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# An Examination of Predictors of Counterproductive Work Behaviors: Personality Traits and Transformational Leadership

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# AN EXAMINATION OF PREDICTORS OF COUNTERPRODUCTIVE WORK BEHAVIORS: PERSONALITY TRAITS AND TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

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ABSTRACT

AN EXAMINATION OF PREDICTORS OF COUNTERPRODUCTIVE WORK BEHAVIORS: PERSONALITY TRAITS AND TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

by Edward Hsi

Counterproductive work behavior (CWB) has constantly been a problem in companies, with research showing that the phenomenon is costly both monetarily to organizations and psychologically to their employees. However, there are many antecedents of CWB, including individual factors and situation factors, that have been found to reduce such behaviors. The present study examined both individual (i.e., personality) and situational factors (i.e., transformational leadership) in predicting CWBs directed at both individuals and organizations. Specifically, this study examined whether three personality traits (i.e., agreeableness, neuroticism and conscientiousness) and transformational leadership would predict CWBs, and whether transformational leadership would predict CWBs above and beyond these three personality traits. A total of 115 individuals working in a variety of industries participated in an online survey. Results showed that although agreeableness and conscientiousness predicted CWB directed at the organization, transformational leadership was able to predict CWBs directed toward organizations as well as individuals above and beyond the personality traits. These findings suggest that in order to mitigate CWBs, organizations should implement transformational leadership training programs rather than rely on personality-based selection methods.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

## Introduction

Counterproductive work behaviors (CWBs), which are defined as employee behaviors that hinder the legitimate interests of an organization (Sackett, Berry, Wiemann, & Laczo, 2006), have been extensively researched due to their prevalence, costs, and consequences to organizations. For example, Holcom, Lehman, and Simpson (1994) reported that almost 25% of employees in their sample knew about drug abuse among their coworkers. According to Bennett and Robinson (2000), 15% of their sample admitted that they had stolen from their employer at least once. Furthermore, the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners (ACFE) estimated that global businesses suffered annual losses of $2.9 trillion because of fraudulent activity (Moore, Detert, Klebe Treviño, Baker, & Mayer, 2012). Appelbaum, Iaconi, and Matousek (2007) reported the estimated impact of the widespread theft by employees on the U.S. economy to be $50 billion annually.

Furthermore, Berry, Carpenter, and Barratt (2012) showed that in addition to the substantial expenses, CWBs resulted in negative consequences to employees in organizations. Such consequences include decreased job satisfaction, increased stress, and greater intentions to quit. Given its overwhelming prevalence, monetary losses, and its detrimental consequences on employees, it is no surprise that organizations have been increasingly interested in identifying antecedents of CWB.

Some factors that have been examined as antecedents of CWBs include personality traits, perceived organizational support, transformational leadership, and organizational justice (Berry, Ones, & Sackett, 2007; Chen, Fah, & Jin, 2016; Fox,

Spector, & Miles, 2001; Lehmann-Willenbrock, Meinecke, Rowold, & Kauffeld, 2015). Organizations could explore these factors to reduce CWBs. However, given that individual behaviors are often determined by personality traits and situations that they are in (Lewin, 1940) and that situational factors exert more effects on behaviors than personality traits (Mischel, 1969), it might be more effective to explore situational factors than individual factors. For example, the only way to minimize CWBs via the knowledge of individual factors is through selection of those individuals who are less disposed to engage in CWBs. In contrast, organizations would have a wider variety of options to combat CWBs via knowledge of situational factors such as transformational leadership and organizational support. Furthermore, research has yet to fully examine whether situational factors (i.e., transformational leadership) may predict CWBs beyond individual factors (i.e., personality traits). Therefore, the present study examined the relationship between personality traits, transformational leadership, and CWBs, and whether transformational leadership would predict CWBs above and beyond personality traits. The following sections present the definition and conceptualization of CWBs, and research on the antecedents of CWBs. The rationale for the study and its hypotheses are also presented.

**Definitions and Conceptualization of Counterproductive Work Behaviors**

CWB is traditionally defined as volitional behaviors committed by current employees that harm or are intended to harm the organization or people within the organization (Spector & Fox, 2005). Holligner and Clark (1983) classified deviant

behaviors into production deviance and property deviance. Production deviance is defined as violating norms about how work is to be performed and includes behaviors such as not being on the job as scheduled (e.g., absence, tardiness), or engaging in behaviors that prevent productivity when on the job (e.g., drug and alcohol use). Property deviance is defined as organization-targeted acts and misuse of employer assets and includes behaviors such as theft, property damage, and misuse of discount privileges.

Robinson and Bennett (1995), acknowledging that Hollinger and Clark (1983) failed to include the interpersonal nature of CWBs, categorized CWBs into two dimensions. The first dimension is the target of deviant behaviors (organization vs. individual) and the second dimension is the severity of offenses (minor vs. major). The combination of these two dimensions creates four categories. Property deviance involves serious behaviors directed at the organization and includes behaviors such as theft, sabotage, or vandalism. Production deviance involves minor behaviors directed at the organization and includes behaviors such as taking long breaks and leaving early. Personal aggression involves serious behaviors directed at individuals and includes behaviors such as hitting, fighting, or sexual harassment. Finally, political deviance involves minor behaviors targeted at individuals and includes behaviors such as showing favoritism, gossiping, and blaming others.

More recently, Spector, Fox, Penney, Bruursema, Goh, and Kessler (2006) argued that the relationships of potential antecedents with specific forms of CWBs might be obscured if these CWBs were categorized in only one or two overall dimensions. As

a result, they categorized CWBs into five dimensions, including abuse, production deviance, sabotage, theft, and withdrawal. Abuse is defined as behaviors directed toward coworkers and others that inflict harm either physically or psychologically such as making threats and nasty comments, ignoring a person, or undermining a person's ability to work effectively. Production deviance is the purposeful failure to perform job tasks effectively the way they are supposed to be performed. This definition is the same as that of Robinson and Bennett (2000), with the exception that withdrawal was separated into a distinct category. Some examples of production deviance are purposely failing to complete tasks correctly or working slow when things need to be done quickly. Withdrawal consists of behaviors that hinder the adequate amount of working time required by organizations and includes behaviors such as being absent, arriving late or leaving early, and taking longer breaks. Sabotage is defacing or destroying physical property belonging to the employer. Employee theft is defined as employees taking things not belonging to them from an organization (Spector et al., 2006).

Although there are many conceptualization of CWBs, Robinson and Bennett's conceptualization (1995) has been used most widely. Therefore, the present study used their model in studying CWBs and differentiated CWBs into those targeted toward individuals (CWB-I) and those targeted toward organizations (CWB-O). As mentioned earlier, there are various factors that have been researched as antecedents of CWBs. Essentially, they fall into two main categories; individual and situational. Individual antecedents are people's inherent characteristics that may influence their

behavior and include factors such as demographic variables and personality traits. In contrast, situational antecedents are factors that come from external means such as the environment and include factors such as organizational justice, transformational leadership, and perceived organizational support.

**Individual Antecedents of CWBs**

Demographic variables have been researched as antecedents of CWBs. However, they do not seem to be related to CWBs. For example, Berry et al. (2007) conducted a meta-analysis on the relationship between demographic variables (i.e., age, gender, tenure, and work experience) and CWBs, which were separated into individual deviant behaviors and organizational deviant behaviors. Results showed that except for work experience, there were little to no relationships between these demographic variables and these two forms of deviant behaviors. Work experience was negatively related to both individual deviance behaviors and organizational deviance behaviors such that the more work experience employees had, the less likely they engaged in both individual and organizational deviant behaviors.

However, several personality traits have been shown to be related to CWBs. According to Spector (2010), personality traits affect people's perceptions and appraisal of the environment, their attributions for causes of events, their emotional responses, and their ability to inhibit aggressive and counterproductive impulses. It is likely that individuals make conscious choices about whether or not to engage in counterproductive behaviors. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that individuals with certain personality traits are predisposed to engage in CWBs. However, it

should be kept in mind that although relationships between personality traits and CWB have been established in many studies, it is still not entirely clear about the underlying mechanisms for such relationships (Spector, 2010).

Hough and Dilchert (2010) argue that the Big Five personality model has been the most widely used model for conceptualizing personality in work settings. Among these five personality traits, three traits have been shown to be related to CWBs: agreeableness, neuroticism, and conscientiousness (Berry et al., 2007). Therefore, the current study focused on these personality traits and the description of these traits are as follows.

