When People at Work Go Astray, What to Say and How to Say It:

A Typology and Test of the Effect of Moral Feedback on Unethical Behavior

by

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ABSTRACT

Unethical behavior is a phenomenon that is unavoidable in the workplace. Ethical transgressors, when caught, often receive feedback regarding their actions. Though such moral feedback—feedback that is in response to an ethical transgression—may be aimed at curtailing future unethical behavior, I seek to demonstrate that under certain conditions, moral feedback may promote subsequent unethical behavior. Specifically, I propose that moral intensity and affective tone are two primary dimensions of moral feedback that work together to affect ethical transgressor moral disengagement and future behavior. The notion of moral disengagement, which occurs when self-regulatory systems are deactivated, may account for situations whereby individuals perform unethical acts without associated guilt. Despite the burgeoning literature on this theme, research has yet to examine whether feedback from one individual can influence another individual's moral disengagement. This is surprising considering the idea of moral disengagement stems from social cognitive theory which emphasizes the role that external factors have in affecting behavior. With my dissertation, I draw from research primarily in social psychology to explore how moral feedback affects transgressor moral disengagement. To do so, I develop a typology of moral feedback and test how each moral feedback type affects transgressor future behavior through moral disengagement.

DEDICATION

To my children,

Jack, Angel, and Hazel.

Non nobis solum nati sumus.

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CHAPTER 1

PURPOSE, KEY DEFINITIONS, AND CONTRIBUTIONS

Introduction

Unethical behavior, or behavior that violates widely accepted moral norms (Kish-Gephart, Treviño, & Harrison, 2010), by individuals in the workplace takes a huge economic toll on organizations (Stub, 2016). The Association of Certified Fraud Examiners (2016) found that fraud alone may cost organizations 5% of revenues each year and projected a potential loss from fraud of up to $3.7 trillion globally in 2016. This is significantly more than the estimated global loss of $2.9 trillion in 2010 (Association of Certified Fraud Examiners, 2010; Moore, Detert, Treviño, Baker, & Mayer, 2012). Furthermore, much of this damage can be attributed to organizational actors who are engaged in an ongoing cycle of unethical behavior (Eskow, 2015). As a recent example, thousands of employees at Wells Fargo engaged in continuous unethical behavior by opening more than two million fraudulent customer accounts between May 2011 and July 2015 (Blake, 2016). Just as the majority of prison inmates are repeat offenders (Durose, Cooper, & Snyder, 2014), the Wells Fargo scandal demonstrates that it is not uncommon for individuals who have engaged in unethical behavior at work to repeat their ethical transgressions (Brady & Wheeler, 1996; Reynolds & Ceranic, 2007).

Because such unethical behavior can be so costly, organizations put much effort into thwarting employee misbehavior. Not only does catching an ethical transgressor prevent the current transgression from progressing and possibly escalating, but it may also prevent future occurrences of the same bad behavior (Harbaugh, Mocan, & Visser, 2013; Nielsen, 1989; Porcano & Price, 1993; Williams & Gold, 1972). Even the fear of

getting caught may change future behavior (Thornton, Gunningham, & Kagan, 2005). Organizations and regulatory agencies alike make steep financial commitments in an effort to promote employee-based controls (systems through which employees can police one another) with the hopes of stopping unethical behavior and apprehending or '*catching*' an ethical transgressor (Rehg, Miceli, Near, & Van Scotter, 2008). Two different ways these controls may operate is through whistleblowing and concertive control.

Whistleblowing is the reporting of illegal, immoral, or illegitimate behavior by the organization or organizational members. Organizations promote whistleblowing by encouraging potential informants to take action (Kaptein, 2011) or even establishing formal reporting systems such as internal anonymous hotlines (Mesmer-Magnus & Viswesvaran, 2005). External regulative agencies also encourage whistleblowing. Indeed, in 2015 the U.S securities and exchange commission (SEC) has paid $37 million to whistleblowers (Stub, 2016).

A more subtle form of peer monitoring occurs when individual group members informally act as agents of control. Social influence from fellow employees may appear in the form of concertive controls whereby employees feel socially obligated to abide by shared interpretations of acceptable behavior (Barker, 1993; Lange, 2008). This type of control develops naturally over time and, thus, needs little to no formal implementation from the organization.

