

**Employer-Employee Relationships in Small Firms: The Role of Personality and
Psychological Contracts**

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ABSTRACT

Employment Relationships in Small Firms

Filotheos Ntalianis, Ph.D.
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This study examined the exchange relationship of small business owners and their employees. The primary purpose of this research was to consider how small business owners' personality and motivation, as seen through the Big Five model and self-concordance theory respectively, affect their promises and commitments made to employees as well as their work attitudes. Data were collected from 50 small business owners and 253 of their employees in small organizations in the provinces of Ontario and Quebec. To minimize common method bias, owners' promises to employees were assessed via self and employee reports. Overall, the results indicated that among the Big Five personality traits, Agreeableness was the best predictor of psychological contract orientations and owner attitudes, while Neuroticism and Extraversion were unrelated to any dimension of the psychological contract. On the other hand, Conscientiousness and Openness to Experience partly explained small business owners' contract orientations and work attitudes. Self-concordant goals were unrelated to both psychological contracts and small business owner attitudes. These findings suggest that small business owners should recognize the importance of their personality characteristics and their impact on establishing vital exchange relationships with their employees. Limitations are discussed in light of the unique context of the small business in which this study was conducted and directions for future research are provided.

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DEDICATION

To my “little” family, Joanna and Stefanos, and my “big” family, the Reverend Stefanos, Margarita, Constantine, Darinka, Grandmother Barbara, Grandfathers Athanasios and George, Argyris, Minas, Klimis, Maria, Porfyrios and Barbara

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter One

1.	Introduction	1
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Chapter Two

2.	Theoretical background and hypotheses	6
2.1.	Size, structure and growth: The influence of context on employment relationships	6
2.2.	Psychological contracts	11
2.2.1.	A brief history	11
2.2.2.	Current definition and dimensions	13
2.2.3.	Psychological contracts in the small business context	17
2.2.4.	Psychological contract breach and violation	18
2.3.	The personality characteristics and motivation of small business owners	23
2.4.	Small business owner personality and psychological contracts	28
2.4.1.	Agreeableness	28
2.4.2.	Conscientiousness	31
2.4.3.	Openness to experience	35
2.4.4.	Extraversion	41
2.4.5.	Neuroticism	44
2.5.	Small business owner motivation: Self-concordance, psychological contracts and work attitudes	48
2.5.1.	Self-concordance	48
2.5.2.	Self-concordance and psychological contracts	51
2.5.3.	Self-concordance and work attitudes	54

Chapter Three

3.	Methods	56
3.1.	Collection of interview data	62
3.2.	Measures	63
3.3.	Questionnaire for small business owners	63
3.3.1.	Personality	63
3.3.2.	Self-concordance	64
3.3.3.	Psychological contract (transactional and relational obligations from the owner to the employees as perceived by the owner)	66
3.3.4.	Job satisfaction	67
3.3.5.	Organizational commitment	67
3.3.6.	Exit intentions	69
3.4.	Questionnaire for small business employees	69
3.4.1.	Psychological contracts (transactional and relational obligations from the owner to the employees as perceived by the employees)	70
3.4.2.	Perceived breach	70
3.4.3.	Feelings of violation	71
3.5.	Translation	71
3.6.	Control variables	72

Chapter Four

4.	Results	74
4.1.	Descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations	74
4.2.	Data from small business owners	74
4.2.1.	Personality	74

4.2.2.	Motivation	76
4.2.3.	Psychological contracts	76
4.2.4.	Job satisfaction, organizational commitment and exit intentions	77
4.3.	Data from small business employees	77
4.3.1.	Aggregation of employee perceptions	77
4.3.2.	Psychological contracts	80
4.3.3.	Perceptions of breach and feelings of violation	81
4.4.	Hypotheses testing	81
4.4.1.	Agreeableness	82
4.4.2.	Conscientiousness	84
4.4.3.	Openness to experience	85
4.4.4.	Extraversion	87
4.4.5.	Neuroticism	87
4.4.6.	Self-concordance, psychological contracts and work attitudes	88
Chapter Five		
5.	Discussion	90
5.1.	Major findings	90
5.1.1.	Overview	90
5.1.2.	Agreeableness	90
5.1.3.	Conscientiousness	92
5.1.4.	Openness to experience	97
5.1.5.	Extraversion	100
5.1.6.	Neuroticism	102

5.1.7.	Self-concordance	104
5.2.	Limitations	106
5.3.	Implications for research	111
5.4.	Implications for practitioners	115
5.5.	Conclusion	120
	Tables	121
	Figures	138
	References	139
	Appendix 1	167
	Appendix 2	168
	Appendix 3	169
	Appendix 4	170
	Appendix 5	171
	Appendix 6	173

List of Figures

Figure 1 Types of psychological contracts

List of Tables

Table 1	Means on the BFI personality traits among three different studies
Table 2	Mutuality between small business owner and employee perceptions across transactional and relational contract obligations
Table 3	Descriptive statistics and correlations for the study variables
Table 4	Regression analyses for the effects of agreeableness on relational contracts – owner and aggregate employee reports
Table 5	Regression analyses for the effects of conscientiousness on relational contracts – owner and aggregate employee reports
Table 6	Regression analyses for the effects of openness to experience on relational contracts – owner and aggregate employee reports
Table 7	Regression analyses for the effects of extraversion on relational contracts – owner and aggregate employee reports
Table 8	Regression analyses for the effects of neuroticism on transactional contracts – owner and employee reports
Table 9	Regression analyses for the effects of agreeableness on job satisfaction, affective commitment, exit intentions, perceptions of breach and feelings of violation
Table 10	Regression analyses for the effects of conscientiousness on job satisfaction, affective commitment, exit intentions, perceptions of breach and feelings of violation
Table 11	Regression analyses for the effects of openness to experience on job satisfaction, affective commitment, exit intentions, perceptions of breach and feelings of violation
Table 12	Regression analyses for effects of extraversion on job satisfaction, affective commitment, exit intentions, perceptions of breach and feelings of violation
Table 13	Regression analyses for the effects of neuroticism on job satisfaction, affective commitment, exit intentions, perceptions of breach and feelings of violation
Table 14	Regression analyses for the effects of self-concordance on relational contracts – owner and aggregate employee reports

Table 15	Regression analyses for the effects of self-concordance on job satisfaction, affective commitment, exit intentions, perceptions of breach and feelings of violation
Table 16	Regression analyses for the effects of autonomous goals on relational contracts – owner and aggregate employee reports
Table 17	Regression analyses for the effects of autonomous goals on job satisfaction, affective commitment, exit intentions, perceptions of breach and feelings of violation

CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

“The better [my employees] are for themselves, the better they are for me. The better I am the better it is for them. It’s a symbiotic kind of relationship because I know a lot of things, but they know things that I don’t know. And we work together to take their God-given talent and to make it grow, to guide them and educate them in a specific way...Because it’s a small firm, one person makes a bigger impact... Let’s say at Bombardier they don’t feel one person; here you feel it definitely”.

(Extract from an interview with a small business owner)

The claim that the success of a business depends on its people has become a commonplace. The ability of the employees to meet the business demands in response to which they were hired can ultimately determine the overall survival and success of the enterprise. This is the essence of a good employer – employee relationship, often described as an “exchange” relationship. In a successful employer – employee exchange relationship both parties have a clear understanding of what is expected from them, and they work to accomplish it.

As is evident from the words of the small business owner cited in the above quotation, employer – employee relationships are crucial in small businesses. These relationships are especially worthy of study because when the number of employees in a firm is limited, the activities of each individual can have a greater impact on the overall firm performance. In view of the importance of employment relationships in small

businesses, it is somewhat surprising that this topic has been largely neglected in small business research. The current study aims to redress this oversight.

Employers and employees both hold expectations about their employment relationship, whether or not these expectations are explicitly stated. For example, if an employer hires someone who needs specialized on-the-job training, he or she is making an investment in this new recruit that will only pay off if the employee stays with the organization in the long term. If, however, this individual intends to leave the organization upon completion of the training, the decision to hire constitutes a poor business decision on the part of the employer. Similarly, an employer who has promised to promote employees from within the organization to managerial positions on the basis of contribution, but instead recruits newcomers or family members to fill these positions, will end up with a staff of very disappointed employees. In cases like this, committed and experienced employees may be driven to seek alternative employment. Clearly, employer and employee must both be aware of the other party's expectations and be committed to fulfilling them in order for the employment relationship to be effective. It is widely accepted in current research that studying and grasping these expectations can significantly enhance our understanding of people's behavior in organizations.

In this research, I shall use the concept of *psychological contract* (Rousseau, 1989), the mutual beliefs held by employer and employees about their employment relationship, as a means of gaining insight into the underlying dynamics of exchange relationships. The concept of psychological contract will be a useful tool to explain the different types of relationship that employers and employees establish in small firms.

Psychological contract studies have traditionally emphasized the employee's perspective. In other words, they have focused on the employee's expectations about their general responsibilities, training, performance standards, and opportunities for promotion, development and advancement in the firm. In my research, I aim to shift the emphasis to the employer's expectations. This decision was guided by the small business context of this study: in a small firm, the role of the owner in establishing and overseeing the venture is pivotal. It is proposed that his or her characteristics will have a significant impact on the working conditions of the employees. I shall therefore focus on the way in which the characteristics of small business employers, specifically their personality and motivation, shape their expectations, and how their employees perceive these expectations.

Past research suggests that personality can be used as a reliable predictor of both employees' expectations (Raja, Johns, & Ntalianis, 2004) and entrepreneurs' work attitudes (Becherer & Maurer, 1999). In general, personality exhibits moderate to strong correlations, at a level of approximately .40, with other constructs or variables associated with individual behavior (Funder, 2001). In this study, I shall examine personality through the lens of the *Big Five* personality characteristics (McCrae & Costa, 1987). The Big Five model has been shown to be a reliable predictor of behavior, yet has been investigated only sporadically in entrepreneurship research (Baron, 2002). A discussion of the Big Five personality taxonomy in a small business context will thus be a key independent variable in this investigation.

A vital aspect of the small business owner's characteristics is his or her motivation for business success: the owner's determination to exert effort in order to

accomplish his or her goals. Scholars in the area of entrepreneurship have long stressed the importance of motivation as a key element in small business performance and success (Cragg & King, 1998; Herron & Robinson, 1993; Keats & Bracker, 1988; Naffzinger, Hornsby, & Kuratko, 1994; Shane, Locke, & Collins, 2003). In this research, I take the premises of self-determination theory of motivation, one of the most comprehensive and widely explored theories of motivation, as the basis for my investigation (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2000). I examine how small business owners' goals are consistent with their "innate psychological needs" (Ryan & Deci, 2000: 68; Sheldon & Elliot, 1998, 1999), and thereby affect the exchange relationship with their employees. Beyond the employment relationship, I am also interested in exploring the way in which owners' motivation and personality affect their own work attitudes – job satisfaction, exit intentions, and commitment to their organization. These work attitudes, too, will be likely to affect their employees' working lives.

In sum, the primary purpose of this research is to consider how small business owners' personality and motivational characteristics affect their employees' work expectations, as well as their own work attitudes. I start my investigation by taking a look at the dynamics of attitudes, relationships and behaviors that are typical of people who work in or own small firms. Johns (2001) suggests that "changing contexts may necessitate changes in the very definitions of work behaviors" or "changes in attributions about behavior" (p. 38). It is therefore important to describe contextual factors such as firm size and structure and the way in which these may affect the owner's behavior and activities.

Personality, employer – employee expectations and work attitudes have certainly been studied before, but most of these studies have been conducted in the context of the large organization. The contribution of the present research is to study the relationship among these variables in a small firm context, defined in this study as organizations that employ 50 individuals or fewer. The purpose of the following section is to provide a backdrop for the investigation that follows, clarifying the nature of small businesses and its impact on the behaviors of the individuals who work in them. The intent is to show that small organizations have their own unique features and dynamics, which create special employer – employee exchange relationships that deserve to be studied in their own right.

CHAPTER TWO

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESES

2.1. Size, Structure and Growth: The Influence of Context on Employment

Relationships

The aspect of size that is of greatest interest here is the impact of size on the structure of the firm. As I shall argue, structure in turn has implications for the type of employee relationships that are expected to develop. In the early sociological literature, Blau's (1970) seminal work established that increases in size are characteristically accompanied by several changes in the structure of organizations. Specifically, Blau argued that as organizational size expands, there are increases in employees' responsibilities as well as the supervisor's span of control. Span of control is defined as the number of subordinates a manager can handle effectively. Further increases in size frequently bring about serious co-ordination problems that require further division of labor, resulting in an increase in the levels of hierarchy in the organization. More recently, Paulson's (1980) work confirmed a positive correlation between organizational size and complexity, defined as the number of job specialties existing in an organization. Marsh (1992), in a sample of Japanese factories, found that size was negatively correlated with centralization and positively associated with levels of hierarchy, signifying that as organizations grow, a diffusion of authority occurs, passing from a single to several individuals within the organization. Taken together, these findings indicate that as size expands, structural differentiation increases, that is, the number of hierarchical levels, and the number of occupational categories or departments that exist in the organization increases. In addition, the span of control broadens, meaning that fewer subordinates will

now report directly to a single individual, namely the supervisor or the small business owner depending on the situation. The result of all these structural changes is the diminishing importance of the individual as a power holder with interpersonal influence. Simply put, the larger the organization, the lower the power of the individual within it.

The above arguments are reinforced by recent leadership research. When the organization has a simple structure, leaders can be most effective at communicating with followers and implementing their vision; this is much more difficult in professional bureaucracies or other complicated structural forms (Pawar & Eastman, 1997). In other words, it will be easier for leaders to attend to and support their followers' needs and challenge and stimulate them when hierarchical structures are flat and allow interaction and direct communication. In complex structures, individuals may be remotely located and interpersonal interaction between leader and followers is limited. Thus I conclude that in small firms, the business owner has a significant impact on the employment relationship that develops with employees, much more so than if the organization were larger.

A similar conclusion stems from work in management research. Burns and Stalker (1961) distinguished between two types of organizational structures: mechanistic and organic. Mechanistic structures are characterized by tallness, that is, a large number of hierarchical levels, specialization, centralization, and formalization (Courtright, Fairhurst, & Rogers, 1989). In general, in mechanistic structures, employees display constrained patterns of interaction. They have a distant relationship with top management and collect and exchange information through direct communication with their immediate co-workers and supervisors only. In mechanistic structures there are typically several people,

rather than a single individual, in charge of the planning and operation of the firm.

Organic structures, on the other hand, are characterized by a relative hierarchical flatness – few levels of authority and hierarchy, and a wide span of control (Burns & Stalker, 1961). In organic structures, informality is a key characteristic, and owner and employees are in close and frequent contact. In such structures, interpersonal dynamics are more intense, developing and changing as a function of the owner's and employees' personal characteristics and the type of interpersonal relations they establish (Scott, 1998).

From the aforementioned descriptions of organizational structures, it is reasonable to assume that small businesses typically have organic structures. In an organic structure the small business owner's characteristics, such as his or her personality, may have great impact on the operations of the organization, due to his or her personal involvement and increased contact with the employees. Moreover, in organic structures, the relationship among subordinates and small business owners is highly interactive, allowing employees to obtain information to shape their exchange relationship or even challenge and criticize the owner's leadership practices. The hierarchical proximity in these organizations creates high visibility of both the owners' and employees' actions (Stanworth & Gray, 1991).

A third stream of research suggests the relative importance of owners' characteristics in small as opposed to larger firms. Scholars who study the growth of small businesses have argued that small firms go through five distinct stages, starting with inception, moving progressively to survival, growth and expansion, and ending in maturity (Scott & Bruce, 1987). Looking more closely at the relationship between the phases in an organization's development and its mode of operation, Scott and Bruce

(1987) have contended that the stage of growth influences top management role, management style and organizational structure. For instance, organizations at the inception stage are unstructured, characterized mainly by an individualistic / entrepreneurial managerial style where direct supervision is highly exercised for goal accomplishment (Scott & Bruce, 1987). At the early stages of organizational growth and before the organization starts to expand, the small business owner plays a decisive role in the way the organization operates. As the organization expands, however, the role of the small business owner diminishes. Management style shifts from entrepreneurialism to professionalism, where emphasis is given to administration, co-ordination and delegation of authority to the lower levels of the hierarchy. Overall this means that as organizations grow, the importance of the small business owner, as a person who can significantly affect the day-to-day operations as well as the fate of the organization, declines. Although there has been debate about the number of stages, and the order in which they are presented in Scott and Bruce's (1987) model (Storey, 1994), it is possible to conclude that small organizations go through different phases during their life span and that these phases have an impact on the way they operate as well as their intra-organizational and interpersonal dynamics.

In sum, the above discussion indicates that differences in organizational size will be accompanied by differences in structure and function, which have direct effects on employer and employee behavior. On this basis I believe that size affects the way exchange relationships between owners and employees are formed, develop and alter over time. Moreover, the influence of the business owners, who act as the leaders of their organizations, will be especially evident in small contexts; their personal characteristics

will define the goals of the organization, its structure and culture, as well as the exchange relationships they establish with their employees. Taking the small business owners' disposition and motivation as the heart of their personal characteristics, I suggest that these characteristics define to a great extent the employers' promises and commitments to their employees, and this plays a central role in the formation of the exchange relationships in small firms.

Several characteristics of the small business establish a unique interactive landscape, with distinctive relationships among the involved parties. First, the prolific and multitasking role of the small business owner in the organization, as decision maker, manager and worker, and the amount of his or her personal wealth that is tied up in the establishment, create challenging and sometimes stressful work conditions. This presence of stressors raises the possibility that friction might occur between owner and employees. Second, the high visibility of everyone's actions can result in constant monitoring anxiety and lack of privacy. Moreover, the frequent involvement of family members in decision-making and the governance of the small firm increases the chances that small firm employees will receive multiple pieces of information from owner, co-owners, partners, and fellow employees. This information might turn out to be conflicting or even confusing, but is nevertheless useful in shaping, evaluating and reforming employees' expectations related to their employment. Using the concept of *psychological contract* (Rousseau, 1989; 1995) as a means of investigating exchange relationships in small firms, will allow us to better conceptualize these working conditions and predict the success of employment relationships. In the following section I shall give a brief overview of the psychological contract: its history, definition and dimensions.

2.2. Psychological Contracts

2.2.1. A brief history. The history of the concept of psychological contract dates back to the early sixties where the concept first appeared. Argyris (1960) first coined the term “psychological contract”, using the term to describe the employees’ perception of their foreman’s leadership style, that is, whether he was passive or understanding. The term also described actual mutual obligations regarding the fulfillment of the expectations of the foremen and employees. Argyris (1960) observed that “since the foremen realize that this system [group] will tend to produce optimally under passive leadership, and since the employees agree, a relationship may be hypothesized to evolve between the employees and the foremen which might be called the ‘psychological work contract’. The employee will maintain the high production, low grievances, etc., if the foreman guarantees and respects the norms of the employee informal culture (i.e., let the employees alone, make certain they make adequate wages, and have secure jobs)” (p. 97).

Levinson, Price, Munden, Mandl, and Solley (1962) produced other early work about psychological contracts. They conceptualized psychological contract in terms of a “series of mutual expectations” (Levinson et al., 1962: 21) between the employees and their organizations. In their book they describe the findings of a research project undertaken to investigate the impact of work experiences on mental health. Their interviews showed that participants had specific expectations about their employment relationship, which they anticipated would be fulfilled. These expectations, according to the authors, had two main characteristics: a) they were mainly un verbalized and b) they frequently preceded the formal employment relationship. These two attributes made them

conceive of psychological contracts as being complex in nature, and prone to evolve over time.

Since its conception, the psychological contract has undergone continual development and clarification. For example, Schein (1965), who stressed the importance of psychological contracts as a means of understanding and better managing individual behavior in organizations, elaborated on the nature of mutual expectations and created a link between psychological contracts and organizational roles. Furthermore, early writers on the topic connected psychological contract with absence behavior (Gibson, 1966), and tried to quantitatively assess the psychological contract construct. Specifically, Jurek (1968) examined the existence of psychological contracts in route salesmen and its impact on their sales performance. Unlike earlier conceptualizations of the psychological contract as agreed employer – employee expectations, Kotter (1973) introduced the notion of “matching”, arguing that incongruence between the expectations of the involved parties could exist.

Portwood and Miller (1976) focused primarily on the nomological network of psychological contracts and investigated its relationship to employee job satisfaction. The authors argued that the psychological contracting process is dependent upon one’s personal characteristics, such as needs, attitudes towards work and job knowledge and experience, and can highly influence one’s attitudes (e.g. job satisfaction) and productivity. In their research, conducted in a Midwestern retail firm operating in 43 different locations, they found that organizations that respect and comply with their psychological contract expectations have satisfied employees. Moreover, Holtz (1978), in a qualitative study, examined the change of psychological contracts as a function of one’s

age and career development. She reported that psychological contract content changes over one's life cycle and career advancement. Finally, from the early development of the construct I also acknowledge the work of Nicholson and Johns (1985), who argued that employees' psychological contract can influence their absence behavior and the way they interpret absence events.

In the last ten years, exchange relationships, in general, and psychological contracts, in particular, have attracted both empirical and theoretical attention. Researchers have examined issues related to the assessment of psychological contracts (Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1998), the dimensionality of the construct (Rousseau, 2000; Sels, Janssens, & Van Den Brande, 2004) and its relationship with other constructs such as personality (Raja et al., 2004), citizenship behavior (Coyle-Shapiro, 2002; Hui, Rousseau, & Lee, 2004), organizational support (Coyle-Shapiro & Conway, 2005), performance (Irving & Gellatly, 2001), job satisfaction (Cavanaugh & Noe, 1999), turnover intentions, organizational commitment (Raja et al., 2004), and trust (Robinson, 1996). Much of the recent research has been pioneered by Rousseau and her colleagues. Below, I discuss Rousseau's (1989) current definition of psychological contracts as well as the dimensions of this construct as presented in contemporary behavioral studies.

2.2.2. Current definition and dimensions. The current theoretical formulation of the psychological contract is owed to Rousseau (1989: 128) who characterized psychological contracts as “ (a) an individual's belief(s) in reciprocal obligations between that individual and another party, (c) [sic] where one party has paid for or offered a consideration in exchange for a promise that the other party will reciprocate (i.e. fulfill its promise), (d) where both the promise and the consideration are highly subjective (i.e.

existing in the eye of the beholder, the individual), and (e) where nonetheless, the individual holding a belief in a psychological contract attaches to this belief assumptions regarding good faith, fair dealing, and trust, treating this contract as part of the larger fabric of the relationship between the parties.” In essence, psychological contracts are subjective perceptions of mutual obligations – based on exchanged promises – affected by the context in which the exchange relationship is established (Anderson & Schalk, 1998; Rousseau, 1995).

Psychological contracts tend to be incomplete in that some terms of the contract are not explicitly stated, and the expectations of either party may change over the course of time. Such contracts therefore impel their holders actively to seek additional information from their environment that will help them fill the gaps. Past experience plays an active role in this search for missing information. Specifically, Millward and Brewerton (2000) propose that freshly accumulated information combined with past experience assists individuals to better comprehend and evaluate their employment relationship, and thus form their psychological contract.

A trichotomous typology has been proposed to encapsulate these exchange relationships. Psychological contracts can take a *relational*, *transactional* or a *hybrid* form (Rousseau, 2000). Relational contracts refer to the socio-emotional aspects of a relationship (Rousseau, 2000). People who form relational contract orientations expect long-term relationships and stability, and attach great emphasis to issues such as loyalty and relationship building, as compared to monetary rewards and material gains (Rousseau, 1995). In contrast, those who have strong economic preferences, and who prefer short-term, clearly-specified employment arrangements, are assumed to hold

transactional contracts (Rousseau, 1995, 2000). As portrayed here, relational and transactional contracts vary significantly in terms of duration, that is, short-term vs. long-term, and performance standards, unspecified vs. specified (Rousseau, 1995). An example of a relational contract would be an individual employed by a parent who has been given only a vague explanation of the performance standards required, but who expects to remain in the organization for a long time because of the family bond with the owner. On the other hand, a college student who is hired on a 15-20 day contract as a salesperson during the Christmas holidays in a large department store, to assist with increased seasonal sales, but who expects that his or her contract will not be renewed afterwards, is an example of a person who holds a transactional contract (Rousseau, 1995).

There are two hybrid forms of the psychological contract, which have been less popular among researchers than transactional and relational dimensions. These are *balanced* and *transitional* contracts. Balanced contracts also describe a long-term relationship between the involved parties, but have in addition specific performance terms, for example, a certain number of articles that must be produced, and an economic focus, such as profitability and high financial returns (Rousseau, 1995, 2000). On the contrary, transitional contracts are of short-term duration with unclear and ambiguous performance terms (Rousseau, 2000). While not heavily researched, balanced and transitional types of psychological contracts help to complete our picture of the exchange relationship. Rousseau's (1995) psychological contract typology is presented in Figure 1.

In this study, I shall focus solely on relational and transactional contracts; hybrid forms will not be examined. This decision was made on the basis that the former have

been consistently theoretically explored and empirically supported in behavioral literature. However, there is less consensus in psychological contract research regarding the existence of the hybrid forms and how distinct they are conceptually from the transactional and relational contract forms (Millward & Brewerton, 2000). In sum, as the current study does not seek to re-examine the structure of the psychological contract nor further validate any new instruments pertaining to that construct, I selected psychological contract theories and measures that have wide acceptance and statistical robustness.

Research has examined the structure of transactional and relational contracts. Specifically, Millward and Hopkins (1998), in a sample comprised of 476 employees working for four multinational organizations in the United Kingdom, have confirmed the existence of the transactional and relational dimensions of the psychological contract and have construct validated the two scales. Further research has investigated the relationship between psychological contracts and other variables. For example, Coyle-Shapiro and Kessler (2003), in a large cross-sectional study (with 5,709 respondents) conducted in the public sector in the United Kingdom, examined the impact of psychological contract fulfillment on employee commitment and citizenship behavior. Their results indicated a negative relationship between transactional contracts and citizenship behavior and a positive relationship between relational contracts and the same construct. As regards organizational commitment, their results indicated a positive association with transactional and relational contract fulfillment. Moreover, in a study conducted in five large public and private organizations located in Pakistan, Raja and colleagues (2004) found that the employee's personality characteristics, such as extraversion, conscientiousness, neuroticism, equity sensitivity, self-esteem and locus of control, were

related to transactional and relational contracts. The same authors also reported a strong relationship between transactional and relational contracts and job satisfaction, affective commitment and turnover intentions. In sum, the transactional and relational types of contract adequately describe and have been used to predict the employer – employee exchange relationship (Dabos & Rousseau, 2003).

In contrast to the aforementioned studies, which have examined psychological contracts in large and multinational corporations, this study will seek to investigate exchange relationships in small firms. In the next section, I shall examine how the psychological contract is established in small firms and clarify the specific dynamics associated with it in this type of organization.

2.2.3. *Psychological contracts in the small business context.* Millward and Brewerton (2000) explain that there is ambiguity in a large organization regarding “whom” the contract is established with. This is because there are multiple power holders and delegation of responsibility to different organizational divisions. In a small firm environment, however, this ambiguity does not exist. It is with the owner that the employee establishes a formal, sometimes written, contractual relationship. Information is derived mainly from the owner’s promises, as the principal power holder in the organization and the person who is usually responsible for key human resource decisions. Promises are the building blocks of psychological contracts, whether conveyed verbally in the form of an assurance, or through actions in the form of an unspoken or unwritten commitment (Rousseau, 2001; Rubin & Lewicki, 1973). Promises can be obtained either directly from the owner or through direct observation of his or her actions, for instance

the way he or she reallocates or distributes rewards among employees, or through repeated interactions over time (Rousseau, 2001).

As was noted earlier, small firms are characterized by flat hierarchies with frequent interaction between owners and employees. This allows a quick flow of information and constant monitoring of the exchange relationship, thus leaving limited space for any misunderstandings. It is worth noting that information can also be retrieved from interaction with other employees. Observation of one's co-workers can be used in a systematic complementary way to complete the conceptual puzzle of one's psychological contract expectations. Exchange relationships are dynamic in nature (Robinson, Kraatz, & Rousseau, 1994), and it is anticipated that information will be constantly collected from all available sources in the environment to refine and redefine the content of the psychological contract. I believe, however, that the information obtained from the employer will be accorded greatest importance, as compared to information collected from one's fellow colleagues. The owner of the organization is the primary agent with whom the employee signs an official contract, the focal point and major power-holder in the small firm. It is for this reason that the current study will focus on psychological contracts formed with the small business owner.

2.2.4. Psychological contract breach and violation. Sometimes, small business owners will fail to keep their promises and this will not go unnoticed by the employees. For example, an owner of a small publishing house, who has promised a cash bonus for all the employees in the cover design and printing facilities for the quick completion of an urgent project, but paid this bonus only to the designing team, will certainly receive complaints from those working in the printing department for the unfair treatment. As

mentioned earlier, because of the physical proximity and frequent interaction in small organizations, employees will clearly observe their employer's actions and closely monitor their exchange relationships. As a result of these broken promises, contract breach might occur, accompanied by negative feelings of violation (Morrison & Robinson, 1997).

