

The Impact of Perceived Psychological Contract Breach, Abusive Supervision, and Silence on Employee Well-being

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The aim of this study was to examine the relationship between psychological contract breach as it is perceived by employees, the comprehensiveness of silence and the moderating effect that abusive supervision has on the relationship between psychological contract breach, silence, and indirectly on employee well-being. This study revealed support for the negative relationship between psychological contract breach and employee well-being. Quiescent silence was found to mediate the negative relationship between psychological contract breach and employee well-being. Abusive supervision was found to be a strengthening moderator in the negative relation between psychological contract breach and quiescent silence.

Keywords: psychological contract breach, work motivation, employee well-being, silence, abusive supervision

INTRODUCTION

An organization's goal is to perform efficiently, increase profits and provide adequate services. Employees are to some extent responsible for achieving these organizational objectives (Ahmad & Khan, 2015). When employees are unsatisfied with their job performance, they become less motivated to ensure the organizational goals are being met (Adebayo & Ogunsina, 2011). In addition, employees who are dedicated and satisfied become more punctual, committed and increase their job performance (Kodden, 2014; Kodden & van Ingen, 2019). Employee satisfaction is therefore, not surprisingly, connected to the level of psychological well-being of employees, their organizational commitment and job performance (Ahmad & Khan, 2015; Kodden & Roelofs, 2019). Employee well-being can be explained by the concept of 'happiness', regarding well-being as a subjective observation, and by the concept of 'realizing human potential' regarding personal achievements (Ryan & Deci, 2001; Zheng, Zhu, Zhao, & Zhang, 2015). Employees with an empowered position in an organization have a distinct impact on the business environment and culture, including on employees' behavior (Johnson & Klee, 2007). According to

Blomme and Kodden (2014, 2015), leadership styles in an organization can have a positive or negative effect on the behavior of employees. Employee relations have been a main strength behind an organization's ability to compete in today's global market. Continuing to ensure relations with various stakeholders of the organization is essential for any organizational performance (Armstrong, 2006). Lifetime commitment towards an organization used to be considered normal by employees, but nowadays, changing careers is an accepted practice (Weng & McElroy, 2010). The modern dynamic and people-focused nature of an organizational environment brings along challenges. A main challenge is to secure the satisfaction of employees, ensuring their commitment towards the company. Savickas (2011) states that ownership of one's career has changed significantly through the years. Nowadays, an individual's career is his or her own to direct. The decision to leave an organization is still not something to think lightly of. The most common reason for employees to quit their job is because employees do not align with their superior or because they are not assured of personal or professional growth (Kodden & Hupkes, 2019). The foundation of the relationship between an employee and an organization is set by a psychological contract (Kodden & Roelofs, 2019; Robinson & Wolfe Morrison, 2000). A psychological contract refers to the corresponding perceived agreements made between the organization and the employee (Rousseau, 1989). The contract is a form of social correspondence and represents mutual exchanges between employees and their organization (Suazo, Martínez, & Sandoval, 2009; Wang & Hsieh, 2014). Although not recognized as an official contract, the psychological contract's foundation is built on the employee's trust in the fulfillment of these agreements by the organization. A psychological contract breach is experienced whenever a party has failed to fulfill the promised agreements (Robinson & Wolfe Morrison, 2000). According to Topa Cantisano, Morales Dominquez, and Depolo (2008), a psychological contract breach is seen as more than just not living up to expectations. A psychological contract breach's influence extends to the foundational beliefs of the employee with regards to respect and trust in his or her manager and organization. It therefore has been said that psychological contract breach negatively relates to the work performance of employees (Kodden & Roelofs, 2019; Bal, Chiaburu, & Jansen, 2010).

