Post-exit loyalty: Exploring the phenomenon, scale developing & testing its predictive value

Title:	Post-exit loyalty: Exploring the phenomenon, scale developing & testing its predictive value
Author:	Jessica Santee-Eekhuis
Student number:	s0031011
University:	Universiteit Twente
Faculty:	Faculty of Behavioural Sciences
Study:	Educational Science and Technology
Specialisation:	Human Resource Development
Supervisors:	Dr. Q. Zhou Universiteit Twente Dr. H. Yang Universiteit Twente Drs. L. Bibo EMC Leren in bedrijf
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No man is an island, entire of it self;
every man is a piece of the continent,
a part of the main......

-John Donne, Meditation XVII
From: Devotions upon emergent occasions

Will: [thinking] Every man is an island. I stand by that.
But clearly, some men are island CHAINS.
Underneath, they are connected...
Marcus: [thinking] I used to think two was not enough.
But now things are great; there are loads of people...
I don't know what Will was so pissed about.
I don't think couples are the future.
The way I see it now, we both got back-up now.
It's like that thing Jon Bon Jovi said: 'No man is an island.'

From: All about the boy (the movie).

Acknowledgement

Writing this thesis, conducting this research, attending this university; it has been quite a journey. Even though the final product is here in front of me (and in front of you); I can still hardly believe that the final destination has arrived.

During this past seven years, this study was a constant factor in my live. I enjoyed going to the university once a week, away from normal working live (in jeans and sneakers) absorbing and exchanging knowledge and ideas with others. I started seven years ago, with the idea that I wanted to find out if what I had been doing in my work so far, was the right way to go. I soon learned that there is no such thing as "the right way" or a "single everlasting truth". My most valuable lesson is simple: different approaches may lead to different results; both can be just as valuable and both views together may bring us a little closer to understanding.

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Jessica Santee-Eekhuis
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Summary

Alvesson (2000) described people who still feel attached to their former employer even after leaving. He labelled this phenomenon post-exit loyalty. This phenomenon is believed to have significant implications for the knowledge intensive industry in which networks and inter-organizational linkages are crucial (Alvesson, 2000). So far prior research lacks empirical evidence of this phenomenon. There is no clear definition of the construct and no measurement is available.

This study offered a first approach to explore phenomenon of post-exit loyalty. This research was divided in two studies: study 1, qualitative and study 2, quantitative. The purpose of these studies was to explore the post-exit relations between ex-employers and their ex-organizations.

The objectives of the first study were: what is going on in this post-exit relationship and what are the affects of ex-employees towards their former organization. In order to reach these objectives, this study followed a qualitative approach, designed with multiple focus groups using an online electronic chat tool, MSN Web Messenger. 19 ex-employees of 7 organizations voluntarily participated in 7 chatsessions. Of these 7 sessions, 5 were based on a predetermined similar characteristic: tenure (short and long period), time-elapse after exit (short and long period) and the current position of the freelancer, and 2 "mixed" chats. Also (limited) data as collected from management perspective (2 managers from 2 organizations).

Out of the qualitative analysis, two general categories of affects were identified: positive and negative affects towards former employer, and a more instrumental attachment to the former employer. Furthermore, the analysis revealed ex-employees benefiting the former employer from a mutual perspective: ex-employees should also benefit. Results also revealed a change over time: affects neutralize.

The second study followed a quantitative approach. The purpose of this study was to develop a measure for the post-exit loyalty construct, validate it and to explore its consequences. The objectives of this study were: how can post-exit loyalty be measured and how predictive are its consequences. To reach these objectives, this second study included an online survey with a sample of 153 respondents of six Dutch consultancy organizations.

The attitude-behaviour model by Eagly and Chaiken (1993) was introduced as a theoretical basis for understanding the post-exit loyalty construct. Using this model, implicates that more constructs are involved, not just one. Based on this model and the results of the qualitative study, the following scales were developed: post-exit positive affects, post-exit negative affects, post-exit instrumental attachment, intention to benefit and beneficial behaviour.

Findings showed positive affects positively related to intention to benefit and beneficial behaviour. In addition, instrumental attachment is positively related to intention to benefit and beneficial behaviour, but less strong than positive affect. Control variables like ex-organizational identification and ex-organizational justice perceptions, correlated with affects and/or intention to benefit and beneficial behaviour, but could not explain all the variance in the causal relationship between positive affects and intention to benefit and beneficial behaviour. When controlled, affects still have a significant effect on intention to benefit and beneficial behaviour. The findings implicate that consultancy firm management may need to consider (post-) exit management and alumni activities. Suggestions for future research were provided.

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# 1.	Introduction

Alvesson (2000) described people who still feel attached to their former employer even after leaving. He labelled this phenomenon post-exit loyalty. This phenomenon is believed to have significant implications for the knowledge intensive industry in which networks and inter-organizational linkages are crucial (Alvesson, 2000). Yet, we know little about post-exit loyalty.

Maintaining positive relationships with former employees might be beneficial and valuable for both the ex-employee and their organization. From an employer's positive point of view this former employee may become a present or a future client, may be re-employed in the future (Rousseau, 1998) or may become a kind of 'ambassador' for the company, who will positively promote inter-organizational linkages between the former employer and his or her new working environment. From a contemporary management point of view, inter-organizational linkage might even be crucial to keep ahead with the competition in the knowledge intensive industries. Gibbons et al. (1994) argue that, intensifying over the late 20th century, there has been a fundamental shift in knowledge relationships. They argue that in contemporary society the key repositories of knowledge and capabilities are distributed across conventional disciplinary and organizational boundaries. In fields where the core capabilities of organizations are based increasingly on knowledge seeking and knowledge-creation, competition is best regarded as a learning race (Powell, 1998). The ability to learn about new opportunities requires participation in them, thus a wide range of inter-organizational linkages is critical to knowledge diffusion, learning, and development.

Ex-employees could have a huge potential in terms of valuable linkage with other organizations. After all, these persons were once part of this organization. They know the organization from within and therefore might be able to point out which linkages will benefit the organization the most. If ex-employees have positive feelings towards their ex-employers, they might be willing to entrust their most valuable new contacts to their former employers, creating valuable (new) networks for their ex-organizations.

So far, prior research lacks empirical evidence of this post-exit phenomenon. There is no clear definition of the construct of post-exit loyalty and no measurement is available. In order to understand more about this proposed post-exit loyalty construct, I therefore first draw upon the body of knowledge of the potentially related constructs: loyalty, social identity, and organizational commitment.

## 1.1	Prior research: Organizational loyalty

Organization loyalty has been subject of study in many fields. Several definitions of loyalty are present in the fields of management studies (e.g. Hirschman, 1970; Alvesson, 2000), organizational psychology (e.g. Scott, 1965; James & Cropanzano, 1994) and social psychology (e.g. Zdaniuk & Levine, 2001; Van Vugt & Hart, 2004). One way to look at loyalty is that loyalty is regarded as the absence of exit (Hirschman, 1970; Alvesson, 2000). Other representations in this view are inertia, non-exit, compliance or continuation of employment (Alvesson, 2000). These definitions and representations suggest that loyalty is only about continuation or discontinuation of the employment relationship. Zdaniuk & Levine (2001) talk about leaving or staying as manifestations of loyalty. Instead, they define loyalty in terms of group welfare versus personal or individual welfare. Loyalty is defined as helping the group while harming oneself, whereas disloyalty is defined as harming the group while helping oneself (Zdaniuk & Levine, 2001, p. 502). For these authors lack of concern for personal welfare is a necessary part of loyalty. This is also part of Alvesson's (2000) definition of loyalty as "being altruistic and prepared to make sacrifices in favour of the organization" (Alvesson, 2000, p. 1107).

Some authors place more emphasis on membership and belongingness in their definitions. James and Cropanzano (1994) define group loyalty as the "adherence to a social unit to which one belongs, as well as its goals, symbols, and beliefs" (p.179). Scott (1965) viewed loyalty as "being a devoted member of the group, never criticizing it to outsiders, and working hard to get ahead other groups" (p. 24). Brewer and Brown (1998), following Sumner (1906), stated that "loyalty is represented in adherence to in-group norms and trustworthiness in dealings with fellow in-group members" (p. 560). Loyalty has been used as a label for in-group bias (e.g., Abrams & Brown, 1989; Burton, 1990). According to these definitions, behaviour is loyal to the extent that it enhances (or at least is meant to enhance) group welfare (Zdaniuk & Levine, 2001).

Within the field of social psychology, Van Vugt and Hart (2004) define loyalty as a "complex, multifaceted construct, consisting of emotive, cognitive, as well as behavioural elements" (p. 586). For example, loyalty may be manifested through the experience of strong, positive emotions (happiness, joy, empathy) associated with group membership. Cognitively, loyalty may be manifested via depersonalized trust in other members, and optimism about the group's future. And, behaviourally, loyalty may be evidenced in the sacrifices that people make to help their group, including staying when it is personally costly" (Levine & Moreland, 2002; Van Vugt & Hart, 2004, p. 585).

1.2   Prior research: Loyalty versus social identity & commitment

Within the general category of loyalty, Alvesson (2000) distinguishes instrumental loyalty and identification-based loyalty. Typical means of reassuring instrumental loyalty are legal agreements and money, as well as other compensations (Alvesson, 2000). Pure forms of identification based-loyalty do not primarily involve money or contracts, but are a matter of perceived similarities, shared positive emotions and social bonds. On a cognitive level, the self-definition is then defined in social identity terms as part of how one conceives one's self, rather than as affiliation with and attractiveness felt for a group of people (Turner, 1984).

Identity provides answers to the question: "who am I?"(Asforth & Mael, 1989). The basic idea behind social identification is that in certain circumstances individuals can perceive themselves in terms of their membership to social groups, social identity, rather than in terms of personal attributes, personal identity (e.g. Asforth & Mael, 1989; Riketta, 2005). Social identity theory originated from the studies of Tajfel and Turner (1979) regarding the psychological basis of intergroup relations. According to this perspective, in certain circumstances, people's sense of who they are is defined in terms of "we" (member of a collective) rather than "I" (individual) and that is a sufficient condition to feel and act as group (e.g. Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Tajfel et al, 1971; Haslam, 2004).

It is important to consider why social identities develop. At a fundamental level, individuals' social identities are meant to satisfy important needs and values, including self-esteem, security, and belongingness (Pratt, 1998; Tajfel, 1978). That is, individuals want to feel good about them selves, and one way many people attempt to do this is to associate with collectives that are held in high regard by themselves and/or others (Meyer et al., 2006). Human beings also value a sense of security against threats to their interests and well-being. This security can often be provided by associating with others who share their interests and care about their well-being. Finally, many people have a strong need to relate to, and be accepted by, others (Meyer et al., 2006; Baumeister & Leary, 1995). For such individuals, identifying with a collective can help to provide a sense of belongingness.

Comparing the concept of loyalty with the concept of commitment in literature reveals several similarities. Both concepts are complex multifaceted concepts linking the individual to a collective and having implications for behaviour of relevance towards that collective. Opposite from social identity, which has to do with social foci (other people, groups and larger collectives) only, both commitment and loyalty could have social and non-social foci. One might be committed to a job or loyal to a cause. Especially the empathy element of the loyalty, overlaps to some extent with the notion of affective commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1990) defined as 'emotional attachment to the organization' (see also Olson-Buchanan & Boswell, 2002).

In literature, there is little agreement on the difference between organizational identity (Albert & Whetten, 1985) and organization loyalty or organizational commitment. On one hand, some authors equate identification with commitment (see Riketta, 2005 and Chisalita, 2008, for explanation of this conceptual overlap). Alvesson (2000) equates identification with loyalty: Loyalty could be reformulated in terms of social identity (Alvesson, 2000, p. 1108). On the other hand, many researchers assert that identity is not the same concept as commitment (Asforth & Mael, 1989; Van Knippenberg & Sleebos, 2006; Meyer, Becker & van Dick, 2006). Quantitative studies such as Asforth and Mael (1992), and more recently, Van Knippenberg and Sleebos (2006) have shown that identification is a concept different from commitment. According to Van Knippenberg and Sleebos (2006) the fundamental difference between organizational commitment and organizational identification is that, commitment refers to a relationship in which the individual and the organization are separate entities psychologically, whereas identification implies that the individual and the organization are one. In other words, by the process of identification, the organization is included in individual's self-conception. There is a merge.

According to Chisalita (2008) evidence from social psychology field shows that (cognitive) identification is an antecedent for affective commitment (e.g. Bergami & Bargozzi, 2000; Foreman & Whetten, 2002) and for loyalty to the group (Ellemers, Spears & Doosje, 1997; Zdaniuk & Levine, 2001; Van Vugt & Hart, 2004; Iyer et al., 1997; Ashfort & Mael, 1989). Besides the similarities between loyalty and commitment, there seems to be a difference in core essence of these concepts. Commitment is about binding of a person to a target and course of action. Loyalty is more than that: it is about a person (emotionally) having positive emotions and empathy associated with the target and (behaviourally) working hard for the benefit of the target and even (sometimes) making sacrifices on behalf of the target.

1.3   Towards the research questions

Many researchers theorised that the identification process might go further than the employment contract. Individuals' desire to maintain the continuity of their self-concept over time and across situations provides a theoretical explanation for ex-employees' continued identification with (and predisposition to benefit) their past employer (Iyer et al., 1997). In addition, Rousseau (2004) refers to the post-exit phenomenon as "the aftermath of employment". Rousseau (2004) and Meyer et al. (2006) suggest that when deep structured identification (opposite from situated identification) is strong, attachment to an organization could continue even after employment ends. Some companies even try to institutionalize this post-employment identity. For example, the soon-to-be-ex-employees of Arthur Andersen went through an informational process that reinforced a positive disposition towards the firm. The result was a network of loyal 'alumni', many placed in firms that were present and future clients of Arthur Andersen (Rousseau, 2004).

However, what are "loyal alumni" in a contemporary management point of view? For many authors, personal sacrifice is an essential element of loyalty within the organizational context. In my opinion, this may not be applicable for the post-exit situation. In a preliminary interview with a Dutch consultant, he told me this story:

> ….After terminating my employment, I started working for a large Dutch temporary employment agency which was an important potential client for my former organization. I took the initiative of introducing my former organization to my new employer. I wanted to give my former organization a chance to get in touch with my management, who were key persons in the organization. Although I was convinced that my present organization could also benefit from the relations between the two organizations, I hesitated at first. I felt that I was taking a risk: My former organization did have some quality issues when I left it. I felt a risk that the connection between the two organizations would prove to be unsuccessful and this would harm me in any way. They could blame me for the failure or accuse me of preferential treatment to my ex-organisation. After all, I was the one who promoted my ex-organization….

Is this consultant an example of a "loyal alumnus"? Alternatively, could this consultant be considered altruistic as he considered the welfare of his former organization and not just his own and new organization's welfare? It is doubtful whether a pure form of personal sacrifice without in anyway considering your own or your new environment's welfare would be likely in the post-exit situation. It might be more likely that the ex-employee will try to consider both organizations and/or his/her own welfare and strive for a win-win situation in the end, instead of a loss – gain situation. A strive for this win situation might also be the most sustainable and enduring approach, considering a today's knowledge intensive industries, where today's suppliers or competitors may be the employers, partners or clients of tomorrow.

However, is it all just sunshine in the post-exit situation? Probably not. Alvesson (2000) argues that exit of an employee may be led and/or accompanied by a wide spectrum of sentiments in terms of loyalty to the former employer. Beside loyalty levels that can be related to a positive relation with the organisation, also non-loyalty (no positive feelings related to group membership) and dis-loyalty (negative feelings to the group, harmful behaviour) are mentioned. Alvesson (2000) proposes that low level of loyalty may easily turn into non-loyalty, which is defined by indifference and goes further, distinguishing loyalty from dis-loyalty (hostility and antagonism). According to Turner (1982), behaviour could be represented in terms of a bipolar continuum. Prior research documented negative effects of staff turnover as well (Iyer et al., 2007).

If personal sacrifice is not an obvious characteristic of loyalty in the post-exit situation, what is? Prior research on loyalty and related constructs, suggests that "feelings" (e.g. "emotions", affects),

play a major role within the organizational context. I propose that these "feelings" or "affects" play a major role, beyond this organizational context, in the post-exit situation.

