
1-1-2015

The Impact of Psychological Contract Breach on Student-Athlete Perceived In-Role Performance and Organizational Citizenship Behaviors

Christopher R. Barnhill

Brian A. Turner

Follow this and additional works at: <https://trace.tennessee.edu/jasm>

Recommended Citation

Barnhill, Christopher R. and Turner, Brian A. (2015) "The Impact of Psychological Contract Breach on Student-Athlete Perceived In-Role Performance and Organizational Citizenship Behaviors," *Journal of Applied Sport Management*. Vol. 7 : Iss. 4.

<https://doi.org/10.18666/JASM-2015-V7-I4-5684>

Available at: <https://trace.tennessee.edu/jasm/vol7/iss4/10>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Volunteer, Open Access, Library Journals (VOL Journals), published in partnership with The University of Tennessee (UT) University Libraries. This article has been accepted for inclusion in Journal of Applied Sport Management by an authorized editor. For more information, please visit <https://trace.tennessee.edu/jasm>.

The Impact of Psychological Contract Breach on Student-Athlete Perceived In-Role Performance and Organizational Citizenship Behaviors

Christopher R. Barnhill

Brian A. Turner

Abstract

Recent research has demonstrated that breached psychological contracts between student-athletes and their coaches can have negative consequences for team members (Barnhill, Czekanski, & Turner, 2013; Barnhill & Turner, 2013, 2014). While these studies are informative, they have been focused on student-athlete attitudes. The purpose of this study was to explore how psychological contracts affect student-athletes' behaviors and performance. The results indicated that neither psychological contract breaches, nor psychological contract violation are significantly related to organizational citizenship behaviors or in-role performance of student-athletes. Implications and suggestions for future results are discussed.

Keywords: *coach-athlete relationship, psychological contracts, student-athletes, perceived performance, organizational citizenship behaviors*

Christopher Barnhill is an assistant professor in the School of Kinesiology at Louisiana State University.

Brian A. Turner is an associate professor and program coordinator for the Sport Management Program at The Ohio State University.

Please send correspondence to Christopher Barnhill, cbarnhill@lsu.edu.

Introduction

Recently, sport management scholars have taken an interest in psychological contracts between coaches and athletes (Bravo, Shonk, & Won, 2012). Research has shown that athletes do form psychological contracts with their coaches (Antunes de Campos, 1994; Barnhill et al., 2013) and that each athlete's contract is unique (Owen-Pugh, 2007). Studies have also shown that many athletes feel that their coaches are failing to live up to the obligations that make up the psychological contract (Barnhill, Turner, & Czech, 2014). Multiple studies have shown that perceived breaches of the psychological contract can affect attitudinal outcomes of athletes (Barnhill et al., 2013; Barnhill & Turner, 2013, 2014).

To date, the psychological contract studies of coaches and athletes have demonstrated the important link between communication, the coach-athlete relationship, and attitudes of athletes. However, behaviors and in-role performance have not been introduced into the scholarship. Since behavioral outcomes and in-role performance directly affect team outcomes, we felt it was important to examine how psychological contracts between coaches and athletes affected those variables. Using a sample of National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) student-athletes, the purpose of this study was to examine how breaches of the psychological contract affect athletes' perceived performance and behaviors towards their teammates. We also examined how the development of psychological contract violation may partially mediate the relationship between perceptions of contract breach and the outcome variables.

Psychological Contracts Between Coaches and Athletes

Psychological contracts are "individual beliefs, shaped by the organization, regarding the terms of an exchange agreement between individuals and their organization" (Rousseau, 1995, p. 9). As the complex relationship between an individual and an organization develops, the psychological contract accounts for areas of the relationship that a formal contract cannot (Rousseau, 1990, 1995). The psychological contract also allows individuals to know what is expected of them, as well as what to expect in return for their efforts (Rousseau, 1990).

Multiple studies have found that student-athletes form psychological contracts with their coaches (Antunes de Campos, 1994; Barnhill et al., 2013). Coaches, representing the management tiers of a team organization (Chelladurai, 2009), pass information to the student-athletes, who must then interpret if the information is part of the psychological contract (Rousseau, 1995). According to Rousseau, any form of communication, including nonverbal communication, can alter the psychological contract if the organizational member (i.e., the student-athlete) believes that there is a change to the exchange agreement. Thus, individuals often have a different interpretation of the psychological contract than their managers (Robinson & Rousseau, 1994).

