

Exploring the Nexus of Transformational Leadership, Individual and Organizational Factors in Mitigating Counterproductive Workplace Behavior

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Abstract

This research aims to study the influence of individual and organizational factors on counterproductive workplace behavior (CWB) while exploring the moderating impact of transformational leadership (TL) on the relationship between these factors. The research surveyed 350 employees from 23 public sector organizations in Pakistan. The quantitative data was analyzed using various statistical tools as SPSS and Smart PLS. The findings indicate a significant connection among individual and organizational factors and CWB. However, the moderating effect of TL in the association between organizational injustice and CWB was not supported. Furthermore, it sheds light on the vital role of transformational leadership as a moderator, suggesting promising avenues for future research.

Key words: Counterproductive Workplace Behavior, Abusive Supervision, Organizational Injustice, Transformational leadership, Public Organizations.

Introduction

In the contemporary era, studying individual behavior in the workplace has become essential due to globalization (Li et al., 2020). Counterproductive workplace behavior (CWB) is a crucial research area that profoundly influences workplace behavior (Rahim et al., 2023). CWB harms organizational health and potential outcomes (Yildiz et al., 2015). It has been explored under various terms, including retaliation, dysfunctional behavior, and organizational misbehavior (Song, 2022).

Regrettably, Pakistan, a developing country, has grappled with the serious issue of CWB among employees in public organizations since its independence (Li et al., 2020). The public sector in Pakistan is plagued by corruption, and bureaucratic red tape hinders the behavior of employees (Li et al., 2020).

CWB by employees directly harms the organization and fellow employees. Individuals entering the workforce have the potential to engage in such destructive behavior, which falls into categories like minor and significant deviance (Younus et al., 2020), production deviance (Robinson & Bennett, 1995), intentionally slowing down work, taking extra breaks, arriving late or leaving early on the job (Nasir & Bashir, 2012).

Several contributing factors include individual and organizational elements (De Clercq et al., 2019). In current study Individual factors encompass personality traits (PT) like the Big Five and dark triad (DT) (Miao et al., 2023) and organizational factors include organizational injustice (OI) and abusive supervision (AS) (Bhattacharjee & Sarkar, 2022; Low et al., 2021). The primary emphasis of this study is on how TL plays a moderating role in the association among individual, organizational factors and CWB. Transformational leadership has the potential to induce significant transformations in both individuals and the organization, as evidenced by Wang et al. (2022).

Literature Review and Framework

Relationship Between Individual Factors and CWB

The study inspects the association among individual factors and CWB, focusing on two distinct sets of traits personality traits (PT) and the Dark Triad (DT). These individual factors are considered independent variables, and it is hypothesized that they incline people to involve in CWB, as discussed by Miao et al. (2023).

It is posited that these traits can significantly influence the likelihood of engaging in CWB because individuals consciously choose to exhibit such behaviors, as noted by Pletzer et al. (2020).

The second set of individual factors focuses on the impact of the DT as a predictor of CWB. IN DT personality this research focus on Machiavellianism and

psychopathy. Machiavellianism is characterized by an individual's desire to attain own goals and chase power, often irrespective of ethical considerations (Li et al., 2020). Additionally, psychopathy is a personality concept marked by thrill-seeking, little empathy, and a absence of guilt (Spain et al., 2013). These Dark Triad traits are hypothesized to be significant predictors of CWB.

Moreover, the study suggests that breaches in the psychological contract can result in decreased employee dedication to the organization (Lambert et al., 2003), compromised integrity, reduced contributions (Silva et al., 2023), and impaired organizational performance (Pate, 2006).

H1a: *There is a significant association among PT and CWB.*

H1b: *There is a significant association among DT and CWB.*

Relationship Between Organizational Factors and CWB

The study aims to explore various organizational determinants related to organizational injustice (OI) (De Clercq et al., 2021) and abusive supervision (AS) (Rahim et al., 2023; Low et al., 2021) within the context of CWB. These organizational factors are considered predictive of CWB (Thair et al., 2018), representing dynamic and emerging research issues. One of the factors being investigated is organizational injustice, defined as an employee's assessment of the honest and ethical status of their manager's practices (Cropanzana et al., 2007). Notably, perceived OI has been linked to increased CWB among employees (Abdi et al., 2016). Furthermore, individuals who perceive organizational injustice in the workplace may engage in CWB to seek justice for themselves.