**Agreeableness**. Agreeableness is a tendency to be compassionate and cooperative rather than to be suspicious and antagonistic towards others (Kozako, Safin, & Rahim, 2013). Kohnstamm, Halverson, Mervielde, and Havill *(*1998) further defined agreeableness as the ability to inhibit disagreeable tendencies. It has also been shown that agreeableness is linked to sensitivity to internal, external, and affective perception (Rothbart, Chew, & Gartstein, 2001). As a result of their enhanced ability to perceive emotions, those high on agreeableness are more sensitive to the needs and perspectives of others. Thus, it is reasonable to assume that those high in agreeableness are less likely to demonstrate CWBs, especially CWB-I.

In Study 1, Scherer, Baysinger, Zolynsky, and LeBreton (2013) examined whether agreeableness predicted intentions to engage in CWB in an individual context where participants in their sample each completed self-report surveys regarding agreeableness and CWB. In Study 2, which occurred several weeks later,

they extended Study 1 by examining how agreeableness would predict reports of actual deviant behavior in a group context. Participants completed two lab-based group decision-making tasks in groups of three to five members that required interpersonal communication, cooperation, and problem solving Within the context of these group interactions, participants had the opportunity to engage in CWBs. After the task, participants completed measures of group cohesion, commitment, and interaction processes, which included negative socio-emotional behaviors, a form of interpersonal CWB that negatively affects interpersonal relationships and task-related interpersonal interaction. In both studies, agreeableness was found to have a negative relationship with CWB.

Furthermore, both Hough, Eaton, Dunnette, Kamp, and McCloy (1990) and Salgado (2002) found that agreeableness had a negative relationship with CWB, indicating that individuals high in agreeableness were less likely to exhibit CWBs. Moreover, Kozako et al. (2013) found that agreeableness had a negative relationship with CWB-O and CWB-I, which indicated that employees high in agreeableness were less likely to demonstrate counterproductive behaviors directed toward both organizations and individuals. However, several researchers (e.g., Berry et al., 2007; Berry et al., 2012; Bolton, 2010) showed that agreeableness was more strongly related to interpersonal deviant behaviors than to organizational deviant behaviors. These results indicate that individuals high in agreeableness are less likely to engage in counterproductive behaviors directed at individuals than at organization. These

results make sense because agreeableness is a more interpersonally-oriented trait. Thus, the following hypothesis was tested.

Hypothesis 1: Agreeableness will predict CWB-I more than CWB-O.

**Neuroticism.** Neuroticism is the personality trait which is related to people's emotional stability and their tendency to experience negative emotions (Kozako et al., 2013). It can be characterized by traits including self-consciousness, tenseness, and impulsiveness. According to Eysenck and Eysenck's (1967) theory of personality, neuroticism is interlinked with low tolerance for stress or for aversive stimuli. This is due to the tendency for neurotic persons to arouse quickly when stimulated and to inhibit emotions slowly (Eysenck, Eysenck, & Barrett, 1985). As a result, individuals high in neuroticism may have an amplified aversive reaction to otherwise minor frustrations that those low in neuroticism may be able to cope with easily. Thus, these problems in emotional regulation are likely to cause those high in neuroticism to have a diminished ability to think clearly, make logical decisions, and effectively cope with stress. These can lead those high in neuroticism to complain, act impulsively, and have lower levels of well-being and lower quality of social relationships (Ozer & Benet-Martinez, 2006). Due to this, it is reasonable to assume that those high in neuroticism are more likely to demonstrate CWBs.

Consistent with this argument, several researchers (e.g., Berry et al., 2007; Berry et al., 2012; Bolton, 2010) showed that there was a positive relationship between neuroticism and CWB. Furthermore, Salgado (2002) found positive relationships of neuroticism with some specific CWBs such as absenteeism and accidents. This

makes sense because neurotic individuals are more easily overwhelmed with aversive stimuli. As a result, they would be more prone to exhaustion which when coupled with impulsiveness and lower quality of social relationships, may cause them to engage in CWBs. Thus, the following hypothesis was tested.

Hypothesis 2: Neuroticism will predict both CWB-I and CWB-O.

**Conscientiousness**. Conscientiousness is a tendency to show self-discipline and aim for achievement above expectations, comprising characteristics associated with self-regulation such as a preference for planned rather than spontaneous behavior (Rothbart & Ahadi, 1994). The aspects of personality that characterize conscientiousness include achievement orientation, cautiousness, self control, dependability, order, and responsibility (Roberts, Chernyshenko, Stark, & Goldberg, 2005). Mount, Ilies, and Johnson (2006) reasoned that dependability was associated with the tendency to follow rules and conform to the norms of the organization which are relevant aspects of CWB-O. Furthermore, traits associated with achievement orientation are also relevant to CWB-O because they pertain to the willingness to exert effort. Due to the fact that CWB-Os include behaviors that are negatively related to exerting effort (i.e., withholding effort, neglecting duties), Mount et al. (2006) suggested that people low in conscientiousness would engage in more CWB-Os because they have a tendency not to follow rules, neglect their duties, and withhold effort. Thus, it is reasonable to assume that conscientious individuals are less likely to engage in CWBs, in particular CWB-Os.

Consistent with this argument, Hough (1992) and Salgado (2002) found that conscientiousness had a negative relationship with CWBs. That is, those who were high in conscientiousness were less likely to exhibit CWBs. Scherer et al. (2013) also showed that conscientiousness had a negative association with CWB in a team context. Furthermore, Bolton, Becker, and Barber (2010) found that conscientiousness was more negatively related to organizationally-directed CWBs than individually-directed CWBs among 234 employees in a large U.S city. It was shown that lower conscientiousness predicted more workplace sabotage and withdrawal. This study is also consistent with the results of Berry et al. (2007) who found that conscientiousness was more strongly related to CWB-O than CWB-I. These findings make sense because of the more impersonal nature of conscientiousness (Lee, Ashton, & Shin, 2005). Thus, the following hypothesis was tested.

Hypothesis 3: Conscientiousness will predict CWB-O more than CWB-I.

**Situational Antecedents of CWBs**

Situational antecedents are factors that come from external means such as the environment. The workplace environment consists of both the physical environment and the social or organizational context. In most voluntary work behavior theories, when people are faced with an undesirable condition, they engage in cognitive appraisal and evaluate the situation. Finally, they will decide whether or not to commit in some form of CWB (Spector and Fox, 2005). Several situational factors have been shown to have relationships with CWBs. These include perceived

organizational support, organizational justice, and transformational leadership (e.g., Chen et al., 2016; Fox et al., 2001).

**Perceived organizational support**. Perceived organizational support is referred to as employees' general belief that their organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Based on social exchange theory, where two parties feel obligated to behave in ways that maintain the balance of the exchange relationship (Blau, 1964), perceived organizational support invokes the norm of reciprocity and produces a felt obligation to repay. Thus, when individuals perceive that their organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being, they are likely to reciprocate such favorable treatment with positive attitudes or behaviors (e.g., affective organizational commitment, extra-role behaviors) and are less likely to engage in behaviors that harm the organization.

Chen et al. (2016) conducted a study to examine the relationship between perceived organizational support and workplace deviance. Questionnaires regarding perceived organizational support and workplace deviance, specifically, interpersonal deviance and organizational deviance, were distributed to 346 volunteers belonging to one of the Malaysian emergency relief centers. Results showed that perceived organizational support had a negative relationship with both interpersonal and organizational deviant behaviors.

**Organizational justice**. Another antecedent of CWB is organizational justice, which is defined as the extent to which individuals perceive that they are treated fairly (Greenberg, 1987). Fox et al. (2001) examined CWBs in response to organizational

justice. They argued that individuals would monitor and appraise events in the environment, and certain events that are seen as threats to their well-being are referred to as job stressors. In this instance, organizational injustice – individuals feel that they are not treated with respect and dignity – befits the definition of a job stressor. According to them, stress from organizational injustice may then lead to behavioral strain which is manifested in the form of CWB. Consistent with their argument, results showed that organizational justice was related to CWBs and it was more strongly associated with organizational than personal types of CWBs.

**Transformational leadership**. Transformational leadership behaviors have been found to be associated with many positive outcomes (e.g., work unit effectiveness, follower satisfaction, extra-role behaviors) (Lowe, Kroeck, & Sivasubramaniam, 1996). In addition, according to Organ, Podsakoff, and MacKenzie (2005), transformational leadership facilitates cooperation among followers and motivates them to work together toward superordinate goals. Furthermore, Burns (1978) stated that a meaningful and constructive relationship between the leader and the follower would help in developing moral values with the follower which would guide him or her during ethical dilemmas.

