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## SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW: AFFECTIVE STATE AS A PREDICTOR OF COUNTERPRODUCTIVE WORK BEHAVIOUR

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### ABSTRACT

Human emotions are within-person factors that function as a stimulus of an individual's attitude and behaviour, either positively or negatively. From the organisational behaviour spectrum, concern over negative behaviour like Counterproductive Work Behaviour (CWB) is more prevalent due to tremendous negative effects on both employees and organisations. Although the impact of the affective states on CWB was empirically evident, there was an insufficient study that systematically reviewed the literature on such association. Hence, the present article adopts the PRISMA guidelines (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic reviews and Meta-Analyses) by integrating multiple research designs to investigate the emotional experiences-CWB phenomenon. The relevant literature review was selected from two established databases, Scopus and Web of Science. Based on the thematic analysis, two main themes (i.e., negative and positive affect) emerged as predictors of CWB at work. Subsequently, the sub-themes of discrete emotions were discussed as part of the study findings. In addition, this study comprehensively explained the significance of affective states on CWB. As a result, the study offers valuable insight into the body of knowledge and practical implementation for future strategies. The key takeaway is that creating more positive events and eliminating negative events

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are expected to be beneficial in elevating employees' emotional well-being, hence reducing CWB occurrence.

**Keywords:** *Systematic Literature Review, Affective State, Discrete Emotions, Counterproductive Work Behaviour*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Counterproductive Work Behaviour (CWB) refers to purposeful behaviours that harm organisations or their members, which may cause financial losses and lessen employees' psychological well-being and morale. Resulting of the emerging research relating to affectivity in the workplace, researchers have begun to investigate how individuals' emotions and moods influence acts of CWB (e.g., Zhang, Crant, & Weng, 2019; Thompson & Bruk-Lee, 2021). According to Affective Events Theory (AET), specific work events are antecedents of affective reactions and behaviours. As empirically evident, negative affective experiences at work were positively linked to CWB and somehow could lead to a more severe CWB. In contrast, the positive emotions that are mapped with the notions of autonomous motivation (Wang, 2018) could mitigate the CWB occurrence. Undoubtedly, emotional experiences at work could positively and negatively impact how people function. Therefore, a deep understanding of the role of affective states in defining CWB at work could resort to more effective intervention strategies. Thus far, various studies have been conducted to analyse the role of affective states in persuading CWB at work (e.g., Paciello, Fida, Tramontano, Ghezzi, & Barbaranelli, 2019; Jahanzeb, Fatima, & De Clercq, 2020; Thompson & Bruk-Lee, 2021). However, there has been little effort to analyse these studies systematically, discover trends, and generate prospective themes on this dysfunctional behaviour. Notably, the review procedures have not been effectively handled, including identification, screening, and eligibility. Traditional literature reviews have several concerns with regard to transparency and bias. Many authors will simply select articles in favour of their topic of interest (Mohamed Shaffril, Samsuddin, & Abu Samah, 2021). As a result, future scholars would face a significant challenge in replicating the study, validating the interpretations, or examining the study's comprehensiveness under such a system. Given this vacuum in the literature, the current study attempts to undertake an SLR that focuses on the affective states-CWB relations. The authors were guided in their work by the major study question, "What are the roles of the affective states in defining CWB at work?". The authors' empirical results can be justified using this approach to identify gaps and suggest the direction of future research in this field.

## 2 METHODOLOGY

The PRISMA Statement (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic reviews and Meta-Analyses) guided the current review. PRISMA is often utilised in studying affective states (Zurriaga, González-Navarro, & Buunk, 2020) and employee work behaviour stream (Tagliabue, Sigurjonsdottir, & Sandaker, 2020). The PRISMA Statement allows for the rigorous search of terms related to affective states-CWB phenomenon and coded information in future organisational behaviour reviews. The SLR process began with formulating the research questions applying the PICO method; 'P' for Problem or Population, 'I' for Interest, and 'Co' for Context (Lockwood,