The formation of a psychological contract is merely the first step in an exchange relationship between the employer and the employee. If the employee perceives that the employer has failed to fulfill his or her promised obligations, it is said that *contract breach* occurs (Morrison & Robinson, 1997; Robinson, 1996). Breach is a cognitive outcome of one's vigilance and monitoring behavior (Berger, 1979). The terms *reneging* and *incongruence* are key to the notion of psychological contract breach (Morrison & Robinson, 1997). Reneging denotes the agent's inability to meet a promised or existing obligation while incongruence refers to dissimilar perceptions that two parties (e.g. employee and manager or employee and owner) can hold about the nature or the existence of the obligations in question (Morrison & Robinson, 1997; Robinson & Morrison, 2000). Robinson and Morrison (2000) contend that the existence of reneging or incongruence can generate the perception that one's contract has been breached.

As noted previously, in the small firm, reduced distance and increased interaction between employees and their employer will create a rapid flow of information. Moreover, as a result of the organization's small size and absence of distance, relationships among small firm members can be stronger and denser. Social network theory asserts that in strong relationships, intimacy, co-operation, and mutual understanding are to be found among interacting members (Granovetter, 1973). Network density, defined as the

proportion of existing network ties as compared to the total number of potential ties (Scott, 1991), will efficiently aid the dissemination of information. In a network characterized by strong and dense member links, the position and actions of the small business owner are highly transparent, can be easily scrutinized and will rarely be unnoticed by the employees. As a result, any action that is inconsistent with employees' perceptions about their employment relationship will be perceived as a breach of the psychological contract. The core assumption is that people who work in a small business will have ample opportunities to test their expectations through interactions with the business owner, monitoring and weighing their exchange relationship.

Contract violation is an emotional or affective state that usually follows breach. Contract violation is usually associated with emotions of anger, bitterness, frustration, injustice, wrongful harm and disappointment (Morrison & Robinson, 1997; Robinson & Morrison, 2000). The impact of violation on employee behavior has been examined in recent behavioral research. For instance, Turnley and Feldman (1999) examined the impact of psychological contract violation on employee behaviors and attitudes in a sample of 804 managers working for large private and public U.S. firms. The authors found that contract violation was a good predictor of employees' decreased loyalty to the organization while at the same time it increased their neglect behavior, their intentions to dissent vocally and exit the organization. Additionally, in a longitudinal study conducted with 128 graduate management alumni, Robinson and Rousseau (1994) examined the effect of psychological contract violation on employee trust, job and organization satisfaction, intentions to stay in the organization and actual turnover. Their results indicated that contract violation was positively related to turnover and negatively

correlated with intentions to stay, trust, and satisfaction. Similarly, in another longitudinal study comprising 126 MBA alumni, Robinson and Morrison (1995) investigated the relationship between psychological contract violation and organizational citizenship behavior. The authors reported that employees were unlikely to report high levels of civic virtue, a component of citizenship behavior defined as the employees' concern, participation and involvement in the organization. The same study found a negative association between relational contracts and violation and a positive relationship between transactional contracts and violation. Recently, Raja and colleagues (2004) reported similar findings that verified the positive relationship between transactional contracts and perceptions of breach and feelings of violation. The same constructs were negatively associated with relational contracts.

As argued earlier in this thesis, organizational size will have an impact on psychological contract dynamics. Size will affect not only the way the psychological contract is formed and breached but also the way employees' feelings of violation are expressed, in terms of intensity and visibility. Once the psychological contract has been violated, these emotions will be expressed either directly or indirectly. This may take the form of a direct and emotional quarrel, for example, between the employee and the owner. On the other hand, indirect ways of expressing one's feelings of violation can take the form of organizational shunning, resistance or dissent. Shunning is defined as "the process whereby one individual aggressively ignores or avoids another in retaliation for a real or fantasized injury" (Lewis, 2000: 125). Resistance means acting in an opposite way from the one desired by one's superiors, for example, performing an undesirable task or avoiding a desirable task (Jermier, Knights, & Nord, 1994). Dissent is the expression

of concerns and disagreement for any aspect of the work (Graham, 1986).

Whistleblowing is a representative example of organizational dissent.

The small business context provides a fertile platform for direct confrontation because of the proximity and inevitable frequency of interaction between the owner and the employee. In a small business context, emotions of violation will emerge as very strong states dominating the relationship between the involved parties. Thus direct confrontation is likely to increase and reinforce negative emotions once violation has been sensed. Empirical research has found that negative moods and emotions transfer more easily than positive emotional states (Joiner & Thomas, 1994; Tickle-Degnen & Puccinelli, 1999). Such transference of emotions among small group members has been termed emotional contagion (Hatfield, Cacioppo, & Rapson, 1992, 1994; Kelly & Barsade, 2001). Given the characteristics of small firms as outlined above, it can similarly be argued that emotional contagion will occur in the small organization and under certain circumstances, dissatisfied members will pass their negative emotions to the other small business employees creating a negative climate for the employer. Feelings of violation may have severe consequences for the small business, and this is thus a variable of great importance in my research. In conclusion, I have shown that the unfulfilled expectations that occur when psychological contracts are broken will differ in terms of intensity and impact within the small firm context as opposed to large firms. In this study, perceptions of breach and subsequent feelings of violation will be dependent variables.

Having examined psychological contract mechanisms in small firms, we may now turn our attention to the issue of personality. In the following paragraphs, I shall examine

the way in which the small business owner's personality can shape the employee's psychological contract.

2.3. The Personality Characteristics and Motivation of Small Business Owners

It has long been assumed that entrepreneurs have specific personal attributes that distinguish them from other people. As a result, research has concentrated on the investigation of these individual characteristics of entrepreneurs (e.g. Stewart, Watson, Carland, & Carland, 1998). A major theme in the substantial research that has been undertaken is in the field of personality. Most of the empirical efforts have focused on a certain range of personality characteristics thought to be closely linked to entrepreneurial actions. These classic themes in entrepreneurial personality research have included risk-taking propensity, achievement motivation, self-efficacy and locus of control (e.g. Vecchio, 2003). Management research has extensively examined whether risk taking proclivity is a characteristic that uniquely characterizes entrepreneurs. For example, in a study comparing entrepreneurs, corporate managers and small business owners, Stewart and colleagues (1998) indicated that entrepreneurs have higher risk propensity than managers and the general population in total. In contrast to these results, Peacock (1986) failed to prove that risk-taking propensity was a crucial factor that could distinguish between successful and unsuccessful small business entrepreneurs in a study conducted with small business owners.

In contrast to the question of risk-taking, research on achievement motivation is more conclusive. For example, in a survey conducted with 239 members of a U.S. small business association, Begly and Boyd (1987) found that small business entrepreneurs had higher levels of a need for achievement as compared to small business managers, and

their levels of achievement were positively related to the financial performance of the business venture. In support of these findings, in a recent meta-analysis, Collins, Hanges, and Locke (2004) reported that achievement motivation had a significant correlation with entrepreneurial career choice and entrepreneurial performance. Similarly, research on self-efficacy indicates that this is an entrepreneurial characteristic. Specifically, Chen, Greene, & Crick (1998), in a study conducted with small business owners and MBA students, found that owners scored higher on entrepreneurial self-efficacy than managers. In the same study, the authors failed to establish a link between locus of control and entrepreneurial behavior. Vecchio (2003) contends that even though strong conceptual arguments link locus of control with entrepreneurial behavior this also needs to be empirically established.

It is noteworthy that personality dimensions other than those mentioned above have been used in very few empirical studies (e.g. Ciavarella, Buchholtz, Riodan, Gatewood, & Stokes, 2004; Nicholson, 1998). Basic research in personality theory has continued to develop over the decades, but this development has not been accompanied by parallel developments in the area of entrepreneurship and personality. An important contribution of this research will be to apply modern personality theory to our conceptualizing about small business owners as they establish, develop and operate their firms. In the past two decades, evidence has accumulated to suggest that almost all personality dimensions can be reduced to five factors. These have been labeled the *Big Five* personality characteristics, or the *Five Factor Model* (FFM) (Goldberg, 1990; McCrae & Costa, 1987). The five factors involved in the FFM are *agreeableness*, *extraversion*, *neuroticism*, *conscientiousness* and *openness to experience* (Goldberg,

1990; McCrae & Costa, 1987; McCrae & John, 1992). In simple terms, agreeableness is one's ability to get along with other people. Extraversion describes people who combine social and interpersonal skills with high self-confidence. Neurotics, on the other hand, are people who are anxious and emotionally unstable. Conscientiousness characterizes individuals who are reliable and consistent in their actions and behavior and considerate of others when making their decisions. Openness to experience describes individuals with artistic and intellectual inclinations. Mounting theoretical and empirical research has established the robustness of the FFM and proven its comprehensiveness and superiority in comparison to other existing personality models (see John & Srivastava, 1999; McCrae & John, 1992; Hough & Schneider, 1996, for detailed reviews of the Big Five taxonomy).

There is considerable evidence linking the Big Five model dimensions with work behaviors and attitudes. For example, research has found strong associations between the FFM dimensions and job performance (Barrick & Mount, 1991), job satisfaction (Judge, Heller, & Mount, 2002), career success (Judge, Higgins, Thoresen, & Barrick, 1999; Seibert & Kraimer, 2001) and leadership style (Judge, Bono, Ilies, & Gerhardt, 2002). Additionally, research has linked the FFM with individuals' eating habits (Goldberg & Strycker, 2002), religiosity (Saroglou, 2002) and even the way people furnish their offices or bedrooms (Gosling, Ko, Mannarelli, & Morris, 2002). Overall, the Big Five taxonomy is widely accepted as an accurate and strong predictor of human behavior.

However, very little research has incorporated the FFM in entrepreneurial and small firm research. For example, Ciavarella and colleagues (2004) examined the relationship between the FFM and the survival of small business ventures. They found that only conscientiousness was positively related to long-term survival. From the

remaining four personality traits, openness to experience had a negative relationship with survival while extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism were unrelated to the long-term survival of the firm. In another study, Nicholson (1998) investigated the link between the Big Five personality dimensions and entrepreneurial leadership, finding that extraversion and conscientiousness were strong predictors of entrepreneurial leadership. On the contrary, agreeableness was negatively related to entrepreneurial leadership. In light of these findings the author concluded: "...contrary to common stereotypes, the leaders are not open minded risk-takers so much as single-minded, thick-skinned, dominating individuals" (p. 529). Beyond these, no study has adequately researched the impact of the small business owner's personality characteristics on employment relationships, employee behavior and work outcomes. This will thus constitute a main focus of the current investigation.

An additional objective of this thesis is to examine small business owners' work attitudes. The work attitudes which will be considered here are *job satisfaction*, defined as "a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences" (Locke, 1976: 1300), *affective commitment*, defined as one's emotional attachment to the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1984), and *intentions to exit* the business venture, denoting one's intent to terminate the operations of the firm or transfer either the management or the ownership to another person. My assumption is that these work attitudes have implications for the long-term viability of the firm, and thus are important to study in conjunction with the personality of these small business owners and the employment relationships they develop. The close connection between the small business owner and his or her establishment is frequently likened to a relationship between a

parent and “baby” (Cardon, Zietsma, Saporito, Brett, Matherne, & Davis, 2005). As a result of this identification, I believe that entrepreneurial attitudes towards the business activities will have a very strong impact on their work outcomes.

Abundant research has investigated the relationship between the Big Five personality dimensions and job satisfaction. In their meta-analysis, Judge, Heller and Mount (2002), reported a positive correlation of .26 between satisfaction and conscientiousness, .25 with extraversion, .17 with agreeableness, and .02 with openness. Additionally, a negative correlation was reported between neuroticism and job satisfaction ($-.29$). The authors concluded that neuroticism and extraversion emerged as the strongest and most consistent correlates of job satisfaction, as compared to the other three dimensions of the FFM.

The relationship between personality and affective commitment has also been studied although to the best of my knowledge no study has thoroughly investigated the relationships between the FFM and organizational commitment. In a recent meta-analysis, Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, and Topolnytsky (2002) reported associations between affective commitment and other personality dimensions, namely external locus of control ($\rho = -.29$) and self-efficacy ($\rho = .11$). Moreover, very few studies have examined the links between personality and job attitudes specifically within a small business context. Bradley and Roberts (2004) is the first notable exception. Using a sample of 7,176 self-employed individuals in the U.S., they investigated the relationship between self-employed individuals’ personality characteristics and their job satisfaction, and found that self-employed individuals enjoyed higher levels of job satisfaction than people who are not self-employed. Similarly, Parasuraman and Simmers (2001), in a

comparative study of self-employed and organizationally employed people, found that the self-employed reported higher levels of job satisfaction than organizationally employed individuals.

Exit intentions have a special meaning in the small firm context. Specifically, exit intentions could be seen as quitting either the position of small business owner or the organization. In the first case, that is, quitting the position, the owner will not leave the organization but transfer duties to someone else, such as a professional manager or relative (succession). However, in the second case the owner makes a permanent decision to leave the organization. Some of the reasons underlying the owner's decision to quit might be related to reaching retirement age, personal ambition or even boredom with current activities and the desire to sell the business and establish a new venture. Finally it is possible that the decision to quit is driven by a preference for the stability and security offered by a larger employer in terms of salary and working hours as compared to the anxiety and volatility experienced as a small firm owner.

In conclusion, further research on the Five Factor personality model, work attitudes and employment relationships in the small business context is required. In the following paragraphs I shall examine in detail each personality dimension and suggest how the small business owner's personality can generate certain expectations which affect the psychological contract orientations of small firm employees, as well as the employer's and employees' attitudes towards their work.

2.4. Small Business Owner Personality and Psychological Contracts

2.4.1. Agreeableness. Agreeableness is a dimension that is related to interpersonal behavior. People who are agreeable are usually friendly, forgiving, altruistic, well

mannered and co-operative (Costa & McCrae, 1992; Goldberg, 1990). These characteristics identify individuals who are interpersonally sensitive and wish to maintain their circle of acquaintances, which is consistent with empirical findings indicating that agreeables are concerned more with friendship than financial success and economic gains (Costa & McCrae, 1992). I propose that agreeable small business owners will exhibit the same interpersonal qualities in their relationships. Thus, it is assumed that small business owners high on agreeableness will attach greater value to co-operation and relationship stability than economic rewards and high status. As regards their work preferences, behavioral research has shown that agreeables are attracted to cultures that are supportive and team-oriented while being indifferent or negatively predisposed to cultures that are aggressive or outcome-oriented (Judge & Cable, 1997). As small business owners, agreeables will be inclined to promote a team-based environment where employees perceive themselves as part of the same team rather than grasping antagonists competing for the same resources or higher status positions. Hence, they will require their employees to exhibit a spirit of altruism, helpfulness and sacrifice towards each other, which, in the long run, will promote the well-being of the organization. In a nutshell, people working for agreeable small business owners will consistently be encouraged to follow the example of the “good soldier”, that is, of the person who exhibits high levels of organizational citizenship behavior (Organ, 1988) in order to maintain the approval of his or her employer.

Agreeable small business owners are concerned mainly with the creation of a stable and “family” oriented environment, which is characterized by strong friendship bonds rather than antagonism and competition among individuals. This is verified by

research that shows agreeableness to be strongly associated with the quality of interactions of group members and actual performance in work teams (Mount, Barrick, & Stewart, 1998). Thus, when we consider the employers and their expectations, it is anticipated that they will place greater emphasis on the fulfillment of promises made to their employees, in an effort to sustain and reinforce the “family type” relationship, thus satisfying their needs and leaving less space for disputes, grievances and negative emotional reactions.

I therefore arrive at the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1a: Agreeable small business owners will expect their employees to form relational types of contracts and their employees will perceive/be aware of these expectations.

Hypothesis 1b: Employees of agreeable small business owners are unlikely to suffer a breach in their psychological contract and experience subsequent feelings of violation.

As explained earlier, agreeable individuals attach greater emphasis to relationship building than economic returns (Costa & McCrae, 1992); they do not perceive their occupation as temporary but rather as permanent, and associated with the fulfillment of their affiliation and socialization needs. It is therefore expected that small business owners will be satisfied, strongly affectively committed to their organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990), and highly unlikely to exit their job (for example, sell their business, discontinue operations) in the near future. Behavioral research has established a firm link between agreeableness and job satisfaction (Judge, Heller, & Mount, 2002). However, the relationship between agreeableness, organizational commitment and intentions to quit

requires further exploration as only scattered and isolated findings exist in different studies. For example, in a study of information technology officers, Waters (2004) examined the factors that affect the protégé – mentor relationship, investigating in particular the extent to which mentors and protégés agreed on the level of psychological support offered by the former to the latter. In these findings, the author reported an association between agreeableness and organizational commitment. Similarly, in a study of 307 U.S. franchisees, Morrison (1997) investigated the impact of personality and job satisfaction on franchisees' relationship with the franchisor, their performance, organizational commitment and their intention to stay with their current business venture. The author reported a positive correlation between agreeableness and organizational commitment and intentions to stay: a relationship which was not hypothesized. Despite undoubted contextual differences, on the basis of these preliminary findings I believe that the relationships existing in large organizations will also occur in small businesses. It is therefore proposed that:

Hypothesis 2a: Agreeable small business owners will be satisfied.

Hypothesis 2b: Agreeable small business owners will be committed and not prone to exit their organizations.

2.4.2. Conscientiousness. Conscientiousness has emerged as one of the most reliable dimensions of the Big Five taxonomy in terms of predictive validity. In behavioral literature conscientious individuals are described as ambitious, persistent, rational, calculating, mature, planning, systematic, punctual (Goldberg, 1990), thorough, well-organized, and achievement oriented (McCrae & Costa, 1987). Additionally, conscientiousness has been linked with job-related behaviors such as job satisfaction

(Judge, Heller, & Mount, 2002), leadership (Judge, Bono, Ilies, & Gerhardt, 2002), performance motivation (Judge & Ilies, 2002), performance (Barrick & Mount, 1991), organizational politics (Hochwarter, Witt, & Kacmar, 2000), contract dynamics (Raja et al., 2004) and citizenship behavior (Organ & Ryan, 1995). I can therefore conclude that conscientiousness has significantly increased our understanding of individual and work behaviors.

The link between conscientiousness and performance has been firmly established. For example, in a meta-analysis of 177 studies conducted between 1952 and 1988, Barrick and Mount (1991) found that conscientiousness was a stable predictor of performance across all occupations, that is managers, salespersons, policeman, professionals, and skilled/semi-skilled workers, and across performance criteria, such as personnel data, training and job proficiency. Similarly, in another meta-analysis including studies conducted in the European Union, Salgado (1997) verified the findings of Barrick and Mount. He contended that of the Big Five traits, conscientiousness was one of the most robust predictors of performance. In addition, research characterizes conscientious people as ambitious (McCrae & John, 1992) but at the same time cautious and risk averse (Goldberg, 1990). As small business owners, conscientious individuals will exhibit similar attitudes towards their job, avoiding risky schemes that could potentially lead to failure. Failure is an unacceptable condition for conscientious people who are generally cautious (Goldberg, 1990), committed to their organizations (Raja et al., 2004), and prefer stability (Goldberg, 1990). Exhibiting risk averse behavior, conscientious small business owners aim at maximizing the wealth (e.g. Barrick & Mount, 1991) and the long-term survival of their organizations (Ciavarella et al., 2003).

My central question relates to the nature of the exchange relationship that conscientious small business owners will establish with their employees. Conscientious people are achievers (Barrick & Mount, 1991), meaning that they will also have high achievement aspirations. As superior performance cannot be achieved in a single day, persistence, strong commitment and stable employer – employee relationships are required. To be successful and establish high performing organizations, conscientious small business owners will look for and hire only those employees who can tolerate and adopt the competitive standards that they impose. Their concern with task completion (Barrick, Stewart, Neubert, & Mount, 1998) requires them to count upon their employees, not only to perform their assigned duties but also to be ready to demonstrate some aspects of citizenship behavior. Indeed, in a study of 402 administrative and professional employees, Konovsky and Organ (1996) examined the impact of personality and contextual factors on citizenship behavior. The authors reported that conscientiousness was related to generalized compliance, that is being compliant to organizational rules and regulations and providing indirect assistance to others, and civic virtue, defined as being committed to the organization and observing and protecting its interests (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine, & Bachrach, 2000). Assistance to other employees and commitment to the organization as a whole are both necessary for the successful fulfillment of the multiple needs of the small business venture, in exchange for stable wages and protection of their security needs, such as, long-term employment and support of their well-being, which are core components of the relational contracts (Rousseau, 2000).

The actions of conscientious small business owners will be consistent with their promises, in accordance with their meticulous attention to planning and organization

(Goldberg, 1990). From the above description of conscientious individuals, it can be inferred that people exhibiting this personality trait will not engage in any activity or make promises that they will have difficulty keeping. Therefore, employees working for a conscientious small business owner will generally perceive their contract terms to be fulfilled.

In view of the above arguments it is hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 3a: Conscientious small business owners will expect their employees to form relational types of contracts and their employees will perceive/be aware of these expectations.

Hypothesis 3b: Employees of conscientious small business owners are unlikely to suffer a breach in their psychological contract and experience subsequent feelings of violation.

Empirical research has exhibited a strong relationship between conscientiousness and job satisfaction (Judge, Heller, & Mount, 2002). These meta-analytic findings indicate that conscientious small business owners will also be satisfied with their small business venture, unsurprisingly given that most of the activities undertaken by conscientious people are successful as products of their achievement and performance motivation (Judge & Ilies, 2002), persistence, systematic planning and co-ordination. This was borne out by a longitudinal study in which Judge and colleagues (1999) examined the impact of the Big Five personality traits on mental ability and career success. The authors reported that conscientiousness was a positive predictor of intrinsic career success, that is, job satisfaction, and extrinsic career success, that is, income and occupational status. Overall, conscientious individuals have a strong sense of contribution

and find a meaning of accomplishment in what they do and this is the main reason that they exhibit positive attitudes toward their job. Thus the strong identification between entrepreneurs or small business owners and their organization (Cardon, et al., 2005) will be heightened in the case of conscientious individuals to the extent that they will regard it as an extension of their self. In fact, behavioral research has indicated a strong positive relationship between conscientiousness and affective commitment (Raja et al., 2004), a type of commitment indicating “an emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organization” (Meyer et al., 2002: 21), and intentions to stay (Morrison, 1997). Hence, it is argued that conscientious small business owners will be affectively committed to their organization with minimal probabilities of leaving their current job. Without any doubt, conscientious people have most of the necessary qualities to perform well, be satisfied with their jobs and succeed in their lives as small business owners.

In light of the above arguments it is proposed that:

Hypothesis 4a: Conscientious small business owners will be satisfied.

Hypothesis 4b: Conscientious small business owners will be committed and not prone to exit their organizations.

2.4.3. Openness to experience. Openness to experience is a personality trait which is considered very broad and incorporates a wide range of characteristics (McCrae & Costa, 1985). In a literature review of openness to experience, McCrae and Costa (1997) concluded that three major dimensions of this personality trait are intellect, culture and intelligence. Intellect may be defined as a person’s inclination for knowledge and their ability to learn and judge (Morris, 1976). Some of the trait descriptive adjectives

underlying intellect are visionary, flexible (McCrae, Costa, & Piedmont, 1993), intuitive (MacDonald, Anderson, Tsagarakis, & Holland, 1994), broad-minded (Dollinger, Leong, & Ulicni, 1996), insightful, perceptive, complex, informed, thoughtful, curious and creative (Goldberg, 1990). Culture, on the other hand, implies sophistication, aesthetic sensitivity and artistic proclivity: qualities not necessarily based on or associated with one's formal education. Intelligence is highly associated with intellectuality and denotes rationality, logic, (Borgatta, 1964), and originality (McCrae & Costa, 1985). However, intellect, culture and intelligence are by no means synonymous and together serve to describe this relatively complex dimension of personality.

Small business owners who are open to experience will exhibit the above three characteristics in their organizations. This means that these owners will be creative, and will frequently implement and reinforce innovative schemes in their organizations. Moreover, research has shown that individuals high in openness to experience have a high tolerance for ambiguity (Judge, Thoresen, Pucik, & Welbourne, 1999; McCrae, 1996) and therefore a proclivity for risk. Some of the schemes implemented are therefore likely to be risky without any guarantees of success and potentially prone to failure. In order for such decisions to be carried out successfully, open small business owners need to hire and train people who are capable of implementing these decisions and are compatible with the owner's creative outlook as outlined above. Being intelligent and knowledgeable individuals, open business owners will staff their enterprises with employees who understand their vision and help to realize it. This means that open small firm owners will make sure they hire people that match the organizational profile they want to establish, and their employees' work attitudes will be compatible with the

general vision that the owner has in mind. Co-operation, trust and loyalty are required if the employer and employee are to work together for the successful fulfillment of their strategies. In return for their devotion, small business owners will support their development, occupational interests and their families' needs. Moreover, openness is highly associated with flexibility (McCrae, Costa, & Piedmont, 1993) and poorly linked with performance (Barrick & Mount, 1991), leading me to infer that open small business owners will not impose strict performance standards. This suggests that open small business owners will encourage their employees to establish a relational link since this reflects an exchange relationship that is based on mutual trust and loyalty and is less dependent on performance.

An additional reason that potentially impels open small business owners to establish a relational contract relates to their transformational leadership style (Judge & Bono, 2000). Transformational leaders are visionary and relationship-oriented (Bass, 1985). According to Bass' theory (1985), due to their charismatic nature, transformational leaders will be successful in inspiring their employees to follow and accomplish their leader's vision. The same author contends that this happens because the transformational leader clearly articulates this vision to his or her employees (*inspirational motivation*), challenging them to dispute the current organizational or team status quo (*intellectual stimulation*) by providing constant support for their needs (*individual consideration*). On the contrary, transactional leaders are authoritative, outcome-oriented and prone to establish exchange or "give and take" relationships with their employees. They believe that employees will best achieve the goals set in a well-structured environment, where resources are provided to support employees' effort

(*contingent reward*) and the leader may choose whether to constantly monitor their performance (*management by exception – active*) or intervene when problems arise (*management by exception – passive*) (Bass, 1998).

Judge and Bono (2000) investigated the relationship between the FFM and transformational leadership in a highly diverse sample of leaders collected from 200 organizations. Their results indicated a positive association between openness to experience and the dimensions of idealized influence, inspirational motivation and individualized consideration (Bass, 1985) from the transformational leadership scale. Additional research found transformational leadership to be directly associated with the fulfillment of employees' implicit psychological contracts (Goodwin, Wofford, & Whittington, 2001). The authors argued that transformational leaders will not hold a specific performance – reward relationship, that is, a transactional relationship based on explicit performance criteria, as transactional leaders frequently do. Rather, transformational leaders “will get their followers to ‘buy into’ their visions and internalize them so that the followers become intrinsically motivated to strive for the common goals and visions” (p. 772). In addition, transformational leaders will do their best to support their subordinates' needs, namely individualized consideration (Bass, 1985). Given that open small business owners are highly likely to adopt a leadership style that resembles that of transformational leaders, I can infer that they will tend to establish a relational rather than transactional relationship with their employees.

In the highly unstable and dynamic environment of small firms (Storey, 1994), creativity and openness to new experiences can result in open small business owners promising employees more than they can offer. This is the result of a tendency to be

curious and to test new ideas that can be spontaneous and not the product of careful and meticulous planning. For instance, a small business owner who is high in openness to experience might believe that the introduction of new technology will lower production costs and increase productivity, resulting in significant profits that could be reinvested in new equipment for the employees, such as laptops or uniforms. However, if these creative plans fail to succeed, small business owners will fall short of their promises to their employees. The employees will therefore pay the price for the unsuccessful entrepreneurial endeavor, resulting in contract breach and subsequent negative feelings of violation. These arguments are further supported by the findings of Judge and Ilies (2002), who, in their meta-analytic study, found a weak but negative association between openness to experience and expectancy motivation, indicating that there is a discrepancy between open individuals' beliefs and goals and their achievements. In light of the above arguments the following hypotheses are proposed:

Hypothesis 5a: Small business owners who are high in openness to experience will expect their employees to form relational types of contracts and their employees will perceive/be aware of these expectations.

Hypothesis 5b: Employees of small business owners who are high in openness to experience are likely to suffer a breach in their psychological contract and experience subsequent feelings of violation.

The way small firms operate and the flexibility they provide to their owners and employees constitutes a platform for new plan implementation. Thus, for those small business owners who are high in openness to experience, small firms can provide a fertile ground for experimentation, fulfilling their needs for creativity and experience seeking

(Zuckerman, Kuhlman, Joireman, Teta, & Kraft, 1993). The ability to realize their creative ideas will result in small business owners who are open to experience being generally satisfied with their work. In support of these arguments, recent meta-analytic findings indicate a positive association between openness to experience and job satisfaction (Judge, Heller, & Mount, 2002). The association between openness to experience and affective commitment or exit intentions is somewhat less clear-cut. No well-formulated link has been established between these constructs in behavioral literature. On the one hand it is possible to argue that open small business owners have a proclivity for change. As a result, they may exhibit low levels of affective commitment and be prone to quit their organization, in search of new opportunities or experiences. However, open small business owners' behavior will be dictated by rationality, a key component of this personality trait (Goldberg, 1990). This means that positive attitudinal states, such as job satisfaction, will overpower their need for change and involvement, as potential antecedents of their intentions to leave their organization.

