

# Government Commitment: A Critical Cog into Teachers' Psychological Contract for Organizational Commitment and Job Satisfaction

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## ABSTRACT

This study examined Government commitment as a crucial factor in teacher psychological contract, driving organizational commitment and job satisfaction in Zambian public schools. A quantitative approach with a cross-sectional descriptive survey of 278 respondents selected through stratified random sampling was undertaken. Data was analyzed by Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Analysis. The results showed strong associations between psychological contract and job satisfaction ( $r = .584, p < .001$ ); psychological contract and government commitment ( $r = .682, p < .001$ ) and psychological contract and organisational commitment ( $r = .639, p < .001$ ). Ultimately, psychological contract was negatively impacted by the low level of government commitment, which eventually affected both organisational commitment and job satisfaction of the teachers.

The study outcome suggests that low levels of government commitment negatively impact teachers' psychological contract resulting in low job satisfaction and organisational commitment. This further highlights the critical role of institutional trust and integrity in policy implementation with regards to psychological contract of employees.

**Keywords:** Psychological Contract, Organizational Commitment, Job Satisfaction, Government Commitment, Teachers, Public School

## INTRODUCTION

Dynamic developments in modern organisations have resulted in the creation of new techniques to better public sector management. These changes necessitate more effective management approaches to employee management. The changes have sometimes made it difficult for organisations to maintain a productive workforce because they impose significant burdens on employee behaviour and adaptation. For organisations to adjust to shifting dynamics, managers must foster positive relationships with their people (Curwen, 2014). Furthermore, Waiganjo and Ng'ethe (2012) indicate that businesses are supposed to foster positive psychological contract with their employees in order to improve performance and thus adapting to changes in the operational environment.

Organisations strive to retain employees by appealing to their dedication, job happiness, and productivity. It should be highlighted that having a strong working relationship can assist to handle numerous difficulties that businesses face (Curwen, 2013).

Therefore, organisational commitment is regarded as one of the most important job attitudes researched in terms of employee motivation and productivity, since it is a foundation for employee success (Tolentino, 2015). Employees' organisational commitment to their the organisation is seen as the foundation of human resource management practice, with employees being motivated and completely involved in their organisation. As a result, their performance and organisational objectives improve (Khalili & Asmawi, 2014).

The psychological contract, an important aspect of the employer-employee relationship, relates to the unwritten expectations and duties between teachers and their employer, the government (Rousseau, 1989). In Zambian public schools, the amount of government's commitment to teachers' psychological contracts for teachers with enhanced qualifications and technical competences has become an urgent matter, having the potential to endanger the fundamental fabric of the education system (Chakulya & Mudenda, 2016). As a result, Zambia's teaching profession, like that of many other Sub-Saharan African nations, is undergoing considerable transition as a result of professionalization and academic upgrading initiatives. To improve educational quality and fairness, the Zambian government has implemented a number of changes over the recent decade, including teacher re-certification, in-service training, and academic progression promotion (Ministry of General Education, 2021). Among these reforms is a strong encouragement for teachers to pursue higher education credentials such as diplomas and degrees. However, these capacity building and technical competence development initiatives have not always translated into better employment conditions or career advancement, raising concerns about the government's fulfilment of the psychological contract, which is an unspoken, implicit set of expectations between employees and their employers

This study underlying this article investigated government commitment as a factor which affects the psychological contract of employees. According to psychological contract theory, when employees perceive a breach or violation of the contract, particularly in terms of career advancement, remuneration, and respect, motivation and organisational loyalty suffer (Conway & Briner, 2005; Morrison & Robinson, 1997). Understanding these processes is not only academically useful but also policy relevant to organisations. This is because psychological contract does affect teacher turnover. In Zambia this is increasing as morale is deteriorating (Muleya, 2022). The motivation for this study stems from the growing disparity between teachers' investment in self-improvement which is often financially and emotionally taxing compared with the perceived derived organisational benefits. General observation and empirical data shows that teachers who gain higher academic credentials most often remained in their present employment, with minimal change in remuneration or responsibility and benefits (Kapambwe & Mwanza, 2020). This condition fosters a sense of psychological contract violation, affecting organisational commitment and work satisfaction. These two are also critical indicators of teacher retention, student outcomes, and school performance (Judge et al., 2001).

This article focusses on the intersection of psychological contract theory, educational human resource management and fidelity in policy reform implementation in a low-income setting. The implications may go beyond Zambia, shedding light on how emerging nations might effectively integrate policy changes with human capital management in public education.

