

# Psychological Contract in Association of Southeast Asian Nations Countries

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## Abstract:

**Background:** The psychological contract has received a lot of attention from both academics and practitioners. The existence of the Covid-19 pandemic has caused various changes and increased layoffs, reduced income, psychological unrest such as anxiety, stress, depression, slumping, and even the threat of terror during a pandemic. The purpose of this paper is to analyze the psychological contract in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

**Materials and Methods:** Mix-method is used by combining qualitative analysis and simple statistics. Data was collected using Publish or Perish (PoP) with Scopus and Google Scholar indexed publications. Metadata is then visualized using VOSviewers and further analyzed using frequency and percentage.

**Results:** The results show that there has been an increase in publications regarding psychological contracts in ASEAN countries in the last decade. The type of psychological contract that is widely discussed is the transactional contract and the ideological contract is the least discussed. Not all reputable publication countries include ASEAN countries, therefore the opportunity to contribute to increasing the value of the psychological contract in ASEAN countries is still open.

**Conclusion:** The publications of psychological contracts have increased in the past 10 years. However, the opportunity to study the publications on the psychological contract is still open, especially by focusing on publications during Pandemic COVID-19. It is advised to add more indexing to improve the comprehensiveness of the findings.

**Key Word:** Psychological Contract; Human Resource Management; Employee Relation; Transactional Contract; Relational Contract.

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## I. Introduction

ASEAN encourages the strengthening of work on employment services regarding the global job market and cooperation in dealing with a pandemic in the world of work [1]. As a regional organization that is a forum for cooperation between 10 countries in Southeast Asia, Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has approved the 2025 ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint. The ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) blueprint 2025 aims to reduce or even eliminate all obstacles in economic activities, such as in trade in goods, services, and investment[2]. The presence of the AEC could be the first step for countries in Southeast Asia to develop various qualities related to the economy in the Southeast Asian region. AEC allows workers and domestically made products to have the opportunity to go global[2].

Currently, several labor conditions in ASEAN countries are experiencing labor problems, ranging from wages, working hours, and unemployment[3]. The creation of many job opportunities and incentives in the form of good regulations for companies are very important for the development of the workforce in the ASEAN region[4].

Many workers from Southeast Asia are looking for work in Southeast Asian, East Asian, and Middle Eastern countries, where Malaysia and Saudi Arabia are the two main destination countries. There are currently an estimated 21.3 million ASEAN nationals living outside their country, of which approximately 6.8 million are intra-regional migrants (i.e. persons who have moved from one ASEAN Member State to another). The five largest ASEAN origin countries in ASEAN itself are Myanmar (2.02 million), Indonesia (1.2 million), Malaysia (1.0 million), Lao PDR (0.9 million), and Cambodia (0.8 million)[2].

Migrant worker education and safe migration programs are essential to ensure that people seeking employment opportunities in countries other than their own are aware of practical information about labor migration[5] Migrant workers need to carefully understand the recruitment process that applies in their country of origin, their rights and responsibilities under the employment contract, including those that apply to their

employers, as well as the legal aid programs available if needed[6]. The need for wider cooperation on information programs for migrant workers and their employers/ companies is well established[7].

Migrant workers need information about the applicable recruitment and placement laws and procedures in the country of origin, labor regulations, living and working conditions, the socio-cultural environment in the destination country, and the legal services and mechanisms available to migrant workers[8]. Employers in destination countries also need cross-cultural orientation in destination countries regarding the management of foreign workers: the practice of placing workers abroad, work habits, and social attitudes[9].

To fulfill the quality of work-life, an organization can never be separated from the reciprocal relationship between the employer and the job recipient[10]. This relationship causes each employer and the recipient to try to develop their views and expectations[11]. These mutual expectations and obligations between employees and the company are known as psychological contracts[12].

Psychological contracts have received a lot of attention from both academics and practitioners. Google Scholar noted that there are more than 1,000 articles of which 331 of them are indexed by Scopus. This number is not significantly different from the publications of the previous 2 decades (2000-2010) with a total of 321 publications on Scopus.