Psychological contracts form when an organization begins recruiting an individual to become a member (De Vos, Buyens, & Schalk, 2003; De Vos, De Stobbeleir, & Meganck, 2009; Rousseau, 1990). The recruiting process in intercollegiate athletics creates a complicated scenario where coaches must play the role of salesperson, while creating accurate expectations about the intercollegiate athletic experience. For many student-athletes, the initial relationship built with the coaching staff is an important factor in their school selection (Gabert, Hale, & Montalvo, 1999; Goss, Jubenville, & Orejan, 2006; Huffman & Cooper, 2012; Klenosky, Templin, & Troutman, 2001; Pauline, 2010). Student-athletes complain that coaches are often unclear with their communication during the recruiting process (Barnhill et al., 2014; Hyatt, 2003). The lack of clarity continues during the student-athletes' career. A thematic analysis by Barnhill et al. (2014) found that many student-athletes felt that their coaches did not follow through with promises related to playing opportunities, scholarship funding, and athletic skills development.

Coaches often engage in what is commonly referred to as "coach-speak" (LeUnes, 2006), meaningless phrases meant to encourage or motivate an athlete. Spend time at a college practice and you are likely to hear a head or assistant coach tell one or more athletes, "Keep up the hard work and good things will happen," or some variation. Teammates may interpret the same vague phrase differently (Rousseau, 1995). An experienced, first-string athlete may interpret the saying as a message from the coaches to work harder during practice and the team will have a good chance at victory in their next contest. At the same time, another teammate might interpret the phrase as a promise, "If I continue to work hard, I will play in the upcoming contest." If the second athlete does not play in the upcoming game, the individual may construe the situation as a broken promise by the coach. Rousseau (1995) argued that individuals interpret communications from their organization in accordance with their career ambitions and often with a positive outlook. Based on Rousseau's argument, student-athletes are likely to interpret communications from their coaches in a manner that is positive to their athletic ambitions.

Psychological Contract Breach

Robinson and Rousseau (1994) stated, "Each party believes that both parties have made promises and that both parties have accepted the same contract terms. However, this does not necessarily mean that both parties share a common understanding of all contract terms. Each party only believes that they share the same interpretation of the contract" (p. 246). Often, one party falls short of the other party's expectations creating what is known as a psychological contracts breach. Morrison and Robinson (1997) stated, "perceived breach refers to the cognition that one's organization has failed to meet one or more obligations within one's psychological contract" (p. 230).

Based on the literature, it is quite possible for coaches to breach a psychological contract that they never knew existed. Perceived breaches of the psycho-

logical contract between coaches and student-athletes has been found to lower student-athletes trust in their coaches (Barnhill et al., 2013; Barnhill & Turner, 2013), commitment to their teams (Barnhill et al., 2013; Barnhill & Turner, 2014), and satisfaction with their role as an athlete at their university (Barnhill et al., 2013; Barnhill & Turner, 2013). Perceived psychological contract breaches have also been found to increase student-athletes intentions to leave their university (Barnhill et al., 2013; Barnhill & Turner, 2013). Unfortunately for coaches, the outcomes of a breach occur regardless of whether the breach was intentional or accidental (Morrison & Robinson, 1997).

Psychological Contract Violation

Even worse than a perceived breach is the development of psychological contract violation (Morrison & Robinson, 1997; Robinson & Morrison, 2000). Psychological contract violation is an emotional, effective state that sometimes follows an individual's perception of a psychological contract breach (Morrison & Robinson, 1997). Outcomes following the development of psychological contract violation are more intense (Rigotti, 2009). Pate (2006) found that relationships are often unsalvageable following feelings of violation. Barnhill and Turner (2013) is the only study to examine psychological contract violation in student-athletes. They examined student-athletes at four NCAA universities and found that psychological contract violation partially mediated the relationship between perceived psychological contract breaches and student-athletes trust, as well as the relationship between psychological contract breach and intentions to leave.

Extending the Theory

Previous studies examining psychological contracts between coaches and student-athletes are enlightening, but there is reason to believe that psychological contracts may also affect in-role performance and organizational citizenship behaviors of student-athletes. Outside of the team sports setting, psychological contract breach has been found to negatively affect in-role performance (Bal, Chiaburu, & Jansen, 2010; Conway & Coyle-Shapiro, 2006; Coyle-Shapiro & Kessler, 2000; Orvis, Dudley, & Cortina, 2008; Restubog, Bordia, & Tang, 2006; Restubog, Bordia, Tang, & Krebs, 2010; Sturges, Conway, Guest, & Liefoghe, 2005; Suazo, Turnley, & Mai-Dalton, 2005; Turnley, Bolino, Lester, & Bloodgood, 2003) and organizational citizenship behaviors (Coyle-Shapiro, 2002; Coyle-Shapiro & Kessler, 2000; Modaresi & Nourian, 2013; Restubog et al., 2006; Suazo et al., 2005; Turnley et al., 2003) of individuals. A meta-analysis by Zhao, Wayne, Glibkowski, and Bravo (2007) found that psychological contract violation mediates the relationships between psychological contract breach and performance and behavioral outcomes.