Clearly in both research and practice there is evidence to support the idea that getting caught may serve as a deterrent to future unethical behavior. Yet, getting caught does not always deter future bad behavior. For instance, in the Wells Fargo scandal, some

employees confronted their co-workers regarding the fake accounts; however these efforts to cease unethical behavior were to no avail (CBS News, 2016; Egan, 2016). In this example, getting caught did not appear to make a difference in the continued unethical behavior of many Wells Fargo employees. This raises the question: why is it that individuals in organizations continue to engage in unethical behavior even after they get caught?

Research on moral consistency offers one perspective that may answer this question. Moral consistency is the notion that individuals seek congruence between their moral standards and actions; scholars who use this perspective provide empirical evidence to support the effect of consistent, or trait-like factors, on continued unethical behavior (Blasi, 1980; Weaver, 2006). This perspective supports the notion that some individuals are essentially “bad apples” who continually transgress despite the threat of organizational or social sanctions (Treviño & Youngblood, 1990). A second perspective as to why individuals may continually engage in unethical behavior focuses more on the malleability of moral cognition. For example, research on moral balancing accounts for inconsistent ethical behavior over time as an ethical or unethical behavior at one point in time reduces the likelihood of performing that same type of behavior again in the future (Conway & Peetz, 2012; Merritt, Effron, & Monin, 2010).

In addition to moral consistency and moral balancing, there exist other explanations as to why individuals repeatedly engage in unethical behavior. For example, recent research by Kouchaki and Gino (2016) uses the term ‘ethical amnesia’ to explain how similar instances of unethical behavior occur repeatedly by the same individual. Essentially, most people like to view themselves in a positive light; thus, ethical

transgressions are less likely to be remembered as compared to other behaviors unrelated to moral choices. This in turn allows the individual to engage in future unethical behaviors (Nield, 2016).

In spite of the advances to our knowledge regarding what causes individuals to behave unethically and how ethical decisions may unfold over time, scholarship in this area lacks an examination of the social interventions to prevent unethical behavior (Moore & Gino, 2015). Indeed, scholars tend to focus on the intra-individual reasons why unethical behavior is repeated; this perspective fails to account for the role of an individual's immediate social context in influencing continued unethical behavior. One study that does incorporate between-person effects is a study by Gino and Bazerman (2009) who find that individuals were more likely to accept the unethical behaviors of others if the behaviors developed gradually versus suddenly. Still, their study was limited to responders' observations and evaluations of ethical transgressors; they did not capture how responders may influence ethical transgressors' future behavior. Given that the social environment plays an important role in ethical decision-making as well as other aspects of organizational life (Anand, Ashforth, & Joshi, 2004; Brass, Butterfield, & Skaggs, 1998; Kish-Gephart et al., 2010; Treviño, 1986), it is surprising that the existing literature is limited in examining how interventions that may impact individuals' patterns of behavior with regard to ethical decision making. Specifically, prior research is somewhat mute regarding the role of feedback as an intervention to continued unethical behavior.

Studying the role of feedback in affecting unethical behavior over time is important because in the real world, individuals are constantly exposed to how others

react to their behavior (Jussim, Yen, & Aiello, 1995; Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). While feedback regarding unethical behavior has been overlooked, research does consider various social and contextual influences on employee unethical behavior. First, at the contextual level, scholars have identified various environmental factors that influence employee unethicality. Most notably, Vitell, Nwachukwu, and Barnes (1993) present a theoretical model of the different environmental factors that affect individual ethical decision-making. Culture, profession, industry, and organizational environment are the major themes of their model. Additionally, research demonstrates the importance of various other contextual variables such as leadership (Peterson, 2004), climate and culture (Shin, 2012), and social network (Brass et al., 1998) in affecting individual ethical decision-making. Of these themes, the effect of culture on unethical behavior is especially prevalent in the literature (Douglas, Davidson, & Schwartz, 2001; Kaptein, 2008, 2011; Key, 1999; Lindsay, Lindsay, & Irvine, 1996).

Second, in considering a more immediate social context, organizational peers also have the ability to influence individual ethical decision-making (Bommer, Gratto, Gravander, & Tuttle, 1987). Research by Chun, Shin, Choi, and Kim (2013) explores how social support, through social learning and exchange, can facilitate organizational citizenship behavior at the collective level. Even social networks may affect ethical behavior (Brass et al., 1998). Indeed, 'bad barrel' models of unethical behavior give empirical evidence that demonstrates the effect that organizational actors may have over individual decision-makers during a moral dilemma (Treviño & Youngblood, 1990). Additionally, leaders may play an important role in unethical behavior. For example, if a subordinate perceives her/his leader to have integrity, then she/he is less likely to commit

an ethical transgression (Peterson, 2004). Despite these studies examining how ethical behavior may be influenced, theory regarding feedback as an intervention to break ongoing cycles of unethical behavior is largely absent from the literature.

