# 'I Feel Mad So I Be Bad': The Role of Affect, Dissatisfaction and Stress in Determining Responses to Interpersonal Deviance

Rebecca T. Michalak, Sandra A. Kiffin-Petersen[1] and Neal M. Ashkanasy[2]

PsychSafe Pty Ltd, GPO Box 2564, Perth, WA 6001, Australia, [1]Business School, University of Western Australia, Crawley, WA 6009, Australia, and [2]UQ Business School, The University of Queensland, Brisbane, QLD 4072, Australia
Corresponding author email: sandra.kiffin-petersen@uwa.edu.au

**Interpersonal deviance relates to a range of destructive individual and organizational outcomes. To date, however, scholars have largely failed to explore this issue from the perspective of the targeted individuals; and in particular *how and why* such negative outcomes manifest. To provide insights into this question, and based in principles of critical realism, we utilized semi-structured in-depth interviews to explore employees' interpersonal deviance experiences, their responses and determinants of response selections, including: (1) emotions and feelings; (2) dissatisfaction and stress. We found that the traditional model, where responses are driven by dissatisfaction and confined to exit, voice, loyalty and neglect (EVLN), is inadequate. We therefore extend the EVLN model to include retaliation (EVLN-R) and identify a range of other responses, including venting and seeking social support for inclusion in the typology. Moreover, contrary to traditional theorizing, we found that responses were determined first and foremost by emotions and feelings, followed by stress, with dissatisfaction of little to no importance. We propose a new, multidimensional response typology including self-orientated responses and make suggestions for future research to test our typology, before closing with the implications for practice.**

## Introduction

Workplace deviance, defined by Robinson and Bennett (1995, p. 556) as 'voluntary behavior of organization members which violates significant organizational norms and in doing so threatens the wellbeing of the organization or its members', is a costly issue for organizations (Bacharach, Bamberger and Sonnenstuhl, 2002). The financial impact of organizationally deviant behaviour (such as theft and production deviance) is typically tangible, negatively impacting the bottom line; however, while often less tangible, interpersonal deviance leads to compounded destructive effects by both directly threatening the wellbeing of targeted individuals and, in doing so, indirectly affecting organizational 'wellbeing'. It is of concern that previous research (e.g. Aasland *et al.*, 2010; Michalak, 2015) suggests that many forms of interpersonal deviance are widely prevalent within workplaces.

In this regard, researchers have previously established that various forms of interpersonal deviance, including bullying, mobbing, incivility, mistreatment and sexual harassment, can lead to a range of negative outcomes for both the targeted individual and their organization. Direct individual outcomes can include: lowered physical health (Lim, Cortina and Magley, 2008); reduced satisfaction (Cortina *et al.*, 2001); psychological ill-health (Niedl, 1996; Zapf, Knorz and Kulla, 1996); depression and emotional exhaustion

(Hershcovis and Barling, 2010); and lowered organizational commitment, physical and mental health (Willness, Steel and Lee, 2007). Interpersonal deviance has also been linked indirectly to declines in performance (Caza and Cortina, 2007), changes in victim attitudes, withdrawal behaviours and lowered performance (O'Leary-Kelly *et al.*, 2009).

Duffy *et al.* (2012) estimated that the various forms of interpersonal deviance (e.g. bullying, incivility, abuse, mistreatment and aggression) cost organizations approximately US$6 billion annually. More ominously, the Australian Productivity Commission estimated the total national cost of workplace bullying alone was between $6 billion and $36 billion annually, triggering a parliamentary inquiry (Commonwealth of Australia, 2012). In addition to numerous negative consequences for employee wellbeing, these financial expenses detract from organizational efficiency and performance (Richard *et al.*, 2009), and reduce organizational effectiveness (Ostroff and Schmitt, 1993). Moreover, the true organizational costs of interpersonal deviance are likely underestimated; for example, most deviant behaviour is either unreported or minimized, often as a result of social desirability biases (Spector, 1994). Collecting data on what may constitute potentially criminal activities also raises ethical concerns (NHMRC, 2007), making it problematic to research these behaviours. Furthermore, targeted employees may react by engaging in subtle withdrawal behaviours that are difficult to capture (Rafferty and Restubog, 2011), but ultimately reduce productivity.

In this research, we focus specifically on interpersonal deviance, which Robinson and Bennett (1995) describe as deviance directed at another member of the organization, including political deviance (e.g. spreading rumours) and personal aggression (e.g. yelling at fellow employees). Our aim in the present study was to gain a deeper understanding of how and why the aforementioned negative outcomes manifest. We focus on the perspective of the individual target of interpersonal deviance, because despite extensive research into the organizational effects of interpersonal deviance, individual responses and how these may relate to negative outcomes remain under-explored (Olson-Buchanan and Boswell, 2008; Rafferty and Restubog, 2011). In particular, it is possible that the responses of targeted individuals might determine the impact of interpersonal deviance on individual outcomes. To address this conundrum, we draw from the two main lines of research into individual responses to deviant behaviour: (1) the exit, voice, loyalty and neglect model of dissatisfaction (EVLN, Farrell, 1983; Hirschman, 1970); and (2) affective events theory (AET, Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996), which addresses the role of affect and stress in organizational behaviour.

Hirschman (1970) proposed, in his original treatise, several ways citizens may respond to political repression, including for example by protesting ('voice'), emigrating ('exit') or suffering in silence in the hope that things will improve ('loyalty'). Farrell (1983) further developed the model through the inclusion of 'neglect' to propose the EVLN model as a potentially useful typology to explain how employees respond to a variety of dissatisfying work situations (though experiencing interpersonal deviance was not one of these). Nevertheless, Dowding *et al.* (2000) suggested that, while some advances had been made since Hirschman, the results are disappointing because the schema may be more complex than originally proposed. More recently, the EVLN model has been used to study how individuals respond to a variety of individual and organizational concerns, including ethical dilemmas (Hooghiemstra and Van Manen, 2002), abusive, dysfunctional leader behaviour (Caldwell and Canuto-Carranco, 2010) and consumer behaviour (Tronvoll, 2007).

Weiss and Cropanzano (1996) developed AET as a means to understand the nature and effects of job satisfaction in workplace settings. The authors sought, in particular, to explain the nexus of cognition and affect in determining employees' responses to events generated through the organizational environment. Ashton-James and Ashkanasy (2005) and Weiss and Beal (2005) subsequently explained how AET relates to employees' appraisal of events and coping with stress. In a recent review of AET, Ashkanasy and Dorris (2017) demonstrate that AET has proven to provide a reliable explanation for affect-driven phenomena in work settings.

### Moving beyond the EVLN model

Since its formulation by Farrell (1983), the EVLN model has undergone both significant criticism and further development (e.g. see Dowding *et al.*, 2000). Moving beyond the EVLN model, Parzefall and Salin (2010) used social exchange

theory (SET) concepts of psychological contract breach, injustice and perceived organizational support to discuss alternative mechanisms through which bullying can lead to negative individual responses and bystander attitudinal and behavioural changes, such as lessened job satisfaction, commitment and intention to stay. A comprehensive SET-based explanatory model of individual responses to interpersonal deviance is yet to be developed or tested, however. Similarly, Harlos (2010) found in her investigation of remedial voice (i.e. attempts to resolve the situation) following mistreatment that power relations – whether the perpetrator is the employee's supervisor, rather than a co-worker – plays an important role in their decision to engage in remedial voice. While making a contribution to 'what is done by whom to who' scholarship, Harlos did not investigate potential process mechanisms and/or outcome variables. As a consequence, the more interesting (and useful in practice) 'why and to what end' questions remain largely unanswered.

While a small number of conceptual frameworks for classifying responses to specific forms of interpersonal deviance have been proposed, few have been empirically tested, and so a common frame of reference is yet to be adopted. Limited prior research into individual responses suggests a consensus of sorts exists on two fronts: (1) individual targets of interpersonal deviance are likely to engage in multiple responses rather than choosing one (Niedl, 1996; Zapf and Gross, 2001); and (2) their responses may be constructive or destructive in nature (Tepper, Duffy and Shaw, 2001). Additional categorization attempts appear limited to differentiating between self-focused and perpetrator-driven responses (e.g. to sexual harassment; Knapp *et al.*, 1997) and psychological, physiological and behavioural responses purportedly driven by the severity of the perpetrator's deviant act (e.g. to victimization; Olson-Buchanan and Boswell, 2008).

With regard to the EVLN model, Farrell (1983; see also Rusbult *et al.*, 1988) categorized the four possible employee responses along two dimensions: (1) destructive versus constructive (anti- or pro-organizational) and (2) active versus passive. Exit is considered an active yet destructive response, where the individual leaves the organization, is transferred or thinks about and/or makes plans to leave (mental exiting). Voice is a means of active yet constructive resistance, in which the individual seeks to maintain their

employment relationship with the organization and tries to improve the situation by telling others or suggesting solutions. It is important to note that Hirschman's (1970) concept of voice is not confined to formal lines of grievance reporting. Likewise, Olson-Buchanan and Boswell (2008) suggest voice-centric responses can vary in formality, adopting the term 'remedial voice' to refer to actions by targeted individuals that are intended to resolve or improve the situation (i.e. third-party alternative dispute resolution or mediation).

Whistle-blowing is another form of voice that may also be considered pro-organizational (Dozier and Miceli, 1985), but only if the employee reports the wrongdoing internally (Near and Miceli, 2016). Because external whistle-blowing discloses the wrongdoing to the public, it almost always entails high costs for the employer and in that situation, therefore, it might be thought of as anti-organizational. Loyalty is a passive but constructive response, where the individual waits for the situation to improve while continuing her or his work and maintaining positive support for the organization. Finally, neglect is considered a passive and destructive response whereby the person (unintentionally) allows conditions to deteriorate through effort reduction.

Various authors (e.g. see Farrell, 1983; Hirschman, 1970; Withey and Cooper, 1989) agree that exit, voice, loyalty and neglect represent employee responses to experiencing dissatisfaction in their workplace, while acknowledging that other factors, including perceived alternatives (e.g. another position, other employers) and the cost of a response (e.g. in time and energy) may also influence the (dis)satisfaction–response relationship. For example, early research into employee grievances drew on Hirschman (1970) to explain why discontented loyal employees might respond by voicing, rather than exiting the organization (Olson-Buchanan and Boswell, 2008).

Huefner and Hunt (1994) further suggest that *retaliation* should be added as a fifth, anti-organizational and active response. Geddes and Stickney (2011) proposed similarly that coworkers who observe another employee's deviant anger displays (e.g. swearing or physical aggression) may informally sanction the deviant employee by responding towards them in a likewise retaliatory manner. Branch, Ramsay and Barker (2013) also highlight the potentially important role of bystanders in contributing to, or escalating,

workplace bullying. Tripp, Bies and Aquino (2002) and Zapf and Gross (2001) also reported that targeted employees may fight back with like means, for example by themselves engaging in interpersonally deviant behaviour. These examples resonate with the notions of an 'incivility spiral' (Andersson and Pearson, 1999, p. 452) and 'retaliatory undermining' (i.e. bank employees who perceive an injustice may themselves subsequently engage in undermining) (Lee *et al.*, 2016). Thus, an initial act of deviance may provoke a tit-for-tat spiral, with both parties exhibiting deviant interpersonal behaviour. As an active, intentional and anti-organizational response, retaliatory behaviour can thus be harmful to the wellbeing of employees and the organization (Robinson and Bennett, 1995).

