

The Impact of Despotic Leadership on Counterproductive Work Behavior is Explained Through Psychological Contract Breach and the Moderating Role of Psychological Safety

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Abstract

The main objective of the study to explore the relationship of Despotic leadership on Counter Productive Work Behavior explained through Psychological Contract Breach and the moderating role of Psychological Safety. The current study focuses on two negative outcomes i.e. psychological contract breach and counterproductive work behavior due to despotic leadership because most of the prior studies focus to the positive side of the leadership. Cross-sectional research design use to complete this study. Due to time constraint researcher use Random sampling technique for data collection. All hypothesis is accepted in this research that confirm the negative side of leadership existence. Finding indicated despotic leadership has a significant effect on counterproductive work behavior and psychological contract breach. This study not only contribute in the literature but also provide guidance to the organizations.

Keywords: Despotic Leadership, Counter productive work behavior, Psychological Contract Breach, Psychological Safety

1 Introduction

Leadership entails influencing others to achieve the earmarked goals (House et al., [1979](#)). Assessment of data for 48 out of 500 Fortune Companies delineated that leadership is pivotal for transforming organizational resources to financial benefits (Wang et al., [2021](#)). Leadership is an integral and setting forth facet for the organization to accomplish organizational goals (Wang et al., [2021](#)). Researchers have mostly focused on the positive side of leadership, subsequently

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neglecting the dark side of leadership (Haynes et al., [2015](#); Ates et al., [2018](#)). It is requisite for organizational employees to be equipped with the knowledge of the positive and negative side of leadership (Ali et al., [2015](#); Su et al., [2021](#)). It also the outcomes related to the positive and negative side of leadership to overcome the hurdle in pursuit of organizational goals (Li et al., [2022](#)).

Despotic leadership (DL) is conceded as the dark side of leadership. Despotic leadership stimulates negative effects on work-related outcomes (Shuja et al., [2020](#)). Despotic leadership is relatively toxic for the team's well-being as despotic leaders are aggressive and autocratic, despotic leaders tend to pose an exploiting behavior, despotic leaders are only concerned about their own interest, despotic leaders are morally corrupt, despotic leaders provoke fear and stress in subordinates (De Hoogh et al. ([2008](#)))

The organizations are having serious concerns in regards to the darker side of leadership as the negative aspect of leadership is getting more intensive (Hoobler et al., [2013](#)). Schilling ([2009](#)) has elaborated eight different categories of negative leadership, including despotic leadership and seven other types of negative leadership (Al Halbusi et al., [2022](#); Mohammadi et al., [2021](#); Shoib et al., [2022](#)). Despotic leadership includes prominent features of negative leadership (Schilling, [2009](#)). Despotic leadership was mostly studied in the context of politics, and endeavor is required to study despotic leadership in the context of management studies.

Negative leadership entails negative behaviors of leaders negatively affects the subordinates damaging their performance, or clutching negative work-related outcomes (Frames et al., [2003](#)). Despotic leaders do not possess the characteristic of social responsibility as they are self-centered and only seek self-interest (De Hoogh et al., [2008](#)). Aronson ([2001](#)) has described despotic leaders as exploiters, autocratic, and revenge seekers. The characteristics of despotic leaders make the despotic leaders highly unfavorable to work among a team (Iorember et al., [2022](#); Lebni et al., [2021](#); Mubeen et al., [2021](#); Soroush et al., [2021](#); Su et al., [2021](#)). Despotic leaders harm their followers psychologically evoking the perception in followers that they are being exploited, treated unfairly and provoking psychological negativity among the followers (Abbas et al., [2022](#); Hafeez et al., [2023](#); Local Burden of Disease, [2021](#); Micah et al., [2023](#); Peter et al., [2017](#)). It further develops damage for organizations (De Hoogh et al., [2008](#)).

Autocratic leadership is positively associated with psychological contract breach (Jiang et al. [2017](#)), and since despotic leaders are autocratic (De Hoogh et al., [2008](#)), employees may feel psychologically breached due to despotic leadership (Moradi et al., [2021](#); Su et al., [2022](#); Su et al., [2021](#); Zafar et al., [2022](#); Zhuang et al., [2022](#)). Psychological contract Breach (PCB) is when employees perceive the failure of an organization to meet their psychologically contracted obligations (Morrison & Robinson, [1997](#)). Despotic leaders are seen to be on a low in terms of ethics as it influences firm performance (Farzadfar et al., [2022](#); Ge et al., [2022](#); Hussain et al., [2017](#); Yu et al., [2022](#)). Thus, despotic leaders do not care about morality as they almost neglect the legitimate interest of followers. The continuous harmful effects of despotic leadership on organization and followers call for a negative response (Rahmat et al., [2022](#)). Psychological contract breach is positively associated with counterproductive work behavior (Chao et al., [2011](#)).

