

# When positive is negative: The moderating role of DT on the relationship between micro-daily events and counterproductive work behavior

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## Research Article

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# Abstract

The workplace is a context, in which, individuals experience diverse types of micro daily events. Taking into account the personality traits, emotions vary, as does the perception of micro daily events. This study examined the three dimensions of the dark triad personality (machiavelism, psychopathy, and narcissism) as moderators of the relationship between micro-daily events, positive and negative, and counterproductive work-related behaviors. To achieve this goal, 205 working adults took part in this study. The results showed that: (1) daily micro-events predicted CWB's, in particular, when the ratio of daily micro-events was positive, the CWB's decreased; (2) the dark triad moderated the relation between micro daily-events and CWB's, such that CWB's decreased as the ratio of daily micro-events increased for individuals with high and moderate DT levels. Such results proved to be fundamental for a better understanding of the behavior of employees in organizations, as well as the impact of daily events in the organizational environment. The implications for theory and practice were discussed.

## Introduction

Micro-daily events at work appear to be a relevant predictor of diverse work-related attitudes and behaviors. The affective events theory (AET; Weiss, & Cropanzano, 1996) has explored such events and states that these kinds of events arouse positive or negative affective reactions that, in turn, will influence work-related attitudes and behaviors (Cropanzano & Dasborough, 2015; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), such as job performance (Junca-Silva et al., 2017).

The AET also states that personality plays a moderating role in this model, such that diverse traits will buffer or maximize the impact of daily events on affect and job-related outcomes (Weiss, & Cropanzano, 1996). For instance, optimism has been found to buffer the negative effects of daily hassles on well-being (Lench, & Ditto, 2008). Some big five have also been found to influence the link events-affective reactions (Sahin, & Cetin, 2017). In a similar vein, several studies have shown that personality traits, such as positive and negative affectivity, are also moderators of the relation between affective events and affect (e.g., Glaso et al., 2011). So, these traits, depending on the work context, and on the events occurred, can influence performance (e.g., Glasø, et al., 2011) and also several job-related behaviors (e.g., Reynolds et al., 2020).

Despite these evidence, empirical studies have been focused on the positive aspects of the personality, giving some emphasis to the big five (e.g., openness) (Costa, & Mcrae, 1992; Lee & Ashton, 2005). However, the dark side of the personality has been ignored on these kinds of research. Notwithstanding, it is important to consider the dark side of the personality within organizational context, as it is hard to find organizations that do not suffer from this pathology (Lučić, 2013). This organizational pathology has, in its genesis, the negative work-related behavior of their employees. This negative work-related behavior is related to the dark triad (DT), a set of three personality traits considered to be socially aversive: subclinical psychopathy, narcissism and machiavellianism. DT has consistently been associated to negative or counterproductive work behaviors (CWB) (e.g., O'Boyle, Forsyth, Banks & McDaniel, 2012).

Counterproductive behaviors are deliberate actions that harm the organization or its members (O'Boyle, Forsyth, & O'Boyle, 2011). Such negative behaviors can be translated into robberies, fall of leaders, bad organizational policies, mobbing, manipulation, sadism, among others. These behaviors affect, directly or indirectly, individuals and the organizations, through the negative affective reactions and the subsequent dissatisfaction.

Although DT has its importance for individual, so far as we know, there are not studies exploring its effects at work (e.g., O'Boyle, et al., 2011). For example, no study has explored DT within the framework of AET, and as such, there are no studies analyzing the effect of DT on the relationship between micro-daily events and CWB. With the aim of fulfilling this gap and to improve the understanding of this problem in the workplace, this study aims to analyze the impact that DT may have on the relationship between micro-daily events and CWB.

## **Theoretical Framework: The Affective Events Theory**

The workplace is known for being one of the biggest affective environments (Ashkanasy, & Humphrey, 2011), in which micro-daily events are present day to day, arousing affective reaction on employees. The AET has explored such events and analyzed its major effects (Weiss, & Cropanzano, 1996). It states that the work environment is filled with job conditions that promote the occurrence of such events. These kinds of events arouse, positive or negative, affective reactions that, in turn, influence work-related attitudes (e.g., job satisfaction) and behaviors (e.g., job performance, or organizational citizenship behaviour) (Junça-Silva, et al., 2017). These micro-events are considered to be affective as they trigger affective reactions from employees (e.g., sadness, happiness) (Junça-Silva, et al., 2017).

Micro-daily have been defined as daily hassles, when they trigger negative affective reactions, and daily uplifts when the affective reaction is positive. Daily hassles are the tiny things that somehow irritate, frustrate or distress individuals (Ashkanasy, et al., 2014). Some examples of daily hassles are sexual harassment, receiving negative feedback, receiving a feedback that is perceived as unfair or inadequate, gossip, lack of resources to perform the job, among others (Junça-Silva, et al., 2020). On the other hand, daily uplifts are the positive daily experiences that will enhance the sense of individuals' well-being and satisfaction (Cropanzano & Dasborough, 2015). Some examples of daily uplifts are receiving a positive feedback, receiving a compliment from someone at work, to make some positive and deliberate breaks at work, receiving some reward (formal or informal) regarding job performance, among others (Junça-Silva, et al., 2020).

The cognitive appraisal theory also states that the affective reactions prompted by micro-daily events are influenced by the cognitive evaluation that an individual has about what has occurred (Lazarus, 1999). Therefore, the same event may trigger diferente affective reactions, from individual to individual, and from moment to moment. So, based on this theory, it is not the event per se that triggers the affective reaction, but is the event' interpretation that is responsible for it. Moreover, the cognitive evaluation has a role that may either, buffer or booster the arousal of the affective reaction (Kiffin-Petersen, et al., 2012).

Additionally, there are also factors that may influence the relation between micro-daily events and affective reactions, such as the personality traits (e.g., Weiss, & Cropanzano, 1996). Weiss and Cropanzano (1996), also refer to the existence of “personality traits that predict general emotional tendencies in individuals” (pp. 12). These personality traits are divided into positive affectivity, that are translated into individuals with a trend to be excited, sociable and often in a good mood, and negative affectivity, associated to individuals more stressed and unhappy, focusing on the negative side of things (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). It is noteworthy the importance that personality traits have on the affective state triggered by such events, as well as its length, and permanence throughout the day, both at work and at home. Therefore, it is evident the impact that the personality traits have, both on the events’ cognitive evaluation, and on the affective and behavioral reaction to them.

Micro-daily events appear to predict work-related behaviors. For instance, Junca-silva et al. (2020) demonstrated that micro-daily events predicted job performance, at both between and within level. Daily events at work were also found to be predictors of creativity (Amabile, et al., 2005) and organizational citizenship behaviors (Spence, et al., 2011). Despite the relevance of micro-daily events for behaviors at work, there are no studies exploring if micro-daily events predict CWB’s. However, because micro-daily events are proximal causes of diverse work-related behaviors, we expect that:

### **H1a**

Micro-daily events are negatively related to CWBI.

### **H1b**

Micro-daily events are negatively related CWBO.

## **The Dark Triad**

Recently, there has been a growing interest in the analysis of the personality traits in the organizational settings, with a special focus on dark side of the personality. With respect to this, Paulhus and Williams (2002) suggest the existence of a set of three personality traits (Machiavellianism, psychopathy and narcissism) defined as the DT. DT has been shown to be quite harmful to the workplace, in particular, when the individual has high levels of these three traits.

DT are different from clinical pathologies because these traits do not reflect an inadaptability in daily life and are included in socially accepted behavioral patterns (Hogan & Hogan, 2001).

