CONCEPTUALISING KANSEI IN AFFECTIVE WORK EVENTS COUNTERPRODUCTIVE WORK BEHAVIOUR MODEL

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ABSTRACT

Studies on Counterproductive Work Behaviour (CWB) have attracted wide interest among scholars. CWB is a subset of unethical behaviour that seems unbearable since it intentionally harms both organisations and people in the organisations. In general, literature holds that CWB is determined by work events and affective state. However, most studies are restricted to examining a single work event which prevents us from understanding the simultaneous effect of multiple work events. In addition, prior research widely utilised a self-reporting mechanism in capturing the affective experiences at work resulting in common method bias and other issues like time constraints, low response rate, etc. Drawing on Affective Events Theory (AET), affective work events, and CWB literature, this article provides an important extension to the CWB literature by proposing multiple work events that predict affective experiences and CWB at work. Additionally, the Kansei Engineering-Kawakita Jiro method is introduced as a substitute for the existing self-reporting mechanism in capturing affective work events. This article offers theoretical insights that may facilitate empirical research to explore the role of affective

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experiences within the CWB spectrum. The introduced conceptual ideas are targeted to be a useful guide for practitioners to craft appropriate strategies to combat employees’ CWB.

**Keywords:** Counterproductive Work Behaviour, Affective Experience, Kansei Engineering

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Among the keystream of ethical behaviour, research emerged to concentrate on “bad apples” or employees who engage in Counterproductive Work Behaviour (CWB). Perhaps because of the significant negative impact on both employees and the organisation, which involved billions of dollars in financial losses, low psychological well-being, and morale among employees (Baharom, Sharfuddin, & Iqbal, 2017). The AET postulated that specific work events functioned as an antecedent of employees’ affective experience and subsequent behaviours (e.g., CWB). The proximate cause of affective reactions in the workplace is thought to be work events generated as a result of consistent work environment elements (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). Thus far, numerous empirical studies have confirmed the AET propositions. In this case, affective experiences were found to be linked to CWB positively and negatively (Bauer & Spector, 2015; Williams, 2020; Hu, Chen, & Ye, 2021). In reviewing the affective events literature, it appears that most of the studies concentrated on a particular work event as a single variable in defining employees’ affective state. Among the events are psychological contract breaches (Griep & Vantilborgh, 2018; Liang, 2019), workplace interactions (Mao, He, & Yang, 2020; Qin & Liu, 2019), task-related (Koon & Pun, 2018; Thompson & Bruk-Lee, 2020), and mistreatment (Fatima, Bilal, & Imran, 2019; Jahanzeb, Fatima, & De Clercq, 2020; Hu, Chen, & Ye, 2021). Various mechanisms and approaches were utilised to investigate the antecedent events that elicit employees’ emotions at work, including diary study, survey-based, open-ended questionnaire, and experience sampling methodology (ESM). However, over-reliance on the self-reported methodology led to common method bias. Hence, applying a substitute mechanism may add value to CWB literature. Although Kansei Engineering (KE) has been established as being well-suited to be applied in understanding human emotions and psychology, it appears that this measure has not been thoroughly explored in CWB research. Therefore, in efforts to resolve CWB occurrence among employees, it is important to identify and explore new strategies to enhance employees’ emotional well-being. Drawing on AET, this paper conceptually investigates the effects of work events and employees’ emotions on CWB. In addition, this paper introduced the Kansei philosophy to give insights into its usefulness in the organisational behavioural perspective.

## 2 THEORETICAL OVERVIEW

### 2.1 Affective Experiences and Counterproductive Work Behaviour

CWB is conceptualised to be a subset of unethical behaviour in which an act intentionally causes harm and often breaches social norms (Wiernik & Ones, 2018; Feinberg, Ford, & Flynn, 2020). CWB refers to dysfunctional behaviour that intentionally harms both organisations or members of the organisations (Spector & Fox, 2002). A great deal of the CWB’s research has concentrated on determining the factors that motivate people to commit harmful workplace
behaviours (e.g., Mercado, Dilchert, Giordano, & Ones, 2018; Chen, Richard, Boncoeur, & Ford, 2020). Research focusing on antecedents of CWB can typically be divided into predictors focusing on the person and predictors focusing on the situation (Sackett & DeVore, 2001). Spector and Fox (2002) introduced a well-known and accepted categorisation, namely environmental antecedents and personal antecedents. Another study suggested situational factors, individual factors, and integrative approaches as CWB predictors (Clark, 2013). Situational antecedents have repeatedly been revealed as significant predictors of CWB engagement (e.g., Jahanzeb et al, 2020; Gürlek, 2021). Furthermore, personal antecedents have also been shown as important predictors of engaging in CWB (e.g., Filipkowski & Derbis, 2020; Nguyen, Pascart, & Borteyrou, 2021). Stemming from the emerging research of workplace affectivity, researchers started to investigate the influence of individuals’ emotions on CWB.