Most research has indicated that student-athletes react to psychological contracts in the same nature as other organizational members (Antunes de Campos, 1994; Barnhill et al., 2013; Barnhill & Turner, 2013, 2014). Therefore, it is reason-

able to assume that student-athletes' performance and behavioral outcomes will be affected by psychological contract breaches and violations. Studies examining communication and athlete outcomes also support these assumptions. Studies examining communication between coaches and athletes have found that athletes believe that coach communication affects their feelings toward their teammates (Turman, 2008) and affected their performance (Kassing & Infante, 1999; Kristiansen, Tomten, Hanstad, & Roberts, 2012). Because communication is a major factor in psychological contract development (De Vos et al., 2003; De Vos et al., 2009; Rousseau, 1990, 1995), it is possible that these studies were actually measuring outcomes related to psychological contracts.

Hypotheses

In-Role Performance

Williams and Anderson (1991) defined in-role performance as an individual's ability to complete tasks directly associated with their position within the organization. In practical terms, in-role performance describes a student-athlete's ability to performance tasks associated with their role on the team. If team members consistently perform their tasks in a successful manner, the team should be more likely to experience success. Based on the previously explored psychological contract literature, we proposed the following hypotheses.

H1: Psychological contract breach will negatively affect student-athletes' perceived in-role performance.

H2: Psychological contract violation will partially mediate the relationship between psychological contract breach and perceived in-role performance.

Organizational Citizenship Behavior

Organizational citizenship behavior is defined as "individual behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and in the aggregate promotes the efficient and effective functioning of the organization" (Organ, 1988). Organizational citizenship behavior has been directly linked to organizational performance (Podsakoff & MacKenzie, 1997). In terms of this study, organizational citizenship behavior examined student-athletes willingness to engage in behavior that is positive to the team without explicit instruction from their coaches. Based on the previously reviewed literature, we proposed the following hypotheses:

H3: Psychological contract breach will negatively affect student-athletes' organizational citizenship behaviors.

H4: Psychological contract violation will partially mediate the relationship between psychological contract breach and organizational citizenship behaviors.

Method

Procedures

Surveys were distributed to student-athletes at four NCAA universities during the spring semester. Three of the universities competed at the Division I level, while the other competed at the Division II level. We sought and obtained permission from the institutional review boards (IRBs) at each participating university. Per IRB instructions, all of the surveys were distributed with athletic department cooperation. To avoid bias, surveys were distributed and collected by athletic department employees at previously scheduled team meetings without coaches present. A total of 271 surveys were returned by the athletic department representatives, of which 248 were usable. Our athletic department representatives did not accurately track the number of surveys distributed nor did they report the number of student-athletes present at the meetings. Because of this limitation, we were unable to determine an accurate response rates. Potential issues related to this issue are discussed in the limitations section.

Respondents

The respondents were student-athletes participating at one of four universities. Of the 248 respondents, 196 (79.0%) competed at the Division I level. The remaining 52 (21.0%) respondents competed at the Division II level. In terms of demographics, 142 of the respondents (57.3%) were female, compared to 104 males (41.9%). Two respondents did not give their gender. A majority of respondents were first-year student-athletes ($n = 87$, 35.1%), followed by second-year student-athletes ($n = 65$, 26.2%), third-year student-athletes ($n = 56$, 22.3%), and fourth-year student-athletes ($n = 30$, 12.1%). Five respondents identified themselves as fifth-year student-athletes, and five other respondents did not provide their year in school. Most of the respondents indicated that they had a starting role on their team ($n = 162$, 65.3%), 58 (23.4%) identified themselves as reserves, and 21 (8.5%) indicated that they were redshirting. Seven respondents did not answer the question. The IRB at the Division II school prevented us from collecting sport information at that institution. Respondents at the Division I schools participated in 22 different sports. The sport that was most represented in the sample was track and field ($n = 48$), followed by women's soccer ($n = 23$), softball ($n = 20$), and men's soccer ($n = 15$). No football players participated in the study (the Division II school does not participate in football).

Instrumentation

In order to test the proposed models, an instrument was adapted to measure: 1) perceived psychological contract breach, 2) psychological contract violation, 3) organizational citizenship behavior, and 4) perceived in-role performance. Items from the instrument are listed in Table 1.

We defined psychological contract breach based on Morrison and Robinson's (1997) definition. In this study, psychological contract breach was defined as a perceived negative balance between what the student-athlete believes they were promised and what they actually received from their coaches. Psychological contract breach was measured using items adapted from Robinson and Morrison's (2000) global scale of psychological contract breach. To illustrate the nature of the adaptations, Robinson and Morrison's scale contains the item, "I have not received everything promised to me by my organization." To make the item relevant to the target population, it was adapted to, "I have not received everything promised to me by my coaches." Four items were adapted and measured using a Likert-type scale (1 = *Strongly Disagree*, 6 = *Strongly Agree*).

