

How Emotional Intelligence Moderate the Relation between Perceived Justice and Counterproductive Behaviours?

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Abstract

This paper aims to reveal the power of emotional intelligence in buffering employees' negative reactions to perceived organisational injustice manifested in counterproductive work behaviours. To test the proposed relationships, a sample of 345 employees working in hospitality private sector in Cairo-Egypt was approached. Tests of between-subjects Effects and Z-score were used to test the moderating effect of emotional intelligence. The results supported the moderating effect of emotional intelligence for counterproductive work behaviours in general and to counterproductive work behaviours directed to people specifically. As expected, high emotional intelligence people are less involved in to counterproductive work behaviours even with perceived injustice. Interestingly, individuals with moderate level of emotional intelligence were found to be more involved in CWB than people with low EI when they perceive injustice. These results could have several empirical and theoretical implications.

Keywords: emotional intelligence, counterproductive behaviours, justice, injustice, hospitality, Egypt

1. Introduction

Organisational Justice (OJ) is a phenomenon that attracts scholars' attention as employees tends to react positively or negatively to the perceived justice/ injustice. OJ is about how employees perceive the way in which they are treated by the organization in terms of being fair or not (Swalhi et al., 2017). Perceived justice (PJ) is a phenomenon that cannot be neglected in organisational context due to its serious consequences within organisations. One major consequence of perceived injustice in organisations is counterproductive work behaviours (CWB). (Cohen & Diamant, 2019).

The relationship between perceived justice and CWB is established based on social exchange theory where individuals tend to reciprocate positive behaviours and outcomes (e.g., perceived justice, supervisors support, salary increase) with positive behaviours (e.g., hard work, citizenship behaviours, objectives' achievement.....), and tend to reciprocate negative behaviours and outcomes (e.g., perceived injustice, psychological contract breach, unfair salary) with negative behaviours (e.g., absenteeism, lack of productivity, revenge...) (Khattak et al., 2021; De-Clercq et al., 2021). However, individuals vary in their tendency to involve in negative behaviours based on individual differences and personality traits that can act as a buffer or a barrier that hinder the occurrence of CWB (Spector, 2011; Khattak et al., 2019; Cheung et al., 2016). One of these traits is Emotional Intelligence (EI) that represent individuals' ability to manage their emotions.

The relationship between emotional intelligence, justice and CWB has evidence from the literature; however, the nature of the relation is debatable. On one hand, EI is found to explain the variance in perceived organisational justice through direct relation (Ouyang et al., 2015; Fabio & Palazzeschi, 2012). On the other hand, EI is found to have negative relation and a moderating effect with CWB (Kundi & Badar, 2021). Even in an academic context EI is found to have negative relation with Counterproductive Academic Behaviour (Cuadrado et al., 2021).

EI is found to affect/moderate the relation between PJ and both burnout and work misbehaviour (Shkoler & Tziner, 2017), and the three facets of performance; task performance, contextual performance and CWB (Cheung et al., 2016; Devonish & Greenidge, 2010) where EI did not explain the variance in perceived justice

but buffered the effect of perceived justice on performance and behaviour. EI also was found to moderate the relationship between Interpersonal conflict and CWB (Kundi & Badar, 2021). It is worth noting that only two researchers investigated the effect of EI on the relationship between PJ and CWB (Shkoler & Tziner, 2017; Devonish & Greenidge, 2010) and presented EI as a moderator to the relationship. In Shkoler and Tziner research, EI was able to buffer the effect of perceived justices on burnout and on CWB. They emphasised the effect of EI as a coping mechanism that can buffer the relation and decrease the negative effects of both injustice and burnout. However, it did not explain whether it buffers this effect on CWB directed to organisation or to people. It is expected that CWB directed to organisation will be more affected by EI as it could have consequence on their career. On the other hand, in Devonish and Greenidge research (2010) EI was found to moderate the effect of procedural justices on contextual performance but not on in-role performance and CWB.

