



## Getting a grip on the gripers: Curmudgeon personality's relationships with job attitudes and employee well-being

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### ABSTRACT

Some people are curmudgeons—they dislike most things. Individual differences in curmudgeon personality are assessed by having respondents provide evaluations of heterogeneous sets of everyday objects. Prior research has found that curmudgeon personality is distinct from more established personality traits and is related to various attitudes—particularly job and consumer attitudes. We extend that research by examining curmudgeon personality as a predictor of a broader set of job attitudes (i.e., job satisfaction, organizational satisfaction, affective commitment) and employee well-being variables (i.e., job-related affective well-being, life satisfaction, physical health) than has been examined within prior research. And whereas prior research has relied solely upon self-reports of criteria, we incorporate informant-reports of criteria to better explain the predictive validity of curmudgeon personality. Using 328 worker-informant pairs, we found that curmudgeon personality consistently predicted both self-reported and informant-reported criteria after the effects of more established personality traits (i.e., the Five Factor Model characteristics and trait affectivity) were controlled. These findings suggest that curmudgeon personality's may have important effects on the well-being of the person and these relationships are not simply the result of common-method bias. As such, curmudgeon personality may contribute unique insights into the dispositional basis of important outcomes.

Some people have a tendency to dislike seemingly unrelated things and consistently have a less favorable evaluation of things compared to others (see Hepler & Albarracín, 2013; Judge & Bretz, 1993; Weitz, 1952). The consistency to evaluate persons, places, and things as less/more favorable compared to others represents an underlying disposition referred to as *curmudgeon personality* (Ditzfeld, Cavazos, & Monroe, 2016). Previous research has focused on curmudgeon personality as a predictor of various attitudes—particularly job attitudes (e.g., Bowling, Beehr, & Lepisto, 2006; Eschleman & Bowling, 2011; Judge, 1993) and consumer attitudes (e.g., Eschleman, Bowling, & Judge, 2015; Hepler & Albarracín, 2013). That is, academic researchers and applied psychologists predict one's attitude toward a specific object of interest (e.g., a toy or one's job) using the evaluations of a set of seemingly unrelated objects. This established predictive effect is very valuable for those vested in the attitude criteria, such as employers and manufacturers. However, little is understood how curmudgeon personality can have a daily effect on the person – does it really matter to the person if they are consistently more dissatisfied with objects compared to others?

In the current paper we extend this research in two ways. First, we

examined curmudgeon personality's relationship with a broader set of criteria, including indicators of psychological and physical well-being and previously unexamined attitudes. Understanding the relationship of curmudgeon personality with one's well-being will demonstrate the meaningful effect of the disposition onto the person themselves. Second—and perhaps more importantly—we examined curmudgeon personality as a predictor of both self-reported and informant-reported criteria. This is an important contribution of our research because previous studies have used only self-reported criteria. The use of informant-reported criteria will demonstrate that the effects of curmudgeon personality are not only internal, but that one's tendency to gripe is influencing the environment around the person. In other words, curmudgeon personality may influence how others view that person, such as their likes, dislikes, and well-being at a given moment. Reliance on self-reports also leaves a study vulnerable to common-method variance (CMV), thus preventing researchers from drawing unambiguous conclusions about the effects of curmudgeon personality. In the following section we describe the assessment of curmudgeon personality and explain why we expect curmudgeon personality to have unique

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relationships with various job attitudes and indicators of employee well-being.

## 1. Curmudgeon personality

Curmudgeon personality scales (see Ditzfeld et al., 2016) ask respondents to provide evaluations of heterogeneous objects. How a person evaluates a series of unrelated objects can reveal information about his or her predisposition toward having positive or negative attitudes (Hepler & Albarracín, 2013). A person who consistently provides negative evaluations of various objects, for instance, may have a predisposition toward holding negative attitudes; a person who consistently provides positive evaluations of various objects may have a predisposition toward holding positive attitudes. It is important to note that those higher in curmudgeon personality may have favorable evaluations too. Ditzfeld and colleagues found that those higher in CP still liked positive things (e.g., a cash bonus), but liked positive things less than those lower in CP. In other words, CP is a negative evaluative bent compared to others and not indicative of always having a negative attitude.

