

An empirical Study of IT Industry Employee's Psychological Contract Violation Theory Method and Computation Simulation

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Abstract

IT companies generally have a higher turnover rate than other companies. It is thus vital to consider employees' turnover intention in IT companies that rely on human capital. In particular, Chinese IT employees are featured with high psychological pressure. These employees will choose to give up current jobs if their psychological demands are unmet and they see the employees in other industries have better working conditions. The purpose of the study is to find how Chinese IT employees' PPCV (Perceived Psychological Contract Violation) affects their turnover intentions and how organizational trust plays an intermediary role in the affective disposition. The paper surveyed the IT companies in Jiangxi Province, China and analyzed the data collected from 281 employees through SPSS 21.0 and AMOS 18.0 for theoretical methods and process simulation of psychological contract violation of Chinese IT industry employees. Three conclusions were drawn: First, an increasing number of IT employees think they will have a higher turnover intention, if they perceive psychological contract violations. Second, IT employees' opinions of psychological contract violation are positively affecting their turnover intention. Despite all this, organizational trust reduces the impact of psychological contract violation on employees' turnover intention. Third, the relationship between psychological contract violation and the turnover intention shows the turnover intention of employees with more positive emotions is less affected by psychological contract violation.

Keywords: Turnover intention, psychological contract violation, theoretical methods, computation simulation

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1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the employment relationship of modern companies is shifting from long-term to short-term. In this context, traditional organizational structure and management methods become less effective. On the other hand, strategic HR management approaches are being introduced in succession. With the disappearance of the concept of lifetime work, corporate workers experience growing insecurity about working in organizations. Also, corporate

employees' loyalty and commitments to their companies are weakening. As a result, the psychological contract violation frequently occurs between companies and employees. Such a phenomenon is particularly ubiquitous in Chinese IT companies. Besides, it is related to the work characteristics of Chinese IT employees. Firstly, IT employees face high pressure. Second, IT employees are engaged in long-term brainwork. Third, a high salary should be paid for IT employees to compensate for their brainwork. Due to high stress

and a long time's brainwork, IT employees are more sensitive and prone to suffering negative emotions. Therefore, the accumulation of pressure and negative emotions is more likely to lower IT employees' satisfaction to work, and commitments, which eventually urges them to leave. Employees should know their psychological states first to alleviate pressure and turnover intention. It is thus urgent and meaningful to study IT employees' psychological contract violations. This study focused on examining the psychological contract violations of employees from IT companies located in Jiangxi Province to find how their psychological contract violations affect the turnover intention. In reality, the completion of many tasks in modern organizations relies on interpersonal cooperation rather than merely individual efforts. However, cooperation is realized through trust, and it takes long-term efforts and strong belief for employees to form an organizational trust. If an organization is devoid of trust, there will be doubts and conflicts between organizational members that make cooperation impossible. Therefore, organizational trust is a vital factor for studying psychological contract violation and an exogenous factor affecting employees' turnover intention. Both psychological contract violation and the turnover intention are negative variables. However, few studies examined the positive impact of negative emotions such as psychological contract violation on employees through trust. In the meantime, few scholars studied the emotional intermediary effect between contract violation behavior and employees' attitudes to work. Hence the paper set the affective disposition as the control variable for the relationship between psychological contract violation and employees' turnover intention and tested its control effect. The study analyzed how psychological contract violation affects IT employees' turnover intention, the intermediating effect between psychological contract violation and the turnover intention, and how the emotional tendency affects organizational trust. The study then put forward suggestions and methods to complement the past studies of psychological

contract violations. More importantly, its study of Chinese IT employees' psychological states will lower their turnover intentions.