Munn, & Porritt, 2015). Next, the document searching strategy was planned and conducted according to three systematic phases: identification, screening, and eligibility (Mohamed Shaffril et al, 2021). The formulated research questions produced two main keywords: affective states and CWB. Several keywords similar to the affective state, including feelings and emotions, were checked based on this process to enrich these keywords. These keywords were combined using search functions, such as field code functions, phrase searching, wildcards, truncation, and Boolean operators in two databases: Scopus and Web of Science (see Table 1). The search efforts identified about 564 potential articles from the selected databases. The screening was the second procedure carried out where articles were either included or excluded (with the assistance of the database or manually screened by the authors) from the study based on a specific set of criteria (see Table 2). A total of 344 articles were excluded from the review during this stage since they were not in line with the inclusion requirement. This resulted in 220 remaining articles for evaluation in the subsequent stage. Then, the authors manually checked the remaining papers to identify them (either by reading the title, abstract, or the entire document). Seventy articles were excluded during the title screening state, and during the abstract screening stage, 101 articles were removed. Another ten articles were excluded after the authors read the content of the selected articles. In total, 181 articles were removed in this stage. Somehow, they did not focus on affective states, and CWB was in the form of a review paper and was science-based. The final number of articles for the further appraisal stage was 39. Lastly, the selected articles were processed through several stages, data extraction and data analysis. The data extraction process was guided by the primary research question, while the qualitative data synthesis (thematic analysis) was performed in analysing the extracted data (see Figure 1).

**Table 1.** Search string used in the selected database

Database	String
Scopus	TITLE-ABS-KEY ( ( "affective state*" OR "emotion*" OR "feeling*" ) AND ( "counterproductive work behavio*" ) )
Web of Science	(TS= ( ( "affective state*" OR "emotion*" OR "feeling*" ) AND ( "counterproductive work behavio*" ) )

**Table 2.** Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Criterion	Inclusion	Exclusion
Timeline	2017–2022	2016 and earlier
Subject area	behavioural science, social science, psychology, management, and ethics	Other than the inclusion criteria
Document type	Articles (with empirical data)	Review article, chapter in a book, book, etc
Language	English	Non-English

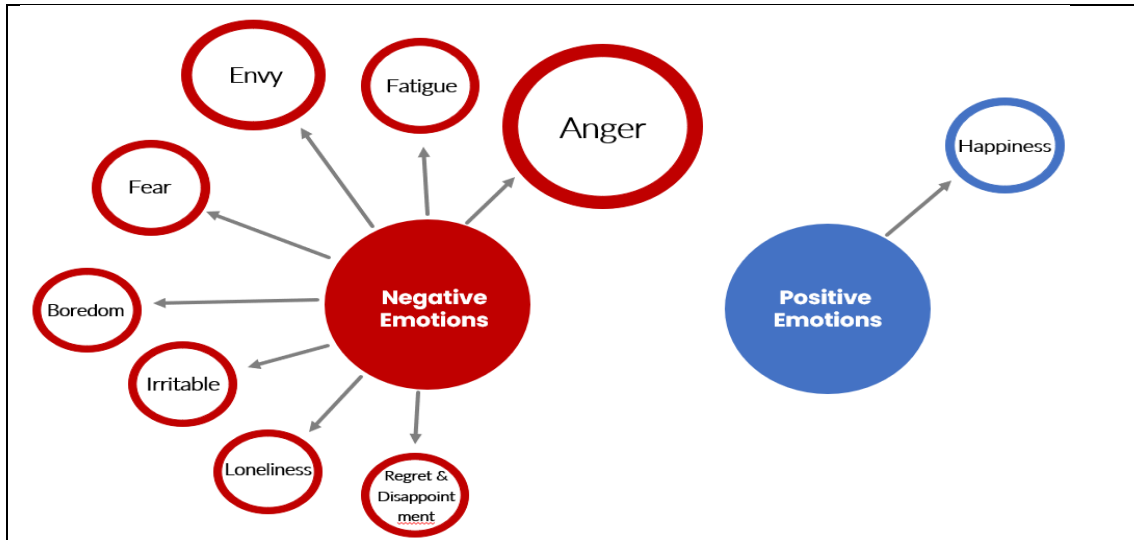


Figure 1. The themes and the sub-themes

### 3 RESULT

#### 3.1 Background of the selected studies

The country of research affiliation of the selected studies is presented in Figure 2. The year of publication is exhibited in Figure 3. Meanwhile, Figure 4 indicates the research design for data collection employed by the selected studies.

