

PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACT AND PERCEIVED PERFORMANCE OF A RUGBY TEAM

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ABSTRACT

Little research has connected the psychological contract and sport. Therefore, the content of the psychological contract of rugby team members was analysed and the correlation between the psychological contract and the perceived performance of rugby team members was determined. A longitudinal research design was chosen, along with a non-probability sampling technique. The sample consisted of rugby team members from a prominent rugby playing university in South Africa. A psychological contract questionnaire and perceived performance questionnaire were used. From the research, the content of the psychological contract of rugby team members was determined. The results indicated no correlation between the psychological contract and perceived performance, however, a strong correlation was found between Institute Obligations and Player Obligations. Another factor, which remains to be investigated, is leadership and the perceived performance of a rugby team.

Key words: Psychological contract; Breach; Violation; Performance; Team; Rugby.

INTRODUCTION

“Once upon a time, there was a boy called William. Now William wasn’t your average sort, one could say he was a tad unconventional. In a blatant disregard for the rules and history of football, this young rascal picked up a ball usually directed by feet only and ran with it! He initiated, what is commonly accepted, the birth of a new game, *rugby*, named after the Public School he attended in Warwickshire, England” (Waterson, 2002: 1).

From the birth of the game until today, rugby has changed to a great extent. Players have become bigger, stronger, fitter and faster (Harmse, 2008). The most profound change, however, is probably professionalism, as it transformed a game played by amateurs for no compensation into a multi-million Rand business venture, where players are treated as professional employees (Waterson, 2002; Thomas, 2006). Before the introduction of professionalism, players were also required to have alternative employment (Paul, 2009). Professionalism has, therefore, changed the game of rugby profoundly.

In August 1995, the International Rugby Board (IRB) announced that the game of rugby would become professional (Mellalieu, 2008). For South African rugby, professionalism led

to team players signing formal contracts and being paid openly for playing both nationally and provincially (Nauright, 1998). It is now purely a business, competing for scarce resources, that requires its management to have a business approach and to use professional management methods (Robinson, 2008). According to McMillan (2006) television was the main cause of this shift to professionalism as a result of the explosive increase in broadcasting profits during the 1990s. Smith and Stewart (2010:9) mention that fans and spectators are willing to pay large amounts of money to see their favourite team or player in action and it is therefore the players that are “at the heart of professional sport”. Even locally, club-level competitions have received a great amount of media attention, not only for the way players performed in a game, but also for what they are doing off the field (Smith & Stewart, 2010). Paul (2009:27) asserts that “[t]here are ‘eyes’ everywhere peering into the darkest corners in the hope they will find the tiniest transgression”.

The result is that the players are living a “fishbowl experience” where their every move is being scrutinised on a daily basis and where they are pressurised to perform to the highest standard (Smith & Stewart, 2010). It is, therefore, apparent that players are under enormous pressure to perform, both on and off the field, not only from their coaches and managers but from the fans and spectators as well. However, professionalism occurs not only at national and provincial level, but also at university level. This is evident in the following vision and mission statement of one of the most prominent rugby playing universities in South Africa: “The vision and mission of the Tuks Rugby Academy is to identify and develop talented rugby professionals to their full potential and to equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge to enjoy a successful career in rugby” (University of Pretoria, Vision section, 2008:1).

The above-mentioned statement is a promise from the university to the player, creating certain expectations and obligations – a psychological contract. Rousseau (1995:9) defines the psychological contract as “individual beliefs, shaped by the organization, regarding terms of an exchange agreement between individuals and their organization”. In other words, the player may have certain expectations regarding remuneration, and training and development opportunities, in exchange for his time, physical and psychological efforts, discipline and devotion to the team. Violation or breach of these expectations and obligations may have adverse effects on the performance and contributions of the individual (Rousseau, 1995). A substantial amount of interest has been devoted in the rugby literature to the performance analysis of teams and players from various disciplines, such as the physiological, psychological and biomechanical (Mellalieu, 2008). Over the last two decades much attention has been given to research of the psychological contract (Suazo *et al.*, 2009). However, there is very little research connecting the psychological contract to sport. It was De Campos (1994) who found that an unclear psychological contract may lead to significant adverse consequences, such as being fired, quitting, changing coaches, changing sport clubs, stopping practising, poor performance, or even changing to another sport.

