

## **Relationship of psychological contract and employees' job engagement (An investigation of the millennium generation and the impacts of various generations)**

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**ABSTRACT.** The current paper was administered with the aim of examining the relationship between the psychological contract fulfillment and the employees' job engagement at the Islamic Azad University, Sanandaj Branch (Investigation of the millennium generation and the impact of various generations). For this purpose, all the employees of this university were examined as the statistical universe. This study, methodologically speaking, is a descriptive research of correlation type, of applied nature in terms of goal, and of survey information in terms of collection manner while temporally it is latitude-periodic. To measure the fundamental concepts of the research, the Rousseau Psychological Questionnaire (including 9 questions) and the Wiley and et al's Job Engagement (in 12 questions) were applied. The questionnaires' reliability in form of Cronbach's alpha was calculated as 0/953 for the psychological contract and 0/872 for ye job engagement. The final findings in the SPSS software suggest the existence of a significant relationship between the psychological contract and its dimensions (officials' thoughts, officials' obligations and act upon the promises made by the officials) with the employees' job engagement of the Islamic Azad University, Sanandaj Branch. The results from the research findings indicate that there is a lack of relation between psychological contracts and job engagement and the millennium generation and various generations. In the analysis of the multiple regression results, the variable of officials' obligation among other dimensions of the variable of the psychological contract has the highest level of influence on the employees' job engagement while there is no strong relation between the various generations and the millennium generation with the psychological contract and job engagement.

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Psychological contracts involve reciprocal obligations between the parties and for years, the issue of the psychological contract and job engagement has assumed importance in the area of management and organizational behavior as well as behavioral sciences. Accordingly, managers are taught how to create motivation among employees so that they have more feelings regarding their own organizations and employers and accept more obligations and meantime, allowing the organization to remain in the scene of competition. Reciprocal relations along with duties and obligations will lead to some psychological contracts. The psychological contract is founded on the equality of the contract law, i.e. on the obligation or the promise based on parties' obligations and expectations. Given the fact that job engagement is assumed to be the central part of working relations and become the core of this structure could be affected by the psychological contract. A positive and negative impact of the psychological contract on overall and working relations is inevitable. Psychological contracts assume prominent effects on other relations (Robins, 2000). For this, we attempt in this paper to illustrate to what extent psychological contracts affect the employees' obligations and whether these effects are positive or negative?. A rise in the psychological; contract fulfillment is associated with an increase of the employees' obligations and

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creation of motivation among them. Meanwhile, positive conducts and giving attention to business results from great emotional and subjective states which are induced in the individual (Chung et al, 2013). The workforce gradually becomes aging and worn out as time lapses and gets retired and needs to be replaced with new and young employees. Hence, there need to be some emotional and mental bonds between young forces and the organization so that the employees feel attached to the organization and vice versa where this is a kind of psychological contract which is finalized between the employee and the organization, thus leading to a promotion of the organization and the individual and encouraging the individual to do the right things (Shaw and Fiarhurst, 2008). Researchers have stated that the millennium employees have less pivotal attitude to their jobs (Shaw and Fiarhurst, 2008). Appropriate assessment and insight into the relation between the millennium generation employees with their employers could lead to a presentation of some valuable insight of the millennium generation working behaviors (Rousseau, 1989; Kahn, 1990; Rousseau 1994; Sels et al, 2004). Understanding the fact to what degree the psychological contract fulfillment is associated with the obligation level of the millennium generation employees (as opposite to other generation groups) could be positively and significantly related with the employees' obligation and thus yield major results. This research is a discovery research which examines the relationship between the job engagement and the psychological contract fulfillment in accordance with the examination of the millennium generation and various generations among the Islamic Azad University of Sanandaj's employees. As we know, if the individual employee establishes some appropriate and strong emotional and sensual relations with the organization, he attempts to apply all of his efforts and innovation in the organization so that the organization goes through the course of program easily. In this regard, the psychological contract established between the individual and the organization assumes higher importance; because the deeper the relations the person has with the organization emotionally, sensually and mentally, he uses all of his force so that the organization reaches its own goals where this leads to some job engagement. In other words, since the employee belongs himself to the organization and vice versa, he does his best to get the organization reach supreme goals. Psychological contracts and the way it affects is a profound issue on the employee's job engaged, because as we know and many scholars have affirmed it, the psychological atmosphere governing on the organization and the staff will direct both and could encourage them to fulfill their duties well. Consequently, when employees fulfill this affair appropriately, this will lead to professional satisfaction, forward and positive performance, organization's progress, reaching the goals and perspectives, actualization and utility. Now, we make efforts to investigate the impacts of the psychological contracts fulfillment on the professional engagement of the staff at the Islamic Azad university in accordance with the examination of the millennium generation and the effects of various generations where this could be a hot topic; because in reference to the fact that these variables could like other factors affecting the organization affect motivations, problems, happiness and cheerfulness and new technologies, modern knowledge and progress of the individual and the organization, where this factor itself could be effective on goals of the organization, employees and productivity. Investigating these variables, could materialize new planning for the organization and avoid the crisis engulfing the organization. Thus, the psychological contract, job engagement and the staff are interrelated and affect the organization and its strategies. As a result, special attention needs to be directed at the organization's planning and strategies. The current paper is aimed at the relationship between the psychological contracts and professional engagement and attempts to find out whether they have relations with the various generations factor; therefore, there are two primary goals in this paper: 1. Examination of the impacts of the psychological contract fulfillment on the job engagement of the employees at the Islamic Azad University, Sanandaj Branch; 2- examining the fact if there is a relation between the Millennium generation and other generation groups with the psychological contract fulfillment and staffs' job engagement.