Prior research shows variability in terminology on workplace affect (James, et al, 2004). The term ''affect'' represents a broad category of affective processes, including emotional experiences, moods, and trait or dispositional affect (Anderson & Thompson, 2004). Emotions are brief states that involve cognitive, physiological, and behavioural processes that help individuals quickly respond to threats or opportunities; they are relatively short (in duration) and are directed at specific events or stimuli (Ekman, 1994; Frijda, 1994). Moods, in contrast, have a longer duration, lasting hours or days, and are less directly focused on anything specific (Ekman, 1994; Frijda, 1994). Trait or dispositional affect reflects stable individual differences in the tendency to experience and express certain emotions and moods (Watson et al, 1988).

In this study, affects towards the ex-organization are considered as the tendency to experience and express certain emotions and moods directed at the ex-organization. Baas et al. (2008) mention several dimensions of emotions. One of these dimensions is the activation level. This refers to the intensity associated to the experience of each emotion. Some emotions are positive and deactivating (e.g. relaxed), whereas others are positive and activating (e.g. happy). Likewise, some emotions are negative and deactivating (e.g. sad), whereas others are negative and activating (e.g. anger). For this study, the more activating emotions seem to be most crucial, as that they may activate people to benefit (or harm) the ex-organization.

This study is a first approach to explore the post-exit phenomenon within Dutch knowledge intensive companies from the perspective of the ex-employee. It aims to lay necessary conceptual and empirical groundwork that might advance the knowledge about post-exit loyalty.

The research questions of this study are:
RQ 1: What is going on in the post-exit relations between ex-employees and their ex-organizations? Specifically: What are the affects of ex-employees towards their ex-organisations?
RQ 2: How can post-exit loyalty be measured and how predictive are its consequences?

1.4   Theoretical implications

This research is of academic interest because of several reasons. First, not many researchers on loyalty and related constructs, like identity and commitment, expand their research beyond the organizational context after employees leave; the post-exit situation. There is only limited empirical research on the antecedents and outcomes of identification of ex-employee (alumni) with their former firm leading to intention to benefit this firm (Iyer et al., 2007) and there is (to my best knowledge) no empirical research on loyalty of the ex-employee with their former organization. This study proposes a first approach to explore the issue loyalty in post-exit situation in knowledge intensive companies in the Dutch context.

Secondly, in this study, it is the aim to set the first steps in constructing a scale for the post-exit phenomenon, as no existing measure is available for the post-exit loyalty construct. A primary goal of scale development is to create a valid measure of an underlying construct (Clark & Watson, 1995). Building a quality measure first is crucial for any quantitative study (Hinkin, 2005. Problems with reliability and validity of measures used on questionnaires have often lead to difficulties in interpreting the results of field research (e.g. Bryman, 1989; Hinkin, 1995, 2005. This study aims to lay the necessary conceptual and empirical groundwork that might help future research on antecedents and effects.

Thirdly, prior research also focuses on documenting the negative effects of staff turnover, and understanding the cause of the high turnover in order to reduce its dysfunctional consequences (e.g. Griffeth et al., 2000). Little research has been conducted on favourable outcomes of alumni for the companies like former employees becoming potential clients, and the relationship between the former employee and the firm becoming a valuable marketing (Iyer et al., 2007), information and learning resource (Powell, 1989) for the company. This study aims to describe the phenomenon in its full dimensions.

Finally, this study provides an alternative approach to examining knowledge intensive organizations' processes and behaviours from the perspective of the former employees rather than the current employees.

1.5   Practical relevance

The context of this study is of Dutch consultancy organizations. These organizations are usually referred to as knowledge intensive companies. Typical other examples of companies in this knowledge-intensive category are law and accounting firms, management, engineering and computer consultancy companies (Alvesson, 2000). Consultants, engineers and scientists belong to occupations involved in knowledge intensive work. Although there is debate about the definition of the concept of knowledge intensive companies (Alvesson, 1993; 2000; 2004), the category normally refers to companies where most work can be said to be of an intellectual nature and where well-educated, qualified employees form the major part of the work force (Alvesson, 1993; 2000). In this sense, knowledge intensive companies are very much depended on their employees' knowledge, because this represents "the most significant resource of the company" (p. 1103).

Issues of loyalty and identity are of crucial interest in knowledge intensive companies due to the presence of multiple and possible competing identities and the space for employees to act based on their own understanding (Alvesson, 2000). It is assumed if people exit the organization the ones who strongly identify with the ex-employer will cause less harm for the organization as they will still show loyalty and will not take the clients with them (Chisalita, 2008).

Knowledge intensive companies have typically been characterized by high levels of turnover. For example, Iyer et al. (1997) report 40-50% of staff of large public accounting firms typically departing within three years. Over time, these high turnover levels result in relatively large databases of ex-employees for these organizations. Potentially creating large intertwined valuable new networks. Insight in what makes (or prevents) these ex-employees benefiting their ex-organizations, would give organizations implications on how to manage their ex-employees' loyalty, even after employment.

1.6   Overview of this thesis

The major goal of this study is to describe the phenomenon and develop a measure for post-exit loyalty and to test its predictive value. Given the nature of this research topic and as little conceptual and empirical information is available on this possible post-exit phenomenon, it will not be appropriate to rely on a deductive approach only. This study therefore combines an inductive and deductive approach. Many researchers emphasised the advantages of combining the two approaches given this type of research topic (e.g. Saunders et al, 2000; Hinkin, 2005. As result of this approach, this research contains two studies: a qualitative study (Study 1) and a quantitative study (Study 2).

In chapter 2, the first qualitative study is presented. After the introduction, this chapter continues with a theoretical discussion. In this discussion, related literature is reviewed leading towards identifying characteristics of interest for selecting respondents (paragraph 2.2). The research method including research design, sample and procedures is described in paragraph 2.3. The following paragraph (2.4) contains the findings of the online focus groups. This chapter ends with a brief discussion and summary of this first study and an introduction to the next chapter (paragraph 2.5).

In chapter 3, the second quantitative study is presented. This chapter, again, starts with an introduction, followed by a theoretical discussion (paragraph 3.2). In this discussion, the attitude-behaviour model is introduced as a basis to understand the post-exit loyalty phenomenon and hypotheses were made on the relationships between constructs involved. In paragraph 3.3, the method is described including the procedure of item generation, the sample and procedure for the survey and the preliminary analysis of the measures. The next paragraph contains the analyses and its results (paragraph 3.4).

In Chapter 4, the general discussion is presented, thereby highlighting the central facets of this study, including the limitations and directions for future research. Finally, in chapter 5, the overall conclusion is presented.

2. Post-exit loyalty: Exploring the phenomenon

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the first study is presented. The purpose of this study was to explore the post-exit phenomenon, as little is known about post-exit loyalty. The objective of this study was to find out what was going on within the relationship between ex-employees and their ex-organizations. Specifically I aimed to identify what the affects were of ex-employees towards their ex-organizations. This first study forms the basis for the following, second, quantitative, study, presented in chapter 3.

After this brief introduction, this chapter continues first with a theoretical discussion (paragraph 2.2). This discussion contains a review of prior literature in order to identify important characteristics that were worth to take into account in this study. Based on these characteristics, the respondents were chosen. Secondly, the method is described (paragraph 2.3): research design, sample and procedures. This paragraph includes a description of the procedure for the chat sessions and the construction of an online interview protocol, specifically designed for this study. The following paragraph (2.4) contains the findings of the chat sessions. This chapter ends with brief discussion and summary of this first study (paragraph 2.5) and a preview of the next chapter.

2.2 Theoretical discussion

In chapter 1 of this thesis, I introduced the (possible) related constructs of (organizational) loyalty, social identity, and organizational commitment, as a starting point to understand more about post-exit loyalty. The review of this literature, gives some direction in identifying factors that may be relevant in terms of post-exit loyalty. The following sub-paragraphs contain the results of this review. Successively, the factors: *tenure*, *post-exit period*, and *freelancer* will be discussed.

2.2.1 Tenure

Rousseau (1998) identifies two levels of cognitive identification: situated and deep-structured identification. Situated identification is an elementary form of identification, is a perception of a discrete work setting, created by situational cues signalling shared interests, and maintains as long as the cues persist (Rousseau, 1998; Meyer et al., 2006). Deep structure identification refers to the cognitive schema formed in work settings across roles, over time, and across situations that leads to congruence between self-at work and one's broader self-concept (Turner, 1978). Such organizational identification can form part of an individual's self-concept by altering individuals' mental models of self in enduring ways (e.g. as United Parcel Service employees say they 'bleed brown' out of a sense of attachment to the company, symbolized by the brown uniforms they wear) (Rousseau, 1998). According to Rousseau (1998), situated identification is a necessary but not sufficient condition for deep structured identification.

Once developed, deep structured identities tend to be more enduring and less cue dependable (Meyer et al., 2006). Rousseau (2004) and Meyer et al. (2006) suggest that when deep structured identification (opposite from situated identification) is strong, attachment to an organization could continue even after employment ends. Therefore, I propose that deep structured identity to be most beneficial in the post-exit situation, as it less cue dependable.

Alvesson (2000) also reports on this "endurance-time issue" associated with the loyalty-concept: He argues that consultants could show loyalty problems towards their organizations when they worked intensively on the workplace of their client for an entire year or more. As deep structured identity is developed over time, *tenure* is an important factor to consider in this study. It is plausible that the longer the employee worked for the ex-organization, the more or deeper he identifies with this organization. As stated before, the consultancy industry is characterized by the relatively high turnover rate: Half of the population, typically leaving within three years. Therefore, it seems important for this study to consider differences in tenure, in particular before and beyond this three years "boundary".

2.2.2 Time elapse

Time is also an important factor in an alternative way. *Time elapse* is about how long ago an employee left the organization. As an identity is considered to be formed over time (e.g. Rousseau, 1998), it may also somewhat feed away in time, even when deep-structured identity is considered. The theoretical explanation may be that as an individual's self-concept is defined in terms of memberships

in multiple social groups; it is likely that the salience of the social group based on the individuals' more distant employment, declines with the passage of time, because other social groups are likely to become more prominent. According to Mael and Ashforth (1992, p. 108) in their study on college alumni "the sense of shared destiny and belongingness would be expected to fade somewhat [as time passes]." However, the empirical evidence involving college alumni offers mixed results (see also Iyer et al., 1997). Nevertheless, this factor will be considered in this study.

2.2.3   *Current employment context: Freelancer*
Alvesson (2000) argued that loyalty problems could arise because of conflicting or competing identities. Different current employment contexts of the ex-employees may influence their post-exit loyalty. It seems plausible that it "easier" to stay loyal with an ex-organization, which is in a very different line of business or a (potential) client than an ex-organization which is a (potential) strong competitor. On one hand, it seems therefore important to differentiate for example in the contexts of (potential) client organizations and (potential) competing organizations. One the other hand, this may not be fruitful: Practically, it may become a challenge to define the categories exhaustively, because the possible employment contexts may be numerous. However, an argument even more important is that this view presumes a rigid view of inter-organizational relationships. I believe that considering another organization just as a competitor (or just a potential client), is a too limited view in a growing knowledge intensive network economy. As mentioned before, competitors might as well be the partners or clients of the future or the other way around. However, it is important to realize that people might not have this (longer-term) flexible view in their daily practice (yet) and therefore we must still be aware of any loyalty related issues directly originated from the more competitive relationship.

Yet, a specific group of ex-employees may be important to identify Freelancers. In today's consultancy business, it is quite common practice that consultants, who leave, start working as a freelancer and stay involved with the ex-organizations. Many freelancers depend on consultancy organization for their assignments, especially when they just started their own business. However, there could be more than just an economical explanation. As many freelancers work alone, they may be more loyal to their former employers (in comparison an ex-employee who is working in an organization with more than one person) due to the fundamental human need to belong to others (Pratt, 1998; Taijfel, 1979). As a conclusion, these freelancers are of special interest in this study.

2.3   Method
In this paragraph, the method of this study is presented. Successively, the research design, sample, data collection and coding procedures, are described.

2.3.1   *Research design*
This first study followed an exploratory strategy in the spirit of the grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This grounded approach is manifested is this study, by starting the data collection without a formation of an elaborative theoretical framework first. It is also manifest in the analysis, where categories of coding information were generated by engaging in ongoing comparisons between the data and literature (Saunders et al., 2000).

In an inductive approach, multiple focus group sessions were organized to explore the post-exit phenomenon. A focus group, originally designed as a marketing research tool, is defined as a "carefully planned series of discussions designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment" (Krueger & Casey, 2000, p.5). According to Krueger and Casey (2000), focus groups can provide trustworthy naturalistic data that also lead to important insights about human behaviour. Multiple focus groups sessions were organized, as the data of a single focus group may not be reliable (Krueger & Casey, 2001).

The specific features of a focus group discussion are: a clear plan for a controlled process and environment in which interactions among participants take place, the use of a structured process to collect and interpret data and participants selected based on characteristics they share, as opposed to differences among them (Krueger & Casey, 2000). Normally, focus groups are executed as "live" discussion in which participants meet each other physically.

All of the six organizations that were initially approached for this research expressed their interest and willingness to contribute to this research. But these organizations also expressed their

concern in the amount of time of their employees these focus groups would take, in relation to their high workload and priorities due to the current economic situation (recession). Many authors report on the difficulty of getting access to respondents as one of the major problems in organizational research (e.g. Bryman, 1989). In order to deal with this access issue for these focus group discussions, I decided to use an online electronic chat tool: MSN Web messenger. By using this online tool, I was able to reduce the time investment of the participants and enabled us to gather information within a relatively short timeframe. To my best knowledge, using this type of tool is still uncommon in the research practice. Anandarajan & Anandarajan (2009) do report the unprecedented growth of social networking tools such as MySpace, Facebook and LinkedIn, primarily designed for social purposes. These authors report that only in the last year they have begun to see the emergence of research-based social networking tools. Because of this still being quite an experimental process, much effort has been done in creating a procedure that would be suitable for the chat sessions.

2.3.2   Sample

Participants for these online focus groups were selected based on meeting with one particular predetermined similar characteristic. The types of characteristics were based on the above review of prior research on loyalty and identity (paragraph). The chosen characteristics for the focus groups were: *tenure*, *time elapse* and *freelancers*. In addition, a specific focus group for *managers* was formed.

Tenure refers to the total time span an employee worked for the ex-organization. Based on Alvesson (2000), I decided to choose participants how worked at least one year for an organization. It would have been interesting to create focus groups with participants from several different tenure periods. Because of the (limited) timeframe of this research, I decided to limit the number of groups to two: one to three years and four to six years. Based on Iyer et al. (2001), I propose there might be significant difference between people who have stayed beyond the three years and people who left before that time; therefore, it seems worth to interview both groups. We limit the second focus group to a maximum of six years not to create too much differentiation within the focus group ((Krueger & Casey, 2000). It would have been interesting as well to investigate employee who stayed more than six years (e.g. 7 – 9 years). Due to the limited time span of this research and the assumption that consultants who stayed that many years are more difficult to be find, this group is not included in this part of the study.

Time elapse refers to the period between the current date and the date of exit. Based on the above-mentioned argumentation for "tenure", also two focus groups of similar time elapses will be formed: 1≤ 3 years and 4 ≤ 6 years.

Although it would be interesting to distinguish many different employment contexts, we chose to limit the different contexts to one context: *freelancer*. I propose that the relationship between the freelancer and ex-employing organization differs substantively from the relationship between the ex-employee who joins another organization and the ex-employing organization. We will also include respondents of both types of organizations (competing and client organization) to our other focus groups and will be aware of any signs of specific differences in their responses.

The last focus group is with *managers* who maintain contacts with ex-employees. As managers are supposed to be in contact with several ex-employees, they might be able to point out some relevant similarities and differences between them. The view of the managers might lead to new insights of the post-exit phenomenon.

Access to the participants for the focus groups was gained through personal contacts with the directors of six Dutch consultancy organizations. Although all of the organizations were willing to contribute to this research, two directors were reluctant to offer access to potential focus group participants. Mentioned reasons were high workload of employees, different priorities due to current economic situation (recession), and other current research initiatives within these organizations.

