

Impact of Personality and Psychopathy on Deviant Workplace Behaviour: Systemic Approach

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Abstract

Objectives: The main aim of this study was to examine the effect of the HEXACO domains and triarchic psychopathy dimensions on interpersonal and organisational deviant workplace behaviour. **Methods/Approach:** The Workplace Deviance Measure, HEXACO-PI-R and Triarchic Psychopathy Measure were applied to a sample of 429 workers recruited from employees of several IT organisations and education staff working in higher education. **Results:** Results showed that honesty-humility and agreeableness significantly predicted both interpersonal and organisational workplace deviance, and agreeableness showed significant effects on interpersonal workplace deviance. Openness to experience was unrelated to both interpersonal and organisational workplace deviance, but extraversion positively predicted organisational deviance. All triarchic dimensions (boldness, meanness, and disinhibition) showed significant effects on both interpersonal and organisational workplace deviance. **Conclusions:** Findings indicate that honesty-humility, agreeableness, and conscientiousness significantly enhance the probability of developing positive relationships with co-workers. Triarchic psychopathy features demonstrate considerable maladaptive potential, consequently presenting a significant risk factor for the development of positive workplace interactions.

Keywords: HEXACO personality; triarchic psychopathy; deviant workplace behaviour

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Introduction

Workplace deviance is an important issue for researchers and practitioners due to its significant detrimental impact on companies (Abbasi et al., 2022; Bujang et al., 2024; Hastings & O'Neill, 2009; Henle et al., 2005). Concerns about the unethical and criminal behaviour of business leaders have directed researchers' interest towards the "dark side" of leadership (Carre et al., 2018; Fernández-del-Río et al., 2022; Van Fleet & Griffin, 2006; Padilla et al., 2007).

Workplace deviance is defined as voluntary behaviour that compromises organisational standards and harms the organisation and its members (Robinson & Bennett, 1995). There are two types of deviant work behaviour: those that are directed at colleagues, or "interpersonal" deviant behaviour, and those that are directed at the organisation to which the individual belongs (Robinson & Bennett, 1995, 1997). Deviant work behaviour is conceptualised in a variety of ways. Skarlicki and Folger (1997) discuss retribution; Neuman and Baron (1998) examine organisational aggressiveness; Hogan and Hogan (1989) characterise it as delinquency, and Hollinger (1986) and Robinson and Bennett (1995) address organisational deviance. Deviant workplace behaviours (DWB) is a multifaceted concept that entails the intentional endangerment of the organisation and the welfare of its members through the violation of organisational norms, including physical violence, workplace bullying (i.e., mobbing), sexual harassment, vandalism of organisational property, information misuse, disregard for security protocols, and evasion of work responsibilities (e.g., tardiness, unsubstantiated sick leave, premature departure from the workplace) (Bennett et al., 2018; Robbins, 2003; Spector, 2010).

The examination and evaluation of deviant work behaviour are extensively researched within the field of organisational psychology. Previous studies have suggested that personality effectively predicts workplace deviance (e.g., Colbert et al., 2004; Obalade et al., 2023; Pletzer et al., 2019). The primary objective of these studies is frequently not to comprehend the influence of individual differences on work behaviour but rather to prevent the acquisition of individuals predisposed towards various forms of DWB. Recently, researchers have increasingly focused their attention on examining the impact of dark personality traits, including psychopathy, on work behaviour. Increasing concerns regarding unethical and criminal conduct among company managers have increased academic interest in the "dark side" of leadership (Padilla et al., 2007).

Research has demonstrated that certain business executives display psychopathic traits linked to significant personal, societal, and economic consequences (Babiak et al., 2010; Boddy et al., 2010). Psychopathic traits can help an individual's corporate progress, yet they ultimately do not serve the corporation's interests. The findings indicate that individuals exhibiting psychopathic traits are prone to making unethical economic judgements, with these patterns stemming from moral deficiencies linked to psychopathy (Međedović et al., 2018; Stevens et al., 2011). The findings validate that psychopathy is a significant construct within the corporate context, particularly concerning leadership styles. Further research is required to investigate the relevance of psychopathy, particularly its adaptive characteristics, in predicting deviant workplace behaviour.

