

The Effect of Psychological Contract Breach on Organizational Silence: The Moderating Effect of Psychological Capital

Fatma Merve DURDAĞ¹ , Atılhan NAKTİYOK² 

¹Oltu Vocational School, Atatürk University, Erzurum, Türkiye

²Atatürk University, Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, Management and Organization, Erzurum, Türkiye

Corresponding author : Fatma Merve Durdağ
E-mail : merve.durdag@atauni.edu.tr

ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to investigate the role of psychological capital in the relationship between perceptions of psychological contract breach and organizational silence. According to the results of the analysis, changes in psychological capital play an important role in the effect of psychological contract breach perception on defensive silence. Additionally, the sample was divided into 3 clusters according to psychological capital levels through cluster analysis to determine the regulatory effects of psychological capital. For each cluster, the effects of psychological contract breach perception on the independent variables of acquiescent, defensive, and prosocial silence were examined. As a result of the cluster analysis, it was observed that psychological contract breach perception caused a significant decrease in all types of silence (acquiescent, defensive, and prosocial) for the group with medium-level psychological capital. Psychological contract breach perception (PCB) at all capital levels (high, medium, and low) has been shown to reduce prosocial silence. These findings provided valuable information about psychological capital and its level, which is a unique resource for organizations.

Keywords: Psychological Contract Breach, Acquiescent Silence, Defensive Silence, Prosocial Silence, Psychological Capital

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1. Introduction

When employees' expectations are considered within the framework of psychological contracts in today's business environment, where change is important, employees no longer see their employers as loyal custodians. On the other hand, organizations avoid offering long-term employment opportunities to their employees and think that their employees work to ensure their career development (Allen, 2009). It can be said that the concept has changed based on the expectations and priorities of employees from their organizations during this period. Thus, based on this change, we conclude that the concept of psychological contract breach, which is an abstract link between organizations and employees, has gained importance.

Psychological contract is a concept that demonstrates that the expectations of all employees and managers in an organization are met (Buranapin, 2007) and that loyalty, Kingshott et al. (2020), and trust are established between the parties. However, the contract parties do (and can) not always fulfill their obligations and promises. The total negative perception of employees who feel that their promised promises are not fulfilled is called psychological contract breach (Kiefer and Briner, 2006). Considering that promises made and unpaid debts in an employment relationship between an employee and employer are the foundation of this relationship, the concept of psychological contract emerges as an important phenomenon. The importance of the promises made in relationships becomes visible in Shakespeare's words: "A promise given is an unpaid debt" (Hamel, 2009).

An individual can change his/her attitude or behavior toward work depending on whether the promises made according to the psychological contract are fulfilled or not. Studies show that the occurrence of breach perception leads to low performance (Patrick, 2008), an intention to leave the job, and a decrease in organizational commitment (Gong & Sims, 2023; Luthans, Youssef, Avolio, 2007). In addition, employees may experience a decrease in their productivity level due to these negative affections they experience, they may abuse information, organizational resources, and working time, and they can be arbitrary about overtime (Gruys & Sackett, 2003). Thus, many positive behaviors, such as trust, which is the foundation of an employment relationship, decrease and increase in negative behaviors (Bal, Lange, Jansen, Velde, 2008; Zhao, Wayne, Glibkowski, & Bravo, 2007). One of the attitudes or behaviors that can change is the employee's voice/silence. While expressing the individual's dissatisfaction with managerial practices, an employee may choose to either exit or voice the model suggested by Hirschman (1970) (Thomas, Feldman, 2009; Dos Santos et al. 2023). In other words, the individual's reactions to a psychological contract breach can be described as voice and silence (Razzaghian, & Ghani, 2015; Kingshott et al., 2020). The first aim of this study is to reveal the effects of perceptions of psychological contract breach on organizational silence.

Silence is the state of employees withholding their opinions, views, and concerns about organizational problems (Pinder and Harlos, 2001). In this case, employees consciously avoid voicing their thoughts, knowledge, and suggestions (Van Dyne et al. 2003). At this point, the question of "What is the role of psychological capital, which represents individual power and capacity, in a person's choice of silence or voice due to the psychological breach perception, which is an individual perception that varies from one person to another, gains importance. In this study, we aim to address the moderating effect of psychological capital on the relationship between perceptions of psychological contract breach and organizational silence. Psychological capital refers to "who we are" and "what we can be through positive changes" (Luthans, Youssef, Avolio, 2007). At the center of this concept are not only the positive and strengths of individuals but also positive psychological entities necessary to overcome difficulties in life, including stressful and conflictual workplaces (Min, Kim, Lee, 2015). Positive organizational behavior has been considered an important way to decrease negative attitudes, especially in employee behavior (Avey et al., 2008), because employees with positive predictions exhibit more positive attitudes and behaviors, whereas those with negative predictions exhibit more negative attitudes and reactions (Wanous et al., 2000). Depending on the level of psychological capital, individuals' responses to unfulfilled responsibilities, namely, voice, silence, loyalty, and neglect, vary (O'Donohue, Martin, Torugsa, 2015). Accordingly, depending on the level of psychological capital, the relationship between perception of psychological contract breach and organizational silence may differ. The second aim of this study was to verify the moderating model of psychological capital. Therefore, we can contribute to the literature by enriching the understanding of how psychological capital affects employee attitudes and behaviors.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Psychological Contract Breach

Psychological contracts are individuals' beliefs that obligations and benefits are mutually exchanged in relationships. A perception of psychological contract breach occurs when the relationship is thought to be out of balance (Topa et al., 2022; Arunachalam, 2020). Psychological contract breach is defined as the total negative perceptions of the employee

regarding the degree of unfulfillment of a psychological contract. In this respect, the organization did not fulfill or keep its promises before the employee (É. Lapointe et al., 2020; Tyagi and Agrawal, 2010). In the literature, it is seen that social exchange theory and equality theory are emphasized for the establishment of healthy psychological contracts between employees and employers. Within this framework, the pursuit of balance and justice gains importance in the relationship between the parties. If individuals do not find a balance in this relationship, their probability of displaying negative behaviors and attitudes will increase (Antonaki & Trivellas, 2014).

