

The Academic Advisor's Playbook: Seeking Compliance from College Student-Athletes

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We explored the effectiveness of compliance-gaining strategies on college student-athletes (N = 228) in three request situations (i.e., seeking a tutor, attending a weekly academic appointment, and faithfully attending class). The study revealed several key findings: a) Student-athletes perceive the compliance-gaining strategy of negative altercasting as unlikely to persuade them in any of the three situations; b) student-athletes do not rate the compliance-gaining strategies differently among the three request situations; and c) when using the compliance-gaining strategies of negative self-feeling and negative altercasting, advisors should consider the type of request situation, because the persuasiveness of these two strategies is situationally dependent. Practical applications for advisors, along with directions for future research, are considered.

KEY WORDS: advising approaches, communication, compliance-gaining techniques, National Collegiate Athletic Association, survey

In the study of human communication, the exercise of power has captured the attention of various scholars (e.g., Hunter & Boster, 1987; Parrot, Burgoon, & Ross, 1992; Petrow & Sullivan, 2007; Turman, 2007). First introduced by French and Raven (1959), *compliance*¹ gaining is “any interaction in which a message source attempts to induce a target individual to perform some desired behavior that the target otherwise might not perform” (Wilson, 2002, p. 4), or “choices people make about what to say when trying to persuade others to behave in predetermined ways” (Rubin, Palmgreen, & Sypher, 1994, p. 143). Compliance gaining is a common practice in human interaction because individuals commonly enact resistance (Petty, Rucker, Bizer, & Cacioppo, 2004; Wilson, 2002).

One particular group, academic advisors² in

intercollegiate athletics, uses compliance gaining strategies as they work with student-athletes³ (Gaston-Gayles, 2003; Watt & Moore, 2001). Advisors play a significant role in the life of student-athletes as they instruct them to complete justifiable tasks, such as regularly attend class, meet with academic tutors, and attend scheduled academic appointments (Carodine, Almond, & Gratto, 2001; Denson, 1996; Kissenger & Miller, 2009). Each of the aforementioned responsibilities proves integral to student-athletes' academic experience (Thompson, 2009), so for their own benefit, they must comply with instructions communicated about these tasks from advisors (Fletcher, Benschoff, & Richburg, 2003; Meyer, 2005). For instance, advisors request that student-athletes faithfully attend class to ensure that they acquire the instructional information needed for successful completion of tests, quizzes, and other assignments. Likewise, an advisor suggests that student-athletes with demonstrated deficiency in a subject area (e.g., mathematics) see a tutor for help in ameliorating the academic problem (Hixon & Sherman, 1988; Thompson, 2008).

Strict academic legislation issued by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) also compels advisors to gain student-athlete compliance to fulfill certain obligations. This legislation (i.e., Bylaws 14. 4. 3. 1 and 14. 4. 3. 3) mandates that student-athletes meet explicit academic requirements regarding grade-point average (GPA) and credit hours earned (National Collegiate Athletic Association, 2010-2011). Thus, advisors' directions help ensure that the student-athletes place themselves in the best possible position to meet NCAA requirements. Student-athletes in noncompliance with NCAA academic progress guidelines risk being rendered ineligible to participate in sports (National Collegiate Athletic Association, 2010-2011). To maintain NCAA eligibility and benefit

¹ In intercollegiate athletics the word *compliance* is most commonly associated with an administrative office responsible for ensuring that members of the athletic department (e.g., coaches) respect and obey NCAA rules and regulations. In the current study, however, compliance gaining means persuading student-athletes to perform a desired behavior.

² The terms *academic advisor* and *advisor* are used interchangeably.

³ Student-athletes are enrolled in college and attending classes while concomitantly participating in their sport.

from successful academic outcomes, student-athletes must follow the instructions given to them by advisors. Therefore, in our present study we examined the ways that advisors should communicate with student-athletes to increase compliance.

Not all student-athletes resist the requests made by their advisors and such claims would constitute both an oversimplification of the situation and reflect an unsubstantiated generalization. In fact, many student-athletes complete some of the aforementioned tasks (e.g., faithfully attending class) without advisors requesting them to do so. Also, each student-athlete who resists compliance is unique (Watt & Moore, 2001) and therefore the compliance-gaining strategy that works with one student-athlete may not be as effective with another. Therefore, we remind advisors to refrain from stereotyping or generalizing the student-athlete population.

Literature Review

Compliance Resistance

Gaining compliance from some student-athletes proves a daunting task laced with rhetorical challenges. *Compliance resistance* refers to noncompliance or resistance to persuasion; it characterizes a situation in which the influence agent's attempt to convince the target to perform a desired action is rejected (Burroughs, 2007; Burroughs, Kearney, & Plax, 1989; McLaughlin, Cody, & Robey, 1980).

