

An Employee-Supervisor Analysis of Counterproductive Workplace Behaviours as an  
Outcome of Social Rank

by

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## **Abstract**

While there is support for various individual and contextual predictors of counterproductive workplace behaviour (CWB), little research has examined social rank and CWB. In this research, I examined social rank in terms of social dominance orientation (SDO), and leader dominance and prestige. Using data from a police organization (281 employees and 130 supervisors), I examined the association between employee SDO (time 1) and employee self- and supervisor-rated CWB (time 2). I also examined the association between perceived leader dominance and prestige (time 1), and employee self- and supervisor-rated CWB (time 2). Findings indicated that SDO was associated with CWB, and that both servant leadership and perceived social impact moderated this relationship. Findings also indicated that perceived leader dominance and prestige were associated with CWB, via leader trust. Findings contribute to the understanding of CWB as potential outcomes of social rank, highlighting the importance of moderating and mediating variables.

*Keywords:* counterproductive work behaviour, prestige, social rank, dominance, social dominance orientation, leadership, social dominance theory, dual strategies theory

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## Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iii
Table of Contents.....	iv
List of Tables.....	v
List of Appendices.....	vii
An Employee-Supervisor Analysis of Counterproductive Workplace Behaviours as an Outcome of Social Rank.....	1
Counterproductive Work Behaviour.....	3
Social Rank.....	5
Social Dominance.....	7
Perceived Social Impact.....	11
Servant Leadership.....	13
Leader Dominance and Prestige.....	16
Trust in Leader.....	22
Current Research.....	25
Method.....	28
Participants.....	28
Procedure.....	30
Measures.....	30
Social Dominance Orientation.....	31
Perceived Social Impact.....	31
Servant Leadership.....	31

Leader Prestige .....	31
Leader Dominance.....	32
Trust in Leader.....	32
Counterproductive Workplace Behaviours .....	32
Statistical Analysis .....	33
Results.....	33
Preliminary Analyses .....	33
Descriptive Statistics .....	33
Correlational Analyses .....	35
Main Analyses: Moderation .....	38
Main Analyses: Mediation .....	47
Discussion.....	50
Social Dominance and CWB.....	50
Leader Dominance, Leader Prestige, and Trust .....	54
Limitations .....	55
Theoretical and Practical Implications .....	57
Future Directions.....	58
Conclusion.....	59
References.....	61

## **List of Tables**

Table 1. Sociodemographic Characteristics of Participants.....	29
Table 2. Means, Standard Deviations, and Bivariate Correlations for Study Variables.....	36
Table 3. Perceived Social Impact Moderates SDO and CWB.....	39
Table 4. Servant Leadership Moderates SDO and CWB.....	43
Table 5. Trust in Leader Mediates Leader Dominance and CWB .....	48
Table 6. Trust in Leader Mediates Leader Prestige and CWB.....	48

## **List of Figures**

Figure 1. Proposed Relationships between SDO and CWB.....	27
Figure 2. Proposed Relationships between Leader Dominance and CWB, and Leader Prestige and CWB.....	27
Figure 3. Perceived Social Impact moderates SDO and Self-rated CWB.....	40
Figure 4. Servant Leadership Moderates SDO and Self-rated CWB.....	44
Figure 5. Servant Leadership Moderates SDO and Supervisor-rated CWB.....	45

## **List of Appendices**

Appendix A – Questionnaires .....	91
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## **An Employee-Supervisor Analysis of Counterproductive Workplace Behaviours as an Outcome of Social Rank**

Although research often focuses on facets of effective organizational behaviour (e.g., organizational citizenship behaviour, transformational leadership; Kalwani & Mahesh, 2020; Organ, 2018), the organizational psychology field also emphasizes the importance of understanding what drives ineffective or dysfunctional work behaviour (Bowling & Gruys, 2010; Choi et al., 2019). In particular, research has highlighted the extent to which employee actions have the potential to harm those within organizations, and organizations themselves (e.g., Bollmann & Krings, 2016; Mackey et al., 2017). While there is support for a variety of individual and contextual predictors of dysfunctional employee behaviour, less research has examined the role of social rank. Social rank, which refers to one's position within a social hierarchy and their capacity for influence, is associated with a wide range of employee behaviours (McClanahan, 2020). For instance, by attaining high social rank, individuals have more social influence over others and have greater control over decision making (Ketterman & Maner, 2021). Research suggests that, while there are multiple ways that individuals may demonstrate their need for, or maintenance of, social rank within an organization, the social rank of others with whom employees work has the potential to influence employees as well (e.g., Howard et al., 2020; Ong et al., 2021). Of relevance to the current research, three employee characteristics that are associated with social rank are employee social dominance orientation (SDO), perceived leader dominance, and perceived leader prestige.

SDO refers to the extent to which individuals endorse and prefer group-based dominance and inequality (Pratto et al., 2006), while dominance (using force, coercion, and intimidation to attain rank) and prestige (using expertise or know-how to attain rank) both relate to attaining

power and status within organizations (Cheng, 2020; de Waal-Andrews, 2014). While SDO is an individual difference characteristic that remains relatively stable over time (Tagar et al., 2017), dominance and prestige are opposing strategies used to achieve positions of leadership and power (Case et al., 2021; Cheng et al., 2013; Henrich & Gil-White, 2001). SDO has often been associated with a preference for hierarchical group dynamics and social rank (Zhai et al., 2021), and has been related to numerous behaviours and cognitions, such as accepting prejudice and inequality, and favouring power and dominance (Cichocka et al., 2017; Tessi et al., 2020). In addition, research suggests that dominance strategies are more likely to be used by arrogant and narcissistic individuals who tend to influence others through fear and control (Cheng et al., 2013; Lee et al., 2021), whereas prestige strategies are more likely to be used by conscientious and prosocial individuals who influence others by using their knowledge and skills in areas that are valued by their peers (Jiménez & Mesoudi, 2019; Redhead et al., 2019).

The purpose of the current research was to examine the association between social rank and counterproductive work behaviour (CWB). Given that they are often fraught with hierarchy and power, police organizations are an ideal location wherein the association between social rank and CWB may be examined, and as such, the current study took place with employees of a police organization. Further, police officers play an integral role in society and help serve and keep the public safe. As such, engaging in CWB in the context of a police organization may be detrimental to their ability to do their jobs effectively and may have far reaching implications for both members of the organization and members of the public. Moreover, this research is timely in that, amidst calls for reform (e.g., Isaak & Walby, 2022) this research will help to better understand police organizations and provide information to advise evidence-based organizational decisions. The current research explored potential moderators (i.e., servant leadership and

perceived social impact) of the relationship between SDO and CWB to determine whether there were factors that might mitigate this association. Finally, to better understand the process by which perceived leader dominance and prestige relate to CWB, trust in leader was examined as a mediator of these relationships. Findings from this research have the potential to contribute to organizational knowledge and practice, as well our theoretical understanding of CWB.

### **Counterproductive Work Behaviour**

Over the past few decades, there has been widespread growth in better understanding how workplace and employee characteristics influence dysfunctional workplace behaviour (Zhang et al., 2019). While dysfunctional workplace behaviour takes on a myriad of forms, researchers and organizations alike have demonstrated sustained interest in CWB (Collins & Griffin, 1998; Li & Chen, 2018; Low et al., 2019; Robinson & Bennett, 1995; Spector & Fox, 2005), which refer to voluntary or intentional actions taken by employees that harm the organization or members of the organization (Bollmann & Krings, 2016; Bowling & Gruys, 2010). CWB go against organizational norms and lead to decreases in organizational well-being and the well-being of those who work for the organization (Robinson & Bennett, 1995). Examples of these actions include, but are not limited to, employee withdrawal (Spector et al., 2006), theft (Sackett, 2002), aggression (Spector & Fox, 2005), and unethical behaviours (e.g., misusing resources, discrimination, lying; Helle et al., 2018). Further, CWB also encompasses behaviours such as excluding coworkers from conversations or group activities, not working to the best of one's ability, and taking unnecessary breaks (Fox et al., 2001). Thus, CWB can emerge as negative behaviours towards coworkers (i.e., criticizing or excluding coworkers) and negative organizational factors (i.e., not working to the best of one's ability or speaking poorly about one's workplace). Prior findings suggest that CWB negatively impacts both employees and

organizations (Bowling et al., 2011; De Clercq et al., 2019). Moreover, not only does CWB have negative financial consequences (e.g., such as losses due to theft, fraud, or workplace mistreatment; Li & Chen, 2018), but it also harms employees who are targeted by this behaviour, among other outcomes, by increasing absenteeism and interpersonal conflict (Lee et al., 2022), and decreasing personal health, well-being, and productivity (Low et al., 2019).

Understanding antecedents of CWB is of interest given the negative interpersonal and organizational outcomes associated with this widespread organizational phenomenon. As such, much research has examined both individual and situational predictors of CWB, with considerable emphasis on demographic factors, cognitive abilities, and personality traits (e.g., Zettler, 2020). For example, research has shown that personality traits, such as conscientiousness and agreeableness, are predictors of deviant behaviours, whereby individuals low on both trait dimensions tend to engage in more aberrant behaviours, such as CWB (Berry et al., 2007; Miao et al., 2017; Runge et al., 2020). Existing literature has also found other personality traits to be related to CWB, such as impulsivity (Blickle & Schütte, 2017), hostility (Meisler et al., 2019), and narcissism (Braun et al., 2018). More recently, and particularly relevant to the current study, O'Brien et al. (2021) found that, under certain organizational circumstances (e.g., experiences of workplace stressors such as organizational constraints or interpersonal conflict), SDO is related to CWB. Moreover, higher levels of CWB have been found to be more prevalent among individuals with lower levels of education (Morf et al., 2017) and emotional intelligence (Greenidge & Coyne, 2014). Existing research has also explored further positive correlates of CWB, such as moral disengagement (Hadlington et al., 2021), stress (De Clercq et al., 2019), abusive supervision (Tepper, 2000), and interpersonal conflict (Kundi & Badar, 2021), and negative correlates of CWB, such as emotional regulation (Greenidge & Coyne, 2014), status

and group identification (Al-Atwi & Bakir, 2014), and perceived organizational support (Palmer et al., 2017). Moreover, situational factors such as empowerment, reward, and upward mobility have also been negatively related to CWB (Vatankhah et al., 2017). It is thus important to understand what motivates individuals to engage in CWB since the effects are pervasive and result in numerous negative outcomes, as outlined above.

Even with the widespread interest in understanding antecedents of CWB, certain predictors have been focused on to a lesser extent. In the current research, I build on these previous contributions and extended prior findings to explore CWB as an outcome of social rank in an organization often characterized by power, rank, and hierarchy (i.e., a police organization; Drummond-Smith, 2018; Kukić et al., 2021). Utilizing the theoretical foundations of social dominance theory (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999), and dual strategies theory (Maner & Case, 2016), I argue that an important antecedent to CWB is employee traits characterized by an inclination to engage in actions that promote social rank.

### **Social Rank**

Social hierarchy and categorizing people into social ranks are prevalent in numerous groups and organizations, making social rank a central aspect of social interactions (Henrich & Gil-White, 2001; Magee & Galinsky, 2008; Roberts et al., 2019). Interestingly, group hierarchies often persist even in organizations that attempt to minimize social rank (Leavitt, 2005), suggesting a pervasiveness in our preference to organize human behaviour into social ranks (Halevy et al., 2012; McClanahan, 2020).

Existing literature defines social hierarchies as a sense of disparity between individuals based on forms of social desirability (e.g., Hays & Bendersky, 2015). For instance, some individuals attain high social rank due to their knowledge, skills, and abilities, while others may

attain high social rank as a function of dominance and power (Martins, 2022). From this, theories of hierarchy, rank, and power suggest that social ranks can be advantageous since they motivate group efforts and result in increased coordination and productivity (Magee & Galinsky, 2008). Moreover, organizing behaviours by social rank has been found to promote decision-making since a limited number of individuals afforded high social rank are making decisions and guiding others accordingly (Hays & Bendersky, 2015).

Prior research has found that individuals engage in behaviours that promote and maintain social rank (Anderson et al., 2015; Cheng & Tracy, 2014), and are also influenced by the behaviours of other individuals with whom they work, as they relate to social rank (Ronay et al., 2012). More specifically, evidence suggests that people tend to want to attain high social rank (perceived level of certain traits that are deemed favourable; Henrich & Gil-White, 2001) because high-ranking individuals benefit from preferential resource distribution and perceived competence, among other advantages (Maner & Case, 2016). Further, research has demonstrated that individuals of high social rank can impact those around them in various ways, such as by influencing their behaviours, and how they feel about the individual of high social rank (e.g., Gong et al., 2017; Yao & Moskowitz, 2015).

