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# HEXACO Personality Traits and Perceptions of Organizational Politics as Predictors of Workplace Revenge

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UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

HEXACO Personality Traits and Perceptions of Organizational Politics as Predictors of  
Workplace Revenge

by

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A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES  
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## **Abstract**

Given the consequences associated with employee revenge, gaining insight into antecedents of revenge in response to transgressions in the workplace is of utmost importance. The present program of research aimed to gain further insight into workplace revenge, by examining novel predictors yet to be explored within the organizational literature: HEXACO personality traits and perceptions of organizational politics (POP). Data was collected online cross-nationally from 239 employees spanning various organizations and industries. Results demonstrated that HEXACO Honesty-Humility and Conscientiousness significantly predict revenge responses, above and beyond other HEXACO personality traits. Perceptions of organizational politics (POP) however was not a significant predictor of revenge responses, nor did it act as a moderator of the relationship between Honesty-Humility and POP. The present study also examined trends between personality traits and characterizations of revenge, however due to small sample sizes these results were inconclusive. Implications of these findings and future research directions are discussed.

Keywords: *HEXACO, Honesty-Humility, revenge, perceptions of organizational politics, workplace mistreatment*

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## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

While the occurrence of interpersonal offenses among employees is virtually inevitable, the way in which victims respond to such offenses can determine the ensuing consequences for both the organization, as well as its employees. Retaliation is one response to interpersonal mistreatment that has garnered a great deal of research attention in the organizational literature (e.g. Aquino, Tripp & Bies, 2001, 2006; Bobocel, 2013). Some scholars have suggested that retaliation in response to mistreatment can be functional as it restores justice within the organization (Tripp & Bies, 1997, 2010), and deters future mistreatment of the victim (Bies & Tripp, 1998). However, other researchers have proposed that revenge is highly dysfunctional (e.g. Bobocel, 2013; Barclay, Whiteside, & Aquino, 2014), as it can incite employee sabotage (Crino, 1994), and often leads to counter-retaliation, which can escalate conflict between two parties (Kim & Smith, 1993). Irrespective of one's philosophical approach towards revenge in the workplace, it is clear that the revenge can lead to a variety of consequences for both organizations and their employees. Therefore, gaining insight into the predictors of revenge within an organizational context is of utmost importance.

Previous research has acknowledged a variety of both dispositional and situational predictors of revenge-relevant variables (for a review see Tripp & Bies, 2009). The aim of the present study is to enhance our current understanding of revenge within the workplace, by examining novel predictors yet to be explored within the organizational literature. More specifically, the present study examines the roles of HEXACO personality traits Honesty-Humility and Agreeableness, as well as victims' perceptions of organizational politics (POP), in predicting vengeful behavior in response to interpersonal provocation within organizations. Furthermore, the present study also attempts to gain insight into characterizations of revenge, by

examining the distinctive relationships between HEXACO Honesty-Humility and Agreeableness and various characteristics and forms of revenge.

### **1.1 Workplace Revenge**

Previous research has documented that employees who feel mistreated often choose to get even with their offender; and they elect to engage in this response over alternative responses such as forgiveness (e.g. Aquino, Tripp, & Bies, 2006; Bobocel, 2013). These attempts to ‘even the score’ are suggested to reflect widely held norms of negative reciprocity, which posit the return of harm for harm (Gouldner, 1960). The present study draws upon Aquino, Tripp, and Bies’ (2001) formal definition of the construct of revenge, which states that revenge is “an action in response to some perceived harm or wrongdoing by another party that is intended to inflict damage, injury, discomfort, or punishment on the party judged responsible” (p. 53).

While revenge certainly encompasses a broad range of aggressive behaviors, it bears an important distinction from other forms of workplace aggression (Bies & Tripp, 2005). The construct of revenge is conceptually different from incivility, bullying or deviance, as it is a provoked behavior occurring in response to a perceived offense or injustice. Distinguishing between provoked and unprovoked aggression offers insight into aggressive acts committed by employees, and can be critical in appropriately assigning blame and/or punishment to all parties involved in conflict. It is also important to note that workplace revenge is distinguishable from Skarlicki and Folger’s (1997) Organizational Retaliatory Behaviors (ORBs), conceptualized as revenge-motivated aggression targeted towards the organization. Different from ORBs, revenge encompasses both interpersonally and organizationally directed behaviors (Bies & Tripp, 2005). The focus of the present study is on interpersonally directed behavior, for ease of measurement. This should not impact the generalizability of the findings however, as reported incidents of

employee mistreatment and resulting revenge reactions have been found to be enacted most often on an interpersonal level (Mikula, Petri, & Tanzer, 1990).

Research has previously identified a variety of dispositional and contextual predictors of revenge-relevant variables. For example, five-factor personality traits of Agreeableness and Neuroticism have both demonstrated relations to dispositional vengefulness (McCullough, Bellah, Kilpatrick, & Johnson, 2001). Furthermore, self-other orientation (Bobocel, 2013) has been found to predict individuals' vengeful responses to mistreatment in organizations. The current study builds upon this literature of dispositional predictors by evaluating two novel dispositions, HEXACO Honesty Humility and Agreeableness, as predictors of revenge behavior in response to interpersonal transgressions. The six-factor HEXCAO personality model captures content not fully covered by five-factor models, offering unique predictive ability above and beyond such models (Ashton & Lee, 2007).

The majority of research examining situational predictors of revenge within organizations has focused on organizational justice. Both procedural justice climate (Aquino, Tripp, & Bies, 2006) and perceptions of overall organizational justice (Bobocel, 2013) have been found to predict employee vengefulness. The current study builds upon this literature of contextual predictors by evaluating perceptions of organizational politics (POP) as a predictor of revenge within organizations. While organizational politics and organizational justice share a common underlying theme of fairness, the constructs each capture a unique aspect of the domain (Andrews & Kacmar, 2001; Aryee, Chen & Budhwar, 2004). More specifically, POP comprises a self-serving component not captured by justice theories (Ferris, Harrell-Cook, & Dulebohn, 2000), and often stems from informal unsanctioned behaviors as opposed to formal treatment

within organizations (Aryee et al., 2004). These dispositional and situational predictors of revenge will be discussed in more detail in the following sections.

## **1.2 HEXACO Model of Personality**

Recent psycholexical research suggests that personality may be best expressed using a six-factor model of personality, termed the HEXACO model (Lee & Ashton, 2004), as opposed to the previous Five-Factor (FFM: McCrae & Costa, 1987) and Big Five (Goldberg, 1990) models of personality. The term HEXACO is an acronym for the model's factors: Honesty-Humility, Emotionality, eXtraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Openness to Experience. The HEXACO model differs from the five-factor model in two essential ways. Firstly, it differs with the addition of the sixth Honesty-Humility factor, a unique contribution that is only partially captured by Five-Factor Agreeableness. Secondly, HEXACO Agreeableness and Emotionality are rotational variants of Agreeableness and Neuroticism in the FFM, respectively (for a review, see Ashton & Lee, 2007). More specifically, HEXACO Emotionality encompasses traits of sentimentality and sensitivity typically found under Big Five Agreeableness, and HEXACO Agreeableness encompasses patience and tolerance, typically found at the low pole of Big Five Neuroticism (Lee & Ashton, 2004).

The HEXACO model of personality has been found to outpredict the FFM on a number of work-related variables, including workplace delinquency (Lee, Ashton, & De Vries, 2005), and job performance (Johnson, Rowatt, & Petrini, 2011), lending to its significant contribution to both academia and industry. Of particular interest to the current study, are two personality traits, HEXACO Agreeableness and Honesty-Humility. In the following sections, these two HEXACO dispositions are defined, and their potential roles as predictors of vengeful reactions in response to interpersonal transgressions in the workplace are discussed.

### **1.3 HEXACO Agreeableness and Workplace Revenge**

HEXACO Agreeableness is defined by good-naturedness, tolerance and agreeableness versus temperamentalness, irritability, argumentativeness, and criticalness (Lee & Ashton, 2004). Previous research has demonstrated that individuals who score high on HEXACO Agreeableness, are more likely to be forgiving and tolerant when they have been offended or exploited (Ashton & Lee, 2007). Low scorers on the other hand, have a low threshold for expressing anger and tend to hold grudges against those who offend/exploit them (Lee & Ashton, 2004).

In addition, HEXACO Agreeableness has previously been found to demonstrate a strong positive correlation with trait forgivingness (Shepherd & Belicki, 2008), and negative correlations with individuals' readiness to retaliate (Perugini, Gallucci, Presaghi, & Ercolani, 2003), and dispositional vengefulness (Sheppard & Boon, 2012). Furthermore, previous research has demonstrated a strong negative relationship between HEXACO Agreeableness and vengeful intentions within hypothetical scenarios (Lee & Ashton, 2012). While FFM Agreeableness and Neuroticism have previously demonstrated relations to revenge (McCullough et al., 2001), as mentioned above, HEXACO Agreeableness subsumes the "anger" component typically associated with FFM Neuroticism (Ashton & Lee, 2007). Given that trait anger is highly predictive of one's likeliness to engage in workplace aggression (Douglas & Martinko, 2001; Herschovis et al., 2007), this rotational variation in the HEXACO model is presumed to be why HEXACO Agreeableness demonstrates relations with revenge-relevant variables, while HEXACO Emotionality does not.

Given the preliminary findings outlined above, there is a need to further examine the relationship between HEXACO Agreeableness and employee revenge behavior as a response to

interpersonal transgressions in organizations. Therefore, in the present study it is anticipated that HEXACO Agreeableness will demonstrate a negative relationship with employees' actual revenge behavior in reaction to instances of interpersonal provocation within an organizational setting.

*Hypothesis 1:* HEXACO Agreeableness will significantly predict revenge reactions, such that participants who score lower on Agreeableness will be more likely to seek revenge in response to interpersonal transgression(s), compared to those who score higher on Agreeableness.

#### **1.4 HEXACO Honesty-Humility and Workplace Revenge**

HEXACO Honesty-Humility is defined by fairness, sincerity, and a lack of greed, for those who score high on the trait (Lee & Ashton, 2004). Conversely, low scorers tend to perceive themselves as superior to others, and lack sincerity in their interpersonal interactions (Lee & Ashton, 2004). Honesty-Humility is also strongly and negatively related to narcissistic tendency (Lee, Ashton, & De Vries, 2005). Given that Narcissists feel entitled to better treatment than others, they are especially likely to be offended when transgressed against (Exline, Baumeister, Bushman, Campbell, & Finkel, 2006).

