

# Psychological Needs at Work Research Highlights

## James Noon's Honours Thesis

### *This Research Investigated*

1. Whether the frustration of employees' needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness in the workplace predict counterproductive work behaviour, such as absenteeism, disobedience, bullying, and abuse.
2. Whether the strength of employees' needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness modify the associations between the frustration of these needs and counterproductive work behaviour.



### *Key Research Findings*

1. The frustration of employees' need for autonomy predicts counterproductive work behaviour. However, the frustration of employees' needs for competence and relatedness do not predict counterproductive work behaviour.
2. The strength of employees' needs for autonomy, competence, or relatedness do not modify the associations between the frustration of these needs and counterproductive work behaviour—such that when employees' need for autonomy is frustrated, employees with a strong need are no more likely to engage in counterproductive work behaviour than employees with a weak need.

### *What Do These Findings Mean?*

- o Providing autonomy-supportive workplaces may reduce or prevent employee engagement in counterproductive work behaviour, regardless of whether employees have strong or weak needs for autonomy in their job.
- o Although providing workplaces that are competence- and relatedness-supportive may not reduce or prevent counterproductive work behaviour, previous research has associated competence- and relatedness-supportive workplaces with favourable employee behaviours, such as being conscientious, courteous, and altruistic, as well as volunteering to do overtime and taking on more work.

### *How To Provide Autonomy-Supportive Workplaces*

- o Give employees the autonomy to make choices relating to the daily functions and aspects of their own jobs.



- o Encourage managers (and other employees) to acknowledge employees' unique perspectives, viewpoints, and contributions.



- o Ensure that feedback given to employees is relevant to the task rather than feedback that demeans the employee and their efforts.



Thank you to everyone who participated in this research.  
Regards, the research team:

- o James Noon ([james.noon@alumni.griffithuni.edu.au](mailto:james.noon@alumni.griffithuni.edu.au))
- o Dr Darren Wishart ([d.wishart@griffith.edu.au](mailto:d.wishart@griffith.edu.au))