

MODERATING EFFECTS OF JOB GRADES ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DARK TRIAD, ANOMIA, NEGATIVE AFFECTIVITY ON TYPE S COUNTERPRODUCTIVE WORK BEHAVIOUR (CWB-S)

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Abstract: *Despite the fact that some researchers have gained notoriety by employing certain approaches and focusing on particular Counterproductive Work Behaviours (CWBs), the study focused on the differences discovered in individual personalities that motivate people to engage in CWB-S. Job grades were also investigated to determine their impacts on the existing link between individual differences and work-related behaviours in order to have a better understanding of how CWB-S and individual differences are connected to one another. The Dark Triad, which consists of Machiavellianism, Narcissism, and Psychopathy, together with Anomia and Negative Affectivity were the independent variables in this study. Meanwhile, job grades (Grades 1, 2, and 3) were employed as the moderating variables. The stratified quota sampling technique was used to select 588 respondents and their responses were collected via online questionnaire survey. The findings of this study should help other scholars to conduct research in this field using other factors and comprehend the topic of Type S Counterproductive Work Behaviours (CWB-S) more thoroughly. It is recommended that further investigation needs to explore the influence of other job factors such as reward programmes or job characteristics, also expanding the samples to other categories with larger samples pertaining to higher-ranking employees.*

Keywords: *The Dark Triad, Anomia, Negative Affectivity, Type S Counterproductive Work Behaviour, Job Grades*

Introduction

There are a great deal of discussions in Malaysia about integrity, particularly among civil servants, and these debates often touch on issues including abuse of authority, betrayal of trust, corruption, and theft. Although a small number of civil servants engaged in ethical misconduct, the fallout now affects all public servants (Muzaffar Syah, 2016). In reality, the majority of public employees still uphold the values of integrity in carrying out their respective responsibilities to the best of their abilities in providing the best services to people from various walks of life (Integrity Management and Conduct of Civil Servants, 2019).

Counterproductive Work Behaviours (CWBs) in Malaysia are a subject of concern for policymakers. As reported by Zunaidah et al. (2014), issues within the public sector in Malaysia could imply how crooked the accountability, integrity, and practices of ethical behaviours are. For instance, Mazni et al. (2013) in their study discovered how damaging the impact could be; therefore, they demanded that the predictors of unethical behaviours are understood deeply. Mazni et al. (2013) discovered that support personnel play an important role in helping public service organisations to achieve their objectives by providing good services to the public. However, the deviant behaviour of support personnel was also reported to record the highest percentage compared to other categories of employees in Malaysian public service organisations.

Despite the issue that has been occasionally highlighted in the media, empirical studies on Counterproductive Work Behaviours (CWBs) are limited in Malaysia (Mazni et al., 2013) and the Asian context since most of the studies on workplace deviant behaviour have been conducted in the West; hence, there is still a lack of empirical evidence on the predictors of unethical behaviours among support personnel, specifically in the Malaysian context (Mazni et al., 2013). Furthermore, there is also insufficient research employing employees from different categories in one study, especially in the Asian context (Farhadi et al. 2015; Mazni and Roziah, 2015; Mazni et al. 2013).

Therefore, the present study attempts to examine the moderating impacts of job grades on the relationship between negative personality qualities (the Dark Triad, Anomia, and Negative Affectivity (NA)) and Type S Counterproductive Work Behaviour (CWB-S). The motivation for Type S misbehavior, according to Vardi and Weitz (2004), is primarily driven by instrumental judgment on the usefulness of engaging in such an act for the individual, the positive and negative values flowing from it, and the eventual personal consequences. Meeting fundamental job requirements, greed, certain job kinds (e.g. working remotely), a lot of autonomy, stress, narcissism, or boredom are factors that lead to Type S misbehavior. Employees with an excessive amount of autonomy are an example of this sort of inappropriate behavior. They may postpone work, indulge in private activities, steal time, or misuse organizational resources when no one is looking, and they have the time and chance.

Literature Review

Three most negative personality qualities, subclinical Narcissism, Machiavellianism, and Psychopathy are collectively known as the "Dark Triad" (Spain et al., 2014). According to Furnham et al. (2013), Narcissism entails unlimited fantasies of grandeur and inflated views of individuals, i.e., Narcissists, which leads to an increased and out-of-control desire for self-promotion and care, while Christie and Geis (1970) stated that Machiavellianism is associated with the perception of the surrounding people to be gullible enough and are easily fooled.

According to Scherer et al. (2013), people with Psychopathy frequently engage in antisocial behaviour and openly mock societal norms.