However, transformational leadership has not been as extensively researched in relation to CWBs as the other situational variables such as perceived organizational support and organizational justice. Although previous studies have shown many positive associations with transformational leadership and discussed its ethical and moral sides, there is still a lack of research elucidating how transformational

leadership behaviors may mitigate CWBs. Thus, in the current study, transformational leadership was examined as an antecedent of CWBs.

Transformational leadership is defined as a process in which leaders and followers help each other advance to a higher level of morale and motivation (Burns 1978). According to Burns (1978), transformational leadership is characterized by four dimensions: *idealized influence*, *inspirational motivation*, *individualized consideration*, and *intellectual stimulation* (Bass & Riggio, 2006). In idealized influence (also known as charisma), transformational leaders present themselves as a captivating role model for their followers, which results in them being admired, respected, and trusted. Thus, followers identify with their leaders and have the desire to emulate them, and leaders are endowed by their followers as possessing exceptional attributes (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

For inspirational motivation, transformational leaders display high levels of enthusiasm and optimism. They utilize these factors to exhibit behavior that may motivate and inspire those around them by providing meaning and challenge to their followers' work, resulting in aroused team spirit. Furthermore, they conjure ideas of attractive future states and create clearly communicated expectations that followers want to meet and demonstrate commitment to their goals and shared vision (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

In intellectual stimulation, by questioning assumptions, reframing problems, and approaching old situations in new ways, transformational leaders exhibit the ability to arouse and encourage innovation, and creativity in their followers. Leaders facilitate

followers' creation of new ideas and solutions to problems, regardless of whether or not they differ from the leaders' ideas. Follower's ideas are not criticized nor is there public criticism for their mistakes (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Finally, in individualized consideration, transformational leaders recognize that there are individual differences in terms of needs and desires within their followers. Thus, specialized attention is applied to each individual follower's needs for achievement and growth, and the differences in each individual are accepted. Two-way exchange in communication is encouraged and the interaction with each follower is personalized. Although the leader delegates and monitors tasks in order to develop and assess his or her followers, the followers ideally do not feel as if they were being monitored (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

After reviewing literature on transformational leadership, Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, and Fetter (1990) argued that there were six key transformational leadership behaviors. Identifying and articulating a vision is behavior on the part of a leader aimed at identifying new opportunities for his or her unit/division/company, and developing, articulating and inspiring others with his or her vision of the future. Providing an appropriate model is behavior on the part of the leader that sets an example for employees to follow that is consistent with the values the leader espouses. Fostering the acceptance of group goals is behavior on the part of the leader aimed at promoting cooperation among employees and getting them to work together toward a common goal. High performance expectations is that a leader expects excellence, quality, and/or high performance from followers. Providing

individualized support is that a leader respects followers and is concerned about their personal feelings and needs. Intellectual stimulation is that a leader challenges followers to re-examine some of their assumptions about their work and rethink how it can be performed (Podsakoff et al., 1990).

Social learning theory (Bandura, 1973, 1977) can be used to explain the potential relationship between transformational leadership and CWBs (e.g., Mayer et al., 2009; Neubert et al., 2008; Pearson & Porath, 2004). Social learning theory posits that people learn through observation, imitation, and modeling of others in order to understand the acceptable forms of behaviors in a given context and utilize it as a guide for action. Furthermore, individuals will pay particularly closer attention to the behavior of people with whom they interact with frequently, possess interpersonal attraction and who have higher status or hold positions of power (Bandura, 1973, 1971). Thus, in organizational settings, direct supervisors represent the most potent models for acceptable behavior (Mayer et al.; Neubert et al.).

It is essential to note that social learning theory posits that while many emotional responses are learned through direct experience much human learning occurs through vicarious conditioning (Bandura, 1973). This implies that a supervisor's treatment of an employee may shape the behavior of other employees in work settings.

To put this into perspective, for example, supervisors who are cold, selfish, and disrespectful (i.e., low in providing individualized support) signal that it is acceptable to be selfish and treat others in an inconsiderate manner. Supervisors who are unmotivated and unenthusiastic (i.e., low in identifying and articulating a vision)

signal that it is acceptable to slack off and put minimal effort into their work. Supervisors who are close-minded (i.e., low in intellectual stimulation) signal that it is acceptable to unwillingly take other's ideas into consideration. Supervisors who are hypocritical (i.e., low in providing an appropriate model) cannot set an example for employees to follow, as they show that they cannot even follow their own personal values. Supervisors who are secretive and distant (i.e., low in fostering the acceptance of group goal) signal that cooperation and team work among employees is unnecessary. Supervisors who have low expectations on their subordinates (i.e., low in high performance expectations) demonstrate that high performance is not the norm and mediocre performance is acceptable. On the other hand, supervisors who are motivated, enthusiastic, open-minded, encouraging, have high expectations on their followers, encourages team work, and protect the welfare of their employees model positive behaviors that help limit employees to engage in CWB. As a result, the followers of transformational leaders are less likely to engage in CWBs.

There is indirect evidence that transformational leadership is negatively related to CWBs. For example, Lehmann-Willenbrock et al. (2015) conducted a study in which they focused on leader-follower communication dynamics during team interactions to discover why transformational leadership could foster team functioning. Specifically, this study coded transformational leadership style and verbal behavioral interactions of leaders and team members over the course of the team's meetings. Results showed a direct negative link between transformational leadership and team members' counterproductive communication. That is, the more transformational leaders were,

the less team members displayed counterproductive communications such as running off topic, criticizing others, and complaining. Furthermore, this study also explored moment-to-moment behavioral dynamics between leaders and their followers. Results showed that solution-focused statements by transformational leaders inhibited subsequent counterproductive behaviors by their followers. These results show that transformational leaders have the power to set the tone in group interactions and consequently, the followers are less likely to engage in behaviors that prevent teams from functioning effectively (Lehmann-Willenbrock et al., 2015).

Thus, given social learning theory and empirical evidence that transformational leadership is negatively related to counterproductive communication and behavior at both organizational and individual levels among subordinates in a team (Lehmann-Willenbrock et al., 2015), transformational leadership is expected to predict counterproductive work behaviors at both the individual and organizational level. Hypothesis 4: Transformational leadership will predict both CWB-I and CWB-O.

Lastly, transformational leadership predicting CWBs above and beyond personality traits could also be expected due to social learning theory (Bandura, 1973, 1977). Employees, despite differences in their personality traits, could still be affected by social learning theory. For example, the inspirational and developmental nature of transformational leadership might offset followers' neuroticism (Guay & Choi, 2015) and enforce extraversion and conscientiousness. The inspirational vision that transformational leaders present to their followers

motivates them to push beyond their comfort zones which may prove to influence the followers' personality traits over time.

Furthermore, the examination of whether transformational leadership might predict CWB-I and CWB-O above and beyond the three personality traits (i.e., conscientiousness, neuroticism, agreeableness) may be important to organizations. If transformational leadership predicts CWBs above and beyond the three personality traits, companies could train managers to become transformational leaders, rather than relying on selecting individuals predisposed not to engage in CWBs, in order to minimize the occurrence of CWBs. However, to date, no study has examined whether transformational leadership predicts CWB-I and CWB-O above and beyond the Big Five personality traits. Thus, the following hypothesis was tested.

Hypothesis 5: Transformational leadership style will predict CWB-I and CWB-O above and beyond neuroticism, agreeableness, and conscientiousness of the Big Five personality traits.

**Purpose of the Current Study**

The purpose of this study was twofold: whether three personality traits (i.e., agreeableness, neuroticism and conscientiousness) and transformational leadership would predict CWBs, and whether transformational leadership would predict CWBs above and beyond these three personality traits. This study contributes to the existing literature in several ways. First, although there has been ample research on the relationship between personality traits and CWBs and research on other situational variables and CWBs, transformational leadership has not received much research

attention as a predictor of CWBs. Furthermore, there has been little to no research examining both personality traits and transformational leadership in relation to CWBs in a single study, in particular, whether transformational leadership has predictive ability above and beyond that of personality traits. This examination is important because a situational antecedent, such as transformational leadership, can be more easily utilized and implemented than individual antecedents such as personality traits to reduce CWBs.

## Method

### Participants

A total of 142 individuals participated in the study. However, 27 participants were eliminated from further analyses due to not meeting the requirement of having current work experience, working under a supervisor, or because they had a large amount of missing data. Thus, the final sample consisted of 115 participants.