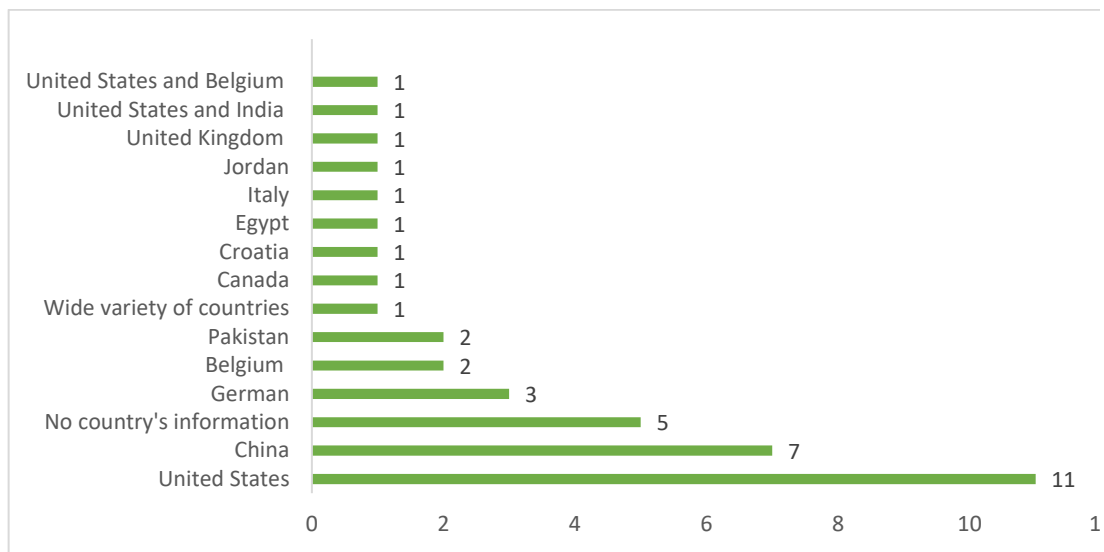


Figure 2. Country of research affiliation of the selected studies

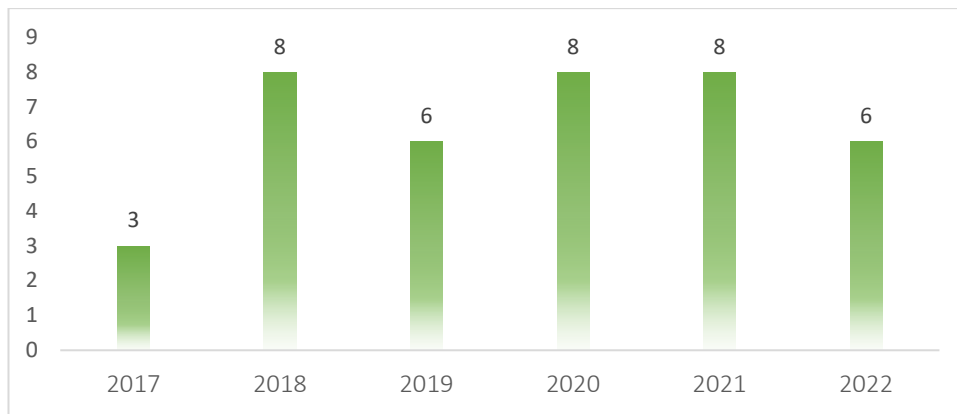


Figure 3. Year of publication

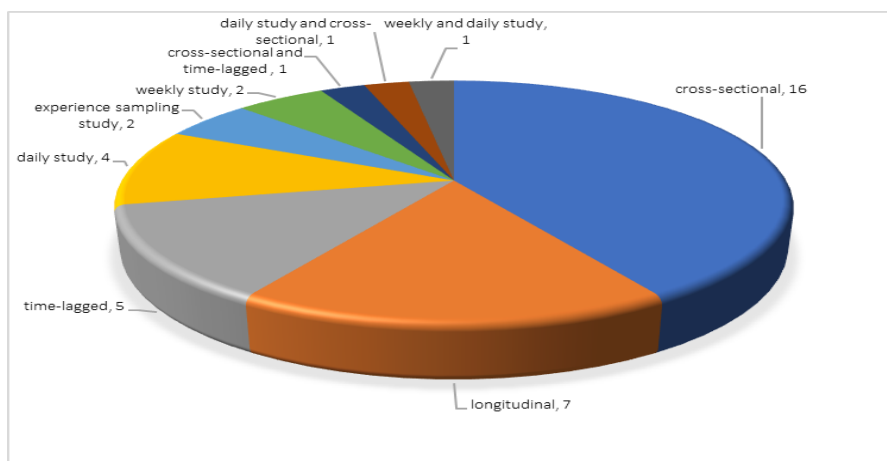


Figure 4. The research design employed by the selected studies

### 3.2 The developed themes - The Affective States' Effect on Counterproductive Work Behaviour

The thematic analysis was undertaken on 39 selected articles resulting in two main themes: (1) Negative Affect and (2) Positive Affect. These two themes further produced nine sub-themes. Based on the results, two themes and nine sub-themes provided answers to the main research question of this SLR, “What are the roles of the affective states in defining CWB at work?”. The themes and sub-themes of the selected studies are explained in the following section.

#### Negative Affect (NA) and Discrete Negative Emotions

The direct effect of NA on CWB can be observed through pieces of empirical evidence. For example, Lin and Johnson (2018) found that high activation of negative emotions is positively linked to deviant behaviour and withdrawal. Likewise, Krishnakumar, Hopkins, and Robinson (2017) revealed that employees with a high degree of job NA and low emotional intelligence showed the highest levels of CWB. Note that the upshift in NA outside work, on the other hand, did not affect CWB the next day (Qu, Yao, & Liu, 2021). Comparably the experience of negative emotions has no positive lagged relationship with CWB. Specifically, workers reporting high negative emotions did not report an increase in CWB at the following measurement occasion (De Longis, Alessandri, Sonnentag, & Kuppens, 2022). Despite the direct effect that NA placed on CWB, mostly NA was also found to be a mediator between eliciting events and CWBs (Dahling, 2017; Griep & Vantilborgh, 2018; Navarro-Carrillo, Beltrán-Morillas, Valor-Segura, & Expósito, 2018; Zhang, Mayer, & Hwang, 2018; Zhang et al, 2019; Dalal, Alaybek, Sheng, Holland, &

Tomassetti, 2020; Griep, Vantilborgh, & Jones, 2020; Naeem, Weng, Ali, & Hameed, 2020; Reynolds Kueny, Francka, Shoss, Headrick, & Erb, 2020; Richard, Young, Walsh, & Giumetti, 2020; Schilbach, Baethge, & Rigotti, 2020; Wang & Xiao, 2021; Griep, Hansen, & Kraak, 2022; Thomas et al, 2022). **Anger:** Anger characterised configurations showing health-related and behavioural problems (e.g., CWB) (Paciello et al, 2019). In a prior study, Fida et al (2018) claimed that sadness is only associated with health symptoms, whereas anger is related to health and misbehaviour. Another important finding indicated that anger elicited CWBs when employees dealt with unfair events (Barclay & Kiefer, 2019). The majority of the study suggested anger as a significant mediator in the affective events-CWB relations. For example, Andel, Pindak, and Arvan (2022) revealed that anger mediated the relationship between Perceived overqualification (POQ) and abuse. Further, Wang and Xiao (2021) indicate that the indirect effect of daily abusive