This concept of social rank is fundamental to both social dominance theory (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999) and dual strategies theory (Case & Maner, 2016), and is defined as an individual's actual or perceived position within a hierarchy (i.e., one's social position or rank based on factors deemed socially desirable; Cheng, 2013; McClanahan, 2019). Where social dominance theory proposes that individuals maintain social inequality based on their position in a social hierarchy (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999), dual strategies theory suggests that individuals use two opposing strategies (i.e., dominance and prestige) to achieve and preserve social rank within hierarchical

groups (Maner & Case, 2016). Of importance when it comes to the dual strategies theory, literature examining social rank suggests that power and status represent separate categories of social rank and are thus relevant to examine as distinct behavioural motivators (McClanahan, 2020). Where power encompasses disproportionate control of resources (dominance), status involves admiration and respect (prestige; Cheng, 2020). And while both are widespread occurrences in human behaviour, power and status are imparted separately, and have different consequences (Anicich et al., 2016). The distinction between power and status is of relevance to the current research as it helps situate and conceptualize the variables of interest. More specifically, previous research links power with dominance, and status with prestige (e.g., Maner & Case, 2016; Ronay et al., 2020). The following sections discuss various forms of social rank (i.e., SDO, leader dominance, leader prestige), and how they may relate to CWB.

### **Social Dominance**

Social dominance theory (SDT; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999) provides a framework for studying the maintenance of social inequalities in organizational settings, and explains the extent to which group-based oppression is maintained. SDT argues that, when dominant and subordinate groups agree with endorsing legitimizing myths, this results in maintaining stability in a hierarchical social system. Here, legitimizing myths, which have also been referred to as culturally held beliefs, describe the extent to which discrimination is made acceptable since the values, attitudes, or stereotypes are generally accepted by society (Pratto et al., 2006). In this way, legitimizing myths help validate and support group dominance, and allow for one social group to have disproportionate power and authority, while other subordinate groups do not experience such privileges (Pratto & Stewart, 2011), which may result in individuals behaving in ways that are counterproductive. Essentially, SDT describes how the complexities of different

levels of social organizations intertwine and allow for group-based inequalities to be accepted. For instance, SDT suggests that individuals with high status use prejudice to justify discriminating against individuals they deem to be of lower status (Küpper et al., 2010), and favour individuals they believe to be of equal or higher status (Garcia et al., 2009; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Moreover, prior research suggests that maintaining such hierarchies often leads to bias and discrimination directed towards individuals of low status (Simmons et al., 2012). Effectively, the principal assumption of SDT is that individuals of high-status groups are intolerant of and discriminate against individuals of low-status groups to maintain their status in the social hierarchy (Pratto et al., 2000).

Stemming from SDT is the construct of SDO, which refers to the extent to which an individual endorses and prefers group-based dominance and inequality (Pratto et al., 2006), and has been found to be a strong predictor of intergroup attitudes and behaviours (e.g., Kteily et al., 2012; Sidanius et al., 2013). Existing studies have consistently shown that the higher an individual is in SDO, the more they support intergroup hierarchies (e.g., Lee et al., 2019b). Further, individuals high in SDO are concerned with maintaining power as well as pursuing their self-interests (Shao et al., 2011). Interestingly, previous research has found social dominance to be associated with numerous negative interpersonal factors, such as a lack of empathy for others (Stathi et al., 2021), prejudice towards immigrants and ethnic minorities (Sidanius et al., 2013), and endorsement of social inequality (Kteily et al., 2011) and sexism (Kteily et al., 2012). Given that individuals high in SDO believe in their dominance and authority, they are also more likely to distance themselves from others whom they perceive to be of lower status (Khan et al., 2016).

Existing literature illustrates that SDO is particularly relevant in social rank organizations (e.g., Haley & Sidanius, 2005). As an institution that promotes the organization of social

dynamics into a hierarchical system, police organizations have been shown to enhance social dominance (e.g., Gatto & Dambrun, 2012; Haley & Sidanius, 2005; King, 2005) and allow for an interesting investigation into the accompanying subordinate-supervisor dynamics. When investigating the impact of group socialization among newly recruited police officers, Gatto and Dambrun (2012) found SDO to be positively related to prejudice toward disadvantaged groups. These results expanded on previous findings from Gatto et al. (2010), where they explored whether police officers differed from the general population in terms of their prejudice towards disadvantaged groups. Results from this study revealed that newly recruited officers were significantly more authoritarian, socially dominant, and prejudiced towards prisoners, compared to the control group (Gatto et al., 2010).

Similarly, a series of recent studies conducted by Swencionis et al. (2021) explored SDO among police officers to determine whether it relates to police officers' use of force, and found that police officers higher in SDO were more likely to use force when called to an occurrence compared to their colleagues who were lower in SDO. Together, these findings suggest that social dominance is a particularly relevant factor in a social rank organization, such as a police organization. Given that individual differences in SDO are relevant in a police context, it is also important to determine whether SDO is related to CWB. Overall, while SDO is important and has implications for all organizations and employees, it is particularly important to explore in an organization that promotes social rank, given its ties with social hierarchy. For instance, prior research has identified numerous negative characteristics (i.e., prejudice and hostility towards minority and disadvantaged groups; Gatto & Dambrun, 2012; Haley & Sidanius, 2005) associated with SDO, and police organizations have previously been referred to in the literature as hierarchy-enhancing social institutions (e.g., Haley & Sidanius, 2005; Sidanius et al., 1994).

As prior findings suggest an association among SDO and various unfavourable behaviours, the current research expands on this notion to explore whether SDO is related to CWB. Interestingly, recent studies have found SDO to be positively associated with endorsing harsh power tactics among both subordinates and supervisors in different organizational settings (Aiello et al., 2018; Tessi et al., 2020). For instance, a study by Tessi et al. (2020) explored whether a subordinate would be more likely to report high compliance with their supervisor's harsh tactics if the subordinate was also high on SDO. Results revealed that SDO increased the association between subordinates' perceptions of their supervisor's use of harsh tactics and subordinates' compliance with these tactics, suggesting that individuals higher in SDO help preserve hierarchical social systems by complying with harsh power tactics and demands. Similarly, previous research has found that individuals high in SDO perceive a threat to the hierarchy within their organization, and thus engage in negative behaviours, such as criticizing or demeaning others (Shao et al., 2011), excluding others from conversations (Khan et al., 2016), and being hostile towards others (Ho et al., 2015), to maintain social group hierarchies, regardless of whether they reflect self-interests (Martin et al., 2015).

Although little research has considered the relationship between SDO and CWB, research suggests that individuals high on SDO value social rank over other organizational goals or values, and are thus likely to engage in CWB (e.g., sabotage of equipment, interpersonal undermining) if necessary to develop or maintain this rank (e.g., O'Brien et al., 2021). Moreover, SDO is related to numerous diverse characteristics, such as reinforcing inequality and excluding others (Rosette et al., 2013), and has consistently been described as a propensity to endorse hierarchy-enhancing attitudes across various contexts (e.g., Kteily et al., 2012).

It is also important to note that there is some discussion in the literature about the value of self-report versus other reports of CWB. Overall, research suggests that self-reports and the reports of others are highly correlated, but that sometimes self-raters report higher levels of CWB than other raters (e.g., Berry et al., 2012). Thus, while I did not expect to see differences, I did include both a self- and supervisor-rating of CWB to account for this issue. Based on research and theory presented above, it was hypothesized that:

*Hypothesis 1: Employee SDO at time 1 will be positively related to (a) self-rated and (b) supervisor-rated CWB at time 2.*

### **Perceived Social Impact**

Although it is important to understand how SDO may be related to CWB, it is also essential to know what factors might mitigate this relationship to gain a better understanding of possible actions organizations can take to make a difference and prevent this outcome. Perceived social impact refers to the degree to which one perceives their work and their actions to positively impact and benefit others (Grant, 2008; Schumann et al., 2021), and has been suggested to result from an understanding or belief that one's work makes a valuable difference (Grant, 2008). Prior research has found perceived social impact to be related to various positive organizational behaviours, such as increases in information sharing (Lee et al., 2019b), helpfulness (Grant, 2008), prosocial employee behaviour (Schumann et al., 2021), and work motivation (Ho & Wu, 2019). Furthermore, previous studies have also found perceived social impact to be positively associated with increases in job performance (Grant, 2008), work engagement (Mayr, 2017), and work performance (Castanheira, 2016). Although perceived social impact has not been widely studied as a moderator variable, some research has begun to recognize the role of social impact as an important boundary condition to various organizational

relationships, such as that between diversity climate and relational conflict (e.g., Jensen, 2018; Lee et al., 2019b)

Interestingly, Grant (2012) explored the extent to which perceived social impact may positively influence employee motivation, and found that participants who perceived their work as having a positive social impact performed more effectively at their jobs, as rated by their supervisors (Grant, 2012). Similarly, Castanheira (2016) used dyadic data to investigate perceived social impact and social worth as they relate to both work engagement and job performance. Findings suggested that perceived social impact was positively associated with increases in both job performance and work engagement, thus supporting the idea that social job characteristics, such as perceived social impact, can positively influence employees. Similarly, Bellé (2014) found a positive association between perceived social impact and employee outcomes, where the former was positively associated with job performance and employee motivation.

Together, previous findings support the notion that perceived social impact can lead to increased job performance (Castanheira, 2016), job satisfaction (Bullock et al., 2015), work motivation (Zubair et al., 2021), and organizational commitment (Lee et al., 2019b). Moreover, there is also support for the idea that perceived social impact can diminish negative job-related outcomes, such as decreases in rates of burnout and relational conflict among employees (Grant et al., 2007; Lee et al., 2019b). While previous research has not specifically explored perceived social impact as it relates to CWB, prior findings do support the notion that perceived social impact is associated with increasing positive employee behaviours (e.g., work motivation and job performance) and decreasing negative employee behaviours (e.g., employee conflict). Perceived social impact has also been found to influence individuals by motivating them to perform better

(Grant et al., 2007) and providing them with a sense of meaning and purpose (Castanheira, 2016). Given these prior associations, it is hypothesized that perceived social impact may interact with SDO to decrease CWB. That is, while individuals who are high on SDO may be more likely to engage in CWB, this effect may be lessened when those same individuals are also high on social impact. Individuals high on social impact likely realize that their work may have a positive impact on others, and thus may be less likely to engage in CWB.

*Hypothesis 2: Employees perceived social impact at time 1 will moderate the association between SDO at time 1 and (a) self-rated and (b) supervisor-rated CWB at time 2, such that when perceived social impact is higher, the relationship between SDO and CWB will be lessened.*

### **Servant Leadership**

While employee characteristics are relevant to workplace behaviours, leadership behaviours are arguably equally relevant when it comes to motivating employees, and influencing employee behaviours (e.g., Kelloway & Barling, 2010; Robertson & Barling, 2013; Yukl, 2008). Moreover, constructive leadership positively influences employee behaviours, such as by improving job attitudes and employee well-being (Harms et al., 2017; Xu et al., 2021). In fact, positive leadership styles (e.g., ethical leadership, servant leadership, transformational leadership) have also been found to help lessen negative employee behaviours, such as employee deviance (Hoch et al., 2018; Gok et al., 2017). Several studies have found support for the moderating role of leadership behaviours when it comes to various forms of workplace behaviour (e.g., Glambek et al., 2018). For example, Ågotnes et al. (2018) found that leadership behaviours moderated the effects of co-worker conflict on workplace bullying, while Ågotnes et

al. (2021) found that exposure to leadership behaviours moderated the effects of employees' work stress on their likelihood of engaging in workplace mistreatment.

In the current research, I examine whether servant leadership moderates the association between SDO and CWB. Servant leadership refers to an individual whose leadership style focuses on serving their followers by satisfying followers' needs to learn, grow, and develop their work-related potential and leadership capabilities (e.g., Parris & Peachey, 2013; Russell & Stone, 2002; Tang et al., 2016; van Dierendonck, 2011). Servant leaders strive to help others succeed and are focused on promoting the interests of their coworkers above their own (Brown et al., 2005; Neubert et al., 2008). Moreover, servant leadership has been found to promote positive organizational outcomes in employees, such as reducing leadership avoidance among followers (Lacroix & Pircher-Verdorfer, 2017), and improving organizational citizenship behaviours (Elche et al., 2020), organizational commitment (Palta, 2019), and work engagement (Bao et al., 2018; van Dierendonck et al., 2014). Further, previous research suggests that servant leaders benefit organizations by promoting collaboration and creativity among employees (Neubert et al., 2008). In line with this, servant leaders also empower followers in ways such as incorporating their input into important decisions, including them in various organizational processes, and providing them with opportunities to enhance their skills (Hunter et al., 2013). It has also been suggested that servant leadership promotes a positive work climate and subsequently results in positive employee outcomes, such as increases in employee well-being (Parris & Peachey, 2013), productivity (Kumari et al., 2022), and job satisfaction (Guillaume et al., 2013). Additionally, servant leadership has been found to decrease both employee turnover intentions (Kashyap & Rangnekar, 2016) and employee deviance (Paesen et al., 2019).

Previous findings support the perception that servant leaders represent strong role models and influence followers through both learning processes and indirect experiences (Lacroix & Pircher-Verdorfer, 2017). Thus, servant leadership may lessen CWB among those high in SDO since these employees are positively influenced by servant leaders in ways that promote pro-organizational behaviours and lessen CWB. Indeed, Gotsis and Grimani (2016) suggested that servant leadership inadvertently lessens CWB by positively influencing pro-social behaviours.

