

THE TRAJECTORY OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT SEEN THROUGH THE NATURE OF THE PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACT

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to explore, through a qualitative analysis approach, how the nature of the psychological contract can influence the organizational commitment of Malagasy civil servants. This implies the analysis of the construction process of the psychological contract of these civil servants before and after their entry into public service, in order to determine the trajectory of the organizational commitment of these servants before and after their entry into public service. The sample of this research is composed of 40 civil servants who were chosen in a theoretical way by using the principle of data saturation. To analyze the relationship between these variables, a series of semi-structured interviews were conducted with our research participants. The data collected was analyzed by thematic content analysis and by the critical incident method to assess the events that influenced the process of building the psychological contract of these types of employees. This research highlights the process of construction of the psychological contract which is based on an anticipatory schema of the psychological contract which will be formalized in the contact of the civil servant with the organization and the other members of the organization. The results of the data analyzes revealed that each nature of the psychological contract of Malagasy civil servants has a different influence on the dimensions of organizational commitment. The contributions of this research also lie in its ability to provide practical answers to contemporary managerial problems.

Keywords: *psychological contract, organizational commitment, civil servants, Malagasy public services, critical incidents method, anticipatory schema.*

1. INTRODUCTION

In a context of continuous and complex transformations of labor relations, researchers are currently interested in studying new analytical models to explain the organizational attitudes and behaviors of employees. The psychological contract plays a central role in understanding contemporary labor relations [1]. Thus, Rousseau et al. [2] defined the psychological contract as a cognitive schema, or system of beliefs, representing an individual's perceptions of his or her own and another's obligations, defined as the duties or responsibilities one feels bound to perform. This definition underlines the importance of individual subjective interpretations which could have an impact on employee's attitude at work, in particular organizational commitment. Porter et al. [3] initially defined organizational commitment as the intensity of an individual's attachment and identification with their organization. Indeed, organizational commitment is characterized by a strong belief in the values and goals of the organization, the willingness to make efforts in favor of it, and the wish to remain a member in it [3].

Research that has focused on the relationship between the psychological contract and organizational commitment has largely focused on the influence of the evaluation of the psychological contract on organizational commitment, and few have focused on the nature of the psychological contract and its effect on organizational commitment. The employee constructs his psychological contract on the basis of his past experiences and his individual predispositions. The construction of this employee's psychological contract will probably depend on the nature of the employment relationship offered by the employer. Thus, the nature of the psychological contract created will probably influence the organizational commitment of this employee. Therefore, this paper focuses on the influence of the nature of the psychological contract on the organizational commitment of Malagasy civil servants. To understand the nature of the psychological contract, previous works have used two alternative approaches to operationalize the psychological contract. The first perspective focuses on the contents of the psychological contract, while the second perspective focuses on the characteristics of the psychological contract. The nature of the psychological contract is subjective to the perception which differs depending on the individual [4], especially as the psychological contract is unique and idiosyncratic in nature [4]. Therefore, by analyzing the nature of the psychological contract, we are able to understand how the psychological contract is constructed, and to assess the contents and characteristics of the psychological contract.

The question that arises here is to know how the psychological contract of civil servants is constructed and at what point in the employment relationship this contract begins to form. This question leads us to wonder about the way in which the nature of the psychological contract thus created will modulate the organizational commitment of these types of employees. Therefore, the objective of this research work is to explore how the nature of the psychological contract, through the analysis of the construction of this contract, can influence the organizational commitment of civil servants.

Based on the theory of social exchange, employees seek a fair and equitable exchange with their employer. The literature suggests that individuals with a transactional psychological contract have a lower level of commitment than those with a relational psychological contract [5]. Starting from the assumption that the psychological contract is associated with organizational commitment, we assume that the nature of the psychological contract is associated with the variation in the organizational commitment of Malagasy civil servants.

However, while the relationship between the psychological contract and organizational commitment in the private sector has been the subject of several studies, few works have focused on this relationship in the context of public administrations. Hence the interest of looking into the relationship of two concepts in the context of Malagasy public administrations. Employee's organizational behaviors are often mediated by their belief and perception of the terms of agreement established with the organization.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to answer our research questions, we devote this section to the presentation of the theories used to understand the relationship between the nature of the psychological contract and organizational commitment. The first subsection reviews the concept of the psychological contract as a framework for analyzing the employment relationship of Malagasy civil servants. The second subsection presents the conceptualization of organizational commitment.

2.1 The construction of the psychological contract

The concept of the psychological contract was used for the first time to describe a tacit agreement between a group of workers and their supervisor [6]. However, although the concept of psychological contract was introduced by Argyris [6], most of the initial work on the psychological contract finds its origin in the works of Levinson *et al.* [7] and Schein [8]. These authors conceptualized the psychological contract as a relational construct based primarily on mutual expectations. On the other hand, the works of Rousseau [9] set aside the perspective of the employer and situate the psychological contract at the level of the individual, considering it as an "individual subjective belief" and the perception, that there is a promise which was made, is different from employee to employee, and the compensation for this promise would define the possible obligations of each party present in the employment relationship. Inspired by the initial work of Rousseau [9], recent conceptualizations [2] have defined the psychological contract as "a cognitive schema, or system of beliefs, representing an individual's perceptions of his or her own and another's obligations, defined as the duties or responsibilities one feels bound to perform".