In view of the above it is argued that:

Hypothesis 6: Small business owners who are high in openness to experience will be satisfied.

The following research questions are also proposed:

Research Question 1: Will small business owners who are high in openness to experience be committed to their organizations?

Research Question 2: Will small business owners who are high in openness to experience seek to exit their organizations?

2.4.4. Extraversion. Extraversion is the fourth of the Big Five personality traits examined in this thesis, and has typically been found to be a robust predictor of individual behavior (e.g. Judge, Heller and Mount, 2002).

Schmitt-Rodermund (2004), in a diverse sample composed of German 10th grade students and local entrepreneurs, examined the impact of parenting and personality characteristics on the development of entrepreneurial interests and competence. Her findings showed that individuals high in extraversion exhibit high levels of entrepreneurial competence. Similarly, Holland, Johnston, Asama and Polys (1993), in a study of 125 individuals participating in two career planning programs, reported that the career beliefs of extraverts, a dimension of the NEO Personality Inventory (NEO-PI) (Costa & McCrae, 1985), portrayed individuals who are hard-working, persist in the face of obstacles and do not hesitate to undertake any type of risk that assists them in achieving their objectives.

People who are high on extraversion are good performers (Barrick & Mount, 1991), guided by optimism and ambition (Goldberg, 1990), enthusiasm, confidence (Goldberg, 1990; John, 1989) and greater self-esteem (Brown, 1996). Extraverts will generate high-level goals (Barrick, Mount, & Strauss, 1993) and inspire their employees to exhibit similar characteristics in their work environment. Being frank, open and straightforward (Goldberg, 1990) they will ensure that their employees are familiar with the organizational goals they want to achieve. Indeed, Judge and colleagues (2002) in a recent meta-analysis examining the relationship between the FFM and leadership behavior, found that extraversion was a stable and strong predictor of leadership

effectiveness, defined as the leader's ability and effort to influence and direct his or her team members towards the achievement of the goals that he or she has established.

Of the goals held, whether short- or long-term, extraverts will usually prefer long-term goals related to social recognition, prestige and financial stable rewards, such as sustained profitability, for themselves and/or their organization (Amabile, Hill, Hennessey, & Tighe, 1994). As the successful realization of these goals usually requires time, extraverts will seek and employ people who are willing to undertake a long-term commitment to help them realize and maximize these goals. This argument is also reinforced by the strong association between subordinates' organizational commitment and transformational leadership, a type of leadership that is highly linked to extraversion (Judge & Bono, 2000), and thus potentially followed by small business owners. In exchange for their commitment, employees will require security from their employer in terms of employment and financial rewards. As a result, it is expected that small business employees will be encouraged to form relational contracts with their small business employers.

Since goal fulfillment and rewards are particularly important to them, extravert small business owners will support and reinforce a long-term relationship leading to desirable outcomes. Extravert owners will ensure that they do not fall short of their promises. If this occurs, then there is high risk that employees will lose trust in them and start challenging their employer's practices, strategies and goals. Consequently, employees are likely to under-perform or search for alternative employment opportunities in other companies. Such behavior can severely jeopardize and restrict goal attainment, a crucial element for firm success in extraverts' eyes. As extraverts are strongly concerned

with the success of their organization and like to maximize rewards (Amabile et al., 1994), their behavior will be consistent with their promises, making their employees feel that their psychological contract terms have been fulfilled.

It can therefore be argued that:

Hypothesis 7a: Extravert small business owners will expect their employees to form relational types of contracts and their employees will perceive/be aware of these expectations.

Hypothesis 7b: Employees of extravert small business owners are unlikely to suffer a breach in their psychological contract and experience subsequent feelings of violation.

In a recent meta-analysis, extraversion was revealed to be a robust predictor of job satisfaction with an estimated true score correlation of .25 (Judge, Heller, & Mount, 2002). Extraverts, driven by their ambition (Goldberg, 1990), entrepreneurial propensity (Schmitt-Rodermund, 2004) and their preference for career success (Seibert & Kraimer, 2001) will not leave any opportunity for success to go wasted and will do their best to establish themselves and be successful in what they do. Indeed, in a sample of 496 employees working in diverse occupations, Seibert and Kraimer (2001) found extraversion to be highly associated with salary level, promotions and career satisfaction. Similarly, in a study with franchisees, Morrison (1997) reported a strong positive correlation between extraversion, organizational commitment and intentions to remain in the franchise business. These results, combined with the findings of Raja and colleagues (2004), who reported a positive association between extraversion and affective commitment and a negative but fairly weak association with one's intentions to quit, lead

me to infer that extravert small business owners will be generally satisfied with their work, exhibiting high levels of affective commitment and being less inclined to leave the organization.

In view of the above, it is expected that:

Hypothesis 8a: Extravert small business owners will be satisfied.

Hypothesis 8b: Extravert small business owners will be committed and not prone to exit their organizations.

2.4.5. Neuroticism. The dimension of neuroticism is as popular as the dimension of extraversion in personality studies. Neuroticism is also called emotional stability, emotionality (e.g. Noller, Law, & Comrey, 1987; Norman, 1963) and psychoticism (Eysenck, 1967). Many studies have taken neuroticism or negative affectivity – a component of neuroticism (Watson & Tellegen, 1985) – as their primary focus of investigation. For instance, behavioral research has examined the relationship between neuroticism and job satisfaction (Judge, Heller, & Mount, 2002), performance (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Hurtz & Donovan, 2000), schizophrenia (Lysaker, Bell, Kaplan, Greig, & Bryson, 1999) and interpersonal relationships in married couples (Caughlin, Huston, & Houts, 2000), as well as the impact of negative affectivity on employee attitudes and behaviors (e.g. Spector, Chen, & O’Connell, 2000; Williams, Gavin, & Williams, 1996). From this it can safely be concluded that neuroticism is a valid predictor of individual behavior in a variety of situations and contexts.

Neurotics have emotional fluctuations and are characterized by instability in their moods and emotions (McCrae & John, 1992). In addition, current psychiatric research has indicated a strong association between neuroticism and schizophrenic spectrum

disorders (Camisa, Bockbrader, Lysaker, Rae, Brenner & O'Donnell, 2005). In a sample of 142 individuals suffering from different psychiatric disorders, such as schizophrenia and schizoaffective disorder, they found that those who scored high on neuroticism were more likely to be associated with any of these disorders as compared to the other Big Five traits. Therefore one can expect neurotics to be anxious, self-pitying, lacking positive psychological adjustment (Goldberg, 1990; McCrae & John, 1992) and frequently perceiving and presenting themselves as exceptionally vulnerable individuals (Lysaker et al., 1999). These descriptions portray individuals with a negative or poor self-image and little self-confidence (McCrae & Costa, 1987). Being poor performers (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Salgado, 1997), with low self-esteem (Judge, Locke, & Durham, 1997), unable to tolerate long-term ambiguity, neurotic small business owners will try to accomplish goals that are very specific and short-term in nature. Moreover, behavioral research has shown that neurotic individuals are insecure and lack trust (Goldberg, 1990; McCrae & John, 1992). As small business owners, neurotics will also exhibit symptoms of distrust toward their employees, conveying ambiguous and conflicting expectations. Indeed, Emmons and King (1988), in an experimental study, showed that individuals high in neuroticism were prone to suffer from goal conflict and ambivalence. Such expectations can induce a climate of suspicion within the organization and thus set the foundation for relationships that are at best short-term. Employees who feel confused and distrusted will also respond with distrust and disloyalty, fulfilling the circle of organizational paranoia (Kramer, 2001). This means that employees will try to accomplish only the most basic performance goals, and at the same time search for alternative employment opportunities.

The effects of distrust toward the owner are more than obvious in a small business environment and are likely to weaken employees' commitment and citizenship behavior in their organization. For example, Brockner, Siegel, Daly, Tyler, and Martin (1997) examined employees' trust in supervisors and managers in relation to fairness procedures and the extent to which decisions made for the employees were favorable to them in three elaborate field studies conducted in the U.S. They reported a strong association between employees' trust in their superiors and commitment to the organization. Similarly, Dirks and Ferrin (2002) conducted a meta-analytic study examining how trust in leadership affects subordinate behavior. They found that distrust in leadership was related to employees' dissatisfaction, low to no levels of citizenship behavior, reduced organizational commitment, lower satisfaction with the leader, and a greater propensity to quit their firm (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). I expect that employees will have a weak identification with their organization and be very hesitant to accept information that comes from a leader or owner whom they do not trust. As a consequence, small business workers will tend to pursue short-term goals, fulfill only those terms that are explicitly written in their official or written contracts or are part of their job description, constantly searching for alternative employment opportunities. In addition, they are likely to perceive a mismatch between the owner's promises and actions. Neurotic small business owners will make promises and generate goals that they are unable to keep, as a result of their unstable temperament (McCrae & John, 1992) and lack of performance motivation (Judge & Ilies, 2002). In fact, Judge and Ilies (2002), in their meta-analytic investigation, contended that neuroticism was negatively associated ($\rho = -.31$) with the three performance motivation theories (goal setting, expectancy and self-efficacy motivation).

Thus, employees who work for neurotic employers are expected to hold transactional contracts, and sense and respond negatively to the unfulfilled promises made by their employer.

I can therefore conclude that:

Hypothesis 9a: Neurotic small business owners will expect their employees to form transactional types of contracts and their employees will perceive/be aware of these expectations.

Hypothesis 9b: Employees of neurotic small business owners are likely to suffer a breach in their psychological contract and experience subsequent feelings of violation.

The negative relationship between neuroticism and job satisfaction is well established in personality research (Judge et al., 2002). However, little research has investigated the relationship between neuroticism and organizational commitment and intentions to quit. For instance, Raja and colleagues (2004) reported a positive but insignificant correlation between neuroticism and organizational commitment and intentions to quit. However, in another study conducted with franchisee business owners, a negative association was reported between neuroticism, intentions to stay and organizational commitment (Morrison, 1997). Furthermore, a poor association exists between neuroticism and extrinsic career success (Judge et al., 1999). These findings indicate that neurotics who are unable to establish long-term interpersonal relationships (Caughlin et al., 2000), will try to avoid or escape situations in which high ambiguity and uncertainty exists and are highly likely to be detrimental for them, financially or as regards their health. In light of the above arguments I argue that neurotic small business

owners will exhibit low levels of commitment towards their venture and high exit intentions.

Hypothesis 10a: Neurotic small business owners will be dissatisfied.

Hypothesis 10b: Neurotic small business owners will be uncommitted and prone to exit their organizations.

2.5. Small Business Owner Motivation: Self-Concordance, Psychological Contracts and Work Attitudes

Motivation is the second key antecedent in this study. Motivation has always been one of the distinct factors incorporated in entrepreneurial models to explain why entrepreneurs behave the way they do (e.g. Naffziger et al., 1994). However, from the literature reviewed, no study has intertwined motivation and entrepreneurial literature in such a way as to explain the psychological contract orientations of entrepreneurs / owners as well as their attitudes towards their work in a small business context. Self-concordance theory (Sheldon & Elliot, 1998, 1999), a “derivative” of self-determination theory (SDT) (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2000), is a promising motivational framework that can provide a response to questions related to the behavior of the small business owner and its impact on employee relations. In the following paragraphs I shall explain the origins and theory of self-concordance and establish the link between the employers’ self-concordance and contract orientations.

2.5.1. Self-concordance. Research on self-concordance (Sheldon & Elliot, 1998, 1999) is in its early stages. Self-concordance is defined as the pursuit of goals that are compatible with one’s core interests, authentic values, passions and beliefs (Sheldon & Elliot, 1998; 1999). Self-concordance starts with an intentional choice and commitment

to specific goals. Self-concordant individuals pursue goals (e.g. personal, interpersonal, task, work, career, family) reflecting their genuine interests and beliefs (Sheldon et al., 2004). These people adopt goals with an internal locus of causality (deCharms, 1968), that is to say, “they are felt to emanate directly from self-choices” (Sheldon & Elliot, 1999: 483) and are classified as *autonomous* (Deci & Ryan, 1985). On the contrary, goals that do not constitute a free selection for the individual and reside outside one’s domain of influence have an external locus of causality, that is, they stem from any other source but one’s self and are classified as *controlled* (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

Ryan and Connell (1989) have elaborated on the issue of autonomous and controlled motivation, identifying four distinct types: “external”, whereby the individuals’ actions are guided by external factors and pressures, “introjected” whereby the individuals behave with the sense that their actions are framed by their own internal forces and pressures, including feelings of anxiety, guilt or the desire to please others, “identified” whereby the individuals dislike what they do or feel that what they do is not inherently fun but they behave on their own initiative, and “intrinsic” whereby the individuals pursue an action because they find it interesting and challenging. Identified and intrinsic motivations are classified as autonomous and represent internal core aspects of the self, whereas external and introjected motivations are controlled types as they are alien to the self (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Self-concordance research has examined the impact of autonomous (that is, intrinsic and identified) and controlled (that is, external and introjected) goals on individuals’ behavior. Specifically, in three experimental studies conducted with undergraduate students, Sheldon and Elliot (1998) examined the impact of personal goals

on effort and attainment. Their results indicate that autonomous goals were positively associated with effort, commitment and competence, while controlled goals were unrelated to goal attainment. In another study, Judge, Bono, Erez, and Locke, (2005) investigated the link between core self-evaluations, defined as how people evaluate themselves and their capabilities (Judge et al., 1997), goal concordance and job and life satisfaction. They concluded that people with positive core self-evaluations were likely to pursue autonomous goals. Additionally, the researchers reported that self-concordance was positively related to job and life satisfaction. Similarly, Sheldon and colleagues (2004), in a multicultural study, examined the relationship between self-concordant goals and well-being. They concluded that autonomous goals were positively related to subjective well-being. On the contrary, controlled goals were negatively related to one's perception of well-being.

Other studies in this area have examined the relationship between self-concordance and goal implementation (Koestner, Lekes, Powers, & Chicoine, 2002), and happiness (Sheldon & Houser-Marko, 2001). Specifically, Koestner and colleagues (2002) combined experimental and meta-analytic techniques to examine the impact of establishing and implementing self-concordant goals on goal progress. Their results indicate that self-concordance and implementation intentions were good predictors of goal attainment. In addition, the authors reported that over time, goal progress contributed towards the establishment of one's positive emotions. In the second study, Sheldon & Houser-Marko (2001) examined the relationship between self-concordance, goal attainment and happiness. The authors concluded that "one way to help people to

better ‘pursue happiness’ may be to help them to better identify and pursue personal goals” (p. 162), that is, self-concordant goals.

In the following paragraphs I examine the impact of employer self-concordant goals on the exchange relationship, that is, the type of psychological contract formed, as well as the employees’ perceptions of contract breach and subsequent feelings of violation.

2.5.2. *Self-concordance and psychological contracts.* Small business owners may pursue different types of goals at different points in time, because of their high need for achievement (Collins et al., 2004; McClelland, 1961). For example, goal focus can shift during the life cycle of the organization from establishing a good reputation and stability to expansion or long-term survival. Irrespective of the content of the goals, I argue that goals that are aligned to the small business owner’s self-interests (that is, self-concordant) will determine the way the organization operates, its growth orientation, success and survival, its relationship with the external environment and the types of relationships the small business owner establishes with the employees. I shall concentrate my attention on employer – employee relationships.

As we saw above, goals which are selected on account of their self-satisfying content and are aligned to the individual’s inherent interests are expected to trigger higher levels of involvement, commitment and continuous effort as compared to directed or contextually imposed goals (Sheldon & Elliot, 1999). Conversely, the same authors argued that controlled goals generate positive initial intentions but cannot be considered a sustainable source of continuous motivation (Sheldon & Elliot, 1998). In addition, intrinsically motivated behavior is interesting (Deci & Ryan, 1985) and likely to produce

higher levels of activation (Omodei & Wearing, 1990) and performance, which is necessary for the small business owners in order to accomplish their personal and organizational goals, such as increase their wealth, preserve their operations or further expand their ventures. Indeed, current research has established a link between goal commitment and goal achievement (Donovan & Radosevich, 1998; Klein, Wesson, Hollenbeck, & Alge, 1999) and self-concordance and goal attainment (Judge, et al., 2005; Koestner et al., 2002) and job performance (Bono & Judge, 2003).

It is suggested that small business owners who strive to accomplish their self-concordant goals will also encourage their employees to exhibit higher levels of involvement and commitment to the pursued goals as well as loyalty to the owner and his or her organization, as compared to owners who pursue goals that are not self-concordant. The reason is that disloyalty and lack of devotion to these goals will jeopardize their accomplishment and the potential benefits which are associated with them, thus risking the existence and long-term survival of the organization. For example, consider the case of small business owners who pursue the introduction of new technology in their firms, because they believe that it can simplify office work and reduce cost, that is, autonomous goals. Such owners are likely to be highly involved and spend more time assisting and supporting their employees to adopt the new technology, while expecting them to embrace the project with the same enthusiasm. On the contrary, owners who are forced to purchase new technology because their competitors use it (a controlled goal) will be less likely to pursue the project with the same enthusiasm and spend time with their employees for its implementation. Thus, when small business

owners pursue self-concordant goals, they are likely to seek to establish a relational contract with their employees on a long-term loyalty-based employment arrangement.

The above argument is further supported by leadership research. McGregor (1960) suggested that leaders communicate their beliefs to their subordinates through the climate they establish. Leaders will convey their priorities to their employees by engaging in behaviors and supporting practices that reinforce their achievement orientations and goals. In turn these behaviors will serve as a signal to employees of what is expected from them (Guzzo & Noonan, 1994). Additionally, leaders will consistently model their behavior and assure that it is followed by their employees by providing certain rewards to those who exhibit it (Bandura, 1986). This means that small business owners who pursue self-concordant goals will be devoted, enthusiastic and persistent to those goals (Judge, et al., 2005; Koestner et al., 2002) and they will try to transmit these characteristics to their employees as well. As these beliefs lay the foundations of a relational rather than transactional relationship (Rousseau, 2000), I believe that small firm owners who pursue self-concordant goals will also pursue a relational relationship with their employees.

Small business owners pursuing self-concordant goals which are representative of their core values and enduring interests (Sheldon & Elliot, 1999) and thus systematically followed, are expected to be more consistent in their behavior and promises than those owners who pursue controlled goals. Psychological research has long exhibited the link between attitude and behavior consistency (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Fazio, 1986), indicating that the stronger the attitudes the more accessible they will be and the greater their impact on individuals' behavior. On the contrary, individuals will not be

passionately devoted to goals that are not self-concordant (Sheldon & Elliot, 1999), exhibiting inconsistencies between the goals they pursue and their behavior. Behavioral discrepancies from the side of the small business owner, whether taking the form of actions or words, will not go unnoticed in a small business context as a result of the proximity discussed earlier. Such discrepancies that contradict pre-established promises and employee expectations of their exchange relationship will result in perceptions of contract breach accompanied by emotional outbursts of violation.

In light of the above arguments, it is argued that:

Hypothesis 11: Small business owners who pursue self-concordant goals will promote a relational contract relationship with their employee and their employees will perceive/be aware of these expectations.

Hypothesis 12: Small business owners' self-concordance will be negatively associated with the employees' contract breach and feelings of violation.

2.5.3. Self-concordance and work attitudes. Goal-motivated small business owners will form more positive attitudes towards their organization than less or unmotivated individuals (Judge et al., 2005). It is suggested that this relationship will be stronger for those small business owners who pursue self-concordant goals. To the best of my knowledge no research has examined and reported findings for the relationship between self-concordance and work attitudes and behaviors, apart from a study conducted by Bono and Judge (2003). These authors investigated the impact of transformational leadership on follower self-concordance and individual attitudes. In two studies conducted, it was reported that follower self-concordance was significantly related to job satisfaction and organizational commitment. These preliminary findings

boost our confidence that self-concordance will also be linked to the small business owner's job satisfaction and organizational commitment. It is suggested that owners who pursue autonomous goals (that is, intrinsic and identified) as compared to those who pursue controlled goals, will derive enjoyment, exhibiting more consistent effort and commitment to their business activities. As regards turnover intentions, it has long been shown that people who are generally satisfied and committed will be less inclined to leave their organization (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Meyer et al., 2002). Consequently, small business owners who find pleasure in pursuing goals compatible with their own interests will be less likely to discontinue their business efforts and abandon their organization. No research has yet established a conceptual or empirical link between self-concordance and exit intentions, so this research fills an important gap in the literature.

Hypothesis 13: Self-concordance will be positively related to small business owners' job satisfaction and affective commitment, and negatively related to their intentions to exit their organization.

CHAPTER THREE

3. METHODS

The first step in data collection was to find a sample of small business owners. According to Curran and Blackburn (2001), there is no widely acceptable definition as to what constitutes a small enterprise. Two of the criteria typically used by policy makers and governments to classify these organizations are the number of employees and financial turnover. I decided to use a classification based on the number of employees, given that the current investigation focuses on the relationships among the individuals working within these businesses. A report by Industry Canada for 2005 (www.ic.gc.ca) defines small enterprises as those employing fewer than 100 employees, for goods-producing companies, and fewer than 50 for service-offering firms. 50 employees was chosen as an approximate upper limit of firm size in this research, to maximize the chances that there would be direct relationships between owners and their employees.

It was considered preferable to focus on a single sector in order to ensure a homogeneous sample and to allow for more direct comparisons between organizations. The professional services sector was chosen because this sector represents a large number of small firms – 13% according to a report for 2002 by Statistics Canada (www.statcan.ca). The first resource used to identify small firms in the Greater Montreal area was Canada's Business and Consumer Site (strategis.ic.gc.ca). The search returned 248 organizations which identified themselves as belonging to the professional services sector. These firms provided fullest details (compared to firms in other industries listed on the website) regarding the number of employees and their work status. From these organizations, 109 were excluded on the basis that they had fewer than three employees

or no employees at all. The remaining organizations (139) had at least three employees and reported total sales of less than CAD 25 million, with most of them having less than CAD 5 million.

These organizations were initially approached with an invitation letter explaining the purpose of the study and its benefits to the small business owner and employees. The letter also outlined the way in which this research would be conducted and the requirements for the participants, both owners and their employees. Particular emphasis was laid on the anonymity of the survey and the confidentiality of the responses. The participants interested in the results were promised a non-technical report of the major findings a few months after the completion of this project. Between four and seven days after the invitation letters were sent to small business owners, I telephoned to confirm receipt of the letter and to explain the purpose of my study and give the opportunity for the owners to ask questions. The specific methodological approach was proposed by Curran and Blackburn (2001) who describe it as an effective way to approach and recruit small firms and to ensure higher response rates. From the 139 organizations to which letters were sent, 20 organizations agreed to participate in this study (a response rate of approximately 12%).

To be able to correspond with the bilingual population of Canada, I created two sets of surveys, one in English and one in French, for both the owners and their employees. To facilitate survey distribution, and the accuracy of the questionnaires requested, a one page document was sent to the small business owners either as an e-mail attachment or by fax, asking them to indicate the precise number of questionnaires required for their organization and their language of preference (English or French). All

small firm owners employing more than 5 employees were asked if all or at least 5 of their employees could complete the questionnaire. This was done in order to avoid a situation whereby only “hand-picked” employees who had good relationships with the organization would complete the surveys. If the organization was employing less than 5 employees (i.e. 3 or 4), I asked if either all or at least the majority of the employees could complete the survey. Surveys accompanied by self-addressed postage paid envelopes were delivered to small business owners by regular or express mail, according to their request.

Of the 20 organizations that had agreed to participate in the study, only 3 returned the exact number of questionnaires requested for owners and employees. For the remaining 17 organizations, 9 small firm owners and 74 employees decided not to complete the questionnaire after all. Overall 11 questionnaires from small business owners and 74 questionnaires from small business employees were collected using this method. Based on the initial target sample size, this translates to a response rate of about 8% for the owners. From personal communications with the small business owners, I discovered that some of the data reported in the Canada’s Business and Consumer Site were outdated. In some cases this was the result of an oversight: some business owners had forgotten to update their profile after they submitted details of their business. In other cases the outdated entry was due to unforeseen circumstances that might have driven the organization out of business or forced the owner to hire or dismiss more employees in a very short period of time. Given that the exact number of employees targeted using this method is not known, it is somewhat difficult to calculate a response rate or to make inferences about non-respondents in the employee sample. However, to minimize any

concerns about the representativeness of the sample, I encouraged the owners to recruit as many employees as possible to complete my questionnaire.

Secondly, data were collected from small firms in the province of Ontario. As with Montreal, information relating to small firms in Ontario (Ottawa and Toronto) was retrieved from Canada's Business and Consumer Site. A total of 221 organizations belonging to the professional services sector were identified in this way. Small firms with less than 3 employees were excluded, resulting in 146 business ventures, which were contacted by e-mail. All the e-mails contained a brief description of the project as well as attachments with the full invitation letter and a survey request form, as sent to Montreal small business owners. The owners interested in the project were encouraged to complete the survey request form and return it to the author by fax or e-mail. Each e-mail included the owner's name and the name of the organization, together with the subject of the e-mail, in the subject heading in order to avoid the e-mail being ignored as spam. Despite the fact that all companies were sent a reminder e-mail about a month after the first e-mail, a total of 9 companies responded positively to the research requests, which constitutes a response rate of 6%. A potential explanation for the low response rate can be attributed to the high volume of spam e-mails received by small firms daily as well as the likelihood that small business owners would not normally respond to any e-mail or letter that was not of any obvious benefit to them. The fact that only 20 of the 146 small business owners who received this e-mail replied negatively to my research request partly verifies the previous assumption that very few small business owners paid attention to the invitation by e-mail. These somewhat disappointing response rates forced me to depart from the original strategy of limiting the sample to a specific industry. I decided to

diversify the sample to include a variety of industries, using data collection methods such as snowballing and the assistance of students, in order to ensure a sufficiently large sample for the purposes of analysis. Below I describe these tactics in more detail.

Snowball sampling was the third method used to recruit small businesses. Snowball sampling is frequently used in small business research (e.g. Dyer & Ross, 2003) and is considered an effective strategy for collecting data from small firm owners (Curran & Blackburn, 2001). The author asked existing participants to recommend other small business owners who would be interested in this research project or requested the assistance of his own acquaintances with contacts who are small business owners. Snowball sampling produced results from 15 small firms in the area of Montreal.

Finally, students participating in an undergraduate course were recruited to assist the investigator of this project in collecting data from small business owners. In exchange for their help, students received an extra credit towards their final grade in the course. All students participating in the project were required to provide the name of the owner of the organization and contact information. A brief workshop was organized for all students to explain issues relating to the confidentiality and anonymity of the responses and to ensure that the surveys would be distributed according to the standards set out by the University's ethics committee. At the end of the workshop sealed envelopes containing a letter explaining the purpose of the study were distributed to the participating students, addressed to the owner and employee respectively. A few days after the investigator of this project was notified of the number of questionnaires required by each of the participating firms, the questionnaires were either provided to the assisting students or

mailed directly to the small business owner according to their preference. A total of 21 organizations were recruited using this method.

In sum, data were collected from 63 small firms in the provinces of Quebec and Ontario. From this sample size, only data from 50 organizations were used in the analyses. There were three primary reasons for excluding the remaining organizations from further analyses: a) questionnaires were received either from the owner or the employees but not both, b) questionnaires were received only by the owner and one employee, or c) the owner who completed the questionnaire did not have any employees. In terms of participants, the final sample size was composed of 50 small business owners and 253 employees, indicating that approximately 5 employees (minimum 2 and maximum 16) per organization participated in this research.

Following the 2002 North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) (www.census.gov/epcd/www/naics.html) small firms were representative of the following industries (percentages included in the parentheses): construction 1 (2%), finance and insurance 1 (2%), information 1 (2%), manufacturing 4 (8%), retail trade 6 (12%), transportation and warehousing 1 (2%) wholesale trade 1 (2%), accommodation and food services 4 (8%), professional, scientific and technical services 17 (34%), health care and social assistance 2 (4%), arts, entertainment and recreation 6 (12%), education services 3 (6%), and other services 3 (6%). The number of employees working for firms within each industry is presented in Appendix 3. The major disadvantage of a sample that includes different sectors is that it does not allow for direct comparison of the firm performance. However, its key advantage is that it increases the potential generalizability of the results.

The average life span of the small businesses composing this sample was approximately 13 years (mean = 12.79). The number of people employed in these firms ranged between 3 and 55 (mean = 18.06). Out of 50 small firm owners who completed the questionnaire, 39 (78%) identified themselves as male. The mean age of small business owners was 43 years. The mean total work experience for the whole sample was 21.8 years with a standard deviation of 9.54. The educational level of the business owners spanned from less than high school (4.1%) to a doctorate degree (4.1%), with most of the owners having a university degree (42.9%).