2.THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

2.1Preliminary Study of Psychological Contract Violation

The term psychological contract is from industrial psychology and refers to the factory supervisor's implicit agreement to workers' production (the contract on psychological work) (Braekkan, 2016). The psychological contract is an important factor that determines a member's attitude to the organization, even though it is not a contract with explicit clauses (Guerrero & Herrbach, 2017). Nowadays, the impact of psychological contract on mutual obligations becomes more blurred (Gakovic&Tetrick, 2015). It is thus more difficult to implement mutual obligations. The psychological contract behavior means "when realizing that there are no tacit commitments, I expect the organization fails to meet it "(Gakovic&Tetrick, 2015). It is because employees experienced severely negative emotions in the organization, such as anger and disappointment. Such feelings reduce members' commitments to the organization and distract their attention to it. It is also the reason for the increase in employees' turnover rate and the decline in their organizational trust and sense of satisfaction. The previous studies of psychological contract violation emphasized its conceptual contents, examined its constituent factors and contents and explained the casual relationship between each factor (Guerrero & Herrbach, 2017). According to these survey findings, psychological contract violation negatively affects organizational members' attitudes and behaviors (Weingart& Rousseau, 2014). It is found that psychological contract violation has a negative impact on the satisfaction to work, organizational commitments and organizational trust. Contrarily, psychological contract violation has a positive

impact on turnover intention (Gakovic&Tetrick, 2015).

2.2 Psychological Contract Violation and Turnover intention

In the broad sense, turnover includes organizational members' all actions of entering and leaving the organization. In the narrow sense, the work turnover rate runs counter to job tenure. When an employee's current job ends, he is immediately shifted to another job or organization. Due to the existence of turnover intention, most studies have replaced the real resignation behavior with the variable of turnover intention to effectively predict the actual turnover behaviors in an organization (Abraham, 2008). In previous studies concerning the relationship between work shift and psychological contract violation, organizational psychological contract violation may enhance a member's turnover intention (Abraham, 2008). If the organizational member is interested in work information and believes the organization is going to meet such expectation, he will expect to get awards from the organization. However, such one-way and implied expectation may not be realized (Guerrero & Herrbach, 2017). If these subjective conceptions are unmet, the organizational member may consider leaving the position. The theory of social exchanges, namely the theoretical foundation of psychological contract violation, shows the turnover intention may vary as each member's perceived psychological contract violation level changes (Braekkan, 2016). If the level of violating organizational responsibilities and personal responsibilities never meets the employee's psychological demand, he will be likely to consider leaving his position (Perryer, 2016). It is thus difficult to maintain the exchange relationship with the organization based on a balanced load. Also, many survey findings have proved that psychological contract violation may enhance turnover intention (Turnley& Feldman, 2008). The special relationship between psychological contract violation, organizational commitment, and turnover intention has also been improved (Abraham, 2008).

The paper put forward the following hypothesis based on the discussions mentioned above:

[Hypothesis 1] The higher one's perceived psychological contract violation is, the stronger one's turnover intention is.

2.3 The Mediating Effect of Organizational Trust

Organizational trust refers to the belief or guarantee of organizational completeness and justice. The paper put forward a new model for psychological contract violation, which can be applied to studying psychological contract (Raja & Ntalianis, 2014). In this regard, the previous studies of Raja & Ntalianis, (2014) show that the organization's psychological contract refers to the more significant perception of infringement. The case of declining confidence in organizational staff proved one result. Braekkan (2016) found in his study that psychological contract violation had a negative impact on organizational trust. If employees have confidence in the organization, their turnover intention will be lowered. Zhu Guerrero & Herrbach (2017) studied whether organizational support led to organization trust and found employees' trust in the organization and satisfaction to work negatively affects the turnover intention. If organizational members have formed complete trust, they will expect to be satisfied with their work and have a lower turnover intention. Regarding the mediating role of organizational trust between psychological contract behavior and organizational efficiency, Guerrero & Herrbach (2017) studied the mediating effect of organizational trust between organizational support and turnover intention. Besides, the study of Braekkan (2016) proved the mediating role played by organizational trust in the relationship between organizational justice and turnover. Regarding the opinions about getting fair treatment from the organization, organizational trust lowers organizational members' turnover intentions through organizational fairness. Thus it can be predicted that organizational trust may play a mediating effect between psychological contract violation and the turnover intention (Zhao, Wayne, Glibkowski& Bravo, 2017). Based on these

results, the paper put forward the following hypothesis:

[Hypothesis2] Organizational trust plays a mediating effect between psychological contract violation and the turnover intention.