This increased interest is largely due to the changing landscape concerning employee perceptions and reactions to employment relationships, related to factors such as outsourcing, increased dependence on temporary workers, and demographic diversity[13]. However, the study is still limited to how the content of psychological contracts, both relational and transactional contracts, affects organizational outcomes[14].

Apart from the direct consequences of psychological contracts among employees, few studies examine contractual content (relational or transactional) that magnifies the relationship with work-related outcomes. In a work environment, everyone expects to be respected by others, but some individuals may expect a higher or lower level of respect. Individuals who are subjected to stigma will have lower expectations because they will regularly experience insinuations that they do not deserve respect.

This study defines stigma awareness as the expectation that a person will experience prejudice and discrimination or to be stereotyped negatively by others because of their attributes in the work environment. However, not all individuals with an alienated status share the same expectations about the degree to which others will discriminate against them. In other words, individuals who have high stigma awareness are more likely to believe and worry that discrimination is directed at their marginalized groups in general, and them personally.

This study aims to fill the research gap by providing a bibliometric analysis of the literature on psychological contracts in ASEAN Published articles indexed by Scopus. By using Publish or Perish (PoP) software, you can find out what research topics are often published and what topics can be developed in the future. Some findings were visualized using VOSviewer, and some were further analyzed descriptively. Finally, the findings are discussed and concluded as a systematic literature review (SLR) regarding psychological contracts in ASEAN countries.

## **II. Material And Methods**

This SLR is based on a process that is both systematic and explicit. This research method adopts the Sample, Phenomenon of Interest, Design, Evaluation, Research type (SPIDER)[15] therefore this research is categorized using a mix-method.

### ***Study Selection***

This research conducts a phenomenon search to identify suitable articles and avoid plagiarism of previous research ideas and ensure that the number of articles to be analyzed is sufficient. In addition, the focus of the problem needs to be related to global values, consistency of methods adopted, and relevant to current scientific developments.

In addition, the focus of the problem needs to be related to global values, consistency of methods adopted, and relevance to current scientific developments. The search using the keyword "physiological contract" was carried out through PoP with Google Scholar (GS) and Scopus searches with a publication deadline of 1970-2021. The findings are interesting, searches using GS and Scopus are relatively constant, GS produces more than 1,000 articles and the Scopus index is around 320 more. In a systematic review, no number of items should be covered. However, the more studies available, the more likely it is to yield more useful findings.[16]

Then we did a search using the keyword "physiological contract in ASEAN" using either GS or Scopus using PoP. The results are interesting, there are 64 articles indexed by GS and not a single article indexed by Scopus. In the search, the researcher did not limit the types of publications, so the articles detected could be articles published in journals, proceedings, book chapters, and other types of publications.

Searches using Scopus take precedence, while searches using GS are benchmarks. Among the search engines, Scopus is the most effective compared to the others, and based on the criteria of importance, Scopus and Google Scholar get the highest ranking among other indexes. Scopus is able to increase international visibility; increase opportunities for collaboration among researchers around the world; increase the accessibility of article content and the number of cited article citations, and increase contributions to the wider scientific community on a particular subject[17].