In preceding research, Honesty-Humility has demonstrated incremental predictive ability beyond HEXACO Agreeableness for trait forgivingness (Shepherd & Belicki, 2008; Berry, Worthington, O'Connor, Parrot, & Wade, 2005), and has been found to correlate negatively with dispositional vengefulness (Sheppard & Boon, 2012). Moreover, Honesty-Humility has also demonstrated a negative relationship with vengeful intentions within hypothetical scenarios (Lee & Ashton, 2012). Again, given these preliminary findings, there is a need to further evaluate the relationship between HEXACO Honesty-Humility and revenge behavior, in response to actual

interpersonal transgressions in organizations. It is anticipated that HEXACO Honesty-Humility will demonstrate a negative relationship with employees' actual revenge reactions to provocation.

*Hypothesis 2:* HEXACO Honesty-Humility will significantly predict revenge reactions, such that participants who score lower on Honesty-Humility will be more likely to seek revenge in response to interpersonal transgression(s), compared to those who score higher on Honesty-Humility.

### **1.5 Perceptions of Organizational Politics (POP) and Workplace Revenge**

Organizational politics are defined as illegitimate self-serving activities in the workplace (Chang, Rosen, & Levy, 2009). These unsanctioned behaviors are strategically intended to promote and/or protect individuals' self-interests, often without regard for the well being of the organization, or fellow coworkers (Ferris, Russ, & Fandt, 1989). There are three main factors underlying organizational politics according to Kacmar and Ferris (1991). These factors include: a) general political behavior, b) go along to get ahead and c) pay and promotion policies. The first factor, "general political behavior," involves the behavior of individuals acting in a self-serving way to obtain particular outcomes. "Go along to get ahead" comprises a lack of action intended to advance one's own self-interests, such as going along with others in order to be accepted into the "in-group" and therefore receive valued outcomes. And lastly, "pay and promotion policies," refers to the organization's political behavior through the policies it maintains. Employees' POP have previously been linked to various employee-level outcomes, including counterproductive work behaviors (Zettler & Hilbig, 2010), as well as task performance and organizational citizenship behaviors (Chang et al., 2009).

In the context of CWBs, researchers have suggested that POP is an “opportunity variable” (Zettler & Hillbig, 2012); where an opportunity variable is conceptualized “as any situation or perception of the situation that facilitates (or inhibits) the exertion of an act of [CWB] by enhancing (or restricting) access to desired outcomes or by making the negative consequences for the actor less (or more) likely or costly” (Marcus & Schuler, 2004; p. 650). Given that organizations with high POP promote a self-serving climate, researchers expected and found that POP is predictive of the occurrence of CWBs (Zettler & Hillbig, 2012). In the present study, it was anticipated that the “opportunity variable” approach could also apply to the context of interpersonal revenge.

Revenge can be considered a self-serving reaction to interpersonal provocation; by enacting revenge when provoked, individuals seek justice for themselves while understanding that various consequences for their offender, as well as the organization, will likely ensue. Further, seeking revenge can be seen as both promoting and/or protecting one’s interests, as it is often enacted to maintain an ‘even score’ between the victim and offender, or to overcome a sense of violation (Bies & Tripp, 2005). In highly political organizations, employees perceive that others are engaging in self-serving behaviors, and that the organization holds policies rewarding individuals who engage in self-serving activities (Ferris, Russ, & Fandt, 1989). Therefore, when provoked, victims may perceive revenge, a self-serving, self-promoting and self-protecting response to provocation, as their most viable option, or at least one that they will not be punished for. It is expected that when victims of an offense perceive their organization to be highly political, they will be more likely to engage in revenge in response to interpersonal provocation.



*Hypothesis 3:* Participants' POP will significantly predict revenge, such that employees will be more likely to engage in revenge when they perceive high levels of organizational politics in their workplace.

According to trait activation theory, trait-relevant situational cues enable the behavioral expression of particular personality traits (Tett & Burnett, 2003). Here, trait activation theory is employed to suggest that POP and Honesty-Humility will interact to produce increased revenge responses to transgressions. Organizations with strong political climates portray the notion that self-serving behaviors are the norm, and even instrumental in furthering ones' career (Chang, Rosen, & Levy, 2009). Individuals who score low in Honesty-Humility care greatly about their status (Lee & Ashton, 2004), and are already willing to engage in these types of activities to get ahead (Wiltshire et al., 2014). Therefore, it was anticipated that these individuals would be particularly responsive to such political cues when deciding on how to respond to a transgression, and as a result be more likely to choose revenge. In addition, previous research has found POP to moderate the relationship between Honesty-Humility and CWBs, such that individuals low in Honesty-Humility engaged in more CWBs conditional on the extent to which they perceived their workplace as political (Hillbig & Zettler, 2010). This was not the case however for individuals who scored high in Honesty-Humility, suggesting individuals low in Honesty-Humility are more sensitive to political climates within organizations. In the present study, it is anticipated that perceiving a high political climate will provide trait-relevant cues to individuals low in Honesty-Humility, activating heightened revenge responses among victims to mistreatment.

*Hypothesis 4:* Victims' POP will moderate the relationship between Honesty-Humility and revenge, such that individuals low in Honesty-Humility will engage in more revenge

conditional on POP, whereas individuals high in Honesty-Humility will engage in less revenge, independent of POP level.

It is not anticipated that individuals who are low in HEXACO Agreeableness would be similarly sensitive to these environmental cues presented by highly political organizations. Therefore it is not hypothesized that POP and Agreeableness will interact to produce a heightened revenge response, and it was expected that HEXACO Agreeableness would similarly predict revenge reactions across organizations with both strong and weak political climates.

### **1.6 Revenge Characterizations and HEXACO Traits**

While researchers have suggested that a wide spectrum of vengeful behaviors exist, to date there has been no real consensus of the ways in which various acts of revenge should be characterized. Further, while the actual act of revenge enacted may be dependent on the situation and/or objective of avenger (Bies & Tripp, 1996, 2000; Skarlicki & Folger, 1997), it is also possible that individual differences systematically explain some of this variability (e.g. Lee & Ashton, 2012). The present study aims to provide a more nuanced understanding of the specific kinds of vengeful acts occurring in organizations, by investigating potential antecedents of different characterizations and forms of revenge that have been offered in past work. More specifically, by examining how two HEXACO personality traits may offer differential predictive ability of these variables. Such characterizations include whether revenge behavior is enacted in a direct or indirect manner, whether the act of revenge is a calculated act or impulsive, and also whether the form of revenge resembles inequity reduction, or focuses on retributive justice.

**1.6.1 Indirect and direct revenge.** According to Buss (1995), aggressive behavior can be classified into various dichotomies, such as the dichotomy of direct and indirect forms of

aggression. Bies and Tripp (2005) argue that revenge is a response to provocation that comprises the full range of aggressive behaviors, and can therefore also be classified into similar dichotomies as aggressive acts. Drawing from the definition of the direct-indirect aggression dichotomy (Buss, 1961), direct revenge is defined here as revenge consisting of face-to-face interaction with the offender, and indirect revenge as revenge that is delivered to the offender through “the negative reactions of others” (p. 8). Indirect revenge would often take the form of spreading hurtful rumors about the offender, and tends to allow the avenger to go unidentified (Kaukiainen et al., 2001).

It is expected that individuals who are low in HEXACO Honesty-Humility would be more likely to engage in indirect acts of revenge, as opposed to direct acts of revenge. Individuals who score low in Honesty-Humility are characterized as being manipulative and unauthentic in their dealings with others (Lee & Ashton, 2004). Moreover, Honesty-Humility has previously demonstrated a negative correlation with impression management (Wiltshire, Bourdage, Lee, 2014); a selfish tactic used with the intention of influencing and manipulating others’ opinions and affective assessments of oneself (Barrick, Shaffer, & DeGrassi, 2009). These individuals care deeply about maintaining others’ positive views of themselves, and have no reservations in manipulating others in order to do so. Since revenge can be viewed as a dysfunctional and destructive response to interpersonal transgressions, engaging in such an act could incite negative evaluations from others. Therefore, it is expected that individuals who are low in Honesty-Humility will seek revenge through indirect means with the intention of avoiding others’ negative evaluations.

*Hypothesis 5a:* Honesty-Humility will be more strongly negatively related to indirect revenge, compared to direct revenge, in response to a transgression.

Furthermore, it is anticipated that individuals who score low on Agreeableness will not be more likely to seek indirect revenge over direct revenge, or vice versa. These individuals have a low threshold for expressing their anger (Lee & Ashton, 2004), and will likely enact their revenge in whichever way is the most feasible for them. Moreover, they will not have the same desire to maintain others' positive social evaluations, and therefore will not have as much of a reason to only seek revenge indirectly.

*Hypothesis 5b:* Individuals who score low on Agreeableness will not differ in their propensity to engage in revenge that is indirect compared to revenge that is direct, or vice versa.

**1.6.2 Calculated and impulsive revenge.** Previous research has suggested that employees can often carry out revenge in a calculated manner (Bies & Tripp, 2001). For example, upon interviewing employees who claimed to have engaged in workplace revenge, Jones and Carroll (2007) discovered that some avengers planned their act(s) of revenge with a great deal of consideration, while others sought revenge either immediately following an offense, or spontaneously when an opportunity presented itself. This calculated form of revenge has been defined as planned revenge, which takes place after the avenger's calm and careful consideration of various options and consequences (Jones & Carroll, 2007). This can be contrasted with revenge that is emotional and impulsive in nature, occurring without planning or consideration of such options or consequences. This suggests that there may exist some variability in individuals' propensity to engage in calculated revenge compared to revenge that is more spontaneous in nature.

