

## The Impact of Despotic Leadership on Knowledge Hiding Through Mediate of Psychological Contract Violation; the Moderating Role of Islamic Work Ethics

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### ABSTRACT

#### Keywords:

*Despotic Leadership,  
Psychological  
Contract Violation,  
knowledge hiding.  
Islamic work ethics*

This study examines how despotic Leadership impacts the Knowledge hiding in the workplace with examine the mediating role of psychological contract violation reactions to Despotic Leadership and how Islamic work ethics can weaken the effects of the relationship between psychological contract violation and knowledge hiding. Data was collected from 196 workers in industries in Iran. Results reveals a positive correlation between employees perceiving their Leader as despotic and engaging in knowledge hiding. Researchers discovered that when despotic Leadership occurs, psychological contract violations mediate the relationship between despotic Leadership and knowledge hiding. Moreover, the effect of Knowledge hiding in this relationship can be weakened when Islamic work ethics are present. Ethics is important in every workplace and should be upheld by those managing the organization. Transparent communication, honoring commitments, and verbal agreements with employees can benefit the work environment. This study explores how a COR framework can theoretically address knowledge hiding. Additionally, it explains that Islamic work ethics can moderate the effect of a leader with a negative style.

### INTRODUCTION

Knowledge is a fundamental organizational asset that is an advantage for any organization as an essential resource and competitive (Aboramadan et al., 2020; Davenport & Prusak, 1998; Khalid et al., 2018). Numerous studies have indicated that knowledge-sharing among employees can significantly enhance organizational outcomes.(Arthur & Huntley, 2005; Bouty, 2000; Lin, 2007; Pradhan et al., 2020; Scarborough & Carter, 2001) Multiple

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academic areas, such as organization studies, have studied the impact of leadership styles on knowledge in the workplace (Connelly et al., 2019; Connelly & Zweig, 2015; Khalid et al., 2018). Define knowledge hiding "as an intentional attempt by an individual to withhold or Hide Knowledge that another person has requested (Connelly & Zweig, 2015). Therefore, knowledge can be a negative behavior hidden in employees' hands (Connelly et al., 2019). It is challenging to motivate people to share their knowledge rather than keep it for the organization's sole advantage.(Farooq & Sultana, 2021).

Hiding has prioritized individual and interpersonal factors based on our extensive knowledge exploration. Most studies link Knowledge hiding leading causes to negative outcomes. However, few articles describe success(Xia et al., 2019).

Leaders influence their subordinates' discretionary and psychological behaviors, including hiding Knowledge. However, Leadership despotic behaviors have yet to be thoroughly studied(Khalid et al., 2018; Srivastava et al., 2006).

Our Research aims to understand the causes of Despotic Leadership, ineffective Leadership, and knowledge-hiding practices (Aflah et al., 2021; Fikriyah et al., 2019; Hassi et al., 2021; Usman & Mat, 2017). Islamic Work Ethics employees are committed to their work, diligent in their tasks, creative problem-solvers, loyal to their organization, goal-oriented, and creative. Individuals engaging with Islamic Work Ethics have improved job satisfaction, job involvement, Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB), organizational change, and adaptive performance. Additionally, it can affect their career (Abdi et al., 2014; Ahmad, 2011; Ali & Al-Owaihan, 2008; Hayati & Caniago, 2012; Javed et al., 2017; Khalil & Abu-Saad, 2009; Khan et al., 2015; Mohamed et al., 2010; Murtaza et al., 2016; Rokhman, 2010).

Despotic Leaders want complete conformity from their subordinates without empathy, have higher expectations, and have more influence over their followers(Schilling, 2009). The findings suggest a link between Despotic Leaders (DL)and subordinate Knowledge hiding ( KH). This association may not hold in other cross-cultural contexts. The reasons subordinates withhold Knowledge in response to Despotic Leadership are unclear. The present study incorporated existing scholarly works on displaced Conservation of Resource (COR) theory and Islamic work ethics (IWE ). This study claims that the Despotic style criticizes, disapproves, and threatens subordinates. These activities can impact subordinates' psychological contract violation impression(Pradhan et al., 2020). The association's feelings

about the psychological contract violation and knowledge-hiding activities have been observed. However, previous Research has not explored this particular coping mechanism.

Furthermore, given that most of the Iranian population (99.3989%) follows the Islamic faith, it is reasonable to anticipate a significant prevalence of Islamic Work Ethics within Iranian organizations.

Consequently, it is plausible to hypothesize that the detrimental impacts of despotic Leadership may be attenuated in this context (Islam, Ahmed, et al., 2022). We argue that those with strong Islamic Work Ethics are less likely to hide information in response to abusive leaders. Thus, Islamic Work Ethics may moderate the effects of controlling Leadership on knowledge hiding.