In both researches the different levels of EI and Justices were not considered, and the direction of CWB was also not considered, this creates a gap in literature. This research tries to capture the effect of the different levels of EI on the direct relation between PJ and CWB (directed to the organisation and directed to people) in order to enhance our understanding of the interaction between these variables in the Egyptian context.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Counterproductive Work Behaviour (CWB)

Counterproductive work behaviour is defined as “behaviour intended to hurt the organization or other members of the organization”. (Spector & Fox, 2002, p. 271). According to the General Theory of Crime any counterproductive act is by nature intentional (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990). This means that in CWB it is the intentions that matters not the results. This understanding is the base for the attempts that has been carried out to establish a framework for studying CWB (De-Clercq et al., 2021). Till the early 1980s, forms of CWB has been studied individually (Gruys & Sackett, 2003). Establishing a frame work to help studying and managing CWB started by the work of Hollinger and Clark (1982) who emphasize that CWB directed to different targets will surely have different antecedents and different outcomes, which raises the need for a clear classification / typology of CWB for better understanding. In 1995 Robinson and Bennett introduced two dimensions: Severity dimension - which represent a wide spectrum of CWB ranging from minor to serious- and Target dimension -which distinguish between CWB targeted to the company/organization (CWB-O) and CWB targeted to individuals/people inside the company (CWB-P). These two dimensions were revised again by Bennett and Robinson in 2000. Later on, the target dimension became the base of classification for CWB and was adopted by researchers as the most accepted classification of CWB (Abdullah et al., 2021; Berry et al., 2007; Spector et al., 2006; Klotz & Buckley, 2013)

CWB-P are “deviant behaviours targeted toward individuals within the organization” (Berry et al., 2007, p.410). It includes a wide spectrum of behaviours ranging from gossip, making fun of colleagues to theft from co-workers, physical assault and harassment. CWB-O are “deviant behaviours targeted toward the organization” (Berry et al., 2007, p.410). It can range from sloppy work, absenteeism, long breaks, drug and alcohol use to sabotage, theft, property damage, and sharing confidential company information (Cohen & Diamant, 2019).

Research has given great attention to the understanding of how CWB emerge and happen and what are the determinants of these behaviour, yet our knowledge of the determinants of CWB remains insufficient (Roy et al., 2012; Cohen & Ozsoy, 2021). One of the comprehensive explanations was offered by (Marcus & Schuler, 2004) who introduced four rubrics that explains the existence of counterproductive behaviours in general. The first rubric is Triggers which represent “any external events or internal perceptions of such events that can provoke general counterproductive behaviours as a response” (Marcus & Schuler, 2004. p.650).

These triggers can be in any form that is perceived in a negative way, this could include: salary cuts, perceived injustice, dissatisfaction (Fine & Gottlieb-Litvin, 2013; Marcus & Schuler, 2004; Galic & Ruzojcic, 2017). The second rubric is Internal Control which reflects the stable individual differences that can act as a buffer or a barrier that hinder the occurrence of CWB (Galic & Ruzojcic, 2017; Khan et al., 2013; Ramana et al., 2016; Cohen et al., 2013). The third rubric -Propensity - reflects a “stable individual differences that drives people toward CWB by making the desired outcomes or the course of action itself appear more attractive” (Marcus & Schuler, p. 650). It can be seen that these two rubrics - Internal Control and Propensity- are manifestation for the dispositional approaches that assumes the ability of some personality traits to restraint against negative actions or lead to negative actions– in this case CWB (Vossen & Hofmans, 2021). The last rubric is Opportunity which is conceptualised by Marcus and Schuler (2004) as “a situation or perception of the situation that facilitates (or inhibits) the exertion of an act of general counterproductive behaviours by enhancing (or restricting) access to desired outcomes or by making the negative consequences for the actor less (or more) likely or costly” p.650.

This explanation helps in understanding the mechanism by which CWB evolves. In the coming sections perceived justice is introduced as a Trigger for CWB and Emotional Intelligence is introduced as a personality trait that works as Internal Control that buffer employees' reactions to perceived injustice and hence affects employees' participation in CWB.