2.2. Organizational Silence

Organizational silence is defined as the state of employees withholding their thoughts, opinions, and information about organizational problems from their institutions (Pinder and Harlos, 2001). In the definitions of employee or organizational silence, the three main functions are emphasized, and silence is considered an active and conscious behavior (Kahveci and Demirtaş, 2013). In addition, silence can be used for affirmation, approval, harmony, or overlooking. If the person thinks that (s)he will encounter a risky situation when (s)he speaks or believes that talking will not be beneficial, then (s)he may express his/her disagreement or dissatisfaction in this way (Blackman & Sadler-Smith, 2009). Organizational silence has been addressed under three main headings: acquiescent, defensive, and prosocial (Van Dyne, Ang, Botero, 2003).

1. **Acquiescent Silence:** Refers to an employee's deliberate choice of silence and avoidance of events. In this case, the employee is aware of alternative ways to change their situation, but he or she remains reluctant to resort to these methods (Pinder & Harlos, 2001).
2. **Defensive Silence:** Refers to employees keeping their ideas and opinions to themselves to protect themselves (based on fear). Here, the employee consciously preferred defensive silence as a proactive behavior to protect themselves from external threats. acquiescent silence is more passive, whereas defensive silence is more proactive (Van Dyne, Ang, Botero, 2003).
3. **Prosocial Silence :** Employees avoid expressing their thoughts about their job and skills for the benefit of their colleagues and/or organization with the motive of cooperation. In this case, the motive that drives an employee to silence is the desire to help other employees or the organization (Van Dyne et al., 2003; Westerman, 2008).

2.3. Psychological Capital

Psychological capital refers to a personal entity with situational characteristics and a greater tendency to change than inherent invariant personal characteristics (Luthans et al., 2008). Psychological capital is defined as "the individual's positive psychological progress state" (Luthans et al., 2007b). Therefore, psychological capital can be measured, developed, and managed (Zhao & Hou, 2009). Psychological capital is more permanent than short-term and momentary mental states and tends to change more than inherent constant personal characteristics (Luthans et al., 2008). As a result of studies on psychological capital, it can be seen that four concepts best describe psychological capital. The concepts accepted as dimensions of psychological capital are self-efficacy, hope, resilience, and optimism (Luthans et al., 2007b; Nelson & Cooper, 2007). Psychological capital (optimism) refers to an individual's prediction of obtaining the most beneficial and positive results (Belcher, 2009); (self-efficacy) refers to believing that the individual has the skills necessary to achieve their goals (Bandura, 1994); (hope) refers to perseverance toward goals to achieve success; and (psychological resilience) represents the positive psychological sources of personality, which has the dimensions of resilience and recovery, when faced with problems and difficulties (Luthans, Youssef et al., 2007).

Although positive psychological capital consists of self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience, it is more than the sum of these dimensions (Luthans, Youssef & Avolio, 2006). The fact that psychological capital is more than the sum of its components can be an example of the formation of synergy from a psychological perspective.

2.4. Psychological Contract Breach and Organizational Silence

As a result of the PCB, the individual becomes silent because he/she is clearly afraid of the negative repercussions of the challenge. In a negative ethical climate, he/she may believe that his/her opinions will not be evaluated by a manager who displays irrelevant attitudes. For example, (s)he may prefer silence to not arouse feelings of revenge in individuals through a decrease in job satisfaction or abnormal behaviors toward an organization. Therefore, the individual would not harm the harmony of group work and would not be noticed by managers (Wang and Hsieh, 2014). He may prefer silence if he thinks that unfair practices or abuse toward employees (Somers, 2009; Morrison and Milliken, 2000). However, the perceived power difference between employees who have to confront unfair attitudes and those who exhibit these

attitudes also affects employees' silence. In institutions where justice (Pinder and Harlos, 2001) and ethical values are ensured, individuals can express themselves comfortably without fear of facing negative consequences or being condemned (Erkutlu & Chafra 2020; Walumbwa and Schaubroeck, 2009). On the other hand, if the individual who experiences psychological contract breach thinks that there is a suitable environment for talking in an organization, (s)he can try to improve their deteriorated relationships by using his/her voice. In this case, the employee expresses her or his dissatisfaction and attempts to understand why the organization has not fulfilled its promises. In other words, individuals expect explanations or hope that the organization will address the current situation (Ruiter, Schalk, Blomme, 2016). If the individual speaks about his/her dissatisfaction and expresses himself/herself, management will have to find remedial alternatives to the situation. However, if the individual thinks that the administration is not making enough effort, (s)he may restrict himself/herself from using his/her voice. Thus, (s)he obtains the perception that what they speak cannot be heard by a deaf ear (Hamel, 2009). Here, the opinion of the individual who has the perception of psychological contract breach plays an important role in their preference for voice or silence with their manager. In other words, it is of great importance to determine whether the breach was committed intentionally or unintentionally. In addition, before the individual decides to speak, they conduct a profit-loss analysis by considering what they will lose or gain and then take action accordingly. If they believe that the breach occurred unintentionally, a desire for empathy and explanation occurs in the individual. However, if the individual believes that the breach was committed deliberately, he/she may want to obtain "compensation" from the psychological contract breach through opposing attitudes. Thus, the employee harms the organization to which they are in and where they experience a breach (Ruiter, Schalk, Blomme, 2016). In other words, individuals with a perception of psychological breach become silent over time or, on the contrary, can express their dissatisfaction by using their voices (Wang & Hsieh, 2014).

Studies conducted to investigate the relationship between psychological contract breach perception and organizational silence show that employees who perceive psychological contract breach prefer to remain silent instead of engage in deviant behavior to obtain revenge (Morrison & Milliken, 2000; Ng & Feldman, 2012; Pinder & Harlos, 2001). In other words, it can be seen that there is a negative relationship between psychological contract breach and voice (Suazo, 2002). In a study by Thomas and Feldman (2009), silence behavior was shown to differ according to age and experience. These results indicate that employees who are young and less experienced can defend their rights when faced with breaches, whereas employees who are older and more experienced prefer silence (Thomas & Feldman, 2009).

