The Light Triad and Interpersonal Counterproductive Work Behaviour: An

Exploratory Study

Anne J. Vlutters

S4589203

Department of Psychology, University of Groningen

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D.P.H Barelds

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Abstract

The present study investigated the relationships between the Light Triad personality traits (Faith in Humanity, Humanism, and Kantianism) and interpersonal counterproductive work behaviour. Previous, yet limited, research indicates that people with Light Triad characteristics would not perform CWB-I due to their kind nature. It was also expected that the Light Triad would not be related to experiences of CWB-I as a victim, as these characteristics were thought to form a buffer. Furthermore, it was investigated if the Light Triad would have additional predictive value in the relationships between self-esteem and agreeableness and CWB-I. A self-report questionnaire was filled out by 100 participants. The results indicated that there was no significant relationship between performed nor experienced CWB-I and the Light Triad, and no additional predictive value was found. The rejection of all hypotheses can be explained by a restriction of range problem, which causes an underestimation of the effect sizes and validity coefficients. Another reason was the relatively small and probably unrepresentative sample.

Keywords: Light Triad, CWB-I, self-esteem, agreeableness

De Light Triad en Contraproductief Werkgedrag: een Verkennend Onderzoek

Samenvatting

In dit onderzoek zijn de relaties tussen de Light Triad-persoonlijkheidskenmerken (Geloof in de Mensheid, Humanisme en Kantianisme) en interpersoonlijk contraproductief werkgedrag (CWB-I) onderzocht. Uit eerder onderzoek kon voorspeld worden dat mensen met Light Triad kenmerken minder CWB-I zullen vertonen door hun vriendelijke aard. Daarnaast werd verwacht dat zij ook geen slachtoffer zullen worden van CWB-I, omdat deze kenmerken een buffer zouden kunnen vormen. Verder is onderzocht of de Light Triad extra voorspellende waarde zou hebben in de relaties tussen zelfwaardering en vriendelijkheid (agreeableness) en CWB-I. Er is gebruik gemaakt van een vragenlijst die door 100 deelnemers is ingevuld. In de resultaten kwam naar voren dat er geen significante relaties waren tussen uitgevoerde of ervaren CWB-I en de Light Triad, en er werd geen extra voorspellende waarde gevonden. De verwerping van de hypothesen kan worden verklaard door een restriction of range problem, wat een onderschatting van de effectgroottes en validiteitscoëfficiënten veroorzaakt. Een andere verklaring voor het verwerpen van de hypothesen was de relatief kleine en de waarschijnlijk niet representatieve steekproef.

Trefwoorden: Light Triad, CWB-I, eigenwaarde, aangenaamheid

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In the last decades, many researchers have been interested in the dark parts of human personality in the workplace. Much is known in the literature about what are called Dark Triad personality traits, but it has to be remembered that darkness and light exist in everybody. Recently the light side of human nature has gained more attention when Kaufman et al. (2019) first mentioned the Light Triad personality traits. People who possess these characteristics will show behaviours that illustrate a positive and loving orientation toward others, instead of the manipulative, malevolent behaviours associated with the Dark Triad (Lukić & Živanović, 2021; O'Boyle et al., 2012).

People with Dark Triad traits also show these negative behaviours towards their coworkers. The Dark Triad is strongly associated with counterproductive work behaviour, or CWB, which describes, among others, behaviours that intentionally harm others in the workplace (O'Boyle et al., 2012). However, the relationship between the Light Triad and CWB is unknown at this point in time. The two Triads are contrasting in nature, so does it mean that people with Light Triad characteristics will perform less CWB, and will be more likely to be the victims instead of the perpetrators of CWB?

This research aims to gain further knowledge about the Light Triad, since it has not yet been researched extensively. The focus lies on the so-far unknown effect of the Light Triad on interpersonal CWB (CWB-I). The main research question is therefore as follows: 'What effect does scoring high on the Light Triad traits have on the performance and experience of interpersonal counterproductive work behaviour?' The current, yet limited, research on this topic will be discussed in the following sections.

The Light and Dark Triad

To understand what the main research question entails, it is important to first comprehend the meaning of the Light Triad. This fairly new concept, developed by Kaufman et al. (2019), is composed of three characteristics; Faith in Humanity, Humanism, and Kantianism. Faith in Humanity entails the belief in the fundamental goodness of others. Humanism describes the valuing of the dignity and worth of each individual. Kantianism explains that people should be treated as ends unto themselves, not mere means (Kaufman et al., 2019). The traits have a positive relationship with each other, meaning that scoring high on one trait makes a person more likely to also score high on the other (Kaufman et al., 2019).

Each trait from the Light Triad is associated with different other personality traits. According to Lukić and Živanović (2021), Faith in Humanity is linked to having higher scores in agreeableness, tolerance, honesty, emotionality and extraversion. Humanism is related to the same traits, with the addition of openness to experience. Kantianism showed a different pattern in the study by Lukić and Živanović (2021). Just like the other two traits, Kantianism was connected to honesty, but had a reverse connection to extraversion. This shows that people who score high on Kantianism are less likely to be extraverted than those who score high on Faith in Humanity or Kantianism. So, the three traits are similar to a certain degree (Faith in Humanity and Kantianism in particular), but also have some differences.

