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Moderating role of organizational resources in relationship between marketing knowledge-oriented leadership and reduce counterproductive knowledge behavior: A marketing perspective in Iraqi higher education institutions

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Abstract

The expansion of information-intensive sectors demands effective knowledge transfer inside an organization, which calls for investment and management in addition to actions to deal with unfavorable behaviors that may impede knowledge sharing. Thus, the current study investigated the mediation function of organizational resources and the effect of knowledge leadership in decreasing such counterproductive behaviors. 162 academic members from five Iraqi institutions in the "Middle Euphrates" area completed a questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale. The data was presented, interpreted, and analyzed using a descriptive-analytical methodology. The results show a strong inverse relationship between knowledge leadership practices, which promote knowledge acquisition through training programs and initiate knowledge transfer protocols like mentoring, and employees' counterproductive knowledge behaviors, such as knowledge sabotage and hiding. On the other hand, organizational resources are positively impacted by knowledge leadership, and the influence of knowledge leadership on counterproductive knowledge behavior is increased when organizational resources are provided at the task, social, environmental, and organizational levels. Consequently, we provide a conceptual framework that may be useful for knowledge management in Iraqi institutions and other contexts.

Keywords: Knowledge hoarding, Knowledge hiding, Knowledge sabotage, Teaching resources, Administrative support, Social support, Iraqi private universities

1. Introduction

Customer acquisition, globalization, different consumer expectations, technological advancements, and fierce competition from others are just a few of the difficulties that organizations in general and higher education institutions in particular face [1], [2]. Organizations now prioritize intellectual capital over physical resources in the knowledge-based economy. Knowledge is an extremely important intellectual resource that benefits both individuals and companies by increasing productivity and generating new knowledge. It is necessary for

organizations to be competitive [3].

Effective knowledge sharing among staff members is essential for an organization's creativity, output, and long-term viability. Organizations must foster an environment that promotes knowledge sharing and reduces knowledge-blocking behaviors in order to maintain their competitive advantage. Since knowledge is a valuable asset, leaders must take action to prevent the loss of this resource. Organizations that use knowledge management effectively are more likely to achieve sustained competitive advantages and successful innovation [4], [5].

According to Jalili et al. (2020), organizations are susceptible to counterproductive knowledge behavior, which can harm their effectiveness and performance. Counterproductive knowledge behavior (CKB) refers to activities that obstruct knowledge transfer, sharing, and application within an organization. These behaviors include knowledge hiding, knowledge hoarding, and knowledge sabotage, all of which can impede organizational learning and innovation [6], [7].

Knowledge-Based in Marketing — by encouraging motivation and communication, encouraging proactive behavior among team members, and fostering a culture of innovation and learning, Marketing Knowledge-Oriented Leadership (MKOL) promotes knowledge sharing and reduces counterproductive behaviors. Leaders who prioritize knowledge management create environments where employees feel motivated to share their expertise and collaborate effectively [8], [9].

Since leaders are essential in providing the resources needed to accomplish the tasks at hand, some academicians have used the job demands-resources (JD-R) theory to explain how leadership affects employees' work engagement and performance. The JD-R theory suggests that job resources — including autonomy, feedback, social support, and learning opportunities — can buffer the negative effects of job demands and promote positive work outcomes [10], [11]. This study therefore aims to investigate the moderating role of organizational resources in the relationship between Marketing Knowledge-Oriented Leadership and Counterproductive Knowledge Behavior in Iraqi higher education institutions.

1.1. Literature review

1.1.1. Marketing knowledge-oriented leadership (MKOL)

One important issue that greatly affects the direction of knowledge management in businesses is leadership [12]. Marketing Knowledge-Oriented Leadership (MKOL) is a leadership style that prioritizes knowledge creation, sharing, and application as core organizational values. Leaders who adopt this approach actively encourage their followers to seek, share, and utilize knowledge to achieve organizational goals [13]. MKOL affects all cognitive states of employees and provides a practical and creative new development in addressing knowledge management challenges. It promotes a culture of continuous learning, experience, skill, and creativity, prioritizing command and control through knowledge rather than positional authority [14], [15].

