



Psychological contract, exhaustion, and cynicism of the employee: Its effect on operational staff turnover in the northern Mexican border

Contrato psicológico, agotamiento y cinismo del empleado: su efecto en la rotación del personal operativo en la frontera norte mexicana

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Abstract

Staff turnover is a costly phenomenon in terms of productivity and performance. The variable that best predicts this phenomenon is the intention to leave, but in Mexico there are few empirical works on said variable. The objective of this research was to investigate whether emotional exhaustion, organizational cynicism, and violation of the psychological contract precede the intention to leave. To this end, a quantitative, empirical, and transversal research was carried out on a sample of 201 operational staff in the auto-parts maquila export industry located in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, Mexico. Partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) was used as the statistical technique. The results indicate that the emotional exhaustion and cynicism of the employee lead to the intention to leave and that, comparatively, cynicism has greater influence. However, the predictive relationship between the violation of the psychological contract and the intention to leave was rejected.

JEL code: M12, M54, M59.

Keywords: violation of the psychological contract; cynicism; emotional exhaustion; intention to leave; PLS-SEM.

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Resumen

La rotación de personal es un fenómeno costoso en términos de productividad y desempeño. La variable que mejor la predice es la intención de rotar, pero en México son escasos los trabajos empíricos sobre ella. Esta investigación tuvo por objetivo indagar si el agotamiento emocional, el cinismo organizacional y la violación del contrato psicológico, influyen sobre la intención de rotación. Para ello, se realizó una investigación cuantitativa, empírica y transversal, en una muestra de 201 empleados operativos en la industria maquiladora autopartista para la exportación, localizada en Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua. Como técnica estadística se utilizó la modelación estructural PLS. Los resultados indican que el agotamiento emocional y el cinismo del empleado llevan a la intención de rotar, y comparativamente, es mayor la influencia del cinismo. Sin embargo, la relación predictiva entre la violación del contrato psicológico y la intención de rotar, se rechazó.

Código JEL: M12, M54, M59.

Palabras clave: Violación del Contrato psicológico; Cinismo; Agotamiento emocional; Intención de rotación; PLS-SEM.

Introduction

Human resources are essential to establish and maintain competitive advantages (Hsu, 2008; Kadiresan, Selamat, Selladurai, Ramendran, & Mohamed, 2015; Ordoñez de Pablos & Lytras, 2008). The practices associated with their management can not only help create and maintain organizational human capital, but also provide instrumental support for the competitive strategy (Delery & Roumpi, 2017; Huselid, 1995). Unfortunately, if said practices are lacking, the company can be deeply affected (Long & Perumal, 2014).

Resignation and covering of vacancies is one of the major costs for companies; in some works on staff turnover, its negative influence is identified on the productivity and moral of employees (Reiche, 2008; Rodríguez, López, Forero, & Gómez, 2013). When employees leave, talent and knowledge is lost—a situation that affects organizational performance and financial returns (Campbell, Coff, & Kryscynski, 2012; Chang, Wang, & Huang, 2013; Khanin, 2013). Therefore, both in theoretical and empirical terms, staff turnover is a relevant phenomenon with high economic and organizational significance and with permanent interest in its study (Harris, Kacmar, & Witt, 2005; Long & Perumal, 2014).

The intention to leave is the strongest predictor of staff turnover (Hom, Mitchell, Lee, & Griffeth, 2012; Lambert, Cluse-Tolar, Pasupuleti, Prior, & Allen, 2011; Mobley, Griffeth, Hand, & Meglino, 1979; Oluwafemi, 2013; Porter & Steers, 1973; Tett & Meyer, 1993). Among the variables that explain it, emotional exhaustion, employee cynicism, and violation of the psychological contract are cited: on the one hand, emotionally exhausted employees tend to decrease their efforts and contributions for the organization; on the other hand, they develop cynicism towards the organization as consequence of the long work hours, intense work, ineffective leadership styles, and continuous reduction of the workforce; finally, non-compliance with the psychological contract causes them to have negative attitudes and behaviors. Said situations can result in the intention to leave or resign (Cartwright & Holmes, 2006; Cassar, 2001; Feldman, 2000; C. Huang, Chuang, & Lin, 2003; Hur, IL Park, & Moon,

2014). However, if identified on time, companies can design appropriate organizational interventions (Chang et al., 2013).