The Light Triad traits are connected to a variety of positive assets. Kaufman et al. (2019) found that individuals scoring higher on the Light Triad traits report higher satisfaction with their relationships and secure attachment styles. Many strengths are found to be related, such as higher levels of autonomy, competence, self-esteem, sense of self,

curiosity, zest, love, kindness, teamwork, forgiveness and gratitude (Kaufman et al., 2019). Overall, the Light Triad makes up the people who are considered to be the 'everyday saints'.

The contrasting image of the Light Triad is labelled the Dark Triad. It consists of three traits: Machiavellianism (manipulative tendencies, cynical view of human nature, putting expediency over principle), Psychopathy (low empathy, impulsivity, aggressiveness), and Narcissism (superiority, dominance, sense of entitlement and grandiosity; Mahmood et al., 2021; O'Boyle et al., 2012). Paulhus and Williams (2002) stated that 'individuals with these traits share a tendency to be callous, selfish, and malevolent in their interpersonal dealings.' It was found that Light Triad and Dark Triad traits have moderate negative relationships with each other, showing that they are not exact opposites of each other (Kaufman et al., 2019). Most people lean more towards the light side, but it appears that there is light and dark in everybody.

Even though they are not exact opposites, the Light and Dark Triads are still contrasting in terms of characteristics and qualities. Kaufman et al. (2019) have investigated the differences between the two and found many. Numerous dimensions of well-being and growth were more strongly connected with the Light than with the Dark Triad, showing that there is a greater quality of life for people who score higher on the Light Triad. But the Dark Triad has stronger connections to goal-getting assets than the Light Triad, as there were positive relations between the Dark Triad and bravery, assertiveness, leadership, power, achievement and self-enhancement. This shows that their contrasting profiles of human nature come with different assets.

Light Triad as Perpetrators of CWB-I

People with high scores on the Dark Triad traits are known to perform callous behaviours, also in the workplace. The Dark Triad traits, for instance, have been found to have a medium to strong connection to Counterproductive Work Behaviour, or CWB

(O'Boyle et al., 2012). CWB is defined as any voluntary behaviour that disregards organisational norms and causes the organisation or its employees harm (Robinson & Bennet, 1995; Kozako et al., 2013). These harmful behaviours in the workplace are divided into two categories, that is, targeted at the organisation (CWB-O) or other individuals (interpersonal CWB, or CWB-I; Kozako et al., 2013). Examples of these behaviours are stealing, (sexual) harassment, verbal abuse, or endangering coworkers (Robinson & Bennett, 1995). CWB's can have a serious negative impact on their victims. In this research, the focus lies on individuals, not organisations, as victims of CWB. This means that CWB-I will be investigated, not CWB-O.

The connection between the Light Triad and CWB-I has not been researched yet, as opposed to the relationship between the Dark Triad and CWB-I. It can however be assumed that people who score high on the Light Triad characteristics will not perform CWB-I, as it is mostly performed by people who are callous and manipulative, like people with high scores on the Dark Triad traits (Paulhus & Williams, 2002). People who possess Light Triad characteristics are about the opposite. They are likely to show kindness, love, and honesty, which are not in line with the callous behaviour shown in CWB-I (Kaufman, 2019; Lukić & Živanović, 2021). Their soft nature makes them unlikely to perform CWB-I.

Light Triad and Perceived CWB-I

It has become clear that people with Light Triad traits are not likely to perform CWB-I, but it remains unclear whether people with Light Triad traits are more likely to become victims. Focusing on workplace bullying, an important form of CWB-I, Zapf and Einarsen (2011) found that three characteristics of the victim make workplace bullying more likely to take place: 1) social competence and self-esteem deficits, 2) overachievement and conflict with group norms, 3) the exposed position of the victim. These characteristics can be used to investigate whether people with Light Triad traits are prone to be a victim of CWB-I, or not.

Social Competence Deficits

Low social competence, self-esteem and self-assertiveness make people more vulnerable to being exploited. In other words, when people are seen as easy targets, they are more likely to become one. It has appeared that people with Light Triad characteristics are less likely to stand up for themselves (Kaufman et al., 2019). Individuals with these characteristics show 'loving kindness' even towards people they dislike. They also have a higher likelihood of experiencing interpersonal guilt, which can make them come across as more vulnerable to manipulation and exploitation (Kaufman, 2019). Their belief that humans are naturally good can also contribute to this unlikeliness of defending themselves.

However, an important aspect of this point mentioned by Zapf and Einarsen (2011) is the lack of social competence of the victim. People who are less likely to solve conflicts are seen as easier targets than the ones who are socially capable of doing so. As stated by Rizeanu and Chraif (2021), the Light Triad is positively connected to having strong personal relationships and being empathetic towards others, which indicates that there are no deficiencies in their social competence.

Overachievement and Conflict with Group Norms

The second point from Zapf and Einarsen (2011) illustrates the overachievement and conflict with group norms. Being 'the good guys' at work can clash with the group norms and hurt the self-esteem of others in the group. The Light Triad is indeed associated with many positive work behaviours, which can cause frustration and envy in others. For example, the Light Triad is said to be connected to higher life satisfaction, more competence, more autonomy, and a tendency to be intellectually curious (Kaufman et al., 2019). All these factors make individuals with Light Triad traits more likely to succeed at work, which can create envy in others, and consequently can make them targets of CWB-I.