Table 1

*Demographic Information of Participants (n = 115)*

| Variables | *n* | *%* |
|---|---|---|
| Ethnicity | | |
| Asian | 78 | 78.8% |
| Black/African American | 2 | 2.0% |
| Hispanic/Latino | 1 | 1.0% |
| White/Caucasian | 12 | 12.1% |
| Other | 6 | 6.1% |
| Gender | | |
| Male | 46 | 46.5% |
| Female | 53 | 53.5% |
| Employment status | | |
| Full-time | 68 | 66.7% |
| Part-time | 20 | 19.6% |
| Intern | 7 | 6.9% |
| Contractor | 3 | 3.0% |
| Years working with company | | |
| Less than 1 year | 36 | 36.7% |
| 1-2 years | 35 | 35.7% |
| 2-4 years | 18 | 18.4% |
| 4-5 years | 5 | 5.1% |
| 5-10 years | 3 | 3.1% |
| 10+ years | 1 | 1.0% |
| Role type | | |
| Individual contributor | 62 | 62.2% |
| Manager/Supervisor | 18 | 18.4% |
| Officer/Director | 13 | 13.3% |
| Other | 6 | 6.1% |

Table 1 displays the demographic information of the sample. Participants' ages ranged from 18 years to 54 years with an average age of 26.2 years (*SD* = 5.67). More than half of the participants identified themselves as Asian (78.8%), followed by White/Caucasian (12.1%), 'Other' (6.1%), Black/African American (2%), and

Hispanic/Latino (1%). The sample consisted of 46.5% males and 53.5% females. The majority of participants worked full-time (66.7%). In terms of years spent with their current company, most of the participants had a short organizational tenure; 72.4% reported that they had been with their current company for less than 2 years, followed by 18.4% reporting 2-4 years, 5.1% reporting 4-5 years, 3.1% reporting 5-10 years, and 1.0% more than 10 years. Additionally, most participants (62.2%) worked as individual contributors at their company, followed by being a manager/supervisor (18.4%), officer/director (13.3%), and 'other' (6.1%).

**Procedure**

An online survey hosted on Qualtrics® was used to collect data. The survey link and an introductory email that included the title and brief description of the study were sent to the my personal and professional contacts through e-mail, Facebook® and LinkedIn®.

When participants clicked the link, they were shown the consent form in which they were informed about the purpose of the present study. Participants were also informed of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses and were told that they had the right to refuse to participate in the entire study or any part of the study without any negative consequences. In order to continue the survey, participants had to consent to participate by selecting the corresponding button. If participants did not consent to participate, they were directed to a 'thank you' page and their questionnaire ended. If the participants consented, the survey asked them a qualifying question that assessed if they were employed at an organization and

worked under a supervisor at the time of data collection. If participants selected 'no,' they were thanked for their participation and the survey ended. If participants responded with a 'yes,' they were directed to complete the rest of the survey. The survey asked participants to respond to questions regarding their supervisor's leadership style, their personality traits, and their counterproductive work behaviors. Participants then filled out demographic information. Once participants had completed all items on the survey, they were thanked via an automated message for their participation.

**Measures**

The variables listed below were measured using a 5-point Likert scale. Response categories for all the scales, with the exception of the scale used to measure personality traits, ranged from 1 (*Not at all*) to 5 (*Frequently, if not always*). Response categories for personality traits ranged from 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 5 (*Strongly Agree*).

**Conscientiousness**. Conscientiousness was measured with the Big Five Inventory, which was developed by John and Srivastava (1999). Although this scale originally contained 44 items measuring five personality traits (openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism), I only used five items pertaining to conscientiousness. The items measured the degree to which individuals were careful, thorough and vigilant. Participants indicated the degree to which they agreed with each statement. Examples of items include "I am a reliable worker" and "I do a thorough job." Items were averaged to create a

composite score. Higher scores indicated that participants were more conscientious. Cronbach's alpha was .89, showing high reliability.

**Agreeableness**. Agreeableness was measured with five items from the Big Five Inventory (John & Srivastava, 1999). The items measured the degree to which individuals were kind, sympathetic, and considerate. Participants indicated the degree to which they agreed with each statement. Examples of items include "I am helpful and unselfish with others" and " I am generally trusting." Items were averaged to create a composite score. Higher scores indicated that participants were more agreeable. Cronbach's alpha was .87, indicating high reliability.

**Neuroticism**. Neuroticism was measured with five items from the Big Five Inventory (John & Srivastava, 1999). The items measured the degree to which individuals were anxious, fearful, and depressed. Participants indicated the degree to which they agreed with each statement. Examples of items include "I can be tense" and "I worry a lot." Items were averaged to create a composite score. Higher scores indicated that participants were more neurotic. Cronbach's alpha was .86, indicating high reliability.

**Transformational leadership**. Transformational leadership was measured with a 20-item scale developed by Podsakoff et al. (1990). The items represented six key behaviors associated with transformational leaders: identifying and articulating a vision, providing an appropriate model, fostering the acceptance of group goals, expecting high performance, providing individualized support, and providing intellectual stimulation.

Table 2

*Results of Exploratory Factor Analysis for Transformational Leadership Items (N = 115)*

| | Factor Loadings | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Item | Articulating a vision and Providing an appropriate model | Providing intellectual stimulation | Giving individualized support | Setting expectations of high performance | Fostering acceptance of group goals | Giving individualized support |
| 1. Has a clear understading of where we are going. | .49 | | .46 | | | |
| 2. Paints an interesting picture of the future for our group | .40 | | .60 | | | |
| 3. Inspires others with his/her plans for the future. | .51 | | .49 | | | |
| 4. Is able to get others committed to his/her dream. | .61 | | .54 | | | |
| 5. Leads by "doing," rather than simply by "telling." | .79 | | | | | |
| 6. Provides a good model for me to follow. | .71 | | | | | |
| 7. Leads by example. | .67 | | | | | |
| 8. Encourages employees to be "team players." | | | | | .80 | |
| 9. Gets the group to work together for the same goal. | .52 | | | | .61 | |
| 10. Develops a team attitude and spirit among employee | .54 | | | | .58 | |
| 11. Shows us that he/she expects a lot from us. | | | | .82 | | |
| 12. Insists on only the best performance. | | | | .85 | | |
| 13. Will not settle for second best. | | | | .78 | | |
| 14. Acts without considering my feelings. | | | | | | .91 |
| 15. Shows respect for my personal feelings. | | | .75 | | | |
| 16. Behaves in a manner thoughtful of my personal needs. | | | .80 | | | |
| 17. Challenges me to think about old problems in new ways. | | .67 | | | | |
| 18. Asks questions that prompt me to think. | | .75 | | | | |
| 19. Has stimulated me to rethink the way I do things. | | .83 | | | | |
| 20. Has ideas that have challenged me to re-examine some of the basic assumptions about my work. | | .75 | | | | |
| Eigenvalues | 10.80 | 2.06 | 1.14 | .86 | .72 | .66 |
| % of variance | 18.77 | 16.33 | 15.87 | 13.88 | 10.75 | 5.64 |

*Note. Factor loadings over .40 appear in bold.*

A principal components analysis with varimax rotation was conducted to verify the number of factors within this scale. The number of factors was forced to be six. The extraction of the six factors accounted for 81.24% of the total variance. Table 2 provides the percentage of variance accounted for by each factor.

Most of the items loaded somewhat on their respective factors. For example, nine items loaded on the first factor. According to Podsakoff et al.'s, (1990) categorization, these items belong to the *providing an appropriate model* and *articulating a vision dimensions*. However, the four items (i.e., "Has a clear understanding of where we are going," "Paints an interesting picture of the future for our group," "Inspires others with his/her plans for the future," and "Is able to get others committed to his/her dream") which were originally categorized as *providing an appropriate model* were cross-loaded on the third factor, which was labeled as *giving individualized support*. Two items (i.e., "Gets the group to work together for the same goal" and "Develops a team attitude e and spirit among employees") that originally categorized as *fostering acceptance of group goals* cross-loaded on the first factor which was labeled as *articulating a vision* and *providing an appropriate model*. Also, one reversed-scored item (item 14) that was originally categorized as *giving individualized support* loaded on its own factor. Although the results of the factor analysis were not identical to those of Podsakoff et al. (1990), the present study kept the original six dimensions.