This study aims to clarify the influence of personality traits and psychopathic traits on various manifestations of aberrant workplace behaviour. This study aims to improve our understanding of individual characteristics that influence the prevalence of harmful work behaviours with the aim of reducing them during the selection process for individual jobs. We use a systematic approach to analyse the results of previous research, with the aim of identifying risk factors associated with deviant work

behaviour. The systematic approach emphasizes the importance of adaptive psychopathic traits, which possess beneficial attributes such as assertiveness and can be challenging to quickly identify; however, they ultimately create significant negative impacts on interpersonal relationships and overall organizational performance.

Literature review

Personality and deviant work behaviour

Factors influencing deviant work behaviour include motivation, an individual's abilities and skills relevant to the job, personal attitudes and values, and diversity factors such as personality, age, gender, and education level (e.g., Alaybek et al., 2023; Douglas & Martinko, 2001; Furnham, 1994). Among these factors, personality traits will be the main topic of this paper because findings have shown that personality is a strong predictor of workplace deviance (e.g., Berry et al., 2012).

Personality is a relatively stable configuration of traits and behaviours that are influenced by a number of factors, such as genetics, physical development, early life experiences, affiliation with important people and groups, societal roles, values, and important relationships and experiences (VandenBos, 2015). The lexical approach is the most widely used method for studying personality structure. It asserts that significant differences in human personality are contained in dictionaries that are sufficiently comprehensive in all natural languages (Goldberg, 1990). According to the lexical approach, all personality traits have their basis in natural language (Goldberg, 1982).

One of the dominant lexical models of personality is the HEXACO model, which captures six domains: honesty-humility, emotionality, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to experience (Lee & Ashton, 2004). This model is similar to the Five Factor (Big Five) model of personality (McCrae & Costa, 1987). However, a key difference with the HEXACO model is its inclusion of a sixth broad factor, termed honesty-humility, encompassing morally relevant prosocial behaviour and some aspects of reciprocal altruism. Because it includes an honesty-humility dimension, the HEXACO model is especially interesting for researchers studying morally relevant behaviour in general and specifically in relation to socially undesirable and deviant behaviour (Ashton et al., 2014).

A meta-analysis investigated the relationships between personality traits and workplace deviance, evaluating the predictive validity of the HEXACO and Big Five and models in this context (Pletzer et al., 2019). Results showed that honesty-humility is the strongest negative predictor of workplace deviance, followed by conscientiousness, agreeableness, and emotionality, while extraversion and openness to experience do not significantly influence the prediction of workplace deviance. Also, this meta-analysis showed that the HEXACO model explains significantly more variance in workplace deviance than the Big Five model (in percentage terms, 31.98% compared to 19.05%). In comparing the HEXACO and Big Five models as indicators of moral character and their influence on predicting workplace deviance, Cohen (2018) further confirms that the honesty-humility attribute of the HEXACO is significant in predicting workplace deviance. A recent study by Obalade et al. (2023) indicates that HEXACO dimensions of honesty-humility, emotionality, and agreeableness are negatively correlated with organisational and interpersonal deviance. However, the regression results showed that the negative impact of emotionality is not statistically significant. Bourdage et al. (2018) found a negative relationship between honesty-humility, agreeableness and conscientiousness, and workplace deviance. In this study, a relationship between emotionality and workplace deviance was not found.

Anglim et al. (2018) showed negative associations between honesty-humility, extraversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness with counterproductive work behaviour, but associations between emotionality and counterproductive work behaviour were not found. Furthermore, extraversion was not identified as a significant predictor of deviant work behaviour in the studies (Bourdage et al., 2018; Pletzer et al., 2019).

Considering the above contradictory findings, the current study intends to advance our understanding of how HEXACO domains contribute to explaining deviant workplace behaviour.

Psychopathy and deviant work behaviour

Psychopathy is a complex construct characterised by extreme trait tendencies of callousness, shallow emotions, immunity to stress, lack of remorse, egocentricity, manipulateness, social dominance, poor behavioural control, aggression, and exploitiveness toward others (Crego & Widiger, 2016; Hare, 1996; Hare & Neumann, 2008; Sellbom & Phillips, 2013; Stanley et al., 2013).