First, Our research study significantly contributes to the literature on despotic Leadership, Islamic Work Ethics, and Knowledge hiding among colleagues. Second, Previous studies have examined the relationship between abusive supervision and knowledge hiding (He et al., 2023; Khalid et al., 2018; Offergelt & Venz, 2023).

Our Research analyzes how despotic Leadership impacts Knowledge hiding in a high-power distance Iranian firm. This Research expands on Middle Eastern researchers' work on this topic, particularly in countries with a majority of Islamic work ethic followers; considering Islamic Work Ethics' moderating effect, Iran's high Muslim population (99.3989%) is an excellent place to study these variables and their effects.

The study also examines how Despotic Leadership impacts knowledge hiding and how psychological contract violations mediate this effect. It also examines how Islamic work ethics—based on honesty and respect—are moderate. This distinct cultural perspective can shape attitudes toward Despotic Leadership and Knowledge, hiding psychological contract violations.

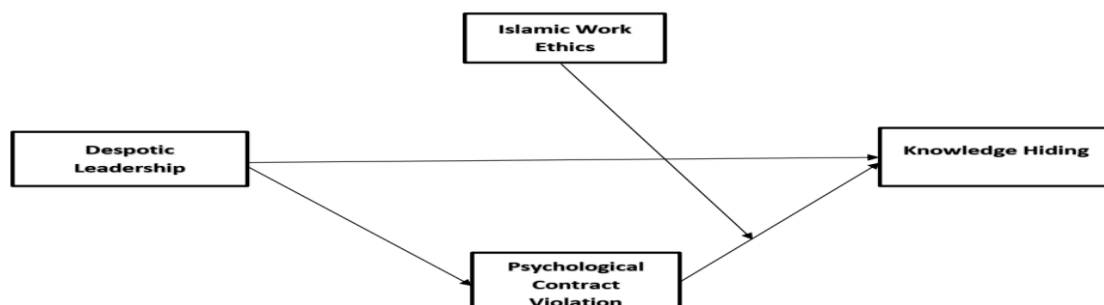


Figure 1. Source Author Developed

Despotic Leadership traces back to the Greek word "despot," used 2400 years ago. However, in recent decades, it has been characterized in leadership studies as destructive and abusive Leadership requiring followers to follow the Leader. Despotic leaders abuse, exploit, and disregard ethics (De Hoogh & Den Hartog, 2008; Khizar et al., 2023; Mughal et al., 2023; Schilling, 2009; Tepper, 2000). High-power distance countries are more exposed to despotic. This Leader fails to consider the impact of the workplace environment on subordinates. (Andersson. et al. 1999, p. 457).

Knowledge management entails planning, organizing, and utilizing skills, information, and their practical application. Knowledge is cognitive understanding, evaluative perception, or competence acquired through learning, practicing, or questioning (Di Vaio et al., 2021). Knowledge hiding occurs when an individual intentionally conceals information or Knowledge from other team members when requested, depriving the organization of potential benefits (Pan et al., 2018). Knowledge, whether gained via job or training, is an organizational investment, like all other resources (Pereira & Mohiya, 2021).

Knowledge hiding assists the organization by keeping information hidden from coworkers (Connelly & Zweig, 2015), which may be critical and characterize organizational contexts. However, we do not consider this KH feature in our Research.

Interpersonal, Leadership, and knowledge-hiding elements concerning organizational outcomes have been studied (Lu, 2022). Recent surveys on despotic Leadership and knowledge hiding indicated that abusive supervisors and leaders encourage Knowledge hiding. Some employees may not share their Knowledge and keep it to themselves (Islam, Ahmed, et al., 2022; Khalid et al., 2018; Srivastava et al., 2006; Tepper, 2000; Zhao & Jiang, 2021). Studies show employees may hide Knowledge as retaliation if they think their manager is disrespectful; therefore, the act of sharing or hiding Knowledge is influenced by Despotic Leadership (Khalid et al., 2018). Employees seek to safeguard their power by hiding information from others to achieve control and personal savings within a company (Cress et al., 2005; Wang et al., 2020; Xiao & Cooke, 2019). In any organization, system progress and outcome depend on sharing Knowledge and meeting quality and social responsibility standards (Miranda & Saunders, 2003; Sher & Lee, 2004; Ghasemaghahi et al., 2020).

Most recent studies on knowledge hiding have primarily focused on the viewpoint of abusive supervisors. Khalid et al. 2018, studied the way abusive Leadership affects hospitality hiding information in Pakistan. The study of 224 organizations indicated that aggressive supervision

increased knowledge hiding. Therefore, an engaged leader is better than an authoritarian one. Data exchange improves employee work performance and innovation.

