Repositório ISCTE-IUL

How human resource managers can prevent perceived pandemic threats from escalating

into diminished change-oriented voluntarism

Abstract

Purpose—For human resource (HR) managers, the harmful outcomes of employees' ruminations about external crises, such as a pandemic, represent important, timely concerns. This research postulates that employees' perceptions of pandemic threats might diminish the extent to which they engage in change-oriented voluntarism at work. This negative connection may be attenuated by employees' access to two personal (work-related self-efficacy and organization-based self-esteem) and two relational (goal congruence and interpersonal harmony) resources.

Design/methodology/approach—The theoretical predictions are tested with survey data collected among employees who work in a banking organization in Portugal.

Findings—Persistent negative thoughts about a pandemic undermine discretionary efforts to alter and enhance the organizational status quo, but this detrimental effect is mitigated when employees (1) feel confident about their work-related abilities, (2) have a positive self-image about their organizational functioning, (3) share a common mindset with coworkers with respect to work goals, and (4) maintain harmonious relationships with coworkers.

Practical implications—This study pinpoints several ways HR managers can reduce the danger that employees' worries about life-threatening crises may lead to complacent responses that, somewhat paradoxically, might undermine their ability to alleviate the suffered hardships.

Originality/value—The findings contribute to research on the impact of external crisis situations on organizations by providing an explanation of why employees may avoid productive, disruptive work activities, contingent on their access to complementary resources.

Keywords: change-oriented voluntarism; pandemic threats; work-related self-efficacy; organization-based self-esteem; goal congruence; interpersonal harmony; conservation of resources theory.

Introduction

In the presence of significant external crises, such as a global pandemic, employees sense threats to their personal well-being and experience diminished quality in their day-to-day lives and activities (Hokyu and Höllerer, 2020; Maity *et al.*, 2020). Perceptions of these threats may manifest in different ways, such as a general difficulty to keep the crisis out of their minds, a sense of helplessness in protecting themselves, or a belief that the future is uncertain, due to ongoing health risks (Debata *et al.*, 2020; De Clercq *et al.*, 2021b). Crisis-related ruminations also may influence employees' professional functioning. For example, persistent worries about the COVID-19 virus deplete employees' resources bases and lead to exhaustion (Lin et al., 2021). To contribute to burgeoning research into the effects of global health crises on organizations—and recognizing the relevance of such research for human resource (HR) management scholarship (Hite and McDonald, 2020)—we investigate the effects of employees' perceived pandemic threats on their willingness to exhibit change-oriented voluntarism or citizenship behavior, defined as the extent to which they seek to alter and improve the organizational status quo voluntarily (Haq *et al.*, 2020; Morrison and Phelps, 1999).

Compared with commonly studied, general forms of organizational citizenship behavior, which tend to align with or reinforce existing organizational practices (Podsakoff et al., 2018), change-oriented citizenship behaviors involve intentional, discretionary efforts to *disrupt* current practices (Chiaburu *et al.*, 2013; Vigoda-Gadot and Beeri, 2012). Change-oriented voluntarism can contribute to organizational effectiveness by suggesting novel ideas and improvements, and it might benefit employees, by giving a boost to their work performance and generating a sense of personal fulfillment (Campbell and Im, 2016; Carter *et al.*, 2014). Yet because they are inherently disruptive, these activities also can create challenges and resistance from other

organizational members who regard the suggested changes as unnecessary or intrusive (Barry and Wilkinson, 2016; Choi, 2007; Hon *et al.,* 2014).

From this perspective, employees might not be willing to undertake change-oriented citizenship behaviors, worried that their efforts might be misunderstood or rejected, which could have negative repercussions for their organizational standing (Maynes and Podsakoff, 2014; Van Dijk and Van Dick, 2009). Considering that these extra-role, change-oriented work efforts are intrinsically demanding and challenging, employees' exposure to resource-depleting situations, including those that originate from outside the work realm, may further limit their willingness to allocate significant energy to potentially upsetting, controversial behaviors (Bergeron, 2007; De Clercq, 2020). In this study, we investigate how ruminations about a pandemic crisis may escalate into diminished change-oriented voluntarism, with a particular focus on several boundary conditions in which this escalation is less likely to unfold. By investigating the connection between perceptions of pandemic threats and change-oriented voluntarism, we extend prior studies of pandemic crises that primarily focus on how such perceptions might make employees indifferent toward work, such that they appear less engaged (Liu et al., 2021), withdrawn (Chong et al., 2020), or determined to quit (Vaziri et al., 2020). Yet prior studies have not considered how ruminations about a global health crisis might interfere with discretionary, constructive work behaviors that otherwise could *resolve* the precarious situation employees find themselves facing (Bettencourt, 2004; Carter *et al.,* 2014). The current study addresses this gap.

Conservation of resources theory

To ground our conceptual arguments about how and when perceived pandemic threats may lead to diminished change-oriented voluntarism, we turn to conservation of resources (COR) theory. According to this theory, employees' work-related behaviors are critically

informed by the extent to which they are exposed to resource-draining experiences, whether the drainage results from work or non-work factors (Hobfoll, 1989; Hobfoll *et al.,* 2018). The theory conceptualizes the notion of resources relatively broadly, citing any "objects, personal characteristics, conditions, or energies that are valued in their own right, or that are valued because they act as conduits to the achievement or protection of valued resources" (Hobfoll, 2001, p. 339). Yet an important resource, to which employees assign great value, is emotional well-being, or the extent to which their emotional needs are met (Cassar and Buttigieg, 2015; Hobfoll & Shirom, 2000; Mishra and Bhatnagar, 2010). Persistent ruminations about a pandemic crisis, such as COVID-19, may cause significant emotional hardships for employees, because it poses imminent threats to their lives or loved ones (De Clercq and Pereira, 2021; Trougakos *et al.,* 2020).

Two key premises of COR theory guide our arguments about the connection between employees' perceived pandemic threats and change-oriented voluntarism. The first is that when employees' resource reservoirs are drained by adverse situations, they seek to avoid additional resources losses. One way to do so is to refuse to undertake discretionary work activities that usurp significant energy and could be perceived as intrusive by others (Hobfoll and Shirom, 2000). As applied to the context of this study, employees who feel emotionally upset by a pandemic might not possess the energy needed to address skepticism surrounding their disruptive ideas, particularly if introducing novel ideas is not required by their job descriptions (Liu *et al.,* 2021; Quinn *et al.,* 2012). The second premise is that employees' behavioral responses to emotionally upsetting challenges depend on their access to other resources, which determine the *forcefulness* with which they suffer from these challenges (Hobfoll and Shirom, 2000). Specifically, if employees can rely on valuable resources that help them deal with the emotional

hardships, their negative or complacent responses should be mitigated (Treuren and Fein, 2021). For example, extant research shows how employees' political skill makes it less likely that they stay away from helping behaviors in the presence of workplace incivility (De Clercq *et al.,* 2019), and high-quality relationships with leaders serve as buffers against the likelihood that exposure to dysfunctional political decision-making escalates into procrastination behavior (De Clercq *et al.,* 2021a).

In this study, we investigate four resources that might perform similar buffering functions in the presence of an emotionally upsetting pandemic crisis, across two categories: work-related self-efficacy and organization-based self-esteem as *personal* resources, and goal congruence and interpersonal harmony as *relational* resources. Each resource may function as a shield against the translation of perceived pandemic threats into diminished change-oriented voluntarism. In particular, we propose that this translation is less prominent to the extent that employees (1) are confident about their work-related abilities (Lin and Liu, 2017), (2) see themselves as valuable members of their organization (Chun and Lee, 2000), (3) have a common mindset with coworkers in terms of their organization's future and goals (Santos et al., 2012), and (4) maintain harmonious relationships with coworkers (De Clercq *et al.,* 2016).

In addition to their unique capacities to protect employees against the emotional hardships that come with persistent worries about a pandemic crisis, these resources might have complementary functions. First, employees' work-related self-efficacy and organization-based self-esteem reflect their individual competencies and beliefs (Bayraktar and Jiménez, 2020; Kim and Beehr, 2018), whereas their goal congruence and interpersonal harmony speak to the quality of their exchanges with organizational colleagues (Baeza and Wang, 2014; De Clercq *et al.,* 2013). Second, different mechanisms underpin their anticipated buffering roles. The

advantageous effects of work-related self-efficacy and goal congruence speak mostly to employees' enhanced *abilities* to leverage their energy to make voluntary suggestions about organizational changes in the presence of emotionally upsetting pandemic threats, and their organization-based self-esteem and interpersonal harmony primarily capture their *motivation* to do so (Hobfoll and Shirom, 2000; Quinn *et al.,* 2012). These four contingency factors thus provide a logical, encompassing view of how employees' reliance on complementary resources might decrease the extent to which their ruminations about a pandemic crisis escalate into tarnished efforts to alter and improve the ways that their organization operates.

Contributions

To contribute to HR management research on the work-related outcomes of external crisis situations, we examine a hitherto overlooked behavior that employees might adopt in response to their resource-depleting perceptions of pandemic threats, namely, a diminished propensity to attempt voluntarily to change the organizational status quo (Bergeron, 2007). By investigating this negative relationship, we extend previous research on the determinants of change-oriented voluntarism that tends to focus on work-related enablers, such as empowering leadership (Li *et al.,* 2016) or innovative climates (Choi, 2007), and work-related inhibitors, such as an organizational climate that discourages citizenship (Haq et al., 2020) or family-to-work conflict (De Clercq, 2020). Our central focus is on the hardships that employees experience due to emotionally challenging situations over which their organization and they themselves have limited control, in the form of a life-threatening, global virus (Caligiuri *et al.,* 2020). We argue that this terrible source of resource depletion likely undermines discretionary work behaviors that are already demanding, due to the disruptions they tend to invoke (Haq *et al.,* 2020; Hon *et al.,* 2014). This argument is interesting from a theoretical angle, in that it reveals how employees

may shoot themselves in the proverbial foot in the midst of an external crisis. In particular, we anticipate that employees who suffer emotionally from a health-related crisis might end up experiencing dual harms: They feel upset by their constant, negative thoughts about the crisis, so they respond with complacent behaviors, in the form of diminished change-oriented voluntarism, and thus *inadvertently* compromise their ability to find adequate solutions to the situation.

