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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Research on Psychological Contract Violation: A Systematic Review and Bibliometric Analysis

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Received: May 18, 2024	The objective of this paper is to conduct a systematic review of scholarly research on psychological contract violation. A review of existing
Accepted: Aug 17, 2024	research will help to identify gaps and opportunities for further
	investigation in the domain of psychological contract violation. Using
	VOSviewer and Citespace, we analysed 228 articles and the associated
Keywords	12273 references on platform research in the Web of Science database.
Psychological contract violation	We identified the most influential publications, authors, journals, institutions, and countries in platform research and explored the
Systematic review	structure of cited references, cited authors, and cited countries. In
Bibliometric analysis	addition, we explored the structure of cited references, cited authors, and cited journals to further understand the theoretical underpinnings of
VOS viewer	platform research. Moreover, through VOSViewer co-occurrence analysis,
Cite space	co-citation analysis, Citespace keyword citation space evolution analysis. This paper discusses the evolution of psychological contract violation
*Corresponding Author:	research, and predicts the future development trend, to provide reference
lunwentougao0629@163.com	for the future development of theory and practice.

INTRODUCTION

Psychological contracts are dynamic and encompass the reciprocal, unwritten expectations between employees and organizations. When these expectations are not met, psychological contract violations occur, leading to a myriad of negative outcomes for both individuals and organizations. Recent studies have advanced our understanding of these dynamics. For example, Terera highlighted the detrimental effects of psychological contract violations on organizational climate and employee productivity, emphasizing the need for robust management strategies to mitigate these impacts (Terera, 2019). Concurrently, the systematic review by some scholars synthesized evidence on the attitudinal and behavioral outcomes of psychological contract breaches, suggesting that despite extensive research, several aspects remain unclear, necessitating further investigation (Topa et, al, 2022).

The significance of delving into psychological contract violations is underscored by a striking imbalance in the literature. A search on the Web of Science reveals over 2,000 articles related to psychological contracts, yet only about 200 articles specifically address psychological contract violations. This disparity highlights a critical gap in the literature and underscores the necessity of conducting a systematic review of psychological contract violations. The value of current research lies in its ability to elucidate the nuanced mechanisms through which psychological contract violations influence organizational outcomes. Some researchers provided a comprehensive

bibliometric analysis, highlighting the evolving landscape of psychological contract research and identifying future research directions (Kozhakhmet et al, 2023). Similarly, the work of Hayes and Keyser through a systematic literature review, shed light on the individual and work-related outcomes of psychological contracts, underscoring the importance of clarity in employee and employer obligations (Hayes & Keyser, 2022). These insights are crucial for developing effective organizational policies and practices that foster a positive psychological contract, thereby enhancing employee engagement, satisfaction, and organizational commitment.

This study outlines the significance of understanding psychological contract violations and their consequences. By reviewing recent literature and employing bibliometric analysis, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of the psychological contract's role in shaping organizational behavior. It highlights the need for further research to address the gaps identified, particularly in the context of changing organizational dynamics and workforce expectations. The ultimate goal is to inform effective management practices that can prevent psychological contract violations and foster a positive organizational environment.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The exploration of psychological contract violation has garnered significant interest over the last two decades, leading to a rich tapestry of research utilizing diverse methodologies and theoretical perspectives. This scholarly attention reflects the growing recognition of the profound impacts that violations in psychological contracts can have on employee attitudes, behaviors, and organizational outcomes.

A study conducted by Havana Sevcan Kurt (2020) explored the relationship between psychological contract violation and turnover intention among employees in the banking call centers in Turkey. The research utilized a structural equation modeling approach to analyze data from 634 employees, finding that perceived loyalty partially mediates the relationship between psychological contract violations and turnover intention. The study emphasizes the importance for bank managers and HR specialists to address psychological contract breaches to improve employee retention.

Azeem et al. (2020) investigated the impact of psychological contract violation on turnover intention, highlighting the mediating roles of job dissatisfaction and work disengagement. The study, which surveyed 200 managers in the banking sector of Pakistan, confirmed that psychological contract violations lead to increased turnover intentions due to feelings of organizational betrayal, which foster job dissatisfaction and disengagement.