## Statement of the Problem

Despite a growing number of Zambian public-school teachers receiving higher academic qualifications, there is a significant disparity between their objectives and actual organisational successes. This is particularly in terms of promotion, income increases, and recognition. This disparity reflects a systemic failure to uphold the psychological contract between the government and the educational profession.

The Zambian Ministry of Education has consistently stressed the importance of academic upgrading and improving educational results and teacher quality through policy reforms (MoGE, 2019). Notwithstanding, there has been no corresponding structural changes made to the employment structure in response to these policy instructions. Many teachers that upgraded academic qualification in response to the policy enforcement remain in their present positions for years without being promoted or acknowledged (Chilala and Sichone, 2021). The inability to integrate job growth with professional development breaches the psychological contract.

Furthermore, the seemingly low government commitment to the teachers' efforts, as seen by the non-responsivity of the policy, fiscal restrictions, and bureaucratic inertia, worsens the problem. Teachers are disillusioned and there are reports of dissatisfaction, absenteeism, and even plans to resign (Muleya, 2022; Zulu, 2023). These developments endanger educational development objectives in a sector currently impacted by teacher shortages and uneven performance (UNESCO, 2020).

Furthermore, the mediating role of psychological contract views in the relationship between government commitment and organisational outcomes among upgraded teachers has not been specifically examined in any empirical research conducted in Zambia. The majority of current research focus on overall teacher motivation or job satisfaction, regardless of psychological contract status or certification level (Mwansa & Phiri, 2018). This oversight underscores the necessity for study which may highlights low psychological contract to be behind low teacher job morale and commitment. Thus, the primary emphasis of this study is on the effect of perceived low government adherence to the psychological contract on teachers' organisational commitment and job satisfaction.

### **Purpose of the Study**

This article endeavored to determine the nature and effect of Government commitment on teachers' Psychological Contracts regarding Organisational Commitment and Job Satisfaction among teachers in Zambian public schools.

### **Research Objectives**

- To assess the relationship between perceived government commitment and psychological contract among teachers in Zambian Public School.
- To determine the influence of government commitment on organisational commitment and job satisfaction among upgraded teachers.
- To examine the influence of the psychological contract on organisational commitment and job satisfaction among teachers.

### **Research Questions**

- What is the relationship between perceived government commitment and the psychological contract among teachers in public schools?
- How does government commitment impact organisational commitment and job satisfaction?
- What is the relationship of psychological contract on organisational commitment and job satisfaction among teachers?

### **Significance of the Study**

The study informs the development of evidence-based interventions to enhance teacher motivation, organisational commitment and job satisfaction in public schools, contributing information on knowledge gaps that can be addressed with interventions to improve educational outcomes and teacher well-being.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Theoretical Foundation on Psychological Contract**

In recent years, the concept of psychological contract has achieved considerable prominence as it advances our understanding of employees' attitudes and behaviour in contemporary times. According to Aggarwal and Bhargava (2009), the psychological contract refers to the relationship between employee and employer regarding the unwritten expectations of theists. Further, Rousseau has identified that Psychological Contracts can be classified into four categories: transitional, transactional, balance and relational. The transitional contract is a passing phase of the relationship between the two parties, reflecting the absence of commitment regarding further employment. A transactional psychological contract indicates economic obligations. Relational contracts involve long-term obligations based upon trust and are concerned with personal, socio-emotional, and economic resources. A balanced psychological contract refers to a contract that contains both transactional and relational dimensions (Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 2014).

Psychological contracts serve two vital roles: defining and describing the employment relationship and managing the mutual expectations in the relationship. Psychological contracts also provide a functional

framework for managing the open process of employees' expectations (Dhanpat & Parumasur, 2014). The benefit of the psychological contract in workplace relationships can also be seen in the fact that it provides an understanding of employment relationships, employee attitudes and behaviour (Tekleab et al., 2020). Where the psychological contract is appropriately handled and managed, it can benefit organisations as it can encourage and motivate employees to contribute to achieving all expected positive organisational outcomes and goals (Dhanpat & Parumasur, 2014).

### **Organisational Commitment**

Another perspective of analysis in literature is organisational commitment. Organizational Commitment of employees in an organization is treated at the heart of Human Resource Management (HRM) practice (Gbadamosi et al., 2007). Researchers have discussed and defined OC in different ways and there is inconsistency in the definition and its components. Meyer & Allen (1997) defined it as a multidimensional discipline and they have designed a model with three components which comprise: Affectionate, Normative and Continuance Commitment.