Moreover, it has been found that organizations led by servant leaders experience improvements in leader and organizational trust (Sendjaya & Pekerti, 2010), as well as organizational citizenship behaviours and collaboration among employees (Parris & Peachey, 2013). Additionally, servant leadership has been found to create a positive and collaborative culture, which can lead to greater individual and organizational efficacy, which in turn may enhance employee well-being (Eva et al., 2019). In a recent review of the literature on servant leadership, Eva et al. (2019) highlighted numerous employee outcomes that have been associated with this style of leadership, such as increases in organizational citizenship behaviours and proactive employee behaviours, and decreases in levels of employee deviance and avoidance of leadership responsibility. Moreover, prior findings suggest that employees of servant leaders are more likely to engage in behaviours like those displayed by their leader (Hoch et al., 2018). For example, results from a meta-analysis exploring the literature on servant leadership identified this leadership style as a significant predictor of employee engagement and job satisfaction, as well as an antecedent to influencing employee attitudes and behaviours (Hoch et al., 2018).

Overall, previous research supports an association among servant leadership and numerous positive employee outcomes, such as improving employee motivation (Kumari et al., 2022), ethical behaviours (Sendjaya et al., 2019), and organizational commitment (Lapointe &

Vandenberghe, 2018). Further, employees of servant leaders have been found to be more likely to engage in tasks outside of the scope of their immediate job description to assist their coworkers and their organization (Chiniara & Bentein, 2016). Similarly, research also suggests that servant leaders inspire their employees to work collaboratively and include colleagues in various work-related tasks (Kumari et al., 2022). Thus, given this previous research, I hypothesized that when employees high on SDO also experienced servant leadership, they would be less likely to engage in CWB. Specifically, I hypothesized that high servant leadership would weaken the association between SDO and CWB by lessening the frequency with which employees engage in CWB.

*Hypothesis 3: Employees' perception of supervisors' servant leadership at time 1 will moderate the association between SDO at time 1 and (a) self-rated and (b) supervisor-rated CWB at time 2, such that when perceptions of servant leadership are higher, the association between SDO and CWB will be lower.*

### **Leader Dominance and Prestige**

While it's important to explore individual characteristics as they relate to harmful behaviours within organizations, it is also the case that employees are influenced by the social rank of others with whom they work (Gong et al., 2017). It is thus imperative to explore the leadership and leader qualities of workplace supervisors (e.g., de Jong & Den Hartog, 2007; Lee et al., 2019a). Workplace supervisors often set the standards for appropriate workplace behaviours and influence exchanges among employees (Sung & Choi, 2021). Moreover, prior research suggests that individuals tend to display behaviours similar to those of their supervisors, and as such, supervisor leadership qualities (e.g., dominance and prestige) may influence

employee's interactions with colleagues (Liu et al., 2012). It is therefore relevant to explore supervisor leadership qualities (e.g., dominance and prestige) as they relate to CWB.

Although much prior research has focused on leader qualities and leadership style in relation to employee outcomes, researchers have recently begun exploring factors related to attaining status among supervisors (Cheng et al., 2010). Specifically, researchers have identified leader dominance and prestige as two opposing strategies that supervisors use to gain status (e.g., Halevy et al., 2012; Kakkar & Sivanathan, 2017). Moreover, existing literature has explored perceptions of leader dominance and prestige, and how these influence various outcomes. Prior research has found that individuals who perceive their supervisors to gain status through dominance are less well-liked and perceived less favourably than supervisors who are perceived to gain status through prestige (Cheng et al., 2013; Suessenbach et al., 2019; Zhu et al., 2021). Thus, given that there are opposing strategies to gain and maintain status, it is likely that the outcomes may vary in direction. More specifically, in the current study I examine the extent to which leader dominance is positively related to CWB, and leader prestige is negatively related to CWB.

Although previous research has focused on leader prestige as a strategy to attain power and influence over others (e.g., Willer, 2009), recent studies have proposed leader dominance as an alternative means to attain status (Cheng et al., 2010). This notion is referred to as the dual strategies theory of social rank, which suggests that efforts to acquire and retain positions of high social rank or status can be categorized into two opposing strategies, namely dominance or prestige (Maner & Case, 2016), and individuals are adept at perceiving which strategy their supervisor is employing (Zhu et al., 2021). While each strategy is accompanied by differing emotions and motivations, dual strategies theory proposes that both are viable options and can

help individuals achieve positions of high social status (Case et al., 2018). For instance, dominance strategies are often accompanied by using coercion and manipulation of group resources to obtain social rank (Cheng et al., 2013), and individuals who use this strategy tend to be feared rather than respected by others (Cheng & Tracy, 2014). In comparison, prestige tends to be awarded to individuals who are admired and respected by their colleagues, and are motivated to act in ways that benefit all (Case & Maner, 2016). Moreover, literature suggests that people are good at determining the motives and status attainment strategies of others (Witkower et al., 2020).

Leaders high in dominance have been described as individuals who exert control over organizational outcomes (Roberts et al., 2019), use fear and intimidation to achieve status (Cheng & Tracy, 2014), and manipulate group resources (Case et al., 2021). Seeing that employees often turn to their leaders to determine appropriate and acceptable workplace behaviours (Liu et al., 2012; Sung & Choi, 2021), having a supervisor who is high in dominance may in turn negatively influence employees by enhancing CWB. Specifically, since supervisors exert influence over others, and since dominant leaders tend to be feared, employees of dominant supervisors may engage in CWB as a coping mechanism to ease the negativity associated with dominant leaders.

In contrast, supervisors high in prestige influence others by sharing their knowledge and expertise, thus helping others learn, develop, and feel positively about their organization (Cheng et al., 2013; Kakkar & Sivanathan, 2017; Maner & Case, 2016). Further, previous research suggests that supervisor's high in prestige engage in more prosocial behaviours compared to supervisor's high in dominance. Examples of such prosocial behaviours include prioritizing factors that benefit the group (i.e., by encouraging strong, positive relationships among

employees), rather than factors that solely favour the leader (Case & Maner, 2014; Maner, 2017). As such, prestigious leaders tend to be viewed favourably by employees, and thus may influence others to engage in prosocial behaviours, such as by working collaboratively and respectfully with colleagues (de Waal-Andrews et al., 2014; Maner, 2017). Indeed, prior research found that while dominant supervisors prevented their followers from forming social ties and working cooperatively, prestigious supervisors encouraged constructive and prosocial behaviours among their followers, therefore making it less likely that followers or employees of prestigious supervisors would engage in CWB (e.g., Case & Maner, 2014; Ketterman & Maner, 2021).

Supervisors high in dominance desire authority over others (Lee et al., 2021) and use pressure, control, and intimidation to achieve their goals and to influence others (Henrich & Gil-White, 2001; Lee et al., 2021). These types of leaders also tend to engage in behaviours that serve self-interests rather than benefit the group (Ronay et al., 2020). Conversely, supervisors high in prestige are perceived to possess valuable skills and knowledge that is coveted by other group members (Henrich et al., 2015), and leader prestige has been associated with a desire for respect and admiration (Cheng et al., 2013). Moreover, supervisors high in prestige have been found to influence helping behaviours among coworkers (Halevy et al., 2012) and share valuable knowledge and skills to other group members (e.g., Henrich & Gil-White, 2001; Kakkar & Sivanathan, 2017). However, despite this multitude of research focusing on leader dominance and prestige, previous research has predominantly examined factors related to attaining (e.g., individual differences, personality factors; Halevy et al., 2012; Ong et al., 2021) and maintaining status (e.g., social cues; Case et al., 2021), and largely overlooked the extent to which dominance and prestige relate to employee behaviours.

Although limited, some studies have explored the effect of leader dominance on employee outcomes and suggest that leader dominance may be related to various disadvantageous organizational outcomes. For instance, leader dominance has been found to negatively influence employee commitment and intentions to work collaboratively with colleagues (Kakkar & Sivanathan, 2021), and positively influence turnover intentions and the propensity to behave unpleasantly with coworkers (Ronay et al., 2020). Similarly, in a recent study examining the mechanisms through which leader dominance and prestige influenced group creativity, Sung and Choi (2021) found these behaviours to be respectively associated with coercive and supportive member interactions. Specifically, leader dominance positively influenced the extent to which coworkers forced others to accept, affirm, and complement their ideas (i.e., coercive member interactions), whereas leader prestige positively influenced coworkers' inclination to willingly accept and affirm their ideas (i.e., supportive member interactions). Despite the various negative aspects associated with leader dominance, research by Ong et al. (2021) found leader dominance to be advantageous as a short-term strategy to attain status. However, this was not sustainable over time given that other group members no longer considered the dominant individual as their leader. Together these findings are in line with the dual strategies theory which proposes that individuals may use different strategies to increase their social rank and gain power (Ketterman & Maner, 2021).

With regards to leader prestige, Ong et al. (2021) found that leader prestige, but not leader dominance consistently predicted leadership overtime, suggesting that leaders high in prestige are viewed more favourably among followers compared to dominant leaders. Similarly, prior research found that dominant political leaders were favoured during times of economic hardship, suggesting that individuals prefer a leader who is decisive and dominant when external

factors are uncertain (Kakkar & Sivanathan, 2017). Although this prior research focuses on dominant leader qualities more generally, rather than as they relate to organizational behaviour, it is important to highlight the mixed findings regarding the perceived benefits and consequences of dominant leaders. While there is some disagreement in the literature regarding leader dominance solely resulting in negative outcomes, a series of experiments by Case and Maner (2014) found that dominant supervisors consistently prevented employees from forming positive relationships with colleagues in an effort to maintain their status. This resulted in social isolation and exclusion for the employees in question and supports the notion that dominant leaders are more inclined to protect their status than foster group success. Moreover, McClanahan (2020) found that individuals who use dominance-based strategies were less likely to consistently attain high social rank, and those who did were regarded less favourably compared to individuals who used prestige-based strategies. Taken together, previous findings indirectly support the notion that leader dominance may result in CWB because employees are more inclined to engage in behaviours that are harmful towards their coworkers or towards their organization.

Conversely, leaders high in prestige tend to engage in prosocial behaviours, such as by favouring group interests rather than personal gain (e.g., Henrich et al., 2015, Ronay et al., 2020), and have been described as respected and sought out for advice (Garfield et al., 2019). Moreover, while there is a paucity of prior research on the topic, previous findings have identified a relation among leader prestige and various beneficial outcomes, such as supporting leadership opportunities (Cheng, 2020), positively influencing group decisions (van Kleef et al., 2021), and motivating cooperation among colleagues (Henrich et al., 2015). Leader prestige has also been found to improve employee's trust in leader, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction (Case & Maner, 2014; He et al., 2015). Furthermore, following an examination of

leader prestige in a hierarchical institution (i.e., the military), Offord et al. (2019) found that leaders high in prestige, regardless of rank, were able to disseminate information more efficiently compared to leaders low in prestige, suggesting that colleagues value and accept information coming from a prestigious leader, and behave accordingly.

While these findings may not directly support an association between leader prestige and CWB, taken together, they suggest that supervisors high in prestige may positively influence followers through imitation and social learning (Bandura, 1977), which may relate to decreases in negative employee behaviours such as CWB. Given the limited research pertaining to leader dominance and leader prestige as they relate to employee behaviours, the current research explores this area to examine the extent to which both types of leader characteristics relate to CWB in employees. Moreover, given that it is unlikely that leader dominance and prestige directly relate to CWB, it was important to consider the process through which this effect occurs.

### **Trust in Leader**

Existing literature exploring leader dominance and prestige has largely focused on the attainment of leadership roles using either strategy (e.g., Cheng et al., 2013; Ronay et al., 2020), and less is known about the extent to which leader dominance and leader prestige may influence outcomes such as CWB. As such, a goal of the current research was to examine the extent to which leader dominance and leader prestige were related to employees' CWB. However, in doing so, it was important to better understand the process through which this relationship occurred, and based on theory and previous research findings, I propose that both leader dominance and leader prestige are indirectly related to employee CWB through their association with trust in leader.

Prior research has identified trust in leader as an important factor that is related to various positive employee outcomes, such as high task performance (Colquitt et al., 2007), positive organizational attitudes (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002), and organizational citizenship behaviours (Williams, 2001). Moreover, trust in leader has previously been explored as a mediator of various employee behaviours, such as work engagement (Hassan & Ahmed, 2011), job performance (Zhu et al., 2013), job satisfaction (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002), and decreases in turnover intentions (Burke et al., 2007). Further, compared to employees with low trust in their leader, previous findings also suggest that employees who trust their leader are more inclined to finish their work on time, spend less time on tasks unrelated to their job, and undertake additional tasks that fall outside of the scope of their role but that benefit the organization (Burke et al., 2007; Zhu et al., 2013). Notably, trust in leader has also been negatively associated with CWB (e.g., Colquitt et al., 2007; Jensen & Raver, 2012).

