Decoding workplace behaviors: Investigating the Impact of Personality, Job Satisfaction, and Perceived Justice on Counterproductive Work Behaviors

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Abstract

This study investigates the relationship between personality traits, job satisfaction, perceived justice, and engagement in counterproductive workplace behaviors (CWBs) among 250 participants. The results reveal significant correlations between personality traits and CWBs, with Agreeableness and Conscientiousness showing negative associations, while Neuroticism exhibits a positive association. Job satisfaction and perceived justice are also negatively correlated with CWBs. Furthermore, hierarchical regression analyses of the proposed model confirm that higher levels of Agreeableness and Conscientiousness are strong predictors of CWBs. The findings highlight the importance of individual characteristics and job-related factors in influencing employee behavior. These findings contribute to understanding workplace behavior and inform efforts to promote positive work environments and organizational success.

Keywords: personality traits, job satisfaction, perceived justice, counterproductive work behaviors, organizational psychology
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Counterproductive Work Behaviors (CWBs) pose significant challenges within organizational contexts, undermining productivity, eroding trust, and impeding overall effectiveness (Fox, 2001). Defined as intentional actions contrary to an organization's legitimate interests, CWBs encompass a broad spectrum of detrimental behaviors such as theft, sabotage, misuse of resources, and poor attendance (Gruys & Sackett, 2003). From pilfering office supplies to spreading rumors that damage team cohesion, CWBs manifest in various forms, each presenting unique threats to workplace harmony and operational efficiency.

Drawing from Allport's (1927) seminal synthesis of personality as dynamic systems within individuals, personality traits are recognized as influential factors shaping behavior patterns. The Big Five personality traits—Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, and Intellect/Openness—provide a lens through which to explore individual predispositions toward engagement in CWBs. Additionally, the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) offers valuable insights into the cognitive processes that drive behavioral decisions. According to TRA (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), an individual's intention to engage in a specific behavior, such as CWBs, is determined by their attitude toward the behavior, work environment, and subjective norms. Attitude reflects the individual's evaluation of the situation or environment, while subjective norms represent perceived social pressure to engage or refrain from the behavior. Therefore, understanding how personality traits interact with attitudes and subjective norms within organizational contexts can elucidate the mechanisms driving counterproductive work behavior engagement.
The prevalence and detrimental impact of CWBs underscore the urgency of understanding and addressing this phenomenon. Research indicates that CWBs are pervasive across industries and organizational settings, exacting a heavy toll on businesses worldwide. According to research, CWBs are estimated to cost organizations billions of dollars annually in lost productivity, absenteeism, turnover, and legal expenses (Gruys & Sackett, 2003). Moreover, the intangible costs, such as damage to organizational reputation and morale, further compound the significance of this issue.

This study uniquely integrates the analysis of personality traits with job satisfaction and perceived justice to understand their combined impact on CWBs. While previous research often examines these factors in isolation, this thesis provides a comprehensive view, demonstrating how these elements together influence employee behavior. This holistic approach is crucial for developing more effective interventions. By identifying key predictors of CWBs, the study provides actionable insights for organizations’ hiring practices, helping them select candidates who are less likely to engage in CWBs, thereby enhancing workplace harmony and productivity. The study also underscores the importance of job satisfaction and perceived justice in reducing CWBs. Organizations can use these insights to develop fair and transparent policies, improve job satisfaction, and foster a positive organizational culture, ultimately leading to reduced incidences of CWBs.

The central focus of this investigation lies in answering the following research question: How do individual differences in personality traits, job satisfaction, and perceptions of justice influence engagement in counterproductive work behaviors (CWBs) within organizational contexts?
Counterproductive Work Behaviors

Counterproductive work behaviors refer to intentional actions performed by any organizational member that deviate from organizational norms, policies, or ethical standards and harm the organization or its members. It is distinguished from counterproductivity, representing tangible outcomes of such behavior (Sackett & DeVore, 2001). CWBs are viewed as a facet of job performance, focusing on behaviors rather than outcomes, encompassing a wide range of behaviors, including theft, destruction of property, misuse of information, misuse of time and resources, unsafe behavior, poor attendance, poor-quality work, alcohol use, drug use, inappropriate verbal actions, and inappropriate physical actions (Gruys, 2000).

The causes of CWBs are multifaceted and can stem from individual, interpersonal, organizational, and situational factors. According to the TRA as summarized in Figure 1 (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), proposing that individual factors including personality traits such as low conscientiousness, or high neuroticism), may influence attitudes such as job satisfaction and perceived justice, and personal experiences such as negative interactions. Interpersonal factors such as conflicts with supervisors or colleagues, lack of social support, or toxic work relationships can also contribute to the occurrence of CWBs (Guay et al., 2016). Organizational factors such as inadequate leadership, poor communication, role ambiguity, unfair treatment, or a toxic organizational culture may further exacerbate the likelihood of CWBs (Schyns & Schilling, 2013). Additionally, situational factors such as job stress, workload, or perceived job insecurity can trigger or facilitate the occurrence of CWBs as individuals seek coping mechanisms or ways to assert control in challenging circumstances (Ho, 2012).
The consequences of CWBs can be significant and wide-ranging, affecting individuals, teams, and organizations alike. For individuals, engaging in CWBs may lead to disciplinary action, damage to reputation, loss of trust, strained relationships, or even termination of employment. CWBs can also have detrimental effects on employee well-being, contributing to stress, burnout, and psychological distress (Gruys & Sackett, 2003). At the team level, CWBs can disrupt collaboration, cohesion, and morale, leading to decreased productivity and effectiveness. For organizations, CWBs can result in financial losses, damage to property, compromised safety, legal liabilities, tarnished reputation, and erosion of organizational culture and trust. Moreover, the ripple effects of CWBs can extend beyond the immediate targets to impact broader organizational climate and employee engagement.

Theoretical frameworks underscore the complexity of CWBs, situating them within broader discussions of organizational behavior, personality psychology, and attitudes theories.
(Fox, 2001). Despite extensive research, there remains a gap in understanding the nuanced interplay between individual differences in personality traits, job satisfaction, perceived justice, and engagement in CWBs within organizational contexts.

**Personality Traits and Counterproductive Work Behaviors**

Personality traits are complex and abstract, with various definitions stemming from literary, theological, philosophical, juristic, and sociological traditions. Allport's integration (1927) characterizes personality as the active arrangement of psychophysical systems within an individual, shaping distinctive adaptations to the surroundings. Funder (2001) provides a more accessible definition, describing personality as an individual's characteristic patterns of thought, emotion, and behavior, along with the underlying psychological mechanisms. Lexical studies have played a significant role in understanding personality, often testing the Big Five factor structure: Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, and Intellect/Openness to Experience. Reliance on self-report data raises questions about the generality of the Big Five in peer ratings. Despite this, lexical studies have contributed valuable insights into the robustness of the Big Five and explored alternative models with varying numbers of factors (Kabigting, 2021).