THEORY AND HYPOTHESES

Employee Well-being in Relation to Psychological Contract Breach

According to Danna and Griffin (1999), research has shown that employee well-being has a significant impact on the longevity of organizations within the market and is the key to organizational productivity and success (Kodden & van Ingen, 2019). Leaders and managers spend extensive organizational resources to increase the well-being of their employees in numerous ways (Hartwell et al., 1996). Based on the social exchange theory of Blau (1964), employees who perceive a psychological contract being breached will experience a negative effect as a result of such a breach on their behavior and attitude at work. Such an effect can include a decrease in job satisfaction and a decrease in commitment to responsibilities (Bal et al., 2010; Zhao, Wayne, Glibkowski, & Bravo, 2007). When a psychological contract breach occurs, employees no longer experience the same degree of control over their economic and social stability within the organization (Reimann & Guzy, 2016). Previous research has shown that when obligations are not met by an employer, feelings of uncertainty and lack of control increase among employees (Chambel & Oliveira-Cruz, 2010). Siegrist (1996) established the effort-reward imbalance model, which explains why psychological contract breach causes an imbalance of the relationship between employer and employee. This particular theory explains that, like the social exchange theory of Blau (1964), relationships are based on reciprocity of efforts committed to by the employee. Such efforts performed by the employee will be compensated through appropriate rewards, such as job security, salary or promotion. According to Reimann and Guzy (2016), psychological contract breach is a perceived imbalance in the working relationship between the employer and its employee. This transactional-based psychological contract breach affects employees' health by putting employees in uncertain work situations that can cause stress and imbalance between the idea of committing effort to retrieve a desired reward. Based on these findings, the following hypothesis is drafted:

Hypothesis 1: *A perceived transactional-based psychological contract breach is negatively associated with employees' psychological well-being.*

Relational-based contracts, which are more open-ended, are often formed with the idea of long-term employment and are based on the mutual trust between employers and employees (Patrick, 2008). When a psychological contract breach takes place, employees are likely to doubt their relationship with their employer, as uncertainty arises when obligations are not being met (Reimann & Guzy, 2016). The predictability and control employees thought to have over their work environment with regards to trust and social stability decreases, which results in negative consequences for employees' psychological health. Robinson, Ford, and Terick (2012) mention that a psychological contract breach often goes hand-in-hand with the feeling of mistreatment and unfairness within the employment relationship. Additionally, these emotions can activate psychological stress among employees and eventually affect the relationship between employers and employees even further (Reimann & Guzy, 2016). Reimann and Guzy (2016) further explain that psychological contract breaches are associated with decreases in the psychological well-being of employees. It was found that the idea of 'broken promises' is associated with consequences for employees' psychological well-being, such as burnouts, anger, depression and the feeling of being betrayed (Buunk & Schaufeli, 1999; Conway & Briner, 2005; Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998). Based on these findings, the following hypothesis is drafted:

Hypothesis 2: *A perceived relational-based psychological contract breach is negatively associated with employees' psychological well-being.*

The Relation Between Employee Well-being, Psychological Contract Breach and Silence

A psychological contract is a form of social exchange between employees and their organization (Wang & Hsieh, 2014). Employees can experience a feeling of violation, which is also called a psychological contract violation (Morrison & Robinson, 1997; Robinson & Wolfe Morrison, 2000). Such violations often result in negative behavior of the employee, such as decreased job commitment and job satisfaction, and it can even result in workplace deviance (Wang & Hsieh, 2014). Additionally, these consequences may prove to be harmful for employees as well as the organization (Zhao et al., 2007). A consequence of a psychological contract breach could be silence, and in particular acquiescent silence. Quiescent silence refers to a form of silence where individuals deliberately withhold useful information to protect themselves, as speaking up would result in a negative experience. This form of silence is based on feeling fearful and can also be regarded as defensive silence (Van Dyne, Ang, & Botero, 2003). Acquiescent silence is mostly focused on the emotion of being hopeless, which is reflected in submissive behavior. Acquiescent silence focuses on the deliberate action of withholding information, ideas or opinions from the organization due to the feeling of relinquishment of responsibility (Van Dyne et al., 2003). In comparison to other behavioral consequences of psychological contract breach, acquiescent silence is a more passive and low risk undertaking for employees and is hard to detect by others in the organization. In case of quiescent silence, someone deliberately chooses to protect oneself from negative consequences (Knoll & van Dick, 2013). Jain (2015) and Brinsfield (2009) explain that quiescent silence is chosen as a behavior to avoid the negative consequences employees' encounters when they would speak up. Based on these findings, the following hypothesis is drafted:

Hypothesis 3: *A perceived psychological contract breach is positively related to employees' choice of quiescent silence.*

Pro-social silence, on the other hand, can be seen as intentional and pro-active behavior, which is mainly built on reasoning regarding others (Korsgaard, Meglino, & Lester, 1997). Engaging in pro-social silence may be due to attempting to gain social capital or protecting one's social status and relationship with the organization (Knoll & van Dick, 2013). Pro-social silence is more focused on becoming silent to

avoid damaging personal relations and to remain trustworthy in the eyes of their supervisor (Knoll & Van Dick, 2013).