Trust in leader refers to the belief or expectation that one can rely on their leaders promises, and that their leader intends to be true to their word (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002; Kleynhans et al., 2021). Understanding the influence that trust in one's leader has on employee outcomes has been an important aspect in organizational research over the years, with trust playing a crucial role in leader-employee relationships (e.g., Colquitt et al., 2007; DeConinck, 2011; Ötken & Cenkci, 2012). Given that supervisors tend to have disproportionate power over employees, such as by making decisions related to promotions, salary, and employee tasks (Kannan-Narasimhan & Lawrence, 2011), employees tend to trust supervisors who keep their promises and represent their values (Simons et al., 2007). A commonly cited definition, taken from Rousseau et al. (1998), defines trust as the willingness or intention to accept being vulnerable based on the behaviours or intentions of another individual (e.g., DeConinck, 2011; Dirks &

Ferrin, 2002). Extending upon this definition, trust in leader has also been defined in the literature as relating to the belief that one's leader will not engage in behaviours that are harmful towards the employee or towards the organization (Brockner et al., 1997; Gkorezis & Bellou, 2016). Leaders who are effective in gaining the trust of their employees thus benefit from positive team cooperation (Nienaber et al., 2015), information sharing (Braun et al., 2013), and leadership effectiveness (Campagna et al., 2020). Moreover, trust in leader has been found to be related to motivating employees to achieve their goals (Schaubroeck et al., 2013), and improving group performance (Colquitt et al., 2007; DeJong et al., 2016; De Jong & Elfring, 2010). Additionally, prior research suggests that trust in one's leader provides employees with the freedom to focus on tasks, thereby indirectly improving organizational performance (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002).

Findings from two separate meta-analyses examining the trust literature found overwhelming evidence that trust in one's leader positively influenced organizational citizenship behaviours, and was negatively associated with CWB (Colquitt et al., 2007; DeJong et al., 2016). Moreover, a synthesis of the trust literature by Dirks and Ferrin (2002) identified numerous related outcomes, such as a positive association with employee altruism and conscientiousness. Further, trust in one's leader was also found to be significantly related to employee attitudes, such as positively influencing job satisfaction and leader satisfaction, and negatively impacting turnover intentions (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002).

While the importance and significance of trust in leadership has been examined and established by numerous researchers over the years (see e.g., Dirks & Ferrin, 2002), there is limited research exploring whether trust in leader mediates the relationships between leader dominance and CWB, and between leader prestige and CWB, even though research supports the

notion that leader behaviours and characteristics are related to leader trust, while leader trust is related to CWB. Given previous research regarding trust in leadership and various organizational outcomes, the current study hypothesizes the following:

*Hypothesis 4: Trust in leader at time 2 will mediate the association between perceived leader dominance at time 1 and (a) self-rated and (b) supervisor-rated CWB at time 2 such that when perceived leader dominance is lower, trust in leader will be higher, and CWB will be lower.*

*Hypothesis 5: Trust in leader at time 2 will mediate the association between perceived leader prestige at time 1 and (a) self-rated and (b) supervisor-rated CWB at time 2 such that when perceived leader prestige is higher, trust will also be higher, and CWB will be lower.*

### **Current Research**

While research has yet to investigate social rank in relation to CWB, previous studies have identified an association between SDO and dysfunctional organizational factors, such as abusive supervision (Khan et al., 2016), discrimination in employee hiring (Umphress et al., 2008), opposition to policies that promote gender equality in leadership positions (Fraser et al., 2015), and workplace bullying (Pheko, 2018). Moreover, previous research suggests that both employee and organizational characteristics play a role in maintaining social dominance, thus lending support for the exploration of social dominance within a social rank organization, such as a police organization. In fact, when exploring SDO in a hierarchical organization, Sidanius et al. (1994) found that police officers expressed significantly more social dominance compared to individuals from other occupations (e.g., public defenders, jurors, and university students), further supporting the relevance of exploring SDO within a police context. Moreover, previous research suggests an association between social dominance, at both the employee and

supervisory level, and negative workplace behaviours (e.g., Khan et al., 2016). Taken together, previous findings provide support for the notion that SDO is relevant in organizations that promote social rank, and suggests the need for closer examination of the extent to which hierarchy maintenance relates to undesirable organizational behaviours.

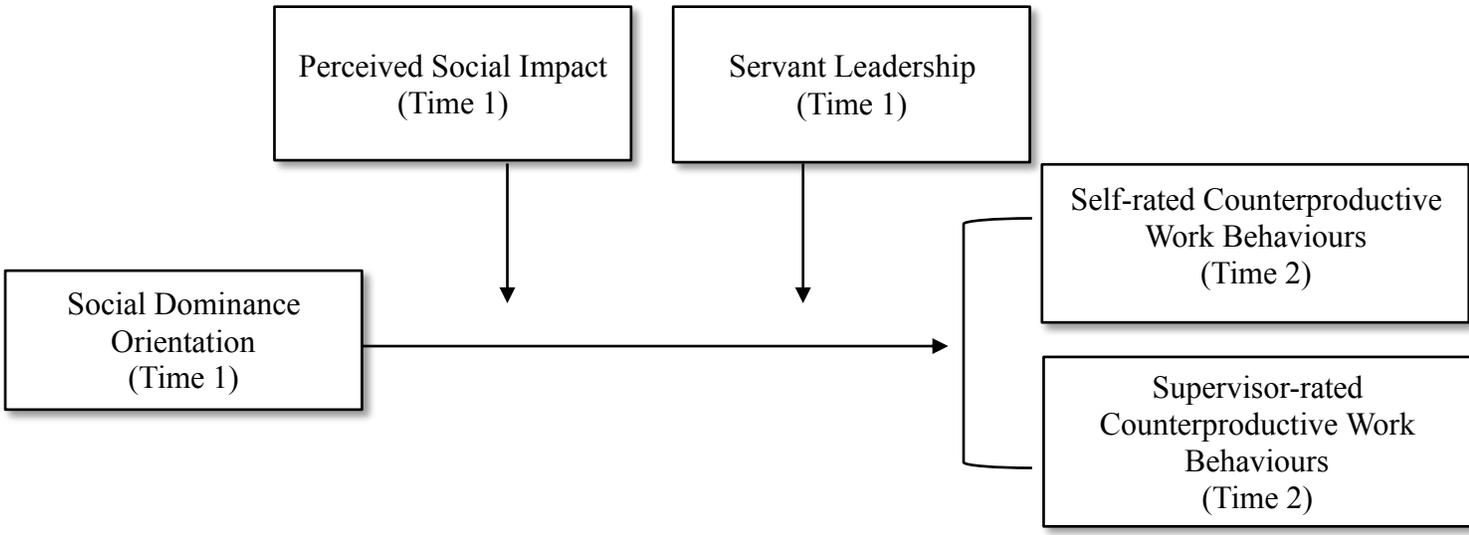
Further, given the negative consequences associated with CWB (Carpenter et al., 2021), it is equally of interest to examine perceived supervisor characteristics, such as leader dominance and prestige. Given how common it is for human behaviour to be organized into social hierarchies (Chen & Tracy, 2014), exploring these behaviours as they relate to important organizational outcomes is also relevant to the organizational literature. Since differences in social rank can result from either forced respect (i.e., dominant leaders) or earned respect (i.e., prestigious leaders), examining the impact of both types of status attainment strategy on CWB will add to our understanding of this widespread workplace phenomenon.

While earlier studies differentiated between CWB directed towards colleagues and CWB directed towards organizations (e.g., Chen & Spector, 1992; Hollinger et al., 1992), recent studies have combined both targets of behaviour and examined CWB as one construct given that CWB encompass actions that are harmful towards both colleagues and organizations (e.g., Bowling et al., 2011; Spector, 2011). The current research thus combines both CWB scales (i.e., directed towards colleagues and directed towards organizations) into one measure.

Overall, the purpose of this research was to better understand social rank correlates of CWB in a hierarchical organization (see Figures 1 and 2 for a graphical depiction of the proposed relationships). Understanding factors that may lessen CWB in organizations is important given the universality of organizing human behaviour in terms of social status and rank (Nijs et al., 2022).

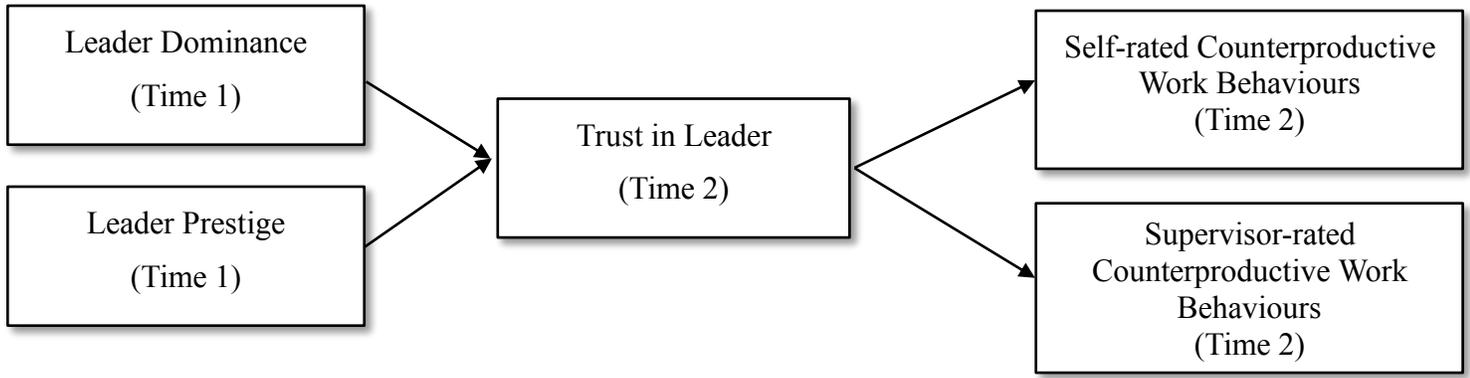
**Figure 1**

*Proposed Relationships between SDO and CWB*



**Figure 2**

*Proposed Relationships between Leader Dominance and CWB, and Leader Prestige and CWB*



## Method

The current study is a secondary analysis of data that was collected as part of a larger study focusing on leadership qualities and how they relate to various well-being and performance indicators.<sup>1</sup>

### Participants

Participants were recruited from a large police organization and included police officers and their respective supervisors. Police officers were invited to participate in the study through the weekly newsletter, which is e-mailed to all police officers in the organization, and data from 281 employees and 130 supervisors was collected. Except in one instance, employees who responded to the survey did not share the same supervisor, therefore, non-independence of the data was not an issue. Participants self-reported their sex (*female, male*), age, race (*White; Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour [BIPOC]*), marital status (*married, widowed, divorced, separated, never married*) and education (*high school, college – no diploma, college diploma, Bachelor's degree, Master's degree, Doctoral degree, Professional degree*). Additionally, information related to their employment was collected, such as job rank, organization tenure, and dyad tenure (see Table 1). The employee sample consisted predominantly of Caucasian (87.5%,  $n = 245$ ) male officers (74.4%,  $n = 209$ ) with a mean age of 43.78 ( $SD = 8.51$ ,  $n = 273$ ). On average, participants from the employee sample had been working for the organization for 16.25 years ( $SD = 8.44$ ,  $n = 276$ ), and for their current supervisor for 1.4 years ( $SD = 1.41$ ,  $n = 263$ ). The supervisor sample also consisted predominantly of Caucasian (78.8%,  $n = 41$ ) male (90.4%,  $n = 47$ ) officers with a mean age of 47.42 ( $SD = 6.03$ ). The supervisor sample reported working for the organization for a mean of 21.81 years ( $SD = 8.04$ ).

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<sup>1</sup> Han, Y. (2020)

**Table 1***Sociodemographic Characteristics of Participants*

Characteristics	Employee				Supervisor			
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	%	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Age	273		43.78	8.51	52		47.42	6.03
Sex								
Female	72	25.6			4	7.7		
Male	209	74.4			47	90.4		
Ethnicity								
White	245	87.2			41	78.8		
BIPOC <sup>a</sup>	35	12.4			11	21.1		
Marital Status <sup>b</sup>								
Married	197	70.1			43	82.7		
Divorced	20	7.1			5	9.6		
Separated	27	9.6			2	3.8		
Never Married	36	12.8			2	3.8		
Highest Education Level								
High school	16	5.7			3	5.8		
College – no diploma	75	26.7			13	25		
College diploma	54	19.2			7	13.5		
Bachelor's degree	117	41.6			25	48.1		
Master's degree	14	5			3	5.8		
Doctoral degree	1	.4			–	–		
Professional degree	4	1.4			1	1.9		
Organization Tenure <sup>d</sup>	273		16.25	8.44	46		21.81	8.04
Dyad Tenure <sup>d</sup>	263		1.4	1.41				

<sup>a</sup>Black, Indigenous, People of Colour (BIPOC). <sup>b</sup>Categories with less than 5% were excluded.

<sup>c</sup>Job ranks with less than 5% were excluded. <sup>d</sup>Measured in years.