Sheikh, Alvi, and Rehman (2020) investigated the relationship between psychological contract violations, organizational cynicism, and job satisfaction among nurses in public sector hospitals in Lahore, Pakistan. The study found that psychological contract breaches lead to increased organizational cynicism, which negatively affects job satisfaction. This highlights the need for organizations to address breaches to reduce cynicism and improve job satisfaction. Some scholars explored the relationship between psychological contract violations, organizational cynicism, and union commitment among employees in Chinese non-state-owned firms. The study found that psychological contract violations increase organizational cynicism, which in turn enhances union commitment. The research underscores the role of organizational cynicism as a mediator in the relationship between psychological contract violations and union commitment (Ahn& Han, 2021).

A qualitative investigation focused on the impact of psychological contract violations on managerial voice behavior through organizational cynicism. The research involved 336 European and Asian managers and found that psychological contract violations lead to increased organizational cynicism, which then fosters aggressive voice behavior. This study emphasizes the importance of addressing psychological contract violations to manage managerial voice and reduce organizational cynicism (Afshan et,al, 2021).

These studies collectively mark a shift from examining the immediate effects of psychological contract violations to exploring more nuanced understandings that consider the interplay between individual, organizational, and contextual factors. This evolution is reflected in the methodologies employed, moving from simple correlational studies to more complex multivariate analyses and mixed-methods approaches. Such advancements have not only deepened our understanding of the dynamics of psychological contract violations but also highlighted the importance of proactive management strategies in mitigating their adverse effects.

Reflecting on the body of research, it is evident that future investigations should adopt a more integrative approach, considering the psychological, social, and organizational dimensions of psychological contract violations. Additionally, with the advent of digital transformation and the changing nature of work, understanding how remote work and digital communication platforms influence psychological contract dynamics will be crucial.

In conclusion, the body of research on psychological contract violations provides valuable insights into the complexities of employee-employer relationships. As organizations navigate the challenges of an ever-evolving work environment, the lessons drawn from these studies will be essential in fostering a culture of trust, commitment, and mutual respect. Further research in this area, especially employing longitudinal and cross-cultural studies, will undoubtedly enrich our understanding and offer new perspectives on managing psychological contracts in the contemporary workplace.

METHODOLOGY

Bibliometric analysis

Bibliometric analysis goes beyond the documents themselves to encompass the myriad elements of those documents, such as authors, keywords, institutional affiliations, and national sources. Visualization techniques in bibliometrics help to unearth potential interconnections between these various data points.

Cite Space and VOS viewer are used for knowledge mapping. Each piece of software has its advantages and can play a complementary role. CiteSpace is based on the data normalization method of set theory to measure the similarity of knowledge units (Chen, 2006), and the similarity algorithm is used to get the timezone view and timeline view within the time slices so that the process of knowledge evolution (Chen et al, 2010). A certain VOSviewer adopts a probabilistic-based data normalization method and provides a variety of visualization views in the areas of keywords, coinstitutions, and co-authors, including network visualization, overlay visualization, and co-author visualization. Network visualization, overlay visualization, and density visualization have outstanding features of easy mapping and beautiful images (Van Eck & Waltman, 2010).

This study proposes a methodology that combines the in-depth reading and exploratory approach of a traditional literature review with the bibliometric approach of a visual analytical tool. This approach consists of a bibliometric analysis of recent developments in higher vocational education worldwide. The findings are presented in the form of a map that illustrates the status and structure of the field, as well as its development frontiers and evolutionary trajectories.

Data Source

This study selects the Web of Science (Core Collection) as its data source. As a high-quality digital bibliographic database, the Web of Science has been widely accepted by researchers and is considered the most suitable database for bibliometric analysis (Ding, X., & Yang, Z, 2020). The indexes were selected as SSCI and SCI-Expended, and the search strategy selected was (TS=("psychological contract violation*" OR "psychology contract violation*")), The period is from to .with a period starting from March 1, 2004, to March 1, 2024, and a literature type selected as Articles and Review articles, and a language of English, and 228 literature records were obtained after the search.

The 228 papers used in this study were from 638 authors at 397 organizations in 43 countries, published in 140 journals, and cited 12273 citations from 4095 journals.