However, understanding the effects of despotic Leadership might help firms improve employee task performance and promote responsible decision-making through knowledge-sharing (Islam, Ahmed, et al., 2022). Knowledge hiding is a significant challenge for service and industry firms. According to the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, employees are motivated to preserve their existing resources and actively seek to acquire new resources to aid them in completing their tasks (Hobfoll, 1989). However, it has been found in Research that when employees experience workplace stress, they prioritize safeguarding their current resources as Knowledge rather than acquiring new ones (Ng & Feldman, 2012).

When employees fear job loss or job-related stress, employees hide their expertise or Knowledge to protect it (He et al., 2023). Similarly, employees may be motivated. They believe sharing Knowledge will help them get or retain resources.

This study claims despotic Leadership impacts KH. These two constructs are linked by COR theory. The COR theory is one of the most appropriate models for explaining how authoritarian Leadership affects knowledge concealment. Abusive supervisors may be indirectly addressed by subordinates who conceal information and demonstrate competence and autonomy (Islam, Asif, et al., 2022).

The theory states that people who cannot trust their leaders may hide their Knowledge to avoid resource loss. DL's leadership style may directly impact this behavior (Guo et al., 2022).

***H1. Despotic Leadership (DL) has a significant positive impact on employees' knowledge hiding (KH).***

### **Despotic Leadership and Psychological contract violation**

The psychological contract is a degree of an employee's perception, not written and signed but interpreted by an employee. Psychological contract Violation of this belief creates psychological contract violation that results in emotional damage, negative feelings, sadness and disappointment, frustration, dissatisfaction, and rage in the organization managed by the Leader. (Morrison & Robinson, 1997; Raja et al., 2020).

The psychological contract violation depends on the subordinate's perception of effort and ability, commitment in reverse anticipation, and organization and leader contribution to reward and promotions. Respect intrusion may cause harmful and more intense feelings, resulting in subsequent adverse emotional reactions, impacting the outcome (Beri & Pathania; Rousseau & Wade-Benzoni, 1995). Psychological contract violation is seen as retaliation

against leaders and organizations. When staff cannot meet what they expect ethically or morally in the workplace, they believe that organizations might show adverse reactions, and this even follows the same response (Morrison & Robinson, 1997; Nikolaou et al., 2007; Tomprou & Nikolaou, 2011). Researchers have found a connection between psychological contract violation and Despotic Leadership (Dust et al., 2018; Naseer et al., 2016; Nauman et al., 2018). Despotic Leadership can harm morale, ethics, empathy, dedication, and responsibility. Despotic Leadership, like authoritarian Leadership, tends to restrict and exclude subordinates from corporate decision-making, according to scholars (Raja et al., 2020).

Due to a lack of communication and fairness, despotic Leadership has been linked to immorality, unwritten perceptions of avoiding agreement with subordinates, and frustration (Braun, 2017; Hochwarter & Thompson, 2012). They follow their self-centered rules in the organization; even studies indicate that despotic leadership ratings did not perceive followers as less effective or less optimistic (De Hoogh & Den Hartog, 2008; Syed et al., 2020). Studies have emphasized the important influence of a subordinate's impression of their Leadership on organizational outcomes. Having positive leadership attitudes is crucial since this can affect personal and business values. Enhancing these emotions may improve organizational success (Erkutlu & Chafra, 2013, 2016; SHAMSPOUR et al., 2023).

*H2. Is there a significant positive impact of despotic Leadership on psychological contract violation.*

### **Psychological contract violation as a mediator between despotic Leadership and knowledge-hiding**

Employees who perceive their Leadership as abusive and Despotic are more inclined to generate work scenarios that deviate from their original expectations and yield varied outcomes. Therefore, they refrain from sharing Knowledge with others (Aboramadan et al., 2020; Rai & Agarwal, 2018). According to employees, self-centered, manipulative, and self-interested Leadership is counterproductive and violates business policies. This perception is heightened when executives with authority act this way. This makes people protect their information while causing job problems. Insufficient exchange relationships produce this imbalance. Other employees may withhold Knowledge because they support the company and think the Leader is abusive (Pradhan et al., 2020). Existing literature suggests effective Leadership may deter knowledge hiding (Tang et al., 2015). However, empirical evidence supporting this assertion within organizational contexts still needs to be discovered.

Promoting psychological contract violation by despotic Leadership is a logical strategy to inhibit hiding information among followers. This is supported by the notion that psychological contract violation is a significant antecedent to sharing and exchanging Knowledge(Siemsens et al., 2009). Furthermore, despotic Leadership fosters psychological safety, reinforcing its relevance(Huang & Paterson, 2017)

Because knowledge hiding is frequent, the study aims to show that egotism and authoritarianism can lead to employees feeling their contract has been violated. Empirical evidence suggests that psychological contract violation significantly mediate the relationship between despotic Leadership and employees' inclination to share Knowledge rather than withhold it(Pradhan et al., 2020).

