



# Sustaining Organizational Change Trajectory: The Role of Charismatic Rhetoric Leadership Model Towards Turnover Intention During Organizational Changes

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**Abstract.** Organizational life has become an inevitable feature of various changes. The COVID-19 Pandemic shows that organizations are forced to be ready to respond and adapt to any unexpected changes when they are abruptly faced with the condition of changing existing operating standards as well as structures. When it comes to adapting business processes and work models, a capable company is tough, agile, and innovative, which requires leaders with the courage and ability to change direction quickly and motivate and influence their employees to follow and support the changes. Because employees frequently perceive organizational changes as a threat and risk to their self-identity and purpose, leaders need to portray change as not a threat and that changes are required for the organization's sustainability. This research investigates whether a charismatic rhetoric leadership model effectively softens employee intentions to leave the company even during organizational changes. Data is collected through an online survey of 240 respondents and is analyzed using Structural Equation Modelling Partial Least Square (SEM PLS). The results show that the charismatic rhetoric leadership variable has a t-statistic value of  $4.087 > 1.96$ , and a p-value of  $0.000 < 0.05$  against the turnover intention variable, meaning that charismatic rhetoric leadership effectively influences employees to stay even during organizational changes.

**Keywords:** Affective Commitment to Change · Charismatic Leadership · Charismatic Rhetoric Leadership · COVID-19 Pandemic · Leadership Style · Organizational Changes · Organization Identification · Turnover Intention

## 1 Introduction

Employee turnover tends to occur when the organization is going through a change process [1]. Change has become an ongoing process for organizations in response to ever-changing environmental factors such as technology, global demands, and economic cycles [2, 3]. However, implementing change in organizations involves considerable challenges [4], mainly because most employees resist change with various factors [5].

When a change is not managed properly, employees are likely to experience negative emotions, leading to a spike in withdrawal behavior [6], resulting in employee turnover often happening during or after significant organizational changes [7].

One of the reasons employees refuse to change is often due to a tendency to see change as a threat because it is associated with uncertainty. The organizational change also implies changes in organizational culture, coworkers, superiors, and various situations that result in employee discomfort [8]. Organizational change can be small-scale, gradual, without disrupting the system as a whole [9] or changes that involve radical and comprehensive change [10].

Based on data research, during the last 3–5 years, many organizational changes have occurred worldwide and in Indonesia. PricewaterhouseCoopers noted global mergers and acquisitions (M&A) hit new highs in 2021—breaking the previous all-time record. The number of announced deals exceeds 62,000 globally in 2021, an unprecedented 24% increase [11]. In Indonesia, if we look at the Google trend data for the last five years, the keyword “merger” continues to increase and reaches its peak in 2021.

Other changes related to working models have also occurred in Indonesia and the world. Reflecting on the situation during the COVID-19 pandemic, many organizations quickly formed their contingency plans and relied on executive leaders to work on change [12]. Based on a survey conducted by the Central Statistics Agency on 12–23 October 2020 on 35,992 business respondents in Indonesia, it was found that during the survey period, 61.03% of business respondents made changes to the system for their operational activities. It included reducing in working hours, machines and personnel (28.86%), temporary closure (15.30%), work from home for some employees (8.71%), work from home for all employees (4.63%), and 3, 53% said there was a change in increasing production capacity. The rest (38.97%) stated no change [13].

If we look at the trend from the last 3–5 years of changes in organizations both in Indonesia and the world, the phenomenon of employee turnover tends to increase. According to a survey by Michael Page Indonesia, in 2022, 84% of employees intend to change organizations [14]. Although many factors encourage employees to change organizations, it is seen by the data that the trend of organizational change also tends to increase. This is quite in line with the theory of [1], which reveals that the tendency of employees to move occurs when the organization is going through a change process.

Business consulting firm Michael Page Indonesia revealed that one of the top 3 reasons employees leave their jobs is a lack of leader communication [15]. Meanwhile, a Deloitte survey shows that 60% of executive respondents think today’s most crucial leadership model supports readiness for the unknown future [16]. The leader is the “Champion of Change” because the leader carries out the change process by maintaining the operational reliability of the organization [17].

