







# “Effect of despotic leadership on organizational deviance: The mediating role of Psychological Contract Breach and moderating role of moral identity”

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# EFFECT OF DESPOTIC LEADERSHIP ON ORGANIZATIONAL DEVIANCE: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACT BREACH AND MODERATING ROLE OF MORAL IDENTITY

## Abstract

Drawing on social exchange theory, this study aims to expand the literature on despotic leadership as a prominent indicator of organizational deviance using a moderate mediation framework. Data were collected from a two-wave study involving 185 randomly chosen full-time administrative staff members in October 2024, in six colleges at the University of Mosul. Hypotheses have been tested by hierarchical multiple regression analysis and an estimated confidence interval for the indirect effect using SPSS 21.0 and Mplus 6.0. The results indicated a positive effect between despotic leadership and between Psychological Contract Breach (PCB) ( $\beta = 0.23, p < 0.01$ ), as well as a positive effect between PCB and organizational deviance ( $\beta = 0.17, p < 0.01$ ). The results also demonstrated a mediating role for PCB, as its presence rendered the association between despotic leadership and organizational deviance non-significant ( $\beta = 0.04, p = n.s.$ ). Furthermore, we demonstrated a moderating role for moral identity, as its interaction with PCB reduced the negative impact on organizational deviance ( $\beta = -0.15, p < 0.01$ ). The study recommends that organizations should focus on discouraging despotic leadership and addressing subordinates' perceptions of PCB. Moreover, the results emphasize the importance of ethical identity and its beneficial influence on the reduction of the influence of despotic leadership on the deviance within the organization.

## Keywords

despotic leadership, psychological contract breach,  
moral identity, organizational deviance, University of  
Mosul

## JEL Classification

M14, D23, J23

## INTRODUCTION

Previous studies have indicated that behaviors such as despotic, toxic behavior, abuse, and exploitation are all manifestations of destructive leadership (Liu et al., 2020). Among the various negative leadership approaches, despotic leadership is often regarded as the most harmful and self-serving (Syed et al., 2020). When a leader treats employees poorly by exhibiting despotic behaviors, they will not feel respected and valued by their organizations (Tepper et al., 2009). This is likely to lead to negative perceptions regarding the assumed moral fulfillment of the implicit agreements between subordinates and the organization, which is known as a psychological contract breach (Nabawanuka & Ekmekcioglu, 2022; Pour et al., 2024; Salin & Notelaers, 2017; Shah et al., 2022). The authoritarian nature of despotic leaders puts subordinates under psychological pressure, preventing them from openly expressing their reactions, which prevents them from expressing their reactions openly

toward these leaders, but they may retaliate in indirect ways, for example by engaging in unacceptable behavior. This has been demonstrated by previous research showing that increased organizational deviant behaviors may be due to employees' awareness of PCB (Verma et al., 2025). The current study also addresses an important issue of how a strong moral identity among subordinates can weaken the positive relationship between PCB and organizational deviance. It is assumed that employees with a strong moral identity possess greater moral awareness and a greater tendency to prioritize ethical conduct, thus demonstrating a stronger commitment to the organization's interests (Cohen & Ehrlich, 2019; Wang et al., 2019).

This study seeks to address the limited understanding of the mechanisms by which subordinates respond psychologically and then behaviorally to mistreatment by leaders (Badar et al., 2023; Mackey et al., 2021). Specifically, there is an ambiguity in explaining how despotic leadership can violate subordinates' psychological expectations and how this can lead to organizational deviance. In addition, discovering whether the moral identity of employees could mitigate the effects of authoritarian leadership on deviant behavior through its impact on the PCB process. Conducting this study in Eastern cultures within the higher education sector adds further importance, which is characterized by collectivism and a high degree of authority, where employees often tolerate authoritarian behaviors, remain silent, or comply with cultural norms that promote hierarchy and obedience (Al-kashab, 2016, 2018).