The authors have well explained these three components: Affectionate Commitment is an emotional attachment of an employee with his/ her organization; he or she would believe and accept the values and goals of the organization; show a willingness to exert considerable effort towards the accomplishment of an organizational goal and show strong desire to remain as a member by spending rest of his/her work life with the same organization. An employee who is emotionally attached to the organization would feel and face problems of organization is his/her own and also talk about his/ her organization with his/her friends and relatives greatly to work for this organization. Normative Commitment is a sense of moral obligation feeling to stay with the organization and may feel a sense of guilt if he or she desires to leave the organization. Those employees who are higher normative commitment would stay with the organization as they may feel that it is right and moral to do so (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Continuance Commitment is a result of an economic decision to be made by an employee either to stay with or to leave the organization. It relates to employment opportunities outside the organization. But before making such a decision the employee may calculate what benefits would avail by staying with the current organization which may lose if he or she desires to switch over to another organization.

### **Job Satisfaction**

Another context of review in this article is job satisfaction. Job satisfaction amongst teachers is a multifaceted construct critical to teacher retention and a significant determinant of teacher commitment and, in turn, a contributor to school effectiveness. It is a complex variable and is influenced by job situational factors as well as the dispositional characteristics of the individual. Hence, Job satisfaction is an attitude towards feelings, beliefs and behaviours. Low job satisfaction is believed to influence teachers' commitment, morale and turnover, and this is particularly salient to the teaching profession. Thus, measuring how satisfied teachers are in a school usually starts by measuring their satisfaction. This should consider essential facts about the job, such as pay, promotion, recognition, teacher-pupil relationship, and teacher-authority relationship. From a historical research perspective by other scholars, it is acknowledged that there is a worldwide tendency towards job dissatisfaction in education (Erez & Gati, 2015).

### **Government Commitment**

According to Eisenberger et al. (1986), government commitment can be defined as the extent to which teachers feel that their contributions are valued and that the government is interested in their welfare. In Zambia, this commitment entails compensation adjustments, transparent promotion procedures, policy implementation, and acknowledgement of higher qualifications in positions and duties.

In public education systems, particularly in low-income countries such as Zambia, the government serves as both policymaker and employer. Thus, government commitment becomes the key party in teachers' psychological contracts. According to Conway and Briner (2005), in highly bureaucratised organisations, perceived violations might be more detrimental due to limited alternative employment and redress avenues. As

a result, when teachers believe that their educational investments are not being rewarded with career development or better employment circumstances, their organisational commitment and job satisfaction suffer.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Psychological Contract Theory**

This research utilized the assumptions underlying both the theoretical constructs of the psychological contract theory (PCT), organisational commitment theory, as well as the Organisational Commitment Theory. The psychological contract theory (PCT) is highly relevant to studying the influence of teachers' psychological contracts on organisational commitment and job satisfaction among teachers with upgraded qualifications in public schools in Zambia in several ways. Firstly, teachers with upgraded qualifications may have certain expectations (e.g., recognition, career advancement, improved working conditions) and obligations (e.g., increased workload, mentoring colleagues) that affect their organisational commitment.

Also, the study through this theory explores how teachers' psychological contracts influence their perceived exchange relationships with the school administration, affecting their commitment. Further, the theory applies to the current study as it reviews the dynamic nature of teachers' experiences and perceptions that change over time. The theory further provides insight to investigate how perceived breaches or violations of psychological contracts (e.g., lack of recognition, inadequate support) impact teachers' organisational Commitment (Rousseau, 2014). In addition, the theory was applied to the current study as it enabled the examination of the specific content of teachers' psychological contracts (e.g., autonomy, professional development) and how it influences their organisational commitment. Thus, by applying the psychological contract theory, the study gained a more profound understanding of the psychological factors driving teachers' organisational commitment, ultimately informing strategies to enhance teacher retention and motivation in public schools in Zambia.

### **Organization Commitment Theory**

The second theory utilised in this study, is the Organisation Commitment Theory. The organization commitment theory (Meyer & Allen, 1991) encapsulated in the three-component model (TCM) of affective commitment, continuous commitment and normative commitment was also considered to have a significant role in the conceptualization of the study. The presumptions underlying the critical and relevant role played by the organization commitment theory are that: (a) affective commitment of the employee brings out the emotional attachment to the organization hence, the high probability of the employee to stay on in the organization and be serious engaged in the achievement of the organization goals and vision; (b) continuous commitment of the employee relating to cost benefit analysis of leaving the organization.

