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Organisational Disenchantment, Enchantment and Counterproductive Work Behaviour

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this study was to examine the incremental validity of measures of Organisational Disenchantment and Enchantment over demographic, personality, burnout and workaholism factors in explaining Counterproductive Work Behaviours (CWB). Four hundred adults participated in an online survey to assess their Big Five personality traits, job burnout, disenchantment, enchantment, workaholism (considering both facet and domain levels), and self-reported CWBs. Our analysis revealed that participant sex, along with the personality traits of Agreeableness and Neuroticism, were significantly associated with job disenchantment and enchantment. Further, a regression analysis with CWB as the criterion variable indicated that sex, age, job disenchantment, and low levels of Conscientiousness accounted for approximately 27 % of the variance in these behaviours. Implications are considered.

Desencanto laboral, interés y comportamiento laboral contraproducente

RESUMEN

El objetivo de este estudio fue examinar la validez añadida de las medidas de desencanto e interés laboral sobre factores demográficos, de personalidad, *burnout* y adicción al trabajo para explicar los comportamientos laborales contraproductivos (CBC). Cuatrocientos adultos participaron en una encuesta en línea para evaluar los cinco grandes rasgos de personalidad: *burnout*, desencanto, interés, adicción al trabajo (considerando tanto los niveles de faceta como de dominio) y los CBC autodeclarados. Nuestro análisis reveló que el sexo de los participantes, junto con los rasgos de personalidad de amigabilidad y neuroticismo, se asociaron significativamente con el desencanto y el interés laborales. Además, un análisis de regresión con el CBC como variable de criterio indicó que el sexo, la edad, el desencanto laboral y los bajos niveles de responsabilidad explicaron aproximadamente el 27 % de la varianza en estos comportamientos. Se consideran las implicaciones.

The objective of this research is to investigate the correlates of Counterproductive Work Behaviours (CWBs), focusing on two new measures. It is an area of continuing interest (Carter et al., 2024; Duradoni et al., 2023). Specifically, the study seeks to determine whether Organisational Enchantment (OE) and Disenchantment (OD) have a more direct (both positive and negative) correlation with CWBs compared to more stable and distal factors, like personality traits and demographic characteristics. Additionally, the present research examines the relationship between CWBs and work engagement patterns, as evidenced by levels of burnout and workaholism. However, our primary aim was to examine the extent to which organisational enchantment and disenchantment added incremental validity in explaining CWBs over other measures already established to relate to them.

Counterproductive Work Behaviour

Counterproductive work behaviours (CWBs) can be defined as any volitional acts that harm or intend to harm organisations and/or organisation stakeholders, such as clients, co-workers, customers, and supervisors (e.g. Spector et al., 2006). These behaviours encompass a broad spectrum of actions, ranging from overtly malicious to subtly undermining. Among the many terms associated with CWBs are Antisocial Behaviour, Blue-collar Crime, Employee Deviance and Misconduct, Non-performance at Work, Aggressive Crime Deviance, Organisational Misbehaviour, Retaliative Behaviours, "Political" Behaviour, Unconventional Work Practices, Workplace Aggression, Hostility, Obstructionism, and Unethical Workplace Behaviour. This extensive list underscores the complexity and multifaceted nature of

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behaviours which can undermine the well-being and efficiency of an organisation and its members.

CWBs result in significant financial repercussions for organisations, with losses running into the billions each year (Dunlop & Lee, 2004). In response, many organisations invest in developing strategies to prevent, mitigate, or identify those most likely to exhibit such behaviours. The terminology used to describe CWBs —such as organisational delinquency, production deviance, property deviance, and workplace deviance—highlights the complicated nature of these actions. CWBs manifest in various forms, characterised by opposition to authority, impulsivity, a lack of empathy, feelings of alienation, and/or a shortfall in ethical standards. Often, individuals resort to these behaviours due to frustration, a sense of powerlessness, or feelings of being treated unfairly (Wu et al., 2016).