The triarchic model of psychopathy (Patrick et al., 2009) was formulated in an effort to reconcile alternative conceptions of psychopathy and clarify how different measures of this clinical condition compare in terms of their coverage. The triarchic model proposes that psychopathy encompasses three distinct but related symptomatic constructs. These are boldness, meanness, and disinhibition. Boldness is defined as the nexus of social dominance, emotional resilience, and venturesomeness. Meanness (callous-unemotionality) entails deficient empathy, lack of affiliative capacity, contempt toward others, predatory exploitativeness, and empowerment through cruelty or destructiveness. The third triarchic construct, disinhibition, entails impulsiveness, weak restraint, hostility, mistrust, and difficulties in regulating emotion (Patrick et al., 2009; Patrick & Drislane, 2015). In the long term, psychopathic traits do not benefit the organisation, even though they could assist a person to grow in their career. The findings indicate that individuals exhibiting psychopathic traits are inclined to make unethical business judgements, with the underlying patterns rooted in moral deficiencies linked to psychopathy (Stevens et al., 2011; Sutton et al., 2020). According to earlier findings, psychopathic traits—particularly manipulative behaviour and emotional shallowness—can serve as an adaptation (Mills-Koonce et al., 2015; Lilienfeld et al., 2015). Affective psychopathic traits have adaptive potential and represent a protective factor for experiencing emotional problems, which can be an important protective factor in a stressful business environment (Babiak, 1995; Lilienfeld et al., 2015; Mededović et al., 2018). The aforementioned findings validate that psychopathy is a significant construct within the business environment, particularly regarding leadership styles. Further research is necessary to investigate the relevance of psychopathy, particularly its adaptive characteristics, in forecasting various leadership styles and organisational results.

In the past two decades, there has been a growing interest in examining the relationship between psychopathy and deviant work behaviour (e.g., Neo et al., 2016; O'Boyle et al., 2012; Sutton et al., 2023). A recent study (Fernández-del-Río et al., 2022) showed that psychopathy had significant effects on counterproductive work behaviours directed to the organisation. Carre et al. (2018) examined the role of the Triarchic Psychopathy model in predicting deviant behaviour in the workplace. The findings of this study demonstrated that meanness and disinhibition were substantial predictors of workplace deviance and workplace sexual harassment, while boldness was a minor predictor of workplace sexual harassment. Similar findings were found in a study (Preston et al., 2022), which showed positive associations between disinhibition

and both interpersonal and organisational workplace deviance and positive associations between meanness and interpersonal workplace deviance, while boldness was unrelated to workplace deviance.

Given the limited number of studies and the fact that the role of the triarchic constructs in predicting different forms of deviant work behaviour has not been sufficiently examined (e.g., Fernández-del-Río et al., 2022; Sutton et al., 2023), this study aimed to contribute to a better understanding of these relationships.

Research hypotheses

The main aim of this study was to examine the effect of the HEXACO domains and triarchic psychopathy dimensions on interpersonal and organisational deviant workplace behaviour.

Based on the theory that honesty-humility encompassing morally relevant prosocial behaviour (Ashton & Lee, 2008), and that agreeableness includes forgivingness, gentleness, and patience, and that conscientiousness capture particularly facets of organisation, diligence, and prudence (Ashton et al., 2014; Lee & Ashton, 2004), and in line with empirical evidence that deviant workplace deviance is negatively associated with honesty-humility, agreeableness and conscientiousness (Bourdage et al., 2018; Khan et al., 2019; Obalade et al., 2023; Pletzer et al., 2019), we expect:

- *H1: Honesty-humility, agreeableness and conscientiousness are negatively related to both interpersonal and organisational workplace deviance.*

Since the emotionality dimension of the HEXACO model includes facets of sentimentality and an interstitial facet of altruism, situated among honesty-humility and agreeableness (Ashton & Lee, 2007; Ashton et al., 2014), and in line with prior research showing negative associations of emotionality and workplace deviance (Pletzer et al., 2019; Obalade et al., 2023), we expect:

- *H2: Emotionality is negatively related to both interpersonal and organisational workplace deviance.*

Based on theoretical presumptions that openness and extraversion encompass qualities like friendliness, vigour, talkativeness, a greater capacity for pleasure, and an attraction to new experiences and social connections that allow for greater engagement with others (Goldberg, 1990), and on the basis of prior evidence (Berry et al., 2007; Pletzer et al., 2019), we expect:

- *H3: Openness to experience and extraversion do not correlate with workplace deviance.*

Consistent with the notion that boldness indexes adaptive traits such as social effectiveness, self-confidence, and emotional resilience, calmness in the face of stressors (Drislane et al., 2014; Lilienfeld et al., 2016; Patrick & Drislane, 2015) and with prior research showing lack of connection between boldness and workplace deviance (Carre et al., 2018; Preston et al., 2022), we hypothesise:

- *H4: Boldness does not correlate with workplace deviance.*

In line with the theoretical description of meanness as residing midway between (high) dominance and (low) affiliation and as being expressed in terms of arrogance, verbal derisiveness, aggressive competitiveness, physical cruelty, defiance of authority, deficient empathy, lack of close attachments, abrasiveness, exploitativeness, and empowerment through cruelty or destructiveness (Blackburn, 2006; Patrick et al., 2012; Skeem et al., 2011), and based on prior empirical findings which showed positive associations between meanness and workplace deviance (Carre et al., 2018; Preston et al., 2022), we predict:

- *H5: Meanness positively related to both interpersonal and organisational workplace deviance.*

Consistent with the notion that disinhibition entails impulsiveness, weak restraint, hostility, mistrust, difficulties in regulating emotion, lack of playfulness, focus on short-term goals and incentives, deficient behavioural restraint, and that shows up behaviourally as irresponsibility, impatience, rapid action with negative consequences, alienation and distrust (Patrick & Drislane, 2015; Krueger et al., 2007), and with prior research showing positive associations of disinhibition and both interpersonal and organisational workplace deviance (Carre et al., 2018; Preston et al., 2022), we predict:

- H6: *Disinhibition positively related to both interpersonal and organisational workplace deviance.*

The methodological section of the article that follows will test the hypotheses by explaining how participants were selected, how the research was conducted, what tools were used, and how the data was analysed.

Methodology

Participants and procedure

The study sample comprised 471 workers recruited from employees of IT organisations and education staff working in higher education who participated on a voluntary basis and gave their written consent before completing the study. Participants were asked to complete a battery of self-report measures anonymously.

Data were collected online during the spring and summer of 2024. Our sample size was adequate for correlational studies recommended by Schönbrodt and Perugini (2013). The participants received no compensation for their participation. The questionnaires of 42 participants were excluded from analyses due to missing data, resulting in a final total of 429 (64% male; M age = 38,2, SD = 4.15, range = 23 – 63).

Measures

Workplace Deviance. The present study used the Workplace Deviance Measure (Bennett & Robinson, 2000). This scale consists of 19 items and assesses two subfactors: interpersonal deviation (7 items) and organisational deviation (12 items). This inventory requires participants to assess the frequency of their engagement in various deviant behaviours at work using a 7-point Likert scale (1 = Never to 7 = Daily) (e.g., “played a mean prank on someone at work”, “acted rudely toward someone at work” or “used an illegal drug or consumed alcohol on the job”).

HEXACO Personality Model. HEXACO-PI-R (Ashton & Lee, 2007; Babarović & Šverko, 2013) was applied. It assesses Honesty-Humility (H), Emotionality (E), Extraversion (X), Agreeableness (A), Conscientiousness (C), and Openness to Experience (O). Items are rated on a 5-point Likert scale. The total HEXACO scores are calculated as sums of ratings on associated items divided by the number of items per scale. The interstitial facet of Altruism (4 items) is also included. Still, as it divides its loadings between Honesty-Humility, Emotionality, and Agreeableness, it is excluded when calculating six HEXACO scores (Babarović & Šverko, 2013). Scores for this personality dimension were calculated as sums of ratings on associated items divided by several items per scale.