Morrison and Robinson (1997) defined psychological contract violation as "the emotional and affective state that may, under certain conditions, follow from the belief that one's organization has failed to adequately maintain the psychological contract" (p. 230). To measure psychological contract violation, we adapted four items from Morrison and Robinson's (2000) emotional response to breach scale. To demonstrate the changes made, Morrison and Robinson's scale contains the item, "I feel betrayed by my organization." We adapted the item to, "I feel betrayed by my coaches." Responses were measured using a Likert-type scale (1 = *Strongly Disagree*, 6 = *Strongly Agree*).

Organ (1988) stated that "organizational citizenship behavior represents individual behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system" (p. 4). Williams and Anderson (1991) further conceptualized the theory by acknowledging that organizational citizenship behaviors may be directed at benefiting individuals within the organization (organizational citizenship behaviors – individuals) or the organization as a whole (organizational citizenship behaviors – organizational). Willingness amongst teammates to help one another without prompts from coaches is an important dynamic within the sport team organization. As such, our operational definition of organizational citizenship behavior was aligned with Williams and Anderson's definition of organizational citizenship behaviors – individuals. We defined organizational citizenship behavior as a student-athlete's willingness to help their teammates. To measure organizational citizenship behavior, four items from Williams and Anderson's scale were adapted to the sample population. To illustrate the nature of the adaptations, Williams and Anderson's scale includes the item, "Goes out of the way to help new employees." On our scale the item read, "I go out of my way to help new members of the team." Responses were measured using a Likert-type scale (1 = *Strongly Disagree*, 6 = *Strongly Agree*).

In-role performance examines behaviors necessary to one's position with the team or organization (Katz & Kahn, 1978). To provide uniformity across sports and to protect anonymity, participants were asked to provide their own perception of their performance. The use of self-evaluative creates potential for self-enhancement bias. However, Goffin and Gellatly (2001) found that self-evaluative

measures are highly correlated with objective performance measures. To measure perceived in-role performance, four items from Williams and Anderson's (1991) scale were adapted. To illustrate the adaptations, Williams and Anderson's scale includes the item "The employee performs tasks that are expected of him or her." The item was adapted to "I consistently perform the tasks expected of me." Responses were measured using a Likert-type scale (1 = *Strongly Disagree*, 6 = *Strongly Agree*).

Reliability and Validity

To establish construct validity, a panel of five experts reviewed the instrument. The panel was comprised of organizational behavior researchers and sports management scholars. Suggestions made by the panel of experts were incorporated into the instrument, thus substantiating the construct validity of the instrument.

Confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to establish the reliability of the instrument. Any items with a factor loading (λ) below .70 were removed from analysis per recommendations by Hair, Anderson, Tatham, and Black (1998). One performance item failed to meet the .70 threshold and was removed from our analysis. The results of the confirmatory factor analysis are illustrated in Table 1. Internal consistency of the instrument was tested by determining the Cronbach's alpha (α) for each construct. A construct with an α of .70 or greater was considered acceptable (Hair et al., 1998). The α levels of all of the variables were

Table 1
Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Items	Factor Loading (α)
Almost all of the promises made by my coaches during recruitment have been kept so far. (PCB, reversed)	.875
So far my coaches have done an excellent job of fulfilling their promises to me. (PCB, reversed)	.897
I have not received everything promised to me by my coaches. (PCB)	.772
My coaches have broken many of their promises to me even though I've upheld my end of the deal. (PCB)	.835
I feel a great deal of anger toward my coaches. (PCV)	.896
I feel betrayed by my coaches. (PCV)	.903
I feel extremely frustrated by how I have been treated by my coaches. (PCV)	.899
I feel that my coaches have violated the contract between us. (PCV)	.800
I take personal interest in the well being of my teammates. (OCB)	.750
I go out of my way to help new members of the team. (OCB)	.840
I take breaks when no one is watching. (OCB, reversed)	.861
I take the time to listen to the worries of my teammates. (OCB)	.812
I fulfill all of the responsibilities of my specified role on the team. (IRP)	.838
I consistently perform the tasks expected of me. (IRP)	.884
<i>I sometimes fail to perform up to my abilities. (IRP, reversed)</i>	<i>.513</i>
<i>I consistently perform to the level that is expected of me.</i>	<i>.833</i>

Factor loadings <.70 in italics

considered acceptable: psychological contract breach $\alpha = .87$; psychological contract violation $\alpha = .89$; organizational citizenship behavior $\alpha = .84$; and in-role performance $\alpha = .830$).