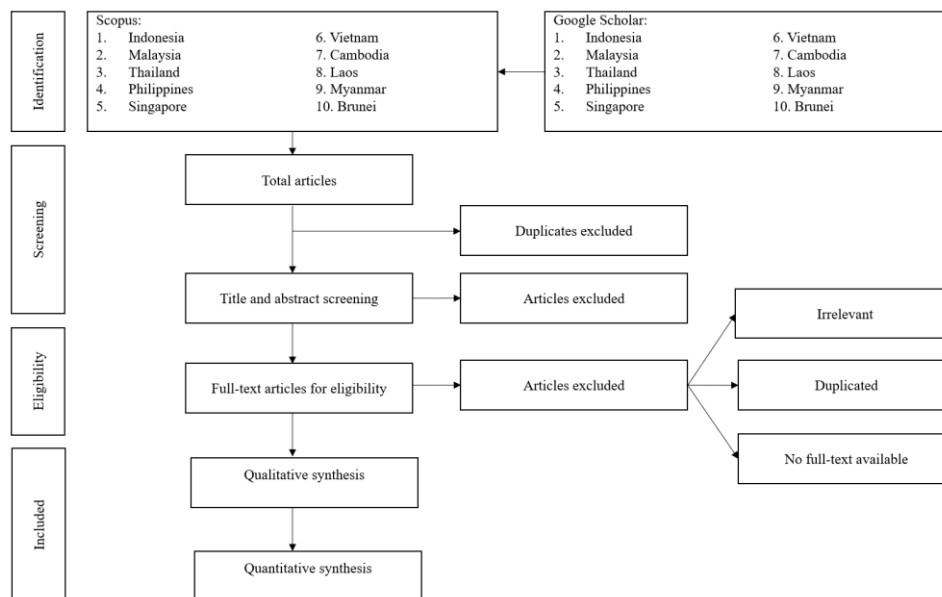
**Data collection process**

Because the keyword "physiological contract in ASEAN", did not produce the expected data, the search process was to use keywords that represent ASEAN countries. The keywords used consisted of "physiological contract in Indonesia", "physiological contract in Malaysia", "physiological contract in Philippines", "physiological contract in Thailand", "physiological contract in Vietnam", "physiological contract in Cambodia", "physiological contract in Singapore", "physiological contract in Myanmar", "physiological contract in Laos", and "physiological contract in Brunei".

The resulting metadata was filtered based on content and duplication and saved using the RIS format. Metadata was copied into excel format to facilitate categorization based on the year of publication, the scope of the country was being studied, and the type of "physiological contract". The category of a year of publication was divided into decade, namely the period 1990-2000, 2000-2010, and 2010-2021. Based on the type, this study used Rousseau's "physiological contract" categorization with the category of elemental beliefs (promises, obligations); associated meanings (transactions, relationships), and higher-level abstraction (ideology, norms).[18][19].

**Data processing**

This study used the PRISMA checklist format from ideation to conclusion[20]. The data synthesis consistency was analyzed using SPIDER. Some data is visualized using VOSviewers to make it more interesting[21]. Keywords and authors name analysis used Bibexcel to rank the most found and most productive. The selection and screening process using PRISMA is presented in Figure 1.



**Figure 1:**PRISMA Flow Chart at The Screening and Selection Stage

Descriptive statistical analysis consists of average and percentage. To avoid bias, triangulation was carried out on 2 reviewers who are active authors in Scopus indexed journals, namely GA and AP, validity starting from topic selection, metadata, analysis steps to the process of making conclusions.

**III. Results**

**Screening results**

From PoP metadata search with predetermined keywords, 79 Scopus indexed articles discuss psychological contracts in ASEAN in 1990-2021. This number is only 21.5% of the total articles available on Google Scholar with the same keywords and search times. From 10 ASEAN countries (Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Vietnam, Thailand, Singapore, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Brunei), only seven have been

discussed and published in Scopus indexed. Laos, Myanmar, and Brunei were mentioned ten times using Google Scholar, but no article indexed by Scopus. The distribution of articles by country and year of publication is presented in Table 1.

**Table no.1:** shows that Indonesia and Malaysia are the countries most mentioned in Scopus indexed publications with 17 papers each in the last three decades. What's interesting is that Singapore, even though it's only been mentioned eight times, the number of citations has reached 189 times. The ranking is in Table 1. Unlike the search data through GS, where Malaysia is the most published with 75 papers, followed by Thailand with 74 articles, Indonesia occupies the fourth position with 60 articles.

**Table no 1:** Distribution of Articles Regarding Psychological Contracts in ASEAN Countries

No	Country	Publication years			Number of Papers	Percentage	Citations
		1990-2000	2000-2010	2010-2021			
1	Indonesia	3	0	17	17	22%	353
2	Malaysia	1	3	17	17	22%	113
3	Philippines	4	5	13	13	16%	305
4	Vietnam	0	1	13	13	16%	129
5	Thailand	1	1	9	9	11%	33
6	Singapore	1	4	8	8	10%	189
7	Cambodia	0	1	2	2	3%	7
Total		10	15	54	79	100%	1.129

Ranking paper based on Scopus is different from search data through GS, where Malaysia is the most published with 75 papers, followed by Thailand with 74 articles, Indonesia occupies the fourth position with 60 papers. Similar to Scopus indexing, in GS, Singapore with 69 articles cited 5,596 times, which means more than 50% of the total number of citations in ASEAN countries. Based on the decade, there has been an increase in the number of articles with a significant increase in the last decade (2010-2021) which reached 53 articles.