In addition, we dedicate specific attention to the conditions in which employees' perceptions of pandemic threats might be less likely to generate work-related complacency. Prior studies on the contingent nature of the detrimental effects of life-threatening terrorism events identify mitigating roles of employees' psychological capital (Raja et al., 2020) or religiousness (De Clercq *et al.,* 2017), and parallel research on employees' reactions to pandemic threats finds evidence of the beneficial roles of telework task support (Chong *et al.,* 2020) or organizational adaptive practice (Lin *et al.*, 2021). We pinpoint similar, functional roles of four other resources: work-related self-efficacy, organization-based self-esteem, goal congruence, and interpersonal harmony. Each of them offers a distinct option that organizations might pursue to diminish the danger that employees, upset by a global crisis, grow complacent and reject discretionary work activities (Chong *et al.,* 2020; Liu *et al.,* 2021). By developing and nurturing these resources, HR managers can avoid a situation in which one kind of problem (i.e., workers ruminate extensively on a health crisis) sows the seeds for another problem (i.e., they become almost paralyzed and unwilling to take on challenges in the organization) (Bergeron, 2007; Carter *et al.,* 2014).

Relevance of the pandemic context

Notably, the scope of these contributions is not limited to employees' responses to any specific pandemic or health crisis. The COVID-19 pandemic represents an excruciating situation that confronts many organizations today, and likely into the future, and global viruses seem

7

likely to persist, in whatever form they take (Debata *et al.,* 2020; Hite and McDonald, 2020). But the theoretical arguments we advance are not restricted to the COVID-19 crisis. The nature of the proposed relationships accordingly should not vary across different crises—even if their *strength* might. For example, whether crisis situations have imminent impacts on people's personal health or safety (e.g., pandemic, terrorism), or else pose a threat in the longer term (e.g., climate change), may influence the *extent* to which employees decide to halt their discretionary, energy-consuming behaviors at a given point in time (Quinn *et al.,* 2012). From this perspective, an intrusive catastrophe, such as COVID-19, represents a highly relevant context to address questions of how and when employees' exposure to an external crisis may inform their day-to-day allocation of personal energy to specific work behaviors (Chong *et al.,* 2020). Yet the pandemic context also offers parallel value in terms of understanding how employees' long-term work plans and objectives might be shaped by crises (Klenert *et al.,* 2020; Narayanan *et al.,* 2021).

Proposed theoretical framework

Figure 1 depicts the theoretical framework and its underlying hypotheses. The baseline relationship captures the negative link between perceived pandemic threats and change-oriented voluntarism. We propose that this link is influenced by four resources that represent two distinct categories: personal (work-related self-efficacy and organization-based self-esteem) and relational (goal congruence and interpersonal harmony). Each resource likely protects employees against the emotional difficulties that they experience in the presence of a pandemic crisis. As mentioned, with its conceptual anchoring in robust COR theory, we expect that the signs of the framework's underlying hypotheses apply to a broad set of external crisis situations, even if their

8

strength may be affected by crisis type. To make our arguments specific and relevant, we use employees' negative thoughts about the current pandemic crisis as a pertinent context.

[Insert Figure 1 about here]

Hypotheses

Perceived pandemic threats and change-oriented voluntarism

The central hypothesis of this study predicts a negative connection between employees' perceptions of pandemic threats and change-oriented voluntarism. The underlying arguments pertain to both ability and motivation elements. When employees cannot banish negative thoughts about a pandemic crisis from their minds, their emotional well-being may be compromised to such an extent that it lowers their ability to add to their organization's well-being with extraordinary efforts, such as change-oriented citizenship behaviors (Choi, 2007). Novel ideas, offered unprompted, that seek to alter the status quo likely are perceived as intrusive by other members of the organization, especially if those ideas might undermine their personal turf or imply personal attacks (Barry and Wilkinson, 2016; Yuan and Woodman, 2010). Consistent with COR theory, the draining effect of perceived pandemic threats on employees' emotional well-being may compromise voluntary change-oriented work efforts, even if these activities could benefit the organization, because employees lack the endurance and ability to defend their disruptive ideas (Chong *et al.,* 2020; Hobfoll *et al.,* 2018). Furthermore, the emotional hardships that come with persistent ruminations about a pandemic crisis may undermine employees' motivation to engage in change-oriented voluntarism, because they feel pessimistic about the future and doubt whether their diligent work efforts are worthwhile (Caligiuri *et al.,* 2020; Lin *et al.,* 2021). If they are emotionally upset by the hardships caused by the pandemic, they likely *conserve* their remaining personal energy to ensure they can complete

their required job duties, rather than "wasting" it on non-mandated activities that ultimately might be rejected anyway (Hobfoll and Shirom, 2000; Liu *et al.,* 2021). These arguments inform our baseline hypothesis:

> **Hypothesis 1:** There is a negative relationship between employees' perceived pandemic threats and their change-oriented voluntarism.

Moderating role of work-related self-efficacy

According to COR theory, the resource-draining effect of adverse life situations is mitigated when employees can make up for those resource losses with valuable personal resources (Hobfoll, 2001). We suggest that work-related self-efficacy represents such a valuable resource; it speaks to employees' enhanced *ability* to cope with their pandemic-related ruminations, such that they can still allocate some energy to voluntary, change-oriented work efforts. Efficacious employees have greater confidence in their work-related competencies, which increases the likelihood that they know how to deal with work challenges that invariably arise with life's hardships (Heuven et al., 2006; Lin and Liu, 2017). For example, they likely have greater abilities to divide their time appropriately across in-role and extra-role work activities, even in emotionally upsetting situations like a global health crisis (Karatepe *et al.,* 2019). Efficacious employees who ruminate on the pandemic also may be better placed to make change-related suggestions to *alleviate* the emotion-related challenges it creates (Dedahanov *et al.,* 2019). That is, self-efficacy may enable employees to find adequate solutions for their pandemic-related suffering (Bandura, 1997; Joie-La Marle *et al.,* 2021), so the extent to which they limit their change-oriented voluntarism in response to perceived pandemic threats is lower.

> **Hypothesis 2:** The negative relationship between employees' perceived pandemic threats and their change-oriented voluntarism is moderated by their work-related self-efficacy, such that the relationship is weaker at higher levels of work-related self-efficacy.

Moderating role of organization-based self-esteem

Employees' organization-based self-esteem also may decrease the risk that their perceptions of pandemic threats halt their voluntary, change-oriented activities. The buffering effect of this personal resource reflects their *motivation* to direct personal energy to change-oriented voluntarism, even if their emotional well-being is compromised due to pandemic-related threats. Employees who feel appreciated by their employer likely put less weight on the emotion-related challenges that they may experience due to negative thoughts about a health crisis (Bowling *et al.,* 2010; Chun and Lee, 2000), so they remain motivated to allocate some energy to productive work activities, such as engaging in change-oriented voluntarism (Haq *et al.,* 2020). They consider themselves valuable organizational members and have a strong interest in changing and improving the organizational status quo on a voluntary basis, despite their emotion-related suffering due to the pandemic (Ghosh *et al.,* 2012; Kim and Beehr, 2018). Their organization-based self-esteem thus directs employees' attention away from the emotional hardships that come with a life-threatening crisis and toward their duty to contribute to organizational effectiveness with discretionary change-related activities (Chan *et al.,* 2013; Toth *et al.,* 2020). Furthermore, employees marked by high levels of organization-based self-esteem may obtain resource gains, due to their sense of personal fulfillment when they are able to add to the well-being of their organization, especially in the presence of an emotionally upsetting external crisis (Ryan and Deci, 2000; Wang *et al.,* 2020). A belief that they can make meaningful contributions in this scenario thus may counter their propensity to conserve personal energy resources and halt their voluntary, change-oriented work efforts in response to pandemic-related ruminations (Hobfoll *et al.,* 2018; Liu *et al.,* 2021). We therefore predict:

> **Hypothesis 3:** The negative relationship between employees' perceived pandemic threats and change-oriented voluntarism is moderated by their organization-based self-esteem, such that the relationship is weaker at higher levels of organization-based self-esteem.

Moderating role of goal congruence

Employees' goal congruence also may decrease the likelihood that perceived pandemic threats translate into diminished change-oriented voluntarism, reflecting their enhanced *abilities* to channel their personal energy in this way. According to COR theory, the resource-depleting effect of difficult life situations is subdued to the extent that employees have access to valuable relational resources that counter their resource losses (Wu and Lee, 2016). If employees and their peers have similar work goals, they likely talk about the emotional hardships they face in their personal lives and the negative impacts on their work functioning, reflecting a general, shared desire to increase their organization's well-being (Chen *et al.,* 2005; De Clercq *et al.,* 2013). Such conversations accordingly may offer useful emotional support during crises and enable employees to learn from one another's experiences (Li *et al.,* 2021), including how they might reserve some of their time to devote to productive, change-oriented work activities (Yuan *et al.,* 2021). Moreover, common work-related goal sets might help employees realize they are not alone in their emotional suffering, and the associated sense of solidarity should keep them from responding to resource-depleting pandemic threats by choosing to halt their change-oriented voluntarism (Memon *et al.,* 2014; Santos *et al.,* 2012). That is, positive energy sparked by a feeling of "being in the same boat" likely increases their ability to go out of their way to undertake change-oriented activities, even in the presence of an emotionally challenging health crisis (Choi, 2007; Hobfoll *et al.,* 2018). We hypothesize:

> **Hypothesis 4:** The negative relationship between employees' perceived pandemic threats and change-oriented voluntarism is moderated by their goal congruence, such that the relationship is weaker at higher levels of goal congruence.

