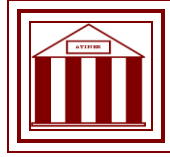


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**Counterproductive Work
Behaviors in Relation to
Narcissism, Machiavellianism and
Psychopathy among University
Staff**

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Abstract

The aim of the present study was to determine whether or not university academics and administrative staff exhibit different counterproductive work behaviors (CWBs) with relation to Dark Triad Personality Traits (Narcissism-Psychopathy-Machiavellianism). For this purpose we collected data from 150 administrative and academic staff working at Turkish universities. The results demonstrated that males engage in sabotage behaviors significantly more than females, while junior staffs engage in withdrawal behaviors more than their senior counterparts. Regarding the sabotage behaviors, high secondary psychopaths displayed more destructive behaviors in the workplace than the low secondary psychopaths. High Machs intentionally engaged in three types of CWBs (abuse towards others, sabotage, withdrawal) significantly more than the low Machs. However, results revealed no significant differences between low-high primary psychopathy groups and also between low-high narcissism groups in terms of CWBs exhibited.

Key Words: Counterproductive Work Behavior, Narcissism, Psychopathy, Machiavellianism.

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Introduction

It is known that ethically problematic employee behaviors are becoming prevalent in today’s workplace relations and if this situation could not be handled effectively, both the success of the organization and employee satisfaction may possibly drop. Therefore, Counterproductive Work Behavior (CWB) has emerged as a major area of concern among organizational psychologists. These behaviors are deliberate actions that harm the organization or its members (Dalal, 2005). Counterproductive work behaviors are then any intentional behaviors which violate organizational norms. However as Hafidz et al. (2012) emphasizes, these behaviors affect not only the organization as whole, but also influence other employees, customers, suppliers etc. In this context, CWBs can appear as visible employee actions like aggression and theft or can be latent (passive) employee behaviors like disobeying rules/orders. Seçer and Seçer (2007) declare that such unfavorable behaviors may hamper job performance of the employee.

O’Boyle et al. (2011) pointed out that inappropriate behaviors that people exhibit in the workplace could be attributed to traits in characters, moral maturity, personality, perceptions, motivations and the interactions among these person-centered variables, therefore the impact of groups and organizations on employee behavior should not be ignored. Salgado (2002) asserts that CWBs can be defined as toxic actions oriented to the organization as well as its members. According to Robinson and Bennett (1995) CWBs can be classified in four categories differing in terms of severity, and the target of behaviors. This framework is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. The Model of Counterproductive Work Behaviors (Robinson and Bennett, 1995)

	Organizational	Interpersonal
Severe	Property deviance (A) <i>serious organization directed offences</i>	Personal aggression (B) <i>serious interpersonally directed offences</i>
	Destruction of property	Inappropriate verbal actions
Minor	Production deviance (C) <i>minor organizationally directed offences</i> Alcohol use Drug use Misuse of time and resources Poor attendance Poor quality work Theft and related behaviors	Inappropriate physical actions Political deviance (D) <i>interpersonally directed but minor offences</i> Misuse of information Unsafe behaviors

Marcus and Schuler (2004) draw attention to the fact that different forms of CWBs are almost always positively correlated with each other. It will be better to design a multi-dimensional model to explain CWBs, because the reason which causes these behaviors can be entirely different and can lead to

entirely different results. Recently numerous studies paid attention to identify the potential causes of CWBs because of the important practical implications of them. For most of the researchers, personality traits are one of the main variables which predict these behaviors (Bowling et al., 2010). CWB is an act based on individual choice, so it is likely to be influenced by personality traits (Hafidz et al., 2012). Paulhus and Williams (2002) suggested that the Dark Triad of three personality traits – machiavellianism, narcissism and psychopathy- are much more important during prediction of CWBs. These three traits are known as “aberrant personality” at work.

According to Wu and Lebreton (2011), narcissists possess feelings of dominance, entitlement, exploitation and attribute success to themselves even if they were not responsible for the success. Narcissists believe that they should receive special privileges and respect, even though they have done nothing in particular to earn that special treatment (Wille et al., 2013). Moreover these people with bigger egos cannot recognize the needs and desires of others. They have an exaggerated positive view of themselves and think that they can violate rules to acquire desirable outcomes for themselves (Michel and Bowling, 2013). CWBs can give them opportunity to use force on others. Therefore, narcissism is expected to be positively related to CWBs.