Although the measurement of “curmudgeon personality” began with Weitz (1952), the labeling of the underlying construct was not a focus of the applied researcher. The measurement tool—which is informally described as a “gripe index”—was initially touted as a predictor of job satisfaction. As awareness grew of the predictive capabilities of this unique measurement method, researchers have described the underlying construct as: “affective disposition” (Connolly & Viswesvaran, 2000), “affective-oriented disposition” (Eschleman & Bowling, 2011), “dispositional attitude” (Hepler & Albarracín, 2013), and “curmudgeon personality” (Ditzfeld et al., 2016). We prefer the term “curmudgeon” because A) it is widely used in everyday conversations to describe some people, B) it aligns with the intention of seminal researchers to measure one's tendency to gripe, and C) it demonstrates the divergence from other established personality traits. Indeed, this concept is so ubiquitous that “curmudgeons” are a mainstay in works of fiction (e.g., Ebenezer Scrooge; Oscar the Grouch; and Frank Barone, a character from the television series *Everybody Loves Raymond*).

## 2. The distinctiveness of curmudgeon personality

Curmudgeon personality is distinct—both conceptually and empirically—from established personality constructs, such as the FFM traits (Costa & McCrae, 1992) and trait affectivity (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). Curmudgeon personality scales are conceptually distinguished from other personality scales by the type of responses they solicit: Whereas most personality scales ask respondents to report their patterns of thoughts, feelings, or behaviors, curmudgeon personality scales ask respondents to evaluate a diverse set of objects. As a result, curmudgeon personality is one's tendency to have a particular attitudinal bent toward all objects. Research has shown that curmudgeon personality scales are modestly related to each FFM trait, with correlations typically  $< |0.35|$  (Eschleman & Bowling, 2011, Study 2; Hepler & Albarracín, 2013, Study 2). Furthermore, meta-analysis has found that the NOSQ was modestly related to trait positive affectivity (PA) and trait negative affectivity (NA)—the mean correlations for both forms of trait affectivity were in the  $|.20s|$  (Eschleman & Bowling, 2011, Study 1). The presence of these modest relationships suggests that curmudgeon personality is distinct from established personality traits.

## 3. The incremental validity of curmudgeon personality

### 3.1. Curmudgeon personality and job attitudes

Researchers have primarily used curmudgeon personality as a predictor of self-reported attitudes. The exclusive use of self-reports raises

questions about how to interpret the causal nature of the curmudgeon personality-attitude relationships observed in prior studies. Researchers have generally assumed that curmudgeon personality has a causal effect on specific attitudes. Reliance on self-reported criteria, however, raises an alternative interpretation: Curmudgeon personality may be related to self-reports of specific attitudes because the latter is conceptually indistinguishable from the former. It is possible, for example, that curmudgeon personality is related to job satisfaction because the degree to which a person likes his or her job is itself part of the curmudgeon personality construct. Indeed, Weitz (1952) included several job-related items (e.g., “your present job”) in the original scale. Judge and Bretz (1993) removed the job-related items from the revised NOSQ in an effort to distinguish between curmudgeon personality and job attitudes.

The conceptual foundation underlying the curmudgeon personality-attitude relationship is simple: Because curmudgeon personality reflects the degree to which a person generally dislikes various objects, it should predict the disliking of any specific object (Eschleman et al., 2015; Hepler & Albarracín, 2013). And indeed, previous studies have found that curmudgeon personality consistently yields negative relationships with many types of attitudes, including global job satisfaction (Bowling et al., 2006; Eschleman & Bowling, 2011), consumer attitudes (Eschleman et al., 2015; Hepler & Albarracín, 2013), and life satisfaction (Eschleman & Bowling, 2011). These effects are consistently present after controlling for other established personality traits.

We extend these findings by examining curmudgeon personality's relationships with both self-reported and informant-reported job attitudes. The inclusion of informant-reports is important because it demonstrates that curmudgeon personality may affect one's external environment (i.e., others views of that person) and addresses concern over CMV (see Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003; Podsakoff & Organ, 1986; Spector, 2006).