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## 1. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES

Despotic leader refers to leaders who have absolute power over their employees and demand complete submission and obedience from them (Mukarram et al., 2021). These leaders are often involved in dishonest activities that are unethical; while at the same time, he lies and pretends to show care and consideration for others, they actually feel less sensitivity and responsibility for the individual's behavior (Khan et al., 2022). This makes these leaders authoritarian and controlling, using their power and influence to achieve their personal gains, and displaying selfish behaviors towards subordinates to serve their own interests and needs instead of focusing on the performance of the organization (Naseer et al., 2016). The authors adopted social exchange theory to understand and explain employee behavior within the organization (Blau, 1964). Through continuous interactions between employees and their supervisors, impressions are gradually formed. These impressions can be positive, based on trust and mutual commitment, or negative, resulting from employees being subjected to deliberate abuse and mistreatment. This leads them to respond negatively as a reaction to these adverse experiences. This is similar to what can happen under despotic lead-

ership. Where, as a result of the selfish practices and harsh treatment of such leaders, employees feel oppressed and wronged. Because they often cannot confront their leaders due to the imbalance of power, they turn to the organization itself for revenge as a reaction to the injustice they have suffered (Shamshad et al., 2025). This makes despotic leadership a fundamental pillar of harmful behavior; it contributes to the development of undesirable psychological attitudes that push employees to form negative impressions and make them adopt behaviors that harm the organization's interests and conflict with its goal (Akhtar et al., 2024; Shamspour et al., 2025).

Based on social exchange theory, which emphasizes that reciprocity is a fundamental principle in the formation of social relationships and that mutual obligations are built on this basis (Gouldner, 1960). The authors believe that PCB can be resolved as a mediating variable because it is one of the natural outcomes of despotic leadership and is also one of the main sources of organizational deviance. This meditation can be explained by the fact that employees form implicit, often unwritten, expectations about what they should receive from their organization in return for their efforts and dedication to work. These expectations are not built on nothing but on promises made and on employees' perceived

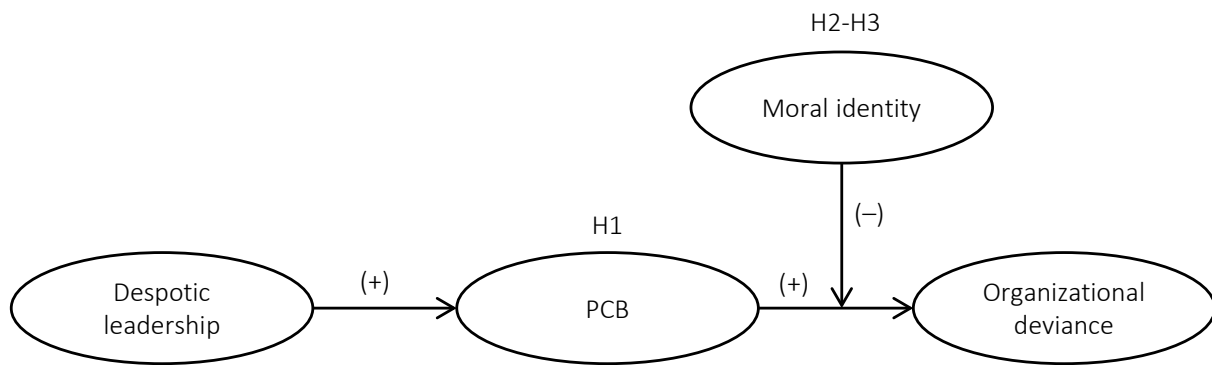
image of the organization, such as benefits, career opportunities, quality of work life, social privileges, etc. When employees discover that their idealized image of the organization is far removed from reality, the promises upon which they based their expectations are false, and that they were frankly misled. While the actual reality indicates that they are facing leaders characterized by authoritarianism, selfishness, and arbitrary treatment, they realize that a fundamental flaw has affected their relationship with the organization. At this point, a psychological breach occurs. Shock occurs to the employees and a definite psychological disturbance ensues. This is in actual sense an experience with emotional and cognitive dimension and not a perceptual judgment. The consequence of this disruption starts to show itself in the form of such negative emotions like anxiety, frustration, reduced satisfaction, and anger (Khan et al., 2022). This subsequently leads them, in most instances, to demonstrate undesired job behavior and break the rules, values, and policies of the organization (Verma et al., 2025). Employees experiencing PCB initially refrain from positive work activities, such as all forms of organizational citizenship behavior, including participation in extracurricular activities, altruism, sportsmanship, and others (Kiazad et al., 2019; Restubog et al., 2008). This is unsurprising, as this reluctance is understood within the context of social exchange theory as a consequence of employees' adherence to the principle of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960). They then end up engaging in unproductive behaviors, as a means of seeking revenge and restoring lost justice (Farnese et al., 2024; Verma et al., 2025).