Three of the five organizations (A, B en C) eventually participated in identifying potential respondents. Both ex-employees and employees who met the criteria of the needed focus groups of these organizations were approached. In addition, current employees were approached, based on the assumption most of them would have one or more ex-employers. They were asked to participate from the context of their last ex-employer. By including current employees, the group of potential respondents could be increased substantially.

The (ex-) employees were told that they would participate in an one-hour chat session concerning their relationship with their ex-employment organization. Most participants were volunteers recruited by aimed personal contact and e-mails, a few applied voluntary after reading the general call for participants. For every focus group, three possible dates for the sessions were set and published on a website. It was communicated that when a session was fully booked (three participants, see also 2.3.3 Data collection), it was made definite and these participants got their confirmation (any others got, in close consultation with them, a cancellation or new invitation for an extra "mixed" session, with specific no specific leading characteristic).

In total 143 persons were approached[1]. Of these 143 persons were 119 participants (ex-) employees of organization A, 10 of organization B, 6 of organization C and 8 from other different organizations. Of the 143 persons in total 40 persons (17 wrong email-addresses; 86 no response) offered to participate, and after definite planning in total 24 participants[2] could be planned in eight chat sessions. Of these 8 sessions, 5 sessions were based on a predetermined similar characteristic: tenure (1 session: $4 \leq 6$ years), time-elapse after exit (2 sessions: $1 \leq 3$ and $4 \leq 6$ years) and their current employment of the freelancer (2 sessions). Of these 8 sessions, 2 were "mixed" chats (no specific characteristic) and 1 session provided with data from management perspective (1 session with 2 managers of 2 different organizations). There were in total three last-minute cancellations (no-shows), bringing the total realized sample up to 21 participants. Of these 21 participants, 14 were females and 7 were males. They all had an academic and/or higher educational background. The following table gives an overview the realized focus groups and their characteristics.

Table 1 Realized focus groups

Realized focus groups	Numbering in timeframe of this study	Realized number of participants
Tenure: $4 \leq 6$ years	1st group	3
Time elapse: $1 \leq 3$ years	2nd group	2 (1 no-show)
Time elapse: $4 \leq 6$ years	4th group	3
Freelancer 1	3rd group	3
Freelancer 2	8th group	2
Managers	7th group	2 (1 no-show)
Mixed group 1	5th group	3
Mixed group 2	6th group	2 (1 no-show)
Realized total number of participants		21

2.3.3   Data collection

A balanced interview guide balances the need for natural features of conversation and the need for a focused discussion in a focus group (Krueger & Casey, 2000). An initial interview protocol was designed based on the research questions and two explorative interviews with two ex-employees.

The group interview was a semi-structured one hour online chat session based on a set of required questions (for comparison) with opportunities for probing responses (for tailoring to individual respondents). An initial chat procedure was designed, based on the technical characteristics of the chat program MSN Messenger and theory of conducting focus groups (Krueger & Casey, 2000) and group-interviews (Saunders et al., 2000). Prior to finalizing the interview protocol, we conducted a pilot chat session with four consultants to assess whether of not the interview questions were understandable and evocative, and to assess the procedure of the chat.

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[1] Five organizations were asked to look in their existing register of employees and ex-employees which persons potentially met the criteria. Only one organization had a (almost) complete overview of their ex-employees, next to their current employees (organization A). Only organization A submitted to whole list to the research so that every potential participant could be invited personally by the researcher. The other four organizations had incomplete overviews of ex-employees. Of these four, one organization withdraw because of the impact of the economic crisis on their business, another organization did offer access in approaching their employees and ex-employees by sending through an email with notice of this research, but nobody responded to this call. Another organization offered access to some specific ex-employees, but this was not possible within the existing timeframe.

[2] During this planning organization C (6 person) withdraw completely due to priority reasons of the management because the economic situation. The other 10 were cancelled, because it was not possible for them to participate on the planned date of their focus group discussion.

Because of the conclusions of this pilot test, the total number of questions was decreased, the optimal number of participants was set on three participants and the procedure of the chat session was standardized. Ultimately, the definite interview protocol included four open questions and several matching questions to probe more in-depth individual information (see Appendix 1 Interview guide for online focus groups: professionals). The interview protocol for the managers chat was derived from the professionals' interview questions (see Appendix 2 Interview guide for online focus groups: manager).

Three days before the chat session, every participant received an email with information on the chat procedure and the structure of the session (see Appendix 3 Chat procedure and pre-information for participants). As using a chat tool was still uncommon form of data collection, specific attention was given to technical use of the tool (e.g. information on how to log on to MNS messenger) and the impact of tool on the interview procedure (e.g. managing the participants' expectations for waiting time).

The eight chat sessions were conducted within a three-week timeframe. Beside the advantages of limited time investment of participants and the relatively short timeframe of the data collection, another major advantage of using the online method is that the results did not have to be transcript afterwards. The results were immediately transcript during the interview by the participants and interviewer. These transcripts were all saved immediately after every chat session.

2.3.4 Coding procedures

The interview transcripts contained an average of 2455 words (range: 2079-2826 words). To start of the analysis a holistic general summary was made of each chat session and interesting quotes were translated in English. This allowed for general themes to emerge and a first comparison between the focus groups.

The raw material of the transcripts was than coded following an inductive approach in the spirit of the grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Saunders et al., 2000). First, an "open coding" strategy was used, allowing for deriving meaning from the subjects being studied without an explicit basis in existing theory (Saunders et al., 2000). After this first stage, an "axial coding" strategy was used, allowing for categories and relationships to emerge (Saunders et al., 2000). The following list gives an overview of the stages in this coding procedure:

1. *Deleting non-information and deleting person/org-specific information (replacing it with anonym information: e.g. the name of organizations, persons or programs).*
2. *Splitting up the remaining data into fragments containing only one subject.*
3. *Numbering the fragments with a unique number.*
4. *Coding the numbered fragments: the label was close to the content of the fragment.*
5. *Building an initial coding book.*
6. *Reviewing and adjusting the initial coding book: related or almost corresponding codes were changed into broader labels.*
7. *Rearranging the fragments(in total 95 fragments) in five main themes that were emerging :*
   a. *What does the post-exit contact consists of?*
   b. *What are their feelings towards their ex- organization now?*
   c. *What are they planning to do or doing now, in terms of benefiting their ex-organization*
   d. *What happened in the past (during employment and at and/or before exit)?*
   e. *What is happing now in their current employment (employment after exit)?*
8. *Remaining other fragments, which could not be placed into these categories, were deleted. The items that were deleted, were not relevant in terms of the research questions. For example, the following item was deleted: [2.8]...I can image that is difficult to deal with an awkward situation like that: do you break off totally or not? In this fragment, the respondent is reflecting on a statement of another respondent and is not referring to her own situation.*

Further analysis of the fragments initially categorized in theme b. (What are their feelings towards the ex-organization now?), began to revolve around three main categories. These categories were again further broken down into more sub-categories. These (sub-) categories and the other findings will be described in the next paragraph.

2.4   Findings
        In this paragraph, the findings of the coding procedure are presented. Successively, the following results are described: The nature of post-exit contact, (positive & negative) affect and instrumental attachment towards the ex-organization, beneficial behaviour or attitudes towards the ex-organization, the quality of the employment relationship and the exit process.

2.4.1   Nature of post-exit contact: Business, professional or pleasure
        Results reveal three types of post-exit contact: business-, professional- and friendship-based. Business orientated contact is about approaching the ex-organization as (potential) client or supplier, or run into the ex-organization as a competitor in an acquisition process. Freelancers talk about earning (part of) their income thought their contact with their ex-organization. Professional contact is about contacting the ex-organization for professional support: meeting the ex-organization at professional associations, attending professional meetings and conferences or consultation with ex-colleagues or ex-managers. Friendships with colleagues continue after exit. These three types of contact, can be, but do not have to be separate. In the following example, the respondent seems to combine friendship with professional support. A respondent states that:

[3.3][3].... I notice that I do not talk about work to "other" friends. That is much easier with old-colleague-friends".

        Although the impact of friendships with specific ex-colleagues should not be underestimated in light of the post-exit phenomenon, this aspect will not be the focus in the rest of this study. One reason is of substantive nature: the proposed "post-exit loyalty" based on friendship with a specific former colleague, may be more vulnerable or less durable, seen from the organization's perspective. When this former colleague leaves the organization, it seems unlikely that their loyalty will "transfer" to the successor of this former colleague or to the rest of the organization. In social identity terms: The collective identity orientation (Brickson, 2000) is less person dependant and therefore seems to be more "resistant" to exit of former colleagues. Another reason is more ethical. In this research, the focus is on aspects that can be influenced by organizations. Do organizations play a role in friendships of their employees? Although many friendships (even love affairs) start in the workplace; and probably work-related benefits as well as problems could arise from these (that may be of concern of the organization); it is my opinion that is should not be the main concern of work-related organizations. Therefore, there will only be reference to friends in this study in terms of them being potential employees, clients, competitors, etc., for the ex-organization.

2.4.2   Positive and negative affects
        Further analysing of the items initially categorized in the category b. (What are they feeling now?), revealed a distinction between positive and negative affects, and a more instrumental form of attachment towards the ex-organization. The positive and negative affects will be described in this paragraph, the instrumental attachment in paragraph 2.4.4.
        In the category post-exit positive affects, nine initial sub-categories were identified (gratefulness, happiness, interest, trust, sympathy, togetherness, equity, pride, respect). For this study, the more activating emotions (Baas et al., 2008) seems to be most crucial, for I proposed that they activate people to benefit (or harm) the ex-organization. In order to create a final list post-exit positive affects, the sub-categories were reviewed on their "activating potential". Considered the most "activating" were gratefulness, interest, trust, togetherness, pride and happiness. Considered less "activating" were sympathy, equity and respect. The following table (Table 2 Definitions & sample quotes post-exit positive affects) gives an overview the emerged categories, their definitions, the frequency (number of fragment and percentage of the total amount of affect fragments) and sample quotes. In this table, only the categories are presented that were used in the second, quantitative study:

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[3] The numbering of the quotes in this paper refer to the numbering of the focus groups mentioned in Table 1 Realized focus groups . For example: Fragment [3.5] refers to the 5th fragment of the 3rd group.

4 of the 9 initial categories (happiness, sympathy, equity and respect) were deleted, during the item generation process (see also paragraph 3.3.2.1).

Table 2 Definitions & sample quotes post-exit positive affects

Emerged categories	Definition	Freq. (%)	Sample quotes positive affects
Gratefulness ex-org	Feeling of being well disposed towards the ex-organization because of enjoyed privileges.	16 (22.5)	[5.11] … Yes, that does play a role in my situation. I have worked for a long time with the ex-organization, I have experienced a lot, done a lot, and I thank them for that. I now choose to work somewhere else, but that does not change the feeling. *What are those feelings exactly?* Appreciating the chances I had, to do things and the freedom in which I could do this. The pleasure I had experienced, in doing it.
Interest ex-org	Feeling of interest towards the ex-organization. Interest means here: wanting to be posted/updated on the ex-organization and wanting to give attention to and discover more about the ex-organization.	6 (8.5)	[3.17]….if the ex-organization is presented one way or another in professional journals, it attracts my attention extra.
Trust ex-org	Feeling of belief in the trustworthiness of the ex-organization. Trustworthiness means here: that the ex-organization can be trusted, so that one can rely on it.	5 (7.0)	[1.10]. …..I always had a deep-rooted trust in the expertise of my advisor colleagues……. For me, the feelings towards my ex-employer returned when they (on my recommendation) came for a small job. Fortunately, they did this as good as it used to be and I than internally promoted them further.
Togetherness ex-org	Feeling of being bonded with the ex-organization in friendship and cordial relationship.	27 (38,0)	[3.8] I recognize the warm business-like contact. Do have the feeling of still being joined. I also think it is an inspiring contact………. The ex-organization is my heart.
Pride ex-org	Feeling of accomplishing something big at the ex-organization and/or belonging to something big and/or beautiful, this represents the ex-organization.	5 (7.0)	[5.12] I do feel emotionally involved with this ex-organization; I see that there is a lot of potential in applying the [name of specific program of the ex-organization] – body of ideas in the current market….. I feel that I still that I can still have an important contribution to the ex-organization. *What is exactly the feeling that you have?* … That I can be a contribution and the ex-organization can be a contribution for me; although it is more from a distance.

In the category, post-exit negative affects: six sub-categories of affects were initially identified (unease, anger, disappointment, regret, distrust, shame). In consistency with the procedure of post-exit positive affects, the sub-categories were reviewed on their "activating potential". Considered the most "activating" were: unease, anger, disappointment, distrust and shame. Considered less "activating" was: regret.

The following table (Table 3) gives an overview the emerged categories, their definitions, the frequency (number of fragment and percentage of the total amount of affect fragments) and sample quotes. In this table, again, only the categories that were used in the following quantitative study are presented: 2 of the 6 initial categories (unease and regret) were deleted during the item generation process (see also paragraph 3.3.2.1).

Table 3 Definition & sample quotes negative affects

Emerged categories	Definition	Freq. (%)	Sample quotes negative affects
Anger ex-org	Feeling of being in an unpleasant mood, for which (it is shown that) one blames the ex-organization.	11 (45.8)	[4.12] In the beginning, I was exhausted and angry. Now the organization is just like any other organization for me…........ When I joined the ex-organization, it was still a pioneering company. We had to invent everything and this often felt not good. How can you ask so much money for something that is quite experimental for us? I missed senior colleagues with much experience to learn from and to lean on. At the same time money had to be brought in and this double pressure was sometimes just too high.
Disappoint-ment ex-org	Feeling of being deceived in once expectations by the ex-organization.	7 (29.1)	[1.9.3] After my exit, the company has developed itself into directions that are not my cup of tea. Alternatively, even I disagree in…. *What does it mean to you that the organization developed in a different direction?* I was director (in employment) there. I developed policy, strategy myself and worked on it… Now it is different, this is sometimes painful to see (feeling of: too bad).
Distrust ex-org	Feeling of absence of trustworthiness of the ex-organization. Absence of trustworthiness means here: that the ex-organization cannot be trusted, so that one cannot rely on it.	2 (8.3)	[1.10] At first, I felt slightly negative. There were quality issues when I left and did not dare to recommend them to my new employer immediately.
Shame ex-org	Feeling of being embarrassed and/or uncomfortable about the connection/ association with the ex-organization.	1 (4.1)	[1.9.2] Affect towards organization: neutral to negative. Do not feel attached on aspects; even do not want to be associated with it.

2.4.3 *Affects develop over time*

Data reveals affects developing over time. There seems to be a neutralizing effect over time: positive affects getting less positive; negative affects getting less negative. Although the data shows consistency in this neutralizing effect, results do reveal variance in level of emotions involved in this process. Ex-employees report it being a quite normal, "not exceptional" process, which happens when you adopt another culture [4.10], showing no sign of intensive emotions. Moving on, getting a new "business perspective" makes you, look back feeling more nuanced to your ex-organization [4.7]. Others talk about a more intense, more emotional process; they talk about getting "mentally" used to the new different relationship [5.6], the need for "kicking the habit"[4.19] and even "being mad at herself" [4.8] The following sample quotes illustrate this effect Table 4 Sample quotes: Affects neutralizing of time (in order of increasing emotional tone).

Table 4 Sample quotes: Affects neutralizing of time (in order of increasing emotional tone).

