

Personality and Counterproductive Work Behavior: The Mediating Role of Job Stress Kepribadian dan Perilaku Kerja Kontraproduktif: Peran Mediasi Stres Kerja

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Article Info:

Received : 22-04-2025

Revise : 14-11-2025

Accepted : 19-11-2025

Published : 27-11-2025

Abstract :

Counterproductive work behavior is often associated with job stress, which tends to be more easily experienced by employees with certain personalities. This study aims to see the relationship between personality and counterproductive work behavior mediated by job stress. The subjects of the study were 147 employees in the Pekanbaru government offices. Data collection was carried out from October 9 to November 22, 2024, in one data collection. Data were collected using the IPIP-BFM-50 Scale, the Counterproductive Work Behavior Checklist for counterproductive behavior and the job stress scale. Results showed that job stress fully mediated the relationship between extraversion and counterproductive work behavior ($p = 0.008$, $Z = -2.668$) and partially mediated neuroticism ($p < .001$, $Z = 3.409$). While agreeableness, conscientiousness and openness to experience were not related to counterproductive work behavior. The implication of this finding is providing an overview for human resource management to consider personality in employees, placing them in job with certain stressful conditions and also can determine the right program to manage job stress so as to minimize counterproductive behavior.

Keywords:

Personality, job stress,
counterproductive work
behavior

How To Cite : Cucuani, H., & Ramadhani, I. (2025). Personality and Counterproductive Work Behavior: The Mediating Role of Job Stress. MOTIVA: JURNAL PSIKOLOGI, 8(2), 234-244. <https://doi.org/10.31293/mv.v8i2.8636>

1. Introduction

Counterproductive work behavior, as behavior that violates rules becomes a barrier to achieving the desired working conditions. Counterproductive work behavior has a negative impact because it can harm the organization and the people involved in it, and can spread (Gualandri, 2012; Mercado et al., 2017). Moreover, if these behaviors are carried out by people who have influence and shape the work climate and culture.

Counterproductive work behavior is often referred as workplace deviance (Mercado et al., 2017), which included all acts of violation that are detrimental or intended to harm the organization or the people within it (clients, coworkers, consumers and superiors) (Spector & Fox, 2005). The forms of counterproductive work behavior are diverse. Spector et al., (2006) explained that in general counterproductive work behavior included product deviance, sabotage, withdrawal, thief and abuse against others. However, based on the target, counterproductive work behavior is divided into counterproductive work behavior directly aimed at the organization, such as stealing organizational assets, shortening work hours, using work materials wastefully, and counterproductive behavior aimed at other individuals, such as making fun of, belittling, spreading gossip, and acting aggressively towards coworkers (Fox et al., 2001; Gualandri, 2012).

Counterproductive work behaviors as described above still often occur among employees in government offices, including in Pekanbaru City. The Indonesian Ombudsman for Riau reported that during 2022, 131 reports of alleged maladministration were recorded, included delays in completing tasks, violates the procedures and asks for bribe such as money, goods or services, most of which were related to local governments (Putra, 2023). Previous studies have linked counterproductive work behavior to job stress (Asif & Hassan, 2024; Fida et al., 2015; Horan, 2016; Penney & Spector, 2005; Rahmadhani & Cucuani, 2024; Tyas & Nabila, 2023). The job stressor-emotion model developed by Spector & Fox (2005) explained that pressure in the workplace evoked negative emotions such as

<https://doi.org/10.31293/mv.v8i2.8636>



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anger and anxiety which then make them coped by scolding, taking aggressive actions, destroying and avoiding other places or people in the workplace. Therefore, counterproductive work behavior can be caused by job stress.

High job stress on employees can occur when there is work pressure but with limited resources such as time and energy, complex family problems, technological developments, financial problems and others (Muafi, 2015). Job stress is a dynamic condition in which individuals face opportunities, constraints, or demands related to what they wanted but the results were perceived as uncertain but important. Robbins & Judge (2013) explained that job stress was manifested in three symptoms, namely physical symptoms such as increased heart rate, blood pressure, headaches and heart problems, psychological symptoms including anxiety, sensitivity, procrastination and boredom, and behavioral symptoms such as decreased productivity, absenteeism, alcohol consumption, eating problems and others. Meanwhile, stress can be caused by various things, including those originating from personal, such as personality.