Hypothesis 4: A perceived psychological contract breach is positively related to employees' choice of pro-social silence.

With regards to employee well-being, silence can have many different effects (Beheshtifar, Borhani, & Moghadam, 2012). Employees whose 'silence' is not recognized, often turn indifferent, which can slowly affect their psychological well-being through experiencing stress, depression, and this can even affect their physical health (Bagheri, Zarei, & Aeen, 2012). Van Dyne et al. (2003) suggests pro-social form of silence entails deliberately withholding information or opinions from employers to benefit others or the organization. Remaining silent can result in employee behavior that is less accessible for co-workers (Knoll & van Dick, 2013). Moreover, Cortina and Magley (2003) found that those employees who deliberately choose to remain silent and choose not to speak up, experience more psychological harm than when they would have chosen to speak up. Employees experience silence as uncomfortable and often feel something should be said, though they still choose not to say anything (Knoll & van Dick, 2013). As employees' views on their circumstances affect their decision on whether or not to remain silent, their feelings will continually be affected by the thought that something should be said, and something might have to be said (Pinder & Harlos, 2001). Based on these findings, the following hypothesis is drafted:

Hypothesis 5: Quiescent silence and pro-social silence are negatively associated with employees' psychological well-being.

Moderating Effect of Abusive Supervision on the Relation Between Psychological Contract Breach and Silence

Abusive supervision is identified as a subjective assessment of subordinates being treated offensively and being insulted (Wei & Si, 2013), and as a display of verbal and non-verbal behavior of supervisors, excluding any physical contact (Tepper, 2000). Research has shown that organizational injustice evokes the behavior of abusive supervision (Tepper, Duffy, Henle, & Lambert, 2006), and that supervisors who experience injustice are more likely to become more abusive to their own subordinates (Aryee, Chen, Sun, & Debrah, 2007). Psychological contract breach implies a failure to fulfil a promise or obligation (Robinson & Rousseau, 1994). When subordinates experience a breach of their psychological contract, a negative response can occur, such as reduced commitment, loyalty and overall happiness in their work situation (Wei & Si, 2013). According to Xu, Loi, and Lam (2015), it often occurs that subordinates choose not to report the experience of abusive supervision due to the fact that their future in the company depends on the relation they have with their supervisor. Correspondingly, Tepper (2000) suggested that abusive supervision has an extensive effect on the attitude and behavior of employees. Employees who eventually report being a victim of abusive supervision were more likely to experience negative consequences such as job dissatisfaction within a short period of time (Qian, Song, & Wang, 2017). Abid and Abid (2017) expand on the importance of sufficient supervisory leadership and the vital role this plays regarding the behavior of subordinates. Employees frequently examine the behavior and fairness of their supervisor, which leads to an increase or decrease in organizational commitment, job satisfaction and emotional health. Multiple studies have investigated the experience of abusive supervision and its negative effect on employee attitudes, psychological distress and even on physical well-being (Aryee et al., 2007; Ashfort, 1997; Tepper, 2000; Tepper, Moss, Lockhart, & Carr, 2007; Tepper et al., 2007; ; Wei & Si, 2013). The studies suggest that a psychological contract breach based on perceived abusiveness by supervisors can result in negative behavior of the employee, such as silence, which in return will have significant consequences for the prosperity of the organization (Abid & Abid, 2017). Hence, transactional-based psychological contract breach is assumed to be negatively related to silence, although abusive supervision weakens this negative relationship. Abusive supervision increases employees' willingness to remain silent due to preventing shame and due to committing to self-protective behavior to

ensure their future. Based on these findings, abusive supervision as a moderator undermines the relationship between the transactional psychological contract breach and silence. Based on these arguments, the following hypothesis was drafted:

Hypothesis 6: *Abusive supervision moderates the relationship between a perceived psychological contract breach and employees' choice of committing to quiescent silence and pro-social silence.*

METHOD

Sample and Procedure

Our sample consisted of 259 respondents. The response rate was 66%. The data have been collected using an online questionnaire, distributed via mail, containing an anonymous link, and by means of convenience and snowball sampling. In the instructions to the survey the purpose of the research was explained and anonymity and confidentiality of the data were emphasized. 96 respondents (37.1%) were male and 163 (62.9%) were female respondents. The average age of the respondents was 39.9 years, ranging from 16 years old to 84 years old, with a standard deviation of 14.7 years. All the respondents were required to have work experience in order to fill out the survey. With regards to the organizational tenure, measured in years of working experience, the average was 10 years ranging from less than 1 year to 73 years, with a standard deviation of 11.5.

Measures

Psychological Contract Breach

In order to measure psychological contract breach, a validated questionnaire created by Bingham (2005) was used. This particular questionnaire is based on the Psychological Contract Inventory (PCI (Rousseau, 2000)), which represents the different forms of a psychological contract. These forms entail the subjective obligations set between the employer and employee (Bingham, 2005). As mentioned earlier in the theoretical framework, the different psychological contract forms include transactional-based, relational-based and ideological-based contracts.

Psychological Well-being of Employees

To measure *psychological well-being of employees*, the eight-item scale index of psychological well-being developed by Berkman (1971a, 1971b) was used. This particular scale uses similar items as Bradburn and Caplovitz's (1965) scale used in earlier research (Wright & Cropanzano, 2000). In Berkman's (1971b) validation of the scale, the included items were based on two perspectives: a positive perspective with three items and a negative perspective with four items, to obtain an overall score representing well-being (Berkman, 1971b). In the questionnaire, items were included such as: "Do you feel depressed or very unhappy?" (Berkman, 1971b, p. 105), focusing on the negative emotions. With regards to more positive feelings, items like "Do you feel pleased about having accomplished something?" (Berkman, 1971b, p. 106) were also included. This index of psychological well-being has been validated through reproduction of the analyses regarding stress-factors by Langner and Michael (1963).

Silence

Silence was measured by using the questionnaire developed by Knoll, and van Dick (2013). This questionnaire consisted of a scale of 16 items to measure silence, which included three items to measure quiescent silence and three items to measure pro-social silence. Only these two forms of silence were used, as the motivation behind these forms is based on fear and negative consequences on one's career (Knoll & van Dick, 2013). An example of one of the three items regarding quiescent silence, is: "because of fear of negative consequences" (Knoll & van Dick, 2013, p. 7) and an example of an item to measure pro-social silence, is: "because I do not want to hurt the feelings of colleagues or superiors" (Knoll & van Dick, 2013, p. 7).

Abusive Supervision

In order to measure *abusive supervision*, the measurement scale regarding abusive supervision of Tepper (2000) was used. The scale measures abusive supervision by concentrating on a supervisor's abusive behavior towards their subordinates. This version consists of 15-items and has been scored using a five-point Likert-scale, ranging from "I cannot remember him/her ever using this behavior with me" (1) to "He/she used this behavior very often with me" (5). For this thesis, Tepper's (2000) original measurement was used to capture the perceptions of abuse targeted at oneself. In the questionnaire, example items are: "My supervisor puts me down in front of others" (Tepper, 2000, p. 189) or "My supervisor expresses anger at me when he/she is mad for another reason" (Tepper, 2000, p. 190). The construct of 'abusive supervision', with a total of fifteen items within the scales, has a Cronbach's alpha score of .95, which reflects the excellence of the internal consistency of the construct.

