

Perceptions of Broken Promises in the Workplace

By

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ABSTRACT

The present study explored psychological contract breach and, intentionality on organizational outcomes. Two independent factors were manipulated: intentionality of psychological contract breach– intentional and. unintentional – and type of psychological contract breach – flexible working hours and. compensation. Four scenarios were created to evaluate interactions of intentionality and type of psychological contract breach by measuring job satisfaction and turnover intention ratings. Participants were randomly presented with one out of the four scenarios and answered psychological contract breach, job satisfaction, and turnover intention questions. Findings suggested that the type of psychological contract breach had a significant effect on satisfaction and turnover intentions. Participants were more likely to have lower job satisfaction ratings and higher turnover intention ratings if the presented scenario related to compensation rather than flexible working hours. A 2 x 2 ANOVA revealed no significant interaction between intentionality and type of contract breach when measuring turnover intentions and job satisfaction. Intentionality did not have a significant main effect on job satisfaction or turnover intentions.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

This study was based on the assumption that when an employee thinks an employer and/or organization did not keep a promise, that employee is likely to perceive that a psychological contract breach occurred (Rousseau, 2001). Throughout this paper, the phrases, broken promises and the psychological contract breach will be used interchangeably. The same is for promises and psychological contracts.

The purpose of this research study was to examine perceptions of intentional and unintentional broken promises of both work-life balance and compensation within an organization. Then I recorded perceptions of broken promises effect turnover intentions and job satisfaction. When working hours and/or pay increases are perceived as unreasonable by an employee, satisfaction and commitment to the organization will decrease (Chambel & Fortuna, 2015; Kanwar et al., 2009). For this study, work-life balance was measured through flexible working hours and compensation was evaluated through pay increases. According to Morrison and Robison (1997), employees tend to be more forgiving if they perceive the organization accidentally breached a promise. If the employee perceives the organizational promise was purposefully broken the employee there tend to be more negative outcomes (Morrison & Robinson, 1997).

Realistic Job Previews

The goal of realistic job previews is to limit skewed expectations in hopes to increase job satisfaction, improve coping abilities for unpleasant job related qualities, and attempts to show transparency from the organization (Dugoni & Ilgen, 1981; Susanto & Hartika, 2016). Once a new and/or potential employee has a realistic understanding of the

job, that individual is more likely to stay committed to the organization, perform better, and is less likely to leave the organization (Susanto & Hartika, 2016). It is essential for the organization to provide an accurate representation of the job.

The only issue with this is that both the organization and the potential employee strive to look attractive to the other (Dugoni & Ilgen, 1981). Sometimes this can bias the information that is transmitted and received by both sides (Dugoni & Ilgen, 1981). Organizations need to be aware of how they present themselves to potential employees, to mitigate perceptions of broken promises.

Psychological Contract Breach

Psychological contracts are reciprocal, and most times are implicit, agreements between an employee and the organization (Rousseau, 1990). Many times, organizations create psychological contracts throughout the recruiting process and foster them through reward systems once the individual is hired (Rousseau, 1990). A main issue with psychological contracts is that there is room for interpretation (Rousseau, 2001). If an employee's perception of the promise does not line up with the employer, there tends to be a greater chance that a perceived psychological contract breach occurred (Rousseau, 2001).

Often when an organization promises an employee something, they believe it. Therefore, when promises are not kept, employees go through an evaluation process to figure out how to react (Morrison & Robinson, 1997). During this evaluation process, employees try to communicate with authority figures within the organization to try and maintain the promise that was made (Parzefall & Coyle-Shapiro, 2011). On average, once

an employee perceives that promises from an organization are fulfilled, turnover and absenteeism intentions decrease (Kraak et al., 2018). When the communication is not provided back to the employee, negative emotions ensue (Parzefall & Coyle-Shapiro, 2011). Once the psychological contract between the employee and the organization is broken the employee loses trust and is less likely to be committed to the organization (Kickul, 2001; Pate et al., 2003).

According to Morrison and Robinson (1997), an employee analyzes the degree to which a psychological contract is breached through uncertainty, the nature of the relationship, and the costs that may occur when the promise is not fulfilled by the employer. Then the employee will examine the ratio of the benefits provided and the benefits that were promised (Morrison & Robinson, 1997). If the employee does not view this ratio as fair, that employee will perceive there to be a psychological contract breach. Finally, the employee will analyze what the consequences should relate to the psychological contract breach (Morrison & Robinson, 1997).

One aspect to understand is that emotions and actions consistently influence one another throughout the reasoning process of a psychological contract breach. Normally a psychological contract breach is considered a violation of a promise or obligation of another party (Parzefall & Coyle-Shapiro, 2011). Individuals that perceive a psychological contract breach occurred, tend to restore order through finding reasons for why the psychological contract was breached or whether there was a misunderstanding between the parties. To reduce this confusion, individuals try to communicate, with the other party, what the cause of psychological contract breach was. If the psychological

contract breach is not resolved or disconfirmed, negative emotions of the individual will ensue, along with loss of trust and commitment (Parzefall & Coyle-Shapiro, 2011).

Once an employee's trust is broken, they become less satisfied with the job and the organization as a whole (Tekleab & Taylor, 2003). This can then lead to a lack of commitment to the organization and the employee may limit contributions to the organization (Chen & Wu, 2017). These employees tend to feel as though the employer failed them, which leads to a greater desire to leave the organization and a lower desire to perform well (Chen & Wu, 2017; Suazo et al., 2005).

Individuals that have a large impact on employees perceptions of the organization are the managers and supervisors (Chen & Wu, 2017). The relationship that an employee has with managers and supervisors can impact job satisfaction, turnover intentions, and organizational commitment (Chambel, 2014; Chen & Wu, 2017; Morrison & Robinson, 1997).

