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THE EFFECT OF KNOWLEDGE-ORIENTED LEADERSHIP ON COUNTERPRODUCTIVE KNOWLEDGE BEHAVIOR: THE ROLE OF JOB RESOURCES

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ABSTRACT
The growth in knowledge-intensive industries necessitates efficient knowledge transfer within an organisation, which requires management and investment as well as steps to address negative behaviours that can hinder knowledge sharing. The current study therefore examined the role of knowledge-oriented leadership in reducing such counterproductive behaviours and explored the mediating role of job resources. A sample of 469 faculty members at five Iraqi universities in the Middle Euphrates region completed a questionnaire that solicited responses on a seven-point Likert scale. A descriptive-analytical approach was used to present, interpret and analyse the data. The results show a significant negative correlation between knowledge-based leadership practices—which facilitate the acquisition of knowledge through training programmes and activate knowledge transfer protocols, such as mentoring—and counterproductive knowledge behaviours among employees, including knowledge sabotage and hiding. Conversely, knowledge-based leadership positively affects job resources, and providing job resources at the task, social, environmental and organisational levels enhances the impact of knowledge-oriented leadership on counterproductive knowledge behaviour. We therefore propose a conceptual framework that may support practical knowledge management in Iraqi universities and beyond.

Keywords: Knowledge Hoarding, Knowledge Hiding, Knowledge Sabotage, Teaching Resources, Administrative Support, Social Support, Iraqi Private Universities.
JEL Classification: D830, J240, M150, O340

INTRODUCTION

Modern organisations rely on knowledge management systems to maintain a competitive advantage and operational effectiveness; however, counterproductive knowledge behaviours threaten organisational learning capacity and innovation potential. The growth of knowledge-intensive industries has further heightened the importance of understanding how leadership influences employee knowledge behaviours (Farooq et al., 2021).
Different leadership styles vary in how effective they are in reducing counterproductive knowledge behaviours. Transformational leadership reduces knowledge hiding through inspirational motivation and individualised consideration, while transactional leadership may actually increase knowledge hoarding through competitive reward structures (Zahoor et al., 2024). Compared to other leadership styles, knowledge-oriented leadership impacts all cognitive states of workers and fosters creativity in knowledge-intensive organisations. It approaches organisational

knowledge governance systematically to integrate cognitive resource management with strategic decision-making (Movaghar et al., 2021). Leaders aid in supervising and transferring knowledge among personnel, enabling corporate objectives to be met.

Despite intensive research, there are no consensus frameworks that explain the mechanisms through which leadership practices influence employee knowledge behaviours. The relationship between organisational job resources and counterproductive knowledge behaviours is also insufficiently explored, despite mounting evidence that resource availability moderates employees' willingness to engage in collaborative knowledge practices (Gürlek & Çemberci, 2020). While isolated studies have explored pairwise relationships between relevant constructs, the lack of a comprehensive theoretical framework limits the practical applications of knowledge management interventions. Furthermore, contradictory findings regarding the effectiveness of leadership in reducing counterproductive knowledge behaviours suggest that mediating mechanisms remain poorly understood (Serobanyane, 2021).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research on effective knowledge management and leadership has demonstrated a positive correlation between the two, suggesting a two-way causal relationship. This manifests through leaders establishing knowledge-sharing protocols, institutionalising learning mechanisms and creating feedback loops that enhance organisational knowledge capital (Ghosh et al., 2022). Specifically, knowledge-oriented leaders operationalise cognitive resource management through four key mechanisms: knowledge acquisition facilitation (training programmes, external partnerships), knowledge codification systems (documentation standards, knowledge repositories), knowledge transfer protocols (mentoring, cross-functional teams) and knowledge application frameworks (decision-making processes, innovation procedures) (Bashir & Pradhan, 2023).

Existing frameworks suggest that knowledge-based leadership may encompass up to five dimensions: cognitive resourcing, learning architecture design, knowledge flow optimisation, innovation enablement and adaptive capacity building. Given the varied definitions and dimensions of knowledge-based leadership, the present study adopts Nugraheni's (2023) recent comprehensive definition: Knowledge-based leadership prioritises organisational knowledge as a strategic asset, integrating cognitive resource management with decision-making processes to create sustainable competitive advantages through enhanced learning capabilities, innovation capacity and adaptive organisational responses.