We employ the conservation of resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989) to explain the relationship between Despotic Leadership and knowledge hiding. The COR theory states that organizational marginalization depletes resources.(Volpato & Andrighetto, 2015). When the sense of marginalization is internalized, the experience of psychological discomfort increases. Research indicates that feelings of contempt, humiliation, and neglect will increase marginalization, rendering workers less important in society(Bell & Khoury, 2016; Christoff, 2014; Huo et al., 2016). Physically unpleasant encounters may obstruct the organization's information-sharing process and foster knowledge-hiding behavior (Zhang & Min, 2021; Zhao & Jiang, 2021). Workers engage in deviant actions because they cannot reciprocate assertively(Foulk et al., 2016). Leaders' stress and intimidation behaviors affect employees' psychological contracts. Thus, an employee who detects unfairness and violates a contract may intentionally hide Knowledge from other employees to gain retaliation from members and leaders, even if it extends his/her stay in the organization. (Halbesleben, 2011).

*H3. Psychological contract violation mediates the relationship between despotic Leadership and knowledge-hiding*

### **The Moderating Role of Islamic Work Ethics**

Weber (1958) claimed that protestant work ethics could influence where he lived and other countries and can be widespread as a theory. Thirty decades later, Islamic scholars in religious countries discovered Islamic Work Ethics (IWE), which can influence employees' beliefs, conceptions, and perceptions of the workplace and their organization.(Ali, 1988; Islam, Ahmed, et al., 2022; Raja et al., 2020) .

Ali (1992, p. 507) states, "Islamic Work Ethics is an orientation towards work." Islamic Work Ethics is more related to Allah's words in the Quran and the prophet Mohammed's advice to

followers as the Hadith of Allah to the last messenger Mohammad, like "There is no envy except in two: a person whom God has given wealth, and he spends it in the right way, and a person whom Allah has given wisdom (i.e., religious Knowledge) and he gives His decisions accordingly and teaches it to the others. " .( Sahih al-Bukhari 1409). Therefore, it gradually affected Islamic followers' cultures and individual perceptions in all aspects of their conditional lives and outcomes at work and in their individual lives(Beekun & Badawi, 2005). Hard work is a virtue in Islam, and serving people at work is like worshipping Allah. Islam values seeking, obtaining, and spreading Knowledge.(Khan et al., 2021; Khan et al., 2015).

Despotic Leadership is self-contentedness; an opinioned leader without any consideration of his/her subordinates cannot bring the feeling that employees can trust to spontaneous decision-making about them and be fair(ASAD et al., 2022). However, a higher Islamic Work Ethic can dilute the bitterness of the behavior of their leaders and even Weaken relationships between knowledge hiding and Leadership (Khalid et al., 2018).

Researchers have examined how Islamic Work Ethics (IWE) affects employee outcomes for decades. Understanding affects dependent factors like job satisfaction. (Hayati & Caniago, 2012; Mohamed et al., 2010; Rokhman, 2010). It also positively impacts organizational commitment(Manan et al., 2013; Marri et al., 2012), and even it can negatively correlate with Turnover Intention(Sadozai et al., 2013; Rokhman, 2010). Islamic Work Ethics has a critical role psychologically in related to work and what employees can envision from the environment at the workplace( Raja et al., 2019; Khan et al., 2015)

Despotic leaders can harm workplace relationships, but Islamic Work Ethics can ignore fairness and impoliteness by leaders, lessening their severity(Khan et al., 2015; Yousef, 2000). Due to the witnessing of all contracts between persons, including God, this can buffer knowledge-hiding reactions. Individuals will be held accountable to God for their actions toward others. Previous Research found that high Islamic Work Ethics reduced psychological contract violation because their perception of reward and justice, even with lower fairness, reduced negativity. Because The Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) declared, "The most generous people after me will be those who will acquire Knowledge and then share/distribute it," a high Islamic work ethic emphasizes honesty. They will appear alone on Judgment Day like rulers. (Al-Tirmidhi, [Hadith, 93]."

Islam advises followers to share Knowledge, collaborate, and shun retribution, wicked behaviors, and revengeful reactions, which violate reciprocity. Thus, Islamic Work Ethics can



moderate psychological contract violation, which may even affect colleagues' knowledge requests (Serenko & Bontis, 2016). so employees with high levels of Islamic Work Ethics do not keep secret jobs and never retaliate in abusive reactions because they desire to do good and leave wrong and unfair actions for judgment day.

**H4.** *Islamic Work Ethics the relationship between PCV and Knowledge hiding such that higher Islamic Work Ethics weakens the relationship between PCV and Knowledge hiding*

## METHODOLOGY

### **Method**

The study participants were employed by private organizations and manufacturers in Mashhad, Iran. The Krejcie and Morgan table (Morgan, 1970) was used for determining the sample size, which included 400 persons. The suitable size was 196 employees.