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## 2. PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACT

For the first time, Menninger (1958) considered the psychological contract as the relationship between a therapist and treatment of the patient. Chris Argyris was the first one in 1960 who introduced this concept in attempts for determining Non-written expectations of the factory's workers and their heads. Levinson et al (1962) considered the psychological contract as including "non-written contract" and all "non-written" expectations between the employee and the employer. Levinson and his colleague Schein (1965) state that an expansion of the sense of the psychological contract could be accompanied with concrete contracts and subjective expectations. Schalk and Roe (2007) argue that the psychological contract is to a great extent "implied and untold". In his research, Kotter (1973) has thought of the psychological contract as an implicit understanding between the individual and the organization regarding that which exists. Schein (1980) in the book "Organizational Psychology" maintains that there is an inseparable and complex interaction between the staffs and the organization where this interaction could be administered. This is the first sign of the psychological contract which assume some strategic value. Rousseau (1989) considers the psychological contracts as beliefs that are accomplished between the employee and the employer reciprocally.

## 3. EMPLOYEES' JOB ENGAGEMENT

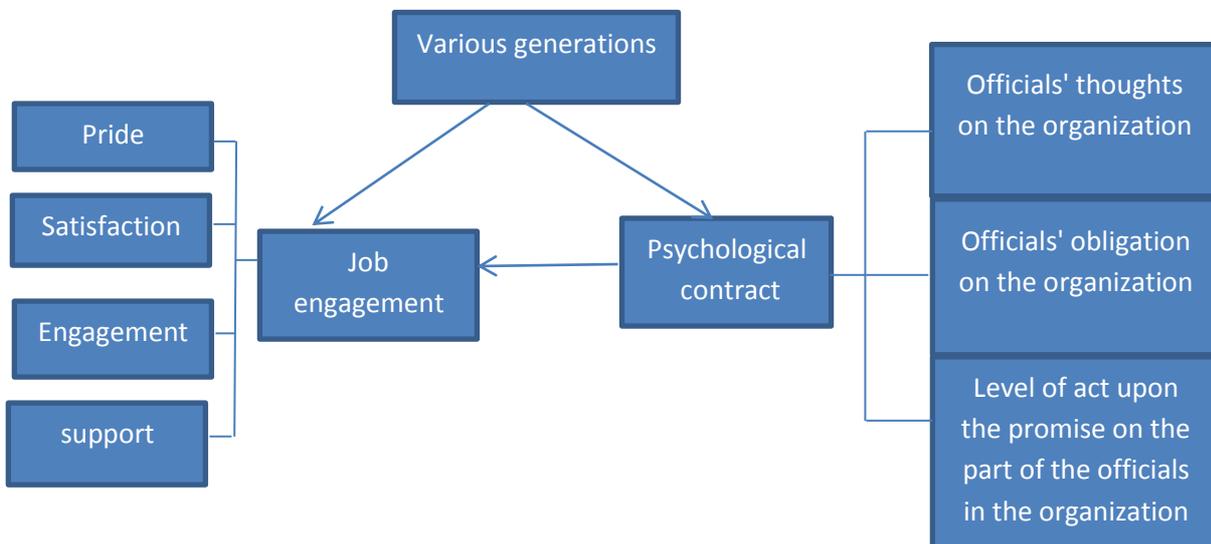
Little and Little (2006) speak of the employees' engagement as something beyond counseling and criticized that which has been defined as a weak structure. Rich et al (2010) consider the employee's job engagement: the interaction of the staff as a structure which comprises cognitive, emotional, psychological and behavioral components which are accompanied with the individual roles performance and the following obligations. Saks (2006) considers job engagement as an interactive structure consisting of behavioral, emotional and psychological and mental components through which the person reaches professional obligation. Schaufeli et al (2002 and 2006): enthusiastic staffs are fully absorbed in their professions and conduct their professional duties favorably. Therefore, professional enthusiasm as a favorable source could lead to a positive cycle of sources and leave as a consequence positive effects on the employee's health. This issue will in the end result in the staffs' professional obligation. Job engagement based on the definition by Wiley and his colleagues (2010): to what extent staffs have motivation with which they can reach the goals they have raised in the organization.