Kidwell and Martin (2005) propose further that deviance often breeds more deviance, suggesting that it may be useful to examine whether employees desire revenge or act out retaliatory behaviours after being targeted (see also Andersson and Pearson, 1999). Bowling and Beehr (2006) also point out that harassed employees may reciprocate in the form of behaviours aimed at getting even with whomever they deem responsible, which could be the perpetrator or the organization. Parzefall and Salin (2010) also suggest that bullied employees who perceive an injustice has occurred may develop highly negative attitudes towards their organization. We refer to the extended five-response, two-dimensional framework as *EVLN-R*, and argue that it may provide a more comprehensive template for categorizing the responses of targeted individuals than, for example, the Knapp *et al.* (1997) typology, which does not clearly differentiate when the response focus is the organization (e.g. loyalty, neglect and {displaced} retaliation) rather than the self/perpetrator. Nonetheless, we are also open to the possibility that the EVLN-R framework may still represent an over-simplified categorization of targeted individuals' responses.

Further, while dissatisfaction has historically been considered a key driver of EVLN responses, this causal premise is yet to be empirically tested, and alternate determinants of targeted individuals' responses – such as the possible role of emotions and feelings, and/or stress – remain unchallenged. For example, additional (albeit scant) research suggests that emotional processes may be involved in the relationship between experiences of deviance and its outcomes (e.g. see Olson-Buchanan

and Boswell, 2008 on mistreatment; Glasø and Notelaers, 2012 on bullying). To investigate this effect further, we next review affect and stress research as a potential alternate theoretical explanation of how targeted individuals respond to interpersonal deviance.

### The relative role of affect and stress

Osborne, Smith and Huo (2012) studied EVLN responses to workplace furloughs (reduced pay), and found the discrete emotions of anger, fear, sadness and gratitude were influential in determining the effect of deprivation on particular EVLN responses, with anger a particularly potent motivator of most responses. Fox and Stallworth (2010) found in a study of interpersonal deviance in public schools that teachers also experienced negative emotions, as well as physical stress symptoms and burnout, when subjected to violent acts and bullying. This was particularly the case when the bullying was frequent or enacted by the principal. Two other studies also link interpersonally deviant behaviours (e.g. bullying, undermining), to specific emotions and outcomes, including reductions in job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Duffy *et al.*, 2012; Glasø and Notelaers, 2012).

Drawing from both voice research and AET (Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996), Olson-Buchanan and Boswell (2008) proposed a theoretical framework to understand how individual employees respond to mistreatment. These authors encourage us to investigate further if, rather than being dissatisfaction-driven *per se*, affect and/or stress play a more dominant role in how employees respond to interpersonal deviance.

Affect can be thought of as collectively referring to emotions, feelings, mood and trait affect (Michalak and Ashkanasy, 2013). Fischer, Shaver and Carnochan (1990, p. 84) define emotion as a 'discrete, innate, functional, biosocial action and expression system'. Frijda (1994) notes further that emotions are usually focused, intense, short in duration and tend to have an object or cause to which they are attached. Emotions, in effect, constitute objective phenomena in that they stem from physiological changes in the body and the release of neurotransmitters (e.g. rise in skin temperature, increase in respiration and heart rate, release of catecholamines). Damasio (1994) differentiates emotions from feelings, which he defines in terms of the subjective meaning an individual attaches to

these internal changes (e.g. 'I feel angry'). Under the affective rubric, we are particularly interested in emotions and feelings in the responses of mistreated individuals; this is because emotions and feelings have a known cause (e.g. a deviant act) and are more likely to be predictive of responses than non-specific, generalized mood or trait affect (Briner, 1999).

In addition to affect, we also examine stress processes, which Folkman *et al.* (1986, p. 572) define as a reaction to 'a person–environment transaction that is appraised as taxing or exceeding the person's resources'. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) contend that experiencing a stimulus is likely to trigger a cognitive appraisal process to evaluate the harmfulness of the stimulus. An assessment of harm then triggers a negative emotional response (e.g. fear, anxiety and anger), leading the individual to become distressed. We therefore argue that, since targets of interpersonal deviance will likely appraise the experience as a threat to their personal wellbeing (Glasø and Notelaers, 2012), it is important also to try to understand the influence of stress in individuals' response selections.

While recent research supports the notion that affective reactions and stress may each be involved in individual responses to deviance (Glasø and Notelaers, 2012), past studies (e.g. Barling, 1996; Cortina and Wasti, 2005; Cortina *et al.*, 2001; Djurkovic, McCormack and Casimir, 2006; Pearson, Andersson and Porath, 2000) focus primarily on behavioural reactions to deviance experiences at work. These earlier studies explored *what* the employee might do, however, rather than *how* they felt about their interpersonal deviance experience or *why* they responded in the way they did. In addition, none appear to have examined the drivers of, or internal processes underpinning, individuals' actual responses, which may encompass behavioural, affective and/or cognitive strategies.

Moreover, while Glasø and Notelaers (2012) found in their large-scale study of bullying that targets' emotions partially mediated the relationship between bullying and attitudes (as theorized by Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996 in AET), these authors did not specifically consider the possibility that emotions and/or attitudes may lead to behavioural responses. Similarly, Salin *et al.* (2014) explored the targeted individual's actual and ideal responses to mistreatment and factors affecting their response selections, but they did not

include any outcome variables or examine possible mechanisms via which responses may influence outcomes. Briner (1999) noted the importance of separating affect from the non-specific affective states of stress and dissatisfaction, because the former may be more helpful in understanding specific responses to interpersonal deviance.

A critical question then arises in this regard: Are the responses of targeted employees best explained by affect (i.e. emotions and feelings), by dissatisfaction, by stress or some combination of the three? Given these alternate differing explanations, we undertook a qualitative study of individual experiences based in principles of critical realism (Bhaskar, 1975), because this approach allows researchers to accept, to modify or to reject theoretical frameworks to better explain the complex processes involved (Fletcher, 2017; Pratt, 2009). The three research questions that arise from this discussion, therefore, are:

*RQ1:* How do individual targets of interpersonal deviance respond to their experience?

*RQ2:* What is the contribution of emotions and feelings in determining individual responses to interpersonally deviant experiences?

*RQ3:* What is the contribution of dissatisfaction and stress in determining individual responses to interpersonally deviant experiences?

## Methods

We collected our data using interviews because, as Buchanan and Bryman (2007) and Shah and Corley (2006) point out, this qualitative method allows the discovery of new factors and relationships, together with insights into complex processes not ordinarily accessible through quantitative methods. This approach also avoids potential ethical concerns with experimental studies that may victimize individuals by deliberately subjecting them to an act of interpersonal deviance. Furthermore, Fineman (2004) highlights that attempts to capture emotions and feelings via 'objective' (i.e. psychometric) measurement may be flawed, instead advocating for interviews as a more appropriate method when examining personal experiences of subjective emotion-centric phenomena. We recruited interviewees via email using snowball and convenience sampling. Snowball sampling is

particularly useful when interviewees' experiences are potentially stigmatizing (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2008; Robinson, 2014). Participation criteria included: (1) the interviewee must have been a target of interpersonally deviant behaviour at work; and (2) the perpetrator was an employee of the same organization.

As our research is based in critical realism (Bhaskar, 1975), we employed the critical incident technique (CIT: Flanagan, 1954) for data collection. CIT is widely used in the social science disciplines because, consistent with critical realism, it enables interviewers to seek insight into how and why people behave in certain ways. The method also enables the interviewer to identify similarities, differences and patterns of behaviour (Hughes, 2007). Though CIT data are retrospective, the method has a reputation for gathering valid, reliable descriptions (Motowidlo *et al.*, 1992; Pescosolido, 2002). In particular, CIT facilitates investigation of interviewees' deviance experiences, the way the occurrences were managed and the perceived outcomes (Chell, 2004).

The first author conducted the interviews either in person or via speakerphone and, consistent with the CIT, began with an invitation to discuss a critical incident where the interviewee was targeted by a perpetrator from their own organization. Interviewees initially described their interpersonal deviance experience consistent with the CIT, before the interviewer progressed to a semi-structured, in-depth stage designed to explore individual responses. We also aimed to deduce the reasons why targeted individuals responded in a given way via open-ended, probing questions eliciting illustrative examples, clarifying contradictions and seeking detailed explanations (Wengraf, 2001). At the conclusion of the interview, participants were provided with the umbrella definition of interpersonal deviance, including examples of its various forms, ranging from minor (e.g. incivility) to severe (e.g. sexual harassment), and asked to self-classify their experience.

We digitally audio-recorded interviews, which lasted between 38 and 150 minutes, and then arranged for them to be transcribed verbatim by an independent service, unaware of the study aims. Finally, we ensured confidentiality and propriety of participant information via a non-disclosure statement signed by each transcriber, meeting Lincoln and Guba's (1985) 'confirmability' quality criterion.

*Participants*

Participants comprised 20 full-time employed adult Australian employees aged between 25 and 64. This sample size satisfied Creswell's (2002) interview guidelines and exceeded Guest, Bunce and Johnson's (2006, p. 65) recommendations for when data saturation is reached (i.e. 'new information produces little or no change to the codebook'). The sample was 90% female and from a range of occupational groups, including professional/technical, education, manufacturing, emergency services and administration.

*Analysis*

We analysed our data using NVivo 10 software (QSR International) and employed an applied thematic analytic approach that not only allows for multiple techniques including quantification, but also encourages it as a means of supporting assertions with evidence (Guest, MacQueen and Namey, 2012). While qualitative data are commonly associated with the constructionist philosophical paradigm, a thematic analytical approach can also be used in a critical realist manner as a means to convert qualitative data into quantitative data, where themes represent patterns within the data. As a minimum, patterns help with describing and organizing observations. At maximum, recognizing patterns can also assist with interpreting aspects of the phenomenon of interest, such as the processes that underpin individual responses (Boyatzis, 1998). NVivo provides a useful means of addressing the dual challenge of complexity and trustworthiness presented by qualitative data (Sinkovics and Alfoldi, 2012).

For RQ1, we explored responses with *a priori* EVLN-R themes before using an inductive technique to code additional responses in line with our earlier assertion that this typology may be overly simplified. We developed a codebook (Boyatzis, 1998) and used autonomous and credentialing counting, to demonstrate why a reader should have confidence in the findings (Hannah and Lautsch, 2011). With respect to RQ2 and RQ3, while we anticipated affect, dissatisfaction and stress themes, we adopted an inductive approach in line with critical realism (Bhaskar, 1975). Across the three RQs, our analytical approach is best described as hybrid and inductive-dominant (Boyatzis, 1998; Fereday and Muir-Cochrane, 2006). The

*Table 1. Individual response data*

| EVLN-R responses | No. references | % EVLN-R references | % All references | Actualized response | % Actualized response |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Exit | 48 | 33.80 | 15.69 | 14 | 12.50 |
| Voice | 31 | 21.83 | 10.13 | 8 | 7.14 |
| Loyalty | 13 | 9.15 | 4.25 | 8 | 7.14 |
| Neglect | 18 | 12.68 | 5.88 | 9 | 8.04 |
| Retaliate | 32 | 22.54 | 10.46 | 8 | 7.14 |
| EVLN-R responses | 142 | 100.00 | 46.41 | 47 | 41.96 |

| Other responses | No. references | % Other references | % All references | Actualized response | % Actualized response |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SSS | 46 | 28.05 | 15.03 | 17 | 15.18 |
| IOS | 25 | 15.24 | 8.17 | 11 | 9.82 |
| PS | 28 | 17.07 | 9.15 | 8 | 7.14 |
| Confront | 35 | 21.34 | 11.44 | 12 | 10.71 |
| Vent | 12 | 7.32 | 3.92 | 7 | 6.25 |
| Avoid | 9 | 5.49 | 2.94 | 5 | 4.46 |
| Ruminate | 5 | 3.05 | 1.63 | 3 | 2.68 |
| Deny | 4 | 2.44 | 1.31 | 2 | 1.79 |
| Other responses | 164 | 100.00 | 53.59 | 65 | 58.04 |
| Total responses | 306 | | 100.00 | 112 | 100.00 |

SSS = Seek social support; IOS = Informal organizational support; PS = Problem-solve.

inductive coding approach to all three RQs involved an iterative process leading to data reduction (Miles and Huberman, 1994). As such, our analysis also includes elements of abductive reasoning, where researchers 'move back and forth between induction and deduction—first converting observations into theories and then assessing those theories through action' (Morgan, 2007, p. 71). Abduction allows the researcher to be open to the discovery of surprising patterns or demi-regularities in the coded data, in keeping with the goal of critical realism to identify the causal mechanism that best explains social events or phenomena (Fletcher, 2017).