This study determined the four organizations' approved human resources departments using "Google Forms" online and a questionnaire-based in-person survey. We could contact employees with written approval. Based on HR, all employees receive the same questionnaire. Also emphasized were data protection and confidentiality.

### **Measures**

The measures were integrated into a questionnaire utilizing a 5-point Likert scale. The investigator did not interfere with self-reported data.

**Control variables** The present study used age, gender, education, and work experience due to their potential influence on subordinates' reactions to harmful conduct exhibited by their Leader ((Tepper et al., 2004; Zellars et al., 2002; Zhao et al.,2013). Age and experience were in years.

**Despotic Leadership:** Despotic Leadership (IV) was assessed using six MCLQ-adapted items (Hanges & Dickson, 2004). Authoritarianism prioritizes the Leader's self-interest, self-aggrandizement, insensitivity, and exploitation. These behaviors were identified by Hoogh and Den Hartog (2008) using similar items.

**Knowledge Hiding:** the KH (DV) adapted three items from Peng's (2012) 3 items. Moreover, "Do not want to transform personal knowledge and experience into organizational knowledge." "Do not share innovative achievements." "Do not share helpful information with others."

**Psychological contract violation:** The PCV (MEV) assessment was conducted using the four-item PCV measure developed by Robinson and Morrison (2000). Some items that exemplify psychological contract violation are as follows: "I feel extremely frustrated by how

I have been treated by my organization", and" I feel that my organization has violated the contract between us."

***Islamic Work Ethics: Islamic Work Ethics: (MOV)*** was measured on a short four-item scale of Ali (1992) (ALI scale is 15Q ): "I feel extremely frustrated by how I have been treated by my organization." I feel that my organization has violated the contract between us." I feel betrayed by my organization."

## ANALYSIS

### ***Reliability and Validity***

Cronbach's alpha coefficient assessed measurement scale reliability. Cronbach's alpha scores indicate excellent internal consistency in all constructions. McDonald's omega total and hierarchical values improve build reliability. High item factor loadings within each construct indicate the measuring model's dependability. AVE values exceed the 0.5 threshold, suggesting convergence. According to reliability analysis, the measuring scales are reliable and adequate for research analysis.

***Table 1. Reliability and Validity Analysis***

<b>construct</b>	<b>items</b>	<b>loading</b>	<b>alpha</b>	<b>(rho_a)</b>	<b>(rho_c)</b>	<b>(AVE)</b>
<b>Despotic Leadership</b>	DL1	0.885	0.932	0.933	0.946	0.746
	DL2	0.808				
	DL3	0.885				
	DL4	0.872				
	DL5	0.857				
	DL6	0.874				
<b>Psychological contract violation</b>	PCV1	0.810	0.865	0.867	0.875	0.637
	PCV2	0.849				
	PCV3	0.854				
	PCV4	0.861				
<b>Knowledge Hiding</b>	KH1	0.888	0.858	0.860	0.913	0.778
	KH2	0.884				
	KH3	0.875				
<b>ISLAMIC WORK ETHICS</b>	IWE1	0.751	0.817	0.867	0.875	0.637
	IWE2	0.828				
	IWE3	0.785				
	IWE4	0.825				

***Discriminant validity*** evaluates research constructs' differentiation. The Fornell & Larcker criterion determines whether each construct's AVE square root exceeds its correlations with others. Discriminant validity is assessed using the correlation matrix. The square root AVE of despotic Leadership (DL) is higher than that of knowledge hiding, psychological contract

violation, and Islamic work ethics. Despotism discriminates constructs. Knowledge Hiding (KH) has a more significant square root of the AVE than Despotism (DL) and Psychological Contract Violation (PCV), proving discriminant validity. The tight relationship with Islamic Work Ethics (IWE) shows alignment. Despotism (DL) and Knowledge Hiding had lower square root AVEs than Psychological Contract Violation (PCV). The similarity to Islamic Work Ethics (IWE) suggests overlap. Islamic Work Ethics (IWE) has a more significant square root of the AVE than Despotism (DL), Knowledge Hiding (KH), and Psychological Contract Violation (PCV), proving discriminant validity. Fornell Larcker says constructs are discriminatory. Knowledge Hiding, Islamic Work Ethics, and Psychological Contract Violation may interact. These overlaps may require additional study or test item refinement to improve Research discriminant validity.