**Hypothesis 1.** Curmudgeon personality will be positively associated with job attitudes after the effects of FFM traits and trait affectivity have been controlled. Specifically, it will yield negative unique relationships with (a) job satisfaction and (b) affective organizational commitment.

### 3.2. Curmudgeon personality and employee well-being

As we mentioned in the previous section, research has focused on curmudgeon personality as a predictor of various attitudes. Curmudgeon personality, however, is also likely to predict employee well-being. We expect curmudgeon personality to be negatively related to employee well-being via two mechanisms: (a) a perceptual mechanism and (b) a stressor-creation mechanism (for a description of both mechanisms, see Spector, Zapf, Chen, & Frese, 2000). Drawing on these mechanisms, we expect that workers who are high in curmudgeon personality will perceive more stressors through a negative perceptual bias. In addition, the negative bias will unintentionally evoke more objective stressors (e.g., interpersonal conflict with supervisors and coworkers) within their environment. Consistent with the perception mechanism, research has found that curmudgeon personality is positively related to perceived work stressors (Walsh & Hitlan, 2007; Zickar, Gibby, & Jenny, 2004). Employees' perceptions of work stressors, in turn, are negatively related to their well-being (see Bowling et al., 2017; Spector & Jex, 1998).

**Hypothesis 2.** Curmudgeon personality will be positively associated with employee well-being after the effects of FFM traits and trait affectivity have been controlled. Specifically, it will yield negative unique relationships with (a) job-related affective well-being, (b) life satisfaction, and (c) physical health.

## 4. Method

### 4.1. Participants

Participants ( $N = 328$ ) were undergraduate students enrolled at a large public university located on the West Coast of the United States. The average participant was 23 years old; 61% were female. All of the participants were currently employed and each recruited a work colleague (i.e., an informant) to provide criterion data. Participants worked an average of two years in their current job, and were employed an average of 24 h per week. The most common industries they were employed in were retail (25%), service (25%; e.g., food, hospitality, maintenance), education (15%), and health care/social assistance (12%). The participants' sample job titles include "barista," "counselor," "receptionist," and "shift leader." Participants most commonly identified as Hispanic (41%), Caucasian (30%), Asian American (23%), or African American (5%). Each participant completed the self-report questionnaires at two time points (time lags ranged from two to three months). We assessed the (self-reported) predictor variables at Time 1 and the (self- and informant-reported) criterion variables at Time 2. Including the predictor and criterion variables in separate waves of data collection is a common strategy for minimizing the effects of CMV (see Podsakoff et al., 2003; Podsakoff & Organ, 1986; Spector, 2006).

### 4.2. Informants

Each participant recruited an informant from their workplace to provide reports about the participant's job attitudes and well-being. The inclusion of informant-reported data is a strategy often used to address CMV (see Podsakoff et al., 2003; Podsakoff & Organ, 1986; Spector, 2006). The average informant was 26 years old; 68% were female. Informants knew the participants an average of 16 months. All of the informants were either work supervisors (13%), coworkers (85%), or subordinates (2%) of the participants. Informants most commonly identified as Hispanic (34%), Asian American (24%), Caucasian (22%), or African American (7%).

### 4.3. Time 1 self-report measures

#### 4.3.1. Curmudgeon personality

We assessed curmudgeon personality using the NOSQ (Judge & Bretz, 1993; Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.77$ ). Each NOSQ item was on a likert-type scale of 1 (*dissatisfied*), 2 (*neutral*), and 3 (*satisfied*). We reverse-scored the NOSQ so that high scores would reflect high levels of curmudgeon personality. Example items include "modern art," "today's cars," "canoes," and "soccer."

#### 4.3.2. Established personality traits

Personality included the FFM traits and trait affectivity. We assessed openness (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.90$ ), conscientiousness (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.94$ ), extraversion (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.93$ ), agreeableness (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.90$ ), and emotional stability (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.96$ ) using the NEO-PI-R Facet measures from the International Personality Item Pool (Goldberg, 1999; Goldberg et al., 2006; IPIP, 2019). Each of the five scales comprised 60 items—10 items for each of that trait's six NEO facets (for a description of the NEO facets, see Costa & McCrae, 1995). Each FFM item was on a 7-point scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

We assessed trait affectivity using the PA (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.87$ ) and NA (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.87$ ) scales of the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS; Watson et al., 1988). Example items include "excited" (PA) and "nervous" (NA). The instructions for the trait affectivity items asked participants to report how they generally feel. Each PANAS item was on a 5-point scale from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*frequently or always*).

