

PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING AND JOB PERFORMANCE AMONG INVESTIGATION OFFICERS IN MALAYSIAN ANTI- CORRUPTION COMMISSION

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Abstract. This concept paper proposes a framework investigating how psychosocial factors, personality traits and gender interact with job satisfaction, psychological well-being and job performance among Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) Investigation Officer (IOs). Grounded in Ryff's Model of Psychological Well-Being and recent literature, the paper proposed to integrate moderating and mediating mechanisms to explain how organization and individual factors influence IO performance in the unique setting of anti-corruption enforcement. The framework posits psychological well-being; autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations purpose in life, and self-acceptance serves as a foundational predictor of job performance, mediated by job satisfaction. Furthermore, the Big Five personality traits which include conscientiousness, extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and neuroticism together with gender, function as important moderators, that may either strengthen or weaken this association. The paper draws upon organizational behaviour perspectives, occupational health psychology, and personality psychology to develop conceptual suggestions suitable for empirical testing. Practical implications for MACC human resource management, recruitment, and well-being interventions are discussed, emphasizing the need for personality-informed and gender-sensitive policies in supporting IO psychological health and performance. This study contributes to both theoretical and practical perspectives by offering a clearer understanding of how psychological dynamics influence performance in high stakes enforcement organizations.

Keywords: *psychological well-being, job satisfaction, job performance, personality traits, gender*

Introduction

The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) operates as the nation's primary enforcement agency to preventing and combating corruption in all sectors of Malaysian society. At the operational core of this mandate are Investigation Officers (IOs), who are responsible for investigating complex corruption allegations, preparing investigative papers, and working with prosecutors to bring perpetrators to justice. Between 2022 and 2024, MACC IOs collectively managed over 3,000 investigation papers and 3,600 preliminary investigation papers, with individual IOs typically assigned 2 to 3 active cases annually alongside ongoing court proceedings and ad-hoc investigative assignments (MACC, 2025). The occupational context of anti-corruption investigation presents a distinctive constellation of psychosocial demands. Unlike general policing or corporate roles, IOs navigate: (i) Case complexity: White-collar corruption cases involving sophisticated financial schemes requiring sustained analytical focus; (ii) Public visibility: High-profile cases subject to media scrutiny, political pressure, and public expectations; (iii) Ethical complexity: Decision-making involving moral judgment, procedural compliance, and maintenance of investigative integrity; (iv) Workload variability: KPI pressures often exceeded when case volume

surpasses projections, creating performance uncertainty; (v) Organizational context: Relatively small workforce (3,300 officers nationwide) relative to national corruption reports, creating resource scarcity.

Within this context, psychological well-being emerges as a critical but under-examined organizational resource. Psychological well-being broadly defined as positive mental functioning, personal development, and meaningful engagement which directly influence how IOs approach investigative work, manage stress, make ethical decisions, and sustain performance over extended careers. The link between psychological well-being and job performance is indirect. It operates through contextual mediator such as job satisfaction and is modulated by individual differences; personality traits & gender. Understanding these complex relationships is essential for MACC to develop targeted interventions supporting IO psychological health while enhancing organizational anti-corruption effectiveness. This concept paper integrates theoretical perspectives from occupational health psychology, organizational behavior, and personality psychology to present a comprehensive framework of how psychological well-being, psychosocial factors, job satisfaction, and personality traits interact to shape IO's job performance.

Literature review and underpinning theories

Ryff's model of psychological well-being (Independent Variable)