There are numerous eliciting events that have been investigated independently. Among the antecedent that have been studied are task-job-related events (e.g., Oerlemans & Bakker, 2018; Eatough et al, 2016), employee-supervisor interaction (Cropanzano, Dasborough, & Weiss, 2017; Reynolds Kueny, Francka, Shoss, Headrick, & Erb, 2020), relationship conflict (Meier, Gross, Spector, & Semmer, 2013), subordinates’ behaviours (Schwarzmüller, Brosi, & Welpe, 2018), interactions with customers (Rueff-Lopes, Navarro, Caetano, & Silva, 2017; Yue, Wang, & Growth, 2017), organisational policies (e.g., Erol-Korkmaz, 2010; Matta, Erol-Korkmaz, Johnson, & Biçaksiz, 2014), and organisational climate (Wang, Guchait, & Pasamehmetoglu, 2020). Although negative experiences are prevalent in predicting CWB, positive workplace experiences are essential in mitigating dysfunctional behaviour. For example, Nagamachi (2014), in his research on the car manufacturing industry, found that when employees are allowed to have fun and a sense of pride in their challenging work, their motivation will be tremendously boosted, and productivity will be increased up to 150% level. In reviewing the literature, it appears that each work events carry a different emotional impact and these emotions lead to diverse behavioural consequences. For example, malicious envy could result in CWB targeted at the supervisor (Braun, Aydin, Frey, & Peus, 2018). In contrast, violation feelings lead to CWB targeted at organisation (Griep, Hansen, & Kraak, 2022). It implies that appropriate methodologies are required to capture the eliciting events based on the respective contextual setting.

3 CURRENT METHODS ON WORK EVENTS-AFFECTIVE STATES STUDIES

Based on the affective work events literature, thus far, various mechanisms have been employed to identify the work events that preceded employees’ emotional reactions at work. Woznyj, Shanock, Heggestad, and Banks (2021), for example, utilised a diary study to capture the events that influenced employees most at work. They asked participants to complete two daily surveys (midday and afternoon). At all three daily time intervals, discrete emotions (anger and happiness) were measured using a reduced 10-item version of the Weiss scale. Meanwhile, Demerouti and Cropanzano (2017) asked participants to complete the morning and afternoon measurements of the diary survey on three consecutive workdays. The momentary pleasant affect was evaluated in the afternoon and the morning. They employed seven items from the Job-Related Affective Well-being Scale on both occasions. Similar to Woznyj, Clark, Robertson, and Carter (2018) asked the participants to indicate if a positive or negative event (or both) occurred
related to their work, a coworker, or a supervisor during the afternoon and end-of-day surveys. While pleasant and unpleasant moods were measured with three items from the Current Mood Report adjective checklist. Unlike diary studies, participants in Experience Sampling Methodology (ESM) are deliberately triggered at various points during the day to lessen the participants’ dependence on long-term memory to re-create past events (Van Berkel, Ferreira, & Kostakos, 2017). With experience sampling, data is acquired by self-reports submitted by participants, much as it is in classic diary studies. Reindl, Lang, and Runge (2021) are among the researchers that employed an ESM design that focused on work events and event-related discrete emotions. They attempted to determine whether the work events occurred within the previous hour and what feelings the participants were experiencing at the time. Whilst Matta et al (2014) utilised ESM via web-based diary surveys. They asked the participants to describe significant work events (e.g., relations with colleagues, supervisors, and customers) that positively or negatively impacted them. They also measured negative emotional reactions with a limited number of items from PANAS (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). Basch and Fisher (1998), on the other hand, utilised a cross-sectional study design to develop the prominent affective events matrix. They employed ten affect scales based on established measures to identify the pool of affective work events. They asked participants to retrospectively describe a recent work event or circumstance that made them feel one of the ten emotions. Unlike Basch and Fisher (1998), Junça-Silva, Pombeira, and Caetano (2021) employed the 18 items from Daily Hassles and Uplifts at Work scale to assess the frequency of daily hassles. Both positive and negative affect were evaluated using the 10-item PANAS (Watson et al 1988). While Erol-Korkmaz (2010) used two different open-ended questionnaire forms to identify as many events as possible that were associated with different emotions or moods. Unlike others, Casper, Tremmel, and Sonnentag (2019) employed a longitudinal research design via three data collection waves to test the hypothesised relationships and examine relationships’ consistency. Positive interpersonal and task-related (positive and negative) work events were assessed in four waves (within three months intervals) using the affective events matrix developed by Basch and Fisher (2000). Whereas negative interpersonal work events were assessed using four items by Giebels and Janssen (2005). In addition to that, they utilised the PANAS by Watson et al (1988) to assess positive and negative affect. Having said that, the current method utilised by affective work events scholars predominantly relies on a self-reporting mechanism that is vulnerable to common method bias and other limitations. Therefore, this article provides insight into the usefulness of the Kansei Engineering-Kawakita Jiro (KJ) method to minimise current method limitations as it offers a platform to capture affective work events based on group consensus.

