

## Examining the impact of realistic job previews on leaders' behavioral integrity and newcomers' psychological contract breach: A multiwave field experiment

### Abstract

**Purpose** – The overarching objective of this study is to explore how realistic job previews can mitigate the negative relationship between perceived leader behavioral integrity and employees' perceptions of psychological contract breach.

**Design/methodology/approach** – A between-subjects field experiment was conducted in the hotel industry. Five waves of data were collected from 104 newcomers over a four-month period.

**Findings** – The results indicated that perceiving leader behavioral integrity reduces newcomer psychological contract breach, turnover intention, and increases job performance. The intervention of realistic job previews effectively mitigated the negative relationship between behavioral integrity and psychological contract breach when leader-member value congruence was low.

**Implications** – The findings of this study offer actionable strategies for hotel professionals to improve employment outcomes, particularly during the pre-entry phase and the early socialization process of newcomers.

**Originality/value** – By integrating social exchange theory and expectancy theory within a framework of employees' psychological contract breach, this study reveals the positive effects of realistic job previews on creating a positive work experience of newcomers.

**Keywords:** Behavioral integrity; psychological contract breach; realistic job previews; leader-member value congruence; field experiment

## 1. Introduction

Behavioral integrity has emerged as a key factor in the employee-employer relationship, contributing to higher organizational profitability by reducing employee turnover (Simons *et al.*, 2018). The importance of behavioral integrity has also been recognized in the hospitality context as it is crucial for effective employee management (e.g., Boğan and Dedeoğlu, 2017; Gatling *et al.*, 2017). Behavioral integrity, which reflects a leader's credibility in keeping promises (Simons *et al.*, 2022), is closely tied to psychological contract. A central aspect of human resource management is the establishment of the psychological contract, which is defined as the implicit expectations and promises between employees and employers (Rousseau, 1995). When employers fail to meet these expectations, employees may perceive a breach of psychological contract (Simons *et al.*, 2022).

Despite the recognized connections between behavioral integrity and the psychological contract breach (Simons *et al.*, 2022), few studies have explored behavioral integrity as an antecedent of psychological contract breach. Examining this relationship contributes to the social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) by indicating how leaders' credibility in keeping promises fosters positive reciprocity, reducing contract breach, and enhancing organizational outcomes. This nuanced understanding highlights behavioral integrity as a foundational mechanism in developing high-quality social exchanges in hospitality organizations.

While existing research on employee-employer relationship has predominantly focused on job incumbents, particularly in areas such as behavioral integrity and psychological contract (e.g., Boğan and Dedeoğlu, 2017; Simons *et al.*, 2007; Tomlinson *et al.*, 2014), there remains

a significant gap in understanding how newcomers' job attitudes develop over time. This oversight is important as newcomers exhibit a unique pattern in work attitudes as they adjust to the new environment, which warrants exploration alongside studies focusing on job incumbents (Delobbe *et al.*, 2016). The dynamic and high-pressure nature of hospitality work creates distinct challenges for newcomers, who often face intense demands to adapt quickly while maintaining high levels of service performance (Lan *et al.*, 2022). These unique circumstances make it essential to explore the experiences and perspectives of hospitality newcomers.

We propose that perceptions of leaders' behavioral integrity significantly influence the newcomers' psychological contract breach. Tomlinson *et al.* (2014) stated that behavioral integrity alone may not suffice to generate positive results. Value congruence, an essential factor accompanied by behavioral integrity, strengthens the viewer's impression that the actor has good character (Tomlinson *et al.*, 2014). Therefore, value congruence between leaders and employees is proposed as a boundary condition that may impact the relationship between behavioral integrity and psychological contract.

Furthermore, implementing strategies before employees commence work may offer greater advantages, as selection, recruitment, and early socialization in organizations precede the development of psychological contract in pre-employment stages (Rousseau, 2001). While strategies such as providing support from supervisors, organizations, or coworkers can mitigate negative organizational outcomes like psychological contract breach among hospitality employees (Shi and Gordon, 2020), few studies have explored proactive approaches to prevent these negative outcomes. To address this research gap, we explore how the hospitality industry

utilizes appropriate strategies during the pre-entry stage, such as realistic job previews, as an intervention in shaping the employee-employer relationship.

In summary, we address the aforementioned issues by integrating social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) and expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964). First, we investigate how leaders' behavioral integrity influences newcomers' turnover intention and job performance through the mediating role of psychological contract breach. Additionally, we explore the moderating effect of leader-follower value congruence on the relationship between behavioral integrity and psychological contract breach. Finally, we assess the effectiveness of interventions, such as realistic job previews during newcomers' early socialization stage, in mitigating psychological contract breach.

Our study makes several contributions to the literature. First, grounded in social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), this study enriches the leader-follower social exchange literature by adopting a dynamic approach to explore newcomers' perceived behavioral integrity during the onboarding process and its further influences on psychological contract breach at a later stage. Second, drawing on expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964), our framework introduces the concept of realistic job previews as a strategic approach to proactively minimize the risk of psychological contract breach during employees' onboarding process. Unlike previous studies primarily focused on exploring the psychological contract breach of job incumbents, the use of newcomers makes a significant contribution, as psychological contract can develop during the early stages of socialization when individuals first start their work in organizations (Rousseau, 2001). Third, our multiwave and multisource field experiment in a real hotel setting allowed us

to manipulate realistic job previews, ensuring robust internal and external validity. This can inform hotel organizations about the long-term benefits of investing in realistic job previews as part of their recruitment and selection processes to reduce newcomers' psychological contract breach that may occur at a later stage.