HEXACO Honesty-Humility and Agreeableness have been previously found to differentially predict calculated and immediate vengeful intentions within a hypothetical scenario

(Lee & Ashton, 2012). More specifically, Honesty-Humility demonstrated a stronger relationship with individuals' endorsement of a calculated vengeful intention item, compared to an immediate or angry one. HEXACO Agreeableness however did not show such differential prediction; as individuals low in Agreeableness demonstrated intentions to engage in all responses. This phenomenon is likely due to the fact that individuals low in Honesty-Humility would want their offender to "pay the full price" for their transgression, and would want to fully execute their revenge, which requires planning for the right opportunity (Lee & Ashton, 2012). It is unlikely that individuals who are low in Honesty-Humility would lash out at their offender emotionally and/or impulsively. Individuals who score low in HEXACO Agreeableness however would not have such specific requirements for enacting revenge, and would therefore likely engage equally in both calculated and impulsive revenge. While the Lee and Ashton (2012) study offered some preliminary evidence for these two HEXACO dispositions as differential predictors of calculated and immediate revenge intentions, there is a need to further examine these relations, using multiple items to measure the constructs and incorporating actual revenge responses to transgressions. The current study uses newly developed items to measure actual revenge behaviors, to examine the differential predictive ability of both personality traits with regards to calculated and impulsive forms of revenge.

*Hypothesis 6a:* Honesty-Humility will be more strongly negatively related to calculated revenge as opposed to impulsive revenge, such that employees who score low on Honesty-Humility will be more likely to engage in revenge that is calculated in nature as opposed to impulsive.

*Hypothesis 6b:* Employees who score low on HEXACO Agreeableness will not differ in their propensity to engage in revenge that is calculated or impulsive.

**1.6.3 Forms of revenge.** According to Tripp and Bies (2010), some forms of revenge can resemble inequity reduction responses. In these cases, any benefit the offender receives from the victim is lessened or reduced, restoring equity to the relationship. Specific examples of this category of vengeful behavior include a victim withholding effort or work, or transferring out of the job or department with the goal of withholding support and/or friendship (Bies & Tripp, 1996; Tripp & Bies, 1997). Conversely, in other cases, acts of revenge may focus on retributive justice, such as harming the offender, and/or damaging the offender's reputation or status (Tripp & Bies, 2010). Researchers found retributive components in the following acts of revenge: public complaints with the goal of humiliating the offender, bad-mouthing the offender, whistleblowing and litigation (Bies & Tripp, 1996; Tripp & Bies, 1997).

It is expected that Honesty-Humility and Agreeableness will also differentially predict the form of revenge enacted by employees. Individuals who score low in Honesty-Humility feel entitled to better treatment than others (Lee & Ashton, 2004), leading them to feel especially offended when transgressed upon. Further, HEXACO Honesty-Humility is strongly and negatively related to narcissistic tendency (Lee & Ashton, 2005); individuals high on this trait are likely to feel a strong desire to bring harm to their offender, as a way of asserting their rights, collecting their "debt", and saving face (Exline et al., 2006). Therefore, it is likely that for individuals low in Honesty-Humility, simply restoring equity in the relationship (i.e. inequity reduction), by withholding effort or friendship, would not fulfill the strong desire to teach their offender a lesson. Therefore, it is anticipated that individuals who score low in HEXACO Honesty-Humility will engage in revenge that focuses on retributive justice (i.e. bad-mouthing, etc.), as opposed to revenge resembling inequity reduction responses (i.e. withholding friendship).

*Hypothesis 7a:* Honesty-Humility will be more strongly negatively related to revenge that focuses on retributive justice as opposed to revenge resembling inequity reduction.

The same differential relations were not anticipated for individuals who score low in HEXACO Agreeableness however, as individuals who score low on this trait would likely enact revenge in whichever form was most accessible to them (as discussed above). Therefore, these individuals would not necessarily be expected to engage in one form of revenge over the other.

*Hypothesis 7b:* Employees who score low on HEXACO Agreeableness will not differ in their tendency to engage in either revenge focusing on retributive justice or revenge resembling inequity reduction.

As a follow up to examining antecedents of the various characterizations of revenge, the present study sought to further investigate the existence of empirical differences between the constructs. While it is clear that the characterizations and forms of revenge outlined above differ conceptually from one another, it was necessary to demonstrate how these differences could translate into tangible disparities. Therefore, relations between the various characteristics and forms of revenge, and the organizationally relevant variable of impression management (IM) were examined.

IM is defined as a selfish tactic used with the goal of influencing and manipulating others' opinions and affective assessments of oneself (Barrick, Shaffer, & DeGrassi, 2009). Previous research has demonstrated IM usage within an organizational context to result in inflated interview evaluations (Stevens & Kristof, 1995; Barrick et al., 2009) and other performance-related outcomes (Higgins, Judge, & Ferris, 2003). It is anticipated that a subset of the characterizations of revenge will demonstrate relations with IM, while others will not. More specifically, it is anticipated that calculated /planned, indirect/sneaky revenge, as well as revenge

focusing on retributive justice, will all demonstrate stronger associations with IM, compared to other types of revenge. These characterizations of revenge all share an underlying willingness to influence others in a very controlled and manipulative way, ultimately out of self-interest. Consequently, it is anticipated that the same individuals who are likely to engage in these forms of revenge will also be more likely to engage in IM.

In summary, the aim of the present study is to enrich our current understanding of revenge within the workplace, by examining predictors yet to be explored within the organizational literature. More specifically, this study examines the roles of two dispositions, HEXACO Honesty-Humility and Agreeableness, as well as victims' POP, in predicting vengeful reactions to interpersonal provocation within organizations. Furthermore, the present study also offers some preliminary insight into various characterizations of revenge, by investigating the distinctive relationships between HEXACO Honesty-Humility and Agreeableness and such characterizations.

## **CHAPTER 2: METHOD**

### **2.1 Participants**

The sample comprised members of the Study Response Project, an online research platform based out of Syracuse University. In order to participate, individuals were required to be full-time employees in North America, Australia, New Zealand or the United Kingdom. Participants were also required to hold non-managerial positions, across various industries and organizations. It was essential for participants to have worked at their current organization for at least one year. Individuals who responded to the survey were financially compensated directly via the Study Response Project.



In total, 372 participants were sampled for the present study. Of these participants, 239 individuals reported experiencing an offense of some sort at their current organization, and could therefore be included in the analyses. The age of participants included in analyses ranged from 21 to 74 years, with a mean age of 42.92 ( $SD = 11.26$ ). The sample was predominantly female (61.1%), with the remainder of participants identifying as male. Furthermore, the ethnic distribution of the participants was as follows: Caucasian (82.8%), Black (i.e. African, Haitian, Jamaican, Somali) (5.4%), East Asian (3.8%), South Asian (2.9%), Latin American (2.1%), Southeast Asian (1.3%), West Asian/Arab (.8%), Aboriginal (.4%), or Other (.4%).

## **2.2 Measures**

All responses for the measures utilized in the present study were indicated on a 5-point scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*), unless otherwise indicated in the description of the measure.

**2.2.1 Demographics.** Participants completed a demographics questionnaire, wherein they answered a series of questions regarding their age, gender, ethnicity, their tenure within their role/organization, the size of their current organization, and the industry to which their organization belongs. A copy of this questionnaire can be found in Appendix A.

**2.2.2 HEXACO Honesty-Humility and Agreeableness.** The shortened 60-item version of the HEXACO Personality Inventory—Revised (HEXACO-PI-R; Ashton & Lee, 2009) was used to measure HEXACO Honesty-Humility and Agreeableness. The inventory contains six subscales assessing the following six personality domains: Honesty-Humility, Emotionality, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Openness to Experience. Cronbach's alpha for the Honesty-Humility subscale was .78, for Agreeableness it was .73, for Conscientiousness

it was .74, for Extraversion it was .86, for Openness to Experience it was .81, for Emotionality it was .80, and for the overall measure it was .84.

**2.2.3 Description of transgression and response.** Participants were asked to recall and describe, in an open-ended format, an event that occurred within the last six months wherein they felt unfairly transgressed upon by another employee or group of employees at work. The sole requirement for any recalled offense was that it must comprise an interpersonal transgression, forfeiting incidents wherein individuals felt unfairly treated by their entire organization, or society as a whole. Participants were subsequently asked, again in an open-ended format, to define how they responded to the event described above, and to indicate their intention(s) underlying their response. This exercise allowed participants the opportunity to reflect on a particular offence that had occurred, and their subsequent response to that specific incident. Participants who did not experience an offense whatsoever could indicate so, and were not included in analyses.

**2.2.4 Offense severity.** Perceived offense severity was assessed using a 10-point severity index (Aquino et al., 2005; Bobocel, 2013), asking participants: “How harmful would you rate the event?” on a scale from 1 (*not at all harmful*) to 10 (*extremely harmful*).

**2.2.5 Revenge behavior.** Employees’ revenge behavior was measured using four items adopted from Aquino et al. (2001). Participants were asked to respond to four items in relation to their response to the described offense (as defined above). The four items were: “I tried to hurt them”, “I tried to make something bad happen to them”, “I did something to make them get what they deserve”, and “I got even with them”. Cronbach’s alpha for the items was .89.

**2.2.6 Direct revenge.** Four items were developed to evaluate whether employees engaged in revenge that was direct in nature. The items were as follows, “I sought to get even

with my offender face-to-face”, “I didn’t try to hide my retaliation from my offender”, “I went directly to the source of my pain and tried to make he/she/they pay for what he/she/they did”, “I tried to get even by angrily confronting my offender(s).” Participants who did not seek to get even with their offender in any way could indicate so, and as a result were not included in the analyses examining the various characterizations of revenge. This was the case for all measures examining numerous characterizations of revenge (i.e. direct, indirect, calculated, impulsive, and the two forms of revenge).

**2.2.7 Indirect revenge.** Four items were developed to evaluate whether employees engaged in revenge that was indirect in nature. Participants responded to the following items, “My offender(s) had no idea that I was the one who tried to get even with him/her/they”, “I sought to get back at my offender(s) by ensuring that others hold a negative opinion of him/her/they”, “I made sure that what I did to try and get even couldn’t be traced back to me”, and “I sought to get even by spreading nasty rumors about my offender(s).

**2.2.8 Calculated revenge.** Six items were developed in order to evaluate whether participants engaged in revenge that could be characterized as calculated in nature. These items were as follows, “I considered all my options for getting even”, “I made sure that when I got even, it would really count”, “I waited for the perfect opportunity to make my offender(s) pay for what he/she/they did”, “I made my offender(s) pay the full price for what he/she/they did”, “I thought about all the possible consequences before getting even with my offender(s)” and “I carefully planned how I would try to get back at my offender(s)”.