While employees in the workplace may share the same experience, their interpretations and responses can differ significantly. A situation can cause stress with varying intensities for each employees due to their different dispositions. Previous researchers have explained job stress through employee personality (Asif & Hassan, 2024; Bisht & Mahajan, 2021; Robbins & Judge, 2013). Personality is a concept discussed in cases of job stress because it explains how individuals assess a situation as dangerous, threatening, or challenging (Pollak et al., 2020).

Big five personality is a personality concept that is considered the most common by many researchers (Pollak et al., 2020). Costa & McCrae (2008) explained five dimensions of personality consisting of neuroticism, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness and openness to experience. Individuals with a predisposition towards one dimension will assess a situation and react differently than those with a different predisposition. This also applies to situations that cause job stress and how individuals behave in response to their assessment.

Research on this topic is still rarely found in previous studies. Job stress has been tested as a mediator in the relationship between narcissistic personality and counterproductive behavior (Asif & Hassan, 2024). Other studies have attempted to explain the role of neuroticism personality as a moderator of job stress and counterproductive work behavior (Rahmadhani & Cucuani, 2024). Based on the explanation above, in this study, it is hypothesized that job stress mediates the relationship between personality and counterproductive work behavior.

2. Methods

This study is a quantitative, cross-sectional, correlational study that aims to see the relationship between the variables studied. Based on the time of data collection, this study is a cross-sectional study because all data are taken once at the same time. There are three major variables in this study, where counterproductive work behavior is the dependent variable, personality as the independent variable and job stress as the mediator variable. This study will examine the relationship between variables and further identify the influence of personality on counterproductive work behavior both directly and indirectly (mediated by job stress). Therefore, the researchers conducted a correlation test using Spearman's Rho because the research data was not normally distributed and continued with path analysis to identify the magnitude of the influence of personality and the mediating role of stress on counterproductive work behavior. The analysis in this study was carried out with the help of the JASP 0.18.3 statistical application.

The research participants were Pekanbaru City government office employees obtained through nonprobability sampling. There were 147 employees who were willing to be participants, consisting of 88 (60%) women and the rest were men. Participants ranged in age from 25 to 60 years, with the 40-49 age category being the largest (40%). This number exceeds the minimum sample size calculated using G-power, with an effect size of 0.4 (Rahmadhani, 2024), an alpha error probability of 0.05, and a power of 0.95.

The research data was obtained through three instruments. The first one was the counterproductive work behavior checklist developed by Spector et al., (2006) and adapted for Indonesians by Cucuani (2022). Job stress was measured using a scale developed by Wulansari & Wijono (2020) based on three dimensions of job stress (Robbins & Judge, 2013). While the five-

<https://doi.org/10.31293/mv.v8i2.8636>



dimensional personality is measured through the The IPIP-BFM-50 adapted by Akhtar & Azwar (2019), based on (Goldberg et al., 2006). The data obtained through these instruments were then analyzed using a mediation path analysis test with the JASP 0.18.3 statistical program.

3. Result

Before conducting the hypothesis test, the following present the results of the descriptive statistical analysis of the research data:

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics, Normality and Alpha's Cronbach Reliability

Variables	Total Item	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Alpha's Cronbach Reliability	Shapiro-Wilk	P-value
Ext	8	10	31	10.415	3.098	0.671	0.971	0.004
Agree	6	14	24	18.714	2.344	0.719	0.928	< .001
Cons	8	14	32	23.673	3.630	0.772	0.968	0.002
Nrtc	8	9	32	20.639	4.288	0.828	0.979	0.022
OpEx	6	11	24	18.272	2.417	0.727	0.953	< .001
CWB	12	12	35	13.156	5.028	0.733	0.868	< .001
Stress	34	52	115	82.939	13.282	0.906	0.988	0.245

Note: Ext= extraversion, Agree= Agreeableness, Cons= Conscientiousness, Nrtc= Neurotic, OpEx= Openness to experience, CWB= counterproductive work behavior, Stree= Job stress. Copy from JASP Team (2024). JASP (Version 0.18.3).

Based on the data above, it is known that almost all variable data is not normally distributed except for job stress . To see the relationship between variables, the following is a correlation matrix of the variables studied based on the Spearman's Rho Test:

Table 2. Correlation Matrix

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Extraversion	-						
2. Agreeableness	0.499***	-					
3. Conscientiousness	0.060	0.190*	-				
4. Neurotic	-0.056	0.137	-0.534***	-			
5. Openness to to experience	0.463***	0.658***	0.033	0.308***	-		
6. Counterproductive behavior	-0.263***	0.004	-0.133	0.308***	0.046	-	
7. Job Stress	-0.172*	0.017	0.059	0.388***	-0.055	0.425***	-

Note: n=147, * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001. Copy from JASP Team (2024). JASP (Version 0.18.3) [Computer software].