Moderating role of interpersonal harmony

Finally, employees' interpersonal harmony with coworkers may serve as a buffer against the escalation of perceived pandemic threats into thwarted change-oriented voluntarism. This contingent factor reflects the increased *desire* of employees to dedicate themselves to change-oriented work efforts, even when they suffer emotionally due to their ruminations about an excruciating external crisis. A notable aspect of harmonious relationships is that employees feel more at ease admitting concerns that they encounter in their lives, without fear of being ridiculed by others (De Clercq *et al.,* 2016; Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998). This confidence makes it more likely that they reach out to coworkers to ask for advice for how to cope with persistent negative thoughts about a life-threatening crisis (Liu *et al.,* 2021) and retain some energy for discretionary, change-related activities (Haq *et al.,* 2020). In addition, the beneficial role of interpersonal harmony might stem from the positive impressions that employees tend to develop about their employment situation in general, because their professional functioning is not compromised by interpersonal tensions or quarrels (Baeza and Wang, 2014). These positive impressions then may diminish employees' interest in reserving individual energy and staying away from change-oriented voluntarism, even when they suffer emotional hardships due to a pandemic crisis (Han and Altman, 2010; Swaminathan and Mishra, 2020). Due to their sense of interpersonal harmony, employees may go beyond taking their personal concerns into account when they decide how to allocate their time at work and consider how the organization can benefit from voluntary, change-related activities. These arguments lead to the following hypothesis:

> **Hypothesis 5:** The negative relationship between employees' perceived pandemic threats and their change-oriented voluntarism is moderated by their interpersonal harmony, such that the relationship is weaker at higher levels of interpersonal harmony.

Method

Sample and data collection

A questionnaire was distributed in April 2021 among the employees of a Portuguese company that competes in the banking sector. This company employs around 1,000 employees and offers various services, including retail banking to individuals and small businesses. Our focus on one specific organization has the advantage of diminishing the potential effect of unobserved organization- or industry-related differences that might inform employees' propensities to engage in voluntary, change-oriented citizenship behaviors, such as the organization's internal culture or the extent of external market rivalry (Chiaburu *et al.,* 2013; Morrison and Phelps, 1999). Moreover, in April 2021, Portugal was in the midst of the intense, severe third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, when confirmed new cases jumped by 87% and deaths rose by 121% compared with 45 days prior (Direção-Geral da Saúde, 2021). Previously, in January, Portugal had instituted strict lockdown and remote work mandates, but in mid-March, it began to lift some of the restrictions. Employees, faced with the prospect of returning to the office, likely were experiencing acute concerns about the risk of COVID-19. We predict that at this point of the health crisis, those concerns would have been very salient in terms of their potential influence on employees' willingness to undertake discretionary, change-related efforts.

To develop the survey, we relied on well-established translation–back-translation methods (van Dick *et al.*, 2018), such that a bilingual translator converted the English-language items into Portuguese, and then another bilingual translator back-translated that version into English. They produced only minor differences. The survey, administered in Portuguese, offered several reassurances of participants' rights and protections. The opening statement clearly stated that respondents could assume the full confidentiality of their responses, noting that the only interest the research team had was to identify general data patterns, not consider any individual

cases. We also promised participants that they could withdraw at any time and that none of their answers were "good or bad." Finally, the introduction to the survey explained that the researchers expected participants to give varying responses but relied strongly on receiving their truthful opinions. Such clarifications help diminish the probability of social desirability and acquiescence biases (Jordan and Troth, 2020). From the employee list received from the firm's top management, we randomly selected 300 persons with a random digit generator. We received 192 completed surveys, a response rate of 64%, among whom 45% of the respondents were women, and 51% had worked in their current jobs for more than five years.

Measures

The focal constructs were measured with previously validated scales, based on prior research, using Likert anchors with seven points (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree).

Change-oriented voluntarism. We assessed the extent to which employees undertake discretionary activities aimed at altering and enhancing the organizational status quo with a nine-item scale of change-oriented citizenship behavior (Bettencourt, 2004; Morrison and Phelps, 1999). Similar to how Morrison and Phelps (1999) designed their survey, an opening sentence asked respondents to indicate the extent to which they perform various work behaviors that extend their formal job duties. They rated, for example, whether "I try to bring about improved procedures for the organization," "I try to institute new work methods that are more effective for the organization," and "I try to introduce new work approaches to improve efficiency" (Cronbach's alpha = .95). The use of self-assessments to measure change-oriented voluntarism is consistent with prior research (e.g., Kao, 2017; López-Domínguez *et al.,* 2013; Simo *et al.,* 2016) and follows the logic that other assessors (e.g., supervisors, peers) tend to have only a partial view of the entire set of change-oriented activities that employees undertake, because employees

15

likely are selective in terms of whom they target with potentially disruptive ideas (Elsbach and Kramer, 2003; Perry-Smith and Mannucci, 2017).

Perceived pandemic threats. To measure employees' ruminations about the pandemic crisis, we relied on a 13-item scale of perceived pandemic threats, an adapted version of a well-established scale of perceived terrorism threats (Raja *et al.,* 2020; Sinclair and LoCicero, 2006) that has been applied to COVID-19 settings (De Clercq *et al.,* 2021b). Three example items were: "I have difficulty keeping the threat of COVID-19 out of my mind," "I often dwell on the threat of COVID-19," and "I think that I am completely helpless in protecting myself from COVID-19 in the future." (Cronbach's alpha = .92).

Work-related self-efficacy. We measured employees' confidence in their work-related competencies with a six-item scale of self-efficacy (Luthans *et al.*, 2007). The participants rated, for instance, whether "I feel confident contributing to discussions about the organization's strategy," "I feel confident analyzing a long-term work problem to find a solution," and "I feel confident in representing my work area in meetings with management" (Cronbach's alpha = .91).

Organization-based self-esteem. To assess whether employees see themselves as worthy and appreciated organizational members, we applied a five-item scale of organization-based self-esteem (Milliman *et al.,* 2003). For example, they cited their agreement with statements such as "I count around here," "I am an important part of this place," and "There is faith in me around here" (Cronbach's alpha = .93).

Goal congruence. We assessed the degree to which employees are on the same page as their coworkers, in terms of work goals, with a four-item scale of goal congruence (De Clercq *et al.,* 2013). Thus they expressed their agreement with whether "Most of my work objectives are

fully aligned with those of my colleagues" or "My colleagues and I share a similar vision

regarding the organization's future" for example (Cronbach's alpha = .81).

Interpersonal harmony. We measured the extent to which employees maintain

harmonious relationships with their coworkers with a reverse-coded four-item interpersonal

conflict scale (Pooja *et al.,* 2016), similar to prior research on harmonious, intra-organizational

relationships (De Clercq *et al.,* 2016). They rated, for example, whether "My colleagues and I do

not get along well with each another" and "There often are tensions in the relationship between

my colleagues and myself" (Cronbach's alpha = .81).

Control variables. We accounted for two control variables in the statistical models:

employees' gender (dummy variable: 0 = male, 1 = female) and job tenure (1 = less than 6 years,

2 = 6–10 years, 3 = 11–15 years, 4 = 16 –20 years, 5 = more than 20 years). Female employees

tend to be more reluctant to create potential disruptions to the status quo (Huang *et al.,* 2020),

and employees who have been doing their jobs for a longer time may feel more capable and

confident that their voluntary, change-related efforts will succeed (Seppälä *et al.,* 2012).

Construct validity. We performed a confirmatory factor analysis of a six-factor model to

evaluate the validity of the study's six central constructs. This model achieved adequate fit:

$\chi^2(744) = 1,348.25$, confirmatory fit index = .91, incremental fit index = .91, Tucker-Lewis index

= .90, and root mean squared error of approximation = .07. As confirmation of the presence of

convergent validity, each measurement item loaded very strongly on its corresponding construct

($p < .001$), and the average value extracted (AVE) values were greater than .50 for each of the

constructs—except for perceived pandemic threats, for which the AVE equaled .40, which is

acceptable for a construct that includes multiple measurement items (Lattin *et al.,* 2003).

Moreover, each AVE value exceeded the squared correlations of corresponding constructs; for

the 15 possible pairs of constructs, the constrained models (correlation between two constructs forced to equal 1) had a fit that was significantly worse than the fit of the equivalent unconstrained models (correlations could vary freely). These conditions affirm the presence of discriminant validity (Hair *et al.,* 2010).

Common method bias. Each of the study's central constructs was assessed in the same survey, which may raise concerns about common method bias. We accordingly performed two statistical tests to check for its presence. First, we relied on Harman's one-factor test (Huang *et al.,* 2020; Podsakoff and Organ, 1986), through an exploratory factor analysis, to check whether a single factor captured the majority of the total variance in the data. The first extracted factor captured only 27% of such variance, which diminished concerns about common method bias. Second, we undertook a comparative fit analysis between the six-factor measurement model and a single-factor model in which each of the measurement items loaded on the same factor. The fit of the former model was significantly better than that of the latter ($\chi^2(15) = 2{,}213.76$, $p < .001$), which further diminished the probability of common method bias (Hair *et al.,* 2010). From a conceptual perspective too, the chances of such bias are substantially subdued in theoretical frameworks that entail a multitude of moderating variables, because it is unlikely for research participants to be able to predict the hypotheses and hence adapt their response to reflect their beliefs about what represent the "right" answers (Brockner *et al.,* 1997; Hair *et al.,* 2010).

Results

Table 1 lists the bivariate correlations and descriptive statistics of the study variables; Table 2 presents the results of the hierarchical moderated regression. Model 1 included the control variables; Model 2 added perceived pandemic threats; Model 3 added the direct effects of the four resources; and Models 4–7 added the perceived pandemic threats × work-related self-

efficacy, perceived pandemic threats × organization-based self-esteem, perceived pandemic threats × goal congruence, and perceived pandemic threats × interpersonal harmony interaction terms, respectively. In line with well-established recommendations, the individual product terms were included in separate equations, because their concurrent estimation tends to mask true moderating effects (Warner, 2013). A mean-centering procedure, applied to the constitutive components of the interaction terms, helps avoid multicollinearity (Aiken and West, 1991).