**2.2.9 Impulsive revenge.** Five items were also developed to evaluate whether participants engaged in revenge that was impulsive in nature. The items were as follows, “I almost instantly started arguing with the offender(s), without thinking too long or hard about it”,

“My immediate emotional reaction was to conform my offender(s), so I went with it”, “I lashed out, without really thinking about the consequences of my act”, “I put little thought into how I would go about trying to make my offender(s) pay”, and “I didn’t give it much thought, I just knew I wanted to hurt my offender(s) in return”.

**2.2.10 Forms of revenge.** In order to evaluate which form of revenge participants engaged in, two items were developed to evaluate whether employees engaged in revenge resembling inequity reduction, or focusing on retributive revenge. The two items were: “I sought to get even with my offender(s) by ultimately withdrawing my support, friendship, or effort in some way”, “I sought to get even with my offender(s) by trying to hurt them, their reputation, or status within or outside of the organization” to measure responses resembling inequity reduction and responses focusing on retributive revenge, respectively.

**2.2.11 Perceptions of Organizational Politics (POP).** Participants’ perceptions of organizational politics will be measured using the 15-item Perceptions of Organizational Politics Scale (POPS), validated by Kacmar and Carlson (1997). This scales consists of three subscales, which represent the three facets of organizational politics: General Political Behavior, Go Along to Get Ahead, and Pay and Promotion Policies. A sample item from the General Political Behavior subscale is “People in this organization attempt to build themselves up by tearing others down”. A sample item from the Go Along to Get Ahead subscale is “ Agreeing with powerful others is the best alternative in this organization”. And lastly, an example item from the Pay and Promotion Policies subscale is, “Promotions around here are not valued much because how they are determined is so political.” Cronbach’s alpha for the overall measure was .85.

**2.2.13 Impression Management (IM).** Participants’ engagement in impression management (IM) was assessed using the 22-item Impression Management Scale, developed by

Bolino and Turnley (1999). Participants were asked to indicate how often they engaged in each strategy, at work over the previous six weeks. Responses were indicated on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*Never*) to 5 (*Often*). Sample items from the measure include “make people aware of your accomplishments” and “try to appear like a hard-working, dedicated employee.” Cronbach’s alpha for the overall measure was .91.

### **2.3 Procedure**

In order to examine predictors of revenge reactions to interpersonal transgressions, participants completed a battery of questionnaires online. This included a demographics questionnaire, the HEXACO-PI-R, the POPS, and the IMS (Appendix B). Participants were also asked to recall and describe an event that occurred within the last six months, wherein they felt unfairly transgressed upon by someone, or a group of individuals, at work. If participants did not experience an offense, they were given the option to choose “N/A - I did not experience an offense” for the remainder of the offense-related questions. Participants who did experience and recall an offense were asked to indicate the severity of the transgression, the status of their offender(s) relative to themselves, as well as approximately how long ago the event occurred. Participants were then asked to describe how they responded to the event, and their motivation underlying this response. All questions related to the offense-response pair can be found in Appendix C. After describing the event and their response to the event, participants responded to the revenge scale indicating the extent to which they engaged in revenge. Following this, participants were presented with the revenge characteristic items, and given the option to choose “N/A - I did not experience an offense or I did not seek to get even at all” for these items (Appendix D).

**2.3.1 Control variables.** Victim' age and tenure (Aquino et al., 2001) have been previously found to predict revenge, and were therefore controlled for when conducting statistical analyses. Furthermore, event severity was also controlled for in analyses, as some offenses may be perceived as more harmful than others, eliciting a more vengeful response (Miller & Vidmar, 1981). Moreover, previous research has also demonstrated that offenders' status relative to the victim, influences whether victims engage in revenge (e.g. Aquino et al., 2001; Aquino et al., 2006). Relative status describes whether the victim or the offender holds more power, and previous research has demonstrated that victims who are of lower status than their offender, are less likely to engage in retaliation, out of fear of counter-retaliation from their well-positioned offender (Aquino et al., 2001). Therefore, offenders' status relative to the victims will also be controlled for in analyses.

## **CHAPTER 3: RESULTS**

### **3.1 Preliminary Analyses**

Participants who failed to correctly answer the two careless response items embedded within the online survey (see Appendix E) were filtered out of analyses, leaving 196 participants remaining in the sample. The first careless response item appeared in the first half of the online survey, and the second item in the latter half. An outlier analysis was conducted using Mahalanobis distance. Mahalanobis distance is the distance from any case and the centroid of the remaining cases, and this distance can be evaluated using a  $\chi^2$  distribution. The input variables used in the calculation were the HEXACO personality traits, POP, IM, general revenge items, and items measuring characteristics and forms of revenge. The critical  $\chi^2$  cutoff value was 29.14, calculated based on 14 degrees of freedom, corresponding with the number of input variables,

and  $p = .01$ . Mahalanobis distance values reached significance for five cases, suggesting the presence of multivariate outliers in the data. Cook's Distance values were all below 1, however. Given that these outliers were not identified as careless responders, nor did they exhibit any unusual patterns in responding, the decision was made to retain them for subsequent analyses. For all regression analyses conducted, appropriate assumptions were checked. Participants rated their recalled events as severe ( $M = 8.08$ ,  $SD = 2.34$ ), suggesting that participants felt sufficiently offended by the elicited transgressions. Descriptive statistics, intercorrelations, and the number of participants who responded (excluding those who indicated N/A) to each of the examined measures, can be found in Table 1. It should be noted that participants tended to endorse some of the characteristic/form items, but would chose "N/A - I did not seek revenge at all" for others, resulting in varying sample sizes of participants who completed these measures.

As anticipated, revenge behavior was significantly negatively related to Honesty-Humility ( $r = -.24$ ,  $p < .001$ ), Agreeableness ( $r = -.15$ ,  $p < .05$ ), and POP ( $r = -.19$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Consistent with prior research (Ashton & Lee, 2009), Honesty-Humility demonstrated a significant moderate relation with Agreeableness ( $r = .33$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Also consistent with previous research (Wiltshire, Bourdage, & Lee, 2014), Honesty-Humility demonstrated a significant small-to-moderate relationship with POP ( $r = -.19$ ,  $p < .001$ ). In addition, Agreeableness demonstrated a significant moderate-to-strong relationship with POP ( $r = -.40$ ,  $p < .001$ ), suggesting that individuals who score lower on Agreeableness are more likely to perceive their organizations as political. Previous research (Wiltshire et al., 2014) also found a significant negative relation between these two variables ( $r = -.28$ ,  $p < .001$ ), although the relationship was not as strong as in the present study.

Items measuring various characteristics of revenge (direct, indirect, calculated and impulsive) were submitted to a principal axis factor analysis. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value was .893 indicating sampling adequacy, and Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant  $\chi^2(171) = 1125.03, p < .001$ . An initial analysis was run to determine the eigenvalues for the factors. While the scree plot (Figure 1) suggested retaining a three-factor solution, given the small sample size a scree-plot was not sufficient for interpretation. However, a three-factor structure was also the most interpretable solution, and so the full principal axis factor analysis was subsequently run with a three-factor solution, rotated using direct oblimin. An oblique rotation was chosen, as there was no prior theoretical reason to expect the factors to be uncorrelated with one another.

Table 2 shows factor coefficients from the pattern matrix after rotation. According to the items clustering on each factor, factor 1 represents calculated/planned revenge, factor 2 represents reactive/direct revenge, and factor 3 represents indirect/sneaky revenge. Cronbach's alpha was calculated for each of the three factors: calculated/planned revenge ( $\alpha = .93$ ), reactive/direct revenge ( $\alpha = .88$ ), and indirect/sneaky revenge ( $\alpha = .85$ ). New scales were computed from items representing the three factors, and bivariate correlations were calculated among the new factor scales: calculated/planned revenge was positively related to reactive/direct revenge ( $r = .50, p < .001$ ), and to indirect/sneaky revenge ( $r = .57, p < .001$ ). Reactive/direct revenge and indirect/sneaky revenge were also positively correlated ( $r = .46, p < .001$ ).



Table 1

*Means, Standard Deviations, and Zero-Order Correlations*

	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
<i>POP Measure</i>											
1. POP	196	3.00	.68	(.89)							
<i>HEXACO Personality</i>											
2. Honesty-Humility	196	3.59	.67	-.19	(.78)						
3. Agreeableness	196	3.20	.72	-.40	.33	(.73)					
4. Conscientiousness	196	3.88	.50	-.30	.25	.20	(.74)				
5. Extraversion	196	3.32	.73	-.31	.21	.50	.17	(.86)			
6. Openness	196	3.61	.69	-.15	.08	.19	.22	.34	(.81)		
7. Emotionality	196	3.12	.65	.15	-.06	-.24	-.13	-.35	-.17	(.80)	
<i>Revenge Measures</i>											
8. Revenge	189	1.47	.76	.19	-.24	-.15	-.29	-.06	-.06	-.09	(.85)
9. CP Revenge	114	2.31	1.21	.16	-.35	-.19	-.27	-.07	-.26	-.23	.49
10. IS Revenge	151	1.83	.94	.27	-.34	-.13	-.43	-.19	-.30	.02	.45
11. RD Revenge	110	1.96	.84	.19	-.25	-.22	-.35	-.11	-.23	-.01	.45
12. Retributive	154	1.58	.90	.10	-.27	-.15	-.35	-.08	-.07	-.06	.55
13. Inequity Reduction	154	2.19	1.30	.12	-.17	-.16	-.18	-.09	-.06	-.06	.40
<i>Impression Management</i>											
14. IM	196	2.22	.62	.19	-.51	-.11	-.16	-.01	.03	.08	.26

*Note.* Numbers in parentheses along the diagonal indicate internal consistency reliabilities. - = reliability not available, as only 1 item is used to measure the construct.

POP = perceptions of organizational politics. C/P revenge = calculated/planned revenge. R/D revenge = reactive/direct revenge. I/S revenge = indirect/sneaky revenge.

IM = impression management.

*N* = Indicates number of participants for whom data was provided, for the associated measure.