However, it might be the case that the Light Triad hinders people from achieving high success. Kaufman (2019) has found that the Light Triad is negatively correlated with motives for achievement and self-enhancement, despite the competencies mentioned above. As said before, they also have a greater sense of interpersonal guilt (Kaufman, 2019). This may refrain them from reaching success, as they experience guilt when they succeed while others are not. This makes them not clash with group norms and less likely to become a victim.

Exposed Position of the Victim

The last point by Zapf and Einarsen (2011) explains that people who differ from others are more vulnerable to exclusion. They state that having a weaker social network, and therefore less social support, makes it easier for bullies to socially exclude someone, especially when the person is seen as 'one of them' instead of 'one of us'. However, Kaufman (2019) states that people with Light Triad characteristics have strong social ties and relationships, indicating that they do have social support. Their positive loving orientation towards others, as mentioned by Lukić & Živanović (2021), and well-exposed position make it less likely that they get to be scapegoats.

All in all, even with the guidance of the established framework by Zapf and Einarsen (2011), the effect of the Light Triad on CWB-I victimisation is under debate. Some signs point in the direction that they will be more likely to become victims, whereas others sign that the Light Triad will be a buffer against CWB-I. After weighing the evidence, a stronger case can be made for the latter point, as people with Light Triad characteristics have a well-exposed position, strong social skills, and debatable overachievement and conflict with group norms.

The Connection between Self-Esteem, Agreeableness and Perceived CWB-I

Self-esteem is another variable that can play a role in buffering one from becoming a victim of CWB-I. Zapf and Einarsen (2011) mentioned that lower self-esteem makes a person

more likely to become a bully victim. This was also found by Iglesias and Vallejo (2012) in a sample of nurses. Furthermore, Van Geel et al. (2018) showed in their studies that low self-esteem increased the chances of peer victimisation in young adolescents.

Thus, it seems that having low self-esteem makes a person more likely to be a victim. People with Light Triad traits actually have higher average self-esteem scores (Rizeanu & Chraif, 2021). Kaufman (2019) added that they are also found to be more authentic and have a more heightened sense of self. Taking this into consideration, they are less likely to fall victim to CWB-I due to this certainty in their worth and abilities. These findings show that possessing both high self-esteem and the Light Triad traits might form an extra buffer.

Being agreeable can protect one from becoming a victim of CWB-I as well. It has been found by Janošová et al. (2018) that agreeableness was a unique predictor of defending behaviour against bullying in early adolescents. Nielsen and Knardahl (2015) encountered the same finding in a sample of working adults. Furthermore, Podsiadly and Gamian-Wilk (2017) have found in their studies that victims of workplace bullying are less agreeable than others, instead of more agreeable.

Thus, agreeableness can form a buffer against CWB-I, just like the Light Triad is expected to be. Agreeableness and the Light Triad characteristics have been found to be positively related to each other (Kaufman et al., 2019; Lukić & Živanović, 2021). Possessing a combination of the two might therefore form an extra buffer against perceived CWB-I over both characteristics on their own.

Current Research

In the previous sections, the connections between the Light Triad and CWB-I, both as perpetrator and victim, have been explained. It has become clear that the people who possess Light Triad traits are unlikely to become perpetrators of CWB-I, due to their kind nature. Next, it was shown that the information about the connection between the Light Triad and

CWB-I victimisation is somewhat contradicting, but pointing in the direction that the Light Triad might form a buffer against experiencing CWB-I. The Light Triad is also expected to have added value in the relationships between CWB-I and self-esteem and agreeableness.

The current research will explore these findings to increase the understanding of the Light Triad. The following hypotheses have been formulated:

H1: There is a negative relationship between the Light Triad and the performance of CWB-I.

H2: There is a negative relationship between the Light Triad and the experience (that is, being the victim) of CWB-I.

H3: There is a negative relationship between self-esteem and the experience of CWB-I.

H4: The Light Triad has added predictive value to the relationship between self-esteem and experienced CWB-I.

H5: There is a negative relationship between agreeableness and the experience of CWB-I.

H6: The Light Triad has added predictive value in the relationship between agreeableness and experienced CWB-I.

Method

Participants and Procedure

A convenience sampling method was used to gather the data. The researcher posted a request on their social media platforms to fill out the questionnaire on the website Qualtrics. Others were approached via a direct message. They were informed shortly about the topic and asked if they would be willing to fill out the 10-minute-long questionnaire. This research was approved by the Ethical Committee of the Faculty of Behavioural and Social Sciences of the Rijksuniversiteit Groningen before the participants were contacted.

The questionnaire started with brief information about the goals and topic of the study, as well as the rights of the participant when they chose to participate. It was explicitly mentioned that a couple of scale questions touch upon the participant's undesirable traits, but

no harm would be caused and the responses would be anonymous. After reading this information they were asked to fill out the informed consent.

Next, the participants were questioned if they were over 18 years old and if they had a job. If the participant did not fulfil the requirements of the study, the questionnaire was ended and the participant was thanked for their participation. The scale items about the Light Triad, Self-Esteem, Agreeableness, Performed CWB-I, Perceived CWB-I and the Dark Triad followed for the ones who did fulfil the requirements.

The survey ended with questions about the demographics and workplace of the participant. They were also asked if they filled out the questionnaire honestly, and if they still wished to give consent for their answers to be used in the study. The participant was thanked for their participation in the end.