Individuals high in Machiavellianism are characterized by their antipathy, low levels of affectivity, by their own and distorted view of morality that comes from their desire to manipulate, lie and exploit others, with an exacerbated focus on their goals (Christie & Geis, 1970; Wu & LeBreton, 2011). This trait is defined by three sets of interrelated values: (1) a belief based on manipulative tactics in dealing with others; (2) a cynical view of human nature, and (3) an amoral perspective that overrates convenience, over the principle (O’Boyle et al., 2012). Such psychological norms lead to a range of negative behaviors. For example,

machiavellians are prone to take revenge on others (Nathanson, 2008) and to lie, more regularly, to people in their inner circle (friends, family, etc.) (Kashy & DePaulo, 1996). Diverse studies have shown the negative consequences of machiavellianism in the work context, for example, antiethic (Treviño, 2003) and manipulative leaders (Hurley, 2005), and low levels of job performances (Molm, 2010), among others.

On the other hand, psychopathy can be seen as a trait, or as a personality disorder. It is characterized by impulsivity, together with an immediate suppression of personal needs (Cleckley, 1976; Hare, 1999), a constant look for feeling and experiencing emotions, combined with low levels of empathy and anxiety (Spain, et al., 2014), and a self-belief in their own superiority and self-promotion trends (Lynam & Widiger, 2007). With respect to this, Jones and Paulhus (2014) refer that psychopathy is based on two key elements: (1) the lack of affection (insensitivity and lack of empathy) and (2) an absence of self-control (impulsivity), that is, it reflects a lack of concern, both with people or with the social regulation mechanisms, as well as an absence of guilt and/or remorse, when their actions harm third parties (O'Boyle, et al., 2012). As a result, psychopaths are immune to anxiety and fear to a certain extent, becoming less vulnerable to embarrassment (Hare, 1999) and, consequently, fail to learn from their mistakes. Psychopathy is the most malevolent trait of DT. Although there are few studies on the impact of psychopathy in the workplace, there is evidence that psychopaths tend to engage in interpersonal conflicts (Boddy, 2014), bullying (Van Geel, et al., 2107), abusive supervision (Boddy, 2010) and in illegal and criminal activities (Hare & Neumann, 2009).

Regarding narcissistic personality, this is marked by a sense of grandiosity, a lack of empathy (Smith, & Lilienfeld, 2013), by the exaggeration imprinted on their achievements (exaggerated view of their own "self"), the rejection of criticism, the difficulty to be committed and the continuous search for relationships with individuals who admire and/or idolize themselves (Resick, et al., 2009). It also includes an inflated view of oneself, of their own success, control, self-admiration and self-love, and the need that this self-love is reinforced by third parties (O'Boyle et al., 2012). Narcissism has received some attention regarding its consequences in the workplace (e.g., Campbell, et al., 2011). For example, studies have shown that narcissism at work leads to poor performances (Judge, et al., 2006), job dissatisfaction (Soyer, et al., 2001), and toxic leaderships (Schmidt, 2008). Therefore, we expect that:

H2a: DT is positively related to CWBI.

H2b: DT is positively related to CWBO.

## **DT and counterproductive work behaviors**

One of the major consequences of DT in the workplace is CWB (e.g., Wu & Lebreton, 2011). Several studies demonstrate that the manipulation inherent to Machiavellianism, the narcissism's sense of entitlement, and the antisocial tendencies of psychopathy are CWB triggers (O'Boyle et al., 2011).

These behaviors are deliberate actions aimed to damage employees and/or the organization (O'Boyle et al., 2014). In general, CWBs may be triggered due to (1) personal factors (due to traits, or disorders, or due

to psychological problems), and (2) organizational factors (due to the perception of unfairness, incompatibility with managers, or the organizational environment).

There are two forms of CWBs: (1) CWB towards the organization occur when directed to the organization (CWB-O), and (2) CWB towards individuals occur when directed to employees (CWB-I). Examples of CWBIs are physical and verbal aggression, abuse of information (personal or organizational towards third parties) and antipathy towards other employees and customers. On the other hand, excessive pauses, misuse of organizational property, theft, purposeful error are examples of CWB-O (Spector, et al., 2006).

CWB's have relevant and negative consequences for organizations. It is estimated that organizations lose billions of dollars per year, due to CWBs (Bennett, & Robinson, 2000). These types of deviant behaviors are based on deviant personality traits, such as DT traits (Kish-Gephart, et al., 2010).

Moore and colleagues (2012) reported that machiavellianism is closely related to unethical behaviors and to several transgressive behavioral trends, including antisocial behavior, lying and manipulation.

Machiavellians have no moral limitations, which makes them to pursue their own interests, without any kind of self-censorship. Given its focus and moral disengagement, it is not surprising that there is a positive relationship between high traits of Machiavellianism and unethical behavior (Hegarty & Sims, 1979). Due to the absence of emotional involvement in interpersonal relationships, communication tends to be less controlled, more impulsive and irresponsible, without taking into account their negative impact on others (Skinner, 1988). As a result, machiavellians tend to engage in communicative CWB's (such as, verbal aggression or rumors) (Wu & Lebreton, 2011). So, we hypothesize that:

H3a: Machiavellianism moderates the relationship between micro-daily events and CWBI, such that the higher the machiavellianism, the weaker the relationship between micro-daily events and the CWBI.

H3b: Machiavellianism moderates the relationship between micro-daily events and CWBO, such that the higher the machiavellianism, the weaker the relationship between micro-daily events and the CWBO.

On the other hand, narcissists tend to interpret criticism and insults as threats to themselves, which increases when these criticisms and insults are made in public. This increased sensitivity to criticism becomes a threat to the self, triggering anger that, in turn, leads to CWB's (Spector, 2011). Wu and Lebreton (2011) also argue that narcissists tend to see themselves as victims which, in turn, increases their vulnerability to engage in negative interactions. This set of negativism and feelings of unfairness, increases the likelihood of engaging in CWB's, such as hostile behaviors, obstructionism or open aggression directed to others. When narcissists interpret interactions as transgressions, it may lead them to absenteeism, retaliatory or fraudulent behavior (Perri, 2013). Wu and Lebreton (2011) also point out that narcissists tend to do whatever it takes for their self-aggrandizement. Their sense of superiority, rebellion and the self-belief of being special, leads them to totally disregard others. Because they have a negative and inferior view of others, they tend to dominate and exploit them, and therefore demonstrate their own superiority (Wu & Lebreton, 2011). Since narcissists have this special view of themselves, they

do not believe or accept that their behavior is negative, which increases the likelihood of performing CWBs during their constant search for self-improvement. So, we expect that:

H4a: Narcisism moderates the relationship between micro-daily events and CWBI, such that the higher the narcissism, the weaker the relationship between micro-daily events and the CWBI.

H4b: Narcisism moderates the relationship between micro-daily events and CWBI, such that the higher the narcissism, the weaker the relationship between micro-daily events and the CWBO.

Regarding psychpaths, according to Wu and Lebreton (2011), they not only get satisfaction from harming others but use this same behavior to achieve their own goals. This occurs to divert attention from a specific task. Thus, hostility between colleagues not only allows to divert attention from a task, but also facilitates the achievement of its own goals. Wu and Lebreton (2011) stated that psychopaths believe that social norms and rules do not apply to themselves, so they usually do not assume responsibility for their actions. Additionally, because psychopaths are individuals without remorse and conscience, who like to take risks, it can lead them to performe risky and compulsive acts, such as unsafe behaviors, which can, for example, lead to the destruction of organizational property, inappropriate physical and verbal behaviors or others that arise as an immediate response to negative events (Wu & Lebreton, 2011). So, it is expected that (Fig. 1):

H5a: Psychopathy moderates the relationship between micro-daily events and CWBI, such that the higher the psychopathy, the weaker the relationship between micro-daily events and the CWBI.

H5b: Psychopathy moderates the relationship between micro-daily events and CWBI, such that the higher the psychopathy, the weaker the relationship between micro-daily events and the CWBO.