Criteria	Quantity
Publications	228
Authors	638
Journals	397
Institutions	140
Countries	43
Cited reference	12273

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of the database

Figure 1 illustrates the temporal trends in the publication of papers focused on psychological contract violation. Overall, there has been a noticeable uptick in publications within this field, particularly since 2019, when a sharp increase in the number of publications can be observed. The peak number of publications reached 34, highlighting a growing interest from scholars in recent years. This trend signifies that the topic has emerged as a new focal point in management research.

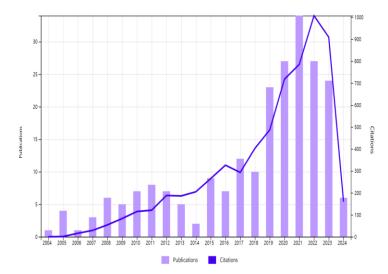


Figure 1. Distribution of publications and Citation from 2004-2024

RESULT

Bibliometric Analysis of Authors

Descriptive analysis of authors

The analysis of authors of academic literature helps in identifying representative scholars and core research forces within a particular field of study. The renowned scholar Price observed that the size of a highly productive sitting is approximately equal to the square root of the total number of all authors (Price, 1963).

$$\sum_{m+1}^{I} n(x) = \sqrt{N}$$

According to Price's law, the minimum number of publications by core authors in a certain field is m = $0.749 \times \sqrt{(n_max)} = 1.67$ (where nmax represents the number of publications by the most productive authors in the field, nmax=8), so authors with 2 or more publications are positioned as core authors in the field. Totaling 57 core authors with a total of 130 articles, accounting for 57% of the total number of articles, which meets the criteria of half (50%) proposed by Price, and substituting the above values into the formula to calculate is also basically in line with the calculation formula of Price's Law. Therefore, it can be assumed that the field of psychological contract violation has developed a more stable group of authors to collaborate with. Table 2 demonstrates the highly productive authors with more than 3 publications in the field. The H-Index is a measure of the academic achievement and research impact of scientists and researchers. A higher H-index indicates greater research impact and reflects the quality of the author's publications (Bihari et al, 2021).

Average Rank **Documents** Citations **H** Index **Author** Citation/ **Publication** agarwal, upasna a. 5 5 143 28.6 2 rai, arpana 5 143 28.6 5 4 3 de clercq, dirk 5 52 10.4 4 eckerd, stephanie 3 286 95.3 3 5 rousseau, denise m. 3 113 37.7 3 3 23 3 6 69 azeem, muhammad umer 7 3 45 15 2 arici, hasan evrim 3 8 5.3 2 jiang, lixin 16 9 3 13 4.3 2 asante, eric adom 10 srivastava, shalini 3 5 1.7 2

Table 2: The most important authors in the research field

Among these important authors, Rai, A., and Agarwal, UA, are the most productive; both of them have collaborated on 5 articles between 2004 and 2024. These publications have gained a lot of attention and have been cited 143 times, with an average of 28.6 citations per publication. Their H-index is 5. Based on the study of published works, the two scholars focused mainly on cross-sectional empirical studies. The second-highest-ranked author is Declercq, D., who has published five papers over a period of 20 years and has accumulated 52 citations. Among these authors, Eckerd, S. also deserves to be recognized; although he only published three articles, he was cited 286 times, indicating the high quality of this author's articles.

Co-occurrence analysis of authors

In this study, VOSviewer was applied to visualize the collaboration network overlay for authors with more than 3 publications. The overlay view adds the time dimension, which can intuitively reflect the active situation of each scholar in recent years through the gradient of color, and the analysis results are shown in Figure. 2. In Figure. 2, the node size represents the number of articles, the node color represents the time distribution, and the connecting line represents the cooperation relationship. The authors with more publications have not yet shown obvious network characteristics among themselves, indicating that the research team of authors in the field of psychological contract violations has not yet formed a global scale.