Employees tend to be more forgiving if they perceive the organization accidentally broke a promise, but if the psychological contract breach is perceived as purposeful, the employee will think negatively towards the employer (Morrison & Robinson, 1997). When employees perceive that there has been a psychological contract breach, commitment to the organization decreases (Parzefall & Coyle-Shapiro, 2011), people are less satisfied with the job (Zhao et al., 2007), there is a higher intention to leave the organization (Tekleab & Taylor, 2003), employees have lower task performance, and employees reduce their organizational citizenship behaviors (Morrison & Robinson, 1997).

Employees are more likely to take part in deviant behavior when they feel the psychological contracts have been breached (Peng et al., 2016). This also leads to a greater intent to leave the organization because those initial promises were not kept and/or violated. When someone perceives a violation of a psychological contract, they are more likely to be less satisfied with their job and start looking for somewhere else to work (Maden et al., 2016). Many times, psychological contract breaches affected employees' intentions and emotions but did not have a significant effect on behaviors (Pate et al., 2003). For instance, studies have shown that people's intention to quit is higher and dissatisfaction is more likely to be voiced when a psychological contract breach occurs, but data shows that absenteeism rates and turnover rates did not differ (Maden et al., 2016; Turnley & Feldman, 2000; Zhao et al., 2007).

Psychological Contract Breach Outcomes

Psychological contract breaches have various outcomes that impact both employees and organizations. A few outcomes of psychological contract breaches are: decreased task performance, reduced organizational citizenship behaviors, increased counterproductive work behaviors, higher levels of turnover intentions, reduced job satisfaction, along with low trust, motivation, and organizational commitment (Asha & Jyothi, 2013; Bal et al., 2010; Suazo et al., 2005). This study will focus on the psychological contract breach outcomes of job satisfaction and turnover intentions.

Job Satisfaction

Employees tend to become unsatisfied with a job when perceptions of a situation or process seem unfair (Pate et al., 2003). Although employees' satisfaction levels seem

to decrease when expectations are not met, satisfaction will not necessarily increase when expectations are exceeded (Irving & Montes, 2009). According to Kanwar et al. (2009), the more satisfied someone is with a job the higher chance of increase productivity while lowering absenteeism and turnover.

According to Irving and Montes (2009), when expectations are not met employees' satisfaction levels are likely to decrease. The more psychological contracts an organization breaches, the more likely that employee will have a negative attitude towards that organization (Kickul, 2001). Higher levels of job satisfaction tend to relate to higher levels of promise fulfillment (Kraak et al., 2018).

Research has shown that employee perceptions of an organization are highly influenced by the employee's supervisor (Chambel, 2014). When supervisors do not follow through with organizational promises that employee's perception of the organization is likely to become tainted (Chambel, 2014). According to Chambel (2014), higher levels of transparent communication and trust an employee has with a supervisor, the greater chance of job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Turnover Intentions

Psychological contract breaches positively relate to an individual's intent to quit and negatively impact commitment to the organization (Suazo et al., 2005). This means that the more psychological contracts are breached, the less likely an employee will be committed to an organization, and the more likely that employee will withdraw from the organization (Irving & Montes, 2009; Kickul, 2001). This means that employees are more likely to mentally detach from the organization by not being as involved within the

organization (Suazo et al., 2005). Kickul (2001) found that when employees were presented with unfulfilled promises related to autonomy, rewards and opportunities, there was a higher chance of the intention to leave. Overall, when promises are not met or unfulfilled, employees become less satisfied and more exhausted which can also lead to higher turnover intentions (Proost et al., 2012).

Reciprocal communication between the leaders of the organization and employees influences the psychological contract breach and minimizes turnover intentions (Morrison & Robinson, 1997). If there is reciprocal communication between the supervisors and employees the number of psychological contract breaches decrease as well as turnover intentions (Chen & Wu, 2017).

Although psychological contract breaches can influence an employee's desire to leave an organization, that the employee's behavior may not necessarily match the intent (Pate et al., 2003). This not only relates to turnover, but also has the same trend when looking at absenteeism intentions and actual absenteeism rates (Pate et al., 2003). Tekleab and Taylor (2003) found that as tenure increased an employee's obligations to the organization increased. This may be a reason why, even if people desire to leave an organization due to a psychological contract breach, the turnover rates may not reflect it (Tekleab & Taylor, 2003). Another reasoning for the disconnect of turnover intentions and behaviors is whether or not there are other job opportunities or not (Turnley & Feldman, 2000). If there are fewer job opportunities, an employee may want to leave their current job, but will not due to lack of job prospects (Turnley & Feldman, 2000).

Work-Life Balance

According to Kraak et al. (2018), work-life balance is an individual's perception of whether the time spent work and areas of life outside of work are reasonable. When employees feel as though the balance work and life commitments are reasonable people are more likely to detach from work and focus on other aspects of life (Kanwar et al., 2009). For this study, work-life balance will be observed through flexible working hours.

Most literature found that a greater balance between work and life commitments reduces stress (Parkes & Langford, 2008); while Sharkey and Caska (2019), found that job stress does not significantly decrease when considering work-life balance. A key issue in relation to work-life balance has to do with work hours provided to employees (Parkes & Langford, 2008). Having long hours limits an employee's ability to psychologically detach from the workplace, which influences stress that is brought home (Kanwar et al., 2009). Ultimately, most employees desire fewer hours and a greater schedule flexibility (Sharkey & Caska, 2019).