Triarchic Psychopathy Model (TriPM). Psychopathy was assessed using the Triarchic Psychopathy Measure (TriPM; Patrick et al., 2009; Patrick, 2010). TriPM is a 58-item self-report questionnaire assessing three psychopathy components, i.e., Boldness (19 items), Meanness (19 items), and Disinhibition (20 items). Using a 4-point Likert-type scale, participants rate the degree to which the items, consisting of personal characteristics, apply to them (mostly false, false, mostly true, true). A higher score on a particular scale means more pronounced features of the psychopathic component

measured by that scale. The sum of the scores on all three scales gives a measure of total psychopathy.

Table 1
Research variables

Study Variables	Examples of research items
Workplace Deviance	
Interpersonal deviance	Acted rudely toward someone at work
Organisational deviance	Taken property from work without permission
Personality	
Honesty-Humility	I am an ordinary person who is no better than others.
Emotionality	I sometimes can't help worrying about little things.
Extraversion	I feel reasonably satisfied with myself overall.
Agreeableness	I tend to be lenient in judging other people.
Conscientiousness	People often call me a perfectionist.
Openness to experience	I enjoy looking at maps of different places.
Psychopathy	
Boldness	I am well-equipped to deal with stress.
Meanness	It doesn't bother me to see someone else in pain.
Disinhibition	I often get bored quickly and lose interest.

Source: Authors' work

Analytic strategy

Zero-order correlations (Pearson's r) were used to quantify basic bivariate relationships between HEXACO personality dimensions, TriPM scale variable and workplace deviance scales. In addition, to test for unique associations of scores on each HEXACO dimension and triarchic domains with workplace deviance scales, we performed hierarchical regression analyses in which scores for the HEXACO dimensions and TriPM Boldness, Meanness, and Disinhibition scales were entered as predictors of criterion variables consisting of interpersonal and organisational workplace deviance dimensions. Gender and age were included as a control variable in each analysis.

Results

Descriptive statistics

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics and internal consistency values. Cronbach alpha (α) for all scales is higher than .70, indicating adequate internal consistency. Skewness and kurtosis for all scales were within the recommended values for normal distribution (between -2 and +2) (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2014). All items showed significant corrected item-total correlations within their assigned scales.

Zero-Order Correlations

Table 3 shows bivariate correlations between study scales. The intercorrelations between the Workplace Deviance, HEXACO, and TriPM scales were found to be low to moderate, suggesting a partial overlap among the scales. Considering these findings, we tested whether multicollinearity was present in each of the models by estimating variance inflation factors (VIF). The VIF value was less than 10.0 for all scales, indicating that multicollinearity was not a problem in the regression models (Hair et al., 2010).

Table 2

Descriptive statistics for TriPM subscale, HEXACO domains, and Workplace Deviance subscale, as well as internal consistency values (n = 429).

Variable	M	SD	Min	Max	α	Sk	Ku
Workplace Deviance							
Interpersonal dev.	20.18	3.28	10.00	30.00	.78	0.22	0.46
Organisational dev.	35.39	3.54	25.00	49.00	.76	0.21	0.59
HEXACO PI-R							
Honesty-Humility	53.19	10.59	18.00	78.00	.86	-0.39	0.41
Emotionality	51.64	9.46	25.00	77.00	.80	0.14	-0.30
Extraversion	55.23	7.60	29.00	78.00	.78	-0.33	0.45
Agreeableness	45.79	8.36	24.00	70.00	.77	-0.03	-0.19
Conscientiousness	56.63	7.88	24.00	75.00	.85	-0.32	0.38
Openness to experience	51.70	9.07	27.00	77.00	.82	-0.01	-0.11
TriPM							
Boldness	51.19	7.36	28.00	73.00	.82	-0.25	0.32
Meanness	34.01	7.63	19.00	70.00	.80	0.84	1.51
Disinhibition	35.82	7.33	21.00	65.00	.87	0.89	0.99
Note. Internal reliability coefficients (α), Skewness (Sk), Kurtosis (Ks).							