Research has given significant attention to agreeableness, conscientiousness, and neuroticism in organizational psychology due to their impactful roles in predicting various organizational behaviors and outcomes (Spector & Che, 2014); conscientiousness is consistently linked to higher job performance and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) due to traits like reliability and hard work. Neuroticism is often associated with negative job satisfaction and higher CWB engagement, as individuals with high neuroticism experience more workplace stress and negative emotions. Agreeableness is crucial for fostering positive interpersonal relationships and collaboration, significantly contributing to CWB by promoting teamwork and reducing conflicts.
These traits are essential for understanding and improving employee performance, motivation, and organizational effectiveness.

**Agreeableness**

Agreeableness is characterized by traits such as warmth, empathy, cooperation, and altruism. Individuals high in agreeableness tend to be considerate, compassionate, and accommodating in their interactions with others. They prioritize harmonious relationships and are inclined to avoid conflict and confrontation. In the workplace, agreeable individuals are valued for their interpersonal skills, teamwork abilities, and willingness to cooperate with colleagues (Hadi et al., 2012).

However, the relationship between agreeableness and CWBs is complex. While agreeable individuals are less likely to engage in overtly hostile or aggressive behaviors, they may still be susceptible to certain forms of CWBs, particularly those involving passive-aggressive or covert actions. For example, agreeable employees may engage in gossip, sabotage, or withholding information as indirect ways of expressing their dissatisfaction or asserting control in situations of perceived injustice or conflict (Sackett & Walmsley, 2014).

**Conscientiousness**

Conscientiousness is characterized by traits such as self-discipline, reliability, organization, and achievement orientation. Individuals high in conscientiousness are diligent, responsible, and detail-oriented in their work. They set high standards for themselves, strive for excellence, and demonstrate a strong sense of duty and commitment to their obligations (Bolton et al., 2010; Bowling, 2010).

Conscientiousness is inversely related to CWBs, as individuals high in this trait are more likely to adhere to rules, norms, and ethical standards in the workplace. They exhibit greater self-
control, impulse regulation, and adherence to deadlines and procedures, thereby reducing the likelihood of engaging in behaviors that undermine organizational goals. Conscientious employees are valued for their reliability, productivity, and ability to contribute positively to team cohesion and performance (Scherer et al., 2013; Spector, 2010).

**Neuroticism**

Neuroticism, also known as emotional instability, is characterized by traits such as anxiety, moodiness, irritability, and vulnerability to stress. Individuals high in neuroticism tend to experience negative emotions more frequently and intensely, leading to heightened levels of distress and maladaptive coping strategies (Hitlan & Noel, 2009; Michel & Bowling, 2013).

Neuroticism is positively associated with CWBs, as individuals high in this trait are more prone to emotional dysregulation, impulsivity, and maladaptive coping mechanisms in response to stressors or perceived injustices in the workplace. They may engage in behaviors such as absenteeism, aggression, sabotage, or withdrawal as a means of alleviating distress or exerting control over their environment (Khattak et al., 2019).

Considering the above, I propose the following hypotheses:

**H1a:** Employees with higher levels of Agreeableness will exhibit lower levels of engagement in CWBs.

**H1b:** Employees with higher levels of Conscientiousness will exhibit lower levels of engagement in CWBs.

**H1c:** Employees with higher levels of Neuroticism will exhibit higher levels of engagement in CWBs.

**Job Satisfaction and Counterproductive Work Behaviors**
Job satisfaction is a crucial aspect of industrial psychology, with a potential link between employee happiness and the reduction of CWBs considered desirable for both labor and management (Fisher, 2000). The concept involves the subjective well-being and happiness of workers, which can be multidimensional. Factors influencing job satisfaction are diverse and multifaceted, including the nature of the job itself, interpersonal relationships, organizational culture, compensation, and opportunities for advancement; employees who find their work meaningful, challenging, and aligned with their values are more likely to experience higher levels of job satisfaction (Bowling, 2010).

Researchers have examined the relationship between happiness and productivity, with historical reviews indicating a trivial association (Locke, 1969). Recent studies, however, suggest a resurgence of interest in understanding this link, exploring factors such as positive affect, emotions, moods, and cognitive judgments of life and job satisfaction (Connolly & Viswesvaran, 2000).

The relationship between job satisfaction and CWBs is a critical area of study within organizational psychology, shedding light on how employees' attitudes toward their work influence their behavior in the workplace (Bowling, 2010); employees experiencing low levels of job satisfaction are more likely to engage in CWBs as a coping mechanism for their dissatisfaction or as a means of expressing their grievances. When individuals feel dissatisfied with aspects of their job, such as tasks, pay, or opportunities for advancement, they may resort to behaviors such as absenteeism or theft as a form of retaliation or withdrawal (Hackett, 1989), these actions serve as both a release of frustration and a way to exert control when they feel powerless or undervalued.

Conversely, employees who derive satisfaction from their jobs are less likely to engage in CWBs, as they experience a sense of fulfillment, motivation, and commitment to contributing
positively to the organization (Bannister & Griffeth, 1986). When individuals feel valued, respected, and engaged in meaningful work, they are more inclined to uphold organizational norms and behave consistently with organizational goals. Job satisfaction acts as a protective factor against CWBs, fostering positive attitudes, enhancing resilience, and promoting constructive coping strategies in the face of challenges or frustrations (Dalessio et al., 1986; Hom et al., 1984).

Furthermore, job satisfaction contributes to the cultivation of a supportive work environment characterized by cooperation, mutual respect, and adherence to organizational norms and policies (Bowling, 2010). Employees who are satisfied with their jobs are more likely to exhibit prosocial behaviors, such as helping their colleagues, cooperating with supervisors, and actively contributing to team success; while a healthy environment will increase their levels of satisfaction. These behaviors enhance individual well-being and contribute to the organization's overall effectiveness and cohesion.

Following these insights, I propose the following hypothesis:

**H2:** Higher levels of Satisfaction with Work will be associated with a lower likelihood of engaging in CWBs.

**Perceived Justice and Counterproductive Work Behaviors**

Perceived justice in the workplace is closely tied to company policies and procedures and is a significant factor influencing job satisfaction (Fishbein, 1975). Organizational justice studies focus on the perceived fairness of both procedures and outcomes within organizations (Mengstie, 2020). This concept is divided into procedural justice, which pertains to the perceived fairness of procedures used to determine outcomes, and distributive justice, which focuses on perceptions of the fairness of the outcomes themselves. Perceptions of injustice are a consequence of workplace policies and procedures, leading to research exploring various types of policies and procedures
such as those related to selection, performance appraisal, compensation, and layoffs. The study of perceived justice examines how these organizational aspects contribute to employees’ perceptions of fairness (Gilliland & Chan, 2011).