## **Procedure**

The newsletter that invited individuals to participate in the study included a description of the research project (e.g., purpose, data confidentiality) and details about data collection. Data collection involved administering surveys to employees at two time points, and a link to the first employee survey was included in the newsletter's invitation to participate in the research (i.e., Time 1). Employees who agreed to participate in the research were able to access the link and were directed to the survey website to respond to the first online survey. Following completion of the first online survey, participants were asked to provide their email address if they were willing to participate in the second survey (i.e., Time 2). At this time, participants were also asked to invite their direct supervisor to participate in the survey by providing their email address. Supervisors were then sent an invitation to participate in the study and were asked to respond to a survey containing measures assessing various personality characteristics and background information. Three months later, employees who previously agreed to be contacted to participate in the second survey were invited to do so by email (i.e., Time 2). The second survey contained various measures assessing organizational factors. The surveys were administered through Qualtrics online survey tool.

## **Measures**

Participants were asked to complete the online survey that took approximately 15 to 20 minutes (see Appendix B for all survey items). While the full online survey included various questions related to leadership and personality factors, the current study focuses on data from time 1 that includes employee's SDO, perceived social impact, perception of their supervisors' servant leadership, perception of their supervisor's leader prestige, and perceptions of their supervisor's leader dominance. At time 2, the current study focuses on employee's trust in their

leader, and their self-rated CWB, as well as supervisor-rated CWB. Additionally, both employees and supervisors answered various demographic questions.

### ***Social Dominance Orientation***

The Short SDO Scale (Pratto et al., 2012) was used to assess employee's SDO orientation. This 4-item questionnaire is scored on a 7-point scale with response options ranging from *strongly oppose* to *strongly favor*. Items included, "*We should not push for group equality*", and "*Superior groups should dominate inferior groups*".

### ***Perceived Social Impact***

The Perceived Social Impact Scale (Grant, 2008) was used to assess the extent to which employee's perceived their employment as having a meaningful impact on society. Participants rated each of the 3 items on the questionnaire on a scale from 1 *very untrue of me* to 7 *very true of me*. Items included, "*I am very conscious of the positive impact that my work has on others*", and "*I am very aware of the ways in which my work is benefiting others*".

### ***Servant Leadership***

Supervisor's servant leadership was assessed using Liden et al.'s (2015) 7-item servant leadership scale. Participants were asked to rate each item on a 7-point scale, where 1 *strongly oppose* and 7 *strongly favour*. Items included, "*My supervisor makes my career development a priority*", and "*I would seek help from my supervisor if I had a personal problem*".

### ***Leader Prestige***

Employee's perception of their leader's prestige was assessed using the 4-item prestige-seeking of supervisor scale (Cheng et al., 2010). The questionnaire is scored on a 7-point scale with response options ranging from *strongly oppose* to *strongly favour*. Items included, "*Members of my group respect and admire my supervisor*", and "*Members of my group always*

*expect my supervisor to be successful*". The scale also included a reverse coded item "*Member of my group do not value my supervisor's opinion.*"

### ***Leader Dominance***

Employee's perception of their leader's dominance was assessed using the 4-item dominance-seeking of supervisor scale (Cheng et al., 2010). The questionnaire is scored on a 7-point scale with response options ranging from *strongly oppose* to *strongly favour*. Items included, "*My supervisor enjoys having control over other members of the group*", and "*My supervisor often tries to get [their] own way regardless of what others in the group may want.*"

### ***Trust in Leader***

The extent to which employee's had trust in their leader was assessed using the 3-item trust in leader scale (Brockner et al., 1997). The questionnaire is scored on a 7-point scale with response options ranging from *strongly oppose* to *strongly favour*. Items included, "*I can usually trust my supervisor to do what is good for me*", and "*I trust management to treat me fairly*".

### ***Counterproductive Workplace Behaviours***

#### ***Self-rated.***

Employees' counterproductive workplace behaviours were assessed by employees themselves using the 6-item Counterproductive Work Behavior scale (Dalal et al., 2009). Participants were asked to rate each item on a 5-point scale, from 1 *never* to 5 *always*. Items included, "*[I] worked slower than necessary*", and "*[I] spoke poorly about the organization to others*".

#### ***Supervisor-rated.***

Employees' counterproductive workplace behaviours were assessed by the employee's supervisor using the 10-item Counterproductive Work Behavior (Dalal et al., 2009). Participants

were asked to rate each item on a 7-point scale, from 1 *strongly oppose* to 7 *strongly favor*. Items included, “[Employee] speaks poorly about a work colleague(s) to others”, and “[Employee] spends time on tasks unrelated to work”.

### **Statistical Analysis**

To test the moderation and mediation hypotheses, SPSS PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2022) was used to estimate moderation and mediation with bootstrapping and confidence intervals. For all analyses, employee’s organization tenure was controlled for given that previous research suggests that tenure, and specific to the current research, police officer’s tenure, influences organizational commitment (e.g., Johnson & LaFrance, 2016; LaFrance & Day, 2012).

## **Results**

### **Preliminary Analyses**

#### ***Descriptive Statistics***

Prior to testing the study hypotheses, the data was screened for outliers and correlations between study variables were assessed (see Table 2). Assumptions for linear regression analyses were also examined, including an assessment of data normality and outliers (Field, 2016).

Potential outliers were examined by standardizing all variables, where values greater than 3.29 or below -3.29 were deemed to be outliers. Although two standardized values on measures of perceived social impact ( $z = -3.77$ ), and self- ( $z = 3.81$ ) and supervisor-rated CWB ( $z = 3.60$ ) were found to be outliers, the participants were included in further analyses given that the sample size was sufficiently large, and corresponding scores for other measures were not outliers (e.g., Field, 2016). Moreover, no univariate outliers were identified among any of the other variables of interest. Following the examination of outliers, the normality of the data was assessed whereby skewness and kurtosis were checked for all variables included in further analysis and

was not deemed to be problematic. Additionally, plots of  $z_{pred}$  vs.  $z_{resid}$  were created to test assumptions of linearity and homoscedasticity. Cook's distance was also analyzed to determine whether certain cases were overly influential in the hypothesized associations, and no values were greater than 1 (Field, 2016). Furthermore, to assess multicollinearity, the variance inflation factor (VIF) and the tolerance statistic were calculated for SDO, leader prestige, and leader dominance, which revealed that multicollinearity was not a concern as all tolerance values were greater than 0.25 and all VIF values were less than four. As such, all assumptions were met.

Means and standard deviations were also calculated for all study variables. The average score on the SDO scale is comparable to the average reported in other studies where the average falls between 2.4 and 3.2 (e.g., see Ho et al., 2015). Scores on the perceived social impact are slightly higher than what has been previously reported, where prior findings indicate average perceived social impact scores to be between 4.6 and 4.9 (e.g., see Grant, 2008). Servant leadership scores were lower than what has been previously reported in the literature, where prior findings report average servant leadership scores to fall between 4.6 and 4.7 (e.g., see Liden et al., 2015). Leader dominance scores were higher than what has previously been reported, where prior findings show that, on average, leader dominance scores tend to fall between 2.7 and 3, whereas the average score for leader dominance in the current study was 3.7 (e.g., see Ong et al., 2021). However, average leader prestige scores in the current study were comparable to scores reported in prior research, where the mean tends to fall between 4.4 and 4.7 (Ong et al., 2021). Additionally, average scores for trust in leader were comparable to scores reported in previous literature, where the average score for trust in leader falls between 3.5 and 3.6 (e.g., see Campagna et al., 2020; Gao et al., 2011). Moreover, average CWB scores were higher than those reported in prior research, where CWB are reported to fall between 1.6 and 2, whereas average

CWB scores for the current study were between 2.2 and 2.5 (e.g., see Braun et al., 2018; De Clercq et al., 2019).

### ***Correlational Analyses***

Pearson's  $r$  was interpreted using general guidelines, where 0.1, 0.3, and 0.5 corresponded to small, medium, and large effects respectively (Field, 2016). SDO was positively correlated with both self-rated ( $r = .24, p < .001$ ) and supervisor-rated ( $r = .24, p = .007$ ) CWB, indicating an increase in CWB for participants who reported higher levels of SDO. A small negative correlation between SDO and perceived social impact ( $r = -.18, p < .001$ ) was found, indicating that participants who were higher in SDO reported lower perceived social impact. SDO was not correlated with servant leadership, while SDO was negatively related to self-reported CWB and servant leadership was negatively related to supervisor-rated CWB.

Findings for leader prestige were also in the predicted direction, as leader prestige was found to be negatively associated with both self-rated ( $r = -.14, p = .04$ ) and supervisor-rated ( $r = -.35, p < .001$ ) CWB, where higher leader prestige was associated with lower CWB as rated by both the employee and their supervisor. Similarly, leader prestige was also correlated with trust in the expected direction, as leader prestige was positively correlated with trust in leader ( $r = .47, p < .001$ ), suggesting that individuals who rated their supervisor as being higher in leader prestige also reported more trust in their leader. Moreover, trust in leader was found to be negatively related to both self-rated ( $r = -.36, p < .001$ ) and supervisor-rated ( $r = -.37, p < .001$ ) CWB, where an increase in leader trust was associated with a decrease in both self-rated and supervisor-rated CWB.

Additionally, leader dominance was positively associated with supervisor-rated CWB ( $r = .35, p < .001$ ) but not self-rated CWB ( $r = .05, p = .47$ ), where participants who considered

their supervisors as high in leader dominance were rated as high in CWB by their supervisor. As such, the findings are partially in the expected directions. As expected, leader dominance was negatively correlated with trust in leader ( $r = -.44, p < .001$ ), suggesting that individuals who considered their supervisors as high in leader dominance also reported decreased trust in their supervisor.

**Table 2***Means, Standard Deviations, and Bivariate Correlations for Study Variables*

Variable	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Organization tenure <sup>a</sup>	276	16.25	8.44									
2. SDO <sup>b</sup>	281	2.57	1.22	-.09	(.75)							
3. Perceived social impact	281	5.42	1.17	.06	-.18**	(.91)						
4. Servant leadership	281	4.27	1.42	-.06	-.02	.19**	(.89)					
5. Leader prestige	281	4.57	1.45	-.03	-.09	.17**	.78***	(.87)				
6. Leader dominance	281	3.73	1.71	.04	.01	-.10	-.68***	-.63***	(.92)			
7. Trust in leader	223	3.51	1.61	-.04	-.10	.27***	.58***	.47***	-.44***	(.86)		
8. CWB <sup>b</sup> – E <sup>c</sup>	223	2.5	.65	-.13*	.24***	-.23***	-.09	-.14*	.05	-.36***	(.74)	
9. CWB <sup>b</sup> – S <sup>c</sup>	130	2.17	1.01	-.24**	.24**	.12	-.36***	-.35***	.35***	-.37***	.20*	(.92)

*Note.* Scale reliabilities are displayed on the diagonal where applicable. <sup>a</sup>Organization tenure is measured in years and in regards to the employee. <sup>b</sup>SDO = social dominance orientation; CWB = counterproductive work behaviours. <sup>c</sup>E = employee; S = supervisor.

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

### Main Analyses: Moderation

The first set of research hypotheses (i.e., relationships depicted in Figure 1) examined the moderation of perceived social impact and servant leadership on the relationship between SDO and CWB. To address these research questions, moderation analyses using SPSS PROCESS Macro – Model 1 (Hayes, 2022) were conducted to examine the association between SDO and self-rated and supervisor-rated CWB (hypothesis 1), and the extent to which employee’s perceived social impact (hypothesis 2) and supervisor’s servant leadership (hypothesis 3) moderated this association. For all analyses, employee’s organization tenure was controlled for. Tables 3 and 4 report the coefficients for direct effects, and bootstrap confidence intervals.

In support of hypothesis 1a and b, SDO was positively related to self-rated and supervisor-rated CWB, where an increase in SDO was significantly related to an increase in both measures of CWB ( $b = 0.12$ ;  $b = 0.21$ ). Hypothesis 2 predicted that higher perceived social impact would minimize the relationship between SDO and CWB for participants who were high in SDO compared to participants who did not perceive themselves to have high social impact but were high in SDO. To test this hypothesis, a moderation analysis was conducted (Model 1; Hayes, 2013). Employee’s organization tenure was controlled for, and accounted for 2% of the variance in self-rated CWB,  $R^2 = .02$ ,  $F(1, 219) = 3.97$ ,  $p = .05$ . The main effects of SDO and perceived social impact accounted for 11% of the variance in self-rated CWB,  $R^2 = .11$ ,  $F(2, 217) = 10.92$ ,  $p < .001$ . To avoid potentially problematic high multicollinearity with the interaction term, the SDO and perceived social impact were centered (Aiken & West, 1991).

Perceived social impact moderated the relationship between SDO and self-rated CWB (hypothesis 2a), accounting for a significant proportion of the variance in self-rated CWB,  $\Delta R^2 = .02$ ,  $\Delta F(1, 216) = 4.63$ ,  $p = .03$ . Results suggest that the moderating effect of perceived social

impact on the association between SDO and self-rated CWB was significant, ( $b = -0.13$ ,  $[-0.21, -0.26]$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Perceived social impact accounted for 13% ( $r^2 = .13$ ,  $p < .001$ ) of the variance in self-rated CWB. Thus, hypothesis 2a was supported. Given this significant effect, a simple slopes analysis was conducted to further explore the nature of the relationship (see Figure 3). Examination of the interaction plot showed that, for participants at the low end of SDO, high perceived social impact lessened the association between SDO and CWB. Specifically, employees who were low in SDO and high in perceived social impact reported fewer self-rated CWB compared to employees who were low in SDO and low in perceived social impact. However, for employees who were high in SDO, perceived social impact did not lessen the association between SDO and CWB. Specifically, at high SDO, self-rated CWB were similar for all levels of perceived social impact.