The data sample consisted of 155 participants. A number of 55 participants were excluded from the sample due to various reasons, such as not fulfilling the requirements for age and occupational status, not giving consent, and/or having too many missing variables. The remaining 100 participants formed the final data set, of which 40 were male and 60 female. As required, all were over 18 years of age and had a job ($M = 32.68$, $SD = 13.85$).

Measures

The participants were presented with a 10-minute long questionnaire, which was available in both English and Dutch (see the Appendix). The questionnaire measured the following variables.

Light Triad

The extent to which participants possess Light Triad characteristics was measured by the Light Triad Scale, or LTS, created by Kaufman et al. (2019). This scale consists of 12 items that measure the three facets of the Light Triad, namely Faith in Humanity (e.g. 'I tend to see the best in people'), Humanism (e.g. 'I tend to treat others as valuable'), and

Kantianism (e.g. 'I don't feel comfortable overtly manipulating people to do something I want). The items could be scored on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). The higher the score, the more the participant possesses Light Triad traits. This scale had a Lambda-2 of .56 for Faith in Humanity, .39 for Humanism and .40 for Kantianism, which are low scores of reliability according to Cohen (1992).

Performed CWB-I

The Counterproductive Work Behaviour Checklist, or CWB-C, from Spector et al. (2010) was used to measure how often the participants performed interpersonal counterproductive work behaviour. This two-dimension scale originally consists of 45 items, of which 22 were directed at a person as a target of CWB (CWB-I) and the remaining were aimed at the organisation as a target (CWB-O). The items about CWB-I were used, as only these had relevance to the current topic. The 22 items test how often the participants performed certain behaviours, for instance how often they have 'Insulted someone about their job performance' and 'Hit or pushed someone at work'. A five-point Likert scale that ranged from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*every day*) was used. The higher the score, the more a person has performed CWB-I. This scale had a Lambda-2 of .86.

Experienced CWB-I

The CWB-C by Spector et al. (2010) was adapted to measure how many times the person was the victim, instead of the perpetrator of CWB-I. This makes up a scale with 22 items that question how many times others have performed certain behaviour towards the participant, e.g. how often has a coworker 'Started or continued a damaging or harmful rumour about you at work' and 'Stole something belonging to you at work'. These could be rated with a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*every day*). The higher the score, the more experienced CWB-I. The Lambda-2 was .70.

Self-Esteem

To measure the participant's self-esteem the Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale was used (Rosenberg, 2015). It consists of 10 items about the participant's general feelings about themselves (e.g. 'On the whole, I am satisfied with myself' and 'I am able to do things as well as most other people'). These items could be rated on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree)* to 5 (*strongly agree*). A high score indicates that the participant has high self-esteem. The scale had a Lambda-2 of .82.

Agreeableness

To measure agreeableness, parts of the Big Five Inventory-2, or BFI-2, were used (Soto & John, 2017). The scale measures the Big Five personality traits in 60 items, of which 12 are aimed at agreeableness (e.g. 'I am someone who is compassionate, has a soft heart' and 'I am someone who is polite, courteous to others'). The scale makes use of a five-point Likert scale that ranges from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). A high score indicates a high level of agreeableness. A Lambda-2 of .71 was found.

Dark Triad

The Dark Triad was measured in order to see if the current data would correspond with the existing knowledge on the connection between the Light Traid and Dark Triad. This was done using the Short Dark Triad, or SD3 (Jones & Paulus, 2014). This 27-item scale is subdivided into three nine-item categories of the Dark Triad, i.e. Machiavellianism (e.g. 'I like to use clever manipulation to get my way'), Narcissism (e.g. 'I know that I am special because everyone keeps telling me so'), and Psychopathy (e.g. 'People who mess with me always regret it'). The items could be rated on a five-point Likert scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). A high score illustrates a high level of Dark Triad traits. The SD3 showed a Lambda-2 of .77 for Machiavellianism, .66 for Narcissism and .59 for Psychopathy.

Data Analysis Plan

SPSS was used to analyse the data sample. The first step was the preparation of the data, which included the recoding of negative variables, checking missing values, creating total scores and excluding the ones who did not meet the criteria. This made up for the final data set. The descriptives, frequencies and reliabilities were computed in the preliminary analysis.

Next, a linear regression analysis was performed to assess the relationship between the Light Triad and the performance and experience of CWB-I. This was done after checking for the assumptions of linearity, independence of observations, outliers, homoscedasticity and normality of residuals. To analyse if the Light Triad has added value in the relationships between self-esteem, agreeableness and the experience of CWB-I, hierarchical multiple regression was performed. The assumptions for the independence of observations, linearity, homoscedasticity, multicollinearity, outliers, and normality of residuals were checked.

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Results

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Descriptive Statistics

Table 1, as can be seen below, shows the means, and standard deviations for the Light Triad (Faith in Humanity, Humanism, Kantianism), Self-Esteem, Agreeableness, Experienced CWB-I, Dark Triad (Machiavellianism, Psychopathy, Narcissism), and Performed CWB-I. It also shows Pearson's correlations between variables. The sizes of the effects were determined according to Cohen (1992), who defined an effect size from .10 to .30 as small, from .30 to .50 as medium and above .50 as large.

It can be seen that there is a negative correlation between all three Light Triad traits and performed CWB-I. However, the effect sizes were small, namely -.11 for Faith in Humanity, -.01 for Humanism and -.13 for Kantianism. The correlation between the Light Triad and experienced CWB-I was also very small and negative for Faith in Humanity and

Humanism with scores of .06 and -.00 respectively, but positive for Kantianism, which

scored .08. The correlation between self-esteem and experienced CWB-I of -.03 was also

very small and negative. Agreeableness and experienced CWB-I had a negative and very

small correlation of -.05.