Research has consistently highlighted the intricate relationship between perceived justice and CWBs within organizational contexts. When individuals perceive themselves as experiencing unfair treatment or injustice within the organization, their propensity to engage in retaliatory behaviors significantly increases (O’Connor et al., 1982). This phenomenon can be observed across various dimensions of perceived injustice, including distributive and procedural injustices. For instance, employees who perceive themselves as unfairly compensated relative to their contributions may resort to CWBs such as theft or sabotage as a means of rectifying the perceived imbalance (Khattak et al., 2019). The desire for equity drives individuals to take actions that they believe will restore fairness to their situation, even if these actions are detrimental to the organization (Cohen & Diamant, 2019).

Similarly, procedural injustices, such as biased decision-making processes or a lack of transparency in organizational procedures, can elicit feelings of dissatisfaction and resentment among employees (Ralston, 1989). In response, they may engage in CWBs to express their discontent and frustration with the perceived injustice. This can manifest in behaviors such as spreading rumors, engaging in workplace gossip, or even actively undermining organizational objectives.

Moreover, the relationship between perceived justice and CWBs is not solely determined by individual perceptions but is also influenced by various contextual and situational factors. Personality traits, organizational culture, and leadership styles can all play significant roles in moderating the extent to which perceived injustice triggers CWBs (Schyns & Schilling, 2013). For
example, individuals with a strong sense of justice or moral identity may be more prone to reacting strongly to perceived injustices and engaging in CWBs as a form of protest or resistance.

Furthermore, leadership styles characterized by fairness, integrity, and effective communication can help foster perceptions of justice among employees, thereby minimizing the occurrence of CWBs (Fox et al., 2001); conversely, leaders who are perceived as arbitrary or lacking in transparency may inadvertently contribute to feelings of injustice and increase the likelihood of CWBs among their subordinates.

Additionally, situational factors such as perceived job insecurity or high levels of stress can exacerbate the relationship between perceived injustice and CWBs (Bromet et al., 1988). In times of economic uncertainty or organizational change, individuals may perceive their opportunities for fair treatment or advancement as being compromised, leading to heightened feelings of injustice and an increased propensity for engaging in CWBs as a coping mechanism.

Given these considerations, the following hypotheses are proposed:

**H3a:** Higher levels of perceived procedural justice will be negatively associated with engagement in CWBs.

**H3b:** Higher levels of perceived distributive justice will be negatively associated with engagement in CWBs.

**Method**

The present study follows a cross-sectional design. It has been pre-registered in the Open Science Framework (OSF), utilizing the provided analysis plan template that encompasses the research question, hypotheses, design plan, sampling plan, variables, and analysis plan ([https://osf.io/rymub](https://osf.io/rymub)). Additionally, all measurement instruments have been uploaded to the OSF platform. By adhering to a pre-registered plan, the study establishes a clear roadmap for data
collection and analysis, thus mitigating the risk of bias and enhancing the integrity of the research process. Any modifications made to the pre-registered plan during the study are transparently reported, and the dataset is available and uploaded to OSF following guidelines, further enhancing transparency and reproducibility.

**Ethical Considerations**

The current study adheres to ethical standards outlined in the Form for Ethical Self-Evaluation of Student Project, ensuring compliance with guidelines and safeguarding participants' rights. The study did not involve processing sensitive personal data, conducting physical operations on research subjects, aiming to physically or psychologically affect participants, using biological material from living or deceased persons, or involving vulnerable groups whose voluntariness could be questioned. As all questions regarding these aspects were answered with a "No," the study did not require approval from a regional Ethical Review Board. The written information provided to participants was clear and comprehensive, ensuring they understood the purpose and design of the study, including all relevant details. Participation was entirely voluntary, with participants informed they could withdraw at any time without any consequences. No sensitive information such as emails or names was collected to preserve anonymity. In addition to these measures, certain items from the CWB instrument were removed due to the sensitivity of their content. Specifically, abuse items 25, 26, 30, and 31, sabotage item 1, and theft items 7 and 12 were excluded to protect participants from discomfort or distress. Following the American Psychological Association guidelines (APA, 2017), informed consent was obtained from all participants, emphasizing voluntary participation, confidentiality, privacy, and the right to withdraw without repercussion. Moreover, participants were not offered any rewards to minimize
potential bias associated with extrinsic motivators. These ethical considerations uphold the integrity of the research process and prioritize the well-being and rights of participants.

**Participants**

Following the pre-registration plan, the inclusion criteria stipulated that participants must be at least 18 years old, proficient in English, either currently employed or have previous work experience, and have passed any of the attention checks.

The study sample, consisting of $N = 250$ participants ($mean\ age = 31.57$, $median\ age = 30$, $SD = 8.77$, $range\ 19 - 68$) successfully met both the inclusion criteria and passing the attention checks with total years of experience ranging from half a year to 48 ($M = 8.90$, $median = 7$, $SD = 8.46$). Gender diversity was evident with 45.6% ($n = 114$) identifying as male, 54.4% ($n = 136$) as female. In terms of educational attainment, the majority of participants held a master's degree or equivalent with 44.4% ($n = 111$), followed by those with a bachelor's degree or equivalent with 40.4% ($n = 101$). Additionally, 11.2% ($n = 28$) reported completing high school, while 4.0% ($n = 10$) had obtained a doctoral or equivalent degree. Regarding employment status, Full-time employment was the most prevalent status, accounting for 59.2% ($n = 148$) of the sample. Part-time employment was reported by 19.2% ($n = 48$), while 16.4% ($n = 41$) indicated previous employment experience. Additionally, 5.2% ($n = 13$) identified as self-employed. The study encompassed individuals with diverse occupational backgrounds of which most participants were in consulting, comprising 16.4% ($n = 41$) of the sample, followed by sales at 13.6% ($n = 34$). Other notable fields include health care and hospitality, each accounting for 12.8% ($n = 32$) of the participants. Education was represented by 10.8% ($n = 27$) of individuals, while arts and IT comprised 5.6% ($n = 14$) and 6.8% ($n = 17$) of the sample, respectively. Engineering and
accounting were less represented, with 2.4% \((n = 6)\) and 5.6% \((n = 14)\) of participants, respectively. The military and architecture fields had the lowest representation, with only 0.8% \((n = 2)\) and 2.0% \((n = 5)\) of individuals, respectively. Additionally, research and N/A (not specified) fields accounted for 6.8% \((n = 17)\) and 3.6% \((n = 9)\) of the sample, respectively. Descriptives and frequency tables of the described variables can be found in the appendix (A2).

**Procedure**

Before publishing the survey to a wider audience, a pilot study was conducted with a small group of six respondents. The aim was to ensure that all survey questions were understandable and to measure the average time it takes to complete the survey. Feedback from the pilot study revealed that some items related to perceived justice were challenging due to the difficult English language. As a result, these items were simplified while maintaining the intended meaning of the questions. The final version of the survey can be found in the appendix file uploaded to OSF (A1). For instance, the original questions regarding perceived justice were revised to make them more straightforward to comprehend, as an example, the original version “People involved in implementing decisions have a say in making the decisions” has been replaced with “People who carry out decisions get to express their opinion about the decision.”