Thompson (2005) posited that student-athletes exercise compliance resistance when they skip a scheduled meeting with a tutor or mentor or when they disregard an academic advising appointment. Student-athletes may enact resistance in other ways. They might *rebuff*; that is, the target (student-athlete) provides no explanation to the influencer (advisor) for not wanting to perform the desired task (Ifert & Roloff, 1998; Roloff & Jordan, 1991). For example, a student-athlete may admit to being unwilling to faithfully attend class but give no reason for this choice. Student-athletes also may enact resistance by putting up an *obstacle*; that is, the target offers a reason for noncompliance to a request by the influence agent (Ifert & Roloff, 1998; Roloff & Jordan, 1991). For instance, a student-athlete may explain that faithfully attending class is less important than athletic pursuits (Thompson, 2009).

Resistance may also be demonstrated by *deception* or *excuses* (Burroughs et al., 1989). Student-athletes behave deceptively if they say they will comply with the request made by the advisor but fail to do so. For example, a student-athlete may promise to faithfully attend class but not show

up to the class. Sometimes, student-athletes offer excuses for reasons precluding their compliance. For example, a student-athlete may explain that he or she is too sore from practice to spend time with a tutor (Parham, 1993; Thompson, 2008). These examples illustrate that student-athletes employ a wide range of strategies to resist complying with advisor instructions.

Noncompliance impacts the interactions and overall interpersonal relationship between two individuals (Burroughs et al., 1989; McLaughlin et al., 1980). Research undertaken prior to 1989 mainly consisted of studies on the role of the teacher or advisor in the persuasive process, and the communication was portrayed as linear. However, in groundbreaking research, Burroughs et al. (1989) considered the student's role, thus calling attention to the transactional, rather than linear, nature of the communication process. Following suit, other researchers (e.g., Burroughs, 2007; Gilchrist, 2008, 2009; Golish, 1999; Golish & Olson, 2001) have argued that compliance is a reciprocal process whereby students also act as agents of persuasion who both employ and resist persuasive tactics. In this study, we embrace the transactional understanding of compliance and explore effective compliance-inducing strategies from the student-athlete's perspective.

Compliance Gaining

Despite the indefatigable resistance enacted by some student-athletes, advisors must know communication tactics that increase the likelihood of gaining compliance. Several studies on compliance-gaining strategies have yielded interesting results (Bevan, Cameron, & Dillow, 2003; Wrench & Booth-Butterfield, 2003). Most relevant to our present study, Marwell and Schmitt (1967) analyzed 16 power-based compliance-gaining techniques that included: a) promise (i.e., influencer rewards compliance), b) threat (i.e., influencer inflicts punishment for noncompliance), c) positive expertise (i.e., the situation demands reward for compliance; e.g., grades based on attendance will increase if student goes to class), d) negative expertise (i.e., the situation demands punishment for noncompliance; e.g., failing a class leads to athletic ineligibility), e) liking (i.e., influencer uses friendliness to get target in a positive frame of mind), f) pre-giving (i.e., influencer rewards target before requesting compliance), g) aversive stimulation (i.e., influencer continuously punishes target until compliance), h) debt (i.e., influencer points out past favors done on target's behalf), i) moral appeal

(i.e., noncompliance indicates immoral behavior), j) positive self-feeling (i.e., compliance engenders positive esteem), k) negative self-feeling (i.e., non-compliance engenders negative esteem), l) positive altercasting (i.e., compliance characterizes a person with good qualities), m) negative altercasting (i.e., noncompliance characterizes a person with bad qualities), n) altruism (i.e., compliance helps influencer), o) positive esteem (i.e., compliance pleases valued people), and p) negative esteem (i.e., noncompliance disappoints valued people).

Factor analysis of the 16 power-based compliance-gaining techniques from Marwell and Schmitt's (1967) original research show that the scale is comprised of five dimensions: a) *rewarding activity* in the form of pre-giving, liking, and making promises; b) *punishing activity*, such as use of a threat; c) both positive and negative *expertise*, which leads to punishment or reward as the situation warrants (e.g., faithfully attending class will lead to good grades, which will help in landing a good job, but not attending class will lead to poor grades, which will not help in getting a good job); d) positive and negative *activation of impersonal commitments* garnered by appealing to negative and positive esteem; e) *activation of personal commitments* such as pointing out debts or need for altruism. Marwell and Schmitt posited that when an influence agent attempts to persuade a target, he or she selects specific strategies from the five dimensions. They intuitively concluded that the effectiveness of the compliance-gaining strategy determines whether or not the target will be persuaded to comply.