Participants indicated the degree to which their supervisors exhibited each of these behaviors. Articulating a vision was measured with four items. Sample items

include: “Has a clear understanding of where we are going” and “Paints an interesting picture of the group for our future.” Cronbach’s alpha was .89, indicating high reliability. Providing an appropriate model was measured with three items. Examples of items include “Leads by ‘doing,’ rather than simply by ‘telling’” and “Provides a good model for me to follow.” Cronbach’s alpha was .92, indicating high reliability. Fostering acceptance of group goals was measured with three items. Examples of items include “Gets the group to work together for the same goal” and “Develops a team attitude and spirit among employees.” Cronbach’s alpha was .90, indicating high reliability. Setting expectations of high performance was measured with three items. Examples of items include “Insists on only the best performance” and “Will not settle for second best.” Cronbach’s alpha was .86, indicating high reliability. Giving individualized support was measured with three items. Examples of items include “Shows respect for my personal feelings” and “Behaves in a manner thoughtful of my personal needs.” Cronbach’s alpha was .89, indicating high reliability. Intellectual stimulation was measured with four items. Examples of items include “Asks questions that prompt me to think” and “Has stimulated me to rethink the way I do things.” Cronbach’s alpha was .90, indicating high reliability.

**Counterproductive work behaviors.** Counterproductive work behaviors were measured with a 28-item Measure of Workplace Deviance scale, which was developed by Robinson and Bennett (2000). Although this scale originally contained 28 items, I only used 16 items that represented behaviors associated with organizational deviant behaviors (CWB-O) and interpersonal deviant behaviors

(CWB-I). Participants indicated the degree to which they exhibited each of these behaviors. CWB-O was measured with eight items. Sample items include "I neglected to follow my boss's instructions" and "I intentionally worked slower than I could have worked." CWB-I was measured with eight items. Sample items include "I cursed someone at work" and "I made fun of someone at work." Items were averaged to create a composite score. Higher scores indicated that participants more frequently engaged in counterproductive work behaviors. Cronbach's alpha was .92 for CWB-I and .93 for CWB-O, indicating high reliability on both dimensions.

## Results

### Descriptive Statistics

Table 3 displays the means, standard deviations, Cronbach's alphas, and Pearson correlations for the measured variables. On average, participants reported that they were conscientious ($M$ = 4.11, $SD$ = .72), agreeable ($M$ = 3.99, $SD$ = .81), and somewhat neurotic ($M$ = 3.00, $SD$ = .91). Participants reported that their supervisors sometimes displayed various dimensions of transformational leadership behaviors such as articulating a vision ($M$ = 3.35, $SD$ = 1.01), providing an appropriate model ($M$ = 3.38, $SD$ = 1.20), fostering group goals ($M$ = 3.67, $SD$ = 1.07), having high performance expectations ($M$ = 3.53, $SD$ = 1.08), providing individualized support ($M$ = 3.47, $SD$ = .90), and providing intellectual stimulation ($M$ = 3.24, $SD$ = 1.00). Finally, participants reported that they once in a while

engaged in both organizational counterproductive work behaviors ($M$ = 1.76, $SD$ =.77) and interpersonal counterproductive work behaviors ($M$ = 1.51, $SD$ =.77).

Table 3

*Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations for Personality Traits, Transformational Leadership Behaviors, and Counterproductive Work Behaviors*

| Variables | *M* | *SD* | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Agreeableness | 4 | .81 | (.87) | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2. Conscientiousness | 4.1 | .72 | .59** | (.89) | | | | | | | | | |
| 3. Neuroticism | 3.00 | .91 | -.22* | -.19* | (.86) | | | | | | | | |
| 4. Artciulating a vision | 3. 35 | 1.01 | .17 | .09 | -.05 | (.89) | | | | | | | |
| 5. Provide appropriate model | 3.4 | 1.20 | .23* | .04 | -.18 | .78** | (.92) | | | | | | |
| 6. Foster group goals | 3.7 | 1.07 | .26* | .19 | -.10 | .77** | .76** | (.90) | | | | | |
| 7. High performance | 3.5 | 1.08 | .21* | .14 | .05 | .55** | .42** | .49** | (.86) | | | | |
| 8. Individualized support | 3.5 | 0.9 | .20* | .05 | -.09 | .60** | .63** | .55** | .17 | (.89) | | | |
| 9. Stimulating intellectually | 3.2 | 1.00 | .16 | .06 | .09 | .74** | .66** | .64** | .57** | .47** | (.90) | | |
| 10 CWB-I | 1.5 | .77 | -.14 | -.19 | .08 | -.32** | -.32** | -.28** | -.37** | -.29** | -.31** | (.92) | |
| 11 CWB-O | 1.8 | .77 | -.20* | -.29** | .04 | -.33** | -.29** | -.35** | -.42** | -.24* | -.30** | .76** | (.93) |

Note. * p < .05, ** p < .01

**Pearson Correlations**

As presented in Table 3, agreeableness, conscientiousness and neuroticism were not significantly related to CWB-I ($r$ = -.14, $p$ > .05, $r$ = -.19, $p$ > .05, $r$ = .08, $p$ > .05, respectively). However, conscientiousness and agreeableness were negatively related to CWB-O. That is, those who were higher in agreeableness and conscientiousness were less likely to engage in CWB-O ($r$ = -.20, $p$ < .05, $r$ = -.29, $p$ < .01, respectively). Neuroticism was not significantly related to CWB-O ($r$ = .04, $p$ > .05).

All dimensions of transformational leadership were moderately and negatively related to CWB-I and CWB-O. Specifically, those who had supervisors who articulated a vision more frequently were less likely to engage in CWB-I ($r$ = -.32, $p$ < .01) and CWB-O ($r$ = -.33, $p$ < .01). Those who had supervisors who provided an appropriate model of the organization's values for them more frequently were less likely to engage in CWB-I ($r$ = -.32, $p$ < .01) and CWB-O ($r$ = -.29, $p$ < .01). Those who had supervisors who fostered group goals more frequently were less likely to engage in CWB-I ($r$ = -.28, $p$ < .01) and CWB-O ($r$ = -.35, $p$ < .01). Those who had supervisors who had high performance expectations to them were less likely to engage in CWB-I ($r$ = -.37, $p$ < .01) and CWB-O ($r$ = -.42, $p$ < .01). Those who had supervisors who provided individualized support to them more frequently were less likely to engage in CWB-I ($r$ = -.29, $p$ < .01) and CWB-O ($r$ = -.24, $p$ < .01). Finally, those who had supervisors who provided intellectual stimulation to them more frequently were less likely to engage in CWB-I ($r$ = -.31, $p$ < .01) and CWB-O ($r$ = -.30, $p$ < .01).

Out of the three personality traits, only agreeableness moderately correlated with four out of the six transformational leadership dimensions. Specifically, those participants who were more agreeable were more likely to perceive their supervisors to provide an appropriate model of the organization's values to them ($r$ = .23, $p$ < .05), foster group goals ($r$ =.*26*, $p$ < .05), have high performance expectations for them ($r$ = .21, $p$ < .05), and provide individualized support to them ($r$ = .20, $p$ < .05).

All of the six transformational leadership dimensions except for high performance expectations and individualized support ($r$ = .17, $p$ > .05) were strongly correlated to each other. Articulating a vision and providing an appropriate model of the organizations' values had the strongest relationship ($r$ = .78, $p$ < .01). Finally, CWB-I and CWB-O were strongly correlated with each other ($r$ = .76, $p$ < .01). That is, the more often participants engaged in CWB-Is, the more often they engaged in CWB-Os.

**Testing of Hypotheses**

Hypotheses 1 and 3 were tested using Steiger's (1980) test for the statistical significance of the difference between dependent correlations. Hypothesis 2 was tested using a simple correlation. Hypothesis 1 stated that agreeableness would predict CWB-I more than CWB-O. Results showed that agreeableness was not significantly related to more CWB-I ($r$ = -.14, $p$ > .05) than CWB-O ($r$ = -.20, $p$ < .05) ($z$ =.87, $p$ > .05). These results show that Hypothesis 1 was not supported.

Hypothesis 2 stated that neuroticism would predict both CWB-O and CWB-I. Results show that neuroticism was not significantly related to CWB-O ($r$ = .08, $p$ > .05) and CWB-I ($r$ = .04, $p$ > .05). Thus, Hypothesis 2 was not supported.

Hypothesis 3 stated that conscientiousness would predict CWB-O more than CWB-I. Although the direction of the difference was consistent with the hypothesis, results showed that conscientiousness was not significantly related more to CWB-O ($r$ = -.29, $p$ < .01) than CWB-I ($r$ = -.19, $p$ > .05) ($z$ =1.47, $p$ > .05). These results show that Hypothesis 3 was not supported.