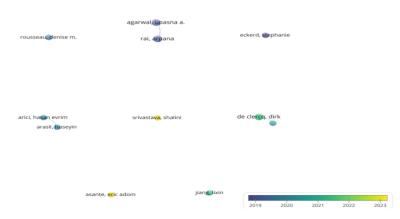


Figure 2: Co-occurrence of Authors

Bibliometric analysis of countries

Descriptive analysis of countries

To understand which country is most prominent in the field of research on psychological contract violations, we also analyzed the volume of articles published in each country. Table 3 shows the top 5 countries in this area.

Researchers from the United States contributed the most to the research papers on this topic, with 82 articles, accounting for 36.0% of the total number of publications. At the same time, the number of citations of the literature published in the United States is also very high, with a total of 3,511 citations and an average citation of 42.8. This result indicates that the quality of literature published in the United States is very high and recognized by peers in the field. China's contribution ranked second, with 39 articles and 964 citations.

In a systematic review, the National H-index typically represents the academic influence and research output of a country in a specific field or topic. The H-index of a country indicates how many research articles or papers from that country have been cited at least the same number of times. It reflects the academic output and influence of the country in a specific field. A higher National H-index generally signifies that the country produces more high-quality research and holds a greater reputation in the international academic community in that field. As can be seen from table 3, the quality and impact of publications are highest in the United States. Although China made a significant contribution in terms of the number of publications in the field, the United States has a higher H-index of research results in the area of psychological contract violations. This indicates that the United States has a higher quality of literature and greater impact when compared to China.

Rank	Country	Publication	Citations	Average Citation/ Publication	H Index
1	USA	82	3511	42.8	29
2	Peoples r china	56	1240	22.1	10
3	India	21	395	18.8	8
4	England	19	551	29	9
5	Canada	17	869	51.1	12

Table 3. The most important countries in the research field

Co-occurrence analysis of countries

To understand which countries are the most prominent contributors to the field of psychological contract violation research, this study analyzed the number of publications from 47 countries. This

study used VOSviewer to visualize the countries with more than or equal to 5 articles, and the results are shown in Figure 3. In Figure 3, larger circular nodes indicate more articles published. The node lines represent the connection between countries; the thicker the line, the more articles the two countries have published together. The node colors represent different clusters.

As can be seen in Figure 3, there is cooperation among individual countries, and more stable clusters of cooperation have been formed. However, in terms of clustering, the 16 countries that entered the statistics are divided into four clusters. Three clusters have two or more countries in them. The red cluster has five countries and territories involved. The cluster in blue has four countries and regions involved but has the highest number of publications.

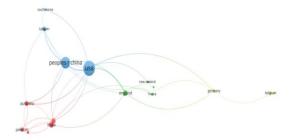


Figure. 3: Co-occurrence of countries

Bibliometric Analysis of Journals

Descriptive analysis of journals

Over the past two decades, the majority of publications on this topic have focused on psychological contract violations. Table 4 shows the top 11 journals ranked by the number of publications, all of which have more than four articles.

"Frontiers in Psychology" is the journal with the highest number of articles on psychological contract violations, with 12 relevant papers published in 20 years. "Frontiers in Psychology" is an open-access psychology journal, published by Frontiers Media since 2010 and indexed in the SSCI, signifying its importance and influence within the field of psychology and the social sciences. As one of the leading journals in the full range of psychological sciences, it covers a wide range of research directions, from clinical research and cognitive science to social psychology, and provides free and instant online access, facilitating the widespread dissemination of scholarly knowledge.

"The International Journal of Human Resource Management" is an SSCI Q2 journal, which indicates that it enjoys a high degree of academic standing and recognition in the field of human resource management and social sciences. As a leading journal in the field of human resource management, it focuses on publishing articles in a variety of research areas ranging from strategic human resource management to organizational behavior, employment relationships, employee benefits, human resource development, and international human resource management. The high citation rate of the journal shows that although "The International Journal of Human Resource Management" is ranked second in terms of the number of articles published, the articles it publishes are more recognized by peers.

If a journal has an H-index, it means that the journal has at least h articles that have been cited h times or more in other journals or academic publications. This indicates a certain level of scholarly impact within the academic community for the journal. The H-index of a journal serves as a tool for scholars and researchers to assess the journal's academic quality and influence. Typically, journals with a higher H-index are considered to have a greater academic reputation within their respective fields due to their articles being widely cited. Researchers can use a journal's H-index as a reference factor when selecting a journal for publishing their research findings. From the results in Table 4, it can be

seen that "The International Journal of Human Resource Management" has an H index of 8. This indicates that the journal has high quality.