There are few studies that examine this relationship in terms of the subdimensions of organizational silence. According to the results of these studies, there is a positive and significant relationship between acquiescent silence and the perception of contract breach (Wang & Hsieh, 2014; Riantoputra et al., 2016). However, a significant relationship was not found between defensive silence and the perception of contract breach, which can be explained by the low perception of contract breach (Riantoputra et al., 2016).

Studies demonstrating that psychological contract breaches significantly affect organizational silence have been examined in the previous section. As a result of the evaluation of these studies, organizational silence is affected by the perception of breach of psychological contracts. In other words, it decreases in some cases and increases in other cases depending on individual (age, gender, personality structure, etc.) and organizational (ethical climate, organizational justice, organizational trust, conscious violation, etc.) variables. In light of this information, the following hypotheses were developed.

H1: Employees' perceptions of psychological contract breach affect their organizational silence and the subdimensions of organizational silence, namely, acquiescent, defensive, and prosocial silence. (have different effects)

H1a; Employees' Perceptions of Psychological Contract Breach Affect Their Acquiescent Silence.

H1b; Employees' Perceptions of Psychological Contract Breach Affect Defensive Silences.

H1c; Employees' Perceptions of Psychological Contract Breach Affect Their Prosocial Silence.

2.5. Moderating Role of Psychological Capital on Psychological Contract Breaches and Organizational Silence

According to studies examining the relationship between psychological capital and organizational silence, the relationship between psychological capital and organizational silence is negative (Hoveyda & Seyedpoor, 2015; Abdi & Hosseini, 2015; Şevik, 2019). Psychological capital affects acquiescent silence negatively but positively affects defensive silence and silence for the benefit of the organization positively (Tutar et al., 2018).

When we examine the relationship between the perception of psychological contract breach that triggers many negative emotions such as stress (Gong & Sims, 2023), frustration, and insecurity in the individual and the individual's psychological capital and subdimensions, it is seen that in the case of low optimism, when individuals have the

perception of psychological contract breach, they are unsuccessful in taking control, obtaining the results they desire (Tomprou, Rousseau, Hansen, 2015), and managing stress and problems (Sivanathan, Arnold, Turner, & Barling, 2004). In addition, it is stated that individuals with high psychological capital have the ability to cope with stress, and the possibility of psychological contract breach perception decreases (Toor & Ofori, 2010). An individual with high psychological capital responds more actively to environmental events. It can be said that in line with the confidence they have in their abilities, they behave in a more responsive and result-oriented way instead of being passive in the difficulties they experience with their organizations.

Studies on psychological contract breach have shown that individuals who perceive breach exhibit negative behaviors and manage the process successfully and constructively. This shows that the moderator variable plays an important role in the response of individuals who perceive a breach (Dodena, Groteb, Rigottic, 2018). Psychological capital (Han and Hwang, 2019; Yu and Liu, 2016; Ghadampour et al., 2017) and self-efficacy perception have been shown to mediate voice behaviors (Wang et al., 2019; Yu et al., 2019). It is seen that low ethical leadership and organizational support, which are among the factors that can cause breach of psychological contract, have an effect on silence with the moderating effect of psychological capital. Thus, psychological capital can play a role in the relationship between perception of psychological contract breach and silence. In cases where the perception of breach of psychological contract and psychological capital intersect, silence can be affected in different ways. In light of all these views, the following hypotheses were developed.

H2: Psychological regulatory capital plays a role in the effect of employees’ perceptions of psychological contract breach on their Organizational Silence.

H2a: Psychological capital plays a role in the effect of breaching psychological contracts on acquiescent silence.

H2b: Psychological capital plays a role in the impact of contract breaches on defensive silence.

H2c: Psychological capital plays a role in the impact of contract breaches on prosocial silence.

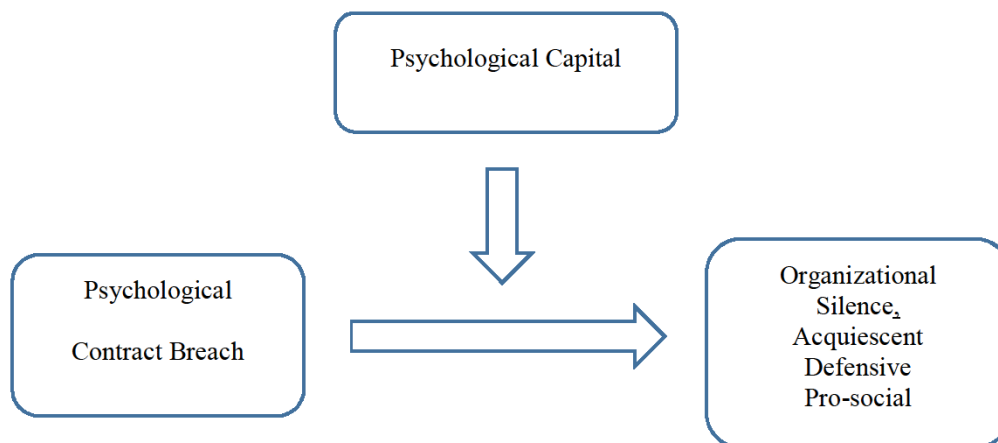


Figure 1. An illustration of our theoretical model showing the role of psychological capital in the relationship between psychological contract breach and organizational silence (acquiescent silence, defensive silence, and pro-social silence).

3. Method

3.1. Sample

The data used in this research were obtained from surveys applied to employees of the Ankara branch of the company between 15.03.2017 and 28.06.2017. The population of the research comprises 458 personnel working in the factory and product distribution for the company in question. The sample size to be selected from this research population was calculated as 209, within the 95% reliability limit, with a margin of error of 5% anticipated (<http://www.surveysystem.com/sscalc.htm>). To determine whether the sample size was sufficient for the study, retrospective power analyses were performed on the basis of the basic hypothesis regarding the research data. As a result of the G-Power analysis, which was carried out within the 95% reliability limits and with a margin of error of 5%, taking into account the sample size of 356 the actual power was found to be 0.82. However, taking into account possible answering errors and incomplete evaluations, 356 survey forms were prepared and distributed to the employees and collected by the researcher himself. In the selection of the sample, a simple random method was used, which ensured that every