In Mexico, workers face work conditions that cause chronic stress (Villavicencio-Ayub, Jurado-Cárdenas, & Valencia-Cruz, 2014), a serious and constantly growing problem (75% of the population suffer from it) (Maldonado, Camacho, Torres, Alcaraz, & Limón, 2015). This phenomenon, in conjunction with work overload, cause emotional exhaustion (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001; Yang, Tsai, & Tsai, 2014) and organizational cynicism (Erkutlu & Chafra, 2017), and could even lead to the eventual violation of the psychological contract (Thomas & Gupta, 2018). Unfortunately, in Mexico, few research works have been conducted and, those that have, are limited to health professionals (mainly nurses and doctors), with observational research designs (Juárez, Idrovo, Camacho, & Placencia, 2014).

Therefore, the objective of this research, in Mexican companies of the auto-parts export sector, was to determine if violation of the psychological contract, employee cynicism, and emotional exhaustion predict the intention to leave in staff who work in operational positions. This document is organized as follows: first, a theoretical framework on the violation of the psychological contract, employee cynicism, emotional exhaustion and their relationship with the intention to leave is presented; subsequently, the research methodology used, the analysis of the results, and the discussion are presented, finalizing with the conclusions of the work.

Theoretical framework

In the Mexican context, northern border cities became an attractive place for the Manufacturing, Maquila, and Export Services Industry (INMEX); among them, Ciudad Juárez stands out, a locality that changed substantially since the mid-1960s, when the Border Industrialization Program was implemented (Carrillo, 2001; Carrillo & Hinojosa, 2001; Dutrént & Vera-Cruz, 2009; Villavicencio & Casalet, 2005). By April 2016, 60.6% of employment in the city was generated by INMEX; employing 253,328 people (230,204 operational staff including workers and technicians) in 324 establishments (Plan Estratégico de Juárez, 2016).

Staff turnover is a challenge for the companies of Ciudad Juárez. In that environment, the excess demand for operational employees caused staff turnover: people easily changed jobs when finding better work offers (Plan Estratégico de Juárez, 2016). In light of this situation, companies implemented strategies to retain their employees and thus decrease their turnover indices (such as increasing benefits, the inclusion of social support services, the advance hiring of staff, and intercompany agreements to offer similar benefits) (Cordova, 2015); however, the initiatives were not entirely successful, since the turnover rates remained high (Flores, 2015). In Ciudad Juárez, the turnover indices had a rising behavior: in April 2014 these were 3.44% and in March 2018 they were 6.68% (Ávila, 2015, 2018).

Although the nature of operational work and of services is different, the effect of the workload can lead to similar manifestations of emotional exhaustion and organizational cynicism in both contexts, which can eventually lead employees to have the intention to leave. Due to the pressures to accomplish production goals (to which operators are often subjected to, in many occasions to remedy errors not necessarily caused by them), conditions conducive to the modification of previous tacit agreements are created, which could lead to the breach and eventual violation of the psychological contract; these conditions also promote, in the minds

of the workers, the search for another job. Because of the context studied, it is considered that this work can increase the knowledge on the topics, particularly in operational jobs, which is a relegated context in academic literature.

Intention to leave

This variable, also known as intent to leave or abandon (Berry, 2010), best predicts staff turnover and, therefore, there is a growing interest in its study (Griffeth, Hom, & Gaertner, 2000; Hom *et al.*, 2012; Lambert *et al.*, 2011; Mobley *et al.*, 1979; Oluwafemi, 2013; Porter & Steers, 1973; Tett & Meyer, 1993). It is defined as the immediate precursor to the thought behavior (Mobley *et al.*, 1979). This construct reflects the subjective probability that, within a certain period of time, the employee leaves the organization (Zhao, Wayne, Glibkowski, & Bravo, 2007); therefore, it is considered a consequence of the deliberate will to leave (Tett & Meyer, 1993).

Evidently, the intention to leave is negative for companies. The phenomenon affects the organization since it causes a decrease in profitability (due to the costs associated with the training (Oluwafemi, 2013), replacement, and selection of staff (Surienty, Ramayah, Lo, & Tarmizi, 2014)), can lead to a loss of valuable knowledge, information, and human talent (Hwang, Lee, Park, Chang, & Kim, 2014; Khanin, 2013), decreases the moral of the employees who remain in the company (Surienty *et al.*, 2014), and negatively impacts organizational leadership, teamwork, and efficiency (Harris *et al.*, 2005), because employees with the intention to leave exhibit different types of abandonment behaviors (Chang *et al.*, 2013).