Another journal that deserves attention in Table 4 is "The Journal of Organizational Behavior. "Although this journal only published five articles related to psychological contract violations, it has an average citation rate of 98.8. It shows that researchers in this field are very sure about the quality of articles in this journal. "The Journal of Organizational Behavior" is an SSCI-indexed journal, which signifies its significant academic status and influence in organizational behavior and related fields. It covers several important areas of organizational behavior, including but not limited to leadership, teamwork, motivation, employee engagement, organizational culture, and change management, and provides a platform for interdisciplinary exchange, attracting researchers and scholars from a wide range of disciplines, including psychology, sociology, and management, to contribute their findings.

Rank	Source	Docum ents	Citations	Average Citation/ Publication	H-Index
1	Frontiers in psychology	12	115	9.6	6
2	International journal of human resource management	9	311	34.6	8
3	Journal of Business Research	7	210	30	5
4	Sustainability	6	14	2.3	2
5	Journal of Organizational Behavior	5	494	98.8	5
6	Journal of Managerial Psychology	5	287	57.4	5
7	Personnel review	5	180	36	5
8	Journal of Vocational Behavior	4	332	83	4
9	Employee relations	4	73	18.3	3
10	International journal of conflict management	4	33	8.3	3
11	Journal of management & organization	4	15	3.8	2

Table 4 The most important journals in the research field

Co-citation analysis of journals

Co-citation analysis aims to identify the articles that are often used in the field of study as well as the journals that publish these publications. VOSviewer performs journal co-citation mapping, setting the minimum number of citations of a cited journal to 30, leaving 84 journals for the co-citation analysis of cited journals, and Figure 4 depicts the final provided co-citation relationship mapping.

The co-citation network of journals can be seen in Figure 4, which consists of 3 clusters corresponding to the 3 colors in the figure, and the top three journals in terms of number of citations are Journal of Applied Psychology (982 citations), Journal of Organizational Behavior (822 citations), and Academy of Management Journal (512 citations).

The "managerial psychology" cluster contains journals concentrating on applied psychology (Journal of Applied Psychology), human resource management (Academy of Management Journal), organizational behavior (Academy of Management Review), and corporate social responsibility (Journal of Business Ethics). This cluster is the largest of the three clusters, colored red, and contains 51 items.

The second largest cluster is the green cluster, which is named in this study: "business management". This cluster encompasses journals that focus on marketing management (Journal of Marketing),

social behavior (Journal of Personality and Social Psychology), and organizational behavior (Journal of Business Research).

The "organizational system" cluster focuses more on the following areas: systems analysis and design (Journal of Management Information Systems), businesses and society (Management Information Systems Quarterly), organizational performance (Journal of Strategic Information System)

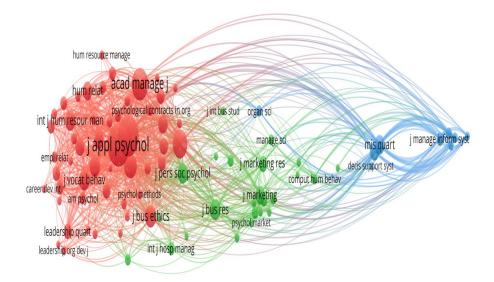


Figure 4: Co-cited journals

Bibliometric Analysis of Keywords

Descriptive analysis of keywords

Keywords condense the core and essence of a paper and the keyword co-occurrence analysis can reveal the research hot spots in a scientific field. The keyword density mapping of 228 papers was performed using Citespace. The results are shown in table 5. The top 3 important keywords are psychological contract violation, model, and breach.