[Insert Tables 1 and 2 about here]

Consistent with the baseline premise that the drainage of discretionary energy that arises with employees' ruminations about a pandemic crisis steers them away from voluntary change-related work efforts, Model 2 indicated a negative relationship between perceived pandemic threats and change-oriented voluntarism (β = -.145, p < .001), in support of Hypothesis 1. In additional findings, beyond the formal hypotheses, the results in Model 2 also revealed direct, positive relationships of work-related self-efficacy (β = .222, p < .001), organization-based self-esteem (β = .135, p < .01), and goal congruence (β = .132, p < .05) with change-oriented voluntarism, but no such significant link for interpersonal harmony (β = .040, ns).

Models 4–5 generated support for the hypothesized buffering effects of the two personal resources: Work-related self-efficacy (β = .084, p < .05) and organization-based self-esteem (β = .115, p < .001) mitigated the negative relationship between perceived pandemic threats and change-oriented voluntarism. The extent to which employees' negative pandemic-related thoughts translated into diminished energy being allocated to change-oriented voluntarism was lower among employees who were confident about their work-related skills (Hypothesis 2; see Figure 2) and who considered themselves valuable organizational members (Hypothesis 3; see Figure 3). The corresponding simple slope analysis results (Aiken and West, 1991) revealed that

19

the negative connection between perceived pandemic threats and change-oriented voluntarism was negative and significant at low levels of work-related self-efficacy ($\beta = -.200$, $p < .001$) and organization-based self-esteem ($\beta = -.220$, $p < .001$), but it was not significant at elevated levels of these two personal resources ($\beta = -.032$; $\beta = .010$, respectively, both *ns*).

[Insert Figures 2–3 about here]

In a similar fashion, Models 6–7 offered support for the buffering roles of the two relational resources. The negative link between perceived pandemic threats and change-oriented voluntarism was subdued at higher levels of goal congruence ($\beta = .082$, $p < .05$) and interpersonal harmony ($\beta = .136$, $p < .01$). The danger that enhanced concerns about a pandemic crisis would escalate into a refusal to undertake extra-role, change-oriented work efforts was mitigated when employees held congruent work goals with their colleagues (Hypothesis 4; see Figure 4) and when they enjoyed harmonious interpersonal relationships (Hypothesis 5; see Figure 5). As in the analyses of personal resources, the simple slope analysis indicated that the connection between perceived pandemic threats and change-oriented voluntarism was negative and significant at low levels of goal congruence ($\beta = -.208$, $p < .001$) and interpersonal harmony ($\beta = -.252$, $p < .001$) but became non-significant at elevated levels ($\beta = -.044$, $\beta = .020$, both *ns*).

[Insert Figures 4–5 about here]

Discussion

This research adds to prior studies by explicating how employees' perceptions of pandemic threats diminish their propensity to engage in voluntary change efforts *and* how this process can be subdued by relevant personal and relational resources. The emotional hardships that come with a life-threatening global virus cannot be underestimated, and recent studies underscore their negative consequences for the quality of employees' work functioning (Chong

et al., 2020; Debata *et al.,* 2020; Vaziri et al., 2020). With a theoretical grounding in COR theory (Hobfoll, 2001), we add to this burgeoning stream of research by predicting that the escalation of pandemic-related ruminations into a reluctance to engage in change-oriented voluntarism is less likely when employees can draw on valuable resources, whether personally held or embedded in peer relationships, that help them cope with their negative thoughts.

Discretionary behaviors to invoke change can contribute to organizational effectiveness and lead to benefits for the champions, but these change-makers also tend to face significant challenges and resistance (Hon *et al.,* 2014). Therefore, adverse, emotionally upsetting situations that make the challenges seem even harder to overcome could prompt employees simply to avoid effortful change-related activities that are not part of their formal job descriptions (Haq *et al.,* 2020). As a first important theoretical implication for HR management research, we identify a critical, unexplored inhibitor of those behaviors, with significant relevance in the current day and age, that is, pessimistic thoughts about a life-threatening global crisis (Liu *et al.,* 2021). As we argue, both ability and motivation mechanisms may explain this translation. That is, the diminished stamina that arises with persistent worries about a pandemic crisis (Chong *et al.,* 2020), combined with a sense that disruptive and potentially controversial work efforts are meaningless (Lin *et al.,* 2021), may steer employees away from voluntary change-related efforts that already are challenging. Rather than formally measuring ability and motivation explanations, we have integrated them to guide our logic for predicting how employees' access to distinct resources might mitigate the negative link between their perceived pandemic threats and change-oriented citizenship behaviors.

In particular, and as a second key theoretical contribution, this study showcases how employees' pandemic-related ruminations thwart their discretionary behaviors to a *lesser* extent

21

when their reliance on pertinent resources diminishes the perceived need to react in complacent ways (Hobfoll and Shirom, 2000). As articulated in the Introduction, the four focal resources we examine are diverse and complement one another along two dimensions. First, they are individually held (work-related self-efficacy and organization-based self-esteem) or embedded in coworker relationships (goal congruence and interpersonal harmony). Second, they capture employees' ability (work-related self-efficacy and goal congruence) or motivation (organization-based self-esteem and interpersonal harmony) to prevent negative thoughts about a pandemic crisis from escalating into diminished voluntary change-related efforts. The empirical results offer the relevant insights that this escalation is less probable when employees (1) have faith in their own capabilities at work, (2) see themselves as valuable organizational members, (3) are on the same page as coworkers in terms of the organization's goals and future, and (4) enjoy high-quality coworker relationships marked by harmony.

Notably, our focus is on the buffering effects of these four resources in the *incremental* contribution of perceived pandemic threats to dissuading employees from engaging in change-oriented voluntarism. Employees' ruminations about a health crisis might drive them away from voluntarism, but the *degree* to which this scenario arises is contingent on their access to various resources (Hobfoll, 2001). This incremental effect comes to the fore in the interaction graphs in Figures 2–5. Increasing perceptions of pandemic threats compromise change-oriented voluntarism when employees (1) lack confidence about their work-related capabilities, (2) perceive themselves as unimportant constituents of their employing organization, (3) hold work-related goals dissimilar from other members', and (4) experience little harmony in their peer exchanges. However, the extent to which they halt their discretionary change-related efforts, due

22

to the pandemic, decreases when they can draw from valuable resources that alleviate the associated difficulties (Liu *et al.,* 2021).

Overall, this research provides HR management scholars with expanded insights into pertinent individual- and relationship-based boundary conditions that HR managers can leverage to avoid a counterproductive *spiral* among their employees, who might feel emotionally upset by a health crisis and thus react in ways that unintentionally hinder their ability to undo the sources of the emotional hardships by undertaking extra-role activities that otherwise could produce valuable solutions (Carter *et al.,* 2014). By examining the *indirect* roles of the four specific resources, personal and relational, in attenuating the danger that perceived pandemic threats translate in thwarted change-related voluntarism, we go beyond prior studies that consider their direct roles—that is, research that shows how discretionary work behaviors are more likely among employees who feel confident in their personal skills (Kao, 2017), have a positive self-image with respect to their organizational membership (Kim and Beehr, 2018), share goals with other organizational members (Bouckenooghe and Menguç, 2018), or enjoy peaceful peer relationships (Han and Altman, 2010). As this study points out, these resources also serve as buffers that protect employees against work-related complacency in the presence of pandemic-related threats.

Limitations and future research

This study has some shortcomings, which set the stage for further investigations. First, the possibility of reverse causality cannot be entirely excluded, even if the conceptual arguments are firmly grounded in COR theory—according to which resource-draining ruminations about a pandemic crisis should direct employees' attention away from discretionary, disruptive work activities (Chong *et al.,* 2020). Such reverse causality would imply, for example, that the *extent*

to which employees are successful in their change-related efforts may fuel them with positive energy, which they can leverage to immunize themselves against the hardships that come with a pandemic.[1] Longitudinal studies that measure the independent and dependent variables at various points in time could better estimate cross-lagged effects and explicitly test for causality. A related empirical limitation is that the data were collected from one source (employees), which raises the possibility of common method bias. Even if the results obtained from exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses, as reported in the Measures section, indicate that such bias is not a direct concern in this study, it would be useful if continued research were to combine self-rated assessments of change-oriented voluntarism with the opinions of supervisors or peers.

Second, we pointed to the emotional hardships that employees may experience in the presence of perceived pandemic threats, as informed by the adverse effect that such threats tend to have on their psychological well-being and quality of life (De Clercq *et al.,* 2021b; Lin *et al.,* 2021). But we did not measure the nature of such emotional suffering. We similarly offered ability and motivation arguments for why perceived pandemic threats might compromise change-oriented voluntarism and how four contingency resources (personal and relational) likely influence employees' ability or motivation to prevent this detrimental process. Specifically, we posited that work-related self-efficacy and goal congruence enhance employees' ability to remain diligent in their change efforts, regardless of the pandemic-related hardships, and their organization-based self-esteem and interpersonal harmony fuel their desire to do so. Continued examinations could formally assess these mechanisms to identify which one is most prominent. Furthermore, the four contingency resources span pertinent personal and relational resources that avert the risk that perceived pandemic threats escalate into diminished change-oriented

---

[1] This reverse causal argument does not imply, however, that the absence of change-oriented voluntarism would trigger perceived pandemic threats. We thank one of the reviewers for this useful insight.

voluntarism, but additional studies could consider the buffering roles of other factors too, at both individual (e.g., resilience; Teng-Calleja *et al.,* 2020) and interpersonal (e.g., coworker trust; Simha *et al.,* 2014) levels.