4 INTEGRATING KANSEI ENGINEERING AS A NEW APPROACH

Kansei is often used to communicate people’s feelings about their surroundings or situations. Although Kansei is difficult to define in other languages because it is solely inherited from Japanese culture, it can be translated as sensitivity, sensibility, feeling, and emotion in general (Lokman, 2010). The KJ method is one of the KE approaches that are well suited to gathering qualitative data via fieldwork to identify human affective responses via group consensus. The KJ technique is thought to best extract and organise social structure constructs that support
individual behaviour within an organisation on a multilateral basis (Norikoshi, Kobayashi, & Tabuchi, 2018). Via qualitative technique that involves a brainstorming session, the KJ method helps organise ideas, problems, and solutions into similar groups. It aids in classifying and organising a significant amount of disjointed and ambiguous data into logical, cohesive categories (Mohd, Othman, Ibrahim, & Jaafar, 2018; Mahmud, Jaafar, & Ibrahim, 2018). Affinity diagrams, also known as KJ diagrams, are a type of brainstorming tool that groups vast amounts of disorganised data and information based on natural relationships (Pareek & Satapathy, 2020). Besides, the emotion classification tool called Lokman’s Emotion and Importance Quadrant (LEIQ™) could be utilised to indicate the priority of the identified events based on positive and negative taxonomy (Lokman et al, 2019). While the initial development of KE has been concentrated on tangible products, recent studies have shown a growing interest in human resource aspects (Tan, Lee, Bong, & Sofian, 2017; Tsuchiya et al, 2018; Tsuchiya, 2019; Zhao, Yang, Liu, & Zeng, 2018; Butlewski, 2019). The KJ method has also been utilised to identify employees’ emotions in a workplace domain (e.g., Mohd et al, 2018; Tsuchiya, Lokman, Kadir, & Noordin, 2018; Mahmud et al, 2018; Tsuchiya, 2019). Most importantly, the KJ Method was utilised to identify the eliciting events that invoked employees’ emotions (happiness) at a public university domain (Tsuchiya et al, 2018; Tsuchiya, 2019). Therefore, the following framework for methodological approach (Figure 1) is proposed to integrate the Kansei-Based KJ Method mechanism into the CWB model:

**Figure 1.** The Integrated Kansei-Based KJ Method in Multiple Affective Work Events-CWB Model

The reason for recommending the KJ method is to generate as many as possible the events that elicit employees’ positive and negative emotions based on group consensus. As illustrated in Figure 2, the KJ method flow process is adapted from Lokman et al (2019).
5 DISCUSSIONS