2.2 CWB and Perceived Justice

Individuals within organisations evaluate the fairness of the organization in terms of ones' outcome (Distributive -DJ), process by which this outcome was allocated (Procedural- ProJ), and how s/he is treated by decision makers (Interactional-IJ) (Swalhi et al., 2017; Colquitt, 2001). According to Social Exchange Theory negative behaviours like CWB is considered as a reciprocity mechanism by which individuals revenge for negative behaviours and outcomes. According to the Agent-system Model for Justice, when an employee feels injustice, s/he tends to direct his/her reciprocating activity to the source of injustice. Perceived injustice can be reciprocated by either withdrawing from activities that may benefit the source of injustice or by engaging in an activity that negatively affects the source of injustice (Fox et al., 2001). Low level of perceived justice (injustice) can trigger employee' practicing of CWB, whereas, high levels of perceived justice will encourage employee' involvement in citizenship behaviours and eliminate the likelihood of involvement in CWB (De-Clercq et al., 2021).

2.3 The Role of Emotional Intelligence (EI)

Emotional Intelligence is defined as "the ability to perceive accurately, appraise, and express emotion; the ability to access and/or generate feelings when they facilitate thought; the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge; and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth" (Mayer & Salovey, 1997, p. 10). Several measures were developed for EI, the majority of these measures were influenced by the work of Mayers and Salovey. These measures defined 4 facets for EI: Self-Emotional Appraisal, Others' Emotional Appraisal, Regulation of Emotion, Use of Emotion (Mayer, et al. 1999; Law, et al., 2004).

EI is found to predict both Organisational Citizenship Behaviours and CWB where EI is positively related to OCB and negatively related to CWB (Ramana et al., 2016; Bauer & Spector, 2015). People with high EI are more capable to manage their negative emotions and consequently less likely to participate in CWB as EI can reduce the effects of negative emotions (Spector & Fox, 2002). People's reactions and behaviours to different situations will differ according to their level of Emotional Intelligence. People with low level of emotional intelligence may experience negative emotions when faced with difficult situations or problems and may react in antisocial and other dysfunctional ways (Miao et al., 2017). In contrast, high emotional intelligence people can regulate their negative emotions and successfully handle them which in return reduce their tendency to participate in antisocial and counterproductive behaviours ways (Miao et al., 2017). Since CWB is considered an emotion-based response to organizational environmental conditions (Roy et al., 2012), EI can help employees to cope with and regulate their negative emotions and consequently reduce CWB (Ouyang et al., 2015; Miao et al., 2017)

Previous research suggests that EI has worked as a self-control/buffering mechanism by affecting the relation between PJ, burnout, work misbehaviour, task performance, contextual performance and CWB (Shkoler & Tziner, 2017; Devonish & Greenidge, 2010). However, the two researches did not examine the different levels of EI and how they interact with the different levels of perceived justice / injustice. Also, the two directions of CWB was examined in (Devonish & Greenidge, 2010) but not in (Shkoler & Tziner, 2017). Hence, this research proposes the following hypotheses:

H1: Emotional Intelligence moderate the Perceived Justice – Counterproductive Work Behaviour' relation.

H1a: Emotional Intelligence moderate the Perceived Justice – Counterproductive Work Behaviour directed to organisation' relation.

H1b: Emotional Intelligence moderate the Perceived Justice – Counterproductive Work Behaviour directed to people' relation.

3. Methodology

3.1 Sample and Procedure

This study targeted managers working in private and public organisations in different industries in Cairo-Egypt. 15 companies were selected. A formal letter was sent to the 15 companies but only 8 agreed to participate representing 3 industries (2 trading, 3 publishing and 3 contracting). Using statistical power test at $\alpha = 0.05$, $\beta = 0.05$ and power = 0.95; for the targeted population (N= 1521) a sample size of 310 is expected to be

representative. A quota sampling procedure was used to recruit the sample from the eight organizations. Participants were approached in their offices and were asked to complete the questionnaire after assuring that their participation was voluntary and anonymity was guaranteed. Only 298 responded positively (186 from public organizations and 112 from private organizations) with a response rate of (96.1%). 52% of respondents were male. The age ranged between 32 to 48 ($M=39.64 \pm SD = 7.92$). Years of experience ranged between 7 to 18 year ($M= 13.72 \pm SD = 5.36$). 51% of the respondents were first line manager, 36% middle management, 13% top management. These characteristics indicate a reasonable mix of demographic groups represented in the collected data. This study targeted employees working in hospitality sector in Cairo-Egypt. The biggest four Hotels were selected with a total number of 3452 full time employees. A convenient sample was applied with a sample size of 345 participants ($\alpha = 0.05$, $\beta = 0.05$ and power = 0.95 / $N= 3452$). Questionnaire was distributed to participants in their offices and by emails. Response rate was 77% (268). In terms of demographics, 56% of respondents were male. 31.5% were less than 25 years old, 50.2% between 25 to 35 and 18.4 between 35 to 45. Years of experience ranged between 3 to more than 9 years ($M= 7.52 \pm SD = 3.31$). 48.3% of the respondents were first line manager, 33.7% middle management, 18% top management.