Noting changes that often occur in an organization and the magnitude of the role of organizational leaders in navigating change and motivating employees to remain loyal and be aware of the importance of change in an organization, the author is interested in researching leadership models that can reduce turnover intention when organizational change occurs.

The charismatic leadership model is a leadership model that can communicate the leader’s vision to followers, encourage and influence followers to accept the leader’s

vision as their own [18], and this type of leader can use their vision to connect their followers' self-concept for organizational goals and needs [19]. Thus, followers will experience greater intrinsic motivation, engage in self-sacrifice, and internalize the leader's vision as their own [20]. Through their vision, charismatic leaders can exert influence over the values, behavior, and performance of others [21].

Leadership and the way one communicates are connected. Thus, leadership is often perceived as a skill to inspire people through language and communication [22, 23]. Communication is a crucial and fundamental factor that shapes and builds leadership, according to the communication-centered perspective of leadership [22]. Charismatic leaders, in particular, use language and speech to create some sort of similarity between themselves and their supporters [24].

When facing an organizational change, affective commitment to change provides confidence that change is beneficial for the organization and employees [25]. In other words, employees who believe in the value of change and view change as an effective strategy do not leave the organization.

Organizational change experts often attribute the desire to leave the company to contextual factors of the organization and the psychological activity of individuals. Wanberg & Banas [26] show that employees' positive attitudes toward change are associated with lower intentions to quit and higher job satisfaction. Kerr & Jermier [27] stated that organizational identification of employees could be one factor that influences the relationship between leadership communication and employee response to change.

The research model that became the core reference of this research is the study conducted by Cen April Yue [28], which examines the effect of charismatic rhetorical leadership on employee turnover intention due to organizational changes. In this case, Yue focuses on changes due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The study was conducted on 417 respondents who are permanent employees in various companies in the United States with more than 50 employees. The control variables used were the respondent's age, gender, years of service, and job position. In his research, Yue added the variable of employee's affective commitment to change as a mediating variable and the variable of organizational identification as a variable that moderated the effect because employee's affective commitment to change is considered sufficient to represent the highest level of commitment and has been shown to have the most consistent positive relationship with behavioral support for change [29].

In his research, Yue put forward four tested hypotheses, namely; 1) charismatic rhetorical leadership is negatively related to employee turnover intention, 2) employee organizational identification moderates the negative relationship between charismatic rhetorical leadership and employee desire to move in such a way that the negative relationship is strong when organizational identification is low, 3) affective commitment employees to change mediates the relationship between charismatic rhetorical leadership and employee desire to move in such a way that charismatic rhetorical leadership is positively related to affective commitment to change and affective commitment to change is negatively related to turnover intention, 4) organizational identification moderates the indirect relationship between charismatic leadership rhetoric and employee desire to move through affective commitment to change. The study results revealed that

hypotheses 1 and 4 were not in line with the study results, while hypotheses two and 3 were in line with the study results.

## 2 Methods

Research into the charismatic leader of an organization can improve the relationship between followers' self-concepts and the goals, values, and efforts of collective organizations [19, 24]. Employees who receive encouragement and high-performance expectations from the leader will see themselves in a solid and effective collective movement [24], so they are less likely to leave their organization because of the motivating power of the leader that empowers them. On this basis, the hypothesis is made as follows:

H1: Charismatic rhetoric leadership has a significant negative effect on turnover intention.

The success of changing an organization requires commitment from its employees. In the face of an organizational change, affective commitment to change provides confidence that change is beneficial for the organization and employees [25]. Employees who perceive the success of their organization as their own are more willing to adjust their behavior to fit the organization [30] and will have a sense of connectedness as members of a larger organization [31]. In contrast, employees with low organizational identification do not feel a sense of oneness with the organization. They tend to feel psychologically detached from the organization and thus lack the intrinsic motivation to undertake change-related tasks or make the necessary adjustments. These employees need a booster to engage in positive work behavior [32], which the leadership can provide. On this basis, further hypotheses are made as follows:

H2: Organizational identification moderates the relationship between charismatic rhetoric leadership and turnover intention so that the negative relationship between charismatic rhetoric leadership and turnover intention becomes stronger when organizational identification is low.