Previous studies showed that knowledge-oriented leadership influences counterproductive knowledge behaviour, i.e., a critical organisational phenomenon that encompasses deliberate actions by individuals to obstruct, manipulate, or undermine knowledge flow within organisations, manifesting through various forms including knowledge hiding, hoarding, withholding, sabotage, and strategic misinformation (Jalili et al.,2021). Studies highlighted four primary mechanisms in this regard: environmental design (creating supportive contexts for knowledge sharing), behavioural modeling (demonstrating knowledge-sharing behaviours), incentive alignment (rewarding collaborative knowledge practices), and relationship facilitation (building trust and reducing interpersonal barriers) (Donate et al.,2022). Implementing comprehensive knowledge governance frameworks that include transparent communication protocols, collaborative decision-making processes, knowledge-sharing incentives, and conflict resolution (Lu,2022).

Knowledge-oriented leadership operates within organisational systems, deploying and managing various job resources to enhance employee capabilities, motivation, and performance in knowledge-intensive environments (Chin Lee et al.,2023). Contemporary research identifies four primary categories of job resources: task-related resources (skill variety, task significance, autonomy, feedback), social resources (supervisor support, colleague support, organisational support), organisational resources (career development opportunities, job security, fair procedures), and environmental resources (physical working conditions, technology, information access) (Kenyi et al.,2020).

Knowledge-oriented leaders function as resource providers, resource facilitators, and resource optimisers, directly influencing the availability, accessibility, and effectiveness of job resources through strategic allocation decisions and environmental design (Pletzer et al.,2024). This occurs through direct resource provision, resource utilisation optimisation, and resource development (building individual and organisational capabilities over time) (Tummers & Bakker,2021). Specifically, knowledge-oriented leaders enhance job resources by creating learning-supportive environments that include intellectual stimulation opportunities, skill development programs, mentoring relationships, and knowledge-sharing platforms (Pletzer et al.,2024). The relationship between knowledge-oriented leadership and job resources is characterised by reciprocal reinforcement, where enhanced job resources enable more effective knowledge management practices, which in turn justify further resource investment and development (Manuti et al.,2022).

Job resources influence employee behaviour through three distinct pathways: direct effects on performance and well-being, moderating effects on the relationship between job demands and outcomes, and mediating effects between organisational practices and employee responses (Nilsen & Kongsvik,2023). Job resources likewise influence knowledge-sharing behaviour through multiple mechanisms: reducing perceived risks associated with knowledge sharing, increasing motivation for collaborative behaviour, enhancing capacity for knowledge processing and transfer, and creating positive reciprocal relationships (Lee & Ding,2023). Job autonomy specifically reduces counterproductive knowledge behaviour by enabling employees to control their knowledge-sharing decisions, reducing external pressure that might lead to defensive behaviours, and fostering intrinsic motivation for collaborative knowledge practices (Purwanto et al., 2023; Pekkanen et al., 2023). Social support resources aid in mitigating counterproductive knowledge behaviour by creating collaborative environments that reduce competition, build trust, and encourage mutual assistance in knowledge-related activities (Yen, 2022) (Yen, 2022). Coworker support facilitates knowledge acquisition and sharing by providing psychological safety, reducing knowledge-sharing risks, and creating reciprocal exchange relationships (Mohammed & Issac,2023). Career development resources influence counterproductive knowledge behaviour through social exchange mechanisms, where employees who perceive advancement opportunities are more likely to engage in knowledge-sharing behaviours that benefit the organisation. Working conditions and environmental resources significantly impact knowledge-sharing behaviour, with comfortable, well-equipped environments promoting collaborative knowledge practices and resource-constrained environments potentially triggering defensive knowledge behaviours (Adesina et al.,2024; Mohamud,2022).

Previous studies identified multiple factors as mediators in the relationship between knowledge-oriented leadership and counterproductive knowledge behaviour, including organisational factors such trust levels, communication quality, perceived fairness, and organisational support for learning and development (Yang et al., 2021; Riaz et al.,2023). Thus, knowledge-oriented leadership effectiveness in reducing counterproductive knowledge behaviour depends on contextual factors including organisational culture, industry characteristics, team dynamics, and individual employee characteristics (Nurhidayati & Zaenuri,2023).