Results

Descriptive statistics for each of the variables can be found in Table 2. A correlation matrix was produced using IBM SPSS Statistics 21. The correlation matrix can be found in Table 3.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
PCB	2.56	1.23
PCV	2.12	1.17
OCB	5.02	.82
IRP	4.89	.80

Table 3

Correlation Matrix

	PCB	PCV	OCB	IRP
PCB	1.000			
PCV	.764**	1.000		
OCB	-.150*	-.182**	1.000	
IRP	-.051	-.076	.264**	1.000

*Significant at the .05 level

** Significant at the .01 level

To test our hypotheses, regression analysis was conducted using Lisrel 9.1. H1 predicted that psychological contract breach will negatively affect student-athletes' perceived in-role performance. H1 was not supported. In-role performance was not significantly related to psychological contract breach ($\beta = .01$, $t(248) = .17$, $p = .422$). H2 predicted that psychological contract violation will partially mediate the relationship between psychological contract breach and perceived in-role performance. H2 was tested using the mediation method prescribed by Baron and Kenny (1986). Partial mediation would be established if the independent variable maintained a significant relationship with both the mediating variable and the

dependent variable, while at the same time the mediating variable maintains a significant relationship with the dependent variable. H2 was not supported. Psychological contract breach was positively related to psychological contract violation ($\beta = .73, t(248) = 18.66, p < .001$). However, neither psychological contract violation ($\beta = -.06, t(248) = -.91, p = .366$), nor psychological contract breach ($\beta = .01, t(248) = .17, p = .422$) was significantly related to in-role performance (Figure 1).

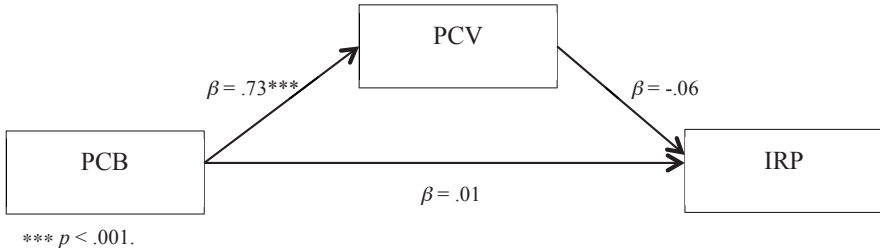


Figure 1. Partial Mediation Model PCB, PCV, IRP

H3 predicted that psychological contract breach will negatively affect student-athletes' organizational citizenship behaviors. H3 was not supported. Psychological contract breach was not significantly related organizational citizenship behaviors of student-athletes ($\beta = -.02, t(248) = -.27, p = .790$). H4 predicted that psychological contract violation will partially mediate the relationship between psychological contract breach and organizational citizenship behaviors. Once again we used Baron and Kenny's (1986) mediation method. H4 was not supported. Neither psychological contract breach ($\beta = -.02, t(248) = -.27, p = .790$) nor psychological contract violation ($\beta = -.11, t(248) = -1.69, p = .093$) were significantly related to organizational citizenship behavior (Figure 2).

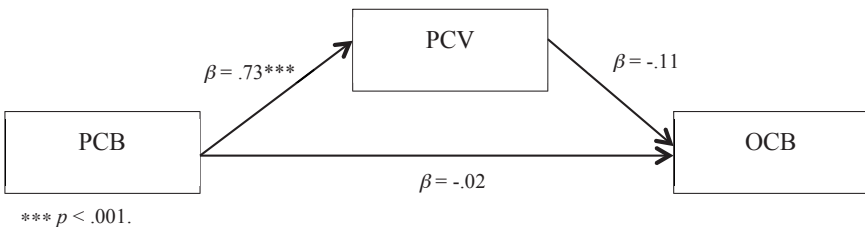


Figure 2. Partial Mediation Model PCB, PCV, OCB

A majority of the student-athletes in the study reported that they were starters on their teams. However, a substantial number of athletes identified as reserves. Owen-Pugh (2007) found that athletes develop unique psychological contracts with their coaches based on their team roles but none of the previous psychological contract literature explored the difference between athletes who identify as starters and students who identify as backups. Rousseau (1995) hypothesized that individuals interpret their psychological contracts differently based on their organizational role and their career ambitions. To control for potential differences within the sample population, we conducted an independent samples *t*-test to determine if playing status affected student-athletes perceptions of breach. This test was conducted to see if student-athletes who identified themselves as reserves were more likely to perceive a psychological contract breach than student-athletes who identified as starters. The mean response from starters regarding perceptions of psychological contract breach was 2.52 ($SD = 1.22$). For reserves, the mean response was 2.80 ($SD = 1.31$). The difference between the two groups was not significant $t(218) = -1.46, p = .145$.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to determine how perceived psychological contract breaches and psychological contract violations between coaches and student-athletes affect organizational citizenship behaviors and perceived in-role performance of student-athletes. Based on the previous literature, we hypothesized that psychological contract violation would partially mediate the relationship between psychological contract breach and the outcome variables. The results of the study did not support our hypotheses.