The employee's continuous commitment to the organization is likely to be based on a decision of the cost or the negative impact he or she might experience (Allen & Meyer, 1991). Thus, an employee with a high level of continuous commitment is perceived to have a higher desire to stay with the organization hence, presumed to contribute effectively and efficiently to organizational performance; and (c) normative commitment which relates to the employee feeling obliged to stay with the organization to achieve its goals.

### **Empirical studies on Government Commitment in Public Education system**

Therefore, from the above conceptualization, the factoring of Government commitment towards teachers' psychological contracts on organisational commitment and job satisfaction among teachers with upgraded qualifications is reviewed based on the various studies. The eminent study of review is that done by Mukuka (2019), where it was evident that a breach of psychological contract by the Government violates teachers' trust, leading to decreased job satisfaction and demotivation. Further, the study by Mulenga (2020) revealed that government failure to fulfil psychological contract obligations results in unmet expectations, decreasing job satisfaction and leading to demotivation. This study provides relevant methodological and geographical approach adapted to determine the findings in this research.



Further, another appropriate study assessed to ascertain the impact of commitment and non-commitment on teachers' psychological contract, organisational commitment and job satisfaction by the government is reviewed based on the study done in Kenya. In the study, done by Kuniya (2015) to investigate the influence of TSC human resource management practices on teachers' commitment in Tetu Sub County, Nyeri, Kenya, it was revealed that most teachers believe that if they worked hard, they would be promoted to a higher rank; promotion is done on merit, and teachers with high career aspirations view their jobs based on the commitment of TSCs towards teachers' career advancement. This study presents a perspective to confirm the commitment by government by the government influence teachers' motivation, engagement and performance. Thus, the relevance of the findings of this study did not support the methodological perspective adopted in this study.

Additionally, to substantiate the effects of the relationship between psychological contracts and job satisfaction, Ampofo-Ansah (2018) conducted a study to investigate the relationship between psychological contracts and staff job satisfaction at Accra Technical University. The study revealed a relationship between perceived psychological contracts and job satisfaction. Using linear regression analysis, the study showed that an increase in the overall fulfilment of obligations and promises (psychological contract) by both Teaching and Non-teaching staff would directly cause an increase in job satisfaction. Therefore, the university fulfilled its promises and obligations to a lesser extent, which meant there was an inverse relation between what the staff offered to the university and what the university offered, and this caused a breach of the psychological contract, which bred job dissatisfaction. This study comparable to this study present methodological and geographical gap impertinently to the approach applied in this research.

Further, analysis reviewed in literature is adapted from Khan et al. (2014) also studied the impact of job satisfaction and organisational commitment on intention to leave among academicians in Pakistan. Their study revealed that job satisfaction hurts the intention to leave and are inversely related. Also, they found that university teachers are committed and go beyond a call of duty, for example, working long hours. The study focused on job satisfaction and did not even mention psychological contracts. Commitment can be affected by many causes, not just job satisfaction, thus an evidence gap being noted comparable to the envisaged analysis and methodological assumptions this study applied.