Control Variables

This study included control variables. Previous research has shown that gender often has a significant influence on the outcome variables, as males and females react differently (Goodrich, 2014; Pinder & Harlos, 2001). With regard to silence, women and men express themselves differently in similar contexts (Pinder & Harlos, 2001). Women are more likely to use a version of silence with a more supportive perspective compared to men who often use silence as a countermeasure of expressing themselves. In relation to a perceived psychological contract breach, males' and females' affiliation towards the organization is often different, which can affect the perception of fulfillment of obligations of the organization (Heilman & Chen, 2005). Males are often more focused on their own achievements and competitiveness in the work environment. Females, on the other hand, are often engaging themselves in the social structure of the organization and have a more nurturing nature. The choice of remaining silent can therefore depend on gender (Bingham, 2005). Moreover, perceptions of leadership qualities differ among males and females (Neubert & Taggar, 2004). Such perceptions can affect the interpretations given by employees to supervisors' abusiveness. For these reasons, the control variable 'gender' has been incorporated in this study. Age has also been included as a control variable in this study. It has been found that age influences the way and the extent of how people react in different situations, and in particular the reactions towards psychological contract breach (Bal et al., 2010). Additionally, Bal, De Cooman, and Mol (2013) found that age is, to a certain degree, related to the transactional-based and the relational-based forms of contract breach. Older individuals have more experience in social and work environments (Steverink & Lindenberg, 2006). Therefore, age was included as a control variable in this study and was measured via a horizontal slide option. The final included control variable was organizational tenure. This variable resembles the impact of age, as work experience increases over the years. According to Bolliotur and Turnley (2003), employees' perceptions and behavior is based on differential sort of experiences gained through years of working in business environments. Furthermore, Robinson (1996) suggests that organizational tenure is related to the relation-building process between employees and employers, as over years of working together in the same environment, possible psychological contract breaches are more likely to have occurred. Moreover, over the years, employees acquire more experience in the same working environment and have more time to invest in the relationship with their supervisor. So, such employees have a more stable mindset and are less likely to become overly emotional as a response to experiences which have the potential to lead to perceptions of unfulfilled obligations (Bal et al., 2013). As a result, 'organizational tenure' is incorporated in this study as a control variable.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed with Pearson correlations and regression analyses in SPSS version 25. Mediation analyses were performed using PROCESS v3.1 for SPSS.

RESULTS

Correlation

TABLE 1 displays descriptive statistics, correlations, and coefficient alphas for all factors extracted from the survey data. To provide a general overview of the relationships between the constructs, their correlations have been calculated and presented in TABLE 1, Cronbach's alphas are between brackets

TABLE 1

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1 Employee well-being	4.05	.49	(.79)								
2 Transactional PCB	2.49	.66	-.26**	(.67)							
3 Relational PCB	2.50	.84	-.34**	.26**	(.88)						
4 Quiescent silence	2.00	.91	-.37**	-.10	.46**	(.90)					
5 Pro-social silence	2.22	.87	-.24**	.03	.32**	.50**	(.88)				
6 Abusive supervision	1.50	.67	-.37**	.23**	.49**	.55*	.41**	(.95)			
7 Gender	.63	.48	-.04	-.04	.11	.04	-.01	-.01			
8 Age	39.90	14.75	.20**	.06	-.05	.05	.06	.07	.17**		
9 Org. tenure	10.20	11.47	.14*	-.04	.04	-.07	-.07	.06	-.23**	.61**	

Note. $n=259$. Cronbach's alpha coefficients are shown on the diagonal (in parentheses). PCB= psychological contract breach. M =means and SD =standard deviation. Gender is coded: female = 0, male = 1. $p < .05=*$, $p < .01=**$.

The correlation table shows that employee well-being and transactional psychological contract breach have a moderate negative correlation ($R = -.26$). Furthermore, employee well-being and relational psychological contract breach also have a moderate negative correlation ($R = -.34$). Also, employee well-being has a negative moderate correlation with both quiescent silence and with abusive supervision ($R = -.37$). Next, the variable relational psychological contract breach has a highly moderate correlation with quiescent silence ($R = .46$), a moderate correlation with pro-social silence ($R = .32$) and a highly moderate correlation with abusive supervision ($R = .49$). Furthermore, the variable quiescent silence has a rather high correlation with pro-social silence ($R = .50$). The correlation between quiescent silence and abusive supervision ($R = .50$) is also high. The variable pro-social silence is moderately correlated with abusive supervision ($R = .41$). Lastly, abusive supervision has a high correlation with quiescent silence ($R = .50$), though the significance level is $<.05$.