Machiavellianism is a strategy of social conduct that involves manipulating others for personal gain and often against other’s self-interest (Wilson et al., 1996). High Machs lack empathy towards others and are selfish during interpersonal interactions (Kerr and Gross, 1978). Therefore it can be said that high Machs are less cooperative and less likely to help others (Wu and Lebreton, 2011). Nelson and Gilbertson (1991) stated that Machs do everything in order to reach their own goals. Since they are very much self-oriented people, they do not pay attention the opinions of others. Zettler and Solga (2013) remind that machiavellianism comprises four aspects: Distrust of others, desire for status, desire for control and willingness to engage in the moral manipulation of others. They will be reluctant to share information, beside that they are prone to engage in unethical behaviors and have high self-concern regardless of other’s interest and wellbeing. Due to these reasons, machiavellianism is expected to correlate positively with CWBs, too.

The third component of the “Dark Triad”, psychopathy, is characterized by impulsivity, arrogance manipulativeness, serial lying and low levels of anxiety, empathy, guilt or remorse. Hare (1999) suggested that a lack of guilt and the absence of a conscience are the telltale signs of a psychopath. According to Benning et al. (2003) psychopathy involves two distinct dimensions termed as primary and secondary psychopathy. Hare (1991) stated that primary psychopathy is related to interpersonally oriented behaviors, whereas secondary psychopathy is associated with antisocial lifestyles and behaviors. Several studies indicated that primary psychopathy is negatively related to anxiety and guilt (Wu and Lebreton, 2011). Hollinger and Clark (1983) reported that the possibility of being caught while committing guilt prevents individuals from engaging in CWBs. Because secondary psychopaths feel guilty from time to time, only primary psychopaths may not be threatened by

the risk of detection and are more likely to engage in CWBs and in more deliberate behaviors (Wu and Lebreton, 2011).

In sum, since narcissists tend to perceive themselves as victims, they can easily engage in CWBs such as hostility or overt aggression to others (Wu and Lebreton, 2011). But interestingly they rarely believe and accept that they have engaged in CWBs (Judge et al., 2006). They could think that they only pursue self-enhancement via CWBs. On the other hand, a frustrated person being prevented for achieving his/her goal is more likely to engage in CWBs when he or she has high Mach trait. Christie and Geis (1970) emphasized that remorseless Machs could engage in hostile and unethical behaviors much easier. Boddy (2006) points out that primary psychopaths fail to take responsibility for their own actions because they believe that norms and rules do not apply to them. And this can lead them to ongoing CWBs easily.

In the present study we expect that the “Dark Triad” may help us in better understanding of the dispositional bases of CWBs. Based on past research findings and theoretical explanation reported in the literature review, we hypothesized the following:

Hypothesis 1: High narcissists engage in CWBs significantly more than low narcissists.

Hypothesis 2: The High Machs engage in CWBs significantly more than the low Machs.

Hypothesis 3: The High primary psychopaths engage in CWBs significantly more than the secondary psychopaths.

Hypothesis 4: The psychopaths engage in all types CWBs significantly more than the narcissists and the Machs.

Hypothesis 5: There are no significant sex differences in engagement of CWBs.

Hypothesis 6: There are no significant age differences in engagement of CWBs.

Method

Research Sample

Data were collected from 150 administrative and academic staff working at Turkish universities. There were 70 females (46.7%) and 80 males (53.3%) with mean ages 32.62 and 36.86, respectively. Amongst them, 64% were under 35, whilst 36% were above 35. Slightly more than half of the participants were administrative staff (52.7%) and slightly less than half of them were working as academics (47.3%).

Measures

In order to collect data, the Counterproductive Work Behavior Checklist (Spector, et al., 2006), Narcissistic Personality Inventory (Ames, et al., 2005), Psychopathy Scale (Levenson, et al., 1995) and The Mach-IV Inventory

(Christie and Geis, 1970) were used. Additionally, a demographic information form was completed by the respondents. The instruments and demographic information forms were distributed to the participants by the researchers.

More detailed information about the measuring instruments used in the study is presented below.