Despite the growing body of research on knowledge-oriented leadership, job resources, and counterproductive knowledge behaviour, several critical gaps remain unaddressed in the business literature. Current research on knowledge-oriented leadership reveals significant theoretical fragmentation, with studies predominantly adopting narrow conceptual frameworks that fail to capture the multidimensional nature of knowledge governance in organisations (Barker,2022). Similarly, research on counterproductive knowledge behaviour remains fragmented, with limited theoretical frameworks to explain the antecedents, mechanisms, and consequences of such behaviours (Mursita & Almilia,2021). More importantly, most studies examine these variables in isolation, failing to capture the complex interactions between leadership practices, resource allocation, and knowledge behaviours in organisational performance. Different operationalisations of knowledge-oriented leadership, varying conceptualisations of job resources, and diverse measures of counterproductive knowledge behaviour create challenges for systematic understanding.

Therefore, this study addresses these gaps by developing and testing an integrated model that examines the direct and indirect effects of knowledge-oriented leadership on counterproductive knowledge behaviour through job resources, providing both theoretical advancement and practical insights for organisational knowledge management. Accordingly, the hypotheses tested in this study are the following:

H1: There is a good sized impact of understanding-oriented leadership on counterproductive understanding behaviour at Iraqi universities.

H2: There is a extensive effect of understanding-oriented leadership on activity resources

H3: There is a significant impact of task resources on counterproductive understanding behaviour on the tested universities in Iraq.

H^4: There is a significant indirect effect of knowledge-oriented leadership on counterproductive knowledge behaviour through the interactive role of job resources.

Based on the above, the current study model can be built as shown in Figure 1.

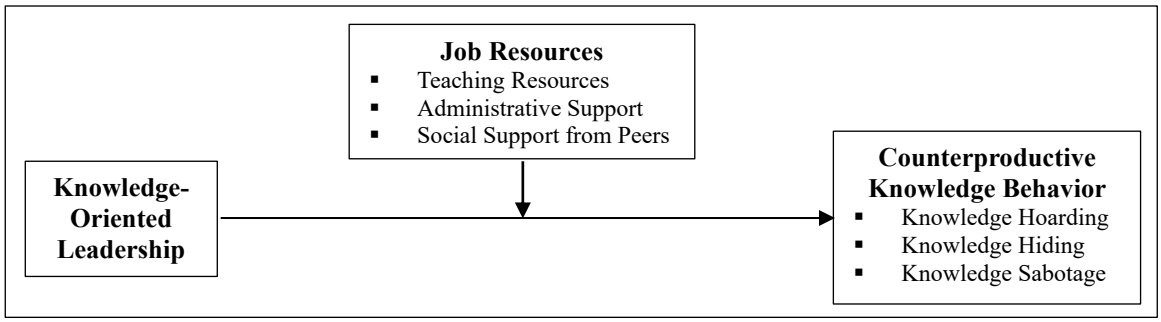

Figure 1. Study Model

This study aims to develop and empirically validate an integrated theoretical model that elucidates the direct and indirect effects of knowledge-oriented leadership on counterproductive knowledge behaviour through the mediating role of job resources.

3. METHODOLOGY

This examine hired a quantitative studies method utilizing a move-sectional survey design to examine the moderating position of activity sources within the relationship between know-how-orientated leadership and counterproductive knowledge behaviour. The studies was conducted in Iraqi higher schooling establishments, specially targeting senior management personnel across seven universities and colleges within the Middle Euphrates vicinity..

3.1 Study Design

The study approach crystallised on the basis of its positivist philosophy based on the principle of job resources, and researching the diagnostic gap in interpreting the relationship between knowledge-oriented leadership and reducing counterproductive knowledge behaviour, and in response to the requirements of scientific research in the reality of that relationship, the circumstances of which were revealed by reviewing the relevant literature according to the flow of scientific analysis and investigation.