The results of this study are surprising. The literature indicates that psychological contract breaches and psychological contract violation are strongly linked to poorer performance (Bal et al., 2010; Conway & Coyle-Shapiro, 2006; Coyle-Shapiro & Kessler, 2000; Orvis et al., 2008; Restubog et al., 2006; Sturges et al., 2005; Suazo et al., 2005; Turnley et al., 2003) and poorer organizational citizenship behaviors (Coyle-Shapiro, 2002; Coyle-Shapiro & Kessler, 2000; Modaresi & Nourian, 2013; Restubog et al., 2006; Suazo et al., 2005; Turnley et al., 2003) in other organizational settings. Our results indicated that psychological contract breaches might affect student-athletes differently than other types of organizational members.

There are some plausible explanations for the results. Intercollegiate athletics are hyper-competitive and performance measures publically available. A drop in performance has numerous negative consequences that may affect the student-athlete differently than others. If an athlete is performing at substandard levels, their team may lose a game or a championship. Student-athletes performance may be more a product of their relationships with their teammates, their drive to win games, their drive to play sport beyond college, or their need to avoid public em-

barrassment than a product of their relationship with their coaches. In an effort to avoid these outcomes, a student-athlete may continue to perform at a high level despite psychological contract breaches and psychological contract violations. The same dynamics may also explain why organizational citizenship behavior was unaffected by psychological contract breaches and psychological contract violations. Student-athletes may feel pressure from teammates or just desire to help teammates in an effort to win contests.

It is also possible that the outcome of our study was affected by self-enhancement bias from the survey participants. Although the findings of Goffin and Gellatly (2001) indicated that self-enhancement bias is unlikely, self-reported measures can leave open the possibility of its occurrence. The outcomes of self-enhancement bias may be twofold. If student-athletes are actually performing at lower levels than indicated in the study, the results could be the outcome of measurement error. On the other hand, if the participants are performing at levels lower than what they reported, it could indicate that they are failing to recognize their own breaches of the psychological contract. Psychological contracts require performance by both parties. It is possible that the actions of the coaches were actually reactions to worse performances than the student-athletes believed they were giving. Further studies would need to be conducted to explore both possibilities.

Finally, we examined whether student-athletes who identified as reserves would be more likely to perceive a psychological contract breach than those who identified as starters. Our results indicated that, although the mean perception of breach was higher for reserves, the difference was not statistically significant. Rousseau (1995) speculated that organizational members should interpret their psychological contracts based on their roles and ambitions. Owen-Pugh (2007) did find evidence that athletes do form different psychological contracts based on their team roles but did not address playing status. It is possible that reserves and starters are equally perceptive of breaches. However, it is also possible that our results were influenced by the demographics of our study. Barnhill and Turner (2013) found that student-athletes are more likely to perceive a psychological contract breach in their later years at the university. A majority of the student-athletes in our sample were in their first or second year. Student-athletes that are reserves in year one or two may not expect to have a starting role on their teams and therefore would not interpret the lack of playing time as a psychological contract breach. Student-athletes who are reserves in years three or four may interpret the psychological contract differently.

Directions for Future Research

There results of this study provide several directions for future study. This was the first psychological contract study of student-athletes that indicated a difference between student-athletes and other populations. Duplication of the study could help determine if this study was an anomaly or if the results are consistent.

In addition, future studies should include football playing student-athletes in the study. Football players are the most prominent student-athletes at the NCAA Division I level. Their experience may be quite different from student-athletes from other teams. Finally, duplications of this study should include scholarship amount as a control. We were prevented from measuring scholarship levels by multiple IRBs, but it is possible that student-athletes with a full scholarship have different perspectives on their relationship with their coaches than other student-athletes.

Outside of duplication, scholars should also explore the development of dimensional scales for psychological contract research on student-athletes. The psychological contract between coaches and student-athletes has been indicated to affect many outcomes (Barnhill et al., 2013; Barnhill & Turner, 2013, 2014), but scholars are unable to determine which perceived promises or expectations truly affect individual outcomes. A dimensional scale would allow scholars to determine which expectations affect different dependent variables (Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1998). The development of a dimensional scale would allow researchers to determine if the psychological contract is truly unrelated to student-athlete performance and organizational citizenship, or if certain dimensions may affect in-role and extra-role performance. Finally, scholars should examine other behavioral outcomes associated with student-athletes. Student-athletes have multiple relationships with their university. The current study examined performance outcomes within the athletics realm. Future studies should examine measures related academics and other aspects of student-athletes' lives.

Limitations

The major limitation to this study was the use of self-evaluation measures for in-role performance. Although, Goffin and Gellatly (2001) supports the assumption that self-evaluation scales are highly correlated with objective measures, there is a possibility that self-enhancement may have biased the performance based measures. Another limitation was the survey distribution method, which protected student-athlete anonymity, but took survey administration out of the investigators control. Other limitations included the use of items adapted from other organizational settings and the lack of a question pertaining to scholarship amount.