Given the significant impact of CWBs on both organisations and their members, scholarly interest in this domain has surged, yielding a substantial body of research, including numerous articles and reviews (Bennett et al., 2018; Carpenter et al., 2021; Götz et al., 2019; Mackey et al., 2021; Marcus et al., 2016; Thrasher et al., 2020; Zappalà et al., 2021). Such scholarly attention has not only focused on the definition and categorisation of CWBs but has also deeply explored the causal factors behind these behaviours (Peng et al., 2021: Van Iddekinge et al., 2023). A significant portion of this research has investigated the correlation between CWBs and personality traits (Pletzer, 2021; Pletzer et al., 2019, 2021, 2023). Pletzer et al (2019) found that HEXACO Honesty-Humility showed the strongest relation with workplace deviance, followed by Conscientiousness and Agreeableness while Neuroticism (positively) correlated with workplace deviance. More recent studies, such as that by Carpenter et al. (2021), have revealed that CWBs at the unit level are significantly associated with collective job attitudes, the use of strategic human resource management practices (e.g. staffing, training, rewards), and collective perceptions of the work environment (e.g. unit-level fairness perceptions).

The primary concern for managers and researchers lies in pinpointing the key predictors and correlates of CWBs in hopes of effectively reducing its prevalence. Additionally, there is a significant interest in understanding the mechanisms or processes through which employees become involved in CWBs. This present investigation explores how four categories of variables relate to CWBs. The first category focuses on demographic variables, specifically sex, age, and education level. The literature in this domain demonstrates a mix of consistent and inconsistent results, which may be attributable to differences in the types of CWBs assessed and the characteristics of the organisations studied. The second category delves into personality traits, examining how these intrinsic characteristics are associated with a propensity for engaging in CWBs. The third category considers two workrelated variables: burnout and workaholism, both identified as significant predictors of CWB. Finally, the fourth category examines job disenchantment and job satisfaction, exploring how feelings towards one's job can serve as a correlate to CWB.

Burnout

Burnout is conceptualised as an internal and emotional reaction to external pressures that overwhelm and deplete our personal and social resources (Maslach, 1998). It symbolises the metaphorical inability of one's inner flame to burn with its former intensity (Schaufeli et al., 2009). Predominantly, research on burnout adopts a multidimensional framework proposed by Maslach and colleagues (Bianchi et al., 2014), characterising burnout through dimensions of emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, and reduced personal accomplishment. However, this study opts for a more concentrated approach, recognising burnout as primarily

fatigue and exhaustion attributable to sustained stress, focusing on this phenomenon within a work environment. Burnout has previously been identified as a mediator of the association between job demands and CWB (Smoktunowicz et al., 2015). The aim is to further explore how burnout relates to other factors, like job satisfaction, job disenchantment, and CWBS.

Workaholism

Fifty years ago, when Oates (1971) brought the term "Workaholic" into the mainstream with his influential book "Confessions of a Workaholic", there were two ways of defining people with this condition. The first was by time: time spent at work or working. Some believed those who did more than 50 hours a week deserved the label. The condition concerns excessively long hours, beyond anything reasonably required or legally stipulated. The other defining characteristic of workaholism involves preoccupation. obsession and uncontrollable reluctance to leave work, stop working, or disengage from work (Andreassen, 2014; Shaufeli et al., 2009). It was proposed that workaholics were addicted because work gave them a status, identity, and structure they could not find elsewhere. Research has consistently linked workaholism to a spectrum of adverse outcomes, including an increase in systolic blood pressure (Balducci et al., 2018), a heightened risk for metabolic syndrome (Ten Brummelhuis et al., 2017), challenges with sleep (Gillet et al., 2018), conflicts between work and family life (Aziz & Zickar, 2006), and diminished satisfaction in personal relationships (Bakker et al., 2009). Workaholism has also been linked to workplace bullying (Balducci et al., 2022), aggressive behaviour at work (Balducci et al., 2012), and CWBs (Clark et al., 2016).