Hypothesis 4 stated that transformational leadership behaviors would predict CWB-I and CWB-O. This hypothesis was tested using linear regression analyses. In the first linear regression analysis, the six transformational leadership dimensions were entered as the predictors and CWB-I was the criterion variable. In the second linear regression analysis, the six transformational leadership dimensions were entered as the predictor and CWB-O was the criterion variable.

Table 4

*Linear Regression Analysis: Transformational Leadership Predicting CWB-I and CWB-O*

| Predictor Variables | B | $R^2$ |
|---|---|---|
| CWB-I | | .20 |
| Identifying and articulating a vision | .03 | |
| Providing an appropriate model | -.10 | |
| Foster the acceptance of group goals | .06 | |
| Expecting high performance | -.34** | |
| Providing individualized support | -.21 | |
| Stimulating intellectually | -.01 | |
| CWB-O | | .21 |
| Identifying and articulating a vision | .04 | |
| Providing an appropriate model | .04 | |
| Foster the acceptance of group goals | -.16 | |
| Expecting high performance | -.36** | |
| Providing individualized support | -.15 | |
| Stimulating intellectually | .02 | |

Note. * p < .05, ** p < .01

The results of the first linear regression analysis are shown in the upper half of Table 4. The six transformational leadership dimensions together accounted for 20% of the variance in CWB-I ($R^2$ = .20, $R^2adj$ = .143, $F(6, 93) = 18.26$, $p < .01$). An examination of beta-weights showed that high performance expectations ($\beta$ = -.34 $t$ = -2.75 $p < .01$) had a significant unique contribution in predicting CWB-I such that the more the participants' supervisor expected high performance of his or her employees, the less they displayed CWB-Is.

The results of the second linear regression analysis are shown in the lower half of Table 4. The six transformational leadership dimensions together accounted for 21%

of variance in CWB-O ($R^2$ = .21, $R^2adj$ = .16, $F(6, 93) = 4.18$, $p$ <.001). An examination of beta-weights showed that high performance expectations for employees ($\beta$ = -.36, $t$ = -3.01 $p$ < .01) had a significant unique contribution in predicting CWB-O such that the more the participant's supervisor expected high performance of his or her employees, the less they displayed CWB-O. Thus, Hypothesis 4 was supported.

Hypothesis 5 stated that transformational leadership would predict CWB-I and CWB-O above and beyond agreeableness, neuroticism, and conscientiousness. This hypothesis was tested using two separate hierarchical multiple regression (MRC) analyses. The first hierarchical MRC analysis used CWB-I as the criterion variable. In Step 1, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and neuroticism were entered together. In Step 2, the six dimensions of transformational leadership were entered.

The second hierarchical multiple regression analysis included CWB-O as the criterion variable. In Step 1, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and neuroticism were entered together. In Step 2, the six dimensions of transformational leadership were entered.

In the first hierarchical MRC analysis, as shown in Table 5, agreeableness, neuroticism, and conscientiousness together accounted for 4% of the variance in CWB-I ($R^2$ = .040, $R^2adj$ = .010, $F(3, 96) = 1.34$, $p$ > .05). The examination of beta-weights showed that agreeableness, ($\beta$ = -.04, $t$ = -.28 $p$ > .05) conscientiousness, ($\beta$ = -.16, $t$ = -1.29 $p$ > .05) and neuroticism ($\beta$ = .05, $t$ = .47 $p$ > .05) did not make a significant contribution in predicting CWB-I.

The six dimensions of transformational leadership dimensions accounted for an additional 19% of the variance in CWB-I above and beyond the effect of the three personality traits ($\Delta R^2 = .19$, $\Delta F(6,90) = 3.61$, $p < .01$). A closer look at the beta weights of each transformational leadership dimensions showed that expecting high performance for employees made a significant and unique contribution in predicting CWB-I ($\beta = -.33$, $t = -2.70$ $p < .01$) such that the more the participants' supervisor exhibited high performance expectations of his or her employees, the less likely participants displayed CWB-Is even after accounting for the effects of the personality traits (i.e., agreeableness, conscientiousness, and neuroticism).

Table 5

*Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis: Personality Traits and Transformational Leadership Predicting CWB-I*

| Steps and Predictor Variables | β | $R^2$ | $\Delta R^2$ |
|---|---|---|---|
| Step 1 | | .04 | |
| Agreeableness | -.04 | | |
| Conscientiousness | -.16 | | |
| Neuroticism | .05 | | |
| Step 2 | | .23** | .19** |
| Identifying and articulating a vision | .04 | | |
| Providing an appropriate model | -.13 | | |
| Foster the acceptance of group goals | .12 | | |
| Expecting high performance | -.33** | | |
| Providing individualized support | -.22 | | |
| Stimulating intellectually | -.04 | | |

Note. * p < .05, ** p < .01

In the second hierarchical MRC analysis, as shown in Table 6, agreeableness, neuroticism, and conscientiousness together accounted for 9% of the variance in CWB-O ($R^2$ = .09, $R^2adj$ = .06, $F(3, 96) = 3.01$, $p < .05$). The examination of beta-weights showed that only conscientiousness ($\beta$ = -.26, $t$ = -2.16 $p < .05$) had a significant unique contribution in predicting CWB-O such that the less conscientious the participants were, the more likely they displayed CWB-Os. Agreeableness ($\beta$ = -.05, $t$ = -.43 $p > .05$) and neuroticism ($\beta$ = -.02, $t$ = -.23 $p > .05$) did not make a significant contribution in the prediction of CWB-O.

In Step 2, the six transformational leadership dimensions accounted for an additional 18% of the variance in CWB-O above and beyond the effect of the three personality traits ($\Delta R^2$ = .18, $\Delta F(6,90) = 3.65$, $p < .01$). A closer look at the beta

weight of each transformational leadership dimension showed that expecting high performance of his or her employees made a significant unique contribution in predicting CWB-O ($\beta$ = -.35, $t$ = -2.84, $p$ < .01) such that the more participants' supervisor exhibited high performance expectations of his or her employees, the less likely participants engaged in CWB-Os even after accounting for the effect of the personality traits (i.e., agreeableness, conscientiousness, and neuroticism). Thus, Hypothesis 5 was supported.

Table 6

*Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis: Personality Traits and Transformational Leadership Predicting CWB-O*

| Steps and Predictor Variables | β | $R^2$ | $\Delta R^2$ |
|---|---|---|---|
| Step 1 | | .09* | |
| Agreeableness | -.05 | | |
| Conscientiousness | .-26* | | |
| Neuroticism | -.02 | | |
| Step 2 | | .26** | .18** |
| Identifying and articulating a vision | .04 | | |
| Providing an appropriate model | -.03 | | |
| Foster the acceptance of group goals | -.08 | | |
| Expecting high performance | -.35** | | |
| Providing individualized support | -.15 | | |
| Stimulating intellectually | .01 | | |

Note. * p < .05, ** p < .01

To summarize, the results of these analyses showed that agreeableness did not correlate more with CWB-I than with CWB-O. Conscientiousness did not relate more to CWB-O than to CWB-I. Neuroticism did not relate to either CWB-O or CWB-I. However, both agreeableness and conscientiousness were negatively related

to CWB-O. All of these personality traits were not related to CWB-I. In contrast, transformational leadership behaviors significantly predicted both CWB-I and CWB-O. Furthermore, transformational leadership behaviors predicted both CWB-I and CWB-O above and beyond these personality traits, in particular the dimension of expecting high performance from followers.

## Discussion

CWBs have been an important topic to both academicians and practitioners due to their serious implications. CWBs are disruptive and costly because of the financial toll they take on the company and the emotional toll they take on employees (Greenburg & Baron, 2003). Because of these problems, there has been research identifying the potential predictors of CWBs in organizations. Predictors of CWBs typically fall into two categories, individual factors (e.g., personality traits, demographic variables) and situational factors (e.g., perceived organizational support, organizational justice). However, previous studies examined these factors separately. This study extended research from previous studies by examining individual factors (i.e., personality traits) and situational factors (i.e., transformational leadership) together and how each factor predicted CWBs. This study also examined whether the situational factor of transformational leadership predicted CWBs above and beyond individual factors of the three personality traits.