With my dissertation, I broaden the research in this domain by exploring how moral feedback may affect an ethical transgressor's subsequent behavior. Moral feedback is feedback given to ethical transgressors regarding their unethical behavior (Springer, 2008). When individuals are engaged in organizational wrongdoing, they may receive a response from others, such as a supervisor or peer, regarding their transgressions. I call this response moral feedback because it is a reaction to a behavior that exists in a moral context. Just as other types of evaluative feedback may affect the future behavior of the feedback recipients (Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 1999; Ilgen, Fisher, & Taylor, 1979), I examine how moral feedback can affect future unethical behavior.

Often, the purpose of moral feedback may be to reduce the likelihood of subsequent unethical behavior by a transgressor; however, the extent to which this purpose is accomplished, I argue, may depend on both the content of the feedback as well as how the feedback is delivered. Specifically, I put forward that a certain type of feedback may have the effect of increasing the likelihood of future transgressor unethical behavior. Thus, initial intentions of a feedback provider may backfire depending on the type of moral feedback given to the transgressor. Whereas research in the management field has neglected to look at moral feedback as an important factor in influencing individuals at work, I develop a typology for it to account for how such feedback may affect individuals in organizations.

Specifically, I propose that moral intensity and affective tone are key elements of moral feedback. Moral intensity refers to the degree to which one's sense of morality is evoked in a given situation (Jones, 1991; Morris & McDonald, 1995). In the context of feedback, it may make the moral implications of ethical transgression more salient. Thus, when transgressors are given morally intense feedback, strongly held values move towards the forefront of their minds. I argue that morally intense feedback affects future behavior by affecting individuals' moral self-regulation. Alternatively, feedback lacking in moral intensity may reinforce current transgressor behavior as moral disengagement may not take place. Specifically, feedback that lacks moral intensity does not directly address the unethical behavior and thus does not prompt change. Rather, this type of feedback is autonomy-supportive, meaning that it serves to promote transgressor behavior instead of control it (Carpentier & Mageau, 2013).

In addition to moral intensity, I build on prior research to examine how the affective tone of the feedback may affect transgressor cognition and future behavior. Specifically, I investigate how the affective tone of a feedback provider's message may affect how the transgressor processes the moral feedback. Affective tone refers to an individual's attitude that reflects a certain encounter or situation (Bower, 1981; Stock, 1949). Individuals use affective tone to relay feelings through more than just language; implicit cues, and level of emotional arousal, for instance, are conveyed through affective tone (Friedman & Förster, 2010; Lindauer, 1968; Mattila, Grandey, & Fisk, 2003). In support of this idea, research demonstrates that characteristics of the feedback provider may affect how a feedback recipient reacts to feedback (Johnson, 2013; Jordan & Audia, 2012; van de Ridder, Peters, Stokking, de Ru, & ten Cate, 2015). These characteristics

may include the ability of a feedback provider to convey a certain tone when delivering the feedback. Indeed, individuals who receive feedback may react differently to the same message when delivered by different sources (Ashford & Tsui, 1991). Thus, a feedback recipient may react differently to the same type of feedback depending on if the feedback is given by someone who is able to convey the message in a positively valenced affective tone versus a negatively valenced affective tone.

To understand the implications of moral feedback on an ethical transgressor's subsequent behavior, I draw on social cognitive theory (SCT). Albert Bandura (1986) developed SCT to explain how social interactions, experiences, and other external influences affect individual behavior by developing and influencing individual self-regulation. Later, he extended SCT by proposing a theory of moral disengagement which holds that self-regulation can be turned off by certain disengagement mechanisms (Bandura, 1990). In my dissertation, I propose the idea that, through moral feedback, an individual may trigger an ethical transgressor's moral disengagement mechanisms. Thus, the potential of future unethical behavior by the transgressor may increase. Not only does my investigation extend the research on unethical behavior over time, I also extend moral disengagement theory by examining the effect of moral feedback on transgressor cognition. Although SCT places a strong emphasis on the external influences on individual behavior, research regarding how feedback affects moral disengagement is lacking.