### 4.4. Time 2 self-report measures

#### 4.4.1. Job attitudes

The job attitude variables measured included job satisfaction and affective commitment. Job satisfaction (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.91$ ) was assessed with 3 items from the Michigan Organizational Assessment Questionnaire (MOAQ; Cammann, Fichman, Jenkins, & Klesh, 1979). A sample MOAQ item is "All in all I am satisfied with my current job." Each MOAQ item was on a 7-point scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

Affective commitment (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.93$ ) was assessed with three items from the Affective Commitment Scale (ACS; Meyer, Allen, & Smith, 1993). A sample item is "This organization has a great deal of personal meaning to me." Each ACS item was on a 7-point scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

#### 4.4.2. Employee well-being

The employee well-being variables measured included job-related affective well-being, life satisfaction, and physical health. We assessed job-related affective well-being (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.90$ ) with the Job-Related Affective Well-being Scale (JAWS; Van Katwyk, Fox, Spector, & Kelloway, 2000). Participants were instructed to report how often their job made them feel a given emotion during the past 30 days. Participants responded to twelve separate emotion items. Negative emotion items were reverse-scored such that high scores indicate high levels of job-related affective well-being. A sample item is "Relaxed." Each JAWS item was on a 5-point scale from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*extremely often or always*).

Life satisfaction (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.89$ ) was assessed with the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS; Diener, Emmons, Larsen, and Griffin's, 1985). A sample item is "I am satisfied with my life." Each SWLS item was on a 7-point scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

Physical health (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.89$ ) was assessed with the Physical Symptoms Inventory (PSI; Spector & Jex, 1998). Participants were instructed to report how often they experienced a physical symptom during the past 30 days. We reverse-scored each PSI item so that a high score reflected good health. A sample item is "headache." Each PSI item was on a 7-point scale from 1 (*never*) to 7 (*daily*).

### 4.5. Time 2 informant-report measures

Informants were instructed to report on the participants' job attitudes and well-being. We adapted the self-report scales to assess their acquaintance's attitude or well-being.

#### 4.5.1. Job attitudes

Job satisfaction was assessed using a single item from the MOAQ (Cammann et al., 1979). Affective commitment (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.88$ ) was assessed using the ACS. Both measures had the same response scale as the self-reports.

#### 4.5.2. Employee well-being

Job-related affective well-being was assessed with the JAWS (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.88$ ). Life satisfaction was assessed using a single item from the SWLS (Diener et al., 1985). Both measures had the same response scale as the self-reports.

We used an alternative measure for physical health because informants are unlikely aware of precise symptoms experienced by their work acquaintance. Each informant provided a single-item report of the participant's overall physical health on a 5-point scale from 1 (*poor*) to 5 (*excellent*). Similar single items such as this are often used to measure self-reported overall health (DeSalvo, Blosler, Reynolds, He, & Muntner, 2006).