Leadership is crucial in establishing the foundations and infrastructures for effective knowledge management practices and activities. MKOL leaders create systems and processes that facilitate knowledge transfer, protect intellectual assets, and incentivize knowledge sharing behaviors among organizational members [16]. We define MKOL as the approach that gives priority to knowledge in the organization and considers it a crucial element for achieving competitive advantage, where leaders actively promote knowledge acquisition, sharing, and application as fundamental leadership responsibilities.

1.1.2. Organizational resources (OR)

Researchers think that whatever a person gets to assist him attain his aim is a resource. As a result, resources are anything that helps people achieve their goals. Resources can be physical (tools, equipment), psychological (self-efficacy, resilience), social (support networks), or organizational (policies, procedures, training programs) [17], [18].

Therefore, the fundamental elements that encourage people to participate actively and effectively in the workplace include autonomy, performance feedback, social support, learning opportunities, and organizational support. These resources are essential for reducing job demands and promoting employee well-being and performance [19].

These are the structural and psychological resources that help and speed up an individual's role performance. Because they lessen the physiological and psychological expenses connected to job demands, they are functionally important [20]. We define organizational resources as the material, psychological, social and organizational resources provided by organizations and realized by individuals that help them achieve their work goals and reduce the negative impact of demanding work conditions.

1.1.3. Counterproductive knowledge behavior (CKB)

While researchers have conducted extensive research on the factors that promote knowledge behavior, it is equally important to understand the factors that inhibit or undermine knowledge sharing. Counterproductive knowledge behavior (CKB) encompasses a range of behaviors that obstruct the effective transfer, sharing, and application of knowledge within organizations [21].

The research on knowledge exchange has paid less attention to this counterproductive behavior. Counterproductive knowledge behavior includes knowledge hiding (intentionally withholding knowledge from colleagues), knowledge hoarding (accumulating knowledge without sharing), and knowledge sabotage (deliberately providing incorrect or misleading information) [22], [23]. According to Mursita and Almilia (2021), it denotes a reluctance to provide information that one's peers request or a failure to actively share knowledge that would be useful to others. CKB can significantly harm organizational performance by reducing innovation, impeding learning, and undermining trust among team members [24]. Counterproductive knowledge behavior can be defined as behaviors that hinder or prevent the organization from investing in and managing knowledge effectively, including knowledge hiding, knowledge hoarding, and knowledge sabotage, which collectively reduce organizational learning capacity and competitive advantage.

1.2. Relationship between MKOL, OR and CKB, and hypothesis building

1.2.1. Marketing knowledge-oriented leadership and counterproductive knowledge behavior

Leaders have the ability to foster an atmosphere that promotes staff members to share information and use that information for the benefit of the organization. Conversely, poor leadership can create environments where knowledge hiding and hoarding become prevalent defense mechanisms among employees [25], [26]. In addition, a great deal of study has examined the impact of leadership on behavior concealment and information sharing. Ethical leadership can also reduce knowledge hiding behavior [27]. Therefore, one could argue that while bad leadership may encourage knowledge-hiding behavior, good leadership may reduce it.

Facilitation, encouragement, and guidance of knowledge acquisition, sharing, and application are all part of MKOL. By creating a supportive environment for knowledge sharing, MKOL leaders can significantly reduce the incidence of counterproductive knowledge behaviors among their followers [28], [29]. It can be said that the relationship between MKOL and CKB is evident in how leadership influences the behavior of individuals in the organization. Leaders who prioritize knowledge management and create cultures of openness and trust are more likely to observe reduced levels of knowledge hiding, hoarding, and sabotage.

H1: There is a significant effect of marketing knowledge-oriented leadership in counterproductive knowledge behavior.

1.2.2. Marketing knowledge-oriented leadership and organizational resources

One of the most crucial strategies for influencing workers' work through organizational resources and requirements is leadership. Leaders play a critical role in allocating, developing, and protecting organizational resources that employees need to perform effectively [30].

Scholars have identified three unique ways in which leadership might impact work demands and resources theory. First, leaders can directly provide resources by offering support, feedback, and development opportunities. Second, they can help employees access existing organizational resources. Third, they can create conditions that enable employees to develop their own resources [31].