Subsequent to Marwell and Schmitt's (1967) work, researchers studied the use of compliance-gaining strategies in an educational context, which is pertinent to the present study. To this end, Kearney, Plax, Richmond, and McCroskey (1984) carefully explored the use of compliance-gaining strategies employed by school teachers to influence students' behavior and learning. They generated a typology of 22 behavior alteration techniques (BATs) with behavior alteration messages (BAMs) for each BAT. Complementing this research, Kearney, Plax, Smith, and Sorenson (1988) suggested that prosocial BATs (i.e., reward oriented) are more effective for teachers than antisocial BATs (i.e., punishment oriented) when seeking compliance from students. In other words, students respond better to prosocial BATs and are more likely to comply with requests using this strategy.

Following this research, Blackadar (1998) examined classroom behavior techniques by enlist-

ing 38 school teachers to complete questionnaires concerning the type of classroom behavioral-control techniques they employed. Findings indicated that teachers used various compliance-inducing techniques to control students' behavior, including "calling parents" and "talking privately to the student" (p. 11). Students responded to these compliance-gaining strategies, and consequently, teachers maintained control of their classrooms. Researchers have also suggested that a teacher's choice of compliance-gaining strategies influences students' desire to learn (Richmond, 1990) as well as their cognitive and affective learning (McCroskey, Richmond, Plax, & Kearney, 1985).

Although the aforementioned studies on teachers were well conceived and expanded the existing knowledge about compliance-gaining strategies, they did not address compliance-gaining strategies for advisors to use with college student-athletes. Therefore, we fill this gap by arguing that advisors are akin to teachers in that, like their classroom counterparts, they need to gain the compliance of some of their student-athletes through particular persuasive strategies. In the subsequent section we discuss situational variations among compliance-gaining strategies to further lay the foundation for our study.

Situational Variations among Compliance-Gaining Strategies

Marwell and Schmitt (1967) presented four situations (i.e., requesting a tutor, more studying, a purchase, and a promotion) in which an influencer attempted to gain the compliance of a target: They asked the target to receive tutoring, study more, make a purchase, or ask for a promotion. They compared data to determine situational variations among the compliance-gaining strategies. Following them, other scholars have examined persuasive techniques across a mix of interpersonal situations such as those involving unwanted sexual advances (Motley & Reeder, 1995), pressure to smoke (Reardon, Sussman, & Flay, 1989), grade and paper deadline changes (Golish, 1999; Golish & Olson, 2000), and class enrollment (Gilchrist, 2009). All the researchers of these studies concluded that not all strategies are appropriate in all situations; thus, even when one is trying to persuade the same group of people, "different contexts require different strategies" (Gass & Seiter, 2007, p. 230).

Cody, Woelfel, and Jordan (1983) articulated seven situational dimensions to consider when seeking compliance: a) dominance (i.e., the level of control or power in a relationship), b) intimacy

(i.e., the level of emotional attachment or knowledge one has of a partner's effect), c) resistance (i.e., the degree to which the persuader thinks a strategy will be resisted), d) personal benefits (i.e., the extent to which either party benefits by compliance), e) rights (i.e., the extent to which a persuader thinks the request is warranted), f) relational consequences (i.e., the degree to which a strategy will impact long- or short-term relationship), and g) apprehension (i.e., the degree to which a persuader perceives nervousness in the situation). Although previous researchers have suggested that compliance-gaining strategies are situationally dependent, these scholars have not examined academic advisors' use of the 16 power-based compliance-gaining strategies with student-athletes. Therefore, in addition to examining the compliance-gaining strategies most and least likely to persuade student-athletes, we also explore whether or not the persuasiveness of strategies varies by request situation.

In sum, those looking for compliance will typically select strategies that generate less resistance than those that inspire higher levels of resistance (Gass & Seiter, 2007), but to effectively persuade student-athletes, advisors need to know which strategies will likely facilitate compliance. Furthermore, they also need to know the ways that context or situation influences the effectiveness of compliance-gaining strategies (see Gass & Seiter, 2007). To equip advisors with appropriate compliance-gaining strategies, we generated the following research questions:

- RQ1 Which compliance-gaining strategies will least likely persuade student-athletes receiving instruction from academic advisors?
- RQ2 Which compliance-gaining strategies will most likely persuade student-athletes receiving instruction from academic advisors?
- RQ3 Do student-athletes rate the persuasiveness of the 16 power-based compliance-gaining strategies differently in the request situations of tutoring, attending weekly academic appointments, and faithfully attending class?