The second organizational factor under consideration is abusive supervision (AS). AS is considered a form of CWB (Malik et al., 2021) and a critical research area (Malisetty & Kumari, 2016). AS is related to factors of organizational deviance that can undermine organizational outcome (Rahim et al., 2023). The study of AS is essential because even minor acts in the workplace can potentially escalate to workplace violence (Younus et al., 2020). Some forms of AS within CWB, such as aggression, shouting, and violence (Schaubroeck et al., 2016)

The study draws support from social exchange theory (SET), suggesting that the reaction to AS can lead to engagement in CWB (Ahmad et al., 2023). Additionally, concepts of reciprocal CWB are rooted in social learning theory.

H2a: *There is a positive association among AS and CWB*

H2b: *There is a positive association among OI and CWB*

Moderating Effect of TL on the Association among Individual Factors and CWB

This study explores the importance of leadership strategies in addressing organizational issues and challenges, a notion supported by existing literature (Iqbal et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2022). Specifically, it investigates the significance of leaders' strategies in shaping leadership effectiveness. Among various leadership styles, Transformational Leadership (TL) stands out as a type characterized by ethical principles and noble intentions of leaders (Pradhan & Pradhan, 2014). TL is distinct from other leadership styles due to its moral influence on followers, setting it apart from traditional leadership approaches (Baharom et al., 2017; Iqbal et al., 2018). TL fosters higher morality and values in leaders and followers (Pradhan & Pradhan, 2014). Bass (1985) substantiates.

TL is recognized as an ethical leadership style (Treviño et al., 2000). TL can substantially change individuals' lives, organizational norms, standards, and culture while profoundly influencing followers (Pradhan & Pradhan, 2014). TL can reshape individuals' perceptions, values, and aspirations within the organization (Burns, 1978). Additionally, TL is instrumental in modifying and refining employee behavior (Hystad et al., 2014).

H3a: *There is a moderating effect TL between PT and CWB*

H3b: *There is a moderating effect TL between DT and CWB*

Moderating Effect of TL on the Association Among Organizational Factors and CWB

Based on the current body of research, it is expected that there exists a moderate positive association between TL key and organizational factors like OI and AS, and how these factors collectively influence the occurrence of Counterproductive Work Behavior (CWB). Researchers commonly observe that CWB often occurs due to the

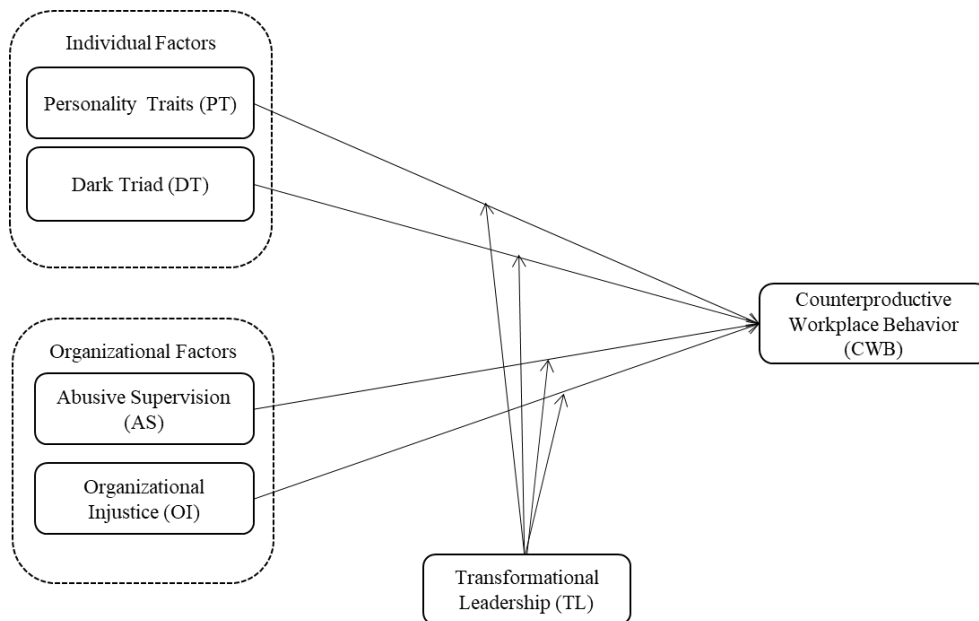
absence of ethical leadership within organizations (Iqbal et al., 2017). Subordinate employees tend to emulate the behavior of their boss (Baharom et al., 2018). When leaders engage in aberrant acts, they may inadvertently encourage their subordinate employees to engage in similar negative behaviors