Through studying moral feedback, I aim to paint a more holistic picture of ethical decision making by incorporating social influences on transgressor cognition and future unethical behavior. Operating under the assumption that some employees may be

engaged in an ongoing cycle of unethical behavior, and that it is beneficial to prevent such behavior in the workplace, I examine how getting caught may affect ethical transgressors' subsequent behavior. Specifically, I investigate how social influence, via moral feedback given to an ethical transgressor, affects post-behavior cognition such that future unethical behavior is altered. My dissertation relies on two principal research questions: (1) What are the different types of moral feedback? and (2) How does this feedback affect ethical decision makers' cognition and future behavior?

In the following sections of this chapter, I first offer a brief description of my research intentions with regard to my research questions as stated above. Next, I discuss the four primary ways that my dissertation makes both scholarly and practical contributions. Following this, I provide definitions to several key terms that I use throughout my dissertation. Finally, I discuss the boundary conditions within which I position my dissertation and how such boundary conditions are managed within my study.

Research Description

The purpose of my dissertation is to examine how social influence, via moral feedback, can alter ethical transgressors' future behavior. I conduct my inquiry by developing a typology of the different types of moral feedback that an individual may receive after engaging in an ethical transgression. I use this typology to answer my first research question with regard to the different types of moral feedback that an individual may receive. Then, drawing on this typology, I aim to answer my second research question: how does social influence in the form of moral feedback affect ethical decision makers' cognition and future behavior? To answer my research questions, I performed a

lab study. As depicted in Figure 1, I examined the direct effect of morally intense feedback on transgressor moral disengagement. I also tested how affective tone of feedback moderates this relationship. To account for future transgressor unethical behavior, I tested moral disengagement as a mediator to the relationship between morally intense feedback and future transgressor unethical behavior. Finally, I tested how affective tone of feedback moderates the mediated relationship between morally intense feedback, moral disengagement, and unethical behavior. Table 1 provides a list of the hypotheses I tested.

Contributions of this research

With my dissertation, I make four primary contributions. First, I develop a typology for the different types of feedback that an ethical transgressor may receive. Ashford and Cummings (1983) criticize the literature on feedback due to its narrow focus on performance appraisals. Here I add to the literature on feedback by first going beyond examining the effects of simply negative versus positive feedback, and second, broadening its focus to the ethical domain and using my typology to help better understand the nature and consequences of different types of moral feedback. Establishing this typology of moral feedback is important for both researchers and practitioners. Within academia, my typology may be a beneficial tool for future researchers to use when examining the different types of social reactions to unethical behavior. Further, I developed and validated a way to test the effects of each type of feedback. Future research can use this content to further investigate moral feedback.

This typology is also practically oriented. Managers are often concerned with curtailing employee unethical behavior. For instance, in the Wells Fargo example in the

first section of this chapter there was a system in place by which unethical behavior could be reported internally. Yet in this case, despite receiving moral feedback, many transgressors continued behaving unethically. In fact, some Wells Fargo employees who provided such feedback were retaliated against by the organization (Egan, 2016). This example highlights the importance of investigating how organizations can offer moral feedback such that detrimental effects for both the feedback provider as well as the ethical transgressor are avoided. In my dissertation, I put forward that it is not simply about catching ethical transgressors, rather, what is more important is what is said to the ethical transgressor as well as how it is said.

Second, I add to the research exploring the link between the immediate social context and the subsequent behavior of a transgressor. As John Donne (1624) once wrote, "no man is an island." In the workplace this notion is especially true as most people engage in social interaction at work. Since organizational actors are subject to the context that surrounds them, they are exposed to social influences ranging from interaction with other organizational actors to organizational-level variables such as culture. Notably, feedback is an especially important form of workplace interaction because it often occurs whether the feedback recipient wants feedback or not. Unlike other forms of social connection at work, feedback may be a one-sided interaction that is unavoidable and potentially unpleasant (Audia & Locke, 2004). Further, although moral feedback may be considered as a tool to prevent future unethical behavior, with my dissertation I present the notion that, depending on the type of moral feedback one receives, one can sometimes encourage subsequent unethical behavior.

By investigating transgressor moral disengagement in the context of feedback, I add to the burgeoning literature on moral disengagement and the broader literature of SCT. Prior studies that incorporate moral disengagement have studied it in terms of variables such as environmental exploitation (Shepherd, Patzelt, & Baron, 2013), motivated forgetting (Shu, Gino, & Bazerman, 2011), corruption (Moore, 2008), job insecurity (Huang, Wellman, Ashford, Lee, & Wang, 2016), the slippery slope effect (Welsh, Ordóñez, Snyder, & Christian, 2015), and various other factors. While prior scholarly works on moral disengagement primarily utilize a within-person approach to their research inquiries, my study incorporates a person-situation interactionist model of ethical behavior (Brass et al., 1998; Mazar & Zong, 2010; Treviño, 1986) to examine how moral feedback can affect a transgressor's subsequent behavior. Notably, this may be the first study to examine the influence that feedback may have on moral disengagement.