## **2. Literature Review**

### *2.1. Newcomers' perceived leader behavioral integrity*

Positive relationships and interactions between employees and their supervisors can mitigate negative outcomes, such as employee burnout and counterproductive work behaviors, particularly in the hospitality context (Wallace and Coughlan, 2023). During the early socialization phase, leaders play an important role in shaping newcomers' understanding of organizations and resolving the ambiguous situations (Saeed *et al.*, 2024). A key factor in this process is behavioral integrity, which refers to the alignment between a leader's words and actions (Simons *et al.*, 2018; Simons *et al.*, 2022). Newcomers often look to leaders for guidance as they form connections and adjust to their new roles. According to social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), interactions between two parties develop over time, contingent on mutual adherence to agreed-upon rules and exchanges. A leader's behavioral integrity signals adherence to fundamental exchanged agreements (Simons *et al.*, 2022), fostering a positive social exchange relationship (Erkutlu and Chafra, 2017). When newcomers perceive these social interactions positively, it can greatly influence their attitudes (Liu *et al.*, 2021; Zheng *et al.*, 2016). Therefore, when leaders consistently demonstrate behavioral integrity, it can foster high-quality social exchanges that help newcomers in adjusting to their new work environment.

Integrity is often considered as one of the most important leadership traits in the hospitality industry (Dimitriou, 2016). Previous studies consistently show that leaders' behavioral integrity affects key aspects of hospitality employees' attitudes and behaviors. These include organizational identification (Erkutlu and Chafra, 2017), trust in leaders (Boğan and Dedeoğlu, 2017), and willingness to voice concerns (Gatling *et al.*, 2017). A leader's integrity not only influences ethical behavior of their followers but also plays a critical role in organizational outcomes such as financial performance and hotel profitability (Simons *et al.*, 2018). Given the important role of leaders' behavioral integrity in influencing both newcomers and organizations, particularly in the hospitality industry, further investigation into its effects is critical.

## *2.2. Leaders' behavioral integrity and newcomers' psychological contract breach*

In the early stages of employee socialization, building a psychological contract is fundamental for both organizations and newcomers (De Vos and Freese, 2011). Psychological contract refers to the perceptions of the terms and conditions of a reciprocal exchange agreement between two parties (Rousseau and McLean Parks, 1993). The hospitality industry's dynamic nature, coupled with negative events (e.g., high levels of conflict), can significantly contribute to employees' psychological contract breach (Yang *et al.*, 2020). Psychological contract breach occurs when employees perceive that their employer has failed to meet the promised obligations outline in the implicit or explicit terms of their psychological contract (Rousseau, 1995). Research within the hospitality context highlights that when employees' psychological contract is breached, they reported higher turnover intentions and low levels of

job satisfaction, organizational commitment, well-being, and organizational citizenship behavior (e.g., Conway *et al.*, 2011; Karatepe *et al.*, 2021; Shi and Gordon, 2020).

While the negative consequences of psychological contract breach for hospitality employees are well-documented, there has been little exploration into how psychological contract breach forms and evolves among newcomers, particularly in how this evolution affects newcomers' attitudes and behaviors. The psychological contract at the early career stage shapes newcomers' subsequent socialization process (Delobbe *et al.*, 2016) and influences various outcomes, such as deviant behaviors (Raza *et al.*, 2024) and turnover intention (Rasheed *et al.*, 2024). Given the critical role of the early stages of employment in the hospitality industry (Raza *et al.*, 2024), investigating the formation of the psychological contract in newcomers is both a valuable and necessary area of investigation.

Prior studies suggest that leaders' behavioral integrity plays a key role in meeting employees' expectations embedded in the psychological contract (Simons *et al.*, 2022). Therefore, this study aims to explore the impact of leaders' behavioral integrity on psychological contract of newcomers. A high level of integrity in a leader serves as a source of positive social exchange for members of the organization (Kacmar *et al.*, 2011). The promise-keeping aspect of behavioral integrity influences psychological contract (Simons *et al.*, 2007). Therefore, if leaders "walk their talk," newcomers will have a more positive perception of the organization. In contrast, if leaders' words and deeds are not aligned, newcomers are more likely to perceive that the psychological contract breach. Thus, we propose that behavioral integrity is negatively related to hotel newcomers' psychological contract breach.

**Hypothesis 1.** Perceived leader behavioral integrity negatively influences newcomers' psychological contract breach.

### *2.3. The impact of Leaders' behavioral integrity on newcomers' turnover intention and job performance*

The hospitality industry consistently faces a high employee turnover, making turnover a persistent challenge (Park and Min, 2020). Recent studies highlights that high turnover intentions among newcomers often stem from difficulties in adjusting to their roles (Ma *et al.*, 2024) and negative experiences such as workplace hazing (Rasheed *et al.*, 2024). Retaining newcomers during their initial employment period in is important because turnover rates tends are highest within the first few months (Kim, 2014).

Leaders play a critical role in shaping employees' retention, particularly through the demonstration of bheavioral integrity (Erkutlu and Chafra, 2017). Newcomers are less likely to leave their job if they receive more social support and experience higher-quality social exchanges (Jabutay and Rungruang, 2021). The trustworthiness associated with leaders' behavioral integrity helps reduce employees' turnover intentions (Palanski and Yammarino, 2011). In contrast, employees perceive hypocritical leaders as unreliable, which lower their perception of interpersonal justice and increase their likelihood of leaving the organization (Simons *et al.*, 2022). We therefore propose a negative relationship between the perceived leader behavioral integrity and newcomers' turnover intention.