## Method

### Participants

Overall, participated in this study 205 working adults, in which most of them were women (79.5%).

Participants were aged between between 18 and 65, and most of them were aged between 35 and 54 years old (56.4%).

From the overall participants, the majority has children (60.5%).

59.5% of the participants is graduated, and also described them to be in a mean-low socioeconomic level.

Most participants are in their organization for at least three years (32.6%), followed by those who are in the organization for more than ten years (33.7%), and also by those who are there between four and nine years (33.7%).

### Measures

To measure *micro-daily events*, we used the Scale for Daily Hassles and Uplifts at Work (SDHUW; Junça-Silva et al., 2020). This scale measures the frequency of micro-daily events at work: daily hassles (10

itens, e.g., "Someone was rude for me at work") and uplifts (eight itens, e.g., "I received positive feedback on my performance").

Participants answered in a five-point Likert scale, regarding the daily events occurred at work in the past seven days (1-never occurred; 5-occurred more than four times).

Cronbach's alpha was .88 for the daily uplift dimension, and .86 for the daily hassle dimension. Overall, the scale presented an  $\alpha$  of .88. To test our hypotheses, we created a ratio between daily uplifts and daily hassles. This ratio allows us to identify the proportionality of the daily uplifts in function of the daily hassles. That is, when the ratio is higher than one, it means that the daily uplifts occurred more frequently than the daily hassles did.

To measure *DT*, we used the Dirty Dozen (Jonason, & Webster, 2010). This scale includes 17 itens, divided in three dimensions: narcissism (e.g., "I tend to manipulate others to get what I want"), psychopathy (e.g., "Usually, I don't feel remorse") and machiavellism (e.g., "I tend to look for status or prestige").

Participants answered on a five-point Likert scale (1-Totally disagree; 5-Totally agree).

Cronbach's  $\alpha$  was .91 for the overall scale and ranged between .89 and .92 for the subscales (narcissism = .89; psychopathy = .90, and machiavellism = .92).

To measure *CWB* we used the CWB Workplace Deviance Scale (Bennett, & Robinson, 2000).

The scale includes 19 itens that evaluate the two CWB dimensions: CWB-I ("I joked with someone at work") and CWB-O ("I took something from work without permission").

Answers were given on five-point Likert scale (1 – never; 5 - always). Overall, the scale presented a Cronbach  $\alpha$  of .93, ranging from .91 for the CWB-I dimension, and .94 for the CWB-O dimension.

## Procedure

Participants completed an online questionnaire.

This was emailed to participants asking them to participate in a "*study about daily events at work*". From the 300 emails sent, there were 205 valid responses, which means a 68% response rate. The confidentiality and anonymity, of the participants, was warranted before they agree to participate in the study.

## Data analysis

Firstly, we calculated the descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations among the variables under study. For data analysis, we used SPSS v. 27.0. The moderating model was tested by using Hayes (2018) PROCESS macro (Model 1). The 95% bias-corrected confidence interval from 5000 resamples was generated by bias-corrected bootstrapping method to examine the significance of moderation effect.

## Results

# Preliminary analyses

Means, standard deviations, and correlations between the variables are showed in Table 1. Of the overall sample, participants reported a positive ratio of micro daily events ( $M = 1.24$ ;  $SD = .52$ ). The highest DT trait was narcissism ( $M = 2.60$ ;  $SD = 1.12$ ), followed by machiavellianism ( $M = 1.92$ ;  $SD = 1.14$ ), and then psychopathy ( $M = 1.24$ ;  $SD = .52$ ). The more performed CWBs were CWB-O ( $M = 1.68$ ;  $SD = .84$ ) and then CWB-I ( $M = 1.49$ ;  $SD = .75$ ). Moreover, all the variables were significantly related with each other.

Table 1  
Means, standard deviations, and correlations between the variables.

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Micro-daily events	1.24	.52	(.88)					
2. CWB-O	1.68	.84	-.35**	(.94)				
3. CWB-I	1.49	.75	-.29**	.85**	(.91)			
4. Narcisism	2.60	1.12	-.30**	.62**	.57**	(.89)		
5. Machiavellianism	1.92	1.14	-.25**	.76**	.72**	.66**	(.92)	
6. Psychpaty	1.79	.97	-.25**	.73**	.68**	.57**	.72**	(.90)

**Notes:**  $N = 205$ ; \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ . Cronbach'α are in brackets.

Table 2  
The moderating role of DT in the relationship  
between micro-daily events and CWBI's.

Variables	$\beta$	SE	LLCI – ULCI
<b>CWBI</b>			
Micro-daily events	-.32**	.06	-.45, -.19
Machiavellianism	.31**	.03	.24, .38
(events*maq.)	-.55**	.07	-.69, -.41
$R^2 = .65, F_{(3, 201)} = 122.08$			
Micro-daily events	-.29**	.07	-.43, -.15
Psychopathy	.33**	.05	.24, .42
(eventos*psic.)	-.57**	.09	-.75, -.38
$R^2 = .57, F_{(3, 201)} = 87.74$			
Micro-daily events	-.34**	.08	-.49, -.18
Narcissism	.27**	.04	.20, .35
(events*narc.)	-.58**	.08	-.73, -.43
$R^2 = .49, F_{(3, 201)} = 64.69$			
<b>Notes:</b> $N = 205$ ; * $p < .05$ ; ** $p < .01$ .			

## Hypothesis Testing

### The effect of micro-daily events on CWB

Hypothesis 1a predicted that micro-daily events would be negatively related to CWBI. As expected, micro-daily events presented a moderate correlation with CWBI ( $r = -.29, p < .01$ ). Moreover, the results of a linear regression also showed that micro-daily events predicted CWBI ( $\beta = -.30, t_{(204)} = -4.45; p < .001; R^2 = .09$ ). therefore, H1a was supported by the data.

Hypothesis 1b expected that micro-daily events would be negatively related to CWBO. First, results from the correlations showed that micro-daily events were negatively related to CWBO ( $r = -.35, p < .01$ ). Plus, the results of a linear regression also showed that micro-daily events predicted CWBO ( $\beta = -.35, t_{(204)} = -5.32, p < .001; R^2 = .12$ ). As such, H1b was also supported by the data.

### The effect of DT on CWB

Hypothesis 1a predicted that DT would be positively related to CWBI. As expected, all the DT traits presented strong correlations with CWBI ( $.57 > r < .72, p < .01$ ). Moreover, the results of a linear regression also showed that overall DT predicted CWBI ( $\beta = .75, t_{(204)} = 16.25, p < .001; R^2 = .56$ ). therefore, H2a was supported by the data.

We also analyzed the specific direct influence of each DT trait on CWBI. The results also confirmed that all DT traits significantly and positively predicted CWBI (machiavellianism:  $\beta = .41, t_{(204)} = 5.61, p < .001$ ; psychopathy:  $\beta = .31, t_{(204)} = 4.70, p < .001$ ; narcissism ( $\beta = .12, t_{(204)} = 1.91, p < .05$ ).

Hypothesis 1b predicted that DT would be positively related to CWBO. As expected, all the DT traits presented strong correlations with CWBI ( $.62 > r < .76, p < .01$ ). Moreover, the results of a linear regression also showed that overall DT predicted CWBI ( $\beta = .80, t_{(204)} = 19.23, p < .001; R^2 = .64$ ). Therefore, H2b was supported by the data.

Following what we made with CWBI, we analyzed the specific influence of each DT trait on CWBO. The results also showed that all DT traits significantly and positively predicted CWBO (Machiavellianism:  $\beta = .40, t_{(204)} = 6.00, p < .001$ ; psychopathy:  $\beta = .36, t_{(204)} = 6.01, p < .001$ ; narcissism  $\beta = .15, t_{(204)} = 2.65, p < .01$ ).

