

## ABSTRACT

*This study aims to explore the subjective meanings and contextual dynamics of Counterproductive Work Behaviour (CWB) among Generation Z workers in the informal sector, positioning the perspectives of SME owners and workers as interrelated units of experience. Grounded in the interpretative paradigm and hermeneutic phenomenology, the study conceptualises CWB not merely as individual behavioural deviance, but as a meaningful expression of work relations, emotions, and value tensions within informal work ecosystems.*

*Using an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews with ten informants (five kiosk owners and five Generation Z workers) at the Ciawi Traditional Market, Tasikmalaya. The analytical process was conducted idiographically and reflexively through a double hermeneutic procedure, supported by field notes and member checking to ensure interpretive rigour and credibility.*

*The findings indicate that CWB manifests across three primary dimensions : poor behaviour, misuse of organisational resources, and inappropriate communication albeit with context-specific articulations characteristic of the informal sector. Two idiographic conceptual extensions emerged: informational misuse (leakage of product codes and cost information) and the public nature of workplace communication, which transforms interpersonal deviance into immediate organisational loss. The study also confirms three key antecedents of CWB : job stressors, perceived organisational injustice, and negative emotions arising from threats to self-esteem with negative emotions constituting the most dominant pathway among Generation Z workers.*

*The contribution of this study lies in enriching the CWB literature through a phenomenological contextualisation of informal-sector work within open service spaces, while offering low-cost managerial implications that are psychologically and culturally sensitive. More broadly, the findings underscore the value of phenomenological approaches in management research for bridging behavioural theory with under-standardised socio-economic realities.*

**Keywords:** *Counterproductive Work Behaviour; Generation Z; Informal Sector; Traditional Market SMEs; Interpretative Phenomenology*