In his work, Rousseau [10] considered that the psychological contract is based on a mental schema that the individual has about his employment relationship. This mental schema plays an important role in the interpretation of promises and determines the perception of the employment relationship. Rousseau [10] believes that "individuals use schemas to distinguish patterns and create meaning from them, allowing them to interpret their current

experiences and guide their behaviors". Rousseau [10] suggested that a job mental schema is structured from assumptions related to that job, previous work experiences, and other personal and societal influences. This type of schema, she argues [10], acts as a cognitive framework linked to beliefs about reciprocal obligations inherent in the employment relationship. In this case, the psychological contract plays the role of a filter through which the employee defines and apprehends his employment relationship.

In addition, before entering a new organization, an individual would have an anticipatory schema of the psychological contract [11]. This schema is defined as individual beliefs about future employment, including obligations to the future employer, and rewards the future employee expects to receive in return [12]. This schema, although in a rudimentary form, participates in the interpretation of the promises and signals sent by the organization during the recruitment and selection process, and during the period of the beginning of organizational socialization [13].

To understand the nature of the psychological contract, previous works have used two alternative approaches to operationalize the psychological contract. The first perspective focuses on the contents of the psychological contract, while the second perspective focuses on the characteristics of the psychological contract. The contents of the psychological contract represent the concrete terms of the employment relationship, in other words the obligations, promises, or agreements that make up the exchange relationship. Anderson and Schalk [14] suggested that many employees have their own contracts and are able to describe the contents of their contract. Given the subjectivity of the psychological contract, it would be difficult to describe the contents of the psychological contract especially since so far no consensus about the contents of the psychological contract. Hence the interest of centering the analysis at the level of the individual since the best way to study the contents of the psychological contract is to ensure that the individual is himself even the source of information regarding his psychological contract rather than his employer [9].

These difficulties have led other research relating to the contents of the psychological contract to focus on the dimensions or characteristics of the psychological contract. The dimension of the psychological contract most used in the literature is the dimension on the orientation of the psychological contract. It is a question of seeing if the psychological contract of the individual is the relational or transactional type. We have found other types of psychological contract in the literature, but the distinction between the relational or transactional nature of the psychological contract is the most used in the organizational context. To distinguish these two types of psychological contract, Rousseau [15] proposed a continuum with five dimensions ranging from the level of the contract to the tangibility. The level of contract relates to the aspects which are important for the individual, in particular the purely economic aspect, the complex extrinsic aspects, or other needs (socio-emotional). The time frame corresponds to the length or duration of the contract (a certain punctual end or an indefinite duration). Contract stability, on the other hand, relates to the nature of approved tasks. In transactional contracts, it is stable and inflexible while in relational contracts, it is more flexible and dynamic. The scope of the contract reflects the influence of the work on the employee's identity and self-esteem. With respect to tangibility in relational contracts, it is often less clear what separates employees from responsibilities. They are more subjective, discreetly understood but rarely explicitly agreed upon [10].

On the other side, Rousseau [15] proposed four types of psychological contract such as the transactional contract, the relational contract, the transitional contract, and the balanced contract. The transactional contract is determined over time, generally short, and the employee is required to follow very precise and specific conditions of the exchange relationship. The relational contract, on the other hand, is described as flexible, less specific agreements that establish and maintain an exchange relationship [4]. This contract is characterized by a long-term exchange relationship in which the mutual obligations are not well specified. The balanced contract, on the other hand, corresponds to a high level of tangibility of a transactional psychological contract and a long-term duration of a relational contract. And finally, the transitional contract includes short-term relationships and non-specific performance criteria. This contract emerges in unstable situations such as a company undergoing restructuring or change. The typology of the psychological contract proposed by Rousseau [15] seems to be the only one that has been frequently taken up by other research on the psychological contract. However, the distinction between the transactional contract and the relational contract is the most prominent in the literature, especially since the distinction between these two types of contract helps researchers to explain the reasons why different types of broken obligations have different effects on organizational behavior.

2.2 Organizational commitment

Organizational commitment is generally described as the psychological attachment of the individual to his organization, his identification with it, the desire to remain a member of it, and the willingness of the individual to

deploy energy for the good of the organization. Indeed, Porter et al. [3] describe the organizational commitment as the identification of an employee with his organization and his involvement in it. Individuals who show commitment are characterized by sharing the values of the organization, the desire to remain in its service and a willingness to give efforts on its behalf.

Early conceptualizations of organizational commitment analyzed this concept from a one-dimensional perspective where three competing approaches. The first conceptualization of organizational commitment situates this concept in an instrumental perspective where the individual remains in an organization to preserve his current advantages and especially his past investments. A little later, the concept of organizational commitment was analyzed from a multidimensional perspective. Criticizing early conceptualizations, Cohen [16] proposed a four-dimensional commitment model which he felt should include the time dimension. According to him, the time frame distinguishes organizational commitment that develops before entry into an organization from that which develops after entry into the organization. The other two dimensions are the basis of commitment, whether instrumental or psychological attachment [16]. For Cohen [16] before entering an organization, an individual can develop either the “instrumental commitment tendency” type of commitment or the “normative commitment tendency” type of commitment type. Then after entering the organization, the employee develops either an instrumental commitment or an affective commitment. Instrumental commitment is the expression of the tendency towards instrumental commitment, and thus the employee expresses how his expectations about benefits and rewards have been met. Affective commitment, on the other hand, is psychological attachment to the organization, which can be viewed as identification with the organization, emotional involvement, and a sense of belonging [16].