Work-life balance contributes to different areas of an employee's life and how satisfied and/or committed they are to the job and organization. With better work-life balance, employees tend to have higher job satisfaction and are more committed to the organization (Kraak et al., 2018). Individuals within an organization that have higher levels of job satisfaction tend to be more productive and stay with that organization longer (Grawitch et al., 2006).

Employees tend to be more engaged within the organization when work-life balance is held at a priority (Parkes & Langford, 2008). When employees have a greater

balance between work and life commitments, they are less likely to become exhausted or burnt out (Parkes & Langford, 2008). Once a person becomes burnt out from organizational commitments, job satisfaction is diminished (Parkes & Langford, 2008). These high levels of stress and exhaustion can lead to negative emotions toward the organization and poor performance (Kanwar et al., 2009).

Compensation

In most organizations, compensation encompasses a variety of ways that employees are paid. There are two different forms of compensation: direct which refers to financial payment (e.g. salary and/or merit pay increases) and indirect which refers to non-monetary based payment (e.g. vacation time and/or dental insurance; Newman et al., 2017). For this study, compensation will only be operationalized as direct pay, specifically merit pay increases.

Employees and organizations hold expectations that there will be payment provided for the work that is accomplished (Chambel & Fortuna, 2015). When organizations exchange monetary value for an employee's work, that employee will evaluate how hard they should work for how they are compensated (Lambert, 2011). When employees work for an organization their perception of how fair the pay and work exchange is can determine various outcomes (e.g. job satisfaction and commitment; Chambel & Fortuna, 2015). Pay is one way that organizations motivate and maintain satisfaction and commitment from employees (Newman et al., 2017).

Normally employees will compare themselves to others to see if the work they are providing is being fairly compensated (Newman et al., 2017). Another way that

employees determine whether they are being compensated properly is by referring to previous monetary promises that the organization made (Lambert, 2011). When an employee feels as though a compensation promise was broken, satisfaction and commitment to the organization tend to decrease (Chambel & Fortuna, 2015).

Hypotheses

The purpose of this research study was to analyze the perceptions of turnover intentions and job satisfaction and how it related to intentionality, and the type of psychological contract breach. I specifically examined the perceptions of intentional and unintentional broken promises related to work-life balance and compensation. Previous studies have shown that working hours and/or pay increases are perceived as unreasonable by an employee, satisfaction and commitment to the organization will decrease (Chambel & Fortuna, 2015; Kanwar et al., 2009). The hypotheses in this research study measured work-life balance through flexible working hours and compensation through pay increases.

This research study aims to observe intentional and unintentional broken promises made by an organization. These variables were then measured with both flexible working hours and compensation. The goal of this study is to see whether perceptions (specifically turnover intentions and job satisfaction) change among intentional and unintentional broken promises, and/or work-life balance and compensation.

Hypothesis 1a: There will be a main effect of intentionality of the broken promise on turnover, such that turnover will be greater when the promises are broken intentionally.

Hypothesis 1b: There will be a main effect of intentionality of the broken promise on satisfaction, such that satisfaction will be lower when the promises are broken intentionally.

Hypothesis 2a: There will be a main effect of the type of broken promise on turnover.

Hypothesis 2b: There will be a main effect of the type of broken promise on satisfaction.

Research Question 1a: Is there an interaction between intentionality of the broken promise and the type of broken promise on turnover?

Research Question 1b: Is there an interaction between intentionality of the broken promise and the type of broken promise on satisfaction?

CHAPTER II: METHODOLOGY

Participants

Participants were from Middle Tennessee State University's (MTSU's) SONA pool. Initially this study had 152 participants. After cleaning the data, 117 participant responses were used. All participants were college students at MTSU; 61% of participants were Freshman, 20% were Sophomores, 13% were Juniors, and 3% were Seniors. Participants had an average age of 20 with the minimum age being 18 and the maximum being 50. The results showed that 63% of participants were White or Caucasian, 17% of participants were Black or African, 6% of participants were, and Asian 4% of participants were Hispanic, Latino or Spanish Origin. The results showed that 67% of participants identified as a woman and 26% identified as being a man.

Design

This study used a 2x2 ANOVA, factorial design. The two variable categories being studied are a) intentionality and b) type of psychological contract breach. For each variable the researcher studied two specific variables within each category. Intentionality refers to whether the psychological contract breach within a scenario was intentional or unintentional. Type of psychological contract breach refers to whether the psychological contract breach was related to work-life balance or compensation. The dependent measures are job satisfaction and turnover intentions based on perceptions of intentionality and type of psychological contract breach.

Materials

Measures created for this study included the following: (a) psychological contract breach scenarios (b) perceptions of psychological contract breach measures, (c) job satisfaction scale, (d) turnover intention scale, (e) and supplementary measures.

Psychological Contract Breach Scenarios

For this study, psychological contract breach scenarios were created. Each scenario places the participant as a worker in a coffee shop incorporating a different combination of intentionality and type of psychological contract breach. Two scenarios were created to portray an intentional psychological contract breach while the other two scenarios portray an unintentional psychological contract breach. For one unintentional and intentional scenario there was a compensation psychological contract breach while the other two scenarios were related to work hour flexibility psychological contract breach. Each scenario can be found in Appendices B-E.

Perceptions of Psychological Contract Breach Measures

The measures and scales for psychological contract breach intentionality were created to relate to the scenarios. The idea for creating measures and scales for psychological contract breaches came from Phuong, (2013). For this research study four original questions were created in relation to psychological contract breaches and intentionality. Each psychological contract breach questions used a 5-point Likert scales ranging from 1 (*Not at all*) to 5 (*A great extent*). All psychological contract breach measures and scales can be found in Appendix F.