Regression Analyses

This section shows the results of regression analyses in order to evaluate the effects of the control variables.

TABLE 2
RESULTS OF HIERARCHICAL REGRESSION ANALYSIS WITH DEPENDENT VARIABLE
QUIESCENT SILENCE

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		First Last	
	B-value	t-value	B-value	t-value	B-value	t-value		
Gender	.07	.54	-.01	-.05	.01	2.13*		
Age	.01	1.90	.01	1.90	.01	.06		
Org. tenure	-.01	-1.87	-.02	-.93**	-.01	-3.22***		
<i>Predictor var</i>								
TA PCB			-.01	-1.33	.06	.91	.41***	.00
Rel PCB			.28	4.38***	.27	-4.40***	.37***	.04***
Abusive sup.			.61	7.76***	.64	6.98***	.22***	.19***
<i>Interaction terms</i>								
PCB_T x AS								
PCB_R x AS					-.11	-1.11	.02**	.00
					.23	3.26***		
							.00	.02***
R ²	.02		.38***		.43			
Adjusted R ²	.01		.37		.41			
F-statistic	1.64		25.36***		26.01***			
DF (df1, df2)	3,253		6,250		8,279			

Note. $n=259$. PCB_T = psychological contract breach transactional. PCB_R = psychological contract breach relational. AS= abusive supervision. $p < .05=*$, $p < .01=**$, $p < .001=***$

TABLE 2 presents the results of the hierarchical regression analysis focusing on quiescent silence. The results show that the predictors added in model 2 and model 3 increased the adjusted R^2 by 37% in model 2 and 41% in model 3. In all models, the F -statistic appears to be significant (model 2, $F = 25.36$, $p < .001$; model 3, $F = 26.01$, $p < .001$). In model 3, the control variable organizational tenure ($t = -3.22$, $p < .001$) was significant for the relation between psychological contract breach and quiescent silence. The predictor variables in model 2, relational psychological contract breach ($r = 4.38$, $p < .001$) and abusive supervision ($r = 7.76$, $p < .001$), were significantly and positively related to quiescent silence. Furthermore, model 3 shows that the interaction terms of relational psychological contract breach with abusive supervision was significantly positively related to quiescent silence ($r = 2.63$, $p < .001$). Lastly, model 3 shows that there was no significant relation between transactional psychological contract breach and quiescent silence, nor was there any interaction with abusive supervision.

TABLE 3
RESULTS OF HIERARCHICAL REGRESSION ANALYSIS WITH DEPENDENT VARIABLE
PRO-SOCIAL SILENCE

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3			
	B-value	t-value	B-value	t-value	B-value	t-value	First	Last
Gender	-.04	-.38	-.10	-.90	-.11	-1.13		
Age	.01	2.01*	.01	1.89	.01	1.71		
Org. tenure	-.01	-2.05*	-.01	-2.67**	-.01	-2.88**		
<i>Predictor var</i>								
TA PCB			-.12	-1.60	.13	1.69	.24***	.01
Rel. PCB			.19	2.74**	-.20	-3.01**	.22***	.02**
Abusive sup.			.44	5.23***	.48	4.78***	.13***	.12***
<i>Interaction terms</i>								
PCB_T x AS					-.12	-1.01	.22**	.00
PCB_R x AS					.23	3.03**	.00	.03**
R^2		.02		.21		.27		
Adjusted R^2		.01		.19		.25		
F-statistic		1.74		11.26***		12.68***		
DF (df1, df2)		3,253		6,250		8,279		

Note. $n=259$. PCB_T = psychological contract breach transactional. PCB_R = psychological contract breach relational. AS= abusive supervision. $p < .05=*$, $p < .01=**$, $p < .001=***$

The predictor variables in model 2, relational psychological contract breach ($r = 2.74$, $p < .01$) and abusive supervision ($r = 5.23$, $p < .001$), were significant and positively related to pro-social silence. Furthermore, the direct relation between relational psychological contract breach and pro-social silence was negatively related, meaning that when a relational based breach is perceived, someone is less willingly to remain silent. However, the interaction terms of abusive supervision and relational psychological contract breach were significantly positive. This indicates that whenever abusive supervision arises, employees' intent to be less willingly to remain silent increases. In model 3, the control variable, organizational tenure ($t = -3.22$, $p < .001$) was found to be a significant control variable for the relation between psychological contract breach and pro-social silence. Model 3 shows that transactional psychological contract breach as an independent variable had no significant relation with pro-social silence as a dependent variable, nor was there a significant interaction with abusive supervision. When considering the last column in TABLE 3, it is evident that when transactional psychological contract breach is added first, an additional 24% ($p < .001$) of explained variance indicates that this independent variable significantly adds to the explained variance.