It is common practice for subordinate employees to observe their leaders' or supervisors' ethical judgments and actions and replicate their behavior, even if it involves unethical actions (Appelbaum et al., 2007). TL can reshape individuals' perceptions, values, and aspirations within the organization (Burn, 1978).

H4a: *There is a moderating effect of TL among AS and CWB.*

H4b: *There is a moderating effect of TL among OI and CWB.*

Theoretical Framework



Methodology/Data Collection Measurement

The current study has focused on a targeted population of 20 public sector organizations in Pakistan. Regrettably, Pakistan, a developing country, has grappled with the serious issue of CWB among employees in public organizations (Li et al., 2020). So, this study will help researchers to understand the reasons behind CWB. For this purpose, a self-administered questionnaire was used. The study focused on a targeted population consisting of 20 public sector organizations in Pakistan.

The current study has collected data using a quantitative instrument. The questionnaire was adopted from prior studies, and details of all the scales are listed in Table 1 below.

Table No. 1 Research Instruments

scale	Author	Year	Items
Counterproductive Work Behavior (CWB)	Spector et al	2006	76
Personality Traits (PT)	John and Srivastava	1999	44
Dark Triad (DT)	Paulhus and Jones	2011	27
Organizational Injustice (OI)	Hodson et al.	1994	4
Abusive Supervision (AS)	Tepper	2000	15
Transformational Leadership (TL)	Bass and Avolio	1995	20

For data analysis, the researchers employed the SPSS along with SEM, as recommended by Hair et al. (2013).

Findings of the Study

Table No. 2 Descriptive Statistics

Variables	Mean	S. D	Skewness
CWB	3.80	0.222	-.489
PT	3.27	1.023	-.618
DT	3.18	0.916	-.266
OI	3.09	0.721	-.213
AS	3.00	0.538	-.879
TL	3.03	0.770	-.648

Table No. 2 displays the descriptive stats for the data, the mean values for the variables in the table range from 3.16 to 3.27. The SD values, which indicate the dispersion or variability of the data, fall within the range of 0.91 to 1.03. Additionally, the skewness values, which provide insights into the data distribution, are all within the range of -1 to +1.

Table No. 3

Model Fitness Measures

	CMIN/DF	GFI	CFI	RMSEA	IFI
Model 1	2.207	0.964	0.996	.048	0.943

Table 3 presents the fit indices for this research. All of these results fall within the accepted range of fit indices. For example, the RMSEA, which should ideally be below 0.08, is 0.04 in this research. These findings indicate that the measurement model is well-suited and dependable for this study.

Table No. 4 Psychometric Properties

Constru cts	A	CR	AV E	MaxR(H)	PT	DT	OI	AS	CWB	TL
PT	0.901	0.888	0.58	0.901	0.76					
			6		9					
DT	0.881	0.855	0.54	0.945	0.23	0.729				
			2		2					
O I	0.889	0.891	0.54	0.903	0.43	0.345	0.65			
			6		5		5			
AS	0.801	0.768	0.59	0.801	0.35	0.455	0.33	0.71		
			6		5		1	3		
CWB	0.844	0.816	0.58	0.971	0.35	0.544	0.52	0.44	0.691	
			4		1		3	1		
TL	0.889	0.911	0.56	0.963	0.35	0.487	0.55	0.58	0.554	0.545
			3		7		2	7		

The results in Table No. 4 demonstrate that the measurement model exhibits psychometric solid properties. The Composite Reliability values exceed 0.8, indicating reliability. The AVE values are more significant than 0.5, indicating convergent validity. Additionally, Alpha values are above 0.7, showing internal consistency reliability. These findings collectively suggest that the data used in the study is reliable and valid for measuring the constructs under investigation.