The multidimensional conceptualization of organizational commitment developed by Meyer and Allen [17] seems to be the most widely used and comprehensive approach to this construct. These authors describe commitment as “a psychological state that characterizes the relationship between an employee and the organization, and which has consequences on the decision to remain a member of the organization or not” [17]. Meyer and Allen's approach [17] makes organizational commitment a multidimensional construct with three components, including the affective component, the continuation component, and the normative component. Meyer and Allen [17] have, among other things, suggested that it is better to consider the three forms of organizational commitment as distinct elements of attitudinal commitment rather than as types of commitment. This presupposes, in fact, that the employee can have the feeling of psychological attachment to his organization (affective commitment) and think at the same time that he would lose his advantages if he were to leave his organization (continuity commitment) without however, having the feeling of being obliged to remain a member of the organization (normative commitment).

Affective commitment is the most predominant form in the literature and corresponds to the emotional attachment and identification of the individual with his organization [18]. Meyer and Allen [17] describe affective commitment as “a desire to maintain membership in the organization that develops largely as a result of work experience that creates feelings of personal comfort and competence”. At the same time, they mention that affective organizational commitment translates into emotional attachment, the identification of the employee with the organization, his involvement in the organization, and the desire (want to) to remain a member of the organization. Continuity organizational commitment (also called reasoned or calculated) is the second form of commitment proposed by Allen and Meyer [18]. Continuity commitment can be viewed as an instrumental nature of attachment in which the association of the individual with the organization is based on an estimate of the economic benefits to be gained [19]. Finally, the third dimension of organizational commitment as suggested by Allen and Meyer [18] is normative organizational commitment. For Meyer and Allen [17], an employee who has a high level of normative commitment believes that he is obliged (ought to) to remain in an organization. Employees who are normatively engaged consider it morally correct to stay in an organization because they feel beholden to the organization that employs them. In other words, the employee's commitment is translated here as a duty toward the organization.

To conclude, Allen and Meyer [18] use a three-dimensional commitment model to conceptualize organizational commitment. According to them, the concept of organizational commitment is a multidimensional construct based on the relationship between an employee and his organization and according to which the employee can develop an affective commitment, and/or a commitment of continuity, or even a normative commitment. These dimensions describe how commitment develops and influences an employee's behavior.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Since the previous sections, which are mainly focused on the conceptualization of our main concepts under study, are not sufficient to answer our research questions, the methodological choices adopted in this section will allow us to provide some answers to our research questions. And thus to legitimize the results of our investigations.

3.1 Research design

Remember that we want to explore and describe how the construction process and the nature of the psychological contract manages to influence the organizational commitment of Malagasy civil servants. In order to define our research design and based on the different types of research developed by Marshall and Rossman [20], it is obvious that our research is exploratory, descriptive and, if possible, capable of putting highlight strong relationships between certain variables. An exploratory nature in the sense that the concept of psychological contract is still little known in French-speaking countries and in our research area, that is to say having been the subject of little research in Malagasy public administrations but which is emerging and arousing growing interest among researchers in human resources management. This research is also exploratory by its scientific purpose since we want to have a deeper understanding of the concept of psychological contract or the employment relationship in the Malagasy public services. It is also descriptive since it aims to verify a possible causal relationship between two or more phenomena, by formulating propositions or by clarifying the concepts studied.

Since our research is designed from the perspective of an exploratory and descriptive research, we decided to adopt a qualitative approach in order to explore and describe the influence of the psychological contract of Malagasy civil servants on their organizational commitment. Miles and Huberman [21] maintain that one of the characteristics of qualitative data is “their richness and their encompassing nature, with a strong potential for deciphering complexity; such data produce dense and penetrating descriptions, nested in a real context and which have a resonance of truth having a strong impact on the reader”. In principle, qualitative research would therefore not aim at statistical generalization, but rather at analytical generalization. By favoring this type of approach, we join Rousseau and Tijoriwala [22] who affirm that such a methodological approach is only relevant if the researcher is interested in the specificities of a situation or an organizational context, which is the case here.

3.2 The research field and sampling procedure

In this research work, we are interested in the employees of the Malagasy public services. The contexts of Malagasy public services are particularly interesting for this research in the sense that public service in developing countries are increasingly considered as non-performing organizations, and in the sense that the context of public service is not the privileged object of research that has been interested in the concept of the psychological contract and the organizational commitment, even less in their relationship.

We decided to carry out our research in the Analamanga region, more precisely in the Malagasy administrative capital because this region has a high concentration of 2.07 civil servants per square kilometer, a figure which represents more than ten times the national average. In addition, our exploratory surveys allowed us to see that people wishing to work in the public service tended to want to work in the capital because, according to them, the situation of civil servants is better there. However, by entering the public services located in the capital, these people discover that the reality is different than what they had hoped for. This makes the public services of the capital particularly interesting for this research.

Starting from the idea that it would be difficult for us to survey everyone, it is obvious that we must select a part of the population to facilitate our survey. The study population is too large to be surveyed in its entirety. In this case, it seems obvious to us to select a fraction of the population to obtain the information we wish to have. The idea of selecting a part of the population leads us systematically to the notion of sample. Admittedly, in quantitative research, researchers tend to value the technical rules of sampling rather than the principles of adequacy between the type of sample and the object of the research. These scenarios give the impression that the quantitative approach gives a more rigorous result but lacks relevance, while in the qualitative approach the results are more relevant but lacks rigor. In principle, in qualitative research, we discover and construct our research objects and samples as the research progresses. In this case, the research sample may change considerably as the research progresses given the research design. It is by following this principle that we constructed our sample.