Organisational Disenchantment and Enchantment

It has been well-established in the literature surrounding subjective well-being/happiness that happiness and unhappiness are obliquely-related rather than opposites: that is, to score low on happiness does not imply unhappiness (Diener & Emmons, 1984). The same appears to be true of job satisfaction. There are many measures of job satisfaction, from very simple, short scales to much longer measures that attempt to assess possible facets of satisfaction. There has also been a concerted effort to measure related concepts, like job commitment, job involvement, and more recently, job engagement. Although each of these concepts has a distinct emphasis, research indicates that their measurements are strongly interrelated. In our study, we employ a comprehensive metric that amalgamates five subscales designed to capture positive work experiences. These subscales are based on existing measures (Cook et al., 1981) and include Work Commitment, Work Engagement, Work Engrossment, Work Involvement, and Work Satisfaction. We have collectively termed this combined measure as Organisational Enchantment (OE), reflecting a holistic assessment of an individual's positive connection and fulfilment derived from

In contrast to OE, Organisational Disenchantment (OD) is defined as a targeted negative affect felt towards an employee's colleagues, superiors, and organisation (Treglown & Furnham, 2022). Furnham (2015) suggested that employee disenchantment had five different facets or factors: Organisational Lying and Hypocrisy, Perceived Inequity, Bullying and Mistreatment, Distrust, and Broken Promises. These factors form a coherent concept and a validated self-report measure was developed to assess them (Treglown & Furnham, 2022). It was argued that Disengagement explains why people at work go from being engaged to disengaged, productive to subversive, and a friend to an enemy of the organisation.

Recently, using three different measures of CWBs, Treglown and Furnham (2022) found OD accounted for significant incremental variance over demography, personality, bright- and dark-side personality, and moral disengagement. The current study is a partial replication of Treglown and Furnham's study, with the addition of exploring the role of job burnout, workaholism, and job satisfaction.

This Study

This study has several aims. The first is to investigate further the OD and OE concepts and measures, observing their internal reliability and correlates on the domain and facet level. The second and primary aim of the study is to look at the key determinants of CWBs. We use four sets of variables, exploring the incremental validity of these in predicting CWBs. These variables include: (1) classic demographic variables (sex, age, education), (2) personality variables (the Big Five), (3) Burnout and Workaholism, and (4) OD and OE. Our central interest is the incremental validity of the above variables, entered in that order.

Method

Participants

In all, 397 people participated in this study: 195 were male, 199 were female, and three were non-binary. Participants ranged in age from 19 to 71, with a mean of 39.9 years (*SD* = 11.63 years). In total, 54% were graduates, 93% were British nationals, and 60.3% owned their own homes. All were in employment in various occupations, including accountants, health workers, and IT. When questioned about their company rank, 5.0% indicated they were the CEO, 4.2% were directors, 22.2% were managers, and 68.7% were employed.

Participants also rated their beliefs on various 10-point scales: Religious (*Not at all* = 0 to *Very* = 10) 2.29 (SD = 2.90); Politics (*Conservative* = 0 to *Liberal* = 10) 5.55 (SD = 2.46); Ambitiousness (*Not at all* = 0 to Very = 10) 5.49 (SD = 2.71). Using a 100-point scale, they also rated their Physical Health 67.69 (SD = 18.68), Intelligence 66.99 (SD = 15.17), and Emotional Intelligence 68.47 (SD = 17.98).

First, we removed 47 of 398 participants as they were unemployed, retired, students, homemakers, etc., leaving a sample of 351. We used listwise deletion to deal with missing responses. Overall, 267 participants responded on all items for all measures, and these responses were included in the analysis.

Measures

CWB

The Counterproductive Work Behaviour Checklist (CWB-C) was developed by Spector et al. (2010). Five of the items measure CWB directed towards the organisation (CWB-O), and the remaining five assess CWB directed towards people (CWB-P). Respondents indicate how often they have engaged in different forms of counterproductive work behaviour using a five-point Likert scale. Spector et al. (2010) found the scale to have acceptable internal consistency with alphas ranging from .79 to .89. The internal consistency for CWB in the current study was acceptable (α = .82). The alpha for CWB-O was .65, and CWB-P was .81.

The Mini-IPIP

We utilised the International Personality Item Pool-Five-Factor Model measure (Donnellan et al., 2006). There were 30 items. Responses were given on a five-point Likert scale. In this study,

the alpha coefficients for the five factors were Agreeableness (.78), Conscientiousness (.67), Extraversion (.80), Openness (.74), and Neuroticism (.76).

Work-related Burnout

The current research uses the 7 item Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (CBI; Kristensen et al., 2005). Responses were given on a five-point Likert scale. Kristensen et al. (2005) found the Work-related Burnout subscale to have an acceptable degree of internal consistency (α = .87). A similar degree of internal consistency was found for the CBI in the present study (α = .88).