Machiavellianism is associated with a few beyond-the-bounds immoral and unethical behaviours. To attain their objectives, Machiavellians typically behave aggressively, mistreat others, and even commit fraud (Mahmood et al., 2021). Also, according to Giacalone and Knouse (2001), Machiavellians are more prone to participate in Counterproductive Work behaviours including abuse, theft, and sabotage. Theft, antagonism, and non-violent crime are the characteristics that high narcissistic personalities typically display (DeShong et al., 2015). Narcissists are more sensitive to negative events because they typically perceive themselves as victims and assume malice in the motives of others. These traits may make them more likely to behave unproductively at work, for instance by being angry, disruptive, or blatantly confrontational against others (Wu and Lebreton, 2011). Due to their low levels of affectivity, psychopaths are less likely to care about other people or have a sense of devotion to their profession (O'Boyle et al., 2012). They also disclaim accountability for their actions and believe that rules and laws do not apply to them (Boddy, 2006). As a result, those people with high degrees of psychopathy frequently engage in unproductive work habits because they fail to adequately evaluate their surroundings or the consequences of their actions. Psychopathy is described in the context of the workplace as having dysfunctional cognitive-affective tendencies that might lead to counterproductive job behaviours (Schilbach et al., 2020).

Martinko et al. (2002) and Spector and Fox (2005) claimed that Negative Affectivity is the key that controls Counterproductive Work Behaviours (CWBs) since it matters more to CWBs than Positive Affectivity. Negative Affectivity often brings about some emotions that may function in the same way—freezing and numbing—rather than energizing and moving. Nervous people often feel weak and tend to neglect self-reliance and refuse a stand. A plethora of knowledge, fear of not understanding what is relevant, and the likelihood of making the wrong choice seem overwhelming and scare an apprehensive individual into passivity. Negative Affectivity will, thereby, reduce the quantity and consistency of knowledge consulted for preference. This tendency has been seen in several contexts, from educated health decisions to future professions (Fuqua et al., 1988; Lounsbury et al., 2004). In an analysis of job knowledge for teenagers, some students clarified that they refrained from deliberately seeking career-related information and sometimes sought to stop it to shield themselves from confusion and anxiety (Julien, 1999).

Negative Affectivity, mental volatility, restlessness, fear of commitment, and social anxiety have been found to trigger indecision among college students (Chartrand et al., 1994; Leong and Chervinko, 1996; Lounsbury et al., 2004; Kracke and Schmitt-Rodermund, 2001). Indecisive people appear to be nervous and have external influence, low self-esteem, and insufficient identity creation (Hartman, 1990; Hartman and Fuqua, 1983; Salomone, 1982). Such a state has also been found to decrease self-efficacy and career-related knowledge (Chartrand et al., 1993).

The recurring theme on all CWBs is that these negative behaviours are destructive to the organisation's assets, the environment, or its people, which will change how the organisation as a whole function or how effectively any one member performs (Fox et al., 2001). This supports Sacket's (2002) assertion that such behaviours by organisational members are planned to undermine the organisation's legitimate interests. Sacket (2002) further noted that these might include both purposeful and inadvertent behaviours performed under various reasons and motives. Marcus and Schuler (2004) established three requirements that must be met for an act

to be regarded as a CWB, namely (i) the action shall be volitional, irrespective of the purpose of harm performed during the action, (ii) the person does not understand the potential for harm by engaging in the action until the action is committed, and (iii) the action is contrary to the legitimate interests of the organisation.

Studies that are related to CWBs typically concentrate on the classification, prediction, link with various workplace and employee characteristics, and theoretical frameworks of CWBs (Dirican and Erdil, 2016). A job is a group of positions with similar main tasks and obligations (Byars and Rue, 2000). From another perspective, a job is a group of consistent tasks that share functional characteristics and have recurring patterns in some psychological and behavioural outcomes (Fried and Ferris, 1987). Each job has certain obligations and responsibilities that are based on these traits. A worker feels that these characteristics contribute to the significance of their employment (Bartlett, 2008). Jobs are divided into many classes, groups, or families, according to Anjum and Parvez (2013), and this method of job classification is based on organisational hierarchy, technology, human behaviour, and the nature of the job.

Also, previous research has demonstrated that those in higher positions within an organisation are more likely to see citizenship behaviours as crucial to their professions (Dirican and Erdil, 2016). In contrast to subordinates, supervisory level employees believed that Counterproductive Work Behaviours (CWBs) were a part of the work that was not permitted to be done, according to Lam, Hui, and Law's (1999) study. Another prior study discovered that professors' CWB were lower than those of employed students, provided evidence to support this assertion (Turnipseed and Vandewaa, 2012).