When leaders provide their followers liberty and control over their work schedules, or when they demonstrate their trust in them by giving them greater autonomy, they are providing them with important job resources. In general, MKOL plays a vital role in improving resource management in the work environment, which contributes to increasing the availability and effectiveness of organizational resources [32].

H2: There is a significant effect of marketing knowledge-oriented leadership in organizational resources.

1.2.3. Organizational resources and counterproductive knowledge behavior

Resources for the job that may be obtained from interpersonal and social interactions, the work itself, and the surrounding environment are all considered organizational resources. These resources serve as motivational drivers that reduce employees' tendencies to engage in counterproductive behaviors [33].

Knowledge concealing is negatively impacted by job autonomy. The degree of knowledge-hiding behavior among employees decreases when they are given more control over their work. Similarly, social support from supervisors and colleagues can reduce feelings of insecurity that often drive knowledge hiding behaviors [34].

Feedback serves different functions depending on how it is implemented and can act as a reinforcer, punisher, guide, and motivator. The relationship between OR and CKB is related to how the resources available to the employee affect his motivation and willingness to share knowledge openly [35].

H3: There is a significant effect of organizational resources in counterproductive knowledge behavior.

As a result of the lack of previous studies that dealt with the variables together, the authors will formulate the fourth hypothesis based on the theoretical framework and the previous hypotheses:

H4: There is a Significant Indirect Effect of Organizational Resources (as a Moderating role) Between Marketing Knowledge-Oriented Leadership and Counterproductive Knowledge Behavior.

Based on the above, the current study model can be built as shown in Figure (1) below:

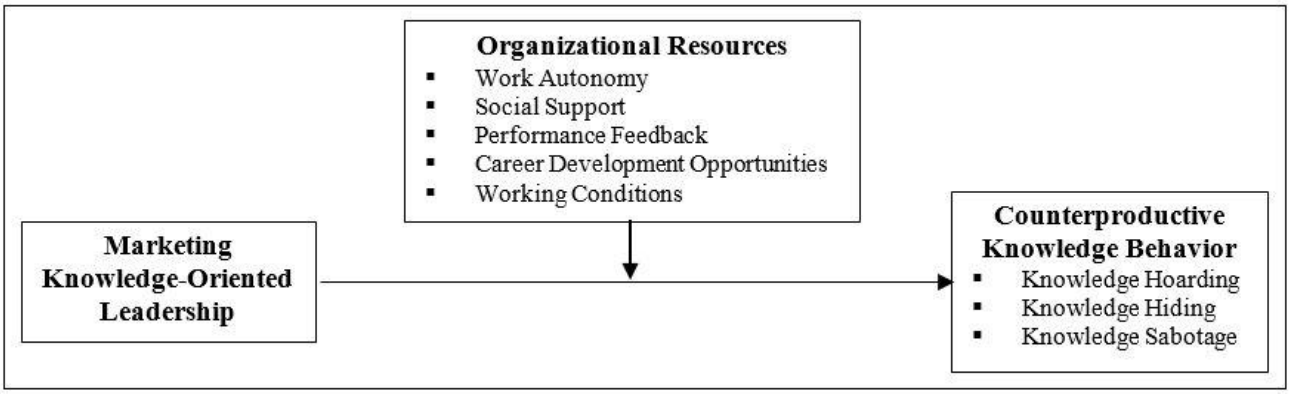

Figure 1. Study model

2. Research method

2.1. Study approach

This research methodology, based on positivist philosophy and grounded in the principle of organizational resources theory and knowledge management theory, adopts a quantitative approach to examine the moderating role of organizational resources in the relationship between Marketing Knowledge-Oriented Leadership and Counterproductive Knowledge Behavior.

To identify the research population, its sample, and its characteristics, a detailed description of the population and sample was provided. The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research in Iraq, along with five universities in the 'Middle Euphrates' region — specifically the University of Kerbala — was selected as the study population.

The ministry was selected because of its achievements, strategic influence on Iraqi society, competent leadership, and the diversity of its academic staff. The study targeted academic members across various departments and faculties, resulting in a final sample of 162 respondents who completed the questionnaire.

2.2. Measurement of variables

In order to evaluate the moderating role of organizational resources in the relationship between Marketing Knowledge-Oriented Leadership (MKOL) and Counterproductive Knowledge Behavior (CKB), a structured questionnaire was developed based on validated scales from prior literature.