Therefore, 18 years after De Campos’s (1994) results, the main objective of the research on which the current article is based was to determine if the psychological contract in sport teams influences the perceived performance of the team members. In order to achieve this objective, a two-phase empirical analysis of the results of a psychological contract questionnaire and a perceived performance questionnaire was conducted.

PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACT

The concept and terminology of the psychological contract was first used in the early work of Argyris (1960), within the context of work organisations (Anderson & Schalk, 1998; Guest, 2004; Schalk & Roe, 2007). It was, however, Levinson *et al.* (1962) who first defined the concept as the sum of mutual expectations between the organisation and the employee (De Campos, 1994; Anderson & Schalk, 1998). Many definitions of the concept followed, but it was Rousseau (1995) who provided the key developments leading to its current use as an analytic framework (Guest, 2004). This analytic framework contains certain elements underlying the psychological contract. According to Rousseau (1995), the psychological contract is in essence a subjective perception, which will differ from one individual to another and, therefore, each individual will perform according to his or her perceived obligations and perceived expectations (De Campos, 1994). Parties to this exchange agreement are thus likely to hold rather different and possibly unique beliefs about what each owes to the other (Robinson & Rousseau, 1994).

The psychological contract furthermore involves a dynamic process (De Campos, 1994), which means that it is subject to change as the relationship between the employee and the employer evolves (Anderson & Schalk, 1998). According to Schalk and Roe (2007), psychological contracts are created at a certain point in time and they are assumed to be changeable over time. Another element underlying the psychological contract is that it is concerned with mutual obligations, based on certain promises, in which the parties will invest in their relationship with the prospect of an optimistic outcome (Anderson & Schalk, 1998). Therefore, the type of relationship that exists between the employee and the employer will have an impact on the psychological contract (De Campos, 1994). A fundamental component of the psychological contract is the concept of breach (Dulac *et al.*, 2008). Morrison and Robinson (1997:230) define psychological contract breach as “the cognition that one’s organization has failed to meet one or more obligations within one’s psychological contract in a manner commensurate with one’s contributions”. For instance, a rugby player expects that if he performs well, then he will be playing for the first team in the next game. It is, however, necessary to keep in mind that this is a subjective experience based not only on an employer’s action or inaction, but on the individual’s perception of what that action or inaction may be (Kramer, 2006).

According to Rousseau (1995), there are three main reasons for the occurrence of perceived psychological contract breach: *reneging*; *disruption*; and *inadvertent violation*. Firstly, *reneging* occurs when the organisation is aware that an obligation exists but consciously fails to meet that obligation (Robinson & Morrison, 2000). For example, a coach explicitly promised a player that he would play for the first team on Saturday and then chose another player. Secondly, *disruption* takes place when the organisation is unable to fulfil its obligations due to changing economic or environmental factors (Lester *et al.*, 2002). According to Lester *et al.* (2002), this type of psychological contract breach will transpire when an organisation is suffering financially or when unforeseen changes require it to adjust existing practices. For instance, the coach has promised the team a practice tour, but unexpected financial constraints subsequently make this impossible. The last reason for psychological contract breach is *inadvertent violation*. This can occur when an employee has a certain perception of a given promise that differs from the perception of the organisation

regarding that particular promise (Morrison & Robinson, 1997). In other words, it is when an employee and organisation have different understandings regarding either whether a given obligation exists or about the nature of that obligation (Robinson & Morrison, 2000). For example, the rugby administrators promised training and development with the onset of the season. The player, in this scenario, perceived this as a promise of a personal trainer, whereas the administrators only meant that they would provide gym facilities.

Accompanying the concept of psychological contract breach is the concept of violation. Early writings regarding the psychological contract regularly used the terms 'breach' and 'violation' interchangeably (Sparrow & Cooper, 2003). However, according to Robinson and Brown (2004), psychological contract breach refers to an individual's perception that another has failed to meet his or her obligations to that individual, whereas psychological contract violation refers to the emotional reaction to the interpretation of a breach experience. Sparrow and Cooper (2003:43) define psychological contract breach as "strong affective responses to more extreme breaches of contract, such as feelings of injustice, betrayal and deeper psychological distress, whereby the victim experiences anger, resentment, and a sense of wrongful harm". Thus, there is a distinction between the violation of the psychological contract and unmet expectations and perceptions of inequity (Robinson & Rousseau, 1994). When the psychological contract has been breached it produces a cognitive response, where an employee might make alterations to their own contributions in two ways (Holbeche, 2006). They may either decrease what they give, such as reducing the amount of effort they put into their work thus withdrawing psychologically, or they may increase what they get by taking more sick leave or commit petty theft to increase untaxed benefits.