Determining the take a look at network and its sample and stating its characteristics is a primary necessity on which the sphere observe is based, and this in turn calls for an correct definition of the community and pattern of the modern study, that's the Iraqi Ministry of Higher Education via seven private universities and colleges and their branches within the Middle Euphrates region and in the departments, divisions and administrative gadgets..

The ministry was chosen due to its strategic impact on Iraqi society, its success, good management, and the administrative and functional commitment of its staff. This decision allows for a successful study to be conducted, distinguishing the case of success in the field. The response rate of 93% was achieved by the research sample, which consisted of 469 respondents who were senior managers and directors of departments and administrative divisions in the universities and colleges. These respondents are suitable for statistical analysis, and the total number of questionnaires distributed and received was 478.

3.2 Measurement of Variables

The research was conducted using a five-point Likert scale questionnaire (ranging from strongly agree [5] to strongly disagree [1]), Designed to study the moderating role of task sources inside the courting between expertise-oriented management and the mitigation of counterproductive know-how behaviours inside a sample of private universities and schools in Iraq. The information had been derived from the empirical aspect of the take a look at.

The questionnaire comprised two sections. The first section collected demographic information about the respondents across five items: gender, age, educational attainment, professional experience, and academic rank, as presented in Table 1. The second section assessed the primary research constructs. Knowledge-Oriented Leadership (KOL) was measured using six items derived from Donate and de Pablo (2015), operationalised as a unidimensional construct. Job Resources (JR), adapted from Han et al. (2020), comprised nine items spanning three dimensions. Counterproductive Knowledge Behaviour (CKB), based on Serenko (2022), included twenty-six items distributed across three dimensions.

Table 1. Demographic Information of Respondents

Characteristics	Frequencies	Percentage
Gender		
Male	284	61%
Female	185	39%
Age		
< 30	31	7%
31-40	167	36%
41-50	174	37%
51-60	83	18%
60 >	14	3%
Education		
Postgraduate Degrees MAS	189	40%
Postgraduate Degrees PHD	280	60%
Functional Experience		
1-5	118	25%
6-10	72	15%
11-15	105	22%
16-20	91	19%
21-30	67	14%
31 >	16	3%
Academic Title		
Assistant Lecturer	160	34%
Lecturer	119	25%
Assistant Professor	111	24%
Professor	79	17%

3.3 Data Collection Procedure

Data collection was conducted over three months, employing a structured questionnaire administration process. We coordinated with the administrative authorities of the participating universities and colleges to ensure appropriate access to the target population. Sampling academics as participants in the knowledge-based industry of education rather than as experts in other knowledge-based industries because data comprises self-reported perceptions of university staff and how they are directly measuring job resources and counterproductive knowledge behaviours. Questionnaires were distributed through direct contact with senior managers and department directors, with follow-up communications implemented to enhance response rates. Ethical considerations were observed throughout the data collection process, including informed consent from all participants and assurance of confidentiality regarding their responses.

3.4 Statistical Analysis

The statistical evaluation changed into carried out the usage of a multi-stage technique. Initially, descriptive facts have been computed to study the distribution traits of the variables, inclusive of way, popular deviations, and correlation coefficients. The reliability of the size contraptions became assessed the use of Cronbach's Alpha coefficients, at the same time as construct validity was evaluated thru Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). The hypotheses were tested using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) implemented via AMOS v.23 software. To examine the moderation effect, an interaction term was constructed by standardising the independent and moderator variables, thereby minimising multicollinearity concerns. The significance of the moderation effect was determined through regression path analysis, with ratios exceeding 1.96 and 2.56 considered significant at the 5% and 1% levels, respectively. Model fit indices, including Chi-square/degrees of freedom ratio, goodness of fit index, comparative fit index , Tucker-Lewis index , and root mean square error of approximation, were evaluated to assess the adequacy of the structural model.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Analysis

The outcomes of the descriptive and correlation analyses are presented in Table 2. The mean and standard deviation for KOL, JR, and CKB were as follows: KOL (M = 5.55, SD = 1.438), JR (M = 5.38, SD = 1.419), and CKB (M = 2.29, SD = 1.743). Pearson correlation coefficients revealed a statistically significant and negative relationship between KOL and CKB (r = –.631**, p < 0.01), indicating that higher levels of leadership oriented towards knowledge foster a reduction in counterproductive behaviours. Similarly, a significant negative correlation was observed between JR and CKB (r = –.537**, p < 0.01). These findings are consistent with the hypothesised relationships posited in the research framework.