2.4The Moderating Effect of Affective Disposition

As a factor for psychological contract violation, the personal characteristic is attracting growing attention (Brotheridge &Grandey, 2002). Personal characteristic plays an important role in formulating the contract clauses, determining violation behaviors and deciding the responses to violations. In particular, employees may be disappointed in the organization, get angry and become frustrated in case of psychological contract violations (Robinson & Morrison, 2015). It is thus necessary to consider employees' emotional experience in such situations. The relationship between psychological contract violation and the turnover intention may be used to predict the impact of emotions. Hence emotions can be applied to predicting attitudes and the personal attributes and behaviors concerning them. Also, an individual's positive and negative emotions may be dominated by someone else at a certain time (Brotheridge &Grandey, 2002). However, it is distinctively different from long-term emotions. Positive emotions are characterized by passion and vigor. On the other hand, negative emotions refer to an unhappy emotional state, such as worry, anxiety, and aversion (Brotheridge &Grandey, 2002). Position emotions and negative emotions are distinctively different in the long term, although they both profoundly affect personal perception, attitudes, and behaviors (Grandey, 2013). On the one hand, positive emotions positively view a matter and make them happy. On the other hand, the higher one's negative emotions are, the higher the tendency of complaining about problems is (Brotheridge &Grandey, 2002). For instance, the less positive an employee is about contract violation, the less negative impact the organization thinks the positive state has. However, employees with higher negative emotions may severely exaggerate the severity of a

problem and make bad responses to it (Watson, 2008). Hence the psychological contract violation affects positive emotions and negative emotions in two different ways. One previous study of Brotheridge &Grandey (2002) showed the positive emotion might be taken as a control variable for the relationship between work satisfaction and the turnover intention. According to survey findings, employees with positive emotions had a lower turnover rate. Grandey's (2013) study proved that the negative emotion was a control variable in the turnover process. The study put forward the following hypothesis based on the discussions mentioned above.

[Hypothesis 3] Affective Disposition plays the role of moderating psychological contract violation and turnover intention.

3.RESEARCH METHODS

3.1 Research Model and Analytical Methods

The paper has two purposes: first, to examine the impact of psychological contract violation, as a parameter, on organizational trust in Chinese IT companies; second, to study how the affective disposition affects the control variable. For this end, the following research model was constructed.

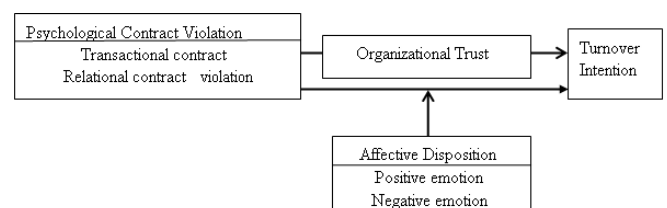


Figure 1. Theoretical model

3.2 Analytical Technology and Characteristics of Samples

Through the relationship between the variable and hypothesis tested in previous research, this paper carried out an empirical analysis to find the relationship between psychological contract violation, turnover intention, organizational trust and affective disposition. The paper analyzed the data of

research hypotheses through statistical software SPSS 21.0 and AMOS 18.0.

Table 1. The sample characteristic

Category		Proportion (%)	Category		Proportion (%)
Gender	Male	(172) 61.2	Work Years	Below 3 years	(98)34.9
	Female	(109) 38.8		3-5 years	(112)39.9
Age	Above 20 years old	(63)22.4		5-10 years	(47)16.7
	Above 30 years old	(93)33.1		Above 10 year	(24)8.5
	Above 40 years old	(91)32.4	Occupation	Researcher	(113)40.2
	Above 50 years old	(34)12.1		Administration	(93)33.1
Education Background	High school	(50)17.8		Production	(53)18.9
	College	(64)22.8		Sales	(22)7.8
	Undergraduate	(85)30.2			
	Master	(82)29.2			