Third, the arguments advanced in this study are industry-neutral, so the signs of the hypothesized relationships should not vary across industries. Yet the banking industry sector in which we conducted this study features some characteristics that make it uniquely relevant for testing the theoretical framework. For example, change-oriented work behaviors may be instrumental in most industries, but their *incremental* value likely is even greater in sectors that embrace rigid organizational structures, such that change-oriented behaviors appear somewhat controversial (Hirst *et al.,* 2011; Li *et al.,* 2019). Furthermore, there might be strongly conflicting opinions among different types of banking employees (e.g., administrative and commercial staff) in terms of what constitutes acceptable risk, so certain employees may fear that their unsolicited, disruptive activities will evoke significant criticism or rejection (De Clercq and Pereira, 2020). From this perspective, the additional challenge of an external crisis situation (e.g., pandemic) may represent another type of discouragement against allocating personal energy to change-oriented voluntarism—and access to valuable personal or relational resources may have especially important roles in disrupting this negative process.

Practical implications

We assert that HR managers should realize that if their organization's employee bases suffer significantly from external crises, it may generate personal problems that escalate into a refusal to undertake change-related efforts. Employees upset by the negative impact of a global health crisis on their personal well-being may lack the drive or desire to spend their precious time on disruptive work activities for which they are not formally rewarded (Chong *et al.,* 2020).

An additional challenge herein is that some employees may be reluctant to admit their personal hardships, for fear of appearing vulnerable or whiny (Maity *et al.,* 2020). Therefore, HR managers should go out of their way to identify employees who are struggling with the external crisis and may be engaging in self-depreciating ruminations. Establishing different communication channels to help employees vent their fears would be highly valuable in this regard, such as face-to-face conversations with an immediate supervisor, group meetings with HR representatives, or virtual visits with trained mental health professionals (Li *et al.,* 2021).

Yet it is probably impossible for HR managers to protect their employees from experiencing tough personal times during severe, life-threatening crises. Our findings in terms of the mitigating roles of the four focal resources suggest relevant solutions to this largely unavoidable issue. In particular, if HR managers hope to maintain a certain level of change-related voluntarism, despite the global threats that their employee bases are experiencing, they should work to (1) make employees feel more confident about their capabilities to take on work challenges, (2) recognize employees for their valuable work contributions, (3) rally employees around a common goal set with respect to the organization's future, and (4) embrace collegial relationships that spur harmony. By nurturing and exploiting these personal and relational resources, HR practitioners can avoid a detrimental spiral in which employees, distressed by a global health crisis, limit their voluntary work contributions and fail to raise potentially pertinent solutions to the crisis (Chiaburu *et al.,* 2013). For example, HR managers might develop a vignette tool, with specific action points, that they can apply to identify the best ways to help each employee cope with the emotional hardships resulting from perceived pandemic threats. We offer an example in the Appendix.

Conclusion

26

This study offers a formal investigation of how HR managers might prevent persistent crisis-related concerns among employees from escalating into work-related complacency, in the form of reduced change-related voluntarism. This translation can be avoided to the extent that employees have access to valuable, complementary resources, whether gathered from their personal characteristics or their coworker relationships. By detailing these buffering effects, we move beyond the direct advantages of these resources. Furthermore, this research offers organizational scholars and practitioners novel, general insights into the conditions in which a devastating health crisis is less likely to translate into tarnished voluntary efforts to induce change and improve the organization. We hope these insights can function as useful platforms for further investigations of how HR managers can weather the challenges that come with external crises.

References

Aiken, L.S., and S.G. West (1991). *Multiple regression: Testing and interpreting interactions.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Baeza, M.A., Wang, Y.J. (2014). A study of gender, culture, and job satisfaction in Mexico: Implications for organizations in emerging economies. *Journal of Organizational Psychology, 14,* 37–51.

Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-Efficacy: The Exercise of Control,* Freeman, New York, NY.

Barry, M., and Wilkinson, A. (2016). Pro-social or pro-management? A critique of the conception of employee voice as a pro-social behaviour within organizational behaviour. *British Journal of Industrial Relations, 54,* 261–284.

Bayraktar, S., and Jiménez, A. (2020). Self-efficacy as a resource: a moderated mediation model of transformational leadership, extent of change and reactions to change. *Journal of Organizational Change Management, 33*, 301-317.

Bergeron, D.M. (2007). The potential paradox of organizational citizenship behavior: Good citizens at what cost? *Academy of Management Review, 32,* 1078–1095.

Bettencourt, L.A. (2004). Change-oriented organizational citizenship behaviors: The direct and moderating influence of goal orientation. *Journal of Retailing, 80,* 165–180.

Bouckenooghe, D., and Menguç, B. (2018). Understanding the dynamics between supervisor-follower social capital, work engagement, and employees' creative work involvement. *Canadian Journal of Administrative Sciences, 35,* 238–251.

Bowling, N.A., Eschleman, K.J., Wang, Q., Kirkendall, C., and Alarcon, G. (2010). A meta-analysis of the predictors and consequences of organization-based self-esteem. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology, 83,* 601–626.

Brockner, J., Siegel, P.A., Daly, J.P., Tyler, T., & Martin, C. (1997). When trust matters: The moderating effect of outcome favorability. *Administration Science Quarterly, 42,* 558–583.

Caligiuri, P., De Cieri H., Minbaeva D., Verbeke, A., and Zimmermann A. (2020). International HRM insights for navigating the COVID-19 pandemic: Implications for future research and practice. *Journal of International Business Studies, 51,* 697–713.

Campbell, J.W., and Im, T. (2016). PSM and turnover intention in public organizations: Does change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior play a role? *Review of Public Personnel Administration, 36,* 323–346.

Carter, M.Z., Self, D.R., Bandow, D.F., Wheatley, R.L., Thompson, W.F., et al., (2014). Unit-focused and individual-focused transformational leadership: The role of middle leaders in the midst of incremental organizational change. *Journal of Management Policy and Practice, 15,* 44–53.

Cassar, V., & Buttigieg, S.C. (2015). Psychological contract breach, organizational justice and emotional well-being. *Personnel Review, 44,* 217–235.

Chan, S.C.H., Huang, X., Snape, E., and Lam, C.K. (2013). The Janus face of paternalistic leaders: Authoritarianism, benevolence, subordinates' organization-based self-esteem, and performance. *Journal of Organizational Behavior; 34,* 108– 128.

Chen, X.-P., Lam, S.S.K., Naumann, S.E., and Schaubroeck, J. (2005). Group citizenship behaviour: Conceptualization and preliminary tests of its antecedents and consequences. *Management and Organization Review, 1,* 273–300.

Chiaburu, D.S., Lorinkova, N.M., and Van Dyne, L. (2013). Employees' social context and change-oriented citizenship a meta-analysis of leader, coworker, and organizational influences. *Group & Organization Management, 38,* 291–333.

Choi, J.N. (2007). Change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior: Effects of work environment characteristics and intervening psychological processes. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 28,* 467–484.

Chong, S.H., Huang, Y., & Chang, C.-H. (2020). Supporting interdependent telework employees: A moderated-mediation model linking daily COVID-19 task setbacks to next-day work withdrawal. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 105,* 1408–1422.

Chun, H., and Lee, C. (2000). Moderating effects of organization-based self-esteem on organizational uncertainty: Employee response relationships. *Journal of Management, 26,* 215–232.

Debata, B., Patnaik, P., and Mishra, A. (2020). COVID-19 pandemic! Its impact on people, economy, and environment. *Journal of Public Affairs, 20,* doi:10.1002/pa.2372

De Clercq, D. (2020). "I can't help at work! My family is driving me crazy!" How family-to-work conflict diminishes change-oriented citizenship behaviors and how key resources disrupt this link. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science, 56,* 166–194.

De Clercq, D., Dimov, D., and Belausteguigoitia, I. (2016). Perceptions of adverse work conditions and innovative behavior: The buffering roles of relational resources. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice, 40,* 515–542.

De Clercq, D., Dimov, D., and Thongpapanl, N. (2013). Organizational social capital, formalization, and internal knowledge sharing in entrepreneurial orientation formation. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice, 37,* 505–537.

De Clercq, D., Fatima, T., and Jahanzeb, S. (2021a). Cronies, procrastinators, and leaders: A conservation of resources perspective on employees' responses to organizational cronyism. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology,* doi:10.1080/1359432X.2021.1928076

De Clercq, D., and Pereira, R. (2020). Knowledge-sharing efforts and employee creative behavior: The invigorating roles of passion for work, time sufficiency, and procedural justice. *Journal of Knowledge Management, 24,* 1131–1155.

De Clercq, D., and Pereira (2021). Let's work together, especially in the pandemic: Finding ways to encourage problem-focused voice behavior among passionate employees. *Journal of Organizational Effectiveness: People and Performance,* doi:10.1108/JOEPP-05-2021-0121

De Clercq, D., Haq, I.U., and Azeem, M.U. (2017). Perceived threats of terrorism and job performance: The roles of job-related anxiety and religiousness. *Journal of Business Research, 78,* 23–32.

De Clercq, D., Haq, I.U., Azeem, M.U., and Ahmad, A.N. (2019). The relationship between workplace incivility and helping behavior: Roles of job dissatisfaction and political skill. *The Journal of Psychology: Interdisciplinary and Applied, 153,* 507–527.

De Clercq, D., Haq, I.U., Azeem, M.U., and Khalid, S. (2021b). The link between fear about COVID-19 and insomnia: Mediated by economic concerns and psychological distress, moderated by mindfulness. *Journal of Management and Organization,* doi:10.1017/jmo.2021.3

Debata, B., Patnaik, P., and Mishra, A. (2020). COVID-19 pandemic! Its impact on people, economy, and environment. *Journal of Public Affairs, 20,* doi:10.1002/pa.2372

Dedahanov, A.T., Rhee, C., and Gapurjanova, N. (2019). Job autonomy and employee voice: Is work-related self-efficacy a missing link? *Management Decision, 57,* 2401–2413.