Ryff (1989) multidimensional model of psychological well-being provides the conceptual foundation for understanding how IOs' positive mental functioning and personal development influence job performance. In contrast to approaches focusing solely on happiness or life satisfaction, Ryff's perspective put emphasis on purposeful living, self-actualization, positive functioning as core dimensions of well-being. The model comprises six interrelated dimensions: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. Together, these dimensions capture the ability of individuals to handle challenges, sustain motivation, and maintain resilience in demanding work environments. In the IO perspective, psychological well-being is remarkably significant given the complexity and sensitivity of anti-corruption investigations. Autonomy supports independent judgment in case management, environmental control reflects competency in navigating legal and organizational systems, and personal growth is promoted through continuous training and exposure to diverse cases. Positive relations improve collaboration and peer support, while purpose in life aligns investigative work with civic responsibility and integrity. Self-acceptance, meanwhile, enables IOs to maintain emotional stability despite outcomes beyond their control. Collectively, these dimensions provide a thorough lens for understanding IOs' mental functioning and its impact on performance. High levels of psychological well-being are anticipated to strengthen motivation, stress management, and ethical decision-making, thereby sustaining investigative effectiveness. Within the proposed framework, psychological well-being serves as the foundational predictor of job performance, with job satisfaction acting as a mediating path and personality traits and gender shaping the strength of these associations.

Job satisfaction as mediator

Job satisfaction is defined as a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences (Locke, 1976). It has long been recognized as a significant factor of employee performance and organizational effectiveness.

Theoretically, it shows the degree to which individuals realize their work as rewarding, fulfilling, and supported personal expectations. Within the proposed framework, job satisfaction functions as a mediating variable that channels the influence of psychological well-being into job performance outcomes (Umrani et al., 2024). For IOs at the MACC, satisfaction surfaces from meaningful case assignments, recognition and respect of professional contributions, and organizational practices that continuously support and encourage continuously. Previous studies show that supportive HRM practices and recognition systems significantly enhance job satisfaction and performance outcomes (Abdullah et al., 2023; Berglund et al., 2023).

When IOs experience superior levels of psychological well-being via autonomy, mastery, and purpose in life, these positive conditions improve satisfaction with their roles. Evidence proves that autonomy and purpose are strong predictors of job satisfaction, which in turn fosters resilience and ethical commitment (Glynn et al., 2024; Tran and Pham, 2024). Satisfied IOs commonly display sustained motivation and stronger investigative performance, consistent with findings that job satisfaction mediates the relationship between well-being and performance (Abolnasser et al., 2023; Mandagi and Wijono, 2023). This mediating role is crucial, as psychological well-being alone may not guarantee performance but its impact is realized through the job satisfaction IOs derive from their work environment (Blasco-Belled and Alsinet, 2022; Bakker et al., 2014). By framing job satisfaction as the bridge between well-being and performance, the framework emphasizes the importance of organizational policies that foster supportive conditions, recognition systems, and opportunities for growth.

Personality traits and gender as moderators

The Big Five personality traits which include conscientiousness, emotional stability, neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, and agreeableness provide a wide ranging framework for understanding how IOs at the MACC translate psychological well-being into job performance. In enforcement agencies, where investigative work is complex, shaped by political sensitivity, and often conducted under extreme public inquiry, these traits serve as moderators that either increase or reduce the well-being and performance relationship. Conscientiousness constantly appears as the strongest predictor of job performance across occupations (Zell, 2022). For IOs, this trait is particularly significant because investigative work demands thorough documentation, adherence to procedural standards, and persistence in tracking complicated cases. Likewise, the emotional stability critical too, allowing IOs to withstand prosecutorial tensions, political interference, and the ambiguity of corruption cases. Studies confirm that neuroticism adversely correlates with performance, whereas emotional stability supports resilience under occupational stress (Williams et al., 2024; DeNeve and Cooper, 1998).

Extraversion enhances interpersonal effectiveness. This aids witness interviews, inter-agencies coordination, and team-based investigations. Extraverted IOs utilised their relations skills to build networks and gather information, while introverted IOs excel in detail analytical tasks such as evidence review and documentation that requires focused concentration (Lee and Chen, 2023; Tavares and Lopes, 2022). Openness to experience supports adaptability in dynamic investigative environments. Corruption practices adapt quickly, often involving cybercrime, cryptocurrency, or complex financial transfers. IOs high in openness embrace new forensic methods, digital tools, and innovative investigative strategies, sustaining performance advantage in modern

enforcement contexts (Li et al., 2022). Agreeableness, though not directly connected to investigative output, serve as a protective factor by encouraging teamwork collaboration, reducing interpersonal conflict, and sustaining supportive team environments that protect psychological well-being under stress (Garcia and Martin, 2024; Neumann et al., 2023).