In the qualitative approach, the sample is determined “theoretically” [23]. This so-called “theoretical” sample is chosen according to the data we want to collect, because this will allow researchers to deal with respondents who have experienced the phenomena studied [24] Thus, in the context of this research, the sample of the research was established based on the progression of research and adopting the principles of theoretical sampling. The degree of confidence in the research results depends critically on the sample size and how the sample was selected. In some studies, it is customary to build a large sample, but this process is unnecessarily long and costly [25]. For this, we constructed a relatively small sample to allow us to explore in depth the experiences of our study participants.

Remember that the construction of our sample was done using the method of theoretical sampling. Thus, at the start, we wanted to constitute a sample of 50 people to constitute our sample, i.e. 25 people from each administration. But as our research progressed, we finally had access to only 40 individuals to constitute our sample.

To select our resource individuals, we have defined criteria based on age, level of education, professional experience, and seniority in the public service. More specifically, we wanted to interview individuals classified in the four age group, who have at least the Bacc, who have already had experience outside their administration, and who have served for more than a year.

Theoretically, based on our sampling methodology, the process continues until the saturation point is reached [26]. Therefore, even though our initial sample size was 40 individuals, as the interview process progressed, the saturation point of our data was reached from the 29th interview. Nevertheless, we continued our interviews up to 35 individuals, but only 32 data sources could be exploited and analyzed because some data were contaminated or were insufficient for analysis.

3.3 Data collection and analysis

Given our research design, we opted for the interview survey to collect our primary data. The interview is a technique intended to collect, in the perspective of their analysis, discursive or verbal data reflecting the conscious or unconscious mental universe of individuals [25]. As part of this research work, we chose the semi-structured interview to collect our main data. By choosing this type of interview, we wanted to maintain a certain freedom of speech between us and the interviewee and to be able to refocus the interview on the topics that interest us, or to ask questions that the interviewee does not come from himself. Moreover, in the semi-structured interview, the interviewees receive similar but not identical questions [27], especially since this type of interview offers the interviewer the possibility of changing the details or the order of the questions he addresses to the interviewee.

As part of this research, the semi-structured interviews were all carried out face-to-face with the resource persons and we did not need to use other means to carry out our interviews. Face-to-face interviews can be labor intensive but are still the best way to collect good quality data and offer a great degree of flexibility. In each participating organization, we established a maintenance plan in advance in which we were able to collaborate with people who were designated by the Human Resources Department. The average duration of these interviews was 45 minutes. With the participating jurisdictions, we have agreed on the approximate duration of each interview, which we have planned to take place for an approximate duration of 30 to 50 minutes. This time frame suited the participants as it would not interfere with their work. In addition, this lapse of time which is not very long will allow us to maintain the lucidity of our participants and ourselves.

After having contacted the participants who have been designated by our contact persons, and after obtaining their consent for the interviews, we send them a telephone message to confirm the appointments. At each interview, we had previously asked the interviewees to record each conversation on an audio medium, and if they agreed we would have recorded the conversations, otherwise we could have limited ourselves to taking notes of conversations. In addition, to preserve the anonymity of our interviewees, we gave each participant a pseudonym. For example, S1A.B2.25H which means "first interviewed employee of administration A (S1A), level Bacc+2 (B2), aged 25 male (25H)".

After collecting and transcribing the interview data, we conducted a thematic content analysis. According to Bardin [28] "Content analysis appears as a set of communication analysis techniques using systematic and objective procedures for describing the content of messages, obtaining quantitative and/or qualitative indicators allowing inference of knowledge relating to the conditions of production (and reception) of these messages". It makes it possible to trace, quantify, or evaluate the ideas or subjects present in the corpus of interview data. To do this, the thematic content analysis of our data was carried out with the assistance of NVIVO 11 software.

To deepen the analysis of our data, we chose the method of critical incidents in order to allow us to highlight the incidents or events that have impacted the relationship between civil servants and their supervisor. Especially since the method of critical incidents can easily espouse qualitative research. The critical incident technique can be defined as a significant negative or positive situation for an emotionally charged subject, at the origin of the establishment of a new behavior [29]. As part of this research, we use this method to collect and analyze a set of accounts of behavioral incidents and events that are at the origin of an individual reflexive approach relating to the professional activity of Malagasy civil servants. These incidents are facts or events that cause behavior that deviates from the norm. Here, these incidents will only be considered critical if they have a minimal impact on the behavior of civil servants or on their employment relationship, or even on the smooth running of their work and their professional activity.

4. SEARCH RESULTS

From a content analysis of the corpus of data collected, our first results showed how Malagasy civil servants build their psychological contract and what factors influenced their choice regarding the choice to work in the public service, and how the nature of their psychological contract happens to influence their psychological contract.

4.1 Descriptive analyzes of the data corpus and the sample

The objective here is to characterize our respondents by drawing a general portrait of these resource persons in order to allow us to classify the variables defined at the outset. Characterizing the profile of our respondents is essential because it will tell us about a number of variables that will act directly or indirectly on the relationship between our main variables. By classifying into four classes of the same amplitude, the age of the civil servants questioned, we have an average age of about 39 years, that is to say exactly 38.66 years. The youngest of our respondents is 28 years old, and the oldest is 55 years old. We also observe that 56.25% of the civil servants questioned are between 31 and 40 years old, i.e. an average age of 36 years.

