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An Investigation of the Impact on Operational Managers'
Psychological Contracts of Moving to Trust Status

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ABSTRACT

Contemporary literature on change management suggests that the pace of change is accelerating and that public sector organisations are increasingly introducing change initiatives designed to move their services into the marketplace. As such, organisations must be aware of the likely impact of change on their employees to respond quickly and ensure change initiatives are effective.

The impact of change on employees' psychological contracts in general, and specifically in relation to downsizing, is seen to reduce their level of commitment, loyalty and trust which can result in employees withdrawing their services, behaving such that change initiatives are adversely affected or deciding to leave the organisation. In addition, operational managers are seen to hold a unique position within an organisation and, at times of significant organisational change, their level of loyalty, commitment and trust is seen as vital to its effective implementation.

Research in this area within the public sector is very limited. More specifically, no published research has looked at the impact of a significant change initiative within the UK Probation Service. This study therefore focuses on Cheshire Probation Area (CPA) and seeks to investigate the impact on operational managers' psychological contracts on moving to Trust status.

A conceptual model was developed which drew together the key theoretical elements of both psychological contracts and change management, in which the *interpretation* of the change was seen as crucial to its effective implementation. A cross sectional design was used to assess the impact using a questionnaire providing both quantitative and qualitative data. Statistical analysis showed the majority of respondents' psychological contracts were unaffected by the move to Trust status. However, for those who were, trust was the main area affected. An interpretive analysis of the data also found that the majority of respondents felt their psychological contract was unaffected, or that it was too soon to appreciate its full impact. However all respondents felt they provided more loyalty to CPA than was reciprocated. It concludes that, in general, operational managers continue to hold a relational psychological contract with CPA that has largely been unaffected by the move to Trust status, and should therefore support the implementation of this change initiative.

DECLARATION

This work is original and has not been submitted previously for any academic process. All secondary sources are acknowledged.

Signed: ---------------------------------

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Research

The changing context of working in the public sector continues to evolve amid government emphases on new organisational forms emerging in the wake of 'marketisation', compulsory competitive tendering and 'best value', resulting in many public sector organisations being targeted for downsizing and restructuring .

Within the Probation Service, this re structuring has culminated in the Ministry of Justice through NOMS (National Offender Management Service) creating a split between 'delivery' and 'strategy', with an emphasis on contestability and the encouragement of a mixed economy in the delivery of services (Burke and Collett 2008).

As a consequence, Probation Areas have been required to move to Trust status, moving the Service and the management of offenders into the market place. This is seen as a significant move away from the Service's origins and a further change in direction for the Service and its staff.

In order to achieve Trust status Cheshire Probation Area (CPA) are required to formulate a 3 year plan with a projection of services against a reduced budget. As a consequence the Senior Management Team and the Area's Board decided to reduce the number of operational managers by 17%, offering voluntary redundancy, flexible or early retirement to those who were eligible. For those managers who remain the expectations are those associated with downsizing and de-layering. In addition, further staff reductions will take place over the next 3 years, with no guarantee that remaining staff would not continue to be affected.

Redman and Wilkinson (2006) acknowledge that downsizing and de-layering are common consequences of organisations trying to meet the challenges of 'New public management' with its emphasis on economy and efficiency. However, research has shown (Wellin (2007), Rousseau (2005), Balogun (2003), Cameron and Green (2004)) the critical importance of middle managers in the successful implementation of major organisational change initiatives such as moving to Trust status, and Rousseau (2005), Bellou (2006), Weber and Weber (2001), Zhao, et al (2007), Pate et al (2000), Hallier

and James (1997), Turnley and Feldman (1999) have suggested that if this group of employees' psychological contracts are breached as a result of organisational changes, the impact on the organisation's ability to successfully implement that change can be significant.

The issues raised by the significant change initiative of moving to Trust status and the impact on operational managers will be considered in this research. A fuller review of these issues will be examined in chapter 2.

1.2 Research Question

This study examines the impact of CPA's decision to downsize and de-layer its operational managers during a time of significant organisational change.

It will examine the perception of operational managers' psychological contracts and the potential implications for the Area.

The research question being addressed is: - "An Investigation of the impact on operational managers' psychological contracts of moving to Trust status".

1.3 Research Aims

1. This research will examine current theory and research on the psychological contract.

2. This research with examine current theory and research relating to change management, and in particular the role of operational managers during times of significant organisational change.

3. Relating this specifically to CPA, a public sector organisation, the research aims to investigate and evaluate the nature of operational managers' psychological contracts during a time of significant organisational change.

4. To investigate the potential impact of this on CPA's move to Trust status, comparing the research findings to theory.

5. Through the research findings, recommendations will be made to support the management of the Area's move to Trust status. Such recommendations could also be

used to inform other Probation Areas which are moving to Trust status or future change initiatives within CPA.

1.4 Research Justification

CPA is going through a period of significant change, moving to Trust status and, in the process, downsizing two layers of operational managers.

Despite this change, expectations remain the same in relation to the level of performance to be achieved by staff.

Research shows that change is difficult to enact, with 70% of change initiatives failing (Beer and Nohria 2000). Lord and Hartley (1998) cited in Cassar (2000) have argued that: "The issue (of organisational change) may be particularly problematic in the public sector, where change can be complex to enact".

Cassar (2000) emphasises that the psychological contract may help personalise and comprehend better these 'shifts' and influences of macro change at the individual level; changes that have traditionally been evaluated through economics as the main index of success or otherwise.

Hallier and James (1997) suggest that operational managers are uniquely placed in this arena of change, as they often have two types of psychological contract. Hallier and James go on to suggest that it is by studying ways in which changes to jobs and conditions are introduced, that opportunities are presented to refine our understanding of how operational managers conceive and enact their own and subordinates' employment relationships.

This research is therefore relevant to the current issues being experienced by CPA and its staff. Understanding the impact of the change initiative on operational managers' psychological contracts will support and inform CPA in achieving the aims of the move to Trust status, and in effectively managing change through its operational managers.

Balogun (2003) and Bellou (2006) suggest that the empirical knowledge in this field is still limited. They both point to the critical nature of such an understanding if serious problems in strategy implementation and success are to be avoided. Willems et al

(2004) concur with this view and also raise concern that such research within the public sector is very limited.

The findings of this research may also support other Probation Areas as they move to Trust status, or with future change initiatives within CPA. This is supported by Van den Heuvel and Schalk (2009) who suggest that, "As lay-offs and reorganisations continue to occur and as the current employment relationship continues to undergo major transformation, the importance of understanding the psychological contract will remain an important issue for researchers and practitioners alike".

1.5 Research Methodology

1.5.1 Philosophy

The research philosophy used in this study is an Interpretative one. It takes a subjective view and uses both an inductive and deductive approach.

1.5.2 Strategy

A case study and survey strategy is chosen, using a questionnaire to collect research data from one specific group of staff within the organisation. The questionnaire contains structured and open questions which enables both quantitative and qualitative data to be gathered. This method is selected as the most appropriate to answer the research question and because it enables triangulation of the two aspects of psychological contract and change management to take place.

1.5.3 Research Design

This research is based on a mixed methods design using both deduction and induction techniques.

The deduction theory is used to investigate whether the move to Trust status impacts on operational managers' psychological contracts.

The induction theory is used to analyse the impact of the move to Trust status on individuals within the organisation.

The methodology selected for this study is described in greater detail in chapter 3.

1.6 Outline of Future Chapters.

Chapter 1 provides a brief overview and background to the research. Research aims are introduced and justified. The research methodology is outlined.

Chapter 2 contains a review of current academic literature and theory on the psychological contract and the management of change. A conceptual model is developed to answer the dissertation question.

Chapter 3 describes the methodological procedures employed to answer the research question. A clear rationale is offered for the chosen research philosophy, approach, strategy and purpose. Rejected methods are also discussed. Selected data collection methods are described and issues relating to validity, reliability and triangulation are considered. In addition, consideration of ethical issues are made.

Chapter 4 presents the findings of the research, including data from the questionnaire.

Chapter 5 discusses the research findings within the context of the literature review and the conceptual model outlined in chapter 2. Conclusions and implications of the research are drawn and methodological limitations are considered. Finally recommendations are discussed.

1.7 Definitions

This dissertation offers an overview of the current academic thinking on the psychological contract and the role of operational managers in the process of change. In order to clarify the meaning of key elements of the study, definitions are provided.

A psychological contract as defined by Robinson and Rousseau (1994) is "an individual's belief regarding the terms and conditions of a reciprocal exchange agreement between that focal person and another party…a belief that some form of a promise has been made and that the terms and conditions of the contract have been accepted by both parties".

Change management as defined by Moran and Brightman (2001) is "the process of continually renewing the organisation's direction, structure and capabilities to serve the ever-changing needs of external and internal customers".

1.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter provides a background to the research question and aims. It provides justification for the research and describes the adopted methodology. An outline of the study is offered and appropriate definitions provided. On these foundations the dissertation can progress to the literature review in chapter 2.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the findings from the academic literature and theory in the two parent themes under investigation; the psychological contract and the management of change. The literature review provides a theoretical foundation on which to build the research. The chapter enables the development of a conceptual model which is used within the dissertation to answer the research question.

2.2 The Psychological Contract

The origins of the psychological contract (the concept of a contract between individuals and organisations, involving non-articulated understandings) has existed in organisational science for decades (Argyris 1960, Schein 1965). Rousseau (1989) points out that economics have also given considerable attention to contractual issues in organisations although these concepts have played little part in research on individual behaviour within organisations. In this respect Cassar (2000) points out that the psychological contract has been used to explain employee-employer exchange relationships for a number of years. It is however Rousseau who has developed the concept, bringing the psychological contract into the mainstream of organisational research.

Rousseau (1995) contends that the psychological contract is a subjective perception which differs between individuals. She suggests it is a dynamic perception that changes over time during the relationship between the employee and employer. Rousseau points to the fact that the contract concerns mutual obligations, based on given promises, in which both parties invest in their relationship with the expectation of a positive outcome for them. It is the attention Rousseau gives to the focus on promise, Roehling (1997) suggests, that is the major distinctive aspect of her conceptualisation.

However, Rousseau is not without her critics. Cullinane and Dundon (2006) cite Guest (1998 and 2004) who argues that the psychological contract should include an employer's perspective in order to be able to assess fully the notion of mutual reciprocal obligations. Herriot and Pemberton (1995) agree, suggesting that the psychological contract is essentially an exchange relationship between both parties and derived from

the models of social exchange. However, Anderson and Schalk (1998) argue that the concept of reciprocal expectations and obligations from both parties perspective is problematic, as the expectation of the organisation and the individual will be different. This, Rousseau (1990) asserts, is the reason she defines the psychological contract at the unilateral, singular level of the individual.

Guest (1998) also suggests that the conceptual distinctions between 'obligation' and 'expectations' are somewhat obscure. His critique is supported by Boxall and Purcell (2003) who argue that if the psychological contract is entirely subjective and constructed only in the head of the individual employee, it cannot in any meaningful way be considered 'contractual'.

Schein (1980) too sees the psychological contract as being entered into by both parties, as reciprocal and dynamic, and needing to be constantly re-negotiated. However Wellin (2007) challenges this, suggesting that the literature on the psychological contract portrays it as a non dynamic relationship. Whilst it has provided interesting insights, he believes it is insufficient to use as a robust vehicle for managing relationships with employees.

Guest (1998) and Wellin (2007) also argue that the psychological contract is not confined to the employee-employer relationship, but can be reflected in wider terms and, as such, can be seen to transcend the employment relationship to which Rousseau has confined it.

2.2.1 Why is the Psychological Contract Important?

Anderson and Schalk (1998) suggest that all aspects of the employment relationship cannot be addressed in a formal written contract. As such, the psychological contract fills the gap in that relationship, providing both a reduction of insecurity and a vehicle in which the employee's behaviour can be shaped, whilst also providing an employee with a feeling of influence as to what happens to them in the organisation.

The traditional psychological contract is based on both relational and transactional elements, of which trust, commitment and job satisfaction, have been seen to be the critical attitudinal components of the contract (Rousseau 1990, Rousseau and Tijoriwala (1998) and Cassar (2000), Willems et al (2004), Ferres et al (2004).

2.2.2 Trust

The concept of trust appears to deal with behaviour in organisations in a variety of ways. A consensus of opinion in the literature suggests that trust between individual and groups within an organisation is a highly important ingredient in the long term stability of the organisation and the well-being of its members (Cassar, 2000). Trust develops from the belief that contributions will be reciprocated, and is therefore likely to play a significant role in the subjective experience of the psychological contract. When an employer breaks a basic rule in work relations, such as good faith and fair dealing, trust declines.

2.2.3 Commitment

Commitment is conceptualised in the exchange framework, whereby performance and loyalty are offered in return for material benefits and rewards. By reneging on such promises, employees may feel a decreased commitment because the organisation is signalling that they may not value the employee's contributions and care little about their well-being. (Mowday et al 1979, Guzzo et al 1994, Van den Heuvel and Schalk 2009).

2.2.4 Job Satisfaction

Robinson and Rousseau (1994), Turnley and Feldman (1999) and Tekleab et al (2005) cited in Van den Heuvel and Schalk (2009) found that general breach of the psychological contract is associated with lower levels of satisfaction, both with the job and the organisation itself. Experiencing discretion between what is promised and what is expected, creates a major source of dissatisfaction and it may become very difficult to obtain satisfaction from doing the job when the employee can no longer rely upon promised inducements. As such, a breach can lead to an intention to quit by the employee.

2.2.5 The Formation of the Psychological Contract

Rousseau (1995) suggests that there are a number of individual and organisational processes that affect the creation of the psychological contract, such as external messages that organisations convey through events which signal future commitment

intentions, for example recruitment, socialisation, developmental activities, or during announcements pertaining to organisational change. Social cues via third parties also provide messages that inform the contract, and convey a social pressure to conform to the group's understanding of the terms and shapes how the individual will interpret the organisation's actions.

However, Wellin (2007) criticises the psychological contract as not being explicit, but subtly communicated in a random manner, with many organisations rarely directly communicating or articulating it. As such, Wellin points out that the individual employee's beliefs about what the organisation expects of them, may or may not have any bearing on what their manager actually expects.

Rousseau (1995) contends that such perceptions are formed at the onset of the employee-employer relationship, accepted by the employee and then used to think about their job and guide their actions. As a result, newcomers to an organisation describe their contract as much more aligned with that of the management, whereas those with the organisation for more than 5 years may gauge their view in terms of their previously established contract. At times of significant organisational change, Rousseau suggests, established psychological contracts will need to change in order to successfully implement the change. however, if the old models persist, 'veterans' are at risk of under performing.

It is this interaction of the transactional and relational components of the psychological contract that Redman and Wilkinson (2006) suggest can be seen to be problematic as, when changes in the transactional terms of the contract occur, this can influence the kinds of relational rewards expected by the employee. The impact of this they suggest cannot be underestimated. Magdire (2001) suggests that it is likely that in such a situation, employees withdraw some or all of their contribution to the relational component of the psychological contract by reducing their commitment, loyalty or trust, and it is this interactivity between the components which has the potential to create problems for organisations in times of organisational change.