On the other hand, Blasi (1984) defined moral identity as "An individual difference reflecting the degree to which being moral is central or characteristic of a person's sense of self" (Mulder & Aquino, 2013). Moral identity reflects a set of ethical traits such as caring, honesty, kindness, friendliness, and compassion, which are possessed by workers who seek to develop their ethical identity, tend to act in accordance with it, and expand their circle of ethical concern (Wang et al., 2019). For this reason, they are less inclined to participate in unethical actions that may harm the organization's interests,

unlike individuals with weaker moral identities (Akhtar et al., 2024; Cohen & Ehrlich, 2019). Previous studies have shown that moral identity is negatively associated with retaliatory behaviors (Barclay et al., 2014; Latif et al., 2023), but this does not mean that employees with a strong moral identity do not react to injustice and mistreatment (Erkutlu & Chafra, 2018). Conversely, their reactions are often firm and they may not tolerate such situations. This can be attributed to the fact that those with a strong moral identity do not accept subservience or injustice. It is important to note, though, that their responses, though, major, are not necessarily unethical (A. Bavik & Y. Bavik, 2015). Such responses can be in the form of actions directed towards correcting breaches and reinstating ethics (Funches et al., 2009). Generally, employees who possess high moral identity tend to follow ethics that allow them to face the challenges encountered in their workplace in a positive way by providing constructive accounts to frustrating circumstances. They are more patient and tolerant, possess greater psychological stability and self-control, and try to correct situations and address failures, which keep them far from engaging in destructive behaviors that harm the organization's interests. Thus, strong moral identity can act as a buffer, mitigating the severity of PCB.

This study aims to examine the effect of despotic leadership on organizational deviance through the mediating role of PCB, as well as to investigate the moderating role of moral identity. Consequently, we present the conceptual model illustrated in Figure 1, based on the following hypotheses:

- H1: *PCB mediates the relationship between despotic leadership and organizational deviance.*
- H2: *Moral identity moderates the relationship between PCB and organizational deviance; such that the effect is stronger when moral identity is low and weaker when it is high.*
- H3: *Moral identity moderates the impact of despotic leadership on organizational deviance by influencing the mediating variable PCB, such that the effect is high when moral identity is low and weakens when it is high.*



**Figure 1.** Conceptual model

## 2. METHODOLOGY

### 2.1. Sampling and data collection

The study relied on primary data collected by the authors using a quantitative cross-sectional design. The statistical analysis was carried out using SPSS 21.0 and Mplus 6.0. The study population is 6 colleges (College of Basic Education, College of Administration and Economics, College of Education for Humanities, College of Education for Pure Sciences, College of Arts, and College of Nursing) at the University of Mosul. The final sample of this study included 185 administrative staff; the administrative staff is employees who do not hold an academic title, such as employees in administrative units and in service support units. The study sample was chosen from the administrative staff due to the work stress resulting from dealing with them in dominance, assigning them routine tasks, and their social status and income being relatively low. While teaching staff who hold academic titles (the university leaders are among them) are more appreciated, work more freely, have social privileges, and their income is higher.

Questionnaires were distributed in October 2024. In a two-wave format to a random sample. This period was chosen because it came after a restructuring of administrative positions in colleges under study. Inclusion criteria included being at least 22 years old and having held their current position for a minimum of five years. During Time-1, a questionnaire was distributed to 300 employees. The initial page of the questionnaire states that participation is