Gender also act as a moderating factors shaping how IOs experience psychosocial stressors and organizational inclusion. Female IOs often face intensified challenges, including cultural expectations around family commitment, reduced in leadership opportunities, and limited access to informal peer networks in male-dominated enforcement settings (Artazcoz et al., 2023; Ismail et al., 2019). Such condition may diminished the extent to which well-being translate into performance unless buffered by inclusive organizational practices. Male IOs, while less affected by gender bias, they may also encounter pressures tied to career progression or breadwinner expectations, which also influence their well-being and performance. In MACC, where anti-corruption investigations demand resilience, integrity, and sustained motivation, gender-sensitive policies such as merit-based case, mentorship programs, flexible work arrangements, and diversity training are important to ensure equitable performance outcomes (Plückelmann et al., 2024; Gustafsson Sendén et al., 2023). By integrating personality traits and gender into the conceptual framework, this study highlights that IO performance is shaped by both personal and workplace factors. Acknowledging these moderators allow for a more refine understanding of how psychological well-being translates into investigative effectiveness emphasize the need for integrating personality-based recruitment and gender-sensitive organizational strategies to support resilience, equity, and long-term performance in anti-corruption enforcement.

Job performance as dependent variable

Job performance is the key outcome in many organizational research, reflecting how well employees carry out expected task to achieve organizational goals, and sustain effectiveness over time (Inceoglu and Zhao, 2022; Sonnentag and Frese, 2020; Viswesvaran and Ones, 2000; Koopmans et al., 2011). In enforcement agencies such as the MACC, job performance is critical because investigative conclusions directly influence public trust, institutional credibility, and national integrity. For IOs, performance includes both task-related dimension such as evidence collection, case documentation, and observance to legal procedures and other scopes such as teamwork, ethical conduct, and resistance under pressure. Psychological well-being, job satisfaction, and personality together would shape IOs' performance. IO with strong well-being they display greater motivation, focus, and ethical commitment, which turn into investigative effectiveness. Job satisfaction mediates this relationship by make certain that positive psychological states are internalized into endless effort and organizational loyalty (Judge et al., 2017). Meanwhile, personality traits and gender act as moderators, affecting how strongly well-being and satisfaction predict performance outcomes. For example, conscientious IOs tend to turn satisfaction into structured investigative practices, while emotionally stable IOs uphold performance under prosecutorial and political pressures (Williams et al., 2024).

In MACC, job performance goes beyond how efficiency one officer is but extends to collective outcomes such as successful prosecutions, deterrence of corruption, and reinforcement of institutional legitimacy. High-performing IOs demonstrate investigative rigor, resilience in high-stakes cases, and adherence to ethical standards,

all of which are essential in combating corruption. On the other hand, compromised performance whether due to low well-being, dissatisfaction, or dispositional vulnerabilities can undermine case outcomes and erode public confidence. Thus, conceptualizing job performance as the dependent variable highlights its role as the endpoint through which psychological, dispositional, and contextual factors converge to determine enforcement effectiveness.

Integrated conceptual framework

The integrated conceptual framework highlights psychological well-being as the independent variable, job satisfaction as the mediator, and Big Five personality traits together with gender as moderators, with job performance as the dependent variable. This framework shows how individual dispositions, psychosocial settings, and organizational outcomes interact within enforcement agencies. Psychological well-being sets the foundation for IOs' motivation, resilience, and ethical commitment, which are fundamental in sustaining investigative effectiveness. Nevertheless, well-being alone is not enough for performance; its influence is transmitted through job satisfaction, which ensures positive psychological states are internalized into sustained effort and organizational loyalty (Judge et al., 2017). The mediating role of satisfaction is also relevant in MACC, where IOs must balance demanding investigative tasks with organizational expectations and public accountability. The pathway from psychological well-being to job satisfaction and job performance is moderated by personality traits and gender. Conscientiousness and emotional stability enhance the translation of job satisfaction into disciplined investigative practices and resistance under stress (Williams et al., 2024). Extraversion and openness to experience foster collaborative effort and adaptive responses to evolving corruption activities, while agreeableness promotes cohesion and supportive environments (Garcia and Martin, 2024; Neumann et al., 2023). Gender adds contextual diversity, as female IOs often face heightening stressors, cultural expectations, and underrepresentation in leadership, weakening the pathway unless buffered by inclusive practices (Gustafsson Sendén et al., 2023; Ismail et al., 2019). Male IOs while less affected by gender bias, encounter pressures from career progression and breadwinner roles, which also shape performance outcomes.