Workaholism

The Multidimensional Workaholism Scale (MWS; Clark et al., 2020) is a 16-item measure of Workaholism, where participants rate if a statement describes them using a five-point Likert scale. The MWS consists of four sub-dimensions (motivational, cognitive, emotional, and behavioural), with four items assessing each dimension. Clark et al. (2020) found the MWS to have sound psychometric properties across five samples, with Cronbach's alphas ranging from .82 to .94. In line with this, internal consistency for the MWS and its subscales were satisfactory in the current study (α varying from .84 to .93).

Organizational Disenchantment (Treglown & Furnham, 2022)

This is a 45-item questionnaire with five subscales. The subscales include: (a) *Organisational Lying* (e.g. "I believe my organisation is hypocritical"; "I believe my organisation has conflicting agendas") (Alpha .94), (b) *Perceived Inequity* (e.g. "My organisation ensures employees have equal opportunities to succeed and thrive"; "I believe my organisation treats all employees fairly") (Alpha .90), (c) *Disrespect* (e.g. "Employees sometimes put others down, making their working life difficult"; "At my work, jokes at another employee's expense often go too far") (Alpha .90), (d) *Distrust* (e.g. "I trust the people who are in charge of my organisation and their methods"; "My employer is open and upfront with me") (Alpha .93), (e) *Broken Promises* (e.g. "My manager has made promises s/he has not kept"; "When incentives are presented to employees they are often exaggerated") (Alpha .96). Responses were given on a seven-point Likert scale. The Alpha for the combined scale was .94.

Organisational Enchantment (Treglown & Furnham, 2022)

The five dimensions were: (a) *Work Commitment* (e.g. "I hope to continue to work in my current job for many more years"; "Even if offered more money and seniority I would not accept an offer of another job") (Alpha .90), (b) *Work Engagement* (e.g. "I feel really positive about my work"; "I am always eager to get to work every day") (Alpha .89), (c) *Work Engrossment* (e.g. "At work I often completely lose track of time"; "At work, I am usually completely engrossed by what I am doing") (Alpha .81), (d) *Work involvement* (e.g. "My work is everything to me"; "I believe 'Who I am is what I do") (Alpha .83), and (e) *Work Satisfaction* (e.g "I get a sense of real satisfaction at work"; "Actually, I enjoy my work more than my leisure time") (Alpha .74). Responses were given on a seven-point Likert scale. The Alpha for the combined scale was .92.

Procedure

Data was collected using Prolific. All participants were healthy, employed adults who completed anonymous, non-invasive

Table 1. Means, Standard Deviations, Correlations and Cronbach's Alphas for Included Variables

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. Sex	1.50	0.50	-												
2. Age	39.11	10.96	-0.01	-											
3. Educatiion	1.43	0.50	-0.09	0.15**	-										
4. Extraversion	11.15	3.49	0.05	0.04	0.01	(.81)									
5. Agreeableness	15.52	2.63	0.34***	0.10	-0.11*	0.26***	(.78)								
6. Conscientiousness	13.40	2.98	-0.02	-0.02	0.02	0.13*	0.05	(.66)							
7. Neuroticism	12.02	3.29	0.27***	-0.17**	-0.14**	-0.18***	0.08	-0.33***	(.77)						
8. Intellect/ Imagination	14.49	2.91	-0.11*	0.00	-0.17**	0.19***	0.21***	0.11*	-0.05	(.72)					
9. Job Enchantment	136.64	37.90	0.16**	0.12*	-0.04	0.11	0.20***	0.14*	-0.12*	0.04	(.96)				
10. Job Disenchantment	154.85	51.17	-0.10	-0.05	0.05	-0.08	-0.16**	-0.18**	0.23***	-0.09	-0.68***	(.96)			
11. Workaholism	43.43	11.39	0.09	0.02	-0.13*	0.03	0.11	0.06	0.18***	0.04	0.37***	-0.01	(.92)		
12. Burnout	23.15	5.90	-0.11	0.18**	0.12*	0.12*	0.04	0.20***	-0.35***	-0.05	0.40***	-0.44***	-0.20**	(.90)	
13. CWB	14.70	4.54	-0.18**	-0.22***	0.04	-0.04	-0.21***	-0.23***	0.13*	-0.06	-0.33***	0.39***	-0.05	-0.26***	(.82)

Note. Male sex is coded as 1, and female as 2.

questionnaires, entirely voluntarily. They are always at liberty to stop at any point and not answer any particular question. Participants were compensated for their time at a minimum of (£5/hour). We specified that people had to be employed. The survey took an average of 21 minutes to complete, and participants were paid £2.00 after completing the survey.