## The moderating effect of DT between micro-daily events and CWB

*Machiavellianism.* The hypothesis 3 predicted that machiavellianism would moderate the relationship between micro-daily events and CWBI (H3a) and CWBO (H3b), such that the higher the machiavellianism, the weaker the relationship between micro-daily events and CWB). To test these hypotheses, we conducted two moderations with PROCESS (model 1, Hayes, 2018).

Regarding H3a, the results showed a significant interaction effect of machiavellianism with micro-daily events in predicting CWBI ( $B = -.55, \beta = .07, \Delta R^2 = .11, p < .01$ ). Simple slope analysis (Dearing, & Hamilton, 2006) found that micro-daily events showed a significant relationship with CWBI in higher levels of machiavellianism (i.e., 1 SD above the mean) (simple slope =  $-.95, \beta = .12, p < .01, IC 95\% [-1.18, -.73]$ ), and in mean levels of Machiavellianism (simple slope =  $-.32, \beta = .06, p < .01, IC 95\% [-.44, -.19]$ ). However, and even tough significant, the relationship between micro-daily events and lower levels of machiavellianism (i.e., 1 SD below the mean) appears to increase CWBI (simple slope =  $.19, \beta = .08, p < .01, IC 95\% [.03, .34]$ ) (see Fig. 2 and Table 1). Therefore, h3a was supported by the data.

Regarding H3b, the results demonstrated the existence of a significant interaction effect of machiavellianism and micro-daily events in predicting CWBO ( $B = -.58, \beta = .07, \Delta R^2 = .09, p < .01$ ). Simple slope analysis (Dearing, & Hamilton, 2006) found that micro-daily events showed a significant relationship with CWBO in higher levels of machiavellianism (i.e., 1 SD above the mean) (simple slope =  $-1.08, \beta = .12, p < .01, IC 95\% [-1.32, -.85]$ ), and in mean levels of machiavellianism (simple slope =  $-.42, \beta = .07, p < .01, IC 95\% [-.55, -.29]$ ), but not significant in lower levels of machiavellianism (i.e., 1 SD below

the mean)(simple slope = .12,  $\beta = .08$ ,  $p > .05$ , IC 95% [-.04, .32]) (see Fig. 3, Table 3). Therefore, h3b was supported by the data.

Table 3  
The moderating role of DT in the relationship  
between micro-daily events and CWBO's.

Variables	$\beta$	SE	LLCI – ULCI
<b>CWBO</b>			
Micro-daily events	-.42**	.07	-.55, -.28
Machiavellianism	.37**	.04	.30, .44
(events*maq.)	-.58**	.07	-.72, -.44
$R^2 = .70$ , $F_{(3, 201)} = 157.41$			
Micro-daily events	-.37**	.07	-.52, -.23
Psychopathy	.44**	.04	.34, .53
(events*psic.)	-.54**	.10	-.73, -.35
$R^2 = .63$ , $F_{(3, 201)} = 115.24$			
Micro-daily events	-.44**	.08	-.60, -.28
Narcissism	.33**	.04	.26, .41
(events*narc.)	-.62**	.08	-.77, -.46
$R^2 = .54$ , $F_{(3, 201)} = 81.04$			
<b>Notes:</b> $N = 205$ ; * $p < .05$ ; ** $p < .01$ .			

*Narcissism.* The hypothesis 4 predicted that narcissism would moderate the relationship between micro-daily events and CWBI (H4a) and CWBO (H4b), such that the higher the narcissism, the weaker the relationship between micro-daily events and CWB.

Regarding H4a, the results showed a significant interaction effect of narcissism with micro-daily events in predicting CWBI ( $B = -.58$ ,  $\beta = .08$ ,  $\Delta R^2 = .14$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Simple slope analysis (Dearing, & Hamilton, 2006) found that micro-daily events showed a significant relationship with CWBI in higher levels of narcissism (i.e., 1 SD above the mean) (simple slope =  $-.98$ ,  $\beta = .13$ ,  $p < .01$ , IC 95% [-1.24,  $-.73$ ]), and in mean levels of narcissism (simple slope =  $-.34$ ,  $\beta = .08$ ,  $p < .01$ , IC 95% [-.49,  $-.18$ ]). However, and even though significant, the relationship between micro-daily events and lower levels of narcissism (i.e., 1 SD below the mean) appears to increase CWBI (simple slope =  $.31$ ,  $\beta = .10$ ,  $p < .01$ , IC 95% [.10,  $.51$ ]) (Fig. 4). So, h4a was supported by the data.

Regarding H4b, the results demonstrated the existence of a significant interaction effect of narcissism and micro-daily events in predicting CWBO ( $B = -.62$ ,  $\beta = .08$ ,  $\Delta R^2 = .13$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Simple slope analysis (Dearing, & Hamilton, 2006) found that micro-daily events showed a significant relationship with CWBO in higher levels of narcissism (i.e., 1 SD above the mean) (simple slope =  $-1.13$ ,  $\beta = .14$ ,  $p < .01$ , IC 95% [ $-1.40$ ,  $-.87$ ]), and in mean levels of narcissism (simple slope =  $-.44$ ,  $\beta = .08$ ,  $p < .01$ , IC 95% [ $-.60$ ,  $-.28$ ]). As observed in the H4a, the same occurred, that is, even though significant, the relationship between micro-daily events and lower levels of narcissism (i.e., 1 SD below the mean) appears to increase CWBO (i.e., 1 SD below the mean) (simple slope =  $.25$ ,  $\beta = .11$ ,  $p < .05$ , IC 95% [ $.04$ ,  $.47$ ]) (Fig. 5). Therefore, H4b was supported by the data.

*Psychopathy.* The hypothesis 5 predicted that psychopathy would moderate the relationship between micro-daily events and CWBI (H5a) and CWBO (H5b), such that the higher the psychopathy, the weaker the relationship between micro-daily events and CWB.

Regarding H5a, the results showed a significant interaction effect of psychopathy with micro-daily events in predicting CWBI ( $B = -.56$ ,  $\beta = .09$ ,  $\Delta R^2 = .08$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Simple slope analysis (Dearing, & Hamilton, 2006) found that micro-daily events showed a significant relationship with CWBI in higher levels of psychopathy (i.e., 1 SD above the mean) (simple slope =  $-.84$ ,  $\beta = .13$ ,  $p < .01$ , IC 95% [ $-1.09$ ,  $-.59$ ]), and in mean levels of psychopathy (simple slope =  $-.29$ ,  $\beta = .07$ ,  $p < .01$ , IC 95% [ $-.43$ ,  $-.15$ ]). But not in lower levels of psychopathy (i.e., 1 SD below the mean) (simple slope =  $.16$ ,  $\beta = .09$ ,  $p > .05$ , IC 95% [ $-.01$ ,  $.33$ ]) (Fig. 5). So, H5a was supported by the data.

Regarding H5b, the results demonstrated the existence of a significant interaction effect of psychopathy and micro-daily events in predicting CWBO ( $B = -.54$ ,  $\beta = .10$ ,  $\Delta R^2 = .06$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Simple slope analysis (Dearing, & Hamilton, 2006) found that micro-daily events showed a significant relationship with CWBO in higher levels of psychopathy (i.e., 1 SD above the mean) (simple slope =  $-.91$ ,  $\beta = .13$ ,  $p < .01$ , IC 95% [ $-1.16$ ,  $-.64$ ]), and in mean levels of psychopathy (simple slope =  $-.37$ ,  $\beta = .07$ ,  $p < .01$ , IC 95% [ $-.52$ ,  $-.23$ ]). But not in lower levels of psychopathy (i.e., 1 SD below the mean) (simple slope =  $.05$ ,  $\beta = .09$ ,  $p > .05$ , IC 95% [ $-.12$ ,  $.23$ ]) (Fig. 7). So, H5b was supported by the data.