In the case of the rugby player, he might reduce the effort he exerts on the field and become prone to absenteeism. However, when the breach develops into a violation, an employee's behaviour becomes more extreme, accompanied by emotional responses such as frustration, feelings of betrayal, leaving the organisation, sabotage and revenge, and physical symptoms such as high blood pressure (Holbeche, 2006). Rousseau (1995) states that the violation of a contract will therefore erode trust as it undermines the employment relationship, yielding lower employee contributions such as performance and attendance, as well as lower employer investments such as retention and promotion. Thus, when a player feels that an expectation or obligation was violated, it could do great damage to the coach-player relationship because the player could lower his performance and ultimately lead to the player quitting the team.

Psychological contract in the professional sporting environment

A fundamental aspect of the labour process is the employment relationship that is defined as the exchange relationship that exists between the employer and the employee in the workplace (Armstrong, 2006). Similarly, the relationship between the coach and the athlete plays a significant role in shaping the athletic endeavour (De Campos, 1994). According to Jowett and Poczwardowski (2007), coaches and athletes normally develop relationships through which athletes receive instruction, guidance and support. They work closely together, form close relationships and have a high level of interaction and reliance upon one another (Lorimer & Jowett, 2009). The coach, for example, may rely on the athlete on issues such as to be on time for practice sessions, to perform during games and to conform to the rules of the sport, whereas the athlete will rely on the coach to teach new techniques and skills, to extend

emotional support, to motivate the athlete and to evaluate the game of the athlete. When parties in a relationship experience that they are obliged to behave or perform in a particular manner, and that the other party has certain obligations towards them, such feelings can be regarded as the inception of a psychological contract (De Campos, 1994).

Wellin (2007:17) states that “the psychological contract essentially refers to the mutual expectations people have of one another in a relationship, and how these expectations change and impact our behaviour over time”. Within the coach-athlete relationship, the athlete starts to create expectations regarding the coach as early as when he or she starts thinking about practising a sport, whereas a coach can form expectations before he or she has met an athlete (De Campos, 1994). Due to the dynamic nature of the psychological contract, it will change and develop as time goes by through accumulating experiences, changing employment conditions and the parties re-evaluating their expectations (Armstrong, 2006).

However, not all expectations may be met, neither those of the employee nor those of the employer (French *et al.*, 1985). As previously mentioned, unmet expectations may lead to a breach and violation of the psychological contract. An employee’s perception of psychological contract breach can have harmful consequences for an organisation; including lowered performance, commitment and satisfaction, as well as lower actual turnover (Robinson & Rousseau, 1994; Robinson, 1996; Robinson *et al.*, 1994). Lanning (1979) argues that the athlete’s performance could be considerably affected by the nature of the relationship between the coach and the athlete. Therefore, if the athlete should feel that the coach has not met certain expectations, it may lead to lowered performance from the athlete.

EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

The empirical analysis of the research was conducted in two phases. The objectives were: to determine the reliability and validity of the psychological contract questionnaires that were used; to determine the content of the psychological contract of rugby team members; and to determine how the psychological contract correlated with the perceived performance of the rugby team members.

Participants

The general objective of the research was to determine the influence of the psychological contract on the perceived performance of a team. In this article, *team* refers to any team playing semi-professional rugby with team members getting paid for playing for the particular team and thus being regarded as employees. Semi-professional rugby teams are defined as the theoretical population. The study population was university rugby teams that participated at club level. In order to choose the participants for the study, a non-probability sampling method (convenience sampling technique) was used to select a sample from the study population. With non-probability sampling, the chance that any one particular person from the population will be chosen is unknown (Stead, 2001). A convenience sampling technique such as this selects respondents because they are easily accessible and should only be used if the universe is homogeneous (Stead, 2001).