Psychological contract

The psychological contract theory is a useful reference framework in understanding worker behavior (Zhao *et al.*, 2007). In recent works (Restubog, Zagenczyk, Bordia, Bordia, & Chapman, 2015), it is stated that the successful management of the employee-employer relationship depends on the degree that the company complies with the psychological contract, key construct in understanding the attitudes of people towards work and the company, their behavior, and psychological wellbeing (Bal, De Cooman, & Mol, 2013; Silla, Gracia, Ferreira, & Silla, 2006).

The psychological contract is different from a legal contract. The former is more subjective than the latter (Zhao *et al.*, 2007). It includes the beliefs of the worker on the terms, conditions, and obligations of an exchange agreement between themselves and the company (Robinson & Rousseau, 1994; Rousseau & Greller, 1994; Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1998); it is an implicit promise in which the parties have mutual obligations: the worker, to work hard and receive training; the company, to compensate the work through remuneration, promotions, and growth opportunities (Robinson & Rousseau, 1994). In this agreement, the expectations of the employee are based on perceived promises, which are not necessarily recognized by management; this perception occurs at an organizational level—it is not an impression regarding a person, manager, or supervisor—that is, from the perspective of the worker, the company assumes an anthropomorphic identity (Morrison & Robinson, 1997).

The violation of the psychological contract can cause a worker to have the intention to leave. Associated to the development of everyday tasks, there are emotional reactions in

the employees; when these lead people to consider that a company fails or breaches what it implicitly promised them, breakdowns can occur that can eventually result in the perception that the psychological contract was violated (Robinson & Rousseau, 1994; Zhao et al., 2007). Unfortunately, both the breach and the violation of the psychological contract have negative consequences that can increase the tendency to leave the company: they decrease the trust of the employee towards the company; increase stress; cause fears (such as not getting a promotion or losing the job), and cause feelings of dissatisfaction, deceit, and betrayal (Kraak, Lunardo, Herrbach, & Durrieu, 2017; Latorre, Guest, Ramos, & Gracia, 2016; Robinson & Morrison, 2000; Robinson & Rousseau, 1994; Rousseau, 1989; Stoner & Gallagher, 2010; Zhao et al., 2007). Based on the aforementioned, it is proposed that:

H1. Violation of the psychological contract positively and significantly influences the intention to leave.

Employee cynicism

New competitive challenges have increased the complexity in work environments. The structure of work has been changing: on the one hand, jobs have greater ambiguity and include tasks that can vary significantly in short periods of time, with a growing range; on the other hand, work relationships are short-term, with greater performance demands, without this reflecting in better wages, positions, or benefits (Cardy, Gove, & DeMatteo, 2000; Pino, del Campo, & Ibarra, 2012). Particularly with operational personnel, there are strong pressures to work in environments where it is required to comply with high quality standards, demanding high levels of concentration, neglecting the need to enrich the job positions. Due to the high levels of psychological tension, employees feel frustrated and disillusioned, they think that the resources provided to them are insufficient to address their tasks, they begin questioning the efficiency and impartiality of the organizational procedures, and even distrust and develop negative feelings, both towards their coworkers and the company (Andersson & Bateman, 1997; Chiaburu, Peng, Oh, Banks, & Lomeli, 2013; Thomas & Gupta, 2018).

Employee cynicism is an unfavorable aspect for companies. Regardless of its classification (organizational, of the employee, or social) (Çinar, Karcioğlu, & Aslan, 2014), it is a highly dangerous phenomenon (Kang, Twigg, & Hertzman, 2010), since the negative attitude associated with it can afflict employees and the organization (Nicholson, Leiter, & Laschinger, 2014; Salessi & Omar, 2014). Cynicism is a defensive response of the employee (Cole, Bruch, & Vogel, 2006; Pino *et al.*, 2012), but its consequences cause low work performance and abandonment behaviors; it is the dimension opposite to engagement (Cartwright & Holmes, 2006; Maslach & Leiter, 2008). An employee with organizational cynicism is not interested in their work (Maslach & Leiter, 2008). Unfortunately, it is a common occurrence and it is stated that a significant number of employees show cynicism towards the organization where they work (Kanter & Mirvis, 1991; Kuo, Chang, Quinton, Lu, & Lee, 2015).