3.2 Measures

Three-part self-reported questionnaire was used. Counterproductive Work Behaviour (CWB) was measured using the Counterproductive Work Behaviour List developed by (Spector et al., 2006) with 45 items distributed between CWBO (21 items) and CWBP (24 items). To measure Perceived Justice, Niehoff and Moorman (1993) scale was used (20 items scale). It measures the three dimensions of justice (IJ / ProJ/ DJ). However, only the total score of PJ will be used in analysis as previous research indicated that it is the overall perception of justice that affects the deviant employees (Chernyak-Hai and Tziner, 2014; Tziner et al., 2020). Emotional Intelligence was measured using (Law et al., 2004) Emotional Intelligence scale. All used scales were designed as a five-point Likert scale. Finally, demographic variables were included in the last part of the questionnaire.

The survey was administered in both languages (English and Arabic). The Latin square procedure was used to minimise common method bias. The validity of the used measures was tested using a panel of 10 experts (3 academics in management, 3 academics in psychology and 4 from industry). The panel assessed the content of each part in terms of clarity and appropriateness to the Egyptian culture. The panel experts ensured the validity of the used measures.

Descriptive statistics and reliability coefficients of measures are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics and reliability (Valid N listwise =222)

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Cronbach's Alpha
SEA (Self-Emotional Appraisal)	267	13.60	4.123	.925
OEA (Others' Emotional Appraisal)	267	13.62	3.482	.745
UOE (Use of Emotion)	267	13.55	3.366	.717
ROE (Regulation of Emotion)	267	13.44	3.612	.773
EI (Emotional Intelligence)	267	54.21	13.497	.942
CWBO (CWB directed to organisation)	267	45.06	9.339	.872
CWBP (CWB directed to people)	267	33.20	11.421	.859
CWB	267	78.26	18.946	.926
IJ (Interactional Justice)	222	29.2703	7.23421	.866
ProJ (Procedural Justice)	222	21.4820	3.36567	.730
DJ (Distributive Justice)	222	16.2162	2.92873	.706
PJ	222	66.9685	10.45195	.842

4. Results

Based on the reported results, it is possible to verify that all aspects of perceived justice are significantly correlated with CWB-O and CWB in general, where CWB-P is correlated only to distributive justice as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Person correlation for research variables

	EI	SEA	OEA	UOE	ROE	CWBO	CWB	CWBP	IJ	ProJ	DJ	PJ
EI												
SEA	.922**											
OEA	.933**	.823**										
UOE	.904**	.739**	.798**									
ROE	.943**	.821**	.841**	.832**								
CWBO	.097	.124*	.058	.071	.099							
CWB	.037	.069	-.014	.028	.048	.892**						
CWBP	-.018	.013	-.071	-.012	-.002	.662**	.929**					
IJ	-.111	-.102	-.089	-.121	-.100	-.315**	-.137*	.016				
ProJ	-.206**	-.214**	-.200**	-.140*	-.207**	-.372**	-.249**	-.122	.324**			
DJ	-.089	-.098	-.079	-.052	-.096	-.413**	-.344**	-.247**	.358**	.309**		
PJ	-.168*	-.167*	-.149*	-.143*	-.163*	-.454**	-.272**	-.097	.897**	.633**	.627**	

Notes. ** Significant at 0.01 (2-tailed)/ *. Significant at 0.05 (2-tailed).

To test the first hypotheses, both EI and PJ were categorized into 3 levels (low, moderate, high) then the interaction between EI and PJ and between subjects' effects were tested. Figure (1) shows the interaction between variables.