Measuring instruments

Psychological contract questionnaire (Phases 1 and 2)

The psychological contract of team members consists of certain obligations of the institution towards the team members and certain player obligations towards the institution. In order to determine the content of these obligations, a psychological contract measure was used. This measure consisted of 40 items that are rated on a 6-point Likert-type scale. Thirty items represented a promise made to the player by the institution and 10 items represented promises made by the player to the institution. If the promise was not made, then the player would choose 0 – No, ‘the promise has not been made’. If the promise was made, the player could choose between 1 – Yes, but ‘promise not kept at all’, to 5 – Yes, for ‘promise fully kept’. Two sample items of the institute obligations are: ‘to provide you with challenging tasks’ and ‘to ensure fair treatment by coaches and managers’. Two sample items of the player obligations are: ‘to give good performances as a player constantly’ and ‘to be committed to the improvement of your team’s performance’.

Perceived performance questionnaire (Phase 2)

This questionnaire measured the level of performance that each team member experienced during each game. The questionnaire consisted of four items (yourself, your captain, the team, the coaching staff) that were answered through a rating scale ranging from 0 to 10. Before and after each home game each team member had to rate the perceived performance of himself, his captain, the team, and the coaching staff from 0 to 10.

Procedure

Phase 1

In order to determine the validity and reliability of the psychological contract questionnaire and the content of the psychological contract, 3 teams were chosen who participated in the U/19s, the U/21s and the first team of a prominent rugby playing university in South Africa. Psychological contract questionnaires were handed out at the onset of the season in order to determine the content of the psychological contract of these team members.

Phase 2

To determine the correlation between the psychological contract and the perceived performance, the first rugby team of a university in South Africa was used. The team chosen took part in an extremely well organised and professional university rugby competition. The competition consisted of 31 matches in total and was played every Monday evening for 2 months. These matches were broadcast live on national television. The psychological contract questionnaires were handed out at the onset of the season and perceived performance questionnaires were handed out on a regular basis – before and after each home game – in order to determine the satisfaction with the teams’ preparation or game, as well as the perceived performance of the team.

The samples in both phases were also deemed to be valid samples of the study population due to their participation in all of the important club level competitions in South Africa.

Statistical analysis

The data obtained from the above questionnaires were statistically analysed using the SPSS program 17.0.

Phase 1

In order to determine the content of the psychological contract, exploratory factor analysis was used. Prior to this, item extraction was done in order to determine the frequencies of promises not made and promises made. Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis) of the factors were also computed to analyse the data obtained from the questionnaires. Cronbach's alpha (α) coefficients were also computed in order to determine the internal consistency of the constructs.

Phase 2

In order to determine the correlation between the psychological contract and perceived performance, exploratory factor analysis was done to determine the factors underlying the psychological contract and perceived performance questionnaires. Thereafter, a Pearson's product-moment (2-tailed) correlation was done to measure the strength of the relationship between the psychological contract and perceived performance (Field, 2005).

RESULTS

Phase 1

Exploratory factor analysis was used to assess the items of the psychological contract questionnaire. As a result, 2 factors were extracted and were labelled Institute Obligations and Player Obligations. Seven factors with inadequate loadings were excluded. These were housing, opportunities for development as a player, accommodating team and academic demands provided by university to match team and academic demands, team captain regulating emotional behaviour, accepting selectors' decisions, and reaching expectations of team supporters. Factor 1, Institute Obligations, had an eigenvalue of 7.291 and explained 27.01% of the variance. Table 1 shows the items grouped under Factor 1, Institute Obligations, with their loadings that ranged from 0.436 to 0.643. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value measured at 0.77 and the Bartlett's test of Sphericity was lower than 0.01.

Table 2 shows the items grouped under Factor 2, Player Obligations, with their loading ranging from 0.411 to 0.848. Factor 2 had an eigenvalue of 5.792 and explained 44.57% of the variance. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value measured at 0.89 and the Bartlett's test of Sphericity was lower than 0.01.