employee in the universe had an equal chance of being included in the sample. Before distributing the survey forms, the necessary permissions were requested from Atatürk University Social Sciences Institute, and an ethical permission certificate was obtained from the ethics committee on 02.02.2017. Then, interviews were held with company managers, information was given about the questions in the survey, and the necessary permissions were obtained. While the surveys were distributed, employees were promised the purpose of the study, how the surveys would be evaluated, that the findings obtained would not be used outside of the relevant scientific research, and that the name of the company would not be disclosed while the necessary analyses were conducted. The distribution of the surveys by the researcher personally to the recipients and providing necessary explanations about the structure and purpose of the survey were effective in achieving a high survey return rate. A total of 356 surveys that were not incomplete or had missing information constituted the sample of the study. Most of the participants in the study were men (84.6%). While 24.4% of the participants were in the 26-30 age group, 24.2% were in the 31-35 age group. In terms of marital status, 63.2% of the participants were married and 32% were single. In terms of educational status, 47.8% of the employees were high school graduates, 18.8% vocational school graduates, and 19.7% university graduates.

3.2. Measures

The scales used in this study were originally developed in English. In adapting the scale to Turkish and ensuring cross-linguistic comparability of scale items, scale items in English were first translated to Turkish and then back-translated to English by a bilingual (English-Turkish) scholar and a bilingual professional translator (Brislin, 1980). After ensuring that none of the scale items lost meaning linguistically, a survey form was developed.

3.2.1. *Psychological Contract Breach*

Employees' perceptions of psychological contract breach were measured with a 9-item psychological contract breach scale developed by Robinson and Rousseau (1994). First, the internal consistency of the 9-item scale was examined to investigate its reliability. Item analysis showed that the total score correlation for any item was not lower than 0.30, which is considered the cut-off point. Thus, there was no need to remove any items related to the scale. In general, the reliability coefficient of the survey is .934. The factor loads of the items varied between 756 and 866. Confirmatory factor analysis was completed to determine the compatibility of the factor structure identified by exploratory factor analysis. The results of the confirmatory factor analysis showed that the factor loads of all items were higher than .50, and the fit index values of the single factor scale were within acceptable limits (Table 1).

3.2.2. *Organizational Silence*

In determining the employees' attitudes toward organizational silence, a scale developed by Van Dyne, Ang, and Botero (2003), which addresses organizational silence in three dimensions: acquiescent silence, defensive silence, and prosocial silence, was used. The scale comprises 15 items with 5 items addressing each dimension of silence. First, an item analysis was conducted to determine the reliability of the scale. The results show that the total score correlation of all items exceeded 0.30. Then, a varimax rotation exploratory factor analysis of the 15 items constituting the scale was conducted using the principal component method. Confirmatory factor analysis was completed to determine the fitness of the three-factor structure revealed by exploratory factor analysis. When the regression loads (parameter estimates) obtained from the model were examined, it was seen that the standardized regression load of the items was not lower than 0.50, and the fit index values of the three-factor structure were within acceptable limits (table 1).

3.2.3. *Psychological Capital*

Employees' psychological capital was evaluated using the scale developed by Luthans et al. (Luthans, Youssef and Avolio, 2007). This scale consists of 4 dimensions that are hope, optimism, self-efficacy, and endurance. The hope dimension was adapted from Snyder et al. (1996), the optimism dimension from Scheier and Carver (1985), the self-efficacy dimension from Parker (1998), and the endurance dimension from Wagnild and Young (1993). The scale includes a total of 24 items, and each dimension is evaluated with 6 items. First, an item analysis was performed on a 24-item scale. Confirmatory factor analysis was performed using the psychological capital scale to determine the fitness of the four-factor structure. The regression loads obtained from the model are higher than 0.50, and the fit index values of the four-factor structure are within acceptable limits (table 1). Because psychological capital is considered as a whole in the research model, the factors of hope, resilience, self-efficacy, and optimism were linked to a single factor called psychological capital (PS), and a second-level confirmatory factor analysis was completed on the scale. The results demonstrate that the fit values of the model were within acceptable limits.

Table 1. Goodness of Fit Values of the Scales

Variables	CMIN/DF	GFI	AGFI	CFI	IFI	TLI	RMSEA
P.C.B.P	3.652	.95	.90	.97	.97	.95	.08
O.S	2.079	.93	.90	.97	.97	.96	.05
P.C 1. Level	2.524	.87	.84	.96	.96	.95	.07

3.2.4. Controls

Previous research has demonstrated that gender (Morrison and Milliken, 2000; Taşkıran, 2010) and age (Turnley and Feldman, 1999; Mesmer-Magnus and Viswesvaran, 2005; Near and Miceli, 1996) are related to organizational silence. Therefore, gender and age were included as control variables in this study.

4. Discussion

4.1. Findings and Theoretical Implications

First, a correlation analysis was conducted to test the hypotheses that form the basis of our research and to determine the relationship between psychological contract breach perception, psychological capital, organizational silence, and their subdimensions. Correlation analysis measures the level or degree of relationship between two variables. The correlation coefficient is indicated by the letter "r" and 0 indicates that there is no relationship between variables, +1 indicates a complete relationship in the same direction, and -1 indicates a complete opposite relationship (Köksal, 1994).

Table 2. Relationships between Variables

Factors	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. PCBP	2.65	.98	1				
2. Pro. S.	3.47	1.47	-.641**	1			
3. Acquiescent S.	1.80	.77	-.168**	.251**	1		
4. Defensive. S.	1.59	.67	-.011	.162**	.621**	1	
5. P. C.	3.98	.61	-.159**	.115*	-.300**	-.294**	1

*p<0.05 ** p<0.01

The correlation coefficients of the relationships between psychological contract breach perception, psychological capital, and organizational silence dimensions are presented in Table 2. As shown in the table, there is a significant and negative relationship at the 99% significance level between psychological contract breach perception and prosocial and acquiescent silence, which are the factors constituting organizational silence. When the relationship between psychological capital and the dimensions of organizational silence is examined, there is a 99% negative relationship between psychological capital and acquiescent silence ($r = -.300$) and defensive silence ($r = -.294$). However, it is understood that the relationship between psychological capital and prosocial silence ($r = .115$) is positive.

