

Examining How the Dark Triad Moderates the Relationship Between Workplace Victimization
and Workplace Behavior

James Parker

Alexander T. Jackson, Ph.D.

Michael Hein, Ph.D.

Richard Moffett III, Ph.D.

Middle Tennessee State University

Abstract

This study will examine the relationship between workplace victimization and workplace behavior. Furthermore, this study will examine how the Dark Triad of personality affects that relationship. The study will be conducted as a Masters' Thesis at Middle Tennessee State University. We propose that there is a positive relationship between workplace victimization and counterproductive work behaviors (CWB) and a negative relationship between workplace victimization and occupational citizenship behaviors (OCB). We also propose that the Dark Triad (narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy) each positively moderate the relationship between workplace victimization and CWB. Data on each of these constructs will be collected from participants through Amazon's Mechanical Turk. This study is intended to help gain an understanding of the range of negative effects that workplace victimization can have on both victims and organizations at large. This study will allow researchers and practitioners alike to understand the negative consequences of workplace mistreatment; also, it may motivate organizations to establish policies to protect their employees from harm.

Summary

Background

According to some estimates, between one-thirds and three-fourths of employees have engaged in some kind of counterproductive work behavior (CWB) in their working lives (Cohen, 2016). Too often, the target of CWBs is other employees. When employees perceive that they have been a victim of CWB, it can have serious consequences for both that employee and the organization (An, Boyajian, & O'Brien, 2016; Nielsen, Glasø, & Einarsen, 2017).

Research has demonstrated a positive correlation between an employee being a victim of some CWB (i.e. abusive supervision, bullying) and the tendency of the victim to become a perpetrator of CWB (Bowling & Beehr, 2006; Bowling & Michel, 2011; Zheng, Wu, Chen, & Lin, 2017). Victimization has also been positively correlated with becoming a perpetrator (Baillien, De Cuyper, & De Witte, 2011; Burton & Hoobler, 2011). One model has theorized that workplace victimization may become cyclical, leading to repeat offenders, repeat victims, and retaliatory victims-turned-perpetrators (Aquino & Lamertz, 2004). This study seeks to supplement the evidence that being a victim at work will affect future behavior of the victim (Aryee, Sun, Chen, & Debrah, 2007; Balducci, Cecchin, & Fraccaroli, 2012; Hon & Lu, 2016; Mawritz, Mayer, Hoobler, Wayne, & Marinova, 2012; Nielsen & Einarsen, 2012).

Furthermore, meta-analytic research has also shown a link between Dark Triad personality characteristics (narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy; (Paulhus & Williams, 2002)) and CWB (O'Boyle, Forsyth, Banks, & McDaniel, 2012). This study also will examine whether the Dark Triad moderates the relationship between victimization and CWB committed by the original victims.

H1: Perceived workplace victimization will positively correlate with CWB both (a) against other individuals in the workplace and (b) against the organization.

H2: Perceived workplace victimization will negatively correlate with OCB, both (a) towards individuals and (b) towards the organization.

H3: Subclinical narcissism will positively moderate the relationship between perceived workplace victimization and both (a) interpersonal CWB and (b) organizational CWB.

H4: Machiavellianism will positively moderate the relationship between perceived workplace victimization and both (a) interpersonal CWB and (b) organizational CWB

H5: Subclinical psychopathy will positively moderate the relationship between perceived workplace victimization and both (a) interpersonal CWB and (b) organizational CWB.

Participants

Approximately 250 working adults (aged 18 and over) will be sampled using Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk). Exclusion criteria include being over the age of 18, currently being employed, and having English as their native language.

Materials and Procedure

To measure victimization from the viewpoint of the victim, we will use the eight-item version of the Perceived Victimization Measure (Sasso, 2013). CWB will be measured using the 10-item short version of the Counterproductive Work Behavior Checklist (Spector, Bauer, & Fox, 2010). OCB will be measured using the 10-Item short version of the Organizational Citizenship Behavior Checklist (Spector et al., 2010). To measure the Dark Triad personality traits, we will use the Short Dark Triad (Jones & Paulhus, 2014). Demographics information will also be collected. To test the relationships between these constructs, we will conduct a path analysis (Kline, 1998).

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