Sample quotes: affects developing over time
[4.10]…. For me, some did change: more distance makes you look differently towards the organization…..… If you are part of an organization, you do adopt the culture in the organization and you become part of it. Once you become part of another culture, than you see the blind spot of the (ex) culture in the organization. I guess that is not that exceptional, in my opinion everybody has that with every organization. … Contact is fine and the relationship also, there is just some more distance. [4.7]…..The relationship is good. I do notice that through the years that I do look differently at the ex organization from a business perspective. When I just left, I still considered the ex-organization the best in market. I do not think that anymore. I have become very critical towards the quality being delivered and the cooperation. I also work with many competitors of the ex-organization and they have to prove themselves just as much as the other suppliers in the market do. [5.5] …. I recognize it from the period when I just left. However, it was a difficult construction then. You still work as an employee, when it is actually not like that. Now there is more balance. [5.6] *What is exactly difficult?* .. You broke the contract, not just formally but also mentally. After that, there is a new situation, to which you both have to get used to. When you come back as a freelancer, it looks the same as before. Maybe on an operational level it is the same, but it does feel differently for both parties. [4.19] B: The working method of the company has been in my genes immensely, nearly indoctrination. When I was gone and joined another company, I really had to kick the habit. I did not work there a long time, because I did not fit into that new culture. I was still to fanatic, although they were very positive on my expertise. *How do you explain this?* Just….. Had to kick the habit, was not totally myself… Yes, how they do that, I really do not know. I mean: that you start to work so hard there, do you utmost best, and become so good. [4.8]……in the beginning I was mad on myself that I got myself provoked to more performance, more sales, more, more, more. I am now more able to into perspective. I have let myself, been carried away…

In addition, results from management perspective show this neutralizing effect. One manager explain that she experienced more than once that a young (report) ex-employee (junior) who left the company reported back to her that seeing it "afterwards": "things were not that bad"[7.15]. These junior employees did feel that way when they just left their first job at this organization. The other manager had similar experiences with ex-employees. He stated that:

[7.14]… "With a new frame of reference (working at other employers) they often come to the conclusion that [name organization] was a special company with its own atmosphere and lots of room for taking own responsibility, lots of freedom"…

2.4.4   Instrumental attachment

Results show that ex-employees keep good relations with their ex-employer for their own personal benefit. Respondents refer to having no obligations in the new relationship with the employer and foremost being able to make their own decisions based on their own conditions [3.7]. With instrumental attachment, there is some reference of attachment towards the ex-organization but mainly based on mainly personal economic needs, like the need for (continuity in) income [8.4], position or status in the market [2.6][2.12]. The contact with the ex-employer is described as being more strategically [5.7]. Examples quotes of the instrumental form of attachment are presented in following table (Table 5 Sample quotes instrumental attachment towards ex-org).

Table 5 Sample quotes instrumental attachment towards ex-org

Sample quotes instrumental attachment
[2.6]… I do not want a fight and conflicts because we are in a competitive position, do not need any negative stories…
[2.12] Even when one does not leave positively, one tries to keep the relationship positive. I have been out to dinner with my ex-manager, the director of this company, I was glad (and the director, too) that it was a pleasant dinner. In some way, I foremost want to remain of speaking terms, without interfering in each other's network.
[3.7] ….. It feels like an equal contact. If I say no, there is nothing attached. Concrete example: In an acquisition process, I had no click with the client. Did not accept the assignment. With good argumentation, this is accepted and even respected. This does not come back in (for example) an assessment interview.
……I am freelancer under my own conditions. Of cause, I am looking for a match and therefore have the necessary flexibility. However, I decide on my own boundaries and not the organization or in consultation with the organization….
[5.7] …. What applies to me as well is that I have chosen a different substantive road, what makes that we are not in each other's way and openly can share what we are doing…..
…… if you leave, but you are still fishing in the same pond, or you have the idea that you are. The contact gets more strategically than personally. This is understandable, but still I did not enjoy this. Whenever you have the feeling that you are doing dissimilar things, that do tough each other, than you do not have communicate that strategically…..
[8.4] … some aspects of being an employee bothered me. Now, as a freelancer within this organization, I do have the advantages, but not the burden as before….
I am paid for my efforts. That is pleasant. Income is an important aspect of work. Next to my personal development this is important to me: that I do now on my own account, just like the acquisition of new projects. The work of the ex-organization does offer some continuity. …

These results are in line with Alvesson (2000)'s instrumental loyalty, distinct from the other category of loyalty, identification-based loyalty. According to Alvesson (2000), typical means of reassuring instrumental loyalty are legal agreements and money, as well as other compensations. Pure forms of identification based-loyalty do not primarily involve money or contracts, but are a matter of perceived similarities, shared positive emotions and social bonds (Alvesson, 2000).

2.4.5   *Benefiting the ex-organization*

Results show ex-employees to benefit the ex-organization in different ways (Table 6): They vary from willingness to promote the ex-organization to their business and professional relations [4.5] [4.11], to doing in them a favour above other organizations [6.16] and grant them business on regular basis [1.13]. The degree in activeness of the ex-employees varies; some talk about "keeping the ex-organization in the back of their mind" [4.5] which refers to a more passive way of benefiting the ex-organization; other take an active role in this process: "bringing the knowhow of the ex-organization to the attention of others on regular basis" [1.13].

In addition, there seems to be a difference in an intention to benefit and actually benefiting the ex-organization: respondents report on what they would do if there would be an opportunity [4.5], and on what they do or did (e.g. favouring the ex-organization by not raising their hourly rate [6.16]).

Table 6 Sample quotes benefiting the ex-organization

Sample quotes: Benefit the ex-organization
[4.5] I do keep the ex-organization in the back of my mind. If I, in my practice as a career counsellor, for example would run into someone who would fit there, I would send somebody there.
[4.11]I do recommend the ex-organization to trainees who drown in my current big organization.
[6.16] The ex-organization gave me a good start, therefore I want to return a favour. E.g., I do not raise my hourly rate as I do for others. Perhaps it sounds silly, but it is purely because we had a win-win situation this fall and the fact that I also want to make a gesture to the ex-organization…..
[1.13] I granted my ex-organization turnover and interesting jobs. At first, I recommended them with caution. I wanted to prevent that the job was not executed well. When that was ok, I regularly brought the knowhow of the ex-organization to the attention of colleagues of my new employer. Concrete it was their request for a new kind of commercial training….

Results also reveal intentions towards the ex-organization that could be harmful, or at least can be seen as non-beneficial. Three respondents talk about not wanting to be involved and benefit the ex-organization in anyway. These three respondents all express strong negative affects towards the ex-organization and express no or very limited positive affects and instrumental attachment. The following fragment illustrates this non-beneficial behaviour.

[1.12]… I do not keep a relationship with my ex-employer (except from a few colleagues), I do feel somewhat emotionally involved, but more from a negative side. If I talk about my ex-organization with others, I stay neutral or tell honestly were I disagree with my ex-organization… I do not recommend the ex-organization to my own network, even if the issues would be suitable for what they do now…

The results of the (rest) ex-employees, who were willing (in different degree) to benefit the ex-organization, showed more variation. Some of them show mainly positive affects, others show also some instrumental attachment and negative affects: they have more "mixed feelings". The following fragment illustrated the "mixed feelings".

[4.15] … I have transferred to non-profit and there I ended up in a warm bath. However, I did not want to have missed my ex-organization. It does feel like grateful…
For what exactly are you grateful?
…For the things I have learned, in skills and work attitude. Recently my ex-boss said: we have also made good money on you, and that felt partly as recognition, but partly as being "used".

Although finding show variation, the above findings indicate a possible relation between the intensity of the affects and the willingness of people to benefit the ex-organization. More (quantitative) research is necessary to see whether this relation is significantly there (see 3.2).

For many researchers on loyalty, personal sacrifice is an essential element of loyalty within the organizational context. Results suggest that this may not be applicable for the post-exit situation. Some respondents do show signs of sacrificing, for example accepting a lower hourly rate [6.16] (see Table 6) or taking some risk in recommending the ex-organization in their new working environment. But also in that case ex-employees still express the importance of mutual benefit and their striving for win-win situations (see Table 7 Sample quotes: Mutual benefit). This seems especially important in when an ex-employee continues his/her career in the same business (competing) [8.16] [5.4]. If the relationship is out of balance, ex-employees want that situation to be improved [5.4].

Table 7 Sample quotes: Mutual benefit

Sample quotes: mutual benefit
[8.16] I have experienced that we do grant each other a proper amount and regularly scratches each other's backs. This mutuality is good. For example, I give a lead for an assignment that I cannot execute myself and I get assignments for them to execute myself….
[5.4] The ex-organization is a partner, with a lot of one-way traffic, the ex-organization determines…. The ex-organization is leading in what is being asked to be done….. *Moreover, what does that mean to you?* That I am going to take the initiative to come up with ideas and projects so that the cooperation is more in balance. *What is your reason for doing this?* That I want to cooperate with organizations that really want to innovate together.

The above sample quotes also reveal a distinction, which can be found in more interview results. There seems to be a difference in core essences of this "mutuality". There is mutual benefit, in economical terms: money and jobs or assignments [8.16], which is probably more related to instrumental attachment. There is also mutual benefit on more emotional level "being equal partners" [5.9], which is probably related to positive affects. This result in inline with earlier results that (positive) affects and distinct from a more instrumental form of attachment. To illustrate this partnership:

[5.6] …..when I just left, I really wanted to come loose, to put it very crudely: loose from the "power" of the employer. Doing my own things. In my opinion, this just takes time. This does improve, after a while not having worked as an employee-employer relationship, this gets much better. It feels more equal in the partnership. We were able to discuss this in all openness.

Managers' results are consistent with this distinction. They also talk about mutual relationships with ex-employees; not in only terms of money, but also in terms of:

[7.8]….. Inspiration, personal growth or satisfaction, or just because the cooperation or contact is fun.

This "mutuality", not only refers to the post-exit relationship. It also seems to play a role the ex-employee evaluating his employment with the ex-employee. To illustrate this:

[5.10] … ex-employee's are the best ambassadors of an organization, when the organization really invested in their employees….. This ex-organization deals with the image that employees when they leave are substantial critical on how much they have been put to work versus the investment that came back from the employer.

Although there may be other numerous factors involved in the degree to which wants to benefit the ex-organization, consistent with the literature review in the introduction of this thesis, identification and tenure seems among them. The respondent in the following fragment explains making a distinction in benefiting her two ex-organizations. She grants one ex-organization access to potential employees, but for the other ex-organization, she is willing to go further; she grant them concrete business deals. She explains being in a competitive position with both ex-organizations. However, because she identifies more with one ex-organization, she is willing to grant this ex-organization more.

[8.15] I regularly recommend educationalists to this (first) ex-organization. However, no potential clients, because we are too much of competitors of each other, and I feel more loyalty towards my second ex-organization. Assignments that I cannot do myself go to this ex-organization (second) and not to the first ex-organization……
Why this difference?
Because I myself founded this company, and worked there for more than 10 years…

2.5 Discussion
Our finding show that there is still a lot going on in the relationship between ex-employee and ex-organization. The three types of post-exit contact were business, professional and friendship oriented or a combination of those three. Business orientated contact is about approaching the ex-organization as (potential) client, supplier or competitor. Professional contact is about contacting the ex-organization for professional support and consultation.
A major focus of this first study was finding out what the affects are of ex-employees towards their ex-organization, as I proposed affects play a major role in the post-exit loyalty concept. The findings show that ex-employees still have a wide pallet of affects towards the ex- organization. What the ex-employees feelings towards the ex-organization are, is complex: ex-employees can even have "mixed feelings", e.g. being grateful in some way and disappointed in another way.
Although the variety of affects, they can be categorized in three types: positive affects (e.g. gratefulness, togetherness), negative affects (e.g. anger, distrust) and a more instrumental form of attachment towards the ex-organization. The main difference between positive affects and instrumental attachment is that although there is some reference of attachment towards the ex-organization, instrumental attachment mainly based on mainly personal economic needs, like the need for (continuity in) income, position or status in the market. There are no (strong) emotions involved.
The affects differ in their "activation level". This refers to the intensity associated to the experience of each emotion. The more activating affects (e.g. gratefulness, anger) seem to be more important in terms of post-exit loyalty, than the less activating affects (e.g. sympathy, regret). Affects also seem to neutralize over time. Strong positive as well as negative affects decline overtime.
Results show ex-employees to benefit ex-organizations in different ways, for example promoting to others, share ideas, introducing them to others, doing them a favour and grant them business and interesting jobs. The degree in which the ex-employee takes on an active role varies;

some are very active, others have a more passive way of benefiting the ex-organization. Results also reveal intentions towards the ex-organization that could be harmful, or at least can be seen as non-beneficial.

This study offers some evidence that there is relationship between affects and benefiting the ex-organization. Respondents who expressed not willing to benefit the ex-organization in anyway, all express strong negative affects towards the ex-organization and express no or very limited positive affects and instrumental attachment. However, the picture of positive affects and instrumental attachment is less clear. More (quantitative) research is necessary to see whether these relations are significantly there (see 3.2 Theoretical discussion: Applying attitude-behaviour model).

This will be the starting point for the second quantitative study. Next to the development and validation of a measure for the multi-dimensional construct, this study attempts to test the predictive value of the constructs of post-exit loyalty.

3.   Post-exit loyalty: Scale developing and testing its predicative value

3.1   Introduction
          In this chapter, the second study is presented. This study had two objectives. The first one was to develop and test a measure for the post-exit loyalty construct, as no existing measure is available. The findings of the first qualitative study were used for the development of the measure. Study 1 offered show evidence that ex-employees' affects play a central role in post-exit beneficial behaviour. Therefore, the second objective of study was to test the predictiveness of the consequences of the construct.
          This chapter starts by introducing the attitude-behaviour model by Eagly and Chaiken (1993) as a theoretical basis to understand the post-exit loyalty construct (paragraph 3.2). Followed by the formulation of hypotheses about the relationship within the post-exit loyalty construct, based on this model. Finally, in this paragraph, the variables were introduced, which were used as control variables in this study.
          In paragraph 3.3, the method of this study is described. Successively, the research design, the process of scale development (including item generation and content validation), sample and procedures, and measures are explained. Finally, in paragraph 3.4, the results of the analyses are presented: exploratory and confirmative factor analysis, descriptive statistics and correlations, and regression analysis including hypothesis testing.

3.2   Theoretical discussion: Applying attitude-behaviour model & hypotheses
          Prior research on commitment gives, next to prior research on loyalty, direction in my attempt to measure the post-exit phenomenon. In this chapter, the attitude-behaviour model used in studies on commitment, is introduced as theoretical basis for the post-exit loyalty construct. As stated in paragraph 1.2, the concepts of loyalty and commitment show several similarities. Commitment has been defined and measured in many different ways (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). According to Meyer et al. (2006), employees may maintain an attachment to a given target because they want to (affective commitment), because they feel they should (normative commitment), or because they have too much to lose by severing the connection (continuance commitment). Although the implications of these mindsets for behaviour are complex, the general finding is that affective commitment has relatively strong, positive relations with desirable workplace behaviours such as attendance, citizenship behaviours (which overlaps in some extent loyalty), and job performance. Normative commitment has weaker positive relations with these behaviours, and continuance commitment has negligible or negative relations with these behaviours (Meyer et al, 2002).
          However, there is disagreement about whether affective and normative commitments are truly distinguishable forms of commitment. Although confirmatory factor analyses consistently demonstrate better fit when affective and normative commitment items define separate factors, correlations between affective and normative commitment are generally quite high (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). Solinger et al. (2008) criticize the three-component (affective, normative and continuance) conceptualization of organizational commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1990). The authors conclude that affective, normative and continuance commitment cannot be considered as components of the same attitudinal phenomenon. Affective commitment equals an attitude towards a target, while continuance and normative commitment represent qualitative different concepts: they refer to anticipated outcomes of behaviour, namely the act of leaving (Solinger et al., 2008). The conceptual analysis provided by these authors shows that three-component model fails to qualify as a general model of organizational commitment but instead represents a specific model for predicting turnover.
          Solinger et al. (2008) propose a reconceptualization based on the standard attitude theory. They propose that the attitude-behaviour model by Eagly and Chaiken (E&C model) (1993), should be adopted as a generic commitment model template from which a range of models for predicting specific organizational behaviours can be extracted (Solinger et al., 2008). In line with Solinger et al. (2008), I propose that the E&C model is applicable for the post-exit phenomenon as well. Therefore, this model was used to provide evidence for the validity of the construct. If this type of model fits the data in study, this could be seen as evidence of validity of the constructs, because they show their predictive value in the same way as Solinger et al (2008) hypnotized.

Applying the E&C-model to this study has several implications. The first implication is that affects towards ex-organization are given a central position in explaining beneficial behaviour towards ex-organization and anticipated outcomes of actions (beneficial behaviour) are included separately in the measurement. Even thought other factors might affect the occurrence of particular behaviour, affects is hypothesized to play a role in their emergence.