**Hypothesis 2.** Perceived leader behavioral integrity is negatively related to newcomers' turnover intention.

Furthermore, recent studies in the hospitality field may have overlooked that leadership style influences newcomers' job performance (Chen and Wu, 2020). The initial interactions between leaders and newcomers are crucial as these interactions shape subsequent relationships and significantly impact employees' performance (Liu *et al.*, 2021). According to social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), when leaders establish an environment of trust through integrity, employees are more likely to reciprocate the benefits received from trusted leaders (Elsetouhi *et al.*, 2018). High-quality social exchanges with leaders can enhance newcomers' trust, fostering a stronger sense of obligation to reciprocate (Liu *et al.*, 2021). Therefore, we propose a direct positive relationship between behavioral integrity and job performance:

**Hypothesis 3.** Perceived leader behavioral integrity is positively related to newcomers' job performance.

#### *2.4. The mediating role of psychological contract breach*

Perceptions of behavioral integrity can have a strong effect on employees' positive attitudes (Davis and Rothstein, 2006), and if a breach of contract occurs, the status of the social exchange will be imbalanced, which has an adverse effect on job attitudes (Bal *et al.*, 2010). Behavioral integrity in leaders can encourage employees' commitment to their organization (Davis and Rothstein, 2006) and increase their satisfaction with their jobs and leaders (Simons *et al.*, 2022). However, a psychological contract breach can lead to distrust and reduce organizational commitment, triggering a greater desire to leave the organization (Dulac *et al.*, 2008). Therefore,

when leaders lack integrity and employees' psychological contracts are breached, employees' turnover intention may increase. We therefore propose the following hypothesis:

**Hypothesis 4.** Newcomers' psychological contract breach mediates the relationship between perceived leader behavioral integrity and turnover intention.

Furthermore, newcomers often have high expectations that the organization will fulfill their psychological needs and provide career development support, particularly during their initial phase of entry (Zhou *et al.*, 2024). Leaders with integrity play a critical role in helping hospitality employees meet these expectations, leading to better integration and improved performance (Ling *et al.*, 2016). Social exchange theory posits that when employees and employers mutually agree on the terms of their contracts, their future interactions become more predictable, which facilitates planning, coordination, and effective performance (Rousseau, 1995). Conversely, psychological contract breach can negatively influence employees' work performance (Bal *et al.*, 2010). Therefore, we proposed the following hypothesis:

**Hypothesis 5.** Newcomers' psychological contract breach mediates the relationship between perceived leader behavioral integrity and job performance.

### *2.5. The moderating role of leader-member value congruence*

Leader-member value congruence refers to the degree to which the values of both parties are aligned (Meglino and Ravlin, 1998). Although value congruence is not explicit in the concept of behavioral integrity, the congruence of leaders' and subordinates' value is an important component (Tomlinson *et al.*, 2014). A high level of value congruence indicates that two parties may share a similar identity, trust each other, and perceive the world in comparable

ways (Edwards and Cable, 2009; Meglino and Ravlin, 1998). This alignment in values can lead subordinates to view their leaders as possessing good character, thereby enhancing the positive effects of behavioral integrity (Tomlinson *et al.*, 2014). When leaders and subordinates share similar values and pursue common goals, their mutual trust and commitment are strengthened (Edwards and Cable, 2009). Value congruence fosters trust by reinforcing perceptions of integrity, meaning employees believe that the organization and its leaders adhere to acceptable principles (Mayer *et al.*, 1995; Tomlinson *et al.*, 2014). As a result, the likelihood of a psychological contract breach may be reduced if subordinates perceive their leader as being similar to themselves in terms of values. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

**Hypothesis 6.** Leader-member value congruence moderates the negative relationship between perceived leader behavioral integrity and psychological contract breach, such that the negative relationship is stronger among newcomers who perceive low rather than high levels of leader-member value congruence.

## *2.6. Realistic job previews as an intervention to reduce newcomers' expectations*

Expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964) posits that individuals are motivated to exert effort and achieve high performance when they perceive a clear connection between their efforts, performance, and desired outcomes. This highlights the importance of providing individuals with accurate information about the relationship among effort, performance and rewards (Chehade and El Hajjar, 2016). Newcomers develop expectations before joining an organization (Major *et al.*, 1995). These expectations often arise from initial interactions during recruitment, where prospective employees are treated with dignity and respect, and

organizational representatives communicate the organization's commitment to being a supportive partner in future exchange (Zheng *et al.*, 2016). Subsequently, newcomers carry these expectations into the employment relationship, which in turn influences their actions and behaviors (Payne *et al.*, 2008).

The detailed information provide through realistic job previews during the hiring process aligns with the principles of expectancy theory, helping new recruits form more accurate expectations about the job and its potential rewards, thereby reducing unrealistic expectations (Chehade and El Hajjar, 2016). These previews can also help shape expectations about leaders, aligning subordinates' expectations with leaders' behavior, and improving overall organizational alignment by reducing newcomers' unrealistic job expectations (Buckley *et al.*, 2002). Additionally, realistic job previews foster high-quality social exchanges by creating an atmosphere of trust and transparency (Ganzach *et al.*, 2002). As a result, these job previews help establish realistic expectations and build trust (Buckley *et al.*, 2002), further enhancing the relationships among behavioral integrity, psychological contract breach, and leader-member value congruence.