For all correlations in involving Revenge Characteristics, *N* = 100 to 154. For correlations only involving other variables, *N* = 188 to 196.

For *N* = 100 to 154,  $r \geq .16$  is significant at  $p < .05$  (exception is relationship between CP and POP,  $r = .155$ ,  $p = .10$ ).

For *N* = 188 to 196,  $r \geq .15$  is significant at  $p < .05$ .

Table 1 Cont'd

*Means, Standard Deviations, and Zero-Order Correlations*

	9	10	11	12	13	14
<i>POP Measure</i>						
1. POP						
<i>HEXACO Personality</i>						
2. Honesty-Humility						
3. Agreeableness						
4. Conscientiousness						
5. Extraversion						
6. Openness						
7. Emotionality						
<i>Revenge Measures</i>						
8. Revenge						
9. CP Revenge	(.93)					
10. IS Revenge	.57	(.85)				
11. RD Revenge	.50	.46	(.88)			
12. Retributive	.32	.55	.44	-		
13. Inequity Reduction	.48	.33	.39	.42	-	
<i>Impression Management</i>						
14. IM	.37	.47	.18	.34	.22	(.91)

*Note.* Numbers in parentheses along the diagonal indicate internal consistency reliabilities. - = reliability not available, as only 1 item is used to measure the construct.

POP = perceptions of organizational politics. C/P revenge = calculated/planned revenge. R/D revenge = reactive/direct revenge. I/S revenge = indirect/sneaky revenge.

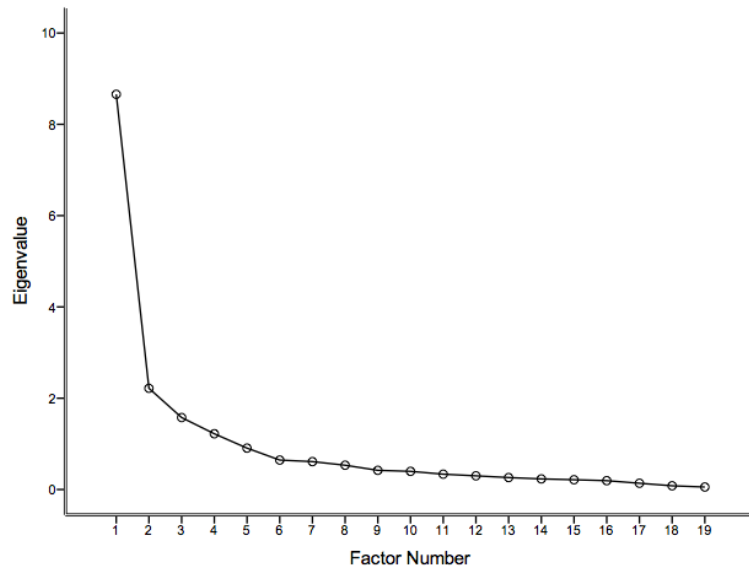
IM = impression management.

N = Indicates number of participants for whom data was provided, for the associated measure.

For all correlations in involving Revenge Characteristics, N = 100 to 154. For correlations only involving other variables, N = 188 to 196.

For N = 100 to 154,  $r \geq .16$  is significant at  $p < .05$ .

For N = 188 to 196,  $r \geq .15$  is significant at  $p < .05$ .



*Figure 1.* Scree plot for initial PAF analysis of revenge characteristic items.

### 3.2 Personality Traits, POP, and Revenge Behavior

In order to examine the influence of personality traits HEXACO Honesty-Humility and Agreeableness, as well as employees' POP, on revenge, a moderated hierarchical regression analysis was conducted. The hierarchical regression comprised four steps in which the variables were entered into the model. Variables are reviewed below, according to the step in which they were entered into the analysis. Please refer to Table 3 for the unstandardized and standardized regression coefficients for the moderated hierarchical regression analysis.

**3.2.1 Step 1: Demographic and control variables.** In order to control for the influence of demographic variables, as well as other variables previously found to predict revenge responses, the following variables were entered in Step 1 of the regression model: age, gender, ethnicity, organizational tenure, severity of the offense as reported by participants, and the status of the offender relative to the victim. Ethnicity and relative status were categorical variables with more than two categories, and therefore required dummy coding to be included in the analysis. For ethnicity, the Caucasian group was set to 0, as it represented the majority of participants.

Furthermore, for relative status, status equivalent to the victim was set to 0, in order to compare higher and lower relative status relative status in a meaningful way. Results demonstrated that this model did not significantly predict revenge behavior,  $F(15, 173) = 1.45, p = .129, R^2 = .11, R^2_{\text{Adjusted}} = .162$ . However, relative status, and more specifically having an offender who is of a higher status ( $\beta = -.22, p < .01$ ), independently accounted for a significant amount of variance above and beyond the other control variables.

**3.2.2 Step 2: Personality variables.** In order to examine whether personality traits HEXACO Agreeableness and Honesty-Humility predicted employees' revenge behavior, these personality variables, along with the remaining four HEXACO personality traits, were entered into Step 2 of the regression model. This model demonstrated incremental predictive ability of revenge behavior compared to the previous model,  $F_{\text{change}}(6, 167) = 4.41, p < .001, R^2_{\text{change}} = .12$ . Of the six HEXACO personality variables, only Honesty-Humility ( $\beta = -.19, p < .05$ ) and Conscientiousness ( $\beta = -.25, p = .001$ ), but not Agreeableness ( $\beta = -.08, p = .36$ ) accounted for a significant amount of variance above and beyond the other personality variables in the model. Therefore, hypothesis 1 did not receive support, while hypothesis 2 was supported.

Table 2

*Factor loadings in the Pattern Matrix for Revenge Characteristic Items*

Items	Factor Loadings		
	1	2	3
1. I carefully planned how I would try and get back at my offender(s).	<b>.943</b>	.017	.002
2. I waited for the perfect opportunity to try to make my offender(s) pay for what he/she/they did.	<b>.853</b>	.033	.105
3. I thought about all the possible consequence before trying to get even.	<b>.740</b>	.107	-.035
4. I considered all my options for getting even.	<b>.732</b>	.057	.037
5. I made sure that when I tried to get even, it would really count.	<b>.697</b>	.001	.166
6. I sought to make my offender(s) pay the full price for what he/she/they did.	<b>.685</b>	.217	.109
7. My immediate emotional reaction was to confront my offender(s), so I went with it.	.033	<b>.776</b>	-.263
8. I almost instantly started arguing with the offender(s), without thinking too long or hard about it.	.085	<b>.703</b>	-.081
9. I went directly to the source of my pain, and tried to make him/her/they pay for what he/she/they did.	.096	<b>.694</b>	.048
10. I tried to get even by angrily confronting my offender(s).	.148	<b>.693</b>	-.037
11. I lashed out, without really thinking about the consequences of my act.	.039	<b>.650</b>	.130
12. I put little thought into how I would go about trying to make my offender(s) pay.	-.284	<b>.602</b>	<b>.441</b>
13. I sought to get even with my offender(s) face-to-face.	.097	<b>.567</b>	.039
14. I didn't give it much thought; I just knew I wanted to hurt my offender(s) in return.	.015	<b>.475</b>	<b>.463</b>
15. I didn't try to hide my retaliation from my offender(s).	.060	<b>.425</b>	.064
16. My offender(s) had no idea that I was the one who tried to get even with him/her/they.	.126	-.058	<b>.728</b>
17. I sought to get back at my offender(s) by ensuring that others hold a negative opinion of him/her/they.	.190	-.040	<b>.694</b>
18. I made sure that what I did to try and get even couldn't be traced back to me.	.287	-.001	<b>.630</b>
19. I sought to get even by spreading nasty rumors about my offender(s).	.272	.239	<b>.460</b>

*Note.* Factor loadings greater than .40 are shown in boldface

**3.2.3 Step 3: POP.** In order to determine whether employees' perceptions of organizational politics would add to the prediction of employee revenge in response to interpersonal transgressions, POP was entered in Step 3 of the regression analysis. Results demonstrated that this model did not incrementally predict revenge behavior compared to the previous model,  $F_{change}(1, 166) = 1.17, p = .31, R^2_{change} = .01$ . Therefore, Hypothesis 3 did not receive support.

**3.2.4 Step 4: POP and personality trait interactions.** To examine whether POP moderated the relationships between both HEXACO personality traits and revenge behavior, interactions between POP and Honesty-Humility, and POP and Agreeableness were entered into Step 4 of the analysis. Results demonstrated that the model did not account for a significant amount of variance beyond the previous models,  $F_{change}(2, 164) = 1.18, p = .31, R^2 = .01$ . The interaction between Honesty-Humility and POP ( $\beta = -.78, p = .144$ ) did not independently account for a significant amount of variance in revenge behavior, and nor the interaction between Agreeableness and POP ( $\beta = .44, p = .260$ ). Therefore, hypothesis 4 was unsupported.

### **3.3 Revenge Characteristics and Forms.**

Given that the factor structure of the revenge characteristic items transformed upon submitting the items to a principle axis factor analysis, the study's hypotheses concerning the characteristics required slight modification. The items developed for both calculated and indirect revenge produced two factors that were similar in nature to the original characteristics. Therefore, the expectation that Honesty-Humility would be more highly related to these two characteristics, compared to the others, remained relevant. The items developed for both impulsive and direct revenge, mostly loaded onto one single factor, forming reactive/direct revenge. Given that Honesty-Humility was not anticipated to relate as strongly to either impulsive

or direct forms of revenge, this remained true even when these items were combined into the one factor. Furthermore, as Agreeableness was not expected to differentially relate to any of the characteristics, this remained true for the new variables as well. Therefore, it was anticipated that Honesty-Humility would be more strongly related to both calculated/planned revenge and indirect/sneaky revenge, in comparison to reactive/direct revenge. Also, that Agreeableness would be similarly related to all characteristics.

In order to compare the strength of the relationships among personality traits and revenge characteristics and forms, bivariate correlations were calculated using listwise deletion. This was done to ensure data were derived from the same set of participants across all relations ( $N = 100$ ), as it appears participants tended to endorse some of the characteristic items, but would chose “N/A - I did not seek revenge at all” for others, resulting in varying sample sizes for each of the relations. Having one sample of participants was also necessary to evaluate the significance of the differences between the correlation coefficients. Fisher z-transformations were calculated and tested according to Meng, Rosenthal and Rubin’s (1991) recommendation for comparing correlation coefficients between a dependent variable and multiple independent variables, using data from a single sample.

