



## Investigating Turnover Intentions During Organizational Change: The Role of Negative Appraisals, Psychological Contract Violation, and Resistance to Change

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The study investigated to what extent and how negative change appraisals employees had amid the pandemic (October 2020) are related to intentions to leave the organization about a year after the start of the pandemic (April/May 2021).

This article proposed resistance to change as an important construct to further understand the mechanism linking psychological contract violation to turnover intentions.

Findings indicate that harm but not threat appraisals predict psychological contract violation and that psychological contract violation is related to behavioral resistance to change as well as intentions to leave. Neither threat appraisal nor resistance to change was related to turnover intentions.

[#cognitiveappraisals](#) [#psychologicalcontractviolation](#) [#resistancetochange](#) [#COVID-19](#) [#turnoverintentions](#)

### Background & Context



- During the COVID-19 pandemic, **nonprofits were confronted with staff fluctuation**. Turnover is especially challenging in the context of organizational change, as resources may already be spread thin by maintaining daily operations while simultaneously implementing changes.
- **Change implementation** may entail **realignment of tasks, alterations of work procedures or schedules, and working in new structures or team constellations**. To understand how nonprofit workers received the organizational changes spurred on by COVID-19, this paper focuses on employee intentions to leave their organization.
- **Hypothesis 1 (H1)**: Harm appraisals (H1a) will be positively related to psychological contract violations, but threat appraisals (H1b) will not.
- **Hypothesis 2 (H2)**: Psychological contract violation is positively related to resistance to change.
- **Hypothesis 3 (H3)**: Threat appraisals are positively correlated to intentions to leave.
- **Hypothesis 4 (H4)**: Psychological contract violation is positively related to intentions to leave the organization.
- **Hypothesis 5 (H5)**: Resistance to change is positively related to intentions to leave the organization.

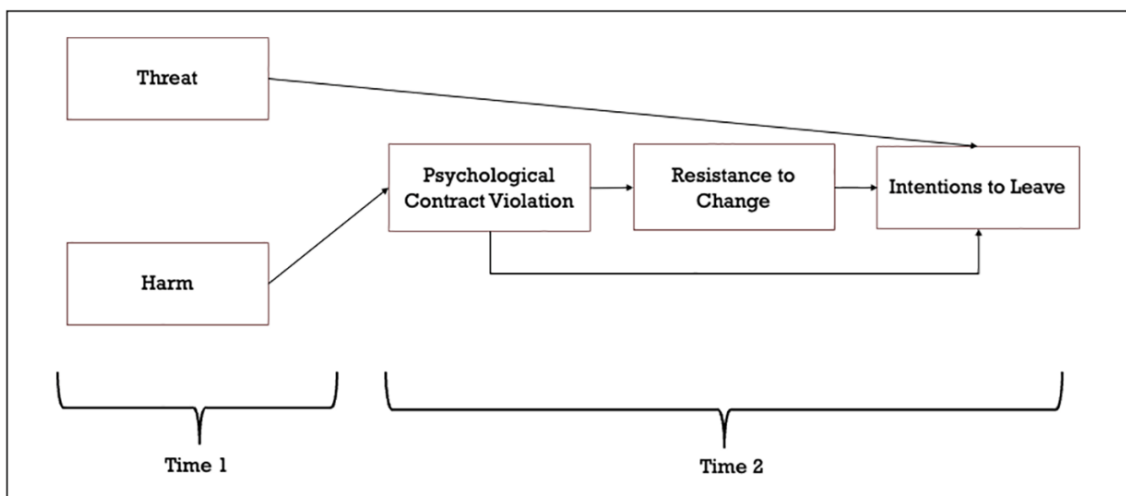
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### Take aways & Learnings



- Only two of the three hypotheses predicting intentions to leave were significant: **psychological contract violations were significantly positively related to turnover intentions**, while threat appraisal and resistance to change were not.
- Employees after cognitively evaluating the change event, displayed an **emotional response in the form of psychological contract violation**, which then led them to engage in resistance behaviors.
- **Changes that encounter resistance may be taxing for the manager**, who must also consider how to sustain themselves through such tumultuous times, and anticipating the resistance may help managers cope with how the change is received from their teams so that they are understanding, rather than encountering the resistance as a betrayal.
- The **COVID-19 pandemic** has had tremendous impacts on how work in the nonprofit sector is done, which in turn **impacted employee expectations about their relationships with their employing organizations**.
- It is important for organizations to be cognizant of the impact of organizational changes on employees. **Once harm is done via organizational change, it seems that violations of the psychological contract are imminent.**
- Given that nonprofits will continue to be constantly asked to change, it is important to develop **effective practices to manage organizational change while also being cognizant of the impact of change on employees and their work.**



**Figure 1. Theoretical Framework.**

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