Job Satisfaction Measures

All five job satisfaction measures used in this study were selected and modified from two previous scales (Andrade et al., 2020; Lepold et al., 2018). Each job satisfaction measure was used to determine participants' perceived job satisfaction of the given scenario. All of the job satisfaction measures were selected from Andrade et al. (2020) while Lepold et al. (2018) measures were used to modify each measure to coincide with the scenarios. The job satisfaction scale was used from Andrade et al. (2020) generic work satisfaction scale was used to correspond with the current study's turnover intention scale. Each response option will be on a 5-point Likert scale 1 (*Totally disagree*) to 5 (*Totally agree*). Each job satisfaction measure, and scale can be found in Appendix G.

Turnover Intention Scale

Turnover intention measures were adapted from Dwivedi (2015). Three turnover measures were chosen from Dwivedi (2015) and the phrasings were moderately edited to specifically relate to the scenarios of this study. The turnover intention scale was used from Andrade et al. (2020) generic work satisfaction scale to correspond with the current study's job satisfaction scale. Each response option will be on a 5-point Likert scale 1 (*Totally disagree*) to 5 (*Totally agree*). Each turnover intention measure and scale can be found in Appendix H.

Supplementary Measures

The first supplementary question asked the participant what the scenario they just read was about (Appendix F). This question was used as a manipulation check, to make sure the participant was attentive and understood the scenario. One fairness question was

asked to observe how fair participants perceived the situation was (Appendix F). The scale used was a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (*Very unfair*) to 5 (*Very fair*). This is a supplementary question to provide potential information for future research. Other supplementary questions focused on participants job status related to the service industry (Appendix I). At the very end of the survey, participants were provided with questions asking about age, gender, and race (Appendix J)

Procedure

Before participating in the study, participants will be asked to read and agree to an informed consent form. Individuals that do not consent to the study will not be included in the analyses. Once a participant agrees to the consent form, they will have the opportunity to take a 15-minute survey in Qualtrics.

Every participant was presented with one scenario with a series of questions related to a scenario provided. There were four different scenarios, where Qualtrics is already programmed to randomly select a scenario for each participant. This ensured that scenarios were given randomly, and each scenario group had a relatively equal number of participants.

Participants were randomly assigned to view one of the four different scenarios that were created for this research study. One scenario focused on an intentional broken promise related to flexible working hours. The second scenario focused on an unintentional broken promise related to flexible working hours. The third scenario focused on an intentional broken promise related to compensation. The fourth scenario

focused on an unintentional broken promise related to compensation. Each participant will only be answering the questions in response to one scenario.

Participants were then presented with the questions related to perceptions of psychological contract breach questions, turnover intention, and job satisfaction scale (Appendix F-H). Then each participant answered questions associated with service industry careers and fill out demographic information (Appendices I-J). Once each participant finished the survey, they were asked if they would like their data to be used and asked them what they think the survey was about (Appendix K). At the very end of the survey, each participant was given a debriefing statement on who to contact and to thank them for taking the survey (Appendix K). After the participant answers are submitted, the participant was redirected to the SONA website.

CHAPTER III: RESULTS

The data was cleaned and analyzed using Microsoft Excel and SPSS. First, reliability tests were conducted for turnover intention and job satisfaction measures. According to Table 1, the Cronbach's Alpha shows that scales are good to excellent measures for rating turnover intentions and job satisfaction. After scale reliability tests were run, the data was cleaned to measure accurate data. Participant responses that were either duplicates and/or did not pass the manipulation check were removed from the analyses ($n=117$).

Table 1
Reliability Scale Statistics

| | <i>n</i> | Number of Items | Cronbach's Alpha | Mean | Variance |
|-----------------------------|----------|--------------------|---------------------|------|----------|
| Turnover Intention Measures | 139 | 3 | .90 | 3.72 | .01 |
| Job Satisfaction Measures | 140 | 5 | .85 | 2.49 | .05 |

Descriptive statistics for turnover intentions and job satisfaction related to type of contract breach and intentionality are shown below in Table 2. Two factorial analyses for variance (ANOVA) using between-subject factors were used to test the effect of type of contract breach and intentionality on turnover intentions and job satisfaction. Both ANOVAs showed a significant effect of type of contract breach on the dependent variables.

The first ANOVA examined the effects on turnover intentions. Recall, hypothesis 1a stated that there will be a main effect of intentionality of the broken promise on turnover, such that turnover will be greater when the promises are broken intentionally.

The results show there was not a significant main effect of type of intentionality and turnover intentions $F(1, 113) = 3.52, MSE = .64, p = .06, n^2_p = .03$. Therefore, hypothesis 1a was not supported. Hypothesis 2a stated that there will be a main effect of the type of broken promise on turnover. The results show that there is a significant main effect of the type of psychological contract breach on turnover intentions $F(1, 113) = 4.28, MSE = .64, p = .04, n^2_p = .04$. Specifically, turnover intentions were greater for compensation broken promises ($M = 3.89, SD = 0.78$) than flexible working hour broken promises ($M = 3.58, SD = 0.83$). Therefore, hypothesis 2a was supported. Research question 1a asked, is there an interaction between intentionality of the broken promise and the type of broken promise on turnover? The interaction between type of contract breach and type of intentionality showed no significant effect on turnover intentions $F(1, 113) = .03, MSE = .64, p = .84, n^2_p = .000$. The answer to the research question is, no there is not a significant interaction between intentionality and type of psychological contract on turnover intentions.