A second implication of using the E&C-model is that, in this study, the intention to benefit and the beneficial behaviour will be treaded separately, as the E&C-model argues that these are separate constructs that are linked in a causal chain (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). This concurs, with the assumption underlying the theory of reasoned action, that a thought of some sort must be formed to activate behaviour: at a minimum, an intention must be formed to direct behaviour. Although the E&C-model suggests a causal chain between intention to benefit and beneficial behaviour, the effects of affects on intention to benefit and on beneficial behaviour is tested in this study separately first. I predict the following four hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1.   Post-exit positive affects is positively related to intention to benefit the ex-
              organization.

Hypothesis 2.   Post-exit negative affects is negatively related to intention to benefit the ex-
              organization.

Hypothesis 3.   Post-exit positive affects is positively related with beneficial behaviour
              towards the ex-organization.

Hypothesis 4.   Post-exit negative affects is negatively related with beneficial behaviour
              towards the ex-organization.

In study 1, I concluded that beside positive affects towards the ex-organization, people could have a more instrumental based form of attachment towards the organization. Next to post-exit positive affects, it is expected that post-exit instrumental attachment is also positively related to intention to benefit and beneficial behaviour. However, I predict that this relationship will be less strong than post-exit positive affects.

Hypothesis 5.   Post-exit instrumental attachment is positively related with intention to benefit
              and beneficial behaviour, but less strong than post-exit positive affects.

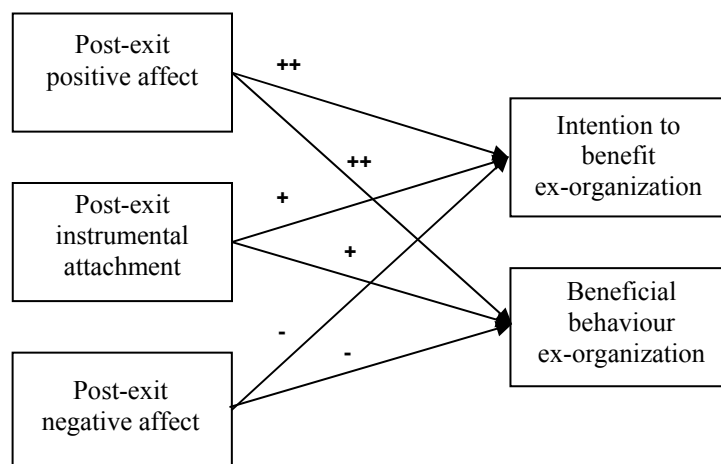The predicted relationships and their strengths are presented in the following figure (Figure 1):

Figure 1 Predicted relationships post-exit instrumental attachment, positive and negative affects on intention to benefit and beneficial behaviour towards the ex-organization (++ refers to a stronger relationship than +)

3.2.1 Control variables

To test these predicted relationships it is necessary consider other variables that may interfere in these relationships. Becker (2005) emphasises the important of considering the hazard of including many impotent control variables (i.e., ones uncorrelated with the dependent variable) and the hazard of failing to include relevant control variables (Becker, 2005).

The findings of study 1 offered some information on which variables are potentially biasing. The first argument for choosing relevant control variables was that both individual derived and organizational derived would be considered. This was in line with the alumni study of Iyer et al. (1997). The individual derived control variables were: *dispositional affects* and *sentimentality*. The organizational derived control variables were: *ex-organizational identification* and *ex-organizational justice perception*. Besides these attitudinal variables, also more factual, demographic variables were controlled for *tenure, time elapse, education, age* and *gender*. The underlying argumentation for each of those variables is found below:

Dispositional affects. Trait or dispositional affect reflects stable individual differences in the tendency to experience and express certain emotions and moods (Watson et al, 1988; Anderson & Thompson, 2004). According to Solinger et al. (2008), the explanatory value of organizational commitment for specific behaviours may be reduced, in the presence of strong habits (Solinger et al., 2008). Consistent with the theory, indicating that dispositional influences of situational attitudes or behaviours, I controlled for general affective disposition (e.g. Solinger et al., 2008).

Sentimentality. Prior research shows that the personal predisposition, sentimentality, effects organizational commitment (Wiener, 1982) and organization identification with the former employer (Iyer, et al., 1997). Mae1 and Ashforth (1992) define sentimentality as the tendency to retain emotional and/or tangible ties to one's past, and to derive pleasure from discussing or reliving one's past. Mae1 and Ashforth (1992) find that sentimentality significantly affects college alumni's identification with their former alma mater. Although, Iyer et al. (1997) found (in their study on alumni of their former accounting firm) that sentimentality was not (directly) significantly associated with inclination to benefit; it is still decided to add this variable as a control variable. In Iyer's model affects were not included, therefore it cannot be excluded that this variable will interfere with the predictive relationship is this study.

Ex-organizational identification. In study 1, it was argued that there is little agreement in literature on the distinction between identification and loyalty. In this study, the view is adopted that in the post-exit situation, organizational identification and loyalty are related, but distinct. As organizational identification is cognitive in nature, I proposed that post-exit loyalty involves more than just cognitive elements. As stated before some authors propose that identification is an antecedent of loyalty (see also paragraph 1.2). However, in this study, this variable will be treated as a control variable. The reason for this is that testing the relationship between ex-organizational identification and post-exit loyalty is considered beyond the scope of this study, but still may interfere with my predicted relationships.

Ex-organization entity justice perceptions. Prior research on organizational justice has clearly established that fairness perceptions can influence important work outcomes as well as employee behaviours and attitudes (Hollensbe et al., 2008). Hollensbe et al. (2008) propose that employees assess the fairness not only events, but also of social entities. These authors differentiate an entity from an event in that the former is an object or unit that persists over time and across situation. An entity may be the ex-organization as a whole. Study 1 also offered some evidence for this possible interfering factor. Findings showed the important of mutual benefit and more specifically equal partnership (paragraph 2.4.5 Benefiting the ex-organization). Ex-employees who feel that they have not been treated equally by there ex-organization, may be less willing to benefit their ex-organization.

Tenure and time elapse. In study 1, I concluded that time is an important factor to considered in terms of affects. It was concluded that affects neutralizes over time. Therefore, its important to control for the length of the post-exit period. In addition, tenure will be added as control variables, in accordance with the reasoning in study 1 (see also paragraph 2.2.1).

3.3   Method

3.3.1   Research design
       Study 2 follows a quantitative method. In this study, it is our first aim to set the first steps in constructing a scale for the post-exit phenomenon, as no existing measure is available for the post-exit loyalty construct. A primary goal of scale development is to create a valid measure of an underlying construct (Clark & Watson, 1995). In this first approach in constructing a measure, it is not possible to its convergent validity with existing instruments.
       The development and validation of a measure falls into three basic stages (e.g. Schwab, 1980; Hinkin, 1995). The first stage is the item development or the generation of individual items. For this, the findings of study 1 will be used on: post-exit positive, negative affect, instrumental attachment and beneficial behaviour. The second stage is scale development, or the manner in which items are combined to form scales. Exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses are used to form scales. Stage three is scale evaluation, or the psychometric examination of a new measure (Hinkin, 1995).

3.3.2   Item generation
       The initial items of the post-exit positive and negative affects and post-exit instrumental attachment for the second quantitative study were inductively derived from the data. For the writing of items the basic principles of item writing of Clark & Watson (1995) were followed, for example using straightforward language and avoid ambiguous items. For each item the 5-point Likert type response format (1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree) was chosen. Although, there is still some debate among researcher about the use of reverse-scored items, no reverse-scored items were used as they may introduce systematic error (Hinkin, 1995).

3.3.2.1 Post-exit positive and negative affects measures: content adequacy
       Of the 15 sub-categories, (9 positive and 6 negative) initial items were derived from the data. To make sure that the items being developed, adequately reflect the theoretical construct of interest, a content adequacy study was conducted. Content adequacy or validity reflects the degree to which the items of a measure are a proper sample of the theoretical content domain of the construct (Schriesheim et al., 1993). The items were shown to two university students ask them first to sort the items into categories based. The use of university student as content adequacy raters is acceptable, as all that is required of content adequacy judges is that they possess sufficient intellectual ability and that they are free from potential bias (Schriesheim et al., 1993)—two qualities that university students normally possess. In the first part of the sorting exercise, the students were asked to sort the items into two categories: positive or negative. Furthermore, they were asked to rate on a scale of 1 (very difficult) to 5 (very easy) how difficult it was to sort them. Second, the students were asked to sort the items into the 15 sub-categories. Again, they were asked to rate on a scale of 1 (very difficult) to 5 (very easy) how difficult it was to sort them. Based on this sorting exercise items and the discussion with the raters afterwards, 27 items were deleted (disagreement among raters and difficulty ≤ 3) and 8 items were rewritten. The whole sub-categories (all items): happiness and unease were deleted, because the raters had difficulty sorting them. The items were not distinctive enough. Happiness seems to refer to a more general type of positive feelings and unease to a more general type of negative feelings.
       The remaining 56 items and 13 sub-categories were also reviewed based prior research on affects. In order to create a final list sub-categories (and items), the sub-categories were reviewed on their "activating potential". Only the most activating were kept. Based on this review another two positive sub-categories were deleted: sympathy, equity, one more negative category was deleted: regret. The finding in the first qualitative supported this decision. The deleted sub-categories were also part of the fragments that had the lowest frequencies in the first qualitative study (see also Appendix 5).
       To finalize the item generation procedure, the items were discussed with my university supervisor, following recommendations of Schriesheim et al. (1993) and Brown et al. (2005). They both recommend a construct development expert, familiar with the definitions and research questions, to be consulted to help evaluate the measure's content adequacy and to eliminate items that were potentially confusing or redundantly worded. Because of this discussion, several items were more specifically worded, for example: the initial item 22: "I am proud that I learned the profession with

this ex-organization", was rephrased in: "I am proud that I learned the profession with this ex-organization instead of with other organizations" (see Appendix 4). This to make sure that the pride is associated with this particular ex-organization. The remaining items in the survey were 23 positive affects items in 5 sub-categories and 20 negative affects in 4 sub-categories. For an overview of the items (in Dutch and in English), see Appendix 4.

3.3.2.2 *Post-exit instrumental attachment*

The following five items for post-exit instrumental attachment were inductively derived from the data of study 1 (see the paragraph 2.4.4 and Appendix 4 for the used Dutch version)

1. I maintain positive contact with this ex-organization in sake of my own image in the market.
2. I maintain positive contact with this ex-organization in sake of my own competitive position in the market.
3. I do not want to break off the relationship with this ex-organization, because of the negative consequences for my present career.
4. I want to stay involved with this ex-organization only for my own personal advantage.
5. For my income, I (partly) depend on this ex-organization.

3.3.2.3 *Beneficial behaviour towards ex-organization*

The following six items for beneficial behaviour were inductively derived from the data of study 1 (see also paragraph 2.4.5 and Appendix 4 for the used Dutch version).

1. I regularly grant work to my ex-organization.
2. I regularly recommend this ex-organization to my friends and acquaintances.
3. I regularly recommend this ex-organization to my business relations.
4. I regularly recommend this ex-organization to my professional relations.
5. I promote this ex-organization regularly to others.
6. I regularly establish worthwhile connection between myself, my present (working-) environment and this ex-organization.

3.3.2.4 *Intention to benefit*

In the qualitative study, (study 1) six items were generated for the measure of beneficial behaviour. Based on the attitude-behaviour model of Eagly & Chaiken (1993) (A&C-model), six items for a measure of intention to benefit were added. The six items were formulated in line with the above items of beneficial behaviour and with items Iyer et al. (1997) used, in their study on accounting firms' alumni's inclination to benefit their former firm (Appendix 4 for the used Dutch version)

1. If I would have the authority, I am planning to grant my ex-organization work.
2. When the opportunity arises, I am planning to recommend this ex-organization to my friends and acquaintances.
3. When the opportunity arises, I am planning to recommend this ex-organization to my business relations.
4. When the opportunity arises, I am planning to recommend this ex-organization to my professional relations.
5. When the opportunity arises, I am planning to promote this ex-organization to others.
6. When the opportunity arises, I am planning to establish mutually worthwhile connections between myself, my present (working) - environment and this ex-organization.

3.3.3 *Control variables*

Dispositional affects. To measure participants' trait positive and negative affect, the positive affect scale of the PANAS (Watson et al., 1988) scales was used. The PANAS scales are among the most widely used affect measures and can measure affect at multiple levels, including the emotion, mood, or trait levels. In this study, the trait level was used. The scales have been shown to be internally consistent, with as ranging in the .80s to .90s, and to be consistent over time (Watson et al., 1988; Anderson et al. 2004). Further, the two trait-level affect scales are largely uncorrelated with

each other, supporting the notion that positive and negative affect are two independent or orthogonal dimensions (Watson et al., 1988). Participants reported how much they felt 10 positive emotions ''in general", or "on average'': interested, excited, enthusiastic, proud, alert, strong, inspired, determined, attentive, and active, on a scale from 1 (''None'') to 5 (''Extreme''). Participants reported how much they felt 10 negative emotions ''in general", or "on average'' afraid, scared, nervous, jittery, irritable, hostile, guilty, ashamed, upset, distressed: on a scale from 1 (''None'') to 5 (''Extreme''). Each scale was translated in Dutch (see Appendix 4 Measures in Dutch and English). In this study, the internal reliability for both PANAS scales were satisfactory positive affects α.83 and negative affects α.81.

Sentimentality. A seven-item scale by Mael & Ashforth (1992) measured sentimentality. Coefficient alpha was 0.73 in Mael & Ashforth's (1992) study. The five items scale was translated in Dutch before adding to the survey (see Appendix 4 Measures in Dutch and English). In this study, the internal reliability was satisfactory α.73.

Ex-organizational identification. The measure for organizational identification was adopted from the study of Iyer et al. (1998). They adapted the original measure of organizational identification by Mael & Ashforth (1992) to the post-exit situation; changing the term "organization" into "former organization". I used the term "ex-organization" in consistence with the other measures used in the questionnaire. Mael & Ashforth (1992) report internal reliability of .87 for this scale. The five items scale was translated in Dutch before adding to the survey (see Appendix 4 Measures in Dutch and English). In this study, the internal reliability was satisfactory α.79.

Ex-organization entity justice perceptions. This variable was assessed with three items. These were based from the work of Choi (2008), Deluga (1994), Cropanzano et al. (2001), and Tyler and Lind (1992). Choi (2008) report internal reliability of .88 for their scale. I adapted the original measure to the post-exit situation; again changing the term "organization" into "ex-organization". The three items scale was translated in Dutch before adding to the survey (see Appendix 4 Measures in Dutch and English). In this study, internal reliability was satisfactory α.70.

Tenure and time elapse. For tenure, respondents were asked to report on the number of years and months they were employed by the ex-organization. For time elapsed, respondents were asked to report on how long ago they left their ex-organization (in number of years and months). The subsequent analysis reported both tenure and time elapsed in terms of months.

Age, *gender* and *education*. Respondents are asked their age (in years), gender (male/female) and highest formal education after high school. In Dutch[4], four options: "MBO", "HBO", "WO" and an "Other" category. If respondent chose "Other", they were asked to fill in their education.

3.3.4   Sample & procedure

The online questionnaire was emailed to 344 respondents: employees and ex-employees (consultants) of five HR consultancy organizations. The questionnaire took approximately 15 minutes to complete. Before the start of the survey, an email summarising the scope and purpose of the research was sent by the directors of these organizations. Of the 344 mailed surveys, 30 were not delivered. This was indicated by automatic e-mail reply message of: unknown email addresses (20) and out of office (8). Two respondents mentioned not being able to open the survey because of technical issues (probably not having an internet explorer caused this problem) Of the 314 consultants who received the survey 168 responded after a reminder, an overall response rate of 53.5%. A total number of 16 cases were deleted because these respondents stopped the survey only after the first few general questions. The remaining 152 respondents were used in the analyses.

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[4] These names were based on the Dutch Educational system.

3.4   Results

3.4.1   *Initial analysis of affects*

In a preliminary analysis, the reliability of the constructs was calculated for each individual scale. The data was analysed with the statistical program SPSS 16.0. The Cronbach's alpha was, overall, satisfactory for all of the individual scales, ranging from α.80 for pride to α.95 for shame towards the ex-organization (see Table 8).