**Table 1**  
Correlations and descriptive statistics.

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
<b>Personality</b>																				
1. Curmudgeon personality	1.63	0.25	(0.77)																	
2. Openness	5.16	0.53	-0.12*	(0.90)																
3. Conscientiousness	5.08	0.64	-0.28**	0.28**	(0.94)															
4. Extraversion	4.68	0.62	-0.25**	0.43**	0.39**	(0.93)														
5. Agreeableness	5.17	0.52	-0.14**	0.29**	0.37**	0.18**	(0.90)													
6. Emotional stability	4.40	0.83	-0.35**	0.20**	0.52**	0.51**	0.20**	(0.96)												
7. Positive affectivity	3.83	0.58	-0.33**	0.29**	0.57**	0.60**	0.20**	0.52**	(0.87)											
8. Negative affectivity	2.63	0.65	0.23**	-0.10*	-0.36**	-0.35**	-0.17**	-0.69**	-0.26**	(0.87)										
<b>Self-reported criteria</b>																				
9. Job satisfaction	5.22	1.44	-0.32**	0.04	0.15**	0.24**	0.06	0.27**	0.22**	-0.11*	(0.91)									
10. Affective commitment	4.52	1.74	-0.23**	0.02	0.14*	0.15**	0.04	0.15**	0.18**	-0.03	0.68**	(0.93)								
11. Job-related affective well-being	3.40	0.72	-0.33**	0.02	0.26**	0.23**	0.12*	0.36**	0.34**	-0.26**	0.73**	0.53**	(0.90)							
12. Life satisfaction	4.69	1.31	-0.30**	0.03	0.24**	0.27**	0.18**	0.44**	0.33**	-0.33**	0.44**	0.30**	0.48**	(0.89)						
13. Physical health	4.51	1.11	-0.23**	-0.21**	0.07	0.07	-0.02	0.32**	0.14**	-0.30**	0.27**	0.19**	0.40**	0.22**	(0.89)					
<b>Informant-reported criteria</b>																				
14. Job satisfaction	5.44	1.51	-0.26**	0.09	0.18**	0.23**	0.06	0.22**	0.24**	-0.13*	0.45**	0.35**	0.35**	0.25**	0.10	-				
15. Affective commitment	5.04	1.60	-0.26**	0.04	0.21**	0.21**	0.04	0.16**	0.20**	-0.06	0.44**	0.50**	0.34**	0.19**	0.08	0.70**	(0.88)			
16. Job-related affective well-being	3.92	0.63	-0.30**	0.09	0.20**	0.22**	0.11*	0.31**	0.25**	-0.18**	0.37**	0.25**	0.45**	0.29**	0.15**	0.60**	0.51**	(0.88)		
17. Life satisfaction	5.74	1.19	-0.27**	0.02	0.17**	0.26**	0.09	0.24**	0.21**	-0.16**	0.29**	0.20**	0.27**	0.36**	0.11*	0.56**	0.43**	0.53**	-	
18. Physical health	4.18	0.84	-0.22**	0.08	0.13**	0.20**	0.04	0.24**	0.22**	-0.10*	0.13*	0.15**	0.16**	0.21**	0.12*	0.30**	0.31**	0.38**	0.37**	-

Note. N = 328. Cronbach's  $\alpha$ s appear in parentheses on the diagonal.

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

5. Results

5.1. Preliminary analyses

Table 1 reports the descriptive statistics and correlations. We found that curmudgeon personality was largely distinct from the more established personality scales (the  $r = -0.35$  between curmudgeon personality and emotional stability was the strongest relationship we observed; for similar findings, see Eschleman & Bowling, 2011; Eschleman et al., 2015; Hepler & Albarracín, 2013). Exploratory regression analyses further demonstrate the distinctiveness of curmudgeon personality: The FFM traits and trait affectivity together explain 12% of the variance in curmudgeon personality.

5.2. Tests of study hypotheses

We tested the Hypotheses using a series of hierarchical regression analyses (Aiken and West, 1991): In Step 1 we included the FFM traits and trait affectivity as predictors; in Step 2 we added curmudgeon personality as a predictor. We ran separate regression analyses for self-reports and informant-reports of job attitude criteria. The regression results are provided in Table 2.

5.2.1. Curmudgeon personality and job attitudes

Hypothesis 1 predicted that curmudgeon personality would be positively associated with job attitudes after the effects of more established personality traits have been controlled. Curmudgeon personality yielded unique relationships with each of the four job attitude measures. As we hypothesized, curmudgeon personality explained unique variance in self-reported job satisfaction ( $\Delta R^2 = 0.05, p < .01$ ) and informant-reported job satisfaction ( $\Delta R^2 = 0.03, p < .01$ ) while controlling for other personality traits. Similarly, curmudgeon personality explained unique variance in self-reported affective commitment ( $\Delta R^2 = 0.03, p < .01$ ) and informant-reported affective commitment ( $\Delta R^2 = 0.04, p < .01$ ) while controlling for other personality traits. Hypotheses 1, therefore, was fully supported using both self-reported and informant-reported job attitudes.