## Research Gap

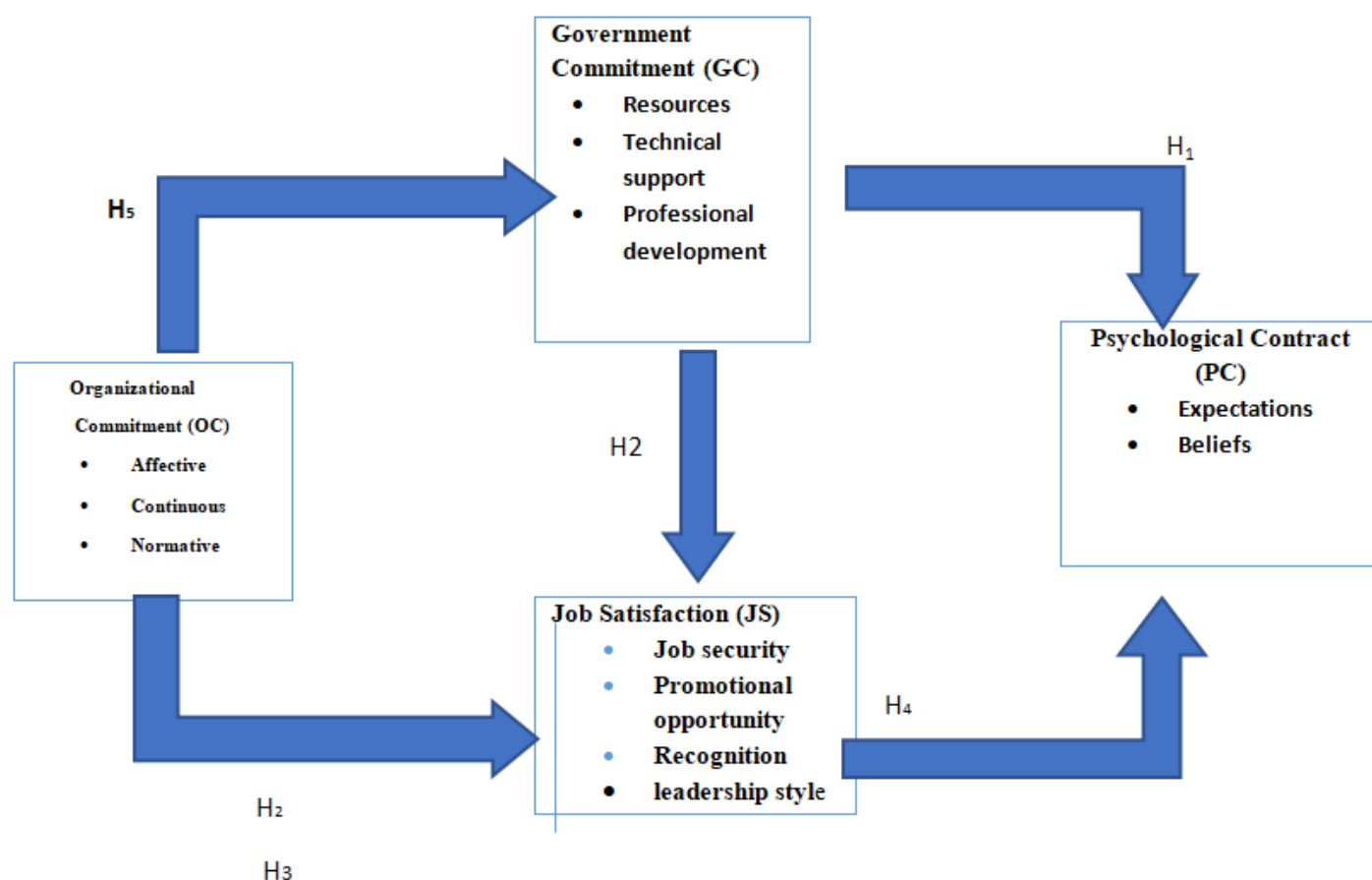
Although literature confirms the importance of the psychological contract in developing job attitudes, there is a dearth of empirical studies on the function of government commitment in mediating the psychological contract-outcome link among teachers in Zambia. Existing studies often approach teachers as a homogeneous group, ignoring the diverse perspectives of individuals who have pursued more education in the hopes of furthering their career. This study fills a vital vacuum by looking at the precise consequences of perceived government commitment on the psychological contract, and how that affects organisational commitment and job satisfaction among teachers. The research, which focusses on Zambian teachers pursues a significant educational reform that faces high teacher discontent, gives current insights into both theory and practice.

## Conceptual framework

In order to examine how government commitment affects teachers' psychological contracts and how this influences their organisational commitment and job satisfaction, the conceptual approach for this study combines the Psychological Contract Theory (Rousseau, 1995) with the organisational commitment theories. These theoretical frameworks are perfect for Zambia's public education system, where centralised government agencies set service standards.

Therefore, Teachers' reliance on implicit agreements, or psychological contracts, is highlighted by the fact that they often improve their qualifications without receiving immediate institutional assurances (Mulkeen, 2010; Coyle-Shapiro & Kessler, 2000). The relationship between the concepts; psychological contract, organisational commitment, job satisfaction, and performance outcome; gives rise to the following conceptual model, which is based on the theoretical constructs and discussions discussed above (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework for Government Commitment, Teacher's Psychological Contract, Organizational Commitment and Job Satisfaction



Source: Author; 2025

Hypothesis adopted in the analysis are as follows;

- **H1:** There is a significant relationship between Government Commitment and Psychological contract;
- **H2:** There is a significant relationship between Government commitment and teachers' job satisfaction;
- **H3:** There is a significant relationship between Organisational commitment and Job satisfaction;
- **H4:** There is a significant relationship between job satisfaction and psychological contract, and
- **H5:** There is a significant relationship between organisational commitment and Government commitment.