Hypothesis testing was conducted to see the influence of personality on counterproductive work behavior both directly and mediated by job stress . To conduct the mediation test, only extroversion and neuroticism personalities are eligible for the mediation test based on the results of the correlation test of each personality type and counterproductive work behavior (Baron & Kenny, 1986). The mediation test will be conducted using the Maximum Likelihood estimator. Since the data is not normally distributed, the researchers uses a 5000 bootstrap with the bias-corrected percentile type. The following are the results of the path analysis test of extraversion on counterproductive work behavior with job stress as a mediator:

Table 3. Path Coefficients of Neuroticism, Job stress and Counterproductive Work Behavior

	Estimate	Srd. Error	z-value	p	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower	Upper
Job Stress → Counterproductive Work Behavior	0.409	0.076	5.420	< .001	0.245	0.558
Extraversion → Counterproductive Work Behavior	-0.045	0.026	-1.776	0.076	-0.096	0.008
Extraversion → Job Stress	-0.083	0.027	-3.065	0.002	-0.137	-0.022
Direct effect	-0.045	0.026	-1.776	0.076	-0.096	0.008
Indirect effect	-0.034	0.013	-2.668	0.008	-0.065	-0.011
Total effect	-0.079	0.027	-2.923	0.003	-0.127	-0.029

Based on Table 3, the extraversion path to job stress shows a negative influence, meaning that the higher the level of extraversion, the lower the job stress. Job stress path to counterproductive work behavior shows a significant influence in a positive direction, meaning that The lower stress, the lower the counterproductive work behavior. Meanwhile, there is no direct influence of extraversion to counterproductive work behavior. Based on the mediation path test, it is known that the influence of extraversion to counterproductive work behavior through job stress is significant ($p = 0.008$) with an estimate of -0.034 and Z-value of -2.668. Furthermore, the results of the path analysis test of Neuroticism to counterproductive work behavior with job stress as a mediator are presented:

Table 4. Path Coefficients of Neuroticism, Job stress and Counterproductive Work Behavior

	Estimate	Srd. Error	z-value	p	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower	Upper
Job Stress → Counterproductive Work Behavior	0.327	0.081	4.050	< .001	0.147	0.486
Neuroticism → Counterproductive Work Behavior	0.055	0.018	3.067	0.002	0.023	0.089
Neuroticism → Job Stress	0.102	0.016	6.316	< .001	0.064	0.133
Direct effect	0.055	0.018	3.067	0.002	0.023	0.089
Indirect effect	0.033	0.010	3.409	< .001	0.015	0.056
Total effect	0.088	0.017	5.281	< .001	0.058	0.116

Based on Table 4, the neuroticism path to job stress shows a positive influence, meaning that the higher the level of neuroticism, the higher the job stress, and job stress path to counterproductive work behavior shows a significant influence in a positive direction, meaning that high stress causes high counterproductive work behavior. Meanwhile, there is still a direct influence of neuroticism on counterproductive work behavior, although it is relatively low. Based on the mediation path test, it is known that there is a significant influence of neuroticism on counterproductive work behavior through job stress ($p < .001$) with an estimate of 0.033 and a Z-value of 3.409.