After determining the existence and strength of the relationship between organizational silence, psychological capital, and perception of psychological contract breach and the factors related to them by completing a correlation analysis, a hierarchical regression analysis was performed with the variables to test the hypotheses. To determine whether there is a multiple linearity problem in terms of the reliability of the findings obtained in the hierarchical regression analysis, the VIF and tolerance values of the independent variables at each step of the hierarchical regression analysis were calculated. All specified VIF values of the variables were lower than 10, and tolerance indexes were lower than .10, indicating that there was no multiple linearity problem in the regression analysis. In this study, averaging or standardizing the predictor and regulatory variables was deemed necessary because otherwise the interaction variable,

which is calculated by multiplying the predictor and regulatory variables, would be highly correlated with these variables. Therefore, variables are centered and standardized when measuring the effects of regulatory variables.

Table 3. Effects of Psychological Contract Breach Perception on Organizational Silence

Factors	Acquiescent Silence		Defensive Silence		Prosocial Silence		Organizational Silence	
	β	t	β	t	β	t	β	t
P.C.B.P.	-.168**	-3.206	-.011	-.212	-.641***	-15.702	-.496***	-10.741
R²	.028		.000		.411		.246	
Adjusted R²	.025		-.003		.409		.244	
F	10.281**		.045		246.552***		115.372***	
Durbin-Watson*	1.341		1.690		1.274		1.366	

*p<0.05 **p<0.01 ***p<0.001 Tolerance: 1 VIF:1

In the first regression equation in which acquiescent silence is determined as the dependent variable, it was found that the psychological contract breach perception explained approximately 3% of the total variance and was significant at the $p < .01$ level ($R^2 = .028$ and $F = 10,281$). This shows that employees' perceptions of psychological contract breaches negatively affect their acquiescent silence. In other words, as employees' perception of contract breaches increases, their acquiescent silence decreases. Based on these findings, H1a was supported.

In the second step of the analysis, defensive silence was determined as the dependent variable, and regression analysis did not yield significant results in the regression equation ($F = .045$ and $p = .832$). This shows that perception of psychological contract breach does not have a significant effect on defensive silence. Accordingly, the H1b hypothesis was rejected.

Regression analysis yielded significant results in the third regression equation, in which prosocial silence was the dependent variable ($F = 246,552$ and $p = .000$). In this step, the psychological contract breach perception variable predicts 41.1% of the total variance of prosocial silence. This indicates that the third regression equation has more explanatory power than the second. In other words, the psychological contract breach perception explains prosocial silence ($= -.641$ and $p = .000$) more than acquiescent and defensive silence. According to this result, prosocial silence decreased as psychological contract breach perception increased. Thus, H1c is supported.

Regression analysis yielded significant results in the fourth regression equation, in which organizational silence was the dependent variable ($F = 115,372$ and $p = .000$). In this step, psychological contract breach perception explains approximately 25% of the total variance of organizational silence, and this perception negatively affects organizational silence ($= -.496$ and $p = .000$). In other words, as employees' perception of psychological contract breaches increases, their organizational silence decreases, and they use their voices more. Thus, the H1 hypothesis is supported.

The results of this study show an inverse relationship between breach of psychological contract and acquiescent silence. Contrary to our findings, previous studies have shown that the acquiescent silence of employees increases in response to psychological contract breaches (Wang and Hsieh, 2014; Riantoputra et al., 2016). On the basis of the acquiescent silence lies negative possibilities such as the employees' seemingly dissatisfaction with their work environment, losing their reputation, and the advantages they have (Milliken et al., 2003; Premeaux & Bedeian 2003), as well as the fear of being excluded by group members with (Bowen & Blackmon, 2003: 1393). If an organization supports the voice of its employees, it is not wrong to generalize that these fears are replaced by courage in the individual (Al-Khlaifat & Al Zoubi, 2021). The support that the organization can offer in this direction includes keeping communication channels open and an organizational culture that supports employees to share their recommendations and opinions and talk to provide a creative environment in the organization. As a result of these positive organizational actions, acquiescent silence is expected to decrease. The results showed that the means of breach of psychological contracts are very low. This may indicate that the perception of breach has not occurred for a long time or that there has been a belief that the breach was not committed intentionally. As a result, due to the organizational reasons explained above, the acquiescent silence of employees against their perception of breach of psychological contract has decreased.

It was found that breach of psychological contract does not have a significant effect on defensive silence. In the study of Riantoputra et al. (2016), a significant relationship was not found between defensive silence and psychological contract breach. The researchers explained this with a low perception of contract breach (Riantoputra et al., 2016). The data obtained in the current study yielded similar results, namely, that perception of contract breach is low.

If employees feel that they have been deceived, that is, their psychological contract has been breached by the organization’s representative or even the managers of the organization, they cannot be expected to prefer to remain silent for the benefit of the organization. The deceiver is the organization itself. If the promises made by managers are not fulfilled, the perception of psychological contract breach that emerges in individuals can cause cognitive conflict (Mamonov, 2014). This contradiction is observed when employees who cannot break their silence express their reactions through their behaviors. For example, employees who maintain prosocial silence reduce their participation in their work. Other examples include employees neglecting their responsibilities and distancing themselves from supporting the organization (Bal, Lange, Jansen, Velde, 2008). Thus, they may develop negative behavioral models, such as trying to take revenge through the benefits they provide to the organization due to the expectations promised and not fulfilled by the organization and its managers (Wang & Hsieh, 2014). In summary, it was found that as employees’ perception of psychological contract breach increases—whether this is a balance or a mechanism of revenge—their tendency to remain silent (prosocial silence) or to exhibit behaviors (altruistic attitude and cooperation with the organization) decreases.