The Counterproductive Work Behavior Checklist – CWB: The CWB Checklist was developed by Spector et al. (2006) to measure negative worker behaviors intended giving harm to others. Scale items are gathered under 5 dimensions as abuse, production deviance, sabotage, theft, and withdrawal.

The scale consisted of 33 items and each item has statements ranging from “1=never” to “5= every day” in Likert type, high points mean CWBs are seen very often. The scale was adapted into Turkish culture by Öcel (2010). The results of factor analysis revealed four dimensional construct for Turkish population, explaining 65.15% of total variance. These dimensions are as followed: Abuse (17 items), Theft (6 items), Withdrawal (6 items) and Sabotage (3 items). Öcel (2010) also reported that Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of the scale was .97, test-retest reliability coefficient was .92 and split-half reliability coefficient was .95.

Narcissistic Personality Inventory – NPI-16: In the present study, the Turkish version of Personality Inventory (NPI-16) (Ames, et al., 2005) was used for measuring non-pathological narcissism. The scale consists of six dimensions: Exhibitionism, Superiority, Authority, Claiming, Self-efficacy, and Exploitationism. Atay (2009) who adapted the inventory into Turkish culture determined the Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of the inventory as .63. The results of factor analysis revealed six dimensioned structure, explaining 60.8 % of total variance. This structure is consistent with the original scale.

Levenson Self-Report Psychopathy Scale - LSRP: LSRP developed by Levenson, et al. (1995) consists of 26 items and measures primary and secondary psychopathy. Each item consists of a statement which the participant read and then endorses on a four point scale (“disagree strongly”, “disagree somewhat”, “agree somewhat” and “agree strongly”). Validity and reliability of the Turkish version of the scale were examined by Engeler and Yargıç (2006). They found internal consistency of the scale for primary psychopathy as .82, whilst alpha coefficient for secondary psychopathy as .63.

The Mach-IV Inventory: Machiavellianism (Mach-IV) Scale was developed by Christie and Geis (1970) to measure the degree of manipulation people use on their interpersonal relationship. The 20 items scale involves 10 items for machievellianist statements and other 10 items for non machievellianist statements. The scale has statements ranging from “disagree strongly”, and “agree strongly” in 5-Likert type. According to total score taken from the scale, persons can be classified as high machievellist or low machievellist. Generally, high scores on the scale are interpreted as socially undesired situation in the literature. Güldü (1998) in her Turkish adaption study found test-retest reliability coefficient of new inventory as .72.

Findings

The aim of the present study was to explore whether there are differences between academic and administrative staff of universities, in terms of tendencies of counterproductive work behavior with relation to personality characteristics of narcissism, psychopathy and machiavellianism.

In all analyses of variance, dark triad personalities (narcissism, psychopathy and machiavellianism), sex, age, and position held (academic-administrative staffs) were chosen as independent variables. For all analysis an alpha value of .05 was chosen to indicate significance. The analyses were conducted with SPSS 18.0.

Analysis of Comparisons between the Groups

The analysis of variance for the socio-demographic questions with the purpose of determining CWBs can be summarized as follows:

With regard to CWB, there was a significant difference ($F(1,148) = 4.24, p < .05$) between male and female participants in only Sabotage subscale. Males had a mean score of 3.51, whereas females had 3.08, indicating that males engaged in sabotage behaviors significantly more than their female counterparts.

According to Withdrawal, there was a significant difference ($F(1,148) = 6.35, p < .05$) between junior (under 35 years) and senior (older than 35 years) staff. Junior participants had a mean score of 8.98 while the seniors had 7.75, indicating that junior staffs engage in withdrawal behaviors significantly more than the senior participants. However, the results revealed no significant difference between academic and administrative staff with relation to any other CWB subscales.

The analysis of variance for the dark triad scores with the purpose of determining CWBs can be summarized as follows:

Regarding the sabotage behaviors, there was a significant difference between the groups in terms of the main effect of secondary psychopathy ($F(1,148) = 6.38, p < .05$). High secondary psychopaths had a mean score of 3.58, whereas the low secondary psychopaths had 3.06. Then it can be said that sabotage behaviors are more prevalent among high secondary psychopathy staff compare with the low ones.