The Dark and Light Triad mostly correlated negatively with each other, as was

expected from previous literature. Machiavellianism had small to medium correlations for

Faith in Humanity with a score of -.27, a score of -.15 with Humanism and -.33 for

Kantianism. Narcissism correlated small to very small with the Light Triad traits, namely a

.08 for Faith in Humanity, a -.00 for Humanism and -.22 for Kantianism. Psychopathy had

small to very small correlations of -.15 for Faith in Humanity, -.07 for Humanism and -.25 for

Kantianism. Machiavellianism, Narcissism and Psychopathy all have a moderate positive

correlation with performed CWB-I of .44, .25 and .20, respectively. For performed CWB-I

there were small to no correlations with the Dark Triad traits, namely .17 for

Machiavellianism, -.00 for Narcissism and .12 for Psychopathy.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics and Pearson's correlation for Study Variables

Variable	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Faith in Humanity	3.64	.47	-									
2. Humanism	3.89	.40	.41**	-								
3. Kantianism	3.76	.53	.25*	.24*	-							
4. Performed CWB-I	1.07	.09	-.11	-.01	-.13	-						
5. Experienced CWB-I	1.25	.23	-.06	-.00	.08	.46**	-					
6. Self-Esteem	3.53	.46	.19	-.25*	-.03	-.06	-.03	-				
7. Agreeableness	3.85	.35	.44**	.24*	.45**	-.22*	-.05	.14	-			
8. Machiavellianism	2.72	.56	-.27**	-.15	-.33**	.44**	.17	-.13	-.53**	-		

9. Narcissism	2.73	.43	.08	-.06	-.22*	.25*	-.00	.47**	-.18	.23*	-
10. Psychopathy	2.22	.40	-.15	-.07	-.25*	.20*	.12	-.15	-.53**	.58**	.30**	-

Note. All variables have scores ranging from 1 to 5.

* $p < 0.05$

** $p < 0.01$

Regression Analysis

A linear regression analysis was performed to assess the relationship between the Light Triad and the performance of CWB-I. The assumptions of linearity, independence of observations, outliers, homoscedasticity and normality of residuals were not violated. Two potential outliers were detected, but they were kept in the sample after running the analysis with and without these respondents.

It can be seen in Table 2, none of the three Light Triad traits significantly predicts performed CWB-I (all ts between -.13 and -1.32). Only 1.7% of the variance was explain by means of the Light Triad traits, $F (1, 98) = 1.74, p = .19$. This indicates no relationship between the Light Triad and performed CWB-I, where a negative relation was expected. For this reason, the first hypothesis was rejected.

Next, a linear regression was run to inspect the relationship between the Light Triad and the experience of CWB-I. The assumptions of linearity, independence of observations, outliers, homoscedasticity and normality of residuals were not violated. However, two potential outliers were detected, but the decision was made to keep these in the sample after running the analysis with and without them.

Table 3 shows that experienced CWB-I was also not significantly predicted by the Light Triad traits (all ts between -.58 and .80). Only 0.3% of the variance was explained by the Light Triad traits, $F (1, 98) = .33, p = .57$. This implies that there is no relationship between the Light Triad and experienced CWB-I, where a positive relationship was expected. The second hypothesis was rejected for this reason.

Table 2

Linear Regression Analysis Summary

Predictor	Performed CWB-I			Perceived CWB-I		
	b	*t*	*p*	*b*	*t*	*p*
Faith in Humanity	-.02	-1.12	.26	-.03	-.58	.57
Humanism	-.00	-.13	.89	-.00	-.02	.98
Kantianism	-.02	-1.32	.19	.04	.80	.43

Next, hierarchical multiple regression was conducted to determine if the Light Triad would have added predictive value to the relationship between self-esteem and experienced CWB-I. The assumptions of independence of observations, linearity, homoscedasticity, multicollinearity, outliers, and normality of residuals were checked, but none were violated. Two potential outliers were found, but were kept in the sample after the regression was done with and without the two respondents. The results of the hierarchical multiple regression can be seen in Table 3.

Self-esteem did not significantly predict the experience of CWB-I, $F (1, 98) = .06$, $p = .80$. 0.10% of the variation in experienced CWB-I was accounted for, with an adjusted $R^2 = -.01$. The addition of the three Light Triad traits explains an additional 0.10% of the variation, which was not significant, $F (4, 95) = .32$ $p = .87$. This indicates that self-esteem did not significantly predict the experience of CWB-I, and that the Light Triad did not have added predictive value when added to this relationship. The third and fourth hypotheses were rejected for this reason.

Lastly, hierarchical multiple regression was used to determine if the Light Triad has added predictive value in the relationship between agreeableness and experienced CWB-I. None of the assumptions of independence of observations, linearity, homoscedasticity, multicollinearity, outliers, and normality of residuals was violated. Again, two potential outliers were found but kept in the sample. Table 3 shows the results of the multiple hierarchical regression.