Table 4. Hierarchical Regression Analysis

Factor	Acquiescent Silence			Defensive Silence			Prosocial Silence		
	1. Model	2. Model	3. Model	1. Model	2. Model	3. Model	1. Model	2. Model	3. Model
	β	β	β	β	β	β	β	β	β
Age	-.154**	-.137**	-.137**	-.100	-.084	-.085	.003	.002	.003
Gender	.056	.050	.051	-.044	-.049	-.047	-.131**	-.130**	-.131**
P.C.B.P.	-.209***	-.256***	-.252***	-.024	-.068	-.054	-.618***	-.616***	-.624***
P.C.	-	-.328***	-.347***	-	-.300***	-.361***	-	.012	.044
P.C.B.*P.C	-	-	-.044	-	-	-.143*	-	-	.076
R ²	.053	.158	.159	.012	.100	.116	.427	.427	.432
Adjusted R ²	.045	.148	.147	.004	.089	.103	.422	.421	.424
F	6.614***	16.429**	13.259**	1.431	9.716***	9.174***	87.474**	65.456**	53.205**
ΔR^2	.041	.104	.002	.001	.088	.016	.355***	.000	.005

Hierarchical regression analysis with the variable of acquiescent silence was performed in 3 steps. In the first step, the psychological contract breach perception variable was included in the analysis together with the control variables of age and gender. In the second step of the hierarchical regression analysis, in which acquiescent silence was taken as the dependent variable, the psychological capital variable was also included in the analysis. In the third step of the hierarchical regression analysis, the variable reflecting the interaction between contract breach perception and psychological capital was included. This model, which includes all direct and indirect effects of psychological contract-broker perception and psychological capital on acquiescent silence, yielded significant results ($F = 13.259$ and $p = .000$). The third model explains 15.9% of acquiescent silence. Although this rate was higher than that of the second model, the change was not within a criterion that can be considered statistically significant. **H2_a was not supported.**

In the first step of the hierarchical regression analysis, in which defensive silence was the dependent variable, the psychological contract breach perception variables and control variables together explain approximately 1.2% of the total variance of defensive silence. In the second step of the hierarchical regression analysis, the psychological capital variable was included in the analysis. In the third step of the analysis, the variable reflecting the interaction between contract breach perception and psychological capital was included in the regression analysis. This model, which includes all direct and indirect effects of contract breach perception and psychological capital on defensive silence, yielded significant results. The third model explains approximately 12% of defensive silence ($\Delta R^2 = .016$ and $p = .012$). In this step, the variable created by the interaction between psychological contract breach perception and psychological capital that was added to the model affects defensive silence significantly and negatively ($\beta = -.143$ and $p = .012$). This shows that the interaction variable affects defensive silence. In other words, changes in psychological capital play an important role in the effect of psychological contract breach perception on defensive silence. **H2_b was supported.**

In the first step of the hierarchical regression analysis in which prosocial silence was considered the dependent variable, the psychological contract breach perception and control variables together explained approximately 43% of the total variance of prosocial silence. In the second step of the hierarchical regression analysis, in which prosocial silence was the dependent variable, the psychological capital variable was included in the analysis. The explanatory power of the second model is lower than that of the first model and is not statistically significant at relevant significance levels ($\Delta R^2 = .000$ and $p = .772$). In the third step of the hierarchical regression analysis, the variable reflecting the interaction between contract breach perception and psychological capital was included. In the third model, the change was not statistically significant. Thus, H2c was not supported.

The hierarchical regression method was used to investigate the H2 hypothesis (psychological capital plays a role in the effect of psychological contract breach perception on organizational silence).

The results of the analysis revealed that psychological capital does not play a role in the effect of employees' perception of psychological contract breach on acquiescent silence. Although the direct effect of employees' perception of psychological contract breach on their acquiescent silence is significant, it does not have an indirect (interaction of psychological contract breach perception and psychological capital factor) effect. This can be explained by the high levels of psychological capital of the members of the organization where the study was conducted and the low levels of perception of psychological contract breach. The interactions between these two factors are limited by the low perception of breach. It can be said that there are no indirect effects. In addition, even if there is a real breach in the presence of a low perception of breach in this organization, the employee will interpret this situation as "accidental, unconscious, temporary" in good faith and will not take it seriously, regardless of their psychological capital. Similarly, according to the hierarchical regression results, the interaction variable does not affect prosocial silence. Therefore, H2a and H2c are not supported.

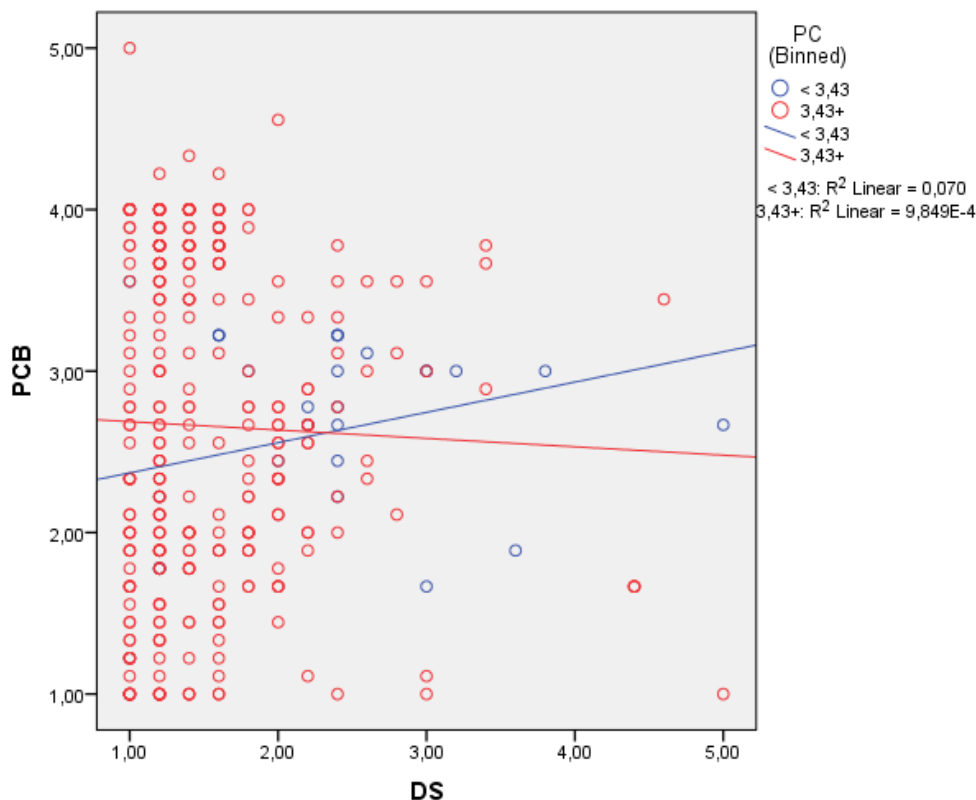


Figure 2. Moderating effect of PC on the relationship between PCB and defensive silence. Note: PCB = psychological contract breach; PC = psychological capital; DS = defensive silence.