## METHODOLOGY

The study took a quantitative approach, using a cross-sectional descriptive survey. This survey was used as an acceptable design to investigate the effect of psychological contract on organisational commitment and work satisfaction among teachers with upgraded credentials, as predetermined by government policy. This was justified because the research approach produces a large amount of information at a low cost in terms of time, money, and effort (Larkin, 2015). The researcher employed a positivist method and deductive reasoning which used a scale to collect information from a large number of people for data analysis. The data was then generalised to some degree, as needed by a positivist methodology (Al-Husseini, 2014). Further, the researcher used the positivist technique to construct and test a hypothesis to demonstrate the impact of psychology Contract on Organisational Commitment and Job Satisfaction among teachers with upgraded credentials in public schools.

From the research population of 745 teachers from primary, combined and secondary schools, the sample size was determined using Yamane's (1989) algorithm for categorical data, as mentioned by Odhiambo et al. (2010). With the algorithm and a target population (N) of 745 respondents, a sample of 361 respondents was

chosen. The 361 teachers from diverse strata in selected public schools in three provinces was done using stratified random sampling and also convenience in terms of available resources. Furthermore, stratified random sampling was employed to ensure that various substrata within the teacher population were adequately represented. Thus, the researcher divided the teacher population into distinct strata based on specific characteristics relevant to the study.

Standardized questionnaires were used in data collection and confidential data was gathered from a diverse teacher sample which aligned with the study's objectives of assessing the effects of psychological contracts on organisational commitment and job satisfaction in a representative manner.

### Ethical Consideration

The study accommodated the responsibility of protecting the interests of the survey participants against breach of confidentiality or the improper use of information. Throughout the research, ethical principles relating to informed consent, non-deception, and participant confidentiality were strictly observed. Participation in this study was based on informed consent and on voluntary basis, with the right to withdraw at any time. Further, the names of the participants were withheld to protect their identities.

## RESULTS

The findings of the study are summarized in this section. The Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Analysis was used to assess the bivariate relationships between the variables.

Table 1 displays the means, standard deviations, and range of scores for the four main variables: job satisfaction (JS), psychological contract (PC), organisational commitment (OC), and government commitment (GC).

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Key Variables (n=278)

Variables	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Minimum (M)	Maximum (M)
Government Commitment (GC)	3.12	0.77	1.11	4.32
Psychological Contract (PC)	3.36	0.71	1.21	4.74
Organisational Commitment (OC)	3.58	0.72	1.53	4.89
Job Satisfaction (JS)	3.52	0.74	1.32	4.78

The respondents generally rated the mean scores of all four factors graded from fairly high, based on the mean ratings. There are some discrepancies between what teachers anticipate and how government policies were actually implemented, especially when it comes to the recognition of updated qualifications, as evidenced by the fact that government commitment received the lowest rating of any construction.

Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated to assess the strength and direction of linear correlations between variables. Table 2 presents the results below.

Table 2: Correlation Matrix

Variables	GC	PC	OC	JS
Government Commitment (GC)	1			
Psychological Contract (PC)	.682**	1		
Organisational Commitment (OC)	.428**	.629**	1	
Job Satisfaction (JS)	.489**	.576**	.661**	1

Note: \*\*p < .001

All the correlations were positive and statistically significant, supporting the hypothesised relationships. The strongest correlation was between GC and PC ( $r = .682$ ), followed by OC and JS ( $r = .661$ ). These results



suggest that government commitment is closely linked to psychological contract fulfillment, which in turn has substantial bearing on both commitment and satisfaction outcomes.

## Summary of Key Findings

### Government commitment and psychological contract

There was a strong and statistically significant correlation between psychological contract and government commitment. This implies that educators feel their psychological contract is being upheld when they think the government is fulfilling its responsibilities, such as prompt promotions, pay adjustments, and recognition of advanced degrees. This is in line with findings from other public sector contexts (Coyle-Shapiro & Kessler, 2000; Restubog et al., 2007) and supports Rousseau's (1995) contention that perceptions of employer obligation shape the psychological contract.

### Psychological contract and Organisational Commitment

Organisational commitment and psychological contract have a strong positive correlation. According to this study, teachers are more likely to remain devoted to and active in their schools when they believe their psychological contract has been fulfilled. Meyer and Allen (1997) discovered that organisational commitment is significantly impacted by employees' perceived alignment of organisational commitment with their personal goals and values. This study highlights the significance of public sector policy integrity in shaping teacher attitudes, albeit not as strongly as the GC-PC or PC-OC relationships (Brewster & Hegewisch, 2017). This is in line with the findings of Guest and Conway (2002), who observed that withdrawal behaviours and dissatisfaction in educational settings are caused by unmet psychological contract expectations.