In addition, to avoid bias, we employed an independent research assistant to dual-code the transcripts. After a codebook training session, the assistant was asked to code four randomly selected transcripts. We used both percentage agreement and Cohen's (1968) kappa to check inter-rater reliability (Hannah and Lautsch, 2011) with the first author's coding. The average agreement per theme was 98% and Cohen's kappa was 0.73 (which is considered substantial; see Landis and Koch, 1977). Coding disagreements primarily related to broad versus narrow coding and were resolved through discussion. A series of matrix queries provided frequency counts for each theme, with chi-square tests used to assess, where appropriate,

significant differences between themes (Preacher, 2001).

## Results

In this section, we discuss the results for each of the three research questions (based on the thematic analysis and matrix queries) in turn. Note that we use pseudonyms to protect the anonymity of interviewees.

*RQ1:* How do individual targets of interpersonal deviance respond to their experience?

Initially, we aimed to determine if the EVLN-R typology encapsulates all responses that individual targets of interpersonal deviance reportedly use. Of the 20 participants, 19 reported that they *thought about using* at least one EVLN-R response, with many also thinking about using more than one, resulting in a total of 142 references, as presented in Table 1. Of the EVLN-R choices, two participants talked only about pro-organizational responses, three talked solely about anti-organizational responses and 12 referred to anti- more often than pro-organizational responses. A chi-square test showed that participants made significantly more references to thinking about anti-organizational responses

than pro-organizational (98, 44: $\chi^2(1) = 20.54$, n = 142, p < 0.01). The results also show that most participants fantasized about retaliating (12 interviewees), as shown in these examples:

> Yeah, I felt like, just in fact, I felt like publicly in the office, telling him what a wanker he was and that the obnoxious act was a joke and that (he is) not respected. (Joanna, F, 34 years)
> I mean at the time I wanted to do all sorts of horrible things like you know, put bombs in his letterbox or something. I mean I wanted to kill everybody that I walked into … (he) bugged me you know. (Heather, F, 36 years)
> I would go out in such a blaze of glory; I would bloody expose him for the incompetent pig he is. Oh yeah! I'm glad there are no shotguns lying around (my workplace). (Amy, F, 28 years)

Table 1 also shows the number of interviewees who *actualized* each EVLN-R response (we included mental exiting or thoughts of leaving for definitional consistency), totalling 47 (42%). Exit was the most frequent of the actualized EVLN-R responses, and second most frequent overall response. The majority of actualized responses were anti-organizational. That is, participants reported responding with exit, retaliation and/or neglect significantly more frequently than loyalty or voice (31, 16: $\chi^2(1) = 4.79$, n = 47, p < 0.05). Eight additional responses are also evident in Table 1, including 'seek social support', 'informally seek organizational support', 'confront the perpetrator', 'problem-solve', 'vent', 'avoid', 'ruminate' and 'deny' (58% of total). While 14 of our interviewees reported that they actually exited, 17 sought social support. Chi-square tests indicate that interviewees both talked about (164, 142: $\chi^2(1) = 1.58$, n = 306, ns) and actualized other responses (65, 47: $\chi^2(1) = 2.89$, n = 112, ns) equally as often as EVLN-R responses. The total number of actualized responses across all strategies was 112, which is an average of five to six responses per person, indicating targeted individuals use a combination of responses.

In Table 2 we present the codebook definitions, examples and qualifications for all 14 responses, as derived from the coding. Inductive coding revealed two additional dimensions in that some responses appear *self-orientated*, rather than being pro- or anti-organizational in nature (as per the EVLN model). Some responses were not clearly pro- or anti-organizational in impact, but rather had a potentially *neutral/mixed* organizational impact. For example, confronting the perpetrator in an effort to improve the situation for the individual employee is different from voice, which is by definition a pro-organizational response. Where the confrontation was reported by the interviewee to have reduced or stopped the perpetrator's behaviour, it may also have achieved concurrently a pro-organizational outcome. In situations where confrontation did not reduce or cease the behaviour, it may have had a neutral organizational effect, and where confrontation led to further or increased perpetration, it may have had an anti-organizational effect.

Table 3 reports the sample characteristics, self-categorizations and individual response combinations used by each participant. The interview protocol did not specifically allow for the temporal ordering of response selections; however, results from the complex narratives show that exit was most often combined with voice (35%) or loyalty (25%). Of the other responses, seeking social support (mentioned by almost all individuals) was most often used with seeking informal organizational support (45%) and/or problem-solving (40%). Sample characteristics also show that a range of critical incidents pertaining to interpersonal deviance were self-categorized by interviewees, ranging from the minor form of incivility to interpersonal mistreatment and bullying. Next, we report the results for RQ2: the contribution of affect in determining targeted individuals' responses.

*RQ2:* What is the contribution of emotions and feelings in determining individual responses to interpersonally deviant experiences?

Across the 20 case narratives, we noted an important demi-regularity in the data in that there were more than 300 references with affective themes. We explored the nature of the affect involved in more detail first by coding changes in and references to positive emotions, and changes in and references to negative emotions. Second, we conducted a word frequency query in each of these four sub-themes. We found a significant difference in references to negative emotions compared with positive emotions across all 20 narratives (411, 46: $\chi^2(1) = 291.52$, n = 457, p < 0.01). The majority of changes in emotion (26 out of 45) involved either an increase in negative emotion or a decrease in positive emotion. For example, interviewees

*Table 2. Descriptive definitions of all responses with examples of actualized individual responses*

**LABEL: EXIT**

DEFINITION: Exit is an active yet destructive response, where the individual leaves the organization, gets themselves transferred, or thinks about leaving (a form of mental exiting) their position or organization.

EXAMPLES: Target may talk about looking for new jobs, going on a secondment, applying for jobs, waiting for a job to come up so they can leave the role/organization they were working for/in at the time of the interpersonal deviance experience.

EXCLUSIONS/QUALIFICATIONS: Does not need to include actual resignation. Target may have mentally exited and still be in the same role. Likewise, they might have left temporarily (e.g. had a short transfer contract) but then returned to their 'normal' role.

'I waited until he left the building. I packed a box and I cleared my desk off and I never went back.' (Heather)

**LABEL: VOICE**

DEFINITION: Voice is a means of active yet constructive resistance, as the individual seeks to maintain their employment relationship with the organization (pro-organizational) and tries to improve the situation. Voice refers to attempts to change, rather than escape from, the dissatisfying situation.

EXAMPLES: Complaining actively with intent of having situation resolved, recommending ways for management or others to improve the situation, or the filing of a formal grievance.

EXCLUSIONS/QUALIFICATIONS: Should not include attempts to confront the perpetrator (see upcoming theme).

'I approached my manager once removed, and discussed with her – because it was getting to the point where everyone in the team was going, "My God. We're going to quit".' (Amy)

**LABEL: LOYALTY**

DEFINITION: Loyalty is a passive but constructive (pro-organizational) response, where the individual simply waits for the situation to improve and in the mean time continues their work and positive support of the organization.

EXAMPLES: Target may refer to keeping their head down and efforts focused on the work at hand, going in to work as regularly as they usually would, making sure they still did their job well, wanting to stay with their employer/in their role at the time of the interpersonal deviance experience, trying to stay concentrated on their tasks.

EXCLUSIONS/QUALIFICATIONS: Should include the *intention* to continue completing their job tasks as per usual.

'I just went in and tried to remain consistent and remain busy so that the days would seem to go a little bit quicker.' (Sophie)

**LABEL: NEGLECT**

DEFINITION: Neglect is a passive and destructive response where the person (unintentionally) allows conditions to deteriorate by reducing their effort. At its core, neglect is response without real intention to harm. The neglect response is passively allowing conditions to worsen.

EXAMPLES: Akin to work withdrawal behaviour, for example putting less effort in to work because the target is distracted or unable to focus properly, and generally letting things fall apart.

EXCLUSIONS/QUALIFICATIONS: Should not include active, deliberate acts of retaliation (see next theme).

'I became a little bit inefficient.' (Rachel)

**LABEL: RETALIATE**

DEFINITION: Retaliation is an active, anti-organizational behaviour – intentionally destructive acts, which are voluntary (rather than being forced); that is, the individual chooses to engage in the behaviours. Retaliation is self-orientated – it was actualized and fantasized about as a means of making the targeted individual feel better.

EXAMPLES: Examples of retaliation behaviours include organizationally deviant (behaviours such as deliberate and unwarranted absenteeism (as opposed to unconsciously avoidant-style absenteeism), insubordination and sabotage) and interpersonally deviant behaviour (going 'tit for tat', gossiping, making up rumours and being aggressive).

EXCLUSIONS/QUALIFICATIONS: Should not include unintentional acts of neglect (see preceding theme).

'taken(ing) my foot off the accelerator … turn(ing) up at 9.00, leave(ing) at 5.00 and not doing a bloody thing.' (Amy)

'(I) gave back.' (Carol; tit-for-tat spiral)

**LABEL: SEEK SOCIAL SUPPORT**

DEFINITION: Self-orientated response to interpersonal deviance experience whereby the target actively speaks about their experience and receives emotional support from others. May have a concurrent anti-organizational impact if done on work time (of either the target, or the person they speak to if in same workplace) as it can constitute production deviance.

EXAMPLES: Targets may refer to talking about their experiences with friends, colleagues or family. They may also talk to direct peers or co-workers. For several cases, this response served a concurrent purpose of confirming with others that the targeted person was not imagining their experiences, and/or was not 'going crazy'.

EXCLUSIONS/QUALIFICATIONS: Other party should not fall into any of the categories of 'professional' listed under informal organizational support seeking.

'I really checked in with my co-workers to see if it was happening to them or what their reaction was when they found out how it was happening to me and it really didn't change. Like I felt like I had some support in arms there. Not that they were prepared – as I would not expect them – to have done anything about it. Um, you know, I certainly didn't put them into that sort of responsibility.' (Heather)

'But I think my friends were so important and having people there saying you are doing the right thing and it's something you need to hear when it gets very difficult. Um, a support base is really important. You wouldn't want to do it alone.' (Isla)

*Table 2.  Continued*

**LABEL: INFORMAL ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT SEEKING**

DEFINITION: Target actively speaks about the interpersonal deviance experience on an informal basis with a member of management/HR, or speaks to a professional (e.g. an in-house or formally affiliated EAP psychologist or counsellor). May have a concurrent neutral or pro-organizational impact. Self-orientated strategy, as often included asking for informal advice on how to address situation/achieve a solution *for the target*.

EXAMPLES: This can include any action whereby the target seeks support or guidance from a professional person of any sort, on the premise that the person does not have the capacity or obligation to act on the disclosure in the absence of the target's formal permission.

EXCLUSIONS/QUALIFICATIONS: Does not include formal reporting (voice), and does not include social support seeking (speaking with friends or family; see relevant other themes).

'And I said that I need, I can't remember what I said, "how can I get you to work with me (to) get him to cooperate with me because if I hear one time (problem employee) was working against me rather than with me ..." and my boss told me if I needed anything doing, send him an email and then later send it in to my boss as well, not copy it in to him, but send it separately so that my boss had it on file as well, and I think it was probably his way of being able to manage what was happening between us.' (Trish)

**LABEL: PROBLEM-SOLVE**

DEFINITION: Target actively developed strategies to deal with/resolve issues with the perpetrator or with the situation in general.

EXAMPLES: This is a broad theme including any means of responding that assisted the target to either temporarily or permanently resolve or improve the situation that is not covered by other themes. It may include befriending the perpetrator, managing the perpetrator, or managing the situation. May have had a concurrent neutral or pro-organizational impact.