However, critics of the psychological contract argue that such rigid assumptions of individual employee behaviour do not take account of specific individual circumstances or that the psychological contract can mean different things to different people in

different organisations. Wellin (2007) contends that individuals working in a mining company, a sandwich company or professional services, will not all hold the same thoughts or bring the same meaning to the psychological contract.

Wellin (2007) also points to the fact that, as an individual progresses through life, their expectations change, and suggests that the perspective that an individual searches for a life long career, is not now valid, and that circumstances such as divorce or the age of the individual can mean an individual may seek transactional rewards above other relational aspects of a psychological contract. Cullinane and Dundon (2006) cited in Hall (2008) also question the ability of individuals with financial commitments to leave a job due to dissatisfaction.

Indeed Bellou (2006) points out that individual personality, personal interpretation of events, values and goals all impact on the individual's ability to manage change, and that the ability to cope with change has its origins in the self efficacy theory. As such, Bellou challenges the psychological contract by suggesting that similar findings in relation to job satisfaction, intentions to quit and an openness to change, can all be found within the self efficacy research.

2.2.6 The New Deal

As working arrangements have changed over the last 30 years due to globalisation, increased competition and government initiatives, Anderson and Schalk (1998) suggest that the psychological contract has also been forced to change. As a consequence, a 'new deal' has evolved in which a loss of job security and increasing demands on employees to be flexible, innovative and willing to contribute to the organisation 'above and beyond' their formal job description and employment contract, are the main features.

However, this shift in focus from relational to transactional aspects of the psychological contract is not necessarily seen by employees to be beneficial, and resistance to change has occurred (Van den Heuvel and Schalk 2009), although research on the effects of psychological contract breach within the public sector is scarce. Cassar (2000) contends that this is due to the public sector being regarded as one of the most job-protected environments within which rigid formal structures have often served to keep 'modern' management practices at bay that may disrupt the traditional employment relationship

of job security, job advancement in return for loyalty, respect and trust.

In their study Litwinenko and Cooper (1994) suggest the health service was faced with fundamentally changing the way it functioned and operated in order to respond to and implement government led reforms, the most far reaching of which was the introduction of Trust status. Indeed Litwinenko and Cooper (1994) go on to suggest that such radical changes within a public sector organisation cut across traditional beliefs and expectations held by employees.

These findings are supported by Wooldrige's study (2001) of a public sector organisation that showed that work is still a significantly important aspect of people's lives, even when it is poorly paid. He suggests that concepts of employee motivation and job satisfaction are as important as ever and, whilst pay is still important, it is the non-pay issues that are significant in shaping the 'new deal'. In fact the CIPD (2009) have suggested that the 'old psychological contract' is still alive, that employees still want security, stating that the length of time that people stay in their jobs has reduced little. They are still prepared to offer loyalty and, in general, remain satisfied with their jobs. Porter et al (2003) however argue that those individuals with psychological contracts involving a strong relational quality, create a greater zone of acceptance - that is a willingness to accommodate the needs and requests expressed by the employer.

Culliname and Dundon (2006), cited in Hall (2008) argue that the depiction of the contemporary psychological contract is a fanciful one, suggesting that it simply serves to disguise the true nature of management power. Rather than an equivalence between employer and employee they see it as a means of the employer dictating the explicit and implicit terms and conditions of employment, both formally and informally. They reject the notion that employees, aggrieved by a perceived breach of their psychological contract, are able just simply to leave or otherwise discipline the organisation through reduced effort and performance. More often than not, they contend, employees are forced to accept the new terms of the psychological contract as dictated by senior management.

2.3 The Management of Change

In today's environment, both effective leadership and change management are at the core of public service delivery and are seen as the answer to a 'host of hugely complex,

large scale and endemic problems' Storey (2005).

Leadership and the management of change has been debated and documented by many authors. The debate focuses on the attempts to quantify the specific qualities or attributes that individual leaders need to exhibit in order to ensure the success of their organisation, whether this is grounded in either contingent or universal models.

Whilst Yuki (cited in Gill 2006) criticises the conceptual weaknesses and lack of strong empirical support in leadership theory, Gill criticises the separating of dimensions of leadership 'in a mutually exclusive way' suggesting a need to appreciate the 'interactions' among a range of capabilities.

However Bennis (1987) argues that there are a few areas that have proven time and time again to be mandatory for effective leadership. These include the combination of vision and goal setting, interpersonal skills, self-knowledge and technical competence regarding the specifics of the business in which the leader works. Such attributes, he suggests sets leaders apart from managers, and are essential to the success of any organisation. Indeed, Metcalf and Metcalf (2005) and Bass (1985) suggest that as a consequence of the superior leadership traits of senior managers, organisations will have employees with higher levels of job satisfaction, trust, commitment, motivation, morale and performance.

Metcalf and Metcalf (cited in Storey 2005) suggest that what characterises the 'charismatic' models of leadership is their major focus on enabling organisations to deal with change. This is very different, they suggest, to the 'situational' models of the 1970's, which regarded leadership as essentially a combination of concern for people and a concern for tasks; more aligned with management or transactional leadership.

However, Hughes et al (2009) point to Hollander's framework of leadership which incorporates three distinctive and overlapping elements to effective leadership and takes account not only of the leader's qualities and the situation, but also the importance of its followers.

The theory of effective processes for implementing change, has been dominated by Lewin and Kotter in particular and psychological theory pertaining to individual and

group behaviour.

Kotter and Cohen (2002) suggest that successful change happens in eight stages, with the central challenge being the changing of people's behaviour, by influencing their thoughts and feelings.

Lewin (1951) recognises the need to unbalance the equilibrium in order to facilitate change by understanding individual resistance to change through driving and restraining forces, whilst psychological studies focus on cognitive and emotional responses to change, often associated with loss.

Models of change management can depict a neat procedural process of implementing change. However, this is rarely the case, especially in an environment where change is constantly occurring and there is insufficient time for the change to be embedded before a new change initiative emerges (Hayes 2007).

2.3.1 The Role of the Operational Manager During Organisational Change

During periods of significant organisational change, the role of operational managers is seen as crucial if the implementation of the change agenda is to be successfully achieved. As Cameron and Green (2004) point out, it is the role of the middle manager to translate the purpose of the restructure into an understandable and viable way of doing things differently.

Balogun (2003) suggests that operational managers fulfil four inter-related roles during change implementation - undertaking their own personal change, helping others through change, implementing necessary changes in their department, and keeping the business going. As the link pin between senior management and staff, operational managers play a crucial role in connecting with the organisation's strategic and operational levels and acting as change implementers.

Tierey (1999) focuses on the relationship between staff and their operational managers and concludes that the relationship which staff have with their operational manager, shapes the attitudes to the organisation and that staff's attitudes to change are aligned to that of their operational managers.

Bennis and Nanus (1985) however, separate the roles of leaders and managers into distinct characteristics, suggesting that the role of the manager is operationally focused and that they do not hold the leadership qualities that are essential if staff are going to effectively embrace changing working environments. This is supported by Porter, Bingley and Steers (2003) who suggest that the causal accounts managers offer are not always accepted, and that reasons for complex organisational change can be difficult for both managers to explain and for staff to understand.

However Wellin (2007) argues that operational managers are central to the organisation's relationship with staff, suggesting that it is the manager who represents and embodies the organisation for many people. He cites Storey (2005) who identifies the critical role of the operational manager in achieving organisational goals, by delivering and driving HR polices.

Both Rousseau (1995) and Balogun (2003) also highlight the unique position operational managers are in at times of organisational change, particularly when the change impacts on them. As such Rousseau (1995) suggests operational managers are uniquely placed in the arena of change, party to the contract with senior management but also subject to alterations in their own contract as subordinate workers.

Arnold et al (1998) go one stage further, seeing an operational manager's identity as one aligned with the organisation rather than the profession, suggesting that their sense of identity and self worth is therefore particularly threatened when the organisation 'rats' on the deal.

Rousseau (1995) suggests that in the face of restructuring, this may raise new and unusual conflicts for operational managers who may or may not be prepared to accept these new contractual responsibilities.

As Hallier and James (1997) found in their study of operational managers, changes to their role have disrupted long established features of their employment relationship. In the wake of restructuring and redundancy, operational managers now work longer hours, have greater workloads and face a demise in their job security. As such, the transactional agreements formed to sustain the employment relationship with managers, have been displaced.

2.3.2 Downsizing and De-layering

Budros, (1999) cited in Redman and Wilkinson (2006) defines downsizing as the conscious use of permanent personnel reduction in an attempt to increase efficiency and or effectiveness. Redman and Wilkinson (2006) contend that downsizing is now one of the preferred ways of cutting costs and improving organisational performance, but suggest that it is seen as an all too easy solution to management problems when public sector organisations are under intense pressure to improve their profitability and efficiency.

The fact that little attention is given to downsizing in HRM, for Chadwick et al (2004) cited in Redman and Wilkinson (2006) is serious, because, they suggest, successful performance following downsizing requires HRM practices that continue to promote discretionary efforts of employees, retain valuable human capital and reconstruct valuable organisational structures. They point to the research that suggests that, whilst the benefits that organisations reportedly achieve through downsizing are intended to benefit the organisation, the reality is that downsizing can have a negative impact on employees' morale, destroy social networks and causes a loss of knowledge.

The potentially negative impact of downsizing is not restricted to those who leave, but also has a major effect on the remaining employees. 'Survivor syndrome' is seen to decrease motivation, morale and loyalty to the organisation. Devine et al cited in Redman and Wilkinson (2006) also notes that survivors feel less in control due to witnessing lay-offs and not knowing if they may be next to go. This results in demoralised managers and workforce. Whilst it might be viewed as 'strong leadership', it is difficult then for organisations to sustain their contention that people are their most valuable resource, and Pfeffer, cited in Redman and Wilkinson (2006) argues that downsizing is simply an 'unplanned, haphazard management of the employment relationship'.

Van de Ven cites Brockner et al (1994) who raise the question of fairness within the downsizing process. He suggests that, if employees perceive a sense of fairness in the downsizing procedures, there is a greater level of survivor commitment.

Job-creep is a further consequence of downsizing and is outlined by Wellin (2007). Job-creep involves ongoing pressure by the employer on the employee to deliver more and

more. As a result, behaviour and performance which was previously discretionary, now becomes increasingly expected or taken for granted. Whilst initially employees can see this as positive, over a period of time the need to re-balance results in a refusal to take on more work and to disengagement with the organisation.

Turnley and Feldman (1999) suggest that downsizing and de-layering can significantly impact on the perceptions of managers' psychological contracts, as they believe their employer has reneged on long standing promises of promotion.

Hall (2008) also points to restructuring associated with downsizing as having an impact on job security, resulting in a shift from a relational psychological contract to a transactional one.

In this context of change and uncertainty, Rousseau (1995) contends that the psychological contract of operational managers may be critical to the success of organisational strategies, with individuals responding to a breach of their own relational frameworks in ways that will 'punish the wrongdoing of the employer'.

Hallier and James (1997) support this, saying that the psychological contract of operational managers may be crucial for explaining their reactions to these new arrangements, as operational managers' actions have been shown to derive from their own priorities and agendas. In times of significant organisational change, Hallier and James suggests that the issue becomes one of whether or not managers are prepared to accept contractual responsibilities and act on behalf of the employer. It is not inconceivable, they suggest, that operational managers will pursue similar forms of redress to those of their subordinates, or respond transactionally by even overriding deep set cultural values, particularly when leaving the organisation is infeasible.

Balogun (2003) says that the key to this is the managers' interpretation of the change intent, which will inform their actions and impacts on the outcomes of organisational change. Balogun suggests that those operational managers with a negative attitude, can be a genuine impediment to change. By being protective of their own staff interests and reluctant to implement change, they become saboteurs and 'resistant out of resentment'. Willems et al (2004) in their study of psychological contracts in the public sector, found a common pattern of higher expectations, strong and loyal psychological contracts that

valued long term involvement, fair and personal treatment and quality of information on changes effecting employment. However, as a consequence they suggest employees in the public sector experience more frequent breaches of their psychological contract.

Whilst research shows that public sector organisations are associated with more breaches of the psychological contract, little research has examined changes from the perspective of the operational manager. As Balogun (2003) points out, if they really do hold a pivotal role in change, given the frequency with which organisations need to undertake change, there is a need for a greater understanding of what operational managers can contribute, and the further development of HRM in order to support operational managers during organisational change.

2.4 A Conceptual Model

The literature review provides a range of current academic thinking in relation to the two parent themes detailed in this study. Conceptualisations are drawn and a model developed that will be used to answer the research question. The model is illustrated and each aspect is discussed.

Fig.1 A Conceptual Model showing the concepts drawn from the literature review in chapter 2.
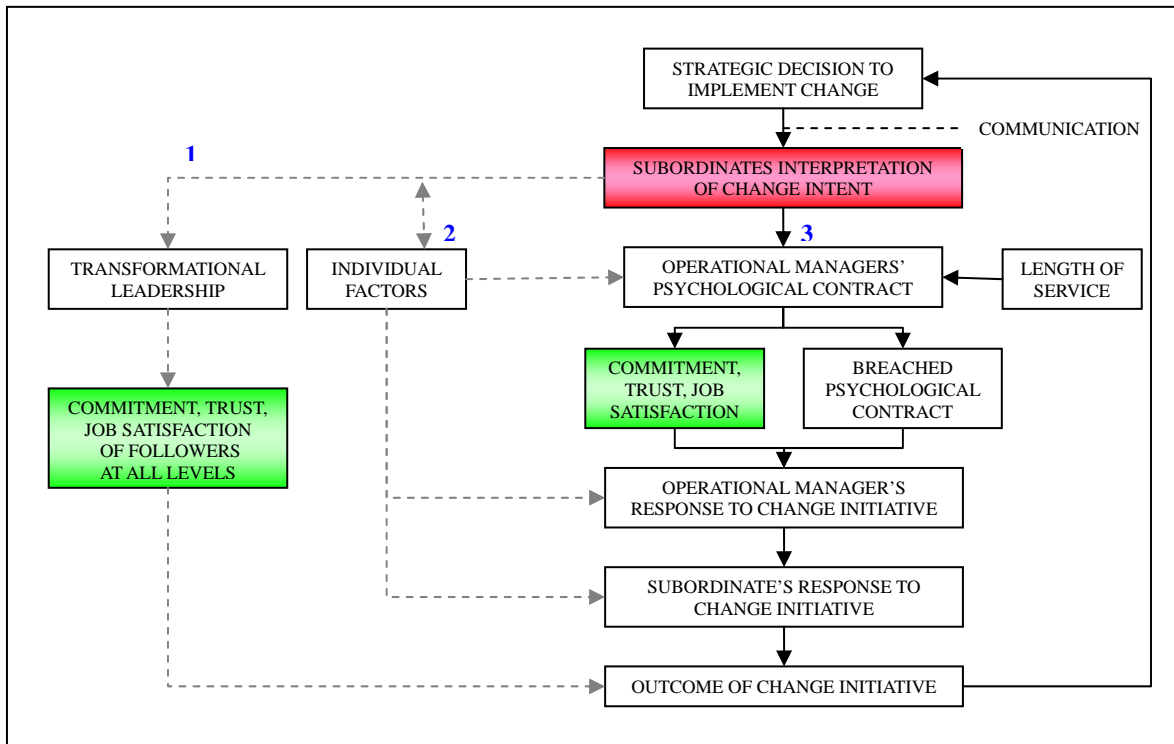
2.4.1 Development and Construction of the Conceptual Model

The conceptual model is developed using the key elements of change management theory, together with the psychological contract as defined by Robinson and Rousseau (1994), with consideration given to key contributions of the self-efficacy model developed by Bandura (1986), and transformational leadership theory.