## 4. VARIOUS GENERATIONS AND THE MILLENNIUM

When we speak of generation dependence, we mean people are born in that generation and those years and are grouped therein. In the past 100 years ago, there has been six generation naming which has been fully accepted and is as follows: Generation G.I.-Silent Generation (also known as mature)-Explosion of population – Generation X- Generation Y (also known as the General or the Millennium generation)- Modern silent generation (also known as the Z generation sometimes). Generation groupings are done for understanding the way groups' behaviors are done like thinking way or feeling as a function of various generations particularly time and progress of technology, economy, politics and social custom could help us with norms, behaviors and expectations from one generation to various generations (DelCampo et al, 2010). A research by Pooker and Feldman (2009) shows that age might play a role in modification of response to the violation of the psychological contract. Various terms need to be applied for the Millennium Generation (Y); they involve various values and beliefs and need higher tech levels (Del, 2007; Shaw and Fairhurst, 2008).

**Table 1. Generational groupings**

Generations	Year related with the A.D. birth	Conversion of A.D. to A.H.	Year related with research in A.H.
Generation G.I.	1900-1924	1278-1302	1300-1324
Silent generation	1925-1945	1303-1323	1325-1345
Explosion of population generation	1946-1964	1324-1342	1346-1364
Generation X	1965-1987	1343-1356	1365-1378
Generation Y (Millennium)	1979-1994	1357-1372	1379-1394
Modern silent generation	1995 plus	1373 plus	1395 plus

*Model and Research hypotheses***Figure 1. Research conceptual model****5. METHODOLOGY**

This paper is a descriptive research of correlation type through which the role of the psychological contract on the job engagement of the employees in accordance with the examination of the Millennium generation and the impacts of the various generations are going to be investigated. The statistical population of this research includes all the official employees at the Islamic Azad University, Sanandaj Branch. Currently, the number of 156 people is considered to be officially working at this university from whom the number of 68 people equivalent to 61/3% are men while 43 people equivalent to 38/7% are women. The sample is part of the people of then community which is investigated in order to fulfill the plans under study. In accordance with the equation used, the statistical sample of this study includes 111 people in the field study stage. Since, the statistical population is limited in this study, the Cochran formula was applied for calculating the volume of the sample in a limited population. To prepare an appropriate sample of the staffs of the Islamic Azad University, Sanandaj Branch, the simple random sampling method was utilized.

**6. RESEARCH DATA GATHERING TOOLS AND METHODS**

In this research, two library and field methods were applied for gathering the data. In the field method: to gather the information required from the statistical population, questionnaires as the

primary sources of research data were given out among them. To administer and score the variables properly, questionnaire were applied which had been made in correspondence with models, dimensions and components of the research variables. These questionnaires are:

***Universal Rousseau Psychological Contract Questionnaire (PCI):*** This questionnaire is an instrument for assessing the psychological contract between a person and the later (Rousseau, 1989 and 2000). In this research, cases taken from the assessment of the employers; promises being kept have been applied for the measurement of the psychological contract fulfillment. This test has been structured in four parts and contains 72 questions and corresponds with the Likert Scale; in this paper, one part of which is associated with the fulfillment of the psychological contract by the organization is under investigation and involves three dimensions and 9 questions relating to hypotheses. Each of the questions on the Likert scale is scored to five points (1=totally disagree/very unsatisfied; 5=totally agree / very satisfied).