voluntary, identity disclosure is not required, and personal data confidentiality is ensured. Respondents were supplied with the requisite information for inquiries or to reach the author. The first stage (Time-1) involved the employees providing their perceptions of despotic leadership and moral identity. Two hundred and fifty-seven (257) questionnaires were gathered and 85.6% responded to. Some 237 forms were left to analyze after elimination of 20 that were not usable. All the members were provided with a code to ensure that their information was not disclosed. The second stage (Time-2) was performed after two weeks in the same procedure. This time around, 211 employees were filling the questionnaire concerning PCB and organizational deviance, and the response rate was 70.3%. Most of the participation can be attributed to cooperation of the employees and the HR departments. Upon reviewing the done surveys, 26 of them were ruled out due to incompleteness. This reduced the sample size to a final respondent of 185 respondents, which indicated a final response rate of 61.6%. Out of the participants, the percentage of women was 61.4% and men were 38.6% of the total number. Education wise, 19.5% attended secondary school, 30.7% attended diploma and 49.8% attended undergraduate degree or higher educational institution. The age distribution revealed that 39.3% were aged 21-30 years, 27.6% were aged 31-40 years, 20.5% were aged 41-50 years, and 12.6% were aged above 50 years. Regarding organizational tenure, 33.5% of the respondents had worked for 1-10 years, 31.3% had between 11 and 20 years of experience, 25.8% had 21-30 years, and 9.4% had more than 30 years of service.

## 2.2. Measures

All measures were translated from English into Arabic and assessed using a six-point Likert scale, where 1 indicated strong disagreement and 6 indicated strong agreement.

Four demographic variables were included: gender, education, age, and tenure. The model incorporates this as a set of control variables. The research indicates a correlation between these variables and leadership (Owens et al., 2013), as well as organizational deviance (Jung & Yoon, 2012).

Despotic leadership is a construct established by De Hoogh and Den Hartog (2008) through a six-item measurement scale. They were questioned about the degree to which they experienced despotic behavior from their leaders. Examples included “Expects unquestioning obedience of those who report to him/her”. Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  coefficient for this scale was 0.83.

A five-item scale for measuring PCB was created by Robinson and Wolfe Morrison (2000). This scale assesses an employee’s comprehensive view of the organization’s adherence to the psychological contract. Examples of items included “I have not received everything promised to me in exchange for my contributions”. Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  coefficient for this scale was 0.85.

The construct of moral identity was assessed using the 10-item scale developed by Aquino and Reed II (2002), which encompasses the internalization and symbolization dimensions.

Example included “being someone who has these characteristics is an important part of who I am”. Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  coefficient for this scale is 0.81.

Organizational deviance has nine items developed by Aquino and Douglas (2003). Some sample items included “Neglected to follow your boss’s instructions”. Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  coefficient for this scale was 0.82.

## 3. RESULTS

### 3.1. Reliability and validity of measurement properties

We use confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to assess the measurement model in the absence of control variables. Executed a sequence of Confirmatory Factor Analyses (CFAs) with Mplus 6.0 (Muthen, 2007), employing testing Chi-square and the fit indices, including TLI, CFI, SRMR, and RMSEA. Table 1 presents the outcomes of the CFA, the model of four-factor exhibited superior fit ( $\chi^2$  (181) 189.15, p-value < 0.001; CFI 0.96, TLI 0.95, SRMR 0.05, RMSEA 0.05) Compared to the three-factor, two-factor, and one-factor models, the results of the CFA analysis demonstrate the unique advantage of the four-factor model in achieving optimal results. Therefore, it can be used in the analyses (see Table 1).

Common Method Bias (CMB) may influence empirical findings; thus, we gathered study data via self-reported questionnaires (Podsakoff et al., 2012). Harman’s one-factor testing was employed to evaluate the influence of CMB through loading

**Table 1.** Confirmatory factor analysis of the measurement models

Measurement models	$\chi^2$ (df)	CFI	TLI	SRMR	RMSEA
Four-factor	189.15 (181)	0.96	0.95	0.05	0.05
Three-factor (combined DL and PCB, MI, OD)	257.04 (182)	0.85	0.85	0.12	0.10
Three-factor (DL, PCB, combined MI and OD)	381.75 (182)	0.77	0.72	0.15	0.16
Two-factor (combined DL and PCB and MI, OD)	466.88 (183)	0.75	0.70	0.16	0.17
Two-factor (combined DL and PCB, MI and OD)	657.45 (183)	0.66	0.59	0.17	0.21
One-factor (combined DL and PCB and MI and OD)	902.55 (184)	0.58	0.49	0.18	0.24