Method

Participants

Our study was comprised of 228 college student-athletes from two mid-sized U.S. universities: one in the Northeast and one in the Southeast. The participants represented the following groups:

Caucasian (124), African American (86), Hispanic (8), Asian (3), and *other* (7). The group consisted of 148 males and 80 females, and the mean age of the sample was 21 years. Participants included 62 freshmen, 63 sophomores, 56 juniors, 38 seniors, and 9 student-athletes who labeled their year in college as *other*. The student-athletes represented the following sports: football (76), track and field (36), basketball (32), cross country (25), soccer (22), baseball (13), softball (10), volleyball (8), swimming (3), hockey (2), and wrestling (1).

Recruiting Participants

In full accordance with Institutional Review Board protocol, we solicited participation by providing a brief description of the study to coaches at perspective universities. While we encouraged coaches to share the information with their student-athletes, we did not force them to help us solicit participants, and student-athletes were not penalized in any way if they chose to decline participating in this study. We distributed a survey to the student-athletes who agreed to participate in the study.

Instrumentation

Through the survey, we asked participants to complete general demographic items, such as questions about age, sex, and ethnicity. In addition, the student-athletes listed the sport(s) in which they participate. The remainder of the survey instrument consisted of three different hypothetical situations in which student-athletes might conceive of themselves as facing (see Appendix). The first situation depicts an advisor requesting that student-athletes meet with a tutor to obtain academic assistance for a class. The scenario states that the student-athlete is struggling in a class and the advisor believes the tutor could enhance her or his academic performance. The second situation entails an advisor requesting a student-athlete to attend a weekly academic-advising appointment with a peer mentor, which is necessary for the advisor to monitor the advisee's academic progress. The third situation concerns an advisor asking that a student-athlete who attends a class infrequently commit to faithfully attending it. The advisor explains that noncompliance will affect the student-athlete's attendance record and overall performance in the course.

The survey instrument consists of a series of statements measured on a Likert-type scale on which student-athletes evaluate the likelihood of an advisor gaining their compliance through specific communication tactics. Scores ranged from 1

(*extremely likely*) to 8 (*extremely unlikely*). The survey items were adapted from the 16 power-based compliance-gaining techniques instrument created by the aforementioned Marwell and Schmitt (1967) study and included: a) promise, b) threat, c) positive expertise, d) negative expertise, e) liking, f) pregiving, g) aversive stimulation, h) debt, i) moral appeal, j) positive self-feeling, k) negative self-feeling, l) positive altercasting, m) negative altercasting, n) altruism, o) positive esteem, and p) negative esteem.

Data Analysis

We used all 16 Marwell and Schmitt (1967) techniques. In previous research, α reliabilities for the compliance-gaining measure averaged in the .80 range (Rubin et al., 1994). From the three situations presented in this study, the α reliabilities were: .84 (tutoring), .88 (weekly academic appointments), and .88 (faithfully attending class). Thus, the scale showed good internal consistency.

Items on the Marwell and Schmitt (1967) compliance-gaining measure were evaluated from 1 to 8. A score of 1 suggested that the student-athletes were extremely likely to be persuaded by the compliance-gaining strategy, whereas a score of 8 indicated the opposite. The *forced-choice response scale* denies respondents the option of a neutral or undecided choice (it has no single middle integer because the scale contains 8 items) (Reinard, 2008). We evaluated scores as follows: 1 and 2, extremely likely to be persuaded by the compliance-gaining strategy; 3 and 4, likely to be persuaded by the compliance-gaining strategy; 5 and 6, unlikely to be persuaded by the compliance-gaining strategy; and 7 and 8 extremely unlikely to be persuaded by the compliance-gaining strategy.

Results

As evident from RQ1 and RQ2, we sought to determine which compliance-gaining strategies are most and least likely to persuade student-athletes receiving instruction from academic advisors. We calculated descriptive statistics for each of the 16 power-based compliance-gaining techniques concerning the three situations of tutoring, attending weekly academic appointments, and faithfully attending class.

In the tutoring situation, none of the compliance-gaining strategies had a mean score in the 1-2 range, suggesting that none of the strategies were extremely likely to persuade student-athletes to seek tutoring. Fourteen of the compliance-gaining strategies had means in the range of 3-4, while two

of the strategies, negative self-feeling and negative altercasting, with mean scores in the 5-6 range, seemed unlikely to persuade student-athletes to seek tutoring. See Table 1. None of the compliance-gaining strategies scored in the 7-8 range, which means the student-athletes did not perceive any of the strategies as extremely unlikely to persuade them to meet with a tutor.