Since it involves more paperwork and information than actual things, white-collar work is done by administrative and professional staff and is categorised as non-manual work (Bernardin and Russell, 1998). For this role, candidates must have a certain level of education, and they value the intrinsic benefits of their profession, such as task relevance and autonomy (Centers and Bugental, 1966). Nonetheless, because of their stringent standards and job expectations, white-collar workers frequently engage in little misbehaviour (Yin, 2010).

Also, workers at higher occupational levels tend to be more committed to the company and its objectives, which results in less unethical behaviours that foster Counterproductive Work Behaviors (CWBs) (Chernyak-Hai and Tziner, 2014). In order to effectively moderate Counterproductive Work Behaviors (CWBs), occupational ranks or job grades should also be considered, especially in the Asian nations (Farhadi et al., 2015).

Methodology

This study was a cross-sectional study, conducted in municipal councils in Selangor, which involved 588 employees as the respondents. These targeted respondents comprised three different levels, namely, grade 1, 2, and 3. According to the yearly report of municipal councils in Selangor, employees that belong to Grade 3 range from grade 41 to 54, employees with the grade range of 29 to 40 belong to Grade 2, and finally, employees that belong to Grade 1 are those having grade 19 to 28. A proportionate quota sampling technique was used to select the respondents. This sampling technique is often used in surveys and opinion polls, where the total number of people to be surveyed is typically decided in advance (Sedgwick, 2012). To determine the sample size for this study, 6% of each municipal council employees was selected as the samples. According to Salkind (2012), the maximum number of 500 respondents is large enough for any study. Therefore, the total number of the desired respondents were divided by

the number of employees for municipal council in Selangor, and multiply by 100. The same formula was applied to calculate the sample for each municipal council.

A total of 39 items of instrument were used to measure all the variables. Section A described demographic of the respondents, Section B was on The Dark Triad, Anomia and Negative Affectivity, while Section C was designated to gauge responses on Counterproductive Work Behaviours (CWBs). As for The Dark Triad and Anomia, 5-point Likert scale were used with values ranging from 1=Strongly Disagree, to 5=Strongly Agree, meanwhile for Negative Affectivity, the 5-point Likert scale represented by 1=Not at all, and 5=Extremely. Lastly, for CWBs, the scale presented with value ranging from 1=Never, to 5= Always. This instrument was distributed to the potential respondents through a representative for each municipal council via email, and the data collection period took about 6 weeks to complete.

Result and Discussion

Analysis was conducted to investigate the moderating effects of job grades on the influence of the Dark Triad, Negative Affectivity, and Anomia on Counterproductive Work Behaviours (CWBs). The analysis was done by employing the Hierarchical Regression Analysis, which aims to examine the relationship between two other quantitative variables as moderated by a quantitative variable (Razi, Karim and Mohamed, 2013; Cramer and Ebrary, 2003; Baron and Kenny, 1986).

To conduct the hierarchical regression analysis for categorical moderating variables, the variables must first be coded using the dummy coding technique (Razi, Karim and Mohamed, 2013). According to Aguinis (2004), this technique will make it easier to execute and relatively simple for the interpretation of findings. The dummy coding for job grades in this study is depicted in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Dummy Coding for Job Grades

Job Grade	D1	D2	D3	Description
Category 1	1	0	0	Grades 19 – 28
Category 2	0	1	0	Grades 29 – 40
Category 3	0	0	1	Grades 41 -54

Table 2 shows the results for the moderating effects of Category 1 job grade on Type S CWB (e.g. wasting time at work). The findings showed that Model 1 contributed to 22.9% of the variance explained in Type S CWB ($F(5, 582) = 34.480; p < .05$), while a 0.5% increment was detected in Model 2 in which the variance explained increased to 23.3% ($F(6, 581) = 29.463; p > .05$). However, in Model 3, a 21% additional variance explained was found, yielding 25.4% of variance explained in Type S CWB ($F(11, 576) = 17.301; p < .05$) compared to Model 2. Thus, moderating effect was present as indicated by the considerable increase in R-squared (Aguinis, 2004). A graphical illustration (Figure 2.1) is given to explain the establishment of the moderating effect of Category 1 job grade on the relationship between Narcissism and Type S CWB.