Table-1: Distribution of respondents according to their age

Age group of agents	Agent distribution	Average age	%
From 20 to 30	3	29	9.38%
From 31 to 40	18	36.44	56.25%
From 41 to 50	9	42.67	28.13%
From 51 to 60	2	55	6.25%
TOTAL	32	38.66	100%

By classifying in seven classes of the same amplitude, the seniority in the public service of our interviewees, we find that 46.88% of the civil servants questioned have been working in the public service and in their current service for more than 8 years, with an average seniority of 9.80 years. On the other hand, 3.13% of civil servants surveyed have worked in public services for more than 12 years. The average seniority of civil servants interviewed in public services is 8 years (8.35 years). The following figure shows the distribution of agents according to their seniority.

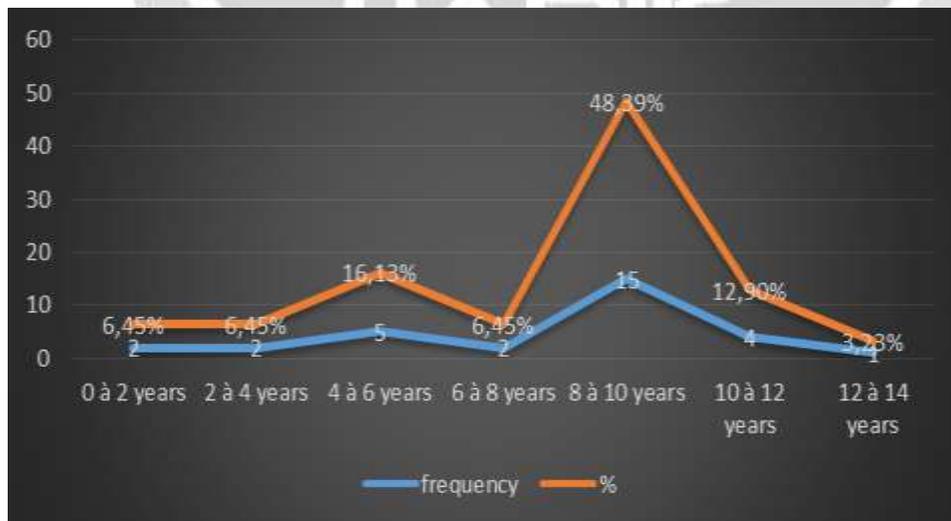


Chart-1: Distribution of agents according to their seniority in the administrations

4.2 Descriptive analysis of the nature of the employment contract

The analysis of the nature of the employment contract is essential because it allows us to have a first answer in relation to the nature of the psychological contract. Obviously the legal nature and the characteristics of the employment contract have an influence on the nature of the psychological contract. The contractual nature of the civil servants, whether ECD (fixed-term contract), EFA, or civil servant, will inform us about the type of psychological contract of the State agents taking part in the research.

By exploring our results, we find that half of the people interviewed (50%) are in a contractual situation in their respective services. 6.25% of them are under an ECD contract, i.e. they have a fixed-term contract, while 43.75% of the agents questioned are under an EFA contract, i.e. to say that these are from assimilated civil servants, they are not fully integrated. On the other hand, 50% of the agents questioned are civil servants that is to say that they are fully integrated. The following table presents the distribution of State employees according to the nature of their employment contract.

Table-2: Distribution of agents according to the nature of their contract

Type of contract	Frequency	Weight
ECD	2	6.25%
E FA	14	43.75%
Civil servants	16	50%
Total	32	100%

4.3 Process of construction of the Psychological Contract of State agents

Through the thematic content analysis of the remarks of the civil servants interviewed, our results show that the civil servants before their first job already had a mental schema of what their future or next job will be. Most of the agents interviewed believe that they are looking for experience in their first job, they are looking for a place where they can put into practice their theoretical knowledge acquired throughout their university career.

In the accounts of the remarks of the civil servants interviewed, certain words are repeated frequently, in this case the words “experience” with a weighted percentage of 4.61%, “salary” with a weighted percentage of 4.49% , “practical” with a rate of 2.47%, “career development” with a rate of 1.29%, “work atmosphere”, “promotion”, “attractive remuneration”, “professionalism” with a respective rate of 0.32%, “independence”, with a rate of 0.74%, “stability” with a rate of 0.64%, “satisfaction”, “value for work”, “training”, “network” with a rate respectively of 0.21% etc.

Even before entering a new organization, the future employee already has an anticipatory psychological contract of what their new job will be like. Indeed, even before entering the public service, the civil servants, already have an anticipatory psychological contract based on their past experience. More than half of those questioned believe that they wanted to work in public services for job stability (1.57%), for the salary (1.31%), for freedom (0.96%) and for retirement (0.79%).

The anticipatory schema of the contract is set to be refined and developed. And this is done after the contact of the future employee with his new organization. Our results show, in fact, that after discovering the organizational reality, civil servants adjust their expectations to better understand their employment relationship. The results of our interviews showed that two out of three of our respondents believe they have had at least one previous job experience before entering the public service. They believe that their previous employment experience influenced their choice regarding the choice to join the public service. The following figure illustrates the response coverage of civil servants regarding their previous experiences according to their age.