The second situation focused on weekly academic appointments. None of the compliance-gaining strategies had a mean score in the range of 1-2, suggesting that, similar to the data obtained in the tutoring situation, none of the strategies were extremely likely to persuade student-athletes to attend their weekly academic appointments. Fifteen of the compliance-gaining strategies had means in the 3-4 range, suggesting that all of the tactics, except negative altercasting, are likely to persuade student-athletes to attend weekly academic appointments. See Table 2. As with the data for the tutoring scenario, none of the compliance-gaining strategies had mean scores in the 7-8 range, indicating that the surveyed student-athletes did not perceive any of the persuasive strategies as extremely unlikely to persuade them to attend weekly academic appointments.

The third situation involved motivating student-athletes to faithfully attend class. Similar to the tutoring and attending weekly academic-appointments situations, none of the compliance-gaining

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for the 16 power-based compliance-gaining strategies in the tutoring situation ($N = 228$)

Strategy	Mean	SD
Promise	3.69	2.12
Threat	3.77	2.30
Positive Expertise	3.25	1.90
Negative Expertise	3.64	1.89
Liking	4.17	1.95
Pregiving	3.64	1.89
Aversive Stimulation	4.29	2.81
Debt	4.55	2.04
Moral Appeal	4.92	1.92
Positive Self-feeling	4.05	1.71
Negative Self-feeling	5.19	1.93
Positive Altercasting	4.20	1.93
Negative Altercasting	5.34	1.96
Altruism	4.12	2.07
Positive Esteem	3.70	2.01
Negative Esteem	4.77	2.17

Note. $\alpha = .84$; minimum score is 1 and maximum score is 8.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics for the 16 power-based compliance-gaining strategies in the weekly academic appointment situation ($N = 228$)

Strategy	Mean	SD
Promise	3.50	1.92
Threat	3.80	2.21
Positive Expertise	3.41	1.68
Negative Expertise	4.07	1.86
Liking	3.66	1.84
Pregiving	3.86	1.86
Aversive Stimulation	3.77	2.50
Debt	4.35	2.09
Moral Appeal	4.83	2.09
Positive Self-feeling	4.00	1.72
Negative Self-feeling	4.90	2.00
Positive Altercasting	4.08	1.90
Negative Altercasting	5.27	1.99
Altruism	4.41	2.07
Positive Esteem	3.81	1.92
Negative Esteem	4.62	2.26

Note. $\alpha = .88$; minimum score is 1 and maximum score is 8.

strategies had averages in the range of 1-2, indicating that none of the strategies were extremely likely to persuade student-athletes to regularly attend class. Reflective of the attending weekly academic appointments situation, all but one of the compliance-gaining strategies had means in the range of 3-4. See Table 3. These means imply that 15 of the 16 compliance-gaining strategies are likely to motivate student-athletes to faithfully attend class. Analogous to the attending weekly academic appointments situation, negative altercasting, with a mean of 5.04, is the lone compliance-gaining strategy unlikely to persuade student-athletes to regularly attend class. Comparable to the previous two situations, none of the compliance-gaining strategies had scores in the 7-8 range, suggesting that the student-athletes did not perceive any of the persuasive strategies as extremely unlikely to persuade them to faithfully attend class.

In a second objective of this study, per RQ3, we examined whether student-athletes rate the persuasiveness of the 16 power-based compliance-gaining strategies differently in the situations of tutoring, attending weekly academic appointments, and faithfully attending class. To explore this question, we performed a series of one-way analyses of variance (ANOVAs).

Fourteen compliance-gaining strategies did not differ significantly among the three request situa-

Table 3. Descriptive statistics for the 16 power-based compliance-gaining strategies in the faithfully attend class situation ($N = 228$)

Strategy	Mean	SD
Promise	3.44	2.04
Threat	3.62	2.24
Positive Expertise	3.49	1.82
Negative Expertise	4.12	1.85
Liking	3.65	1.92
Pregiving	4.03	1.93
Aversive Stimulation	3.92	2.48
Debt	4.40	2.06
Moral Appeal	4.70	2.09
Positive Self-feeling	4.03	1.78
Negative Self-feeling	4.76	1.90
Positive Altercasting	4.19	1.90
Negative Altercasting	5.04	2.01
Altruism	4.07	2.11
Positive Esteem	3.71	1.99
Negative Esteem	4.37	2.28

Note. $\alpha = .88$; minimum score is 1 and maximum score is 8.

tions. See Table 4. The results suggest that student-athletes will perceive the persuasiveness of these strategies similarly if used by advisors in the request situations of tutoring, attending weekly academic appointments, and faithfully attending class.