EXCLUSIONS/QUALIFICATIONS: Should not include any response that could be reasonably coded under other themes. For example, making a formal complaint is a means of problem-solving, but meets the definition of voice and should be coded as such.

'Just kind of shrug my shoulders and ignore her, there is no point arguing with her, it doesn't penetrate, she has just got in her mind what she thinks and that is it, because I wouldn't engage with her when she starts that kind of behaviour so I just waited for her to depart.' (Rachel)

'I did a lot of work because I am such cuddly, friendly; don't like to fight with anyone. I did a lot of work to get things back on sort of speaking terms and get us all getting along in a sort of a professional level as well ... like I said to (one of two key perpetrators) ... "okay, we don't get along in the workplace but as a person I really like you" and I think that broke a lot of the ice.' (Kate)

**LABEL: CONFRONT THE PERPETRATOR**

DEFINITION: An active and intentional response following an interpersonal deviance experience whereby the target tells the perpetrator (e.g. in writing, via telephone or in person) that they did not like their behaviour and/or they want the behaviour to stop. It has a self-centred basis, and may have had a concurrent anti-, neutral/mixed or pro-organizational impact depending on whether it ceased/reduced, had no impact and/or exacerbated the perpetration.

EXAMPLES: Target complains to/confronts the perpetrator directly and/or is assertive in providing feedback about the perpetrator's behaviour being unacceptable/unwelcome.

EXCLUSIONS/QUALIFICATIONS: This theme differs from *voice* in that the target's focus is self-centred; not being undertaken with intention of benefitting the organization. Confrontation also must address the perpetrator directly, not via another person. Depending on how it is done, may also concurrently constitute voice.

'... he called me lazy, and I said you could call me anything you like in this world, you could call me hyperactive, you could call me a bitch, you could call me whatever, but there is one thing in this world that I am not and that is lazy.' (Kate)

'I would try many times to say to him, to try and emphasize that I wasn't interested in a relationship with him ... I was talking to him at one point, just having a normal conversation he starts staring at my chest and I said "stop it, just stop it".' (Isla)

**LABEL: VENT**

DEFINITION: Targets actively engaged in one-sided talking about their interpersonal deviance experiences to other people, with an emphasis on the emotional aspects of the experience. Venting is a self-orientated response, and may have had a concurrent anti-organizational impact if done on work time and/or if the other party was a colleague because it may constitute production deviance.

EXAMPLES: Colloquially, this response is about getting something of one's chest, releasing the emotions in verbal form, having a rant and a rave, or letting off steam. Venting involves one person talking at someone else, not a discussion between two or more people.

EXCLUSIONS/QUALIFICATIONS: This theme is differentiated from social support seeking in that it is emotion-centric, does not involve input from the other party and the other party may not be known to the target; however, social support seeking and venting may co-occur.

'Yeah, I mean please, I'm the best whinger (whiner) of all time. You know, I told everyone who was, I'm sure I told the clerk at the grocery store that I was miserable about my boss. Yeah, I told a lot of people.' (Heather)

'She has been one of the best people to talk to in terms of just being able to vent to someone.' (Leanne)

'I would walk home from work most nights with my boyfriend at the time, and I would spend 30 minutes downloading to him how unhappy I was with what had gone on in the course of the day.' (Sophie)

'I needed to talk to somebody just to tell them how frustrated I was about it.' (Brenda)

© 2018 British Academy of Management.

*Table 2. Continued*

**LABEL: AVOID**

DEFINITION: Target actively found cognitive or behavioural ways to avoid the perpetrator of the interpersonal deviance.

EXAMPLES: Target may refer to staying away, avoiding, working different hours or altering working habits in such a way as to reduce the amount of time or frequency with which they were exposed to the perpetrator, or the level of attention they paid to/cognitive effort they used to process the perpetrator's behaviour. This response typically had a neutral organizational impact.

EXCLUSIONS/QUALIFICATIONS: Should not include acts of neglect or retaliation whereby the target avoids doing their job or deliberately avoids their workplace (without permission).

'Um … I would avoid her.' (Leanne)

'Also, I guess moving out of the (department of Y) into (X department), it was only a couple of buildings away but it was a move and it was getting out of there and knowing that I wouldn't see him every day. That was part of it as well.' (Isla)

**LABEL: RUMINATE**

DEFINITION: A passive, cognitive response whereby the target obsessively thinks about their interpersonal deviance experience/s on a repetitive basis. Ruminate may have had a concurrent anti-organizational impact if done on work time as it may constitute production deviance.

EXAMPLES: Target may report not being able to get the interpersonal deviance experience out of their thoughts or of going over it several times in their mind without any alteration in detail or getting any closer to a resolution/outcome. May also be followed by verbal or behavioural signs of rumination (e.g. repetitive talking about the same situation). This passive response is a self-orientated response but without an objective.

EXCLUSIONS/QUALIFICATIONS: Repetitive talking about the situation may or may not be a follow-up to cognitive rumination. Talking about similar but not exactly the same situation with multiple people should be coded to venting or seeking social support (see other themes).

'I thought about it 24–7 … I think it just got to the point where I was so fed up with him. I was talking to – I had a very close friend … who also reported to him … it was almost like you were ruminating … we were so obsessed with his behaviour.' (Jenny)

**LABEL: DENY**

DEFINITION: Target passively responded to their interpersonal deviance experience by pretending or trying to convince themselves that an act of perpetration had not occurred. Any organizational impact of denial is difficult to assess with only two cases as a base. Denial may have a neutral organizational impact.

EXAMPLES: Denial is a cognitive response first and foremost. Target may talk about mentally shutting out the experience, trying not to process it, putting it in a 'box' and not dealing with it, and deliberately focusing on other tasks rather than thinking about the experience. May also be followed by behavioural denial, for example telling others that nothing happened.

EXCLUSIONS/QUALIFICATIONS: Cognitive denial must be present for behavioural denial to occur. For example, this theme does not include target acknowledging the perpetration themselves but then deliberately lying to others or publicly denying the perpetration occurred.

'I didn't react. I just didn't know what to do. I reacted in the sense that I just pretended that it didn't happen and went back to my desk and felt yuck.' (Sophie)

'Just don't deal with it. Just pretend nothing happened.' (Isla)

talked about their experiences leading them to feel *more wary* of people and *less confident* in themselves, their capabilities and their judgment. The narratives show that there were 15 positive changes *after* the situation, which included interviewees talking about how much happier they felt after, for example, they or the perpetrator left the organization, but only four positive changes in emotion reportedly occurred *during* the experience.

Based on coding for affect (which includes emotions and feelings), we also identified a sub-theme, '*Fear of negative consequences*' (eight cases). While determinants of, not deterrents to, response selections were the focus of our study, we briefly report this data because the sub-theme highlights that a specific discrete emotion – namely fear – appeared to influence the non-selection of certain responses, particularly voice. Feared negative consequences included tarnishing their own reputation, for example, if they formally reported (voiced), which Carol described as a personal desire to 'keep my copybook unblotted'. Post-voice victimization was also a source of fear. For example, Jenny was convinced that, if she approached HR (voiced), her life 'would become a misery' and, based on other employees' experiences of HR, that she would be told 'well, you're the problem'. Similarly, members of Rachel's department 'were all called into (the perpetrator's) office individually and told that if we dared speak about this event it would be viewed as serious misconduct, like a veiled threat'. While describing his fear of post-voice victimization, Peter spoke about a 'culture of silence' as a key deterrent to voicing:

*Table 3. Sample characteristics, pseudonyms, self-categorizations and individual response combination*

| Pseudonym | Industry | Age | Gender | Self-categorization | EVLN-R | Other responses | Active | Passive | Anti-org. | Pro-org. | Neutral/ mixed org. | Self-orientated |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Amy | NGO Lobbying | 28 | F | Bullying | EVNR | SSS, IOS, PS, VENT | 7 | 1 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 5 |
| Barbara | Consulting (Management) | 64 | F | Bullying | L | SSS, CONFRONT | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Brenda | Academia | 26 | F | Incivility, interpersonal deviance | — | SSS, PS, VENT, AVOID | 4 | — | 2 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Carol | Mining | 45 | F | Bullying, interpersonal deviance | R | SSS, IOS | 3 | — | 2 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Heather | Publishing | 36 | F | Interpersonal deviance | ELNR | SSS, IOS, VENT | 5 | 2 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Isla | Academia | 25 | F | Sexual harassment | EVR | SSS, IOS, CONFRONT, AVOID, DENY | 7 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 6 |
| Jenny | Insurance | 38 | F | Interpersonal deviance, bullying | EVR | SSS, CONFRONT, RUMINATE | 5 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Joanna | Mining | 34 | F | Interpersonal deviance | ER | SSS, CONFRONT | 4 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Kate | Beverage Manufacturing | 32 | F | Bullying | LN | SSS, IOS, PS, CONFRONT | 4 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4 |
| Leanne | Academia | (45+) | F | Interpersonal mistreatment, interpersonal deviance, bullying | EVLNR | SSS, IOS, CONFRONT, VENT, AVOID | 8 | 2 | 6 | 4 | 4 | 6 |
| Mary | Education (Schools) | 57 | F | Interpersonal mistreatment, interpersonal deviance | EVN | IOS, CONFRONT, RUMINATE | 4 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 2 |
| Matt | Engineering Consulting | 33 | M | Bullying | ELN | SSS, PS, CONFRONT | 4 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| Nicole | Legal | (35+) | F | Mobbing, bullying | EVN | IOS | 3 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Peter | Police | 32 | M | Incivility, interpersonal mistreatment, interpersonal deviance, bullying | EVNR | SSS, IOS, CONFRONT, AVOID | 7 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 5 |
| Rachael | Academia | 61 | F | Incivility, interpersonal mistreatment, interpersonal deviance, bullying | ELN | SSS, IOS, PS, VENT, AVOID | 6 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Sarah | Ambulance | 33 | F | Interpersonal mistreatment | ELR | SSS | 3 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Sophie | Corporate Banking | 30 | F | Bullying, unwanted sexual attention | ELNR | IOS, PS, VENT, RUMINATE, DENY | 5 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 6 |
| Trish | Food Processing | 54 | F | Incivility, bullying | ER | SSS, IOS, PS, CONFRONT | 6 | — | 4 | 3 | 3 | 5 |
| Veronica | State Government | 28 | F | Incivility, bullying | L | SSS, PS, VENT | 3 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| Wendy | Community Services | 47 | F | Interpersonal mistreatment, interpersonal deviance | VR | SSS, CONFRONT | 4 | — | 3 | 2 | 2 | 3 |

SSS = Seek social support; IOS = Informal organizational support; PS = Problem-solve. Responses are not listed in temporal order of actualization; reliable temporal ordering was not possible given the complexity of the narratives. Typology total number of responses may differ from combination number of responses due to a single response being categorized as having multiple organizational impacts (e.g. Confront the perpetrator may have had a pro-, anti- and/or mixed/neutral organizational impact).

© 2018 British Academy of Management.

You just don't. It's just…You just wouldn't do. You'd try and deal with it yourself. It's not as bad as what it used to be, but it's still there. And you're frowned upon by your peers if you start doing that sort of stuff. There are guys that do it and they're like, no one talks to them. You just get ostracized. With my mates… I've lived and breathed (the job). Be it social or work. And I didn't want that, so you just sort of shut your face and just get on with it. (Peter, M, 32 years)

To explore the relationship between discrete emotions, we also ran matrix queries for coding references to increases in positive and decreases in negative affect, and for positive and negative emotions and feelings for all identified responses (Table 4). The six most negatively emotionally laden responses were: seek social support (25, 19%), retaliate (21, 16%), confront the perpetrator (19, 14%), neglect (15, 11%), exit (12, 9%) and ruminate (10, 8%). Given the low base rates for emotions per individual response, we explored these relationships by coding the negative emotions on the negative evaluation regions of the circumplex of affect: high-arousal/no-evaluation (near 90 degrees, e.g. astonished, surprised), high-arousal/negative-evaluation (near 135 degrees, e.g. angry, fearful), no-arousal/negative-evaluation (near 180 degrees, e.g. unhappy, sad), low-arousal/negative-evaluation (near 225 degrees, e.g. depressed, discouraged) (Remington, Fabrigar and Visser, 2000; Russell, 1980). Responses that were not clearly identified as discrete emotions as per the Remington *et al.* list of affective states were coded using thesaurus synonyms.