3.1. Collection of Interview Data

Although the primary data set for this research came from the quantitative questionnaires, I decided to collect some supplementary qualitative information to aid in the interpretation of the findings. To this end, interviews were scheduled with owners and employees from 10 of the 50 organizations that agreed to participate in this research endeavor. Small business owners who were willing to be interviewed were also asked if some of their employees could be interviewed on a voluntary basis. A total of 36 employees from 10 small firms agreed to participate in the interviews. Both small business owners and employees were assured of the confidentiality of their responses and the researcher ensured that all interviews were conducted behind closed doors. To facilitate the research process, all interviews were recorded. Semi-structured interviews, composed of open-ended questions, were conducted either during regular work hours or in the leisure time of the participating employees and owners. Two different sets of questions were prepared for the small business owners and their employees respectively. The interview questions are detailed in Appendices 1 and 2.

3.2. Measures

Unless otherwise noted, owners' and employees' responses were rated on a 5-point Likert scale anchored from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. Higher scores indicate high levels of the construct in question. Below, I describe all the measures used in this study.

3.3. Questionnaire for Small Business Owners

3.3.1. *Personality.* Personality was measured using the 44-item Big Five Inventory (BFI) (John, Donahue, & Knetle, 1991). The selection of this instrument from the several available Big Five measures was based on two criteria. The first is the psychometric properties of the BFI. In a recent review of existing Big Five inventories, John and Srivastava (1999) have shown that the BFI exhibits equivalent or better reliability and validity than other existing measures (e.g. the NEO Five Factor Inventory – NEO-FFI [Costa & McCrae, 1992], and the Big Five Factor Markers – BFFM [Goldberg, 1999]). Secondly, lengthy questionnaires are usually less attractive to the respondents, especially for small business owners, and it was thus considered sensible to minimize the number of questions incorporated. Therefore, the 44-item BFI emerged as the best alternative, in terms of length and conciseness of the items included, as compared to the 60-item NEO FFI (Costa & McCrae, 1992) and the 50-item IPIP (Goldberg, 1999). Alternatives (for example the 10-item personality measure [TIPI] [Gosling, Rentfrow, & Swann, 2003]) were rejected due to their weak psychometric properties and the suggestions of the authors for the measure to be used “where very short measures are needed, [and] personality is not the primary topic of interest” (p. 504).

In the 44-item BFI, 10 items measure openness to experience, 9 items measure agreeableness, 9 items measure conscientiousness, 8 items measure extraversion and 8 items measure neuroticism. Some sample items for the five dimensions are: (*I see myself as someone who...*) “Has a forgiving nature” and “Is considerate and kind to almost everyone” (Agreeableness), “Perseveres until the task is finished” and “Does things efficiently” (Conscientiousness), “Is sophisticated in art, music, or literature” and “Is original comes up with new ideas” (Openness to experience), “Generates a lot of enthusiasm” and “Tends to be quiet” (reversed-keyed item) (Extraversion), “Is depressed, blue” and “Is emotionally stable, not easily upset” (reverse-keyed item) (Neuroticism). All scales reached acceptable levels of internal consistency reliability. Specifically, alpha reliabilities for the 5 scales were: .77 for agreeableness, .71 for conscientiousness, .83 for openness to experience, .81 for extraversion and .70 for neuroticism.

3.3.2. Self-concordance. To assess small business owners’ goal orientation and self-concordance, a goal-based measure was used as suggested by Sheldon and Elliot (1998, 1999). In line with other research on personal goals (Emmons, 1986) and self-concordance (Sheldon & Elliot, 1998, 1999), small business owners were asked to identify four of their short-term business goals. After these goals were identified, and in order to assess self-concordance, small business owners were asked to identify their reasons for pursuing each goal as external, introjected, identified and intrinsic, with each dimension being assessed with one item. These reasons were stated as: “You pursue this goal because somebody else wants you to or because the situation demands it” (external), “You pursue this goal because you would feel anxious, guilty, or ashamed if you didn’t”

(introjected), “You pursue this goal because you really believe it’s an important goal to have” (identified) and “You pursue this goal because of the personal satisfaction [original: “fun”] and enjoyment it provides you” (intrinsic). The substitution of the word “satisfaction” for the word “fun” in the assessment of intrinsic motivation item was deemed to be more appropriate for many of the goals that small business owners would potentially generate. For instance, some goals such as financing or hiring more qualified staff would plausibly provide “enjoyment” to the small business owner, if obtained, without however necessarily being “fun”. Owners were asked to answer all four questions using a 9-point scale ranging from 1 = “Not at all for this reason,” to 9 = “Completely for this reason”. An index of self-concordance was calculated by summing the intrinsic and identified scores (autonomous) and subtracting the external and introjected scores (controlled) following Sheldon and Elliot (1999). The reliability of the aggregate self-concordance measure was .56, an unacceptably low level of internal consistency.

In their recent studies, Sheldon and Elliot (1998) and Bono and Judge (2003) suggest the calculation of the autonomous and controlled as separate scales. Their recommendation is based on the complication associated with the use of difference scores, in particular, loss of information, and negative and positive correlated items, which affect the reliability of the instrument (Edwards & Parry, 1993; Johns, 1991). Following their suggestion, I calculated the measures of autonomous and controlled goals separately and included them in this format in my analyses. Each scale was thus composed of 8 items. Internal consistency reliabilities for the autonomous and the controlled scales were .73 and .72 respectively.

3.3.3. Psychological contract (transactional and relational obligations from the owner to the employees as perceived by the owner). The employers' obligations to their employees, as perceived and expressed by the small business owners, were assessed using Rousseau's (2000) Psychological Contract Inventory (PCI). In accordance with the psychological contract theory, the structure of the PCI taps four distinct dimensions: relational, transactional, balanced and transitional contracts. In this study, I decided to use the relational and transactional scales, as they are the most robust, and the most widely and frequently used dimensions in the psychological contract literature (see Millward & Brewerton, 2000). It is worth mentioning that the transitional aspect of the psychological contract does not really constitute a contract situation (that is, it is a non-contract situation). Rousseau (2000) comments that the transitional contract is "not a psychological contract form itself but a cognitive stated [sic] reflecting the consequences of organizational change and transitions that are at odds with a previously established employment arrangement" (p.3).

The PCI – employer version – is a 28-item scale, with 16 items capturing the employer's obligations – transactional and relational – to the employees (*To what extent have you made the following commitment or obligation to your employees? 1 = not at all to 5 = to a great extent*). Sample items are: "A job limited to specific, well-defined responsibilities", "Limited involvement in the organization", "Make no commitments to retain them in the future"(transactional) and "Make decisions with their interest in mind", "Be responsive to their personal concerns and well-being" and "Stable benefits for employees' families" (relational). According to Rousseau (2000), alpha reliabilities for these scales range from .65 (transactional) to .80 (relational). In this study the

transactional and relational scales had alpha reliabilities of .71 and .85 respectively. After removing one item from the transactional scale, (“Training them only for their current job”), as suggested by the reliability analysis, the alpha coefficient of this scale increased to .74. It is not surprising that this item was poorly associated with the rest of the items in the transactional scale, as in most small firms tasks are defined very broadly and training usually occurs in an unstructured and informal fashion.

In sum, these findings are consistent with Rousseau’s (2000) PCI report, which shows that the transactional scale exhibits lower levels of internal consistency reliability than the relational scale. It is also consistent with previous theoretical assumptions placing small firm employees mainly in the relational quadrant of the psychological contract (Rousseau, 1995) (see Figure 1).

3.3.4. *Job satisfaction.* Job satisfaction was measured using five items from the Brayfield and Rothe scale (Brayfield & Rothe, 1951). This shortened version has been used in other research projects exhibiting acceptable reliabilities between .82 and .86 (e.g. Bono & Judge, 2003; Judge, Bono, & Locke, 2000). Sample items are: “Most days I am enthusiastic about my work,” and “I feel fairly satisfied with my present job”. The alpha reliability for this study was .83.

3.3.5. *Organizational commitment.* The 6-item affective commitment scale (Meyer, Allen, & Smith, 1993) was used to assess organization commitment. Affective commitment denotes strong identification and attachment to one’s organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990). A sample of these items includes: “I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization” and “I do not feel a strong sense of ‘belonging’ to my organization” (reverse-keyed item). Meyer and colleagues (2002) in their meta-

analysis of the three facets of organizational commitment (i.e. affective, continuance and normative) report an average n-weighted reliability of .82 for the affective commitment scale. Surprisingly, in this study, the reliability of the 6-item affective commitment scale was very low ($\alpha = .52$). The three negatively worded items did not seem to fit well with the rest of the items in this scale. Even after removing all the reverse-coded items from the scale, the measure barely reached acceptable reliability levels ($\alpha = .62$). A potential explanation could be related to the effects of item wording (Schriesheim & Eisenbach, 1995). Methodological research has clearly shown that the use of negative worded items may trigger different response reactions among respondents (Spector, Van Katwyk, Brannick, & Chen, 1997), thus producing systematic error in a measure (Jackson, Wall, Martin, & Davids, 1993) and reducing its validity (Schriesheim & Hill, 1981). In addition, reverse-coded items have been shown to generate artifactual constructs (McPherson & Mohr, 2005; Spector et al., 1997). The use of an exploratory or confirmatory factor analysis could have cast some light into those assumptions (see McPherson and Mohr, 2005 and Spector and colleagues, 1997), examining the structure of the well-established unidimensional affective commitment scale (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Meyer, Allen, & Smith, 1993). Unfortunately, due to the small sample size and severe deviation from normality (four out of six variables had skewedness between -2.34 and -7.07 and three of them kurtosis between 7.60 and 50.00), I was unable to conduct an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) or a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), as research indicates that these types of analysis are inappropriate and not recommended under these conditions (Fabrigar, Wegener, MacCallum & Strahan, 1999). Alternative explanations

related to the content validity of this measure and its impact on the findings of this study are considered below in the discussion.

3.3.6. *Exit intentions.* To measure the small business owner's exit intentions, the author created a tailor-made scale. This was necessary because of the apparent lack of an appropriate and validated scale in the small business literature. The instrument was composed of six items underlining potential reasons for small business owner to leave their organization. These reasons were either associated with the owner's desire to retire, hand the operation of the firm to a professional manager, sell the firm and establish a new venture or work for someone else and expand the business. The following items were formulated: "I am seriously thinking of getting out of this business and working for someone else", "I would like to hand the operation of my firm over to a professional manager", "I intend to sell this firm and establish a new one", "I am thinking of selling this venture to someone else", "I am planning to retire" and "I intend to seek new markets or further expand my organization" (reverse-keyed item). The internal consistency reliability including all 6 items was .68. Inter-item correlations revealed that the single reverse-worded item was poorly associated with the rest of the items composing this measure, and it was therefore dropped. After removing the reverse coded-item, the inter-item consistency reliability increased to .70. Content validity could be the reason for the poor consistency between the reverse-keyed item and the rest of the items in the exit measure. While all five direct items describe small business owners' intentions to leave or stay with their organization, the reverse-scored item depicts their growth orientation.

3.4. Questionnaire for Small Business Employees

3.4.1. Psychological contracts (*transactional and relational obligations from the owner to the employees as perceived by the employees*). Small business owners' promises to their employees, as perceived by the employees, were assessed using the same instrument (PCI) (Rousseau, 2000) that measured the employers' psychological contract. For the instrument to apply in the employees' case, a few changes in wording were considered necessary. For example, one of the items in the owners' section "Make decisions with their interest in mind" was changed to read "Make decisions with my interest in mind". Employees' were asked to indicate the commitments or obligations made by their employer. Alpha reliability for the transactional scale was .73. This was based on a 7 rather than an 8-item scale. The reason was that two of the PCI items, "A job for a short-time only" and "Short-term employment", turned out to be almost identical in the French translation. Fearing that this would create suspicion among the respondents that I was double-checking their responses I decided to remove it from the French version of the survey and overall from the reliability analyses. Lastly, the alpha reliability for the relational contract scale was .89.

3.4.2. Perceived breach. Perceived contract breach was captured using Robinson and Morrison's (2000) 5-item scale. The authors claim that this instrument is consistent with previous theoretical endeavors conceptualizing breach as the employee's overall estimation of how well the employer has fulfilled promises (Robinson, 1996). A few sample items are: "Almost all promises made by my employer during recruitment have been kept so far" (reverse-keyed item) and "My employer has broken many of its promises to me even though I've upheld my side of the deal." The internal consistency reliability of this scale was good ($\alpha = .91$).

3.4.3. *Feelings of violation.* Robinson and Morrison's (2000) 4-item measure was used to assess employees' feelings of violation. Sample items include: "I feel my organization has violated the contract between us" and "I feel extremely frustrated by how I have been treated by my organization." A good level of reliability was also achieved with this scale ($\alpha = .85$).

3.5. Translation

Canada is a bilingual country, with both English and French being the official languages in its ten provinces. To ensure the accuracy of the responses and small business owner and employee participation, the above scales used in the owner and employee questionnaires were translated into French. For the Big Five Inventory (John et al., 1991) and the affective commitment scale (Meyer et al., 1993), validated translations into French already existed. The French translation of the BFI was adopted from Lepage, Levasseur, Van Nieuwenhuyse, and Lavallée (2003) and Schmitt et al. (2004), and the French translation of the affective commitment scale was adopted from Vandenberghe, Bentein, and Stinglhamber (2004).

To ensure consistency between the English and the French version and to minimize problems associated with any specific translation approach, I used the backward translation and the committee approach as suggested by Brislin (1980). Initially, a small group of three bilingual individuals was formed to carry out the translation of the survey measures from English into French. The group was composed of two Ph.D. students in the area of Organizational Behavior and a Professor experienced in scales translation. Brislin (1980) has noted that a major weakness associated with this translation method is lack of criticism among co-operating committee members. To

overcome this problem, the two Ph.D. students worked in co-operation but independently from the Professor who supervised the translation, suggested the final changes and resolved existing ambiguities. After the translation was complete, a trilingual Doctor of Life Sciences, was asked to carry out a backward translation of the instrument from French into English. Any emerging discrepancies were resolved with the collaboration of the backward translator and the translation group.

In the sample, 32 small business owners completed the questionnaire in English, and 18 in French. Of the employees, 120 completed the English version and 133 the French version, resulting in a total of 253 questionnaires.

3.6. Control Variables

Demographic variables, such as age, gender, educational level, and work experience, have been consistently used in research studies to explain variation in people's behavior. From the aforementioned demographic variables, gender and work experience have been systematically used and found to be associated with individuals' contractual preferences in previous studies (e.g. Millward & Brewerton, 2000). Information about these variables was collected from the owners' and employees' questionnaires. In addition, to ensure whether there were any significant differences across industries, organizations and the language of the respondents (both owners and employees answered the surveys either in the English or French language) a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted for all dependent variables. An ANOVA revealed no significant differences across industries, organizations and languages for the small business owner sample. Thus, only gender and work experience were used as

control variables in regression analyses for the small business owner, primarily based on the theoretical grounds explained above.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. RESULTS

4.1. Descriptive Statistics and Bivariate Correlations

The distributions of all independent and dependent variables were examined to identify influential cases (e.g. outliers) or potential deviations from normality (e.g. skewness and kurtosis). The criterion of $+/-2$ for skewness was used according to the suggestion of West, Finch, and Curran (1995). Visual examinations of the normality plots for the independent variables indicated that job satisfaction (Skewness = -2.737) and affective commitment (Skewness = -2.797) were negatively skewed. For each variable, a square or cubic transformation was calculated to normalize the data distribution.

Although the performed transformations were successful in reducing the skewness and normalizing the data distributions, I decided to use the original variables, for two main reasons. First, the transformed variables did not exhibit any major differences, when compared to the original variables, in any of the analyses performed. Second, results and beta-standardized coefficients are straightforward and easily interpreted in regression analysis when variables are not transformed.

4.2. Data from Small Business Owners

4.2.1. Personality. Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics and the correlation matrix for all the owner and employee variables. The means and standard deviations for the BFI scales were as follows: extraversion (mean = 3.76, SD = .68), agreeableness (mean = 4.09, SD = .53), conscientiousness (mean = 4.05, SD = .55), neuroticism (mean = 2.46, SD = .59) and openness to experience (mean = 3.99, SD = .64). Official published norms do not exist for the BFI scale (Srivastava, personal communication), therefore I

compared my results with the results of Benet-Martinez and John (1998) and Srivastava, John, Gosling, and Potter (2003). The choice was based primarily on the extensive sample sizes of these studies and their cross-cultural nature. My comparisons revealed that the means in my study appear to be almost similar to or slightly higher than the means values reported by Benet-Martinez and John (1998) in one of their studies on 136 Spanish – English bilingual individuals. Specifically, my means for extraversion (3.8 vs. 3.6), agreeableness (4.1 vs. 3.9), conscientiousness (4.1 vs. 3.9) and openness to experience (4.0 vs. 3.9) were slightly higher. Conversely, my mean for neuroticism was slightly lower (2.5) than that reported by the authors (2.6). Finally, a comparison with the study by Srivastava and colleagues (2003) shows similar results. A comparison table is provided in Table 1.

All absolute correlations above .24 were significant at $p < .05$. The absolute average bivariate correlation among all personality variables in this study was .31, which is somewhat inflated in comparison to the value of .20 reported by previous studies (Benet-Martinez & John, 1998) although this was for a much larger sample size ($n = 1605$). The highest positive correlation was between openness to experience and extraversion ($r = .44$), while the highest negative correlation was between agreeableness and neuroticism ($r = -.62$). No significant relationships were reported between: a) openness to experience and conscientiousness ($r = .14$, $p < .17$) or agreeableness ($r = .05$, $p < .36$), and b) extraversion and agreeableness ($r = .08$, $p < .29$). However, these findings are not surprising and consistent with the results of Benet-Martinez and John (1998), who report lower correlations between the same variables for a U.S. sample ($n = 711$). Neuroticism was negatively correlated with all other trait scales (average bivariate

correlation $r = -.41$), while the remaining scales were positively associated (average bivariate correlation among agreeableness, conscientiousness, extraversion and openness to experience was $r = .24$).

4.2.2. Motivation. Out of the 50 small business owners who participated in this study 42 (84 %) provided all four goals requested. The remaining 8 owners described one, two or a maximum of three of their pursued goals. Popular choices of goal were related to growth (e.g. “Growth”, “Become more diverse”, “Increase market share/presence”), sales (e.g. “Increase sales by a minimum 10% annually”, “Increase volume of sales”), hiring new employees (e.g. “Hire four new stable employees”, “Hire pharmacy students for stage/internship”), applying for financing (“Increase corporate financing”, “Seek financing”), and increasing clientele (e.g. “Obtain new clients”, “Increase the client base”).

The means and standard deviations of the motivation scales were as follows. Self-concordance (aggregate measure): mean = 3.60 and SD = 2.09; autonomous goals: mean = 7.79 and SD = 1.07 and controlled goals: mean = 4.17 and SD = 1.61. As noted earlier in the methods section, the motivation scales were rated on a 9-point scale. Taken together, these means suggest that small business owners were more likely to rate their goals as autonomous rather than controlled.

4.2.3. Psychological contracts. Small business owners’ psychological contract was measured using the transactional (mean = 2.09, SD = .75) and the relational (mean = 4.06, SD = .71) contract scales. A conclusion I draw from these results is that small firm owners believed that they were more likely to make relational rather than transactional promises to their employees.

4.2.4. Job satisfaction, organizational commitment and exit intentions. The means and standard deviations of the owners' attitudes towards their job were as follows. Job satisfaction: mean = 4.46 and SD = .70; affective commitment: mean = 4.44 and SD = .70 and exit intentions: mean = 1.76 and SD = .79. These means, measured on a 5-point scale, indicate that their scores on satisfaction and commitment to their organization were extremely high. Conversely, their exit intentions were relatively low.

4.3. Data from Small Business Employees

4.3.1. Aggregation of employee perceptions. In this study, psychological contract perceptions were assessed in two different ways, by measuring the perceptions of the owner and the perceptions of the employees. This allowed me to gain a more accurate and objective picture of the promises, commitments and expectations of both parties to the psychological contract. Perceptions of breach and feelings of violation were assessed only by the employees.

Klein, Danserau and Hall (1994) consider independence among actors, homogeneity within groups and heterogeneity between groups to be paramount for multilevel theory building and conceptualization of higher level constructs. In addition they argue that for cross-level models (that is, models where the independent and dependent variables are assessed at different levels of analysis [Rousseau, 1995]) all the conditions of homogeneity and heterogeneity should be met. My assumptions, therefore, are that each employee is an independent actor working for a small business owner, alongside other employees with whom the owner has similar (homogeneous) employment relationships. Furthermore, I assume that the small firm operates autonomously and is differentiated from other small firms. This set of assumptions is a precondition for

aggregating individual employee responses to the group level. Bearing these considerations in mind, below I statistically examine the issue of aggregation of the psychological contract scales.

Klein and Koslowski (2000) suggest procedures that can be used to aggregate data from a lower to a higher level of analysis. The authors state that the r_{wg} index (James, Demaree, & Wolf, 1984), the eta-squared, the intraclass correlation coefficients, ICC(1) and ICC(2), and a within and between analysis (WABA) are among the most frequently used. Burke, Finkelstein, and Dusig (1999), Burke and Dunlap (2002) and Dunlap, Burke and Smith-Crowe (2003) propose and argue for the superiority of another procedure, the average deviation index (AD,) over the r_{wg} index.

In this study, I used the AD-index (Burke & Dunlap, 2002; Burke et al., 1999; Dunlap et al., 2003), together with the intraclass correlation coefficients – ICC(1) and ICC(2) – to assess homogeneity in employee responses and evaluate the appropriateness of data aggregation.

The AD-index assesses interrater agreement based on the measurement scale used (Burke et al., 1999). Burke and Dunlap (2002), referring to Burke and colleagues (1999), argue that “in comparison to other indices for estimating interrater agreement with a single target, the average absolute deviation computed relative to the mean of an item (AD_M) or median of an item (AD_{Md}) provides more direct conceptualizations and assessments of interrater agreement in the metric or units of the original measurement scale.” (p.159). They conclude that different cut-off points exist for different Likert-type scales, according to the following formula: $c/6$, where c equals the number of response options for a Likert-type scale. Therefore, the broader values of 0.8, 1.2, 1.5 and 1.8

represent benchmark points when using the AD index with 5-, 7-, 9-, and 11-point item scales. Burke and Dunlap (2002) explain that if the AD-index value is smaller than the $c/6$ heuristic value then this is a good indication of aggregation. On the contrary if the AD-index value is greater than the heuristic $c/6$ value, then aggregation cannot be performed, as data are not homogeneous enough to reflect common employee views. In sum the AD-index is a measure of respondent agreement that helps us to evaluate whether lower-level data can be aggregated, taking into consideration the type of scale used.

In this study, the value of .833 (Burke & Dunlap, 2002) was used as a cut-off point for data aggregation. The AD-indices for transactional and relational contracts, perceptions of breach and feelings of violation were .802, .713, .695 and .539 respectively. The calculated AD-indices provided supportive evidence for data aggregation for all of the scales of interest in this study.

The intraclass correlation indicators also supported aggregation. ICC(1) measures the amount of the total variance explained by individual membership and ICC(2), a derivative of ICC(1), is a measure of reliability of the group means. ICC(1) is unaffected by the size of the group, whereas ICC(2) usually appears to be inflated by larger sample sizes. Research methods literature suggests that even though there is no rule of thumb, a value exceeding .20 (Ostroff & Schmitt, 1993) and a significant F-statistic is an adequate indicator of aggregation for the ICC(1), while a value equal to or exceeding .70 is an acceptable indicator for ICC(2) (Klein & Koslowski, 2000). Both indices are considered to be robust indicators for aggregation and have been successfully used in other studies (e.g. Barrick et al., 1998). The ICC(1) for the transactional contract scale was .27 ($F =$

3.65, $p < .000$), for the relational contract .43 ($F = 7.13$, $p < .000$), for perceptions of breach .67 ($F = 11.04$, $p < .000$), and for feelings of violation .57 ($F = 6.36$, $p < .000$).

The ICC(2) for the transactional contract was .73 ($F = 3.65$, $p < .000$), for the relational contract .86 ($F = 7.13$, $p < .000$), for perceptions of breach .91 ($F = 11.04$, $p < .000$), and for feelings of violation .84 ($F = 6.36$, $p < .000$).

In sum, the combination of results from the AD-index and ICC(1) and ICC(2) provided strong evidence for aggregation of the data collected from employees within each small firm.

4.3.2. Psychological contracts. The data collected from the employees partly support the owners' contract orientations. Specifically, aggregate employees' reports on owners' transactional contracts had a mean of 2.31 ($SD = .46$), and a mean of 3.48 ($SD = .70$) for relational contracts.

In the next stage of the analysis, I examined the data to see the extent to which there was mutuality between the two parties, defined here as the agreement between the owners and employees as regards the owners' specific obligations. Following the suggestions of Porter, Pearce, Tripoli, and Lewis (1998) and Dabos and Rousseau (2004), I calculated mutuality as the absolute value of the gaps between owner and employee perceptions for all types of psychological contracts. The mutuality equation used was as follows:

$$GAP_{ij} = | \text{Small Business Owner Obligation}_i (O) - \text{Small Business Owner Obligation}_j (E) |$$

where i and j represent the transactional and relational types of psychological contracts. A small average gap value indicates mutuality of commitments and obligations between

small business owners and their employees. According to the rating scale used in this study, values can range between 0, indicating full agreement and 4, indicating no agreement at all. Dabos and Rousseau (2004) state that this gap should be smaller for the same psychological contract obligations (e.g. transactional – transactional) as compared to dissimilar contract orientations (e.g. transactional – relational).

Table 2 estimates the mean difference and the 95% confidence intervals for all four mutuality gaps. The results indicate that items in the on-diagonal have lower means than items in the off-diagonal. No confidence intervals overlap, suggesting that, in general, small business employees have a clear picture of their employers' commitments and obligations. Overall, these data indicate the existence of mutuality between small business owners and their employees.

4.3.3. *Perceptions of breach and feelings of violation.* As noted earlier, I asked employees to indicate the extent to which the promises made by their employer have been fulfilled and whether cases of non-fulfillment resulted in any negative feelings. Employees' psychological contract breach (mean = 2.07, SD = .66) and subsequent feelings of violations (mean = 1.57, SD = .55) were below the mean value on the 5-point scale used.

4.4. Hypothesis Testing

In testing the hypotheses, I began in each case with simple bivariate correlations that provided evidence for the relationship between personality or motivation variables and psychological contracts and work attitudes. Hierarchical linear regression analyses were then conducted to test the main effects of personality and goal motivation on psychological contracts and work attitudes. Control variables (i.e. gender and work

experience) were entered at the first step of the regression equation, while each specific personality trait alone (or self-concordance) was entered simultaneously with the control variables at the second step.

Nevertheless, before performing any analyses between the independent and dependent variables of interest in this study, it was deemed necessary to investigate whether the two basic conditions for multiple regression were met – linearity between the independent and dependent variables, and normal distribution of the error terms and lack of association with the antecedent variables (DeMaris, 2004). As suggested by DeMaris (2004), linearity between the independent and dependent variables was examined through an examination of the scatterplots. None of the scatterplots between personality, goal motivation, psychological contracts and work attitudes showed any deviations from linearity for any of the variables used in the analyses. In addition, all residual scatterplots exhibited a normal distribution of the error terms, negating the assumption that predictors and residuals were correlated. In sum, both criteria were satisfied, which allowed me to safely conduct multiple regression analyses.

Tables 4 through 13 describe the results for personality variables and psychological contract orientations. Below these results are classified and presented in terms of the Big Five taxonomy.

4.4.1. Agreeableness. Most of the hypotheses concerning agreeableness and psychological contracts or work attitudes were supported at the bivariate level. Specifically, agreeableness was strongly correlated to relational contracts for both owner and employee perceptions ($r = .52$ and $r = .36$ respectively) (Hypothesis 1a).

Examining the same relationships with regression analyses, I found that agreeableness was significantly related ($\beta = .30, p < .05$) to relational contracts. A total of 20% (adjusted $R^2 = .20$) of the variance in relational contracts was explained by the inclusion of the small business owner's gender, work experience and agreeableness. Agreeableness explained an additional 7% ($\Delta R^2 = .07, F = 4.89, p < .01$) of the variance in relational contracts (Table 4). Therefore, Hypothesis 1a was supported. Similarly, the relationship between agreeableness and employee perceptions about their owner's promises was investigated. Hierarchical regression analysis showed that agreeableness was significantly related to relational contracts ($\beta = .35, p < .05$), explaining an additional 10% of the variance in employees' perceptions about their employers' promises. This thus provided additional support for Hypothesis 1a.

As regards the relationship between agreeableness and work attitudes, bivariate correlations showed that agreeableness was unrelated to exit intentions ($r = -.17$), positively associated with the owners' job satisfaction ($r = .39$) and affective commitment ($r = .22$) while strongly negatively related to employees' perceptions of breach ($r = -.44$) and feelings of violation ($r = -.43$). As shown in Table 9, the regression analyses supported the positive relation between agreeableness and job satisfaction ($\beta = .34, p < .031$) (Hypothesis 2a) and its negative association with employees' perceptions of breach ($\beta = -.43, p < .007$) and feelings of violation ($\beta = -.49, p < .002$) (Hypothesis 1b). However, I was unable to support any of the remaining relationships proposed in Hypothesis 2b.