Therefore, in situations where leader-member value congruence is low, realistic job previews can mitigate the negative relationship between leaders' behavioral integrity and employees' psychological contract breach. Conversely, in cases of high leader-member value congruence, the importance of realistic job previews may diminish, as leaders and subordinates already share similar values and understand each other's expectations. The effect of these previews on behavioral integrity and psychological contract breach may then be less

pronounced. Realistic job previews can therefore mitigate the moderating effect of leader-member value congruence and psychological contract breach. We therefore propose the following hypothesis and present our conceptual model in Figure 1.

**Hypothesis 7.** Realistic job previews mitigate the moderating effect of leader-member value congruence on the relationship between leaders' perceived behavioral integrity and newcomers psychological contract breach. Furthermore, this negative relationship is mitigated for employees experiencing realistic job previews when they perceive low rather than high levels of leader-member value congruence.

[Insert Figure 1 here]

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Sample and procedure

Multiwave and multisource data were collected from newcomers in full-service hotels located in a city in the eastern China. A total 13 hotels agreed to support the data collection. Out of the 13 full-service hotels, only one hotel experienced a shutdown during the study period, resulting in data collection from 12 full-service hotels. While there is no confirmed definition of job newcomers previous empirical studies typically refer to individuals who have just started their work, before or during the new employee orientation (e.g., Delobbe *et al.*, 2016; De Vos and Freese, 2011). We recruited participants who had accepted the job offer letter but had not attended the new employee orientation. Data collection began after the newcomers accepted the job offer letter but before they commenced their positions. To standardize our participants, we recruited the newcomers in line-level positions with a one-year contract and a one-month

probationary period. All these job newcomers are freshly graduated students from the college.

We applied a one-factor between-subjects experimental design and conducted a five-stage data collection process (see Figure 2). A detailed description of each stage from T1 to T5 can be found in the Appendix I of the supplementary material. A total of 128 job newcomers were recruited to participate in the five-stage study. The first stage (T1) was conducted in September 2022, and the 128 participants completed a survey to obtain information about their initial psychological contract before starting work and their demographic information. Two days after completing the survey, the participants attended new employee orientation sessions. The second stage (T2) was conducted during these sessions, in which the intervention was given. At T2, all of the participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions (realistic job previews vs. control) and engaged in different employee orientation activities. In both conditions, four employees offered the orientation to the participants. They included a human resource manager and three current employees who worked in the Food and Beverage, Front Office, and Marketing departments, respectively. In both conditions, the human resource manager gave an overview of the hotel's situation and employees' overall job responsibilities. In the control condition, the three current employees only shared information about their job responsibilities in each department and their positive experiences. Conversely, in the realistic job previews condition, the three current employees not only discussed their job responsibilities but also mentioned the negative aspects of the work, such as challenges faced or aspects they found unfavorable. The third stage (T3) was conducted in October 2022 after the participants had worked in hotels for a month. All of the participants completed a survey in T3 that measured

their perceptions of their leaders' behavioral integrity. The fourth stage (T4) was conducted in November 2022 after the participants had worked for two months. All of the participants completed a survey in T4 that measured aspects related to their psychological contract after work and their leader-member value congruence. The final stage (T5) was conducted in December 2022, after three months of employment. Participants completed a survey in T5 that measured their turnover intention, and their direct supervisors also completed a survey to rate their job performance.

In addition to the 128 newcomers recruited to take the five-stage study, their direct managers were recruited to rate the newcomers' job performance at T5. A total of 126 newcomers completed the T1 survey. Of these, 105 newcomers attended the orientation (T2) and completed the three other surveys (i.e., T3 to T5). After matching with the supervisor survey, 104 valid responses were obtained for further analysis. There were 56 newcomers in the realistic job previews condition and 48 newcomers in the control condition (without receiving realistic job previews). Among the 104 newcomers, 74% were females. All the newcomers were aged between 20 and 24. The majority of them worked in the Food and Beverage department (42%) and the Front Office department (36%).

### *3.2. Power analysis*

Following the recommendations of Leung *et al.* (2024) and Viglia *et al.* (2021), we conducted a sample size estimation using G\*Power to estimate if the sample size is enough for generating a statistical power of 0.8. Considering that interaction effects often represent more complex relationships between variables and may have larger effect sizes compared to main

effects, we used the effect size of the three-way interaction from Hypothesis 7. Using the t-test, the results showed that a minimum sample size of 55 was needed for each group. Our valid responses from 104 newcomers, with 56 in one condition and 48 in the other. While our total sample size fell slightly short of the ideal, the difference of only six participants is unlikely to have a significant impact on the study's overall robustness. Furthermore, considering the medium effect size of 0.48, which falls within the range commonly considered as moderate, the sample size is adequate to address our research questions.

[Insert Figure 2 here]

### 3.3. *Manipulation check*

To ensure the effectiveness of the realistic job previews manipulation, we conducted a manipulation check. According to existing literature (Baur *et al.*, 2014; Colarelli, 1984), realistic job previews typically enhance perceptions of trustworthiness and accuracy, while also increasing awareness of the negative aspects of a job. Therefore, if the manipulation of our realistic job previews is successful, participants in the realistic job previews condition would report higher levels of trustworthiness and accuracy and would recognize more negative characteristics of the job, compared to those in the control condition.

Specifically, we employed three measures, including trustworthiness of the information provided by organizations, accuracy of the information provided by organizations, and understanding of any negative characteristics of the job. Trustworthiness and accuracy were measured with one question each, following Colarelli (1984) (i.e., "How trustworthy was the new staff orientation you attended as a source of information about the work that you will do



in this hotel?” and “How accurate was the content from the new staff orientation as a source information about the work that you will do in this hotel?”). Negative information was measured using one item adopted from Saks and Cronshaw (1990) (i.e., “I found a lot of the negative characteristics of hotel employees’ work through this new staff orientation.”).