Table 2. Mean, standard deviations, and correlations between main variables

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3
Knowledge-Oriented Leadership	5.55	1.438	1		-.631**
Job Resources	5.38	1.419		1	-.537**
Counterproductive Knowledge Behaviour	2.29	1.743	-.631**	-.537**	1

Note n=469, **p<0.01

4.2 Measurement of Reliability and Validity

The results of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) are reported in Table 3. Parameter estimates exceeding the threshold of 0.40 were considered statistically acceptable and practically viable. The critical ratio (CR), representing the statistical significance of each parameter, serves as an indicator of robustness; values surpassing 1.96 and 2.56 are considered significant at the 5% and 1% levels, respectively (Holtzman & Sailesh, 2011). Lower standard error values further enhance the reliability of parameter estimates.

With the exception of Items 2 and 3 from the 'Working Conditions' dimension, which were excluded due to sub-threshold factor loadings, all items demonstrated acceptable loadings above 0.40, thereby affirming construct validity. Furthermore, the model's fit indices met permissible thresholds, reinforcing the structural soundness of the measurement model as assessed through Structural Equation Modelling (SEM).

Cronbach's alpha values, also displayed in Table 3, exceeded the 0.70 benchmark, indicating high internal consistency across all constructs (Sharma, 2016). Consequently, the instrument employed in this study can be regarded as both reliable and valid, aligning with established psychometric standards.

Table 3. Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Cronbach's Alpha

Variables (Dimensions)	Cranach's Alpha	Loading	Quality Indicators
Knowledge-Oriented Leadership	.90	.720 .760 .812 .870 .869 .671	Cimn/Df=3.648 Gfi=.974 Cfi=.982 Tli=.965 Rmsea=.071
Job Resources	.90		
Work Autonomy	.91	.857 .890 .886 .834	Cimn/Df=3.364 Gfi=.963 Cfi=.982
Social Support	.89	.847 .896 .847	Tli =.971 Rmsea=.073
Performance Feedback	.90	.932 .824	
Counterproductive Knowledge Behaviour	.95		
Knowledge Hoarding	.95	.892 .943 .881 .912	Cimn/Df=2.658 Gfi=.935 Cfi=.961 Tli =.942

		.825	Rmsea=.066
		.860	
		.758	
		.649	
		.670	
		.839	
		.880	
		.843	
Knowledge Hiding	.94	.830	
		.793	
		.744	
		.528	
		.525	
		.401	
		.425	
		.793	
		.765	
		.769	
		.760	
Knowledge Sabotage	.85	.837	
		.399	
		.641	

4.3 Hypothesis Testing

This examine explored the effect of Knowledge-Oriented Leadership on Counterproductive Knowledge Behaviour, along with the moderating position of Job Resources. The moderation impact, by definition, may both expand or attenuate the connection among the impartial and based variables. For the interplay effect to be substantiated, statistical importance is needed.

The moderation analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modelling via the AMOS v.23 software. To facilitate this analysis, an interaction term was constructed. This entailed the standardisation of the independent and moderator variables—achieved by subtracting the mean of Each variable from its discovered values—thereby minimising multicollinearity between the interaction term and its constituent variables.

This methodological step guarantees the integrity of the analysis by addressing potential distortions springing up from excessive inter-correlations. The resultant interaction variable become then included into the SEM framework. Figure 2 depicts the regression paths from the independent (KOL), moderator (JR), and interaction variables to the dependent construct (CKB), allowing for a robust assessment of both direct and moderated effects.