Seek social support was primarily associated with emotions coded to the high-arousal/negative-evaluation region (64%), with the most frequently mentioned emotions being anxious and distressed, and the low-arousal region, with tired reported most often (16%). Retaliate was primarily associated with the high-arousal emotions of fear, anger, contempt and shame (48%), followed by discouraged/disengaged (33%) in the low-arousal/negative-evaluation region. Confront the perpetrator was mostly associated with the high-arousal emotions (68%) of anger, frustration, embarrassment and annoyance. Unique to confront the perpetrator response was astonished, located at 90 degrees on the circumplex. Neglect was also uniquely associated with unhappiness, which is located in the no-arousal/negative-evaluation region

*Table 4. Comparison of affect, stress and satisfaction coding references for the 14 responses*

| | Decrease in positive affect N (%) | Positive affect N (%) | Increase in negative affect N (%) | Negative affect N (%) | Affective references N (%) | Stress references N (%) | Satisfaction references N (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Exit | 1 (11) | 4 (33) | 0 (0) | 12 (9) | 17 (11) | 11 (23) | 2 (40) |
| Voice | 2 (22) | 1 (8) | 0 (0) | 8 (6) | 11 (7) | 5 (11) | 0 (0) |
| Loyalty | 1 (11) | 1 (8) | 0 (0) | 1 (1) | 3 (2) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) |
| Neglect | 0 (0) | 1 (8) | 0 (0) | 15 (11) | 16 (10) | 3 (6) | 1 (20) |
| Retaliate | 0 (0) | 1 (8) | 1 (50) | 21 (16) | 23 (15) | 5 (11) | 0 (0) |
| SSS | 0 (0) | 3 (25) | 0 (0) | 25 (19) | 28 (18) | 13 (28) | 1 (20) |
| IOS | 2 (22) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 8 (6) | 10 (6) | 3 (6) | 0 (0) |
| Problem-solve | 1 (11) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 3 (2) | 4 (3) | 2 (4) | 0 (0) |
| Confront | 2 (22) | 1 (8) | 1 (50) | 19 (14) | 23 (15) | 1 (2) | 1 (20) |
| Vent | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 4 (3) | 4 (3) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) |
| Ruminate | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 10 (8) | 10 (6) | 2 (4) | 0 (0) |
| Avoid | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 6 (5) | 6 (4) | 1 (2) | 0 (0) |
| Deny | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 1 (1) | 1 (1) | 1 (2) | 0 (0) |
| Total | 9 (6) | 12 (8) | 2 (1) | 133 (85) | 156 (100) | 47 (100) | 5 (100) |

SSS = Seek social support; IOS = Informal organizational support; PS = Problem-solve. Cell percentages are the proportion of the individual response attributed to that column coding category. Total column percentages are references to positive change in affect, positive affect, negative change in affect, negative affect, stress and satisfaction.

© 2018 British Academy of Management.

(53%). Exit associated with high-arousal/negative-evaluation (67%, anger, anxious, afraid) and low-arousal/negative-evaluation regions (33%, depressed, discouraged). Lastly, ruminate was associated with the high-arousal/negative-evaluation region (60%, frustration, anxiety, irritable) and the no-arousal/negative-evaluation region, where miserable was the emotion most reported (40%). Table 4 also shows that interviewees made references to negative emotions (135) almost three times as often as they did to stress (47). These findings provide a segue into reporting results for RQ3 next.

*RQ3:* What is the contribution of dissatisfaction and stress in determining individual responses to interpersonally deviant experiences?

In relation to RQ3, we found that stress rather than (dis)satisfaction was a stronger recurrent theme among our interviewees' responses, as shown in Table 4. Data coding showed as few as five references to (dis)satisfaction across all participants' responses to interpersonal deviance. In contrast, almost all participants (19) talked about stress, with a total of 47 coding references associated with individual responses. Seeking social support was the most commonly mentioned (28%), followed by exit (23%) and voice and retaliate equally (11%). Interviewees also reported behavioural, physiological and psychological symptoms of stress, including not being able to sleep, panic attacks, stomach issues, grinding teeth, changes in dietary habits, trouble concentrating, memory issues, changed socialization habits and even suicide ideations. Participants talked about: 'losing my marbles', 'being at my wits end', 'having had enough', 'being on edge', 'trying to deal with it' and 'saving my own sanity', being 'stressed out' and 'mental destruction'. Substance abuse, in the form of alcohol to try to relieve stress levels, was also mentioned. For example, Nicole spoke about having 'a drink or two, or five'. Amy admitted: 'I mean, yeah, I drink more, most certainly. I think, I came home last night from a particularly heavy day – or the day before yesterday, or Tuesday night, I came home and drank two bottles of wine'.

When we consider RQ2 and RQ3 together, we find that, of the 19 cases that referred to stress, 16 talked about it in relation to affect. Ten of the 16 cases that talked about (dis)satisfaction talked about it not in reference to their responses, but rather in relation to affect, either relating it to emotions, or describing satisfaction itself as a

feeling rather than a response. Abduction from the data suggests that changes in satisfaction levels are heavily influenced by affect, including emotions, feelings and mood states. Notably, our results do *not* support a relationship between dissatisfaction and EVLN-R responses in the manner theorized by the original authors of this model with respect to interpersonal deviance. Although satisfaction was mentioned in 16 interviews, targeted individuals tended to refer to *changes* in satisfaction as a result (an attitudinal outcome) of the interpersonal deviance. For example, when asked specifically whether their experiences had an effect on their view of their workplace, including job satisfaction, the majority of the 16 participants said their satisfaction levels decreased. Others stated that their job satisfaction was unchanged, but indicated that they wanted to leave their organization.

In summary, in relation to RQ2 and RQ3, we found that responses to interpersonal deviance were associated with affect references in all 20 cases. Of the 19 cases that referred to stress, 16 talked about it in relation to affect (cf. Ashton-James and Ashkanasy, 2005). Ten of the participants talked about (dis)satisfaction not in reference to their responses, but rather in relation to affect, either relating it to emotions, or describing satisfaction itself as a feeling rather than a response. To understand whether affect or stress was more important to responses to interpersonal deviance, we created the stress theme, and reviewed the coding under stress. Of the 19 interviewees who talked about stress, we found that all but two related stress to their responses. We found no support for a relationship between satisfaction and interviewee response coding references. Examples of the relevant association node coding for our three *thematic relationships* – affect and (1) responses to interpersonal deviance, (2) (dis)satisfaction and (3) stress – are presented in Tables 5, 6 and 7.

## Discussion

Our aim in this qualitative study was twofold: (1) to explore targeted individuals' responses to interpersonal deviance; and (2) to identify the contribution of affect (specifically emotions and feelings), stress and dissatisfaction in individuals' response selections. Findings in respect of RQ1 suggest that, while interviewees did in fact use a range of strategies from the EVLN-R typology, they used

*Table 5. Affect (feelings and emotions) and target responses (relationship node data)*

| Response | Illustrative examples |
| --- | --- |
| Exit (transfer) | 'Once I got off his team and on to another team, even though I was still in the same work place, my work went through the roof and I was just back to what I was doing before. …Was *happy* going to work. Wasn't getting stress headaches. *Felt* a lot healthier. It was amazing. Just the *relief*. That day I moved from his team to the new team was just phenomenal. It was just a whole new life.' (Peter) |
| Exit (resigned) | '… I resigned at that point because I also *felt* like my mental health was starting to suffer. My GP, I said to her, "this is the way I *feel*", and described my symptoms of the way I was *feeling* and I said, "I just don't want to get to the point where I'm hitting *depression*". She said to me, "you're not *depressed* but if you continue to subject yourself to this environment, you will be *depressed*". So, it was at that point that I said to her, I said this isn't worth subjecting yourself to this and ruining your mental health, so that's when I resigned.' (Sophie) |
| Voice | Interviewer: … when you made the decision to speak to the (manager) initially, what was your motivation for doing that?<br>Nicole: Oh, because it was becoming unbearable, because I was so deliberately being excluded from things and they were doing it right in front of me to make me very aware. I mean, I *felt very isolated* and just the work. I was really *concerned* about the work level … |
| Voice | Interviewer: … you did say that you reported to HR … what made you think to go to that official level of reporting?<br>Kate: I knew what they had done was just so wrong. It was personal, it wasn't a work issue and they were sharing my personal information around for *embarrassment* and to *humiliate* me … |
| Voice & Retaliate | 'I was extremely *distressed* and *angry*. So there was part of me was a sense of release, of *relief* that I'd done something.' (Isla) |
| Loyalty | 'The motivation decreased a little bit, but I used to work, I have always *liked* working, in the sense that I *hate* coming to work and playing cards and things like that.' (Matt) |
| Loyalty | 'Like I was *concerned* about meeting deadlines, I was *concerned* about letting not only my own team members down …' (Heather) |
| Neglect | 'So you do, you do tend to do half the job for the day or for a couple of days because you don't, you're *not powering along feeling great* because nothing is fantastic … I think when you preoccupy yourself with other trivial matters going on and that takes up energy. By the time you've finished and you're *emotionally exhausted* your output or your productivity would be I think you know at least lower.' (Carol) |
| Retaliate | 'We used to go for coffee 4 or 5 times a day because we were right across the street from a coffee shop … near the end we just didn't *care*. We just did not *care* … I just became completely *disengaged*, didn't want to work …' (Jenny) |
| Retaliate | 'Like, I didn't go to the (organization) and member cocktail function, because I was ultra, ultra *pissed off* with, um, with work.' (Amy) |
| Seek social support | '… like I said before like I really checked in with my co-workers to see if it was happening to them or what their reaction was when they found out how it was happening to me and it really didn't change. Like I *felt like I had some support* in arms there … We had developed such good relationships within the team that I did *feel supported* by them if only sort of from an *emotional* standpoint.' (Heather) |
| Avoid | 'Well like I said, *scared* like before, um, just wanting to avoid her basically.' (Brenda) |
| Deny | 'I didn't react. I just didn't know what to do. I reacted in the sense that I just pretended that it didn't happen and went back to my desk and felt *yuk*.' (Sophie) |
| Ruminate | 'I think it just got to the point where I was so *fed up* with him. I was talking to – I had a very close friend … who also reported to him … we had that support together, but it was almost like you were ruminating because we used to go out all the time and we were so obsessed with his behaviour. And as I said, I can't even recall half of the behaviours now, but it was an obsession because it was like he was taking over control. And it was just a *hideous feeling*.' (Jenny) |
| Vent | 'I needed to talk to somebody just to tell them how *frustrated* I was about it.' (Brenda) |
| Confront | 'And I remember just being like *stunned*, thinking – and I remember saying in the meeting "This is unacceptable".' (Jenny) |
| Informal organizational support seeking | 'I thought look I don't know if I want to do anything. I was very, very *distressed* over all of this and I thought firstly, okay I'm going to go to the head of (department) … and I'm just going to say "I want it on the record. I don't want to file a complaint. I just want something in his file saying there were concerns from an (employee)".' (Isla) |