Within this same contribution area of exploring the link between the immediate social context and the subsequent behavior of an ethical transgressor, I expand the literature on emotions and emotional influence. Van Kleef, De Dreu, and Manstead (2010) criticize the literature that examines emotions as a social influence stating that the current focus is too narrow as it primarily investigates positive versus negative mood and lacks an investigation of discrete emotions. My dissertation helps to broaden this field by examining how a discrete emotion, guilt, may be induced by moral feedback to alter ethical transgressors' cognition and behavior.

Third, I also contribute to the literature on moral consistency. Specifically, I present moral feedback as an unexplored variable that may affect moral consistency. As

briefly mentioned, moral consistency is the notion that moral character is trait-like and stable to a certain degree (Blasi, 1980). Theories of moral consistency align with Festinger's (1962) theory of cognitive dissonance which proposes that individuals feel pressure to conduct themselves in a consistent manner over time. However, I explore the notion that feedback may alter consistent moral behavior. Specifically, I present theory regarding the role of critical moral feedback as a deterrent to future transgressor unethical behavior.

In the same vein, a fourth contribution I make is to the literature on ethical behavior over time. Although behavioral ethics has become a popular topic in management, literature examining how unethicality progresses is sparse (Kish-Gephart et al., 2010). The few studies that have endeavored to investigate unethicality over time are limited in their examination of interventions to unethical behavior. For example, one theory that examines changes in ethical behavior over time is moral seduction. Also known as both ethical fading and the slippery slope effect, this phenomenon takes place when there is a gradual change in an individual's ethical behavior such that their transgressions progress in either severity or incidences over time (Tenbrunsel & Messick, 2004; Welsh et al., 2015). Yet, these studies do not take into account the actions that a leader or employee to intervene on an individual's unethical behavior cycle. As the literature stands, our understanding of the role of social influence on unethical behavior over time is narrow. Specifically, this dissertation may be the first study of the effects of feedback as an external intervention on the post-unethical-behavior cognition of a transgressor and her/his subsequent behaviors. The lack of moral feedback in our current

theories of repeated unethical behavior has led to an "undersocialized" view of the phenomenon (Granovetter, 1985).

Definitions of key terms

Unethical behavior. For the purpose of my dissertation, I conceptualize unethical behavior as any action taken by an organizational member that violates social norms that are widely accepted to the larger community (Kish-Gephart et al., 2010). Under this definition, unethical behavior is tantamount to engaging in an ethical transgression (Jones, 1991). Due to the vague and relativistic nature of this definition, it captures a wide variety of unethicality. Although there exists research that aims to establish more concrete definitions of unethical behavior in organizations (Cavanagh, Moberg, & Velasquez, 1981), allowing for different types of ethical transgressions is consistent with my theory. Furthermore, it is important to note that I do not make a moral awareness distinction, thus I treat both conscious and subconscious unethicality the same. I will further elaborate on how setting aside this distinction shapes my research in the penultimate section of this chapter.

Moral disengagement. Moral disengagement is a set of cognitive mechanisms that disengage an individual's moral self-regulatory processes. After disengagement occurs, an individual may subsequently make unethical decisions without having guilty feelings (Bandura, 1986; Detert, Treviño, & Sweitzer, 2008). SCT is a theory about how individuals control their thoughts and behaviors through self-regulatory processes. These regulatory processes include self-monitoring and self-reaction that serve to equalize one's behavior in accordance with one's standards (Bandura, 1986, 1999). However, the moral self-regulation process can be activated and deactivated selectively; as Bandura (1999)

points out, it is moral disengagement that underlies this deactivation process. Moral disengagement extends SCT by flushing out the ways in which self-regulation is turned off.

Traditionally, moral disengagement is conceptualized as a state. It is something that may be in constant flux for an individual depending on the situation that surrounds her/him. However, it is important to note that moral disengagement has more recently been captured as a trait-based variable. A measure for the propensity to morally disengage has been developed by Moore and colleagues (2012) in order to capture how moral disengagement as a personality trait is related to unethical behavior. In my dissertation, although I adapt items from the scale developed by Moore and colleagues (2012), I use the traditional conceptualization of moral disengagement to capture the morally disengaged state of an ethical transgressor (Hartmann & Vorderer, 2010; Shu et al., 2011).