After the screening process, from 79 papers there were 13 duplicate articles, with five titles. Article “A probe into reasons for international migration in Fujian Province”[22] is the one with the most duplication, which is four times detected in the search for psychological contracts for the countries of Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, and Singapore. And of the 13 duplications, the discussion about the Philippines is the most with four times detected[22][23][24][25]. Based on these findings, 8 articles were deleted, bringing the total number of articles to 71.

The next screening was through title and abstract, the researcher observes the abstract of each article. Not all articles discuss psychological contracts related to employee relations, some articles discuss psychological social, political psychological, psycho-cultural, work, and psychological contracts in hospital patients. Therefore from 71 articles, thirteen of them had to be deleted. Full-text availability was carried out on 58 articles, and 57 of them had full-text articles thus they could proceed to SPIDER analysis.

***SPIDER analysis***

Articles on metadata were analyzed based on the availability of Sample, Phenomenon of Interest, Design, Evaluation, and Research type (SPIDER). Of the 58 articles analyzed, three of them did not meet SPIDER. From the year of publication, these articles spread over three decades, namely 1990, 2020, and 2017. Two articles discussed psychological contracts in Indonesia, specifically the BedolDesa Transmigration program and abuse doctrine, and another article discussed foreign workers in the garment industry in Indonesia. Malaysia. Based on the completeness considerations, the 3 articles that did not meet the criteria could not be analyzed further.

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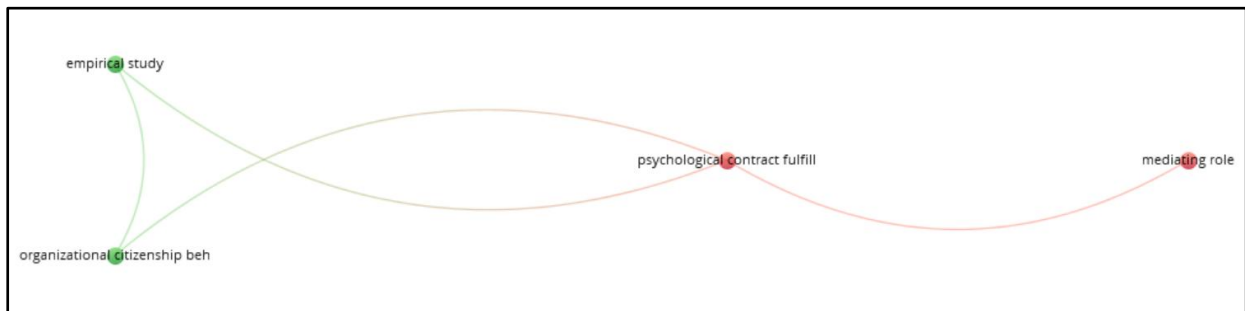
Based on this score, the most relevant terms were selected. The default choice is to select the 60% most relevant terms and the number of selected terms is 20, the details of which are presented in Table 2.

**Table no 2:** shows three out of twenty terms were then deleted, namely “case”, “governance”, “Indonesia”, “Philippine”, “procedural justice”, “psychological contract perspective” because the number of occurrences was zero.

**Table no 2:**A Term Co-Occurrence Map Based on Text Data

No	Term	Occurrences	Relevance
1	Perception	2	2.26
2	Psychological empowerment	2	2.26
3	Qualitative study	2	2.26
4	Turnover intention	2	2.26
5	Training	2	1.78
6	Transfer	2	1.78
7	Mediating role	2	1.18
8	Unethical behavior	2	1.06
9	Psychological contract fulfillment	2	0.99
10	Trust	3	0.91
11	Organizational citizenship behavior	2	0.88
12	Empirical study	2	0.88
13	Knowledge sharing	2	0.74
14	Mediator	2	0.74
15	Case	2	0.00
16	Governance	2	0.00
17	Indonesia	3	0.00
18	Philippine	2	0.00
19	Procedural justice	2	0.00
20	Psychological contract perspective	2	0.00

Network visualization of keywords is presented in Figure 2. It can be seen that labels and circles have the same weight, meaning that no single label dominates. There are four labels that appear, namely empirical study, full psychological contract, mediating role, and organizational citizenship behavior which are grouped into 2 clusters and form 4 strong links.