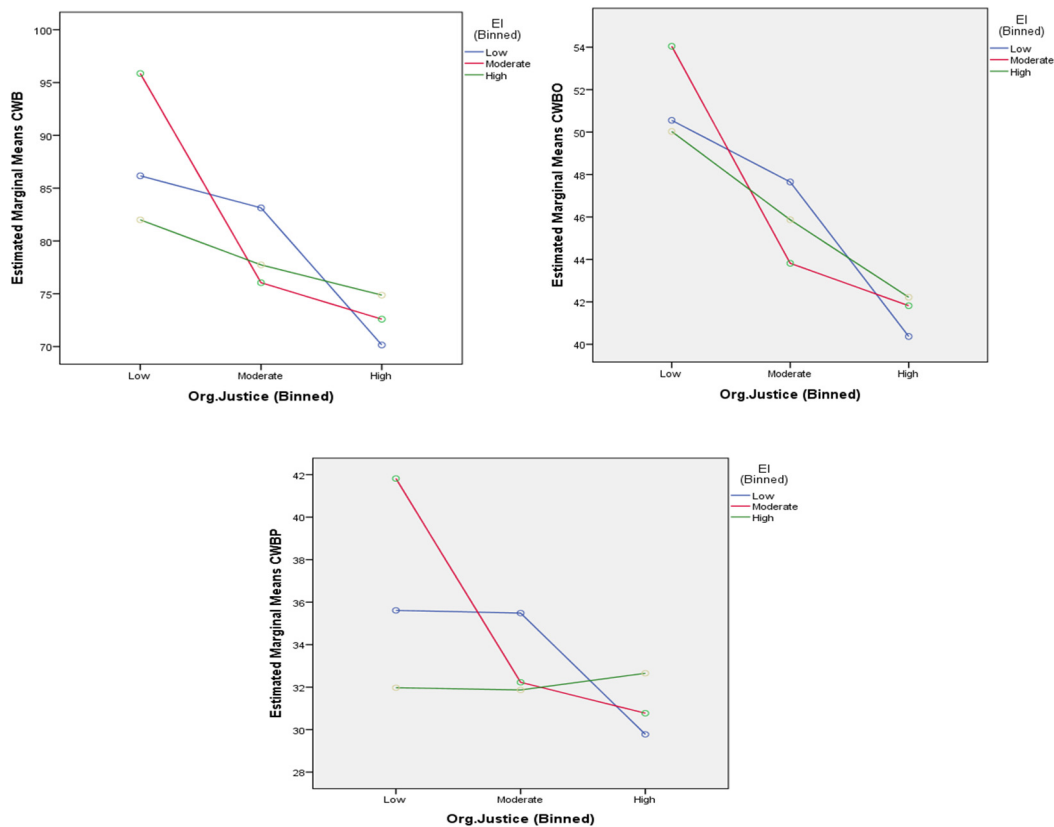


Figure 1. The interaction between different levels of PJ and EI in relation to CWB

The above figure illustrates the interaction between the different levels of EI and PJ. As expected, different levels of EI were associated with different reactions to levels of perceived justice, this result supports the proposed research hypotheses. These interactions between the different categories of the variables where tested using between subjects' effects test as seen in table 3,4 and 5.

Table 3. Tests of between-subjects effects - dependent variable: CWBO (directed to organisations).

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	11581.561 ^a	8	1447.695	4.342	.000
Intercept	1310765.124	1	1310765.124	3931.042	.000
Emotional Intelligence (EI).Cat	357.207	2	178.604	.536	.586
Perceived Justice.(PJ) .Cat	8524.549	2	4262.274	12.783	.000
EI.Cat * PJ.Cat	3134.381	4	783.595	2.350	.045
Error	71022.637	213	333.440		

Note. a. R Squared = .140 (Adjusted R Squared = .108).

Table 4. Tests of between-subjects effects - dependent variable: CWBP (directed to people)

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	4124.924 ^a	8	515.616	7.865	.000
Intercept	440111.394	1	440111.394	6713.584	.000
Emotional Intelligence (EI).Cat	9.554	2	4.777	.073	.930
Perceived Justice.(PJ) .Cat	3605.499	2	1802.749	27.500	.000
EI.Cat * PJ.Cat	463.772	4	115.943	1.769	.136
Error	13963.292	213	65.555		

Note. a. R Squared = .228 (Adjusted R Squared = .199).