The second ANOVA examined the effects on job satisfaction ratings. Recall, hypothesis 1b stated that there will be a main effect of intentionality of the broken promise on satisfaction, such that satisfaction will be lower when the promises are broken intentionally. The results show there was not a significant main effect of intentionality of the broken promise on job satisfaction $F(1, 112) = 2.59, MSE = .45, p = .11, n^2_p = .02$. Therefore, hypothesis 1b was not supported. Hypothesis 2b stated that there would be a main effect of the type of contract breach on job satisfaction. The results show that there was a significant main effect of the type of psychological contract breach on job

satisfaction $F(1, 112) = 5.02, MSE = .45, p = .03, n^2_p = .04$. Specifically, job satisfaction was lower for compensation broken promises ($M = 2.28, SD = 0.55$) than flexible working hour broken promises ($M = 2.56, SD = 0.77$). Therefore, hypothesis 2b was supported. Research question 1b asked, is there an interaction between intentionality of the broken promise and the type of broken promise on satisfaction? The interaction between type of psychological contract breach and type of intentionality showed no significant main effect with job satisfaction $F(1, 112) = .61, MSE = .45, p = .44, n^2_p = .005$. The answer to the research question is, no there is not a significant interaction between intentionality and type of psychological contract on job satisfaction.

Table 2

ANOVA Descriptive Statistics of Intentionality and Type of Contract Breach Interaction Related to Job Satisfaction and Turnover

| | Intentionality | Overall Job Satisfaction | | | Overall Turnover Intentions | | |
|------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|------|----------|-----------------------------|------|----------|
| | | Mean | SD | <i>n</i> | Mean | SD | <i>n</i> |
| Compensation | Intentional | 2.23 | 0.49 | 30 | 4.01 | 0.68 | 30 |
| | Unintentional | 2.34 | 0.62 | 28 | 3.76 | 0.88 | 28 |
| | Total | 2.28 | 0.55 | 58 | 3.89 | 0.78 | 58 |
| Flexible Working Hours | Intentional | 2.41 | 0.64 | 29 | 3.73 | 0.66 | 30 |
| | Unintentional | 2.71 | 0.86 | 29 | 3.43 | 0.96 | 29 |
| | Total | 2.56 | 0.77 | 58 | 3.58 | 0.83 | 59 |
| Total | Intentional | 2.32 | 0.57 | 59 | 3.87 | 0.68 | 60 |
| | Unintentional | 2.53 | 0.77 | 57 | 3.59 | 0.93 | 57 |
| | Total | 2.42 | 0.68 | 116 | 3.74 | 0.82 | 117 |

CHAPTER IV: DISCUSSION

Discussion

This study aimed to evaluate the type of psychological contract breach, compensation or flexible working hours, intentionality of the contract breach, intentional or unintentional, and their effect on job satisfaction and turnover intentions. There has been some research on the topic of psychological contract breaches, but little to no research on whether type of contract breach and/or intentionality have an effect on job satisfaction and/or turnover intentions (Chambel, 2014; Chen & Wu, 2017; Morrison & Robinson, 1997). None of the hypotheses were in this study were supported.

Hypotheses

After analyzing group differences in both factorial ANOVAs, hypotheses 1a and 1b along with research questions 1a and 1b were not supported. The ANOVA results showed that there was no significant main effect for intentionality on turnover intentions or job satisfaction. The results did not support research question 1a because there was no significant interaction between type of contract breach and intentionality of the contract breach on turnover intentions. The results also did not support research question 1b because there was no significant interaction between intentionality and type of contract breach on job satisfaction. A possible explanation for the nonsignificant findings is that the scenarios provided to the participants may not have been clear to the reader whether the psychological contract breach was intentional or unintentional.

Although the interaction and intentionality results were not significant, the type of psychological contract breach had a significant main effect on turnover intentions and job

satisfaction supporting hypotheses 1b and 2b. The results showed that participants were more likely to have higher turnover intention ratings and lower job satisfaction ratings if they were presented with a broken promise associated with compensation rather than flexible working hours. A possible explanation for job satisfaction having a significant main effect with type of psychological contract breach could be that participants find compensation to be more important than flexible working hours, especially among this particular sample – working students. These participants might have been more tolerant of broken promises related to flexible working hours than broken promises related to compensation. Out of the 117 participants, about 81% of them stated that they have worked or are currently working in the food service industry. When asked about if they had experienced a broken promise at work, 26 participants stated that the broken promise was related to flexible working hours, and 14 stated that that the broken promise was related to compensation. This shows that schedule changes tend to be more common for working college students. Therefore, the participants may not feel as inclined to leave the organization or be as dissatisfied with their job because psychological contract breaches related to schedule flexibility are so common.

Limitations

There were several limitations regarding this study. One limitation was the type of sample and size. Since the only participants were, on average, 20-year-old college students from MTSU with fairly limited work experience. The responses may have been different if the sample size was larger and more randomized. The sample size for each group was about 30 participants, which could have also limited the power and

significance of results. Another limitation could have been associated with the type and number of manipulation checks used. While participants who did not pass the manipulation checks were removed, these checks may not have been strong enough or clear enough to ensure the manipulations worked as intended. There may have needed to be more manipulation check questions associated with intentionality. These questions should be asked to see if the participants know whether or not the scenario is intentional or not. It could have been possible that the intentionality of the scenario was not understood by the participant.

Since this study used hypothetical work scenarios, participants may not have responded to the extent that they would if they were actually in the provided situation. Each scenario had minimal context of other related variables within each scenario. This may have not accounted for various confounding variables.

Future Directions

Future directions should focus on significant differences in type of psychological contract breach, and psychological contract breaches that were not studied in this study. A different psychological contract breach that could be examined along with compensation and flexible working hours could be promotional broken promises. With a more randomized and larger sample, future researchers could examine the effect those different psychological contract breaches have on job satisfaction and turnover intentions.

