

# AN EXPLORATORY INVESTIGATION OF THE PREDICTORS OF COUNTERPRODUCTIVE WORK BEHAVIORS AMONG MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL EMPLOYEES

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study was to assess predictors of employee counterproductive work behavior (CWB) in six Major League Baseball (MLB) organizations. Robinson and Bennett (1995) defined CWB as “voluntary behavior of organizational members that violates significant organizational norms, and in so doing, threatens the well-being of the organization and/or its members” (p.256). The definition has also been employed by various organizational behavior researchers (e.g., Lee & Allen, 2002; Martinko, Gundlach, & Douglas, 2002; and Sackett, 2002). For instance, Gruys and Sackett (2003) outlined CWB as “any intentional behavior on the part of an organizational member viewed by the organization as contrary to its legitimate interests” (p. 33). Similar to Robinson and Bennett (1995), the authors argue the definition “encompasses behavior that is targeted at both individuals and the organization as both types of actions can have severe consequences on the organization” (p. 30).

## Methods

The sample included 352 full time MLB employees. Participants were identified by their job title and profile on their workplace website. Research participants were asked to provide information by answering a survey questionnaire. Respondents were recruited with the assistance of contacts within the six MLB teams. Each contact was visited by the primary investigator to ensure details of the study were clear. Coded surveys (for an indication of response rates only) were distributed to full-time employees at the office by the principle investigator.

Of the 352 surveys distributed, 301 were deemed complete and usable yielding a response rate of 85%. Of the 301 participants, 208 were male (69%) and 93 were female (31%). All respondents indicated they had at least some college experience. In addition to demographic information on the participants, each survey was coded to indicate which particular team a participant was connected with. “Team 1” contributed 49 usable surveys (16%). “Team 2” and “Team 3” contributed 51 and 52 usable surveys representing 17% each. “Team 4,” “Team 5,” and “Team 6” added 46, 55, and 48 completed surveys accounting for approximately 15%, 18%, and 16% of the usable surveys. Therefore, the researcher concluded the usable surveys were adequately distributed amongst the six organizations for this investigation. All together the six MLB teams under investigation reported employing 882 full time employees at the time of this investigation.

## Results

A hierarchical regression was performed to conduct the final analysis with the inclusion of a two-step process. The results provide evidence to support the idea that individuals who see their world through a negative lens are more likely to engage in counterproductive behaviors, compared to their counterparts. In addition to the significant correlations of NA and PA with CWB, there were non-significant correlations between the three justices (procedural, distributive, and interactional) and CWB. Additionally, one of the main premises for this investigation was the inclusion of the moderating effect of team identification in the relationship between the independent variables and CWB. The results associated with Model 1 provide evidence there was a significant relationship between team identification and CWB at the .05 level ( $\beta = -.115$ ,  $p = .006$ ). This finding was not replicated in Model 2. The finding in model one suggests evidence of a relationship between team identification and CWB.

This study incorporated a highly investigated sport fan variable into an organizational employment setting. One argument that is frequently heard in the sport industry is: Why do people want to work in sport when the hours are consistently long and pay scales are low? In a practical sense the answer to this ongoing debate is rooted in an individual’s psychological connection with the team. Consequently, it is practically significant to investigate how team identification may alter an individual’s attitude, cognitions, and behaviors at work. This study examined the moderating effects of team identification on the relationships between three justice variables and two personality variables. Full-time employees (N=301) completed questionnaires assessing team identification, individual variables, situational variables, counterproductive behaviors, and demographic questions. The results regarding the relationships with CWB were mixed. Team identification did not play a significant role as a moderator in the analysis. Negative affectivity was found to have a positive relationship with CWB; positive affectivity was found to have a negative relationship. Individuals high in positive affectivity were less engaged in CWB, whereas individuals low in positive affectivity engaged in more CWB. Counter to expectations, distributive justice was positively associated with CWB. Although the hypotheses regarding the effects of six variables on CWB were partially supported; the study of MLB employees warrants further investigations.

## References

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