*Note:* The proposed four-factor produced a Chi-square of fit score of 1825.37 for the baseline model. RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation), CFI (Comparative Fit Index), TLI (Tucker-Lewis Index), and SRMR (Standardized Root Mean Square Residual). Despotic Leadership (DL), Psychological Contract Breach (PCB), Moral Identity (MI), Organizational Deviance (OD).

all variables related to despotic leadership, PCB, and moral identity. Furthermore, organizational deviance is incorporated into an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA). The findings revealed six factors have eigenvalues above 1, which together accounted for 64% of the total variance, and the contribution of the primary factor independently amounted to 25%. Thus, common procedure variance was not a substantial concern.

### 3.2. Correlation analysis

We present descriptive statistics and correlations as well as internal consistency reliability (Table 2). Despotic leadership exhibited a substantial correlation with PCB ( $r = 0.22, p < 0.05$ ), and PCB also showed a significant correlation with organizational deviance ( $r = 0.25, p < 0.01$ ). There was a strong correlation between despotic leadership

and organizational deviance ( $r = 0.16^*, p < 0.05$ ), indicating that moral identity was inversely related to deviance ( $r = -0.33, p < 0.01$ ). These outcomes lend initial support to the proposed hypotheses.

### 3.3. Hypotheses testing

To evaluate research hypotheses, we use hierarchical multiple regression analysis with SPSS 21.0. We initially investigated the mediation function of PCB in the association between despotic leadership and organizational deviance. It has been examined the moderating role of moral identity in the relationship between PCB and organizational deviance. Besides, we investigate the moderating of moral identity within the indirect relationship between despotic leadership and organizational deviance, mediated by PCB. Table 3 displays the results of the regression analysis.

**Table 2.** Correlations, means, and standard deviations

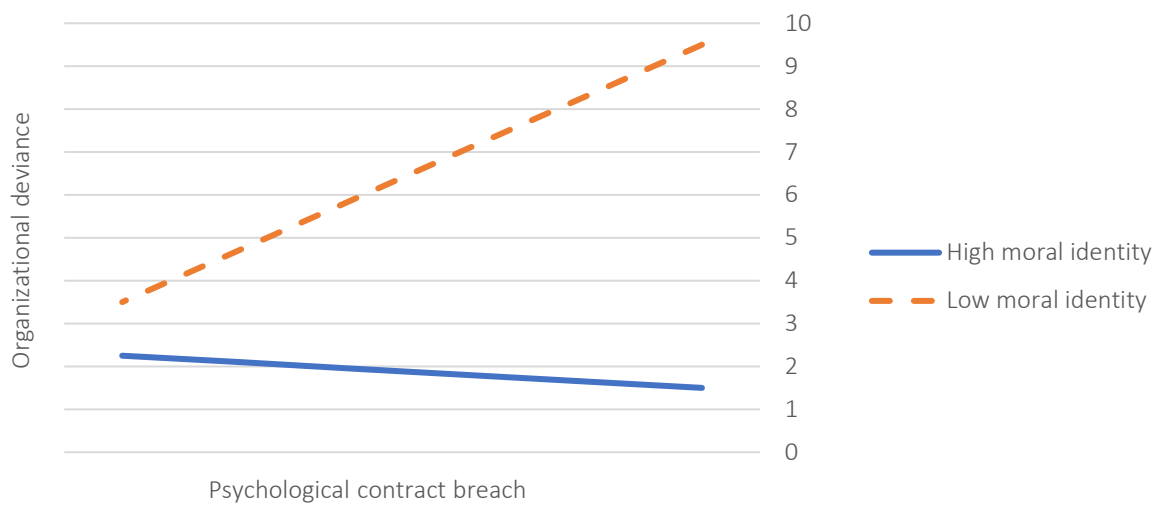
Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1 Gender								
2 Age (year)	0.04							
3 Work tenure (year)	0.06	0.39**						
4 Education	-0.16	-0.28**	-0.06					
5 Despotic leadership (Time-1)	-0.17*	-0.04	-0.02	0.06	(0.83)			
6 PCB (Time-1)	-0.03	0.09	0.05	-0.11	0.22*	(0.85)		
7 Moral identity (Time-2)	0.06	0.03	-0.04	-0.06	0.23**	-0.08	(0.81)	
8 Organizational deviance (Time-2)	-0.03	0.25**	0.39**	0.06	0.16*	0.25**	-0.33**	(0.82)
Mean	1.38	2.18	2.11	1.38	4.38	4.68	4.98	1.52
SD	0.55	0.82	0.69	0.90	0.69	0.88	0.89	0.67

Note: N = 185, \* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* $p < 0.01$ .