**Table 2. Discriminant Validity -Fornell &Larcker criterion**

	. Despotism Leadership	. Knowledge Hiding	. Psychological contract violation	. Islamic Work Ethics
01. Despotism Leadership	<b>0.864</b>			
02. Knowledge Hiding	0.271	<b>0.882</b>		
03. Psychological contract violation	0.503	0.298	<b>0.844</b>	
04. Islamic Work Ethics	0.059	-0.279	-0.114	<b>0.846</b>

**Discriminant Validity (HTMT):**

The Heterotrait-Mono trait (HTMT) ratio of correlations measures discriminant validity by determining whether constructs are more strongly linked with their measurements than others. For discriminant validity, HTMT values should be below 0.85. The Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT) supports discriminant validity because all values are below 0.85. This suggests that the study's conceptions are separate since each is more strongly connected with its measurements than others.

**Table 3. Discriminant validity (HTMT)**

	Despotism Leadership	Knowledge Hiding	. Psychological contract violation	. Islamic Work Ethics
01. Despotism Leadership				
02. Knowledge Hiding	0.302			
03. Psychological contract violation	0.553	0.345		
04. Islamic Work Ethics	0.072	0.328	0.163	
03. Psychological contract violation	0.071	0.194	0.077	0.396

### Cross loading

In this method, the correlation between the indicators of a structure is compared with that structure and the degree of correlation of those indicators with other structures. As can be seen from the table below results, all the questions or indicators related to each structure have a higher correlation with the same structure, and so on. Another model's divergent validity is adequate.

Note. DL = Despotic Leadership, IWE = Islamic Work Ethics, KH = Knowledge Hiding, PVC = Psychological Contract Violation.

**Table 4. Cross loading**

	Islamic work ethics	Knowledge hiding	Psychological contract violation	despotic Leadership	Islamic work ethics x Psychological contract violation
DL1	0.044	0.234	0.451	0.885	0.072
DL2	0.024	0.167	0.418	0.808	-0.050
DL3	0.004	0.232	0.427	0.885	0.036
DL4	0.019	0.252	0.408	0.872	0.019
DL5	0.016	0.269	0.443	0.857	-0.015
DL6	0.038	0.245	0.455	0.874	0.101
IWE1	0.751	-0.186	-0.082	0.080	0.307
IWE2	0.828	-0.286	-0.046	0.057	0.308
IWE3	0.785	-0.221	-0.177	0.016	0.276
IWE4	0.825	-0.382	-0.091	-0.027	0.255
KH1	-0.336	0.888	0.284	0.251	-0.185
KH2	-0.296	0.882	0.257	0.229	-0.298
KH3	-0.317	0.876	0.247	0.237	-0.229
PVC1	-0.052	0.208	0.810	0.496	0.059
PVC2	-0.127	0.265	0.849	0.403	-0.052
PVC3	-0.122	0.246	0.854	0.346	-0.076
PVC4	-0.105	0.288	0.861	0.432	-0.057

### Structural Model Assessment

Following the assessment of the measurement model, the next step is evaluating the structural path for the evaluation of path coefficients (relationships amongst study constructs) and their statistical significance.

**H.1** Despotic leadership (DL) significantly impacts employees' knowledge hiding (KH). The results revealed that despotic Leadership significantly and positively impacts knowledge hiding (B 0.208,  $t = 2.277$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Hence, H1 was supported.

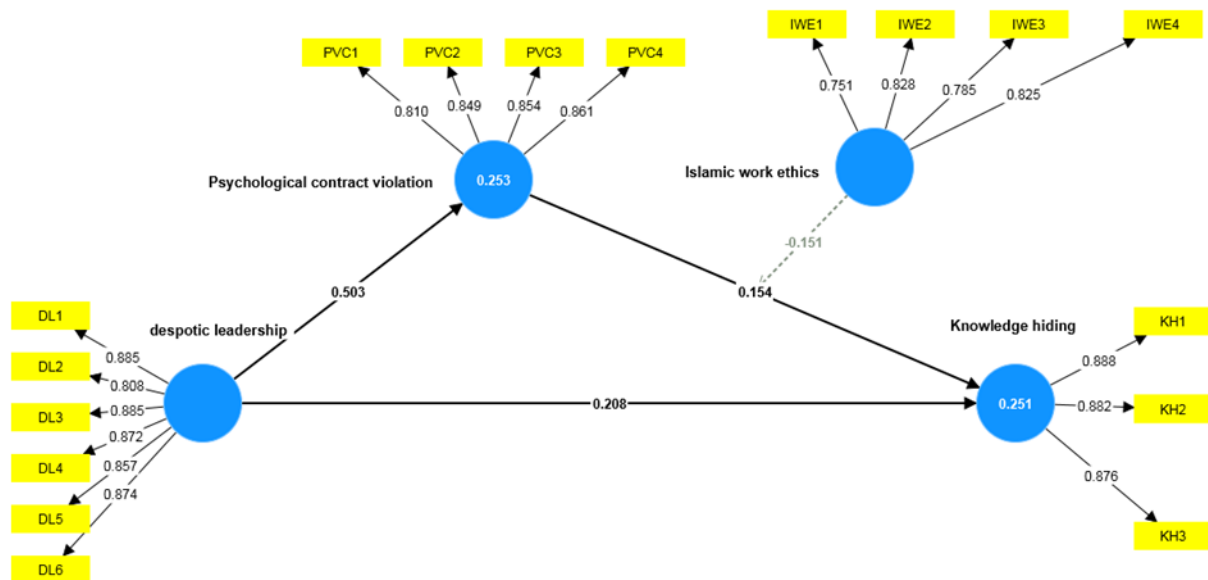
**H.2** evaluates whether Despotic Leadership has a significant positive impact on psychological contract violation. The results revealed that Despotic Leadership significantly and positively affects psychological contract violation (B 0.503,  $t = 9.276$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Hence, H2 was supported. The results are presented in Table 5