Counter Productive Work Behavior (CPWB) is intentionally deviating from organizational disciplines that harm the organization or organizational employees in the context of monetary means or well-being (Tepper et al., [2000](#)). Despotic leadership is positively associated with organizational deviance (Erkutlu et al., [2018](#)). Organizations suffering from despotic leadership suffer immensely from CPWB; organizational teams that perceive their leaders to be despotic tend to behave negatively in relation to work-related outcomes (De Hoogh et al., [2008](#)). CPWB is caused by several factors interpersonal, intrapersonal, or organizational (Aqeel et al., [2022](#); Li et al., [2022](#); Li et al. [2022](#); Schmidt et al., [2022](#); Zhang et al., [2022](#)). It is possible after being abused subordinates may not go for CPWB, employee depends on several factors (Azadi et al., [2021](#);

Mubeen et al., [2021](#); NeJhaddadgar et al., [2022](#); Shuja et al., [2020](#); Zeidabadi et al., [2022](#)). It may enhance or reduce the effect of factors, which are the source of CPWB (Grijalva et al., [2015](#)). Psychological safety (PS) is a preeminent source in avoiding any psychological endangerment to the organization (Burke et al., [2006](#)).

Psychological Safety is defined as “being able to show and employ one’s self without fear of negative consequences to self-image, status or career”. PS connate on different levels i.e., individual level, group level, and organizational level (Edmondson et al., [2004](#)). We are considering PS, which is anticipated from the organization by its employees. Psychological safety is used as a moderator in our research to weaken the relation between PCB and CPWB.

Social exchange theory (SET) is used as the theoretical bedrock for the aimed research (Aqeel et al., [2021](#); Azhar et al., [2018](#); Geng et al., [2022](#); Li et al., [2021](#); Paulson et al., [2021](#)). Thus, SET states that individuals feel obligated to reciprocate the actions (Blau, [1964](#)). In the exchange of DL employees may reciprocate DL with CPWB explained through the breach of the psychological contract. Not enough studies have participated in developing the understanding of despotic leadership and its work-related outcomes. The relationship between deviant work behavior and the negative side of leadership needs to be researched (Tepper et al., [2009](#)). An emphasis on empirical research is needed to provide evidence for the generalizability of despotic leadership’s work-related outcomes, testing the outcomes despotic leadership in a different context such as different industries and cultures (Aman et al., [2022](#); Rahmat et al., [2022](#); Wang et al., [2021](#); Yao et al., [2022](#); Zhou et al. [2021](#)). It will participate immensely in building generalizable concepts (Erkutlu et al., [2018](#)).

Our aim for the current research is to understand the underlying mechanism between despotic leadership and CPWB through PCB. We aim to empirically test how would organizational psychological safety provided to employees of the organizations help in mitigating the effect of PCB on CPWB (Ahmad et al., [2021](#); Khattak et al., [2012](#); Zhang et al., [2012](#); Zhang et al., [2012](#)). The research aims to contribute to the body of knowledge by understanding concepts and their relationships (Ali et al., [2021](#); Asad et al., [2020](#); Badar & Irfan, [2018](#); Yan et al., [2020](#); Zhang et al., [2013](#)). The study also includes implications for practitioners so they may tailor strategies accordingly. We are conducting research in Pakistan, which is suitable for our research (Ali & Irfan, [2020](#); Asad et al., [2020](#); Zhu et al., [2021](#)). As power distance is at high in Pakistan, chances of dark leadership and its impact are higher to occur where power distance is high. Future research agenda and limitations are also included in the research paper.

2 Literature review

2.1 Despotic leadership (DL) and Counter Productive Work Behavior (CPWB)

Negative leadership or dark leadership is one major concern for organization which has gained much more attention recently and there are several types of negative leadership e.g. abusive supervision, destructive leadership and despotic leadership (Erkutlu, & Chafra, [2018](#)). Despotic leaders possess a behavior which is autocratic, dominant and egocentric, despotic leader only cares about his own interest, despotic leaders are relentless and requital (Aronson, [2000](#)). Schilling ([2009](#)), has divided negative leadership in different types in which Schilling also included despotic leadership. Bearing in mind the vandalization despotic leadership causes to the organization and organization’s stake holders, negative leadership is a rising area of interest for organization especially after scandals like Enron. Despotic leadership is a source of negative work-related outcomes for an organization such as employee deviant behavior (Erkutlu, & Chafra, [2018](#)). (Mangione et al., [1975](#)) proposed types of deviant behavior in an organization, so Mangione & Quinn explained CPWB is the behavior in which employee intend to damage employer’s property or intend to do less on the job or even give output with poor performance. Fox & Spector 1999 Explained affective, dispositional, & situational precursors of counterproductive work behavior