Table 3

*Summary of Regression Analyses for Predictors (HEXACO Agreeableness, Honesty-Humility, and POP) of Employees' Revenge Behavior)*

<i>Step 1</i>	B	SE B	$\beta$
Age	-.00	.01	-.10
Gender	-.19	.12	-.17
Organizational Tenure	.00	.00	.09
Role Tenure	-.00	.00	-.09
Offence Severity	-.03	.03	-.09
Ethnicity (vs. Caucasian)			
Aboriginal	.37	.76	.04
East Asian	-.15	.30	-.04
South East Asian	-.82	.79	.08
South Asian	-.15	.35	-.03
West Asian	.88	.55	.12
Black	.08	.25	-.02
Latin American	.64	.39	-.12
Other	-.51	.76	-.05
Status (vs. equivalent)			
Above	-.33	.12	-.22**
Below	-.32	.25	-.10
<i>Step 2</i>	B	SE B	$\beta$
Age	.00	.01	.07
Gender	-.11	.12	-.07
Organizational Tenure	.00	.00	.14
Role Tenure	-.00	.00	-.11
Offence Severity	-.01	.02	-.03
Ethnicity (vs. Caucasian)			
Aboriginal	-.18	.73	-.02
East Asian	-.18	.29	-.04
South East Asian	.42	.76	.04
South Asian	-.29	.34	-.06
West Asian	1.08	.53	.15
Black	-.21	.25	-.06
Latin American	-.56	.37	-.11
Other	-.17	.74	-.02
Status (vs. equivalent)			
Above	-.33	.11	-.22**
Below	-.29	.24	-.09
Honesty-Humility	-.21	.01	-.19*
Agreeableness	-.09	.09	-.08
Emotionality	-.12	.09	-.10
Extraversion	-.00	.09	-.00
Conscientiousness	-.38	.11	-.25**
Openness to Experience	.03	.09	.03

Note. \*\* =  $p < .01$ , \* =  $p < .05$ .

POP = perceptions of organizational politics.



Table 3 Continued

<i>Step 3</i>	B	SE B	$\beta$
Age	.00	.01	.06
Gender	-.11	.12	-.07
Organizational Tenure	.00	.00	.14
Role Tenure	-.00	.00	-.12
Offence Severity	-.02	.03	-.05
Ethnicity (vs. Caucasian)			
Aboriginal	-.18	.73	-.02
East Asian	-.16	.29	-.04
South East Asian	.35	.76	.03
South Asian	-.29	.34	-.06
West Asian	1.03	.53	.14
Black	-.19	.25	-.06
Latin American	-.55	.37	-.11
Other	-.22	.74	-.02
Status (vs. equivalent)			
Above	-.33	.11	-.22**
Below	-.27	.24	-.09
Honesty-Humility	-.20	.10	-.18*
Agreeableness	-.06	.10	.06
Emotionality	-.11	.10	-.10
Extraversion	.01	.10	.01
Conscientiousness	-.35	.12	-.23**
Openness to Experience	.03	.09	-.03
POP	.10	.09	.09
<i>Step 4</i>	B	SE B	$\beta$
Age	.00	.01	.05
Gender	-.11	.12	-.07
Organizational Tenure	.00	.00	.13
Role Tenure	-.00	.00	-.11
Offence Severity	.02	.03	.06
Ethnicity (vs. Caucasian)			
Aboriginal	.10	.73	.02
East Asian	-.17	.29	-.04
South East Asian	.44	.77	.04
South Asian	-.21	.34	-.04
West Asian	1.10	.53	.14*
Black	-.20	.25	-.06
Latin American	-.56	.38	-.11
Other	-.24	.74	-.02
Status (vs. equivalent)			
Above	-.33	.11	-.22**
Below	-.26	.24	-.08
Honesty-Humility	.41	.43	.36
Agreeableness	-.48	.38	-.45
Emotionality	-.11	.09	-.10
Extraversion	.04	.10	.04
Conscientiousness	-.35	.12	-.23**
Openness to Experience	.04	.09	.04
POP	.43	.48	.38
Honesty-HumilityXPOP	-.20	.14	-.78
AgreeablenessXPOP	.14	.12	.44

Note. \*\* =  $p < .01$ , \* =  $p < .05$ .

POP = perceptions of organizational politics.

With regards to the various characterizations of revenge, Honesty-Humility was significantly negatively related to calculated/planned revenge ( $r = -.40, p < .001$ ) and indirect/sneaky revenge ( $r = -.37, p < .001$ ), as was anticipated. However, Honesty-Humility was also significantly negatively related to reactive/direct revenge ( $r = -.32, p < .001$ ), and this relationship was not significantly different from the relation between Honesty-Humility and calculated/planned revenge ( $z = -.88, p = .20$ ) or between Honesty-Humility and indirect/sneaky revenge ( $z = -.51, p = .30$ ). Therefore, hypothesis 5a and 6a were unsupported. Agreeableness demonstrated similar negative relations with reactive/direct revenge ( $r = -.28, p < .01$ ), calculated/planned revenge ( $r = -.20, p < .05$ ), and indirect/sneaky revenge ( $r = -.17, p = .09$ ). Therefore hypothesis 5b and 6b were supported.

With regards to the two forms of revenge, Honesty-Humility was similarly related to revenge focusing on retributive justice ( $r = -.37, p < .001$ ) and revenge resembling inequity reduction ( $r = -.25, p < .001; z = -1.14, p = .25$ ). Therefore hypothesis 7a did not receive support. In addition, Agreeableness was similarly related to revenge focusing on retributive justice ( $r = -.26, p < .05$ ), and revenge resembling inequity reduction ( $r = -.18, p = .07; z = -.73, p = .23$ ). Therefore hypothesis 7b was supported.

In an effort to examine empirical differences between the various characterizations and forms of revenge, relations between these revenge variables and IM were examined. In comparison to direct/reactive revenge ( $r = .21, p = .08$ ), IM was more strongly related to both calculated/planned revenge ( $r = .47, p < .001; z = -2.83, p < .01$ ) and indirect/sneaky revenge ( $r = .50, p < .001; z = -2.96, p < .01$ ). In addition, IM was more strongly related to revenge that focused on retributive justice ( $r = .36, p < .001$ ) than revenge resembling inequity reduction ( $r = .17, p = .08; z = -1.77, p < .05$ ).

## **CHAPTER 4: DISCUSSION**

Given the various consequences revenge can exert on both an organization and its employees, previous research has focused on examining a number of dispositional and contextual antecedents of employee revenge behavior within organizations. The overarching goal of the present study was to enhance our current understanding of revenge within the workplace, by examining novel predictors that have yet to be explored within the organizational literature. More specifically, the present study examined the roles of HEXACO personality traits Honesty-Humility and Agreeableness, as well as victims' perceptions of organizational politics (POP), in predicting vengeful responses to interpersonal transgressions within organizations. Furthermore, the present study also investigated the distinctive relationships between HEXACO Honesty-Humility and Agreeableness and various characterizations of revenge.

In summary, the major contribution of this program of research is three-fold. Firstly, while studies have begun to examine HEXACO personality traits as predictors of revenge-relevant variables, these traits had yet to be examined as predictors of actual revenge reactions to historical transgressions within organizations, as was done in the present study. Secondly, this study offers preliminary insight into various characterizations of revenge, by examining how HEXACO personality traits may offer differential predictive ability of these variables. Lastly, to the best of my knowledge, the relationship between employees' POP and revenge behavior in response to transgressions had yet to be explored in previous research, offering a novel contribution to the organizational literature.

### **4.1 HEXACO Personality Traits and Workplace Revenge**

Among variables controlled for, only relative status emerged as a significant predictor of revenge; this finding was consistent with previous research examining revenge in organizations

(Aquino et al., 2001). It was anticipated that of the six HEXACO personality traits, Honesty-Humility and Agreeableness would emerge as predictors of workplace revenge. As hypothesized, Honesty-Humility was found to significantly predict revenge, echoing previous findings of a negative relationship between this trait and other revenge-relevant variables (Lee & Ashton, 2012; Sheppard & Boon, 2012). Agreeableness however, did not demonstrate significant predictive ability of employee revenge in the present study. This finding was surprising, as it was not in line with earlier preliminary work in this area (Lee & Ashton, 2012; Sheppard & Boon, 2012). Instead, Conscientiousness emerged as a second significant predictor of revenge behavior. This finding was also unpredicted, however, in Lee & Ashton (2012), self-reported (but not peer-reported) Conscientiousness demonstrated a significant relation with their measure of vengefulness. Therefore, this finding is not in contradiction with previous work in this area.

One possible theoretical explanation for these findings is that the act of seeking revenge reflects, to some extent, immoral behavior. Previous research has demonstrated that individuals classified as having low moral character scored low on both HEXACO Conscientiousness and Honesty-Humility, while Agreeableness was not found to be a particularly distinguishing trait (Cohen, Panter, Turan, More, & Kim, 2014). According to Cohen and colleagues, the relationship between Conscientiousness and moral character could be attributed to the trait's association with socialization (i.e. following rules, values & prohibitions of society). Given that seeking revenge has been argued to be incongruent with the way a moral person behaves (Colquitt, Scott, Judge, & Shaw, 2006), revenge itself may be considered an immoral behavior, or to at least comprise immoral components. Taking this perspective, it would then seem appropriate that revenge would negatively relate to both Honesty-Humility and Conscientiousness traits, and less so to Agreeableness. It is possible that this result did not fully

emerge in preliminary work, as actually enacting revenge may be considered as more immoral, compared to holding a vengeful disposition (Sheppard & Boon, 2012) or endorsing thoughts/intentions of getting even with an offender (Lee & Ashton, 2012). Therefore, it may be more morally acceptable to endorse vengeful items or feelings, but to actually seek revenge against colleagues may be crossing a “moral line”. While these findings were not necessarily hypothesized, these results further underscore the importance of the current study’s examination of actual revenge reactions to transgressions within organizations. This builds upon previous work, and highlights a need for further investigation into the impact of personality traits on revenge in a field setting, in order to examine the replicability of these findings.