Within this framework, job performance is the ultimate outcome, integrating task components (evidence collection, case documentation, procedural adherence) and contextual components (teamwork, ethical conduct, resilience). High-performing IOs shows consistency and integrity, strengthening institutional legitimacy and public trust. The framework shows IO performance is conditional on psychological, dispositional, and contextual factors. It underscores the need for personality-based recruitment, well-being initiatives, and gender-sensitive policies to sustain resilience, equity, and long-term effectiveness in anti-corruption enforcement (*Figure 1*).

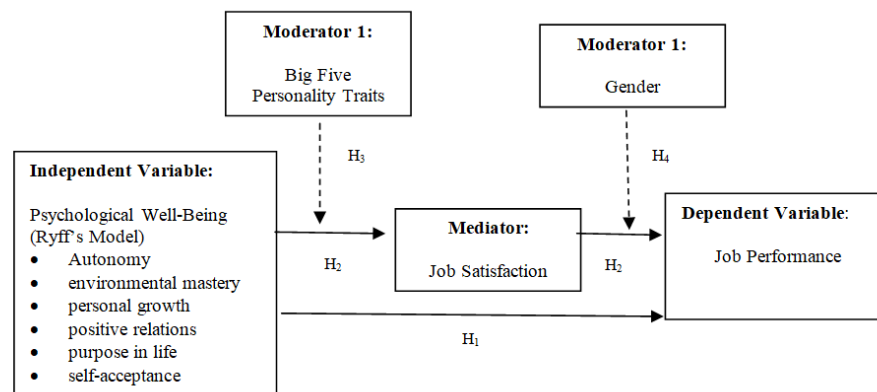


Figure 1. Integrated conceptual framework.

Proposition / Hypotheses

Building on the integrated framework, several integrated propositions are developed to explain the relationships among psychological well-being, job satisfaction, personality traits, gender, and job performance within the MACC context. These hypotheses are established in prior empirical findings and theoretical models (e.g., Judge et al., 2017). Proposition 1 (main effect): (H1): Psychological well-being positively influences job performance among MACC IOs. Proposition 2 (Mediation): (H2): "Job satisfaction mediates the relationship between psychological well-being and job performance among MACC IOs. Proposition 3 (Moderation): (H3): "The Big Five personality trait will moderate the relationship between psychological well-being and job performance among MACC IOs. Proposition 4 (Moderation): (H4): "Gender will moderate the relationship between psychological well-being and job performance among MACC IOs. Proposition 5 (Interaction Effects): (H5): The pathway from psychological well-being to job performance, mediated by job satisfaction, is contingent upon personality traits and gender differences among MACC IOs.

Results and Discussion

Theoretical contribution

This conceptual framework contributes to the literature on personality and job performance relationships by extending the Big Five model into the enforcement context. Though prior studies have confirmed conscientiousness and emotional stability as the strongest predictors of performance across various occupations (Williams et al., 2024; Zell, 2022), this paper would want to further explore these traits within the unique demands of anti-corruption investigation. By integrating psychological well-being and job satisfaction into the model, the framework advances theoretical understanding of how dispositional traits and gender relate with psychosocial states to shape performance outcomes in high-stakes enforcement agencies. It also highlights the moderating role of gender, presenting how cultural expectations and organizational climates influence the translation of well-being into performance (Gustafsson Sendén et al., 2023).