and also about two types of CPWB, that are organizational & individual counterproductive work behaviors. CPWB is aggressive response of the employee towards organization. CPWB is way to protest against the injustice in the organization. CPWB is undesirable response of the employee in organization which change the goal and objectives of the organization. Different CPWBs were examined in different organizations which include ‘‘abusing, production deviance, sabotage, withdrawal and CPWB is harmful and purposeful act against the organizations, CPWB is also against the employees working in the organization. CPWB is all about neglecting the policies and guidelines of the organization CPWB refers to deviant work behavior which is intentionally acted by the employees to violate the disciplines of the organization and harm the well-being of its members, Scholars refer its different dimensions, relationship of CPWB with job performance, task performance & citizenship behavior (Sousoush et al., [2022](#)). Scholars also referred the interpersonal CPWBs of the employee which actually hinder the tasks performance of other workers & focused on how organizations should manage such behaviors. If employees have insufficient time to perform their job will enhance their stress due which they perform counterproductive work behavior in the organization (Cohen et al., [2019](#)).

Leadership is a foretell for effective team management and work-related outcomes, despotic leadership has relatedness towards team working dynamics and effective team management fostering harm to work-related outcomes as well as damaging optimism of team members (De Hoogh et al., [2008](#)). Despotic leadership may cause the employees or team members to deviate from the path of organizational goal attainment, as leaders who use the powers for their own interest and personal goals, perceiving low altruistic behavior towards organizational goal serve as a source of motivation for team members to deviate from organizational path (Wang et al. 2021). Negativity in other team members or organizational employees is being spread through despotic leadership (De Hoogh et al., [2008](#)).

Naseer et al. ([2016](#)) tagged despotic leaders as exploiters being very low on moral grounds and treating their followers scornfully. Immoral leaders trigger their followers to get involved in activities which are harmful for organization such as counterproductive work behavior (Badar, [2018](#)). Respectful treatment is a natural desire of everyone but despotic leaders at times treat their followers very disrespectfully, as treated unfairly fosters counterproductive work behavior (Cohen et al., [2019](#)). Despotic leadership provokes the followers towards negative organizational deviance (Erkutlu et al., [2018](#)). In the light of literature reviewed we purpose that despotic leadership is positively related to counterproductive work behavior.

Hypothesis 1: Despotic leadership may relate positively with counterproductive work behavior.

2.2 Despotic leadership (DL) and Psychological contract breach (PCB)

Robinson & Rousseau defined psychological contract breach as the perception of employee which the organization has failed to fulfill its responsibilities or promises. In the literature the term contract breach and violation mostly used as psychological contract breach (PCB), however, the breach shows as intellectual assessment which organization fails to fulfill its commitments and violation considered as emotional and psychological state (Morrison et al., [1997](#)). Some previous studies found relation between negative feelings with job attitudes by showing that negative emotions are connected to decreases in trust, job satisfaction and commitment. When organizations breach psychological contract then employee’s trust in the organization is harm furthermore, when organizations fail to deliver its obligations that decrease job satisfaction and organization commitment (Erkutlu et al., [2018](#)). Previous studies suggest that leaders do act abusively when their organizations have don’t fulfill their responsibilities.

Hoobler and Brass ([2013](#)), found that supervisors and leaders who experienced PCB were more abusive and despotic. This study explains when supervisors and leaders mistreated, they may ultimately mistreat or abuse their followers or subordinates. Because PCB is very common in Pakistan, we try to understand the relationship between PCB and despotic leadership in Pakistan (Blau et al., [1964](#)). Accordingly, one purpose of this study to examine in the Pakistan context, the

effect of despotic leadership with PCB. We proposed to examine how the leader's negative behavior with his followers can enhance or disturb the relationship (tepper et al., [2000](#)). Despotic leadership and PCB positively related to each other, abuse behavior from leader influence followers negatively in this response they start feeling insecure. DL damages employees trust and commitment with the organization.

Hypothesis 2: Despotic leadership may positively influence psychological contract breach.