Summarizing the above findings, I can say that agreeable small business owners seem to derive satisfaction from what they do. In addition, they pursue an exchange

relationship based on stability and loyalty (i.e. relational) and they successfully communicate this message to their employees. Their employees, at the same time, appear to be generally satisfied with their exchange relationship and feel that they have received what has been promised to them.

4.4.2. *Conscientiousness.* At the bivariate level, conscientiousness was associated with relational contracts in terms of both owner ($r = .37$) and employee perceptions ($r = .29$). In the regression analysis, the inclusion of conscientiousness in the equation explained an additional 8% ($\Delta R^2 = .08$, $F = 4.91$, $p < .05$) of the variance in relational contracts (Table 5). Thus, Hypothesis 3a arguing that conscientious owners will expect their employees to form relational contracts was supported. The same analysis was conducted for employees' perceptions of relational contracts. Similarly, conscientiousness was weakly related ($\beta = .24$, $p < .10$) to relational contracts, explaining an additional 6% ($\Delta R^2 = .06$, $F = 2.93$, $p < .10$) of the variance in employees' perceptions about their owner's promises. This therefore provides further evidence for Hypothesis 3a.

As regards work attitudes, conscientiousness was negatively correlated to perceptions of breach ($r = -.21$) and feelings of violation ($r = -.30$) (Hypothesis 3b). Moreover, conscientious was negatively associated with exit intentions ($r = -.22$) (Hypothesis 4b) and positively associated with job satisfaction ($r = .21$) (Hypothesis 4a). Regression analyses did not indicate any significant relationship between conscientiousness and job satisfaction ($\beta = .18$, $p < .21$), exit intentions ($\beta = -.21$, $p < .171$) and perceptions of breach ($\beta = -.19$, $p < .217$) (Table 10). However, conscientiousness was found to be a strong predictor of employees' feelings of violation

($\beta = .29$, $p < .053$, $\Delta R^2 = .082$, $F = 1.46$ $p < .238$). In conclusion, these results do not provide any support for Hypotheses 4a or 4b but do partially support Hypothesis 3b.

In sum, I found that owners who were high on conscientiousness promoted a relational relationship with their employees. This was verified by the employees, indicating that they had a clear awareness of their employer's intentions towards them. Interestingly, even in cases where small business owners fell short of their promises, the employees were unwilling to express any negative feelings towards them. Surprisingly, my results failed to show that conscientious small business owners were satisfied, committed and less prone to leave their organizations.

4.4.3. Openness to experience. At the bivariate level, the hypothesis linking openness to experience with psychological contracts was not supported ($r = .08$, $p < .293$ for owners, $r = -.05$, $p < .371$ for employees) (Hypothesis 5a). In the regression analyses, however, I found weak support for the hypothesis contending that open small business owners will form a relational contract with their employees ($\beta = .25$, $p < .089$). This is possibly the outcome of suppression effects, defined as the improvement in prediction between two uncorrelated variables, that is, predictor-criterion (e.g. openness to experience and relational contracts). This may be the result of the inclusion of another predictor variable in the equation, that is gender or work experience, which were used as controls (Horst, 1941; Tzelgov & Henik, 1991). Consequently, openness to experience explained an additional 5% ($\Delta R^2 = .05$, $F = 3.03$, $p < .009$) of the owner's perception of relational contracts, while controlling for small business owner gender and work experience (Table 6). However, an examination of the same hypothesis using the data

from employee reports resulted in an insignificant regression coefficient ($\beta = .05$, $p < .32$).

Openness to experience was hypothesized to be positively related to job satisfaction while its relationship with affective commitment and exit intentions was left open as a research question (Hypothesis 6, Research Questions 1 and 2). At the bivariate level, the relationships between openness to experience and job satisfaction ($r = .34$) and affective commitment ($r = .20$) were supported (Hypothesis 6 and Research Question 1), but not the relationship with exit intentions ($r = .09$) (Research Question 2). However, hierarchical regressions were performed for all work attitudes. Regression analyses showed that openness was significantly related to job satisfaction ($\beta = .37$, $p < .013$) explaining an additional 12% in its variance ($\Delta R^2 = .12$, $F = 3.94$, $p < .014$) but unrelated to affective commitment ($\beta = .21$, $p < .171$) and exit intentions ($\beta = -.04$, $p < .784$) (Table 11). These results provide support only for Hypothesis 6. Finally, as regards the relationship between small firm owner personality and employee perceptions of breach and feelings of violation (Hypothesis 5b), I did not find any significant results either at the bivariate level or in regression analyses.

In sum, I found that owners who were high on openness to experience were somewhat more likely to say they had made promises of long-term, loyalty based employment to their employees. Interestingly, their employees did not agree. They believed that their employers had no relational intentions as they claimed. Additionally, owners who were high in openness to experience were also more likely to say they were satisfied with their work; however they did not report any strong commitment to their organization, which would discourage them from leaving.

4.4.4. Extraversion. Extraversion was weakly correlated with relational contracts, although only for employees' perceptions ($r = .23$). Nevertheless, this relationship failed to be supported in the regression analysis ($\beta = .21, p < .16$). Similarly, the relationship between extraversion and owners' relational contract (Hypothesis 7a) was supported neither at the bivariate level ($r = .16, p < .13$) nor in regression analyses ($\beta = .21, p < .16$) (Table 7).

Hypotheses 8a and 8b predicted that extravert small business owners would be satisfied, affectively committed and less prone to exit their organization. At the bivariate level only the link between extraversion and job satisfaction ($r = .39$) was depicted as significant. Examining the relationships with regression analyses, a strong link was found between extraversion and job satisfaction ($\beta = .42, p < .003, \Delta R^2 = .17, F = 9.78, p < .003$) (Table 12). Hence, these results provide support only for Hypothesis 8a. No relationship was supported for affective commitment and exit intentions, either bivariate or in regression analyses.

In sum, extravert small business owners appeared to be satisfied with their work, but not deeply committed to their organizations. As regards their exchange relationship, the message I received both from the owners and the employees is the lack of mutuality between them. In my opinion, this is a signal that extravert small business owners do not have a specific and clear-cut set of expectations from their exchange relationship.

4.4.5. Neuroticism. The hypothesis linking neuroticism and psychological contracts was not supported either at the bivariate level or in hierarchical regressions (Hypothesis 9a). The results from the hierarchical regressions were $\beta = -.01, p < .93$ for owner perceptions, and $\beta = -.22, p < .12$ for employee perceptions (Table 8).

The results between neuroticism and work attitudes were less disappointing. Specifically, neuroticism was, as expected, negatively correlated to job satisfaction ($r = -.25$) but unrelated to affective commitment and exit intentions, bivariate and in hierarchical regressions. Additionally, neuroticism was weakly associated with employee perceptions of breach ($r = .21$) and strongly associated with feelings of violation ($r = .35$) (Hypothesis 9b). Re-examining these relationships with regression analyses, I found that neuroticism was not related to job satisfaction ($\beta = -.22, p < .121$) (Hypothesis 10a) or employees' perceptions of psychological contract breach ($\beta = .18, p < .222$). However, it was strongly associated with employees' feelings of violation ($\beta = .34, p < .021$), explaining an additional 11% ($\Delta R^2 = .11, F = 5.70, p < .021$) of its variance, thus providing partial support for Hypothesis 9b (Table 13).

In short, I found that neurotics portrayed themselves as dissatisfied small business owners. They are likely to hold an exchange relationship with very loose or even unspecified contract terms with their employees. Such a relationship is likely to be unreciprocated by employees and generate frustration, disappointment and sometimes anger, as a reaction to their employment uncertainty. It seems that employees working for neurotic small business owners do not have a clear picture of what their employer expects from them, and this can become a constant source of irritation and friction between them.

In conclusion, mixed support was found at the bivariate level and in regression analyses for the hypotheses proposed for personality.

4.4.6. Self-concordance, psychological contracts and work attitudes.

Surprisingly, the self-concordance composite measure was unrelated to any of the hypothesized psychological contract (Hypothesis 11) or work attitude variables

(Hypotheses 13 and 14) at the bivariate level or in hierarchical regression analyses (Tables 14 and 15). Similarly, controlled goals were not associated with any of the variables in this study.

However, one of the two scales (autonomous and controlled), which was calculated independently from the aggregate self-concordance measure, exhibited a significant association with some of the dependent variables in this study. In particular, the autonomous goals scale, as shown earlier, was bivariately related to relational contracts – owner perceptions ($r = .25$), job satisfaction ($r = .33$), affective commitment ($r = .26$) and employees' perception of contract breach ($r = -.25$), from the list of the dependent variables. From the regression analyses performed, small business owners' autonomous goals were found to be weakly positively associated with job satisfaction ($\beta = .27, p < .074$) and unrelated to relational contracts – owner perceptions ($\beta = .17, p < .255$), affective commitment ($\beta = .21, p < .176$) and perceptions of contract breach ($\beta = -.21, p < .177$) (Tables 16 and 17). Overall, the combination of gender, work experience and autonomous goals weakly predicted job satisfaction, $F(3, 44) = 2.70, p < .057$, and explained an additional 6% ($\Delta R^2 = .06$) of its variance.

In sum, my findings indicate that small business owners who pursued intrinsically interesting and enjoyable goals were likely to report higher levels of satisfaction than those who followed less self-identified goals.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 Major Findings

5.1.1 Overview. This thesis investigated the impact of small business owners' characteristics, namely personality and goal motivation, on their work attitudes and psychological contract orientations. In general, good support was found for 7 and partial support for 2 of the hypotheses proposed. Appendix 5 summarizes the findings for all hypotheses.

5.1.2. Agreeableness. Agreeableness emerged as the strongest antecedent among the dimensions of the Five Factor model in the current study. All of the hypotheses linking agreeableness positively with relational contracts and negatively with employees' perceptions of breach and feelings of violation were supported. Thus agreeable small business owners encouraged their employees to form a relational contract with them and the employees for their part clearly perceived these commitments and obligations, thereby completing the circle of mutuality as regards owner promises. In addition, employees working for agreeable small business owners were less likely to suffer a breach in their psychological contract and to express negative feelings of violation. Undoubtedly, these results provide an ideal picture of a harmonious exchange relationship between the agreeable small business owners and their employees, in which owners' expectations are reciprocated by the employees and employees feel that promises made to them are well kept.

The same impression was gained from the interviews conducted: agreeable small business owners will employ all possible means to ensure that the employees hired will

have a clear picture of the organization and what is expected from them. Thus, they will not hesitate to involve other people in this procedure in order for this goal to be achieved, as indicated by one of the small business owners high in agreeableness:

“Now also when we hire people, when we interview them: I interview them, Jo interviews them. We are looking for people who are willing to do things, not just people like ‘I am gonna teach and gonna leave’, you know...”

In terms of the link between small business owners' personality and their work attitudes, the relationship between agreeableness and job satisfaction stands out as the most robust both at the bivariate level and in regression analyses. The correlation between the two variables ($r = .39$) is much higher than the value reported in the meta-analytic findings of Judge and colleagues (2002) ($r = .17$). This discrepancy can be understood primarily in light of the unique relationship between the small business owner and his or her organization, given the key role played by this individual in its establishment and success (Cardon et al., 2005). This is borne out by the relatively strong association between job satisfaction and almost all of the Big Five traits: job satisfaction had an absolute correlation of approximately .32 as compared to the much lower value of .20 indicated by Judge and colleagues (2002), serving as a clear indication that small business owners derive high levels of job satisfaction from their ventures. This is also a sign that their ambitions and needs for achievement are largely fulfilled. Moreover, the fact that personality and work attitude data were collected from the same source, namely the small business owners, can provide a possible explanation for the inflated association observed between the two variables. In addition, the social desirability of both agreeableness and job satisfaction can provide further explanation for these results.

The relationship between agreeableness, affective commitment and exit intentions was not supported by hierarchical regressions. Both affective commitment and exit intentions were correlated with agreeableness as hypothesized, but only limited support was found for the former. The life span and survival of the small business provide a possible explanation for this phenomenon. Agreeable small business owners are positively predisposed to establish an “affective” bond with their organizations due to their co-operative, accommodating and sentimental nature (Goldberg, 1990). In the words of an employee of an agreeable owner:

“the [employees] that we have ... do not take to heart the business as she does.”

However, Ciavarella and colleagues (2003) found no relationship between agreeableness and long-term venture survival (that is, more than 8 years) and research findings indicate a negative association between agreeableness and achievement and motivation (Roccas, Sagiv, Schwartz, & Knafo, 2002). It is thus possible that the affective commitment on the part of the agreeable owner might be directed towards the employees rather than the organization per se. For them, commitment might denote attachment to their colleagues – a meaning which was not reflected in the instrument used – rather than to the organization as an abstract concept.

5.1.3. Conscientiousness. Looking first at personality and psychological contracts, conscientiousness was found to be a good and reliable predictor of relational contracts, for both owner and employee reports. Conscientious individuals are proactive, planning, organizing and achievement oriented, driven by high performance motivation. As such, conscientious small business owners will make sure that their employees have a clear picture of their goals and that assurances made regarding employee working

conditions are fulfilled. The following extract from an interview conducted with a small business owner high in conscientiousness reinforces the above conclusion. The owner shows that he has a clear picture of his expectations from his employees and tries systematically to communicate these to his employees, justifying his decisions to them:

“I have absolutely clear-cut expectations of my employees... I have minimum expectations of what functions need to be filled. Certain functions need to be filled; but if that person is capable of more I am not going to stop their growth: I would encourage it, develop it and embrace it and try to get as much out of that particular person than what they have to do... Upfront I tell them [at the first meeting] what I expect. How can you expect somebody to know what’s in your head; you have to tell them. Why are you wasting their time and yours? This is what I expect from you – can you handle it? If the answer is no, interview over, thank you for coming.”

Similarly, this small business owner’s employee confirmed that her employer effectively communicates his expectations regarding the employees’ role and duties within the organization:

“So he [the employer] has written our duties and who is supposed to be the backup. So it’s very helpful. So everybody knows...”

Hierarchical linear regressions showed that small firm owner conscientiousness was negatively related to employees’ feelings of violation but unrelated to their perceptions of breach. The negative association between the employer’s conscientiousness and the employees’ feelings of violation is a clear indication that the employer’s promises will be fulfilled and that, even in the rare case of contract breach,

employees working for a conscientious small firm owner will consider contract breach to have occurred as a result of adverse circumstances, that is situational attribution, rather than the deliberate actions of the owner and will thus hesitate to express any negative feelings towards their employer. Even though the relationship between conscientiousness and employees' perceptions of psychological contract breach was weakly supported at a bivariate level it was not supported in the regression analyses. This might be a signal that conscientious small business owners, being punctual and meticulous planners (Goldberg, 1990), will get the benefit of the doubt from their employees even in situations where they cannot fulfill all of their promises. For instance, a conscientious owner who failed to keep a promise to pay employees' salaries on a fixed date, will not be blamed for this delay, since the latter know that their employer has a very high sense of responsibility, and they therefore assume that something serious or beyond his or her control must have happened, such as a bank strike or extreme work overload. In the following extract from the interview cited above, the conscientious business owner shows how his preoccupation with production (a trait characteristic of conscientiousness) underlies his respect for and professional treatment of his employees. In turn, this is appreciated by the employees and will prevent them from expressing any negative feelings associated with contract violation:

"It makes it more interesting if people enjoy it, and they produce more. In any business, in any family that's how it works: give and take. One day your kids are tired and sick. You have to make allowances. But if I ask you to work overtime you do it. It's give and take... Something comes up in their personal life...always keep your word, say good morning, say goodnight. When they're sick call them at

home. Give them a gift or two, just be a human being... Treating them with respect is what makes my employees stay here. I may not pay better than anyone else but I treat them with respect. It's a circle."

Surprisingly, none of the hypothesized relationships linking conscientiousness with owner work attitudes was supported. The lack of association in hierarchical regression analyses between conscientiousness and job satisfaction which persisted even after the removal of both of the control variables (gender and total work experience) ($\beta = .21$, $F = 2.21$, $p < .144$) was most unexpected in light of meta-analytic findings that portray the relationship between the two variables ($\rho = .26$) (Judge et al., 2002) as one of strongest among the Big Five traits. However, the mediocre correlation in this study between conscientiousness and job satisfaction ($r = .21$) compares favorably with the aforementioned research. Possibly these results can be attributed to the skewness of the job satisfaction instrument. Indeed, after a cubic transformation of job satisfaction, conscientiousness was marginally significant ($\beta = .24$, $p < .094$), explaining an additional 6% in its variance. Substantively, this means that conscientiousness had a lightly traceable impact on owners' job satisfaction.

The relationship between conscientiousness and affective commitment was the weakest among all work attitudes examined. A correlation of .02 between the two variables represents a poor relationship which is far lower than the values reported in the studies of Norris-Watt and Levy (2003) ($r = .17$) and Raja and colleagues (2004) ($r = .32$). These correlations, combined with the fact that small firm owners strongly identify with their organizations, make these findings hard to explain. It is possible that this is an artifact of the measure used. The organizational commitment scale used was constructed

to assess employees' commitment to their organization. However, items such as "I do not feel like 'part of the family' at my organization", "I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own" and "I do not feel a strong sense of 'belonging' to my organization", are in a sense self-evident in the case of the small business owners, due to their close connection and identification with their businesses. This is portrayed clearly in the words of a small business owner interviewed for the Montreal Gazette: "I love what I do. When I arrive in the morning, it doesn't feel like coming to work; it's my home, my thing." (Dougherty, 2005). This might have been the primary reason why this instrument exhibited low psychometric properties ($\alpha = .62$, skewness = -2.797) and was thus unable to capture accurately any variance in small firm owners' self-reported affective commitment towards their firm.

Finally, conscientiousness failed to emerge as a significant predictor of small business owners' exit intentions even though it was weakly supported at the bivariate level ($r = -.22$). Possibly, the inclusion of the controls (gender and work experience), which were weakly and insignificantly correlated with conscientiousness and thus potential impotent variables (Becker, 2005), combined with the small sample size used in this study, might have diminished its power as a predictor of owners' exit intentions. To test this assumption, I removed both control variables from the regression equation. However, this exclusion did not affect the relationship between conscientiousness and exit intentions which remained insignificant ($\beta = -.22$, $p < .129$). Nevertheless, the weak bivariate association is consistent with empirical findings portraying conscientious individuals as persistent and decisive (Goldberg, 1990), prepared to work hard to make

their organization survive (Ciavarella et al., 2004), and thus less likely to sell or close operations.

5.1.4. Openness to experience. Openness to experience was found to exhibit poor associations with all of the variables of interest in this study, with the exception of job satisfaction. The results for this trait, although counter to my predictions, are not unexpected in light of past research into openness to experience; in general, openness has been found to be only weakly related to individual attitudes and behaviors (Barrick & Mount, 1991; McCrae & Costa, 1997). An attempt is made below to formulate some explanations for these results, although these are necessarily tentative in light of the limited significance in the correlations between openness and the other variables.

Firstly, openness to experience was very weakly related to the employer's perception of relational contracts. However, surprisingly, openness to experience in employee reports was negatively but insignificantly correlated with relational contracts and positively correlated with transactional contracts. There are two possible reasons for this lack of mutuality, if this negative though insignificant correlation is to be interpreted. Firstly, small firm owners who are open to experience can fail to fulfill their promises, promising their employees more than they can actually offer. This could be the outcome either of excessive and unrealistic goals, as a result of unconventional thinking and high levels of imagination (McCrae & John, 1992,) or the outcome of constant changes in plans as a consequence of creativity (Goldberg, 1990; McCrae & Costa, 1987) and tolerance to ambiguity (McCrae, 1996).

A second possible reason for the absence of mutuality is that small business owners who are high in openness to experience are highly creative and intellectual

individuals (Goldberg, 1990; McCrae & Costa, 1997) and can thus be complex, even abstruse. They may therefore experience problems in communicating the appropriate promises to their employees, so that the latter wrongly perceive transactional intentions in their employers' words or actions. This is borne out by the words of one of the small business owners who was high in openness to experience and presented himself as an extremely creative person. When asked about his expectations from his employees, his answer suggested a lack of agreement between his expectations from his employees and their performance:

"I have different expectations for different people in the organization, depending on what they've applied for...Now I think the average person would stay with the company – a loyal person – my best guess would be seven years. The average fast-tracker is a year and a half...The market reinforces it. My expectations are for my people to be loyal, and to stay and to be company-driven. That doesn't mean that that is what I get here. It's hard to get that at the interview."

It could be argued that the lack of communication between employer and employees, combined with a transactional exchange relationship, can contribute to organizational instability and even the ultimate termination of operations for the small firm, as a result of high turnover rates among employees. This means that employees who receive conflicting messages about their owner's intentions and goal orientations and do not seek to establish a long-term relationship with their organization are likely to be on the job market soon after they have been hired. Interestingly, in a study examining the impact of the Big Five model on venture survival, Ciavarella and colleagues (2004) found that openness to experience was negatively related to the long-term survival of the

venture, which, they argued, was due to the inability of open entrepreneurs to develop a managerial mindset over time, and their incapability to allocate resources in the right direction.

As regards the relationship between openness to experience and owner work attitudes, openness was related to job satisfaction but unrelated to affective commitment and owners' exit intentions. Small business owners in this sample scored very highly on job satisfaction. Indeed, the correlation between openness to experience and job satisfaction was much greater in this study ($r = .34$) than that found by Judge, Heller and Mount (2002) in their meta-analysis ($r = .02$). This was the case with almost all of the Big Five personality traits, possible reasons for which were discussed above. The positive correlation between openness to experience and exit intentions in hierarchical regression analyses is at first glance surprising in light of these high levels of job satisfaction, yet in fact consistent with the limited duration of the entrepreneurial ventures of open individuals (Ciavarella et al., 2004), low performance motivation (Judge & Ilies, 2002), low job performance in general (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Salgado, 1997) and poor career success (Seibert & Kraimer, 2001). Indeed, it may be argued that open small business owners derive greatest satisfaction from their very proclivity for innovation and change, as is suggested by the following words of an open small business owner:

"I feel at this point that I've accomplished my goal and if there was a buyer, yes, I would sell and I would look to pursue to sell it so that I could go and fulfill another goal. Now we did it. Now there's no more drive. A plateau is not comfortable. If we had the opportunity I would do something else. I wouldn't tell

anybody because I don't want to lose my staff. I've already started doing something and it's going very well."

5.1.5. Extraversion. In the present study, extraversion emerged as the weakest predictor of psychological contract orientations and owner work attitudes. From the four hypotheses proposed only one was supported, namely that linking extraversion and job satisfaction. These findings are particularly striking if one considers that extraversion frequently appears as a stable and reliable predictor of individual behavior in the literature reviewed earlier.

None of the hypotheses predicting a link between extraversion and relational contracts, perceptions of breach and feelings of violation was supported at the bivariate level or by hierarchical regressions with the exception of the weak correlation between extraversion and employee-reported relational contracts ($r = .23$). In addition, nonsignificant but positive correlations between extraversion and transactional contracts were observed. An explanation for this phenomenon can be suggested on the basis of an interview with an extravert small business owner:

"There are a lot of people out there who are willing to give 120% and very few of us have to deal with the 100% because there are 120%-ers out there. I try and find 120% -ers... There are people who come here and they're looking for a job because they want money, and they want to come in at 9 and leave at 5 and they're going to take an hour's break for lunch. That's not the kind of person I'm interested in. I'm looking for customer service skills, for somebody who wants to come in and work as a team, who respects people."

From this it would appear that the small business owner expects to hold a long-term, performance oriented relationship with the employees. This points to a hybrid form of contract, and in fact matches Rousseau's (1995) definition of the balanced contract. This type of contract would be compatible with the performance and outcome orientation of extravert individuals. Extraverts are achievers and it is thus plausible that the relationship formed with their employees will be based not on loose performance standards, but on specific and stringent performance conditions.

As indicated earlier, the relationship between extraversion and employee-reported perceptions of breach and violation were not supported. The low negative correlations between extraversion, breach ($r = -.10$) and violation ($r = -.13$) indicate that extraverts will try to honor their promises to their employees, as argued in Hypothesis 7b.

Examining extraversion from a different perspective, it could similarly be argued that due to their gregarious, pleasant and enthusiastic personality (Lucas & Fujita, 2000; McCrae & John, 1992), guided by impulsiveness and spontaneity (Goldberg, 1990) and lacking the calculating, farseeing and organizing qualities of conscientious individuals, extraverts will tend to promise more than they can actually achieve.

Extraversion was positively related to job satisfaction, indicating that the small business owner's work and their business in general is a source of positive emotions. This is consistent with previous meta-analytic findings (see Judge, Heller & Mount, 2002). Conversely, the relationships between extraversion, affective commitment and exit intentions were not supported in hierarchical regression. However, as hypothesized, extraversion was positively correlated with affective commitment and negatively correlated with exit intentions. Even though these correlations are extremely weak and

insignificant, they can be taken to indicate the attachment of extravert small business owners with their firm. It seems that extravert small business owners do not match the profile of a venturesome renegade, a person who would sell the organization to grasp the first attractive opportunity available. On the contrary, it would appear that as effective leaders (Judge et al., 2002) with an attraction to team-oriented cultures (Judge & Cable, 1997), extravert owners will guide their ambition and enterprising interests (Goldberg, 1990; Tokar, Fischer, & Mezudlo-Subich, 1998) to build strong bonds and to form a sustainable venture which they will hesitate to abandon when the first alternative presents itself. Thus it appears that more important reasons must exist, beyond mere opportunistic behavior, in order for extravert small business owners to exit their organizations. These are presented in the words of one of the extravert small business owners interviewed:

“I love what I do. It’s been super for me because it’s been an opportunity for me to put my money where my mouth is. I’ve worked for other people for many many years and I’ve always given everything I could...this is all mine. This is make it or break. If my theories are wrong, we’re not going to be here a year from now but I can guarantee you, we’re going to be here a year from now. This is a great opportunity for me to do it my way, and I think we’ve made a huge difference so far.”

5.1.6. Neuroticism. Out of four hypotheses proposed for neuroticism only one, which proposed a link between the small business owner’s neuroticism and feelings of violation on the part of the employee, was supported.

As regards the psychological contract orientation of neurotic small business owners, the limited significance of the positive association with transactional contracts is

somewhat difficult to explain. A possible reason lies in the limited duration of such contracts. As with any other small business owner, neurotics are unlikely to engage in an entrepreneurial venture involving high risk and uncertainty, knowing that under these circumstances they would soon have to terminate their operations. Similarly, it can be argued that neurotic small firm owners would be willing to employ someone to accomplish specific performance terms but would be reluctant to hire an employee in the knowledge that he or she is certain to leave soon. Thus it is possible that the neurotic small business owner agrees with the one aspect of the transactional contract (specific performance standards) but not the other (limited duration). However, this is a question of behavioral research that requires further theoretical and empirical investigation.

When we turn to the employees' perceptions of their employers' contractual promises, the results at first sight are surprising in that negative correlations are observed between owner neuroticism and both transactional and relational contracts (aggregate employee reports). This is suggestive of a degree of uncertainty or even confusion on the part of the employees and, as such, is not entirely unexpected in light of the characteristics and behavior of neurotic individuals, since they are characterized as vulnerable individuals (Lysaker et al., 1999) with frequent mood swings (Watson, Gamez, & Simms, 2004) and mental instability, that can result in an unpredictable and unstable behavior.

This interpretation of the contract orientations formed by employees of neurotic small business owners is strengthened by the findings on breach and violation. It was found that employees working for neurotic small business owners will be prone to express negative feelings associated with a breach in their psychological contract. This in

itself is to be expected since personality research has depicted neurotics as individuals who have chronic negative effects (Watson & Clark, 1984) and are tense and frustrated (McCrae & Costa, 1987). These characteristics combined with the fact that neurotics are frequently aggressive and hostile (von Collani & Werner, 2004) and have poor control of their impulses (McCrae & Costa, 1987) lead me to conclude that emotional instability, on the part of the owners, will bring about emotional outbursts directed towards the employees under certain circumstances. However, the precondition of breach, which is tightly coupled with feelings of violation, was supported at the bivariate level but not in hierarchical regressions. Perceptions of breach, as reported by the employees, were found to be only marginally correlated to neuroticism but lacked support in regression analyses. It can be argued that this discrepancy between breach and violation is related to the employees' confusion regarding contractual terms, witnessed above in relation to the type of psychological contract held. An additional explanation refers to the commonality between neuroticism, also referred to as emotional instability (Noller et al., 1987; Norman, 1963), and feelings of violation. This commonality refers to emotional elements which underline both constructs.. This implies that it is sensible to assume that a link will be more likely to exist between constructs of the same nature, for example emotions (in this case, neuroticism and feelings of violation) as compared to constructs of a different nature, such as one's perceptions of psychological contract breach.