## Discussion

This study's goals were threefold: (1) explore if micro-daily events were negatively related to CWB (CWBI's and CWBO's); (2) analyze if DT were positively related to such behaviors, and (3) analyze the potential moderating role of DT on the link between micro-daily events and CWB.

The results supported our first hypotheses, by demonstrating that micro-daily events were a significant situational predictor of CWBs. Moreover, these relationships were found to be negative, as expected. That is, the higher the ratio of micro-daily events, the less occurrence of CWBI's and CWBO's. This is consistent with other studies (e.g., Junça-Silva, et al., 2020) demonstrating the benefits of experiencing daily uplifts in diverse work-related outcomes, such as, job performance, or work engagement. Matta et al. (2014), in their diary study conducted through 10 days, also showed that daily hassles were closely related to

negative affective reactions which, in turn, lead to increases in diverse kinds of daily CWB's. So, there is strong evidence that micro-daily events are a strong predictor of diverse forms of CWB's at work.

Second, we proposed that DT would also predict both forms of CWB's. The results were also consistent with what was expected and revealed a positive relationship between DT and CWB's. That is, the higher the DT levels, the more CWB's, performed. To this respect, Wu and Lebreton (2011) also demonstrated the existence of a significant link between each DT trait and deviant behaviors in the workplace, justified by the deviant personality inherent to DT traits. DeShong, et al. (2015) also stated that DT was positively related to CWB's. So, DT is also a strong predictor of these kinds of deviant behaviors at work.

Moreover, when we consider each DT trait individually, the results showed that machiavellianism appears to be the strongest predictor of both CWB's, followed by the psychopathy, and at last, the narcissism. Although there is not consensus, several studies (e.g., Kanten, et al., 2015) have suggested that machiavellianism and psychopathy are the DT traits that most impact CWB's. Narcissism is seen as the less black trait of DT (Volmer, et al., 2016), however, there are cultural influences that seem to mitigate or exponentiate its impact.

Additionally, our results demonstrated that each DT trait appears to be a moderator in the link micro-daily events and CWB's. Specifically, when the micro-daily events ratio is lower than 1, and the DT is high, the frequency of each form of CWB increases. That is, when the frequency of daily hassles increases, the individuals with the highest levels of DT are those who perform more CWB's. However, for individuals with moderate to high levels of DT traits, this behavioral trend decreases when daily uplifts increase. As such, individuals who have the dark personality, when confronted with several daily hassles, see their "dark side" also intensifying, which leads them to incur in more CWB's. This is consistent with the main assumptions of AET (Weiss, & Cropanzano, 1996), that is the behaviors triggered by micro-daily events, may be positive or negative, depending on the nature of the event occurred, however this is exponentiated in individuals with high levels of DT (Cropanzano & Dasborough, 2015).

Diverse studies have associated CWB's to aggressive, antisocial and deviant attitudes and behaviors (Neuman & Baron, 1998), delinquency (Hogan & Hogan, 1989) retaliation and revenge (Skarlicki & Folger, 1997). Bies et al. (1997) also state that, the affective perspective is related to CWB's because, affective events at work, by arousing negative affect and thoughts, under the right conditions, can lead to adverse behavioral reactions (CWB's). Thus, affective events are psychological ignitions inducing deviant actions (Wallbott, & Scherer, 1989). Individuals are active agents of their own experiences, and affective events become triggers that influence certain behaviors (Bies et al., 1997), as is the case with CWB's.

While daily hassles induce tendencies of run away from negative situations, daily uplifts create tendencies of positive actions. Therefore, the greater the frequency of daily uplifts, the greater the likelihood of behaviors that increase and maintain a positive work environment. Plus, when individuals experience daily uplifts, they tend to behave in an altruistic manner in order to maintain a positive state of mind (Isen, 1984).

Additionally, with the increase in the ratio of micro-daily events, the decrease in CWB's can occur due to the induction of positive affect triggered by these events, which in turn, can buffer the negative affect, typical of DT traits, having, as a consequence, the decrease in CWB's. Furthermore, this can happen also because positive affect promotes the involvement of the individual with the workplace and instigate the search for more positive affect. For example, according to the broaden and build theory (Fredrickson, 2001), the experience of positive affect increases the capacity for momentary thought-action which, in turn, contributes to the enrichment of personal resource, that is, there is a positive spiral, in which positive affect contributes to the individual improvement in the workplace. These assumptions seem to be similar even for individuals with high levels of DT, since a higher ratio of micro-daily events seem to decrease their CWB's.

Unexpectedly, it seems to be the opposite trend when we look at individuals with low levels of DT. That is, the increase in the ratio of micro-daily events, appear to lead these individuals, with lower levels of DT, to increase their CWBI's. However, this trend can only be seen in machiavellianism and narcissism. This pattern was not verified in the psychopathy. This can be justified by the need of having interpersonal interactions, crucial characteristics of machiavellians and narcissists (Volmer, et al., 2016). However, this is not consensual (Spain, & Harms, 2014) among the researchers.

This pattern of results was also verified regarding CWBO's, however only for narcissism. That is, as the micro-daily events ratio increases, CWBO's tend to increase for individuals with low levels of DT. The justification for these behavioral reactions may lie in the neutralization theory (Sykes & Matza, 1957). Accordingly, neutralization appears to be a technique that allows individuals to rationalize or justify their immoral or illegal acts (Sykes & Matza, 1957). This theory is used to understand deviant behaviors and states that a great part of such behaviors does not occur all of the time. That is, people that engage in these kinds of behaviors are not mean in their nature. The theory also notes that individuals drift back and forth between acceptable and deviant behaviors. With respect to this, because most people are not immune to guilt and remorse, they need excuses for the times in which they do drift into offensive or harmful actions. They need some mechanism to allow them to deal with their own guilt and the agent for this rationalization is neutralization. Therefore, neutralization appears to be a defense mechanism through which individuals downplay the repercussions of their behavior. It is a kind of temporary release from society's moral bond with society. By using neutralization, individuals can justify their actions and turn off their internal social-control button. Denying their culpability helps them to deflect the disapproval that they will experience from defying societal norms and societal expectations of what is acceptable behavior. They are regular people who need some way to allay the guilt and blame that they feel for harming another human being, despite their intent (Daigle, 2005). So, individuals with low levels of DT may use neutralization techniques to justify their negative behavior, such as, CWBs.

## **Theoretical and practical Implications**

This study has several implications for individuals and organizations. First, it is important to understand the relationship between micro-daily events, DT and CWB's because it appears to be relevant to use DT

measures in recruitment and selection, once it can avoid dramatical losses for organizations, such as financial losses (resulting from fraud) or denigrating the organizational image (through harassment among employees or discrimination) (Jones, 1997).

On the other hand, it is important to understand how micro-daily events can be used as a socialization strategy to better integrate the newly employees in the organizational context, taking advantage of their added value and mitigating their negative impact.

## Limitations and future directions

Despite the positive features of this study, it has some limitations. First, the small sample size means that these results should be generalized with caution. Second, the use of self-reported measures may also bias the data, because individuals may not always provide accurate reports. Efforts should be made to further studies, by conducting, for instance, a diary study, in order to obtain more accurate data. Moreover, the sample was mostly feminine, which again limits the generalization of the data. In addition, several studies point to a greater male predisposition to emotional stimuli and CWB's (Bowling, & Burns, 2015), so a more homogeneous sample, and/or in contrast, being made up only of male individuals, it would be interesting to compare results. Also, the fact that data was collected in just one moment is a limitation. Daily events must be collected at various time points to understand the existing fluctuations. Therefore, future studies could replicate this study through a longitudinal or daily study.