We conducted an independent samples *t*-test to compare the responses of participants in the realistic job previews condition with those in the control condition on all three measures. The results showed significant differences between the two groups on all three measures. The newcomers in the realistic job previews condition felt that the information from the new staff orientation was more trustworthy ( $M_{RJPS} = 4.00, M_{control} = 3.74, p < 0.05$ ), more accurate ( $M_{RJPS} = 4.00, M_{control} = 3.76, p < 0.05$ ), and more negative ( $M_{RJPS} = 3.40, M_{control} = 3.10, p < 0.05$ ) than those in the control condition. Therefore, the manipulation of realistic job previews was successful.

### 3.4. Measures

All the measures used in this study were from the existing studies. Except for the psychological contract breach, the other four variables of behavioral integrity, leader-member value congruence, job performance, and turnover intention were measured on a 5-point Likert scale with one represents strongly disagree and five represents strongly agree.

*Psychological contract breach (measured at T1 and T4, self-rated).* Following the approach proposed by the previous studies (e.g., Chambel and Oliveira-Cruz, 2010; Robinson, 1996), we assessed employees’ expectations regarding their organizations’ obligations and the extent to which those obligations were fulfilled separately. Psychological contract breach

indicates the disparity between employees' expectations regarding their employers' obligations and the actual fulfillment of those obligations. Thus, the differences between the two values represent psychological contract breach. To measure this construct, before the participants started their jobs at T1, they were asked to indicate the extent to which they believed that the hotels were obligated to provide the nine items representing various obligations (hereafter "PC\_initial") on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = "not at all obligated"; 5 = "completely obligated"). Example items are "support in learning new skills" and "necessary training to do the job well." At T4, which was two months after the participants started their jobs, they were asked to indicate the extent to which they actually had been provided with the above list of obligations (hereafter "PC\_after") on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = "not at all fulfilled"; 5 = "very well fulfilled"). Cronbach's alpha values for "PC\_initial" and "PC\_after" were 0.95 and 0.98, respectively. To calculate the levels of psychological contract breach, we used the value of "PC\_initial" minus the value of "PC\_after." A high score means that an item was perceived as highly obligated and was not perceived as well fulfilled, while a low score means that an item was not perceived as highly obligated but was provided by the company.

*Behavioral integrity (measured at T3, self-rated).* Behavioral integrity was measured using the eight-item scale from Simons *et al.* (2007). A sample item is "There is a match between my manager's words and actions" (Cronbach's alpha = 0.99).

*Leader-member value congruence (measured at T4, self-rated).* Value congruence was measured using the three-item scale from Hoffman *et al.* (2011). A sample item is "My personal values match my manager's values and ideas" (Cronbach's alpha = 0.99).

*Turnover intention (measured at T5, self-rated).* Turnover intention was measured with the four-item scale from DeConinck and Johnson (2009). A sample item is “I would rate the likelihood of leaving my present job as high” (Cronbach’s alpha = 0.91).

*Job performance (measured at T5, rated by supervisors).* The newcomers’ job performance was measured using the six-item scale developed by Huang *et al.* (2021). A sample item is “This employee can meet performance standards and expectations” (Cronbach’s alpha = 0.97). Following previous studies (e.g., Gatling *et al.*, 2017) of behavioral integrity, we also included the participants’ gender as a control variable.

Although the measurement scales employed were based on the established scale, a confirmatory factor analysis using maximum likelihood was conducted. The results indicated that the standardized factor loadings of all the items were all above the 0.5 cutoff and were all significant at the 0.001 level on their respective constructs. The composite reliability values for behavioral integrity, psychological contract breach, job performance, turnover intention, and leader-member value congruence are 0.94, 0.97, 0.97, 0.95 and 0.98, which are above 0.70. The average variance extracted values are 0.87, 0.76, 0.85, 0.81, and 0.97, which are above 0.5.

## **4. Results**

### *4.1. Preliminary analysis*

Table 1 gives the descriptive statistics of the variables (see Table 1 in the supplementary material). We tested multivariate normality by calculating the values of skewness and kurtosis for the study variables. According to Curran *et al.* (1996), the cut-off values for skewness are

between  $-2$  and  $2$  and for kurtosis are between  $-7$  and  $7$ . The values of skewness and kurtosis of our study variables were within these ranges.

#### *4.2. Hypothesis testing*

We tested our hypotheses with ordinary least squares regression analysis using the “stats” package in R studio. Supporting Hypothesis 1, employees’ perceived behavioral integrity was negatively associated with their psychological contract breach ( $B = -0.43, p < 0.001$ , see Model 1 in Table 2 of the supplementary material). The results of testing Hypothesis 2 are given in Table 3 (see Table 3 in the supplementary material). Model 1 in Table 3 showed a negative relationship between behavioral integrity and turnover intention ( $B = -0.35, p < 0.01$ ), thus supporting Hypothesis 2. Model 4 in Table 3 also provided support for Hypothesis 3, by indicating a positive relationship between behavioral integrity and job performance ( $B = 0.50, p < 0.001$ ).

Before examining the mediating effects proposed in Hypothesis 4 and Hypothesis 5, we first examined the relationship between psychological contract breach and the two outcome variables (i.e., turnover intention and job performance). Model 2 in Table 3 showed a positive relationship between psychological contract breach and turnover intention ( $B = 0.21, p < 0.05$ ). Model 5 in Table 3 showed that psychological contract breach negatively influenced employee job performance ( $B = -0.14, p < 0.05$ ). After confirming all of the direct relationships, we moved on to testing the mediating effect of psychological contract breach.