**Table 3.** Mediating and moderating in the regression analysis

Variables	Psychological contract breach			Organizational deviance		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Gender	-0.07	-0.05	-0.06	-0.02	-0.05	0.07
Age	0.06	0.12	0.03	0.07	0.02	0.05
Education	-0.13	-0.14	0.05	0.07	0.12	0.07
Tenure	0.04	0.03	0.08	0.12	0.09	0.06
DL		0.23**			0.04	0.02
PCB				0.17**	0.15**	0.11
MI						-0.25***
PCB * MI						-0.15*
R-square	0.04	0.07	0.17	0.26	0.28	0.39
Delta R-square		0.03		0.09	0.02	0.11
F-test	1.15	3.21*	11.15***	12.21***	10.2***	15.31***

Note: \* $p < 0.05$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ . Despotic Leadership (DL), Psychological Contract Breach (PCB), Moral Identity (MI), Organizational Deviance (OD).



**Figure 2.** Moral identity as a moderator on psychological contract breach and organizational deviance

Table 3 indicates a positive effect between despotic leadership and PCB ( $\beta = 0.23$ ,  $p$ -value  $< 0.01$ , Model 2), as well as a positive effect between PCB and organizational deviance ( $\beta = 0.17$ ,  $p$ -value  $< 0.01$ , Model 4). Model 5, the association between despotic leadership with organizational deviance, becomes non-significant ( $\beta = 0.04$ ,  $p = n.s.$ ). Thus, the three conditions of mediating role presented by Baron and Kenny (1986) were tested. Thus, *H1* is supported.

Hypothesis 2 investigates the moderating effect of moral identity on the relationship between PCB and organizational deviance. We incorporated the moderate variable of moral identity and its interaction with PCB in Model 6. The findings indicate that interaction has a negative correlation with organizational deviance ( $\beta = -0.15$ ,  $p < 0.01$ , Model 6). To interpret the interaction pattern, we employed a simple slopes procedure, as outlined by Aiken et al. (1991), at lower and higher levels of moral identity by standard deviation (one degree) above

and below the mean to demonstrate the interaction. Figure 2 illustrates relationship between PCB and organizational deviance, indicating a stronger effect at lower levels of moral identity ( $\beta = 0.27$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Conversely, the impact is minimal and statistically insignificant at higher levels of moral identity ( $\beta = -0.07$ ,  $p = n.s.$ ). Consequently, hypothesis 2 is validated.

In Hypothesis 3, we examined the role of moral identity as a moderator, where the PCB mediates the indirect relationship between despotic leadership and organizational deviance. Path analysis was conducted using Mplus 6.0 (Edwards & Lambert, 2007), applying the model in high and low moderating contexts. Five thousand replications of Monte Carlo were conducted to assess a confidence interval for indirect effects. The indirect effect is high at low levels of moral identity (estimate 0.08, 95% CI [0.04, 0.15]), while it was not significant at high levels of moral identity (estimate -0.02, 95% CI [-0.05, 0.03]) (Table 4). Consequently, Hypothesis 3 is validated.

**Table 4.** Moderated mediation of moral identity in organizational deviance

Moderator	Level	Conditional indirect effect	SE	Bias-corrected 95% CI
Moral identity	Low (-0.89)	0.08	0.05	(0.04, 0.15)
	High (0.89)	-0.02	0.02	(-0.05, 0.03)

Note: N = 185. Confidence intervals, corrected for bias at 95%, are obtained from five thousand bootstrap samples. The moderator values provided represent the sample mean and one degree above and below standard deviation.