**Table5. Direct Relationships**

Hypotheses	B	Standard deviation	T statistics	P values	result
D L -> K H	0.208	0.091	2.277	0.023	Supported
D L -> P C V	0.503	0.054	9.276	0.000	Supported

Note. B =Beta Coefficient, D L= **Despotic Leadership**, PCV= Psychological Contract Violation, , **K H**= **Knowledge Hiding**

**Figure 1**



**(Model Fit)**

After checking the fit of measurement and structural models, it is time to check the fit of the overall research model. SRMR, the standard root mean square residual index, is the difference between the structural model's observed correlation and the correlation matrix. If the value of this index is less than 0.8, it indicates that the model fits appropriately. In this Research, SRMR=0.061 is considered, so the model fits well.

**Mediation Analysis**

Mediation analysis assessed the mediating role of psychological contract violation in the relationship between Despotic Leadership and Knowledge Hiding. The results (see Table 1) revealed a significant indirect effect of [Despotic Leadership] on [Knowledge Hiding] through psychological contract violation (  $H^* 3 / \text{beta} = 0.077, t = 5.794, p < 0.001$  ). The total effect of Despotic Leadership on Knowledge Hiding was significant (  $\text{beta} = 0.285, t = 3.772, p < 0.001$  ). With the inclusion of the mediator, the effect of psychological contract violation on Knowledge Hiding was still significant (  $\text{beta} = 0.154, t = 2.327, p < 0.01$  ). This shows a complementary partial mediating role in psychological contract violation in the relationship between Despotic Leadership and OP. Hence, H3 was supported.

**Table 6.**

Total effects ( D L-> KH)			Direct effect ( D L-> KH)			H13:DL->PSV->KH	Coefficient	Sample mean (M)	5.00 %	95.0 0%
Coefficient	T value	p-value	Coefficient	T value	p-value					
0.077	1.98	0.02	0.285	3.772	0.000	0.077	0.083	3	0.142	

**Moderation Analysis**

H4: Islamic Work Ethics(IWE) the relationship between psychological contract violation (PCV )and Knowledge hiding(KH) such that higher Islamic Work Ethics weakens the relationship between PCV and KH

The study assessed the moderating role of Islamic Work Ethics on the relationship between psychological contract violation (PCV )and

Further, the significance of the moderating effect was analyzed, and the results revealed a weakened and significant moderating impact of IWE on the relationship between PCV and KH (b=-0.150, t = 2.232, p < .001), supporting H4. This shows that with an increase in role IWE, the relationship between PCV and HK is weakened. The moderation analysis summary is presented in Table 7.

**Table 7**

	B	(M)	(STDEV)	T statistics	P values	H4
IWE x PCV KH	-0.15	-0.154	0.067	2.232	0.013	<b>Supported</b>

Note. B =Beta Coefficient,M= Sample Mean , STDEV =Standard deviation D L= Despotic Leadership, PCV= Psychological Contract Violation, , K H= Knowledge Hiding

Further, slope analysis is presented to understand better the nature of the moderating effects (Figure 2). However, higher Islamic Work Ethics weaken the impact of PCV on KH.

**Figure 2.**



## DISCUSSION

This study aimed to investigate the impact of despotic leadership behaviors on knowledge-hiding, focusing on the mediating role of psychological contract violation. It contributed to related literature on how destructive leadership behavior can influence the relationship between despotic Leadership and knowledge-hiding and mediate psychological contract violation, specifically through the moderating Effect of Islamic Work Ethics. The study reveals a positive correlation between Despotic Leadership and Knowledge hiding.