Table 8 Number of items, means, SD & Cronbach's alpha of all individual post-exit affects scales

Measure	Items	Mean	S.D.	Alpha
Gratefulness ex-org*	7	3.83	0.61	0.86
Interest ex-org*	4	3.57	0.70	0.91
Trust ex-org*	3	3.48	0.78	0.89
Togetherness ex-org*	5	2.99	0.84	0.89
Pride ex-org*	4	3.09	0.71	0.80
Anger ex-org*	6	1.90	0.79	0.91
Disappointment ex-org*	5	2.20	0.89	0.90
Distrust ex-org*	4	2.14	0.91	0.90
Shame ex-org*	5	1.56	0.71	0.95
* Measured on a 5-point Liker-type scale.				

3.4.2   *Exploratory factor analysis*

The primary purpose of either exploratory or confirmative factor analysis in scale construction is to examine the stability of the factor structure and provide information that will facilitate the refinement of a new measure (Hinkin, 2005).

I conducted an exploratory factor analysis to create the scales for post-exit positive affects (PEPAS), post-exit negative affects (PENAS), post-exit instrumental attachment (PEIAS). First, all the positive affects, negative affects and instrumental attachment items were included in this analysis. I conducted in SPSS 16.0 an exploratory factor analysis (principle component) with a Varimax rotation method (Clark & Watson, 1995), allowing for correlations among three factors. After deleting items that were cross loading on multiple factors (these were interest01-04, trust01-03, instru05), 40 items remained. To ensure an acceptable response to item ratio I decreased the number of items further. Only the items with the strongest loadings of each positive and negative affect and instrumental attachment (proposed) scales were maintained, 20 items remained. The remaining items all loaded strongly on one of the three factors, .57 and above (see Table 9). The eigenvalues of the factors were 7.00, 3.03 and 2.07, respectively. Explaining respectively 35.0%, 15.1% and 10.4% of the variance.

Table 9 Exploratory Factor Analysis of the PEPAS, PENAS & PEIAS

Name	Item (in Dutch)	PEPAS	PENAS	PEIAS
graful03	2. Ik ben dankbaar voor de mensen die ik heb leren kennen bij deze ex-organisatie.		.567	
graful07	3. Ik ben deze ex-organisatie erkentelijk voor wat zij heeft betekend voor mij persoonlijk.		.637	
togeth02	4. Deze ex-organisatie zit in mijn hart.		.772	
togeth03	5. Ik voel me prettig verbonden te zijn met deze ex-organisatie.		.761	
togeth04	6. Het voelt fijn dat deze ex-organisatie in mijn genen zit.		.779	
pride01	7. Wanneer ik een reclame uiting of publicatie van deze ex-organisatie zie, voel ik me trots.		.707	
pride02	8. Ik ben trots op de kwaliteit van deze ex-organisatie.		.680	
pride03	9. Ik ben er trots op dat ik bij deze ex-organisatie het vak heb geleerd en niet bij een andere organisatie.		.685	
anger02	10. Ik voel pijn over wat deze ex-organisatie mij heeft aangedaan.	.866		
anger03	11. Ik ben boos over wat deze ex-organisatie mij heeft aangedaan.	.847		
disapp02	14. Ik ben teleurgesteld over het gebrek aan mogelijkheden die ik heb ervaren bij deze ex-organisatie.	.689		
disapp04	15. Ik voel me teleurgesteld dat deze ex-organisatie mij niet bracht wat ik nodig had.	.767		
distrust02	17. Ik heb er geen vertrouwen in dat deze ex-organisatie het beste met mij voor heeft.	.780		
distrust03	18. Ik voel dat deze ex-organisatie een verborgen agenda heeft.	.787		
shame02	20. Ik voel me onbehagelijk als iemand mij vraagt iets over deze ex-organisatie te vertellen.	.676		
shame03	21. Ik voel een zekere schaamte bij het geassocieerd worden met deze ex-organisatie.	.693		
instru01	22. Ik onderhoud positief contact met deze ex-organisatie in belang van mijn eigen imago in de markt.			.849
instru02	23. Ik onderhoud positief contact met deze ex-organisatie in belang van mijn eigen concurrentiepositie in de markt.			.893
instru03	24. Ik wil de relatie met deze ex-organisatie niet verbreken omdat dat negatieve consequenties heeft voor mijn huidige carrière.			.723
instru04	25. Ik wil betrokken blijven bij deze ex-organisatie puur voor mijn eigen persoonlijk voordeel.			.680

Note. N = 152, loadings less than .40 are suppressed

The Cronbach alpha's were acceptable, respectively for the 8-item PEPAS .87; the 8-item PENAS .91 and the 4-item PEIAS .81. The Cronbach alpha was for the 6-item intention to benefit scale (IBS) .93 and for the 6-item (BBS) beneficial behaviour .91.

3.4.3   Confirmative factor analysis

Subsequently, I conducted confirmative factor analyses on the Post-exit positive and negative affects, to ensure that they were independent and the items produced the expected factor structures. To conduct the EFA's, I used AMOS.

A one-factor solution was estimated, for the 8-items PEPAS. Fit indices showed that a unidimensional model fit the data. The Chi-square of this model was acceptable (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Hinkin, 1995): [CMIN] =36.42, *df*=17, *p*<0.01, [CMIN/*df*] =2.14. The [TLI] =.94, the Comparative Fit Index [CFI] =.96, the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual [SRMR] =.05, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation [RMSEA] =.09, were all at or above recommended standards.

A one-factor solution was also estimated, of the 8-items PENAS. Fit indices showed that again a unidimensional model fit the data. The Chi-square of this model was acceptable (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Hinkin, 1995): [CMIN] =38.14, *df*=16, *p*<0.001, [CMIN/*df*] =2.38. The [TLI]=.96, Comparative Fit Index [CFI] =.98, the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual [SRMR] =.02, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation [RMSEA] =.09, were all at or above recommended standards (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Hinkin, 1995)

3.4.4 Descriptive statistics and correlations

The descriptive statistics for and the correlations among variables of interest in this study can be found in the Table 10 Descriptive Statistics and Correlation. Post-exit positive affects was positively correlating with intention to benefit ($r =.68$, $p < .01$) and with beneficial behaviour ($r =.54$, $p < .01$). In addition, Post-exit instrumental attachment was positively correlating, but less strong than Post-exit positive affects, with intention to benefit ($r =.17$, $p < .05$) and with beneficial behaviour ($r =.37$, $p < .01$). Post-exit negative affects was moderately negatively correlating with intention to benefit ($r =-.44$, $p < .01$) and, less strong, with beneficial behaviour ($r =-.18$, $p < .05$).

Table 10 Descriptive Statistics and Correlation matrix

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. PEPAS														
2. PENAS	-.47**													
3. PEIAS	.19*	.00												
4. IBS	.68**	-.44**	.17*											
5. BBS	.54**	-.18*	.37**	.64**										
6. EOI	.57**	-.23**	.29**	.51**	.51**									
7. EOJP	.28**	-.58**	-.06	.33**	.13	.24**								
8. Pos. PANAS	.10	-.04	.10	.10	.08	-.03	-.12							
9. Neg. PANAS	-.16*	.23**	.03	-.09	-.03	.04	-.07	.05						
10. Sentim.	.13	.10	.16	.31	-.00	.19*	-.10	.14	.07					
11. Tenure	.07	-.05	.04	.01	.05	.08	-.01	-.08	-.03	.01				
12. Time elapse	-.11	.09	-.26**	-.11	-.20*	-.28**	.03	-.08	-.13	-.17*	-.18*			
13. Age	-.14	.10	-.12	.04	.02	-.06	-.03	-.09	-.18*	-.22**	.32**	.39**		
14. Gender	-.04	.06	-.02	-.03	.00	.05	.03	-.13	-.14	-.20*	.08	.17*	.32**	
15. Edu.	-.11	.00	-.13	-.04	-.06	-.02	.13	-.16*	-.02	-.04	-.07	.05	.08	.30**
M	3.23	1.90	2.46	3.54	2.78	2.69	3.21	3.60	1.78	3.30	65.35	71.83	42.18	
SD	.68	.72	.79	.78	.87	.70	.71	.49	.40	.54	45.97	58.23	8.18	

Note: ** correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), * correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)
PEPAS = Post-exit positive affects, PENAS = Post-exit negative affects, PEIAS =Post-exit instrumental attachment, EOI= Ex-organizational identification, EOJP =Ex-organizational justice perception, Sentim.=Sentimentality, Edu. = Education.

3.4.5 Hypothesis testing

The hypothesis predicted that affects and instrumental attachment were related with intention to benefit and with beneficial behaviour towards the ex-organization. I conducted hierarchical linear regression analyses to test the hypotheses.

First, the models were tested with intention to benefit as dependent variable and positive affects as independent variable. In the first step, I entered the control variables (mentioned in paragraph 3.3.3) as the first predictors. Model 1 has an adjusted R^2 =.332, which was statistically significant with F=7.498, p<0,001. That means that the control variables account for 33.2% of the variance in intention to benefit the ex-organization. In the second step, I entered post-exit positive affects as predictor. Model 2 has an adjusted R^2 =.538, which is statistically significant with F=14.873, p<0,001. That means that all variables, including post-exit positive affects, account for 53.8% of the variance in intention to benefit the ex-organization.

Secondly, the models were tested with beneficial behaviour as dependent variable and positive affects as independent variable. Again, in the first step, I entered the control variables as the first predictors. Model 3 has an adjusted R^2 =.275, which was statistically significant with F=5.973, p<0.001. That means that the control variables account for 27.5% of the variance in intention to benefit the ex-organization. In the second step, I entered post-exit positive affects as predictors. Model 4 has an adjusted R^2 =.407, which is statistically significant with F=9.178, p<0.001. That means that all variables, including post-exit positive affects, account for 40.7% of the variance in beneficial behaviour towards the ex-organization. The regression results of these models including the coefficients for the control variables are presented in the following table (Table 11).

Table 11 Regression results of PEPAS on IBS and BBS

Variables entered	Intention to benefit		Beneficial behaviour	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
EOI	.54***	.22**	.56***	.30**
EOJP	.21**	.13	.05	-.02
Pos. PANAS	.16	.08	.10	.04
Neg. PANAS	-.10	.02	-.03	.06
Sentimentality	-.08	-.08	-.14	-.14
Tenure	-.04	-.11	-.01	-.07
Time elapse	.01	-.07	-.06	-.12
Age	.06	.16*	.04	.12
Gender	-.04	-.04	-.09	-.10
Education	-.06	-.02	.06	.09
PEPAS		.58***		.47***
F	7.498	14.873	5.973	9.178
R^2	.332	.538	.275	.407

Note: N = ranging from 139 to 152 because of missing data
* *p* <.05, ** *p* <.01, *** *p* <.001.
PEPAS = Post-exit positive affects, PENAS = Post-exit negative affects, PEIAS =Post-exit instrumental attachment, EOI= Ex-organizational identification, EOJP =Ex-organizational justice perception, IBS = intention to benefit, BBS = Beneficial behaviour.

Third, the models were tested with intention to benefit as dependent variable and post-exit negative affects as independent variable. In the first step, I entered the control variables (mentioned in paragraph 3.3.3) as the first predictors. Model 5 has an adjusted R^2 =.332, which was statistically significant with F=7.498, p<0,001. That means that the control variables account for 33.2% of the variance in intention to benefit the ex-organization. In the second step, I entered post-exit negative affects as predictor. Model 6 has an adjusted R^2 =.382, which is statistically significant with F=8.357, p<0,001. That means that all variables, including post-exit negative affects, account for 38.2% of the variance in intention to benefit the ex-organization.

Fourth, the models were tested with beneficial behaviour as dependent variable and post-exit negative affects as independent variable. Again, in the first step, I entered the control variables as the first predictors. Model 7 has an adjusted R^2 =.275, which was statistically significant with F=5.973, p<0.001. That means that the control variables account for 27.5% of the variance in intention to benefit the ex-organization. In the second step, I entered post-exit negative affects as predictor. Model 8 has an adjusted R^2 =.271, which is statistically significant with F=5.437, p<0.001. That means that all variables, including post-exit negative affects, account for 27.1% of the variance in beneficial behaviour towards the ex-organization. The regression results of these models including the coefficients for the control variables are presented in the following table (Table 12).

Table 12 Regression results of PENAS on IBS and BBS

Variables entered	Intention to benefit		Beneficial behaviour	
	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8
EOI	.54***	.50***	.56***	.55***
EOJP	.21**	.05	.05	.01
Pos. PANAS	.16*	.12*	.10	.10
Neg. PANAS	-.10	-.03	-.03	-.02
Sentimentality	-.08	-.03	-.14	-.13
Tenure	-.04	-.07	-.01	-.02
Time elapse	.01	.02	-.06	-.06
Age	.06	.09	.04	.04
Gender	-.04	-.02	-.09	-.09
Education	-.06	-.05	.06	.06
PENAS		-.30**		-.06
F	7.498	8.357	5.973	5.437
R^2	.332	.382	.275	.271

Note: N = ranging from 139 to 152 because of missing data
* p <.05, ** p <.01, *** p <.001.
PEPAS = Post-exit positive affects, PENAS = Post-exit negative affects, PEIAS =Post-exit instrumental attachment, EOI= Ex-organizational identification, EOJP =Ex-organizational justice perception, IBS = intention to benefit, BBS = Beneficial behaviour.

Fifth, the models were tested with intention to benefit as dependent variable and post-exit instrumental attachment as independent variable. In the first step, I entered the control variables (mentioned in paragraph 3.3.3) as the first predictors. Model 9 has an adjusted R^2 =.332, which was statistically significant with F=7.498, p<0,001. That means that the control variables account for 33.2% of the variance in intention to benefit the ex-organization. In the second step, I entered post-exit instrumental attachment as predictor. Model 10 has an adjusted R^2 =.327, which is statistically significant with F=6.774, p<0,001. That means that all variables, including post-exit instrumental attachment, account for 32.7% of the variance in intention to benefit the ex-organization.

Sixth, the models were tested with beneficial behaviour as dependent variable and post-exit instrumental attachment as independent variable. Again, in the first step, I entered the control variables as the first predictors. Model 11 has an adjusted R^2 =.275, which was statistically significant with F=5.973, p<0.001. That means that the control variables account for 27.5% of the variance in intention to benefit the ex-organization. In the second step, I entered post-exit instrumental attachment as predictor. Model 12 has an adjusted R^2 =.334, which is statistically significant with F=6.968, p<0.001. That means that all variables, including post-exit instrumental attachment, account for 33.4% of the variance in beneficial behaviour towards the ex-organization. The regression results of these models including the coefficients for the control variables are presented in the following table (Table 13).

Table 13 Regression results of PEIAS on IBS and BBS

Variables entered	Intention to benefit		Beneficial behaviour	
	Model 9	Model 10	Model 11	Model 12
EOI	,54***	,53***	,56***	,49***
EOJP	,21**	,22**	,05	,06
Pos. PANAS	,16*	,16*	,10	,08
Neg. PANAS	-,10	-,10	-,03	-,02
Sentimentality	-,08	-,08	-,14	-,15
Tenure	-,04	-,04	-,01	-,01
Time elapse	,01	,01	-,06	-,01
Age	,06	,06	,04	,04
Gender	-,04	-,04	-,09	-,11
Education	-,06	-,06	,06	,07
PEIAS		,02		,26**
F	7.498	6.774	5.973	6.968
R^2	.332	.327	.275	.334

Note: N = ranging from 139 to 152 because of missing data
* p <.05, ** p <.01, *** p <.001.
PEPAS = Post-exit positive affects, PENAS = Post-exit negative affects, PEIAS =Post-exit instrumental attachment, EOI= Ex-organizational identification, EOJP =Ex-organizational justice perception, IBS = intention to benefit, BBS = Beneficial behaviour.

Hypothesis 1 predicted that Post-exit positive affects is positively related with intention to benefit the ex-organization. Hypothesis 3 predicted that Post-exit positive affects is positively related with beneficial behaviour towards the ex-organization. Both hypotheses were supported, as both situations the beta for Post-exit positive affects, when controlled, was significant.

Hypothesis 2 predicted that Post-exit negative affects is negatively related with intention to benefit the ex-organization. Hypothesis 4 predicted that Post-exit negative affects is negatively related with beneficial behaviour towards the ex-organization. The first (hypothesis 2) was supported by the data, as the beta for post-exit negative affects, when controlled, was significant. However, hypothesis 4 was not supported by the data; the beta for post-exit negative affects was not significant.