*Table 6. Affect (feelings and emotions) to stress relationship node data*

| Affect | Illustrative examples |
| --- | --- |
| Awful | 'If I lie in bed and think about it, I can't sleep and then I *feel awful* the next day and I've already just been … I've only been back two days and I've already have a headache. I haven't had a headache for six months …' (Mary) |
| Dread<br>Panic<br>Frenzied<br>Anxiety<br>Frustrated<br>Injustice | 'Mostly health and just intruding – as I said, it became an obsession and it just impacted everything. I was always very physically fit and I started not wanting to exercise or I started getting injured all the time, I had *panic* attacks, *anxiety*, wasn't sleeping, would *dread* – would pray for the weekend, type of thing, and by Sunday night would be worked into a complete *frenzy* because I had to go back into work Monday. And my husband kept saying the whole time "Just quit, just quit". And you know, looking back at it I probably should have but it's almost like this thing of "Why should I quit? Why should I throw away my career because of one dickhead that no-one's dealing with and people know that this is going on?" I think it was the *injustice* of it all and just being so *frustrated*.' (Jenny) |
| Depressed<br>Demoralized<br>Wary | 'It affected me a great deal because it made me – it got me quite *depressed* and it got me really, really *stressed* so it certainly had an impact on me for a couple of years, just the whole behaviour and it's just that – and it was quite *demoralizing* the way they were behaving and it didn't matter what I did … because they were just out – it was like the sabotage thing … it just made me very *wary* of people in the workplace …' (Nicole) |
| Worn out | 'Oh absolutely, yep and I used to have to go to the doctor to have, it used to affect my stomach, I had to go and get tablets for the stomach. It is very *wearing*, it was not only that I was busy, but you would have to deal with what, you never knew what was coming from them, so it is very, very *wearing*. I had to, it was my stomach I think was affected, so I had to have tablets for that, and since I have been away I haven't had to take them. As I say it is an occupational health and safety issue.' (Rachael) |
| Not calm<br>Shocked | '… I just lay there for 5 hours literally so shaking I could not have done anything anyway you know. At the end of 5 hours I *calmed* down … I guess I was expecting it to be bad it was so it was an even greater *shell shock* the second time around.' (Leanne) |
| Feel awful<br>Harassed<br>Sick | 'Yeah, it was absolutely, what happened there was absolutely horrible, I nearly left my job because I *felt sick* turning up for work every day. I was not only *harassed*, because at that stage we were all on the one shift … we were all on the one shift … so I was going to work and on that line you could *feel* it, they would all be looking at me and none of them would talk to me and it was really, really, like I said I used to get that, *feel that sick* in the stomach I would think of any excuse not to go do work. I remember one day I bunged on that I was sick so I could go home early because I just couldn't handle it any more … it was just the way that they made me *feel* and the way that they, you could see them standing in their little group and talking together and looking over at me and it was really, honestly one of the most *awful* experiences I have ever had.' (Kate) |

non-EVLN-R responses equally as often. Consistent with Olson-Buchanan and Boswell's (2008) theorizing, this finding suggests (at least in the instance of employee responses to interpersonally deviant behaviour) that EVLN-R fails to capture the full range of responses. In addition to EVLN-R, we identified six active self-oriented responses (seek social support, confront, informal organizational support, problem-solve, vent, avoid) and two passive self-oriented not so intended (ruminate, deny). This distinction is important, given that how targeted individuals respond may also indirectly deal with their feelings of injustice. Hence, we suggest that a more descriptive approach is to categorize a response with regard to three dimensions: activity (active vs. passive), organizational impact (pro-, anti- or mixed/neutral) and focus of response (self- vs. not self-orientated, perpetrator or organization). Literature that adopts a victimological approach may fail to address this full foci and range of responses. We also argue

that distinguishing between responses focused on the self, the perpetrator and the organization is critically important to ensure interventions are directed at the appropriate level. While we found no reports of external whistle-blowing, because its aim is to actively resolve the problem (Near and Miceli, 2016), we suggest its inclusion in Figure 1 for completeness.

By applying a critical realism approach in a qualitative study of how and why individuals respond to interpersonal deviance, we found support for AET as the primary explanatory mechanism, because it is emotions and not dissatisfaction *per se* that intervenes between interpersonal deviance and individual responses. Patterns in the data also showed that particular discrete emotions uniquely drove some responses. In particular, fear of negative consequences deterred mistreated employees from responding with voice. Anxious, distressed and tired were associated with seeking social support; fear, anger and discouragement

*Table 7. Stress to response relationship node data*

| Response | Illustrative examples |
| --- | --- |
| Exit (mentally) | 'And, um, when that happens, I will definitely reapply. And, um, but I'm not going to change jobs at this point in my career, just for the sake of changing jobs. I'm a little more – I don't know, I reckon I can handle it for the moment. But, uh, I think, God, it's – who knows. I mean, sometimes I feel like I'm at the end of my tether. Other times, I can cope with it quite well.' (Amy) |
| Exit (resigned) | 'But yeah, then this all started happening and it just progressively got worse and worse and worse and worse to the point where I sort of snapped. That was when I saw the psych and it all sort of came to me and I've realized what sort of pressures I've been put under and that it wasn't my fault. Not all of it anyway. So I left.' (Peter) |
| Voice | '… I remember just saying, "Well, you better deal with me today because I've had enough. I've just had enough" … And so I just said, "Alright, I've had enough … Deal with me … treat me like a person … It was just so unacceptable to me that anyone would think that they could treat people like that and the HR person I think kind of knew I was at breaking point …' (Jenny) |
| Seek social support & Voice | 'I didn't really talk to anyone about it either, um, except for my close friends … I didn't talk to any of my (other employees) right up until the end when it was really just terrible trying to cope with you know, the prospect of having his lawyer there, having him sitting in that room challenging the misconduct charges. That was the worst time … it was very stressful trying to deal with the complaint process.' (Isla) |
| Seek social support & Informal organizational support seeking | 'Yeah, I mean the stress it is hard to even concentrate on something if it's been a confrontation then you are blocked for the rest of the day. For me it takes a long time before I get back to not showing physical signs of stress. You know your heart is racing, your, you know, your mind is racing, you know, you are showing signs of being physically stressed, and that would go on for days you know, I can take several weeks before I have calmed down to this background level of stress … I was talking to a lot of people … I get a lot of advice before I make my move …' (Leanne) |
| Seek social support | '… I guess that's me handling it in a very positive way for myself, um, it would have been very, very easy at the time to, and I'd be lying if I didn't say that I didn't consider the term topping myself because um, yeah, very lucky to have support of very great family and lots of friends and lots of work colleagues around me, most of who I still see today.' (Sarah) |
| Retaliate | Interviewer: Did you ever throw a sickie so to speak? So, call up on a day that you weren't really ill and say that you were?<br>Sophie: Yes, I think I did that about two or three times. Once might have been when I had a job interview, because I tried to fit job interviews in my lunch hour but a lot of the time I would get to my lunch hour and something might have happened during the morning where I just really wasn't in the right frame of mind to actually go for a job interview. I had been stressed out at work.<br>Interviewer: So there would be days where you called in sick and you weren't sick …? Is that right?<br>Sophie: Yes, that's right. I mean it's a point of, you hear the term "mental health day". I mean to me, that's what it was. I wasn't actually sick but I didn't feel that I could mentally cope with going into work that day. |

with retaliation; astonishment with confronting the perpetrator; unhappiness with neglect; and a combination of negative emotions including anger, anxiety, fear, depression and discouragement were related to exit. Theoretically, since different negatively valenced emotions were related to differing EVLN responses in our study compared with that of Osborne, Smith and Huo (2012) (i.e. anger and voice, sadness and neglect), the *type* of affective event appears a necessary condition for a particular discrete emotional pathway to be present. Our findings also highlight that care should be exercised in quantitative methodologies, where low-arousal negative emotions such as discouraged and tired may be overlooked in favour of popular high-arousal emotions.

Findings with respect to RQ2 and RQ3 can be summarized into two main points. The first is that, in contrast to some authors' arguments (e.g. Farrell, 1983; Hirschman, 1970; Rusbult *et al.*, 1988), (dis)satisfaction appeared to be unrelated to targeted employees' responses to deviance. Affective states in the high-arousal region of the circumplex, including anger and fear, appear particularly important. These findings are consistent with the central premise of AET that emotional processes affect attitudes (e.g. job satisfaction) and, ultimately, judgment-related behaviours including withdrawal, rather than the reverse

|  | Self-Orientation | Anti-Organizational | Pro-Organizational | Neutral / Mixed Organizational |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Active | Retaliate<br>Seek social support<br>Informal organizational support<br>Confront the perpetrator<br>Problem-solve<br>Vent<br>Avoid | Exit<br>Retaliate<br>Confront the perpetrator<br>*Whistle-blow\* (External)* | Voice<br>Informal organizational support<br>Confront the perpetrator<br>Problem-solve | Seek social support<br>Informal organizational support<br>Problem-solve |
| Passive | Ruminate<br>Deny | Neglect | Loyalty | Ruminate<br>Deny |

*Figure 1. Typology of individual responses to interpersonal deviance.*
*\* While we did not find evidence of external whistle-blowing in our sample, it is suggested here as an example of an active, anti-organizational response.*

(Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996). EVLN-R responses might therefore best be viewed as ways that individuals cope, rather than as direct outcomes of the interpersonal deviance experience.

Although changes in satisfaction did occur, these changes appeared strongly related to affect and were described by mistreated employees as an outcome of their experience. Our second main finding regarding RQ2 and RQ3 was that affect plays a critical role in response choices, although stress also potentially affects (dis)satisfaction. We also extend the earlier findings to show that the processes underpinning individual responses can be stress-related. Stress inherently includes an emotional component, since appraisal processes underpin a variety of cognitive, affective and behavioural responses to stressors.

### Limitations

We acknowledge three main limitations to our research: (1) reliance on retrospective self-report data; (2) majority female sample; and (3) degree of severity of interpersonal deviance. We discuss these issues next.

*Self-report data.* We argue that self-report data is unavoidable in any research where the perceptions of the individual are central. Hence, a self-report interview was the most appropriate method as this approach is more likely to facilitate the discovery of new variables and relationships (e.g. does retaliation exist?). Self-report data can also assist in providing insight into complex processes (e.g. does dissatisfaction or affect underpin response choices?). Known for its tendency

to generate accurate recall of events, the CIT method helps address the issue of retrospective data. Emotion enhances event-memory retention such that memories of events evoking strong emotions, especially fear, selectively persist (e.g. Breslau, 2001; Coles and Heimberg, 2002). Because interpersonal deviance is an emotionally salient event, the data recalled are likely to be accurate. Nonetheless, future researchers would do well in future to consider physiological changes (e.g. salivary cortisol) as alternative measures of stress.

*Sample.* It is possible that gender may play an important role in targeted individuals' emotional experiences and also in determining aggressive behaviour, which may influence their tendency to retaliate. Nonetheless, Simon and Nath (2004) found that once household income is accounted for, females and males in the United States did not differ significantly in the frequency with which they reported negative emotions. Some evidence exists to suggest that males are more aggressive than females, and thus may be more likely to engage in retaliatory behaviour (e.g. Hershcovis *et al.*, 2007). In contrast, behaviour typically varies as a function of the situation and individual characteristics, and may be affected by several factors. Thus, any relationship between gender and aggressive or retaliatory acts is unlikely to be simple. Aquino and Douglas (2003) and Douglas and Martinko (2001) also found significant interactional effects involving gender, but no main effects for gender and aggressive or retaliatory behaviour. Clearly there is a need for further research to investigate the extent

© 2018 British Academy of Management.

to which gender may have influenced the results in our study.

*Range of severity.* Finally, we acknowledge that, because the breadth of interpersonal deviance experiences in our exploratory study ranged from single acts of incivility and mistreatment through to bullying and sexual assault, this may have affected the frequency data reported for each interviewee's response. Olson-Buchanan and Boswell (2008) suggest that minor incidents of mistreatment may elicit milder responses from victims. Nonetheless, we believe that because all 20 cases reported negative affect and all cases bar one reported distress, the themes we identified should remain influential, regardless of the type of interpersonal deviance experienced.