Meeting the psychological contract is also closely linked to greater job satisfaction, according to the positive correlation. This is comparable to the findings of Guest and Conway (2002), who found that withdrawal behaviours and dissatisfaction in educational settings are caused by unmet psychological contract expectations.

### Government and Organisational Commitment

This moderate-to-strong correlation demonstrates that educators are more committed to their organisations when they believe the government is responsive and helpful. This study highlights the significance of public sector policy integrity in shaping teacher attitudes, albeit not as strongly as the GC-PC or PC-OC relationships (Brewster & Hegewisch, 2017). This is in line with the findings of Guest and Conway (2002), who observed that withdrawal behaviours and dissatisfaction in educational settings are caused by unmet psychological contract expectations.

### Government Commitment and Job Satisfaction

Despite its decline, this association remains positive and significant. It implies that enhancing teachers' evaluations of government performance influences their level of job satisfaction. Similar grievances have been raised in Sub-Saharan Africa regarding the application of human resource management policies in the education sector, and customer satisfaction may suffer if promised improvements are not delivered on time (Mulkeen, 2010).

### Organisational Commitment and Job Satisfaction

This important connection shows that teachers' degree of commitment to their institutions and their job satisfaction are correlated. This finding is in line with earlier research by Mowday et al. (1982) and more recent studies conducted in Sub-Saharan Africa (Nguni, Slegers, & Denessen, 2006), which demonstrate that commitment and satisfaction are interdependent elements of school organisational dynamics.

The above findings are summarised in Table 3 which indicates the significant and strength of the relationships constructs analysed below.

Table 3: Correlation Matrix

Relationship	r-value	Strength	Significance
Government Commitment (GC)-→PC	.682	Strong	P < .001
PC---→ Organisational Commitment	.629	Strong	P < .001
PC---→ Job Satisfaction	.576	Strong	P < .001-
GC--→ Organisational Commitment	.428	Strong	P < .001
GC--→ Job Satisfaction	.489	Strong	P < .001
Organisational Commitment--→JS	.612	Strong	P < .001

Note: \*\*p < .001

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study revealed a strong negative correlation between government's low commitment and psychological contract. Teachers' perceptions of state responsiveness especially regarding qualification-upgrade recognition, promotions, and salary adjustments were critically negligible.

In slight alignment with Njobvu and Daka (2025), the outcome specifically highlights that low government commitment adversely impacts teacher psychological contract and yields meagre outcomes in terms of job commitment and satisfaction among teachers with upgraded qualifications. Where teachers self-finance their academic upgrading efforts, the expectation is a reasonable return on their investment but in this case the yield is as good as none. This is because the Government reward system has failed to delivery. As with the theory on psychological contract, a breach or inconsistencies by the government likely results in damaged morale and institutional trust.

Furthermore, the study ascertained the correlation between psychological contract and organizational commitment as high, underscoring that fulfilling and satisfying of unwritten expectations fosters stronger institutional loyalty from employees (Conway & Briner, 2005; Coyle-Shapiro & Kessler, 2000). In addition, Njobvu and Daka (2025) posit that low psychological contract awareness and fulfillment are significantly linked to reduced organizational commitment among upgraded teachers.

Regarding the correlation between psychological contract and job satisfaction, the study reveals a statistically significant link. An optimistic psychological contract outlook and fulfillment is a key predictor of job well-being (Guest & Conway, 2002; Robinson & Morrison, 2000). In the context of this study, teachers upgraded qualifications but without seeing institutional promises met were often disappointment translating into lower satisfaction even when intrinsic motivation could somewhat be there. Given the increasing emphasis on teacher well-being and retention globally, these findings accentuate the importance of institutional coherence in aligning policy-driven qualification expectations with on-the-ground realities.

On the whole, the study reveals a moderate and significant correlation between government commitment and organizational commitment. This highlights that macro-level governance influences micro-level institutional allegiance. While the direct effect is less potent than mediated routes via psychological contract, it nonetheless underscores the role of institutional credibility integrity and transparency in sustaining teacher loyalty (Brewster & Hegewisch, 2017). Notably also, the study uncovered that the relationship between government commitment and job satisfaction, though weaker, remains meaningful. It reflects Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, where organizational policies act as hygiene factors they may not directly motivate but can prevent dissatisfaction when absent. In Zambia, when teachers invest in capacity building yet feel institutional promises remain unmet, satisfaction erodes; even if salary scales or conditions have improved nominally.