Hypothesis 5 predicted that Post-exit instrumental attachment is positively related with intention to benefit and beneficial behaviour, but less strong than Post-exit positive affects. This hypothesis was supported. In model 10 Post-exit instrumental attachment did not significantly explain the variance of intention to benefit and in model 2, Post-exit positive affects did significantly explain the variance of intention to benefit. In model 12 Post-exit instrumental attachment did explain some of the variance of beneficial behaviour, but not as much as post-exit positive affects did in model 4. In the next chapter, these findings were discussed and both theoretical and practical implications are provided.

4.   General discussion

Although post-exit loyalty was identified as an important phenomenon (Alvesson, 2002), the topic has received little systematic scholarly attention. So far, the construct has not been adequately measured. Little theoretical and empirical work has been done to understand its theoretical base and consequences. My research begins that work by exploring post-exit relationships, by using the attitude-behaviour model by Eagly and Chaiken (E&C model) (1993) as a theoretical foundation, and by developing and testing a multi-dimensional measurement, and by demonstrating the predictiveness of the constructs consequences.

In the first quantitative study, several categories emerged. First, ex-employees still had a variety of affects towards their ex-organizations. These could be categorized in positive affects, negative affects and a more instrumental form of attachment towards ex-organization. Some evidence was provided that affect neutralize over time. Second, ex-employees expressed several forms in which they were willing to or are already benefiting their ex-organization (e.g. promoting the ex-organization, sharing ideas, introducing them to others, doing them a favour and grant them business and interesting jobs). Some take a more "passive" role, others a more "active" role in this process. For the post-exit situation, benefiting from a "mutual perspective" seems to be the most appropriate and enduring within the knowledge intensive industry. In other words, not only the ex-organization should benefit, but also the ex-employee.

In the following quantitative study, I proposed that the E&C model (Eagly and Chaiken, 1993) provides a strong theoretical foundation for post-exit loyalty. This model implicated that affects towards ex-organization played a central position in explaining beneficial behaviour towards ex-organization and intention to benefit was treated separately from beneficial behaviour.

As an important next step, the research focused on measurement development. As there were no existing instruments available, it was not possible to its convergent validity with existing instruments. To ensure that the measures were psychometrically sound, I followed systematic procedures (Schwab, 1980; Hinkin, 1995) for developing new measures. The procedures included item generation from the data of the first study, followed by a content adequacy study. Exploratory and confirmative factor analyses provided support for post-exit positive, negative affects and instrumental attachment to be separate constructs. Resulting in scales for each construct of respectively for post-exit positive affects, eight items; for post-exit negative affects, eight items and for post-exit instrumental attachment, four items. Finally, despite the breath of the construct, the measures are still relatively short for survey future research purposes.

As predicted, post-exit positive affects is positively related to intention to benefit and beneficial behaviour towards the ex-organization. It showed its predictive value in the same way as Solinger et al. (2008) hypnotized, therefore also providing more support for the viability of these constructs. Moreover, as predicted, post-exit instrumental attachment is less strong positively related to intention to benefit and beneficial behaviour than post-exit positive affects.

Regarding the predictions of post-exit negative affects negatively relating with intention to benefit and beneficial behaviour, only the prediction on intention to benefit is supported by the data. Post-exit negative affects does not have the same relationship with intention to benefit as with beneficial behaviour, providing more evidence that indeed these two are different constructs. A possible explanation of this lack of a significant relationship with beneficial behaviour, may be the temporal issue; people may have intention to benefit their ex-organization, but their beneficial behaviour may be delayed for some reason. Future research can try to verify or discount this possibility by using a longitudinal design. Another possible explanation is that the effect was too small for the present study to detect. Future research can verify or discount this possibility by using a larger sample to test this effect.

The present study is not without limitations. First, the sample for the qualitative study was not a random sample of consultants. This was not possible, due to access problems within a limited timeframe. Although the last chat session, did not bring many more extra categories of affects, which had not been identified before, it is not possible to rule out that any more post-exit affects exit. For future researchers, it is therefore important to conduct more qualitative studies, to check whether new categories emerge, that would add more depth to the measures.

The second limitation is the external validity. For this study, it was my goal to explore within the context of Dutch consultancy organizations. However, to increase external validity of the constructs, future researchers are also encouraged to conduct research in other type of knowledge intensive companies and/or in other countries.

Third, in spite of its advantages, applying the E&C-model also has its limitations. Solinger et al. (2008) remarked that the applicability is only restricted to behaviours that are preformed consciously. For instance, it is not suitable to explain spontaneous, emotional, and/or reflexive behaviour (Solinger et al. 2008). Emotions may interfere with a conscious, rational process. Therefore it may be possible that ex-employee are not aware being loyal (or disloyal) to their ex-employing organization. For future research, it is therefore important to consider this unconscious behaviour as well.

Another limitation of this study is that this study only focuses on the affects towards the ex-organization, as a collective. Both Brewer & Gardner (1996) and Brickson (2000; 2007) proposed that the self concept is a multifaceted, consisting of three fundamental loci of self-definition: the self as an individual (personal), as an interpersonal being (relational), and as a group member (collective) (Brickson, 2000). Brewer and Chen (2007) concluded that there is conceptual confusion in the meaning of collectivism: many measures do not have collectives or large groups in the central focus but in fact contain relational items. For future study, it may be important to distinguish identifying with this organization as a whole ("being a good group member") or with (a few of) their former colleague(s) ("being a good colleague or co-worker"). This distinction seems especially important for the post-exit situation for two reasons. The first reason is that loyalty only directed toward the former colleague, might be more vulnerable (from the organization's perspective) to exit of this former colleague as it seems to be less likely that their loyalty will "transfer" to the successor of this former colleague. The second reason has to do with the context of this study situated in Dutch medium-sized[5] (knowledge intensive) consultancy organizations. Alvesson (2000) argues that larger and smaller companies differ in their successful "means" of managing loyalty. As mentioned before Alvesson (2000) identified a distinctive organizational identity driven by organizational symbolism as a successful way of managing loyalty in larger companies. Smaller companies might have difficulty in successfully developing rhetoric about their distinctiveness or excellence, but may instead strong rhetoric about interpersonal bonds.

The last limitation is in relying on self-reported measures for all constructs in the survey. Problems of common method variance or effects of social desirability cannot be ruled out. However, self reported measures are an economical way of extending the research to greater samples. Additionally, in this study, I was exploring self-perceptions and these self-reported measures consisted in an objective way to do that.

Despite its limitations, this the present study contributes to the organizational literature and the employee loyalty study in at least four ways. First, this post-exit perspective adds to the employee loyalty study by providing more evidence that employee loyalty (within organizational context) indeed is more than just the continuation of employment (Alvesson, 2002). Even beyond employment, ex-employees can still feel emotionally attached towards their ex-organizations and as a result are willing to benefit their ex-organizations.

Second, post-exit loyalty, just like employee loyalty defined by Van Vugt and Hart (2004), should be regarded as a multidimensional construct. Many authors already identified the emotional aspect of employee loyalty. This post-exit study provides further evidence for the central role of affects in the loyalty construct.

For, Zdaniuk & Levine (2001), the lack of concern for personal welfare is a necessary part of loyalty. It is here where this post-exit loyalty deviates from employee loyalty. Although there was some indication of personal sacrifice, for the benefit of the ex-organization, this did not generally apply. A mutual benefit (partnership) approach, on a more emotional level, seems more appropriate. Identification processes may offer a theoretical explanation for the ex-employees' need for this mutuality. As stated above, Brewer & Gardner (1996) proposed that identification processes revolve around three distinct self-views or self-concepts: personal, relational and collective identity

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[5] Medium-sized within the Dutch context: 30 – 50 consultants.

orientations. Each identity orientation is associated with a particular primary motivation among individuals: the desire to enhance their own, their own or their relationship partner, or their group wellbeing. Different self-construal's may coexist within the same individual, available to be activated at different times or in different contexts (e.g. Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Meyer et al., 2006). Because people can belong to multiple groups or collectives, employees can form multiple social identities, one or more of which might be more prominent at any given time (Meyer et al., 2006). It seems plausible that when an employee "trades" an organization for another working environment, the identification process in his or her new organization (or own business), causes the ex-employees need for balancing the benefits in the long run. More research is necessary to examine the relationships between (multiple) identities and post-exit (multiple) loyalties.

Third, this study provides an instrument that can be used and further developed in future research. Fourth, this study provides more evidence for the value of the attitude-behaviour model, for the first time in a post-exit context.

This study has also practical implications. First, it is important for management of knowledge intensive companies to realize that their ex-employees still have a lot affects towards their ex-organizations, and that their positive affects predict their intention to benefit and beneficial behaviour towards the organization. Management should be aware that positive affects play a greater role in this, than instrumental attachment alone. So even when ex-employees, like freelancers, are economically attached to the organization, it may be worth to find out how they feel about their ex-organizations.

Management should take into account that ex-employee strive for mutual benefiting relationships in the end. Moreover, this study provides some evidence that affect neutralizes over time. This suggests that positive affects need to be "maintained" in order to stay strong. Several ex-employees in this study reported that they enjoy attending professional meetings of their ex-organizations. This type of alumni activities that appeal to social and emotional aspects (Alvesson, 2002), may be a fruitful way to try to create a context for post-exit positive affects to last, and ex-employees remaining of enduring value to knowledge intensive organizations.

5.   Conclusion

In this increasing knowledge intensive economy, organizations depend more on their inter-organizational networks. This study sheds light in an underexposed field of the post-exit relationship of the ex-employees and their ex-organizations. By constructing and testing reliable and valid measures, and demonstrating the predictive value of positive affects for intention to benefit and beneficial behaviour, I hope to spur study of post-exit loyalty, its antecedents and additional consequences.

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Appendix 1.   Interview guide for online focus groups: professionals

Table 14 Interview guide professionals

Dutch interview guide (original)	Dutch questions (original)	English interview guide (translation)	English questions (translation)
Deel 1: Feitelijke vragen over het contact/relatie met je ex-organisatie	Waaruit bestaat het contact met je ex-organisatie, sinds dat je bij deze organisatie uit dienst bent? Wat doe jij precies in dit contact (een voorbeeld) ?	Part 1: Factual questions on the contact/relationship with your ex-organization	What does the contact with your ex-organization consist of since you left this organization? What do you actually do in this contact?
Deel 2: beleving relatie/verhouding met je ex-org	Hoe zou je de relatie/verhouding met je ex-org willen omschrijven? Hoe komt het, denk je, dat deze relatie/verhouding is zoals je het beschrijft? Wat speelt daarin je een rol?	Part 2: Your perception of the relation(ship) with your ex-organization	How would you describe your relations(ship) with your ex-organization? What do you think causes this? What factors are involved?
Deel 3: jouw gevoelens ten aanzien van de ex-organisatie	Wat zijn jouw gevoelens ten aanzien van je ex-organisatie? Mijn verwachting is dat mensen in sommige situaties een positieve relatie onderhouden met hun ex-organisatie omdat zij zich nog in een bepaalde mate emotioneel/affectief betrokken voelen bij deze organisatie waar zij eerder onderdeel van waren. Speelt dat bij jou wel/niet? Geef daarvan ook een concreet voorbeeld.	Part 3: Your affects towards the ex-organization	What are your affects towards the ex-organization? I predict that people, in some situations, keep a positive relationship with their ex-organizations because they still feel to a certain degree emotionally/affectively attached to this organization. Does that apply to you or not? Give a concrete example.
Deel 4: Controle	Lees de chat even terug: wat heb je nog niet gezegd ten aanzien van je relatie met je ex-organisatie?	Part 4: Verification	Please read the chat results back: What it still missing concerning your relations with your ex-organization?
Deel 5: Feedback	Welke feedback heb je ten aanzien van deze sessie?	Part 5: Feedback	What feedback do you have concerning this session?

Appendix 2.   Interview guide for online focus groups: manager

Table 15 Interview guide managers

Dutch interview guide (original)	Dutch questions (original)	English interview guide (translation)	English questions (translation)
Deel 1: Feitelijke vragen over het contact/relatie met je ex-organisatie	Waaruit bestaat het contact tussen jouw organisatie en de ex-medewerkers zoal?	Part 1: Factual questions on the contact/relationship with your ex-organization	What does the contact between your organization and your ex-employees generally consist of?
Deel 2: Onderzoeken van voorbeelden van ex-medewerkers die wel en niet een positive relatie onderhouden	Welk voorbeeld kun je beschrijven van een ex-medewerker die een positieve relatie/verhouding heeft met jouw organisatie?.	Part 2: : Exploring examples of ex-employees that do (and do not) keep positive relationships	Which example can you describe of an ex-employee that keeps a positive relationship with your organization?
	Wat versta je in dit voorbeeld precies onder een positieve relatie?		What do mean exactly by positive relations?
	Welk voorbeeld kun je beschrijven van een ex-medewerker die geen positieve relatie/verhouding heeft met jouw organisatie?		Which example can you describe of an ex-employee that does not keep a positive relationship with your organization?
Deel 3: Gevoelens ten aanzien van de ex-organisatie	Mijn verwachting is dat mensen in sommige situaties een positieve relatie onderhouden met hun ex-org omdat zij zich nog in een bepaalde mate emotioneel/affectief betrokken voelen bij deze organisatie waar zij eerder onderdeel van waren. Speelt dat bij jouw ex-medewerkers wel/niet? Geef daarvan ook een concreet voorbeeld.	Part 3: Your affects towards the ex-organization	I predict that people, in some situations, keep a positive relationship with their ex-organizations because they still feel to a certain degree emotionally/affectively attached to this organization. Does that apply to your ex-employees? Give a concrete example.
Deel 4: Controle	Lees de chat even terug: wat heb je nog niet gezegd ten aanzien van je relatie met je ex-medewerkers?	Part 4: Verification	Please read the chat results; What it still missing concerning your relations with your ex-employees?
Deel 5: Feedback	Welke feedback heb je ten aanzien van deze sessie?	Part 5: Feedback	What feedback do you have concering this session?

Appendix 3.   Chat procedure and pre-information for participants (in Dutch)

Introductie chatsessie
Je maakt vandaag onderdeel uit van (nummer).... chatsessie. De eerste sessies hebben o.a. opgeleverd dat het nog niet eenvoudig was voldoende diepgang te bereiken en toch niet te verzuipen in de talloze mogelijke verhaallijnen. Morgen probeer ik dit te verbeteren o.a. door aanscherping van het proces (graag na afloop jullie feedback over de gehele sessie).

Om je enigszins voor het bereiden op het proces, hier alvast de stappen die ik morgen in het algemeen probeer te hanteren:

Processtappen:
1. *ik stel de eerste vraag aan één deelnemer: bijv. Anton (=A)*
2. *en ik vraag door bij A totdat ik hier voldoende over weet*
3. *ondertussen kijken B en C mee en denken na over hun antwoorden op deze vragen*
4. *Ik vraag B het antwoord van A te bekijken en kort aan te geven wat van A voor hem ook geldt en uitgebreider te beschrijven datgene wat voor hem anders is of aanvullend is*
5. *en ik vraag door bij B totdat ik hier voldoende over weet*
6. *vervolgens vraag ik C dit ook te doen bij de reacties van A & B*
7. *Tot slot voor allen: toevoegingen?*
8. *ik ga dan naar deel 2: dan begin ik met B en volg dezelfde stappen.*

Verdere aandachtspunten:

Doorvragen: Regelmatig zal ik doorvragen op wat je precies bedoeld, ook wanneer dit wellicht (voor jou) vanzelfsprekend lijkt. Dit doe ik dan om zeker te weten dat ik je goed begrijp. Voor het onderzoek is het groot belang precies te weten hoe het zit.

Wachttijd benutten: uit de testsessie kwam na voren dat je soms moet wachten voor je weer aan "beurt" bent. Dat kan lang voelen. Ik wil je vragen om deze tijd te gebruiken om naar de antwoorden van de andere deelnemers te bekijken en dit te vergelijken met je eigen situatie. Door op kladblok/pen alvast wat zaken te noteren, kun je daarna het intypen versnellen en daarmee ook de algemene wachttijd voor iedereen. Ook voorkom je dat je de belangrijke eerste reacties kwijt raakt.