Cynicism can be observed in terms of the intention to leave of the employees; cynical workers think that their bosses do not have their best interests in mind and simply use them for the profit of the company (Khan, 2014). In different industries and contexts, cynicism is associated with the intention to leave (Çinar *et al.*, 2014; C. Huang *et al.*, 2003; Kang *et al.*,

2010; Mantler, Godin, Cameron, & Horsburgh, 2015; Wong & Spence Laschinger, 2015); therefore, it is proposed that:

H2. Employee cynicism positively and significantly influences the intention to leave.

Emotional exhaustion

Emotional exhaustion is one of the current challenges of organizational management (Elçi, Şener, Aksoy, & Alpkan, 2012). Historically, its research emerged from the burnout model proposed by Maslach (Cropanzano, Rupp, & Byrne, 2003); in recent works (Lloyd, Boer, Keller, & Voelpel, 2015) it is stated that it is one of the relevant determinants for the functioning of the organization. It is the fatigue resulting from the long-term exposure to work stress, it is a critical manifestation of the same (Herda & Lavelle, 2012; Yang *et al.*, 2014).

Emotional exhaustion has damaging consequences for companies (Cropanzano *et al.*, 2003). It is stated that if the stress of frontline employees is neglected, there can be increases in their levels of exhaustion (P.-F. Huang & Dai, 2010), with affections in productivity, disruption in work processes, and decrease in the quality of the goods or services (Ghapanchi & Aurum, 2011; P.-F. Huang & Dai, 2010). Therefore, there is a special academic and professional interest in its study, particularly when it is the result of high workloads, time pressures, and lack of social support (Houkes, Janssen, de Jonge, & Bakker, 2003).

Emotional exhaustion is a precedent to the intention to leave the company (Hwang *et al.*, 2014; Lambert *et al.*, 2010; McKnight, Phillips, & Hardgrave, 2009; Shih-Tse Wang, 2014). When employees feel emotionally exhausted, the probability that they will begin looking for another job is greater (Cropanzano *et al.*, 2003; Haque & Aslam, 2014). Thus, it is proposed that:

H3. Emotional exhaustion positively and significantly influences the intention to leave.

Methodology

The design of the research was non-experimental, quantitative, empirical in nature, and cross-sectional, with a non-probabilistic sampling for convenience, according to the allowed accessibility. This research method is useful when direct contact with the subject of research is required and, although it overlooks the representativeness of the cases, it does consider the sample size (Hernández Sampieri, Fernández Collado, & Baptista Lucio, 2010).

During the months of November and December of 2015, workers in operator jobs in the auto-parts sector in maquila export industries located in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, Mexico, were surveyed. Generally, the participants were contacted when concluding their shift (83%) in the transport units that take them to areas close to their homes. A special instrument was designed, which was self-administered to the participants. Items with a five-point Likert-type format were included, where 1 meant “completely disagree” and 5 “completely agree”. In total, 201 surveys were collected. This sample size complies with the criteria recommended by Hair Jr., Hult, Ringle, and Sarstedt (2016), who suggest a minimum of 75 observations to detect an r^2

of 0.25 with a 1% level of significance and a statistical power of 80% in the case of the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM).

Scales available in the academic literature were adapted in the survey. The intention to leave was measured with 6 items of the Ganesan and Weitz (1996) scale. Emotional exhaustion, with 8 items of the Maslach and Jackson (1981) scale. Cynicism, with 6 items of the Moreno-Jiménez, Rodríguez-Carvajal, and Escobar-Redonda (2001) scale. And, finally, violation of the psychological contract was evaluated using 4 items of the Robinson and Morrison (2000) scale. From the originally proposed model, only the item (Introt1) was eliminated due to it showing a factor load lower than the one recommended. The items in each of the variables are shown in Table 1.

Table 1.
Operationalization of the latent variables.