Table 2 also displays the findings for the moderating effect of Category 2 job grade on the relationships between the independent variables and Type S Counterproductive Work Behaviour (CWB) (e.g. wasting time at work). There was a significant increment in R-squared in two out of three models. Model 1 explained 22.9% of the variance in Type S CWB ($F(5, 582) = 34.480; p < .05$), followed by 23.3% of variance explained in Model 2 with a 0.4%

increment, ($F(6, 581) = 29.361; p > .05$). Finally, in Model 3, the total variance explained increased by 1.5%, yielding 24.8% of the variance explained ($F(11, 576) = 17.246; p < .05$). As supported by Cohen et al. (2003), the increment in R-squared implies the moderating effects. The F value change in Model 3 shows a significant value ($p < .05$), which indicates a significant moderating effect (Razi, Karim, and Mohamed, 2013). However, none of the interaction terms show a significant value. Therefore, the interaction between Category 2 job grade and Type S CWB did not strengthen the relationships of Machiavellianism, Narcissism, Psychopathy, Negative Affectivity, and Anomia with Type S Counterproductive Work Behaviour (CWB).

The findings for the moderating effect of Category 3 job grade on the link between the independent variables and Type S Counterproductive Work Behaviour (CWB) (e.g. wasting time at work) are shown in Table 2. Model 1 showed 22.9% of variance explained in Type S CWBs ($F(5, 582) = 34.480; p < .05$). However, both Model 2 and Model 3 showed no significant increment, indicating no additional variance explained ($F(6, 581) = 28.704$ and $p > .05$) and retaining the overall variance explained at 22.9% ($F(11, 576) = 17.139$ and $p > 0.5$). No changes in the R-squared values suggest that Category 3 job grade has no moderating influence on the association between the independent variables and Type S CWB (Cohen et al., 2003).

Table 2: Moderating Effects of Jobs Grade on Type S Counterproductive Work Behaviour (CWs)

Variables	Grade 1			Grade 2			Grade 3		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Independent Variable									
DT – Machiavellianism	.256	.241	.252	.047	.247	.210	.256	.254	.255
DT – Narcissism	-.237	-.232	-.094	-.237	-.230	-.256	-.237	-.238	-.238
DT – Psychopathy	.160	.143	.254	.160	.148	.102	.160	.159	.159
Negative Affectivity	.126	.112	.145	.126	.116	.097	.126	.125	.120
Anomia	.145	.159	.094	.145	.156	.145	.145	.145	.147
Moderating Variable									
Job Category		.075	.702		-.068	-.560		-.011	-.057
Interaction Term									
DT – Machiavellianism*JC			-.135 (.468)			.092 (.572)			-.012 (.938)
DT – Narcissism*JC			-.305 (.038)			.226 (.117)			.061 (.724)
DT – Psychopathy*JC			-.311 (.078)			.243 (.117)			-.009 (.957)
Negative Affectivity*JC			-.119 (.422)			.023 (.853)			.072 (.601)
Anomia*JC			.136 (.501)			-.070 (.725)			-.017 (.987)
R-Squared	.229	.233	.254	.229	.233	.248	.229	.229	.229
R-Squared Change	.229	.005	.021	.229	.004	.015	.229	.000	.000
F Change	34.480	3.605	3.228	34.480	3.135	2.310	34.480	.094	.068
Sig. of F Change	.000	.058	.007	.000	.077	.043	.000	.759	.991
F	34.480	29.463	17.846	34.480	29.361	17.246	34.480	28.704	17.139
df	582	581	576	582	581	576	582	581	576
Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
Durbin-Watson			1.913			1.895			1.911