The model is constructed around the one main crucial component, the interpretation of the change intent. The model attempts to show how this component links to the concepts of trust, commitment and job satisfaction. In addition, the conceptual model will allow the development of the questionnaire by linking the questions back to the model with consideration given to the triangulation of the data collected to answer the research question.

2.4.2 Linkages Within the Conceptual Model

At the head of the model is the strategic decision to implement change. Once communicated, this leads to the interpretation of the change-intent by staff. At this point the conceptual model divides in relation to the three key theoretical models outlined,

ultimately leading to the outcome of the change initiative.

Route 3 illustrates the basis for this research, illustrating the link between the interpretations of the change-intent to the operational manager's psychological contract, which can, according to Rousseau (1995), be affected by the individual's length of time in the organisation. Whether the individual's contract is breached, or their perceptions of trust, commitment and job satisfaction remain, will according to Rousseau, have a direct link to their response to that intent. Linking this to the concept of an operational manager's impact on a subordinate's behaviour at times of organisational change, the conceptual model makes the final link with the outcome of the change initiative.

Routes 1 and 2 illustrate the additional concepts pertaining to change management discussed in Chapter 2. However these are not the focus of this research. Route 1 illustrates the link with transformational leadership theory proposed by Bass (1985) to the outcome of a change initiative. The theory asserts such leadership traits increase a follower's sense of self efficacy, trust commitment and job satisfaction and, in so doing, enables the strategic outcome to be achieved.

Route 2 portrays the inter-relation between the interpretation of the change intent with individual factors, (Bellou (2006), Culliname and Dundon (2006). It also illustrates the inter-relation between these individual factors and operational managers' psychological contracts, and with transformational leadership outcomes pertaining to the self-efficacy model on followers' responses to a change initiative (Metcalf and Metcalf, 2005). Both routes ultimately link to the outcome of the change initiative.

2.4.3 A Summary of the Conceptual Model

The themes and concepts reviewed in the literature are illustrated. Linkages are made in relation to transformational leadership and individual factors that are seen to impact on the outcome of a change initiative. The main theme within the conceptual model however relates to the interpretation of the change intent and its impact on operational managers' psychological contracts. Their subsequent response to that change and the effects of this on their subordinates can be seen to impact on the outcome of the change initiative.

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The conceptual model directly informs the research question which examines the interpretation of a significant organisational change through a structured approach (Fisher 2007). A methodological philosophy and strategy is also established that directly relates to the links established in the model.

2.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter provides a review of the current literature pertaining to change management and the psychological contract. A conceptual model is developed, illustrated, with links established and explained. Fundamental connections are made from the literature review and conceptual model, to inform the research question and methodology.

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the methodological procedures employed to answer the research question. A clear rationale is offered for the chosen research philosophy, approach, strategy and purpose. Rejected methods are also discussed. Selected data collection methods are described and issues relating to validity, reliability and triangulation are considered. In addition, consideration to ethical issues, time horizons and limitations of the research method, are provided.

The research for this study was conducted within Cheshire Probation Area in February and March 2010. It is approved by the Area's Chief Officer.

3.2 Research Strategy- Methodological Considerations

The conceptual model demonstrates how the research question has evolved from the literature. In order to answer the question, a clear rationale for the most appropriate methodology is sought. By considering the conceptual model together with Saunders et al's (2009) research 'onion', a clear framework for the most suitable research method and strategies are found.

Saunders et al (2009) research 'onion' promotes consideration on how knowledge should be developed in order to answer the research question. Each 'layer' is discussed.

3.2.1 Philosophy

An interpretivist philosophy is adopted in this study as its critical aim is to examine the actor's interpretation of a change event and how they might 'act out their part in accordance with their interpretation' Saunders et al (2009).

The author follows a subjective ontology whilst also valuing the use of objectivity in the interpretation of the research data.

3.2.2 Approaches

A mixed methods design is taken using both deductive and inductive techniques in a questionnaire containing both structured, closed and open questions.

This approach is used as the researcher is interested in understanding if the move to Trust status impacts on operational managers' psychological contracts as well as understanding the impact of the move to Trust status on individuals within the organisation.

The use of quantitative and qualitative data also improves the validity and reliability of the study's findings (DelCampo 2007).

3.2.3 Strategy

A case study and survey method is adopted using a questionnaire with both structured and open questions. This strategy allows for collection and analysis of both quantitative data using descriptive and inferential statistics, and qualitative data, using an interpretivist deductive approach. The quantitative data is used to aid interpretation and to formulate reasons for relationships between the variables. This is supported by the qualitative data that will enable a greater level of interpretation of the findings.

3.3 Research Design - Choices

The mixed method design is selected as the most appropriate to answer the research question and will, according to Saunders et al (2009), enable triangulation of the two parent theories to take place.

3.3.1 Time Horizons

A cross-sectional approach is taken. Whilst time restraints influence the time horizon adopted, the study focuses on a contemporary change initiative and its current impact. As a consequence, a cross-sectional approach is preferred.

3.3.2 Techniques - Instrument Design and Construction

A questionnaire is chosen as the most appropriate means of collecting data. An appropriately designed questionnaire is able to incorporate a mixed methods design using both structured and open questions. Saunders et al (2009) also suggest that attitude and opinion questionnaires, enable the researcher to identify and describe the variability in different phenomenon. The questionnaire comprises a set of structured questions taken from Rousseau's Psychological Contract Inventory (2008). The questions pertaining to the employee's level of loyalty and commitment (Q 1-7) are

followed by a closed question (Q8a) asking respondents if they believe their loyalty and commitment to CPA had changed during the move to Trust status. Q8b then offers an opportunity for respondents to provide qualitative data giving examples of why their loyalty and commitment has changed.

Questions 9-15 relate to the employees perception of the organisation's loyalty and commitment to them. This is followed by a closed question (Q16a) asking respondents if they believe CPA's loyalty and commitment to them has changed during the move to Trust status. Q16b then offers an opportunity to give qualitative data asking for examples to further explain their answer.

Questions 17-19 assess the level of trust the respondent has with the organisation, and question 20a asks if they believe this level of trust has changed during the move to Trust status. To follow a similar format, Q20b provides respondents with the opportunity to express why they believe their level of trust has changed, again providing qualitative data.

These questions will allow for analysis of the quantitative data to investigate if there is any significant difference between the two groups of respondents (those who do believe there has been a change in their psychological contract, and those who don't) as detailed in Chapter 2. The qualitative data will also support the triangulation of theories.

Questions 21 relates to each respondent's level of fulfilment to CPA, and question 22 assesses each respondent's belief as to whether or not CPA has fulfilled its commitments to them.

Questions 23 and 24 elicit data as to each respondent's length in service and whether they are taking early/flexible retirement. This data will support further analysis of the independent variables and will support the analysis of correlations between the variables.

The quantitative data is collected using rating questions in a Likert scale. The Psychological Contract Inventory is a theoretically developed scale to measure transactional, relational, balanced and transitional contracts. Freeze and Schalk (2008)

point out that many measures have been developed to assess and analyse the psychological contract, however only a few have accounted for where the items they use in their questionnaires theoretically or empirically stem from. Questionnaire validity and reliability are fundamental to the research as it enables valid data to be collected on a consistent basis (Saunders et al 2009). In order to retain validity and reliability all questions contained in the Inventory are replicated in this study.

The use of both quantitative and qualitative data collection procedures within the study enables triangulation to take place (Saunders et al 2009), further supporting its validity.

3.3.3 Pilot Questionnaire

A pilot questionnaire is developed and designed using SNAP computer software. The questionnaire is designed to maximise the respondent's response rate, and the reliability and validity of the data as detailed in Saunders et al (2009) and Fisher (2007). A covering letter introducing and explaining the questionnaire is attached.

Feedback is sought and amendments made to a number of areas, including elements of the language and wording used: e.g. in question 2, the word 'quit' is removed, replacing it with 'leave', and CPA is used to identify the organisation in questions 2, 7, 9 and 10. This supports the cultural and specific work context in which the questionnaire is delivered and ensures it is meaningful to the respondent.

The open questions (Q8b, Q16b and Q20b) are found to undermine the internal validity of the questionnaire and amended to ensure the respondent's interpretations are clear.

In supporting the maximum return rate and confidence in anonymity, one demographic question is removed which identifies the gender of the respondent. This is particularly pertinent to this research as the group of respondents are predominantly female, therefore male respondents would be more easily identified.

3.4 Rejected Methods

A totally positivist approach is rejected as law-like generalisations would overly simplify the complexities of organisational behaviour.

A wholly deductive approach is not appropriate as it requires the development of an

initial theory and hypothesis which are subjected to rigorous testing (Saunders et al 2009), and is not required in this research.

A longitudinal study is rejected due to time constraints and no data having been previously collected. Secondly the research pertains to a current phenomenon and its impact which doesn't lend itself to a longitudinal study.

A mono-method of data collection techniques and analysis is rejected in favour of a mixed method approach, as a mono-method doesn't allow for both quantitative and qualitative data collection and the triangulation of the parent theories.

A pure interpretivist method of data collection is rejected in favour of a more pragmatic approach, as a purely interpretivist method doesn't allow for a number of ethical considerations pertaining to the recipients to be addressed as detailed in section 3.7.

3.5 Research Process

This research is undertaken within the organisation of CPA. Participants are all operational managers taken from a total population of 31. This population is chosen to test the research theory detailed in chapter 2. A census data collection method is adopted is this study. This is appropriate to the research strategy, methods and purpose.

3.5.1 Data Collection

Data is collected using a self administered questionnaire. A final version of the questionnaire is developed from the pilot and distributed by post to each respondent. (Appendix 1)

To maximise the response rate and support anonymity, the questionnaire is sent to the recipient's work address, marked 'addressee only'. A self addressed and postage paid return envelope is included marked 'private and confidential, to be opened by addressee only'. A return by date is clearly marked on the questionnaire.

A follow up email is sent two weeks later to all potential respondents thanking those who have replied and encouraging those who have not, including a final reply by date.
All returned questionnaires are opened by the author and envelopes that might contain information identifying the recipient's location, discarded.

Collected data is securely stored to maintain confidentiality and input into computerised survey software, SNAP, Microsoft Excel and SPSS.

3.6 Data Analysis

The quantitative data collected from the questionnaire is coded (Appendix 2) and analysed using SPSS.

When selecting the most relevant statistical analysis tools to use within the study, the researcher initially determined whether the data is nominal, ordinal or numerical. Following this, dependent and independent variables were identified. As noted by Fink (2003), the choice of method for analysing survey data, is dependent on the type of data available and the number of dependent and independent variables involved.

The data is split between those respondents who believe there has been a change in their level of commitment, loyalty or trust during the move to Trust status (Group 1), and those respondents who believe there has been no change (Group 2). This will enable a greater level of analysis from which conclusions will be drawn and related to the literature in chapter 2. Excel is used to illustrate responses using bar charts.

Chi square is the most appropriate means of analysing ranked ordinal data from two groups in order to determine if there are any significant differences between the groups (Saunders et al 2009). However the small number of respondents in group 1 means that the Mann -Whitney U test is used.

The mean frequencies are plotted to identify the nature of the respondents' psychological contracts and the profiles are plotted using radar charts. Excel is used to illustrate responses in Chapter 4.

Data collected from the questionnaire and analysed through SPSS consisted largely of ordinal data, dependent and independent variables. To appropriately analyse this data, Spearman's correlation coefficient is used to analyse the strength of relationships between the variables.

Qualitative data is transcribed and analysed by themes and relationships in a deductive approach (Saunders et al 2009), (Appendix 4).

All findings are related to the literature detailed in chapter 2 and detailed in Chapter 4.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

A number of ethical considerations are made. Firstly, agreement was sought from the Area's Chief Officer to undertake this research. The context of the research is current and ongoing. It involves the downsizing and de-layering of staff who are the recipients of this research as well as those who remain.

Significant consideration is given to the anonymity of individuals, particularly given the small number of staff to which it relates. The questionnaire is designed to protect individual identification whilst still retaining sufficient data on which to analyse potential relationships. Administration of the questionnaire is designed to maximise anonymity, and support the voluntary nature of their contribution.

The feedback and amendments to the questionnaire from the pilot study further support the ethics of the research. Confidentiality is assured in the introduction letter as is the fact that no individual will be identified in the results.

Consideration is also given to the methods used to collect the data. Whilst a purely interpretivist research philosophy supports an in-depth qualitative investigation, a mixed methods approach is used with a self administered questionnaire. This method will enable a more pragmatic approach in which recipients are able to contribute to the research in a more detached manner, secure that their anonymity and confidentiality is upheld and that any effects of a power differential are minimised.

This methodology is also supportive of the author's role, being an operational manager that is also subject to the downsizing change initiative and the implicit issues associated with researcher subjectivity.

3.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter details the research strategy, including its philosophy, design and processes used. It outlines the rejected methods and the reasons for this together with the ethical considerations made.

CHAPTER 4. RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the research, including the quantative data drawn from the structured questions and qualitative data from the open ended questions within the questionnaire.

The findings from the structured and closed questions relate to the respondents' psychological contracts and are deduced using the analytical methods described in section 3.6. The calculated results are described and illustrated using appropriate tables and charts.

The findings from the open ended questions are analysed according to themes and expressed using descriptive analysis and direct quotes where appropriate.

4.2 Analysis of Research Participants and non-participants

A total of 31 questionnaires were distributed to the quota sample with 22 returned. This represents a 71% return rate. All respondents are operational managers within CPA.

4.3 Data from the Closed Questions in the Structured Questionnaire

Chart 1 shows the number of respondents who answered Q8a –"Do you believe your level of loyalty and commitment to CPA has changed during the move to Trust status?"

Group 1 (N= 4) represents those operational managers who said their loyalty and commitment to CPA had changed during the move to Trust status. Group 2 (N=18) represents those operational managers who said there had been no change.