supervision on daily supervisor-directed deviance mainly occurs due to anger. Anger in another study mediated the relationship between lower quality leader-member relations and CWB. However, self-control moderates the anger-CWB link. The anger-CWB relation will be more substantial in people lower in self-control than individuals higher in self-control (Newton & Perlow, 2021). In addition, the indirect effect of supervisors' contempt, anger, and disgust (CAD) on subordinates' CWBs worked through subordinates' CAD (Li, Law, & Yan, 2019). Furthermore, Jahanzeb et al (2020) asserted that workplace bullying spurs interpersonal and organisational deviance because it prompts feelings of anger in employees. Meanwhile, the indirect effect of implicit aggressiveness on CWBs via workplace anger was significant for self-reported CWBs. Further, the indirect effect of implicit hostility on workplace anger through self-reported CWBs was also significant (Ružojčić, Galić, & Jerneić, 2021). Despite that, organisational politics (POP) perceptions were positively related to hostility (classified as anger) and CWB. Moreover, hostility mediated the relationships between POP and organisational and interpersonal CWB (Meisler, Drory, & Vigoda-Gadot, 2019). Another result showed that within individuals, daily illegitimate tasks positively predicted next-day CWB, and the relationship was mediated by daily end-of-work anger (Zhou, Eatough, & Wald, 2018). **Envy:** Shousha's (2020) study demonstrated a significant negative correlation between contextual performance and perceived workplace envy, whereas CWB was positively associated with perceived workplace envy. Besides, the results from multiple-regression analysis indicated that the three proposed antecedents (i.e. neuroticism, conscientiousness and perceived competitiveness) significantly predict workplace envy. Further, workplace envy significantly predicts CWB (Ghadi, 2018). Likewise, leader narcissism is positively related to followers' negative emotions (i.e., malicious envy), mediating the positive relationship between leader narcissism and supervisor-targeted CWB (Braun, Aydin, Frey, & Peus, 2018). **Fatigue:** Another important finding is that citizenship fatigue mediated the relationship between Organisational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) and CWB, while perceived organisational support (POS) moderated the relationship between OCB and citizenship fatigue. In addition, POS moderates the mediating effect of citizenship fatigue in the inverted U-shaped curvilinear relationship between OCB and CWB. This mediating effect is more robust under conditions of low POS than high POS (Xu et al, 2021). Likewise, experienced patient incivility is indirectly related to increased future incivility towards patients through increased compassion fatigue (Thomas et al, 2022). **Fear:** One interesting finding is that fear-characterised configurations show health-related and behavioural problems, including CWB (Paciello et al, 2019). In line with discrete emotions