Moral intensity. Moral intensity is defined as the degree to which an individual's sense of morality is evoked in a given situation (Jones, 1991; Morris & McDonald, 1995). When a situation is morally intense, morality is at the forefront of one's mind. Alternatively, when a situation lacks moral intensity, then moral implications are either nonexistent or not apparent.

Affective tone. I refer to affective tone as an expression of an individual's attitude with regard to a particular situation or encounter (Bower, 1981; Stock, 1949). Affective tone is used to convey feelings. Although an affective tone can be exhibited via words (Bradley & Lang, 1999), other factors such as body language, volume of voice, and facial

expressions, for instance, may be used to convey affective tone (Friedman & Förster, 2010; Lindauer, 1968; Mattila et al., 2003).

Transgressor. I derive the word transgressor from the phrase ethical transgression as defined above. Applying this definition to an agent of an ethical transgression, I consider an ethical transgressor, or simply *transgressor*, to be an individual who performs a behavior that is morally unacceptable to the larger community. Because I am specifically interested in transgressions that occur in a workplace setting, I consider organizational actors as the larger community.

Feedback provider. A feedback provider is an individual who responds to unethical behavior of a transgressor by confronting the transgressor. The most important distinction between a feedback provider and an observer is that a feedback provider reacts to unethical behavior via the use of feedback. For the purpose of my study, it is only essential that a feedback provider knows about the transgressor's unethical behavior. It is not critical whether the feedback provider was a witness to the transgressor's behavior or found out about the behavior through other means. Below I further elaborate this point as a boundary condition of my research.

Ethical and moral. Although ethics and morality can be recognized as two distinct concepts, this distinction is not relevant for the purpose of my dissertation. As such, I follow the lead of behavioral ethics research in presenting moral and ethical as equivalent in meaning (Cavanagh et al., 1981; Treviño, Weaver, & Reynolds, 2006). Throughout my dissertation I use them interchangeably depending on the context.

Boundary conditions

There are three boundary conditions of my dissertation. The first is that I focus on feedback that pertains to unethical behavior. In line with my definition of moral feedback being in response to an ethical transgression, I do not examine feedback as it is given to individuals who perform a morally upright action (Springer, 2008). Thus, unlike performance feedback which may be in regard to both good and bad performance (Balcazar, Hopkins, & Suarez, 1985), the feedback that I focus on is solely in response to an ethical transgression. Social expectations motivate individuals to adhere to established moral norms (Conner & Armitage, 1998). Thus, when these norms are violated, it is more likely that individuals in the workplace will receive moral feedback that is in a reaction to such unethical behavior than they would unsolicited positive moral appraisals as a reaction to behavior that falls within normal moral norms. Although potentially limiting the scope of my dissertation, my focus on feedback in response to unethicality better mimics the workplace than would a focus on appraisals of positive moral behavior.

The second boundary condition is that I do not distinguish between feedback regarding the performance of an unethical behavior and feedback regarding the result of an unethical behavior. This is an important boundary condition because I am interested in the type of feedback rather than the type of ethical transgression. As such, I focus on the assumption that the individual giving the moral feedback—the feedback provider, in my model—is aware that an unethical transgression occurred. Whether they became aware of the behavior by seeing the transgressor perform the behavior, or if was due to knowledge of what resulted from the behavior, is less important.

In the management literature, feedback has historically been a popular topic of interest among many scholars (Deci, 1971; Ilgen et al., 1979). Feedback is generally

considered in terms of feedback intervention, which is defined as actions that are taken by an external agent to deliver information in regard to some aspect of an individual's task performance (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996). Early research on feedback intervention incorporates knowledge of results (KR); essentially the person giving the feedback—generally someone in a supervisory role—has information about the actual results of the task (Brand, 1905; Jones, 1910). Later research drifted towards the examination of knowledge of the performance (KP); thus, effort was taken into consideration in addition to final task outcomes (Kim & Hamner, 1976). Finally, recent research has shed light of the individual receiving the feedback. For example, it has been established that there are certain individuals who seek out feedback from their supervisors (Chen, Lam, & Zhong, 2007).

There are some similarities between the notion of moral feedback and that of feedback intervention. For instance, both assume that the person giving the feedback has information regarding the behavior of the individual receiving the feedback. However, an important distinction is that moral feedback is in regard to an unethical behavior while feedback intervention is in regard to a task that may or may not have moral implications (Lindsay et al., 1996). Another difference between feedback intervention and my conceptualization of moral feedback is that knowledge of results and knowledge of performance are considered separately in former but not the latter (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996). Although I acknowledge that the performance of an unethical behavior and the result of that unethical behavior may be distinct from one another in moral feedback, I do not examine such differences in my dissertation. In my literature review section I more

specifically detail the similarities and differences between feedback as it is used in most management research and moral feedback.