Chart 1

A bar chart to show the respondents' answers to Q8a

(Yes: 4, No: 18)
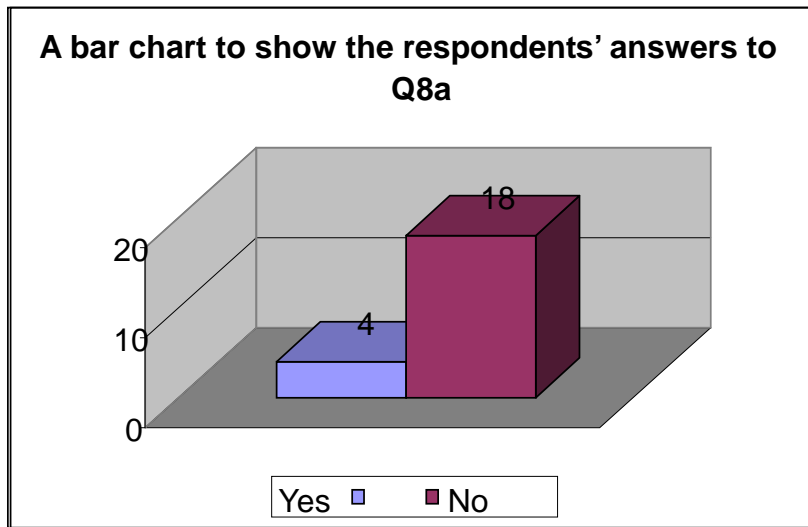
Chart 2 shows the number of respondents who answered Q16a –"Do you believe CPA's level of loyalty and commitment to you has changed during the move to Trust status?"

Chart 2

A bar chart to show the respondents' answers to Q16a

(Yes: 6, No: 16)
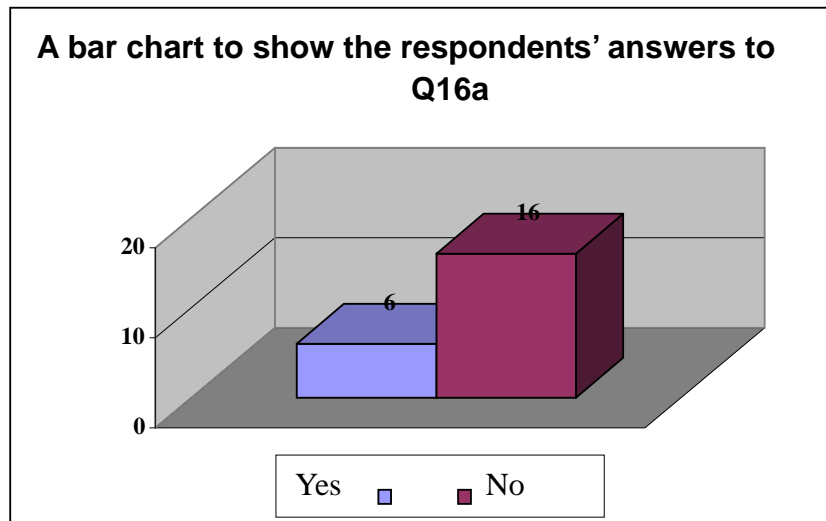
Group 1 (N=6) represents those operational managers who said they believed CPA's level of loyalty and commitment to them had changed during the move to Trust status. Group 2 (N=16) believed there had been no change.

Chart 3 shows the number of respondents who answered Q20a – "Do you believe your level of trust in CPA has changed during the move to Trust status?" Group 1 (N=5)

represents those operational managers who believe that their level of trust in CPA has changed during the move to Trust status. Group 2 (N=17) believe that there has been no change.

Chart 3

A bar chart to show the respondents' answers to Q20a
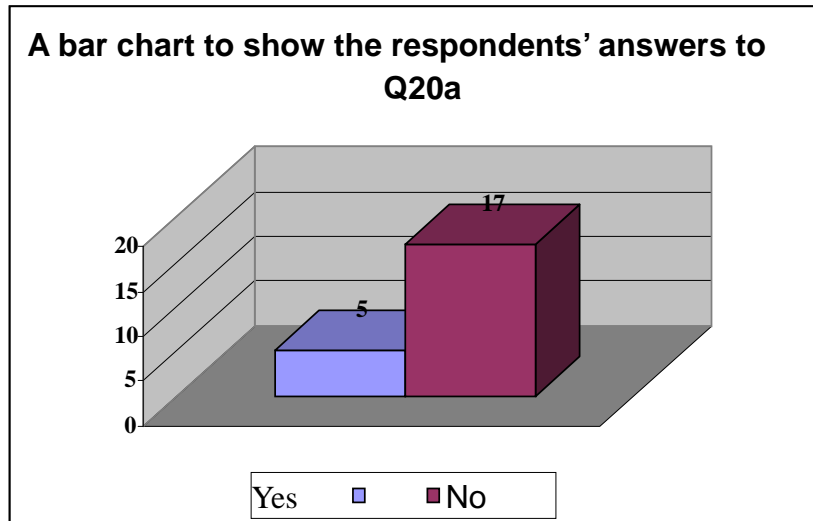
4.4 Demographic Data

Chart 4 shows the length of service of all respondents (N=22).The results show that the largest population of respondents have worked for CPA for 1-10 years.

Chart 4

A bar chart to show the length of service of all respondents

Chart 5 shows the length in service of the respondents who answered Q8a. It illustrates that of those respondents who answered "Yes, they thought their level of loyalty and commitment to CPA had changed", two had worked for the Service for 1-10 years, one for 11-19years and one for 20+ years. Of the respondents who answered that they did *not* believe their level of loyalty and commitment to CPA had changed, the majority had worked for CPA for up to 10 years, with three working for 20years+.

Chart 5

A bar chart to show the years in service of respondents' who answered Q8a
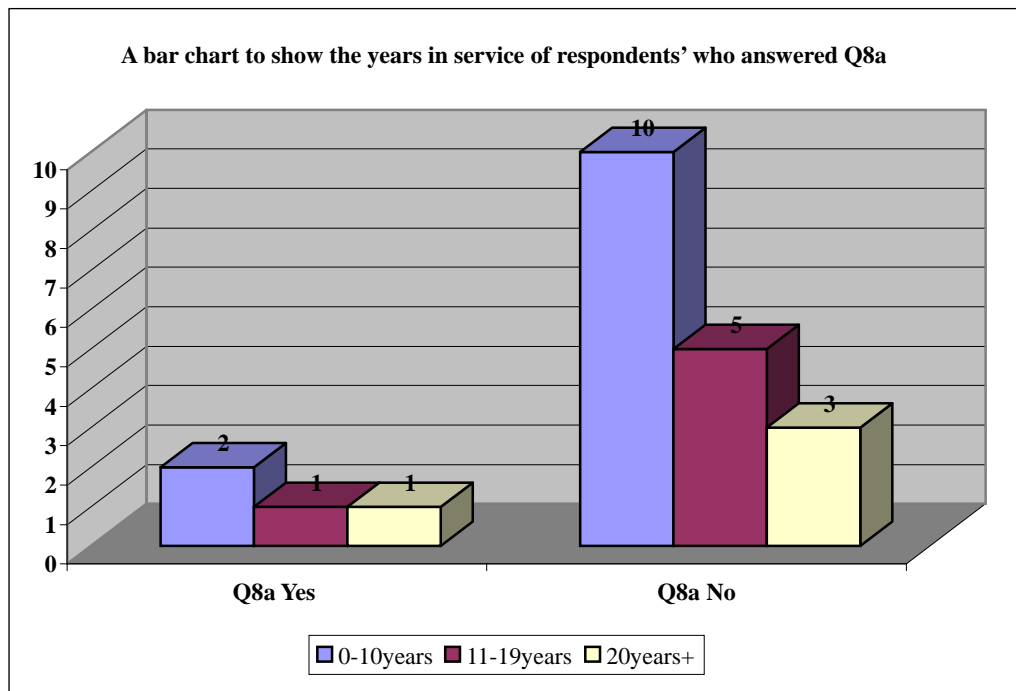
Chart 6 shows the length in service of respondents who answered Q16a. It illustrates that of those respondents who answered that they *did* believe that CPA's level of loyalty and commitment had changed, four had worked for CPA for up to 10 years, with one respondent working for 20years+. Of the respondents who answered that they did *not* believe CPA's level of loyalty and commitment had changed, eight had worked for CPA for up to 10 years, five for 11-19years and three for 20years+.

Chart 6

A bar chart to show the years in service of respondents' who answered Q16a

Legend: 1-10years, 11-19years, 20+years
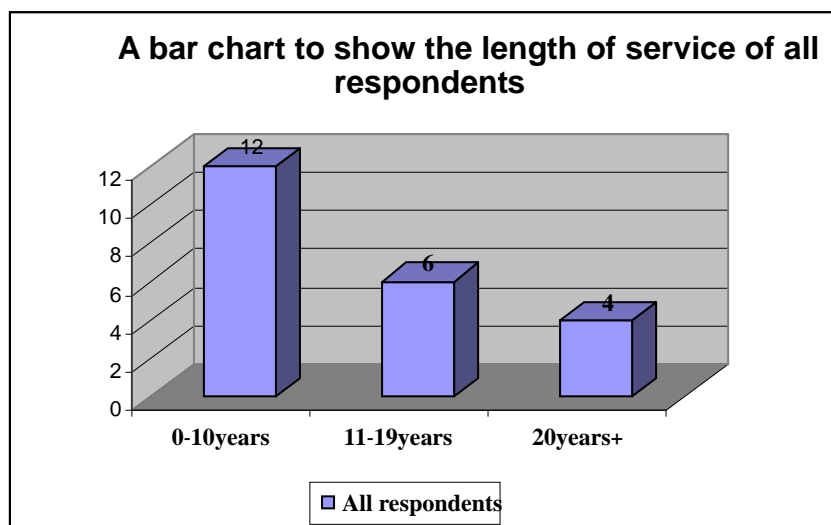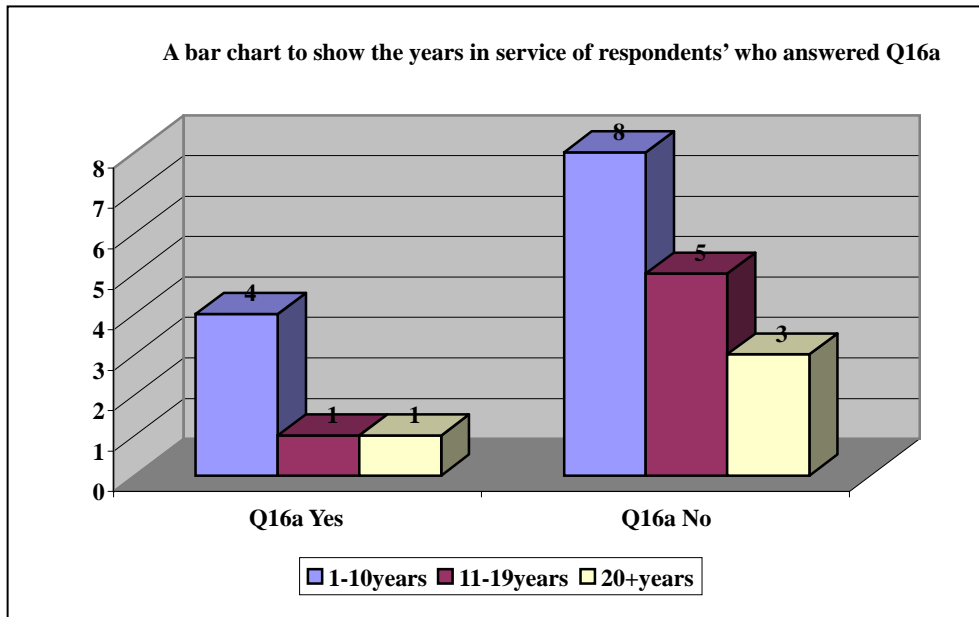
Chart 7 shows the length in service of the respondents who answered Q20a. It illustrates that, of those respondents who said that they did believe their level of trust in CPA has changed during the move to Trust status, one has worked for CPA for 1-10 years, two for 11-19years and two for 20years+. Of those respondents who said that they did not believe their level of trust had changed, eleven have worked for CPA for 1-10years, four for 11-19years and two for 20years+.

Chart 7

A bar chart to show the years in service of respondent's who answered Q20a

Legend: 1-10years, 11-19years, 20+years
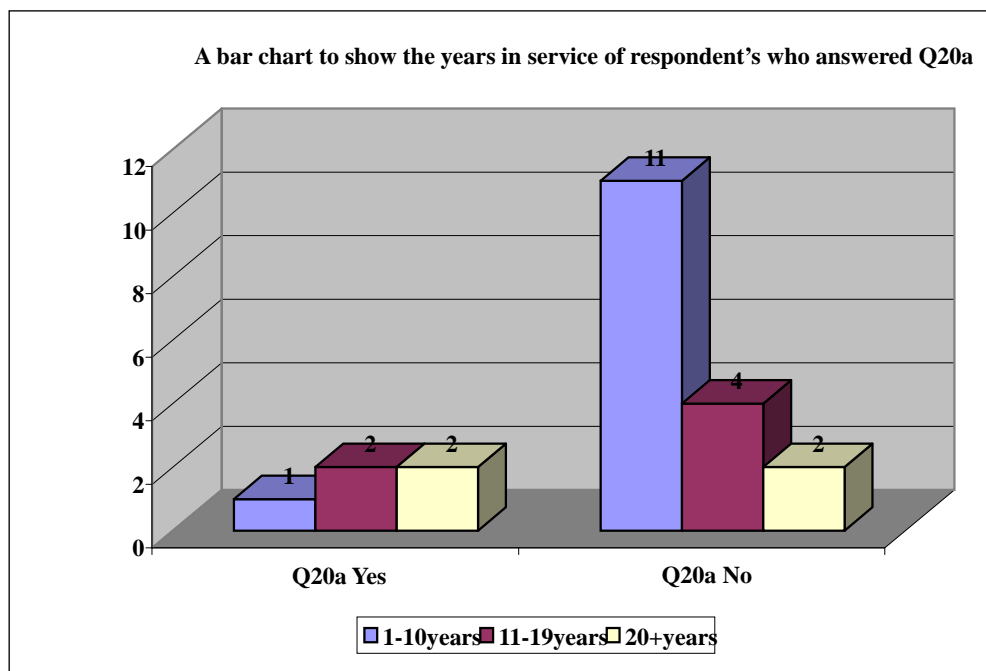
4.5 Psychological Contract Inventory Data

Data is gathered on the respondents' beliefs pertaining to a range of work related issues using a 5 point Likert scale ranging from 'not at all' (1) to 'to a great extent' (5). The results to each of the questions 1-7, 9-15 and 17-19 are totalled and coded.

Data is missing from Q's 1-4 in respect to two respondents and from Q9 from one respondent. Missing data is coded accordingly as '0'.