2.3 Mediating Role of Psychological contract Breach (PCB).

Psychological contract breach positively related to the Counterproductive work behavior, when employee perceived that organization is not fulfilling needs and psychological contract has been breached they may involve in some misbehaviors to get back their equity, so they devote less effort in the favor of organization to reduce cost (Chao et al., [2011](#); Li et al., [2018](#); Ates et al., [2022](#)). There is correlation in between counterproductive behavior and psychological contract breach, due to counterproductive behavior harmful consequences generate in the organization Counterproductive Behavior investigated the psychological contract breach due to which counterproductive behavior happens, scholars investigated the individual and situational role which actually mitigate the counterproductive behavior of employee due to certain policies applied by the organization which dissuade the counterproductive Behavior (Geng et al., [2022](#)). Counterproductive behavior is positively and negatively related to psychological contract breach and if employee acquire psychological contract breach for more than ten weeks that will positively be associated with the violation feelings which leads towards the counterproductive behavior (Griep et al., [2018](#)).

Despotic leadership is unethical and abusive supervision and morally corrupt behavior of a despotic leader. Workers and employees need to work for common goals and they need to be serious about the firm's loss. When PCB occurs, employees start reducing their performance, efforts, and contributions. PCB is the relationship between employee and organization if organizations fail to complete their responsibilities and contract employees psychological withdraw happens. Researchers indicate the role of leadership in the psychological contract breach as a negative factor. Ashforth and Kreiner ([2002](#)), worked on the effect of psychological contract on organizational leadership but reported no significant results. Leadership researchers adopted despotic or destructive leadership topic from other areas such as abusive and counterproductive work behavior (Moradi et al., [2021](#)).

Through previous literature we conceded that despotic leadership is positively related to PCB and PCB is positively related to CPWB, so in the light of previous studies we argue that PCB may mediate the relationship between DL and CPWB.

2.4 Moderating Role of Psychological Safety (PS)

The influential work on the construct of PS founded on the organizational transformation depends upon degree at which an employee is able to manage change and feel secure, safe and confident (Subenett et al., [2021](#)). Post their seminal work after almost quarter a century, it was led towards a renewed phenomenon on PS which is the perception as if it is comfortable for an individual to demonstrate and engage without any doubts of negative impact to the image, job, and career. He emphasized that the individual senses psychologically safe in an environment when have trust and support, and their interpersonal relationship are effective with their peers. Later one, Edmondson ([2004](#)) debated that PS may be well treated at horizontal and team level type of environment and described it as the common belief assumed by the members and that they are safe and may take interpersonal risks. This elaboration is dissimilar from Kahn ([1990](#))'s definition in a sense that the perception originates from an individual. She established and validated, based on the qualitative work, a scale of 7-items so as to measure team PS, capturing mutual perception of individuals and team members.

Psychological Safety is being referred to the employee awareness of being socially comfortable

and safe at workplace (Edmondson [2004](#)). While the employee perceives the environment being psychologically safe, they share their point of view and concerns openly, feel free to give their feedback and work out on training needs so as to perform effectively to achieve goals. PS also provides them the opportunity to share about their uncertainties without any implication from others, based on the perception that lesson may be learnt from the mistake and may be avoided in future. This study revolves around and proposes that the PS moderates the relationship among PCB and CPWB. As a result of high PS perception, the effect of PS on PCB will be lower. On contrary, low PS in an organization will negatively affect and increase the level of PCB Paulson et al. ([2021](#)), because they will be hesitant to speak-up honestly and will definitely avoid engaging in the task-related activities; for example will not ask for the resources that may be needed to complete a job, seeking assistance, asking for requisite information and informing about difficulties they have been facing or about any mistakes; they will not be able to focus and attend to their tasks (Farmer et al., [2003](#)).

Over almost last two (2) decades study on the PC construct has developed considerably and mainly influenced by Micah et al. ([2023](#)). Therefore, the construct carries a developed and deeper degree of relationship with its ancestor, and previous work on the theory of social exchange. The fundamental of the theory revolves around the social relationship that consists upon undefined agreement and allocation of uneven competence resources (Blau, [1964](#)).

An environment that is considered to be psychologically safe motivates employee well-being as compared to the unsafe working environment for the reason that employee feel relaxed, able to avoid external impacts and hurdles and unrestricted in raising their voice (Burke et al., [2006](#)). In this study, it is proposed that PS moderates the effects of PCB on CPWB. Under the circumstances, when an employee perceives higher level of PS the relationship of PCB will be lower on CPWB. The strong perception of PS permits employees to be confident in raising their voice and expression in a safe environment, and their behavior will not be affected.

With all these negative sides of leadership there are some others characteristics for which employee connected with organizations if the employee feels safe and secure, company give important to his or her contribution and their suggestions, in these circumstances' employee avoid turnover intention. Psy Safety moderate's relationship between the mediator and the dependent variable (CPWB). Psy contract breach increase because employees think their company doesn't fulfill their commitments and promises so that influences them for CPWB.