Table 5: High-frequency keywords in the research field

Rank	Keyword	Frequency	Year
1	psychological contract violation	155	2005
2	model	76	2004
3	breach	72	2005
4	impact	67	2005
5	psychological contract	56	2005
6	antecedent	37	2007
7	trust	33	2005
8	consequence	31	2007
9	commitment	31	2005

10	performance	30	2009
11	turnover intention	28	2010
12	mediating role	28	2016
13	work	27	2010
14	violation	26	2013
15	psychological contract breach	26	2010

High-frequency keywords are more strongly correlated with research related to the psychological contract, but the high-frequency keywords all appeared earlier in the years. The reason for this situation may be that the more mature studies have experienced a longer development time. So there is not much significance in simply studying the frequency of keywords. So we have to combine timeline graph analysis and emergent word analysis.

Evolution Analysis of Keywords

To understand the progress of psychological contract violations in the time dimension, the timeline diagram provided by CiteSpace was used to present a keyword co-occurrence network map (see Fig. 5), which shows the stage-by-stage change of the hotspots of this research in recent years. From Figure 5, it can be seen that the retrieved literature can be categorized into 8 major clusters. At the same time, each cluster corresponds to the research hotspot of each period presented on the timeline. According to the clustering results, the time zone can be divided into two stages.

The first phase was before 2010. The first phase was before 2010, when research focused on psychological contract violation and its similar concepts, such as psychological contract breach and job satisfaction. Trust and Breach of the Psychological Contract: This study examines the relationships between trust, psychological contract breach, and violation, highlighting the importance of initial trust in moderating the impact of breaches on subsequent trust and job satisfaction (Robinson, 1996). The Development of Psychological Contract Breach and Violation: Explores factors affecting perceptions of breach and violation, and their impact on job satisfaction, emphasizing the role of unmet expectations and perceived fairness (Robinson & Morrison, 2000). Reexamining the Effects of Psychological Contract Violations: Investigates the mediating role of unmet expectations and job dissatisfaction in the relationship between psychological contract violations and employee behaviors (Turnley & Feldman, 2000).

The second phase is from 2010 to present. In these years, the research focuses more on related variables such as turnover intention because of psychological contract violation and a series of complex research concepts such as moderating role, mediating role, etc. This indicates that the research in this field is getting more and more complex. This shows that the research in this field is becoming more complex with the addition of many related variables. Psychological Contract Violation and Turnover Intention: Analyzes the role of loyalty in mediating the relationship between psychological contract violation and turnover intention, highlighting the complexity of this relationship in modern organizational settings (Kurt, 2020). Psychological Contract as Precursor for Turnover and Self-Employment: This study examines the effect of psychological contract fulfillment and violation on turnover and self-employment intentions, adding an interesting angle on the career paths post-violation (Stormbroek & Blomme, 2017). Psychological Contract Violation, Job Dissatisfaction, and Work Disengagement: Investigates the sequential underlying mechanism of psychological contract violation leading to turnover intention via job dissatisfaction and work disengagement, offering insights into the emotional and cognitive processes involved (Azeem et al., 2020).

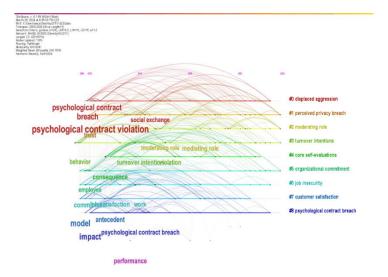


Figure 5: Map of timezone view of keyword

Top 12 Keywords with the Strongest Citation Bursts

Keywords	Year	Strength	Begin	End	2004 - 2024
obligation	2004	4.7	2004	2013	
psychological contract	2005	3.92	2008	2012	
employment relationship	2009	2.92	2009	2015	
violation	2013	2.93	2013	2015	
impact	2005	3.89	2016	2017	
resource	2018	3.05	2018	2019	
job satisfaction	2007	2.95	2019	2021	
organizational citizenship behavior	2012	2.99	2020	2022	
job performance	2020	2.7	2020	2021	
mediating role	2016	3.15	2021	2024	
turnover intention	2010	2.76	2021	2022	
leader member exchange	2022	2.85	2022	2024	

Figure 6: Map of keywords with the strongest citation burst

The emergent keywords are the ones that appear more frequently in a short period and can be used to predict the frontiers and trends of research in the field. In this paper, we set a threshold value of 0.8 and came up with 12 keywords. The keyword with the highest intensity of emergence is "investigation," up to 4.7.