#### **4.2 Perceptions of Organizational Politics and Workplace Revenge**

It was anticipated that POP would predict revenge, such that employees who perceive their organizations to be highly political would be more likely to seek revenge in response to an interpersonal transgression. Contrary to this expectation, POP did not incrementally predict revenge above and beyond control variables and HEXACO personality traits. Furthermore, POP did not moderate the relationship between Honesty-Humility and revenge, as was anticipated. One potential theoretical explanation for the lack of relationship between POP and revenge could be that while organizations with political climates portray a self-serving norm, the construct of POP also encompasses the factor “go along to get ahead” (Kacmar & Ferris, 1991). “Go along to get ahead” comprises a lack of action intended to advance ones own self-interests, such as going along with others in order to be accepted by the “in-group” and achieve valued outcomes through this means. Given that seeking revenge would require individuals to act out against their offender to advance their own interests, it is possible that revenge would be somewhat at odds with this component of POP. Therefore, it is possible that factors of “general political behavior” and “pay

and promotion policies” may be relevant to revenge responses to transgressions, but due to the third factor of “go along to get ahead”, the relationship between POP and revenge may be diluted. Perhaps future research should take a more narrow approach, and examine relations between the POP factors and revenge in organizations.

One possible methodological explanation for this finding could be that participants completed the measure of POP some amount of time after the offense-response pair occurred. In some cases 6 months or even longer had passed from when the event occurred, and when the measures were completed. It is possible that participants’ current perceptions of politics in their organizations may have changed or evolved somewhat from when the offense and response occurred. Future research should investigate the role of POP using perhaps a longitudinal diary study design, where individuals can complete such organizationally relevant measures at the time of the offense.

#### **4.3 Revenge Characteristics and Forms**

It was expected that HEXACO Honesty-Humility would differentially relate to the various characteristics and forms of revenge, while Agreeableness would demonstrate similar relationships with each. More specifically, it was anticipated that Honesty-Humility would relate more strongly to calculated/planned and indirect/sneaky revenge, compared to direct/reactive revenge. Unfortunately, the sample sizes for these analyses were too small to detect significant differences and therefore only trends can be deduced from these analyses, which should be interpreted with extreme caution.

In the present study Honesty-Humility similarly related to all three revenge characteristics, although the relations were slightly stronger for calculated/planned and indirect/sneaky revenge compared to reactive/direct revenge. Agreeableness also similarly

related to all three revenge characteristics, although slightly more strongly related to reactive/direct revenge. Given the small sample sizes for these analyses however, it is not possible to compare and/or contrast these results to previous work in a meaningful way, though the trends do seem to be somewhat in the hypothesized directions. Future research should revisit these hypotheses with a larger sample size. For the forms of revenge, Honesty-Humility showed a slightly larger trend towards revenge focusing on retributive justice compared to revenge resembling inequity reduction, as was hypothesized. Agreeableness also demonstrated a slightly larger trend towards revenge focusing on retributive justice, contrary to the expectation that Agreeableness would similarly relate to both forms. These differences however were not statistically significant, and given the small sample can only be interpreted with extreme caution. These relationships should also be re-examined using a larger sample.

As anticipated, IM differentially related to the three revenge characteristics. More specifically, IM demonstrated a stronger relationship with calculated/planned revenge compared to direct/reactive revenge. Further, IM also exhibited a stronger relationship with indirect/sneaky revenge, compared to direct/reactive revenge. These differences were significant, even despite the small sample size. In addition, IM also demonstrated a stronger relationship with revenge focusing on retributive justice compared to revenge resembling inequity reduction, as anticipated. This would suggest that individuals who engage in calculated/planned revenge, indirect/sneaky revenge, and revenge focusing on retributive justice, also tend to engage in IM, which has been linked to a number of organizational outcomes such as performance appraisals (Barrick et al., 2009; Harris et al., 2003).

#### **4.4 Strengths, Limitations and Future Directions**

The present study examined antecedents of participants' vengeful responses to transgressions occurring within their organizations. Preliminary work in this area, particularly that which examined relations between HEXACO personality traits and revenge relevant variables (Sheppard & Boon, 2012; Lee & Ashton, 2012), offered an important foundation upon which the current study has built. By having participants recall a tangible transgression-response pair from their recent experience, it was possible for the present study to gain insight into predictors of behavioral acts of employee revenge. Furthermore, in the particular case of revenge, it is highly possible that individuals may underestimate their willingness to seek revenge, when they are not actually feeling the emotions associated with being offended or transgressed upon. Therefore, by examining responses to historical transgressions, the present study offered critical insight into antecedents of employee revenge. Furthermore, the present study also examined various characteristics of revenge in an exploratory fashion, providing a basis on which future research in this area can extend.

While this study offers valuable insight into various antecedents of workplace revenge, like all research, it was also subject to some limitations worth noting. Firstly, data in the present study was derived from self-report surveys; this single-source method of data collection renders the study's findings vulnerable to common method bias. However, many of the variables under examination in the current study requested information that would not have been outwardly observable by sources other than the participants themselves, such as underlying motivations (i.e. revenge variables). Yet for the other variables examined, it would have been useful to collect data from additional sources, such as having peer-reports of HEXACO personality measures. Further, participants' reported their perceptions of organizational politics within their respective



organizations, but it is not possible to be sure how accurately these perceptions reflect actual political behavior in the organizations. Given that the present study was conducted through an online crowdsourcing platform however, it was not feasible to incorporate peer- and/or supervisor-reports, or other objective data. Future research should attempt to replicate these findings using various sources of data, to rule out any concerns with regards to common method bias.

Secondly, the present study was conducted with employees located in highly individualistic cultures (i.e. North America, the United Kingdom, etc.). Therefore the findings from the present study may not generalize to organizations operating in countries that are characterized by more collectivistic values. It is likely that employees in collectivistic cultures would be more reluctant to put their needs above those of the organization as a whole (Hofstede, 1980). Therefore, it may be the case that individuals who hold a more collectivistic orientation may be less likely to choose retaliation in response to transgressions, upon consideration of the disadvantages this could inflict on the organization or their immediate work group. Future research may choose to examine whether the relationships highlighted in the present study hold across organizations located in/spanning various cultures.

Lastly, an additional limitation of the current study is the small sample size for the analyses involving revenge characteristics and forms. The correlations were calculated with very small sample sizes ( $N = 100$ ), which rendered analyses insufficient to detect a significant effect. It was particularly challenging to achieve a large number of participants for these analyses however, as participants were required to a) have experienced an offence at their current organization, and b) to have responded by seeking revenge in some way to some extent. Despite the small sample sizes in these analyses, the present study offers some interesting preliminary

insight into the various characteristics and forms of revenge. These preliminary findings should be interpreted with caution of course, and this topic of inquiry should be further examined with a larger sample of participants. In addition, given that the analyses involving revenge characteristics and forms were primarily exploratory in nature, there remains a great deal of work to be done in this area. A qualitative approach may be well suited to address research questions on this particular topic, as it could provide researchers with a more multidimensional and in-depth picture of the qualities of vengeful acts taking place in organizations. For example, perhaps in future research employees could be interviewed, and asked to describe their responses to historical transgressions, which could later be coded according to the various characteristics present in the response.

Furthermore, future research may choose to examine both short-term and long-term outcomes of the various characterizations of revenge. For example, the individuals who engage in calculated/planned revenge will have weighed their options and contemplated the consequences of said options, and may therefore choose an optimal act that will not threaten counter-retaliation, avoiding any ensuing conflict spirals. However, the prolonged rumination exhibited by these individuals may lengthen initial feelings of injustice, which may lead to a variety of adverse outcomes, such as issues with psychological well-being. Conversely, individuals who engage in impulsive forms of revenge may be more likely to invite counter-retaliation and possible resulting conflict, but may move on quickly and avoid negative consequences associated with rumination.

#### **4.5 Implications and Conclusion**

By gaining insight into various predictors of employee revenge, organizations can better inform conflict-management practices. At the extreme, in organizations where escalation of

conflict could be highly detrimental, curbing vengeful responses to provocation could be accomplished through selection and promotion of individuals less likely to engage in revenge. The purpose of this study however is not to necessarily provide organizations with the knowledge to develop a ‘screening tool’ to segregate individuals with select traits in the hiring and promotion processes, but instead to provide employees and managers with valuable information regarding peoples’ affinities and tendencies toward vengeful responses to provocation in the workplace. By gaining a better understanding of which employees are likely to engage in revenge, and situations that may exacerbate this effect, organizations can better adapt their interventions to suit individual needs.

Ultimately, given the various consequences associated with vengeful responses to provocation within organizations, gaining insight into antecedents of employee revenge is of paramount importance. Gaining a better understanding of dispositional and contextual variables that may influence employees’ vengeful responses to interpersonal provocation, can better inform organizational efforts to address and mediate conflict between employees. Moreover, with increased awareness of which individuals are likely to engage in each specific form of revenge, organizations can optimally allocate any intervention efforts.

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## APPENDIX A: DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

- \_\_\_ What is your age
- \_\_\_ What is your gender
- \_\_\_ Which of the following ethnicities do you identify with the most closely?
- \_\_\_ For how long have you been employed in your current organization?
- \_\_\_ For how long have you been employed in your current position?
- \_\_\_ Which of the following best describes your occupation
- \_\_\_ How many people does your current organization employ?