To test the mediating role of psychological contract breach, as in Hypothesis 4 and Hypothesis 5, we used the Monte Carlo method for assessing mediation, via the online

calculator developed by Selig and Preacher (2008). Biased-corrected confidence intervals (CIs) were calculated using estimates from 10,000 bootstrap samples. The indirect effect of behavioral integrity on turnover intention via psychological contract breach was negative and significant ( $B = -0.29$ , 95% CI  $[-0.13, -0.01]$ ). Taken together, the results of the mediation analysis showed that psychological contract breach partially mediated the effect of behavioral integrity on turnover intention. Thus, Hypothesis 4 was supported. Regarding the mediating effect of psychological breach on the relationship between behavioral integrity and job performance, the results of the mediation analysis failed to support Hypothesis 5 as the indirect effect was not significant ( $B = 0.51$ , 95% CI  $[-0.05, 0.06]$ ).

Next, Hypothesis 6 proposes the moderating role of leader-member value congruence in the relationship between behavioral integrity and psychological contract breach. Model 2 in Table 2 showed that the interaction term of behavioral integrity and value congruence was significant ( $B = 0.18$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , see Table 2 in the supplementary material). The simple slope tests shown in Figure 3 revealed that the relationship between behavioral integrity and psychological contract breach was significant and negative when leader-member value congruence was low ( $B = -0.71$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) but not when it was high ( $B = 0.03$ ,  $p = n.s.$ ) Thus, Hypothesis 6 was supported.

[Insert Figure 3 here]

Finally, we tested Hypothesis 7 by examining the three-way interaction between behavioral integrity, leader-member value congruence, and the realistic job previews intervention. After controlling for all predictors and two-way interactions, the three-way interaction of behavioral

integrity, leader-member value congruence, and the intervention was found to be a significant predictor of psychological contract breach ( $B = -0.48, p < 0.05$ ), explaining 6% of the additional variance (Model 3 in Table 2 of the supplementary material). Figure 4 shows the three-way interaction plot. We used Dawson and Richter's (2006) slope difference test to interpret the results (see Table 4 of the supplementary material). For the participants who perceived low levels of leader-member value congruence, the negative relationship between behavioral integrity and psychological contract breach was stronger for those in the control condition than for those in the realistic job previews condition (slope difference = 1.36,  $p < 0.05$ ; see the comparison between situations (2) and (4) in Table 4 of the supplementary material). The results also showed that when leader-member value congruence was low, the realistic job previews intervention did not affect the relationship between behavioral integrity and psychological contract breach (slope difference =  $-0.55, p = n.s.$ ; see the comparison between situations (1) and (3) in Table 4 of the supplementary material). In summary, our results indicated that the realistic job previews intervention effectively mitigated the negative relationship between behavioral integrity and psychological contract breach when the subordinates had low leader-member value congruence with their supervisors. Therefore, Hypothesis 7 was supported.

[Insert Figure 4 here]

## **5. Discussion and Implications**

### *5.1. Discussion*

Based on social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) and expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964), we examined whether perceived leader behavioral integrity can enhance subordinates' job

performance and decrease their turnover intention through psychological contract breach. We also investigated the moderating effects of leader-member value congruence and realistic job previews. Our data analysis revealed that perceived leader behavioral integrity negatively influenced newcomers' perceptions of psychological contract breach and their turnover intention, and positively influenced their job performance. Furthermore, we found that psychological contract breach mediated the negative relationship between perceived leader behavioral integrity and newcomers turnover intention. The negative relationship between behavioral integrity and psychological contract breach was only found when supervisors and newcomers had a low level of value congruence. Finally, our results showed that realistic job previews can effectively reduce newcomers' expectations.

### *5.2. Theoretical implications*

Our research has several important theoretical implications. First, the study contributes to the literature on social exchange by taking a dynamic perspective to examine the relationship between newcomers' perceived behavioral integrity and psychological contract breach. The early socialization process provides an important opportunity for hospitality organizations to facilitate the integration of newcomers, a group on which hospitality businesses heavily rely (Raza *et al.*, 2024). By assessing newcomers' psychological contract both before and after they begin employment, our study reveals valuable insights into how the employment relationship evolves over time in hospitality settings. While past research has established links between perceived behavioral integrity and key outcomes like trust and organizational identification (Erkutlu and Chafra, 2017), our study extends this literature by identifying how dynamic

changes in psychological contracts mediate the relationship between perceived leader integrity and employee outcomes. This emphasizes the importance of understanding how dynamic shifts in psychological contracts can influence newcomers' overall onboarding experience and employment relationship in the hospitality industry.

Second, this study is among the first to apply expectancy theory to examine the effectiveness of realistic job previews in reducing newcomers' expectations and perceptions of psychological contract breach. In the hospitality industry, where high turnover rates are often caused by mismatched expectations, understanding newcomer expectations is particularly crucial (Ling *et al.*, 2016). Our findings show that the social exchange processes between leaders and newcomers before employment officially starts. This builds on Blomme *et al.* (2010), who argued that employees' turnover intentions are influenced by their pre-employment expectations, suggesting that interventions aimed at reducing turnover should be introduced in the pre-entry phase. Thus, our study emphasizes the importance of preventing psychological contract breaches before newcomers even begin their jobs.

Finally, we manipulated realistic job previews in a real hotel setting by conducting a multiwave and multisource field experiment. In field experiments, the effects of manipulations are tested in real-world settings, thus ensuring internal validity, external validity, and the generalizability of the findings (Samek, 2019). Instead of examining employees' one-time perceptions of a psychological contract breach, we explored the newcomers' initial psychological contract (i.e., their expectations from the organization) and the actual psychological contract after several months of employment (i.e., how they were treated at work).