The effect of psychological capital on the effect of psychological contract breach on defensive silence was found to be significant; thus, the regression slope that reveals this effect was examined. A graph showing how the relationship between psychological contract breach perception and defensive silence changed at different levels of psychological capital is presented below. The fact that lines are not parallel in the graph indicates that psychological capital plays a regulatory role in the effects of psychological capital breach on defensive silence.

According to the analysis results, the level of psychological capital plays an important role in the effect of employees' perception of psychological contract breach on defensive silence. In other words, as employees' psychological capital increases, the interaction between perceptions of psychological contract breach and their psychological capital decreases their defensive silence. Thus, H2.2 was supported. Defensive silence is proactive and turns into voice when an appropriate time and space are established. Therefore, it can be said that it is the transition from accumulated silences to life. Individuals with psychological capital exhibit more active behaviors such as voicing their concerns than passive behaviors such as loyalty and neglect (O'Donohue, Martin, Torugsa, 2015) because the endurance, self-efficacy, and optimism of individuals with psychological capital are high. A resilient and optimistic individual is more resistant to difficulties and obstacles, sees the failure they encounter as temporary and does not attribute it to personal inadequacy (Luthans, 2011), and sees events positively (Avey, Luthans, Jensen, 2009). Hopeful individuals have high beliefs about their ability to create alternative plans when they encounter obstacles (Snyder, 2000). People with a sense of self-efficacy set difficult goals and do not hesitate to strive for and even fight for them (Jex & Bliese, 1999). In light of all these characteristics, we can say that "as the psychological capital of employees increases, their perception of psychological contract breach will decrease their defensive silence more and more." No matter how low the breach perception level is in the company, it is quite normal for such companies to have a high level of employee quality, where cumulative perceptions reduce defensive silence.

In this part of the study, we aimed to obtain more data to support the assumption of psychological capital. In this case, as psychological capital levels (high, low, medium) change, does the effect of psychological contract breath perception on acquiescent, defensive, and prosocial silence differ? The question has gained importance.

To determine the role of psychological capital in the regulatory effect of psychological contract breach on organizational silence factors, the sample was divided into 3 clusters according to psychological capital levels using the k-means method. There were 27, 104, and 225 samples in the second cluster, and 225 samples in the third cluster. The overall mean of the clusters is 2.23-4.54 and 3.93, respectively. Considering the cluster means and the lowest and highest values of the clusters, cluster 1 was named low, cluster 2 was named high, and cluster 3 was named the sample with a medium psychological capital level. The difference between the psychological capital means of the 3 clusters that emerged in the cluster analysis was significant.

Table 5. Cluster Analysis Results

Clusters	Mean	S.D	Minimum	Maximum
Low	2.23	.57	1.00	3.00
High	4.54	.21	4.25	5.00
Moderate	3.93	.16	3.13	4.21
Wilks' Lambda: 0.145 F: 1041.107 p: 0.000				

First, the means of the variables in terms of 3 clusters were examined, and a one-way analysis of variance was performed to determine whether there was a significant difference between the means. As shown in the table below, the group with the high mean level of psychological capital had a lower perception of psychological contract breach than the other groups. When the means are examined in terms of silence, the acquiescent and defensive silence levels of the group with a low psychological capital level are higher than those of the other groups, while the group with moderate psychological capital has a lower prosocial silence level than the other groups.

To determine the regulatory effect of psychological capital, the effects of psychological contract breach perception on the independent variables of acquiescent, defensive, and prosocial silence were examined for each cluster.

As shown in Table 7, although the effects of psychological contract breach on acquiescent and defensive silence were not significant for the group with low and high levels of psychological capital, its effect on prosocial silence was significant. Considering the relationship in terms of the group with a moderate level of psychological capital, it can be seen that the psychological contract breach affects all three levels of silence significantly. In other words, psychological contract breaches only cause a significant decrease in prosocial silence in groups with low and high levels of psychological capital, while causing a significant decrease in acquiescent, defensive, and prosocial silence in groups with moderate psychological capital. Therefore, the effects of perceptions of psychological contract breach on organizational silence factors differ among groups with low, moderate, and high psychological capital levels.

The results of the cluster analyses revealed that psychological contract breach perception caused a significant decrease

Table 6. Differences between Means by Clusters

<i>Factor</i>		<i>Mean</i>	<i>Stand. Deviation</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Significance (Sig)</i>
P.C.B.P	Low	2.57	.68	23.454	.000
	High	2.14	.89		
	Moderate	2.89	.957		
Acquiescent Silence	Low	2.64	.99	20.093	.000
	High	1.64	.73		
	Moderate	1.78	.69		
Defensive Silence	Low	2.23	.98	20.565	.000
	High	1.36	.51		
	Moderate	1.61	.63		
Prosocial Silence	Low	3.74	.85	24.203	.000
	High	4.22	1.11		
	Moderate	3.09	1.53		

Table 7. Predictive Results of the Structural Model among the Groups

PREDICTED PREDICTOR VARIABLE VARIABLE	Low	High	Moderate
	Stand. R	Stand. R	Stand. R
Acq. ← P.C.B	.026	.001	-.341***
Def. ← P.C.B	.276	.021	-.148*
Pro. ← P.C.B	-.368*	-.330***	-.690***

in all types of silence (acquiescent, defensive, and prosocial) for the group with moderate psychological capital. There is balance at the foundation of the concept of psychological capital (Lazarus, 2003). It can be stated that the levels of hope, optimism, resilience, and self-efficacy—which are the components of psychological capital—are neither too high nor too low and are not ideal for an organization and its employees. For example, if we address capital through optimism, it has a deeper meaning than "Pollyannaism" in business life (Luthans, 2011). The concept should be realistic and flexible so that neither the individuals claim all their achievements and get the perception that they are in control of all areas of their life, nor should they avoid responsibility by attributing all failures to external causes (Luthans et al., 2007a). The same can be applied to resilience, hope, and self-efficacy. A moderate level of psychological capital indicates that an individual's self-confidence, beliefs about what they can do, and hopes for the future are at an optimal level, which prevents them from acquiring false wisdom. They know that their assets must be developed, and they believe that they can contribute. Therefore, individual interests are balanced with organizational interests. When promises are not fulfilled, it is inevitable that people will experience a serious decrease in their silence when they are wrong.