Herscovitch & Meyer [33] extend the organizational commitment model to the context of organizational change. They show that commitment to change is a better predictor of behavioral support for change than organizational commitment. Affective commitment to change has become a significant antecedent of employees' supportive behavior towards change. Cunningham [34] provides one of the first pieces of evidence to show that affective commitment to change facilitates the adoption of employees' coping strategies during change, leading to lower turnover intentions. Neves & Caetano [35] brought further evidence on the role of affective commitment to change on employee turnover intentions, pointing out the importance of emphasizing the benefits of change over the outcomes of not supporting change. On this basis, further hypotheses are made as follows:

H3: Affective commitment to change mediates the relationship between charismatic rhetoric leadership and turnover intention, such that charismatic rhetoric leadership has a positive effect on affective commitment to change and affective commitment to change has a negative impact on turnover intention.

Based on the previous hypotheses, this study predicts that organizational identification will moderate the indirect effect of charismatic rhetorical leadership on employee turnover intention (through an affective commitment to change). For employees with low organizational identification, leaders who use charismatic rhetoric are more likely to elicit their affective commitment to change and are less likely to lead to switching intentions.

On this basis, further hypotheses are made as follows:

H4: Organizational identification moderates the relationship between charismatic rhetoric leadership and turnover intention through affective commitment to change such that the indirect relationship becomes stronger when organizational identification is low.

The measurement of the Charismatic Rhetoric Leadership (CRL) variable in this study used questionnaire items from research [24] about charismatic leadership rhetoric plus items from research by [36] which used the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire from [37] for items to test the leader's charisma in the eyes of followers. There are 14 items, each measured using a 6 Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 6 = strongly agree).

Measurement of Organizational Identification (OID) variables in this study used questionnaire items from the organizational identification model reformulated by [38] and added two research items on group identification from [39]. There are eight items, each of which is measured using a 6 Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 6 = strongly agree).

The measurement of the Affective Commitment to Change (CTC) variable in this study used a questionnaire item from research on the extension of the three-component models of commitment to organizational change [25], added by research items on the relationship between the organization and individual change from [40]. There are eight items, each of which is measured using a 6 Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 6 = strongly agree).

The measurement of the Turnover Intention (TOI) variable in this study used the 6-item Turnover Intention Scale [41]. Each item is measured using a 6 Likert scale (1 = very rarely to 6 = very often).

The sampling method in this study uses non-probability sampling with a purposive sampling technique, which means the sampling technique with certain considerations. The questionnaire is a set of questions designed to generate data, then analyzed to answer research questions and achieve research objectivity [42]. This study uses SEM analysis and uses the SmartPLS version 3.0 application. Partial Least Square (PLS) is one of the alternative methods of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) that can be used to overcome these problems [43].

The data collection method in this study was carried out by distributing questionnaires to respondents online using google form with the following criteria: employees in Indonesia with a minimum working period of three years at their current company, an Indonesian citizen above 18 years of age, knows the communication style of the Company's Leaders (for example through direct interaction or written communication/other organizational internal media), and in the last three years experienced changes in their organization, such as; changes in working models (WFH/WFO/Hybrid), changes in organizational structure, mergers/acquisitions, changes in organizational direction/goals, etc.

### 3 Results and Discussion

#### 3.1 Results

The study was tested on 240 respondents with the demographics as shown in Table 1.

The measurement and the structural model of the Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) were analyzed using Smart PLS3. The results of the reliability and validity of the measurement model can be seen in Table 2. The results have shown that all indicators produce a value of outer loadings  $> 0.70$ . In most references, a factor weight of 0.70 or more is considered to have strong validation to explain latent constructs [44, 45].

**Table 1.** Demographic of Respondents

Item		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	111	46%
	Female	129	<b>54%</b>
Age	18 - 25 y.o	40	17%
	> 25 - 35 y.o	115	<b>48%</b>
	> 35 - 45 y.o	71	30%
	> 45 - 55 y.o	14	6%
Education	High School	35	15%
	Diploma	29	12%
	Bachelor	159	<b>66%</b>
	Master	17	7%
Year of Service at current company	3 - 5 years	81	34%
	> 5 - 10 years	106	<b>44%</b>
	> 10 - 15 years	39	16%
	> 15 - 20 years	9	4%
	> 20 years	5	2%
No of the employees in the current company	< 50 employees	39	16%
	> 50 - 100 employees	80	<b>33%</b>
	> 100 - 250 employees	60	25%
	> 250 - 500 employees	35	15%
	> 500 employees	23	10%
	Do not know	3	1%
Type of Organization	Government	47	20%
	Private National	120	<b>50%</b>
	Multinational	55	23%
	NGO	18	8%