The ANOVAs yielded significant differences for two of the compliance-gaining strategies among the three request situations: negative self-feeling and negative altercasting. When results of the ANOVAs were statistically significant, we used Scheffé post hoc multiple comparisons to determine where differences between the means existed. The results indicated a significant effect in how student-athletes perceive the persuasiveness of negative self-feeling in the three advising situations $F(2, 681) = 2.90, p < .05$. Specifically, a Scheffé post hoc test revealed that student-athletes report being less persuaded by the compliance-gaining strategy of negative self-feeling used by advisors to convince them to seek tutoring ($M = 5.19, SD = 1.93$), whereas they are more persuaded by the strategy when the advisors use the method to encourage them to faithfully attend class ($M = 4.76, SD = 1.90$).

In addition to negative self-feeling, results from the ANOVA signified that student-athletes differ in how they perceive negative altercasting in the various advising situations $F(2, 681) = 68.80, p < .001$. Post hoc analyses revealed differences between

Table 4. ANOVA summary for the power-based compliance-gaining strategies perceived similarly in persuasiveness among advising situations

Strategy	Source	df	MS	F
Promise	Between Groups	2	3.91	.95
	Within Groups	681	4.12	
	Total	683		
Threat	Between Groups	2	2.22	.44
	Within Groups	681	5.06	
	Total	683		
Positive Expertise	Between Groups	2	3.45	1.06
	Within Groups	681	3.26	
	Total	683		
Negative Expertise	Between Groups	2	.54	.15
	Within Groups	681	3.62	
	Total	683		
Liking	Between Groups	2	0.03	.01
	Within Groups	681	3.54	
	Total	683		
Pregiving	Between Groups	2	5.53	1.51
	Within Groups	681	3.67	
	Total	683		
Aversive Stimulation	Between Groups	2	16.18	2.39
	Within Groups	681	6.77	
	Total	683		
Debt	Between Groups	2	2.58	.61
	Within Groups	681	4.25	
	Total	683		
Moral Appeal	Between Groups	2	2.88	.70
	Within Groups	681	4.14	
	Total	683		
Positive Self-feeling	Between Groups	2	.19	.06
	Within Groups	681	3.01	
	Total	683		
Positive Altercasting	Between Groups	2	1.08	.30
	Within Groups	681	3.65	
	Total	683		
Altruism	Between Groups	2	7.61	1.76
	Within Groups	681	4.33	
	Total	683		
Positive Esteem	Between Groups	2	0.88	.23
	Within Groups	681	3.89	
	Total	683		
Negative Esteem	Between Groups	2	9.06	1.80
	Within Groups	681	5.02	
	Total	683		

Note. Request situations = tutoring, attending academic appointment, and faithfully attending class.
 $p > .05$ for all F statistics.

the tutoring ($M = 5.34$, $SD = 1.96$) and the weekly academic appointment ($M = 3.41$, $SD = 1.68$) situations and differences between the weekly academic appointment ($M = 3.41$, $SD = 1.68$) and faithfully attending class ($M = 5.04$, $SD = 2.00$) situations.

Taken together, these results suggest that student-athletes perceive the persuasiveness of negative altercasting differently based on the advising scenario. Specifically, the data indicate that negative altercasting is less persuasive in the tutoring and

faithfully attending-class situations than it is in the attending academic-appointment situation. Table 5 displays the post hoc statistics for the mean differences among advising situations for the negative self-feeling and negative altercasting compliance-gaining strategies.

Discussion

In this study, we explored the effectiveness of compliance-gaining strategies on college student-athletes. Regarding RQ1 and RQ2, student-athletes were most likely to be persuaded by 14 out of the 16 compliance-gaining strategies when asked to seek tutoring and 15 out of the 16 compliance-gaining strategies when asked to attend weekly academic appointments and weekly class meetings. However, in all three situations studied, student-athletes were least likely to be persuaded by negative altercasting. Therefore, advisors should refrain from communicating with student-athletes by pointing to noncompliance as characteristic of bad personal traits (Burroughs, 2007; McLaughlin et al., 1980). This outcome supports research that purports targets respond with compliance with positive or reward-oriented, not negative, messages (Hunter & Boster, 1987; Kearney et al., 1988). Perhaps student-athletes feel that advisors attack their personal character when they say that only a person with bad qualities would not comply with the advisor’s request. These feelings of offense may explain some student-athletes’ resistance. The responses to RQ1 and RQ2 imply that, except for negative altercasting, the other 15 rhetorical strategies may persuade student-athletes to comply with advisor instructions.