TABLE 1: RESULTS OF EXPLORATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS FOR INSTITUTE OBLIGATIONS (F1)

| Items | F1 | Communalities |
|--|-----------|----------------------|
| Challenging tasks | 0.496 | 0.735 |
| Financial assistance | 0.506 | 0.605 |
| Opportunities for development | 0.578 | 0.646 |
| Participation in decision-making | 0.454 | 0.582 |
| Career opportunities | 0.610 | 0.588 |
| Good working atmosphere | 0.567 | 0.703 |
| Fair treatment | 0.580 | 0.771 |
| Growth opportunities | 0.643 | 0.745 |
| Taken care of | 0.594 | 0.741 |
| Accommodated with long-term injury | 0.632 | 0.799 |
| Help with personal problems | 0.485 | 0.750 |
| Honest about performance | 0.593 | 0.773 |
| Clear and consistent with performance appraisals | 0.636 | 0.724 |
| Quality training facilities | 0.497 | 0.777 |
| Task-orientated team | 0.572 | 0.669 |
| Committed team performance | 0.562 | 0.726 |
| Loyal team members | 0.565 | 0.757 |
| Team members accepting norms and standards | 0.584 | 0.677 |
| Good team captain | 0.480 | 0.600 |
| Team captain leading by example | 0.553 | 0.780 |
| Team captain providing feedback | 0.576 | 0.769 |
| Team captain taking responsibility | 0.436 | 0.600 |

TABLE 2: RESULTS OF EXPLORATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS FOR PLAYER OBLIGATIONS (F2)

| Items | F2 | Communalities |
|--|-----------|----------------------|
| Loyal to Rugby Institute | 0.723 | 0.595 |
| Constantly good performance | 0.789 | 0.664 |
| Constantly good academic performance | 0.411 | 0.663 |
| Supporting image | 0.844 | 0.752 |
| Honesty | 0.799 | 0.701 |
| Task-orientated | 0.722 | 0.523 |
| Commitment to improvement | 0.848 | 0.756 |
| Loyal to team | 0.675 | 0.679 |
| Accepting team norms and standards | 0.693 | 0.492 |
| Innovative suggestions for improvement | 0.690 | 0.498 |
| Accepting captain's authority | 0.606 | 0.548 |

Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics of the aforementioned factors, as well as the 7 items that were dropped from the factor analysis. Also indicated in Table 3 is the Cronbach's α for the 2 factors. Cronbach's α value for both factors were above the recommended 0.7 that indicates that the constructs are reliable.

TABLE 3: MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS, SKEWNESS, KURTOSIS AND CRONBACH'S ALPHAS

| Variables | Mean | SD | Skewness | Kurtosis | α |
|----------------------------|------|------|----------|----------|----------|
| Institute obligations (F1) | 4.38 | 0.37 | -0.43 | -0.14 | 0.882 |
| Player obligations (F2) | 4.56 | 0.43 | -1.88 | 6.00 | 0.897 |

As shown in Table 3, the means of Institute Obligations and Player Obligations were 4.38 and 4.56 with standard deviations of 0.37 and 0.43. The kurtosis of Player Obligations is 6.00, which indicates that the distributions were relatively pointy (Field, 2005).

Phase 2

Exploratory factor analysis was done and 4 factors were extracted: Before Game Performance, After Game Performance, Institute Obligations and Player Obligations. Both Before Game Performance and After Game Performance grouped successfully with Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin values higher than 0.60 (BGP=0.81; AGP=0.82) and the Bartlett's tests of Sphericity were lower than 0.01 in both cases. These factors measure acceptable Cronbach's alpha coefficients, to confirm their reliability ($\alpha_{BGP}=0.81$; $\alpha_{AGP}=0.83$). Pearson's product-moment (2-tailed) correlation was done for the 4 factors and the results are indicated in Table 4.

TABLE 4: CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN CONTENTS ($n = 27$)

| Items | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|----------------------------|--------------|-------|----------------|---|
| 1. Before game performance | — | - | - | - |
| 2. After game performance | 0.479 * + | — | - | - |
| 3. Institution obligations | 0.183 | 0.028 | — | - |
| 4. Player obligations | 0.238 | 0.062 | 0.749 ** ++ | — |

* Statistically significant correlation: $p < 0.05$ ** Statistically significant correlation: $p < 0.01$

+ Practically significant correlation: $r = 0.30$ (medium effect)

++ Practically significant correlation: $r = 0.50$ (large effect)

Table 4 indicates that there were strong correlations between Before Game Performance and After Game Performance (0.497) and between Institute Obligations and Player Obligations (0.749). The correlation between Before Game Performance and After Game Performance was statistically significant at a confidence level of 95% and was practically significant with a medium effect ($r=0.30$). The correlation between Institute Obligations and Player Obligations was statistically significant at a confidence level of 99% and was practically significant with a large effect ($r=0.50$). There was, however, no correlation between the 2 factors for performance and the 2 factors for the psychological contract.