Intention to leave	Emotional exhaustion	Employee cynicism	Violation of the psychological contract
I do not think I will be promoted in this company (Introt1)	I feel emotionally exhausted by my job (Agot1)	Since I began this job, I have been losing my interest in it (Cinis1)	Regarding the company where I work: I feel a lot of anger towards it (Contr1)
I have the intention to leave this company (Introt2)	I feel tired at the end of the work day (Agot2)	I have been losing enthusiasm in my job (Cinis2)	I feel betrayed by it (Contr2)
I have decided to leave this company (Introt3)	I feel fatigued when I wake up in the morning and have to go to work (Agot3)	I just want to do my job and not be bothered (Cinis3)	I feel it has not fulfilled all the offers it made me (Contr3)
I am currently looking for work like what I do now, but in another company (Introt4)	I feel tired because of my job (Agot5)	I mock myself thinking that my job "is good for something" (Cinis4)	I feel frustrated by how I have been treated in it (Contr4)
I will look for another job in case I am not promoted (Introt5)	I feel frustrated by my job (Agot6)	I doubt the value of what I do in my job (Cinis5)	
I am looking for work in the same field (Introt6)	I think I am working too much (Agot7)	I think that my job is good for nothing (Cinis6)	
	Working directly with people causes me stress (Agot8)		

Source: own elaboration

Structural equation modeling (SEM) with partial least squares (PLS) was used as the statistical analysis technique, which is adequate to prove hypotheses of a predictor type between variables and is considered useful to analyze data and to handle small samples that do not adjust to parametric criteria (Lowry & Gaskin, 2014). The two-stage analysis suggested by Anderson and Gerbing (1982) was applied. In a first stage, to ensure the reliability and validity of the construct, the measurement model (external) was reviewed; subsequently, the structural model (internal) was analyzed to evaluate the predictive relevance of the model and, with it, prove the research hypotheses (Hair Jr., Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2016). The statistical software used was Smart PLS 3.

Regarding the measurement model, the factor loads, the Cronbach alpha coefficients, the composite reliability indices, and the average variance extracted (AVE) were evaluated. In

the first case, the factor loads showed values between 0.618 and 0.897, with *t* values greater than 1.96, which confirms their statistical significance at a 95% confidence level. On the other hand, as shown in Table 2, the Cronbach alpha indicators were between 0.819 and 0.893, with composite reliability (CR) indicators between 0.873 and 0.915; with this, the recommended cut-off points of 0.70 and 0.60, respectively, were surpassed (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). Finally, in all cases, the AVE exceeded the minimum value of 0.50 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Seidel & Back, 2009).

Table 2.
Convergent validity indicators of the measurement model.

Latent variable	Cronbach's alpha	CR	AVE
Exhaustion	0.893	0.915	0.576
Employee cynicism	0.841	0.882	0.557
Intention to leave	0.819	0.873	0.582
Violation of the psychological contract	0.855	0.903	0.700

Source: own elaboration.

Discriminating validity was evaluated based on two criteria: Fornell-Larcker and Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT). As shown in Table 3, in accordance with the Fornell-Larcker criterion, the module had discriminating validity, because the values of the square root of AVE of the variables included in the model (on the diagonal) were greater than the correlation coefficients between them (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Seidel & Back, 2009). For its part, the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) reiterated the existence of this type of validity, since the average of the correlations between indicators that measure different constructs (heterotrait-monotrait ratios, HTMT) (Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2015) were below the established cut-off point (0.85).

Table 3.
Discriminating validity.

	Fornell-Larcker Criterion [AVE].				Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio [HTMT].		
	Exhaustion	Employee cynicism	Intention to leave	Violation of the psychological contract	Exhaustion	Employee cynicism	Intention to leave
Exhaustion	0.759						
Employee cynicism	0.685	0.747			0.784		
Intention to leave	0.550	0.588	0.763		0.623	0.678	
Violation of the psychological contract	0.544	0.689	0.520	0.837	0.621	0.815	0.606

Source: own elaboration based on results from Smart PLS 3.

Results

Below are some descriptive statistical data of the participating subjects. For the most part, the participants were men (52.7%), with schooling between primary and secondary education (65.7%), younger than 40 years of age (81.6%), married or cohabiting (51.8%), affiliated to the production department (96.5%), in the first shift (82.5%), and with less than 4 years working in the company (81.1%).

Table 4.
 Demographic characteristics of the subjects of study.

Characteristic	No. of people	Percentage	
Gender	Male	106	52.7
	Female	95	47.3
	Total	201	100.0
Age	Below 20	26	12.9
	Between 20 and 30	93	46.3
	Between 31 and 40	45	22.4
	Between 41 and 50	33	16.4
	Over 50	4	2.0
	Total	201	100.0
Schooling	Primary school completed	41	20.4
	Secondary school not completed	33	16.4
	Secondary school completed	58	28.9
	High school not completed	25	12.4
	High school completed	31	15.4
	Other	13	6.5
	Total	201	100.0
Civil status	Single	88	43.8
	Married	49	24.4
	Divorced / Separated	9	4.5
	Cohabiting	55	27.4
	Total	201	100.0
Career	Less than a year	97	48.3
	Between 1 and 3 years	66	32.8
	Between 4 and 7 years	25	12.4
	More than 8 years	13	6.5
	Total	201	100.0

Source: own elaboration.