References

- Antunes de Campos, P. (1994). *The relationship between coaches and athletes: The strength of the psychological contract in sports*. (Unpublished Dissertation), Alliant International University, San Diego, CA.
- Bal, P. M., Chiaburu, D. S., & Jansen, P. G. W. (2010). Psychological contract breach and work performance: Is social exchange a buffer or an intensifier? *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 25(3), 252–273. doi: 10.1108/02683941011023730

- Barnhill, C. R., Czekanski, W. A., & Turner, B. A. (2013). Psychological Contracts and Student-Athlete Retention. *Journal for the Study of Sports and Athletes in Education*, 7(1), 20–40. doi: 10.1179/1935739713z.0000000002
- Barnhill, C. R., & Turner, B. A. (2013). Broken promises: The effect of psychological contract violation on student-athlete trust and intentions to leave their team. *Journal of Intercollegiate Sport*, 6, 179–195.
- Barnhill, C. R., & Turner, B. A. (2014). Psychological contract breach between coaches and student-athletes: The impact on team commitment. *Journal of Issues in Intercollegiate Athletics*, 7, 245–262.
- Barnhill, C. R., Turner, B. A., & Czech, D. R. (2014). *Terms of the student-athlete psychological contract: A thematic analysis*. Paper presented at the College Sports Research Institute Annual Meeting, Columbia, SC.
- Baron, R. M., & Kenny, D. A. (1986). The moderator–mediator variable distinction in social psychological research: Conceptual, strategic, and statistical considerations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 51(6), 1173–1182.
- Bravo, G., Shonk, D., & Won, D. (2012). Psychological contract in the context of sport organizations. In L. Robinson, P. Chelladurai, G. Bodet & P. Downward (Eds.), *Routledge handbook of sport management* (pp. 193–213). London: Routledge.
- Chelladurai, P. (2009). *Managing organizations for sport and physical activity* (3rd ed.). Scottsdale, AZ: Holcomb Hathaway.
- Conway, N., & Coyle-Shapiro, J. A.-M. (2006). *Reciprocity and psychological contracts: Employee performance and contract fulfillment*. Paper presented at the Academy of Management Annual Meeting, Atlanta, GA.
- Coyle-Shapiro, J. A.-M. (2002). A psychological contract perspective on organizational citizenship behavior. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 23(8), 927–946. doi: 10.1002/job.173
- Coyle-Shapiro, J. A.-M., & Kessler, I. (2000). Consequences of the psychological contract for the employment relationship: A large scale survey. *Journal of Management Studies*, 37(7), 903–930.
- De Vos, A., Buyens, D., & Schalk, R. (2003). Psychological contract development during organizational socialization: adaptation to reality and the role of reciprocity. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 24(5), 537–559. doi: 10.1002/job.205
- De Vos, A., De Stobbeleir, K., & Meganck, A. (2009). The relationship between career-related antecedents and graduates' anticipatory psychological contracts. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 24(3), 289–298. doi: 10.1007/s10869-009-9107-3
- Gabert, T. E., Hale, J. L., & Montalvo, G. P. (1999). Differences in college choice factors among freshmen student-athletes. *The Journal of College Admissions*, 164, 20–29.

- Goffin, R. D., & Gellatly, I. R. (2001). A multi-rater assessment of organizational commitment: are self-report measures biased? *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 22*, 437–451.
- Goss, B. D., Jubenville, C. B., & Orejan, J. (2006). An examination of influences and factors on the institutional selection processes of freshmen student-athletes at small colleges and universities. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education, 16*(2), 105–134. doi: 10.1300/J050v16n02_05
- Hair, J. F., Anderson, R. E., Tatham, R. L., & Black, W. C. (1998). *Multivariate data analysis* (5th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Huffman, L. T., & Cooper, C. G. (2012). I'm taking my talents to... An examination of hometown socioeconomic status on the college-choice factors of football student-athletes at a Southeastern university. *Journal of Issues in Intercollegiate Athletics, 5*, 225–246.
- Hyatt, R. (2003). Barriers to persistence among African American intercollegiate athletes: A literature review of non-cognitive variables. *College Student Journal, 37*, 260–275.
- Kassing, J. W., & Infante, D. A. (1999). Aggressive communication in the coach-athlete relationship. *Communication Research Reports, 16*(2), 110–120.
- Katz, D., & Kahn, R. (1978). *The social psychology of organizations* (2nd ed.). New York: Wiley.
- Klenosky, D. B., Templin, T. J., & Troutman, J. A. (2001). Recruiting student athletes: A means-end investigation of school-choice decision making. *Journal of Sport Management, 15*, 95–106.
- Kristiansen, E., Tomten, S. E., Hanstad, D. V., & Roberts, G. C. (2012). Coaching communication issues with elite female athletes: Two Norwegian case studies. *Scandinavian Journal of Medicine and Science in Sports, 22*(6), 156–167. doi: 10.1111/j.1600-0838.2012.01521.x
- LeUnes, A. (2006). Applying sport psychology philosophies, principles, and practices onto the gridiron: A commentary. *International Journal of Sports Science and Coaching, 1*(4), 339–341.
- Modaresi, S., & Nourian, K. (2013). Impact of fulfillment of psychological contract on organizational citizenship behavior and innovative behaviors. *Advances in Environmental Biology, 7*(8), 1861–1869.
- Morrison, E. W., & Robinson, S. L. (1997). When employees feel betrayed: A model of how psychological contract violation develops. *Academy of Management Review, 22*(1), 226–256.
- Organ, D. W. (1988). *Organizational citizenship behavior: The good soldier syndrome*. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.
- Orvis, K. A., Dudley, N. M., & Cortina, J. M. (2008). Conscientiousness and reactions to psychological contract breach: A longitudinal field study. *The Journal of Applied Psychology, 93*(5), 1183–1193. doi: 10.1037/0021-9010.93.5.1183