Table 5. tests of between-subjects effects - dependent variable: CWB

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	2462.169 ^a	8	307.771	2.325	.021
Intercept	231820.672	1	231820.672	1751.290	.000
Emotional Intelligence (EI).Cat	253.011	2	126.506	.956	.386
Perceived Justice.(PJ) .Cat	1043.140	2	521.570	3.940	.021
EI.Cat * PJ.Cat	1273.213	4	318.303	2.405	.051
Error	28195.111	213	132.371		

a. R Squared = .080 (Adjusted R Squared = .046)

According to between subjects' effects test the interaction between categories of EI and categories of perceived justice has significant effect on CWB in general, and on CWB directed to people but not for CWB directed to organisation. To confirm the existence of the moderating effect, Z-score was calculated as seen in table (6).

Table 6. The moderation effect of emotional intelligence

Dependent	Variable	b	S.E	T	R ²	F
CWBO	Z – Perceived Justice (PJ)	-4.303	.564	-7.623**	.214	19.807**
	Z – Emotional Intelligence (EI)	-.067	.549	-.122		
	Interaction PJ * EI	.778	.515	1.511		
CWBP	Z – Perceived Justice (PJ)	-1.694	.812	-2.086*	.041	3.070*
	Z – Emotional Intelligence (EI)	-.581	.789	-.737		
	Interaction PJ * EI	1.888	.741	2.547*		
CWB	Z – Perceived Justice (PJ)	-5.996	1.294	-4.635**	.096	7.721**
	Z – Emotional Intelligence (EI)	-.648	1.257	-.515		
	Interaction PJ * EI	2.667	1.181	2.258*		

Note. * Coefficient is significant at .05 level; ** Coefficient is significant at .01 level.

The results of Z-score test supports H1 and H1b where EI moderates the relation between perceived justice and Counterproductive Work Behaviours in general and Counterproductive Work Behaviours directed to people. However, the results rejects H1a as EI do not significantly moderate Counterproductive Work Behaviours directed to organization.

5. Discussion

This research investigated the moderating effect of Emotional Intelligence and how it affects employees' negative reactions to Perceived Justice in forms of Counterproductive Work Behaviours. The results supported the existence of the moderating effect for general CWB and for CWB directed to people and not for Organisations. According to results; people with high EI were less involved in overall CWB and in CWB directed to organisation and directed to people with low level of perceived justice (injustice). Also, as expected, people with low EI scored higher in CWB (overall CWB, CWBO, and CWBP) with perceived injustice (low level of justice). Whereas, against expectations, people with moderate EI involved the most in CWB as a reaction to low levels of justice.

This results can be understood for high emotional intelligence people as they are more able to understand and control their emotions and, at the same time, they have the ability to regulate their emotions and to express them effectively (Al-Ghazo et al., 2019), which means they can find way to relieve their negative feelings caused by the perceived low levels of justice and hence their likelihood of being involved in CWB decrease (Ouyang, et al., 2015; Fabio & Palazzeschi, 2012; Miao, et al., 2017). This result contradicts with previous research by (Tziner et al., 2020), where they categorised people according to EI score to high or low and categorised perceived justice to high and low level of justice. They found that high emotional intelligence people were more involved in deviant behaviour than low EI people even with low level of injustice. Tziner and his colleagues explained this by highlighting the sophisticated and malicious nature of high EI people and that they more likely to adopt a Machiavellian behaviour to compensate their perceived injustice regardless of level of perceived injustice. This contradiction could be a result of the categorizing of levels of justice and levels of EI, having three categories can add more understanding of the relation, if we merge high EI and moderate EI in one category, the result might become similar.

As for low emotional intelligence people they are less able to understand, control and regulate their emotions. They are more directed, in their reaction, to searching for fast relieve thought immediate response without clear understanding of their true emotions (Miao et al., 2017). That is why they are more involved in CWB, compared to high EI people, in low levels of perceived justice (perceived in justice). This matches the results of previous research by (Ouyang et al., 2015; Fabio & Palazzeschi, 2012; Miao et al., 2017).