The impact of despotic Leadership was positively significant after the study on knowledge-hiding behavior. Despotic leadership was positively related to psychological contract violation. The indirect effect of despotic Leadership on knowledge hiding was significant, indicating a substantial association between psychological contract violation and Knowledge hiding as retaliation to the system. As demonstrated by the findings of our Research, destructive leadership dynamics significantly affect the incidence of knowledge hiding among organization members. Remarkably, H3 results are based on previous Research. The results show that Islamic Work Ethics reduces subordinates' psychological reactions to professional stress.(Ajmal et al., 2015). It was statistically significant that Islamic Work Ethics Weaken the relationship between PCV and knowledge-hiding behaviors. So, H3 was supported. As we expected, higher Islamic Work Ethics weaken the association between PCV and Knowledge hiding. Thus, work ethics might still affect solid psychological perception while reaching organizational justice. (Khan et al., 2015; Tufail et al., 2017).

Prior Research has focused on the direct positive influence of knowledge hiding concerning abusive behavior, neglecting to examine how this association may impact work ethics regarding psychological and mental violations. (Pradhan et al. 2019, Aboramadan et al, 2020) However, this study shows that the direct and indirect relationship between Despotic Leadership and knowledge hiding, mediated by psychological contract violation (PCV), is contingent upon knowledge hiding.

## CONCLUSION

The present study's results are consistent with COR theory, explaining why when an individual experiences a psychological contract violation and observes despotic leadership behaviors, it might increase the sense of threat, so individuals are motivated to withhold Knowledge as a valuable resource, leading to more excellent retention of Knowledge within the business rather than disseminating it among coworkers and colleagues (Riaz et al., 2019). The study's results provide additional evidence that (PCV) plays a role in influencing the

association between Despotic Leadership and Knowledge Hiding. This essential discovery demonstrates that a violation of the psychological contract by the specified organization impacts the perception of psychological contract violation, which has a notable and favorable effect on the sense of knowledge hiding. This discovery substantiates previous Research that has examined the mediating role of contract violation (Arasli et al., 2019).

### ***Managerial implications***

According to the findings of this investigation, there are several implications for managers. First, a Despotic leadership style or behavior undermines the positive outcome, though bad Leadership instills in subordinates that a leader can make any decision immediately; hence, the future of work life is at stake (Rasool et al., 2018). Therefore, this dysfunction and stress cost the Knowledge that they gain by the organization as experience, so we have to suggest that the Leader consider a rewarding system for those who share their Knowledge via organizational goals because Knowledge is part of good or bad performance and creativity so this can be one of valuable outcome for Leadership (Naseer et al., 2016; Nauman et al., 2021) Second, in some organizations, this style (Despotic) is chosen by some leaders as a better option because they think it might work better than other kinds of Leadership; some have this reason that time is of the essence and want decisions made quickly and prefer results faster instead of leaving to the team. Besides, studies show that even this kind of Leadership might not weaken results in private companies (Shams Pour et al., 2023). In this case, if Leadership sways the perception of followers that this behavior is as parental Leadership, employees feel less insecure and less stressed that the organization will not violate their contract and some other kindness will cover it Third, Employees always remember promises made when they are recruited. Managers and supervisors should be honest and careful in verbal agreements. Thus, organizations should seriously maintain staff's psychological feelings. This requires the company to be transparent about initial employee agreements, claims, and future promises. Because Leader's subordinates are more calculating when they reach an agreement and consider their benefits, if they see any contract violation related to their expectation and what was claimed, they start to exchange retaliation in their action, so in this case, the organization must get close and communicate freely with workers to get a clear vision of what they expected when they hired and what they see now and after get their words and th Fourth, Ethics are important and different from firm to firm, organization to organization, and even geographical region. However, when reaching a religious country, it can be a joint base



in the organization for handling the subordinate's ethics, especially in our field; when they reach an Islamic country, it can cover some negative feelings in case managers develop these ethics. These ethics can impact job satisfaction, commitment, and organizational citizenship behavior if leaders choose a despotic approach in an Islamic country and organization, even having to show they believe in their ethics. It is essential that the head of the organization follows Islamic work ethics and shows its beliefs genuinely.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

The interpretation of our findings should take into consideration different limitations.

First, three manufacturing facilities were surveyed in Mashhad, Khorasan Razavi, and Abhar, Zanjan. It is important to note that our sampling approach may limit generalizability.

Second, authors investigated despotic leadership behavior, which has been extensively researched due to its harmful implications. The method should be examined in conjunction with other leadership approaches to improve the clarity of results. This study would lessen the moderating effects and influence of the same mediator variables on the relationship.

Third, to resolve this limitation, future research efforts discussing Islamic Work Ethics designs may employ longitudinal designs and ensure an adequate sample size. In conclusion, authors have formulated and defined knowledge-hiding behaviors as a means of retaliation and self-protection to extend one's tenure within an organization, especially when leadership decisions are made arbitrarily based on subjective reports or emotions.

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