The meta-analysis at a large scale investigated the presence of common factors of job performance, with the variation of main lower scale factors in the model, for example task, PCB and CPWB. The study revealed that the relationship of task performance, PCB and avoidance of CPWB is positively related with each other and have substantial effect on one another. The intersectional relationship of PCB and CPWB remains the area of focus and meta-analytic study showed contradictory legitimacy and valid evidence between these two variables (Dalal, [2005](#)).

The dominion of CPWB has shown considerable improvement. Around four (4) decades ago, research started taking place on CPWB in the organization considering the fact that employee embezzlement, interruption, damage, poor performance, unpunctuality, and tardiness (Badar et al., [2018](#); Cressey, [1953](#); House, [1979](#)). In spite of these studies, in the absence of acknowledged framework, these particular types of behaviors were seen in a particular environment and formal focus was not on a focal point of CPWB (Gruys et al., [2003](#)). Around two (2) decades ago, argument arose and a hierarchical model has been introduced, showing two more general and specific factors of the deviance in assets and production (Gruys et al., [2003](#)).

A recent study on the moderating effect of PS negative work-related outcomes has been conducted finding out that the employee behavior gets affected based on the level of PS in the organization,

an individual gains or loose trust and confidence in working relationship, the stronger the PS lower the negative work-related outcomes especially for those who perceive PCB in the organization (Cressy, 1953). On the basis of previous literature, we argue that PCB may moderate the relationship between PCB and CPWB.

Hypothesis 4: Psychological Safety may moderate the relationship between psychological contract breach and counterproductive work behavior by weakening the effect of psychological contract breach on counterproductive work behavior.

3 Theoretical Framework

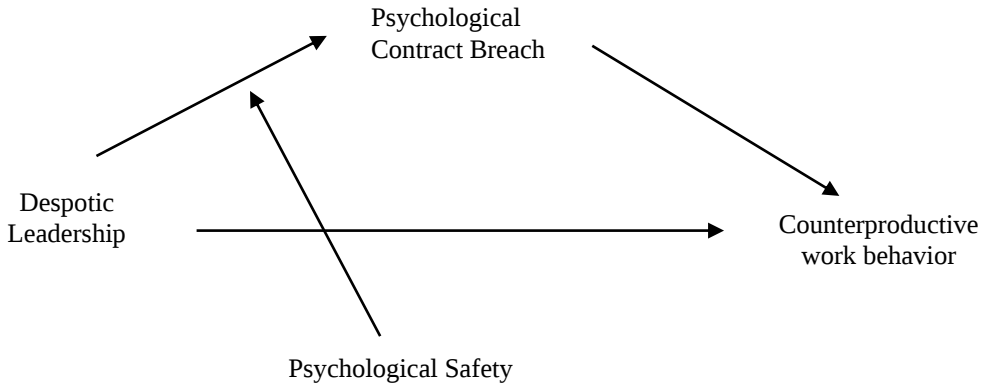


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

4 Method

4.1 Data Collection

The data was collected on the basis of convenience sampling, which is as per guidelines (Al-Sulaiti, 2007; Al-Sulaiti & Baker, 1997). Management executive of different levels i.e. upper level managers, middle level managers; lower level managers were approached who are working in the domain IT (Information Technology), education or Pharmaceuticals (Abaalzat et al., 2021; Al-Sulaiti et al., 2021; Al-Sulaiti & Almwajeh, 2007; Sulaiti et al., 2006). All the organizations from which data was collected had their physical presence in Lahore, Pakistan. Data was collected using cross-sectional survey questionnaire according to literature (Al-Sulaiti, 2022; Al-Sulaiti & Fontenot, 2004; Al Sulaiti et al., 2005). Questionnaire was self-administrative and was also administered in English language. An opening statement was written to acknowledge the respondent about the purpose of the research “To check the influence of despotic leadership on counterproductive work explained through the mediating role of Psychological contract breach: Moderating role of Psychological safety”. Our level of analysis throughout the research data collection was individual. Opening statement also narrated the efforts made in regard to keep the data anonymous and confidential. Designing of questionnaire and data collection was followed on the footsteps of prior studies We distributed survey questionnaire through online tools and hard copies. From 300 surveys questionnaire distributed and we had 203 usable responses with a response rate of 67.6%.

4.2 Measures

Variables were measured through previously validated scales. Despotic leadership was measured through a 6 item scale adapted from (Hanges & Dickson, 2004). Psychological contract breach’s 5-items scale of measurement was adapted from (Robinson & Morrison, 2000). Psychological

safety was measured through 5 items scale adapted from (Brown & Leigh, [1996](#)), further validated by (Liang et al., [2012](#)). Measurement of counter productive work behavior was attained through a 10- items scale adapted from (Spector et al., [2010](#)). All variables were measured through 7 point-likert scale starting from 1= strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree.