The data is then split between group1- those who believe there has been a change in their level of loyalty, commitment and trust during the move to Trust status, and group 2- those respondents who believe there has been no change. A Mann-Whitney U test is conducted to analyse whether there is a significant difference between the groups. The likelihood of any difference between the two groups occurring by change alone is calculated, and a significant difference, as proposed by Saunders et al (2007) is calculated at the .05 level.

Questions 1-7 measure the respondents' beliefs in their level of loyalty and commitment to CPA in a number of difference aspects. Results from Q1 that measures respondents' beliefs in their loyalty, found no significant difference between the groups ($p = .646$, $p > .05$). The scores for group1 range from 10-19, and for group 2 from 12-20.

Results from Q2 that measures short term obligations found no significant difference between groups ($p = .471$, $p > .05$). The scores for group 1 range from 7-8, indicating a very narrow set of scores, and for group 2 from 4-16, a much wider range. Q3 measures the narrowness of tasks and duties, and found no significant difference between the groups ($p = .262$, $p > .05$). Group 1 all score a total of 4. In group 2 the scores range from 4-7 with the mean being 4.

Q4 measures dynamic performance requirements, and found no significant difference between the groups ($p = .814$, $p > .05$). Scores for group 1 range from 12-15, and for group 2 from 9-15. Q5 measures internal career development. A significant difference between groups is not found ($p = .053$, $p > .05$), however this is very close to a level of significance which is of interest to the author. Scores for group 1 range from 10-14, and for group 2 from 11-20.

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Results from Q6 that measures external career development, found no significant difference ($p= .538$, $p > .05$). Scores for group 1 range from 4-11 and for group 2 from 4-13. Results from Q7 that measures security in terms of whether the respondent believes they expect to remain with CPA, found no significant difference between groups ($p= .837$, $p> .05$). Scores for group 1 range from 6-18, and for group 2 from 5-20, a far wider range of scores but with a similar mean (14 in group 1 and 15 in group 2).

Questions 9-16 assess the respondents' beliefs as to CPA's level of loyalty and commitment to them under the same aspects as above.

Q's 9 to 14 found no significant difference between the groups (See Appendix 3 for full results)

Q15 did however find a significant difference between the groups' responses, with ($P = .008$, $p< .05$) (1-tailed). Question 15 relates to the respondents' beliefs in the level of security CPA provides for them. Scores for group 1 range from 7-16 and for group 2 from 11-20.

Questions 17-19 relate to the respondents' beliefs in the level of trust they have in CPA and the level of trust CPA presents to the respondents.

Q's 17 and 18 showed no significant difference between the groups (Appendix 3), however, whilst Q19 also shows no significant difference, there is some interest in the result which falls close to the significance level ($p= 0.62$, $p > .05$). Q19 relates to the level of erosion of benefits and quality of work in the employment relationship. Scores for group 1 range from 9-18 and for group 2 from 4-18.

Rousseau's analysis of results includes the use of principle factor analysis (1995). This provides an assessment of the specific factors relating to the psychological contract. However, due to the small sample size in this research, an alternative analysis tool is used. To support the interpretation of respondents' overall psychological contracts, the mean frequency of respondents' answers is calculated and a profile of their psychological contracts is illustrated in a radar chart. Chart 8 illustrates the psychological contract of those respondents who believe their level of loyalty,

commitment and trust has changed during the move to Trust status. The two lines illustrate the respondents' (employee) perceptions of *their* contracts with CPA, and the respondents' belief as to *CPA's* (employer) contract with them. Chart 9 presents a profile of those respondents who do not believe there has been any change to their level of loyalty, commitment and trust. The two illustrated lines again refer to the respondents' beliefs as to *their* (employee) loyalty, commitment and trust in CPA, and their view of *CPA's* (employer) contract.

Chart 8
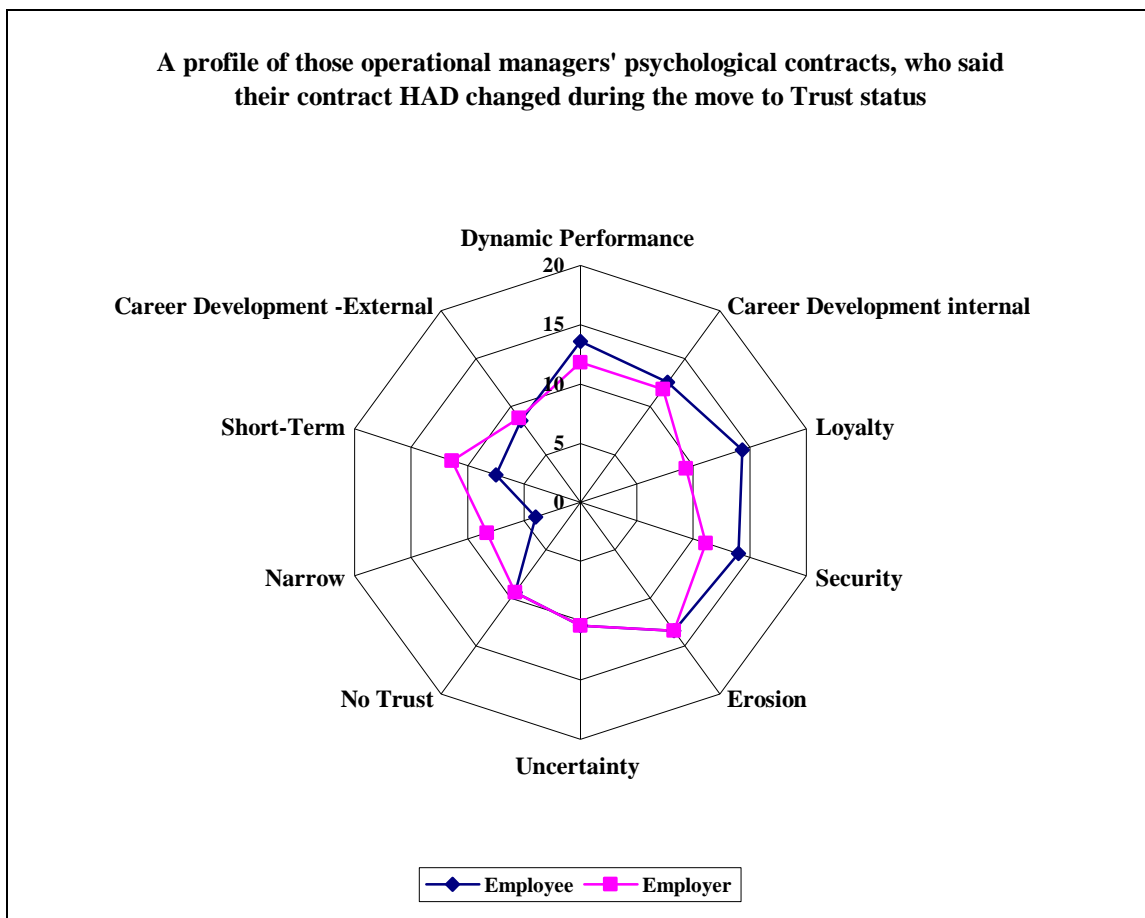
Whilst little statistically valid difference is found between the groups, the radar charts illustrate the different profiles of the groups and, in particular, the sole significant difference between the levels of security (Q15) felt by the two groups which are clearly evident.

The differences in responses to Q19, whilst not statistically significant, are illustrated well in the radar charts. It shows the greater level of erosion felt by those respondents in

group 1 who believe their psychological contract has changed.

Chart 8 also illustrates that respondents feel a greater level of uncertainty regarding their future with CPA, and less trust in CPA. Group 1 respondents also show a more short term and transactional relationship with CPA.

Chart 9

A profile of those operational managers' psychological contracts, who said their contract HAD NOT changed during the move to Trust status
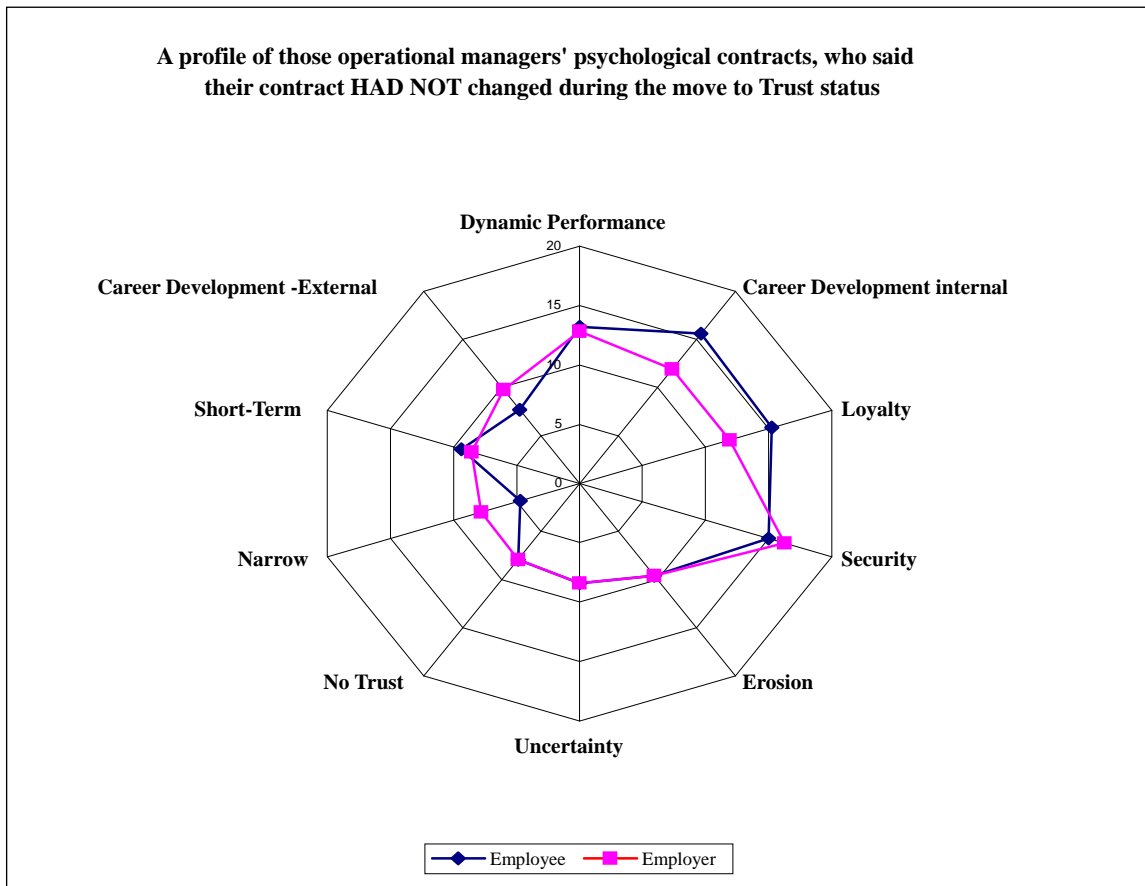
There are also some similarities between the groups that are evident from the two charts. Both groups believe they provide a greater level of loyalty to CPA than it gives to them.

For group 1, who believe their loyalty, commitment and trust has changed, it can be seen that these respondents have a greater level of willingness to perform dynamically for the benefit of the organisation. A low level of external career development is experienced by all respondents and those in group 2, who do not believe their psychological contract has changed, believe they have a greater level of internal career development than those in group1. Internal career development is assessed in Q5 which measured close to a statistically significant difference.

Finally it is very evident that all respondents score low on the narrow scale. This measures the level of fixed or set duties that respondents believe they perform, or that they do only what they are paid to do.

4.6 Job Fulfilment

In terms of job fulfilment, the questions in Q21 relate to how well the respondent believes they have fulfilled their commitment and promises to CPA and Q22 relates to how the respondent believes CPA has fulfilled its promises and commitments to them.

A significant difference was found between groups 1 and 2 in relation to their belief as to whether CPA fulfils its commitments to them ($p = .026, p < .05$) (1-tailed). No further significant difference is found pertaining to whether respondents either believe they fulfil their commitment to CPA ($p = .386, p > .05$), or whether respondents fulfil their promises to CPA ($p = .386, p > .05$), or whether CPA fulfils its promises to the respondent ($p = .227, p > .05$).

4.7 Early or Flexible Retirement

Question 24 asks respondents if they opted for early or flexible retirement. A Mann-Whitney U Test is conducted to assess for difference in answers between those in groups 1 and 2 who answered Q8a and Q16a relating to loyalty and commitment and Q20a relating to trust. A significant difference is found between those respondents who believe their level of trust in CPA has changed during the move to Trust status (Q20a) ($p = .007, p < .05$).

4.8 Correlation

A Spearman's rank correlation coefficient is used to assess the strength of relationship between the variables. This is the most appropriate method for assessing relationships with ranked data (Saunders et al 2009).

In relation to respondents' level of commitment and loyalty to CPA and:-
1. Whether they took early or flexible retirement, no significant relationship is found ($p = .356, p > .05$) (1-tailed). However, a strong positive correlation coefficient is evident (.083).

2. In relation to their length in service, no significant relationship is found ($p = 0.392$, *p>.05*) (1-tailed)

In relation to respondents' beliefs as to CPA's level of loyalty and commitment to them and:-

1. Whether they took early or flexible retirement, no significant correlation is found (*p=.458*, *p> .05*) (1-tailed).

2. In relation to their length in service no significant correlation is found ($p = .290$, *p> .05*) (1-tailed)

Finally in relation to respondents' level of trust in CPA and:-

1. Taking early or flexible retirement, a positive significant correlation is found (*p=.002*, p< .01) (1-tailed). The strength of this correlation is 'moderate' (Coolican 1995), and taken together reduces the chance of a type 1 error.

2. In relation to their length in service a positive correlation is found at the 0.05 level (*p=.033*, *p< .05*) (1-tailed).

4.9 Qualitative Data

Qualitative data is gathered in relation to three specific areas. 1. Respondents' beliefs about their loyalty and commitment to CPA, 2. Respondents' beliefs of CPA's commitment and loyalty to then, and 3. Respondents' beliefs in the level of trust they have in CPA. Responses are themed to establish patterns and relationships within the data (Appendix 4).

Of the fourteen responses relating to respondent's beliefs pertaining to their level of loyalty and commitment to CPA, seven stated that they felt there has been no change. One commented "I have not noticed any change in my loyalty. I believe it is a good service. I am happy in my current role and remain committed". Another respondent commentated that "Trust status has not altered the people I manage or those to whom I am directly responsible/accountable to - that is what commands my loyalty".

Three respondents relate their beliefs to the process of downsizing and de-layering. One commented "Manager's posts are clearly dispensable and the Area has made it obvious that they have no obligation to retain staff at an individual/personal level. This has resulted in me feeling less attached/committed personally to the organisation". In

contrast another respondent commented, "The threat of being made redundant or taken over by another Area increased my commitment to CPA".

One respondent commented on the procedure used to determine potential redundancies not being equitable which affected their loyalty, whilst another focused on the impact of moving to Trust status being the responsibility of the Government rather than of CPA itself.