Reliability and validity test

Table 2. The Reliability and validity analysis

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	Eigen values	Variance (%)	Cronbach's Alpha
Transactional contract	.859	.065	.052	-.106	-.035	.035	7.315	25.225	.901
	.851	.072	.078	-.033	.055	.011			
	.835	.055	.107	-.029	.018	.071			
	.820	.025	.116	-.061	.073	-.034			
	.808	.024	.169	-.028	.080	.076			
Relational contract violation	.064	.876	.078	-.003	.054	-.061	4.587	15.817	.895
	.098	.869	.033	-.083	.101	-.001			
	.051	.856	.016	-.038	.140	-.052			
	-.029	.821	.162	-.125	.084	.052			
Turnover intention	.107	.100	.895	-.285	.058	.074	3.542	12.213	.965
	.149	.117	.881	-.241	-.066	.091			
	.116	.076	.879	-.244	.007	.114			
	.135	.144	.863	-.287	.033	.061			
	.154	.122	.851	-.293	.055	.107			
Organizational trust	-.037	-.012	-.225	.865	.039	-.029	2.699	9.307	.937
	-.057	-.035	-.234	.865	.011	-.003			

	-.055	-.112	-.191	.863	.051	.111			
	-.022	-.055	-.254	.858	-.104	.023			
	-.113	-.085	-.284	.836	.024	.023			
Positive emotion	.027	.067	.063	.013	.926	-.055	2.506	8.641	.944
	.031	.069	.047	.013	.919	-.062			
	.015	.107	.058	.053	.901	-.051			
	.096	.072	.046	.022	.891	-.060			
	.029	.079	-.036	.030	.848	-.066			
Negative emotion	.046	-.029	.082	-.030	-.046	.846	1.740	5.965	.840
	-.035	-.094	.030	-.014	-.022	.794			
	.120	.141	.139	-.044	-.072	.791			
	-.125	-.072	-.046	-.008	-.057	.753			
	.167	-.012	.145	-.014	-.066	.684			

The study carried out a factor analysis to prove the validity of the variable. Regarding the analytical standards, the characteristic value is set to be 1.0 or bigger, while the factor loading is set to be 0.5 or

bigger. The alpha value of Cronbach is used to identify the reliability. The coefficient of α is 0.6. The analytical results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. The correlation analysis

Variable	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Transactional breach of contract	3.28	0.79	1					
2. Relational contract violation	3.73	0.89	.122*	1				
3. Organizational trust	3.73	0.93	- .155**	- .163**	1			
4. Turnover intention	2.21	1.10	.267**	.256**	-.543**	1		
5. Positive emotion	3.54	1.11	-.081	- .189**	.049	-.066	1	
6. Negative emotion	3.92	3.92	.063	0.62**	.076	.177**	-.123*	1

Note: *P<0.05; **P< 0.01.

4.HYPOTHESIS TESTING

4.1 Validation for Hypothesis 1

The paper first analyzed the correlations between variables to prove the hypothesis. It is the process of testing the correlations between variables in the empirical study. Analytical results are shown in

Table 4. According to these results, there are static correlations between transactional violation, relationship violation, and turnover intention; there are negative correlations between organizational trust and turnover intention. It proved the multicollinearity between variables.

Table 4. Regression analysis of Psychological Contract Violation on Turnover Intention

Dependent variable	Independent variable	B	SE	β	t-value	p-value
Turnover	(constant)	-.117	.380		-.307	.759

intention	Transactional contract	.334	.079	.240	4.232	.000
	Relational contract violation	.281	.070	.227	4.007	.000
R ² =.112 F=19.388(.000)						

Note: *P<0.05; **P< 0.01, ***P< 0.001.

A regression analysis was carried out to prove psychological contract violation (transactional violation and relational contract violation) has a significant impact on turnover intention. According to analytical results, the standardized regression

coefficient of transactional violation is 0.240 (p<0.001), and the regression coefficient is 0.227 (p<0.001). It means the higher contract violation is, the higher an employee's turnover intention is.