My third boundary condition is regarding the moral awareness of the transgressor. In my dissertation, I do not make a distinction between transgressors who are morally aware of their unethical behavior and those who are not. Rest (1986) defines moral awareness as an interpretive process that allows for individuals to identify that a moral problem exists; this problem could be proximal, such as a personal moral dilemma, or distant. For instance, an individual may take issue with a rule or law they believe to be unjust even if they are unaffected by this injustice (Gino, Schweitzer, Mead, & Ariely, 2011). A more recent conceptualization defines moral awareness as individuals' judgment that a situation has moral relevance and may be considered from a moral perspective (Reynolds, 2006b). This definition allows for individuals to demonstrate inconsistent patterns of moral awareness depending on the situation (Treviño, 1986).

Because moral awareness can change and I am studying the malleability of transgressor cognition after receiving moral feedback, the level of transgressor moral awareness may be altered depending on the nature of the feedback. Despite these changes that may happen further down the causal chain of my model, my dissertation does not make moral awareness distinctions with regard to the intentionality of the initial unethical behavior.

Structure of this document

This chapter served to provide an overview of my dissertation by way of research questions, a theoretical foundation, and key terminology. The remaining sections of my dissertation proposal are as follows: Chapter 2 is a detailed literature review of scholarly

work that is applicable to my research here. In this chapter I explore research from sources both within and outside of the management literature. Chapter 3 offers a theoretical foundation, primarily based upon SCT from which I develop my predictions. Along with theoretical development, I offer specific hypotheses that I test in a lab setting as well as a field study. In Chapter 4, I discuss the design and procedure of my study as well as present the manipulations and measures. Chapter 5 presents the results of my study. Finally, Chapter 6 includes a discussion of my results as well as potential avenues of future research that scholars may pursue based on my dissertation.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Behavioral Ethics

Behavioral ethics is the study of how individuals make ethical decisions. While ethics in general refers to generally acceptable norms and practices, behavioral ethics is more specific in that it involves the explanation of the moral behaviors of individuals within the context of a larger social setting (Treviño et al., 2006). This focus on the social scientific aspect of ethics differentiates behavioral ethics from the philosophical inquiry of ethics. Behavioral ethics is primarily rooted in social psychology but has gained much traction in organizational behavior research. Although behavioral ethics may often have normative implications, most research in this field is not focused on what is the 'right' thing to do. Rather, the nature of this work is a descriptive inquiry with regard to understanding and predicting individual cognition and action during a morally charged situation. As such, the study of behavioral ethics encompasses a broad range of theoretical models and empirical investigations. Given the extensive nature of this research, I restrict my literature review to social scientific works of behavioral ethics that fall within the scope of my dissertation. Specifically, I focus on research that concerns the topics of unethical behavior at work, moral disengagement, and feedback.

First, I detail foundational models in behavioral ethics research and review some relevant research on unethical behavior in the management field. In this section I first review behavioral ethics models that concern unethicality over time. I then review unethical behavior specific to organizations. Then, I provide a review of ethics-based research that is rooted in social cognitive theory (SCT). Though I use SCT as a

theoretical foundation in my dissertation, I specifically build on the theory of moral disengagement to explain why continued unethical behavior may occur.

Moral disengagement is a burgeoning theme in organizational behavior research. Providing a literature review of moral disengagement will set the foundation from which I build my theory and hypotheses in the next chapter. Finally, I review the literature on feedback. My dissertation specifically focuses on moral feedback, which is feedback that is in response to an ethical transgression. However, as there may be some crossover between the effects of moral feedback and the effects of regular feedback—an appraisal based on job or task performance—I review select themes that are relevant to my dissertation. Specifically, I make use of research regarding the effects of feedback sign, source of feedback, and dispositional factors of the feedback recipient.