Source: Authors' work

Table 3

Correlations for study variables (n = 429)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Interper. Dev.	-										
2. Organizat. dev.	.18**	-									
3. Honesty-Humility	-.42**	-.31**	-								
4. Emotionality	.13*	-.03	.11*	-							
5. Extraversion	.07	.08	-.01	-.08	-						
6. Agreeableness	-.56**	-.21**	.35**	-.08	.05	-					
7. Conscien.	.00	-.08	.25**	.02	.21**	.06	-				
8. Openness	-.07	-.02	.16**	.02	.14**	.15**	.16**	-			
9. Boldness	.16**	-.09	-.18**	-.44**	.56**	-.07	.19**	.21**	-		
10. Meanness	.36**	.23**	-.48**	-.43**	-.05	-.36**	-.29**	-.13*	.24**	-	
11. Disinhibition	.32**	.24**	-.40**	.06	-.15**	-.33**	-.51**	-.08	-.10*	.52**	-
Note. *p<0.05; **p<0.01.											

Source: Authors' work

As expected, Honesty-Humility ($r = -.42$) and agreeableness ($r = -.56$) were negatively and significantly associated with Interpersonal Workplace Deviance. Also, Honesty-Humility ($r = -.31$) and agreeableness ($r = -.21$) were significantly negatively associated with Organisational Workplace Deviance. Contrary to our hypothesis, boldness was positively significantly associated with Interpersonal Workplace Deviance ($r = .16$); as predicted, meanness was positively significantly associated with both Interpersonal Workplace Deviance ($r = .36$) and Organisational Workplace Deviance ($r = .23$). Also, disinhibition was positively significantly associated with both Interpersonal Workplace Deviance ($r = .32$) and Organisational Workplace Deviance ($r = .24$).

Regression analyses

The results of hierarchical regression analyses examining HEXACO personality traits as predictors of deviant workplace behaviour are presented in Table 4. In line with our hypothesis, Honesty-Humility negatively and significantly predicted both Interpersonal Workplace Deviance ($\beta = -.27$, $p < .001$) and Organisational Workplace Deviance (β

= -.28, $p < .001$). As expected, Agreeableness significantly negatively predicted Interpersonal Workplace Deviance ($\beta = -.48$, $p < .001$) and Organizational Workplace Deviance ($\beta = -.12$, $p < .001$). Also, Conscientiousness ($\beta = -.10$, $p < .05$) significantly negatively predicted Interpersonal Workplace Deviance. As predicted, Openness to Experience is unrelated to both Interpersonal and Organisational Workplace Deviance. Extraversion is unrelated to Interpersonal Workplace Deviance. However, our results showed that Extraversion significantly positively predicted Organisational Workplace Deviance ($\beta = -.10$, $p < .05$), which is contrary to our prediction. In percentage terms, HEXACO personality traits accounted for 39% unique variance in Interpersonal Workplace Deviance and 13% unique variance in Organisational Workplace Deviance.

Table 4

Multiple regression models examining HEXACO personality traits as predictors of deviant workplace behaviour (n = 429)

	Interpersonal Deviance			Organisational Deviance		
	β	t	VIF	β	t	VIF
Step 1						
Gender	-.05	-1.09	1.06	.02	.37	1.06
Age	-.14*	-2.85*	1.06	.04	.73	1.06
Adjusted R2	.01*			.00		
F	4.14*			.28		
Step 2						
Gender	-.09	-1.92	1.48	.10	1.75	1.48
Age	-.11*	-2.77*	1.10	.06	1.17	1.10
Honesty-Humility	-.27**	-6.26**	1.31	-.28**	-5.43**	1.31
Emotionality	-.12*	1.41	1.39	-.04	-.75	1.39
Extraversion	.06	1.44	1.07	.10*	2.05*	1.07
Agreeableness	-.48**	-11.74**	1.20	-.12*	.244*	1.20
Conscientiousness	-.10*	2.43*	1.16	-.02	-.46	1.16
Openness	.03	.86	1.09	.04	.77	1.09
Adjusted R2	.39**			.11**		
ΔR^2	.39**			.13**		
F	35.85**			7.71**		
Note. Standardised regression coefficients (β). Variance inflation factors (VIF).						
*$p < 0.05$; **$p < 0.01$.						