5.2.2. Curmudgeon personality and employee well-being

Hypothesis 2 predicted that curmudgeon personality would be positively associated with employee well-being after the effects of more established personality traits have been controlled. Curmudgeon personality yielded unique relationships with each of the six employee well-being measures. Specifically, it explained unique variance in self-reported job-related affective well-being ( $\Delta R^2 = 0.03, p < .01$ ) and

Table 2  
Hierarchical regression analyses testing incremental validity of curmudgeon personality.

Criterion variable	Self-reports			Informant-reports		
	Ordered predictors	$\beta$	$\Delta R^2$	Ordered predictors	$\beta$	$\Delta R^2$
Job satisfaction	1. Openness	-0.10		1. Openness	-0.01	
	Conscientiousness	-0.02		Conscientiousness	0.01	
	Extraversion	0.17*		Extraversion	0.10	
	Agreeableness	0.04		Agreeableness	-0.01	
	Emotional stability	0.20*		Emotional stability	0.11	
	Positive affectivity	0.00		Positive affectivity	0.06	
	Negative affectivity	0.12	0.10**	Negative affectivity	0.07	0.07**
	2. Curmudgeon personality	-0.24**	0.05**	2. Curmudgeon personality	-0.18**	0.03**
Affective commitment	1. Openness	-0.07		1. Openness	-0.08	
	Conscientiousness	0.04		Conscientiousness	0.13	
	Extraversion	0.07		Extraversion	0.20**	
	Agreeableness	0.00		Agreeableness	-0.04	
	Emotional stability	0.08		Emotional stability	0.05	
	Positive affectivity	0.06		Positive affectivity	-0.04	
	Negative affectivity	0.11	0.04*	Negative affectivity	0.12	0.08**
	2. Curmudgeon personality	-0.18**	0.03**	2. Curmudgeon personality	-0.21**	0.04**
Job-related affective well-being	1. Openness	-0.10		1. Openness	-0.02	
	Conscientiousness	0.00		Conscientiousness	-0.01	
	Extraversion	0.00		Extraversion	0.06	
	Agreeableness	0.04		Agreeableness	0.03	
	Emotional stability	0.17*		Emotional stability	0.24**	
	Positive affectivity	0.19**		Positive affectivity	0.04	
	Negative affectivity	-0.05	0.17**	Negative affectivity	0.06	0.11**
	2. Curmudgeon personality	-0.21**	0.03**	2. Curmudgeon personality	-0.20**	0.03**
Life satisfaction	1. Openness	-0.13*		1. Openness	-0.11	
	Conscientiousness	-0.07		Conscientiousness	0.02	
	Extraversion	0.05		Extraversion	0.21**	
	Agreeableness	0.12*		Agreeableness	0.05	
	Emotional stability	0.26**		Emotional stability	0.05	
	Positive affectivity	0.25*		Positive affectivity	0.01	
	Negative affectivity	-0.06	0.24**	Negative affectivity	0.00	0.10**
	2. Curmudgeon personality	-0.15**	0.02*	2. Curmudgeon personality	-0.20**	0.03**
Physical health	1. Openness	-0.27**		1. Openness	-0.00	
	Conscientiousness	0.10		Conscientiousness	-0.05	
	Extraversion	0.03		Extraversion	0.07	
	Agreeableness	0.01		Agreeableness	-0.01	
	Emotional stability	0.25**		Emotional stability	0.21*	
	Positive affectivity	0.09		Positive affectivity	0.07	
	Negative affectivity	-0.15*	0.20**	Negative affectivity	0.10	0.08**
	2. Curmudgeon personality	-0.12*	0.01*	2. Curmudgeon personality	-0.15**	0.02**

Note.  $N = 328$ .  $\beta$  = Standardized regression coefficients with all variables included in the regression equation.  $\Delta R^2$  = unique variance explained by predictors after Step 1 and Step 2 of the regression equation.