Hypothesis 2b predicted that higher perceived social impact would moderate the relationship between SDO and CWB, and lead to decreased supervisor-rated CWB compared to employees who did not perceive themselves to have high social impact. Results showed that perceived social impact did not moderate the association between SDO and supervisor-rated CWB ( $b = .11$ ,  $[-0.06, 0.28]$ ,  $p = .2$ ). Although the results displayed a conditional effect of SDO on CWB, hypothesis 2b was not supported.

**Table 3***Perceived Social Impact Moderates SDO and CWB*

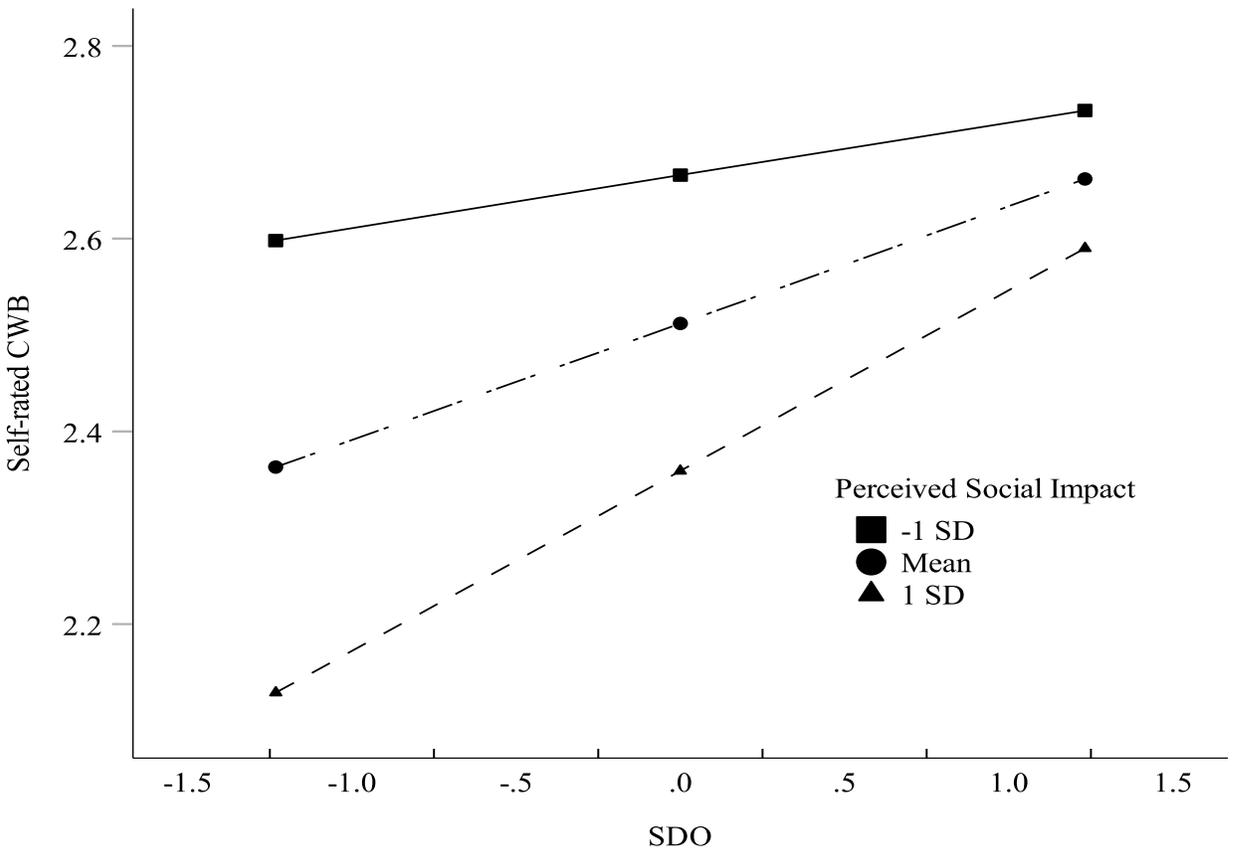
Model	Self-rated CWB ( <i>n</i> = 221)				Supervisor-rated CWB ( <i>n</i> = 129)			
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	95% CI		<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	95% CI	
			Lower	Upper			Lower	Upper
SDO <sup>a</sup>	.12***	.03	0.05	0.19	.21**	.07	0.07	0.35
Perceived social impact	-.13***	.04	-0.21	-0.06	.11	.09	-0.06	0.28
Interaction	.06*	.03	0.01	0.11	.08	.07	-0.06	0.21
Organization tenure <sup>b</sup>	-.01	.01	-0.02	0.002	-.03**	.01	-0.05	-0.01

<sup>a</sup>SDO = Social dominance orientation. <sup>b</sup>Organization tenure is measured in years and in regards

to the employee. \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

**Figure 3**

*Perceived Social Impact Moderates SDO and Self-rated CWB*



*Note.* CWB = counterproductive work behaviours. SDO = social dominance orientation.

Hypothesis 3 predicted that servant leadership would moderate the association between SDO and self-rated and supervisor-rated CWB. To test this hypothesis, a moderation analysis was conducted (Model 1; Hayes, 2013). Employee's organization tenure was controlled for, and accounted for 2% of the variance in self-rated CWB,  $R^2 = .02$ ,  $F(1, 219) = 3.97$ ,  $p = .05$ . The main effects of SDO and servant leadership accounted for 9% of the variance in self-rated CWB,  $R^2 = .09$ ,  $F(2, 217) = 7.98$ ,  $p < .001$ . To avoid potentially problematic high multicollinearity with the interaction term, the SDO and servant leadership were centered (Aiken & West, 1991).

Servant leadership significantly moderated the relationship between SDO and self-rated CWB, accounting for a significant proportion of the variance in self-rated CWB,  $\Delta R^2 = .02$ ,  $\Delta F(1, 216) = 5.54$ ,  $p = .03$ . Results indicated that servant leadership moderated the association between SDO and self-rated CWB was significant, ( $b = .05$ ,  $[0.0004, 0.09]$ ,  $p = .03$ ). Including servant leadership in the model accounted for 10% ( $r^2 = .10$ ,  $p = .03$ ) of the variance in self-rated CWB. Thus, hypothesis 3a was supported. Given this significant effect, a simple slopes analysis was conducted to further explore the nature of the relationship (see Figure 4). Examination of the interaction plot showed that, at low levels of SDO, employees who rated their supervisors as higher on servant leadership reported engaging in fewer CWB compared to employees who rated their supervisors lower in servant leadership. However, when employees were high in SDO, the attenuating effects of servant leadership on CWB was no longer statistically significant. Specifically, at high SDO, self-rated CWB were similar for all levels of servant leadership.

Hypothesis 3b predicted that servant leadership moderated the association between SDO and supervisor-rated CWB. Employee's organization tenure was controlled for and accounted for 6% of the variance in supervisor-rated CWB,  $R^2 = .06$ ,  $F(1, 127) = 7.54$ ,  $p = .007$ . The main effects of SDO and servant leadership accounted for 23% of the variance in supervisor-rated

CWB,  $R^2 = .23$ ,  $F(2, 125) = 14.21$ ,  $p < .001$ . To avoid potentially problematic high multicollinearity with the interaction term, SDO and servant leadership were centered (Aiken & West, 1991). Servant leadership significantly moderated the association between SDO and supervisor-rated CWB, accounting for a significant proportion of the variance in supervisor-rated CWB,  $\Delta R^2 = .09$ ,  $\Delta F(1, 124) = 15.84$ ,  $p < .001$ . Results demonstrated that the moderating effect of servant leadership on the association between SDO and supervisor-rated CWB was significant, ( $b = -.24$ ,  $[-0.35, -0.13]$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Including servant leadership in the model accounted for 32% ( $r^2 = .32$ ,  $p < .001$ ) of the variance in supervisor-rated CWB. Thus, hypothesis 3b was supported. Given this significant effect, a simple slopes analysis was conducted to further explore the nature of the relationship (see Figure 5). The interaction plot shows that at low SDO, servant leadership did not impact supervisor-rated CWB. However, at high SDO, employees who rated their supervisors as high in servant leadership engaged in significantly fewer CWB compared to employees who rated their supervisors lower in servant leadership.

**Table 4***Servant Leadership Moderates SDO and CWB*

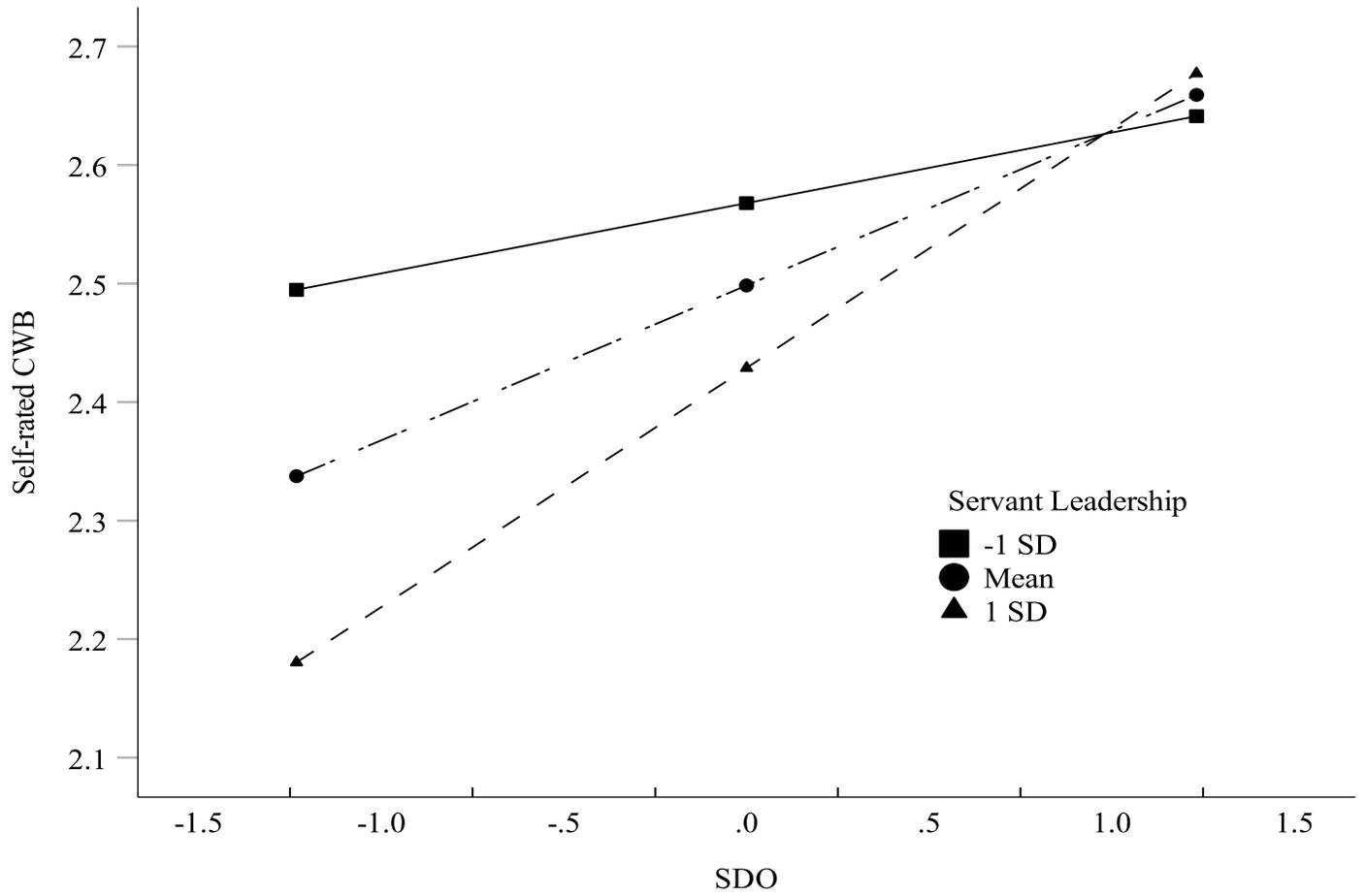
Model	Self-rated CWB ( <i>n</i> = 221)				Supervisor-rated CWB ( <i>n</i> = 129)			
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	95% CI		<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	95% CI	
			Lower	Upper			Lower	Upper
SDO <sup>a</sup>	.13**	.03	0.06	0.19	.08	.06	-0.05	0.21
Servant leadership	-.05	.03	-0.11	0.01	-.24***	.06	-0.35	-0.13
Interaction	.05*	.02	0.004	0.09	-.17***	.04	-0.25	-0.08
Organization tenure <sup>b</sup>	-.01*	.01	-0.02	-0.0002	-.03**	.01	-0.05	-0.01

<sup>a</sup>SDO = Social dominance orientation. <sup>b</sup>Organization tenure is measured in years and in regards to the employee.