**Sampling Procedures.** Following the pre-registration plan, the survey garnered responses from a total of 250 participants who met the established inclusion criteria. The survey was designed to capture relevant information on personality traits, job satisfaction, perceived justice, CWBs, and demographics. To ensure data quality, attention check questions were included in the survey. To foster a diverse and comprehensive sample, recruitment efforts were conducted across multiple platforms, including widely used social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter,
and LinkedIn. Furthermore, the survey was strategically posted on surveycircle.com, an online platform dedicated to facilitating participant recruitment for various surveys. This multi-channel recruitment approach ensured broad outreach and contributed to the inclusivity and representativeness of the study sample.

**Sample size, Power, and Precision.** I determined the sample size through a power analysis using G*power (version 3.1.9.7), aligning with the pre-registered plan to ensure methodological transparency and rigor. The primary objective was to attain stable estimates and adequate statistical power capable of detecting meaningful effects. Drawing upon the insights of Schönbrodt & Perugini (2013), it was established that stable estimates necessitated a sample size approaching $N = 250$ participants. To achieve this, I aimed for a robust statistical power of 95%, aiming to detect the smallest effect size of interest ($f^2 = 0.07$) with an alpha level ($\alpha = 0.01$), and considering a total of six predictors (Cohen, 1998). The power analysis output generated by G*power, further substantiating the study's sample size determination, has been made accessible on the OSF platform.

**Measures**

**Personality traits.** The present study delves into three pivotal personality traits: Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Neuroticism. These traits were carefully selected for their relevance to workplace behaviors and to allow a short and accessible survey. They were assessed using the well-established 44-item Big Five Inventory (BFI), as developed by John and Srivastava (1999). The BFI is widely regarded in the field of personality psychology for its robustness and comprehensiveness in capturing individuals' dispositions across the Big Five Factors of personality (Goldberg, 1993). To streamline the assessment process, the subsets corresponding to the specified
traits were used, consisting of 26 items. “I see myself as someone who... tends to find fault with others” was an item used for Agreeableness, “… does a thorough job” for Conscientiousness, and “… is depressed, blue” for Neuroticism. Participants were asked to rate their agreement with each statement on a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from "Strongly disagree" to "Strongly agree". Internal reliability of the scales was deemed to be low for Agreeableness (0.633), and higher for Conscientiousness (0.8) and Neuroticism (0.809).

**Job Satisfaction.** Job satisfaction was measured on a 7-point Likert-type Scale ranging from “Strongly disagree” to “Strongly agree” using the 5-item Satisfaction With Work Scale (SWWS) developed by Bérubé et al. (2007) and validated by Houlfort (2007). “In general, the type of work I do corresponds closely to what I want in life” was an example item used in the scale that as a whole showed a strong internal reliability (0.824). The SWWS demonstrates strong validity and reliability as a measure of work satisfaction, offering a valuable addition to existing instruments in organizational behavior research. Adapted from Diener et al.'s (1985) Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS), the SWWS focuses specifically on individuals' cognitive evaluations of their work-related well-being, filling a significant gap in the literature. Validation efforts for the SWWS involved rigorous testing across both English and French language groups. Confirmatory factor analysis revealed a robust structure for the scale, with adjustments made to enhance model fit, demonstrating the scale's suitability across varied linguistic and occupational contexts. The internal reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) for the combined samples was found to be satisfactory at 0.75. Furthermore, the SWWS exhibited stability over time, as evidenced by favorable test-retest reliability in one of the samples. Importantly, correlations with related constructs such as general life satisfaction and intent to leave indicated discriminant validity,
affirming that the SWWS captures a unique aspect of work satisfaction distinct from overall life satisfaction.

**Perceived Justice.** Perceived Justice was measured using the 7 items Distributive and Procedural Justice Measure (DPJM) developed by Parker et al. (1997). A 5-point Likert-type scale was used ranging from “Strongly disagree” to “Strongly agree”. “People who carry out decisions get to express their opinion about the decision” and “If you do well, you'll get recognized and rewarded” are example items used in the Procedural and Distributive scales respectively. Internal consistency was low for Procedural (0.637) and high for Distributive (0.865) scales. According to Parker et al. (1997), the scale demonstrates strong reliability and validity in assessing employee perceptions of fairness in organizational processes. The scale exhibits high internal consistency, with coefficient alpha values of 0.88 for distributive justice and 0.74 for procedural justice. These coefficients suggest robust reliability, implying that the scale consistently measures the intended constructs across diverse respondents. Across four subsamples, there are positive correlations between distributive and procedural justice, indicating an intrinsic connection between perceptions of fairness in reward allocation and decision-making processes. Moreover, both distributive and procedural justice exhibit positive associations with vital organizational outcomes such as career development opportunities, job satisfaction, and organizational loyalty. This confirms the scale's validity in effectively capturing various facets of organizational justice and their distinct relationships with organizational outcomes. Additionally, as noted earlier in this section, the adaptation of scale items to ensure clarity and accessibility underscores a commitment to methodological rigor and participant engagement, thereby further enhancing the scale's applicability and significance in a variety of organizational contexts.
Counterproductive Work Behaviors. CWBs were assessed using the 32-item short English version of the Counterproductive Work Behaviors Checklist (CWB-C) by Spector et al. (2006) containing the five subscales of abuse, sabotage, theft, production deviance, and withdrawal. The CWB-C is used as a standardized tool for assessing various forms of CWBs within organizational settings. It provides a structured framework for identifying and measuring behaviors that are detrimental to organizational functioning and productivity. It is measured using a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from “Never” to “Every day”. Seven items were removed from the scale due to the sensitivity of their content and to protect participants from discomfort or distress (removed items: 1, 7, 22, 25, 26, 30, 31). “Purposely damaged a piece of equipment or property” is an example item used in the scale which showed a strong internal reliability of 0.921. The CWB-C exhibits commendable internal consistency, as evidenced by high coefficient alpha values across its subscales. Specifically, the Abuse subscale demonstrates strong reliability with a coefficient alpha of 0.85, indicating consistent measurement of harmful behaviors directed towards others. Similarly, the Production Deviance, Theft, and Withdrawal subscales exhibit satisfactory reliability, with coefficient alpha values ranging from 0.63 to 0.64 (Spector et al., 2006). Despite slightly lower values, these coefficients still indicate adequate internal consistency within each subscale. Furthermore, the CWB-Organization, CWB-Person, and CWB-Total scales demonstrate excellent reliability, with coefficient alpha values of 0.86 and 0.90, respectively, indicating strong internal consistency in assessing overall CWB directed towards the organization, towards individuals, and overall. The CWB-C demonstrates strong construct validity by encompassing various dimensions of counterproductive work behaviors (Spector et al., 2006). It evaluates a broad spectrum of CWBs, such as abuse, production deviance, sabotage, theft, and withdrawal, thereby offering a comprehensive assessment of behaviors detrimental to both organizations and
individuals. Moreover, the scale's validity is reinforced by its ability to distinguish between CWBs directed at the organization and those directed at individuals, as evidenced by the separate CWB-Organization and CWB-Person subscales. Additionally, the CWB-C exhibits discriminant validity by establishing distinct subscales for different types of counterproductive behaviors. This indicates that the scale effectively measures specific dimensions of CWBs, thereby enhancing its applicability in both organizational research and practical settings.