TABLE 4
RESULT OF HIERARCHICAL REGRESSION ANALYSIS WITH DEPENDENT VARIABLE
EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING

	Model 1		Model 2		First Last	
	B-value	t-value	B-value	t-value		
Gender	.00	.03	.02	3.31***		
Age	.01	2.39*	.01	-.21		
Org. tenure	.00	.36	-.00			
<i>Predictor variables</i>						
TA PCB			-.13	-3.01**	.06***	.03**
Rel. PCB			-.10	-2.61**	.12***	.02**
Quiescent silence			-.14	-3.81***	.15***	.04***
Pro-social silence			-.04	-.97	.06***	.00
R ²		.42		.26		
Adjusted R ²		.03		.24		
F-statistic		3.68*		12.30***		
DF (df1, df2)		3,253		7,249		

Note. $n=259$, $p < .05 = *$, $p < .01 = **$, $p < .001 = ***$

TABLE 4 presents the hierarchical regression analysis, which shows the direct relation of the dependent and independent variables. The results show that the predictors, added in model 2, increased the adjusted R^2 from .03 to .24. Moreover, in model 1 ($t = 3.68$, $p < .05$) and model 2 ($t = 12.30$, $p < .001$), the F -statistic appears to increase significantly, when adding the predictor variables. In model 2, gender was found to be a significant positive control variable ($t = 3.31$, $p < .001$). In model 2 it appears that both transactional psychological contract breach ($t = -3.01$, $p < .01$) and relational psychological contract breach ($r = -2.61$, $p < .01$), were negatively related to employee well-being. Moreover, the direct relationship between quiescent silence and employee well-being was significantly negative ($t = -3.81$, $p < .001$). There was no significant relation found between pro-social silence and employee well-being. When considering the last column in TABLE 4, it is evident that when transactional psychological contract breach is added first, an additional 6% ($p < .001$) of explained variance indicates that this independent variable significantly adds to the explained variance. This is the same for relational psychological contract breach ($\Delta R^2 = 12\%$, $p < .001$), quiescent silence ($\Delta R^2 = 15\%$, $p < .001$) and pro-social silence ($\Delta R^2 = 6\%$, $p < .001$).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The present study aimed to examine the relationship between psychological contract breach and employee well-being, and to examine whether silence indirectly mediates this relationship, with an influence of abusive supervision. The results of the analyses showed that both the transactional psychological contract breach and the relational psychological contract breach were negatively related to employee well-being. Hypothesis 1 and hypothesis 2 are therefore supported, as there is a significant negative relationship between the independent and the dependent variable. It was hypothesized that transactional and relational psychological contract breaches would be positively related to quiescent silence as well as to pro-social silence. The results showed that only relational psychological contract breach had a significant positive relationship with quiescent silence and pro-social silence. Transactional psychological contract breach was shown to have no significant relationship with quiescent silence, nor

with pro-social silence. It was hypothesized that both quiescent silence and pro-social silence should mediate the relationship between transactional and relational psychological contract breach and employee well-being. However, the results indicate that only quiescent silence mediates the relationship between relational psychological contract breach and employee well-being. Thus, the relation between transactional psychological contract breach and employee well-being is not significantly mediated by any form of silence, nor is pro-social silence mediating the relation between relational contract breach and employee well-being. Based on existing literature, it was expected that both quiescent silence as well as pro-social silence would mediate the relationship between transactional and relational psychological contract breach and employee well-being. However, not all relationships were found to be significant. It was hypothesized that abusive supervision would moderate the positive relationship between psychological contract breach and silence. The results of this study show that abusive supervision indeed strengthens the relationship between relational psychological contract breach and silence.