Direção-Geral da Saúde (2021). *Novo Coronavírus COVID-19 – Relatório de Situação, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350.* Ministério da Saúde de Portugal. https://covid19.min-saude.pt/relatorio-de-situacao/

Elsbach, K.D., and Kramer, R.M. (2003). Assessing creativity in Hollywood pitch meetings: Evidence for a dual-process model of creativity judgments. *Academy of Management Journal, 46,* 283–301.

Ghosh, R., Reio, T.G, Jr., Haynes, R.K. (2012). Mentoring and organizational citizenship behavior: Estimating the mediating effects of organization-based self-esteem and affective commitment. *Human Resource Development Quarterly, 23,* 41–63.

Hair, J.F., Black, W.C., Babin, B.J., and Anderson, R.E. (2010). *Multivariate data analysis (*7th ed.). Pearson Prentice Hall.

Han, Y., and Altman, Y. (2010). Confucian moral roots of citizenship behaviour in China. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Business Administration, 2,* 35–52.

Haq, I.U., De Clercq D., Azeem M.U., Suhail A. (2020). The interactive effect of religiosity and perceived organizational adversity on change-oriented citizenship behavior. *Journal of Business Ethics, 165,* 161–175.

Heuven, E., Bakker, A.B., Schaufeli, W. B., Huisman, N. (2006). The role of self-efficacy in performing emotion work. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 69,* 222–235.

Hirst, G., Van Knippenberg, D., Chen, C., & Sacramento, C. A. (2011). How does bureaucracy impact individual creativity? A cross-level investigation of team contextual influences on goal orientation-creativity relationships. *Academy of Management Journal, 54,* 624–641.

Hite, L.M., and McDonald, K.S. (2020). Careers after COVID-19: challenges and changes. *Human Resource Development International, 23,* 427–437.

Hobfoll, S.E. (1989). Conservation of resources. A new attempt at conceptualizing stress. *American Psychologist, 44,* 513–524.

Hobfoll, S.E. (2001). The influence of culture, community, and the nested-self in the stress process: Advancing conservation of resource theory. *Applied Psychology: An International Review, 50,* 337–369.

Hobfoll, S.E., Halbesleben, J., Neveu, J.-P., and Westman, M. (2018). Conservation of resources in the organizational context: The reality of resources and their consequences. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior, 5,* 103–128.

Hobfoll, S.E., and Shirom, A. (2000). Conservation of resources theory: Applications to stress and management in the workplace. In R.T. Golembiewski (Ed.), *Handbook of organization behavior* (2nd ed., pp. 57–81). New York: Dekker.

Hokyu, H., and Höllerer, M.A. (2020). The COVID-19 crisis and its consequences: Ruptures and transformations in the global institutional fabric. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science, 56,* 294–300.

Hon, A.H., Bloom, M., and Crant, J.M. (2014). Overcoming resistance to change and enhancing creative performance. *Journal of Management, 40,* 919–941.

Huang, L.-C., Lin, C.-C., & Lu, S.-C. (2020). The relationship between abusive supervision and employee's reaction: The job demands-resources model perspective. *Personnel Review, 49,* 2035–2054.

Huang, W., Shen, J., Yuan, C., and Li, M. (2020). Roles of gender and basic need satisfaction in decent work perception and voice behavior. *Employee Relations, 43,* 263–278.

Joie-La Marle, C., Parmentier, F., Vinchon, F., Storme, M., Borteyrou, X., and Lubart, T. (2021). Evolution and impact of self-efficacy during French COVID-19 confinement: A longitudinal study. *Journal of General Psychology, 148,* 360–381.

Jordan, P.J., and Troth, A.C. (2020) Common method bias in applied settings: The dilemma of researching in organizations. *Australian Journal of Management, 45,* 3–14.

Kao, R. (2017). The relationship between work characteristics and change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior: A multi-level study on transformational leadership and organizational climate in immigration workers. *Personnel Review, 46,* 1890–1914.

Karatepe, O.M., Ozturk, A., and Taegoo, T.K. (2019). The effects of nonwork and personal resources on frontline bank employees' work engagement and critical job outcomes. *International Journal of Bank Marketing, 38,* 858–879.

Kim, M., and Beehr T.A. (2018). Organization-based self-esteem and meaningful work mediate effects of empowering leadership on employee behaviors and well-being. *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies, 25,* 385–398.

Klenert, D., Franziska, F., Linus, M., and O'Callaghan Brian. (2020). Five lessons from COVID-19 for advancing climate change mitigation. *Environmental and Resource Economics, 76,* 751–778.

Lattin, J.M., Carroll, J.D., and Green, P.E. (2003). *Analyzing multivariate data.* Belmont, CA: Thomson Brooks/Cole.

Li, C.-R., Lin, C.-J., & Liu, J. (2019). The role of team regulatory focus and team learning in team radical and incremental creativity. *Group & Organization Management, 44,* 1036–1066.

Li, M., Liu, W., Han, Y., and Zhang, P. (2016). Linking empowering leadership and change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior. *Journal of Organizational Change Management, 29,* 732–750.

Li, J.-Y., Sun, R., Tao, W., and Lee, Y. (2021). Employee coping with organizational change in the face of a pandemic: The role of transparent internal communication. *Public Relations Review, 47,* doi:10.1016/j.pubrev.2020.101984

Lin, C.-P., and Liu, M.-L. (2017). Examining the effects of corporate social responsibility and ethical leadership on turnover intention. *Personnel Review, 46,* 526–550.

Lin, W., Shao, Y., Li, G., Guo, Y., and Zhan, X. (2021). The psychological implications of COVID-19 on employee job insecurity and its consequences: The mitigating role of organization adaptive practice. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 106,* 317–329.

Liu, D., Chen, Y., and Li, N. (2021). Tackling the negative impact of COVID-19 on work engagement and taking charge: A multi-study investigation of frontline health workers. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 106,* 185–198.

López-Domínguez, M., Enache, M., Sallan, J.M., and Simo, P. (2013). Transformational leadership as an antecedent of change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior. *Journal of Business Research, 66,* 2147–2152.

Luthans, F., Avolio, B.J., Avey, J.B., and Norman, S.M. (2007), Positive psychological capital: Measurement and relationship with performance and satisfaction. *Personnel Psychology,* Vol. 60, pp. 541–572.

Maity, S., Sen, N., and Sahu, T.N. (2020). COVID-19: Triggers fear psychosis among private sector employees. *Journal of Labor and Society, 23,* 503–513.

31

Maynes, T.D., and Podsakoff, P.M. (2014). Speaking more broadly: An examination of the nature, antecedents, and consequences of an expanded set of employee voice behaviors. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 99,* 87–112.

Memon, M., Salleh, R., Baharom, M.N.R., and Harun, H. (2014). Person-organization fit and turnover intention: The mediating role of employee engagement. *Global Business and Management Research, 6,* 205–209.

Milliman, J., Czaplewski, A.J., and Ferguson, J. (2003). Workplace spirituality and employee work attitudes: An exploratory empirical assessment. *Journal of Organizational Change Management,* 16 (4), 426–447.

Mishra, S.K., and Bhatnagar, D. (2010). Linking emotional dissonance and organizational identification to turnover intention and emotional well-being: A study of medical representatives in India. *Human Resource Management, 49*, 401–419.

Morrison, E.W., and Phelps, C.C. (1999). Taking charge at work: Extrarole efforts to initiate workplace change. *Academy of Management Journal, 42,* 403–419.

Nahapiet, J., and Ghoshal, S. (1998). Social capital, intellectual capital, and the organizational advantage. *Academy of Management Review, 23,* 242–268.

Narayanan, V., Wokutch, R.E., Ghobadian, A., and O'Regan, N. (2021). Toward a strategic approach to studying COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Strategy and Management, 14,* 285–299.

Perry-Smith, J.E., and Mannucci, P.V. (2017). From creativity to innovation: The social network drivers of the four phases of the idea journey. *Academy of Management Review, 42,* 53–79.

Podsakoff, N.P., Morrison, E.W., and Martinez, T.M. (2018). The role of a good soldier: A review of research on organizational citizenship behavior role perceptions and recommendations for the future research. In P.M. Podsakoff, S.B. Mackenzie, and N.P. Podsakoff, *Oxford Handbook of Organizational Citizenship Behavior,* Oxford Handbooks Online.

Podsakoff, P.M., and Organ, D.W. (1986). Self-reports in organization research: Problems and prospects. *Journal of Management, 12,* 532–544.

Pooja, A.A., De Clercq, D., and Belausteguigoitia, I. (2016). Job stressors and organizational citizenship behavior: The roles of organizational commitment and social interaction. *Human Resource Development Quarterly, 27,* 373–405.

Quinn, R.W., Spreitzer, G.M., and Lam, C.F. (2012). Building a sustainable model of human energy in organizations: Exploring the critical role of resources. *Academy of Management Annals, 6,* 337–396.

Raja, U., Azeem, M.U., Haq, I.U., and Naseer, S. (2020). Perceived threat of terrorism and employee outcomes: The moderating role of negative affectivity and psychological capital. *Journal of Business Research, 110,* 316–326.

Ryan, R.M., and Deci, E.L. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist, 55*(1): 68–78.

Santos, A., Hayward, T., and Ramos, H.M. (2012). Organizational culture, work and personal goals as predictors of employee well-being. *Journal of Organizational Culture, Communications and Conflict, 16,* 25–48.

Seppälä, T., Lipponen, J., Bardi, A., and Pirttilä-Backman, A.-M. (2012). Change-oriented organizational citizenship behaviour: An interactive product of openness to change values, work unit identification, and sense of power. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology, 85,* 136–155.

Simha, A., Elloy, D.F., and Huang, H. (2014). The moderated relationship between job burnout and organizational cynicism. *Management Decision, 52,* 482–504.

Simo, P., Sallan, J.M., Fernandez, V., and Enache, M. (2016). Change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior. *International Journal of Organizational Analysis, 24,* 261–273.

Sinclair, S.J., and LoCicero, A. (2006). Development and psychometric testing of the perceptions of terrorism questionnaire short-form (PTQ-SF). *New School Psychology Bulletin, 4,* 7–37.