Lastly, future research could analyze the different outcomes of psychological contract breaches related to type and/or intentionality. Other outcomes such as organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) and counterproductive work behaviors

(CWBs) could be observed in relation to psychological contract breach and intentionality. For instance, if a manager intentionally does not compensate an employee are they more likely to retaliate and less likely to work above and beyond necessary tasks? Perceptions of fairness could be evaluated to determine if psychological contract breach outcomes will change depending on how fair a participant believes a scenario is.

Conclusion

This present study was one of the first studies to examine psychological contract breach type and intentionality outcomes. Although there was no support for hypotheses 1a and 2a and research questions 1a and 1b, the results showed significant main effects for type of psychological contract breach with job satisfaction and turnover intentions, supporting hypotheses 1b and 2b. Participants were more likely to have lower job satisfaction ratings and higher turnover intention ratings for psychological contract breaches associated with compensation rather than flexible working hours. Using a larger and more randomized sample size could provide different results. Further exploration of different psychological contract breaches and their outcomes should be considered. It is also possible that because this study used hypothetical scenarios to record job satisfaction and turnover intention ratings associated with psychological contract breach, it may not accurately measure realistic reactions to psychological contract breach scenarios. Studying psychological contract breaches and their outcomes can help future practitioners understand what may be affecting attrition and job satisfaction.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A

Informed Consent

The following information is provided to inform you about the research project in which you have been invited to participate. Please read this disclosure and feel free to ask any questions. The investigators must answer all your questions and please save this page as a PDF for future reference.

- Your participation in this research study is voluntary
- You are also free to withdraw from this study at any time without loss of any benefits

For additional information on your rights as a participant in this study please contact the Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU) Office of Compliance (Tel 615-494-8918 or send your emails to irb_information@mtsu.edu. URL: <http://www.mtsu.edu/irb>)

Please read the following and respond to the consent questions in the bottom if you wish to enroll in this study.

1. Purpose: this research project is designed to help us evaluate individual reactions to employer promises.
2. Description:
 - Collection of data related to reactions to employer promises.
3. IRB Approval Details
 - Protocol Title:
 - Primary Investigator: Carissa Marto
 - PI Department & College: Psychology Department; College of Behavior and Health Sciences
 - Faculty Advisor (if PI is a student): Dr. Judy Van Hein
 - Protocol ID: Approval Date: Expiration Date:
1. Duration: 15 minutes
2. Here are your rights as a participant: (MANDATORY)
 - Your participation in this research is voluntary.
 - You may skip any item that you do not want to answer, and you may stop the experiment at any time (but see the note below).
 - If you leave an item blank by either not clicking or entering a response, you may be warned that you missed one just in case it was an accident. But you can continue the study without entering a response if you did not want to answer any questions.
 - Some items may require a response to accurately present the survey.
1. Risks and Discomforts: no more than encountered in day-to-day life.
2. Benefits:

- Benefits to you from this research: There are no direct benefits to you from this study.
 - Benefits to the field of science: More information on the reactions to employer promises.
1. Identifiable Information: You will NOT be asked to provide identifiable information.
 2. Compensation: Participants will not be receiving compensation.
 3. Confidentiality: All efforts, within reason, will be made to keep your personal information private but total privacy cannot be promised. Your information may be shared with MTSU or the government, such as the Middle Tennessee State University Institutional Review Board, Federal Government Office for Human Research Protections, if you or someone else is in danger or if we are required to do so by law.
 4. Contact Information: If you should have any questions about this research study or possibly injury, please feel free to contact Carissa Marto by telephone 518-590-1985 or by email chm2z@mtmail.mtsu.edu OR my faculty advisor, Dr. Judy Van Hein, at judith.vanhein@mtsu.edu. You can also contact the MTSU Office of Compliance via telephone (615-494-8918) or by email (compliance@mtsu.edu). This contact information will be presented again at the end of the experiment.

You are not required to do anything further if you decide not to enroll in this study. Just quit your browser. Please complete the response section below if you wish to learn more or you wish to take part in this study.

Participant Response Section

No Yes I have read this informed consent document pertaining to the above
identified research

No Yes The research procedures to be conducted are clear to me

No Yes I confirm I am 18 years or older

No Yes I am aware of the potential risks of the study

By clicking below, I affirm that I freely and voluntarily choose to participate in this study. I understand I can withdraw from this study at any time without facing any consequences.

NO I do not consent

Yes I consent

Appendix B

Flexible working hours (Intentional)

Imagine you are an employee at a coffee shop chain called Roma. This is an Italian coffee shop that does both take out and dine in orders for customers. The busiest times for this coffee shop are breakfast rushes during the weekdays, and the brunch and late lunch rushes on the weekends. You have been working as a barista at Roma for a little over a year now.

When you first applied to Roma you let the manager know that you are a college student and that your hours may have to change semester to semester because of your class schedule. During your interview and first semester working at Roma your manager set your work schedule around school. The next semester, you had to sign up for a morning class on Tuesday and Thursday. Before your semester starts you send in your availability schedule to your manager. Later, your manager sends your work schedule, but it did not integrate your availability. When you ask your manager about it they say "Yeah I know, I'll look at that later".

Appendix C

Flexible working hours (Unintentional)

Imagine you are an employee at a coffee shop chain called Roma. This is an Italian coffee shop that does both take out and dine in orders for customers. The busiest times for this coffee shop are breakfast rushes during the weekdays, and the brunch and late lunch rushes on the weekends. You have been working as a barista at Roma for a little over a year now.