The difference between these two measures indicated the levels of psychological contract breach. This approach responds to the calls from Alcover *et al.* (2017) and Kuttaula *et al.* (2020) to explore the changing nature of the psychological contract. The study's multiwave design also helped identify the mechanisms through which realistic job previews influence employee turnover intention and job performance. This can provide more nuanced insights into the underlying processes that contribute to the effectiveness of realistic job previews in reducing employee turnover intention and improving job performance.

### *5.3. Managerial implications*

The high rates of resignation in the hotel industry have exacerbated the labor shortage problem, and hotel managers face unprecedented challenges in recruiting and retaining talent. The findings of this study can provide them with valuable suggestions. First, hotel managers' behavioral integrity helps to sustain the psychological contract with their employees and thus reduce their turnover intention and enhance job performance. Hoteliers should therefore attempt to ensure the behavioral integrity of supervisors. For example, workshops and training can be provided to ensure that supervisors recognize the importance of professional integrity and how it can be developed and maintained. Supervisors should maintain honesty and respect, show fairness and justice, and encourage individual achievement and personal growth. Hotels can apply motivation mechanisms such as awards or prizes for supervisors and managers who demonstrate integrity in their behavior.

Second, the study demonstrates the importance of leader-subordinate value congruence. This was found to moderate the negative relationship between managers' behavioral integrity

and employees' psychological contract breach. Therefore, hoteliers should develop leader–subordinate value congruence to mitigate this negative effect. They may consider conducting surveys to establish the values of all of their employees and supervisors and match employees and supervisors based on similarities in roles and personal values. Specific strategies such as goal setting and positive feedback can ensure the alignment of leader–subordinate values in the workplace. Positive interactions between hotel employees and their supervisors can be facilitated through networking activities such as pop-up events. Such interactions can help develop leader–subordinate value congruence.

This innovative study illustrates how offering realistic job previews during new employee orientation can alleviate the negative effect of behavioral integrity on psychological contract breach with low levels of leader–subordinate value congruence. Thus, we suggest that hotels should include realistic job previews in their new employee orientation or onboarding. Realistic job previews show the positive and negative sides of the job to new employees and thus inform their expectations of the job. Best practices in terms of realistic job previews include showcasing by and interviews with current employees, a description of a “day in the job,” focusing on organizational culture fit, and tours of workplaces. Although we examined job previews at the time of newcomers' orientation, they can occur through other means. For example, hotels can create brochures, booklets, or flyers to provide realistic previews of the job. By posting employee testimonial videos, video tours of the office, or video interviews on social media platforms, they can provide prospective employees with accurate information.

#### 5.4. Limitations and future research

This study has some limitations. First, the potential impact of prior experiences psychological contract breach on employees' relationships with their new employer has been noted in recent studies (Asante *et al.*, 2023). While our study did not directly control for prior psychological contract breach, we standardized our sample to include freshly graduated students from colleges. These newcomers were in line-level positions with a one-year contract and one-month probationary periods. This ensured a relatively homogenous sample, minimizing the likelihood of significant variations in prior experiences among participants. Future studies could expand upon this by investigating the potential impact of prior psychological contract breach using a more diverse sample of newcomers. Second, it is important to acknowledge that data collection occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic, a period marked by unprecedented challenges for the hospitality and service industry. While the hotels where we conducted our study were not significantly influenced by the pandemic, with only one hotel experiencing a temporary shutdown, the broader context of the pandemic should not be overlooked. The operational pressures, employee anxieties, and changes in customer behavior during this time may have influenced employee perceptions. As such, we encourage caution when interpreting the findings, especially in terms of the generalizability of our results. Future studies may benefit from exploring how long-term pandemic effects and other external disruptions could influence employee behaviors and perceptions in hospitality settings. Third, given the challenges associated with collecting multiwave and multisource data, our sample

size was slightly short of the ideal. It is important to acknowledge that this deviation from the ideal sample size could be considered a limitation of our study. Future research could address this limitation by aiming for a larger sample size to further enhance the reliability and generalizability of the findings.

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**Table 1.** Descriptive statistics

| Variable                          | M    | SD   | Skewness | Kurtosis | 1        | 2        | 3       | 4       |
|-----------------------------------|------|------|----------|----------|----------|----------|---------|---------|
| 1. Behavioral integrity           | 3.46 | 0.72 | 0.49     | 0.74     |          |          |         |         |
| 2. Psychological contract breach  | 1.16 | 0.87 | −0.02    | 1.78     | −0.33*** |          |         |         |
| 3. Turnover intention             | 3.32 | 0.80 | 0.10     | 1.14     | −0.30**  | 0.23*    |         |         |
| 4. Job performance                | 3.44 | 0.63 | 0.30     | 1.61     | 0.59***  | −0.17    | −0.24** |         |
| 5. Leader–member value congruence | 3.42 | 0.84 | 0.01     | 0.78     | 0.59***  | −0.34*** | −0.15   | 0.32*** |