The contrasted model is shown in Figure 1, in which the following indicators are presented: values of the factor loads of the constructs of the model, path coefficients of the structural relationships, and r^2 value of the intention to leave. The prediction quality of the model was evaluated based on the path coefficients and the r^2 value.

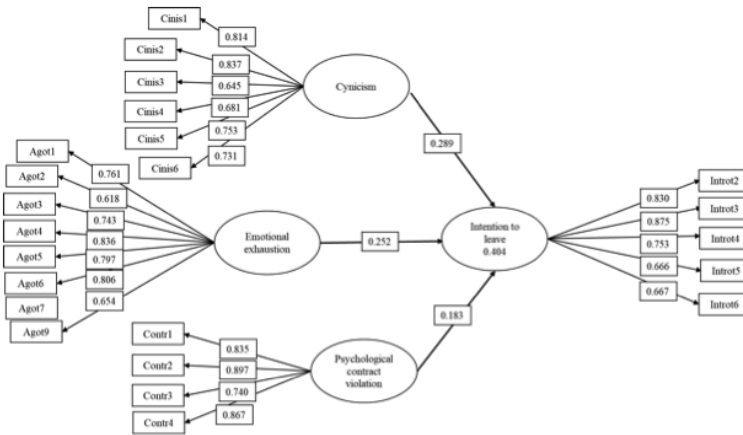


Figure 1. Contrasted model.
Source: own elaboration.

Regarding the path values, the evaluation was carried out considering their algebraic sign, magnitude, and significance. It is stated that when the path indicators coincide with the previous assumptions, there is a partial empirical validation of the theoretical relationships proposed (Henseler, Ringle, & Sinkovics, 2009). In this work, these values coincided with the previous assumptions, but only 2 out of the 3 relationships of the model were statistically significant (t values greater than 1.96 for a 95% confidence level) and surpassed the minimum cut-off point of 0.20 (Chin, 1998); that is, H1 was rejected, and H2 and H3 were not rejected (Table 5).

On the other hand, the determination coefficient evaluates the degree in which the model explains the data (Seidel & Back, 2009); thus, an r^2 of 0.67 is considered substantial, an r^2 of 0.35 moderate, and an r^2 of 0.19 weak (Chin, 1998; Henseler *et al.*, 2009). In this sense, the results showed that, in a moderate-substantial manner, cynicism, emotional exhaustion, and violation of the psychological contract predict the intention to leave ($r^2=0.404$), although as previously mentioned, this last relationship was not statistically significant.

Table 5. Structural relationships posed in the model.

Hypothesis	Path	t value	Result
H1. Violation of the psychological contract positively and significantly influences the intention to leave.	0.183	1.848	Rejected
H2. Employee cynicism positively and significantly influences the intention to leave.	0.289	2.574	Not rejected
H3: Emotional exhaustion positively and significantly influences the intention to leave.	0.252	2.938	Not rejected

Source: own elaboration based on results from Smart PLS.

Discussion and conclusions

In the context of the auto-parts sector of the maquila export industry located in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, the objective of this research work was to determine if violation of the psychological contract, emotional exhaustion, and employee cynicism predict the intention to leave of the staff who work operational jobs. The results indicate that the last two variables influence in a direct and significant manner.

In different contexts and industrial sectors, there is increasing recognition of the negative effects of emotional exhaustion and employee cynicism. This work reiterates this situation, and the findings have theoretical and empirical implications. In the context of the maquila export industry of the auto-parts sector, emotional exhaustion and employee cynicism lead to the intention to leave. Comparatively speaking, cynicism on said phenomenon has greater influence, which coincides with previous works (Wong & Spence Laschinger, 2015).