Anonimiteit: door de aliasnaam te gebruiken, doe je anoniem mee. Met die uitzondering dat ik als onderzoeker weet welke aliasnaam bij welke persoon hoort; de overige deelnemers van de chat weten dat niet. Ook de naam van je ex-organisatie hoef je niet te noemen. De informatie die je geeft wordt alleen in het kader van dit onderzoek gebruikt en wordt anoniem verwerkt in het onderzoeksrapport.

Per ongeluk offline?: Tijdens de afgelopen chats is het een enkele keer voorgekomen dat iemand uit de chat "wegviel". Als dat gebeurt, zie ik dat. De tip is dan: probeer even opnieuw aan te melden en controleer of er dan achter je naam (online) staat. Ik zie dan dat je terug online bent (kan wat tijd tussen zitten) en dan nodig ik je weer terug uit de chat (wederom verschijnt er waarschijnlijk een kader in rechter onderhoek van je scherm waar je op kunt klikken)

Onderwerp van dit interview
De relatie tussen jou als ex-werknemer en jouw ex-werkgevende organisatie (verder ex-org genoemd).

Structuur van het interview (4 delen): maximaal 1 uur.
Deel 1: feitelijke vragen over het contact met je ex-org.
Deel 2: beleving van de relatie tussen jou en je ex-org.
Deel 3: jouw gevoelens ten aanzien van je ex-org.
Deel 4: controle op volledigheid en jouw reactie/terugkoppeling over dit interview

Appendix 4.   Measures in Dutch and English

I. Measures in Dutch.
This part of the appendix contains all the measures that have been used in this study.

Positieve affect ten aanzien van de ex-organisatie:

A. Dankbaarheid jegens de ex-organisatie: het gevoel van de ex-organisatie goedgezind zijn wegens genoten voorrechten.
7.   Ik ben dankbaar voor de dingen die ik geleerd heb bij deze ex-organisatie.
8.   Ik ben dankbaar voor ervaringen die ik opgedaan bij deze ex-organisatie.
9.   Ik ben dankbaar voor de mensen die ik heb leren kennen bij deze ex-organisatie.
10. Met dank aan deze ex-organisatie, kan ik doen wat ik nu doe.
11. Met dank aan deze ex-organisatie, ben ik wie ik nu ben.
12. Ik ben deze ex-organisatie erkentelijk voor wat zij heeft betekend voor mijn carrière.
13. Ik ben deze ex-organisatie erkentelijk voor wat zij heeft betekend voor mij persoonlijk.

B. Interesse jegens de ex-organisatie: het gevoel van belangstelling voor de ex-organisatie. Belangstelling betekent hier: het op de hoogte willen zijn of het geïnteresseerd zijn in de ex-organisatie.
14. Ik ben geïnteresseerd in de ontwikkeling van deze ex-organisatie.
15. Ik ben geïnteresseerd in informatie over deze ex-organisatie in (vak)bladen.
16. Ik ben geïnteresseerd in de welvaart van deze ex-organisatie.
17. Ik wil op de hoogte blijven van de ontwikkelingen van deze ex-organisatie.

C: Vertrouwen jegens de ex-organisatie : het gevoel van geloof in de betrouwbaarheid van de ex-organisatie. Betrouwbaarheid betekent hier: dat de ex-organisatie te vertrouwen is, zo dat men zich erop kan verlaten.
18. Ik heb vertrouwen in de expertise van deze ex-organisatie.
19. Ik heb vertrouwen in de kwaliteit van deze ex-organisatie.
20. Ik heb vertrouwen in de eerlijkheid van deze ex-organisatie.

D. Saamhorigheidsgevoel geassocieerd met de ex-organisatie: het gevoel met de ex-organisatie verbonden te zijn in vriendschap en verstandhouding.
21. Ik voel me nog steeds onderdeel van de familie van deze ex-organisatie.
22. Deze ex-organisatie zit in mijn hart.
23. Ik voel me prettig verbonden te zijn met deze ex-organisatie.
24. Het voelt fijn dat deze ex-organisatie in mijn genen zit.
25. Ik voel me op mijn gemak bij deze ex-organisatie.

E. Trots geassocieerd met de ex-organisatie: het zelfgevoel dat het volbrengen van iets groots bij de ex-organisatie geeft of het bezit van iets moois gekregen bij de ex-organisatie geeft of het horen bij iets groots of iets moois dat de ex-organisatie is.
26. Wanneer ik een reclame uiting of publicatie van deze ex-organisatie zie, voel ik me trots.
27. Ik ben trots op de kwaliteit van deze ex-organisatie.
28. Ik ben er trots op dat ik bij deze ex-organisatie het vak heb geleerd en niet bij een andere organisatie.
29. Ik ben trots op de positie van deze ex-organisatie in de markt.

Negatieve affect ten aanzien van de ex-organisatie:

F. Boosheid jegens de ex-organisatie: een gevoel van in een sterk onaangename stemming verkerend, waarin men de ex-organisatie verwijten maakt of daarvan blijk geeft.
   30. Ik voel boosheid over wat het werken voor deze ex-organisatie mij persoonlijk heeft gekost.
   31. Ik voel pijn over wat deze ex-organisatie mij heeft aangedaan.
   32. Ik ben boos over wat deze ex-organisatie mij heeft aangedaan.
   33. Ik voel mij gebruikt door de ex-organisatie.
   34. Ik ben boos over het gebrek aan ondersteuning die ik heb ervaren bij deze ex-organisatie.
   35. Ik ben boos over het gebrek aan mogelijkheden dat ik heb ervaren bij deze ex-organisatie.

G. Teleurstelling geassocieerd met de ex-organisatie: een gevoel van door de ex-organisatie in zijn verwachtingen bedrogen te zijn.
   36. Deze ex-organisatie heeft niet aan mijn verwachtingen voldaan.
   37. Ik ben teleurgesteld over het gebrek aan mogelijkheden die ik heb ervaren bij deze ex-organisatie.
   38. Het werken bij deze ex-organisatie heeft mij niet gebracht wat ik ervan had gehoopt.
   39. Ik voel me teleurgesteld dat deze ex-organisatie mij niet bracht wat ik nodig had.
   40. Ik ben teleurgesteld over de richting waarin de ex-organisatie zich heeft ontwikkeld.

H: Wantrouwen geassocieerd met de ex-organisatie: Het gevoel van afwezigheid van vertrouwen geassocieerd met de ex-organisatie. Vertrouwen betekent hier: geloof in de betrouwbaarheid van de ex-organisatie. Betrouwbaarheid betekent hier dat de ex-organisatie te vertrouwen is, zo dat men zich erop kan verlaten.
   41. Ik vertrouw deze ex-organisatie niet.
   42. Ik heb er geen vertrouwen in dat deze ex-organisatie het beste met mij voor heeft.
   43. Ik voel dat deze ex-organisatie een verborgen agenda heeft.
   44. Ik vertrouw de deskundigheid van deze ex-organisatie niet.

I. Schaamte geassocieerd met de ex-organisatie: het gevoel van zich verlegen en/of onbehagelijk voelen over de verbondenheid met de ex-organisatie.
   45. Ik voel me onbehagelijk als iemand weet dat ik voor deze ex-organisatie heb gewerkt.
   46. Ik voel me onbehagelijk als iemand mij vraagt iets over deze ex-organisatie te vertellen.
   47. Ik voel een zekere schaamte bij het geassocieerd worden met deze ex-organisatie.
   48. Ik wil niet meer geassocieerd worden met deze ex-organisatie.
   49. Ik voel me onbehaaglijk als iemand mij vraagt mijn eerlijke mening over deze ex-organisatie te vertellen.

Instrumentele betrokkenheid ten aanzien van de ex-organisatie:
   50. Ik onderhoud positief contact met deze ex-organisatie in belang van mijn eigen imago in de markt.
   51. Ik onderhoud positief contact met deze ex-organisatie in belang van mijn eigen concurrentiepositie in de markt.
   52. Ik wil de relatie met deze ex-organisatie niet verbreken omdat dat negatieve consequenties heeft voor mijn huidige carrière.
   53. Ik wil betrokken blijven bij deze ex-organisatie puur voor mijn eigen persoonlijk voordeel.
   54. Ik ben voor mijn inkomen (deels) afhankelijk van deze ex-organisatie.

Intentie tot weldoend gedrag tav ex-organisatie:
   55. Als ik de mogelijkheid zou ik hebben, dan ben ik van plan om mijn ex-organisatie werk te gunnen.
   56. Wanneer de mogelijkheid zich voordoet, ben ik van plan mijn ex-organisatie aan te bevelen bij mijn vrienden en bekenden.
   57. Wanneer de mogelijkheid zich voordoet, ben ik van plan deze ex-organisatie aan te bevelen bij mijn zakelijke relaties.

58. Wanneer de mogelijkheid zich voordoet, ben ik van plan deze ex-organisatie aan te bevelen bij mijn vakgenoten.
59. Wanneer de mogelijkheid zich voordoet, ben ik van plan deze ex-organisatie te promoten bij anderen.
60. Wanneer de mogelijkheid zich voordoet, ben ik van plan wederzijdse waardevolle verbindingen te leggen tussen mijzelf, mijn huidige (werk-) omgeving en deze ex-organisatie.

Weldoend gedrag tav ex-organisatie:
61. Ik gun mijn ex-organisatie regelmatig werk.
62. Ik beveel deze ex-organisatie regelmatig aan bij mijn vrienden en bekenden.
63. Ik beveel deze ex-organisatie regelmatig aan bij mijn zakelijke relaties.
64. Ik beveel deze ex-organisatie regelmatig aan bij mijn vakgenoten.
65. Ik promoot regelmatig deze ex-organisatie bij anderen.
66. Ik leg nu regelmatig wederzijdse waardevolle verbindingen aan tussen mijzelf, mijn huidige (werk-)omgeving en deze ex-organisatie.

Positieve PANAS:
67. actief
68. alert
69. aandachtig
70. vastberaden
71. enthousiast
72. opgewonden
73. geïnspireerd
74. geïnteresseerd
75. trots
76. krachtig

Negatieve PANAS:
77. bang
78. angstig
79. gespannen
80. zenuwachtig
81. geïrriteerd
82. vijandig
83. schuldig
84. beschaamd
85. geërgerd
86. bedroefd

Sentimentaliteit:
87. Ik houd ervan om herinneringen op te halen over mijn jeugd.
88. Ik ben een sentimenteel persoon.
89. Ik heb geen behoefte om aandenkens uit het verleden te bewaren. (R)
90. Ik houd ervan om souvenirs en andere herinneringen van interessante plaatsen en evenementen te bewaren.
91. Ik houd van gesprekken waarin we herinneringen uit het verleden ophalen.
92. Herdenkingen van speciale evenementen zijn niet belangrijk voor me. (R)
93. Ik word emotioneel geraakt wanneer ik terugdenk aan scènes uit mijn jeugd.

Ex-organisatie eerlijkheidsperceptie:
94. Mijn ex-organisatie heeft mij altijd een eerlijke deal gegeven.
95. Mijn ex-organisatie is een eerlijke organisatie.
96. Eerlijkheid is het woord dat mijn ex-organisatie het best karakteriseert.

Ex-organisatie identificatie:
    97. Wanneer iemand mijn ex-organisatie bekritiseert, voelt het als een persoonlijke belediging.
    98. Ik ben erg geïnteresseerd in wat anderen denken over mijn ex-organisatie.
    99. Wanneer ik spreek over mijn ex-organisatie, zeg ik meestal "wij"in plaats van "zij".
    100.   De successen van mijn ex-organisatie zijn mijn successen.
    101.   Wanneer iemand mijn ex-organisatie complimenteert, voelt het als een persoonlijk compliment.

II. Measures translated in English.
This appendix only contains the affects measures that were developed for this study and not have been reported on in the main thesis.

Positive affects towards the ex-organization

A. Gratefulness towards the ex-organization
    1. I am thankful for the things I have learned at this ex-organization.
    2. I am thankful for the experiences I have had at this ex-organization.
    3. I am thankful for the people I have met at this organization.
    4. Thanks to this ex-organization, I can do what I do now.
    5. Thanks to this ex-organization, I am what I am now.
    6. I am grateful for what this ex-organization has meant for my career.
    7. I am grateful for what this ex-organization has meant for me personally.

B. Interest towards the ex-organization
    8. I am interested in the development of this ex-organization.
    9. I am interested in information about this ex-organization in (specialist) journals.
    10. I am interested in the prosperity of this ex-organization.
    11. I want to stay well informed on the developments of this ex-organization.

C. Trust towards the ex-organization
    12. I have faith in the expertise of this ex-organization.
    13. I have faith in the quality of this ex-organization.
    14. I have faith in the honesty of this ex-organization.
    15. I think that this ex-organization wants to do me a favour.

D. Togetherness associated with the ex-organization
    16. I still feel part of this ex-organizations' family.
    17. This ex-organization is in my heart.
    18. I enjoy being bonded with this ex-organization.
    19. It feels nice to have this ex-organization in my genes.
    20. I feel at ease with this ex-organization.
    21. I feel bonded with the method of working of this ex-organization.

E. Pride towards the ex-organization
    22. When I see a commercial article or publication of this ex-organization, I feel pride.
    23. I am proud of the quality of this ex-organization.
    24. I am proud that I have learned the profession at this ex-organization.
    25. I am proud of the position of the ex-organization in the market.
    26. I often feel proud for what I have learned then at this ex-organization.

Negative affects towards the ex-organization

F. Anger towards the ex-organization
27. I feel angry of what working for this ex-organization has cost me personally.
28. I feel pain on what this ex-organization has done to me.
29. I am angry about what this ex-organization has done to me.
30. I feel used by this ex-organization.
31. I am angry about the lack of support I have experienced with this ex-organization.
32. I am angry about the lack of possibilities that I have experienced with this ex-organization.

G. Disappointment associated with the ex-organization
33. The ex-organization did not come up to my expectations.
34. I am disappointment on the lack of possibilities that I have experienced with this ex-organization.
35. Working at this ex-organization did not bring me what I had hoped for.
36. I feel disappointed that this ex-organization did not bring me what I needed.
37. I am disappointed about the direction in which the ex-organization developed itself.

H. Distrust associated with the ex-organization
38. I do not trust this ex-organization.
39. I do not trust this ex-organization having the best intentions for me.
40. I feel that this ex-organization has a hidden agenda.
41. I do not trust the expertise of this ex-organization.

I. Shame associated with the ex-organization
42. I feel uncomfortable when somebody knows that I have worked for this ex-organization.
43. I feel uncomfortable when somebody asks me to tell something about this ex-organization.
44. I feel a certain kind of shame when getting associated with this ex-organization.
45. I do not want to be associated with this ex-org anymore.
46. I feel uncomfortable when somebody asks me to give my honest opinion about this ex-organization.

Appendix 5. Results coding procedures positive and negative affects (frequencies)

Nr.	Total number Fragments	Number of positive affects	grate-full-ness	happi-ness	interest	trust	sym-pathy	together-ness	equity	pride	res-pect
1	23	7	3	1	1	1	-	-	-	1	-
2	27	8	2	1	1	-	-	2	-	2	-
3	37	19	2	2	2	1	1	8	1	1	1
4	37	7	3	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	-
5	23	4	1	1	-	-	-	2	-	1	-
6	23	10	2	-	1	-	-	7	-	-	-
7	20	8	1	-	-	2	-	3	1	-	1
8	27	8	2	-	1	1	-	2	-	-	2
Total number of fragment per affect		71	16	5	6	5	1	27	2	5	4
% of total number of positive affects			**22,54**	**7,04**	**8,45**	**7,04**	**1,41**	**38,03**	**2,82**	**7,04**	**5,63**

Nr.	Number fragments	Number of negative affects	unease	anger	disappoint-ment	regret	distrust	shame
1	23	4		1	1	1	-	1
2	27	5	1	3	-		1	-
3	37	1	-	-	1		-	-
4	37	9	-	6	3		-	-
5	23	3	-	1	2		-	-
6	23	-	-	-	-		-	-
7	20	2	1	-	-		1	-
8	27	-	-	-	-		-	-
Total number of fragment per affect		24	2	11	7	1	2	1
% of total number of negative affects			**8,33**	**45,83**	**29,17**	**4,17**	**8,33**	**4,17**