The growing body of evidence established various workplace events as a primary cause of employees’ affective states (positive and negative emotions). Thus far, the empirical evidence supports the notion that both negative and positive emotions significantly influenced CWB through positive and negative interaction. Hence, understanding the work events that arouse negative and positive emotions would enable comprehensive mitigation actions against such contributing factors. This effort is thought to be relevant as different work events affect employees’ emotional states differently, which in turn leads to diverse CWB. Based on the affective work events literature, thus far, various mechanisms have been employed to identify the work events that preceded employees’ emotional reactions at work. Generally, previous research utilised four common research designs: diary study, ESM, cross-sectional study, and longitudinal study. The approach for each design is identical in terms of the survey studies and self-reporting mechanism, but the procedures appear to vary from one another. Note that there are various limitations associated with the daily reporting mechanism. For example, the amount of information collected in such a survey using daily reporting is limited due to time constraints (Matta et al, 2014). Moreover, a low response rate is a common challenge faced by daily study design researchers (Clark et al, 2018). Participants did not disclose any positive or negative events because of their reluctance to commit extra effort by frequently reporting similar work events over several days (Ohly & Schmitt, 2015). In addition, it seems that the assessed unpleasant events weren’t all that bad because people were forced to record a negative and a positive event every day. This has been confirmed by the fact that negative events have much lower mean intensity scores than positive events (Demerouti & Cropanzano, 2017). Notably, the daily diary study sample was also limited to employees who had an internet connection and could use it during work hours (Woznyj et al, 2021). Meanwhile, the limitations of the other two designs (i.e.,
cross-sectional and longitudinal study), which are identical to daily study design, are the reliance on self-report to measure affective events that might be vulnerable to common-method bias (Demerouti & Cropanzano, 2017; Clark et al, 2018). Furthermore, the existing methods, which rely on survey mechanisms, cannot be used to obtain any additional clarification. As a result, data reliability is strongly influenced by survey design and response quality. Moreover, it does not capture respondents’ feelings, behaviour, or emotional changes. In contrast, focus groups can offer a wider range of information and the chance to ask questions if there are any areas that require more clarity (Queirós, Faria, & Almeida, 2017). Unlike other focus group techniques, the KJ method enables both data collection and analysis to be performed simultaneously. It is plain to see common focus group techniques require subsequent activity, including transcribing and analysing. Additionally, a conventional focus group involves participants with specific characteristics that limit a greater generalisation (Smithson, 2000). Hence, the KJ method contributes to time-saving and reduces extra effort to analyse the data separately. In addition, KE based KJ method would enable the generation of cohesive implicit responses based on group consensus, hence minimising the effect of self-reporting bias. In addition to that, with the use of LEIQ™, the priority of the events can be identified.

6 CONCLUSION

This article contributes to the respective literature in numerous aspects. First, although the past decade of research has discussed the importance of multiple affective work events (e.g., Basch & Fisher, 1998; Erol-Korkmaz, 2010; Matta et al, 2014), the recent studies appeared to focus on a single work event as a single composite variable in defining employees’ emotional state and CWB at work (e.g., Jahanzeb et al, 2020; Griep et al, 2022). According to Kansei’s philosophy, subjective emotions are formed as a result of various stimuli, and this subjectivity must be objectified so that the stimuli and the subsequent emotional reaction are explicit. Therefore, in defining the CWB, the multiple work events that elicit employees’ emotions need to be captured to understand a general pattern of affective needs that requires further attention. Second, most researchers investigating affective work events have utilised self-reporting mechanisms to capture the daily affective events. It’s worth noting that this method results in common method bias and other issues like time constraints, low response rate, and rigid survey structure. Although KE has been established as being well-suited to be applied in understanding human emotions and psychology, it appears that this measure has not been thoroughly explored in the CWB research. Thus, this article contributes to the importance of methodology by introducing a new approach, i.e., the Kansei-Based KJ Method, in identifying the affective experiences at work via group consensus, hence minimising survey studies and self-reporting drawbacks. Finally, on top of the proposed framework, this article provides a KJ Method flow process that future studies could replicate to assess employees’ affective experience in defining other organisational behaviour. Notwithstanding that, this paper suggests a practical way to reach optimum quality and validity of the data that practitioners could employ. This article is not excluded from its downsides. For example, focus groups can be challenging to organize, regulate, and persuade people to participate. Thus, they might not be an accurate representation of non-users (Queirós et al, 2017). As previously mentioned, this article explicitly focuses on AET as a
descriptive framework for describing the affective events and discrete emotions that influence employees’ CWB. Thus, we see various alternative theoretical explanations for the proposed model that might assist inform future research. Despite understanding employees’ affective experience, other underlying mechanisms could be incorporated to mitigate the CWB prevalence. For instance, if moral and religious rules are embodied and bind individuals, they will willingly reduce their proclivity for transgression. Therefore, religion is one of the major aspects impacting one’s ethical considerations (Dora & Azim, 2019). Despite behavioural control measures, religiosity was found to be significant in emotion regulation strategies (cognitive reappraisal) (Vishkin, Bigman, Porat, Solak, Halperin, & Tamir, 2016). From this theoretical point of view, religiosity-based emotion regulation strategies may serve as a significant variable to buffer the affective state-CWB relationship.

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