5.1.7. Self-concordance. Turning to the relationship between motivation and psychological contracts and owner and employee work attitudes, self-concordance was unrelated to any of the variables of interest in this study. The self-concordance measure had an average absolute correlation of .07 with psychological contract scales (owner and

employee reports) and an average absolute bivariate association of .11 and .06 with owner and employee work attitude scales respectively. Overall, the self-concordance measure emerged as a very poor predictor of owner and employee behavior.

Several factors might be considered responsible for the weak performance of the self-concordance instrument. The most important is associated with its psychometric properties. First, self-concordance did not reach acceptable levels of reliability ($\alpha = .56$). This may have been the result of the limited response rate ($n = 50$) in conjunction with the number of items ($n = 16$) composing this instrument. Methodological research ideally requires a minimum of five to ten responses for every item used in the instrument in order for adequate variance to be achieved (DeVellis, 2003). Thus in this study at least 80 responses should have been gathered.

The use of both controlled and autonomous items, which naturally form two separate negatively correlated factors, in the estimation of Cronbach's alpha may also underlie the disappointing reliability. Further analyses indicated that autonomous scale items that were negatively associated with the remaining items had to be removed if acceptable reliability was to be achieved. Appendix 4 shows that maximum reliability ($\alpha = .73$) was achieved after the removal of one controlled and all of the autonomous scale items. The final self-concordance scale was almost identical to the controlled goals scale, clearly illustrating the effects of the inclusion of antithetical items.

In contrast to the self-concordance measure, the autonomous goals scale emerged as a better predictor in this study. The autonomous goals scale did not suffer from the same psychometric drawbacks as the self-concordance measure, and was significantly bivariate associated with most of the values of interest in this study. Autonomous goals

were found to be positively associated with job satisfaction and affective commitment, reinforcing the findings of Bono and Judge (2003). However, the inclusion of the control variables reduced the effects of autonomous goals and thus only the relationship between autonomous goals and job satisfaction was supported in regression analyses. Even though not hypothesized, these findings do not appear surprising if the pursuit of goals that express genuine interests and values (namely autonomous goals) will produce greater levels of satisfaction to small business owners, as compared to goals emanating outside their locus of control. Indeed, as was discussed earlier, motivation research indicates that identified and intrinsic goals, which are underlying dimensions of autonomous goals, are positively associated with positive affectivity and subjective well-being in general.

On the contrary, the controlled goals scale results resembled those of the self-concordance measure. Owner-reported controlled goals were almost unrelated to owner- and employee-reported contract orientations (average absolute correlation .02 and .05 respectively) and owner attitudes towards their work (average absolute correlation .06) at the bivariate level. These results verify earlier reviewed research that depicts controlledness as a weak or poor predictor of individual behaviors and work attitudes. In sum, these findings, which cannot be attributed to the poor psychometric properties of the scale as was the case with the self-concordance composite measure, suggest that the controlled goals scale cannot be considered a good predictor of individuals' psychological contract orientations or of their work attitudes.

5.2 Limitations

In order for the contribution of this study and its findings to behavioral research to be gauged, certain limitations first need to be discussed. This will enable us to maintain a

sense of perspective when interpreting and evaluating the results, and to identify issues which can facilitate future research.

Certain issues arise and pose threats to the generalizability of the findings in this study. These issues refer mainly to the characteristics of the sample used in this study. Even though every effort was made for the data to be representative of the small business population in Quebec and Ontario, this was evidently not possible. A sample size of fifty small businesses cannot be considered an accurate representation of the thousands of small firms that operate in these two provinces of Canada or of the industrial sectors as described by the North American Industry Classification System 2002 (www.census.gov/epcd/www/naics.html). In fact, the sample used in this study represents thirteen out of twenty industrial sectors, as classified by the NAICS. No data were collected from sectors such as agriculture, real estate or utilities. Finally, given that the whole data set was collected primarily from a North American country, certain questions emerge regarding the generalizability of these findings in countries with distinct work values. For instance, does the impact of the small business owner's personality play the same role in the formation of the exchange relationship in countries which are more collectivistic (e.g. China) or characterized by high power distance (e.g. Arab countries) (Hofstede, 1980)? Indeed, in a study conducted in Argentina (a country high in uncertainty avoidance and power distance [Hofstede, 2003]), Dabos and Rousseau (2004) found high levels of mutuality and reciprocity among research directors' and subordinates' perceptions about their employment relationship. It seems that the unquestionable acceptance of authority (i.e. power distance) combined with employees' intentions to maintain their work status and exchange relationship intact (i.e.

uncertainty avoidance), makes them extremely vigilant in their work environment and highly receptive to work expectations. This is suggestive of the potential impact of cultural factors.

Second, due to the cross-sectional nature of part of the data in this study, the issue of common method bias emerges as a potential pitfall. Williams and Brown (1994) comment that selecting data from self-reports can considerably inflate relationships, resulting in significant findings where they do not exist. More recently, in a meta-analysis, Doty and Glick (1998) excluded the possibility that common method bias is strong enough to invalidate cross-sectional research findings. In an attempt to minimize potential hazards associated with common method variance, and following Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee and Podsakoff's (2003) suggestions, some of the key dependent variables were assessed at the employee level. However, as the owners' personality, motivation and work attitude data came primarily from their self-reports, there is still the possibility that some of these relationships could have been inflated.

Multilevel research usually suggests the use of hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) to test cross-level models and relationships. However, in this study I did not consider HLM to be the optimal solution to my analysis for several reasons. From a practical point of view, Kreft and de Leeuw (1998) suggests that the use of a relatively large sample size is essential if HLM is to be used as a statistical method of analysis and is to be able to detect cross-level interactions. As a rule of thumb it is suggested that 30 groups, each comprising approximately 30 people are required (i.e. about 900 observations) (e.g. Van der Leeden & Busing, 1994). Hofmann, Griffin and Gavin (2000) argue that there can be a trade-off between the number of individuals and groups that are

required to perform the HLM analysis. The same authors conclude that “if there is a large number of groups (say, one hundred and fifty), then the requirements regarding the number of individuals per group are reduced, to maintain the same level of power.

Similarly, if there is a large number of individuals in each group, then the requirements regarding the number of groups will be reduced.” (p. 496). With 253 participants from 50 small firms, the sample in this thesis evidently fails to meet the standards proposed by the aforementioned studies in HLM.

Moreover, a primary function of HLM is to test how a higher-level construct (e.g. group cohesiveness) affects a lower level construct (e.g. individual performance) (Hofmann, 1997; Hofmann et al., 2000). In this study, the reverse relationship is proposed. In particular, I examine how small business owners’ personality (a lower level construct) affects the psychological contract of their employees (a higher level construct). Theoretical assumptions in multilevel modeling assert that HLM would be ineffective in answering a cross-level question that sets an individual level construct as the independent variable and a group level construct as the dependent variable of a hierarchical linear model (Hofmann et al., 2000). In fact, the ideal situation for the use of HLM would be one in which both the independent and the dependent variables hold at the individual level and can thus be aggregated at unit (group) level. On this basis, the use of HLM was rejected as a potential statistical procedure for testing the hypotheses proposed in this study.

Personality research has repeatedly examined the inclusion of all five factors in regression analyses as a strategy that could simultaneously account for the effects of all personality factors at the same time, thus reducing the possibility of erroneous and

spurious results (e.g. Judge, Martocchio, & Thoresen, 1997). Unfortunately, in this study I was unable to include all Big Five dimensions as predictors or some of them as control variables, due to strong multicollinearity effects. The Big Five dimensions, when all entered simultaneously at the second step of the regression analyses after the control variables, or with four out of five dimensions as control variables, resulted in relatively low tolerance values and variance inflation factors (VIF) greater than 1, indicating strong multicollinearity effects. A possible explanation for the multicollinearity effects can be the small sample size of this study in combination with the relatively strong associations among the Big Five factors at the bivariate level (the absolute correlation among all Five Factor variables was .31). As a result, it was decided that the most suitable alternative was to test for the individual effects of each Five Factor trait on the dependent variable of interest. Even though this multicollinearity-free strategy would allow me to investigate the independent effects of each of the traits on the dependent variable of interest, it would not permit me to examine which personality factor(s) would emerge as robust predictor(s) among the Big Five variables.

Finally, it is not clear how reverse causality might have inflated or deflated some or all of the proposed relationships in this thesis. For example, it is possible that small business owners who have established a successful relational contract with their employees may present themselves as being more agreeable than they would normally do. Conversely, extravert small business owners who are not on good terms with their employees and have failed to create a relational contract with them, might describe themselves as being less sociable and more reserved. Although I acknowledge this limitation, I nevertheless believe that this interpretation cannot hold as personality

research has systematically shown that personality traits and their measurement tend to be stable across time and situations (Epstein & O'Brien, 1985). Furthermore, if reverse causality was the case it would be very difficult to explain the significant relationships between owner-reported personality and employee-reported psychological contracts. Finally, the structure of the questionnaire constrained or minimized this effect because the personality of the small business owner was assessed prior to his or her psychological contract orientations.

5.3 Implications for Research

Even though research on the FFM in behavioral studies is abundant, hardly any theoretical or empirical endeavor has incorporated this model in entrepreneurial and small firm research with a few notable exceptions, which were discussed in the theory section of this thesis. Hence, the major contribution of this study was that the Big Five model was used as a focal point and an analytical tool to explain exchange relationships in small firms and entrepreneurial work attitudes. The findings of this study may therefore be taken as a starting point for a fuller exploration of these relationships. In particular, it is believed that a larger and more diverse sample that could duplicate the results of this study would enrich our understanding of exchange relationships and strengthen these results. In addition, some areas related to the current study emerge as potentially fruitful avenues for research and these are examined in greater detail below.

Firstly, further empirical attention regarding the relationship between owner personality (or motivation) and employee perceptions about their own psychological contract and work attitudes is required. To the best of my knowledge, no research so far has investigated this relationship and it would be of great importance to discover how

small business owner personality (or motivation) affects employees' "actual" psychological contract and not just their perceptions about their employers' promises or commitments. Moreover, the question of the impact of the small business owner's personality (or motivation) on employee job satisfaction, organizational commitment or intentions to leave the small firm is equally significant. For example, would employees working for an open small business owner report more or less job satisfaction as compared to employees employed by conscientious or neurotic small business owners?

Furthermore, future research endeavors should further expand the model proposed in this thesis to incorporate more individual or organizational outcomes. For instance, a model examining the impact of psychological contracts on employee performance or organizational performance, success and survival would be fruitful areas that could certainly be of great interest to small firm owners and potentially change the way in which they view and establish their exchange relationships with their employees.

Organizational commitment has been established as a concrete construct in organizational behavior studies (Meyer & Allen, 1997). For example, empirical and conceptual research has investigated its nomological network (e.g. Mathieu & Zajac, 1990), its relationships with motivation (Meyer, Becker, & Vandenberghe, 2004), employee tenure and job performance (Wright & Bonett, 2002). Additionally, strong evidence exists for the construct validity of current organizational commitment measures, with the most popular being Allen and Meyer's (1990) Three-Component Model. In their recent meta-analysis, Meyer et al., (2002) found strong evidence for this model. In this study, the abbreviated scale of Meyer, Allen and Smith (1993) emerged as a poor predictor of small business owner commitment, exhibiting extremely low levels of

reliability. As explained earlier, this measure may be a good predictor of employee commitment, but is nevertheless unsuitable for assessing small business owners' commitment to their venture. Indeed, as explained earlier, high levels of commitment among small business owners restrict the variance of the measure used. Hence, it is proposed that refined measures of small business owner commitment are developed. In particular, it is essential that future research endeavors focus on the establishment and construct validation of a small business owner commitment measure that would adequately capture all the unique behaviors that attach small business owners or entrepreneurs, in general, to their work place.

Employee turnover intentions have likewise been the focus of theoretical and empirical research (e.g. Johns, 2001). This study made an initial attempt to establish a conceptual foundation and construct a measure (EXIT) of small business owner exit intentions. My assertion was that owner turnover should differ from employee turnover in many different respects, primarily relating to the reasons that impel small business owners to exit their establishment. The five-item scale used to capture the small business owners' exit intentions reached marginal reliability. Taking into consideration the significantly restricted sample of this study, hasty conclusions should not be drawn about the construct validity of the EXIT measure. Undoubtedly, future research should further examine and test the construct validity of the proposed measure. The establishment of the nomological network, describing the antecedents, correlates and outcomes of the small business owners' exit intentions, will further researchers' understanding of the factors leading owners to leave their work.

The primary focus of this thesis was the examination of the main effects of personality and motivation on psychological contracts. I did not hypothesize or test any moderating or mediating effects. Future research is proposed to investigate how variables such as personality and motivation interact with each other or with other variables to predict not only the nature of promises and commitments made by the small business owner to his or her employees but also the psychological contract established with the employee. For example, one could investigate whether interaction between conscientiousness and controlled goals impels small business owners to seek a short-term rather than a long-term relationship with their employees, based on specific performance standards. As regards mediation, research could also examine whether certain variables intervene between personality and psychological contracts. A suggestion would be to examine whether self-concordance could act as a mediator in the relationship between the Big Five factors and psychological contract orientations or work attitudes, to better explain “how” and “why” these effects occur (Barron & Kenny, 1986).

This thesis examined owner – employee relationships in small firms using mainly the concept of psychological contract. Undoubtedly, other concepts and constructs could further enlighten us about the quality of exchange relationships in small organizations. Leader-member exchange (LMX) theory (Danserau, Cashman, & Graen, 1973) is a fairly comprehensive theory that has been extensively validated (Gerstner & Day, 1997) and could shed light upon these exchange relationships. LMX theory examines the quality of relationship that leaders establish with their employees (Danserau, Cashman, & Graen, 1973). The central issue in LMX theory is that effective leadership occurs when leaders and their subordinates establish a mature relationship, from which both parties can

benefit (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Applying LMX theory in small business research we can further examine the nature of the owner – employee relationship in more depth and provide alternative explanations related to their work attitudes and behaviors, such as job satisfaction, commitment, loyalty and turnover.

“Culture influences psychological processes. Individual thoughts and actions influence cultural norms and practices as they evolve over time, and these cultural norms and practices influence the thoughts and actions of individuals” (Lehman, Chiu, & Schaller, 2004: 689). Thus, a comparative cross-cultural study is warranted to elucidate the way in which entrepreneurial exchange relationships are built in other countries, where the North American standards, culture or tradition do not apply. As Triandis and Suh (2002) have suggested, the inclusion of “emic and etic elements of culture” (p.152) will significantly enhance our understanding of cultural syndromes held responsible for the generation of distinct behaviors.

5.4 Implications for Practitioners

The knowledge gained about employment relationships in small businesses from the present study has important practical implications. Below I consider the potential contribution of the conclusions drawn from this investigation to human resource (HR) practices and some ways in which these can be applied by practitioners in order to improve the working environment within small organizations.

Personality research has systematically showed that personality characteristics remain relatively stable throughout one’s life (House, Shane, & Herold, 1996). The fact that it is nearly impossible to change the small business owner’s disposition will limit my discussion mainly to certain processes that owners or practitioners can follow in order to

establish effective exchange relationship with their employees. However, the following suggestions will have no merit if small firm owners do not realize, first and foremost, the importance of their personality and its role in establishing effective and vital relationships with their employees. Hence, an issue of utmost significance is that small business owners should discover/examine their personality profile and accept the fact that it is associated both with positive as well as negative qualities and inclinations. I strongly believe that this realization in combination with some professional assistance can lead small business owners to improve themselves the employment relationships they establish with their employees, and the general effectiveness of their business activities.

Clearly the most important findings of this study relate to the link between owner personality and psychological contract orientations. Relational contracts have been shown to be positively associated with job satisfaction and organization commitment, and negatively associated with employee turnover intentions (Raja et al., 2004).

Consequently, it is clear that relational contracts can play a potentially key role in the overall success of a business venture and it is thus in the interests of small business owners, regardless of their personal characteristics and contract orientations, to establish such contracts with their employees and to avoid breaking their promises, whether explicit or implicit. Specifically, the current study showed that extravert and neurotic small business owners will be more prone to establish loose, unspecified psychological contracts with their employees. With this in mind, neurotic and extravert small business owners should exercise care when considering the content of their promises and conveying these to their employees. Extraverts, due to their gregarious and verbose nature (Goldberg, 1990), tend to promise more than they can achieve, thus establishing a

psychological contract that is likely to be breached, resulting in initial feelings of dissatisfaction and betrayal which lead to high turnover intentions for the disappointed employees. Similarly, this study showed that neurotic small firm owners are likely to convey confusing messages to their employees, thus creating an unclear psychological contract state. If neurotic small firm owners wish to retain their employees and sustain the operations of their organizations in the long term, they should be more responsive to their employees' concerns and well-being, increasing their responsibilities in the organization and providing additional opportunities for active involvement.

For some extravert and neurotic small business owners, it may be sufficient simply to bear these potential pitfalls in mind and adjust their practices accordingly. However, in some cases it may be appropriate to draw on the expertise and experience of a professional manager or recruiting agency for hiring new employees and other key HR functions, or to involve more people in these processes (e.g. existing employees or managers), which would help the small business owners to scrutinize their goals and prioritize their commitments.

Below I consider some further ways in which relational contracts can be promoted by employers, drawing in particular on the insights gained from my interviews with small business owners and their employees.

According to the results of this research, conscientious or agreeable small business owners who have specific expectations of their employees and clearly communicate them should anticipate that their employees will reciprocate. Under such conditions, employees will harmoniously co-operate with their employers and remain with their organization, adhering to those expectations. This is a particularly sensitive

issue for small firms that have great difficulty in retaining a skilled work force. As familiarization and socialization of the employees with the organization starts even before their official hiring (Fisher, 1986), small business owners, and especially those who are high in openness to experience, extraversion and neuroticism, should be extremely careful about the recruitment process in general, from advertising vacancies to selecting the appropriate applicants. A fairly condensed but accurate job description is likely to provide better qualified applicants that have a clear awareness of their employer's expectations than a vague and unrealistic job posting. Indeed, from the interviews conducted it became apparent that these three personality categories had difficulty conveying their expectations to their employees.

It is customary for small business owners to actively participate in HR practices in their firm, namely recruitment, selection and training (Storey, 1994). As these HR practices frequently take on an informal character (Jackson, Schuler, & Rivero, 1989) the small firm owner should exercise caution and take the time to reflect on how these practices are carried out and what message ought to be conveyed to the newly-hired employees. For some people who fall under certain personality characteristics, such as conscientiousness or agreeableness, this might be a part of their recruiting routine. However, others might avoid it or think that it is totally undesirable. For instance, neurotic small business owners who can be relatively insecure and lacking in confidence (Goldberg, 1990) might hesitate to ask their employees' assistance in selecting candidates, fearing that this may expose their inabilities to hire the right employees alone. Nevertheless, it is highly recommended that the recruitment and selection process should be conducted in conjunction with at least one other individual, preferably one who is

trustworthy, has reasonable judgment and is not afraid to speak up and express his or her opinions. This will help small business owners to avoid hiring individuals who exhibit similar characteristics and attitudes to themselves. For instance, small business owners who are extremely conscientious and possibly conventional (Goldberg, 1990) in the way they perform or follow certain practices might not hire an extravert applicant due to a mismatch in their personalities and outlook or even their external appearance (e.g. classic and old fashioned for the conscientious owner vs. modern look for the extravert), even if the situation might require the existence of such a person in the organization, for example to cover the marketing needs of the small firm.

During the recruitment and training process, it is essential that the small business owner presents the applicant with specific job requirements and how these can be achieved. For example, a conscientious small business owner interviewed for this study compiled a complete list describing the specific job duties that the employee would be required to perform in order to fulfill the job requirements. This list would be presented to the candidate during the hiring interview to ensure a full understanding of what the job entails. Similar steps were taken by the small business owner during training to ensure compliance with job requirements and to reinforce expectations. The actions taken by the conscientious small business owner can become an example for imitation by other business owners who do not match this specific personality profile. Even in the case of small business owners who are spontaneous and like to experiment with new techniques, such as those high in openness to experience, it is preferable to establish a relatively stable core set of job requirements, which can be always be adjusted to the needs of each applicant depending on their employment background and qualifications.

Lastly, this study established a link between owners' autonomous goals and the satisfaction they derive from their work. This suggests that small business owners who have concrete and well-established goals that are consciously selected and reflect their own internal needs are likely to have higher job satisfaction than small business owners who pursue goals that are imposed by other external factors or circumstances. Small business owners would be advised to bear this in mind when considering their business plans or whenever they establish and put into action their short or long term plans.

5.5 Conclusion

“Small does not mean simple. Neither is a small business merely a scaled-down version of a large business. A small number of human beings engaged in a common endeavour can create very complex, subtle interactions. Unravelling the underlying meanings and patterns of these interactions can be far from straightforward...repertoires difficult to decipher.” (Curran & Blackburn, 2001: 5). This thesis is an initial attempt to comprehend human interactions in small firms, in order to add a small piece to the greater puzzle of human behavior. Certainly, by overcoming the shortfalls of this study, future research endeavors can significantly contribute towards the understanding of exchange dynamics in small firms: a long journey into the labyrinth of human behavior.

Table 1. Means on the BFI personality traits among three different studies

	Current Study ^a	Benet-Martinez & John (1998) ^b	Srivastava, John, Gosling, and Potter (2003) ^{c, d}
Openness	4.0 (0.6)	3.9 (0.7)	4.0 (0.7)
Conscientiousness	4.1 (0.6)	3.9 (0.7)	3.6 (0.7)
Extraversion	3.8 (0.7)	3.6 (0.7)	3.2 (0.9)
Agreeableness	4.1 (0.5)	3.9 (0.7)	3.7 (0.7)
Neuroticism	2.5 (0.6)	2.6 (0.8)	3.0 (0.9)

Note: Numbers in parentheses are standard deviations.

^a n = 50

^b n = 136 (English version of the survey)

^c Approximate results are based on the reverse percentage of maximum possible (POMP) scores (Cohen, Cohen, Aiken, & West, 1999).

^d n = 132,515

Table 2. Mutuality between small business owner and employee perceptions across transactional and relational contract obligations.

Scale	Mutuality	
	SBO Transactional (E)	SBO Relational (E)
SBO Transactional (O)	0.67 (0.53, 0.80)	1.58 (1.34, 1.82)
SBO Relational (O)	1.82 (1.57, 2.06)	0.71 (0.57, 0.84)

Note: The numbers represent the mean GAP values and their 95% confidence intervals (in parentheses). SBO = small business owner, O = owner, E = employee.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics and correlations for the study variables

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
1 Age	42.57	9.34	-																			
2 Gender	1.22	0.42	.03	-																		
3 Work Experience	21.79	9.54	.87**	-.08	-																	
4 Openness	3.99	0.64	.22*	-.14	.29*	-.83)																
5 Conscientiousness	4.05	0.55	.09	.13	.10	.14	(.71)															
6 Extraversion	3.76	0.68	-.01	.29*	.02	.44**	.31*	(.81)														
7 Agreeableness	4.09	0.53	.27*	-.01	.41**	.05	.42**	.08	(.77)													
8 Neuroticism	2.46	0.59	-.01	-.05	-.10	-.27*	-.49**	-.27*	-.62**	(.70)												
9 Autonomous Goals	7.79	1.07	.15	.27*	.19*	.21*	.10	.26*	.06	-.07	(.73)											
10 Controlled Goals	4.17	1.61	.13	-.11	.16	.07	.12	-.08	.06	-.08	-.19	(.72)										
11 Self-Concordance	3.60	2.09	-.02	.21*	-.01	.05	-.05	.19	-.03	.06	.66**	-.87**	(.56)									
12 Transactional-OR	2.09	0.75	-.02	-.14	-.15	.01	-.08	.02	-.24*	.06	.09	.03	.01	(.74)								
13 Relational-OR	4.06	0.71	.16	.18	.21*	.08	.37**	.16	.52**	-.24*	.25*	.00	.12	-.28*	(.85)							
14 Transactional-AER	2.31	0.46	-.01	-.34**	-.06	.18	-.06	.06	-.17	-.15	-.09	.07	-.10	.21*	-.39**	(.73)						
15 Relational-AER	3.48	0.70	-.06	.23*	-.01	-.05	.29*	.23*	.36**	-.22*	.18	.03	.05	-.25*	.62**	-.43**	(.89)					
16 Breach- AER	2.07	0.66	-.07	-.06	-.16	.04	-.21*	-.10	-.44**	.21*	-.25*	-.10	-.04	.31*	-.46**	.22*	-.81**	(.91)				
17 Violation-AER	1.57	0.55	.03	.00	-.08	.00	-.30*	-.13	-.43**	.35**	-.12	-.18	.09	.26*	-.35**	.14	-.68**	.83**	(.85)			
18 Job satisfaction	4.46	0.70	.32*	.08	.27*	.34**	.21*	.39**	.39**	-.25*	.33**	.09	.10	-.04	.52**	.12	.21*	-.23*	-.28*	(.83)		
19 Affective Commitment	4.44	0.70	.29*	.13	.18	.20*	.02	.05	.22*	-.01	.26*	.03	.11	-.10	.42**	.00	.23*	-.24*	-.17	.63**	(.62)	
20 Exit intentions	1.76	0.79	-.01	-.07	.08	.09	-.22*	-.08	-.17	.09	-.14	.07	-.12	.13	-.26*	-.16	-.23*	.26*	.26*	-.30*	-.35**	(.70)

Note: n = 46-50, alpha reliabilities given in the diagonal. OR = owner report, AER = aggregated employee reports.

p* < .10 (1-tailed)

p* < .05 (1-tailed)

p*** < .01 (1-tailed)

Table 4. Regression analyses for the effects of agreeableness on relational contracts – owner and aggregate employee reports

Predictors	Dependent Variables					
	Relational Contracts (OR)			Relational Contracts (AER)		
	β	R^2	ΔR^2	β	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1:						
Controls		.18*			.08	
Step 2:						
Agreeableness	.30*	.25*	.07*	.35*	.17*	.10*

Note: n = 48; control variables are gender and work experience. OR= owner reports, AER= aggregate employee reports.

*p < .05

** p < .01

Table 5. Regression analyses for the effects of conscientiousness on relational contracts – owner and aggregate employee reports

Predictors	Dependent Variables					
	Relational Contracts (OR)			Relational Contracts (AER)		
	β	R^2	ΔR^2	β	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1:						
Controls		.18*			.08	
Step 2:						
Conscientiousness	.29*	.26*	.08*	.24 ⁺	.14 ⁺	.06 ⁺

Note: n = 48; control variables are gender and work experience. OR= owner report, AER= aggregate employee reports.

+p < .10

*p < .05

Table 6. Regression analyses for the effects of openness to experience on relational contracts – owner and aggregate employee reports

Predictors	Dependent Variables					
	Relational Contracts (OR)			Relational Contracts (AER)		
	β	R^2	ΔR^2	β	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1:						
Controls		.18*			.08	
Step 2:						
Openness to Experience	.25 ⁺	.23 ⁺	.05 ⁺	.05	.08	.00

Note: n = 48; control variables are gender and work experience. OP= owner reports, AER= aggregate employee reports.

+p < .10

*p < .05

Table 7. Regression analyses for the effects of extraversion on relational contracts – owner and aggregate employee reports

Predictors	Dependent Variables					
	Relational Contracts (OR)			Relational Contracts (AER)		
	β	R^2	ΔR^2	β	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1:						
Controls		.18			.08	
Step 2:						
Extraversion	.20	.21	.03	.21	.12	.04

Note: n = 48; control variables are gender and work experience. OP= owner reports, AER= aggregate employee reports.

*p < .05

** p < .01

Table 8. Regression analyses for the effects of neuroticism on transactional contracts—owner and employee reports

Predictors	Dependent Variables					
	Transactional Contracts (OR)			Transactional Contracts (AER)		
	β	R^2	ΔR^2	β	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1:						
Controls		.07			.15	
Step 2:						
Neuroticism	-.01	.07	.00	-.22	.20	.05

Note: n = 48; control variables are gender and work experience. OP = owner reports, AER = aggregate employee reports.

*p < .05

** p < .01

Table 9. Regression analyses for the effects of agreeableness on job satisfaction, affective commitment, exit intentions, perceptions of breach and feelings of violation

Predictors	Dependent Variables											
	Job Satisfaction			Commitment			Exit Intentions			Breach		
	β	R^2	ΔR^2	β	R^2	ΔR^2	β	R^2	ΔR^2	β	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1:												
Controls		.09			.06			.06			.04	.01
Step 2:												
Agreeableness	.34*	.18*	.09*	.17	.08	.02	.17	.08	.02	-.43**	.19**	.15**
										-.49**	.20**	.19**

Note: n = 48; control variables are gender and work experience.

*p < .05

**p < .01

Table 10. Regression analyses for the effects of conscientiousness on job satisfaction, affective commitment, exit intentions, perceptions of breach and feelings of violation

Predictors	Dependent Variables											
	Job Satisfaction			Commitment			Exit Intentions			Breach		
	β	R^2	ΔR^2	β	R^2	ΔR^2	β	R^2	ΔR^2	β	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1:												
Controls		.09			.06			.04			.04	
												.01
Step 2:												
Conscientiousness	.18	.12	.03	-.03	.06	.00	-.21	.08	.04	-.19	.07	.03
											-.29 ⁺	.08 ⁺

Note: n = 48; control variables are gender and work experience.