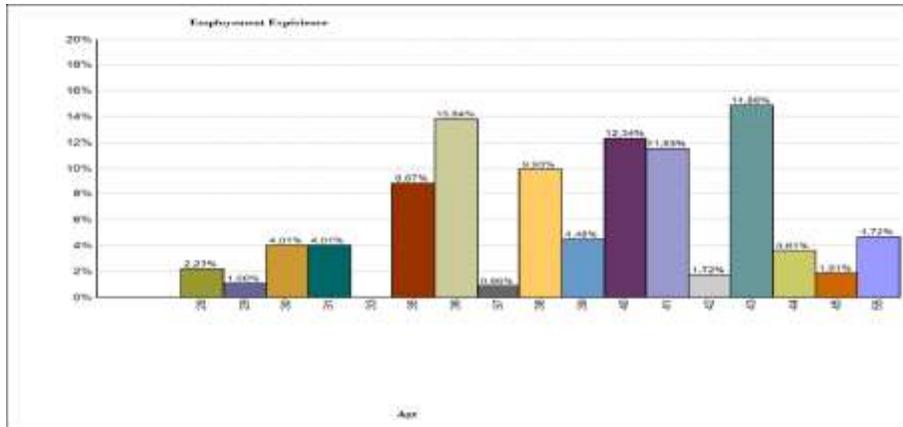


Chart-2: Response coverage vis-à-vis previous work experience

In the continuation of our thematic content analysis, we are interested in the expectations which modeled the process of formation of the psychological contract of the civil servants. After recruitment, exchanges of commitments between the two parties to the employment relationship continue. And each will probably interpret the words of the other individually. Our results show that late experiences of civil servants in their respective organizations modeled their psychological contract. The following cross-tabulation shows the results relating to late expectations and experiences that shaped the formation of the psychological contract of civil servants.

Table-3: Results relating to late expectations and experiences of civil servants

Nodes \ Sources	From 20 to 30 n=3	From 31 to 40 n=18	From 41 to 50 n=9	From 51 to 60 n=2	TOTAL n=32
Expectations towards the administration	52.99%	54.88%	44.07%	78.40%	57.58%
Expectations of the official	21.61%	11.77%	21.67%	13.41%	17.12%
Post-recruitment expectations	25.40%	33.35%	34.26%	8.19%	25.30%
TOTAL (unique)	100%	100%	100%	100%	12.50%

4.4 The contents of the psychological contract of state agents

In our conceptualization of the psychological contract, the contents of the psychological contract is conceptualized as being unique to each individual and that each employee should be able to describe the contents of their contract. To facilitate our analyses, we have grouped together the terms and dimensions of the psychological contract that emerge most often in the accounts of civil servants during their interviews. From their experience in their respective services, we asked the civil servants their obligations towards their organizations and possibly the obligations of the organization towards them. We found in the officer’s stories that their main expectation of their public services is recognition. For them, the organization should show them recognition after a job done. To facilitate our analyses, we have identified elements of the parent codes (inductive codes) which are associated in a particular way with encoded cases (source codes). In the words of the interviewees, five nodes seem important in their eyes to evoke their expectations of their services. These codes are “value for work”, “training”, “career development”, “listening”, and “consideration”. These codes were not part of our initial coding but they are codes created in an inductive way that is to say that these codes emerge from the words of the civil servants. To identify the terms contained in the agents’ psychological contracts, we conducted a frequency query of the 300 keywords most used by agents regarding the contents of their psychological contracts. To facilitate our interpretation, we have only retained the terms which have significant percentages, i.e. those which have a weighted percentage of more than one percent in relation to the result of the query for frequency of words used by the agents.

Regarding the dimensions of the psychological contract of civil servants, our results showed that 75% of agents have an intangible and ambiguous psychological contract. 94% of these agents also believe that their psychological contract is long-term or even lifelong. By analyzing in depth the words of the civil servants, our results show that the psychological contracts of the agents are regulated in an individual way (59.38%) and have a more varied scope (53.13%).



Chart-3: The dimensions of the psychological contract of civil servants

4.5 Nature of commitment organization of civil servants

To determine the organizational commitment profiles of civil servants, we used two approaches, the first was to ask them how they feel about their organization, and the second was to ask them if they wish to remain a member of their organization. The first will allow us to determine the affective or moral nature of the organizational commitment of civil servants, while the second will allow us to identify the continuous nature of their organizational commitment. To determine the nature of the organizational commitment of civil servants, we asked civil servants to express their feelings about their current organization. More specifically, we asked them, initially to describe their feeling towards their organization, and then finally, to ask them if they consider themselves a member of the family or if they have a feeling of belonging toward their organization. The answers provided by the agents concerning these questions allowed us to determine the emotional or moral nature of their relationship with their respective administrations.

The results showed, in fact, that 66.67% of the civil servants questioned expressed a negative feeling toward their current organization. After further analysis of our results, we found that agents' negative feelings are rather mixed. Specifically, 67.65% of these agents surveyed have moderately negative feelings towards their organization, and 32.35% of them have very negative feelings towards it. A proportion of 33.33% of civil servants consider, on the other hand, to have a rather positive feeling towards their current organization. Among those who have a positive feeling towards their organization, 64.71% of these agents have moderately positive feelings, and 34.29% have very positive feelings towards their organization. With regard to the feelings of belonging of the civil servants, the finding showed that 37.50% of the civil servants questioned believe that they have a feeling of belonging to their current organization. In other words, these civil servants feel that they see themselves as a member of the family not only in their respective departments, but also in their current administration. In addition, 62.50% of agents believe that they do not feel they belong to their organization. Some believe (i.e. 12.5%) that they have a feeling of belonging to their department or management but not to their organization.