## Conclusions

These results add to the existing literature on micro-daily events, DT traits and its impact on CWBs; to date, this is the first study exploring the role of DT as moderators between micro-daily events and CWBs. The present study addresses a major gap in the current organizational behavior literature; whereas the correlational link between micro-daily events and CWBs has been well established, this is one of the first studies to examine some of the intricacies of this relation.

Additionally, the results point out that it does not matter only those who have high levels of DT traits, but those who appear to have lower levels of such traits, when experiencing more daily uplifts tend to behave in a worst way than the dark personalities do. This behavioral pattern can be explained through the neutralization theory, in which individuals rationalize their deviant actions to justify them. On the other hand, the dark personalities appear to benefit with the occurrence of more daily uplifts as it appears to diminish their CWBs.

## Declarations

i) **Conflict of interest statement:** The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

ii) **Compliance of ethical standard statement:** All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research

committee and with the 1964 Helsinki Declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

iii) **Informed consent:** Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants involved in the study.

iv) **data availability:** The datasets generated during and analysed during the current study are not publicly available due to the confidentiality and anonymity of the individuals who participated, but are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

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## Figures

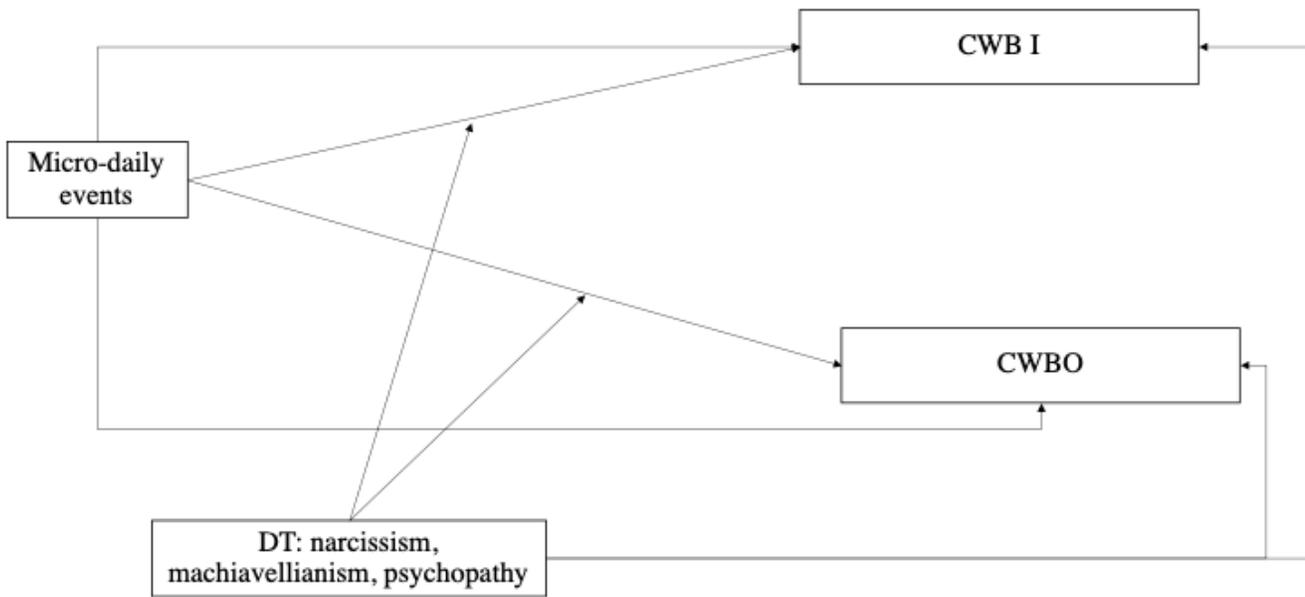
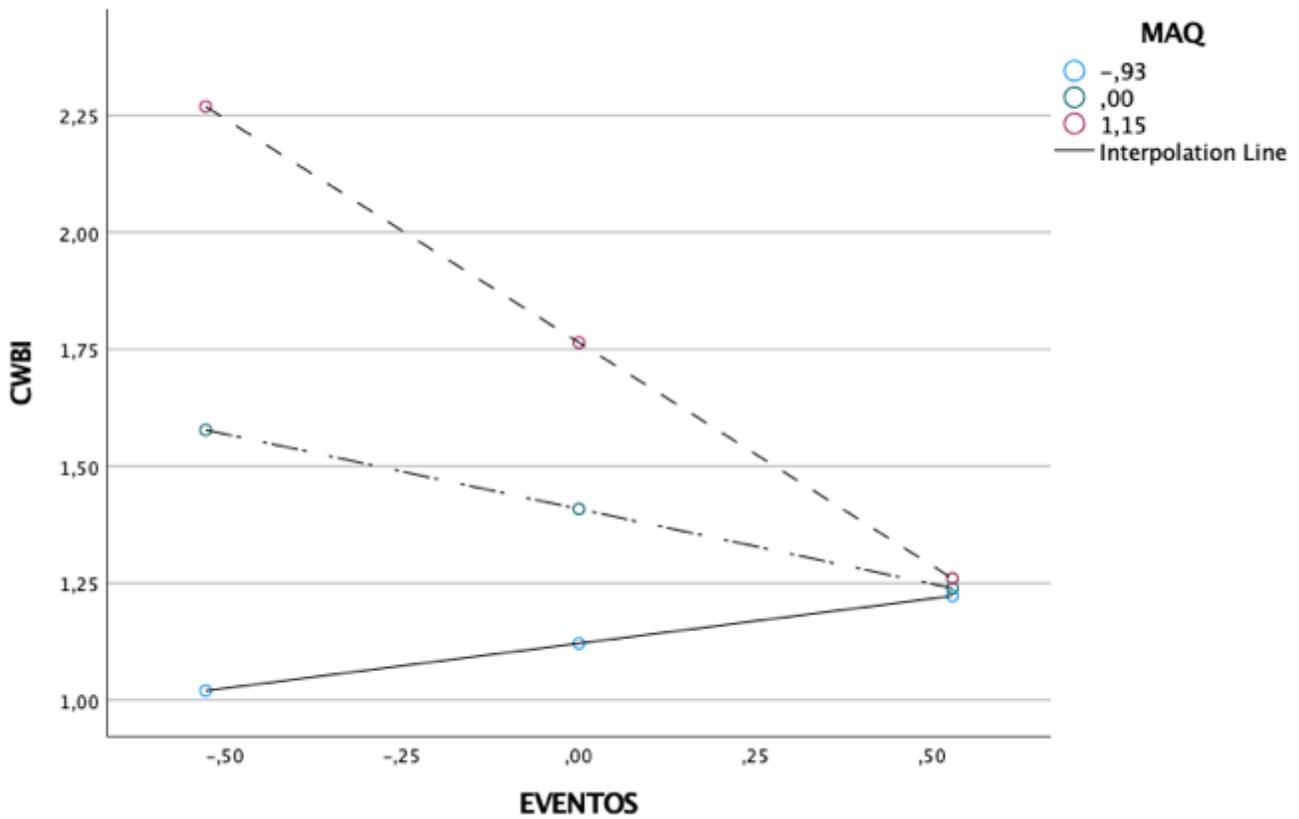