Statistical Analysis

Data diagnostics. The screening of data involved several steps to ensure its quality and integrity for subsequent analysis. Initially, all items in the survey were designated as “required”, meaning that participants were obligated to respond to each item before proceeding, thereby minimizing the potential for missing data or errors during data collection. Data collection ceased as soon as the target of 250 respondents was reached.

Following data collection, outlier detection was performed using the Box plot function in Jamovi (2.4.8.0). This method enabled the identification of a few potential outliers that were detected across certain variables. After further investigation, it was found that these outliers did not appear to compromise the validity or reliability of the results; instead, they seemed to reflect genuine variations or extreme, honest responses within the data. As a result, I decided to retain these outliers within the dataset and incorporate them into the study's analysis (appendix A3). This decision was made based on the understanding that outliers can sometimes provide valuable insights into the underlying patterns or dynamics of the data. By retaining these outliers, the analysis can capture the full range of variability within the dataset, thereby enhancing the richness and depth of the findings.
Analytic strategy. The proposed statistical analysis plan involves several steps.

First, descriptive analysis summarizes the data by calculating means, standard deviations, and distributions for each variable including agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, job satisfaction, perceived justice, and CWBs. This will help explore possible correlations with demographic variables and will be performed using a correlation matrix. Data transformations are implemented to correct any measurement issues, such as reversing relevant items within the scales used in the BFI.

Multiple regression analyses are then performed, utilizing CWBs as the dependent variable and personality traits, job satisfaction, and perceived justice as independent variables. The beta coefficients will be interpreted to assess the impact of each variable on CWBs. Model fit and assumptions check, such as normality test and Q-Q plot of residuals will be checked to ascertain the adequacy of the regression models. Finally, Pearson correlation coefficients were computed to determine the strength and direction of relationships between independent variables (personality traits, job satisfaction, and perceived justice) and the dependent variable (CWBs).

Inference criteria are based on a common significance level (alpha) of 0.01 for hypothesis testing. Confidence intervals will be reported along with p-values to provide a range for effect estimates.

Results

The mean scores for the different variables, shown in Table 1, suggest that individuals in the sample tend to exhibit agreeable and conscientious traits, low levels of neuroticism, and high levels of satisfaction and perceived justice while engaging in relatively few CWBs.
Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Descriptives</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agreeableness</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>0.502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conscientiousness</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>0.611</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neuroticism</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>0.718</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job satisfaction</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>1.271</td>
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<tr>
<td>Procedural justice</td>
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<td>0.758</td>
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<td>Distributive justice</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>1.090</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counterproductive behaviors</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>0.482</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. N = 250, Personality traits, Perceived justice, and Counterproductive work behaviors were measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale, Job satisfaction was measured on a 7-point Likert-type scale, all ranging from “Strongly disagree” to “Strongly agree”.

Specific assumptions

Following the pre-registered plan, assumption checks were tested before conducting the analysis and reported in Appendix (A5). To answer the research question, a hierarchical regression analysis was conducted with CWBs as the dependent variable, and personality traits, job satisfaction, and perceived justice as independent variables in different steps respectively.

Personality traits were introduced in the model following a comparison of 95% CI. Collinearity statistics were examined to assess multicollinearity between the independent variables. A Durbin–Watson Test for Autocorrelation indicated no significant autocorrelation present in the residuals (*DW Statistic* = 1.97, *p* = 0.824) suggesting they are independent and not correlated with each other. The variance inflation factor (VIF) was calculated for each variable with Agreeableness (*VIF* = 1.30), Conscientiousness (*VIF* = 1.26), and Neuroticism (*VIF* = 1.30) suggesting no multicollinearity issues with the variables. A Shapiro-Wilk Test was conducted to assess the normality of the data. The test yielded a statistic of 0.909 with a corresponding p-value
of less than 0.001. This suggests that the assumption of normal distribution is violated. However, it's important to note that the violation of the normality assumption may not be a critical issue depending on the regression model's robustness and the violation's size (Baron & Kenny, 2018). Since the sample size is relatively large (N = 250), the impact of this violation on the results may be minimal (Navarro & Foxcroft, 2018).

In the final steps, job satisfaction and perceived justice were introduced following a comparison of 95% CI. A Durbin–Watson Test for Autocorrelation indicated no significant autocorrelation present in the residuals for Job satisfaction ($DW\text{ Statistic} = 2.09, p = 0.490$) and Perceived justice ($DW\text{ Statistic} = 2.06, p = 0.598$) suggesting they are independent and not correlated with each other. Collinearity statistics for Job satisfaction ($VIF = 1.00$) and Perceived justice ($VIF = 1.46$) suggest no multicollinearity issues with the variables. A Shapiro-Wilk Test was conducted to assess the normality of the data. The test yielded a statistic of 0.798 and 0.795 respectively, with a corresponding p-value of less than 0.001. This suggests that the assumption of normal distribution is violated. Like personality traits, since the sample size is relatively large (N = 250), the impact of this violation on the results may be minimal (Navarro & Foxcroft, 2018).

**Confirmatory results**

The correlation matrix in Table 2 indicates significant correlations and CI between personality traits, job satisfaction, perceived justice, and CWBs.
Table 2

Correlation matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Agreeableness</th>
<th>Conscientiousness</th>
<th>Neuroticism</th>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
<th>Procedural justice</th>
<th>Distributive justice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agreeableness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson's r</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95% CI Upper</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95% CI Lower</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conscientiousness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson's r</td>
<td>0.380 ***</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95% CI Upper</td>
<td>0.481</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95% CI Lower</td>
<td>0.268</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neuroticism</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson's r</td>
<td>-0.413 ***</td>
<td>-0.380 ***</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95% CI Upper</td>
<td>-0.304</td>
<td>-0.268</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95% CI Lower</td>
<td>-0.511</td>
<td>-0.481</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson's r</td>
<td>0.279 ***</td>
<td>0.294 ***</td>
<td>-0.282 ***</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95% CI Upper</td>
<td>0.390</td>
<td>0.404</td>
<td>-0.164</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95% CI Lower</td>
<td>0.161</td>
<td>0.177</td>
<td>-0.393</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedural justice</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson's r</td>
<td>0.204 **</td>
<td>0.108</td>
<td>-0.111</td>
<td>0.361 ***</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95% CI Upper</td>
<td>0.320</td>
<td>0.229</td>
<td>0.013</td>
<td>0.464</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95% CI Lower</td>
<td>0.082</td>
<td>-0.017</td>
<td>-0.232</td>
<td>0.248</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distributive justice</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson's r</td>
<td>0.151 *</td>
<td>0.147 *</td>
<td>-0.203 **</td>
<td>0.448 ***</td>
<td>0.561 **</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95% CI Upper</td>
<td>0.270</td>
<td>0.266</td>
<td>-0.081</td>
<td>0.542</td>
<td>0.640</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agreeableness</td>
<td>Conscientiousness</td>
<td>Neuroticism</td>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>Procedural Justice</td>
<td>Distributive Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95% CI Lower</td>
<td>0.027</td>
<td>0.023</td>
<td>-0.319</td>
<td>0.343</td>
<td>0.469</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counterproductive work behaviors Pearson’s r</td>
<td>-0.445 ***</td>
<td>-0.482 ***</td>
<td>0.216 ***</td>
<td>-0.268 **</td>
<td>0.180 **</td>
<td>-0.171 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95% CI Upper</td>
<td>-0.340</td>
<td>-0.381</td>
<td>0.331</td>
<td>0.149</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-0.048</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95% CI Lower</td>
<td>-0.539</td>
<td>-0.572</td>
<td>0.095</td>
<td>0.380</td>
<td>0.297</td>
<td>-0.289</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001. Personality traits, Perceived justice, and Counterproductive work behaviors were measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale, Job satisfaction was measured on a 7-point Likert-type scale, all ranging from “Strongly disagree” to “Strongly agree”.