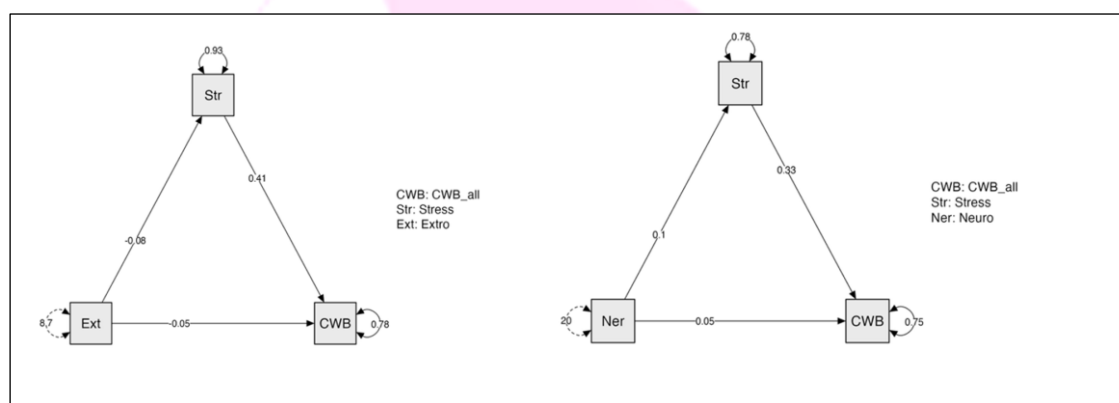


Figure 1. Path Diagram

4. Discussion

Based on the research findings presented above, this study proves that job stress has a mediating role in explaining the influence of personality on counterproductive behavior. Personality as a unique set of individual characteristics that influence how individuals think, motivated and behave in certain situations, determines the individual's adjustment to their physical and social environment (Deniz & Satici, 2017). Therefore, personality explains how employees can adapt to job demands, people in the workplace, the physical environment in the workplace and therefore influencing their assessment of the amount of pressure they feel at work. The job stress experienced from various stressors then determines the employees' responses through behavior.

This study proves that extraversion and neuroticism personality affect counterproductive work behavior through stress in different directions. Employees with an extraversion personality tendency are not less prone to stress, so the strength of this personality tendency is related to lower job stress. Individuals with extraversion personality tend to be easy going in facing difficulties, have lower assessments of daily hassles and lower levels of health risks, have many friends so they have more social support, and have better self-confidence. (Vollrath, 2001). The results of the study also showed that extraversion personality is related to problem-focus coping, so that employees with extraversion personality usually try to solve problems immediately so that job stress tends to be lower (Liong & Yeoh, 2011; Vollrath, 2001).

In other hand, employees with an neurotic personality tendency are more susceptible to stress. Vollrath (2001) explained that in various research results, neuroticism personality was a significant predictor of increased anxiety and other negative impacts in stressful conditions. Employees who have high neuroticism personality tend to have greater psychological distress and experience more negative emotions, where they are anxious, hostile, tense, irritable, and restless (Deniz & Satici, 2017). This suggests that employees with high neuroticism personality are associated with higher job stress.

Furthermore, individuals experiencing high job stress tend to have negative emotions, become more prone to aggressive behavior (potentially harming others), feel uncomfortable in the office, and may intentionally reduce their working hours and disregards work procedures. However, low job stress is associated with lower counterproductive work behavior. Individuals who are in low job stress conditions are less likely to behave negatively in the workplace. Several research results support the results of this study, where high job stress leads to high counterproductive work behavior, and vice versa (De Clercq et al., 2019; Ma & Li, 2019; Rahmadhani & Cucuani, 2024).

This study also found that in addition to explaining counterproductive behavior through job stress, correlation test showed that neuroticism personality was also directly and positively related to counterproductive work behavior. Neuroticism, characterized by tenseness, moodiness, nervousness, and anxiety, plays a role in declining work performance and is related to counterproductive work behavior, although not substantial (Mercado et al., 2017). On the contrary, this study explains that there is a negative relationship shown by extraversion personality and counterproductive work behavior. Mercado et.al explained that people with extraversion personality are reflected by the ability to socialize, assertive, and have positive emotions so that they have a negative relationship with counterproductive work behavior in general, as well as counterproductive work behavior with individual and organizational targets.

Apart from these two dimensions of big five personality, there was no relationship from agreeableness personality, conscientiousness personality and openness to experience personality. Agreeableness personality is described as a tendency to understand, empathize, care for and be able to cooperate with others, so that based on previous research agreeableness was considered a person who is cooperative, polite and far from aggression (Mercado et al., 2017). This is different from what was obtained from this study, where agreeableness was not related to counterproductive work behavior. One possible explanation is the tendency of conformity with agreeableness people in the workplace where people in it usually do counterproductive work behavior to maintain harmony. The results of the study showed that there was a strong relationship between agreeableness and value conformity (Bajrami, 2017).