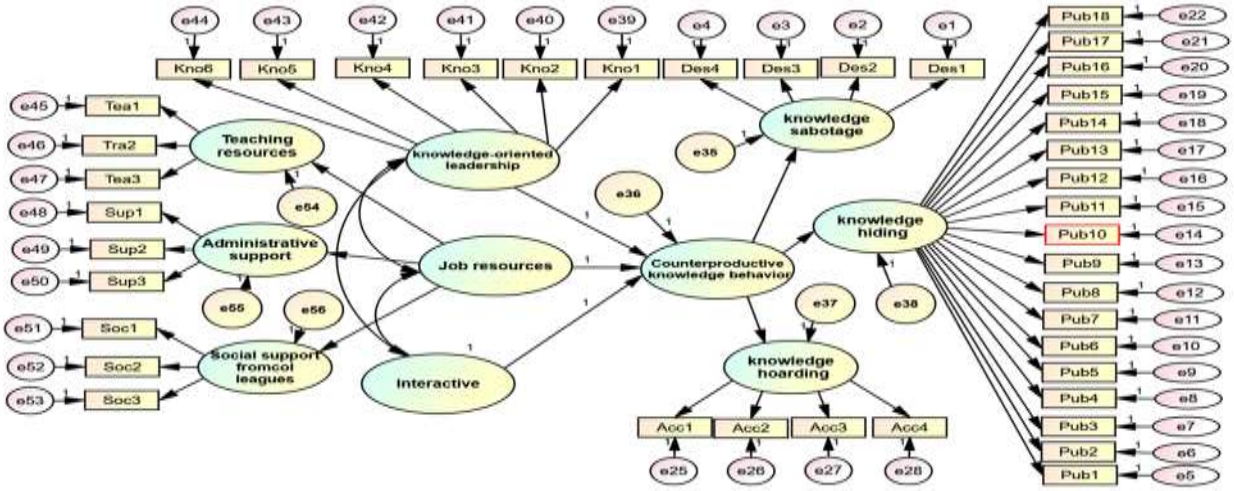

Figure 2. The regression path of the interaction model

The second step is to confirm the moderator effect's significance in the model. To do this, we need to determine whether the moderator effect is positive and strengthens the relationship between the independent and dependent variables, or if it has a negative effect and lessens the nature of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. Table (4) provides an overview of the interaction model's estimates, which were significant below the level (P<.001) and the critical ratio C.R. According to table (4), it satisfies the necessary criterion and is bigger than 1.96.

Table 4. Regression weights for the impact model

			S.R.W	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Knowledge-Oriented Leadership	→	Counterproductive Knowledge Behaviour	-.647	-.668	.058	-11.517	***
Interactive	→	Counterproductive Knowledge Behaviour	-.461	-.495	.073	-6.781	***
Job Resources	→	Counterproductive Knowledge Behaviour	-.393	-.418	.047	-8.893	***

The data in Table 4 Display that the regression coefficient S.R.W for the interaction variable reached (.65), a vast value, indicating that there's an interacting effect that reduces the poor influence of the unbiased variable at the structured variable. This finding shows that the interactive variable, task assets, affects the degree of affect that exists among understanding-orientated leadership and counterproductive expertise behaviour. In different words, it strengthens the effect that know-how-oriented management has on counterproductive expertise behaviour. The effect of knowledge-oriented leadership decreases in the amount of counterproductive knowledge behaviour as job resource levels grow.

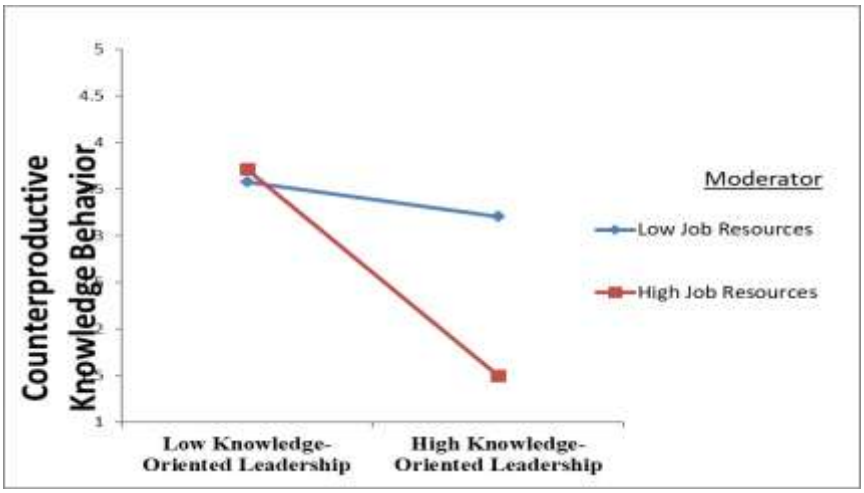

Figure 3. The interaction of the Clarity of JR at the level of the impact of KOL on CKB