Results

We conducted an exploratory factor analysis on the five enchantment and five disenchantment factors. This confirmed the clear difference between the factors. Next, we correlated all the variables.

Table 1 depicts that OD and OE were negatively correlated (r = -.68). In all, eight variables correlated with CWB: Sex, Age, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, OD, OE, and Burnout. All were negative except Neuroticism and OD.

Table 2. Hierarchical Multiple Regression Predicting CWB

Independent variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Sex	20***	20**	22***	17**
Age	24***	21***	18**	18**
Education	.07	.06	.07	.06
Extraversion		08	.10	.10
Agreeableness		12	10	08
Conscientiousness		19**	16**	15**
Neuroticism		.09	.04	02
Intellect/Imagination		05	05	03
Workaholism			01	.03
Burnout			22***	09
Org Enchantment				09
Org Disenchantment				.23**
R^2	.096	.17	.209	.272
R ² change	.096***	.075***	.037**	.063***

Note. Male sex is coded as 1, and female as 2. Standardized regression coefficients (β) are reported. N = 267.

Table 2 presents the results of the hierarchical multiple regression predicting CWB. Four models were tested, with variables entered in successive steps reflecting their temporal stability. The R^2 value for each model is displayed, along with the change in R^2 at

each step as new predictors were added. The results showed that two demographic factors (sex and age) accounted for 9.6% of the variance in CWB. When Conscientiousness was added in Model 2, the explained variance increased by 7.5%. Adding Workaholism and burnout in Model 3 further increased the explained variance by 3.7%, and finally, the inclusion of job engagement (OE) and job demands (OD) in Model 4 explained an additional 6.3%. All increments in R^2 were statistically significant, achieving a p-value of .001 or lower. Collectively, incorporating all variables, the final model explained 27.2% of the variance in CWB. In the fourth and final model, four variables significantly predicted CWB: being male, younger age, lower Conscientiousness, and OD.

Table 3. Regression onto Total Organisational Disenchantment

	В	SE	Beta	t
Sex	-14.51	5.81	14	-2.50*
Age	10	.25	02	-0.41
Degree	7.65	5.51	.07	1.39
Agreeableness	-2.29	1.15	12	-1.99*
Conscientiousness	-1.43	.98	08	-1.46
Extraversion	1.07	.83	.07	1.29
Openness	-1.40	.96	08	-1.45
Neuroticism	4.11	.93	.27	4.42***
Adjusted R ²				
F				
p				

*p < .05, ***p < .001.

Table 4. Regression onto Total Organisational Enchantment

	В	SE	Beta	t
Sex	11.09	4.30	.15	2.58*
Age	.39	.18	.12	2.16*
Degree	-4.00	4.07	05	-0.98
Agreeableness	2.06	.85	.14	2.43*
Conscientiousness	1.37	.73	.10	1.89
Extraversion	.11	.61	.01	0.19
Openness	.08	.71	.01	0.11
Neuroticism	-1.47	.69	13	-2.14*
Adjusted R ²				
F		4		
p				

*p < .05.

p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001.

^{*}p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001.

We then examined demographic and personality correlates of OD and OE through regressions. Tables 3 and 4 demonstrate similar but opposite results, with three variables being significant. Being male, low in Agreeableness, and high in Neuroticism was positively related to OD scores, but predicted OE negatively. In addition, age was related positively to OE.