It can be seen that agreeableness did not significantly predict the experience of CWB-I, $F(1, 98) = .27$, $p = .61$, accounting for 0.30% of the variation in experienced CWB-I, with an adjusted $R^2 = -0.01$. Adding the Light Triad explains an additional 0.20% of the variation, which was not significant, $F(4, 95) = .45$, $p = .78$. This shows that there is no significant relationship between agreeableness and the experience of CWB-I, and the Light Triad does not have added predictive value in this relationship. Hypotheses five and six were rejected.

Table 3

Hierarchical Multiple Regression using Experienced CBW-I as Criterion

Variable entered	b	t	p	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1				.00	.00
Self-Esteem	-.01	-.25	.80		
Step 2				.01	.01
Faith in Humanity	-.04	-.72	.47		
Humanism	.01	.07	.95		
Kantianism	.04	.93	.35		
Step 1				.00	.00
Agreeableness	-.03	-.52	.61		
Step 2				.02	.02
Faith in Humanity	-.03	-.48	.64		
Humanism	.01	.10	.92		
Kantianism	.06	1.14	.26		

Discussion

The present study investigated if the Light Triad would predict the performance and victimisation of CWB-I, and if the Light Triad would have any additional predictive value in the relationship between experienced CWB-I and self-esteem, as well as the relationship between experienced CWB-I and agreeableness. This way it could be investigated whether or not the Light Triad traits would form a buffer against CWB-I. It has appeared that there are

no relationships between the Light Triad and CWB-I, both for the performance and experience. Furthermore, no additional predictive value of the Light Triad was found, in either relationship. This caused all hypotheses to be rejected.

This can at the least in part be explained by the mean scores for performed and experienced CWB-I. The scores for both performed and experienced CWB-I are low. The mean scores for both were just above 1, while they could be scored from 1 to 5. This indicates that not many participants experienced CWB-I, and also did not perform CWB-I. This is called a restriction of range problem, which entails that a variable in a sample has less variability than a full population would have (Hallgren, 2018). In the current study, the low scores for CWB-I make it seem as if CWB-I barely occurs, while it does in reality. This causes the effect sizes and the validity coefficients to be underestimated, which makes it difficult to make conclusions about a bigger population (Bland, 2011; Hallgren, 2018). So, the low and restricted scores for CWB-I, both performed and experienced, in part have caused the rejection of the hypotheses.

An explanation for the lack of CWB-I can be found in the characteristics of the participants of the sample, which was quite small and unrepresentative. Most respondents were in proximity to the researcher, due to the convenience sampling method. Individuals who are more likely to perform CWB-I are less likely to participate in research voluntarily, since they are less likely to perform prosocial behaviour (Prewett et al., 2019). So, it could have happened that only the ones unlikely to perform CWB-I were participating. Most participants also were presumably higher educated, and higher cognitive ability can inhibit people from performing CWB (Ones & Dilchert, 2013). Thus, the used sample might have been a reason why the predicted relationships were not found.

It could also be argued that people who score higher on the Light Triad do not perform and experience less CWB-I after all. It could happen that they perform CWB-I

without noticing, since they do not intend their behaviour to be malicious. Someone could, for example, ignore another person or do something to make another look bad without acknowledging it as CWB-I, while it is. Consequently, they do not report that they performed CWB-I on a scale, because they do not recognize it in themselves. People with Light Triad traits could also not experience less CWB-I. In the introduction, it became clear that they have more trouble defending themselves, which makes them come across as easy targets for CWB-I (Kaufman et al., 2019). They are more likely to stand out from a group because of their competencies and successes as well (Zapf & Einarsen, 2011). For these reasons, people with Light Triad traits could be perpetrators and victims after all.

Limitations & Further Research

It became apparent that the reliability scores for the Light Triad scales were low. This indicates that the used scale may not represent variation between participants accurately, which can explain why the expected results were not found. It could have happened that the restriction of range caused the reliability to be lower, as reliability was estimated based on correlations between items (Sacket et al., 2006). In future research, a larger and more diverse sample size is recommended to increase the range, and ultimately the reliability. It is also an idea to use a different scale for the Light Triad, or to further investigate the reliability and validity of the Light Triad scale. Perhaps some new items could be added as well.

An explanation of the restriction of range problem can be found in the limitations of the measurement method. A self-report questionnaire was used, but this comes with multiple limitations (Paulhus & Vazire, 2007; Rice, 2022). Firstly, the experience and performance of CWB-I could have been low, because the participants might have given socially desirable answers, instead of honest ones (Rice, 2022). In multiple studies, it has been found that people tend to give socially desirable answers when reporting flawed behaviours, like bullying behaviour (Bohart, 2021; Filipponi et al., 2020). However, the current participants

were asked if they answered the questions honestly, and all reported yes. The participants

also scored relatively high on the Light Triad, which is connected to honesty (Kaufman et al.,

2019). Social desirability may still happen unconsciously, so it can happen that respondents

have given socially desirable answers without being aware of it (Murphy, 2021).

In the future, it is useful to consider the way CWB-I is introduced in the questionnaire

to prevent social desirability. Due to ethical reasons, the choice was made to mention that the

questionnaire would 'touch upon desirable traits, but also upon less desirable traits'. By

calling the behaviours undesirable, the participant might be triggered to give socially

desirable responses, even unconsciously.