In relation to the second area of respondents' beliefs about CPA's level of loyalty and commitment to then, a total of eleven responses are made. Two believe there has been no change, whilst four make comments relating to downsizing and de-layering. One stated "Job security is no longer promised and reduces my belief in the Area's loyalty to me". Another responded that "They have demanded a higher performance without the input of resources. More pressure to deliver on targets and performance without the realignment of other responsibilities". One concern was raised as to the procedures used by CPA to determine redundancies and, whilst no responses relate to the role of the Government, two comments relate to beliefs that the Service is becoming more distant, and "blind to the individual".

The final area relating to respondents' beliefs in their level of trust in CPA, collected seven responses. Three are concerned with the impact of downsizing, with one commenting that "Trust assumes there will be a relationship in the future –as this is not the case then the level of trust has inevitably altered." Two respondents felt it was too early to comment or that there had been no change, whilst one makes reference that the issue of moving to Trust status is being created by the Government - "The changes are not down to the specific Area but…have been forced and driven by central government. CPA has responded to this in a positive and pro active manner".

One final opportunity is given to respondents to make any further comments regarding their psychological contract and the Area's move to Trust status. The one response focused on the fact that they believe it is not the move to Trust status that is affecting the relationship between the service and its employees, but the reversal of 30 years of growth, "The organisation enjoyed a culture of positive staff focus and development...Put the removal of the cash together with the development of a potentially centralised muddle and the current reactions were entirely predictable".

4.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the findings of the research, including the quantitative data from the structured questionnaire and closed questions, and the qualitative data from the open questions. The data is analysed using appropriate statistical analysis tools including the Mann-Whitney U test to analysis differences between groups, and the Spearman's correlation coefficient to identify the strength and direction of relationships between dependent variables for the whole group. Descriptive statistics such as means and ranges were also used to interpret the data.

Qualitative data is analysed according to themes and presented with direct quotes.

The findings illustrated in this chapter allow for suitable conclusions to be drawn. The conclusions and implications of the findings are presented in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5. SUMMARY

5.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses the findings from the research and draws conclusions based on the results. It includes their place in the body of the knowledge outlined in chapter 2. A critical evaluation of the adopted approach is made, limitations of the study are addressed and opportunities for future research are made. Finally recommendations are provided with regard to CPA's move to Trust status.

5.2 Critique of the Adopted Approach

The study's methodology was initially developed by considering each layer of Saunders et al (2007) research 'onion' model. The model provided a clear framework for selecting appropriate research strategies and methods capable of answering the research question and aims.

An interpretivist philosophy was deemed appropriate for this study. An interpretive philosophy emphasises the necessity for the researcher to appreciate variations between humans and their interpretation of their social role, and was certainly appropriate to support the interpretation of the qualitative data. Due to the changes made to the analysis of the psychological contract, this method was also used to support the evaluation of aspects of the quantitative data and develop the profiles of operational managers' psychological contracts illustrated in charts 8 and 9. However, the value of objectivity in the interpretation of research data was also recognised and a positivist element was therefore used to statistically analyse the quantitative data and further support the research findings.

A mixed methods design was employed, using both deductive and inductive techniques in a questionnaire which asked structured, closed and open questions. Both quantitative and qualitative data was gathered which supported the analysis and interpretation of the data and improves the validity and reliability of the study's findings (Del Campo 2007). The use of a survey method enabled data to be gathered efficiently and effectively from the census sample to answer the research question.

In general the survey method used in this research was successful with 71% of potential

respondents completing the questionnaire. However there is still some room for improvement. Despite the pilot questionnaire being amended as detailed in 3.3.3, questions 1-4 were not answered by two respondents, and one further question (Q9) was left blank by another respondent. Whilst it is not possible to establish the reason for Q9 not being answered, Q's 1-4 were placed on the reverse of the front page of the questionnaire, and may not have been seen. This was the only aspect of the questionnaire that did not follow the recommendations of Saunders et al (2007) on questionnaire design which suggests that a questionnaire should be printed on one side of each page.

The initial analysis of data used appropriate methods to establish differences between the respondents' answers, which led to further analysis of the two established groups. However a further analysis of respondents' overall psychological contracts was somewhat restricted due to the sample size. The review of literature led the researcher to focus on the role of operational managers at a time of significant organisational change. Data was therefore gathered from this specific sample group (N=31) with 22 respondents completing the questionnaire. Whilst the original research on psychological contracts was conducted on large samples using factor analysis tools, it was not appropriate for this research. Therefore an alternative non-parametric method was used. Whilst interpretations are made of the overall 'profiles', the interpretation may not be fully representative of Rousseau's psychological contract, as it is founded on data analysis that is not used within Rousseau's original literature (1995). However, the method of analysis used within this research has been replicated by Guest and Conway (2002) who also used mean scores across the items to measure the psychological contract.

It is also apparent from the qualitative data detailed in 4.9 that a number of respondents felt it was too soon to assess the full impact on their role of moving to Trust status. This indicates that a longitudinal study may have gathered data that would have enabled the researcher to answer the research question with more accuracy and rigour. However a cross sectional approach was taken, partly due to time restraints but also because the study focused on a contemporary change initiative and its current impact.

5.3 Analysis of Findings for Each Research Aim

The following research aims were initially reported to answer the research question:-

Aim 1. To examine current theory and research on the psychological contract.

Aim 2. To examine the current theory and research relating to change management, and in particular the role of operational managers during a time of significant organisational change.

Aim 3. To investigate and evaluate the nature of operational managers' psychological contracts during a time of significant organisational change.

Aim 4. To investigate the potential impact of this on CPA's move to Trust status, comparing the research findings to theory.

Aim 5. To make recommendations to support the management of the Area's move to Trust status.

Aims 1and 2 have been addressed within the literature review and detailed in chapter 2. The reviewed literature allowed for a theoretical foundation on which this research was founded. A conceptual model was established that drew together the key elements of change management and the psychological contract in order to answer the research question.

Research aim 3, which addressed the nature of operational managers' psychological contracts during a time of significant organisation change, is answered in chapter 4. The questionnaire described in chapter 3 was used to explore key themes drawn from the conceptual model. The evaluation of operational managers' psychological contracts is discussed below.

5.3.1 The Psychological Contract

The initial findings showed that a majority of the respondents believed that their psychological contract had not changed during the move to Trust status.

5.3.2 Loyalty and Commitment

In relation to the respondents' level of loyalty and commitment, four of the twenty two believed this had changed, and six respondents believed CPA's level of loyalty and commitment to them had changed. This was not a significant number and overall doesn't support the literature that suggests that employees may feel a decreased amount of loyalty and commitment during a time of significant organisational change (Mowday et al 1979, Guzzo et al 1994, Rousseau 1995, and Van den Heuvel and Schalk 2009).

However it does support Willems et al (2004) who found that those working in public sector organisations had strong and loyal psychological contracts and, if Balogun's (2003) assertions are correct, i.e that operational managers do hold a pivotal role at times of change, then this may have considerable implications in relation to the management of change within the public sector as opposed to private sector organisations.

5.3.3 Trust

The issue of trust elicited a number of responses in this research. A significant difference was found between those who did and did not believe their level of trust in CPA had changed, and whether or not they opted for early or flexible retirement. This indicates that those who believed their level of trust in CPA had changed were more likely to opt for early or flexible retirement.

This is further supported by the significant positive relationship that was also found between respondents' levels of trust and whether early or flexible retirement was taken. This would indicate that a change in the level of trust is more likely to lead to an intention to quit than a change in loyalty or commitment. These findings clearly support the research that suggests that trust plays a significant role in the subjective experience of the psychological contract (Cassar 2000), and supports Rousseau's (1995) findings that a breach of psychological contract is linked to an employee's 'intention to quit'. What is also evident is that as a consequence, the majority of operational managers who remain, have a level of trust in CPA that has been unaffected by the move to Trust status.

In addition, a significant positive relationship was also found between trust and the length of a respondent's service. This indicates that those respondents, who believe their level of trust in CPA has changed, have worked for the organisation for a greater number of years than those who do not believe their level of trust in the organisation has changed. These results support the literature that suggests that 'newcomers' to an organisation describe their contract as much more aligned with that of the senior management, whereas those who have been in the organisation for longer, may gauge their views in terms of their previously established contract (Rousseau 1995).

5.3.4 Job Satisfaction

Further analysis of the two groups found a significant difference in relation to their beliefs as to whether CPA fulfils its commitments to them. This indicates that, for those who did believe their psychological contract had changed during the move to Trust status, are left feeling that CPA has not fulfilled its commitments to them and are therefore less fulfilled in their job. This supports Robinson and Rousseau (1994), Turnley and Feldman (1998) and Tekleab et al (2005), cited in Van de Heuvel and Schalk (2009) who found that, for those who experience a discretion between what is promised and what is expected, a major source of dissatisfaction is created. As a result, it is argued that this can lead to a stronger intention to quit by the employee, although no significant relationship was found between this group of respondents and whether they had opted for early or flexible retirement. However the scope of this research did not examine whether, as Hall (2008) and Bellou (2006) contend, the personal circumstances of those individuals meant that they were not in a position to leave their employment in any case.

According to Van den Heuvel and Schalk (2009), this lack of fulfilment from the organisation felt by employees has a significant relationship with resistance to organisational change, and that by building trust an organisation could prevent such resistance. They do go on to suggest however, that many organisations are not aware of the content of their employees' psychological contracts and, as such, are not able to predict how the changes affect them or whether some critical aspects of the psychological contract have been violated.

5.3.5 Overall Profile of Operational Managers' Psychological Contracts

Results in relation to the overall profiles of respondents' psychological contracts showed one significant difference between groups, which was their perception of the level of security CPA offers. This indicates that those who believe their level of loyalty, commitment and trust in CPA has changed during the move to Trust status have a perception that CPA offers them less security than those who believe there has been no change. It can be argued that the impact of the downsizing and de-layering which has taken place within CPA will have impacted on this belief as traditionally, public service organisations have offered very stable and secure employment. These findings support those of Cassar (2000) who contends that this is due to the public sector being regarded

as one of the most job-protected environments in which rigid formal structures have often served to keep 'modern' management practices at bay.

Job security is a fundamental aspect of a relational psychological contract, and these results therefore indicate that those who believe there has been a change to their psychological contract have also experienced a reduction in their relational contract with CPA. Indeed Hall (2008) points to downsizing as having an impact on job security resulting in a shift from a relational psychological contract to a transactional one.

Loyalty is also fundamental to a relational psychological contract, and whilst the results do not show a statistically significant difference between the groups, charts 8 and 9 do illustrate that all respondents believe they provide a greater level of loyalty to CPA than it provides to them. This would indicate that overall, respondents believe they have a stronger relational psychological contract with CPA than it has with them. This view concurs with that of other studies of the psychological contract within public sector organisations, in which a strong relational contract is still evident (Wooldridge 2001), and with Porter et al (2003) who argue that in such situations employees create a greater zone of acceptance, being willing to accommodate the needs expressed by the employer. Indeed the outcome of Litwienko and Cooper's (1995) study of health service workers during a move to Trust status showed that, despite making changes that cut across the traditional beliefs and expectations of the workers, their results did not show a negative outcome for the organisation. This may reflect a higher commitment to their work. Alternatively they suggest that employees may have had no choice but to remain in work because of reduced job opportunities within an insecure economy.

The three elements comprising 'dynamic performance', 'internal' and 'external career development', focus on the extent to which the psychological contract is balanced, where employees adapt to changing performance targets and the demands of the organisation at the same time as being provided with opportunities for both internal and external career development. What is apparent in these results is that external career development is extremely low in both group's responses, indicating that respondents do not seek, or are not provided with, significant opportunities to develop skills pertinent to other employment opportunities. This may be due to the relatively 'closed' environment of the Probation Service, in which Probation Officers and many managerial posts require a specific probation qualification, and therefore opportunities to work outside of

the Service are not advanced. However the underlying reasons for these findings are not addressed within the scope of this research.

In terms of 'internal career development', the results showed that, whilst not being statistically significant ($p=$ .053), there was a difference between the groups, with group 2 believing they have greater opportunities to develop skills relevant to CPA, and that CPA is more committed to creating employee career development within the organisation. This may relate to the fact that respondents whose psychological contract has not been affected by the move to Trust status, have a more long term vision of their career development in CPA than those whose psychological contract has been affected. As suggested by Cassar (2000), a move to more 'modern' management practices, can disrupt the traditional employment relationship that includes the aspect of job advancement in exchange for loyalty, respect and trust.

The 'short-term' and 'narrow' elements of the psychological contract assessment relate to the transactional part of a contract. Results indicate that there is no significant difference between the groups in this respect although those in group 1 believe CPA's relationship is now more short term, offering employment only in the short term and making few commitments for the future. Again this is an indication that those who feel their psychological contract has changed, also believe that CPA is less able to provide long term employment in the future and therefore it has a more transactional contract with its employees. However, this is counteracted by the very low 'narrow' scores of all respondents which shows that operational managers do not perform only a fixed set of duties, or do only what they are paid to do, and that CPA does not only offer a limited involvement for managers in the organisation. This is perhaps indicative of the role of operational managers within the public sector, and of the impact of downsizing and de-layering within CPA associated with job-creep (Wellin 2007).

The results relating to a transitional psychological contract show that there was no significant difference between groups in relation to 'no trust' or 'uncertainty' but, whilst not being statistically significant ($p=$.62) there was some difference in relation to 'erosion'. Erosion relates to employees expectations for the future, in that they expect to receive fewer returns, and that CPA intends to institute organisational changes which reduce financial rewards and benefits, ultimately eroding an employee's quality of life. This was one of the highest scoring areas for those operational managers in group 1 who

believe their psychological contract has changed during the move to Trust status. This is perhaps not surprising, given that CPA is undergoing significant changes in relation to downsizing and, with reduced resources, it creates an uncertainty for the future. As Devine et al, cited in Redman and Wilkinson (2006) suggest, downsizing can have a negative impact on an employee's morale, motivation and loyalty to the organisation, with 'survivors' also feeling less in control having witnessed lay-off's, not knowing if they may be the next to go. Whilst it is also suggested that this can demoralise both managers and the workforce, the results from this research indicate that, if taken as a whole, the elements relating to a transitional psychological contract were not significantly evident.

What was also seen as crucial in the initial literature review and informed the intrinsic construction of the conceptual model, was the operational manager's interpretation of the change initiative which, it is suggested, will inform their actions and ultimately impact on the outcomes of the organisational change (Balogun 2003). This can be seen more clearly from the qualitative data. A significant number of respondents believed that there had been no change to their contract, or that the changes being experienced in CPA were not due to CPA itself but due to the Government's change agenda and its demand that all Areas move to Trust status. However what is interesting about this belief is that it is not the government who has dictated *how* the move to Trust status should be managed, but the Area's senior managers and the Board. These perceptions of the change initiative are therefore somewhat misinterpreted but have created a stronger sense of loyalty and commitment to CPA as a result. The findings also support Arnold (2005) who suggests that, if it is felt that the breach is not the employer's fault or intention, then the impact on the employee's loyalty is likely to be small.