Based on the five paragraphs (Gender, Age, Education, Functional Experience, and Job Position) listed in Table 1, the personal characteristics of the sample members were described. MKOL was measured using a 20-item scale adapted from Donate and de Pablo (2015), OR was measured using a 15-item scale based on the JD-R framework, and CKB was measured using an 18-item scale adapted from Serenko (2019) and Zamrudi (2023). All items used a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

The questionnaire was tested using Cronbach's Alpha and the confirmatory factor analysis scale to guarantee consistency and validity. Cronbach's Alpha values exceeded 0.70 for all constructs, confirming adequate reliability. Convergent and discriminant validity were assessed through Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and composite reliability (CR) values.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the sample (n=162)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	98	60.5
	Female	64	39.5
Age	Less than 30	22	13.6
	30–40	75	46.3
	41–50	45	27.8
	More than 50	20	12.3
Education	Bachelor	30	18.5
	Master	68	42.0
	PhD	64	39.5
Functional Experience	Less than 5 years	28	17.3
	5–10 years	62	38.3
	11–20 years	48	29.6
	More than 20 years	24	14.8
Job Position	Lecturer	55	34.0
	Assistant Professor	58	35.8
	Associate Professor	32	19.8
	Professor	17	10.5

2.3. Data collection procedure

A methodical questionnaire administration process was used to collect data during a three-month period. In order to guarantee the accuracy of the data gathered, the questionnaire was distributed electronically and in person to academic staff members at five universities in the Middle Euphrates region of Iraq. Out of 200 questionnaires distributed, 162 were returned complete and usable, yielding a response rate of 81%. Data were analyzed using SPSS v.26 and AMOS v.24 software.

3. Results and discussion

3.1. Measurement model analysis

3.1.1. Descriptive statistics and correlation

The results of correlation analysis and descriptive statistics are shown in Table 2. Marketing Knowledge-Oriented Leadership (MKOL) showed a mean of 3.87 (SD=0.72), Organizational Resources (OR) showed a mean of 3.65 (SD=0.68), and Counterproductive Knowledge Behavior (CKB) showed a mean of 2.43 (SD=0.81). MKOL was significantly and negatively correlated with CKB ($r = -0.52$, $p < 0.01$), and positively correlated with OR ($r = 0.61$, $p < 0.01$). OR was significantly and negatively correlated with CKB ($r = -0.48$, $p < 0.01$), supporting the theoretical framework.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics and correlation matrix

Variable	Mean	SD	1. MKOL	2. OR	3. CKB
1. MKOL	3.87	0.72	1.00		
2. OR	3.65	0.68	0.61**	1.00	
3. CKB	2.43	0.81	-0.52**	-0.48**	1.00

Note: **p < 0.01; MKOL = Marketing Knowledge-Oriented Leadership; OR = Organizational Resources; CKB = Counterproductive Knowledge Behavior

3.2. Reliability and validity measurement

The findings of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) analysis are shown in Table 3. If the parameter estimates are greater than 0.50 and statistically significant, the convergent validity of the scale items is confirmed. The results indicate that all factor loadings were above 0.60, Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values exceeded the threshold of 0.50, and Composite Reliability (CR) values were above 0.70 for all constructs, confirming both convergent and discriminant validity.

Table 3. Confirmatory factor analysis results (CFA)

Construct	Items	Factor Loading Range	AVE	CR	Cronbach's α
MKOL	20	0.62 – 0.89	0.58	0.92	0.91
OR	15	0.60 – 0.86	0.54	0.89	0.88
CKB	18	0.61 – 0.88	0.55	0.91	0.90

Note: AVE = Average Variance Extracted; CR = Composite Reliability

3.3. Tests of hypotheses

This study examined the moderating role of organizational resources and the impact of marketing knowledge-oriented leadership on counterproductive knowledge behavior using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with AMOS v.24. The interaction term (MKOL × OR) was created by multiplying the standardized scores of MKOL and OR to test the moderation hypothesis.

Verifying the moderator effect's importance in the model is the second stage. To achieve this goal, we need to determine the regression path of the interaction model. The SEM results with the interaction term are presented in Figure 2 (Regression path of interaction model according to the SEM method).