5. DISCUSSION

This study explored how leadership and job resources reduce counterproductivity in Iraq. The hypothesis was put forward that knowledge-oriented leadership has a positive effect in reducing counterproductive knowledge behaviours and the interactive role of job resources in that relationship. The study analysed the responses of 469 respondents, and the results showed that adopting knowledge-oriented leadership practices has a positive effect on both the optimal investment of job resources and reducing counterproductive knowledge behaviour by those universities and colleges.

Our research heightens the advantages of implementing a knowledge-oriented leadership approach when investing in the tangible and intangible resources of those universities, as previously supported (Bakker & Demerouti, 2018; Tummers & Bakker, 2021; Manuti et al., 2022; Bakker et al., 2023). The findings also endorse the benefits of applying knowledge-oriented leadership practices in reducing counterproductive knowledge behaviour. These results are consistent with previous research (e.g. Donate & de Pablo, 2015; Oorschot, 2018). Second, they provide additional support for the impact of efficient investment of the resources of these universities in strengthening the reduction of

counterproductive knowledge behaviour, as previously reported (Gagné et al., 2019; Llopis & Foss, 2015; Dijk, 2019). Third, they provide additional support for the impact of efficient investment of the resources of these universities in strengthening the relationship between knowledge-oriented leadership and reducing counterproductive knowledge behaviour, as previously emphasised (e.g., Hussain et al., 2024a, 2024b). Thus, Iraqi educational institutions should explore the interactive factors that can facilitate prompt responses to changes in the internal and external work environment. They should also take proactive measures to exploit the potential that emerges from such changes to enhance performance and deliver superior services, whether in the field of education or consulting. Thus, Iraqi educational institutions should explore the interactive factors that can facilitate prompt responses to changes in the internal and external work environment. They should also take proactive measures to exploit the potential that emerges from such changes to enhance performance and deliver superior services, whether in the field of education or consulting. Consistent with the studies (Ahmed et al., 2023; Hussein et al.,2023; Fadhil et al., 2023), we found that managers are well-versed in the study variables and their sub-dimensions, which enables them to enhance strategic performance by improving the quality of services provided by universities/colleges, thereby becoming an agile and adaptable organisation.

CONCLUSIONS

The studied variables and dimensions adequately inform the sample members, aligning with the stated objectives and addressing the previously documented question. However, there is also an excellent and significant correlation between KOL and JR in the colleges under study, indicating that they have a clear vision, goals, policies, and procedures in place to improve cognitive performance through the efficient use of their resources. These findings contrast with the strong and significant correlation between KOL and reducing CKB, which positively indicates the importance of KOL in reducing the level of CKB that falls on the directors of those universities/colleges. Among the most notable findings is the demonstration of the interactive relationship between JR and KOL, which strengthens the relationship to reduce CKB within the outputs of the ministry's universities through well-studied and practical decisions based on a previously prepared cognitive strategy.

Knowledge-oriented leadership practices can also enhance the performance of their assigned tasks more innovatively and beneficially than before.. The implications of this extend to organisational practices, indicating that developing a coherent knowledge strategic vision, consistent with knowledge management practices, can enhance the ability of those universities/colleges to make influential decisions towards investing their resources to improve the services provided according to their perspective towards knowledge.

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Author Contributions

Conceptualization: A.A.A.A.; **Data curation:** M.H.A.F.; **Formal analysis:** M.H.A.F.; **Funding acquisition:** A.A.A.; **Investigation:** A.A.A.; **Methodology:** A.A.A.A.; **Project administration:** A.A.A., M.H.A.F.; **Software:** M.H.A.F.; **Supervision:** A.A.A., M.H.A.F.; **Validation:** A.A.A.A.; **Visualization:** A.A.A.A.; **Writing – original draft:** A.A.A.A., A.A.A., M.H.A.F.; **Writing – review & editing:** A.A.A.A., A.A.A., M.H.A.F.

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