The perceptions of a strong relational psychological contract are however modified by those relating to downsizing and de-layering. Several respondents commented on the impact of a lack of job security, a reduced workforce and the increased level of work that would be a consequence. The procedures that were used by CPA to determine redundancies were also commented on as not being fair or equitable. Indeed, the benefits for the organisation of demonstrating fairness in the downsizing process is seen by Brockner et al (1994) and Cropanzano and Prehar (2001) cited in Van de Ven to produce a greater level of survivor commitment, which is a significant aspect of the psychological contract that can be seen to affect an individual's behaviour within the

organisation (Van den Heuvel an Schalk 2009).

5.3.6 Change Management

Aim 4 of this research was to investigate the impact of the research results on CPA's move to Trust status.

It is evident from this research that the majority of operational managers who took part in this study, did not believe their psychological contract had changed during the move to Trust status. For those who did, some have opted for early or flexible retirement and, of those who remain, the majority believe their level of commitment, loyalty and trust in CPA has been unaffected by the move to Trust status. In terms of the management of change, these findings indicate a number of important issues.

Firstly, in relation to those operational managers who are leaving the organisation, many have worked within CPA for more than twenty years. The issue of trust in the organisation has clearly had a significant impact on these individuals and as a consequence, the Area will suffer a loss of knowledge and experience with their departure that will not be easily replaced.

The majority of operational managers who remain believe they are loyal and committed to CPA. The scope of this research has not extended to investigating the reasons behind this, however what is evident is that, in relation to managing the move to Trust status, the impact of the changes associated with downsizing and de-layering have not adversely affected the majority of operational managers. This runs counter to other research findings that link the negative impact of organisational change on operational managers' psychological contracts and consequently to the organisation's ability to effectively implement change (Rousseau, 1995, Hallier and James 1997, Balogun, 2003, Cameron and Green 2004).

Given Arnold et al (1998), Tierey (1999) and Wellin's (2007) focus on the crucial role operational managers play in shaping the attitudes of staff, the findings of this research indicate that, in achieving organisational goals, the majority of operational managers within CPA are committed to the organisation and the changes being implemented. In line with the change management research therefore, it is unlikely that their behaviour would jeopardise the organisation's outcomes through their messages to staff.

Whilst this maybe the case for the operational managers as a whole, it could also be argued that, for those individual operational managers who believed their psychological contract had changed and who still remain in the organisation, their attitudes relating to a loss of trust, loyalty and commitment may well have an impact. As Wellin (2007) suggests, there needs to be a consistency in the messages managers give to staff throughout the organisation if the change initiative is to be fully achieved.

Indeed, the results of this research indicate the extent of operational managers' psychological contracts at this moment in time, and individual perceptions can change very quickly (Rousseau 1995). As a result Wellin (2007) suggests that, with increasing dramatic changes in psychological contracts brought about by ever faster and vigorous economic and social forces, "The need to be clear about psychological contracts becomes more and more important if we are to cope and thrive in business". It is therefore important, as outlined by Wellin (2007) and Van den Heuvel and Schalk (2009), to have a clear understanding of employees' psychological contracts due to its link with the components "central to the multi-dimensional conceptualisation of resistance to change".

As the full impact of moving to Trust status, and the effects of downsizing and de-layering become more evident, it will be important to monitor if this impacts further on the relational aspects of the operational managers' contracts.

Wellin (2007) goes on to point out that, if organisations want people to be committed and engaged in their work, current thinking is increasingly that effective leadership involves gaining the emotional 'buy-in' of the people in order for them to do what is required. This supports Kotter and Cohen's (2002) notion that it is the behaviour, rather than anything else, that requires most input, and that change occurs most effectively when it is bought into emotionally.

Wooldridge (2001) also points to the key values held within the public sector that relate to making a difference to society, with serving the community and in having integrity. Wooldridge warns that, as we move to a 'new scenario', we must make sure we 'do not throw these away'. Indeed, given the level of significance associated with the issue of trust that has emerged from this research, Weber and Weber (2001) also point to the importance of creating an atmosphere where trustful communication and collaboration

can take place, which may be an important foundation in achieving organisational change goals. Trust in senior management they suggest, can reduce some of the feelings of uncertainty and a lack of information about the change, thereby reducing speculation and unfounded fears. Furthermore, employees who trust their management's values tend to react more positively to changes in organisational direction.

5.4 Overall Conclusions of the Research Question

This research has investigated the impact on operational managers' psychological contracts on moving to Trust status. Certain elements of the psychological contract have proved to be more significant than others. Overall, the research has found significant evidence to suggest that the issue of trust has had the most impact on some managers' perceptions and behaviour, through their decision to leave the organisation.

The findings have also shown that overall, operational managers have a predominantly relational psychological contract, although they perceive that they provide a greater level of loyalty to CPA than it provides to them. However, there was no evidence to suggest that managers were looking to develop their careers beyond the Probation Service, despite the fact that there was an overall perception of an 'erosion' of long term financial benefits and rewards.

Finally, of those operational managers who remain within the service, the evidence suggests that they remain loyal and committed to the organisation, although elements of the qualitative data do suggest that issues pertaining to the impact of downsizing have had a negative impact on perceptions and interpretations of the move to Trust status.

This supports the findings of the CIPD (2009) who suggest that the 'old psychological contract' is still alive, and that employees continue to seek the relational elements of their contract, remaining in their jobs, offering loyalty and in general staying satisfied in their jobs. Such findings could have significant implications for those working in public sector organisations where change initiatives are increasingly being implemented, and for those managing that change, in terms of the manner in which change is approached.

In relation to managing the move to Trust status, there is no significant evidence to suggest that, as a group, those who remain with CPA will behave in a way that might undermine the organisation's aims or goals. It is clear from this research that operational managers in CPA generally hold a psychological contract that is aligned with senior

management and that it has not been significantly affected by the Area's decision to downsize their numbers. Again, this runs contrary to the majority of authors who contend that, at times of significant organisational change, the unique position of operational managers can result in them feeling threatened and acting in a way that will undermine the organisation's change initiative (Rousseau 1995 and Hallier and James 1997), especially in relation to the process of downsizing (Turnley and Feldman 1999). However, it is also evident that there has been little previous research undertaken specifically relating to the impact on operational managers' psychological contracts at times of organisational change. These results do suggest that differences can be found within the public sector when compared with private sector organisations and supports the findings of Litwinenko and Cooper (2004) and Wooldridge's (2001) studies of public sector organisations.

Research also shows that, in order to achieve organisational goals, there is a need for consistency in the messages being imparted to staff as this has a fundamental impact on the development of their psychological contract from the recruitment stage, through day to day engagement and performance reviews (Wellin 2007).

The findings of this research can also be seen to support Balgogun (2003) who contends that the key to the impact of change is the manager's interpretation of the change intent and also supports Porter et al (2003), who argue that those individuals with strong relational psychological contracts, create a 'zone of acceptance' to accommodate the needs and requests of the employer. This links back to the conceptual model which highlighted the individual's perception of the change intent as a major factor in the management of it.

This study has shown that an understanding of employees' psychological contracts can inform senior management in terms of the impact of specific events within the organisation. It can also be seen as a means by which the organisation can gauge the perceptions of staff over the long-term which might inform future change initiatives or HRM policies.

As such there are aspects of the research findings that CPA could consider in order to ensure a greater future awareness of employees' psychological contracts in general, building on aspects of trust in particular. This will support the management of change in

the future and also provide a consistency of approach from operational managers across the Area.

5.5 Recommendations

Aim 5 of the research was to make recommendations to support the management of the Area's move to Trust status. These are outlined in Table 1, which details the recommendations from this research based on its findings and the review of literature detailed in Chapter 2.

Table 1

Recommendation	Purpose	Implementation plan
That CPA improves operational managers' levels of trust in the organisation.	Perceptions of good faith and fair dealing support a positive psychological contract and effective management of change.	Open, honest and consistent messages will be sent to operational managers throughout the change process. A culture of trustful communication and collaboration will be extended to operational managers in which 2 way dialogue and open discussions are used and seen to inform decision making. Procedures pertaining to decisions of downsizing will be clear and seen to be fair.
That CPA improves operational managers' perceptions of the organisation's commitment and loyalty to them	Perceptions of organisational commitment support the performance and loyalty of staff	Evidence on an on-going basis the Organisation's commitment to supporting the well-being and long term interests of operational managers.

Recommendation	Purpose	Implementation plan
That CPA ensure a consistent approach to the messages given to new staff during recruitment, informal contact and in performance reviews	Socialisation of new staff is seen as the most vital and influential process in achieving a psychological contract that perceives the organisation as supportive. If this is achieved it will encourage employees to be committed to the needs of the organisation	HRM policies are supportive of a positive socialisation of new staff and that this approach is used consistently by all managers. All managers are made aware of the importance of consistency in their approaches during recruitment, in their day to day engagement and in performance reviews
For CPA to promote and increase the external employment opportunities of its operational managers	This supports a more balanced psychological contract in which the Area benefits from a wider skill base and movement of staff can been seen as a positive move rather than being enforced through downsizing or redundancies.	HRM policies to include career development of operational managers. i.e. opportunities for secondments, joint working with partner organisations, and cross organisational advertising of jobs
That CPA continues to be aware of it's employees' psychological contracts with the organisation	Understanding employees' psychological contracts informs senior managers and the Board of how staff perceive their relationship with the organisation and supports the organisation's decision making when implementing and managing change.	A review of staff psychological contracts should be undertaken on an annual basis.

5.6 Limitations of the Research

There are a number of limitations to this research that have been highlighted throughout the study.

Firstly, the research focussed on one specific group of staff within CPA. The results of the research can therefore not be assumed to be representative of all staff.

The research findings are based on a total of 22 respondents from a census group of 31. As such the findings are not representative of all operational managers and do limit the transferability of the research findings to other Areas with different management structures.

Due to the small sample size, a full analysis of the psychological contract as defined by Rousseau (1995) was not possible. Whilst an alternative analysis was undertaken providing a useful illustration of the findings that supported the interpretivist approach, future research should consider the sample size to ensure a robustness to its findings.

The research was conducted at a time of significant organisational change. This change is on-going and further budget restraints will inevitably impact on future job losses. This may have impacted on respondent's answers and therefore the findings of this study.

The evaluation of a psychological contract is a snap-shot of the perceptions of an individual at one moment in time. As such, the findings of this research are not necessarily long-standing and should be reviewed on a regular basis.

The study focused on the perceptions of employees and did not take account of the employer's perspective. As such it could be argued that a full contractual evaluation was not undertaken and that the results are more a point of view (Guest 1998 and 2002, cited in Cullinane and Dundon 2006). A future study may wish to incorporate the employer's perspective.

The qualitative data highlighted the fact that a number of respondents felt it was too early in the move to Trust status to fully appreciate the impact of the change. As such the timing of this research may have limited the findings and could be seen as an argument for a further study to be undertaken when the full impact is realised or for this study to form the basis of a longitudinal study to be taken forward.

5.7 Opportunities for Further Research

To facilitate the selection and design for future research projects examples of further opportunities for research are detailed below.

An opportunity exists to extend this research across all staff within CPA. This will

provide a wider understanding of the perceptions of all staff within the organisation and highlight ways in which the organisation can improve its relationship with them.

A cross-sectional design was used in this research, however a longitudinal study could be undertaken to determine if operational managers' psychological contracts change over time.

Further research could also be undertaken across other Probation Areas that would provide a greater knowledge of the impact of change on operational managers within the public sector. This is an area of research that is significantly lacking.

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A RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Colleague,

I am currently completing a dissertation for my masters in business administration (MBA).

My dissertation is focussing on the impact on Operational Manager's psychological contract on moving to Trust status.

The psychological contract is an individual's belief or perception of mutual obligations between themselves and their employer. It is based on the subjective belief that a promise has been made by the employer and terms and conditions of the contract have been accepted by both parties.

This is an independent piece of research although I have sought permission from Cheshire Probation Service's Chief Officer Steve Collett to undertake it. I am using a questionnaire to gather my evidence which I have attached. I would very much appreciate it if you could spare the time to answer the questionnaire. **It is anonymous and all completed questionnaires will remain totally confidential.**

The results of the questionnaire will enable me to evaluate Operational Managers perceptions of whether their psychological contract has altered during this significant change process, and enable me to give consideration to how this may impact on the Areas ability to successfully implement the changes associated with moving to Trust status. **The findings will not be reported in any way that could identity an individual.**

Please use the enclosed stamped addressed envelope to return your completed questionnaire by 15th February 2010.