\**p* < .05. \*\**p* < .01. \*\*\**p* < .001.

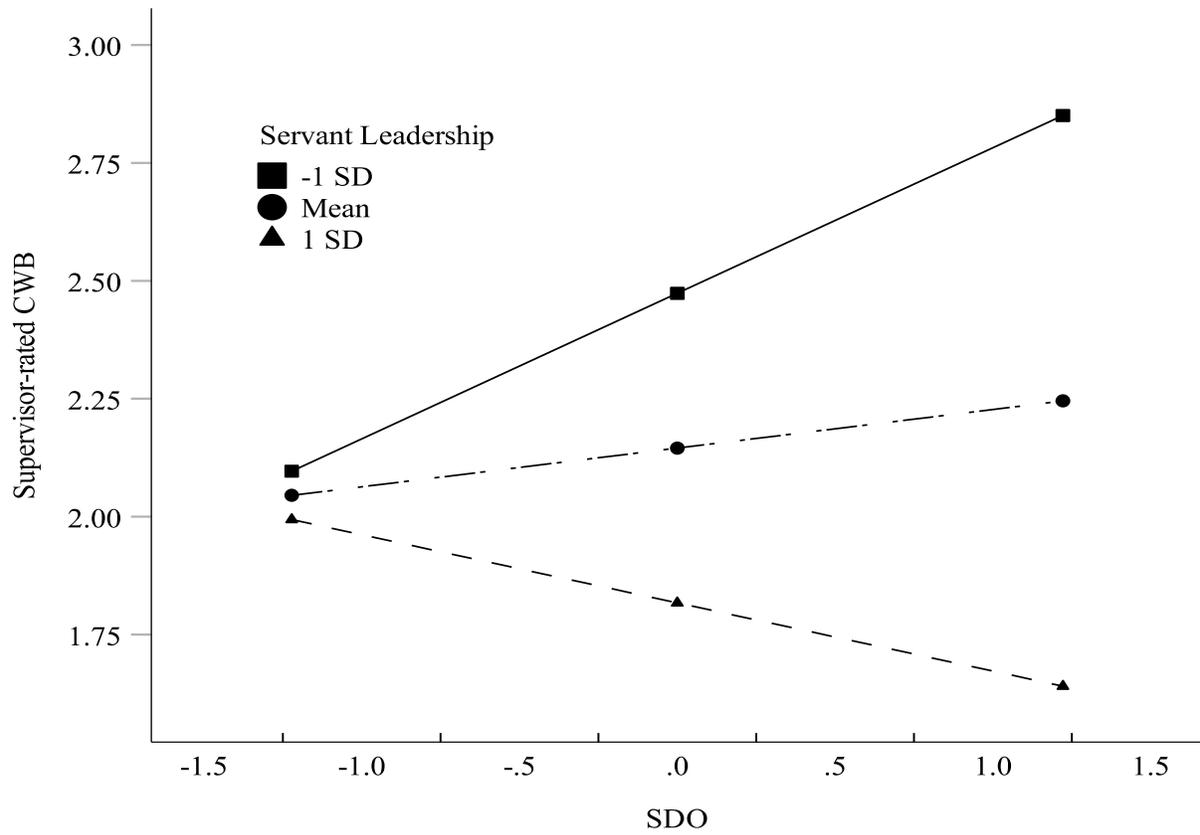
**Figure 4**

*Servant Leadership Moderates SDO and Self-rated CWB*



**Figure 5**

*Servant Leadership Moderates SDO and Supervisor-rated CWB*



*Note.* CWB = counterproductive work behaviours. SDO = social dominance orientation.

### Main Analyses: Mediation

Hypotheses 4 and 5, depicted in Figure 2, examined whether trust in leader mediated the association between leader dominance and self-rated and supervisor-rated CWB, as well as between leader prestige and self-rated and supervisor-rated CWB. To test these hypotheses, mediation analyses were conducted using SPSS PROCESS Macro for mediation analyses (Model 4; Hayes, 2013). For all analyses, employee's organization tenure was controlled for. Tables 5 and 6 report the coefficients for direct effects, and bootstrap confidence intervals.

Results suggest that trust in leader significantly mediated the association between leader dominance and self-rated CWB,  $b = -.17, [-0.23, -0.12], p < .001$ . This model accounted for 17% of the variance in self-rated CWB,  $R^2 = .17, F(3, 217) = 14.36, p < .001$ , thus hypothesis 4a was supported. Additionally, trust in leader significantly mediated the association between leader dominance and supervisor-rated CWB,  $b = -.15, [-0.28, -0.03], p = .02$ , where trust in leader was related to significantly fewer CWB as rated by the employee's supervisor. This model accounted for 24% of the variance in supervisor-rated CWB,  $R^2 = .24, F(3, 107) = 11.23, p < .001$ , thus hypothesis 4b was supported.

Next, to test hypothesis 5 which predicted that trust in leader would mediate the association between leader prestige and self-rated and supervisor-rated CWB, mediation analyses were conducted using SPSS PROCESS Macro for mediation analyses (Model 4; Hayes, 2013). The analysis revealed that trust in leader significantly mediated the association between leader prestige and self-rated CWB, whereby trust in leader was related to significantly fewer self-rated CWB,  $b = -.16, [-.21, -.09], p < .001$ . This model accounted for 15% of the variance in self-rated CWB,  $R^2 = .15, F(3, 217) = 13.2, p < .001$ , thus hypothesis 5a was supported.

In support of hypothesis 5b, trust in leader significantly mediated the association between leader prestige and supervisor-rated CWB,  $b = -.14$ ,  $[-0.27, -0.02]$ ,  $p = .02$ , where trust in leader was related to significantly fewer CWB as rated by the employee's supervisor. This model accounted for 25% of the variance in supervisor-rated CWB,  $R^2 = .25$ ,  $F(3, 107) = 11.7$ ,  $p < .001$ .

**Table 5***Trust in Leader Mediates Leader Dominance and CWB*

Model	Self-rated CWB ( <i>n</i> = 221)				Supervisor-rated CWB ( <i>n</i> = 111)			
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	95% CI		<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	95% CI	
			Lower	Upper			Lower	Upper
Leader dominance → Trust in leader	-.42***	.06	-.53	-.31	-.5***	.08	-.66	-.34
Leader dominance → CWB	-.05	.03	-.09	.01	.16**	.06	.04	.28
Trust in leader → CWB	-.17***	.03	-.23	-.12	-.15*	.06	-.28	-.03

*Note.* Organization tenure measured in years as it relates to the employee was controlled for.

\**p* < .05. \*\**p* < .01. \*\*\**p* < .001.

**Table 6***Trust in Leader Mediates Leader Prestige and CWB*

Model	Self-rated CWB ( <i>n</i> = 221)				Supervisor-rated CWB ( <i>n</i> = 111)			
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	95% CI		<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	95% CI	
			Lower	Upper			Lower	Upper
Leader prestige → Trust in leader	.54***	.07	.40	.67	.57***	.09	.39	.75
Leader prestige → CWB	.01	.03	-.05	.08	-.2**	.07	-.34	-.06
Trust in leader → CWB	-.16***	.03	-.21	-.09	-.14*	.06	-.27	-.02

*Note.* Organization tenure measured in years as it relates to the employee was controlled for.

\**p* < .05. \*\**p* < .01. \*\*\**p* < .001.

## Discussion

While research exploring the antecedents of dysfunctional work behaviours has seen an increase in recent years, limited research remains in some areas. The purpose of the current research was to examine the extent to which factors that are associated with social rank, namely SDO, leader prestige, and leader dominance, are associated with CWB. Further, the present study examined the moderating roles of perceived social impact and supervisory servant leadership on the association between SDO and CWB, and the mediating role of leader trust in the associations between leader dominance and CWB, and leader prestige and CWB. With some exceptions, the results from this research supported the hypotheses. The findings have the potential to expand our understanding of the prediction and prevention of CWB. These findings are discussed in more detail below.

### **Social Dominance and CWB**

I hypothesized that employee SDO would be positively related to CWB as rated by both the employee themselves and their supervisor. In support of hypothesis 1, the results suggest that SDO was positively associated with both self- and supervisor-ratings of CWB. Additionally, I hypothesized that employees perceived social impact would moderate the association between SDO and ratings of CWB such that when perceived social impact was higher, SDO and CWB would be lower. In partial support of hypothesis 2, the results showed that while perceived social impact significantly moderated the association between SDO and self-rated CWB (hypothesis 2a), it did not moderate the relation between SDO and supervisor-rated CWB (hypothesis 2b). Interestingly, for self-ratings of CWB, perceived social impact was a significant moderator of the SDO and CWB association at low levels of SDO compared to high SDO. When employees were high in SDO, they had similarly higher ratings of CWB regardless of perceived social impact,

suggesting that, at high levels of SDO, the degree to which one perceives their work and their actions to positively impact others does not meaningfully impact their inclination to engage in CWB. These results are similar to findings from other studies which highlight the extent to which individuals high in SDO, particularly those who work in hierarchy-enhancing environments (e.g., a police organization), display greater levels of discrimination and are unlikely to waver in their beliefs (Saeri et al., 2015; Zubielevitch et al., 2022).

In support of hypothesis 3, employees' perception of their supervisors' servant leadership moderated the association between SDO and both self- and supervisor-ratings of CWB. For self-ratings of CWB (hypothesis 3a), employees who were low in SDO and perceived their supervisors to be high in servant leadership, engaged in significantly fewer CWB compared to employees who were low in SDO but perceived their supervisor to be low in servant leadership. This finding is not surprising given that previous research reports that servant leadership promotes positive organizational outcomes, such as organizational commitment and work engagement (Bao et al., 2018; Palta, 2019; van Dierendonck et al., 2014). This study is, however, among the first to suggest that servant leadership may relate to decreases in negative behaviours (i.e., CWB), as opposed to increases in positive behaviours, but is in line with a recent meta-analysis that reported a significant negative association between servant leadership and CWB (Lee et al., 2020), suggesting that future research should further explore this area to better understand the effects of servant leadership on dysfunctional employee behaviours.

When examining the moderating role of servant leadership on the relationship between SDO and supervisor ratings of employee's CWB (hypothesis 3b), a significant difference was found when employees were high in SDO compared to employees who were low in SDO. Contrary to the expected association, CWB did not significantly differ across levels of servant

leadership when employees were low in SDO. However, when employees were high in SDO, those who perceived their supervisors to be high in servant leadership were rated as engaging in significantly fewer CWB (as rated by their supervisor), compared to employees who perceived their supervisors to be low in servant leadership. This finding is surprising given results from previous research, which suggests that high levels of SDO are consistently related to negative organizational and attitudinal outcomes, such as generalized prejudice against minority groups (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999), and hostility and aggression towards others with opposing views (Ho et al., 2012). It is an interesting finding that, for self-ratings of CWB, servant leadership solely significantly moderated CWB at low levels of SDO, however, for supervisor-ratings of CWB, servant leadership solely moderated CWB at high levels of SDO.

There are several potential explanations for this discrepancy, however future research should strive to replicate these findings, and explain the underlying mechanisms that may drive these differences. There may be differences regarding supervisors' perceptions of their employee's workplace behaviours. It is possible that supervisors may not see the full spectrum of employee behaviours and may misjudge the degree to which employee's engage in CWB. It may also be difficult for supervisors to accurately answer some of the CWB items dependent upon the amount of time they see the employee interacting with colleagues, or the nature of their own interactions with this employee. While this explanation is possible, the mean scores and standard deviations for self- and supervisor-rated CWB were similar, suggesting that the difference in results may not be due to differences in CWB ratings. Another potential explanation for the disparity in findings relates to leadership qualities and employee differences. For both self- and supervisor-ratings of CWB, employees who were high in SDO and perceived their supervisor to be low in servant leadership had similarly high scores on their respective measures of CWB.

However, when servant leadership was high, this is where we see a significant difference in that self-rated CWB is high for those high in SDO, while supervisor-rated CWB is low for those high in SDO. Perhaps this is due to differences in the perception of employee behaviours depending on leadership style and supervisor qualities. It is possible that supervisors who are perceived to be servant leaders misperceive their employees to be engaging in fewer CWB than what is taking place.

While these findings are not all in the predicted direction, they illuminate potential avenues for future research. Given that this study was undertaken with police officers, it is possible that police officers in particular may be more receptive to certain types of positive leadership when their SDO is low, resulting in, for the most part, an associated decrease in CWB, as seen in this study. Future research should examine the nature of the association between leadership and work-related outcomes, such as CWB, in a social rank context to gain a better understanding of factors that may influence such negative behaviours. If servant leadership and other types of positive leadership styles have a beneficial impact on police officer behaviours, consideration could be given to incorporating leadership training that promotes these characteristics. Previous studies have suggested that supervisors who engage in leadership training benefit from this training by gaining a better understanding of advantageous leadership qualities (Avolio et al., 2009), and positively impacting their employees' work engagement and performance (Barling et al., 1996). Leadership training that incorporates qualities of servant leadership, such as perspective taking and active listening (Brown et al., 2005), can benefit organizations by promoting and developing skills that facilitate positive supervisor-employee relationships, which can in turn lead to greater employee engagement and job performance.