literature, sadness is only linked with health symptoms, but fear is related to health and misbehaviour (Fida et al, 2018). **Boredom:** The current study found that boredom significantly mediated the cyberloafing and POQ relationship. Task crafting moderated the indirect effect of POQ on cyberloafing behaviours through boredom, such that the indirect effect will be weaker (vs stronger) when task crafting is higher (vs lower) (Andel et al, 2022). **Irritability:** The moderated mediation analysis revealed that when the external motivation for proactivity was high, proactivity led to increased irritability and rumination; irritability was, in turn, related to withdrawal (Pingel, Fay, & Urbach, 2019). **Loneliness:** Becker, Belkin, Tuskey, and Conroy (2022) hypothesised that there would be indirect effects of work-related loneliness through emotional exhaustion on minor CWB, depression, and insomnia. However, they only found support for the indirect effect of work-related loneliness through emotional fatigue on depression, but not CWB or insomnia. **Regret & Disappointment:** Disappointment had a significant and positive link with work withdrawal, whereas regret did not. Besides, the relative importance analysis also suggested that regret and disappointment did not significantly differ in their relations with CWBs (Howard & Smith, 2021).

#### Positive Affect (PA) and Discrete Positive Emotions

According to Littman-Ovadia, Lavy, and Boiman-Meshita (2017), PA mediated the association between strengths use (signature strengths, lowest strengths, and happiness strengths) and all work-related outcomes (work meaningfulness, engagement, job satisfaction, performance, OCB, and CWBs), when each was examined separately. However, when uses of the three kinds of strengths were examined together, PA mediated the effects of lowest strengths, and happiness strengths use, but not the effects of signature strengths use. Although, when PA is higher than NA could lead to a lower level of CWB (Lan, Mao, Peng, & Wang, 2021). Surprisingly, the shift in PA outside of work did not mitigate the shift in NA outside of work and CWB interactions the next day (Qu et al, 2021). **Happiness:** General well-being, representing employees' perceptions of their current mental state of happiness, anxiety, and depression, has significantly negatively impacted CWB. In contrast, feelings of unhappiness are significantly related to CWB (Soroya, Sarwar, & Soroya, 2022). Note that high job demands decreased employee happiness, increasing employees' CWBs (Thompson & Bruk-Lee, 2021).