H1a was “Employees with higher levels of Agreeableness will exhibit lower levels of engagement in CWBs”. To test H1a, I conducted a Pearson bivariate correlation examining the relationship between Agreeableness and engagement in CWBs. As predicted, Table 3 confirmed that higher levels of Agreeableness are associated with significantly lower levels of engagement in CWBs. This indicates that individuals who score higher on Agreeableness are less likely to engage in counterproductive behaviors in the workplace, thus supporting H1a.

H1b was “Employees with higher levels of Conscientiousness will exhibit lower levels of engagement in CWBs”. To test H1b, I conducted a Pearson bivariate correlation examining the relationship between Conscientiousness and engagement in CWBs. As predicted, the results confirmed that higher levels of Conscientiousness are associated with significantly lower levels of engagement in CWBs. This indicates that individuals who score higher on Conscientiousness are less likely to engage in counterproductive behaviors in the workplace, thus supporting H1b.
H1c was “Employees with higher levels of Neuroticism will exhibit higher levels of engagement in CWBs. To test H1c, I conducted a Pearson bivariate correlation examining the relationship between Neuroticism and engagement in CWBs”. As predicted, the results confirmed that higher levels of Neuroticism are associated with significantly higher levels of engagement in CWBs. This indicates that individuals who score higher on Neuroticism are more likely to engage in counterproductive behaviors in the workplace, thus supporting H1c.

Similarly, H2 was “Higher levels of Satisfaction with Work will be associated with a lower likelihood of engaging in CWBs”. To test H2, I conducted a Pearson bivariate correlation examining the relationship between Satisfaction with Work and engagement in CWBs. As predicted, the results confirmed that higher levels of Satisfaction with Work are associated with a significantly lower likelihood of engaging in CWBs. This suggests that individuals who are more satisfied with their work are less inclined to engage in counterproductive behaviors, supporting H2.

Finally, H3a and H3b were “Higher levels of perceived procedural and distributive justice will be negatively associated with engagement in CWBs”. To test H3a and H3b, I conducted a Pearson bivariate correlation examining the relationship between both procedural and distributive justice and engagement in CWBs. Both perceived procedural justice and perceived distributive justice are negatively associated with engagement in counterproductive workplace behaviors (CWBs). Specifically, higher procedural and distributive justice levels indicate a strongly decreased likelihood of engaging in CWBs. This suggests that when employees perceive fairness in procedural and distributive aspects of workplace interactions, they are less inclined to exhibit counterproductive behaviors, supporting both H3a and H3b.
Multiple Regression Analysis. Linear multiple regression was conducted to explore how individual differences in personality traits, job satisfaction, and perceptions of justice interact to influence engagement in CWB within organizational contexts, answering the research question: How do individual differences in personality traits, job satisfaction, and perceptions of justice influence engagement in counterproductive work behaviors (CWBs) within organizational contexts?

The regression analysis involved entering Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Neuroticism as predictors for the first model, with CWBs as the outcome variable across four different models. Additionally, models included Satisfaction with Work (Satisfaction) in the second model, and both Procedural Justice and Distributive Justice in the third model, leaving control variables such as gender, education level, and employment status for the last model.

In Model 1, which included only the personality traits as predictors, a significant overall model test was observed \( (F(3, 246) = 37.9, p < .001) \), with an adjusted \( R^2 \) of 0.316. Agreeableness \( (\beta = -0.3126, p < .001) \) and Conscientiousness \( (\beta = -0.3017, p < .001) \) were both significant predictors of CWBs, supporting their negative association with engagement in such behaviors. However, Neuroticism did not significantly predict CWBs \( (\beta = -0.0429, p = 0.288) \).

Continuously, Model 2 introduced Satisfaction with Work as an additional predictor. The overall model remained significant \( (F (4, 245) = 29.3, p < .001) \), showing improved overall model fit \( (\Delta R^2 = 0.00791, p = 0.092) \), and explaining 32.4% of the variance in CWBs. Agreeableness \( (\beta = -0.299, p < .001) \) and Conscientiousness \( (\beta = -0.2881, p < .001) \) continued to be significant predictors of CWBs, while Neuroticism remained non-significant \( (p = 0.195) \). Satisfaction with Work \( (\beta = -0.0363, p = 0.092) \) showed a moderate significance.
Similarly in Model 3, Procedural Justice and Distributive Justice were included as additional predictors. The overall model ($F (6, 243) = 19.7, p < .001$) showed no improvement ($\Delta R^2 = 0.00371, p = 0.512$), with an adjusted $R^2$ of 0.328. Agreeableness ($\beta = -0.2934, p < .001$) and Conscientiousness ($\beta = -0.2896, p < .001$) remained significant predictors, while Neuroticism remained non-significant ($p = 0.189$). Satisfaction with Work ($\beta = -0.0252, p = 0.288$), Procedural Justice ($\beta = -0.0281, p = 0.496$), and Distributive Justice ($\beta = -0.0146, p = 0.625$) did not significantly predict CWBs.