The intention to leave manifested in the clear decision of the employees to leave the company, having intention to leave it, and, at the time of the research, were looking for similar jobs but in other companies. For its part, organizational cynicism was reflected in the loss of enthusiasm or interest for their job, employees have doubts on the value thereof; that is, as the operators lost interest and enthusiasm for their job and considered that there was no value in what they did, their intention to leave was greater. These results coincide with previous works (Çınar *et al.*, 2014; C. Huang *et al.*, 2003; Kang *et al.*, 2010; Mantler *et al.*, 2015; Wong & Spence Laschinger, 2015). This is a worrying phenomenon; it is associated with a psychological retirement of the employee that causes a lack of will to carry out tasks, with affectations for the organization (Mantler *et al.*, 2015). Among the alternatives for its management is the display of leadership styles that reduce the consequences of organizational cynicism; sharing information and having employees see the value of their work; these are vital actions in this sense (Thomas & Gupta, 2018). Addressing this phenomenon is a challenge for human talent management.

Regarding emotional exhaustion, employees indicated that working all day was really stressful, that they felt frustrated by their work, and that they believed they were working too much. This coincides with previous works according to which, in the Mexican context, stress and work overload are among the main reasons for staff turnover (Vargas, 2011); in this study, emotional exhaustion was a significant predictor of the intention to leave the company (Cropanzano *et al.*, 2003; Haque & Aslam, 2014; Hwang *et al.*, 2014; Lambert *et al.*, 2010; McKnight *et al.*, 2009; Shih-Tse Wang, 2014). Therefore, it is recommended for organizational interventions to be carried out as soon as the first signs of exhaustion are detected in the employee

(Kang *et al.*, 2010). An alternative is the development of ethical leaders, who listen to the employees. In this regard, very recent works (Dust, Resick, Margolis, Mawritz, & Greenbaum, 2018) indicate that this type of leaders help subordinates give sense and understanding to the impact of their work, they appreciate and respect them, which in turn helps them feel like an integral part of the company, to perceive themselves not as means of production, but as valuable assets for the company. In parallel, it is recommended that the supervisors develop their capability to listen to their subordinates, since that also helps deal with exhaustion (Lloyd *et al.*, 2015). In the environment, it can be useful to implement work recognition schemes, and explore alternatives of autonomy and empowerment. With this, since workers who conclude their work satisfactorily are more inclined to feel a sense of achievement and, if allowed to explore new ways of working, their curiosity, knowledge, and abilities will increase; all of which shall increase their levels of energy (Spreitzer, Sutcliffe, Dutton, Sonenshein, & Grant, 2005).

Different from what was expected, in this research violation of the psychological contract did not influence the intention to leave. Although it is recommended to continue researching the relationship, the results indicate that breaching the agreement of the terms, conditions, and obligations between the company and the worker does not impact the intention to leave. A possible explanation lies in the short career of the workers in the company, a situation that could prevent reaching the violation of the contract. Time is a relevant factor in psychological contracts (Bal, Hofmans, & Polat, 2016); these are adjusted with the passage of time, as the employee lives different experiences in the company (Robinson & Rousseau, 1994; Rousseau & McLean Parks, 1993). Furthermore, the findings could be tied to the subjects studied, since, generally, their expectations are limited to the agreed upon wages and benefits, working conditions that are unlikely to be breached (Cortés Castillo, 2015); that is, they are transactional contracts (Rousseau & McLean Parks, 1993). Notwithstanding that the relationship between the violation of the psychological contract and the intention to leave was not significant, it is pertinent for companies to take special care during the recruitment and selection of their staff (the psychological contract begins to form there), and to always keep in mind the expectations and promises made to the worker, both during their hiring and in their working life, in order to prevent the breach and subsequent violation of the psychological contract. Only realistic promises that can be fulfilled should be made (Kraak *et al.*, 2017).

Similar to other works, this research has some limitations. It is a cross-sectional study with a non-probabilistic sample, carried out in the auto-parts sector of the manufacturing and maquila export industry located in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, Mexico; therefore, the results cannot be generalized and only apply to the studied sample. Second, the analysis does not consider the moderating effect of demographic variables, such as gender or civil status, which could generate differences between groups, thus it is impossible to rule out the heterogeneity of the information. On the other hand, with regard to the sample, it is suggested to replicate the work in a probabilistic manner, since, although the size of the sample utilized was statistically appropriate for the purposes of this study, it represents a small portion of the people employed in the context. Finally, to increase the external validity of the results, it is recommended to carry out longitudinal studies in other contexts and sectors, and to continue researching the relationships posed, particularly in jobs different to human and healthcare services.

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