***Employees' job engagement questionnaire:*** Job engagement indices (Wiley et al, 2010) for the measurement of the employees' engagement used four aspects. This test has been prepared in accordance with the dimensions of the Employees' Job Engagement Model. It consists of 4 dimensions and 2 questions and has been formulated in accordance with the fulfillment of the psychological contract and its impacts on the staffs while its design involves a five choice Likert Scale. Each of the cases on the Likert Scale is scored to five points (1=totally disagree/very unsatisfied; 5=totally agree / very satisfied).

Validity and reliability of the measurement tools: In the current paper, due to the fact that standard questionnaires were applied for gathering the information, however for more validity, two content validity and test constructs were investigated. To guarantee the content validity of the questionnaire, the views of the academic experts were utilized. Via acquiring the views of the people mentioned, necessary reforms were made to the questions and hence, it was made sure that the questionnaire was measuring the same features desired.

In the current paper, to calculate the reliability of the questionnaire questions, the Cronbach's alpha for 30 questions was applied. The validity of the Cronbach's alpha coefficients usually ranges from zero meaning instability to +1 meaning complete; the more the value obtained approaches +1, the higher reliability of the questionnaire. According to the empirical rule, alpha needs to be at least (0.70) so that the scale is assumed to be having reliability. The overall reliability of the questionnaire in form of the Cronbach's alpha for the variables of psychological contract and job engagement were calculated and affirmed as 0/953 and 0/872 respectively. In addition, experts and professors' views were utilized.

Statistical techniques used includes two inferential and descriptive parts: in the research descriptive part, the statistical method includes tables of frequency description and percentage, Column Histogram descriptive graph, average central index and its comparison in different parts as well as standard deviation scattering indices relating to the responses provided at the University. Within the inferential statistics, the Kolmogorov – Smirnov test was applied for determining the normality and non-normality of the data where all the data were normal and for this reason, T-student parametric tests, variance analysis, Pearson correlation coefficient and multiple regressions were applied.

## 7. FINDINGS

Research findings include two inferential and descriptive categories: based on research descriptive results, most respondents to the research questionnaires were comprised of men and the professional rank of the employee had the highest frequency. Most respondents were holding B.A. licenses and the highest working record was related to the age level of 11-15 and the age group of 36-45 had the highest frequency among other groups. In total, 111 questionnaires were gathered. Findings resulting from the examination of average and standard deviation of the independent and dependent variables indicate that overall, the average psychological contract and job engagement of the employees was at an acceptable level being beyond the medium range; however, investigation

of the average distribution and standard deviation of the variables affirm the fact that all the dimensions of the variable of the psychological contract and all the dimensions of the variable of job engagement of the employees were having good scores. AS a result, one can conceive of a good situation for the research variables in general.

**Table 2. Test of variance analysis of the first secondary hypothesis**

		Squares sum	Freedom degree	Square average	F	Sig.
Psychological contract	Inter groups	5.125	3	1.708	2.383	.073
	Intra groups	76.702	107	.717		
	Total	81.827	110			
Job engagement	Inter groups	2.405	3	.802	1.780	.155
	Intra groups	48.178	107	.450		
	Total	50.583	110			

In table (2) the results of the first secondary hypothesis are shown. The average respondents' responses to the variable of the connection of various generations with the psychological contract fulfillment and job engagement were 0/71 and 0/45 respectively. Fischer statistics for the psychological contract was 2/38 and the significance level was 0/07. Also, the Fischer statistics for the job engagement was 1/78 and the significance level was 0/15. Given the fact that the significance level was greater than 5%, thus with 95% confidence, the  $H_0$  hypothesis is affirmed and the  $H_1$  is rejected; in other words, we can say that from the view of respondents, there is no significant difference between various generations with the psychological contract fulfillment and job engagement of the staffs at the Islamic Azad University in Sanandaj.