### Contributions to theory and research

Despite the foregoing limitations, we feel that our research makes two main contributions to the literature. The first is that, as far as we are aware, ours is the first study to examine empirically the proposed extension of the EVLN model to include 'retaliate' (EVLN-R). In particular, our results tell us that targets of interpersonal deviance may retaliate against the organization directly, or indirectly via targeting the perpetrator, supporting Huefner and Hunt's (1994) suggestion to include retaliation as a fifth, anti-organizational and active response. Our results also suggest that being a target of interpersonal deviance may lead people to become perpetrators of deviance themselves (i.e. retaliate), with evidence that targeted employees may engage in both interpersonally and organizationally deviant acts after being targeted. Our study examples provide support for the proposition that interpersonal deviance breeds deviance (Andersson and Pearson, 1999; Kidwell and Martin, 2005). Moreover, our findings tell us that even with the addition of 'R', the extended EVLN framework is still an oversimplification, at least in the instance of individuals' responses to interpersonal deviance. Emotions are critical determinants of a targeted individual's decision to respond with retaliation. Putting the relationship between affective states and target responses in general aside, retaliating seems to be an attempt by employees to feel better. These results suggest that retaliation following interpersonal deviance experiences is expressively, rather than instrumentally, motivated (Robinson

and Bennett, 1997). As such, our study is perhaps the first to explore the role of retaliation within a range of response options available to employees.

The second theoretical contribution of our study relates to the processes that underpin employees' response choices. Used in several settings (e.g. Niedl, 1996; Rusbult *et al.*, 1988; Solvang, 2008; Withey and Cooper, 1989; Zapf and Gross, 2001), the EVLN framework is based on the proposition that responses primarily relate to dissatisfaction. Using a critical realism approach, we found little support for this proposition. Our interviewees described dissatisfaction as an outcome, not a process. Moreover, the majority of our interviewees related their satisfaction to affective states, either in terms of being felt emotions or described using affect-based terms. Importantly, some discrete emotions were more clearly associated with specific responses. Our findings also highlight the importance of examining low-arousal negative emotions as possible determinants of responses to interpersonal deviance. Finally, with evidence that discrete emotions were related to all responses, it seems reasonable to conclude that affective states drive responses, and moreover that affect also affects satisfaction as an attitudinal outcome.

### Implications for practice

With respect to management practice, we found that mistreated employees typically deployed anti-organizational EVLN-R responses detrimental to employers. In addition, none of the non-EVLN-R responses were aimed at achieving pro-organizational outcomes and some – venting, ruminating, denial and avoidance – may eventually be destructive for the organization (e.g. causing productivity losses). Moreover, previous research (e.g. Houshmand *et al.*, 2012) suggests that employees do not actually have to experience (be a target of) forms of interpersonal deviance to engage in anti-organizational behaviours, such as exiting. Simply being an observer of bullying, for example, can prompt individuals to exit. In addition, our findings about retaliation provide support for the notion that deviance breeds further deviance (Andersson and Pearson, 1999; Kidwell and Martin, 2005). Thus, interpersonal deviance can exacerbate an already injurious impact on organizations by creating a deviance spiral.

The second applied contribution for our study is that interpersonal deviance appears to engender

distress and therefore has potential to lead to psychological injury, such as anxiety or depressive disorders. Given our finding that mistreated employees' responses include a range of behaviours not directed at improving the situation (i.e. vent, avoid, ruminate, deny), this is of particular concern. Thus, because employers in most British Commonwealth countries are legally required to ensure that workplaces are psychologically safe environments (e.g. Commonwealth of Australia, 2011; Health and Safety Executive, 2016), preventing interpersonal deviance is a critical imperative. Collectively, our findings suggest that the most beneficial and appropriate action is for management to focus on preventing interpersonal deviance in the first instance, rather than dedicating time and resources to attempting to buffer its stressful effects, or to motivating constructive target responses when there are potentially destructive consequences for employees, and their organizations. Further, Woodrow and Guest (2014) stress that for a zero tolerance to bullying to be effective, careful attention must also be paid to contextual factors in how the policy is implemented.

## Conclusion

Our findings suggest that researchers would do well to continue to explore targeted individuals' perspectives of interpersonal deviance, including but not limited to their responses, within-person changes in affect and stress processes. Efforts to build on our taxonomy, for example by identifying possible anti-organizational, problem-focused responses, and further exploring retaliation as expressively rather than instrumentally motivated behaviour, would also be of benefit. Quantitative, longitudinal studies of individual responses as potential mediators of the relationship between interpersonal deviance and its negative individual and organizational outcomes will make a particularly worthwhile contribution to scholarship.

## References

Aasland, M. S., A. Skogstad, G. Notelaers, M. B. Nielsen and S. Einarsen (2010). 'The prevalence of destructive leadership behaviour', *British Journal of Management*, **21**, pp. 438–452.

Andersson, L. M. and C. M. Pearson (1999). 'Tit for tat? The spiraling effect of incivility in the workplace', *Academy of Management Review*, **24**, pp. 452–471.

Aquino, K. and S. Douglas (2003). 'Identity threat and antisocial behavior in organizations: the moderating effects of individual differences, aggressive modeling, and hierarchical status', *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, **90**, pp. 195–208.

Ashkanasy, N. M. and A. D. Dorris (2017). 'Emotion in the workplace', *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, **4**, pp. 67–90.

Ashton-James, C. E. and N. M. Ashkanasy (2005). 'What lies beneath? A deconstructive analysis of affective events theory'. In N. M. Ashkanasy, W. J. Zerbe and C. E. J. Härtel (eds), *Research on Emotion in Organizations*, vol. **1**, pp. 23–50. Oxford: Elsevier Science.

Bacharach, S. B., P. Bamberger and W. J. Sonnenstuhl (2002). 'Driven to drink: managerial control, work related risk factors and employee drinking behavior', *Academy of Management Journal*, **45**, pp. 637–658.

Barling, J. (1996). 'The prediction, experience, and consequences of workplace violence'. In G. R. VandenBos and E. Q. Bulatao (eds), *Violence on the Job: Identifying Risks and Developing Solutions*, pp. 29–49. Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.

Bhaskar, R. (1975). *A Realist Theory of Science*. New York: Verso Books.

Bowling, N. A. and T. A. Beehr (2006). 'Workplace harassment from the victim's perspective: a theoretical model and meta-analysis', *Journal of Applied Psychology*, **91**, pp. 998–1012.

Boyatzis, R. E. (1998). *Transforming Qualitative Information: Thematic Analysis and Code Development*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Branch, S., S. Ramsay and M. Barker (2013). 'Workplace bullying, mobbing and general harassment: a review', *International Journal of Management Reviews*, **15**, pp. 280–299.

Breslau, N. (2001). 'Outcomes of posttraumatic stress disorder', *Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*, **62**, pp. 55–59.

Briner, R. B. (1999). 'The neglect and importance of emotion at work', *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, **8**, pp. 323–346.

Buchanan, D. A. and A. Bryman (2007). 'Contextualizing methods choice in organizational research', *Organizational Research Methods*, **10**, pp. 483–501.

Caldwell, C. and M. Canuto-Carranco (2010). '"Organizational terrorism" and moral choices: exercising voice when the leader is the problem', *Journal of Business Ethics*, **97**, pp. 159–171.

Caza, B. and L. Cortina (2007). 'From insult to injury: explaining the impact of incivility', *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*, **29**, pp. 335–350.

Chell, E. (2004). 'Critical incident technique'. In C. Cassell and G. Symon (eds), *Essential Guide to Qualitative Methods in Organizational Research*, pp. 45–60. London: Sage.

Cohen, J. A. (1968). 'Weighted kappa: nominal scale agreement provision for scaled disagreement or partial credit', *Psychological Bulletin*, **70**, pp. 213–220.

Coles, M. E. and R. G. Heimberg (2002). 'Memory biases in the anxiety disorders', *Clinical Psychology Review*, **22**, pp. 587–627.

Commonwealth of Australia (2011). *Work Health and Safety Act, Queensland (2011)*. Office of the Queensland Parliamentary Counsel.

Commonwealth of Australia (2012). *Workplace Bullying: We Just Want It To Stop*. House of Representatives Standing

Committee on Education and Employment. October 2012, Canberra.

Cortina, L. M. and S. Wasti (2005). 'Profiles in coping: responses to sexual harassment across persons, organizations, and cultures', *Journal of Applied Psychology*, **90**, pp. 182–192.

Cortina, L. M., V. J. Magley, J. H. Williams and R. D. Langhout (2001). 'Incivility in the workplace: incidence and impact', *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, **6**, pp. 64–80.

Creswell, J. W. (2002). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 2nd edn. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Damasio, A. R. (1994). *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason and the Human Brain*. New York: Putnam Publishing.

Djurkovic, N., D. McCormack and G. Casimir (2006). 'Neuroticism and the psychosomatic model of workplace bullying', *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, **21**, pp. 73–88.

Douglas, S. C. and M. J. Martinko (2001). 'Exploring the role of individual differences in the prediction of workplace aggression', *Journal of Applied Psychology*, **86**, pp. 547–559.

Dowding, K., P. John, T. Mergoupis and M. Van Vugt (2000). 'Exit, voice and loyalty: analytic and empirical developments', *European Journal of Political Research*, **37**, pp. 469–495.

Dozier, J. B. and M. P. Miceli (1985). 'Potential predictors of whistle-blowing: a prosocial behavior perspective', *Academy of Management Review*, **10**, pp. 823–836.

Duffy, M. K., K. L. Scott, J. D. Shaw, B. J. Tepper and K. Aquino (2012). 'A social context model of envy and social undermining', *Academy of Management Journal*, **55**, pp. 643–666.

Farrell, D. (1983). 'Exit, voice, loyalty and neglect as responses to declining job satisfaction: a multidimensional scaling study', *Academy of Management Journal*, **26**, pp. 596–607.

Fereday, J. and E. Muir-Cochrane (2006). 'Demonstrating rigor using thematic analysis: a hybrid approach of inductive and deductive coding and theme development', *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, **5**, pp. 2–11.

Fineman, S. (2004). 'Getting the measure of emotion and the cautionary tale of emotional intelligence', *Human Relations*, **57**, pp. 719–740.

Fischer, K. W., P. R. Shaver and P. Carnochan (1990). 'How emotions develop and how they organise development', *Cognition and Emotion*, **4**, pp. 81–127.

Flanagan, J. C. (1954). 'The critical incident technique', *Psychological Bulletin*, **51**, pp. 327–358.

Fletcher, A. J. (2017). 'Applying critical realism in qualitative research: methodology meets method', *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, **20**, pp. 181–194.

Folkman, S., R. S. Lazarus, R. J. Gruen and A. DeLongis (1986). 'Appraisal, coping, health status, and psychological symptoms', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, **50**, pp. 571–579.

Fox, S. and L. E. Stallworth (2010). 'The battered apple: an application of stressor-emotion-control/support theory to teachers' experience of violence and bullying', *Human Relations*, **63**, pp. 927–954.

Frijda, N. H. (1994). 'Varieties of affect: emotions and episodes, moods, and sentiments'. In P. Ekman and R. Davison (eds), *The Nature of Emotions: Fundamental Questions*, pp. 59–67. New York: Oxford University Press.

Geddes, D. and L. T. Stickney (2011). 'The trouble with sanctions: organizational responses to deviant anger displays at work', *Human Relations*, **64**, pp. 201–230.

Glasø, L. and G. Notelaers (2012). 'Workplace bullying, emotions, and outcomes', *Violence and Victims*, **27**, pp. 360–377.

Guest, G., A. Bunce and L. Johnson (2006). 'How many interviews are enough? An experiment with data saturation and variability', *Field Methods*, **18**, pp. 59–82.

Guest, G., K. M. MacQueen and E. E. Namey (2012). *Applied Thematic Analysis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Hannah, D. R. and B. A. Lautsch (2011). 'Counting in qualitative research: why to conduct it, when to avoid it, and when to closet it', *Journal of Management Inquiry*, **20**, pp. 14–22.