When you first applied to Roma you let the manager know that you are a college student and that your hours may have to change semester to semester because of your class schedule. During your interview and first semester working at Roma your manager set your schedule around school. Before your semester starts you send in your availability schedule to your manager. Later, your manager sends your work schedule, but it did not integrate your availability. When you ask your manager about it they say "Oh I'm sorry I forgot about your availability sheet. I'll look into that later".

Appendix D***Compensation (Intentional)***

Imagine you are an employee at a coffee shop chain called Roma. This is an Italian coffee shop that does both take out and dine in orders for customers. The busiest times for this coffee shop are breakfast rushes during the weekdays, and the brunch and late lunch rushes on the weekends. You have been working as a barista at Roma a little over a year now.

When you first started at Roma, they said that employees will receive a dollar more an hour after every 6 months. At month 6 you received your first pay increase, but did not 6 months later. When you ask your manager why you have not yet received your pay increase, they say "Yeah I know, we aren't giving out raises this year".

Appendix E

Compensation (Unintentional)

Imagine you are an employee at a coffee shop chain called Roma. This is an Italian coffee shop that does both take out and dine in orders for customers. The busiest times for this coffee shop are breakfast rushes during the weekdays, and the brunch and late lunch rushes on the weekends. You have been working as a barista at Roma for a little over a year now.

When you first started at Roma, management said that employees will receive a dollar more an hour after every 6 months. At month 6 you received your first pay increase, but did not 6 months later. When you ask your manager why you have not yet received your pay increase, they say "Oh, I'm sorry I forgot, we can address it during the next pay raise period".

Appendix F***Contract Breach Questions***

The previous scenario was about:

Work hour flexibility

Pay/Compensation

Vacation time

Argument with a coworker

Placing yourself in this situation, to what extent do you think the manager kept his/her promise?

Not at all
1

A small
extent
2

Some extent
3

A moderate
extent
4

A great
extent
5

Placing yourself in this situation, to what extent was the promise broken on purpose?

| | | | | |
|-----------------|---------------------|------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| Not at all 1 | A small extent 2 | Some extent 3 | A moderate extent 4 | A great extent 5 |
|-----------------|---------------------|------------------|------------------------|---------------------|

Placing yourself in the above scenario to what extent do you agree with these statements?

| | Not at all | A small extent | Some extent | A moderate extent | A great extent |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Your manager intended to keep their promise. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Other elements got in the way of keeping the promise. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

How fair do you think the above situation is?

| | | | | |
|-------------|--------|-------------------------|------|-----------|
| Very unfair | Unfair | Neither fair nor unfair | Fair | Very fair |
|-------------|--------|-------------------------|------|-----------|

Appendix G

Job Satisfaction Questions

Placing yourself in this scenario answer the following questions:

| | Totally disagree | Disagree | Neither agree or disagree | Agree | Totally agree |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| I would like working for this company | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I would get along well with my manager | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I would feel like the company cares about me | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I would feel respected by my manager | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I would enjoy my job | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Appendix H

Turnover Intention Questions

Placing yourself in this scenario answer the following questions:

| | Totally disagree | Disagree | Neither agree or disagree | Agree | Totally agree |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| I would look for new job opportunities | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I would plan to search for a position with another employer | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I would think about leaving this organization | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Appendix I***Current Job Questions***

Have you ever worked in the food service industry (past or present)?

Yes

No

Why have you stayed in your current job? Check all that apply:

Pay

Convenient

Enjoy the coworkers

Will benefit my future career

Flexible Hours

Other (Please Specify)

Describe a time that you were promised something at work, and it was broken? (If you have not had this happen write N/A.)

Appendix J

Demographic Information Questions

What gender do you identify with?

Woman

Man

Nonbinary

Other

I prefer not to answer

What racial categorie(s) describes you?

White or Caucasian

Hispanic, Latino or Spanish Origin

Middle/Southern African or Black

Asian

Middle Eastern or North African

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islanders

Native American or Alaskan Native

Multiracial (if so please specify)

Other

I prefer not to answer

What is your age?

What year are you in college?

Undergraduate Freshman

Undergraduate Sophomore

Undergraduate Junior

Undergraduate Senior

Graduate Student

Not applicable

Appendix K

You are nearly finished. Please answer the questions on this page. Your responses to these questions **will NOT** influence your credit for this study. Please answer honestly.

Did you take this study seriously, or did you click through the responses?

Just clicked through

Took the study seriously

Is there any reason why we should **NOT** use your data?

My data should **NOT** be included in your analyses

My data should be included in your analyses

Finally, what do you think the purpose of this study is?

Debriefing Statement

Thank you for your participation. If you have any questions concerning any of the measures you took or you would like to know the results of this study, please contact Carissa Marto (chm2z@mtmail.mtsu.edu) or Dr. Judy Van Hein (judith.vanhein@mtsu.edu).

Please do not share any of this information with anybody as it may limit our ability to continue this study.

Thank you.