**Table 3. T-student test results of secondary hypotheses**

Variable	Average	Standard deviation	t	Df	Sig.
Officials' thoughts	2.7658	.98226	-2.512	110	.013
Officials' obligation/engagement	2.4474	.86046	-6.766	110	.000
Act upon promises made by the officials	2.4595	.94180	-6.047	110	.000

In table (3) test of secondary second, third and fourth hypotheses are shown. The average scores of the respondents to the variable of officials' thoughts is 2/76 with the standard deviation of 0/98. The student t statistic is -2/51 with a significance level of 0/01. Given the fact that the significance level is less than 5% and the absolute value of the student t statistic is greater than 1/96, thus with 955 confidence, the  $H_0$  hypothesis is rejected and the  $H_1$  is supported; in other words, one can claim that from the view of respondents, there is a significant relationship between the thoughts of the officials regarding the organization and the job engagement of the employees at the said branch. The average scores of the respondents to the variable of officials' obligation was 2/44 with a standard deviation of 0/86. The student t statistic is -6/76 and the significance level is 0/00. Given the fact that the significance level is less than 5% and the absolute value of the student t statistic is greater than 1/96, thus with 955 confidence, the  $H_0$  hypothesis is rejected and the  $H_1$  is supported; in other words, one can claim that from the view of respondents, there is a significant relationship between the obligation of the officials regarding the organization and the job engagement of the employees at the said branch. The average scores of the respondents to the variable of officials' obligation was 2/45 with a standard deviation of 0/94. The student t statistic is -6/76 and the significance level is 0/00. Given the fact that the significance level is less than 5% and the absolute value of the student t statistic is greater than 1/96, thus with 955 confidence, the  $H_0$  hypothesis is rejected and the  $H_1$  is supported; in other words, one can claim that from the view of respondents,

there is a significant relationship between the act upon the promises made by the officials regarding the organization and the job engagement of the employees at the said branch.

**Table 4. Results of correlation coefficient appertaining to the research hypotheses**

Hypothesis		Text of research hypotheses	Sig.		Correlation coefficient		Test results
Main	First	There is a significant relationship between the psychological contract fulfillment and the job engagement of the Islamic Azad Employees, Sanandaj branch	0/000		0/588		Supported
	Second	There is a significant relationship between the psychological contract fulfillment and the job engagement of the Islamic Azad Employees of the Millennium generation, Sanandaj branch	Psychological contract	Job engagement	Psychological contract	Job engagement	Rejected
			0.86	0.07	-.164	-.207	
Secondary	First	There is a significant relationship between the psychological contract fulfillment and the job engagement of the Islamic Azad Employees of various generations , Sanandaj branch	Psychological contract	Job engagement	Psychological contract	Job engagement	Rejected
				.096	.080	-.154	-.307
	Second	There is a significant relationship between the officials' thoughts regarding the organization and the job engagement of the Islamic Azad Employees, Sanandaj branch	0/000		0/521		Supported
	Third	There is a significant relationship between the	0/000		0/614		Supported

		officials' promises regarding the organization and the job engagement of the Islamic Azad Employees, Sanandaj branch			
	Fourth	There is a relationship between the act upon the promises made by the officials regarding the organization and the job engagement of the staffs at the said university	0/000	0/511	Supported
Confidence level of 99% or ( $p < 0/01^{**}$ )					

In table (4) the significance level and correlation coefficient of the research hypotheses are met. In accordance with the findings, the first main hypothesis stating the existence of a significance relation between the psychological contract and job engagement of the staffs, given the correlation coefficient (0/588) is accepted and affirmed with 99% confidence. However, the second main hypothesis of the research stating the existence of relation between the psychological contract and job engagement of the millennium staffs, due to the fact that the correlation coefficient for the psychological contract is -0/164 and -0/207 for the job engagement is rejected and not affirmed with 99% confidence level. SAs seen in table 4, the first secondary hypothesis on the significant relation between the psychological contract and job engagement of various generation staffs due to the fact that the correlation coefficient is -0/154 and -0/307 for the psychological contract and job engagement, this hypothesis is rejected and not affirmed with 99% confidence. The second secondary hypothesis stating the existence of relationship between thoughts of the officials regarding the organization and job engagement of the staffs, given the correlation coefficients of 0/521 is accepted and affirmed with 99% confidence level. The third secondary hypothesis of the research involving the relationship of officials' obligations regarding the organization and job engagement of the staffs with correlation coefficients of 0/614 is accepted and affirmed with 99% confidence level. The fourth secondary hypothesis concerning the significant relationship between the promises of the officials regarding the organization and the job engagement of the staffs with the 0/511 level of correlation coefficient and 99% confidence level is accepted.