Main Findings and Theoretical Implications

The main aim of this study was to examine the direct and indirect relationship between the included constructs by examining psychological contract breach as it is perceived by employees, the comprehensiveness of silence and the moderating effect that abusive supervision has on the relationship between psychological contract breach, silence, and indirectly on employee well-being. This study showed that transactional and relational psychological contract breach were statistically significantly negatively related to employee well-being, which was in line with the hypothesis and with other studies (Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998; Conway & Briner, 2002; Zhao et al., 2007; Bal et al., 2010; Robinson, Ford & Terick; 2012 (Reimann & Guzy, 2016)). It was examined to what extent psychological contract breach is related to silence. The academic literature used in this study suggested most employees often decide to remain silent in order to keep their job. However, psychological contract breaches are interrelated to job commitment and turnover intention (Cooper-Hakim & Viswesvaran, 2005). Robinson and Rousseau (1994) mention that transactional-based psychological contract breach lead to a increase in the willingness to remain silent, as the perception of a fair economic exchange is damaged. However, no significant relation between the constructs was found. It could be argued that this is due to the foundations of the transactional psychological contracts, as these types of contracts are often fixed and less prone to misconceptions (Bingham, 2015). It was examined to what extent silence is related to employee well-being. In this study, there was only a significant relationship found between quiescent silence and employee well-being, and no such significant relationship between pro-social silence and employee well-being. Pro-social silence was not found to have any significant relationship with employee well-being. It could be argued that this is due to the fact that pro-social silence is focused on the benefit of others and on being considerate of one's surroundings. Another subquestion concerned the mediating effect of silence on the relationship between psychological contract breach and employee well-being. The academic literature suggests that both sub-dimensions of silence mediate the relationship between these two constructs (Brinsfield, 2009; Gross & Levenson, 1997; Knoll & van Dick, 2013; Milliken et al., 2003; Morrison & Milliken, 2000; Richard & Gross, 1999; Van Dyne et al., 2003). Based on the results in this study, it can be said that only the relationship between relational psychological contract breach and employee well-being is mediated by quiescent silence. The results showed there was no significant interaction between the transactional psychological contract breach and silence. However, this study did find support for the moderating effect of abusive supervision on the relationship between relational psychological contract breach and silence. In regard to the indirect influence of the moderator on employee well-being, this study found that abusive supervision significantly affected employee well-being.

Limitations and Future Research

The choice of research design might cause debate due to the alterations of the formulations of the questions of the survey used in this study. Not only were the academic literature and measurements originally in English, also the Likert-scale scoring had to be altered due to formulation and translation

inefficiencies. These inefficiencies came to light during the explanatory factor analysis, where some questions needed to be taken out, as the answers to these questions were inconsistent with other answers, resulting in a cross-loading with other factors. These cross-loadings could have occurred due to the translation from English to Dutch (Douglas & Craig, 2007). Moreover, this study has been conducted in a relatively short period of time, which means it was a cross-sectional investigation. According to Rousseau (1989), the perception of a psychological contract breach can change over time, as it is possible for an individual to change perspectives. Furthermore, the reasons for turning silent are not developed within a short timeframe. Additionally, turning silent for the benefit for people around you, will only occur if there is a relationship with these people. Therefore, a future study with a more longitudinal research design is preferred.

Practical Implications and Conclusion

For practical recommendations, this study found support for the relationship between relational psychological contract breach and employee well-being. As employees' health and well-being should be a priority for organizations, a greater focus should be put on accumulated knowledge and skills that make a workforce productive (Kodden & Groenveld, 2019; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2001; Zheng et al., 2015). Employees who are at ease in their working situation will be more productive, energetic and valuable for the organization (Schaufeli, Bakker, & Van Rhenen, 2009). Furthermore, a psychological contract with a focus on relations within the organization will be established in the early stage of employment and will become the base on which employees connect themselves with the organization (Rousseau, 1989). In order to establish and maintain a positive and striving relationship with their employees, managers should acknowledge the obligations they include in any psychological contract. Simply put, managers should stay on top of their promises towards their employees and be aware when promises are not fulfilled. Open and forthright communication is essential to grasp the understanding of a relational psychological contract and to recognize a breach.

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