## APPENDIX B: PREDICTOR MEASURES

### Perceptions of Organizational Politics Scale (Kacmar & Carlson, 1997)

- \_\_\_ People in this organization attempt to build themselves up by tearing others down
- \_\_\_ There has always been an influential group in this organization that no one ever crosses
- \_\_\_ Employees are encouraged to speak out frankly even when they are critical of well-established ideas
- \_\_\_ There is no place for yes-men around here; good ideas are desired even it means disagreeing with superiors
- \_\_\_ Agreeing with powerful others is the best alternative in this organization
- \_\_\_ It is best not to rock the boat in this organization
- \_\_\_ Sometimes it is easier to remain quiet than to fight the system
- \_\_\_ Telling others what they want to hear is sometimes better than telling the truth
- \_\_\_ It is safer to think what you are told than to make up your own mind
- \_\_\_ Since I have worked for this organization, I have never seen the pay and promotions policies applied politically
- \_\_\_ I can't remember when a person received a pay increase or promotion that was inconsistent with the published policies
- \_\_\_ None of the raises I have received are consistent with the policies on how raises and promotions are determined
- \_\_\_ The stated pay and promotion policies have nothing to do with how pay raises and promotions are determined
- \_\_\_ When it comes to pay raise and promotion decisions, policies are irrelevant
- \_\_\_ Promotions around here are not valued much because how they are determined is so political

### HEXACO Personality (HEXACO-PI-R 60-item version; Ashton & Lee, 2009)

- \_\_\_ I would be quite bored by a visit to an art gallery
- \_\_\_ I plan ahead and organize things, to avoid scrambling at the last minute
- \_\_\_ I rarely hold a grudge, even against people who have badly wronged me
- \_\_\_ I feel reasonably satisfied with myself overall
- \_\_\_ I would feel afraid if I had to travel in bad weather conditions
- \_\_\_ I wouldn't use flattery to get a raise or promotion at work, even if I thought it would succeed
- \_\_\_ I'm interested in learning about the history and politics of other countries
- \_\_\_ I often push myself very hard when trying to achieve a goal
- \_\_\_ People sometimes tell me that I am too critical of others
- \_\_\_ I rarely express my opinions in group meetings
- \_\_\_ I sometimes can't help worrying about little things
- \_\_\_ If I knew that I could never get caught, I would be willing to steal a million dollars
- \_\_\_ I would enjoy creating a work of art, such as a novel, a song, or a painting
- \_\_\_ When working on something, I don't pay much attention to small details

\_\_\_ People sometimes tell me that I'm too stubborn  
 \_\_\_ I prefer jobs that involve active social interaction to those that involve working alone  
 \_\_\_ When I suffer from a painful experience, I need someone to make me feel comfortable  
 \_\_\_ Having a lot of money is not especially important to me  
 \_\_\_ I think that paying attention to radical ideas is a waste of time  
 \_\_\_ I make decisions based on the feeling of the moment rather than on careful thought  
 \_\_\_ People think of me as someone who has a quick temper  
 \_\_\_ On most days, I feel cheerful and optimistic  
 \_\_\_ I feel like crying when I see other people crying  
 \_\_\_ I think that I am entitled to more respect than the average person is  
 \_\_\_ If I had the opportunity, I would like to attend a classical music concert  
 \_\_\_ When working, I sometimes have difficulties due to being disorganized  
 \_\_\_ My attitude toward people who have treated me badly is "forgive and forget"  
 \_\_\_ I feel that I am an unpopular person  
 \_\_\_ When it comes to physical danger, I am very fearful  
 \_\_\_ If I want something from someone, I will laugh at that person's worst jokes  
 \_\_\_ I've never really enjoyed looking through an encyclopedia  
 \_\_\_ I do only the minimum amount of work needed to get by  
 \_\_\_ I tend to be lenient in judging other people  
 \_\_\_ In social situations, I'm usually the one who makes the first move  
 \_\_\_ I worry a lot less than most people do  
 \_\_\_ I would never accept a bribe, even if it were very large  
 \_\_\_ People have often told me that I have a good imagination  
 \_\_\_ I always try to be accurate in my work, even at the expense of time  
 \_\_\_ I am usually quite flexible in my opinions when people disagree with me  
 \_\_\_ The first thing that I always do in a new place is to make friends  
 \_\_\_ I can handle difficult situations without needing emotional support from anyone else  
 \_\_\_ I would get a lot of pleasure from owning expensive luxury goods  
 \_\_\_ I like people who have unconventional views  
 \_\_\_ I make a lot of mistakes because I don't think before I act  
 \_\_\_ Most people tend to get angry more quickly than I do  
 \_\_\_ Most people are more upbeat and dynamic than I generally am  
 \_\_\_ I feel strong emotions when someone close to me is going away for a long time  
 \_\_\_ I want people to know that I am an important person of high status  
 \_\_\_ I don't think of myself as the artistic or creative type  
 \_\_\_ People often call me a perfectionist  
 \_\_\_ Even when people make a lot of mistakes, I rarely say anything negative  
 \_\_\_ I sometimes feel that I am a worthless person  
 \_\_\_ Even in an emergency I wouldn't feel like panicking  
 \_\_\_ I wouldn't pretend to like someone just to get that person to do favors for me  
 \_\_\_ I find it boring to discuss philosophy  
 \_\_\_ I prefer to do whatever comes to mind, rather than stick to a plan  
 \_\_\_ When people tell me that I'm wrong, my first reaction is to argue with them  
 \_\_\_ When I'm in a group of people, I'm often the one who speaks on behalf of the group

- \_\_\_ I remain unemotional even in situations where most people get very sentimental
- \_\_\_ I'd be tempted to use counterfeit money, if I were sure I could get away with it

**Impression Management (Bolino and Turnley, 1999)**

- \_\_\_ Talk proudly about your experience or education
- \_\_\_ Make people aware of your talents or qualifications
- \_\_\_ Let others know that you are valuable to the organization
- \_\_\_ Let others know that you have a reputation for being competent in a particular area
- \_\_\_ Make people aware of your accomplishments
- \_\_\_ Compliment your colleagues so they will see you as likeable
- \_\_\_ Take an interest in your colleagues' personal lives to show them that you are friendly
- \_\_\_ Praise your colleagues for their accomplishments so they will consider you a nice person
- \_\_\_ Use flattery and favors to make your colleagues like you more
- \_\_\_ Do personal favors for your colleagues to show them that you are friendly
- \_\_\_ Try to appear like a hard-working, dedicated employee
- \_\_\_ Stay at work late so people will know you are hard-working
- \_\_\_ Try to appear busy, even at times when things are slower
- \_\_\_ Arrive at work early in order to look dedicated
- \_\_\_ Come to the office at night or on weekends to show that you are dedicated
- \_\_\_ Be intimidating with co-workers when it will help you get your job done
- \_\_\_ Let others know that you can make things difficult for them if they push you too far
- \_\_\_ Deal forcefully with colleagues when they hamper your ability to get your job done
- \_\_\_ Deal strongly or aggressively with co-workers who interfere in your business
- \_\_\_ Use intimidation to get colleagues to behave appropriately
- \_\_\_ Act like you know less than you do so people will help you out
- \_\_\_ Try to gain assistance or sympathy from people by appearing needy in some area
- \_\_\_ Pretend not to understand something to gain someone's help
- \_\_\_ Act like you need assistance so people will help you out
- \_\_\_ Pretend to know less than you do so you can avoid an unpleasant assignment

## APPENDIX C: TRANSGRESSION AND RESPONSE ITEMS

### Event Description

In the following space provided, please describe a particular incident, wherein you felt unfairly treated or mistreated by another employee, or group of employees, at work. This incident must have occurred within the last six months.

### Offence Severity

\_\_\_ How harmful would you rate the event described above? On a scale from 1 (not at all harmful) to 10 (extremely harmful).

### Offender Status

What was your offender's status within the company, relative to yours? Check whichever applies best.

- \_\_\_ Above your status, they are in a supervisor or managerial position
- \_\_\_ Approximately equivalent to your status
- \_\_\_ Below your status, they are a subordinate

### Frequency of Contact

How frequently do you encounter your offender? (Either at work or outside of work)

- \_\_\_ Once a month
- \_\_\_ More than once per month
- \_\_\_ Weekly
- \_\_\_ More than once per week
- \_\_\_ Daily
- \_\_\_ More than once per day

### Response Description

In the following space provided, please describe how you responded to the offense described above, and indicate what you hoped to achieve with this response. This response may be minor or major in nature, and may have taken place immediately after the offense, or any time since the offense occurred. If you did not respond to the offense at all whatsoever, you can indicate that by checking the N/A box.

\_\_\_ If you did respond to the offense, after how many days did your response take place, once the offense occurred? Please insert the approximate time in number of days below.

## APPENDIX D: REVENGE ITEMS

### Measure of Revenge Behavior (Aquino et al., 2001)

- \_\_\_ I tried to hurt them.
- \_\_\_ I tried to make something bad happen to them.
- \_\_\_ I did something to make them get what they deserve.
- \_\_\_ I got even with them.

### Direct Revenge Items

- \_\_\_ I sought to get even with my offender(s) face-to-face.
- \_\_\_ I didn't try to hide my retaliation from my offender(s).
- \_\_\_ I went directly to the source of my pain, and tried to make him/her/they pay for what he/she/they did.
- \_\_\_ I tried to get even by angrily confronting my offender(s).

### Indirect Revenge Items

- \_\_\_ My offender(s) has no idea that I was the one who tried to get even with him/her/they.
- \_\_\_ I sought to get back at my offender(s) by ensuring that others hold a negative opinion of him/her/they.
- \_\_\_ I made sure that what I did to try to get even couldn't be traced back to me.
- \_\_\_ I sought to get even by spreading nasty rumours about my offender(s).

### Calculated Revenge Items

- \_\_\_ I considered all my options for getting even.
- \_\_\_ I made sure that when I tried to get even, it would really count.
- \_\_\_ I waited for the perfect opportunity to try to make my offender(s) pay for what he/she/they did.
- \_\_\_ I sought to make my offender(s) pay the full price for what he/she/they did.
- \_\_\_ I thought about all the possible consequences before trying to get even.
- \_\_\_ I carefully planned how I would try to get back at my offender(s).

### Impulsive Revenge Items

- \_\_\_ I almost instantly started arguing with my offender(s), without thinking too long or hard about it.
- \_\_\_ My immediate emotional reaction was to confront my offender(s), so I went with it.
- \_\_\_ I lashed out, without really thinking about the consequences of my act.
- \_\_\_ I put little thought into how I would go about trying to make my offender(s) pay.
- \_\_\_ I didn't give it much thought, I just knew I wanted to hurt my offender(s) in return.



**Revenge Form Items**

\_\_\_ I got even with my offender by ultimately withdrawing my support, friendship or effort in some way.

\_\_\_ I got even with my offender by trying to hurt them, their reputation or status within or outside of the organization.

## APPENDIX E: CARELESS RESPONSE ITEMS

### Careless Response Items

- ☐ This is an attentiveness check; please indicate strongly agree.
- ☐ This is an attentiveness check; please indicate occasionally.