**Notes.** \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

**Table 2.** Hypothesis testing results when psychological contract breach is the outcome variable

| Variable                                     | Psychological Contract Breach |                  |                  |
|--|-------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
|  | B(SE)<br>Model 1              | B(SE)<br>Model 2 | B(SE)<br>Model 3 |
| Intercept                                    | 2.41(0.40)***                 | 4.97(1.17)***    | 6.93(1.36)***    |
| Behavioral integrity                         | −0.43(0.11)***                | −0.89(0.32)**    | −1.70(0.48)***   |
| Congruence                                   |                               | −0.92(0.36)*     | −1.27(0.39)**    |
| Intervention                                 |                               |                  | −5.93(3.34)      |
| Behavioral integrity*Congruence              |                               | 0.18(0.09)*      | 0.35(0.11)**     |
| Behavioral integrity *Intervention           |                               |                  | 1.84(0.88)*      |
| Intervention*Congruence                      |                               |                  | 1.64(1.02)       |
| Behavioral integrity*Congruence*Intervention |                               |                  | −0.48(0.24)*     |
| Gender                                       | 0.27(0.18)                    | 0.28(0.18)       | 0.28(0.19)       |
| $R^2$  | 0.13                          | 0.19             | 0.25             |

**Notes.** Congruence = Leader–member value congruence; Intervention (1 = Realistic job previews condition, 0 = Control condition); Gender (1 = Male, 2 = Female); \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

**Table 3.** Hypothesis testing results when turnover intention and job performance are the outcome variables

| Variable                      | Turnover intention |                  |                  | Job performance  |                  |                  |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
|                               | B(SE)<br>Model 1   | B(SE)<br>Model 2 | B(SE)<br>Model 3 | B(SE)<br>Model 4 | B(SE)<br>Model 5 | B(SE)<br>Model 6 |
| Intercept                     | 4.43(0.03)***      | 3.09(0.18)***    | 4.13(0.44)***    | 1.58(0.25)***    | 3.36(0.14)***    | 1.56(0.29)***    |
| Behavioral integrity          | −0.35(0.11)**      |                  | −0.29(0.11)*     | 0.50(0.07)***    |                  | 0.51(0.08)***    |
| Psychological contract breach |                    | 0.21(0.09)*      | 0.12(0.09)       |                  | −0.14(0.07)*     | 0.01(0.06)       |
| Gender                        | 0.11(0.17)         | −0.01(0.18)      | 0.08(0.18)       | 0.17(0.11)       | 0.34(0.14)*      | 0.17(0.11)       |
| $R^2$                         | 0.09               | 0.05             | 0.11             | 0.35             | 0.08             | 0.36             |

**Notes.** Gender (1 = Male, 2 = Female); \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

**Table 4.** Slope difference test results for three-way interactions

| Pair of slopes     | Slope difference | <i>t</i> -value | <i>p</i> -value | 95% CI              |
|--------------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| (1) and (2)        | −0.53            | −0.62           | 0.54            | (−2.21, 1.16)       |
| (1) and (3)        | −0.55            | −0.13           | 0.26            | (−1.51, 0.41)       |
| (1) and (4)        | 0.83             | 1.47            | 0.14            | (−.28, 1.94)        |
| (2) and (3)        | −0.02            | −0.04           | 0.97            | (−1.18, 1.14)       |
| <b>(2) and (4)</b> | <b>1.36</b>      | <b>2.07</b>     | <b>0.04</b>     | <b>(0.07, 2.65)</b> |
| <b>(3) and (4)</b> | <b>1.39</b>      | <b>3.15</b>     | <b>0.002</b>    | <b>(0.52, 2.25)</b> |

*Notes.*

- (1) Participants in the realistic job previews intervention who have high value congruence with their leaders;
- (2) Those in the realistic job previews intervention who have low value congruence with their leaders;
- (3) Those in the control condition who have high value congruence with their leaders; and
- (4) Those in the control condition who have low value congruence with their leaders.

## **Appendix I. Summary of data collection process (T1 to T5)**

### **T1: Initial Psychological Contract and Demographic Information (September 2022)**

T1 data collection was conducted before the participants started their jobs. Participants had been recruited but had not yet begun working in their assigned hotels. The T1 survey established a baseline for participants' initial psychological contract before any job-related experience had occurred. This would later allow us to measure how these expectations evolved throughout their early job stage, especially after exposure to either the realistic job previews or control condition at T2.

### **T2: Intervention – new employee orientation (September 2022)**

At T2, participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions—Realistic Job Preview or Control—at the new employee orientation. This intervention was designed to influence participants' psychological contract development.

- Realistic Job Preview Condition:
  - The HR manager gave an overview of the hotel's situation.
  - Three current employees from the Food and Beverage, Front Office, and Marketing departments shared their experiences. These employees presented both positive aspects of their jobs (e.g., opportunities for career growth, supportive environment) and negative aspects (e.g., long working hours, challenging customers).
  - The aim was to provide a realistic view of the job to help participants form more accurate expectations about their upcoming roles, fostering a psychological contract based on reality rather than idealized notions.
- Control Condition:
  - Similar to the above group, the HR manager provided an introduction to the hotel.
  - However, the three current employees only discussed the positive aspects of their jobs. They shared job responsibilities, highlighted the benefits of working at the hotel, and spoke of their positive experiences.

The difference between these two conditions was pivotal in influencing participants' psychological contracts, with those in the RJP condition expected to form more realistic expectations.

### **T3: Measuring Leader Behavioral Integrity (October 2022)**

One month after starting their jobs, participants completed a survey at T3 (October 2022) to measure their perceptions of their leaders' behavioral integrity.

### **T4: Measuring Psychological Contract and Leader–Member Value Congruence (November 2022)**

At T4, two months into their jobs (November 2022), participants completed a survey to assess their psychological contract at the moment and leader–member value congruence.

### **T5: Measuring Turnover Intention and Job Performance (December 2022)**

At this stage, participants completed a survey assessing their turnover intention, while their direct supervisors rated their job performance.