Harlos, K. (2010). 'If you build a remedial voice mechanism, will they come? Determinants of voicing interpersonal mistreatment at work', *Human Relations*, **63**, pp. 311–329.

Health and Safety Executive (2016). *Work Related Stress, Anxiety and Depression Statistics in Great Britain 2016*. Available at: www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/.

Hershcovis, M. S. and J. Barling (2010). 'Towards a multi-foci approach to workplace aggression: a meta-analytic review of outcomes from different perpetrators', *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, **31**, pp. 24–44.

Hershcovis, M. S., N. Turner, J. Barling, K. A. Arnold, K. E. Dupre, M. Inness, M. M. DeBlanc and N. Sivanathan (2007). 'Predicting workplace aggression: a meta-analysis', *Journal of Applied Psychology*, **92**, pp. 228–238.

Hirschman, A. O. (1970). *Exit, Voice and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Forms, Organizations and States*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Hooghiemstra, R. and J. Van Manen (2002). 'Supervisory directors and ethical dilemmas: exit or voice?', *European Management Journal*, **20**, pp. 1–9.

Houshmand, M., J. O'Reilly, S. Robinson and A. Wolff (2012). 'Escaping bullying: the simultaneous impact of individual and unit-level bullying on turnover intentions', *Human Relations*, **65**, pp. 901–918.

Huefner, J. C. and K. H. Hunt (1994). 'Extending the Hirschman model: when voice and exit don't tell the whole story', *Journal of Consumer Satisfaction, Dissatisfaction and Complaining Behavior*, **7**, pp. 267–270.

Hughes, H. (2007). 'Critical incident technique'. In S. Lipu, K. Williamson and A. Lloyd (eds), *Exploring Methods in Information Literacy Research*, pp. 49–66. Sydney: Centre for Information Studies.

Kidwell, R. E. and C. L. Martin (2005). 'The prevalence (and ambiguity) of deviant ehaviour at work'. In R. E. Kidwell and R. E. Martin (eds), *Managing Organizational Deviance*, pp. 1–21. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Knapp, D. E., R. H. Faley, S. E. Ekeberg and C. L. Dubois (1997). 'Determinants of target responses to sexual harassment: a conceptual framework', *Academy of Management Review*, **22**, pp. 687–729.

Landis, J. R. and G. G. Koch (1977). 'The measurement of observer agreement for categorical data', *Biometrics*, **33**, pp. 159–174.

Lazarus, R. S. and S. Folkman (1984). *Stress, Appraisal and Coping*. New York: Springer.

Lee, K., E. Kim, D. P. Bhave and M. K. Duffy (2016). 'Why victims of undermining at work become perpetrators of undermining: an integrative model', *Journal of Applied Psychology*, **101**, pp. 915–924.

Lim, S., L. M. Cortina and V. J. Magley (2008). 'Personal and workgroup incivility: impact on work and health outcomes', *Journal of Applied Psychology*, **93**, pp. 95–107.

Lincoln, Y. S. and E. G. Guba (1985). *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Beverley Hills, CA: Sage.

Lutgen-Sandvik, P. (2008). 'Intensive remedial identity work: responses to workplace bullying trauma and stigmatization', *Organization*, **15**, pp. 97–119.

Michalak, R. T. (2015). *Causes and Consequences of Work-Related Psychosocial Risk Exposure: A Comparative Investigation of Organisational Context, Employee Attitudes, Job Performance and Wellbeing in Lawyer and Non-lawyer Professionals*. Brisbane, Australia: PsychSafe Pty Ltd.

Michalak, R. T. and N. M. Ashkanasy (2013). 'Emotions and deviance'. In S. Elias (ed.), *Deviant and Criminal Behavior in the Workplace*, pp. 19–49. New York: New York University Press.

Miles, M. and A. M. Huberman (1994). *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook*, 2nd edn. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Morgan, D. L. (2007). 'Paradigms lost and pragmatism regained', *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, **1**, pp. 48–76.

Motowidlo, S. J., G. W. Carter, M. D. Dunnette, N. Tippins, S. Werner, J. R. Burnett and M. J. Vaughan (1992). 'Studies of the structured behavioural interview', *Journal of Applied Psychology*, **77**, pp. 571–587.

Near, J. P. and M. P. Miceli (2016). 'After the wrongdoing: what managers should know about whistleblowing', *Business Horizons*, **59**, pp. 105–114.

NHMRC (2007). *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2007*. Canberra, ACT: Australian Government National Health and Medical Research Council.

Niedl, K. (1996). 'Mobbing and well-being: economic and personnel development implications', *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, **5**, pp. 239–249.

Olson-Buchanan, J. B. and W. R. Boswell (2008). 'An integrative model of experiencing and responding to mistreatment at work', *Academy of Management Review*, **33**, pp. 76–96.

O'Leary-Kelly, A., L. Bowes-Sperry, C. Bates and E. Lean (2009). 'Sexual harassment at work: a decade (plus) of progress', *Journal of Management*, **35**, pp. 503–536.

Osborne, D., H. Smith and Y. J. Huo (2012). 'More than a feeling: discrete emotions mediate the relationship between relative deprivation and reactions to workplace furloughs', *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, **38**, pp. 628–641.

Ostroff, C. and N. Schmitt (1993). 'Configurations of organizational effectiveness and efficiency', *Academy of Management Journal*, **36**, pp. 1345–1361.

Parzefall, M. and D. M. Salin (2010). 'Perceptions of and reactions to workplace bullying: a social exchange perspective', *Human Relations*, **63**, pp. 761–780.

Pearson, C. M., L. M. Andersson and C. L. Porath (2000). 'Assessing and attacking workplace incivility', *Organizational Dynamics*, **29**, pp. 123–137.

Pescosolido, A. T. (2002). 'Emergent leaders as managers of group emotion', *The Leadership Quarterly*, **13**, pp. 583–599.

Pratt, M. G. (2009). 'From the editors: for the lack of a boilerplate: tips on writing up (and reviewing) qualitative research', *Academy of Management Journal*, **52**, pp. 856–862.

Preacher, K. J. (2001). *Calculation for the Chi-square Test: An Interactive Calculation Tool for Chi-square Tests of Goodness of Fit and Independence*. Available at: http://quantpsy.org.

Rafferty, A. E. and S. L. D. Restubog (2011). 'The influence of abusive supervisors on followers' organizational citizenship behaviours: the hidden costs of abusive supervision', *British Journal of Management*, **22**, pp. 270–285.

Remington, N. A., L. R. Fabrigar and P. S. Visser (2000). 'Reexamining the circumplex model of affect', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, **79**, pp. 286–300.

Richard, P. J., T. M. Devinney, G. S. Yip and G. Johnson (2009). 'Measuring organizational performance: towards methodological best practice', *Journal of Management*, **35**, pp. 718–804.

Robinson, O. C. (2014). 'Sampling in interview-based qualitative research: a theoretical and practical guide', *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, **11**, pp. 25–41.

Robinson, S. L. and R. J. Bennett (1995). 'A typology of deviant workplace behaviors: a multidimensional scaling study', *Academy of Management Journal*, **38**, pp. 555–572.

Robinson, S. L. and R. J. Bennett (1997). 'Workplace deviance: its definition, its manifestations and its causes'. In R. J. Lewicki, R. J. Bies and B. H. Sheppard (eds), *Research on Negotiation in Organizations*, vol. **6**, pp. 3–27. Oxford: Wiley.

Rusbult, C. E., D. Farrell, G. Rogers and A. G. Mainous (1988). 'The impact of exchange variables on exit, voice, loyalty and neglect: an integrative model of responses to declining job satisfaction', *Academy of Management Journal*, **31**, pp. 599–627.

Russell, J. A. (1980). 'A circumplex model of affect', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, **39**, pp. 1161–1178.

Salin, D., A. Tenhiälä, M. Roberge and J. L. Berdahl (2014). '"I wish I had …": target reflections on responses to workplace mistreatment', *Human Relations*, **67**, pp. 1189–1211.

Shah, S. K. and K. G. Corley (2006). 'Building better theory by bridging the quantitative–qualitative divide', *Journal of Management Studies*, **43**, pp. 1821–1835.

Simon, R. W. and L. E. Nath (2004). 'Gender and emotion in the United States: do men and women differ in self-reports of feelings and expressive behavior?', *American Journal of Sociology*, **109**, 1137–1176.

Sinkovics, R. R. and E. A. Alfoldi (2012). 'Progressive focusing and trustworthiness in qualitative research: the enabling role of computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS)', *Management International Review*, **52**, pp. 817–845.

Solvang, B. K. (2008). 'Customer protest: exit, voice or negative word of mouth', *International Journal of Business Science and Applied Management*, **3**, pp. 15–32.

Spector, P. E. (1994). 'Using self-report questionnaires in OB research: a comment on the use of a controversial method', *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, **15**, pp. 385–392.

Tepper, B. J., M. K. Duffy and J. D. Shaw (2001). 'Personality moderators of the relationship between abusive supervision and subordinates' resistance', *Journal of Applied Psychology*, **86**, pp. 974–983.

Tripp, T. M., R. J. Bies and K. Aquino (2002). 'Poetic justice or petty jealousy? The aesthetics of revenge', *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, **89**, pp. 966–984.

Tronvoll, B. (2007). 'Complainer characteristics when exit is closed', *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, **18**, pp. 25–51.

Weiss, H. M. and D. J. Beal (2005). 'Reflections on affective events theory'. In N. M. Ashkanasy, W. J. Zerbe and C. E. J. Härtel (eds), *Research on Emotion in Organizations*, vol. **1**, pp. 1–21. Oxford: Elsevier Science.

Weiss, H. M. and R. Cropanzano (1996). 'Affective events theory: a theoretical discussion of the structure, causes, and consequences of affective experiences at work', *Research in Organizational Behavior*, **18**, pp. 1–74.

Wengraf, T. (2001). *Qualitative Research Interviewing: Biographic Narratives and Semi-Structured Methods*. London: Sage.

Willness, C., P. Steel and K. Lee (2007). 'A meta-analysis of the antecedents and consequences of workplace sexual harassment', *Personnel Psychology*, **60**, pp. 127–162.

Withey, M. and W. H. Cooper (1989). 'Predicting exit, voice, loyalty, and neglect', *Administrative Science Quarterly*, **34**, pp. 521–521.

Woodrow, C. and D. E. Guest (2014). 'When good HR gets bad results: exploring the challenge of HR implementation in the case of workplace bullying', *Human Resource Management Journal*, **24**, pp. 38–56.

Zapf, D. and C. Gross (2001). 'Conflict escalation and coping with workplace bullying: a replication and extension', *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, **10**, pp. 497–522.

Zapf, D., C. Knorz and M. Kulla (1996). 'On the relationship between mobbing factors, and job content, social work environment and health outcomes', *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, **5**, pp. 215–237.

Rebecca M. Michalak is Founder and Principal Consultant at PsychSafe Pty Ltd. She completed her doctoral studies in the UQ Business School at the University of Brisbane. Her research interests lie in understanding the nature of organizational mistreatment and how victims of mistreatment cope with this behaviour.

Sandra A. Kiffin-Petersen is a Senior Lecturer at the UWA Business School, where she teaches and consults in the areas of organizational behaviour and leadership, work team effectiveness and negotiation. Her research interests include emotions in the workplace, work team effectiveness and trust within organizations. She has published in journals such as *Human Relations*, *Personality and Individual Differences*, *The International Journal of Human Resource Management* and *Journal of Business Ethics*.

Neal M. Ashkanasy is Professor of Management at the UQ Business School, University of Queensland. His research focuses on emotion in organizations, leadership, culture and ethical behaviour. He has published in journals such as the *Academy of Management Journal*, *Academy of Management Review* and the *Journal of Applied Psychology*. He has served as Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of Organizational Behavior* and Associate Editor of the *Academy of Management Review*. He is currently Associate Editor of *Emotion Review* and series editor of *Research on Emotion in Organizations*.