Regarding RQ3, we discovered that 14 out of the 16 power-based compliance-gaining strategies did not yield significant differences across situations. This outcome suggests that advisors need not consider the situation when using any of the

14 compliance-gaining strategies. In contrast, we discovered that situation did affect how student-athletes rated the persuasiveness of 2 out of the 16 compliance-gaining strategies: negative self-feeling and negative altercasting. Student-athletes were less persuaded when advisors used a negative self-feeling strategy to convince them to seek tutoring, yet they were more persuaded when the advisors used it to persuade them to faithfully attend class. Student-athletes were more likely to be persuaded by negative altercasting regarding academic appointment attendance. However, they were less persuaded by this strategy when advisors used it to encourage pursuit of tutoring and faithful class attendance.

Evidently, the three situations are lenses through which student-athletes examine the rhetorical strategies being employed by advisors to induce their compliance. For example, perhaps student-athletes believe that they should feel ashamed of themselves for skipping class because class attendance is the fundamental basis of their academic experience in college and constitutes a basic responsibility; that is, they feel that others are justified when perceiving nonattenders as lazy, unmotivated, and intellectually incompetent. These negative characteristics are face threats (Goffman, 1967; Metts & Cupach, 2008) and perpetuate existing inauspicious stereotypes of college student-athletes (Baucom & Lantz, 2001; Hodge, Burden, Robinson, & Bennett, 2008; Sperber, 2000; Thompson, 2010). For this reason, negative self-feeling may be an effective rhetorical strategy to convince student-athletes to attend class but may not work to gain their compliance to attend tutoring sessions. In a similar light, perhaps student-athletes believe that they are persons with bad personal traits when they choose to skip attending their weekly academic appointment because skipping these sessions both prevents academic advisors from effectively doing their job and communicates blatant disrespect to the academic advisor. Weekly

Table 5. Post hoc statistical differences among advising situations for negative self-feeling and negative altercasting

Strategy	Situations	Situations		
		Tutor	Academic Appointment	Class Attend
Negative Self-feeling	Tutor	---	.28	.05*
	Academic Appointment	.28	---	.74
	Class Attendance	.05*	.74	---
Negative Altercasting	Tutor	---	.001*	.23
	Academic Appointment	.001*	---	.001*
	Class Attendance	.23	.001*	---

Note. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .001$.

academic appointments are intended to keep advisors abreast of student-athletes' progress in the classroom and this progress is commonly reported to coaches and other academic-advising personnel. Academic progress reports cannot be delivered when student-athletes miss their appointments. Furthermore, the academic advisor represents an authority figure similar to a student-athlete's coach. As an authority figure, the advisor deserves respect. Failing to attend the weekly appointment, in the eyes of the student-athlete, may be tantamount to a slap in the face of the advisor. Taken together, such actions decidedly cause student-athletes to believe that they are persons with bad personal traits if they fail to comply.

Practical Applications and Recommendations

Advisors can apply the results of this study to situations in which persuading student-athletes to comply proves challenging. We endorse translating research into practice as Petronio (2007) argued:

We recognize that in order to address everyday problems we need to go beyond the knowledge discovery of the basic research enterprise to interpret and apply research outcomes in an effort to develop effective practices for the betterment of everyday life. (p. 215)

This excerpt captures the importance of applied research. In this spirit, administrators and advisors can use our results to coordinate on-campus, formal presentations over the summer months. We recommend that advisors become educated about the range of research regarding compliance gaining and the ways they can use it in their work with student-athletes. Researchers (e.g., Gass & Seiter, 2007) have shown that people do not use unsuccessful compliance-gaining strategies, but advisors need to know which tactics will help them motivate student-athletes to follow through with important instructions.

Limitations

Despite the strengths and practical applications associated with the findings, some limitations affect their utility. For example, we investigated three situations (seeking a tutor, attending a weekly academic appointment, and faithfully attending class), but advisors must try to gain the compliance of student-athletes in numerous other situations. Therefore, future researchers should consider a wider range of situations in any additional studies on student-athlete responses to compliance-gaining strategies.

The resulting information could prove beneficial in further informing advisors how student-athletes perceive the persuasiveness of the compliance-gaining strategies across multiple situations.

Though our study shows the compliance-gaining strategies most and least likely to persuade student-athletes, it does not reveal the reason behind the results. This lack of understanding illustrates another limitation of the study. Thus, future researchers should consider exploring the exact reasons why some strategies are more effective than others. Perhaps they can conduct interviews with student-athletes following their completion of the survey. They may consider observing the real-time interaction between advisors and student-athletes in a compliance-gaining situation, as some scholars (e.g., Dillard, 1988) have suggested. Triangulating the survey data with some form of qualitative analysis would enable advisors to acquire a deeper understanding of the rhetorical strategies that facilitate compliance from student-athletes.