Discussion

In this study, eight of the examined variables significantly correlated with CWB: Sex, Age, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, Burnout, OD, and OE. Regression analysis showed that these predictors accounted for approximately 27% of the variability in CWB. Consistent with prior literature (Pletzer, 2021; Spector & Zhou, 2014), findings indicate that age and female sex were variables associated with lower levels of CWB. Similarly, higher levels of Conscientiousness were linked to lower CWB, aligning with previous research (Bolton et al., 2010). However, Agreeableness, despite its noted association with CWB in other studies (Bolton et al., 2010), did not significantly predict CWB in our regression analysis when considering all variables together. Neither Workaholism nor Burnout predicted CWB in the final model. On the other hand, OD was the strongest predictor of CWB in our study, echoing the findings by Treglown and Furnham (2022).

Disenchantment is a state of experiencing feelings of disillusionment, betrayal, and disappointment due to the treatment received. The phenomenon embodies the negative affect that surfaces within employees due to specific job stressors. The negative affective response is directed at the source of the job stressor (i.e., the employee's colleagues, management, and the organisation itself) potentially motivating people to engage in CWB. Thus, identifying disenchanted employees and addressing any organisational stressors that might lead to employee disenchantment is crucial for any organisation seeking to understand and mitigate CWB.

In our study, we also delved into the factors predicting OE and OD, uncovering an intriguing pattern; the predictors for OD mirrored those for OE, albeit with predicted inverse relationships. Notably, Neuroticism emerged as the paramount predictor of OD. This personality trait, marked by emotional instability, irritability, anxiety, self-doubt, depression, and various negative emotions, positively correlated with Disenchantment while inversely predicting organisational Enchantment. Our findings align with previous scholarly work. For instance, in their meta-analysis on personality and job satisfaction, Judge et al. (2002) identified Neuroticism as the personality dimension most negatively and strongly associated with job satisfaction among the five major personality factors.

Intriguingly, Extraversion did not significantly predict OE or OD in our sample despite its association with positive affect and previous research linking it to job satisfaction (Judge et al., 2002). Agreeableness positively predicted OE and negatively predicted OD in the correlations and in the regressions with demography. However, in the regression on the CWBs shown in Table 2 it failed to reach significance, suggesting that other factors were more powerful predictors. Agreeableness is linked with the pursuit and maintenance of cooperative and supportive relationships with others, along with the capability to establish meaningful connections. Hence, it likely plays a crucial role in enhancing the satisfaction of relatedness needs, which are associated with job satisfaction (Deci et al., 2017).

Sex differences, specifically female, negatively influenced job dissatisfaction and positively influenced job satisfaction, aligning with existing literature that suggests women tend to be happier in their workplaces (Clark, 1997). Furthermore, age was identified as a positive predictor of job satisfaction, but did not significantly predict job dissatisfaction. This observation is supported by research indicating that job satisfaction generally increases with age (O'Brien & Dowling, 1981). A potential reason for this trend is that older employees

might possess more realistic job expectations, further professional experience, or more effective coping mechanisms for managing work-related stress compared to their younger counterparts.

One implication of these results concerns the assessment of OD which has been unexplored in the literature. OD is essentially, targeted negative affect felt towards an employee's colleagues, superiors, and organisation and which develops over-time. It is more than simple job dissatisfaction as it is targeted at the organisational as a whole and explains CWBs as a form or revenge and restitution. These results suggest it is a factor that could be added to annual staff surveys to assess staff morale and dissatisfaction.

Limitations

The current study is not without limitations. Firstly, the study uses self-reports, which are susceptible to various biases. These include, but are not limited to, social desirability bias, where respondents may answer in a manner they perceive as more socially acceptable rather than reflecting their true feelings or behaviours (Paulhus, 1991), and recall bias, which can impact the accuracy of reported information due to memory errors (Stone et al., 2007).

Secondly, the use of a single source and the study's cross-sectional nature limits our ability to infer causality or understand how relationships between variables may evolve with time (Kazdin, 2003; Podsakoff et al., 2003). Without longitudinal data, it becomes challenging to discern whether a particular factor leads to a specific outcome or if the relationship observed is influenced by external variables that change over time.

Future studies should seek to mitigate these limitations by gathering longitudinal, observational and/or behavioural data. Additionally, acquiring data from other reports on disenchantment, enchantment, and CWBs could offer a deeper understanding of the dynamics among these variables.

Conflict of Interest

The authors of this article declare no conflict of interest.

Author Contribution

A.F: Visualisation, Writing -review; J.H: Writing, Analysis.

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