According to the three-dimensional model of Meyer and Allen (1991), the organizational commitment of civil servants can be an affective nature, of a moral nature, or even a calculated or continuous nature. To determine the economic nature of the organizational commitment of civil servants, we asked them to express themselves in relation to their wish to remain a member of their organization or to seek other opportunities outside their current organization. The finding have shown, in fact, that 62.50% of the civil servants questioned wish to leave their current organization and seek other opportunities elsewhere. A proportion of 37.50%, on the other hand, wishes to remain and remain a member of their current organization. However, by exploring our interview data, we found that 78.13% of government employees surveyed believe that if they find better opportunities elsewhere than in their

current organization, they will leave without hesitation. They add in their remarks that they would not feel guilty if one day they would leave their colleagues or their current organization. The majority of them believe that their colleagues, let alone their leaders, do not deserve their loyalty. For them, if they have better opportunities they will have no qualms about leaving their colleagues or their administration. Although they are looking for better opportunities, only 12.50% of them wish to return to the private sectors. The others no longer want to return to the private sectors but seek better opportunities in the public sector. Conversely, 21.88% of these agents indicate in their comments that they do not wish to leave their current organization even if they find better opportunities elsewhere. The following comparison diagram explores the difference and commonalities between two codes relating to agents' choices to stay in their organization or seek better opportunities elsewhere.

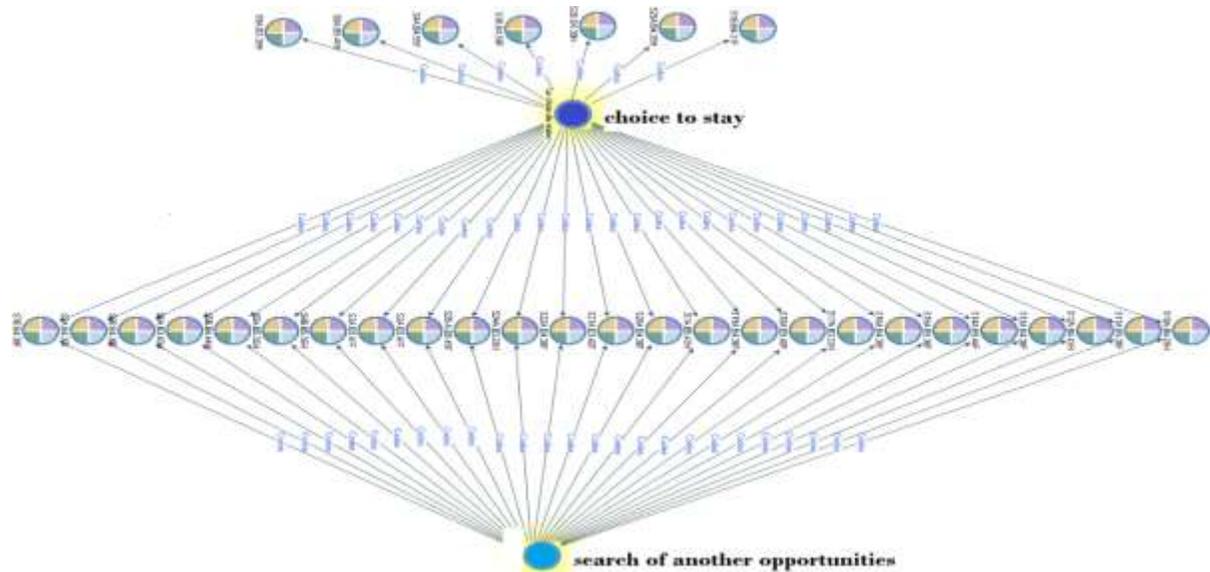


Figure-1: Comparison diagram of the nodes the "choice to stay" and "opportunity search"

As we have seen previously, the majority of civil servants remain in their respective organizations for lack of finding better opportunities elsewhere. They are constantly looking for the best job opportunities elsewhere, they want to leave their organization for another. However, feelings of obligation to remain a member of the organization represent a moral commitment to their organization. In other words, the individual has a sense of moral obligation to remain a member of the organization because he feels indebted to the organization. Our results show, in fact, that 18.75% of the civil servants questioned believe that they remain a member of their organization because they feel morally obliged. They believe in their statement that they are not particularly beholden to the organization but rather to the taxpayers. They add that it is the taxpayers who are their employer, so "it is our duty to respect them and to get involved in our work". Some of them feel that they are more accountable to members of their department, or to their management, and that they feel obligated to honor their commitment to their colleagues and to their line manager. According to them, their behavior is guided by their loyalty to their department, their colleagues, or even.

5. DISCUSSION

The analysis of our results showed that the psychological contract of civil servants is idiosyncratic according to the characteristics and the organizational goals of the individual. Our results confirm, in this sense, most of the results of the literature regarding the interest of putting the individual at the center of the analysis [9]. Indeed, our results confirm the difficulty of generalizing the contents of the psychological contract. We found in this sense that civil servants used several terms to describe their psychological contract. And each term used by the civil servants to describe their psychological contract is different from one civil servant to another, even if in certain points their remarks meet. This can be explained, on the one hand, by the characteristics and individual experiences of the civil servants. And on the other hand, the organizational goals of each civil servant make their expectations and the

contents of their psychological contract different, especially since most agents have their own psychological contract [14]. Among the terms of the psychological contract described by the civil servants, some stand out the most in their remarks, in this case recognition, motivation, valuation of work, etc.

By making a comparison of our results with those of the literature with regard to the obligations of the employer towards its employees, we found that only five (5) obligations of the employer out of sixteen (16) are comparable between our results and those of literature. Compared to the results of Rousseau [4] only three bonds are comparable between the two studies. Consequently, our results confirm, among other things, the relationship of dependence between organizational goals, the experiences lived by the individual, or even individual characteristics, and the contents of the psychological contract of civil servants. The expectations of civil servants change according to the organizational context they face, especially since their psychological contract remains dynamic and therefore the terms of their psychological contract are constantly being renegotiated.