Appendix K

IRB
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
 Office of Research Compliance,
 010A Sam Ingram Building,
 2269 Middle Tennessee Blvd
 Murfreesboro, TN 37129
 FWA: 00005331/IRB Regn.. 0003571



IRBN007 – EXEMPTION DETERMINATION NOTICE

Friday, March 04, 2022

Protocol Title **Perceived Broken Promises in the Workplace**
Protocol ID **22-1118 2q**

Principal Investigator **Carissa Marto** (Student) *Faculty Advisor:* Judith Van Hein
Co-Investigators Alexander Jackson and Patric McCarthy
Investigator Email(s) **chm2z@mtmail.mtsu.edu; Judith.vanhein@mtsu.edu**
Department/Affiliation **Psychology**

Dear Investigator(s),

The above identified research proposal has been reviewed by the MTSU Institutional Review Board (IRB) through the **EXEMPT** review mechanism under 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2) within the research category **(2) Educational Tests, surveys, interviews or observations of public behavior (Qualtrics Survey)**. A summary of the IRB action and other particulars of this protocol are shown below:

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| <i>IRB Action</i> | EXEMPT from further IRB Review Exempt from further continuing review but other oversight requirements apply |
| <i>Date of Expiration</i> | 3/1/2023 <i>Date of Approval:</i> 3/4/22 <i>Recent Amendment:</i> NONE |
| <i>Sample Size</i> | ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY (150) |
| <i>Participant Pool</i> | Healthy adults (18 or older) – MTSU SONA |
| <i>Exceptions</i> | 1. Online consent followed by internet-based survey using Qualtrics is permitted. 2. Participant information retention to comply with SONA policy is allowed. |
| <i>Type of Interaction</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Non-interventional or Data Analysis <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Virtual/Remote/Online Interview/survey <input type="checkbox"/> In person or physical– Mandatory COVID-19 Management (refer next page) |
| <i>Mandatory Restrictions</i> | 1. All restrictions for exemption apply. 2. The participants must be 18 years or older. 3. Mandatory ACTIVE informed consent. 4. Identifiable information, such as, names, addresses, and voice/video data, must not be obtained. 5. NOT approved for in-person data collection. |
| <i>Approved IRB Templates</i> | <i>IRB Templates:</i> Informed consent and SONA Script <i>Non-MTSU Templates:</i> NONE |
| <i>Research Inducement</i> | NONE |
| <i>Comments</i> | NONE |

Summary of the Post-approval Requirements: The PI and FA must read and abide by the post-approval conditions (Refer "Quick Links" in the bottom):

- **Final Report:** The Faculty Advisor (FA) is responsible for submitting a final report to close-out this protocol before **3/1/2023**; if more time is needed to complete the data collection, the FA must request an extension by email. **REMINDERS WILL NOT BE SENT. Failure to close-out (or request extension) may result in penalties** including cancellation of the data collected using this protocol or withholding student diploma.
- **Protocol Amendments:** IRB approval must be obtained for all types of amendments, such as:
 - Addition/removal of subject population and sample size.
 - Change in investigators.
 - Changes to the research sites – appropriate permission letter(s) from may be needed.
 - Alternation to funding.
 - Amendments must be clearly described in an addendum request form submitted by the FA.
 - The proposed change must be consistent with the approved protocol and they must comply with exemption requirements.
- **Reporting Adverse Events:** Research-related injuries to the participants and other events, such as, deviations & misconduct, must be reported within 48 hours of such events to compliance@mtsu.edu.
- **Research Participant Compensation:** Compensation for research participation must be awarded as proposed in Chapter 6 of the Exempt protocol. The documentation of the monetary compensation must Appendix J and MUST NOT include protocol details when reporting to the MTSU Business Office.
- **COVID-19:** Regardless whether this study poses a threat to the participants or not, refer to the COVID-19 Management section for important information for the FA.

COVID-19 Management:

The FA must enforce social distancing guidelines and other practices to avoid viral exposure to the participants and other workers when physical contact with the subjects is made during the study.

- The study must be stopped if a participant or an investigator should test positive for COVID-19 within 14 days of the research interaction. This must be reported to the IRB as an "adverse event."
- The FA must enforce the MTSU's "Return-to-work" questionnaire found in Pipeline must be filled and signed by the investigators on the day of the research interaction prior to physical contact.
- PPE must be worn if the participant would be within 6 feet from the each other or with an investigator.
- Physical surfaces that will come in contact with the participants must be sanitized between use
- **FA's Responsibility:** The FA is given the administrative authority to make emergency changes to protect the wellbeing of the participants and student researchers during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the FA must notify the IRB after such changes have been made. The IRB will audit the changes at a later date and the PI will be instructed to carryout remedial measures if needed.

Post-approval Protocol Amendments:

The current MTSU IRB policies allow the investigators to implement minor and significant amendments that would not result in the cancellation of the protocol's eligibility for exemption. **Only THREE procedural amendments will be entertained per year (changes like addition/removal of research personnel are not restricted by this rule).**

| Date | Amendment(s) | IRB Comments |
|------|--------------|--------------|
| NONE | NONE. | NONE |

Post-approval IRB Actions:

The following actions are done subsequent to the approval of this protocol on request by the PI or on recommendation by the IRB or by both.

| Date | IRB Action(s) | IRB Comments |
|------|---------------|--------------|
| NONE | NONE. | NONE |

Mandatory Data Storage Requirement:

All research-related records (signed consent forms, investigator training and etc.) must be retained by the PI or the faculty advisor (if the PI is a student) at the secure location mentioned in the protocol application. The data must be stored for at least three (3) years after the study is closed. Additionally,

Institutional Review Board, MTSU

FWA: 00005331

IRB Registration. 0003571

the Tennessee State data retention requirement may apply (*refer "Quick Links" below for policy 129*). Subsequently, the data may be destroyed in a manner that maintains confidentiality and anonymity of the research subjects. **The IRB reserves the right to modify/update the approval criteria or change/cancel the terms listed in this notice.** Be advised that IRB also reserves the right to inspect or audit your records if needed.

Sincerely,

Institutional Review Board
Middle Tennessee State University

Quick Links:

- Post-approval Responsibilities: <http://www.mtsu.edu/irb/FAQ/PostApprovalResponsibilities.php>
- Exemption Procedures: <https://mtsu.edu/irb/ExemptPaperWork.php>
- MTSU Policy 129: Records retention & Disposal: <https://www.mtsu.edu/policies/general/129.php>