## 4 DISCUSSION

Thus far, most CWB studies have investigated the relationship between external factors (i.e., organisational and between-person) and CWB. However, the affective states, a within-person factor, also play a significant role in associating eliciting events-CWB relations (e.g., Zhang et al, 2019; Jahanzeb et al, 2020). In line with the AET propositions, the growing body of evidence established various workplace events as a primary cause of employees' affective states (positive and negative). Accordingly, the empirical evidence supports the notion that both negative and positive emotions significantly influenced CWB through positive and negative interaction. General affect entails various discrete emotions, and the impact of these emotions are not identical to one another. They carry different implications on employees' behaviour, including CWB (e.g., Fida et al, 2018; Howard & Smith, 2021). Therefore, understanding the influence of each discrete

emotion might be useful in addressing this dysfunctional behaviour. Based on the current review, general NA is the most frequent affective state that has been studied. Whereas discrete emotions, including boredom, irritability, loneliness, regret-disappointment, and happiness, have received little attention from researchers. It is important to note that other negative emotions (e.g., Shousha, 2020; Paciello et al, 2019) and positive emotions (e.g., Lan et al, 2021; Soroya et al, 2022) also exhibited significant direct and indirect relations with CWB. Although NA is more influential in defining the CWB prevalence at work. It appears that positive affect (PA) also plays a significant role in addressing this dysfunctional behaviour. Moreover, Lan et al (2021) highlighted that when PA is higher than NA, it leads to a higher level of job satisfaction and a lower level of CWB than when NA is higher than PA. Given this situation, it can be noted that despite the effort to address NA, the role of PA should not be side-lined to lessen the effect of emotions on CWB. In reviewing the buffering mechanism, it emerges that negative emotion inertia increased employees' tendency to enact in CWB (De Longis et al, 2022). Despite that, employees' attributing blame to the organisation and supervisor could motivate them to engage in CWB targeted at organisation and supervisor, respectively (Griep et al, 2022). In contrast, employee perceptions concerning the organisation's extent of CWB tolerance could buffer the link between negative affect and CWB (Dalal et al, 2020). Despite the individual factor, ethical climates, including instrumental and caring climates, are also significant in moderating the negative emotions and CWB relationship (Wang & Xiao, 2021). Another interesting finding is that building positive resources via learning new things at work could be more beneficial in overcoming negative emotions and deviance in distressing workplace settings (Zhang et al, 2018). Meanwhile, self-control (Newton & Perlow, 2021), POS (Xu et al, 2021), and task crafting (Andel et al, 2022), significantly buffered employees' affective state-CWB relationship. Finally, the studies' background information analysis depicted a relevant contextual gap. Thus far, relatively few investigations have been carried out in ASEAN countries. Hence, it raises the question of whether the cultural background predicts CWB. Additionally, most studies utilised a self-reporting mechanism that leads to common method bias like social desirability.

## 5 CONCLUSION

The primary question addressed in this systematic review is the role of the affective states in influencing CWB at work. Based on the review of the selected articles, two main themes emerged, namely NA and PA, with an additional nine sub-themes comprising envy, anger, fatigue, fear, boredom, irritability, loneliness, regret & disappointment, and happiness. These affective states and their discrete emotions significantly influenced CWB at work. In most cases, they play a significant role in mediating the relationship between eliciting events and CWB. As a result of answering this research question, this article contributes to the respective literature in numerous aspects. First, previous studies tend to concentrate on negative emotions since positive emotions are less distinguishable in defining the CWB occurrence. NA and anger are the most frequent emotional states that have been studied to predict CWB. As a result, this study provides insight into the direct and indirect effects of other discrete emotions (positive and negative) on the CWB. Second, this study sheds light on moderating variables useful in weakening or strengthening the affective states-CWB relation. Third, the analysis of the background information of the selected



studies could provide insight into the contextual and theoretical gap. Although this study met its primary objective, this study is not excluded from its downsides. As previously mentioned, it is explicitly focused on AET as a descriptive framework for describing the affective states that influence employees' CWB. Thus, we see various alternative theoretical explanations for the proposed model that might assist inform future research. Furthermore, the searches only included articles published in English between 2017 – 2022. Additionally, this study solely included empirical studies based on two databases (Scopus and WOS) to provide scholars with an overview of recent investigations as a foundation for future research. Despite the flaws, the results of this study emphasise the importance of systematic reviews in furthering our understanding of affective states-CWB relation.

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