Swaminathan M., and Mishra, M. (2020). Non-monetary levers to enhance employee engagement in organizations–"GREAT" model of motivation during the Covid-19 crisis. *Strategic HR Review, 19,* 171–175.

Teng-Calleja, M., Hechanova, M.R.M., Sabile, P.R., and Villasante, A. (2020). Building organization and employee resilience in disaster contexts. *International Journal of Workplace Health Management, 13,* 393–411.

Toth, I., Heinänen, S., Nisula, A.-M. (2020). Personal resources and knowledge workers' job engagement. *International Journal of Organizational Analysis, 28,* 595–610.

Treuren, G.J.M., and Fein, E.C. (2021). Off-the-job embeddedness as a moderator of the relationship between work and life conflict and turnover intention. *International Journal of Human Resource Management, 32,* 1251–1272.

Trougakos, J.P., Chawla, N., and McCarthy, J.M. (2020). Working in a pandemic: Exploring the impact of COVID-19 health anxiety on work, family, and health outcomes. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 105,* 1234 – 1245.

Van Dijk, R., and Van Dick, R. (2009). Navigating organizational change: Change leaders, employee resistance and work-based identities. *Journal of Change Management, 9,* 143–163.

Vaziri, H., Casper, W.J., Wayne, J.H., & Matthews, R.A. (2020). Changes to the work–family interface during the COVID-19 pandemic: Examining predictors and implications using latent transition analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 105,* 1073–1087.

van Dick, R., Lemoine, J., Steffens, N.K., Kerschreiter, R., Akfirat, S., ..., & Haslam, S.A. (2018). Identity leadership going global: Validation of the identity leadership inventory across 20 countries. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology, 91,* 697–728.

Vigoda-Gadot, E., & Beeri, I. (2012). Change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior in public administration: The power of leadership and the cost of organizational politics. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory, 22,* 573–596.

Wang, X., Guchait, P., Paşamehmetoğlu, A. (2020). Why should errors be tolerated? Perceived organizational support, organization-based self-esteem and psychological well-being. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 32,* 1987–2006.

Warner, R. (2013). *Applied statistics: From bivariate through multivariate techniques* (2nd ed.). Los Angeles: Sage Publications.

Wu, W.-L., and Lee, Y.-C. (2016). Do employees share knowledge when encountering abusive supervision? *Journal of Managerial Psychology, 31,* 154–168.

Yuan, F., and Woodman, R. W. (2010). Innovative behavior in the workplace: The role of performance and image outcome expectations. *Academy of Management Journal, 53,* 323–342.

Yuan, Z., Ye, Z., and Zhong, M. (2021). Plug back into work, safely: Job reattachment, leader safety commitment, and job engagement in the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 106,* 62–70.

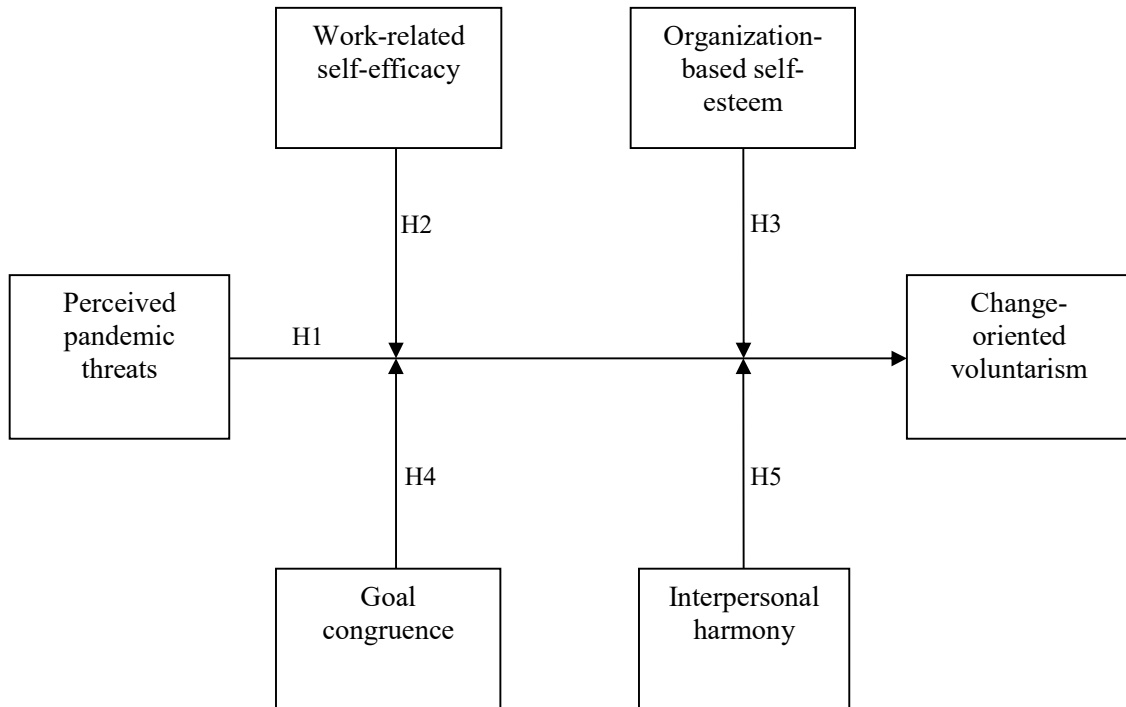**Figure 1.** Conceptual Model

Figure 2: Moderating effect of work-related self-efficacy on the relationship between perceived pandemic threats and change-oriented voluntarism
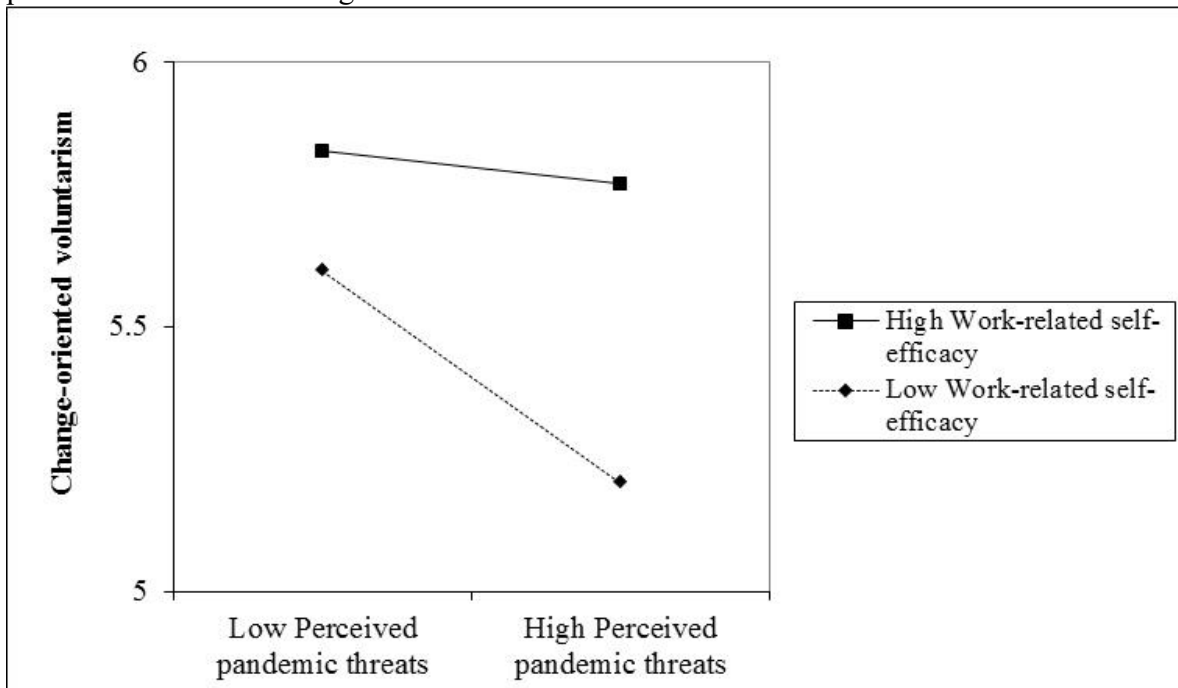