Finally, Model 4 (Table 3) included all predictors from previous models, along with Gender, Highest level of education, and Employment status. The overall model showed improvement, explaining 36.2% of the variance in CWBs. Agreeableness and Conscientiousness remained significant predictors, while Neuroticism remained non-significant. Satisfaction with Work, Procedural and Distributive Justice, and Demographic factors all together also did not predict CWBs.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intercept *</td>
<td>3.9730</td>
<td>0.3430</td>
<td>11.583</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreeableness</td>
<td>-0.2828</td>
<td>0.0586</td>
<td>-4.823</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conscientiousness</td>
<td>-0.2755</td>
<td>0.0469</td>
<td>-5.871</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neuroticism</td>
<td>-0.0427</td>
<td>0.0407</td>
<td>-1.051</td>
<td>0.294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>-0.0126</td>
<td>0.0240</td>
<td>-0.525</td>
<td>0.600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedural justice</td>
<td>-0.0384</td>
<td>0.0414</td>
<td>-0.926</td>
<td>0.355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distributive justice</td>
<td>-0.0228</td>
<td>0.0299</td>
<td>-0.763</td>
<td>0.446</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender: Female – Male</td>
<td>-0.1025</td>
<td>0.0523</td>
<td>-1.959</td>
<td>0.051</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest level of education:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree or equivalent</td>
<td>0.0372</td>
<td>0.0852</td>
<td>0.437</td>
<td>0.663</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s degree or equivalent</td>
<td>0.0318</td>
<td>0.0863</td>
<td>0.369</td>
<td>0.713</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Model Coefficients – Counterproductive Work Behaviors with all other variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral or equivalent – High school</td>
<td>0.0877</td>
<td>0.1476</td>
<td>0.594</td>
<td>0.553</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment status:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time employment – Previously employed</td>
<td>0.2088</td>
<td>0.0871</td>
<td>2.397</td>
<td>0.017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time employment – Previously employed</td>
<td>0.0743</td>
<td>0.0731</td>
<td>1.017</td>
<td>0.310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed – Previously employed</td>
<td>-0.1373</td>
<td>0.1293</td>
<td>-1.062</td>
<td>0.289</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Represents reference level

Overall, the results suggest that Agreeableness and Conscientiousness consistently play important roles in predicting lower engagement in CWBs, while the influence of Neuroticism, Satisfaction with Work, and perceptions of justice are less consistent or non-significant.

### Discussion

In the realm of organizational psychology, understanding the factors that influence counterproductive workplace behaviors (CWBs) is of paramount importance for fostering a productive and harmonious work environment. The present study delves into this complex interplay by examining the influence of personality traits, job satisfaction, and perceived justice on engagement in CWBs. Through a rigorous confirmatory analysis, several key findings emerge, shedding light on the intricate relationships between these variables.

**Personality Traits and Counterproductive Work Behaviors**

The findings of the study offer compelling insights into the influential role of personality traits in shaping employee behavior within organizational settings. In line with established literature and the TRA, individuals characterized by high levels of Agreeableness and Conscientiousness demonstrate lower levels of engagement in counterproductive work behaviors.
(CWBs). The regression analysis provides deeper insights into the complex interplay between personality traits and CWBs. One notable finding is the consistent and robust predictive power of Agreeableness and Conscientiousness in explaining lower engagement in CWBs across all models. This highlights the enduring influence of these personality traits on workplace behavior, suggesting that individuals who possess higher levels of Agreeableness and Conscientiousness are more likely to adhere to organizational norms and values, thus reducing their propensity for engaging in counterproductive behaviors. Organizations can thus incorporate personality assessments into the recruitment process to identify candidates with high levels of Agreeableness and Conscientiousness, and lower levels of Neuroticism. This can help in selecting individuals less likely to engage in CWBs, contributing to a more positive and productive work environment.

Agreeableness, as a personality trait, encompasses qualities such as altruism, cooperation, and empathy. Individuals scoring high on Agreeableness tend to prioritize interpersonal harmony and positive social interactions (Hadi et al., 2012). Consequently, they are less likely to engage in behaviors that disrupt workplace relationships or undermine teamwork. By fostering cooperative and empathetic attitudes, Agreeableness acts as a protective factor against the manifestation of counterproductive behaviors that could jeopardize organizational cohesion and morale. Employees high in Agreeableness are more inclined to collaborate effectively with colleagues, resolve conflicts amicably, and contribute positively to team dynamics, thus reducing the occurrence of CWBs.

Similarly, the trait of Conscientiousness is associated with attributes such as responsibility, organization, and self-discipline. Individuals who score high on Conscientiousness exhibit a strong work ethic, a commitment to fulfilling obligations, and a propensity for adhering to rules and norms (Bowling, 2010). As a result, they are less likely to engage in behaviors that deviate from
established organizational standards or undermine productivity. Conscientious employees demonstrate diligence in their work tasks, maintain a structured approach to their responsibilities, and exhibit self-control in managing impulses or temptations to engage in counterproductive behaviors. This conscientious mindset contributes to a work environment characterized by reliability, efficiency, and accountability, thereby reducing the prevalence of CWBs.

The study sheds light on the contrasting role of Neuroticism, a personality trait characterized by tendencies towards anxiety, insecurity, and impulsivity, in shaping workplace behavior. However, the non-significant relationship between neuroticism and CWBs contrasts with some prior research. Although neuroticism was initially considered a potential predictor due to its association with emotional instability and stress, it did not survive in the final model. This suggests that when controlling for conscientiousness and agreeableness, the direct impact of neuroticism on CWBs diminishes. It indicates that the emotional traits of employees may be less influential on CWBs when strong positive traits (conscientiousness and agreeableness) are present. Alternative explanations for this discrepancy could involve the specific nature of the CWBs assessed in this study or the interaction of neuroticism with other factors not accounted for in the analysis. However, correlation analysis showed a negative association between Neuroticism and CWBs, in line with prior research. Individuals scoring high on Neuroticism exhibit heightened emotional reactivity and vulnerability to stressors, which can manifest in maladaptive responses and behaviors within the organizational context (Hitlan, 2009).

Individuals high in Neuroticism are more susceptible to experiencing negative emotions such as anxiety, irritability, and mood fluctuations, which can impair their ability to cope with workplace challenges effectively. This heightened emotional volatility may lead to heightened sensitivity to perceived slights or injustices, increasing the likelihood of engaging in retaliatory or
impulsive behaviors. In the face of stressors or conflicts, individuals high in Neuroticism may struggle to regulate their emotions and impulses, leading to disruptive actions that undermine organizational harmony and productivity.

Moreover, the tendency towards insecurity and self-doubt characteristic of Neuroticism may contribute to a sense of perceived threat or inadequacy in the workplace. Individuals high in Neuroticism may harbor feelings of uncertainty about their performance or fear of rejection, which can fuel defensive or defensive behaviors aimed at self-preservation. This defensive posture may manifest in behaviors such as scapegoating, blaming others for one's shortcomings, or engaging in passive-aggressive tactics to alleviate feelings of insecurity or protect one's self-esteem.

Furthermore, impulsivity, another trait of Neuroticism, can lead to rash decision-making and impulsive actions with detrimental consequences for organizational functioning. Individuals prone to impulsivity may act without considering the long-term implications of their actions, leading to errors in judgment or reckless behavior that disrupts the workflow and undermines organizational goals.