Source: Authors' work

Table 5 presents the results of hierarchical regression analyses examining the Triarchic Psychopathy Measure as a predictor of deviant workplace behaviour.

As expected, Meanness significantly positively predicted Interpersonal ($\beta = .23$, $p < .001$) and Organizational ($\beta = .15$, $p < .001$) Workplace Deviance. In line with our prediction, Disinhibition significantly predicted both Interpersonal ($\beta = .21$, $p < .001$) and Organisational ($\beta = .19$, $p < .001$) Workplace Deviance. Contrary to our hypothesis, Boldness positively significantly predicted both Interpersonal ($\beta = .15$, $p < .05$) and Organisational ($\beta = .11$, $p < .05$) Workplace Deviance. In percentage terms, Triarchic Psychopathy traits accounted for 16% unique variance in Interpersonal Workplace Deviance and 10% unique variance in Organisational Workplace Deviance.

Table 5

Multiple regression models examining Triarchic Psychopathy Measure as predictors of deviant workplace behaviour (n = 429)

	Interpersonal Deviance			Organisational Deviance		
	β	t	VIF	β	t	VIF
Step 1						
Gender	-.06	-1.08	1.06	.01	.21	1.05
Age	-.14*	-2.68*	1.06	.03	.54	1.05
Adjusted R2	.01*			.00		
F	3.71*			.15		
Step 2						
Gender	.07	1.44	1.23	.10	1.89	1.23
Age	-.11*	-2.21*	1.09	.05	1.05	1.09
Boldness	.15*	2.93*	1.24	.11*	1.98*	1.24
Meanness	.23**	3.85**	1.67	.15*	2.34*	1.68
Disinhibition	.21**	3.75**	1.49	.19**	3.37**	1.50
Adjusted R2	.17**			.09**		
ΔR^2	.16**			.10**		
F	17.19**			8.47**		

Note. Standardised regression coefficients (β). Variance inflation factors (VIF).
* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$.

Source: Authors' work

Discussion

This study's main aim was to examine the effect of the HEXACO domains and triarchic psychopathy dimensions (boldness, meanness, and disinhibition) on interpersonal and organisational deviant workplace behaviour. The findings support most of the proposed hypotheses.

Relations between HEXACO domains and workplace deviance obtained in the current study were consistent with settings of the HEXACO model of personality (Lee & Ashton, 2004; Ashton et al., 2014) and of the workplace deviance construct as proposed by Bennett and Robinson (2000). As expected, honesty-humility negatively predicted both interpersonal and organisational workplace deviance, which is in line with the view that honesty-humility encompasses morally relevant prosocial behaviour (Ashton & Lee, 2008), and with previous findings showing a negative association between honesty-humility and workplace deviance (Bourdage et al., 2018; Khan et al., 2019; Obalade et al., 2023; Pletzer et al., 2019).

As predicted, workplace deviance was negatively associated with agreeableness and conscientiousness. Our results are in line with the HEXACO model, which postulated that agreeableness includes forgivingness, gentleness, and patience and that conscientiousness captures particular facets of organisation, diligence, and prudence (Ashton et al., 2014; Lee & Ashton, 2004) and in line with empirical evidence that workplace deviance is negatively associated with agreeableness and conscientiousness (Bourdage et al., 2018; Khan et al., 2019; Obalade et al., 2023; Pletzer et al., 2019). In our study, emotionality was negatively related to both interpersonal and organisational workplace deviance, but the relationship between emotionality and organisational workplace deviance was statistically insignificant. This result is in accordance with the previous studies, which showed negative associations between emotionality and workplace deviance (Pletzer et al., 2019; Obalade et al., 2023), and in line with a view that emotionality dimension of the HEXACO model includes facets of sentimentality and an interstitial facet of altruism, situated among honesty-humility and agreeableness (Ashton & Lee, 2007; Ashton et al., 2014).