The interesting result is the level of involvement of moderate EI people in CWB in different levels of perceived justice and in both CWBO and CWBP. Moderate EI people seems to be less involved in CWB with moderate and high perceived levels than other high and low EI people. Whereas with perceived low justice (perceived injustice) they exceed the expectation and involve in CWB more than the other two categories (high and low EI). Most of previous researches ignored this moderate category and explanations for this result is not clear. However, a possible explanation can be developed with reference to the nature of other two categories. Knowing the nature of low emotionally intelligence person, managers and employees seems to avoid stimulating their negative response and tend to exert more effort to explain the situation and decisions in order to avoid any unexpected behaviour. People with low EI "might have unexpected emotional outbursts that seem overblown and uncontrollable. The smallest things set them off into a tirade that can last for minutes, even hours (Tziner et al., 2020). On the other hand, high EI people can control their reactions and they are more concerned about the effects of their behaviours which make them less involved in actions that may affect their relations with others (Al-Ghazo et al., 2019). Whereas moderate EI people are less recognised and takes less attention from managers and supervisors. This category doesn't outburst or act in uncontrollable manner and at the same time they are more capable to recognise and manage and control their emotions under high and moderate levels of perceived justice, but they are less recognized by the management which could create frustration and anger. These negative emotions may drive them to involve in CWB as a revenge for both perceived injustice and not being noticed by the management (needs reference). One other possible explanation could be that most of the attention and training is directed to low EI people rather than moderate EI people especially that these negative behaviours appears only with perceived injustice (Tziner et al., 2020)

6. Conclusion

The effect of perceived justice on employees' behaviours is an important research topic that attracts researchers' attention. Researchers found that perceived justice / injustice can trigger emotional responses manifested in citizenship behaviours or counterproductive behaviours. Researchers also suggested that some personality traits could buffer these reactions to perceived justice / injustice (Vossen & Hofmans, 2021). This research introduced Emotional Intelligence as a buffering mechanism that affects employees' negative reactions to perceived justice / injustice manifested in counterproductive behaviours. This research aims at investigating the moderating effects

of emotional intelligence on the relationship between perceived justice and counterproductive work behaviours. To achieve research aim, previous researches were reviewed to clearly define the research variables and to identify the relationship between variables. The research was conducted using a self-administered survey that measured the different levels of perceived justice and emotional intelligence and the involvement in counterproductive behaviours for employees working in hospitality sector in Cairo-Egypt.

The results support the existence of a moderating role of emotional intelligence in the relationship between perceived justice and counterproductive working behaviours. Different levels of EI were found to have different effects on employees' involvement in CWB with different levels of perceived justice. High emotional intelligence employees seem to involve less in CWB with perceived injustice, whereas, low emotional intelligence employees seem to involve more in CWB with perceived injustice. Moderate emotional intelligence employees were found to be more involved in CWB than the other two categories.

Theoretically, this research contributes in enhancing our understanding for the role of emotional intelligence in buffering employees' behaviours. It pinpoints the importance of considering the different levels of a scale when studying personality traits and not only the two ends of the scale (high and low). It also pinpoints that emotional intelligence buffering power is limited to the CWB directed to people not to organisations, which in return should attract our attention to the role of written policies, procedures and rules as another buffering mechanism that limits the likely hood of involving in CWB directed to the organisation. It also directs our attention to the importance of studying alternative buffering mechanism that could reduce the likely hood of being involved in CWB directed to people as a reaction to perceived injustice.

Empirically, this research highlights the importance of attribute approach in selection. It is important to include emotional intelligent measures to selection criteria in organisations. It also draws attention to the importance of training and coaching for moderate emotional intelligent employees (Dulewicz & Higgs, 2004; Al-Ghazo, et al., 2019) not only to minimise their involvement in CWB, but also to improve employees wellbeing (Higgs & Dulewicz, 2014). Finally, it draws attention to the importance of developing clear policies to protect individuals within the organisation from CWB-P.

Future research is needed to investigate why employees tends to direct their counterproductive behaviours to people not to organisations. It is also required to investigate what are the types of counterproductive behaviours are more affected by justice and emotional intelligence. Finally, a cross-cultural study to investigate the moderating role of EI in the relationship between PJ and CWB could add more to our understanding.

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