Figure 2 illustrates the measurement model, which evaluates individual items related to rehabilitee and assesses various aspects of its measurement quality. Evaluating these properties is essential for ensuring the quality and effectiveness of the measurement instrument used in the study (Henseler et al., 2009).

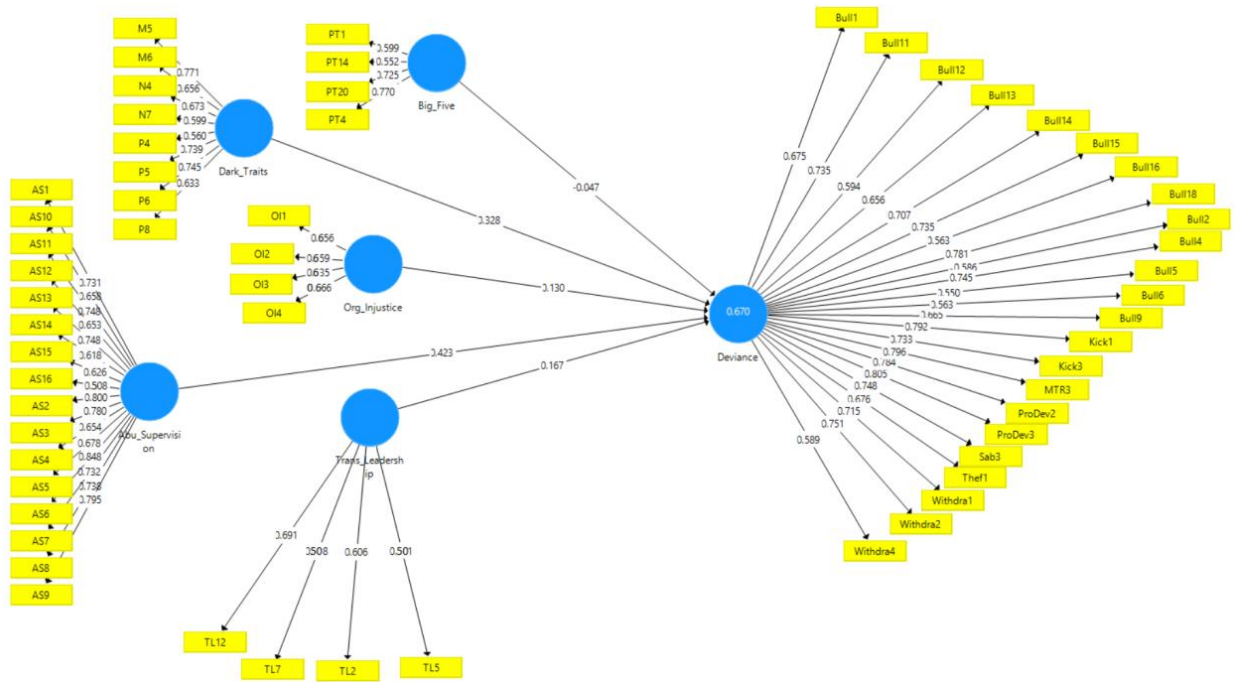


Figure 2

Table No. 5 Structured Equation Modeling

Relationships	Unstandardized β	Standardized β	S.E	C.R	P
PT→CWB	-.242	-.221	.064	3.427	***
DT→CWB	.122	.104	.082	-.189	**
AS→CWB	.161	.153	.090	.072	**
OI→CWB	.312	.294	.173	2.017	***

Table No. 5 The results specify that PT has a negative outcome on CWB, leading to a decrease of 22% in this behavior and DT has a positive outcome on CWB, increasing it by 10%. These findings provide valuable insights into the relationships between PT and CWB. It shows that specific PT can influence the likelihood of engaging in deviant or counterproductive behaviors at work. The result also

indicates that OI and AS have a significant impact on increasing CWB by 29% and 16%, respectively. This is supported by the statistical significance of the p-value, which is less than 0.05,

Table No. 6 Moderation Analysis for PT

	Coefficients	SE	T	P	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	2.011	0.061	54.42	0.001	3.469	3.691
TL						
CWB						
Int_1	0.0621	0.049	3.12	0.026	-0.175	0.031

Table No. 6 indicates that TL plays a moderating role in the connection among PT and CWB. That means that TL amplifies the relationship and enhances or accelerates the impact of PT on CWB by 6%.