4.3 Demographic & Control variables

Age, Gender, Tenure in organization, organization, experience and qualification were used as control variables in accordance to previous research on despotic leadership (De Clercq et al., [2018](#)). Control variables were also chosen on the basis of understanding conceded through literature review on despotic leadership.

4.4 Analysis tools

SPSS 19.0 and AMOS 20.0 were used as analyzing tools. We calculated the mean, standard deviation and frequency of the obtained data. Cronbach's Alpha values were calculated to measure the reliability. Hypotheses testing and causal effect was examined through correlation and regression analysis. Correlation was analyzed through Pearson correlation and for regression analysis we used Preacher and Hayes models.

4.5 Common method variance

Research studies may suffer from common method variance (CMV), Ex ante and post ante techniques are used to avoid CMV (Chang et al., [2010](#)) i.e. reverse coded questions were used and respondents were acknowledged about confidentiality and anonymity through opening statement. Keeping the data anonymous and confidential also serve as a remedy to cater social desirability (Spector, [2006](#)).

5 Data Analysis

5.1 Preliminary & Descriptive Analysis

Table 1 reflects the results for preliminary and descriptive data analysis. Total number of respondents was 192; in which 139 respondents were male with the percentage of 72.6% and 53 respondents were female with the percentage of 27.6%. Qualification demographics reflected 10 persons were having M.Phil/Phd as their recent qualification in terms of education with the percentage of 5.2%. Master's degree was attained by 91 respondents with the percentage of 47.4%, 84 respondents have done graduation with the percentage of 43.8 %, 6 respondents had passed HSSC qualification with the percentage of 3.1 % and SSC qualified respondents were the lowest in numbers as only 1 respondent was SSC passed with the percentage of 0.5%.

Designation item's result in Table 1 reflected that 28 of the respondents were working as upper level managers with the percentage of 14.6%. 96 respondents were from middle level management with the percentage of 50 % and 68 respondents were working as lower level managers with the percentage of 35.4%.

Data was collected from forty-nine different private sector organizations working in the jurisdiction of Pakistan from service sector and manufacturing sector. Names of the organizations are A.S steel mills, Apna Bank, Aracon Systems, Bank Alfalah, Bank of Punjab, BPO360, CK, C WEB, CCL PHARMACEUTICALS, CORESOL, DeAxis Technologies, Education sector, Educational, Finca bank, Getz pharma, HBL, HEC,IBEX, Ideas Soul, KT, Lahore Grammar School, Master tiles private limited, NTG PAKISTAN, Orient Electronics, PRG, RSM Top Jobs, Savoey Hotel, seml, Sigma refrigerator, SKM Lahore, SME International (Pvt.) Ltd, SOFTWARE HOUSE, sss edactional system, Stars Group of academies and collages, Style textile pvt. Ltd, Superior University, t.w, TAPAL TEA PVT, TCS, TECHCLAN, Telalinkz, The city school, The educators, The smart school, The Trust School, Tracking world, University of home economics,University of Management & Technology, Zameen.com. Considerable amount of respondents were from CCL Pharmaceuticals with 34 respondents and 17.7%, DeAxis

Technologies with 25 respondents and 13.02%, RSM Top Jobs with 15 respondents and 7.8%, SSS educational system with 33 respondents and 17.1%, Telelinkz with 15 respondents and 7.8%.

Most respondents had spent 5 to 10 years with the current company with a percentage of 42.7%, 21.4% respondents had spent less than 1 year with the current organization, 38 respondents spent 5-10 years in the current organization with the percentage of 19.8%, 24 respondents spent between 10-15 years in the current organization and 7 respondents spent more than 15 years in the current organization with the percentage of 3.6%.

Experience item analysis reflected mostly respondents were having higher number of job experience as the mean for job experience was 7.6 with the standard deviation of $\pm$ SD 6.69 and ranged from 1 year to 40 years of experience. Most of the respondents were young and in middle stage of life as mean age was 31.6 with the standard deviation of $\pm$ SD 8.59 and ranged from 21 year to 69 years of old.