Validation for Hypothesis 2

Table 5. The mediating effect of organization trust

Variable	Estimate	Standardized Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Transactional contract → organization trust	-0.176	-0.147	0.076	-2.295	0.022
Relational contract violation → organization trust	-0.176	-0.152	0.075	-2.353	0.019
Transactional contract → turnover intention	0.251	0.182	0.073	3.458	***
Relational contract violation → turnover intention	0.227	0.169	0.071	3.203	0.001
Organization trust → turnover intention	-0.61	-0.527	0.065	-9.339	***
Model Fit	CMIN/DF=1.452, RMR=0.092, GFI=0.887, RMSEA=0.04, NFI=0.935, CFI=0.979				

Note: *P<0.05; **P< 0.01, ***P< 0.001.

Testing of Hypothesis 2: The independent variables (transaction violation and relational contract violation) are chosen as a psychological contract violation; the dependent variable is chosen as the turnover intention; the intermediary variable is organizational trust; Testing results are as follows: Table 5: CMIN/DF>0.05, RMR<0.1, RMSEA<0.05, CFI>0.9, CFI>0.8 and NFI>0.8. It shows the model fitting is high and appropriate. In the meantime, its direct effect on turnover intention is also shown. When the model is at the explanatory power of 0.251, it is significant at the level of 25.1% and p=0.000. Second, the direct impact of the turnover intention is 0.227, showing the model's explanatory power is 22.7% and p=0.001, which is significant. The parameters of the relationship between the organizational trust's explanatory power and turnover level in transactional violation and

relationship violation are respectively 7.7% (-0.147 * -0.527, P <0.05) and 8.0% (-0.152 * -0.527, P <0.05). It shows that the parameter is important at the significance level. According to analytical results, an organizational trust may play the mediating effect on the turnover intention and psychological contract violation (transaction contract and relational contract violation).

It proved the intermediating role of organizational trust and Hypothesis 2. Table 6 shows the results of the Sobel test to prove the mediating effect more clearly. Hence it can be determined that partial intermediating effect exists in the path of psychological contract violation→organizational trust→turnover intention.

Table 6. Sobel test

	a, Sa, b, Sb	Test, P
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Transactional contract → organization trust → turnover intention	a=-0.147 b=-0.527 Sa=0.076 Sb=0.065	1.881 (P<0.05)
Relational contract violation → organization trust → turnover intention	a=-0.152 b=-0.527 Sa=0.075 Sb=0.065	1.996 (P<0.05)

a is the standardized predictor of the psychological contract, the independent variable of parameter trust. b is the dependent variable and the non-standardized regression parameter of the turnover intention. Also, Sa and Sb are respectively the standard deviations of a and b. The parameter significance is determined by calculating MacKinnon tests statistic with $Z = A * B / \sqrt{a^2 * sb^2 + b^2 * sa^2}$.

Table 7. The moderating effect of POS(SES)

Variable	M1	M2	M3
Psychological Contract Violation(A)	.349***	.373***	.309***
Positive emotion (B)		-.132*	-.156**
A*B			-.179**
R2	.122	.139	.166
ΔR2	.122	.017	.027
F	38.793* **	22.443* **	18.387** *

Variable	M1	M2	M3
Psychological Contract Violation(A)	.349***	.350***	.328***
Positive emotion (B)		.178**	.172**
A*B			.113*
R2	.122	.154	.166
ΔR2	.122	.032	.012
F	38.793* **	25.276* **	18.387** *

Note: *P<0.05; **P< 0.01, ***P< 0.001.

The upper part of Table 7 shows the results of the regression analysis, which proved that positive emotions play the role of moderating psychological contract violation and the turnover intention. When the psychological contract of illegal behavior is an independent variable, it is 19.9%. It found in Step 3 that the interaction term between the psychological contract violation and positive emotion was at the significance level of 6.9%, meaning it substantially enhances the explanatory power of Step 1 (R2). The lower part of the table aims to prove negative emotions play the role of mediating psychological contract violation and turnover intention. The power described in Step 1 is taken into a psychological contract violation as an independent variable (R2). The explanatory power is 1.2%, while the interaction in three steps is 12.2%. It shows the psychological contract violation, and negative impact is significantly increased.