Hypothesis 1 stated that agreeableness would predict CWB-I more than CWB-O. Results did not support the hypothesis. However, the results showed that agreeableness was related to CWB-O. That is, the more agreeable individuals were,

the less they engaged in CWB-O. One reason why agreeableness predicted CWB-O but not CWB-I could be due to the demographics of the participants. The majority of the participants were of Asian descent, in particular foreign nationals. Collectivistic cultures such as those in China, Japan, and Korea emphasize the importance of work group needs over individual desires (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov 2010). Furthermore, their employer-employee relationships are moral-based, similar to a family bond, in contrast to individualistic cultures in which employer-employee relationships are a contract between two parties on a labor market (Hofstede et al., 2010). Thus, it makes sense that the view of employee-employee relationships of the participants with a collectivistic culture which is at a much deeper and personal level, is likely to prevent them from engaging in counterproductive behavior towards individuals, regardless of their agreeable disposition.

Additionally, many collectivistic cultures are high in power distance, the degree to which member of an organization or society expect and agree that power should be stratified and concentrated at higher levels of an organization or government (House, Javidan, Hanges, & Dorfman, 2002). Merton's (1968) strain theory suggests that individuals situated at the low end of the social hierarchy, with little power, wealth or other contingencies, may feel denied of access to their goals through legitimate means. This strain may push these people to engage in CWB-Os such as receiving bribery to achieve their goals, regardless of an agreeable disposition. However, this explanation is purely speculative as the cultural values of the participants and how they were related to CWBs were not measured.

Hypothesis 2 stated that neuroticism would predict both CWB-O and CWB-I. Results did not support the hypothesis and showed that neuroticism was not related to CWB-O or CWB-I. The relationships between neuroticism and CWBs have been inconsistent. For example, Kozako et al. (2013) found a positive relationship between neuroticism and both CWB-I and CWB-O, but Mount et al. (2006) showed that neuroticism was not related to either CWB-I or CWB-O. The relative lack of consistent findings on the relationship between neuroticism and CWB might be due to the broad structure of neuroticism, as it consists of the facets that include anxiety, anger, depression, self-consciousness, impulsiveness, and vulnerability (John & Srivastava, 1999). As a result, although certain facets such as anger may be positively related to CWBs, other facets such as self-consciousness may be negatively related to CWBs (Chen & Spector, 1992; Tangney, Wagner, Hill-Barlow, Marschall, & Gramzow, 1996). According to Chen and Spector, a measure of anger correlated with CWBs. On the other hand, self-consciousness consists of a facet of guilt which mitigates anger (Tangney et al.). When a broad trait of neuroticism is used to measure a relationship with CWBs, the effect of self-consciousness might cancel out the effect of anger, which may have led neuroticism to have a non-significant relationship with CWB.

Hypothesis 3 stated that conscientiousness would predict CWB-O more than CWB-I. Although conscientiousness was more strongly related to CWB-O than to CWB-I, there was no significant difference between the two. However, consistent with past research, conscientious was significantly related to CWB-O. The lack of

support for the hypothesis might be due to the structure of conscientiousness. According to Roberts, Chernyshenko, Stark, and Goldberg (2005), individual facets of conscientiousness (e.g., traditionalism, industriousness) were better predictors of outcome variables (e.g. academic achievement, traffic risk) than the overall conscientiousness. That is, for certain outcomes, there were certain facets of conscientiousness that constituted the best predictors. For example, some facets of conscientiousness (i.e. industriousness, self-control) had a positive relationship with work dedication. However, other facets of conscientiousness (i.e. traditionalism, order) had a negative relationship with work dedication. As a result, due to the differential validity of conscientiousness facets, individual facets were better predictors of criteria than the overall conscientiousness composite (Roberts et al.). Thus, one could argue that certain facets of conscientiousness such as industriousness and self-control could have supported Hypothesis 3 as opposed to the overall conscientiousness.

This is also consistent with Paunonen (1998) who proposed that lower order traits might be good candidates for making distinctions among closely related constructs (i.e. CWB-I and CWB-O). Two of the lower level facets of conscientiousness from the Roberts et al. (2005) study, industriousness (hardworking, resourceful, and achievement oriented) and responsibility (cooperative and dependable) may explain why conscientiousness was related to CWB-O. Dunn, Mount, Barrick and Ones (1995) found a strong relationship between the achievement orientation component of conscientiousness and exertion of effort as well as a relationship between the

dependability component of conscientiousness and reliability. This is relevant because their reliability measure consisted of supervisor ratings of following and abiding by rules. Because much of CWB-Os are related to not exerting effort (i.e. purposely going off task, purposely working slow) and breaking the rules and norms of an organization (i.e. theft, coming in late without permission), people low in conscientiousness engage in CWB-Os because they are more likely to withhold effort and break rules and norms in their organizations (Mount et al. 2006). Thus, if the more specific facets of conscientiousness that had to do with dependability and reliability were used, the hypothesis might have been supported.

Hypothesis 4 stated that transformational leadership behaviors would predict both CWB-I and CWB-O. Results showed that transformational leadership behaviors predicted both CWB-I and CWB-O, thus this hypothesis was supported. These results show that the more transformational leadership behavior one's supervisor showed, the less frequently he or she engaged in CWB-O and CWB-I. These results are consistent with previous studies. For example, Bruursema (2004) found that transformational leadership was negatively related to overall CWBs. More specifically, after examining transformational leadership facets, it was found that individualized consideration (individually-focused, mentoring-type behaviors) showed a negative relationship with overall CWB. These findings are somewhat consistent with the current study in that the expecting high performance dimension of transformational leadership had the greatest contribution in predicting both CWB-I and CWB-O. It can be argued that both expecting high performance from followers

and individualized consideration dimensions of transformational leadership highlight the importance of instilling in employees a feeling that they are respected by leaders.

Furthermore, the negative relationship between these dimensions and CWB may also be explained by social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), where employees feel a sense of obligation to maintain the balance of the exchange relationship. Leaders who exhibit high levels of individualized consideration and high performance expectations to their subordinates may cause them to feel that they are obligated to reciprocate the positive treatment from their leaders by withholding CWBs in order to maintain the balance of their relationship

In addition, according to Pradhan and Pradhan (2014), transformational leaders are the role models to their followers. These ethical leaders dissuade their followers from engaging in unethical and anti-social behaviors. The fear of losing the trust of the transformational leader acts as a strong deterrent for followers to behave unethically. Thus, consistent with social learning theory which posits that individuals learn through observing the behaviors of others in order to understand acceptable forms of behaviors in a given context (Bandura, 1973, 1977), the more transformational leadership behaviors a leader exhibits, the more employees will be able to understand the context of acceptable behaviors in an organization and engage in appropriate behaviors, thus, avoiding unethical and anti-social behaviors.

Hypothesis 5 stated that transformational leadership behaviors would predict both CWB-I and CWB-O above and beyond the three personality traits. Consistent with the hypothesis, results showed that transformational leadership behaviors predicted

both CWB-I and CWB-O above and beyond the personality traits of agreeableness, neuroticism, and conscientiousness. According to Bass (1985), transformational leaders can be considered as agents of change, as they attempt to develop and transform the attitudes and beliefs of their subordinates through the adoption of strategies make subordinates more aware of their needs for accomplishment and well-being. There is evidence that transformational leader's behaviors significantly predict various aspects of personality in followers. More specifically, transformational leader's behaviors are positively related to followers' extraversion, and conscientiousness, even after controlling for work activity and transactional leadership behaviors (Hoffman & Jones, 2005). This is due to the fact that transformational leadership provides an inspirational vision for followers, such that expectations for higher performance are raised and followers are motivated to pursue this vision. Over time, the existence of this vision results in higher collective conscientiousness and extraversion (Hoffman & Jones). Therefore, transformational leadership should be better at predicting CWBs than personality traits due to the fact that it captures components of personality as well as situational factors that result in reducing the display of CWBs by employees.

**Theoretical Implications**

According to Paunonen and Ashton (2001), narrower traits of the Big Five personality factors surpassed broader traits in the prediction of many criteria (e.g., academic achievement, traffic risk). These researchers have argued that much important information could be lost when one's focus on personality is exclusively at

the Big Five factor level in contrast with at the Big Five lower order traits. They explained that each individual variable had its own component of trait specific variance. Thus, by the process of aggregation, the specific components of variance in the variables that do not predict a criterion could cancel out those components in the variables that do predict a criterion. This implies that future studies may want to consider exploring the lower order facets of the Big Five personality traits in order to predict CWB-I and CWB-O, rather than using Big Five personality traits.