Based on previous research, conscientiousness is a personality trait that has a negative relationship with counterproductive work behavior (Ismail et al., 2018; Mount & Johnson, 2006;

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Salgado, 2002). Because people with this personality tendency are people who are diligent, tenacious, and like to work hard, even when no one else is looking (Miller, 2015), so they do not commit negligence and deliberate violations of rules in the workplace. However, based on this study, conscientiousness is not significantly related to counterproductive work behavior. Other study also revealed no relationship between conscientiousness and counterproductive work behavior (Kozako et al., 2013). Therefore, as Kozako et al. suggest, the differing results in this study could be due to variations in industry, geographic area and employee perceptions of the organization.

The last dimension of the big five personality is openness to experience. Individuals high in this personality tend to be receptive to new experiences, embracing new ideas and approaches, and possessing a broad interest in unconventional thought processes (Costa & McCrae, 2008). Based on the results of previous studies, this personality had a negative correlation with counterproductive behavior in both male and female employees (Gonzalez-mule et al., 2013). While in this study no relationship was found between openness to experience and counterproductive work behavior. Individuals with an openness to experience personality are typically critical and may oppose rules they perceived as restrictive and outdated. However these individuals are also brilliant, imaginative, and broad-minded, which enables them to provide suggestions and criticisms for organizational improvement.

The differences in findings in this study compared to previous research may be due to differences in culture, organisational type, and occupation. Indonesian society, which tends to have a more collectivist culture, has a greater concern for the judgment of others and groups. This study was conducted in a government agency, where following superiors' instructions and prevailing workplace customs is considered more important for existence and career advancement than following one's conscience. A person's trait can be hampered from being realised in the form of appropriate behaviour due to a lack of positive stimuli from their environment (Cucuani et al., 2021; Tett et al., 2013, 2015).

5. Conclusion

The findings of this study indicate that job stress plays a mediating role in the influence of extraversion and neuroticism on counterproductive work behavior. Job stress mediates the influence of Extraversion (negatively) and Neuroticism (positively) on CWB. This mediation test also found that the direct path from extraversion to CWB was insignificant, while a direct relationship between Neuroticism and CWB was still found, although small. However, the other three dimensions of the big five personality, namely conscientiousness, agreeableness and openness to experience are not related to counterproductive work behavior. In addition, it is proven that the higher job stress relate with higher counterproductive work behavior in employees. This study has limitations, namely that it was conducted with a limited number of civil servants from several government agencies and did not consider situational variables in explaining counterproductive work behavior. Therefore, future research is expected to consider cultural and leadership factors and to compare results across various types of organisations. The results of this study offers valuable insights, especially for human resource management, by outlining personal and situational factors that can lead to counterproductive work behavior. Therefore, it is recommended that human resource management should consider employee personality when assigning employees for jobs particularly those with environments, characteristics and workloads that could potentially cause stress in order to prevent counterproductive work behavior. These findings provide a foundation for developing personality-based stress management programs in government institutions.

6. CRediT Authorship Contribution Statement

Each author contributed to the research and writing of this article, with the following contributions: **Hijriyati Cucuani**: Conceptualization, Data analysis, Validation, Writing – original draft, and Writing – insight & editing. **Ifi Anjely Ramadhani**: Conceptualization, Data curation, and Writing – insight & editing.

7. Declaration of Conflicting Interests

Neither of them has any financial conflicts of interest or personal relationships that could have influenced the work reported in this paper.

<https://doi.org/10.31293/mv.v8i2.8636>



8. Declaration of Generative AI and Assistive Technology in the Writing Process

The author used the AI tool Grammarly to check and edit the English structure listed in the Abstract. However, the final content has been reviewed by the author.

9. Funding

The researchers independently funded this research. This research was conducted with a student who was also researching the same theme as part of her final assignment.

10. Ethical Approval

The study reported in this article adhered to the ethical codes applicable in Indonesia for psychological research, namely the American Psychological Association (APA) Code of Ethics applicable in the United States, the Indonesian Psychological Association (HIMPSI) Code of Ethics, and Law Number 23 of 2022 concerning Psychology Education and Services for research conducted in Indonesia. Researchers uphold the rights and protect the dignity of research subjects by means of anonymity, giving and taking scales directly from research subjects. The data in this study were obtained by obtaining informed consent from the participants.

11. Acknowledgements

The researcher would like to thank to Paul E. Spector for generously granting permission to adapt the CWB-C measurement tool to the Indonesian language version so that it can be used in future research on CWB in Indonesians. We also thank the Faculty of Psychology, UIN Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau, for the support and facilities provided for several things needed in carrying out this research, especially in terms of administrative support.

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