### **Leader Dominance, Leader Prestige, and Trust**

It was also hypothesized that trust in leader would mediate the relationships between leader dominance and CWB (hypothesis 4), and leader prestige and CWB (hypothesis 5). In support of both hypotheses, findings showed that leader dominance was negatively related to trust in leader, and leader prestige was positively related to trust in leader. These findings are consistent with previous research that suggests that, while prestigious leaders have a greater ability to earn the trust of their employees (Maner, 2017; Redhead et al., 2021), employees are less inclined to trust dominant leaders (Ronay et al., 2020; Uslander & Brown, 2005). Trust in leader was also found to be negatively related to both self- and supervisor-rated CWB. Overall, trust in leader mediated the association between leader dominance and self- and supervisor-rated CWB (hypothesis 4), where trust in leader was related to less CWB as rated by both the employee and their supervisor. Additionally, trust in leader mediated the association between leader prestige and self- and supervisor-rated CWB (hypothesis 5).

These findings are in line with previous research which found that trust in one's leader can reduce negative behaviours, such as CWB (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). When employees perceive their leaders to be dominant, they are less likely to trust, compared to when employees perceive their leaders to be prestigious and are more likely to trust their supervisor. These associations between dominance, prestige, and trust, in turn have implications for CWB whereby employees with less trust in their supervisor engage in more CWB, whereas employees with more trust in their supervisor engage in fewer CWB. These findings are in line with prior research which found that, when employees perceive their leader to be trustworthy, employees tend to not only engage in more positive behaviours, such as working cooperatively with colleagues (e.g., Ji & Jan, 2019), but also engage in fewer negative behaviours, such as CWB (Wang et al., 2019). While

the current study did not explore positive organizational outcomes, findings from this research are consistent with previous studies which have shown that trust in leader mediates various antecedents of CWB, resulting in employees engaging in fewer CWB (Li et al., 2017). When employees trust their leaders, they are more willing engage in behaviours that benefit the organization. This could be due to employees feeling supported when they trust their leader, which may in turn dissuade employees from engaging in negative behaviours towards the organization, as well as toward their colleagues. Together, these findings contribute to the research on CWB by exploring employee characteristics that are associated with social rank as they relate to CWB, and various moderating and mediating factors that influence CWB in a police organization.

### **Limitations**

Though results from this research have the potential to improve our understanding of CWB, there are several limitations associated with this research that should be acknowledged. First, given that participation in the study was voluntary and relied on participants accessing the survey independently, self-selection bias is a potential limitation whereby the representation of police officers may be skewed. For instance, there may have been employees who were quite engaged in their job who volunteered to participate, or there could be individuals who have more negative feelings towards their organization compared to the average employee who self-selected to participate. Moreover, since participants sent the survey link to their supervisor, it is possible that they sent it to a supervisor they prefer, someone who is their friend, or to a supervisor whom they dislike. As such, results from this study may be distorted since participation in this study did not involve random sampling. Further, the uneven distribution of responses from employees and supervisors may also skew the results and have implications for the generalization of these

findings. For example, if the sample size for both employees and supervisors were larger, it is possible that the results may differ. Perhaps with responses from more police officers, we would see a higher frequency of SDO, which may diminish the influence of servant leadership and perceived social impact on CWB. Moreover, if we received more responses from supervisors, it is possible that we would see more differentiation in leadership qualities, which may alter the influence of trust on CWB, as well as perceived leader dominance and leader prestige.

Additionally, there was an uneven distribution of male and female respondents, with more male respondents participating in the study. While this distribution is uneven, it is proportionate to the distribution we see nationally, where, based on the most recent values obtained in 2021, 22% of police officers in Canada identify as female, and 78% as male (Statistics Canada, 2021).

Further, all measures in this study, with the exception of supervisor-ratings of CWB, are self-report, and as such there is a risk of mono-method bias (e.g., Spector, 2006). However, testing for moderation helps to overcome this limitation. Online self-report methods of data collection may also contain bias through reporting that is socially desirable. Findings from prior research has noted that self-reports tend to be influenced by social desirability bias given that individuals are inclined to select responses they feel are socially accepted, rather than responding truthfully (Hyun Kim & Kim, 2015). For instance, previous studies have found social desirability to be significantly associated with perceptions of organizational values, whereby respondents answer in a way they believe reflects the values of the organization (Miller, 2012). Moreover, prior findings report that individuals tend to embellish or respond in a way that portrays themselves more favourably (Akbulut et al., 2017; Pedregon et al., 2012). It is thus possible that responses in the current study underestimate the employees' level of SDO as well as their CWB. However, given that measures of CWB were comparable from self- and supervisor reports, it is

less likely that social desirability influenced this outcome. Additionally, the current study was a secondary analysis of data, thus the choice of scales and the organization were already determined. It is possible that findings might differ if data was obtained from different types of organizations, or from organizations that have a more even distribution of gender. The current sample consisted of predominantly male employees and male supervisors, and it is possible that social rank may have a different association with CWB in organizations with more gender diversity.

Overall, while there are some limitations, this research remains important toward furthering our understanding of the relation between various individual, interpersonal and organizational leadership factors as they relate to CWB in a police organization. Importantly, this research highlights the association between social rank and CWB, and future research and practice should take these findings into consideration.

### **Theoretical and Practical Implications**

This research contributes to our understanding of social rank characteristics as they relate to CWB, and thus provides an interesting avenue to explore for future research in this area. Utilizing the theoretical foundations of social dominance theory (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999), and dual strategies theory (Maner & Case, 2016), employee and leader traits characterized by an inclination to engage in actions that promote social rank appear to be important antecedents to CWB. These findings suggest that employee's individual differences as they relate to social rank may influence dysfunctional workplace behaviours such as CWB. Further, supervisors may also influence followers through imitation and social learning (Bandura, 1977), and this may relate to differences in employees engaging in CWB. This research also extends our understanding of interpersonal and leadership factors that may mitigate the association between social rank

characteristics and CWB. Given the personal and organizational costs associated with CWB, it is important to both research and practice to understand what may influence employees to engage in CWB.

This research also has notable practical implications. By exploring personal and leadership characteristics that lessen CWB, researchers and organizations are able to develop training that targets relevant factors. For instance, current findings may help individuals and organizations understand the impact that social rank may have on dysfunctional behaviours such as CWB. And since, under certain circumstances, personal and leadership characteristics helped lessen CWB, organizations may consider promoting these positive behaviours in the workplace, and exploring whether other related factors, such as perceived organizational support or transformational leadership, mitigate CWB. These results also emphasize the importance of understanding social dynamics in the workplace as some social rank qualities have negative consequences for workplace behaviours.

### **Future Directions**

Moving forward, future research should consider implementing training programs for supervisors to increase positive leadership behaviours, which may lead employees to engage in fewer counterproductive behaviours, while potentially increasing employee well-being and decreasing employees' perception of stress and negative affect. Additionally, involving staff members in decision-making has been linked to improving employee well-being, thus reducing negative organizational behaviours such as CWB (e.g., Duxbury & Higgins, 2012; Muller et al., 2009). As such, policy makers for police organizations may consider including a collaborative process in their decision-making to allow for and incorporate employee feedback. As discussed in previous literature, employees are more willing to accept organizational change if they feel as

though they have contributed to the change (Dubord & Griffiths, 2018; Muller et al., 2009). The literature also suggests that efforts to make changes in police organizations are more effective when officers are consulted during the process and given the opportunity to impart their opinions (e.g., Toch, 2008) which can lead to positive organizational outcomes.

Future research should also consider exploring the association between stress and CWB, which aligns with the conservation of resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989), that suggests that individuals have a limited number of resources, such as energy, knowledge, and time, to invest in their daily activities. Previous research has found that employees tend to engage in CWB as a protective mechanism to reclaim control of lost resources or protect the diminishing resources that remain (Taylor et al., 2017). Moreover, past findings indicate that work stressors relate to CWB (e.g., Hershcovis et al., 2007; Meier & Spector, 2013) as a response to a loss of resources and to reduce further resource loss (De Clercq et al., 2019). While the current research did not examine stress specifically, it did explore the extent to which CWB occur in a high stress work environment (i.e., a police organization; Lentz et al., 2020), and it would be interesting to further explore the stress aspect of this relationship. Indeed, prior research has found that employees under stress have fewer resources remaining to prevent themselves from engaging in CWB (Wheeler et al., 2013), thus this relationship warrants further examination.

## **Conclusion**

In summary, using a time-separated, supervisor-employee sample, I have contributed to, and extended our understanding of existing research and theory on CWB by examining the association between social rank and CWB. Understanding influential factors related to CWB is important given the negative organizational and personal outcomes associated with CWB, particularly in a police organization where police officers face tremendous stress on a regular

basis. The current findings contribute to our understanding of CWB as an outcome of social rank, and suggest that there are various processes by which social rank influences CWB. In addition, I examined the potential role of moderating and mediating factors, and found that there are important factors that must be considered when examining the association between social rank and CWB. Finally, I have provided future directions that researchers should examine to further extend this area of research. Overall, these findings demonstrate that social rank plays an important role when it comes to CWB, and that improving our understanding of these phenomena may benefit organizations and individuals by motivating employees to engage in fewer negative workplace behaviours.

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## Appendix A

### Questionnaires

#### Short Social Dominance Orientation Scale (Pratto et al., 2012)

Show how much you favour or oppose each idea below by selecting a number from 1 to 7 on the scale below. You can work quickly; your first feeling is generally best.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Oppose	Somewhat Oppose	Slightly Oppose	Neutral	Slightly Favor	Somewhat Favor	Strongly Favor
1. In setting priorities, we must consider all groups. (R)						
2. We should not push for group equality.						
3. Group equality should be our ideal. (R)						
4. Superior groups should dominate inferior groups.						

#### Perceived Social Impact (Grant, 2008)

Show to what extent the following statements apply to you by selecting a number from 1 to 7 on the scale below.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very untrue of me	Untrue of me	Somewhat untrue of me	Neutral	Somewhat true of me	True of me	Very true of me
1. I am very conscious of the positive impact that my work has on others.						
2. I am very aware of the ways in which my work is benefiting others.						
3. I feel that I can have a positive impact on others through my work.						

### Servant Leadership (Liden et al., 2015)

Show how much you favour or oppose each idea below by selecting a number from 1 to 7 on the scale below.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Oppose	Somewhat Oppose	Slightly Oppose	Neutral	Slightly Favor	Somewhat Favor	Strongly Favor
1. My supervisor can tell if something work-related is going wrong.						
2. My supervisor makes my career development a priority.						
3. I would seek help from my supervisor if I had a personal problem.						
4. My supervisor emphasizes the importance of giving back to the community.						
5. My supervisor puts my best interests ahead of his/her own.						
6. My supervisor gives me the freedom to handle difficult situations in the way that I feel is best.						
7. My supervisor would NOT compromise ethical principles in order to achieve success.						

### Dominance and prestige-seeking of supervisor (Cheng et al., 2010)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Dominance						
1. My supervisor enjoys having control over other members of the group						
2. My supervisor often tries to get his/her own way regardless of what others in the group may want.						
3. My supervisor is willing to use aggressive tactics to get his/her way						
4. My supervisor tries to control others rather than permit them to control him/her						
Prestige						
1. Members of my group respect and admire my supervisor						

2. Members of my group always expect my supervisor to be successful.
3. Members of my group do NOT value my supervisor's opinion (R)
4. My supervisor's unique talents and abilities are recognized by others in the group

**Trust in leader** (Brockner et al., 1997)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I can usually trust my supervisor to do what is good for me.						
2. Management can be trusted to make decisions that are good for me.						
3. I trust management to treat me fairly						

**Counterproductive work behavior – organization toward organization** (Dalal et al., 2009)

***Employee self-report***

Over the past two months, please indicate how frequently you have demonstrated the following behaviours:

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
1. ...worked slower than necessary				
2. ...spent time on tasks unrelated to work				
3. ...not worked to the best of your ability				
4. ...criticized [organizational] policies				
5. ...taken an unnecessary break				
6. ...spoken poorly about the organization to others				

**Counterproductive work behaviour** (Dalal et al., 2009)***Supervisor report on their employees***

Using the following 7-point rating scale, please indicate the extent to which each of the statements below describes this employee:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Does not work to the best of his/her ability.						
2. Spends time on tasks unrelated to work.						
3. Criticizes organizational policies.						
4. Takes unnecessary breaks.						
5. Works slower than necessary.						
6. Speaks poorly about the organization to others						
7. Behaves in an unpleasant manner toward a work colleague.						
8. Criticizes a work colleague's opinion or suggestion.						
9. Excludes a work colleague(s) from a conversation.						
10. Speaks poorly about a work colleague(s) to others.						