Table No. 7 Moderation Analysis for DT

	Coefficients	SE	T	P	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	2.22	0.132	523.048	0.0002	2.12	4.10
TL						
CWB						
Int_1	- .093	0.141	3.611	0.0012	-0.05	2.05

Table No. 7 indicates a moderation effect of 9%. This means that TL reduces or mitigates the impact of Dark Personality Traits on CWB by 9%. These findings suggest that TL has a significant moderating influence on how Dark Personality Traits relate to CWB.

Table No. 8 Moderation Analysis for OI

	Coefficients	SE	T	P	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	3.523	0.082	35.41	0.00	3.02	4.021
TL						
CWB						
Int_1	-.0893	0.072	-2.23	0.076	1.04	1.40

Table no. 8 described that TL does not appear to significantly influence or change the relationship between OI and the CWB because the p-value is greater than .05

Table No. 09 Moderation Analysis for AS

	Coefficients	SE	T	P	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	2.231	0.124	56.045	0.000	3.13	4.22
TL						
CWB						
Int_1	-.0641	0.048	3.622	0.0005	-0.09	1.09

Table no.9 indicates a moderation effect of 6%. This means that TL reduces or mitigates the impact of AS on CWB by 6%.

Discussion

The current study initially proposed eight hypotheses, consisting of four direct and four indirect hypotheses, to investigate the moderating effect of TL. After testing the hypotheses, the results showed that H1a and H2b have a positive association among PT and DT on CWB; therefore, these hypotheses are supported and are corroborated by the findings of several authors, Pletzer et al. (2020) and Miao et al. (2023). The testing results also showed that H2a and H2b have a positive association among OI and AS on CWB, so these hypotheses are also supported and aligned with previous studies Song (2022) and Rahim et al. (2023). The result of the H3a and H3b tests of the moderating effect of TL between TL and CWB is supported.

The result of H4a indicates that the moderating effect of TL between AS and CWB was also supported. The test result regarding H4b testing the moderating effect of TL in the association between OI and CWB was not supported, which is in line with previous works by Iqbal et al. (2017) and Wang et al. (2022). Indeed, CWB within organizations is acknowledged as a significant obstacle, necessitating organizations to actively seek solutions for its mitigation. The outcomes of this research carry significance for both theoretical understanding and practical implementation. The following are some notable conclusions: The findings from this study extend their relevance beyond the distinct area of CWB. They have the

potential to enlighten and enhance various aspects of organizational research, offering valuable perspectives into the intricacies of workplace behavior.

Conclusion and Future Directions

In conclusion, the current research has provided a meaningful addition to the established pool of knowledge concerning the influence of individual and organizational factors on CWB. Furthermore, it has delved into the moderating role of TL on the association between these variables. Despite some limitations, the study's findings are consistent with its theoretical underpinnings, primary objectives, and research questions.

While prior investigations have explored the antecedents of CWB, this study has addressed a theoretical gap by introducing TL as a moderating variable within the connection between individual factors and CWB. This research has expanded the domain of SET, by investigating the impact of individual and organizational factors on CWB. The practical significance of this research is paramount, providing valuable guidance to institutional leaders, managers, and organizations for addressing and mitigating CWB. Despite its inherent limitations, this study is a foundational stepping stone for future research directions and offers invaluable insights for enhancing workplace dynamics and cultivating more positive organizational environments.

Undoubtedly, there exist multiple potential directions for future research that can build upon the findings and limitations of the current study. Subsequent researchers might use different moderator as dark leadership. While current study primarily focused on a specific set of organizations, including universities, boards, and authorities, forthcoming research could broaden its scope by investigating deviant behavior in diverse organizational types or across various departments within organizations.

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