Conclusion

In this study, we explored student-athletes' responses to Marwell and Schmitt's (1967) 16 power-based compliance-gaining strategies used by academic advisors in three request situations. Based on the study's findings, we conclude that a) advisors can use a wealth of rhetorical strategies to persuade student-athletes to comply with requests; b) advisors should avoid using negative altercasting, as this compliance-gaining strategy is perceived by student-athletes as unlikely to persuade them to seek tutoring, attend weekly academic appointments, or faithfully attend class; c) for the most part, student-athletes do not rate the compliance-gaining strategies differently among the three request situations. However, we suggest that if advisors decide to use negative self-feeling and negative altercasting, they should consider the request situation because the persuasiveness of these two strategies is situationally dependent. This study supports previous research and indicates that resisting and gaining compliance is integral to interpersonal dynamics, including the interactions shared between advisors and student-athletes.

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Appendix. Compliance gaining survey

Directions: Please read the situation item. On a scale of 1-8 answer the following items based on what most accurately describes how likely your advisor would be in trying to persuade you, or gain your compliance, in each situation.

Situation 1 (Tutoring): Imagine that you have been getting poor grades this semester. Even though you have been getting poor grades, you have not met with a tutor all semester because it is a hassle to you and because you do not like to meet with tutors. Although meeting with tutors is not your favorite thing, your advisor requests that you meet with a tutor regularly, because he/she feels that meeting with a tutor will help you do better in the class.

Situation 2 (Weekly academic appointments): As a college student-athlete imagine that you are required to have your academic progress monitored by your peer advisor/mentor. In order to monitor your academic progress, your advisor requires that you meet with your peer advisor/mentor each week at a specified time. You do not like attending these meetings and therefore, from time to time, have decided not to attend. Your advisor knows that you do not like these meetings, nevertheless, he/she still requests that you attend at the appointed time because the meetings are necessary.

Situation 3 (Faithfully attending class): Imagine that you have been inconsistent with your class attendance in the past because you've never enjoyed going to class every day. You know the importance of attending class regularly, however you still do not do so. Your advisor has caught you missing class on several occasions and requests that you attend class each day. Therefore, he/she seeks to gain your compliance with attending class regularly.

How likely is your advisor to gain your compliance by communicating with you in each of the following manners?

1) Your advisor offers to give you one night off from study hall each week that you successfully visit with the tutor to get help with the class.

Extremely likely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 **Extremely unlikely**

2) Your advisor threatens to tell your coach if you do not visit with the tutor to get help with the class.

Extremely likely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 **Extremely unlikely**

3) Your advisor points out to you that if you meet with the tutor then you will probably get good grades. This will help you to be able to get a good job.

Extremely likely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 **Extremely unlikely**

4) Your advisor points out to you that if you do not meet with the tutor then you will probably not get good grades, and this will not help you to get a good job.

Extremely likely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 **Extremely unlikely**

5) Your advisor tries to be as friendly and pleasant as possible to get you in the "right frame of mind" before asking you to visit with the tutor to get help with the class.

Extremely likely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 **Extremely unlikely**

6) Your advisor gives you candy and then tells you that he/she now expects you to visit with the tutor to get help with the class.

Extremely likely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 **Extremely unlikely**

7) Your advisor tells you that you will not be able to practice with the team until you visit with the tutor to get help with the class.

Extremely likely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 **Extremely unlikely**

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Appendix. Compliance gaining survey (continued)

8) Your advisor points out that he/she stayed late one night after study hall with you in order to help you proofread one of your assignments for a class.	Extremely likely	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Extremely unlikely
9) Your advisor tells you that it is morally wrong for anyone not to take advantage of help when he/she needs it, and therefore you need to visit with the tutor to get help with the class.	Extremely likely	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Extremely unlikely
10) Your advisor tells you that you will feel proud of yourself if you visit with the tutor to get help with the class.	Extremely likely	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Extremely unlikely
11) Your advisor tells you that you will feel ashamed of yourself if you do not meet with the tutor to get help in the class.	Extremely likely	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Extremely unlikely
12) Your advisor tells you that since you are a mature and intelligent person, you naturally will want to visit with the tutor to get help with the class so that you can get good grades.	Extremely likely	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Extremely unlikely
13) Your advisor tells you only someone very childish does not visit with the tutor to get help with a class as he/she should.	Extremely likely	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Extremely unlikely
14) Your advisor tells you that he/she really wants very badly for you to get an excellent grade in the class and that he/she wishes that you would study more as a personal favor to him/her.	Extremely likely	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Extremely unlikely
15) Your advisor tells you that your family will be very proud of you if you get good grades.	Extremely likely	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Extremely unlikely
16) Your advisor tells you that your family will be very disappointed in you if you get poor grades.	Extremely likely	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Extremely unlikely