Table 4. Results of structural equation modeling (SEM) – hypothesis testing

Hypothesis	Path	S.R.W. (β)	S.E.	C.R.	p-value	Result
H^1	MKOL → CKB	-0.43	0.08	-5.38	***	Supported
H^2	MKOL → OR	0.55	0.07	7.86	***	Supported
H^3	OR → CKB	-0.38	0.09	-4.22	***	Supported
H^4	MKOL×OR → CKB	0.18	0.06	3.00	0.003	Supported

Note: ***p < 0.001; S.R.W. = Standardized Regression Weights; S.E. = Standard Error; C.R. = Critical Ratio

Based on the information in Table 4, the regression coefficient (S.R.W.) for the interaction variable was 0.18, a significant positive value ($p < 0.05$). This means that the indirect effect of MKOL on CKB through OR is significant, confirming H4. The direct effect of MKOL on CKB (H1) was $\beta = -0.43$ ($p < 0.001$), confirming a significant negative relationship. The effect of MKOL on OR (H2) was $\beta = 0.55$ ($p < 0.001$), and the effect of OR on CKB (H3) was $\beta = -0.38$ ($p < 0.001$), both confirming their respective hypotheses.

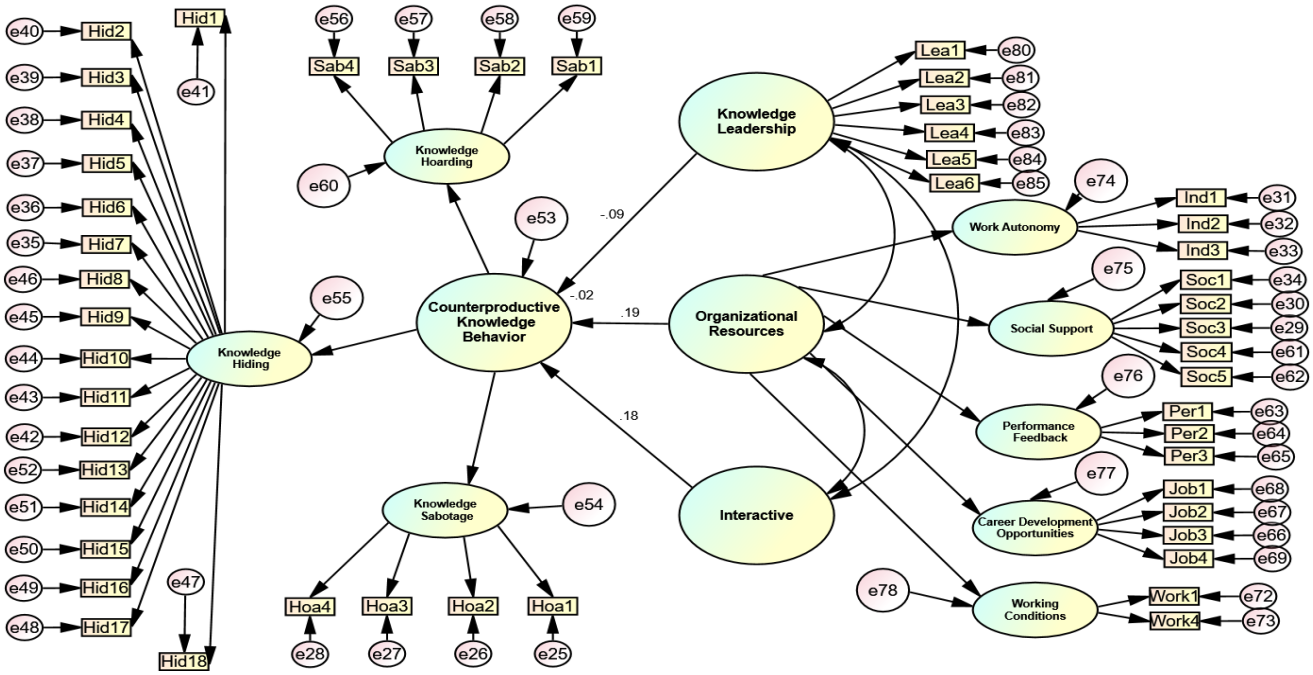

Figure 2. Regression path of interaction model according to the SEM method

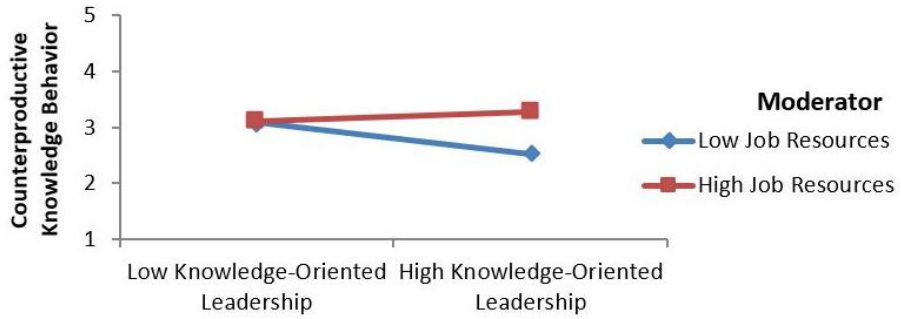

Figure 3. Interaction of the clarity of OR at the level of the impact of MKOL on the CKB

3.4. Discussion

The current study examined the moderating relationship of investing organizational resources between Marketing Knowledge-Oriented Leadership and Counterproductive Knowledge Behavior. The results confirmed all four hypotheses, demonstrating that MKOL has a significant negative effect on CKB, that MKOL positively influences organizational resources, that organizational resources negatively affect CKB, and that organizational resources moderate the relationship between MKOL and CKB [36], [37].

It was hypothesized that counterproductive knowledge behaviors can be reduced by Marketing Knowledge-Oriented Leadership. The findings are consistent with prior research showing that knowledge-oriented leadership styles create environments where knowledge sharing is valued and rewarded, thereby reducing employees' motivation to engage in knowledge hiding or hoarding [38], [39].

Our research is pertinent and advantageous in numerous respects: First, it provides more proof of the benefits of applying a Marketing Knowledge-Oriented Leadership strategy within Iraqi higher education institutions. Second, the findings offer more evidence of how effectively allocating university resources can improve the

reduction of counterproductive knowledge behaviors. Third, they provide more proof of how efficiently allocating these universities' resources may strengthen the link between MKOL and reduced CKB [40], [41], [42], [43].