Thus, it can be said that all indicators can measure variables so that the analysis can be continued. Furthermore, the acceptable value of Average Variance Extracted (AVE) must be greater than 0.5 [44]. The table shows that all variables produce Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values greater than 0.5. Thus the indicator is declared valid to measure the dimensions or variables. Then the reliability test is used to determine the consistency of the research instrument so that it is always used consistently to collect data. Based on the data in the table, it can be concluded that the Composite Reliability value is greater than 0.7. Based on the Composite Reliability value calculation, all indicators are declared reliable or consistent in measuring the variables.

**Hypothesis test.** According to the test requirements, if the T-statistics T-table (1.96) or the P-value is significant alpha 5 percent or 0.05, it signifies that exogenous factors substantially influence endogenous variables.

Based on the table, it can be concluded that the results of the research model hypothesis testing:

Hypothesis 1 predicted a significant negative relationship between the leader's charismatic rhetorical leadership attitude and the intention to switch employees. Based on the analysis, a significant relationship was found; therefore, H1 was supported. Hypothesis 2 proposed that organizational identification moderates the negative relationship between a leader's charismatic rhetoric and turnover intention. The results showed that the negative relationship between charismatic rhetoric and employees' turnover intention was significant when organizational identification was low. Therefore, H2 was supported. Hypothesis 3 suggested that employees' affective commitment to change can mediate

**Table 2.** Hypothesis Result

<b>Hypothesis Path</b>	<b>T Statistics (IO/STDEVI)</b>	<b>P Values</b>
H1: Charismatic Rhetoric Leadership (CRL) -> Turnover Intention (TOI)	4.087	0.000
H2: Organizational Identification (OID) X Charismatic Rhetoric Leadership 2 (CRL) -> Turnover Intention (TOI)	5.880	0.000
Organizational Identification (OID) -> Turnover Intention (TOI)	10.003	0.000
Charismatic Rhetoric Leadership (CRL) -> Affective Commitment to Change (CTC)	4.742	0.000
Affective Commitment to Change (CTC) -> Turnover Intention (TOI)	2.899	0.004
Organizational Identification (OID) X Charismatic Rhetoric Leadership (CRL) -> Affective Commitment to Change (CTC)	0.493	<b>0.622</b>
Organizational Identification (OID) -> Affective Commitment to Change (CTC)	3.076	0.002

the relationship between a leader's charismatic rhetoric and employee turnover intention. The result shows that H3 was supported. Hypothesis 4 proposed that organizational identification of employees moderates the indirect relationship between a leader's charismatic rhetoric and employee turnover intention through affective commitment to change. Results showed that H4 was not supported.

### 3.2 Analysis

Organizational change is a necessity, and organizational leaders are important actors in the success of the organizational change. The results of this study indicate that the highest total average value is found in the Charismatic Rhetoric Leadership variable, which suggests that most respondents feel that the charismatic leadership model has a major influence on the employee's desire to move.

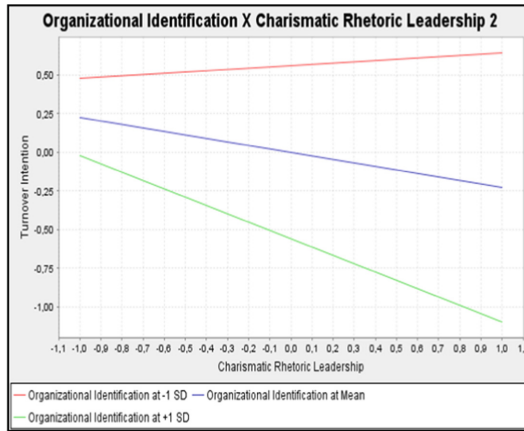
Based on the study results, the highest outer loading factor on the Charismatic Rhetoric Leadership variable was on the item "The leader of the company where I work provides a good example for me to follow" or item CRL14, which shows a considerable influence on this variable. The results of the average value (mean) on the CRL14 item is 4,862 on a Likert scale of 1–6, which indicates that the respondents quite agree with the statement on the item and feel that the leadership of the company where they work provides a good example to follow. To achieve the desired charisma, leaders must provide good examples and become role models for their employees to convince employees of the importance of changes that occur in the organization.