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

informant-reported job-related affective well-being ( $\Delta R^2 = 0.03$ ,  $p < .01$ ) while controlling for other personality traits. Furthermore, curmudgeon personality explained unique variance in self-reported life satisfaction ( $\Delta R^2 = 0.02$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and informant-reported life satisfaction ( $\Delta R^2 = 0.03$ ,  $p < .01$ ). And finally, curmudgeon personality explained unique variance in self-reported physical health ( $\Delta R^2 = 0.01$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and informant-reported physical health ( $\Delta R^2 = 0.02$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Hypotheses 2, therefore, was fully supported with both self-reported and informant-reported employee well-being.

## 6. Discussion

The current research suggests that curmudgeon personality is a promising addition to the employee personality literature. First, curmudgeon personality was distinct from some of the most widely studied personality traits—the FFM traits and trait affectivity. Curmudgeon personality yielded correlations with established personality traits between  $|0.12|$  to  $|0.35|$ . Furthermore, our exploratory regression analyses found that established personality traits explain 12% of the variance in curmudgeon personality. This is consistent with prior findings (Eschleman et al., 2015; Eschleman & Bowling, 2011; Hepler & Albarracín, 2013) and suggests that curmudgeon personality scales assess a largely distinct construct.

We also found that curmudgeon personality consistently yielded the hypothesized relationships with job attitudes and employee well-being. And in all instances, curmudgeon personality predicted incremental variance in these criteria after the effects of established personality traits were controlled. Of note, the current study included several job attitudes and employee well-being indices not previously examined in relation to curmudgeon personality: organizational commitment/satisfaction, job-related affective well-being, and physical health. As a whole, these findings suggest that curmudgeon personality is a valuable addition to the applied literature because it further demonstrates that psychologists can predict how a person will feel when faced with a novel stimulus (e.g., new product or new job) without having to introduce the person to the stimulus. The findings also demonstrate the broad and personal impact curmudgeon personality can have the mental and physical well-being of a person.

The current research also extends prior findings by examining curmudgeon personality's relationships with informant-reported criteria. However, prior curmudgeon personality research has relied upon self-reported criteria (e.g., Eschleman et al., 2015; Hepler & Albarracín, 2013; Judge & Bretz, 1993). The significant effects with informant-reports indicate that curmudgeon personality leaks into a person's everyday experiences and affects the environment around the person. The notion implies that a self-fulfilling prophecy may occur, such that one's beliefs can increase the likelihood of an event occurring (e.g., Jussim & Harber, 2005). In addition, the reliance of self-reported criteria leaves it unclear whether curmudgeon personality has a causal effect on attitudinal criteria. That is, rather than being an outcome of curmudgeon personality, specific attitudes (e.g., job satisfaction, life satisfaction, attitudes toward particular consumer products) might instead be conceptually indistinguishable from the curmudgeon personality construct. Our use of informant-reported criteria allowed us to rule out this alternative explanation for previous research findings.

### 6.1. Limitations and future research

In the Introduction, we invoked two mechanisms that potentially link curmudgeon personality to work-related criterion variables: The perception mechanism suggests that that curmudgeon personality affects work-related criteria by influencing how a person *interprets* his or her work environment; the stressor-creation mechanism suggests that curmudgeon personality affects work-related criteria by influencing how a worker *modifies* the objective nature of his or her work environment (for a detailed description of these mechanisms, see Spector

et al., 2000). Because we didn't examine either of these mechanisms in the current research, they should be the focus of future studies.

Although we focused on curmudgeon personality's relationships with job attitudes and employee well-being, we expect that curmudgeon personality is related to various social attitudes (e.g., racial, gender, and political attitudes). Future research should thus examine curmudgeon personality's relationships with a larger set of criteria.

### 6.2. Summary

We found that curmudgeon personality was distinct from established personality traits and was consistently related to both job attitudes and employee well-being. In all instances, curmudgeon personality predicted incremental variance in these criteria after the effects of the FFM traits and trait affectivity were controlled. In addition, curmudgeon personality was similarly related to both self-reported and informant-reported criteria. As a whole, these findings suggest that further study of curmudgeon personality may contribute new insights into role of personality within attitudes and well-being.

### CRedit authorship contribution statement

**Kevin J. Eschleman:**Investigation, Data curation, Formal analysis, Writing - original draft, Project administration.**Nathan Bowling:**Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing - original draft, Project administration.**Lucian Zelazny:**Writing - review & editing, Project administration, Methodology.

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