5.2 Correlation analysis

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics, bivariate correlations, and alpha reliabilities. Correlation of despotic leadership with psychological contract breach is ($r = 0.367$, $P < .01$), psychological safety was significantly associated with despotic leadership ($r = -0.489$, $p < .01$) and psychological safety was significantly associated with Psychological Contract Breach ($r = -0.570$, $p < .01$). Correlation of counter productive work behavior with despotic leadership is ($r = 0.494$, $p < .01$). Counter productive work behavior was insignificantly associated with psychological contract breach ($r = 0.141$, n.s) and Counterproductive work behavior was significantly associated with psychological safety ($r = -0.319$, $p < .01$). Cronbach's alpha values were presented in parenthesis where the cronbach's alpha value for despotic leadership is 0.89, for psychological contract breach cronbach's alpha value is (0.90), for psychological safety the value of cronbach's alpha is (0.76) and for counter productive work behavior the value of cronbach's alpha is (0.85). Mean and standard deviation is also mentioned in the table 2 for each variable i.e. despotic leadership, psychological contract breach, psychological safety and counterproductive work behavior.

Table 1: Demographic

	N	%
Gender		
Male	139	72.4
Female	53	27.6
Qualification		
M. Phil/Phd	10	5.2
Master	91	47.4
Bachelor	84	43.8
HSSC	6	3.1
SSC	1	0.5
Designation		
Upper level Management	28	14.6
Middle level Management	96	50.0
Lower Level Management	68	35.4
Tenure with Current Organizations		
Less than 1	41	21.4
1-5 Years	82	42.7
5-10 Years	38	19.8
10-15 Years	24	12.5
15 years & above	7	3.6

Mean ($\pm$ SD)	Range
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Total working Experience	7.6 (6.69)	1.0-40
Age	31.6 (8.59)	21-69

Note. N = 192

N represents number of respondents.

Age and Total working experience were measured in years.

Table 2: Correlation and Reliability

	Mean ±St. Div 1			2	3	4
1.Despotic Leadership	2.86	1.44	(0.89)			
2.Psychological Contract Breach	3.35	1.39	0.367**	(0.90)		
3. Psychological Safety	4.76	1.12	0.489**	-.570**	(0.76)	
4. Counter Productive Work Behavior	2.66	1.148	0.494**	0.141	-.319**	(0.85)

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

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Table 3: Main effects through Linear Regression – Regression analysis

Counterproductive work behavior

	β	R^2	Sign.
Step 1 Highest Qualification	0.073		0.557
Step 2 Despotic Leadership	0.395	0.247	0

N= 192,

$p < .05$, $p < .01$.

Linear regression analysis was used to test main effects of despotic leadership on counterproductive work behavior. One-way Anova was used to check the significance of demographics on counterproductive work behavior. Highest qualification was the only to have significant effect on counterproductive work behavior. For analysis of main effects using linear regression highest qualification was entered as independent variable and counterproductive work behavior as dependent variable in the 1st step. For 2nd step we entered despotic leadership as independent variable and counterproductive work behavior remained the dependent variable. Results depicted that despotic leadership significantly predicted counterproductive work behavior ($\beta = 0.395$, $p < .001$) with R^2 value 0.247. Table 3 reflects all the results. Results were in the favor of our 1st hypothesis that despotic leadership positively related to counterproductive work behavior.

Table 4: Despotic leadership on psychological contract breach – Psychological Contract Breach

	β	R^2	Sign.
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Step 1 - Gender	0.464		0.039
Step 2 - Despotic Leadership	0.342	0.144	0

5.3 Moderation (2nd order) using Preacher and Hayes 1st model

Table 5: Moderation (2nd order) Using Preacher and Hayes 1st Model

	Counterproductive work behavior	
	B	±SE
Psychological Safety	-0.3658***	0.0733
Psychological Contract Breach	-.0497	0.0638
Interaction term = Psychological Contract Breach × Psychological Safety	0.0629	0.0384
R ²	0.1134***	

N= 192, N represents number of participants.

*p <.05.

p <.01, *p <.001.

Figure 2 is for the understanding of conceptual model. Table 5 is reflecting results for the analysis of moderation effect of psychological safety on the relationship of psychological contract breach as independent variable and counterproductive work behavior as dependent variable using Preacher and Hayes Model 1. Entered counterproductive work behavior as outcome variable Y, psychological contract breach as independent variable X and Psychological safety as moderator W. Effects were computed for each of 1000 bootstrapped samples, and the 95% confidence interval. The effect of psychological contract breach on counterproductive was ($\beta = -.0497$, n.s.) with standard error (0.0638) and the effect of psychological safety on counterproductive work behavior was ($\beta = -.3658$, $P < .001$) with standard error (0.0733). The moderation effect was analyzed through the interaction term of psychological contract breach and psychological safety, analysis depicted that moderation effect of interaction term ($\beta = -.034$, n.sig.) with standard error 0.044 while the for R² (0.1134***). The results are not in favor of our 4th hypothesis that Psychological safety moderates the relationship between PCB and CPWB.