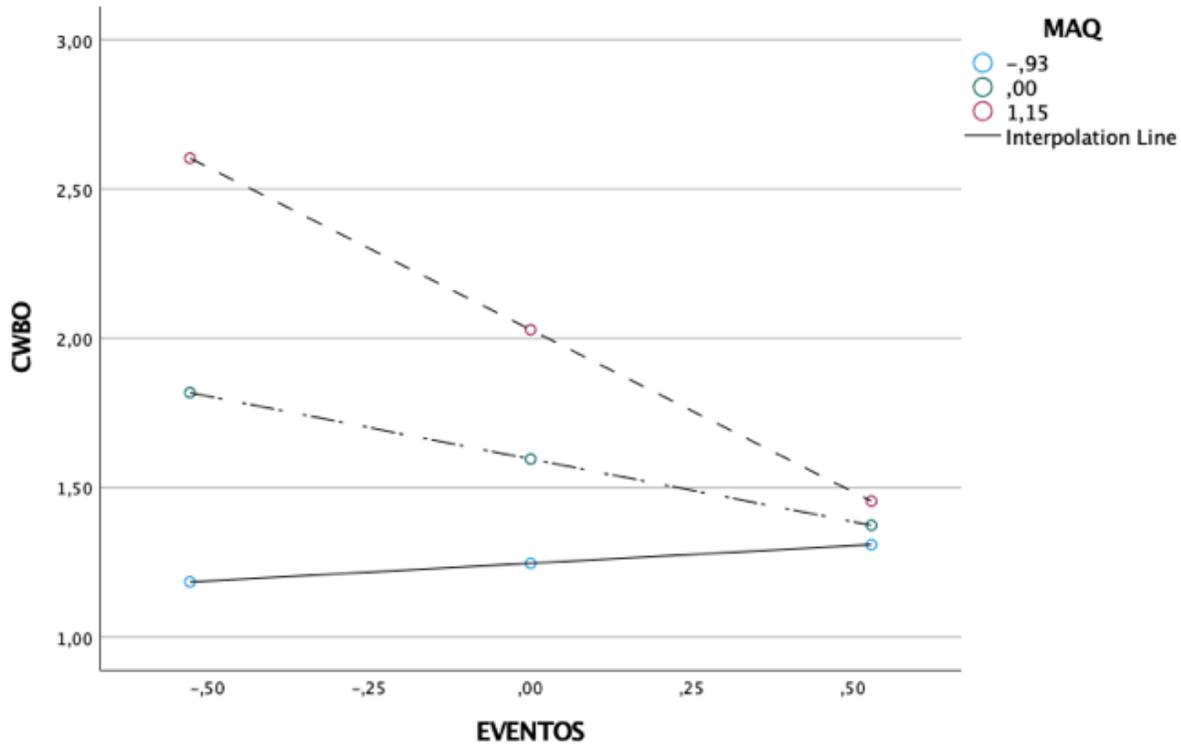
Figure 1

Conceptual model: the moderating role of DT between micro-daily events and CWB's.



**Figure 2**

The moderating effect of machiavellianism in the relationship between micro-daily events and CWBI.



**Figure 3**

The moderating effect of machiavellianism in the relationship between micro-daily events and CWBO.

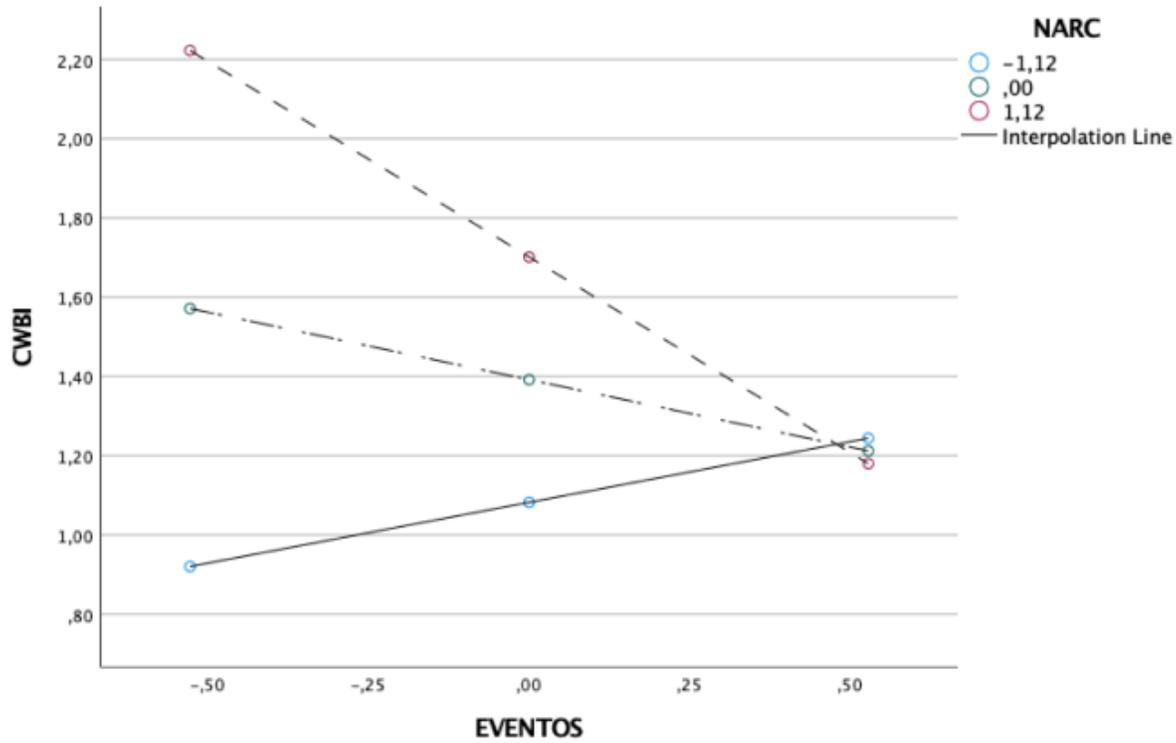
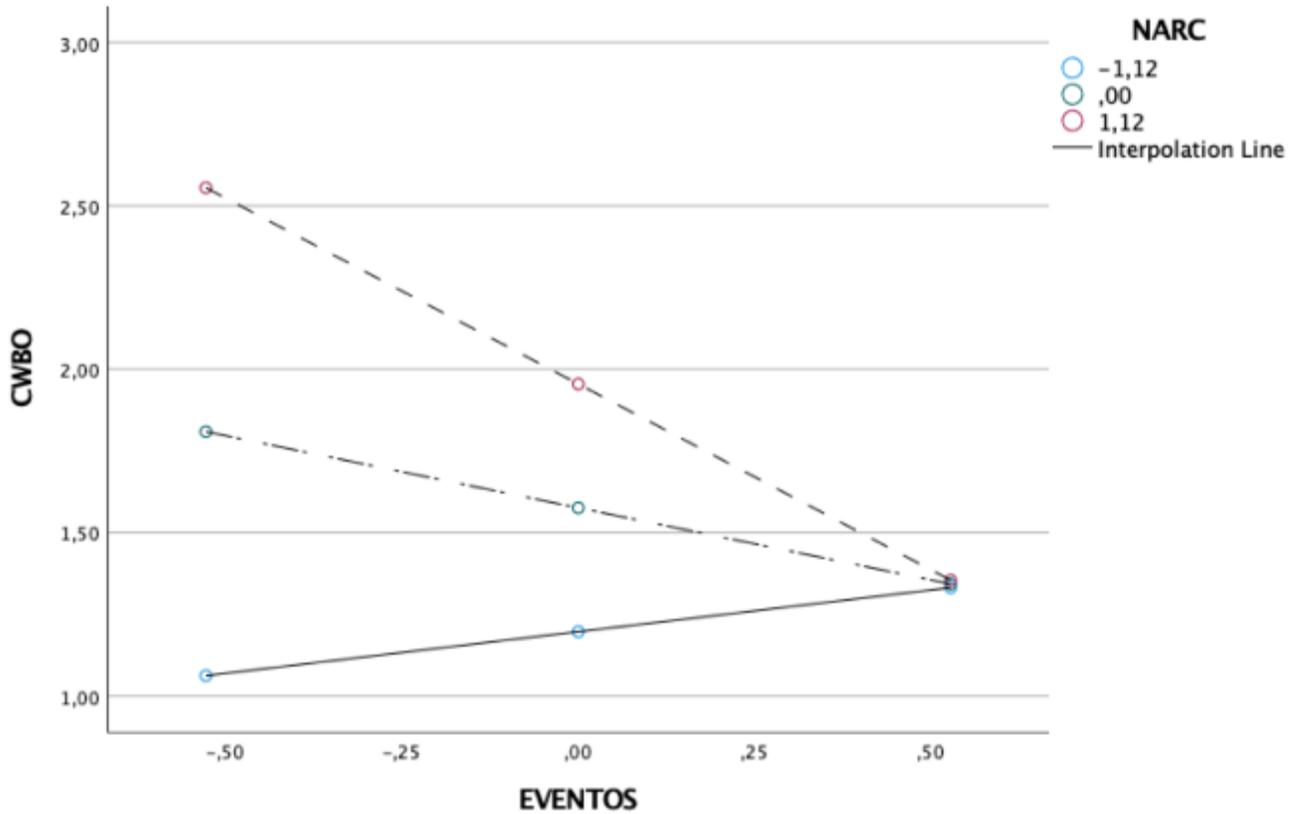