**Job Satisfaction, Perceived Justice, and Counterproductive Work Behaviors**

Beyond personality traits, attitudes towards work encompassing job satisfaction and perceived justice were also not significant in the final model, indicating that their influence on CWBs might be more indirect or context-dependent. The findings imply that while job satisfaction and perceptions of fairness are important for overall employee well-being, their direct impact on reducing CWBs may not be as strong as the influence of inherent personality traits. However, the correlation analysis reveals a robust negative association between job satisfaction, perceived justice, and engagement in CWBs, indicating that individuals who experience higher levels of job satisfaction and perceived justice are less likely to exhibit detrimental behaviors in the workplace.
The negative correlation between job satisfaction and CWBs underscores the significance of cultivating a positive work environment that fosters employee satisfaction. When employees feel fulfilled and content in their roles, they are more motivated to contribute positively to the organization and less inclined to engage in behaviors that undermine productivity and cohesion. Job satisfaction serves as a buffer against the manifestation of counterproductive tendencies, acting as a protective factor that mitigates the likelihood of engaging in disruptive actions (Fisher, 2000).

A positive work environment conducive to job satisfaction encompasses various elements, including supportive leadership, clear communication channels, opportunities for growth and development, fair compensation, and recognition for contributions (Locke, 1969). Organizations that prioritize employee well-being and invest in initiatives to enhance job satisfaction are likely to experience lower rates of CWBs and higher levels of organizational performance. Organizations can then develop and implement strategies to improve job satisfaction, such as offering competitive compensation, providing career development opportunities, and ensuring a healthy work-life balance. They can regularly solicit employee feedback through surveys and focus groups to identify areas for improvement and address concerns promptly.

Furthermore, the negative association between job satisfaction and CWBs underscores the reciprocal relationship between employee well-being and organizational outcomes. As employees experience greater satisfaction in their roles, they are more likely to be engaged, committed, and productive, leading to improved organizational performance and morale. In contrast, a lack of job satisfaction can contribute to employee disengagement, turnover, and the proliferation of CWBs, ultimately impacting the organization's operations and reputation (Fisher, 2000; Bowling, 2010).

Similarly, regression analysis showed no significant prediction between the justice scales and CWBs, however, correlation analysis also indicates a strong negative correlation between the
variables explaining that employees who perceive fairness and equity in procedural matters, such as decision-making processes, and the distribution of rewards, are less likely to engage in CWBs. This underscores the profound impact of organizational justice on employee attitudes and behaviors, highlighting its significance in promoting a positive work environment and enhancing organizational effectiveness.

Perceived procedural justice refers to employees' perceptions of the fairness and transparency of procedures used in decision-making processes, while distributive justice pertains to perceptions of fairness in the allocation of rewards and resources (Cohen et al., 2019). The study's results suggest that when employees perceive these aspects of justice within their organization, they are more likely to exhibit lower levels of engagement in CWBs.

Organizational justice serves as a cornerstone of effective leadership and management practices, as it cultivates a sense of trust, commitment, and compliance among employees (Cohen et al., 2019). When employees believe that decision-making processes are fair and transparent and that rewards are distributed equitably based on merit and performance, they are more likely to feel valued and respected within the organization (Fox et al., 2001). This, in turn, contributes to higher levels of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and overall well-being.

The study's findings underscore the importance of promoting organizational justice to foster a positive organizational culture and reduce the occurrence of CWBs. By ensuring fairness and transparency in procedural matters and reward distribution, organizations can enhance employee trust, commitment, and morale, while simultaneously discouraging behaviors that undermine productivity and morale. This includes clear communication of how decisions are made, equitable distribution of resources and rewards, and consistent enforcement of rules. Training managers in fairness and ethical leadership can further enhance perceived justice.
Furthermore, the role of perceived justice extends beyond its direct impact on employee behavior to encompass broader organizational outcomes. Organizations that prioritize fairness and equity in their policies and practices are more likely to enjoy higher levels of employee engagement, satisfaction, and retention, leading to improved performance, innovation, and competitiveness in the marketplace (Gilliland et al., 2001).

Finally, the results highlight the importance of focusing on personality traits during the hiring process. By prioritizing candidates with high levels of conscientiousness and agreeableness, organizations can reduce the likelihood of CWBs and foster a more positive workplace environment. Although job satisfaction and perceived justice did not directly predict CWBs in the final model, they remain important for overall organizational health. Ensuring fair treatment and fostering job satisfaction can contribute to a supportive work environment, indirectly reducing stress and dissatisfaction that might otherwise lead to CWBs.

Limitations of Current Research and Future directions

While the findings of the present study contribute valuable insights into the relationships between personality traits, job satisfaction, perceived justice, and engagement in CWBs, it is essential to acknowledge several limitations that may impact the interpretation and generalizability of the results.

One notable limitation of the study pertains to the characteristics of the sample. The study sample consisted of $N = 250$ participants, which, while adequate for many analyses, may not fully represent the diversity of the workforce across different industries, organizational sizes, and cultural contexts. This could be due to the participants’ educational background being significantly skewed towards higher education levels, with 44.4% holding a master’s degree and 4.0%
possessing a doctoral degree suggesting that the findings may be more applicable to highly educated populations. Conversely, the occupational backgrounds of the participants also reveal an over-representation in fields such as consulting (16.4%), sales (13.6%), and healthcare/hospitality (12.8%). These sectors might have unique job characteristics and work cultures that do not fully encompass the workers’ experiences in other significant industries like manufacturing, agriculture, or public service.

The present study adopted a cross-sectional design, capturing data at a single point in time. While cross-sectional designs offer valuable snapshots of associations between variables, they do not allow for causal inference or the examination of temporal relationships. Longitudinal studies tracking participants over time would provide a more robust understanding of how changes in personality traits, job satisfaction, and perceived justice influence subsequent engagement in CWBs.

Another limitation relates to the reliance on self-report measures for assessing personality traits, job satisfaction, perceived justice, and engagement in CWBs. Self-report measures are susceptible to response biases, such as social desirability bias and recall bias, which may inflate or deflate associations between variables. Social desirability bias occurs when respondents intentionally provide responses that they perceive as socially acceptable or favorable, rather than reporting their true thoughts, feelings, or behaviors. In the context of personality traits, individuals may consciously or unconsciously present themselves in a more positive light by overestimating their agreeableness, conscientiousness, job satisfaction, or even CWBs to conform to societal norms or organizational expectations (Furnham, 1985; Chernyak-Hai & Tziner, 2014). Similarly, recall bias refers to systematic errors in the recollection of past events or experiences, leading to inaccuracies in reporting. When assessing engagement in CWBs or job satisfaction, individuals
may have difficulty accurately recalling specific instances of behavior or subjective feelings, particularly if those events occurred in the distant past or were relatively rare. This bias can result in underestimation or overestimation of the frequency or intensity of CWBs or job satisfaction levels, potentially weakening the observed associations with personality traits or perceived justice.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, this thesis delves into the intricate relationships between personality traits, job satisfaction, perceived justice, and counterproductive work behaviors within organizational settings. Through a comprehensive study involving 250 participants, the research uncovers significant correlations between all mentioned variables. Within the research context, hierarchical regression analysis shows that agreeableness and conscientiousness were the ultimate predictors of counterproductive work behaviors. Future research should continue to explore these dynamics across various contexts and industries, using longitudinal approaches to capture the evolution of these relationships over time. Additionally, examining a broader range of personality traits and situational variables can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms driving CWBs.
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