## 4. DISCUSSION

Based on social exchange theory and consistent with our findings for 185 employees in six colleges at the University of Mosul, employees' perceptions of despotic leadership are linked to their perceptions of PCB, which in turn influences organizational deviance. This demonstrates the mediating role of PCB, due to subordinates' feelings that there is no trust between them and their despotic leaders, suffer from emotional detachment, arrogant, sensitive to criticism, lacking empathy, exploiting, and lacking ethical values (Naseer et al., 2016). These outcomes confirm earlier research indicating that when employees experience PCB, they develop negative emotions and a sense of psychological loss (Duran et al., 2019; Reimann, 2016). Also, aligns with Al-kashab (2024) who noted that unfulfilled expectations regarding respect and career development increase employees' anxiety and reduce their sense of efficacy.

If these negative feelings and cognitive contradictions are not reconciled by improving leadership style and meeting its basic requirements, this will increase the psychological distance between the organization and employees, because they will realize that their PCB has been violated, and they will find themselves obliged to take retaliatory actions such as unproductive work behaviors (Farnese et al., 2024; Verma et al., 2025). This result makes PCB a crucial precedent in the organization, causing employees to distance themselves psychologically from the organization and resort to revenge. Therefore, the present study strength-

ens the argument that PCB plays a crucial psychological role in explaining why despotic leadership escalates deviant behaviors within organizations.

Our study specifically contributes by presenting an argument about the effect of moral identity on reducing deviance, through its positive influence on shaping employees' ethical behavior. Consistent with prior studies showing that moral identity promotes ethical conduct and self-regulation (Cohen & Ehrlich, 2019; Leavitt et al., 2016). Conversely, for employees with low moral identity, morality represents a relatively less central guiding principle; they are less concerned with monitoring their current moral behavior and less likely to evaluate it against established moral standards. Additionally, they are less sensitive to discrepancies between their actions and their desired state of moral equilibrium after engaging in morally questionable behavior (Greenbaum et al., 2013; Reynolds & Ceranic, 2007). This suggests that moral identity serves as a personal resource that mitigates the adverse effects of despotic leadership and PCB on deviant behavior.

Finally, by using a sample from Mosul, Iraq, recognizing that Iraq differs substantially from Western contexts in social, cultural, economic, and political dimensions (Al-kashab, 2016), we recognize that many studies on despotic leadership, PCB, and organizational deviance have been accomplished in Western countries. Our research contributes by introducing a new cultural pattern that supports previous studies in the organizational theory field (Ma et al., 2019).

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## CONCLUSION

The study aimed to determine the impact of despotic leadership on organizational deviance, examining the mediating role of PCB and the moderating effect of moral identity in six colleges at the University of Mosul. The results showed that despotic leadership positively influences organizational deviance, and the mediating role of PCB was confirmed. Furthermore, the study revealed that moral identity moderates the indirect influence between despotic leadership and organizational deviance through PCB. The results of our study contribute to raising awareness about the potentially serious consequences of despotic leadership behavior in higher education institutions. Some of these consequences are reflected in the adverse psychological implications on employees that are not instantaneous but severe nonetheless. The biggest impact perhaps is the fact that the employees feel that the psychological contract between them and the organization is somehow breached. This gives them the perception that they are not supposed to carry out their expected duties and can do whatever they wish. This may eventually culminate into organizational deviant behaviors. Therefore, early detection and addressing of despotic leadership

behaviors becomes a priority. The study also helped in emphasizing the ethical identity of the employees and how it has a positive influence in guiding employees and aligning their conduct with ethical standards that are in line with the interest of the organization, in a bid to minimize the indirect influence of despotic leadership on organizational deviation.

We have made several valuable contributions in this study. Yet, there are other significant points that we should mention. Although it is true that the two-wave design will be useful in reducing the common method bias, it is important to keep in mind that the data were being obtained within a single cultural setting; this admittedly compromises the causal explanation and generalizability. We also propose the need to research on other mediating factors other than PCB, including emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and bullying at the workplace. Besides, we also recommend the need to further research on other types of organizational deviance especially organizational deviance that targets others. Finally, we believe it is beneficial to examine individual differences such as experience, competence, and resilience, as these may play a role in explaining the variation in employee responses to despotic leadership and why some employees are more affected by it than others.

## AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Conceptualization: Hassan Al-Kashab, Safa Al-Naimi, Raghad Kharrufa.

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