As predicted, openness to experience was unrelated to both interpersonal and organisational workplace deviance, and extraversion was unrelated to organisational workplace deviance, which is in line with previous findings (Berry et al., 2007; Pletzer et al., 2019). Although the association between extraversion and organisational workplace deviance was small, this relation was significant and positive, contrary to our prediction. The positive relationship between extraversion and organisational workplace deviance is consistent with previous findings showing that extraversion is associated with aggression that leads to deviant behaviour (Jiang et al., 2022). Relations between triarchic psychopathy traits and workplace deviance obtained in the current study were consistent with settings of the triarchic psychopathy model (Patrick et al., 2009) and of the workplace deviance construct as proposed by Bennett and Robinson (2000).

More specifically, in the present study, boldness positively predicted interpersonal and organisational workplace deviance. These findings are consistent with previous studies showing that boldness was related to some form of maladaptive behaviour, e.g., manipulateness, callous affect, erratic lifestyle, dishonesty, and grandiosity/lack of modesty (Driscoll et al., 2014). Furthermore, these results are in line with the view that boldness was associated with indices of maladjustment (low honesty-humility), which negatively predicted workplace deviance (e.g., Obalade et al., 2023; Pletzer et al., 2019). Given the evidence indicating no correlation between boldness and workplace deviance (Carre et al., 2018; Preston et al., 2022) and our opposing results, additional study is necessary to clarify the influence of boldness on deviant work behaviour.

As expected, meanness predicted high interpersonal and high organisational deviant workplace behaviours. This is consistent with previous findings (Carre et al., 2018; Preston et al., 2022) and with the triarchic conceptualisation of psychopathy which proposed that meanness encompasses arrogance, verbal derisiveness, aggressive competitiveness, physical cruelty, defiance of authority, deficient empathy, lack of close attachments, abrasiveness, exploitativeness, and empowerment through cruelty or destructiveness (Blackburn, 2006; Patrick et al., 2012; Skeem et al., 2011). Consistent with our hypothesis, disinhibition predicted high interpersonal and high organisational workplace deviance. Our results are in line with assumptions of the triarchic model that disinhibition entails impulsiveness, weak restraint, hostility, mistrust and difficulties in regulating emotion, lack of planning, focus on short-term goals and incentives, and deficient behavioural restraint, and that shows up behaviourally as irresponsibility, impatience, rapid action with negative consequences, alienation and distrust (Patrick & Driscoll, 2015), and with prior findings showing positive associations of disinhibition and both interpersonal and organisational workplace deviance (Carre et al., 2018; Preston et al., 2022). The results of this research have both theoretical and practical implications. Findings indicate that honesty-humility, agreeableness, and conscientiousness can greatly benefit one's chances of forming positive relationships with co-workers. Triarchic psychopathy traits exhibit significant maladaptive potential, thus representing a substantial risk factor for the development of positive relationships in the workplace. Given that organisational psychology emphasises the prediction of deviant work conduct, our findings can serve as a framework for employee selection processes to reduce workplace deviance.

Conclusion

The results of this research have both theoretical and practical implications. Honesty-humility, agreeableness, and conscientiousness can greatly benefit one's chances of

forming positive relationships with co-workers. Triarchic psychopathy traits exhibit significant maladaptive potential, thus representing a substantial risk factor for the development of positive relationships in the workplace. Given that organisational psychology emphasises the prediction of deviant work conduct, our findings can serve as a framework for employee selection processes to reduce workplace deviance.

When considering the conclusions of this work, the following limitations should be considered. Participants were recruited from employees of several IT organisations and education staff working in higher education rather than a more homogeneous pattern sample. Although such a sample may be appropriate for the investigation of continuous relations between personality, psychopathy and workplace deviance, additional studies with other samples are needed. Therefore, although our findings provide preliminary support, they cannot be generalised to the other populations. Next, the present study employed self-report measures, which could have affected socially desirable responsiveness to present themselves in a favourable light.

Therefore, future studies should evaluate deviation using peer evaluation and behavioural measures of deviance. Moreover, associations between HEXACO domains and workplace deviance are complex and different on the facet level. Therefore, future empirical research on the relationship between the HEXACO personality and workplace deviance should focus on facet-level analysis.

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