5.4 Moderation Graphical representation

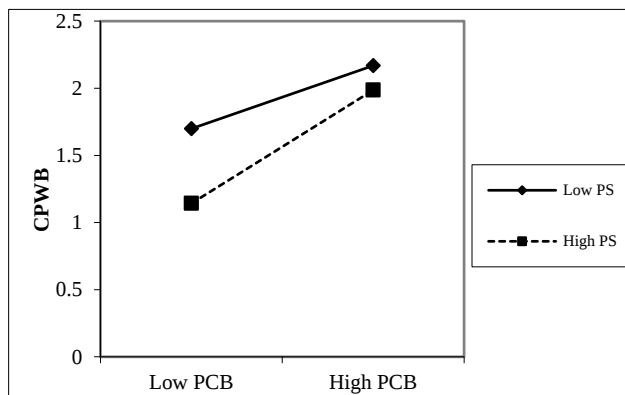


Figure 2: Moderation Graphical representation

We plotted the graph of interactions for high and low (mean $\pm$ SD) values of the moderator psychological safety. Figure 3 shows that with low psychological safety the relationship between PCB and CPWB remained positive, with the increase of PCB, CPWB tended to increase when the psychological safety is low. When the psychological safety was high with the increase in PCB, CPWB is predicted to rise more intensively.

5.5 Mediation analysis

Table 6: Direct and indirect effect of DL, PCB, CPWB

	Effect	SE	LLCI	ULCI	P Value
DL→ PCB → CPWB					
Total effect	.3938	.0600	.2754	.5121	.00
Direct effect	.4074	.0654	.2785	.5364	.00
Indirect effect	-.0137	.0208	-.0553	.0257	<i>Not. Sig</i>

Table 7: Conditional indirect effects of DL, PS, PCB, and CPWB

	PCB		CPWB	
	B	SE	B	SE
Despotic Leadership	.3558***	.0698	0.3732***	.0763
Psychological Safety			-.1691*	.0926
Int_1 = Psychological contract breach × Psychological Safety			.0818*	.0415
Psychological contract breach			-.0999	.0667
R ²	0.1346***	R ²	0.2772***	
Conditional indirect effects				
	Indirect Effect/Index	SE	95% CI (Lower, Upper)	
Psychological Safety				
-1 SD(1.124)	-.0683	.0361	-.1528, -.0101	
Mean (.000)	-.0356	.0268	-.0951, .0090	
+1 SD (1.124)	-.0028	.284	-.0609, .0516	
Index of Moderated Mediation	.0291	.0167	.0010, .0660	

Note: N = 192.

Unstandardized regression coefficients are reported.

Bootstrap sample size=1000.

CI=confidence interval.

*p< .05, **p< .01, ***p< .001 .

Figure 5 is for the understanding of conceptual model. Table 8 is reflecting results for the relationship between DL and CPWB through PCB, where PS plays the role as moderator between PCB and CPWB was analyzed using Preacher and Hayes Model 14. Entered CPWB as outcome variable Y, DL as independent variable X, PCB as mediator M and PS as moderator V. Effects were computed for each of 1000 bootstrapped samples, and the 95% confidence interval. The effect DL on PCB was ($\beta = .3558$, $P < .001$.) with standard error (0.0698). The effect of PCB on CPWB was ($\beta = -0.999$, n.sig) with standard error (0.0667) and R² value was (0.1346**). The effect of PS on CPWB was ($\beta = -.1691$, n.s.) with standard error (0.926), DL effected CPWB as ($\beta = 0.3732$, $P < 0.001$.) with standard error (0.0763), interaction term of PCB and PS effected passion for work as ($\beta = .0818$, sig.) with standard error (0.0415) and R² value was (0.2772**). The moderating mediation was significant with an effect of (.0291) and standard error (0.167), lower level confidence (.0010) and upper level confidence (.0660).

6 Conclusion

We found out through the data analysis that DL is positively associated to PCB and CPWB. We also revealed, if employee is consecrated with PS from organization then due to PCB in result of DL intensity of CPWB will increase which is against our proposed 3rd hypothesis. We also found out PCB doesn't mediates between DL and CPWB, as due to psychological contract breach employee will not exercise organizational CPWB (Cohen, & Diamant, 2019; Griep, Vantilborgh, & Jones, 2018).

6.1 Limitations

Our studies included several limitations one of the major limitations is the generalizability of the study as it is being conducted in Pakistan, where power distance is at high (Mohamed et al., [2021](#)). It will be interesting to check the study outcomes where the cultural dimensions are different e.g. low power distance. Study was conducted through cross-sectional self-administered survey so it is advised to obtain data from different sources and time lagged in order to avoid common method variance.

7 Reference

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