**Table 5. Multiple regression test results**

Model		Non-standard coefficients		Standard coefficients	T statistic	Sig.
			Standard error	Beta		
1	Constant value	2.401	.155		15.538	.000
	Officials' obligation	.484	.060	.614	8.118	.000

## 8. CONCLUSION

The current paper was administered with the aim of examining the relationship between the psychological contract fulfillment and the employees' job engagement at the Islamic Azad University, Sanandaj Branch (Investigation of the millennium generation and the impact of various generations). To measure the fundamental concepts of the research, the Rousseau Psychological Questionnaire (including 9 questions) and the Wiley and et al's Job Engagement (in 12 questions) were applied. Also, to measure the hypotheses, the existing questionnaires and based on the dimensions of these two models were utilized. Results from researches done across the globe indicate that psychological contract fulfillment helps the employees' job engagement and organizational performance in different aspects and assist the organization in providing services and products properly. In other words, psychological contract fulfillment results in creation of some job engagement and emotional belonging of the staffs to the organization and the individual with the inward desire attempts to help the organization. In connection with this concept, results from correlation surveys between the psychological contracts and job engagement of the employees reaffirm the point that psychological contract is one of the consequences of job engagement of the employees. In line with the findings, the main first hypothesis stating the relationship between the psychological contract and job engagement of the staffs, given the correlation coefficient of 0/588 and confidence level of 99% is accepted; which is to say the more the level of fulfillment and empowerment in psychological contracts dimensions increase, the more job engagement of the staffs will increase. The reason for this is that the psychological contract fulfillment and its dimensions bring about favorable emotional state, sense of attachment, identity and self-confidence towards managers and the organization as a whole. Consequently, the employees get engaged in their work with higher motivation and satisfaction and collaboration with the organization. This issue is a basis for progress and reaching the targets in the organization. The results of the main first hypothesis are in consistence with the studies by More Trarone (2014), Breit et al (2003), Rousseau (1990), Schein (1965), and Hess and Jobson (2009). As seen from the findings of the research, the second hypothesis of the research stating the existence of a significant relation between the psychological contract and job engagement of the millennium generation staffs in accordance with the correlation coefficient of -0/164 and -0/207 for psychological contract and job engagement respectively is rejected and not affirmed with 99% confidence level which corresponds with the studies by More Trarone. It can be said that that the psychological contract and job engagement are not influenced by the millennium generation. As shown from the findings, the first secondary hypothesis stating the existence of a significant relationship between the psychological contract and job engagement of the various generations staffs in accordance with the correlation coefficient of -0/154 and -0/307 for the psychological contracts and job engagement respectively is rejected and not affirmed with 99% confidence. The reason is the psychological contract and job engagement is not influenced by any sort of generations and there is no relation between them. The second secondary hypothesis stating the existence of relationship between the thoughts of the officials regarding the organization and the job engagement of the staffs in accordance with the correlation coefficient of 0/521 is accepted and affirmed with 99% confidence level. The reason is when the staff sees the managers is thinking of promoting and helping the employees, he enhances his own motivation for helping the organization. In other words, the individual will enjoy more appropriate morale and have more satisfaction towards his own manager and the organization. The third secondary hypothesis stating a significant relation between officials' obligations regarding the organization and job engagement of the employees as based on the correlation coefficient of 0/614 is accepted and affirmed with 99% confidence level. The reason is the managers and directors of the organization, while acting upon their own promises, being accountable against personal worries and welfare of the staffs as well as job achievement of the staffs and sustainable employment could show their own candor and solidarity with the staffs. As a result, the staffs will get involved in the affairs of the organization with purity, working conscience and higher obligation in reaching the targets set. The fourth secondary hypothesis of the research stating the significant relationship between the level of act upon the promises made by the authorities and the job

engagement of the staffs in line with the correlation coefficient of 0/511 is accepted and affirmed with the confidence level of 99%. The reason is that the directors of the organization via acting on their promises, supporting the fulfillment of the goals and higher efficacy and creating an environment for promotion and progress of the staffs could motivate and encourage the staffs to work harder and contribute to the advancement of the organization. The overall results of the main and secondary hypotheses indicate that the current paper could play a significant role in the ever increasing studies in the area of psychological contract fulfillment and job engagement of the staffs. The findings illustrate that thereby a positive and direct relation between the psychological contract variable and its dimensions with the job engagement of ten staffs and in this research, because the significance level was 0/000 and is less than 5%, the linear assumption of the model is affirmed. According to the beta coefficients (coefficients standardized value) the variable of officials' obligation was 0/614 and has the highest influence compared to other variables on the job engagement of the staffs.

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