**Figure 2:** Network visualization of keywords

Based on the co-authorship (authors, organizations, and countries), using the full counting method, with a minimum number of documents of 2 authors, from 49 authors, there are four that meet the threshold. Namely Anggraeni, Arshad, Phuong, and Restublog, with a maximum number of three documents, but no strong links.

**Table no.3:** shows Indonesia and Malaysia are still the ones that appear the most with 14 articles each, three articles being deleted. The biggest changes were in the Philippines, Vietnam, and Thailand with the deletion of five documents each. While Cambodia and Singapore only experienced the deletion of one and two articles.

**Table no 3:**The Paper Distribution Before and After Screening Process

No	Country	Number of papers before screening	Number of papers on first screening	Number of papers on second screening
1	Indonesia	54,800	17	13
2	Malaysia	56,500	17	14
3	Philippines	52,900	13	8
4	Vietnam	94,400	13	8
5	Thailand	53,600	9	4
6	Singapore	102,000	8	6
7	Cambodia	21,900	2	1
Total		436,100	79	53

#### IV. Discussion

Based on data processing using VOSviewers, the subject of psychological contracts is still wide open. As evidenced by the mapped keywords, the psychological contract has a strong relationship with empirical study area, psychological contract fulfilment, mediating role, and organizational citizenship behavior. In line with the opportunity for co-authorships, where researchers who discuss the contents of psychological contracts in ASEAN countries have not collaborated. From 53 articles, the researcher tried to analyze the findings related to the psychologic contract theory presented[18].

There are three main points of agreement regarding the psychological contract, namely: subjective, unique, idiosyncratic, reciprocal, and cognitive dimension[26]. In addition, formal contract characteristics and HR practices are important antecedents in determining the nature of psychological contracts[27]. Furthermore, the hypothesized links between affective commitment and the three dimensions of time frame, exchange symmetry, and contract level, as well as the relationships between tangibility, scope, and flexibility with personal control, are confirmed.

Employee satisfaction and organizational identity are both influenced by psychological contract fulfilment, and the findings underline the necessity of include NA in psychological contract research[28]. The influence of one facet of the psychological contract, employer promises and obligations, appears to be neutralized by the vocation and environment of being in-demand employees. In ASEAN countries, research on psychological contract fulfilment is discussed[29][30]. Although studying different countries (Indonesia and Malaysia), those papers were published in the same year and the same journal and field of study, namely, 2020, the journal Systematic Reviews in Pharmacy and discusses the pharmaceutical industry. Some papers place psychological contract fulfilment as a mediating role[31][30]. The mediating role is defined as a mediating variable between workplace spirituality and affective commitment[31]. Psychological contract concept is derived from social exchange theory and can strongly predict affective commitment[32]. The degree to which a psychological contract holds the two aspects is the major focus while examining a spiritual workplace (ie transactional and relational, hybrid is rarely observed) where transactional contracts are economic terms, as well as other types of psychological contracts, have a set length of time, are static, have a limited scope, and are visible[33]. In contrast to transactional organizations, spiritual organizations place a premium on long-term employee development, as seen by their culture and human resource policy[34]. Although psychological contracts are often associated with spirituality, they are often criticized for being difficult to implement[35].

In contrast to Kerdpitak&Jermstittiparsert, organizational justice is a mediating variable when testing psychological contract fulfilment on organizational citizenship behavior[30]. Psychological contract fulfilment is also used as an independent variable to test employee reactions where organizational citizenship behavior is one of the dimensions being measure[36]. In industrial psychology, Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) is defined as the behavior of employees who voluntarily do work that exceeds the standard of tasks assigned to them, to help the company's sustainability in achieving its goals[37]. Employees with a high level of OCB are assets for an organization, they obey orders given by their superiors[38]. The psychological contract is understood from the employee's point of view, not from the company's point of view thus this belief has also been described as employee perception. Conversely, if the organization fails to fulfil the psychological contract, it will cause many problems such as job dissatisfaction, negative behavior, low levels of well-being, and low organizational commitment.