Although there has been some research examining the relationship between transformational leadership and CWBs, the research has been scarce. To my best knowledge, there has been no study that has examined the relationship between Podsakoff et al.'s (1990) conceptualization of transformational leadership and CWBs. Results of the current study discovered that transformational leadership predicted both CWB-O and CWB-I, but the expecting high performance dimension of transformational leadership was the most significant predictor of CWBs. This result contributes to existing leadership literature by highlighting the specific dimension of transformational leadership that predicts CWBs. However, it should be noted that all dimensions of transformational leadership behaviors were strongly correlated to each other which could serve as a reason to why the other dimensions failed to predict CWBs.

Furthermore, to my best knowledge, there are no existing studies that have explored the relationship between personality traits, transformational leadership behaviors, and CWBs together in a single study. This study found that

transformational leadership behaviors were able to predict CWBs above and beyond certain personality traits. This research demonstrates the value of comparing both a situational and an individual factor in predicting CWBs in a single study. The present study also suggest that that situational factors such as transformational leadership behaviors may be more important in predicting CWBs than individual factors such as personality traits.

**Practical Implications**

The results of this study showed the importance of transformational leadership behaviors in predicting CWBs over the three personality traits of agreeableness, conscientiousness, and neuroticism. Although many studies have focused on individual factors such as personality traits to predict CWBs, the results of this study suggest that it may be worthwhile to examine more situational factors than individual factors of CWBs. Furthermore, the results of this study also highlighted the dimension of transformational leadership which had the most impact on CWBs. Results indicate that if organizations desire to reduce the occurrence or frequency of CWBs, it may be more pragmatic to focus their efforts on developing programs that train supervisors to become transformational leaders, instead of selecting individuals who are less likely to engage in CWBs.

Additionally, results showed that the expecting high performance from his or her follower's dimension of transformational leadership had the greatest impact on CWBs. Thus, it may be more pragmatic to design training programs that have an additional focus on training supervisors to uphold an attitude that conveys respect to

their subordinate's knowledge, skills, and abilities in the organization. As a result, these programs are likely to train supervisors to expect high performance from their subordinates.

**Strengths, Limitations, and Future Research**

One strength of the study was the examination of both a situational factor and an individual factor in predicting CWBs in a single study, which allowed for a more accurate and comprehensive assessment of the contribution of each factor in predicting CWBs. Despite the strength of the study, it also has several weaknesses. The first weakness pertains to the current study's design and demographic data. As the data were collected through my personal and professional contacts, they were heavily skewed to the participants who were of Asian descent and under the age of 31. Thus, the current study may not be generalizable to the current working population. For example, people become more socially agreeable, less neurotic (Allemand, Zimprich, & Hertzog, 2007), and increasingly socially wise with age (Grossmann, Varnum, Park, Kitayama, and Nisbett, 2010). Therefore, the current study's participants may have been less agreeable or more neurotic than the general population due to the young age of the participants. As such, the demographic make-up of the participants might have affected the results of the current study.

The second demographic variable that may have skewed the data is ethnicity, as the majority of the participants were of Asian descent, specifically foreign nationals. According to Muenjohn and Armstrong (2007), the perception of leadership effectiveness and the enactment strategy are influenced by societal values and cultural

contexts because attributes of effective leadership might vary for different cultural contexts. People of Asian descent, in particular foreign nationals, may have a particular affinity to collectivistic culture, and this might have skewed the perceptions of effective transformational leadership behaviors. For example, people in a collectivistic culture may find some transformational leadership behaviors unappealing that people in an individualistic culture may find desirable. According to Shao and Webber (2006), certain personality traits were positively related to transformational leadership behavior in North American culture such as extraversion are not evident in Chinese culture. Future studies may strive to utilize a wider variety of data collecting methods in order to gather a more varied and representative sample. For example, it may be fruitful to distribute surveys via universities and internet forums as well rather than simply through personal and professional contacts in order to obtain a more diverse sample.

Another limitation of the study pertains to the measurement method of the study. All of the variables in this study was measured via self-report questionnaires. Thus, the current study might have been subject to common method variance, variance that is attributable to the measurement method rather than to the constructs that the measures represent (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). The method effects that may have contributed to the current study's method variance include social desirability and leniency effects. Social desirability refers to the tendency of some people to respond to items more as a result of their social acceptability rather than of their true feelings. Therefore, some participants might have subconsciously

chosen personality traits that they wished themselves to possess and understated the engagement of some CWBs. Leniency effects refer to the propensity for respondents to attribute socially desirable traits, attitudes, and/or behaviors to someone they know and like than to someone they dislike (Podsakoff et al.). Therefore, some participants might have either exaggerated or understated the transformational leadership behaviors of their supervisors depending on their relationship with them. Future research should focus on utilizing various methods of data collections. For example, CWBs and transformational leadership behaviors may be collected via both supervisors and co-workers of participants. Thus, this might produce more comprehensive data that are measured from multiple angles and reduce common method variance.

**Conclusion**

Due to the costly and negative implications of CWBs, it is no surprise that researchers have extensively identified and examined many of their predictors. However, research has seldom examined both an individual predictor and a situational predictor in a single study. This study shed light on the effectiveness of two predictors, personality traits and transformational leadership behaviors, in predicting CWB-O and CWB-I. The results of the current study showed that although conscientiousness and agreeableness were negatively related to CWBs, inconsistent with the hypotheses, they were not more related to one type of CWB than to the other type of CWBs. However, transformational leadership behaviors were not only able to predict both CWB-I and CWB-Os, but were also able to do so

above and beyond the effects of the personality traits. Finally, this study also highlighted the facet of transformational leadership behaviors that had the most impact on CWBs; expecting high performance from subordinates. Although personality traits did not predict CWBs as hypothesized, transformational leadership behaviors were able to predict CWBs even after accounting for the personality traits. These findings suggest that it is actually more effective to emphasize individual's unique inherent dispositions less and to more focus on developing transformational leaders, which in turn, will cultivate and improve their subordinates by mitigating CWBs that may impede organizational effectiveness.

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## Appendix

Survey Items

*Transformational Leadership*

1. My supervisor or manager has a clear understanding of where we are going.
2. My supervisor or manager paints an interesting picture of the future for our group.
3. My supervisor or manager inspires others with his/her plans for the future.
4. My supervisor or manager is able to get others committed to his/her dream.
5. My supervisor or manager leads by "doing," rather than simply by "telling."
6. My supervisor or manager provides a good model for me to follow.
7. My supervisor or manager leads by example.
8. My supervisor or manager encourages employees to be "team players."
9. My supervisor or manager gets the group to work together for the same goal.
10. My supervisor or manager develops a team attitude and spirit among employees.
11. My supervisor or manager shows us that he/she expects a lot from us.
12. My supervisor or manager insists on only the best performance.
13. My supervisor or manager will not settle for second best.
14. My supervisor or manager acts without considering my feelings.
15. My supervisor or manager shows respect for my personal feelings.
16. My supervisor or manager behaves in a manner thoughtful of my personal needs.
17. My supervisor or manager challenges me to think about old problems in new ways.
18. My supervisor or manager asks questions that prompt me to think.
19. My supervisor or manager has stimulated me to rethink the way I do things.
20. My supervisor or manager has ideas that have challenged me to re-examine some of the basic assumptions about my work.

*Agreeableness*

1. I am helpful and unselfish with others.
2. I am generally trusting.
3. I have a forgiving nature.
4. I am considerate and kind to almost everyone.
5. I like to cooperate with others.

*Conscientiousness*

1. I do a thorough job.
2. I am a reliable worker.
3. I persevere until the task is finished.
4. I do things efficiently.
5. I make plans and follow through with them.

*Neuroticism*

1. I am depressed, blue.
2. I can be tense.
3. I worry a lot.
4. I can be moody.
5. I get nervous easily.

*Counterproductive Work Behaviors*

1. I left work early without permission.
2. I took property from work without permission.
3. I spent too much time fantasizing or day dreaming instead of working.
4. I made fun of someone at work.
5. I put little effort into my work.
6. I have taken an additional or longer break than is acceptable at my work place.
7. I made an ethnic religious or racial remark or joke at work.
8. I come in late to work without permission.
9. I littered my work environment.
10. I cursed at someone at work.
11. I lost my temper while at work.
12. I neglected to follow my boss's instructions.
13. I intentionally worked slower than I could have worked.
14. I publicly embarrassed someone at work.
15. I acted rudely toward someone at work.
16. I played a mean prank on someone at work.

*Demographic Questions*

What is your age?

What gender do you identify with?

What race/ethnicity do you identify with?

What is your highest level of education?

What is your current occupation?

What is your current yearly household income (before taxes)?

How long have you been employed at your current organization?

What type of employee are you?

What type of role are you currently in?