However, keywords such as "investigation", "psychological contract", and "employment relationship" have been highlighted. "Mediating role" has been interactively updated around 2010, although the high intensity of keywords suggests that they were heavily researched at the time of their emergence. Investigation and Psychological Contract Violation. This study investigates the relationships between consumers' perceived justice and their behavioral intentions, exploring the effects of psychological contract violation on these relationships. The findings indicate that psychological contract violation serves as a partial mediator, affecting consumer behavior within service industries, suggesting implications for understanding psychological contract violation beyond traditional employment contexts (Chih et al., 2017). Psychological Contract and Violation Relationship: Morrison & Robinson provide a model outlining the sense-making processes preceding an employee's experience of psychological contract violation. This foundational work identifies factors influencing these processes and encourages future empirical research, offering a crucial perspective on the development and impact of psychological contract violations (Morrison & Robinson, 1997). Psychological contract violations lead to a deterioration in the quality of the employment

relationship. These breaches are associated with decreased trust, commitment, and job satisfaction, and can result in increased turnover intentions among employees (Isaksson, 2020).

"Mediating role," "turnover intention," and "leader-member exchange" have remained the focus of research since their emergence. The emergence of "mediating role," "turnover intention," and "leader-member exchange" are still the focus of research and hot spots and will be the trend of research in the future. Mediating Role of Psychological Contract Violation: M. Suazo examines the role of psychological contract violation as a mediating variable in the relations between psychological contract breach and work-related attitudes and behaviors. This study aims to expand the generalization of psychological contract theories by examining service-oriented employees, revealing the full mediating role of psychological contract violation on various work-related outcomes (Suazo, 2009). Leader-Member Exchange and Psychological Contract Violation: Some scholars discuss the buffering role of momentary leader-member exchange in the relationship between feelings of violation and counterproductive work behavior. This study highlights the potential of leader-member exchange quality to mitigate the effects of psychological contract violations, adding depth to our understanding of the dynamics within organizational settings (Griep et al., 2016).

DISCUSSION

The study of psychological contract violation is an interdisciplinary area that intersects psychology, organizational behavior, and human resource management. This field has garnered significant interest due to the increasing recognition of its impact on employee behavior and organizational outcomes, making it a continually evolving topic.

This research utilizes VOSviewer and Citespace software to analyze two decades of studies in this field, systematically reviewing its development, validating the applicability of Price's Law, and identifying key authors, high-output countries, and major journals. It also examines co-citation patterns among authors, journals, and references. By exploring keyword clustering and current trends, the findings from the econometric analysis are summarized as follows:

The field of psychological contract violation has cultivated a stable group of collaborating authors and distinguished scholars, significantly contributing to its advancement. However, international collaboration remains limited and should be enhanced moving forward.

Journals in this area are predominantly focused on psychology and organizational behavior, with some publications in broader management journals. A considerable number of these journals are open-access, indicating that the open access movement has effectively supported the growth of research in this domain.

Co-citation analysis has highlighted the most cited journals and seminal literature, assisting subsequent researchers in identifying core studies, thereby facilitating a more efficient grasp of the fundamental content and overarching framework.

Keyword clustering and evolutionary analysis reveal that this research area has seen rapid development over the past twenty years, expanding significantly in both scope and depth.

Despite the thorough analysis, this study has certain limitations. Firstly, the stringent standards and norms imposed by bibliometric software on data quality meant that only journal articles from the SSCI and SCIE indexes within the Web of Science Core Collection were included, excluding other databases like Scopus. This could lead to a lack of comprehensiveness in the data analysis. Moreover, quantitative analysis requires interpretation that relies heavily on the researchers' deep understanding of the field, which can introduce subjectivity.

Future research is expected to dynamically evolve by combining insights from psychology and big data analytics. Thus, there is significant potential for further exploration in this study. Future research should aim to integrate literature from multiple databases to enhance data comprehensiveness. Researchers should also actively collaborate with experts in the field of psychological contract violation, keeping abreast of the latest developments to minimize subjectivity in data interpretation and analysis.

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DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT: The dataset analyzed during the current study is available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

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