Regards

Catherine Corbett

Please answer each question using the following scale:

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all	Slightly	Somewhat	Moderately	To a great extent

Q1 To what extent have you made the following commitments or obligations to Cheshire Probation Area

	Not at all 1	Slightly 2	Somewhat 3	Moderately 4	To a great extent 5
a) I make personal sacrifices for this organisation	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
b) I take this organisations concerns personally	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
c) I protect this organisations image	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
d) I commit myself personally to this organisation	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

Q2 To what extent have you made the following commitments or obligations to Cheshire Probation Area

	Not at all 1	Slightly 2	Somewhat 3	Moderately 4	To a great extent 5
a) I will leave whenever I want	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
b) I have no future obligations to Cheshire Probation Area	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
c) I can leave at any time I chose	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
d) I am under no obligation to remain with this Area	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

Q3 To what extent have you made the following commitments or obligations to Cheshire Probation Area

	Not at all 1	Slightly 2	Somewhat 3	Moderately 4	To a great extent 5
a) I perform only required tasks	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
b) I do only what I am paid to do	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
c) I fulfil a limited number of responsibilities	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
d) I only perform specific duties I agreed to when I was employed	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

Q4 To what extent have you made the following commitments or obligations to Cheshire Probation Area

	Not at all 1	Slightly 2	Somewhat 3	Moderately 4	To a great extent 5
a) I accept increasingly challenging performance standards	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
b) I adjust to changing performance demands due to business necessity	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
c) I respond positively to dynamic performance requirements	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

Q5 **To what extent have you made the following commitments or obligations to Cheshire Probation Area**

	Not at all 1	Slightly 2	Somewhat 3	Moderately 4	To a great extent 5
a) I seek out development opportunities that enhance my value to this employer	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
b) I build skills to increase my value to this organisation	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
c) I make myself increasingly valuable to my employer	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
d) I actively seek internal opportunities for training and development	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

Q6 **To what extent have you made the following commitments or obligations to Cheshire Probation Area**

	Not at all 1	Slightly 2	Somewhat 3	Moderately 4	To a great extent 5
a) I build contracts outside this organisation that enhance my career potential	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
b) I build skills to increase my future employment opportunities elsewhere	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
c) I increase my visibility to potential employers outside this organisation	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
d) I seek out assignments that enhance my employability elsewhere	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

Q7 **To what extent have you made the following commitments or obligations to Cheshire Probation Area**

	Not at all 1	Slightly 2	Somewhat 3	Moderately 4	To a great extent 5
a) I would like to remain with this organisation indefinitely	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
b) I plan to stay here a long time	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
c) I will continue to work for Cheshire Probation Area	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
d) I have no plans to work anywhere else	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

Q8a **Do you believe your level of loyalty and commitment to Cheshire Probation Area has changed during the move to Trust Status?**

YES	NO
❑	❑

Q8b **Please explain your response giving examples if possible**

Q9 **Consider your relationship with Cheshire Probation Area. To what extent has your employer made the following commitments or obligations to you?**

	Not at all 1	Slightly 2	Somewhat 3	Moderately 4	To a great extent 5
a) A job only as long as Cheshire Probation Area needs me	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
b) CPA makes no commitments to retain me in the future	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
c) Short term employment	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
d) A job for a short time only	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

Q10 **Consider your relationship with Cheshire Probation Area. To what extent has your employer made the following commitments or obligations to you?**

	Not at all 1	Slightly 2	Somewhat 3	Moderately 4	To a great extent 5
a) CPA shows concern for my personal welfare	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
b) Is responsive to my personal concerns and well-being	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
c) Makes decision with my best interests in mind	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
d) Shows concern for my long-term well-being	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

Q11 **Consider your relationship with Cheshire Probation Area. To what extent has your employer made the following commitments or obligations to you?**

	Not at all 1	Slightly 2	Somewhat 3	Moderately 4	To a great extent 5
a) Shows limited involvement in the organisation	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
b) Training me only for my current job	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
c) A job limited to specific, well defined responsibilities	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
d) Requires me to perform only a limited set of duties	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

Q12 **Consider your relationship with Cheshire Probation Area. To what extent has your employer made the following commitments or obligations to you?**

	Not at all 1	Slightly 2	Somewhat 3	Moderately 4	To a great extent 5
a) Supports me to attain the highest possible level of performance	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
b) Helps me to respond to ever greater industry standards	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
c) Supports me in meeting increasingly higher goals	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
d) Enables me to adjust to new, challenging performance requirements	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

Q13 **Consider your relationship with Cheshire Probation Area. To what extent has your employer made the following commitments or obligations to you?**

	Not at all 1	Slightly 2	Somewhat 3	Moderately 4	To a great extent 5
a) Provides opportunities for career development within the organisation	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
b) Provides developmental opportunities with this organisation	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
c) Advancement within the organisation	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
d) Opportunities for promotion	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

Q14 Consider your relationship with Cheshire Probation Area. To what extent has your employer made the following commitments or obligations to you?

	Not at all 1	Slightly 2	Somewhat 3	Moderately 4	To a great extent 5
a) Helps me develop externally marketable skills	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
b) Gives job assignments that enhance my external marketability	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
c) Potential job opportunities outside the organisation	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
d) Contracts that create employment opportunities elsewhere	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

Q15 Consider your relationship with Cheshire Probation Area. To what extent has your employer made the following commitments or obligations to you?

	Not at all 1	Slightly 2	Somewhat 3	Moderately 4	To a great extent 5
a) Provides secure employment	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
b) Wages and benefits I can rely on	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
c) Steady employment	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
d) Stable benefits for employees families	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

Q16a Do you believe CPA's level of loyalty and commitment to you has changed during the move to Trust Status?

YES	NO
❏	❏

Q16b Please explain your answer with examples if possible

Q17 **To what extent do the items below describe your employer's relationship with you?**

	Not at all 1	Slightly 2	Somewhat 3	Moderately 4	To a great extent 5
a) Withholds information from its employees	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
b) Acts as if it doesn't trust its employees	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
c) Introduce changes without involving employees	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
d) Doesn't share important information with its workers	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

Q18 **To what extent do the items below describe your employer's relationship with you?**

	Not at all 1	Slightly 2	Somewhat 3	Moderately 4	To a great extent 5
a) Its difficult to predict future direction of its relations with me	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
b) An uncertain future regarding relations with me	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
c) Uncertainty regarding its commitments to employees	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
d) Uncertainty regarding its commitments to me	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

Q19 **To what extent do the items below describe your employer's relationship with you?**

	Not at all 1	Slightly 2	Somewhat 3	Moderately 4	To a great extent 5
a) Demands more from me while giving me less in return	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
b) Decreased benefits in the next few years	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
c) Stagnant or reduced wages the longer I worked here	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
d) More and more work for less pay	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

Q20a **Do you believe your level of trust in the organisation has changed during the move to Trust Status?**

YES	NO
❏	❏

Q20b **Please explain your answer with examples if possible**

Q21

	Not at all 1	Slightly 2	Somewhat 3	Moderately 4	To a great extent 5
a) Overall how well have you fulfilled your commitments to your employer	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
b) In general, how well do you live up to your promises to your employer	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

Q22

	Not at all 1	Slightly 2	Somewhat 3	Moderately 4	To a great extent 5
a) Overall, how well does your employer fulfil its commitments to you	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
b) In general, how well does your employer live up to its promises	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

Q23 How many years have you been employed by CPA?

1-10	11-19	20+
❑	❑	❑

Q24 Following the offer of early / flexible retirement and / or voluntary redundancy during the move to Trust Status

	YES	NO
a) Have you opted for early / flexible retirement?	❑	❑

Q25 If you have any further comments you would like to make regarding your psychological contract or the Area's move to Trust status, please include them below.

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This is the end of the questionnaire. Thank you for spending the time to complete it. My dissertation should be completed by June 2010, if you would like a copy of the results, please contact me by email at
catherine.corbett@cheshire.probation.gsi.gov.uk

YOU THANK

APPENDIX 2

Q1a	Q1b	Q1c	Q1d	Q2a	Q2b	Q2c	Q2d	Q3a	Q3b	Q3c	Q3d	Q4a	Q4b	Q4c	Q5a	Q5b	Q5c	Q5d	Q6a	Q6b	Q6c	Q6d	Q7a	Q7b	Q7c	Q7d	Q8a	Q9a	Q9b	Q9c	Q9d
3	0	0	0	3	1	3	3	1	1	1	1	5	5	5	4	4	4	5	3	3	3	2	3	3	4	3	0	3	2	3	1
2	2	5	4	5	1	5	5	1	1	1	1	5	5	3	3	3	3	3	1	1	1	1	3	3	3	5	0	5	5	3	3
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4	4	5	5	2	1	3	5	2	2	1	1	4	5	5	5	5	4	5	3	2	2	1	5	5	5	5	0	4	3	2	4
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Q10a	Q10b	Q10c	Q10d	Q11a	Q11b	Q11c	Q11d	Q12a	Q12b	Q12c	Q12d	Q13a	Q13b	Q13c	Q13d	Q14a	Q14b	Q14c	Q14d	Q15a	Q15b	Q15c	Q15d	Q16a	Q17a
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2	2	1	2	1	4	2	1	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	2	1	1	1	4	5	5	4	0	2
3	3	3	3	1	4	3	1	3	2	2	2	4	4	3	3	2	2	2	2	4	5	5	5	0	3
2	2	1	2	3	2	3	1	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	0	2
3	3	2	3	3	1	3	4	3	3	3	3	2	2	3	4	3	3	3	4	5	5	5	5	0	1
5	5	3	4	2	3	4	1	4	5	5	5	5	2	4	4	5	5	5	2	5	5	5	5	0	2
3	4	2	2	1	1	1	1	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	2	4	4	2	3	1	2	2	2	1	2
4	4	2	3	2	4	4	1	4	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	0	2
4	4	3	4	3	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	2	1	3	3	3	2	4	5	5	1	0	2

Q17b	Q17c	Q17d	Q18a	Q18b	Q18c	Q18d	Q19a	Q19b	Q19c	Q19d	Q20a	Q21a	Q21b	Q21c	Q22	Q23	Q24
2	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	4	4	4	4	1	0
1	2	2	4	4	4	4	2	3	2	2	0	5	5	4	4	1	0
1	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	1	1	0	5	5	5	5	1	0
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	4	2	4	4	0	5	5	3	4	2	0
1	2	2	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	3	0	4	4	4	4	1	0
2	3	2	2	1	1	1	4	4	1	0	0	4	4	3	4	3	0
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	3	0	4	4	4	4	1	0
1	3	3	4	4	3	4	4	4	3	4	0	5	5	3	3	1	0
3	3	3	3	3	3	3	5	4	3	3	0	5	5	4	4	1	0
1	2	2	2	2	2	2	4	3	3	3	0	5	5	4	3	2	0
3	2	2	1	1	1	1	3	4	4	3	1	5	4	3	3	3	1
4	4	3	4	4	4	4	5	5	3	5	1	4	4	4	2	1	0
1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	2	0	4	4	4	4	1	0
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	4	4	4	5	3	1
2	1	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	1	5	5	5	4	2	1
5	5	3	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	4	0	4	4	4	4	1	0
2	4	3	2	2	3	3	2	2	1	3	0	4	5	4	4	3	0
1	3	2	2	2	3	2	2	4	1	1	0	4	4	4	4	1	0
1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	0	4	5	4	5	3	0
2	4	2	4	4	4	4	5	4	3	4	1	5	5	3	3	2	0
2	3	2	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	0	5	5	5	5	2	1

Full Results for survey Q's 9-14, 17 and 18.

Q9 found no significant difference between groups ($p= .208$, $p> .05$). Scores for group 1, range from 4-16 and for group 2 from 5-16.

Q10 found no significance between groups ($p= .261$, $p> .05$). Scores for group 1 range from 4-14 and for group 2 from 7-19, a wider range but with the majority of scores remaining within the 7-13 range.

Q11, also found no significance ($p=.641$, $p> .05$), with scores for group 1 ranging from 5-11, and for group 2 from 4-13.

No significant difference was found in Q 12 ($p=.590$, $p> .05$). Scores for group 1 range from 9-16, and for group 2 from 8-20.

No significant difference was found in Q13 ($p= .914$, $p> .05$), with scores for group 1 ranging from 9-16, and for group 2 from 4-18.

 Q14 found no significant difference ($p= .541$, $p> .05$) with scores for group 1 ranging from 4-16 and for group 2 from 4-19.

Results from Q17 show no significant difference between the groups ($p= .249$, $p> .05$). scores for group 1 range from 6-13 and for group 2 from 4-16, a wider range than group 1 but with the majority of scores remaining within a range of 4-9.

Q18 results indicate no level of significance ($p= .543$, $p > .05$). Scores for both groups range from 4-16.

Responses to each question are colour coded according to themes identified in the literature review.

A change to the level of loyalty, commitment or trust is identifed

The effects of downsizing

No change/ too soon to identify any change

Procedural fairness

The impact of moving to Trust status is not seen as determined by CPA, but the Government

Q8a) Do you believe your level of loyalty and commitment to Cheshire Probation Area has changed during the move to Trust status?
Q8b) Please explain your response to Q8a) giving examples if possible

I have not noticed any change in my loyalty. I believe it is a good service. I am happy in my current role and remain committed.
Trust status has not altered the people I manage or those to whom I am directly responsible/ accountable to - that is what commands my loyalty.
Has not altered my attitude or loyalty.
The threat of being made redundant or taken over by another area increased my commitment to the Cheshire Probation Area.
Trust status was necessary to remain viable. I see it as evolvement rather than total change.
My role made redundant - nowhere to go but out.
Possible redundancies and how they were handled did not appear equitable and had a pragmatic effect upon loyalty.
The move to trust status has just presented new challenges that I am happy to accept and work towards.
Conditions of service remain largely unchanged as do objectives and targets. Little impact on day to day work. Little evidence from SMT that staff loyalty will be valued more.
I don't feel my loyalty or commitment has changed.
I believe that any negative impact on us will result from forces outside the control of CPA, so not their fault.
Has made no difference to me personally at all.
Managers post are clearly dispensable and the Area has made it obvious that they have no obligation to retain staff at an individual/ personal level. This has resulted in me feeling less attached/ committed personally to the organisation.
Unclear at this stage how it will impact on middle managers

Responses to each question are colour coded according to themes identified in the literature review.

A change to the level of loyalty, commitment or trust is identified

The effects of downsizing

No change/ too soon to identify any change

Procedural fairness

The impact of moving to Trust status is not seen as determined by CPA, but the Government.

Q16a) Do you believe CPA's level of loyalty and commitment to you has changed during the move to Trust status?
Q16b) Please explain your answer to Q16a) with examples if possible

I feel CPA has become more distant, not listening to staff at times, external and not a 'joined up service'.
I have perceived no change because of Trust status that impacts on this - as yet.
Seen no evidence of any change. National agreements on pay conditions etc - remain.
Due to financial constraints job security is not as strong, although I do believe that CPA will do all it can to retain as many staff as they can.
They have demanded a higher performance without the input of resources. More pressure to deliver on targets and performance without the realignment of other responsibilities.
Believe the service has become blind to the individuals - the organisation's needs are the singular concern.
Focus on targets more than ever and no consideration for how this effects workloads and how this is managed.
CPA appears to have tried to meet individual's wishes regarding work location.
Changes in loyalty may change. Far too early to assess this. It will all depend on how the new trust develops.
However it is a business so I recognise this context.
As per previous example - job security is no longer promised and reduces my belief in the Areas loyalty to me.
Though when middle managers needed to be reduced to bid for Trust Status, the issue of operational/corporate staff was badly handled.

Responses to each question are colour coded according to themes identified in the literature review.

A change to the level of loyalty, commitment or trust is identified

The effects of downsizing

No change/ too soon to identify any change

Procedural fairness

The impact of moving to Trust status is not seen as determined by CPA, but the Government.

Q20a) Do you believe your level of trust in the organisation has changed during the move to Trust status?
Q20b) Please explain your answer to Q20a) with examples if possible

The changes are not down to the specific probation area but these changes have been forced and driven by central government. Cheshire Area has responded to this in a positive and proactive manner.
Trust assumes there will be a relationship in the future - as this is not the case then the level of trust has inevitably altered.
Due to how potential redundancies where handled plus increasing workload with no considerations to how this impacts on staff wellbeing.
I understand business case for changes and have been notified of changes involving me and the team.
Trust status may require financial decisions to take precedence over the benefits for individuals.
Too early to say. The issue won't be what they do, but what they could reasonably have expected to do otherwise.
Though probably more due to unknown future, the response to the previous issue re operational/ corporate. Don't think the change is huge though.

Q25 If you have any further comments you would like to make regarding your psychological contract or the Area's move to Trust status, please include them below.

The transition to trust status is not the process that is affecting the relationship between the services and its employees', it is coincidence that this trust occurred when the money ran out. It is the reversal of 30 years of growth that has the significant impact. The organisation enjoyed a culture of positive staff focus and development when the cash was flowing. Put the removal of cash together with the development of a pointedly centralised muddle and the current reactions were entirely predictable.