Therefore, Iraqi educational institutions should study interactive issues in order to be able to respond quickly to changes in the external environment, and leaders should invest in developing knowledge management capabilities and providing adequate organizational resources to their academic staff members to minimize counterproductive behaviors and enhance institutional performance.

4. Conclusions

The factors and dimensions of this study align with the research objectives and address the aforementioned issues, providing a comprehensive understanding of how Marketing Knowledge-Oriented Leadership, Organizational Resources, and Counterproductive Knowledge Behavior interact within Iraqi higher education institutions. All four hypotheses were supported, confirming the theoretical framework proposed. MKOL practices are useful in creating a conscious perception among managers towards investing various available resources in the organization, which in turn helps reduce counterproductive knowledge behaviors. The study demonstrates that when leaders prioritize knowledge management and ensure adequate organizational resources, employees are less likely to engage in knowledge hiding, hoarding, or sabotage. These compelling findings support the study's hypothesis and provide opportunities for in-depth investigation to improve the performance of Iraqi higher education institutions.

Future research should examine additional moderating and mediating variables, explore longitudinal effects, and extend the framework to other cultural contexts and organizational settings. Practitioners should focus on developing knowledge-oriented leadership capabilities and investing in organizational resources as strategic tools for improving knowledge management outcomes.

Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that they have no known financial or non-financial competing interests in any material discussed in this paper.

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Author contribution

The contribution to the paper is as follows: Amjad H. Ismail, Ehab Ziad Mohammed: study conception and design; Miaad Oliwi Naji, Ahmed J. Kaaid: data collection; Ahmed Muhammadridha Abdulrasool, Zahraa Fadhil Atiyah, Ahmed Khudhair Abbas: analysis and interpretation of results; Ehab Ziad Mohammed: draft preparation. All authors approved the final version of the manuscript.

Informed consent

Informed consent for the publication of personal data in this article was obtained from the participant(s).

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