Overall, the analysis revealed that psychological contract interpretation may vary across cultural contexts, particularly in African education systems where relational dynamics and collectivist norms shape expectations (Schreuder et al., 2023). In the Zambian public sector, such values can influence how teachers perceive recognition, loyalty, and reciprocation. This highlights the necessity for policies that reflect local cultural understandings of trust and mutual expectation.

## Theoretical Implication

The results are consistent with the main tenets of Psychological Contract Theory, which holds that employee attitudes and behaviours are directly impacted by the perceived employer fulfilment of unwritten expectations (like promotion, respect, and equitable treatment) (Rousseau, 2001). Teachers' micro-level work experiences are greatly influenced by macro-level actors, in this case the Ministry of Education, as evidenced by the strong correlation between psychological contract and government commitment. Therefore, when organisations fulfil their perceived commitments, employees react with favourable attitudes like loyalty and contentment. Thus, perceived government delays can undermine the psychological contract of the employees leading to dissatisfaction and low commitment among a large number of teachers.

## Policy and Managerial Implication

On the flip side, this study postulates that high government commitment to teachers' psychological contracts may enable high commitment, satisfaction and morale. Therefore, government commitment towards teachers' motivation is a precondition for potential positive work attitudes and performance outcomes among public school teachers. Therefore, the government is foundational to shaping teachers' work attitudes and behaviors. The government's commitment, demonstrated through policy frameworks and managerial practices, critically determines whether these psychological contracts are fulfilled or breached.

Policy-wise, key areas such as fidelity to implementation in remuneration, professional development, resource allocation, and performance management representing formal government commitments directly impact teachers' perceptions of fairness and support. Effective policy implementation, including timely salary payments, access to continuous training, and improved working conditions, reinforces teachers' affective, continuance, and normative commitment, thereby enhancing job satisfaction. Conversely, policy inconsistencies and delays contribute to psychological contract breaches, leading to dissatisfaction and reduced organizational commitment.

Managerially, school leaders and local education officials must operationalize government policies and play a central role in sustaining government commitment at the grassroots level. Transparent communication, supportive leadership, efficient resource management, and conflict resolution are critical managerial practices that influence teachers' daily experiences and perceptions of government support. Deficiencies in managerial capacity can undermine policy benefits, negatively affecting teacher morale and commitment.

The interaction between policy and managerial effectiveness is especially significant in resource-limited contexts like Zambia, where systemic challenges persist. Strengthening both policy frameworks and managerial competencies is essential to uphold government commitment, thereby fostering motivated and committed teachers. This alignment is crucial for enhancing educational outcomes through sustained teacher engagement and satisfaction. The findings underscore that government commitment, through coherent policies and effective managerial practices, is a critical cog in teachers' psychological contracts, significantly influencing organizational commitment and job satisfaction in Zambian public schools. Policymakers and education managers must prioritize consistent policy implementation and capacity building to realize these outcomes.

## CONCLUSION

The study's findings indicate that teachers' psychological contracts in Zambia are significantly impacted by perceived government commitment, which affects both organisational commitment and job satisfaction. Teachers react devotedly and assiduously when their expectations are met because they perceive the government's response as an indication of institutional support and respect. These results emphasise how important it is to link educational human resource policy to the goals and sacrifices of teachers, particularly those who have huge skill and competence set of skills. For Zambia's public education system to have a resilient and dedicated teaching workforce, this reciprocal relationship must be strengthened.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

It is, therefore, recommended that, in order to address low teacher commitment, the Government, should hasten bettering of benefits to teachers that upgraded qualification in line with policy directives; continuously provide training that clearly communicate expectations, roles, and responsibilities, disseminate resources (e.g. guides, FAQs) as well as develop and implement policies that support teachers' psychological contracts.

## Contribution and Future Research

This paper extends psychological contract and organisational commitment theories into the domain of macro-level governance in educational contexts, offering evidence from Zambia's public education system, which is underrepresented in current literature post-2020. By highlighting the mediating role of psychological contract between policy delivery and attitudinal outcomes, it adds granularity to understanding teacher motivation in developing countries. Future research might explore factors such as leader-member exchange, job embeddedness, or organizational justice perceptions as additional mediators or moderators paralleling studies like Amoah et al. (2021) in Ghana, and Snyman et al. (2023) in South Africa.

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