- Owen-Pugh, V. (2007). The commercialising of British men's basketball: Psychological contracts between coaches and players in the post-Bosman game. *Journal of Contemporary European Research*, 3(3), 255–272.
- Pate, J. (2006). The changing contours of the psychological contract: Unpacking context and circumstances of breach. *Journal of European Industrial Training*, 30(1), 32–47. doi: 10.1108/03090590610643860
- Pauline, J. (2010). Factors influencing college selection by NCAA Division I, II, and III lacrosse players. *Journal of Research in Health, Physical Education, Recreation, Sport and Dance*, 5(2), 62–69.
- Podsakoff, P. A., & MacKenzie, S. B. (1997). Impact of organizational citizenship behavior on organizational performance: A review and suggestions for future research. *Human Performance*, 10(2), 133–151.
- Restubog, S. L. D., Bordia, P., & Tang, R. L. (2006). Effects of psychological contract breach on performance of IT employees: The mediating role of affective commitment. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 79(2), 299–306. doi: 10.1348/096317905x53183
- Restubog, S. L. D., Bordia, P., Tang, R. L., & Krebs, S. A. (2010). Investigating the moderating effects of leader-member exchange in the psychological contract breach-employee performance relationship: A test of two competing perspectives. *British Journal of Management*, 21, 422–437. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-8551.2009.00673.x
- Rigotti, T. (2009). Enough is enough? Threshold models for the relationship between psychological contract breach and job-related attitudes. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 18(4), 442–463.
- Robinson, S. L., & Morrison, E. W. (2000). The development of psychological contract breach and violation: a longitudinal study. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 21, 525–546.
- Robinson, S. L., & Rousseau, D. M. (1994). Violating the psychological contract: Not the exception but the norm. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 15, 245–259.
- Rousseau, D. M. (1990). New hire perceptions of their own and their employer's obligations: A study of psychological contracts. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 11, 389–400.
- Rousseau, D. M. (1995). *Psychological contracts in organizations: Understanding written and unwritten agreements*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Rousseau, D. M., & Tijoriwala, S. A. (1998). Assessing psychological contracts: Issues, alternatives, and measures. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 19, 679–695.
- Sturges, J., Conway, N., Guest, D., & Liefoghe, A. (2005). Managing the career deal: the psychological contract as a framework for understanding career management, organizational commitment and work behavior. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 26(7), 821–838. doi: 10.1002/job.341

- Suazo, M. M., Turnley, W. H., & Mai-Dalton, R. R. (2005). The role of perceived violation in determining employees' reactions to psychological contract breach. *Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies, 12*(1), 24–36.
- Turman, P. D. (2008). Coaches' immediacy behaviors as predictors of athletes' perceptions of satisfaction and team cohesion. *Western Journal of Communication, 72*(2), 162–179. doi: 10.1080/10570310802038424
- Turnley, W. H., Bolino, M. C., Lester, S. W., & Bloodgood, J. M. (2003). The impact of psychological contract fulfillment on the performance of in-role and organizational citizenship behaviors. *Journal of Management, 29*(2), 187–206.
- Williams, L. J., & Anderson, S. E. (1991). Job satisfaction and organizational commitment as predictors of organizational citizenship and in-role behaviors. *Journal of Management, 17*(3), 601–617.
- Zhao, H., Wayne, S. J., Glibkowski, B. C., & Bravo, J. (2007). The impact of psychological contract breach on work-related outcomes: A meta-analysis. *Personnel Psychology, 60*, 647–680.