DISCUSSION

The general objective of the research was to determine how the psychological contract influences the perceived performance of rugby team members. The first phase of the study investigated the content of the psychological contract of the members of three rugby teams. According to the literature, the psychological contract is in essence a subjective perception; therefore, parties to this exchange agreement are likely to hold different beliefs about what each owes the other.

It was indicated in the descriptive statistics that the team members' perceived obligations of the institute was high (mean=4.38). In general, this is an experience of a fulfilled psychological contract and much higher than the average experience of perceived obligations by employers. Isaksson (2006) indicates an average mean of 3.69 on the same scale for perceived employment obligations in eight European countries and Linde and Schalk (2008) report a mean of 3.60 in a South African sample. In both of these studies, there was a significant difference between the perceived employer obligations and the employee obligations, where the perceived employee obligations were much higher than the perceived employer obligations. Thus, the participants of the Isaksson (2006) and Linde and Schalk (2008) studies, perceived that they kept much more promises than the organisation. In this study, the fulfilment experience of the team members were much more balanced with a similar experience of perceived promises kept. These two factors of the psychological contract measured as a significant correlation with a large practical effect. The high level that the institute's obligations were fulfilled had a strong influence on the way that the team members fulfilled their obligations.

This indicates that the team members were not only satisfied with the manner in which the institution kept its promises, but also kept theirs. Maritz (2012) confirmed that a balanced psychological contract, as the team members, has a strong impact on the well-being of the employee, including job satisfaction, job security and physical well-being. Most importantly, such a fulfilled and balanced psychological contract reflects on the perceived and actual performance of the employee.

The current study could not confirm such a direct relationship between a balanced and fulfilled psychological contract with perceived performance. This result does not eliminate such a correlation, since the evaluation of the psychological contract was not measured before and after each match, but at the onset of the season. Furthermore, according to the Job Demands-Resources Model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), the fulfilment of promises by the employer creates an environment where well-being is achieved that sets the scene for own fulfilment of promises. This will have an influence on perceived performance. Even though a direct link was not found in this study, it can be deduced that high levels of perceived performance will not easily be reached without a fulfilled and balanced psychological contract, since it is part of hygiene factors for performance.

A correlation was achieved between perceived performances in the preparation for a match, with the perceived performance in that match. Various researchers confirmed that team cohesion (Gully *et al.*, 1995), mental and physical well-being (Smith *et al.*, 1992) and the

exchange relationship (Seers *et al.*, 1995), within teams can predict perceived performance in sporting events.

This study also included the experience of performance in the preparation for the actual sport event as a predictor of the perceived performance in the match. The findings confirmed such a correlation, which indicates that similar experiences of performances were experienced before and after the match. The above-mentioned past studies of antecedents for perceived performances in matches excluded the experience of the training for the specific event. It is proposed that this perceived performance of the preparations of the match can be used as a mediator between the exchange relationships, well-being and team cohesion with the perceived performance in the match.

CONCLUSION

Through this study it can be concluded that a valid and reliable psychological contract measurement can be used for sport teams that will measure the obligations of the team members to the team, management and institution. This measurement can also measure the obligations of the institution to the team member, as perceived by the team member. Certain items were dropped from the factor analysis due to their low loadings towards the two factors. These items included the promise of housing for the players, opportunities for the development of players, accommodating team and academic demands, team captain regulating emotional behaviour, accepting selectors' decisions, and reaching expectations of team supporters. Thus, rugby team members did not perceive the afore-mentioned items as promises either made by the institution or to the institution.

It was also confirmed that the team members experienced a balanced and fulfilled psychological contract, which seemed to be quite unique to this form of relationship, since an unbalanced psychological contract was measured in employment relationships in the past. This establishes a favourable situation for team members to achieve their goals and reach high levels of performance. Even though the researchers could not link the balanced and fulfilled psychological contract with perceived performance, they did identify the importance of the measurement of perceived performance in the preparation to the match, since it is linked with the match's perceived performance.

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