+p < .10

*p < .05

Table 11. Regression analyses for the effects of openness to experience on job satisfaction, affective commitment, exit intentions, perceptions of breach and feelings of violation

Predictors	Dependent Variables											
	Job Satisfaction			Commitment			Exit Intentions			Breach		
	β	R^2	ΔR^2	β	R^2	ΔR^2	β	R^2	ΔR^2	β	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1:												
Controls		.09			.05			.04			.04	
Step 2:												
Openness to												
Experience	.37*	.18*	.12*	.21	.10	.05	-.04	.04	.00	.03	.04	.00
											-.02	.01
												.00

Note: n = 48; control variables are gender and work experience.

*p < .05

** p < .01

Table 12. Regression analyses for effects of extraversion on job satisfaction, affective commitment, exit intentions, perceptions of breach and feelings of violation

Predictors	Dependent Variables											
	Job Satisfaction			Commitment			Exit Intentions			Breach		
	β	R^2	ΔR^2	β	R^2	ΔR^2	β	R^2	ΔR^2	β	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1:												
Controls		.09			.06			.04			.04	
Step 2:												
Extraversion	.42**	.26**	.17**	.02	.06	.00	-.12	.05	.01	-.12	.05	.01

Note: n = 48; control variables are gender and work experience.

*p < .05

**p < .01

Table 13. Regression analyses for the effects of neuroticism on job satisfaction, affective commitment, exit intentions, perceptions of breach and feelings of violation

Predictors	Dependent Variables											
	Job Satisfaction			Commitment			Exit Intentions			Breach		
	β	R^2	ΔR^2	β	R^2	ΔR^2	β	R^2	ΔR^2	β	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1:												
Controls		.09			.06			.04			.04	
												.01
Step 2:												
Neuroticism	-.22	.14	.05	.03	.06	.00	.05	.04	.00	.18	.07	.03
											.34*	.12*
												.11*

Note: n = 48; control variables are gender and work experience.

*p < .05

**p < .01

Table 14. Regression analyses for the effects of self-concordance on relational contracts – owner and aggregate employee reports

Predictors	Dependent Variables					
	Relational Contracts (OR)			Relational Contracts (AER)		
	β	R^2	ΔR^2	β	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1:						
Controls		.16*			.06	
Step 2:						
Autonomous goals	.04	.17*	.01	-.01	.06	.00

Note: n = 48; control variables are gender and work experience. OP= owner reports, AER= aggregate employee reports.

*p < .05

**p < .01

Table 15. Regression analyses for the effects of self-concordance on job satisfaction, affective commitment, exit intentions, perceptions of breach and feelings of violation

Predictors	Dependent Variables											
	Job Satisfaction			Commitment			Exit Intentions			Breach		
	β	R^2	ΔR^2	β	R^2	ΔR^2	β	R^2	ΔR^2	β	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1:												
Controls		.09			.06			.02			.04	
												.01
Step 2:												
Self-												
concordance	.05	.09	.00	.09	.06	.00	.05	.03	.01	.01	.04	.00
											.11	.02
												.01

Note: n = 48; control variables are gender and work experience.

*p < .05

**p < .01

Table 16. Regression analyses for the effects of autonomous goals on relational contracts – owner and aggregate employee reports

Predictors	Dependent Variables					
	Relational Contracts (OR)			Relational Contracts (AER)		
	β	R^2	ΔR^2	β	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1:						
Controls		.18			.08	
Step 2:						
Autonomous goals	.17	.20	.02	.12	.09	.01

Note: n = 48; control variables are gender and work experience. OP= owner reports, AER= aggregate employee reports.

*p < .05

**p < .01

Table 17. Regression analyses for the effects of autonomous goals on job satisfaction, affective commitment, exit intentions, perceptions of breach and feelings of violation

Predictors	Dependent Variables											
	Job Satisfaction			Commitment			Exit Intentions			Breach		
	β	R^2	ΔR^2	β	R^2	ΔR^2	β	R^2	ΔR^2	β	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1:												
Controls		.09			.06			.04			.04	.01
Step 2:												
Autonomous												
Goals	.27 ⁺	.16 ⁺	.06 ⁺	.21	.09	.04	-.13	.05	.01	-.21	.08	.04
												.01

Note: n = 48; control variables are gender and work experience.

⁺ p < .10

*p < .05

FIGURE 1

Types of Psychological Contracts

(Adapted from Rousseau D. M. 1995. *Psychological contracts in organizations: Understanding written and unwritten agreements*. New York: Sage Publications)

		<i>Performance Terms</i>	
		Specified	Not Specified
<i>Duration</i>			
Short term	Transactional (e.g. retail clerks hired during Christmas shopping season) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Low ambiguity• Easy exit/high turnover• Low member commitment• Freedom to enter new contracts• Little learning• Weak integration/identification	Transitional (e.g. employee experiences during organizational retrenchment or following merger or acquisition) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ambiguity/uncertainty• High turnover/termination• Instability	
Long term	Balanced (e.g. high involvement team) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• High member commitment• High integration/identification• Ongoing development• Mutual support• Dynamic	Relational (e.g. family business members) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• High member commitment• High affective commitment• High integration/identification• Stability	

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Appendix 1. Small business owner interview questions.

1. When did this organization start? What are your primary activities?
 2. How many employees do you have and what duties do your employees perform?
 3. What is your vision for this organization? Where do you see it going in the near and distant future?
 4. At the time that you hire a new employee, do you have clear expectations for them, or do you prefer that the expectations develop over time? Please explain. What do you think your employees expect from you?
 5. How would you characterize your relationships with your employees? Friendly, family-like? Strictly business? Other? Does this vary from employee to employee? Please explain.
 6. What makes your employees stay with you instead of going to work for someone else?
 7. To what extent do your employees provide input in your planning and problem solving?
 8. In general, are you satisfied with your employees? What changes, if any, would you like to make in your employment relationships?
-

Appendix 2. Employee interview questions.

1. When did you join this organization? What do you actually do in this organization? What are your duties?
 2. What type of relationship have you established with your employer? Is it friendly, family-like, strictly business, other?
 3. What type of relationships have you established with your co-workers? In your view, is there a strong bond between your co-workers and your employer?
 4. Do you have a different work arrangement with your employer as compared to other employees? If yes, why is that?
 5. Do you see yourself as a part of this organization in the next 3-5 years? Why or why not?
 6. Do you believe that there are some particular characteristics of your employer that play a significant role in the success of this organization? Could you describe them or give me some examples.
 7. Do you believe that there are some particular characteristics of your employer that affect his/her relationship with his/her employees? Could you describe them or give me some examples.
-

Appendix 3. Analytical table presenting the number of organizations and number of employees per industry.

Industry		No. of Organizations	No. of Employees
1.	Construction	1	6
2.	Finance and Insurance	1	5
3.	Information	1	4
4.	Manufacturing	4	22
5.	Retail Trade	6	18
6.	Transportation and Warehousing	1	6
7.	Wholesale Trade	1	9
8.	Accommodation and Food Services	4	28
9.	Professional, Scientific, and Technical services	17	64
10.	Health Care and Social Assistance	2	13
11.	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	6	39
12.	Education Services	3	15
13.	Other Services (except Public Administration)	3	24
Total:		50	253

Appendix 4. Results of reliability analysis ^a

Self-Concordance Items	Alpha if item deleted
GOAL 1	
a. You pursue this goal because somebody else wants you to or because the situation demands it.	.71
b. You pursue this goal because you would feel anxious, guilty or ashamed if you didn't.	.71
GOAL 2	
a. You pursue this goal because somebody else wants you to or because the situation demands it.	.67
b. You pursue this goal because you would feel anxious, guilty or ashamed if you didn't.	.67
GOAL 3	
a. You pursue this goal because somebody else wants you to or because the situation demands it.	.70
b. You pursue this goal because you would feel anxious, guilty or ashamed if you didn't.	.68
GOAL 4	
b. You pursue this goal because you would feel anxious, guilty or ashamed if you didn't.	.73
Cronbach's alpha = .73	

^a These items are from Sheldon and Elliot, 1999.

Appendix 5. Summary of tested hypotheses.

Hypotheses	Results
a) Personality, Psychological Contracts and Work Attitudes	
Agreeableness:	
<i>Hypothesis 1a: Agreeable small business owners will expect their employees to form relational types of contracts.</i>	Supported
<i>Hypothesis 1b: Employees of agreeable small business owners are unlikely to suffer a breach in their psychological contract and experience subsequent feelings of violation.</i>	Supported
<i>Hypothesis 2a: Agreeable small business owners will be satisfied.</i>	Supported
<i>Hypothesis 2b: Agreeable small business owners will be committed and not prone to exit their organizations.</i>	Not Supported
Conscientiousness:	
<i>Hypothesis 3a: Conscientious small business owners will expect their employees to form relational types of contracts.</i>	Supported
<i>Hypothesis 3b: Employees of conscientious small business owners are unlikely to suffer a breach in their psychological contract and experience subsequent feelings of violation.</i>	Partially supported
<i>Hypothesis 4a: Conscientious small business owners will be satisfied.</i>	Not supported
<i>Hypothesis 4b: Conscientious small business owners will be committed and not prone to exit their organizations.</i>	Not supported
Openness to Experience:	
<i>Hypothesis 5a: Small business owners who are high in openness to experience will expect their employees to form relational types of contracts.</i>	Supported
<i>Hypothesis 5b: Employees of small business owners who are high in openness to experience are likely to suffer a breach in their psychological contract and experience subsequent feelings of violation.</i>	Not supported
<i>Hypothesis 6: Small business owners who are high in openness to experience will be satisfied.</i>	Supported
<i>Research question 1: Will small business owners who are high in openness to experience be committed to their organizations?</i>	Not supported

<i>Research question 2: Will small business owners who are high in openness to experience seek to exit their organizations?</i>	Not supported
<hr/>	
Extraversion:	
<i>Hypothesis 7a: Extravert small business owners will expect their employees to form relational types of contracts.</i>	Not supported
<i>Hypothesis 7b: Employees of extravert small business owners are unlikely to suffer a breach in their psychological contract and experience subsequent feelings of violation</i>	Not supported
<i>Hypothesis 8a: Extravert small business owners will be satisfied.</i>	Supported
<i>Hypothesis 8b: Extravert small business owners will be committed and not prone to exit their organizations.</i>	Not supported
<hr/>	
Neuroticism:	
<i>Hypothesis 9a: Neurotic small business owners will expect their employees to form transactional types of contracts.</i>	Not supported
<i>Hypothesis 9b: Employees of neurotic small business owners are likely to suffer a breach in their psychological contract and experience subsequent feelings of violation.</i>	Partially supported
<i>Hypothesis 10a: Neurotic small business owners will be dissatisfied.</i>	Not supported
<i>Hypothesis 10b: Neurotic small business owners will be uncommitted and prone to exit their organizations.</i>	Not supported
<hr/>	
b) Self-Concordance, Psychological Contracts and Work Attitudes:	
<i>Hypothesis 11: Small business owners who pursue self-concordant goals will promote a relational contract relationship with their employees.</i>	Not supported
<i>Hypothesis 12: Small business owner self-concordance will be negatively associated with the employees' contract breach and feelings of violation.</i>	Not Supported
<i>Hypothesis 13: Self-concordance will be positively related to small business owners' job satisfaction and affective commitment, and negatively related to their intentions to exit their organization.</i>	Not Supported

APPENDIX 6
QUESTIONNAIRES

SMALL BUSINESS SURVEY



ENTREPRENEUR



John Molson
School of Business
Concordia University

ACADEMIC SURVEY

February 2005

Dear Participant,

I am a Ph.D. candidate in Organizational Behavior at John Molson School of Business at Concordia University, in Montreal. I am carrying out research into positive entrepreneur-employee relationships in small firms. You can assist me in my research by filling out the following questionnaire, which should take you approximately 15 minutes. In doing so, you will also gain the opportunity to learn about your relationship with your employees and its impact on the long-term goals and day-to-day operation of your organization.

The focus of this survey is on your role as a small business owner and your relationship with your employees. Therefore feel free to express yourself as frankly and honestly as possible without consulting anyone, as I want to know how you personally think. There are no "trick" questions and all the scales incorporated in this survey are adopted from well-validated and popular measures in the area of Organizational Behavior. I would ask you to answer all the questions as this will produce more accurate results. As this research is **anonymous** you are not required to give your name or any other particulars that will reveal your identity. I am not asking you for any sensitive personal information and I assure you that your responses will be held in the **strictest confidentiality** and will not be revealed to your employees or any other party.

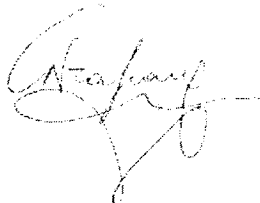
On completion of the study, I would like to remind you that I am willing to share and discuss my findings with you. It is my belief that your participation in this research can contribute to the **success** of your business by highlighting significant issues relating to the recruitment and retention of the right employees for your firm, and outlining how your own role can help to fulfill your business objectives.

Finally, I would like to remind you that if for any reason you do not wish to participate in this study you should feel free to decline.

If at any time you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact: Adela Reid, Research Ethics and Compliance Officer, Concordia University, at 848-2424 ext. 7481 or by e-mail at: adela.reid@concordia.ca. For any other inquiry my supervisor's telephone number and e-mail address are provided below.

Thank you for your participation in my study.

Yours sincerely,



Filotheos Ntalianis,
Ph.D. Candidate in Organizational Behavior
Telephone: 848-2424 ext. 7568
E-mail: Filotheos@jmsb.concordia.ca

Thesis Supervisor: Dr. Linda Dyer
Telephone: 848-2424 ext. 2936
E-mail: Dyer@jmsb.concordia.ca

Section 1

PERSONAL DATA

Gender: Male ☐ Female ☐ Age: _____

Education (check highest):

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less than high school graduate | <input type="checkbox"/> Community college/2-year degree | <input type="checkbox"/> Masters/post-graduate degree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> High school graduate | <input type="checkbox"/> State University | <input type="checkbox"/> Doctorate |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Some community college/CBCEP | <input type="checkbox"/> University degree | |

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

Total work experience: Year(s) Month(s)

Total years of current organization's operation: Year(s) Month(s)

Total years as a business owner
(this and previous firms, if any): Year(s) Month(s)

COMPANY INFORMATION

What are the primary activities of your organization? (check appropriate)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, or Hunting | 11. Private Motor Vehicle |
| 2. Construction | 12. Retail Trade and Wholesale Trade |
| 3. Mining and Quarrying | 13. Administrative and Support and Waste Management |
| 4. Manufacturing | 14. Accommodation and Food Services |
| 5. Transportation | 15. Health Care and Social Assistance |
| 6. Wholesale Trade | 16. Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation |
| 7. Retail Trade | 17. Management of Companies and Enterprises |
| 8. Transportation and Warehousing | 18. Education |
| 9. Utilities | 19. Other (Specify: _____) |
| 10. Wholesale Trade | |

How many employees are currently employed by your organization? _____

How many of them work: Part time _____ Full time _____

How many are: Family members _____

Section 2

Here are a number of characteristics that may or may not apply to you. For example, do you agree that you are someone who likes to spend time with others? Please write a number next to each statement to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with that statement.

"I see myself as someone who "

Disagree strongly	Disagree a little	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree a little	Agree strongly
1	2	3	4	5
1 is talkative				
2 tends to find fault with others				
3 does a thorough job				
4 is depressed, blue				
5 is original, comes up with new ideas				
6 is annoyed				
7 is helpful and unselfish with others				
8 can be somewhat vain				
9 is relaxed, handles stress well				
10 is excited about many different things				
11 is full of gossip				
12 often quarrels with others				
13 is a reliable worker				
14 can be vain				
15 is ingenious, a deep thinker				
16 is somewhat of a flirtatious				
17 has a forgiving nature				
18 wants to be understood				
19 worries a lot				
20 has a few imaginary friends				
21 tends to be quiet				
22 is generally trusting				
23 tends to be lazy				
24 is emotionally stable, not easily upset				
25 is inventive				
26 has an assertive personality				
27 can be cold and aloof				
28 perseveres until the task is finished				
29 can be moody				
30 values artistic, aesthetic experiences				
31 is sometimes shy, inhibited				
32 is confident and kind to almost everyone				
33 does things efficiently				
34 remains calm in tough situations				
35 prefers work that is routine				
36 is somewhat vain				
37 is sometimes rude to others				
38 expects others and likes to help others				
39 gets nervous easily				
40 likes to talk, play with words				
41 has few artistic interests				
42 likes to compare with others				
43 is easily distracted				
44 is somewhat of a flirt, likes to flirt				

Section 3

Consider your relationship with your employees. Please circle the number that most expresses your thoughts and feelings about each statement.

To what extent have you made the following commitment or obligation to your employees?

Not at all	Slightly	Somewhat	Moderately	To a great extent			
1	2	3	4	5			
1	Concern for their long-term well-being.		1	2	3	4	5
2	Support for them to attain the highest possible levels of performance.		1	2	3	4	5
3	Limited involvement in the organization.		1	2	3	4	5
4	Advancement within the firm.		1	2	3	4	5
5	Short-term employment.		1	2	3	4	5
6	Subordination for promotion.		1	2	3	4	5
7	Steady employment.		1	2	3	4	5
8	Requires them to perform only a limited set of duties.		1	2	3	4	5
9	Help them to respond to ever greater industry standards.		1	2	3	4	5
10	Make decisions with little discretion or input.		1	2	3	4	5
11	A job limited to specific, well-defined responsibilities.		1	2	3	4	5
12	Encourage them to work at better/more sophisticated/complex jobs.		1	2	3	4	5
13	Secure employment.		1	2	3	4	5
14	A job only as busy as a dead mouse.		1	2	3	4	5
15	Wages and benefits they can count on.		1	2	3	4	5
16	Working conditions for their own health.		1	2	3	4	5
17	Stable benefits to employees' families.		1	2	3	4	5
18	Wages and benefits to be the same as for the future.		1	2	3	4	5
19	Concern for their personal welfare.		1	2	3	4	5
20	Stability within the firm.		1	2	3	4	5
21	Responsiveness to employees' concerns and well-being.		1	2	3	4	5
22	Unemployment, unemployment with the firm.		1	2	3	4	5
23	A job for a short time only.		1	2	3	4	5
24	Opportunity for career development within the firm.		1	2	3	4	5

List four specific goals you would like to achieve in your business during the next 3 to 5 years. For example: hire new employees, do a customer survey, apply for financing, attend a workshop, etc. Then, using the scale below, please indicate how much you pursue each goal for each of the four reasons.

GOAL 1

GOAL 2

GOAL 3

GOAL 4

Not at all for this reason

Moderately for this reason

Completely for this reason

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

GOAL 1

1 You pursue this goal because somebody else wants you to or because the situation demands it.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

2 You pursue this goal because you would feel anxious, guilty or ashamed if you didn't.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

3 You pursue this goal because you really believe it's an important goal to have.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

4 You pursue this goal because of the personal satisfaction or enjoyment it provides you.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

GOAL 2

1 You pursue this goal because somebody else wants you to or because the situation demands it.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

2 You pursue this goal because you would feel anxious, guilty or ashamed if you didn't.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

3 You pursue this goal because you really believe it's an important goal to have.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

4 You pursue this goal because of the personal satisfaction or enjoyment it provides you.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

GOAL 3

1 You pursue this goal because somebody else wants you to or because the situation demands it.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

2 You pursue this goal because you would feel anxious, guilty or ashamed if you didn't.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

3 You pursue this goal because you really believe it's an important goal to have.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

4 You pursue this goal because of the personal satisfaction or enjoyment it provides you.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

GOAL 4

1 You pursue this goal because somebody else wants you to or because the situation demands it.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

2 You pursue this goal because you would feel anxious, guilty or ashamed if you didn't.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

3 You pursue this goal because you really believe it's an important goal to have.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

4 You pursue this goal because of the personal satisfaction or enjoyment it provides you.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Section 5

This part of the questionnaire asks you various questions about your work attitudes or your plans for the next 3-5 years. Please respond to each statement as honestly and as objectively as possible according to the provided scale.

Disagree strongly	Disagree a little	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree a little	Agree strongly
1	2	3	4	5
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				
13				
14				
15				
16				
17				
18				

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SMALL BUSINESS SURVEY



EMPLOYEE



John Molson
School of Business
Concordia University

ACADEMIC SURVEY

February 2005

Dear Participant,

I am a Ph.D. candidate in Organizational Behavior at John Molson School of Business at Concordia University, in Montreal. I am carrying out research into positive entrepreneur-employee relationships in small firms. You can assist me in my research by filling out the following questionnaire, which should take you approximately 15 minutes. In doing so, you will also gain the opportunity to learn about your employment relationship and its impact on the long-term goals and day-to-day operation of your organization.

The focus of this survey is on your role as an employee and your relationship with your employer. Therefore feel free to express yourself as frankly and honestly as possible without consulting anyone, as I want to know how you personally think. There are no "trick" questions and all the scales incorporated in this survey are adopted from well-validated and popular measures in the area of Organizational Behavior. I would ask you to answer all the questions as this will produce more accurate results. As this research is **anonymous** you are not required to give your name or any other particulars that will reveal your identity. I am not asking you for any sensitive personal information and I assure you that your responses will be held in the **strictest confidentiality** and will not be revealed to your employer or any other party.

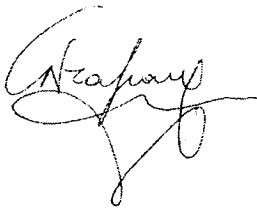
On completion of the study, I would like to remind you that I am willing to share and discuss my findings with you. It is my belief that your participation in this research will prove both interesting and valuable to you, by highlighting key issues for you and your employer to consider as regards your respective roles in your organization that can contribute towards its success, with clear benefits for all.

Finally, I would like to remind you that if for any reason you do not wish to participate in this study you should feel free to decline.

If at any time you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact: Adela Reid, Research Ethics and Compliance Officer, Concordia University, at 848-2424 ext. 7481 or by e-mail at: adela.reid@concordia.ca. For any other inquiry my supervisor's telephone number and e-mail address are provided below.

Thank you for your participation in my study.

Yours sincerely,



Filotheos Ntalianis,
Ph.D. Candidate in Organizational Behavior
Telephone: 848-2424 ext. 7568
E-mail: Filotheos@jmsb.concordia.ca

Thesis Supervisor: Dr. Linda Dyer
Telephone: 848-2424 ext. 2936
E-mail: Dyer@jmsb.concordia.ca

Section 1

PERSONAL DATA

Gender: Male ☐ Female ☐ Age: _____

Education (check all that apply):

- ☐ Less than high school graduate ☐ Community college / CEGEP degree ☐ Masters / post graduate degree
☐ High school graduate ☐ Some University ☐ Doctorate
☐ Some community college / CEGEP ☐ University degree

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

Total work experience: Year(s) Month(s)

How long have you been with your current employer: Year(s) Month(s)

Work Status: Part Time ☐ Full Time ☐

Relationship with the employer: Family ☐ Non Family ☐

What occupational level are you working in:

- ☐ Upper Management ☐ Middle Management ☐ Supervisory ☐ Non-managerial

What department are you currently working in (if any): _____

COMPANY INFORMATION

How would you describe the primary activities of your organization (check all that apply):

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting | 11. Other Administrative |
| 2. Construction | 12. Retail Trade and Wholesale Trade |
| 3. Finance and Insurance | 13. Administrative and Support Services |
| 4. Information | 14. Accommodation and Food Services |
| 5. Manufacturing | 15. Health Care and Social Assistance |
| 6. Mining | 16. Health Care and Social Assistance |
| 7. Retail Trade | 17. Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation |
| 8. Transportation and Warehousing | 18. Management of Companies and Enterprises |
| 9. Utilities | 19. Education Services |
| 10. Wholesale Trade | 20. Other Services (except Public Administration) |

How many employees are currently employed by your organization?

Section 2

Here are a number of characteristics that may or may not apply to your employer. For example, do you agree that he/she is someone who likes to spend time with others? Please write a number next to each statement to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with that statement.

"My employer is someone who "

Disagree strongly	Disagree a little	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree a little	Agree strongly
1	2	3	4	5
1 is talkative				
2 seems to get along with others				
3 does a thorough job				
4 is depressed, blue				
5 is original, comes up with new ideas				
6 is social, outgoing				
7 is helpful and unselfish with others				
8 can be somewhat careless				
9 is relaxed, handles stress well				
10 is curious about many different things				
11 is full of energy				
12 starts quarrels with others				
13 is a reliable worker				
14 is a dreamer				
15 is independent, self-reliant				
16 is somewhat of a flirt, coquette				
17 has a forgiving nature				
18 tends to be impractical				
19 worries a lot				
20 has no strong opinions				
21 tends to be quiet				
22 is generally trusting				
23 tends to be lazy				
24 is emotionally stable, not easily upset				
25 is inventive				
26 has an assertive personality				
27 can be cold and aloof				
28 perseveres until the task is finished				
29 can be moody				
30 values artistic, aesthetic experiences				
31 is sometimes shy, inhibited				
32 is suspicious and finds fault with others				
33 does things efficiently				
34 tends to get in some scrapes				
35 prefers work that is routine				
36 is outgoing, sociable				
37 is sometimes rude to others				
38 makes decisions and acts on the spot, without delay				
39 gets nervous easily				
40 likes to reflect, play with ideas				
41 has few artistic interests				
42 likes to get together with others				
43 is easily distracted				
44 is sophisticated in art, music, literature				

Section 3

Consider your relationship with your current employer. Please circle the number that most expresses your thoughts and feelings about each statement.

To what extent have you made the following commitment or obligation to your employer?

	Not at all	Slightly	Somewhat	Moderately	To a great extent
	1	2	3	4	5
1 Plan to stay here for a long time.	1	2	3	4	5
2 Actively seek internal opportunities for training and development.	1	2	3	4	5
3 Perform only required tasks.	1	2	3	4	5
4 Make personal sacrifices for this organization.	1	2	3	4	5
5 Accept increasingly challenging performance standards.	1	2	3	4	5
6 Only perform specific duties I agreed to when hired.	1	2	3	4	5
7 Remain with this organization indefinitely.	1	2	3	4	5
8 Fulfill duties, regardless of how much overtime they require.	1	2	3	4	5
9 Continue to work here.	1	2	3	4	5
10 Work steadily and hard.	1	2	3	4	5
11 Work here for a limited time only.	1	2	3	4	5
12 Take the organization's interests seriously.	1	2	3	4	5
13 Quit whenever I want.	1	2	3	4	5
14 Commit myself completely to this organization.	1	2	3	4	5
15 I am under no obligation to commit with this employer.	1	2	3	4	5
16 Make no effort to work any extra time.	1	2	3	4	5
17 I have no moral obligations to this employer.	1	2	3	4	5
18 Contact this organization often.	1	2	3	4	5
19 Leave at any time I choose.	1	2	3	4	5
20 Accept even more difficult performance standards.	1	2	3	4	5
21 Do only what I am paid to do.	1	2	3	4	5
22 Not look for a job elsewhere.	1	2	3	4	5
23 Fulfill a limited number of responsibilities.	1	2	3	4	5
24 Make myself increasingly valuable to my employer.	1	2	3	4	5

Section 3 cont'd

To what extent has your employer made the following commitment or obligation to you?