Practical implication for MACC

The framework suggests insights for recruitment, development, and organizational policy in MACC. Personality-based recruitment should assess conscientiousness, emotional stability, and openness during IO selection. It should use validated tools such as the Big Five Inventory. Potential IO combining high conscientiousness and high emotional stability and moderate-high openness has high chance to excel. Recruitment also must be gender-inclusive, making sure merit-based processes and equitable representation of female IOs (Artazcoz et al., 2023). Newly recruited IOs should be assessed on Ryff's six well-being dimensions, with targeted development focusing on vulnerabilities such as autonomy or environmental mastery. Plus, training that focus on personality development can enhance effectiveness, for example, resilience coaching for lower-emotional-stability IOs or creative problem solving workshops for high-openness IOs. Leadership development programs should also be given to train supervisors for inclusive leadership, reducing gender-based workplace climate pressure and recognizing personality-based strengths.

MACC should implement structured well-being initiatives which include autonomy enhancement through delegated investigative decision making, environmental mastery support via training, enhancing personal growth via specialized training in forensic and digital investigation program, and positive relations building via peer engagement and consultation groups. Purpose reinforcement through communication of MACC's mission and case success stories can strengthen IOs' sense of societal impact, while self-acceptance support through mentoring and resilience coaching can mitigate stress among lower-emotional-stability IOs. Inclusive leadership training, merit-based case assignment, and diversity climate surveys are essential to minimize bias. Work-life balance support, including flexible scheduling and parental leave, can reduce gender-related strain. Formal mentorship programs and female IO networks should be established to ensure equitable career development. Promotion and advancement rates must be monitored to prevent gender disparities, while organizational culture should be strengthened through unconscious bias training and zero-tolerance policies for harassment or discrimination.

Future research direction

Future research is needed to empirically test the proposed framework in order to validate its pathways. A cross-sectional study could measure psychological well-being, personality traits, job satisfaction, and performance among IOs using structural equation modelling. Longitudinal studies are essential to evaluate whether personality traits predict well-being and performance trajectories over time. Qualitative interviews could explore IOs' lived experiences of well-being, personality and work fit, and gender-based challenges, while intervention studies could evaluate the effectiveness of personality-informed coaching and gender-inclusive practices. Future research should also expand theoretical understanding by investigating personality and well-being interactions, gendered personality effects, and organizational context effects across MACC headquarters and state offices.

Conclusion

This concept paper proposes an integrated framework for examining the mediating and moderating roles of psychosocial factors, job satisfaction, personality traits, and gender in shaping the relationship between psychological well-being and job

performance among IOs at the MACC. Grounded in Ryff's Model of Psychological Well-Being and the Big Five Personality Trait and recent empirical literature, the framework highlights several key insights. First, psychological well-being appears as a foundational predictor of IO performance, operating through six interrelated dimension which are autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. These dimensions are particularly significant in investigative contexts. Second, job satisfaction functions as a mediator, translating well-being into performance outcomes by activating engagement, motivation, and organizational commitment. Third, the Big Five personality traits practically moderate these relationships, with conscientiousness and emotional stability showing the strongest effects, while extraversion, openness, and agreeableness contribute through mechanisms aligned with investigative work requirements. Fourth, gender acts as a moderator too, with female IOs often experiencing compounded psychosocial stressors in male-dominated enforcement settings, requiring clear organizational commitment to inclusive practices, merit-based case assignment, and gender-sensitive support.

Personality traits and gender interact in shaping IO performance, with high-conscientiousness and high-emotional-stability female IOs possibly demonstrating performance equivalent to male peers despite greater underlying psychosocial challenges. This emphasizes the need for MACC to adopt personality-based recruitment, resilience training, and inclusive leadership practices to sustain investigative effectiveness. The framework offers practical implications for MACC's recruitment strategies, organizational development, well-being programs, and diversity initiatives. Its primary value, however, lies in providing a comprehensive foundation for future empirical research addressing the gap in understanding IO psychological well-being and performance in the unique context of anti-corruption enforcement. By advancing both theoretical understanding and organizational practice in this understudied occupational area, MACC can enhance IO psychological health, sustain high-quality investigative performance, and strengthen Malaysia's institutional capacity to combat corruption successfully.

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Conflict of interest

The authors confirm that there is no conflict of interest involve with any parties in this research study.

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