Figure 3: Moderating effect of organization-based self-esteem on the relationship between perceived pandemic threats and change-oriented voluntarism
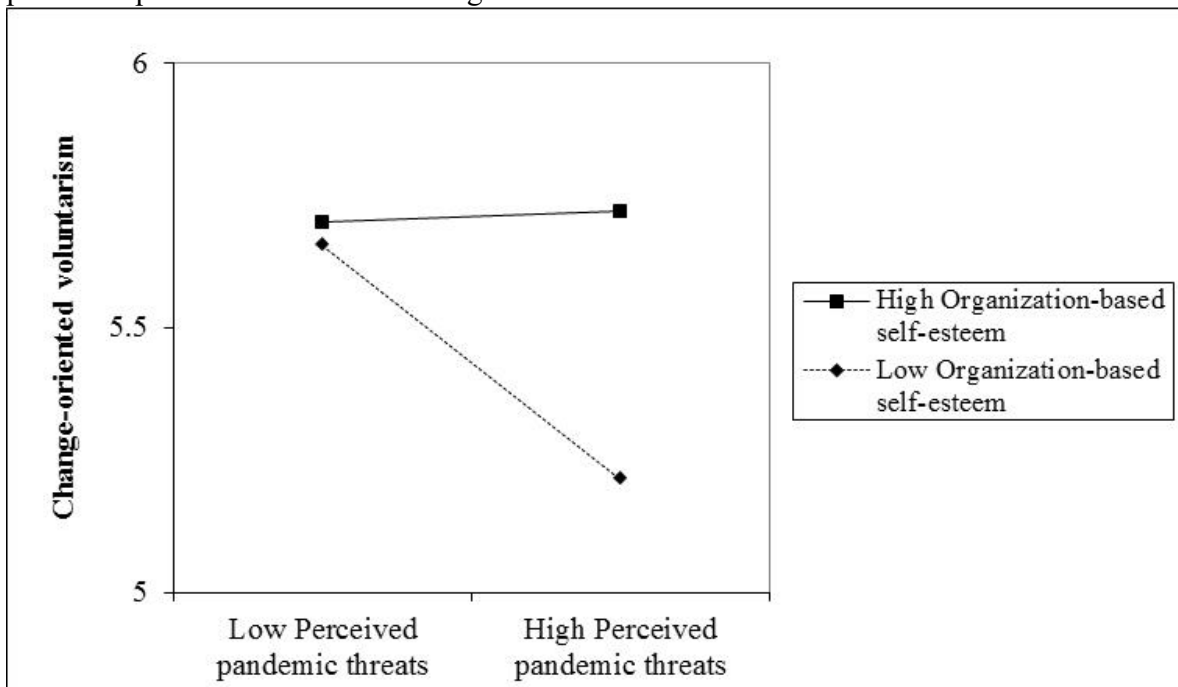
Figure 4 Moderating effect of goal congruence on the relationship between perceived pandemic threats and change-oriented voluntarism
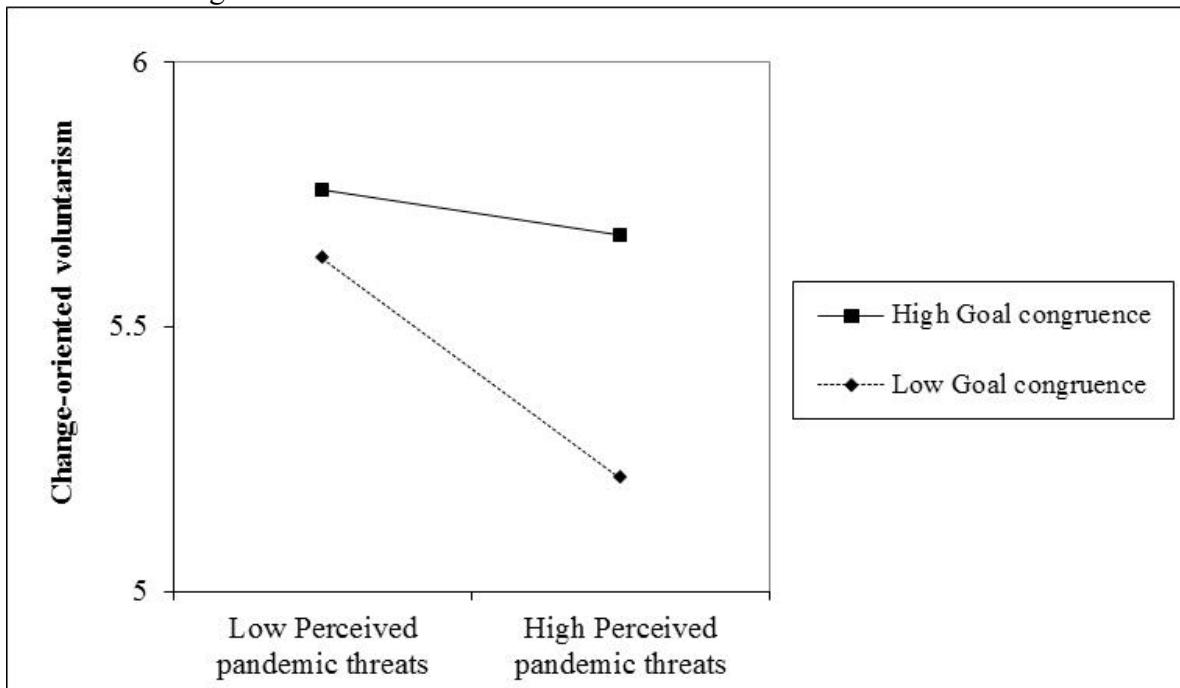

Figure 5: Moderating effect of interpersonal harmony on the relationship between perceived pandemic threats and change-oriented voluntarism
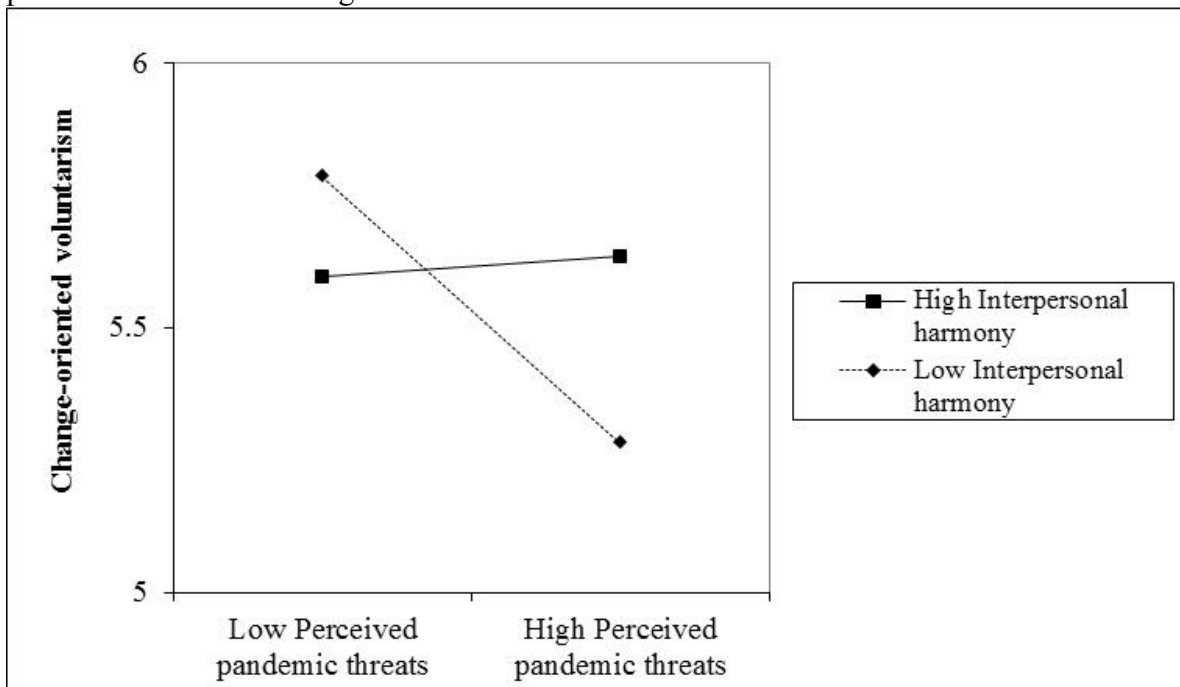
Table 1. Correlations and descriptive statistics

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Change-oriented voluntarism								
2. Perceived pandemic threats	-.237**							
3. Work-related self-efficacy	.507**	-.228**						
4. Organization-based self-esteem	.414**	-.001	.414**					
5. Goal congruence	.383**	.061	.344**	.417**				
6. Interpersonal harmony	.197**	-.110	.140	.184*	.333**			
7. Gender (1 = female)	-.111	.103	-.177*	.010	-.042	.062		
8. Job tenure	.154*	-.015	.047	.056	.097	-.067	-.021	
Mean	5.704	2.732	5.650	5.738	5.398	5.650	.453	1.792
Standard deviation	.736	1.153	1.019	1.082	.974	.925	.499	.948

Note: n = 192.

*$p < .05$; **$p < .01$.

Table 2. Regression results (dependent variable: change-oriented voluntarism)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
Gender (1 = female)	-.159	-.125	-.051	-.034	-.053	-.034	-.051
Job tenure	.118*	.116*	.087$^+$	.078$^+$	.087$^+$	.081$^+$	.095$^+$
H1: Perceived pandemic threats		-.145***	-.107**	-.116**	-.105**	-.126**	-.116**
Work-related self-efficacy			.222***	.198***	.227***	.216***	.220***
Organization-based self-esteem			.135**	.145**	.138**	.128**	.129**
Goal congruence			.132*	.137**	.121*	.147**	.128*
Interpersonal harmony			.040	.036	.034	.029	.042
H2: Perceived pandemic threats × Work-related self-efficacy				.084*			
H3: Perceived pandemic threats × Organization-based self-esteem					.115***		
H4: Perceived pandemic threats × Goal congruence						.082*	
H5: Perceived pandemic threats × Interpersonal harmony							.136**
R^2	.035	.086	.376	.397	.412	.391	.403
Change in R^2		.051***	.290***	.021*	.036***	.015*	.027**

Note: n = 192; unstandardized coefficients.
$^+ p < .10$; $*p < .05$; $**p < .01$; $***p < .001$ (two-tailed).

Appendix. Vignette tool for HR managers: Action points for helping employees deal with perceived pandemic threats and persist in change-oriented work efforts

Employee X comes to your office and formally explains that worries about COVID-19 and his family are keeping him from getting his work done efficiently. The next day, during a company-wide coffee break, Employee Y mentions in passing that she feels like COVID-19 is everywhere and inescapable, without ever mentioning the effects of this perception on her work. Both of these employees have long been valuable contributors to the organization, but Employee X tends to engage in formal, hierarchically oriented interactions, whereas Employee Y seems to make friends with everyone, everywhere she goes. Their interactions with you represent their more and less explicit signals that they are suffering from powerful perceptions that the pandemic represents a threat—which means they both require some HR intervention to be able to continue undertaking productive work activities to help the organization. As their HR manager, you should assess which of the following efforts are likely to be most valuable for each employee:

- Increase their confidence by allowing them to set work-related targets or goals.

- Increase their confidence by having them contribute meaningfully to the organization's strategy.

- Ensure they see how they make a meaningful difference for the organization.

- Reassure them that organizational leaders have faith in them.

- Encourage them to regard work-related problems as shared with colleagues.

- Suggest that they reach out to colleagues to share their vision of the organization's future.

- Emphasize the importance of creating and nurturing harmonious, collegial relationships.

- Highlight the importance of avoiding interpersonal tensions in interactions with colleagues.