Based on the study results, the highest outer loading factor on the Affective Commitment to Change variable is in the item "I really support the change" or the CTC9 item, which significantly influences this variable. The average value (mean) on the CTC9 item is 4,654 on a Likert scale of 1–6, which indicates that the respondents quite agree with the statement on the item and feel they support the change. To increase a sense of commitment to change, organizations must communicate various success stories about changes that have occurred so that employees affectively support changes in the organization.

The highest outer loading factor on the Organizational Identification variable is on the item "I feel very connected to the organization/company where I work" or item OID7, which significantly influences this variable. The average value (mean) on the OID7 item is 4,729 on a Likert scale of 1–6, which indicates that respondents agree with the statement on the item and feel connected to the company/organization where they work. Companies need to have strong employer branding so that employees are well associated with the organization, have organizational identification, and feel connected to the company.

Furthermore, for the Turnover Intention variable, the highest outer loading factor is in the item "I often consider leaving work" or the TOI1 item, which greatly influences this variable. The results of the average value (mean) on the TOI1 item is 3,275 on a Likert scale of 1–6, which shows that the respondents are divided in two almost equally for those who agree with the statement and those who do not agree, meaning that some respondents feel they often consider leaving their jobs temporarily, while others do not. The leadership/management of the company needs to be able to give a sense of empowerment to its employees by giving them opportunities to develop their potential so that employees are more dedicated and loyal to the company.





**Fig. 1.** Chart Organizational Identification X Charismatic Rhetoric Leadership 2

The result of the study shows that the role of the Organizational Identification variable in moderating the effect of Charismatic Rhetoric Leadership on Affective Commitment to Change such that when the sense of organizational identification is low, the higher the rhetorical charismatic leadership model, the higher the employee’s affective commitment to change. Similarly, when employees have a high sense of organizational identification, the higher the rhetorical charismatic leadership model, the higher the employee’s affective commitment to change.

The result of the study also shows the role of the Organizational Identification variable in moderating the influence of Charismatic Rhetoric Leadership on Affective Commitment to Change such that when the sense of organizational identification is low, the higher the charismatic rhetorical leadership model increases the employee’s intention to move. However, when employees have a heightened sense of organizational identification, the higher the rhetorical charismatic leadership model significantly reduces employee’s intention to move, as shown in the following chart (Fig. 1).

Most research respondents are 25–35 years old with 5–10 years of service in the company. This shows that most respondents are developing productive age, and the role of charismatic leaders is quite influential in directing this population in making decisions to change jobs.

### 3.3 Discussion

Organizational leaders also act as agents of change in the success of organizational change so that regular communication that encourages and motivates employees to make changes can make employees support change. Forms of internal communication such as regular procurement of employee town halls and formation of leadership forums at the supervisory and manager levels will help make this group support change and contribute significantly to encouraging support for change in the organization.

To increase the affective commitment to change, companies need to show various success stories about changes that have occurred in the organization so that employees

affectively support the changes that occur. The description of this success story can be done during the town hall meeting or on internal media/newsletters so that all employees have access to information on the success story.

Companies need to have strong employer branding so that employees are well associated with the organization, have organizational identification, and feel connected to the company. Employer branding, among others, can be done by internalizing organizational values in employees (for example, placing posters of organizational values in the company environment), implementing the organizational commitment to inclusion and diversity, equal opportunity employment, etc.

Company management needs to give employees a sense of empowerment by giving them opportunities to develop their potential. By having a structured career opportunity design and appropriate talent management mapping, employees will feel connected to the organization and understand that organizational change is not a threat to their identity.

## 4 Conclusion

In undergoing organizational change, the role of the leader with the Charismatic Rhetoric Leadership model can influence and motivate employees to survive the changes in the organization. A charismatic rhetoric leadership model is especially needed in organizations where employees have a low sense of organizational identification to help reduce employee turnover intention. Research also shows that organizational identification affects employee affective commitment to change, and employee affective commitment to change positively influences responding to charismatic leadership and reduces employee turnover intentions.

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