Not at all	Slightly	Somewhat	Moderately	To a great extent			
1	2	3	4	5			
1	Concern for my long-term well-being.		1	2	3	4	5
2	Encourage me to attain the highest possible levels of performance.		1	2	3	4	5
3	Limited involvement in the organization.		1	2	3	4	5
4	Advancement within the firm.		1	2	3	4	5
5	Short-term employment.		1	2	3	4	5
6	Unrestricted job promotion.		1	2	3	4	5
7	Steady employment.		1	2	3	4	5
8	Require me to perform only a limited set of duties.		1	2	3	4	5
9	Help me to respond to ever greater industry standards.		1	2	3	4	5
10	Overload me with my interests in the firm.		1	2	3	4	5
11	A job limited to specific, well-defined responsibilities.		1	2	3	4	5
12	Encourage me to create employment opportunities elsewhere.		1	2	3	4	5
13	Secure employment.		1	2	3	4	5
14	Encourage me to leave the company if I don't like it.		1	2	3	4	5
15	Values and behaviors I can count on.		1	2	3	4	5
16	Working conditions for the current job.		1	2	3	4	5
17	Stable quarters for employees' families.		1	2	3	4	5
18	Encourage my colleagues to remain here in the future.		1	2	3	4	5
19	Concern for my personal welfare.		1	2	3	4	5
20	Comply with labor laws.		1	2	3	4	5
21	Be responsive to my personal concerns and well-being.		1	2	3	4	5
22	Be committed to commitment with this firm.		1	2	3	4	5
23	A job for a short time only.		1	2	3	4	5
24	Opportunity for career advancement within this firm.		1	2	3	4	5

Section 4

This part of the questionnaire asks you various questions about your job and how you feel about it. Please respond to each statement as honestly and as objectively as possible according to the following scale:

Disagree strongly	Disagree a little	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree a little	Agree strongly		
1	2	3	4	5		
1	I feel fairly satisfied with my present job.	1	2	3	4	5
2	This organization has a great deal of personal meaning to me.	1	2	3	4	5
3	So far my employer has done an excellent job of fulfilling its promises to me.	1	2	3	4	5
4	I will probably look for a new job in the next year.	1	2	3	4	5
5	I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own.	1	2	3	4	5
6	I feel betrayed by my organization.	1	2	3	4	5
7	I feel that my employer has come through in fulfilling the promises made to me when I was hired.	1	2	3	4	5
8	I consider my life better employed.	1	2	3	4	5
9	I do not feel emotionally attached to this organization.	1	2	3	4	5
10	Most days I am enthusiastic about my work.	1	2	3	4	5
11	I feel extremely irritated by how I have been treated by my organization.	1	2	3	4	5
12	My employer has broken many of the promises he has made to me.	1	2	3	4	5
13	It is highly likely that I will look for a new job in the next year.	1	2	3	4	5
14	I would be very "glad" to leave this work if my current work was not so good.	1	2	3	4	5
15	I often think about quitting.	1	2	3	4	5
16	I have not received everything promised to me when I was hired.	1	2	3	4	5
17	I do not feel like part of the family at my organization.	1	2	3	4	5
18	My employer has completely misled me by my employment contract.	1	2	3	4	5
19	I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization.	1	2	3	4	5
20	I feel that my organization has violated the contract between us.	1	2	3	4	5
21	I find real enjoyment in my work.	1	2	3	4	5
22	I find that my work makes life a hell of a lot better.	1	2	3	4	5
23	I feel a great deal of anger toward my organization.	1	2	3	4	5

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SMALL BUSINESS SURVEY



ENTREPRENEUR-FR



John Molson
School of Business
Concordia University

Étude Académique

Février 2005

Madame,
Monsieur,

Je suis étudiant au programme de doctorat à l'École de Gestion John Molson de l'Université Concordia dans le domaine du comportement organisationnel. Mon projet de recherche porte sur le développement de relations durables et positives entre les propriétaires de petites et moyennes entreprises et leurs employés. En remplissant le questionnaire ci-joint, ce qui devrait prendre environ 15 minutes, vous m'aidez à compléter mon projet de recherche et vous obtiendrez de l'information sur les relations entre vous et vos employés qui pourraient avoir des effets sur vos objectifs à long terme et vos activités quotidiennes.

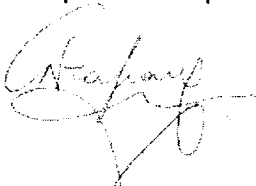
Le questionnaire porte sur votre rôle d'entrepreneur et vos relations avec vos employés. Vu que mon intérêt principal est de connaître vos attitudes et pensées, je vous invite à répondre au questionnaire ouvertement et sans aucune consultation externe. Le questionnaire ne comprend aucune question piège et a été développé à partir de mesures valides et reconnues dans le domaine du comportement organisationnel. Je vous demande de répondre à toutes les questions pour assurer des résultats précis. L'étude se déroulera dans l'**anonymat** et aucune question ne pourra de quelque façon vous identifier ou identifier votre entreprise. De plus, toutes les informations recueillies dans le cadre de cette étude seront **strictement confidentielles**.

Tel que précisé antérieurement, une fois l'étude complétée, il me fera plaisir de vous faire part des résultats et de discuter avec vous de leur pertinence pour votre entreprise. Je suis convaincu que votre participation dans cette étude contribuera au **succès de votre entreprise** en identifiant les éléments de votre rôle qui auront le plus d'influence sur la réalisation de vos objectifs et en vous permettant de recruter et conserver des employés bien qualifiés.

Pour terminer, je vous rappelle que votre participation est volontaire et vous pouvez refuser de participer en tout temps.

Si vous avez des questions à propos de vos droits en tant que participant à un projet de recherche, je vous invite de contacter Adela Reid, responsable - code d'éthique de recherche, au 848-2424 ext. 7481 ou par courriel: adela.reid@concordia.ca. Pour toutes autres informations, veuillez contacter ma directrice de recherche au coordonnées indiqués ci-dessous.

Merci pour votre participation.



Filotheos Ntalianis,
Candidat au doctorat en comportement organisationnel
Tel: 848-2424 ext. 7568
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Directrice de recherche: Linda Dyer, PhD.
Tel: 848-2424 ext. 2936
Courriel: Dyer@jmsb.concordia.ca

Section 1

INFORMATIONS PERSONNELLES

Homme ☐ Femme ☐ Age: _____

Éducation (indiquez le plus haut niveau de scolarité obtenu)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Études secondaires, incomplètes | <input type="checkbox"/> Études universitaires, incomplètes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diplôme d'études secondaires (D.E.S.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Diplôme universitaire, 1er cycle (Baccalauréat) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Études collégiales/C.E.P.P. incomplètes | <input type="checkbox"/> Diplôme universitaire, 2ème cycle (Maîtrise ou autre) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diplôme d'études collégiales (D.E.C.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Diplôme universitaire, 3ème cycle (Doctorat) |

EXPERIENCE DE TRAVAIL

Expérience de travail: Nombre d'années Mois

Âge de l'entreprise: Nombre d'années Mois

Expérience en tant que propriétaire

(entreprise actuelle et toute entreprise antérieure): Nombre d'années Mois

INFORMATIONS SUR L'ENTREPRISE

Quels sont les champs d'activités principales de votre entreprise? (Veuillez indiquer toutes les activités pertinentes)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Agriculture, horticulture, sylviculture et pêche | 11. Information publique |
| 2. Construction | 12. Immobilier - vente de location |
| 3. Commerce de gros, de détail, de restauration | 13. Transport et message par câble, par la poste |
| 4. Commerce de détail | 14. Transportement de matériel roulant |
| 5. Manufacturier | 15. Services sociaux et services personnels, professionnels |
| 6. Minier | 16. Services au sein de santé publique |
| 7. Industrie chimique | 17. Arts, divertissement, médias et loisirs |
| 8. Industries de transformation | 18. Consultants en questions d'entreprise |
| 9. Énergie, pétrole, gaz, chauffage | 19. Services juridiques |
| 10. Équipement | 20. Autres services (veuillez préciser) |

Nombre d'employés au sein de l'entreprise: _____

Nombre d'employés à temps partiel: _____ Temps plein: _____

Nombre d'employés qui sont membres de votre famille: _____

Section 2

Les énoncés suivants peuvent servir à vous décrire avec plus ou moins de précision. Par exemple, êtes-vous d'accord pour dire que vous êtes quelqu'un qui aime passer du temps avec d'autres personnes? Pour chacun des énoncés suivants, indiquez dans l'espace approprié à quel point vous êtes en accord ou en désaccord avec chacun d'entre eux.

"Je me vois comme quelqu'un qui "

Fortement en désaccord	Légèrement en désaccord	Ni en accord, ni en désaccord	Légèrement en accord	Fortement en accord
1	2	3	4	5
1 Est bavard.				
2 A tendance à trouver des défauts chez les autres.				
3 Fait les choses minutieusement.				
4 Est déprimé, triste.				
5 Est original, a de nouvelles idées.				
6 Est rassuré.				
7 Est serviable et généreux avec les autres.				
8 Peut être un peu compliqué.				
9 Est décontracté, supporte bien le stress.				
10 Peut perdre des objets ou des choses d'importance.				
11 Est plein d'énergie.				
12 Peut se laisser aller à des idées bizarres.				
13 Est un peu impatient, facile à énerver.				
14 Est un peu timide.				
15 Est intelligent, a une pensée profonde.				
16 Peut être un peu dur, un peu impatience.				
17 Est très sensible émotionnellement.				
18 A tendance à être un peu paranoïa.				
19 S'ennuie facilement.				
20 A une imagination vive.				
21 A tendance à être tranquille.				
22 Peut être très émotif, peut pleurer facilement.				
23 A tendance à être paresseux.				
24 Est émotif, se laisse facilement impressionner.				
25 Est inventif.				
26 A une personnalité affirmée.				
27 Peut être froid et distant.				
28 Peut être un peu dur, peut être un peu dur.				
29 Peut être lunatique.				
30 Peut être un peu dur, peut être un peu dur.				
31 Est parfois timide, inhibé.				
32 Est généralement en accord avec les autres.				
33 Fait les choses rapidement.				
34 Peut être un peu dur, peut être un peu dur.				
35 Préfère les relations faciles.				
36 Est généralement en accord.				
37 Est parfois un peu dur avec les autres.				
38 Peut être un peu dur, peut être un peu dur.				
39 Peut être facilement énervé.				
40 Peut être un peu dur, peut être un peu dur.				
41 A peu d'intérêt intellectuel.				
42 Aime passer du temps avec les autres.				
43 Est facilement énervé.				
44 Est un peu dur, peut être un peu dur.				

Section 3

Cette section contient des énoncés sur vos relations avec vos employés. S.V.P. encerclez le chiffre qui correspond le mieux à vos pensées et sentiments envers l'énoncé.

Dans quelle mesure avez-vous pris un engagement ou ressentez-vous une obligation envers vos employés en fonction des énoncés suivants?

Pas du tout	Faiblement	Quelque peu	Modérément	Dans une grande mesure	
1	2	3	4	5	
1. Un intérêt pour leur bien-être à long terme.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Les encouragements pour les performances d'acquiescer la gestion et d'acquiescer les performances positives.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Une implication limitée dans l'organisation.	1	2	3	4	5
4. La formalisation des soins de l'entreprise.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Un emploi à court terme.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Des opportunités de développement.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Un emploi stable.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Des gens qui ne sont pas des hommes d'œuvre de l'entreprise.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Les aider à atteindre les standards de plus en plus exigeants de la sécurité.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Prendre des décisions de promotion de leurs employés.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Un emploi limité à des responsabilités très spécifiques.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Donner une opportunité d'emploi à des personnes qui ne sont pas qualifiées.	1	2	3	4	5
13. La sécurité d'emploi.	1	2	3	4	5
14. Un emploi dans lequel on est encouragé à acquiescer à tous les ordres.	1	2	3	4	5
15. Un salaire et des avantages sociaux sûrs.	1	2	3	4	5
16. Un salaire et avantages sociaux élevés et sûrs.	1	2	3	4	5
17. Des avantages sociaux sûrs pour leurs familles.	1	2	3	4	5
18. Un emploi dans lequel on est encouragé à acquiescer à tous les ordres.	1	2	3	4	5
19. Un salaire pour leur bien-être personnel.	1	2	3	4	5
20. Un salaire élevé et sûr.	1	2	3	4	5
21. Une attitude envers les intérêts et le bien-être des employés.	1	2	3	4	5
22. Une opportunité de développement et de promotion pour les personnes qui ne sont pas qualifiées.	1	2	3	4	5
23. Un emploi à court terme seulement.	1	2	3	4	5
24. La possibilité d'un changement de carrière au sein de l'entreprise.	1	2	3	4	5

Section 4

Indiquez quatre objectifs précis que vous aimeriez accomplir au cours des 3 à 5 prochaines années. Par exemple, accroître le niveau de production, introduire un nouveau service, demander du financement, participer à un séminaire, etc. Ensuite, lisez les énoncés ci-dessous et indiquez dans quelle mesure chacun d'eux reflète vos raisons pour poursuivre chaque objectif.

OBJECTIF 1

OBJECTIF 2

OBJECTIF 3

OBJECTIF 4

Pas du tout pour cette raison

Modérément pour cette raison

Complètement pour cette raison

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

OBJECTIF 1

1	Vous poursuivrez cet objectif parce que quelqu'un d'autre le fera, et parce que si quelqu'un le fait, vous serez en retard.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
2	Vous poursuivrez cet objectif parce que vous vous sentirez inquiet, coupable ou honteux si vous ne le faites pas.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
3	Vous poursuivrez cet objectif parce que vous devez accomplir quelque chose d'important pour le moment.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
4	Vous poursuivrez cet objectif parce que vous éprouvez de la satisfaction personnelle ou que vous aimez ça.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

OBJECTIF 2

1	Vous poursuivrez cet objectif parce que quelqu'un d'autre le fera, et parce que si quelqu'un le fait, vous serez en retard.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
2	Vous poursuivrez cet objectif parce que vous vous sentirez inquiet, coupable ou honteux si vous ne le faites pas.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
3	Vous poursuivrez cet objectif parce que vous devez accomplir quelque chose d'important pour le moment.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
4	Vous poursuivrez cet objectif parce que vous éprouvez de la satisfaction personnelle ou que vous aimez ça.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

OBJECTIF 3

1	Vous poursuivrez cet objectif parce que quelqu'un d'autre le fera, et parce que si quelqu'un le fait, vous serez en retard.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
2	Vous poursuivrez cet objectif parce que vous vous sentirez inquiet, coupable ou honteux si vous ne le faites pas.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
3	Vous poursuivrez cet objectif parce que vous devez accomplir quelque chose d'important pour le moment.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
4	Vous poursuivrez cet objectif parce que vous éprouvez de la satisfaction personnelle ou que vous aimez ça.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

OBJECTIF 4

1	Vous poursuivrez cet objectif parce que quelqu'un d'autre le fera, et parce que si quelqu'un le fait, vous serez en retard.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
2	Vous poursuivrez cet objectif parce que vous vous sentirez inquiet, coupable ou honteux si vous ne le faites pas.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
3	Vous poursuivrez cet objectif parce que vous devez accomplir quelque chose d'important pour le moment.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
4	Vous poursuivrez cet objectif parce que vous éprouvez de la satisfaction personnelle ou que vous aimez ça.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Section 5

Dans cette section, vous trouverez des énoncés sur vos attitudes de travail et vos plans pour les 3 à 5 prochaines années. S.V.P., répondez à chaque énoncé de façon objective en fonction des choix fournis.

Fortement en désaccord	Légèrement en désaccord	Ni en accord, ni en désaccord	Légèrement en accord	Fortement en accord			
1	2	3	4	5			
1	Je me sens satisfait au travail.		1	2	3	4	5
2	Mon organisation représente le meilleur pour moi.		1	2	3	4	5
3	J'envisage prendre ma retraite bientôt.		1	2	3	4	5
4	Je respecte les priorités de mon entreprise comme étant les miennes.		1	2	3	4	5
5	La plupart du temps, je suis enthousiaste envers mon travail.		1	2	3	4	5
6	Je réfléchis à vendre cette entreprise et d'en créer une nouvelle.		1	2	3	4	5
7	Je trouve mon travail plutôt désagréable.		1	2	3	4	5
8	Il est peu probable que je quitterais les "trois étoiles" des "Barracks" dans les six prochains mois.		1	2	3	4	5
9	J'aimerais transférer la direction de mon entreprise à un gestionnaire professionnel.		1	2	3	4	5
10	On dirait que les managers japonais ont l'avantage de travailler plus vite.		1	2	3	4	5
11	Je suis vraiment heureux(Se) au travail.		1	2	3	4	5
12	Je songe à vendre cette entreprise à quelqu'un d'autre.		1	2	3	4	5
13	Je songe volontiers à laisser les affaires et à aller travailler pour quelqu'un d'autre.		1	2	3	4	5
14	Je ne me sens pas suffisamment motivé(e) pour travailler.		1	2	3	4	5
15	Je serais très heureux de passer toute ma carrière dans cette organisation.		1	2	3	4	5
16	Il est probable que parce que les japonais travaillent plus vite, ils sont également plus enthousiastes.		1	2	3	4	5
17	Je n'éprouve pas vraiment un sentiment d'appartenance à mon organisation.		1	2	3	4	5

www.johnmolson.concordia.ca



SMALL BUSINESS SURVEY



EMPLOYEE-FR



John Molson
School of Business
Concordia University

Madame,
Monsieur,

Je suis étudiant au programme de doctorat à l'École de Gestion John Molson de l'Université Concordia dans le domaine du comportement organisationnel. Mon projet de recherche porte sur le développement de relations durables et positives entre les propriétaires de petites et moyennes entreprises et leurs employés. En remplissant le questionnaire ci-joint, ce qui devrait prendre environ 15 minutes, vous m'aidez à compléter mon projet de recherche et vous obtiendrez de l'information sur les relations entre vous et votre employeur qui pourraient avoir des effets sur les objectifs à long terme et les activités quotidiennes de votre entreprise.

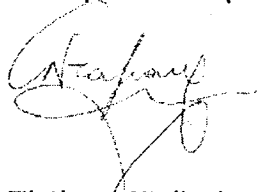
Le questionnaire porte sur votre rôle d'employé et vos relations avec votre employeur. Vu que mon intérêt principal est de connaître vos attitudes et pensées, je vous invite à répondre au questionnaire ouvertement et sans aucune consultation externe. Le questionnaire ne comprend aucune question piège et a été développé à partir de mesures valides et reconnues dans le domaine du comportement organisationnel. Je vous demande de répondre à toutes les questions pour assurer des résultats précis. L'étude se déroulera dans l'**anonymat** et aucune question ne pourra de quelque façon vous identifier ou identifier votre entreprise. De plus, toutes les informations recueillies dans le cadre de cette étude seront **strictement confidentielles**.

Tel que précisé antérieurement, une fois l'étude complétée, il me fera plaisir de vous faire part des résultats et de discuter avec vous de leur pertinence. Je suis convaincu que vous trouverez l'étude intéressante et que votre participation identifiera des éléments clés pour vous et votre employeur sur vos rôles respectifs qui auront un impact sur le succès continu de l'entreprise, ce qui bénéficiera tous et chacun.

Pour terminer, je vous rappelle que votre participation est volontaire et vous pouvez refuser de participer en tout temps.

Si vous avez des questions à propos de vos droits en tant que participant à un projet de recherche, je vous invite de contacter Adela Reid, responsable - code d'éthique de recherche, au 848-2424 ext. 7481 ou par courriel: adela.reid@concordia.ca. Pour toutes autres informations, veuillez contacter ma directrice de recherche au coordonnées indiqués ci-dessous.

Merci pour votre participation.



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Candidat au doctorat en comportement organisationnel
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Directrice de recherche: Linda Dyer, PhD.
Tel: 848-2424 ext. 2936
Courriel: Dyer@jmsb.concordia.ca

Section 1

INFORMATIONS PERSONNELLES

☐ Homme ☐ Femme Age _____

Éducation (indiquez le plus haut niveau de diplôme obtenu):

<input type="checkbox"/> Études secondaires incomplètes	<input type="checkbox"/> Études universitaires incomplètes
<input type="checkbox"/> Diplôme d'études secondaires (DES)	<input type="checkbox"/> Diplôme universitaire 1er cycle (Baccalauréat)
<input type="checkbox"/> Études collégiales/CÉGEP incomplètes	<input type="checkbox"/> Diplôme universitaire 2ème cycle (Maîtrise ou autre)
<input type="checkbox"/> Diplôme d'études collégiales (DEC)	<input type="checkbox"/> Diplôme universitaire 3ème cycle (Doctorat)

EXPERIENCE DE TRAVAIL

Expérience de travail (Totale): Nombre d'années Mois

Expérience de travail (Entreprise actuelle): Nombre d'années Mois

Statut: Temps partiel ☐ Temps pleins ☐

Lien avec le propriétaire: Famille ☐ Non familial ☐

Type d'emploi:

☐ Cadre supérieur ☐ Cadre intermédiaire ☐ Superviseur ☐ Non managériale

Dans quel département travaillez-vous (si applicable): _____

INFORMATIONS SUR L'ENTREPRISE

Quels sont les principaux secteurs d'activité de votre entreprise? (Veuillez sélectionner toutes les catégories qui s'appliquent)

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Agriculture, sylviculture, pêche et chasse | 11. Administration publique |
| 2. Industrie | 12. Commerce - vente au détail |
| 3. Services professionnels et techniques | 13. Hébergement et restauration |
| 4. Construction | 14. Hébergement et restauration |
| 5. Manufacturière | 15. Services techniques et scientifiques, professionnels |
| 6. Mines | 16. Services au consommateur |
| 7. Santé, services sociaux | 17. Arts, spectacles, récréation |
| 8. Transport et communication | 18. Conseil en gestion d'entreprise |
| 9. Commerce de gros | 19. Services financiers |
| 10. Énergie | 20. Autres services (non classés ailleurs) |

Nombre d'employés au sein de l'entreprise: _____

Section 2

Voici plusieurs énoncés sur des caractéristiques personnelles qui pourraient ou non s'appliquer à votre employeur. Par exemple, croyez-vous que votre employeur est une personne qui aime interagir avec d'autres personnes? Dans la boîte à la fin de chaque énoncé, écrivez le chiffre qui correspond le mieux au niveau de votre accord ou désaccord avec l'énoncé.

"Mon employeur est quelqu'un qui "

Fortement en désaccord	Légèrement en désaccord	Ni en accord, ni en désaccord	Légèrement en accord	Fortement en accord
1	2	3	4	5
1 Est bavard.				
2 A tendance à trouver des défauts chez les autres.				
3 Fait les choses minutieusement.				
4 Est calme, réfléchi.				
5 Est original, a de nouvelles idées.				
6 Est réservé.				
7 Est sympathique généralement avec les autres.				
8 Peut être un peu nerveux.				
9 Est déterminé, supporte bien le stress.				
10 Est heureux, se réjouit de la plupart des événements.				
11 Est plein d'énergie.				
12 A tendance à se laisser aller au plaisir.				
13 Est un peu difficile à traiter.				
14 Est un peu têtu.				
15 Est intelligent, a une pensée profonde.				
16 A tendance à être un peu égoïste.				
17 Est de nature indifférente.				
18 A tendance à être complaisant.				
19 Semble être heureux.				
20 A une personnalité facile.				
21 A tendance à être tranquille.				
22 Est généralement confiant.				
23 A tendance à être paresseux.				
24 Est généralement stable, mais pas nécessairement heureux.				
25 Est inventif.				
26 A une personnalité affirmée.				
27 Peut être froid et distant.				
28 Persévère jusqu'à ce que son tâche soit terminée.				
29 Peut être lunatique.				
30 Aime les changements, les idées et les idées.				
31 Est parfois timide, honte.				
32 Est généralement agréable avec les autres, mais pas toujours.				
33 Fait les choses efficacement.				
34 Peut parfois être un peu égoïste.				
35 Préfère les travaux routiniers.				
36 Est à l'aise avec les gens.				
37 Est parfois impoli avec les autres.				
38 Peut être un peu égoïste.				
39 Devient facilement ennuyé.				
40 Aime parler de son travail aux autres.				
41 A peu d'intérêt pour les autres.				
42 Aime travailler avec les autres.				
43 Est facilement distrait.				
44 Est calme, mais un peu égoïste, et a des idées.				

Section 3

Cette section contient des énoncés sur vos relations avec votre employeur. S.V.P. encerclez le chiffre qui correspond le mieux à vos pensées et sentiments envers l'énoncé.

Dans quelle mesure avez-vous pris un engagement ou ressentez-vous une obligation envers votre employeur en fonction des énoncés suivants?

	Pas du tout	Faiblement	Quelque peu	Modérément	Dans une grande mesure
	1	2	3	4	5
1. Avoir l'intention de demeurer ici longtemps.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Rechercher des possibilités de formation et de perfectionnement à l'intérieur de l'entreprise.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Réaliser uniquement les tâches requises.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Faire des sacrifices personnels pour cette entreprise.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Accepter des normes de performance de plus en plus élevées.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Réaliser seulement les tâches spécifiques que j'ai acceptées lors de mon embauche.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Accepter d'acquiescer à toutes les décisions prises par mon employeur.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Donner des conseils en dehors de cette entreprise afin d'améliorer mon rendement au travail.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Continuer de travailler ici.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Faire un emploi à temps partiel.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Travailler ici pour une durée de temps limitée.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Contribuer aux activités de l'entreprise comme étant les miennes.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Quitter aussitôt si les choses changent.	1	2	3	4	5
14. Continuer personnellement à donner cette entreprise.	1	2	3	4	5
15. Avoir une obligation de demeurer à l'emploi chez cet employeur.	1	2	3	4	5
16. Continuer à donner de travailler ailleurs.	1	2	3	4	5
17. Avoir une obligation future envers cet employeur.	1	2	3	4	5
18. Prendre un emploi ailleurs.	1	2	3	4	5
19. Quitter lorsque je déciderai de partir.	1	2	3	4	5
20. Aider les collègues de travail à améliorer et développer leurs compétences.	1	2	3	4	5
21. Accomplir uniquement les tâches pour lesquelles je suis rémunéré.	1	2	3	4	5
22. Ne pas chercher un emploi ailleurs.	1	2	3	4	5
23. Avoir un nombre restreint de responsabilités.	1	2	3	4	5
24. Me faire le plus ou plus responsable à mon employeur.	1	2	3	4	5

Section 3 cont.

Dans quelle mesure votre employeur a-t-il pris des engagements ou obligations envers vous en fonction des énoncés suivants?

Pas du tout	Faiblement	Quelque peu	Modérément	Dans une grande mesure	
1	2	3	4	5	
1. Un intérêt pour mon bien-être à long terme.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Des suggestions pour que j'améliore l'organisation de mon travail personnel.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Une implication limitée (de ma part) dans l'organisation.	1	2	3	4	5
4. De l'avancement au sein de l'entreprise.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Un emploi à court terme.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Des opportunités de promotions.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Un emploi stable.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Le fait que je réalise un nombre limité de tâches.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Adopter à l'avenir les standards de plus en plus exigeants du travail.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Des tâches très stimulantes au travail et des idées intéressantes.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Un domaine limité de responsabilités très spécifiques.	1	2	3	4	5
12. L'absence d'opportunités de travail à des responsabilités d'employé à long terme.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Un salaire d'appoint.	1	2	3	4	5
14. Le fait que j'aimerais pour le moment que mon employeur a des idées de travail.	1	2	3	4	5
15. Un salaire et des avantages sociaux élevés.	1	2	3	4	5
16. Le fait que j'aimerais avoir des opportunités de promotion à l'avenir.	1	2	3	4	5
17. Des avantages sociaux stables pour ma famille.	1	2	3	4	5
18. Le fait que j'aimerais à mon travail d'être un travail.	1	2	3	4	5
19. Un travail pour mon bien-être personnel.	1	2	3	4	5
20. Le fait que j'aimerais de l'entreprise.	1	2	3	4	5
21. Une attitude envers mes intérêts et mon bien-être.	1	2	3	4	5
22. Le fait que j'aimerais de l'entreprise et de l'employeur d'être un travail.	1	2	3	4	5
23. La possibilité d'un cheminement de carrière au sein de l'entreprise.	1	2	3	4	5

Section 4

Dans cette section, vous trouverez des énoncés sur vos attitudes de travail. S.V.P., répondez à chaque énoncé de façon objective en fonction des choix fournis.

Fortement en désaccord	Légèrement en désaccord	Ni en accord, ni en désaccord	Légèrement en accord	Fortement en accord			
1	2	3	4	5			
1	Je me sens satisfait au travail.		1	2	3	4	5
2	Mon organisation représente beaucoup pour moi.					4	5
3	Jusqu'ici, mon employeur a tenu de façon excellente les promesses qu'il m'a faites.		1	2	3	4	5
4	Je n'aurais eu un tel(e) emploi(e) probablement au vol(e) de l'air(e) d'urgence.			2		4	5
5	Je ressens vraiment que les problèmes de cette entreprise sont les miens.		1	2	3	4	5
6	Je me sens traité par mon organisation.			2		4	5
7	Je crois que mon employeur a tenu les promesses faites lorsque j'ai été embauché.		1	2	3	4	5
8	Je trouve mon travail plutôt désagréable.			2		4	5
9	Je ne me sens pas affectivement lié à cette entreprise.		1	2	3	4	5
10	La plupart du temps, je suis enthousiasmé envers mon travail.						5
11	Je suis frustré par la façon que je suis traité par mon organisation.		1	2	3	4	5
12	Mon employeur a tenu plusieurs promesses depuis mon arrivée, mais rien que des fausses, cela lui fait mes employés sont toujours dans le doute.						5
13	Il est fort probable que je cherche un nouvel emploi cette année.		1	2	3	4	5
14	Je suis très heureux de travailler pour mon entreprise. Je suis très satisfait de mon travail.						5
15	Je songe souvent à démissionner.		1	2	3	4	5
16	Je suis très fier de mon travail et de mon organisation. Je suis très fier de mon travail.						5
17	Je n'ai pas vraiment le sentiment de faire partie de la famille dans mon organisation.		1	2	3	4	5
18	Je suis très fier de mon travail et de mon organisation. Je suis très fier de mon travail.						5
19	Je ne pousse pas vraiment un sentiment d'appartenance à mon organisation.		1	2	3	4	5
20	Je pense que mon organisation a tout à fait le droit de me faire travailler.		1	2	3	4	5
21	Je suis vraiment heureux au travail.		1	2	3	4	5
22	Je suis très fier de mon travail et de mon organisation. Je suis très fier de mon travail.						5
23	Je ressens beaucoup de colère envers mon organisation.		1	2	3	4	5

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