Of the 53 articles that were observed, 59 were classified, 29% discussed transactions contracts, and 19% about relationships contracts. Some articles are being categorized into more than one type of psychological contract. This shows that researchers who discuss psychological contracts in ASEAN countries tend to research transactional contracts. Both types of psychology are included in the category of associated meanings. Violation of the psychological contract can increase negative behavior.

Both types of psychology are included in the category of associated meanings. Violation of the psychological contract can increase negative behavior (for example, may reduce organizational citizenship behavior and beliefs)[39]. Some articles look at both relational and transactional contracts, but the results show that a positive relationship is shown for individuals who mostly hold relational contracts and their job satisfaction and performance, and low intention to quit work [40].

Rousseau developed a Stein concept called a schema that combines how new information is received, interpreted, and organized[18][19]. In interpreting the “promises” implied in the job relationship, “SCHEMA” plays a critical role. They are used to arrange this experience in meaningful ways, allowing individuals to deal with ambiguity and organizations to predict their behavior. Beliefs about the job connection get intertwined in ways that give rise to larger meaning units. The complexity of cognitive schema (and the meaning that this transmits to the individual) varies along two dimensions.

The individual's views about promises and specific obligations are the most basic degree of complexity in the job relationship psychological contract. The business needs to convey that the employment arrangement has become a relationship rather than a transaction, the perception that the organization has committed to a long-term internal career might be linked with the belief that it has also committed to providing employability elsewhere. The connected meanings that are used to categorize the essential promises and obligations can be consolidated into fewer ideologies and norms. Of the articles that deserve to be analyzed, 20% discuss promises and 12% discuss obligations. The antecedent factors of psychological empowerment can explain how western multinational enterprises possess the ability to effectively manage skilled staff in Southeast Asia[41].

The last group is higher-level abstractions consisting of ideology and norms. An employee's psychological contract with a new company could be seen through the prism of their pre-employment schema and the responsibilities that this entails. Professional norms and ideas are formed within society, occupations, and previous employment. In terms of employee obligations, team relationships mitigated the correlations between some components of employer contract fulfillment and employee obligations, but there were no significant interactions between employer ideological fulfillment and team relationships[42]. There are 3% articles related to ideology and 17% related to norms. Susceptibility to moral feelings, such as shame and remorse, can predict corrupted conduct[43]. The research showed that reveals that psychological contract breach experience considerably affects the negative association between unethical behavior and trust[44]. The fact that there are potential benefits of ideology on improving employee emotional engagement in the banking sector[31].

**Table no.4:** shows the summary of the distribution of papers based on schema components is presented in Table 4. It can be seen that of the phenomena regarding psychological contracts in ASEAN countries, transactional contracts are the most observed (29%) and regarding ideology are the least (2%).

**Table no.4:** Paper distribution based on SCHEMA

	Elemental Beliefs		Associated Meanings		Higher-Level Abstractions		Total
	Promises	Obligations	Transactions	Relationships	Ideology	Norms	
Number	12	7	17	11	2	10	58
Percentage	20%	12%	29%	19%	3%	17%	100%

## V. Conclusions

The Covid-19 pandemic has an impact on all aspects of life, including policies related to employment in ASEAN countries. Contract psychology is increasingly needed by workers considering the uncertainty about the continuity of their work is also getting higher. Although not as many as countries in America and Europe, the publication of psychological contracts has increased in the last decade. By combining quantitative and qualitative methods, it is possible to know the distribution of credible psychological contract publications. Research on psychological contracts can be carried out further by focusing on publications in the Covid-19 era and involving more indexing such as Google Scholar and Crossref so that the explanation can be more comprehensive. To conclude, comparisons are not futile, provided the context is not ignored. They enable academics and practitioners to acquire a deeper understanding of an adjudicatory institution and appreciate the strengths and weaknesses of the various approaches that can be adopted.

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