In terms of “abuse toward others”, “sabotage” and “withdrawal”, there were significant differences between the groups in terms of the main effect of machiavellianism scores (respectively, $F(1, 148) = 5.51, p < .05$; $F(1, 148) = 5.92, p < .05$ and $F(1, 148) = 4.11, p < .05$). The results confirmed that the high Machs had a mean score of 19.28, whilst the low Machs had 17.43 for abuse towards others, indicating those with high Machs express concern for others or show emotions during interpersonal interactions significantly less than the low Machs. In contrast, they engage in manipulative and subtle/covert of verbal CWBs (like gossiping) more than the low Machs. In terms of sabotage behaviors (active behaviors like defacing or destroying physical property belonging to the employer), it seems that high Machs ($\bar{X}=3.59$),

because of their anger and hostile feelings, engage in aggressive and active behaviors significantly more than the low Machs ($\bar{X} = 3.08$). Considering withdrawal behaviors, the data showed that the high Machs ($\bar{X} = 8.89$) participants had significantly higher score in withdrawal subscale than the low Machs ($\bar{X} = 7.88$). This result indicate that the high Machs people are more prone to making purposeful failure during performing work than those of low in Machs. Finally the results failed to confirm any significant differences between low-high primary psychopathy groups, as well as low and high narcissism groups.

Regression Analysis for the CWB-types

We theorized that dark triad personalities and demographic characteristics (age, sex and position) would be useful in predicting all CWB-types. Regression analysis showed that only primary-secondary psychopathy and machiavellianism contributed to the total variance, in explaining all type of CWBs. The results for withdrawal behaviors indicated that sex also responsible from the change in variance. The regression equations for CWB types are displayed as follows:

$$\text{Abuse towards others behaviors} = - 9.51 + 0.63 \text{ primary psychopathy} + 0.51 \text{ secondary psychopathy} - 0.15 \text{ Machiavellianism} - 0.01 \text{ narcissism}$$

.78 and this is a significant value ($F(7, 113) = 25.35, p < .05$). In other words dark triad personalities were responsible for 61% of total variance.

$$\text{Sabotage behaviors} = - 3.06 + 0.16 \text{ primary psychopathy} + 0.13 \text{ secondary psychopathy} - 0.04 \text{ Machiavellianism} - 0.03 \text{ narcissism}$$

.73 and this is a significant value ($F(7, 113) = 18.98, p < .05$). In other words dark triad personalities were responsible for 54% of total variance.

$$\text{Theft behaviours} = - 5.78 + 0.32 \text{ primary psychopathy} + 0.21 \text{ secondary psychopathy} - 0.07 \text{ Machiavellianism} + 0.02 \text{ narcissism}$$

and this is a significant value ($F(7, 113) = 16.78, p < .05$). In other words dark triad personalities were responsible for 51% of total variance.

$$\text{Withdrawal behaviors} = 1.48 + 0.29 \text{ primary psychopathy} + 0.41 \text{ secondary psychopathy} - 0.12 \text{ Machiavellianism} - 0.20 \text{ narcissism} - 1.20 \text{ sex}$$

is .73 and this is a significant value ($F(7, 113) = 18.94, p < .05$). In other words dark triad personalities were responsible for 54% of total variance.

Results of Correlation Analysis

The correlation coefficients among dark triad personality traits and CWB-types are shown in Table. 2.

Table 2. *Correlation Coefficients among Dark Triad Personality Traits and CWB-Types*

	<i>Primary Psychopathy</i>	<i>Secondary Psychopathy</i>	<i>Machiavellianism</i>	<i>Narcissism</i>
<i>Abuse toward others</i>	.66*	.55*	-.04	.20*
<i>Theft</i>	.61*	.46*	-.05	.20*
<i>Withdrawal</i>	.46*	.47*	-.13	.05
<i>Sabotage</i>	.64*	.51*	-.04	.14
<i>Age</i>	.11	.02	.09	-.17
<i>Sex</i>	.21*	.14	.02	.11

* $p < .05$

As can be seen from Table 2., the level of primary and secondary psychopathy are correlated with all types of CWBs. These results indicate that all CWBs will become prevalent, when both primary and secondary psychopathies increase. On the other hand, primary psychopathy seemed to be more prevailed among males than females.