With regard to the dimensions of the psychological contract of the civil servants which emerge from our results, our results highlight a more relational orientation of the psychological contract of the Malagasy civil servants. Our results show in this sense that when they enter public service, the level of the agents' contract is both economic and socio-emotional. Economic in the sense that the civil servant seek above all job security and socio-economic in the sense that they seek the relational in the relationship of exchange. Once in civil service, psychological contracts remain dynamic, subjective and broader. This implies that the civil servant are in continuous renegotiation of the terms of their psychological contract. The temporal framework (long term and indefinite) of the psychological contract of civil servants confirms the relational nature of their psychological contract.

By putting into perspective the dimensions of organizational commitment to those of the psychological contract of civil servants, our results show a dependency relationship based on contextual factors. By attending the labor market, new graduates compete to find stable employment. However, the economic and political context in the country makes it increasingly difficult to find work and those who have it do everything to keep their job. This leads new graduates to seek employment in public service for job stability and to secure their retirement. Our results show, in fact, that before entering a public service, civil servant seek above all an exchange of an economic nature. By choosing the public service, civil servants believe that they are looking for job stability, financial independence (salary), and retirement pension. These terms correspond to the anticipatory expectations at the origin of the construction of their psychological contract. Our results underline in this sense that the organizational commitment of civil servants is a transactional nature when they enter their new organization. A calculated commitment modulated by an exchange relationship of an exclusively economic nature reflecting a transactional psychological contract. This implies a positive relationship of dependence between the organizational commitment of continuity and the transactional psychological contract of the civil servants.

After their entry into the organization, the expectations of civil servant are refined and become more developed. The analysis of the terms of the agents' psychological contract shows that the obligations of two parties to the relationship, in this case the civil servants and their manager, are not well specified. The flexibility of the agreement, the more varied scope of the contract make both parties maintain a relationship based on a long-term exchange. Our results show, in fact, that the psychological contracts of civil servant contain both specific terms reflecting economic and socio-emotional character. In this sense, our results underline the relational nature of the psychological contract of civil servants, a contract characterized by a long-term exchange relationship. In return for the job security provided by the organization, officers feel accountable to the organization and to taxpayers. This type of commitment reflects more a normative than an affective type of commitment. As suggested by our hypothesis that the affective organizational commitment is associated with the relational type psychological contract, our results confirm on the one hand, that the affective organizational commitment of civil servants is positively associated with the relational psychological contract.

This relationship advocated by the literature is also true in the context of Malagasy public service but remains nevertheless nuanced by a positive relationship of dependence between the relational psychological contract and the normative organizational commitment. A type of organizational commitment based on the norm of reciprocity that obliges the civil servants to be accountable to their public service. This relationship is justified by the fact that this type of commitment develops through a process of organizational socialization [16]. In other words, the relational-type psychological contract is positively associated not only with affective-type organizational commitment, but also with normative organizational commitment.

6. CONCLUSION

Despite the subjectivity of the psychological contract of the Malagasy civil servants, our results revealed that the nature of their psychological contract varies according to their later progression in the organization. When they

enter public service, the psychological contract of civil servants is an economic nature. They will progress in the organization, the more their psychological contract will become of a relational nature. Upon entering public service, civil servants show a calculated organizational commitment. This commitment will evolve and will move towards the affective dimension of organizational commitment. Civil servants who have a transactional psychological contract are those who present a continued organizational commitment. On the other hand, it is those who have a relational psychological contract who show a high level of normative and affective organizational commitment.

These results confirm our initial hypothesis that the nature of the psychological contract of civil servants is associated with their organizational commitment. Each type of civil servant psychological contract has a different influence on the three dimensions of organizational commitment. In the context of Malagasy civil services, the transactional psychological contract has a positive influence on the continuous dimension of organizational commitment, and negatively influences the affective dimension of organizational commitment. The more the relationship of exchange is of an economic nature, the more the agents of the State tend to engage in a minimalist behavior based on the search for better job opportunities elsewhere and on ensuring that their involvement will allow them to hold their jobs in the absence of better job opportunities. On the other hand, the relational nature of the psychological contract has a positive influence on the affective dimension of organizational commitment. Civil servants who have a relational psychological contract tend to show a strong emotional attachment to their organization and show a high sense of belonging to their organization and their colleagues. Our results, however, revealed that civil servants who have a relational psychological contract present a high level, not only of affective organizational commitment, but also of normative commitment.

Before and after the entry of civil servants into public organizations, the organizational commitment of civil servants follows a different trajectory depending on the nature of their attachment to the organization. If at entry, the civil servants presents a transactional attachment, his commitment tends to move towards an instrumental commitment represented by a calculated organizational commitment. On the other hand, if at the time of their entry, the civil servants present psychological attachment, they tend to commit themselves normatively towards their organization by accountability towards the latter towards the taxpayers. This tendency towards normative commitment will transform into normative or affective organizational commitment after they enter a public organization.

This research contributes to the advancement of knowledge regarding the relationship between the orientation of the psychological contract and the dimension of organizational commitment. It also provides clearer answers regarding the process of developing organizational commitment seen through the process of training and developing the psychological contract of Malagasy civil servants. In addition, the contributions of this research also lie in its ability to provide practical answers to contemporary managerial problems. But the question that arises in the apprehension of the psychological contract is how to overcome the subjective and dichotomous nature of the psychological contract so as not to limit the understanding of this construct, and thus integrate the employer's perspective.

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