5.CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Conclusion and Implication

This study examined the relationship between the psychological contract violation resulting from the changes in the organizational environment and the turnover intention in the IT industry. It made the following conclusions based on analyzing the mediating effect of organizational trust and the moderating effect of affective disposition. First, it was found that the impact of psychological contract violation on the turnover intention positively affects the behavior of transaction contract violation and relational contract violation. It is a sub-variable of psychological contract violation. In other words, the more employees think an organization violates the psychological contract, the higher the turnover intention is. It is consistent with previous research findings. If employees think the employment relationship is unfair in the company, they may choose a response that reduces his extra-role behaviors. Those who experienced such emotions may have a strong sense of being betrayed by the organization and even choose to leave the

organization. It is thus necessary for IT companies to manage employees' turnover intention by providing psychological contracts, such as comfortable work conditions, a proper salary, training, and stable jobs. In particular, analytical results show that transaction violation is more influential to the turnover intention than relational contract violation. Hence IT companies should pay more attention to transactional contract violations. Secondly, organizational trust plays a vital mediating role between transactional contract violation and turnover intention. Also, it is recognized that organizational trust indirectly affects turnover intention. It seems that practitioners recover their confidence in the organization's positive impact and perceived psychological contract violation. In other words, IT employees' conception of psychological contract violation is positively affecting their turnover intention. On the contrary, organizational trust reduces the impact of psychological contract violation on the turnover intention. It is thus necessary for companies to emphasize that employees are organizational roles and reduce their anxieties. Thirdly, positive emotions have statistical significance and play the role of moderating the relationship between psychological contract violation and turnover intention. Also, positive emotions have better control effect than negative emotions. In other words, the increase in positive emotions weakens the correlations between psychological contract violation and the turnover intention; also, the impact of psychological contract violation on the turnover intention will decrease. It is necessary for companies to provide an enjoyable work environment for employees and reduce their stress.

The academic significance of the study is listed as follows: First, the studies that take psychological contract violation as a variable are on the increase. On the other hand, there are few studies of psychological contract violations centered on Chinese IT employees. This study examined the employees of Chinese IT companies. It is of

profound significance for expanding the research range of psychological contract violations and solving the deficiencies of past studies. Secondly, fewer studies involve how the affective disposition affects the relationship between psychological contract violation and turnover intention, although the primary affective disposition affects employees' turnover intention. In this study, identifying with the affective disposition may reduce the negative impact of psychological contract violation. It is of profound significance in studying how the moderating role of the affective disposition plays its role in the relationship between psychological contract violation and the turnover intention. Thirdly, most studies about psychological contract violations are related to turnover intention. This study took psychological contract violation as an independent variable to show the relationship between psychological contract violation and the turnover intention. It emphasized the importance of psychological contract violation and proved its profound impact on turnover intention.

Specifically speaking, companies should provide opportunities for encouraging workers to enjoy in-time development. Meanwhile, enterprises should recognize the fair play of employees, pay corresponding salaries and adopt effective incentives. Secondly, organizational trust mediates the relationship between psychological contract violation and turnover intention. Hence IT companies should emphasize organizational trust to lower employees' turnover intentions. With a lower turnover intention, employees will lengthen their tenure and provide continuous technology. It will be conducive to organizational development and generate performances. Thirdly, IT employees' emotions are controlled and directly affect their turnover intention. In consideration of this, IT companies should make plans that can new employees' emotional tendencies when recruiting new employees. Fourthly, the study shows that it is vital for human resource managers to provide IT

employees with psychological consultation and training.

5.2 Limitations and Future Research

The following aspects are worth considerations in future studies. Firstly, the paper surveyed IT employees working in IT companies located in Jiangxi, China. The purpose of the paper is to measure the psychological contract violation, turnover intention, organizational trust and affective disposition of Chinese IT companies. It faces limitations in promoting analytical results. Hence the author should expand the survey range in future studies. Secondly, the analytical method only included a questionnaire survey. It is necessary to adopt other qualitative research methods, such as having in-depth interviews with interviewees. Thirdly, psychological contract violations can be divided into the transactional violation or relevant contraction. Relevant violation can be divided into transactional violation and credit-default swaps. The study did not analyze the differences between each type. It is necessary for the author to study this regard more deeply.

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