Another limitation of self-report questionnaires also could have played a part in the

restriction of range. Respondents may not be able to assess themselves accurately, due to a

limited introspective ability (Paulhus & Vazire, 2007; Rice, 2022). Branson and Cornell

(2009) have found in their studies that there was a discrepancy between self and other reports

of both experienced and performed bullying for adolescents. Coyne et al. (2003) have

established the same finding, but in the workplace. It appears that it is hard for respondents to

accurately estimate the experience and performance of bullying, which also can be an

explanation for the lack of CWB-I in the current sample.

To overcome these limitations it is recommended in future studies to use both self and

other reports to form a more complete picture of the CWB-I experience and performance of a

person (Bouman et al., 2012; Cowie et al., 2002). Using multiple sources of data can also

help to overcome single source bias. This research relies on one self-report measure. Garger

(2020) mentioned that collecting data can be complex and inaccurate, especially when only

one source of data is used. It can cause researchers to think, or not to think, that a relationship

is there, where the opposite is the case. It is therefore even more recommended to collect data

from multiple sources in future research.

It is good to remember that, despite the focus on the darker side of human personality, there is also much light in us. It was found in both literature and the current study that the average human has more light than dark personality traits, which makes it worthwhile to investigate the Light Triad in the future (Kaufman et al., 2019). The Light Triad has existed since 2019, which makes it relatively new. Many other interesting concepts are yet to be researched in connection to the Light Triad. An idea might be to investigate organisational citizenship behaviour. CWB describes behaviour that harms the organisation, but organisational citizenship behaviour illustrates behaviour that positively impacts an organisation (Verlinden, 2021). Persons with Light Triad traits might show this behaviour due to their kind nature.

Implications

This study currently does not contradict, nor affirm previous research. The restriction of range problem and low reliability scores have made it difficult to give hard evidence that goes for or against the notion that CWB-I is influenced by the Light Triad. Future research is needed to explore this topic further.

Conclusion

In the beginning, the following research question was posed: 'What effect does scoring high on the Light Triad traits have on the performance and experience of interpersonal counterproductive work behaviour?' From the current research, it can be taken that the Light Triad does not affect CWB-I, both performed and experienced. This can be explained by the restriction of range problem that occurred in the scores for CWB-I and the small sample that was used. CWB-I was only present to a limited extent in the current study, but it does occur in the bigger population. Therefore, it is hard to generalise the current findings. More research is needed to discover the relationship between the Light Triad and CWB-I.

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Appendix

Questionnaire in English

Informed Consent

Welcome!

You are invited to participate in this research. Keep in mind that you should be 18 years or older and that you need to have a job in order to take part. Before you do, it is important that you understand the purposes of this research and your rights as a participant. Please read the following information carefully. This master thesis is carried out by Anne Vlutters, and supervised by Dick Barelds.

Participation in the research is voluntary. However, your consent is needed. Therefore, please read this information carefully. Ask all the questions you might have, for example because you do not understand something. Only afterwards you decide if you want to participate. If you decide not to participate, you do not need to explain why, and there will be no negative consequences for you. You have this right at all times, including after you have consented to participate in the research.

This research aims to investigate more about the Light Triad, which describes the three traits of a loving person with a focus on others (Kantianism, Humanism, Faith in Humanity). Currently, not much research is done on the Light Triad. I want to know more about it, especially its relationship to counterproductive work behaviours (e.g. bullying, manipulation). Will they become victims of counterproductive work behaviors due to their goodness, or will this form a buffer? Or will they even become perpetrators when there are other variables at play?

When you choose to participate, you will be asked to give your consent. Afterwards, you will be presented with a couple of scale questions about some aspects of your personality, and whether you have been a victim/perpetrator of counterproductive work

behaviour. Note that some questions touch upon your desirable traits, but also upon your less desirable traits. Taking part takes approximately 10 minutes. As said, not much is known currently about the Light Triad, and your participation can help to get to know more about this concept. There are no disadvantages or negative effects of participating in this research.

All your responses to this survey will be anonymous, since it is not possible to be identified on the basis of the collected data. The data will be stored securely and will not be shared with external parties. It is only used for the purposes of this master thesis.

You may always ask questions about the research: now, during the research, and after the end of the research. You can do so by emailing one of the researchers involved (a.j.vlutters@student.rug.nl).

Do you have questions/concerns about your rights as a research participant or about the conduct of the research? You may also contact the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Behavioural and Social Sciences of the University of Groningen: ec-bss@rug.nl.

- I have read the information about the research.

- I have had enough opportunity to ask questions about it.

- I understand what the research is about, what is being asked of me, which consequences participation can have, how my data will be handled, and what my rights as a participant are.

- I understand that participation in the research is voluntary. I myself choose to participate. I can stop participating at any moment. If I stop, I do not need to explain why. Stopping will have no negative consequences for me.

- Below I indicate what I am consenting to.

[ ] Yes, I consent to participate; this consent is valid until 01-10-2022

[ ] No, I do not consent to participate

As a research participant, you have the right to a copy of this research information.

Selection Criteria

Are you over 18 years old and do you currently have a job?

[ ] Yes

[ ] No

Light Triad

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

1. I tend to see the best in people

2. I tend to trust that other people will deal fairly with me

3. I think people are mostly good

4. I'm quick to forgive people who have hurt me

5. I tend to admire others

6. I tend to applaud the successes of other people

7. I tend to treat others as valuable

8. I enjoy listening to people from all walks of life

9. I prefer honesty over charm

10. I don't feel comfortable overtly manipulating people to do something I want

11. I would like to be authentic even if it may damage my reputation

12. When I talk to people, I am rarely thinking about what I want from them

Self-Esteem

Below is a list of statements dealing with your general feelings about yourself. Please

indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement.

1. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself

2. At times I think I am no good at all

3. I feel that I have a number of good qualities

4. I am able to do things as well as most other people

5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of

6. I certainly feel useless at times

7. I feel that I am not a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others

8. I wish I could have more respect for myself

9. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure

10. I take a positive attitude toward myself

Agreeableness

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

I am someone who…

1. Is compassionate, has a soft heart

2. Is respectful, treats others with respect

3. Tends to find fault with others

4. Feels little sympathy for others

5. Starts arguments with others

6. Has a forgiving nature

7. Is helpful and unselfish with others

8. Is sometimes rude with others

9. Is suspicious of others' intentions

10. Can be cold and uncaring

11. Is polite, courteous to others

12. Assumes the best about people

Performed CWB-I

How often have you done each of the following things in your present job?

How often have you…

1. Started or continued a damaging or harmful rumour at work

2. Insulted someone about their job performance

3. Made fun of someone's personal life

4. Ignored someone at work

5. Refused to help someone at work

6. Withheld needed information from someone at work

7. Purposely interfered with someone at work doing his/her job

8. Blamed someone at work for error you made

9. Started an argument with someone at work

10. Stole something belonging to someone at work

11. Verbally abused someone at work

12. Made an obscene gesture (the finger) to someone at work

13. Threatened someone at work with violence

14. Threatened someone at work, but not physically

15. Said something obscene to someone at work to make them feel bad

16. Hid something so someone at work couldn't find it

17. Did something to make someone at work look bad

18. Played a mean prank to embarrass someone at work

19. Destroyed property belonging to someone at work

20. Looked at someone at work's private mail/property without permission

21. Hit or pushed someone at work

22. Insulted or made fun of someone at work

Perceived CWB-I

How often have others done each of the following things to you in your present job?

How often has someone…

1. Started or continued a damaging or harmful rumour about you at work

2. Insulted you about your job performance

3. Made fun of your personal life

4. Ignored you at work

5. Refused to help you at work

6. Withheld needed information from you at work

7. Purposely interfered with you at work doing your job

8. Blamed you at work for an error they made

9. Started an argument with you at work

10. Stole something belonging to you at work

11. Verbally abused you at work

12. Made an obscene gesture (the finger) to you at work

13. Threatened you at work with violence

14. Threatened you at work, but not physically

15. Said something obscene to you at work to make you feel bad

16. Hid something so you couldn't find it at work

17. Did something to make you look bad at work

18. Played a mean prank to embarrass you at work

19. Destroyed property belonging to you at work

20. Looked at your private mail/property without permission at work

21. Hit or pushed you at work

22. Insulted or made fun of you at work

Dark Triad

Please indicate how much you agree with each of the following statements.

1. It's not wise to tell your secrets

2. I like to use clever manipulation to get my way

3. Whatever it takes, you must get the important people on your side

4. Avoid direct conflict with others because they may be useful in the future

5. It's wise to keep track of information that you can use against people later

6. You should wait for the right time to get back at people

7. There are things you should hide from other people to preserve your reputation

8. Make sure your plans benefit yourself, not others

9. Most people can be manipulated

10. People see me as a natural leader

11. I hate being the centre of attention

12. Many group activities tend to be dull without me

13. I know that I am special because everyone keeps telling me so

14. I like to get acquainted with important people

15. I feel embarrassed if someone compliments me

16. I have been compared to famous people

17. I am an average person

18. I insist on getting the respect I deserve

19. I like to get revenge on authorities

20. I avoid dangerous situations

21. Payback needs to be quick and nasty

22. People often say I'm out of control

23. It's true that I can be mean to others

24. People who mess with me always regret it

25. I have never gotten into trouble with the law

26. I enjoy having sex with people I hardly know

27. I'll say anything to get what I want

Demographic Questions

What is your gender?

[ ] Male

[ ] Female

[ ] Other

[ ] Prefer not to answer

What is your age? (enter a number, for example 23)

What kind of job do you currently have?

[ ] Salaried job

[ ] Self-employed job

[ ] Volunteer work

[ ] Other, namely

[ ] I do not have a job

How many hours per week do you work on average?

[ ] 0 to 12 hours

[ ] 13 to 23 hours

[ ] 24 to 32 hours

[ ] 33 to 40 hours

[ ] More than 40 hours

For how long have you had this job?

[ ] Less than 1 year

[ ] 1 to 10 years

[ ] 11 to 20 years

[ ] 21 to 30 years

[ ] 31 to 40 years

[ ] More than 40 years

What is the industry you work in?

[ ] Advertising and marketing

[ ] Aerospace

[ ] Agriculture

[ ] Computer and technology

[ ] Construction

[ ] Education

[ ] Energy

[ ] Entertainment

[ ] Fashion

[ ] Finance and economics

[ ] Food and beverage

[ ] Health care

[ ] Hospitality

[ ] Manufacturing

[ ] Media and news

[ ] Pharmaceautical

[ ] Telecommunication

[ ] Transportation

[ ] Other, namely

Closing Questions

Have you answered the questions in this questionnaire honestly?

[ ] Yes

[ ] No

Now having completed the full questionnaire, do you still give consent for your answers to be used for the purposes of this study?

[ ] Yes

[ ] No