Psychological contract breach perception (PCB) at all capital levels (high, moderate, and low) has been shown to reduce prosocial silence. However, the largest decrease was also observed in the group with moderate psychological capital. Since psychological capital in balance represents individual power and independence, the interests of collective structures may not make sense for these individuals. Personal purposes and requests are prioritized. Therefore, they do not communicate and avoid conflict, if necessary. However, when this individual wealth rises above a certain level can lead to arrogance and apathy in individuals. The results show that in the group with high psychological capital, PCBs' decrease in prosocial silence was lower than in the other groups. When psychological capital (PC) exceeds a certain

level, individuals may go on their way, downplaying the problems in their environment. This can lead to some degree of unresponsiveness and insensitivity.

Identification of the individual with low psychological capital in the organization, the reckless attitude and selfishness of individuals with high capital can be shown as factors in the emergence of this situation. As a result, employees with moderate psychological capital are skilled at perceiving themselves, their organizations, and the problems in their environment. They clearly see the situations that develop around them and display an optimal judgment skill in these situations. When they review the events and the positions they would take when facing them, they clearly reveal their reactions by making new inferences. This creates an environment in which individual silence can decrease significantly.

4.2. Practical Implications

Practical managerial implications can be drawn from the results of this study. Uncertainties and threats related to the perception of a person lie at the foundation of silence. It is revealed by this determination that in such a situation, the organization must psychologically strengthen the employee and encourage them to continue making efforts regardless of their perceptions to include the employee in such a situation back into the cycle of participation. The employee should be able to address the uncertainty and threats or share their problems and ideas with people who can help resolve the issues. At this point, it is the psychological capital of the person that gives this power to the employee regardless of the unfavorable conditions. Psychological capital plays an important role in the individual's perception of their environment, giving meaning to their past and their perspective on the future. It serves as a compass through which people can act. It goes beyond economic and social capital and offers organizations the opportunity to create dynamic and sustainable resources that can be developed over time. In this sense, psychological capital appears as an indispensable tool for today's organizations that cannot be imitated to achieve organizational goals and objectives or ensure the competitiveness of organizations. The psychological capital level, self-efficacy perception, optimism degree, hope, and resilience of a person are first reflected in their thoughts and then in their attitudes and behaviors. Therefore, psychological capital and its components (hope, resilience, self-efficacy, optimism) will play a role, along with organizational characteristics, in the individual's preference for using their voice or silence in the face of problems in the event of a perception of breach.

It is known that the occurrence of psychological contract breach perception affects the behavior and attitudes of employees (there are studies showing that it decreases job satisfaction (Kraak et al., 2023), organizational commitment, organizational trust (Gong & Sims, 2023), and organizational citizenship). It was found that psychological contract breach perception decreases acquiescent and prosocial silence and that employee behaviors such as seeking their rights, expressing their creative thoughts, not hesitating to discuss problems, and not hiding their reactions when they experience injustice can be exhibited.

In addition, it is seen that psychological capital plays a role in preventing the defensive silence of employees due to PCB (psychological contract breach perception). It was concluded that employees who think they are wronged or deceived do not prefer silence for the purpose of protecting and defending themselves because of their psychological capital. The culture and supportive practices of the organization in which the research was conducted should also be considered in this result.

Employees' silence behavior is closely related to their culture (Fujio, 2004). Turkish people adopt obedience and silence as elements of decency because their customs and religious traditions are orthodox, that is, limited by strict rules (Delaney, 2017), and they attach great importance to loyalty to authority (Aytaç, 2007). Similarly, loyalty to authority and community is essential in business life. For example, a subordinate cannot say "I have a good idea" because it means "I know better than you, and I have my eyes on your position". Therefore, employees cannot express their opinions (Cüceloğlu, 2008). However, the most obvious indicators of the transformation in Turkish business culture are; It is understood that it is compatible with society, at peace with its employees, and prone to modern management methods that pave the way for innovation and creativity (Bayrak, 2003). Turkish business culture has moved away from collectivist behavior, which is the cultural code of Anatolia (Seymen et al., 2005). As a result, we can say that Turkish businesses tend to change their traditional characteristics (Öğüt, Kocabacak, 2008).

4.3. Limitations and Future Research

Because the research is based on human factors and includes evaluations regarding personal perceptions, the reliability of the findings is limited to the evaluation of employees and the characteristics of the survey method used in data collection. A cross-sectional research design was used in our study, which limited us from obtaining results that could be obtained in a longitudinal study. It has also made it impossible to capture the dynamic aspects of psychological

capital in terms of its regulatory effect. In a longitudinal study, having data on all variables in each of the time periods you use can establish a healthier causal relationship between the variables. The findings suggest that further research should consider adopting a longitudinal design that can shed light on these relationships over time.

This study is important for determining the relationships among PCB, PsyCap, and OS. However, their results cannot be generalized to the general population. Results are also based on self-report. therefore, it depends on the individual reactions of employees; Some of them may have been reluctant or antisocial to participate in the survey in general or during the period when the survey was administered.

5. Conclusion

This study provides evidence supporting the regulatory role of psychological capital in the relationship between perceptions of psychological contract breach and acquiescent, defensive, and prosocial silence. Our study reveals how psychological capital, which affects organizational silence, impacts results at different levels (high, moderate, low). We hope that our study will attract more researchers' attention.

Ethics Committee Approval: The obtained the necessary official permissions from Ataturk University's Ethics Committee (02.02.2017-1).

Informed Consent: Consent was obtained from the participants.

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ORCID :

Fatma Merve DURDAĞ 0000-0002-5727-0453
Atılhan NAKTİYOK 0000-0001-6155-5745

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