Nevertheless, there are no significant correlations between machiavellianism and CWB types, indicating that this personality trait does not contribute to engagement in CWBs. Similarly, while narcissism is correlated positively with abuse towards others and theft, this part of dark triad is not correlated significantly with the other two CWBs (withdrawal and sabotage).

Discussion and Conclusion

The first aim of our study was to test the role of Dark Triad personalities in the exhibition of counterproductive work behaviors (CWB). Our results suggest that there is a strong personality-related effect in CWBs. Actually, it seems that whether CWBs (abuse toward others, sabotage and withdrawal) would exhibited or not, depend upon Machiavellianism level of the worker. In this context, while the high Machs pay no attention to others and their feelings, they can show considerable hostility and aggression with the aim of destroying all things in the workplace. This finding reveals that high Machs can prefer easily to engage in active behaviors containing also violence (Wu and Lebreton, 2011). The above-mentioned outcome has an important meaning for managers in the course of establishing work peace. In the same vein, when it comes to withdrawal behaviors, high Machs are more inclined to intentionally being unsuccessful at the job tasks. Even if this behavior seems much more

passive and moderate, its outcomes can be very severe (Zettler and Solga, 2013). However, our analysis yielded no significant differences in emergence of CWBs between high-low narcissism and also high-low primary psychopath groups. Even if this is so, yet narcissism and primary psychopathy contribute to CWB tendencies to some extent. Especially secondary psychopathy plays an important role on CWBs. As stated before, theft was not correlated with the personality traits. This finding can be explained with family discipline by which culturally condemned actions were taught (Taylor, 2012). For example, workers would have inferiority feelings if they steal something from the workplace. This behavior cannot be cleared of blame by antagonism toward others.

In addition, we aimed to test the role of sex, position and age in the emergence of the CWBs. There was a significant difference according to sex only for sabotage behaviors. This difference can be explained with the passive position of women both in society and workplace. Domination of patriarchal relations is closely associated with the perception and construction of cultural approach which approve that overt and concrete aggressive behaviors like sabotage are more exculpated for men than women. Gender role socialization procedure can be hold responsible from these low aggressive actions exhibited by women in the workplace. It can be said that boys and girls learn the appropriate behaviors according to their gender and this differentiate their attitudes and actions towards injustice at the workplace (Güldü and Ersoy-Kart, 2009).

We also found that monitored withdrawal behaviors differed according to age of the participants (independently of their positions), indicating that the junior participants engaged in withdrawal behaviors significantly more than their senior counterparts. There are some evidences supporting our result. For example Lau, Au, and Ho (2003) found a moderate age effect indicating that younger employees engage in more production deviance, and were more likely to be late for work.

We also investigated if CWBs can be predicted by the means of Dark Triad personalities and also by demographic variables. The results of the data analysis clearly showed that primary-secondary psychopathy and machiavellianism contributed in explaining all type of CWBs, indicating that these personality traits contribute to emergence of the deviant workplace behaviors almost always. In terms of demographic variables, only one subscale of the CWB (withdrawal behaviors) significantly predicted by sex of the participants. The other two demographical variables (age and position) have non-significant contribution to the regression equation. Again paternalistic approach reflects the idea that women are more agreeable and more willing to be in the line with the rules (Spector, 2012). So, they do not violate principal of works and do not engage to hostile acts like loafing. However, Lau et al. (2003) found women were more likely than men to be absent from work. This can be attributed to the fact that women are more likely to take up the role of caregivers in families and are responsible for childcare and elderly care.

The most important point of this discussion that should be taken into account, is that all CWBs can be accepted as a tool of individualistic struggle against the demands of new management models (HRM,TQM) which create high stress over the workforce. While new management models have been weakening the unionization all over the world and getting away them from collective behaviors, of course naturally CWBs have been appearing as individualistic reactions. “Many individuals with clinical personality disorders are often housed in criminal or psychiatric settings” (Hare, 1999; Wu and Lebreton 2011) and their rates in general population are low. Yet findings of researches related with CWBs and personalities showed that these behaviors have been spreading at workplaces since 1986. Therefore CWBs should not be evaluated as “toxic” behavior. They can be examined as looking for equity treatments for workers at workplaces.

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