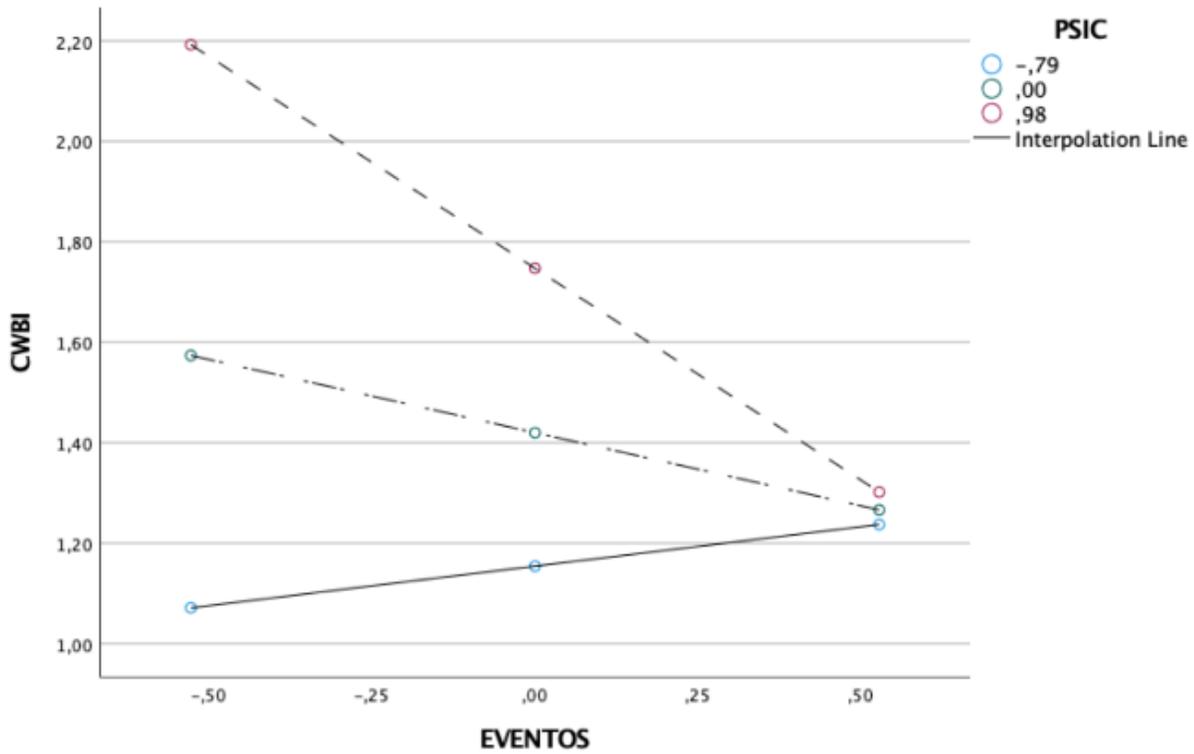
Figure 4

The moderating effect of narcissism in the relationship between micro-daily events and CWBI.



**Figure 5**

The moderating effect of narcissism in the relationship between micro-daily events and CWBO.



**Figure 6**

The moderating effect of psychopathy in the relationship between micro-daily events and CWBI.

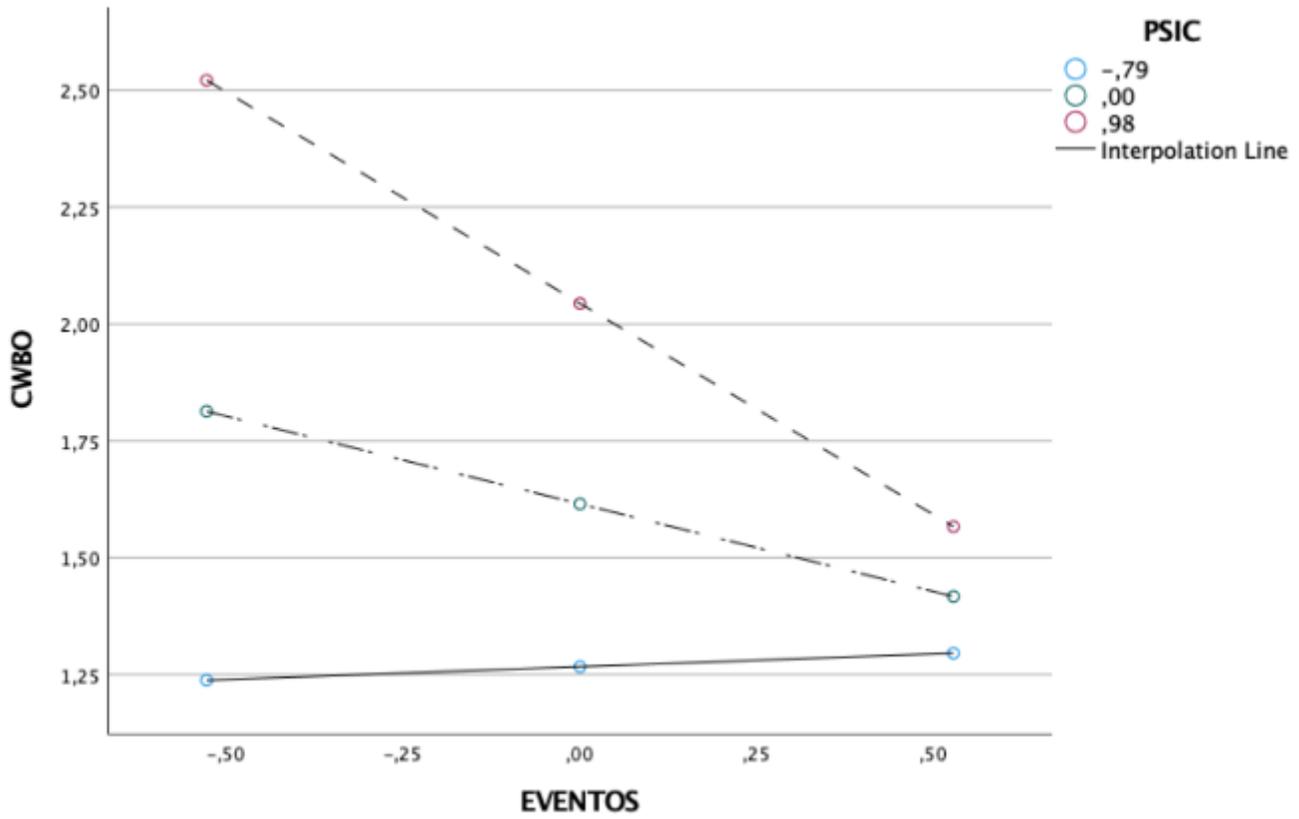


Figure 7

The moderating effect of psychopathy in the relationship between micro-daily events and CWBO.