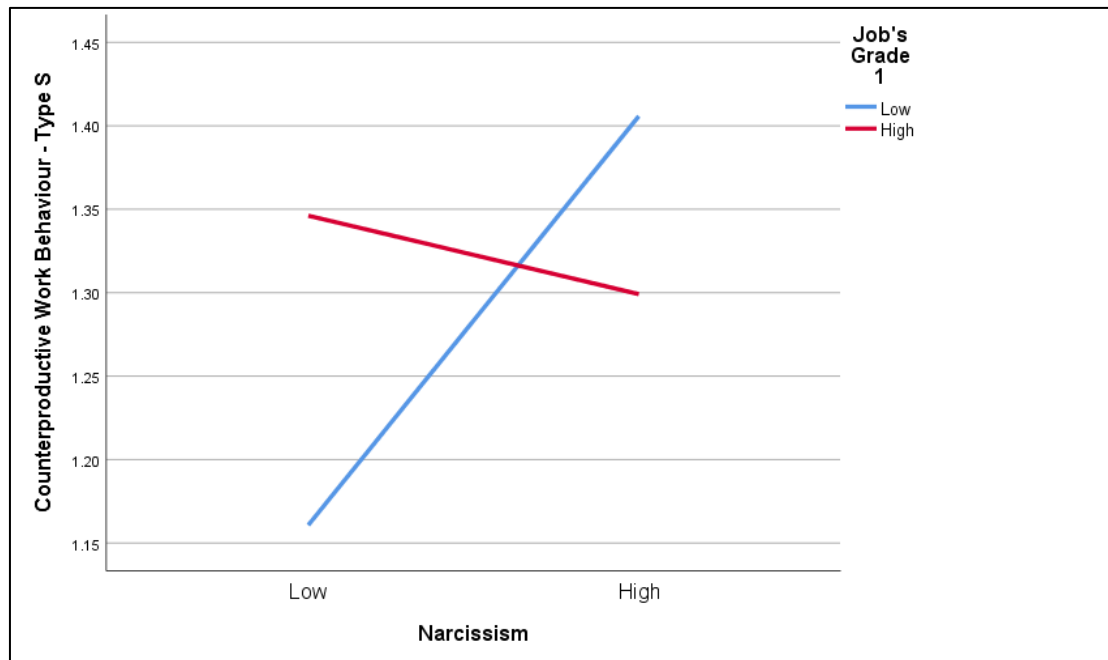


Figure 1: Moderating Effect of Category 1 Job Grade on the Relationship Between narcissism and Type S CWBs

Category 1 job grade plays a significant role in affecting the link between Narcissism and Type S CWB (e.g. wasting time at work) as shown in Figure 1. Employee grades are presented by two distinct lines marked as low and high. Their Type S CWB and Narcissism levels are displayed accordingly along the vertical and horizontal lines in the graph. In essence, the findings supported the theory that employees with Grade 1 (blue line) have low score on Type S CWB when their Narcissism level is low. However, they have high score on Type S CWB when their Narcissism level is high. In contrast, employees with higher grades (red line) score highly on Type S CWB when their Narcissism level is low. However, they score lower Type S CWB when their Narcissism level is high. This is an interesting finding regarding the behaviour of employees with higher grades. It might be due to their egocentrism that prohibits them from engaging in Type S CWB as they want to portray good image to others.

Conclusion

Individual differences are significant CWB predictors, as has been demonstrated by earlier researchers. Moreover, several personality traits have also been connected to CWB-S (Wu and Lebreton, 2011). As CWB-S is a personal choice, it is logical to presume that personality differences rather than ability disparities are more likely to be at play (Mount, Ilies, and Johnson, 2006). Several categories have been used to study these personality variances, such as by focusing exclusively on demographic characteristics or specific personality traits, leading to the discovery that personality antecedents significantly predict involvement in CWB-S (Tuncer, 2019).

According to the results of the current study, Category 3 job grade had no significant moderating effect of the relationship between the independent variables and CWB-S. These employees are among older employees, and they are counting down the days before retirement, which may be the cause of this condition. According to Dirican and Erdil (2016), higher-ranking employees typically view citizenship behaviours as being crucial to their position. So, supervisory level employees are more likely than subordinates to view counterproductive work

behaviours (CWBs) as prohibited (Lam, Hui and Law, 1999). This group of workers showed lower levels of unethical behaviours that foster Counterproductive Work Behaviours (CWBs) because individuals at higher occupational levels also tend to indicate stronger involvement with the organisation and its aims (Chernyak-Hai and Tziner, 2014).

Supervisory level employees in grade 29 to 40 are considered middle-level employees in an organisation when it comes to Grade 2 job grade. Employees who fall into this category are more prone to commit small infractions due to stringent moral standards and workplace culture, as confirmed by Yin (2010). Furthermore, Chernyak-Hai and Tziner (2014) asserted in their study that lower-level workers exhibited a significant number of unethical behaviours that foster CWB-S.

Also, it was discovered that Grade 1 employees that exhibit narcissism engage in CWB-S that serves their own interests. This group's level of personnel is regarded as the lowest in the organisational hierarchy. This description suggests that this group of workers makes less money than other employee groups. According to Pratama and Parahyanti (2019), basic salaries and other forms of incentives or prizes can have an impact on CWB-S. Because compensation encourages both motivation and employee performance, organisations that offer employees more compensation in exchange for acting in a way that furthers organisational goals will urge the employees to do so (Jensen and Meckling, 1976).

This study concludes that there are connections among individual variations in terms of how individuals behave at work. The results of this study may serve as a useful addition to numerous works of literature that have already been published, and the results should also assist other researchers in undertaking studies in this area by utilizing additional variables and gaining a deeper understanding on the subject of Type S Counterproductive Work Behaviours (CWB-S).

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