Foundational models in behavioral ethics. There are many different types of unethical behavior (Cavanagh et al., 1981; Kish-Gephart et al., 2010). Studies oriented towards strategic management may examine themes such as circumventing environmental regulation violations (Dixon-Fowler, Slater, Johnson, Ellstrand, & Romi, 2013), CEO unethical behavior (Bradford & Garrett, 1995; Tang, Qian, Chen, & Shen, 2014), and power asymmetry in buyer-supplier relationships (Benton & Maloni, 2005; Hill, Eckerd, Wilson, & Greer, 2009). On the other hand, organizational behavior research is more oriented towards moral cognition and individual-level behavioral ethics. These micro-level themes of unethical behavior at work include topics such as counterproductive work behavior (Carpenter & Berry, 2014), abusive behaviors (Spector, Fox, & Domagalski, 2006), dishonesty (McCabe, Treviño, & Butterfield, 2001), workplace deviance (Yan Liu & Loi, 2012), and withdrawal (Maslach, Schaufeli, &

Leiter, 2001). In the next section I provide an overview of two models that serve as the foundation of much of the behavioral ethics research in management.

The first is Kohlberg's (1969) model of moral development. Whereas earlier research in the behavioral ethics field focused on the consequences of ethical decision-making (Bower, 1965; Edwards, 1954; Shubik, 1958), Kohlberg highlighted the role that different stages of moral development play in decision making. His theory proposes that an individuals' behavior is guided by their moral reasoning. The ability for individuals to develop this capacity for moral reasoning is dependent on their developmental stage. The theory includes six stages based on personal orientation towards: obedience and punishment, self-interest, conformity, authority, social contract, and universal ethical principles (Kohlberg, 1971). The stage of development impacts individual ethical decision making. For example, individuals in the first developmental stage of moral reasoning act morally for the sake of avoiding punishment. This stage of development may be exemplified by children behaving well in order to avoid punishment by their parents (Kohlberg, 1971). Much of the research regarding various stages of moral development has been performed using longitudinal observation and by surveying individuals from childhood to adulthood (Colby & Kohlberg, 1987). The work of Treviño expands this model by proposing how one's developmental stage may interact with individual and situational factors to affect moral decision-making. Her theory holds that moral cognitive judgments are malleable depending on individual variables such as locus of control as well as situational factors like job context (Treviño, 1986). Thus, judgments made at the cognitive level are altered before they manifest in behavioral form (Jones, 1991).

A second model that is foundational to much of the behavioral ethics research in management is Rest's (1986) model of moral development. This model holds that there are four progressive steps of an ethical decision. A moral agent must first recognize that there is a moral issue at hand; this stage is called moral awareness or moral sensitivity. Second, a moral judgment is to be made regarding the specific course of action to be taken. The third stage concerns the agent's intentions to execute a moral judgment; this stage is called moral motivation or moral intent. In the final stage, action is taken; this stage is called moral character as it encompasses an individual persisting in a moral action despite the challenges that may be associated with taking that action (or choosing not to take an immoral action). Rest (1986) puts forward that each component in the process is conceptually distinct and that success in one stage does not necessarily imply success in subsequent stages.

Although there are other important models that contribute to how behavioral ethics research has unfolded in the management field, the above theories from Rest and Kohlberg serve as a foundation for many of the inquiries of ethical decision making and action in organizations (Treviño et al., 2006). Further, many scholars incorporate both perspectives into their research. This may be because of the overlap between the two. Specifically, the second component of Rest's model incorporates Kohlberg's concept of moral development (Jones, 1991; Kohlberg, 1976; Rest, 1986). As described, the second component of Rest's model is moral judgment; such moral judgments may stem from one's stage of moral development. Further, management research in behavioral ethics falls into two primary streams. The first focuses on Rest's second component, moral judgment, while the second focuses on the relationship between the second and fourth

component, moral judgment and moral action (Jones, 1991; Treviño et al., 2006). As the Kohlberg and Rest models have so significantly influenced the behavioral ethics field, much of the literature I review below expands on either one or both of these foundational theories.

Moral consistency and moral balancing. In this section, I review the work that falls under the respective categories of moral consistency and moral balancing. Both of these theories pertain to unethical behavior unfolding over time. Further, both primarily rely on the concept of self-regulation to explain effects. Despite these similarities, the underlying assumptions of moral consistency and moral balancing compete with one another. Whereas moral consistency predicts that future behavior is consistent with the same type of behaviors that were performed in the past, moral balancing predicts that future behavior may be inconsistent with past behavior (Jordan, Mullen, & Murnighan, 2011). Consequently, in my review I compare and contrast each literature stream to offer a clear picture of this research domain.

Moral consistency. Moral consistency is the notion that an individual who performs an ethical or unethical act is more likely to behave in the same fashion in the future (Cornelissen, Bashshur, Rode, & Le Menestrel, 2013). Ariely (2009) uses the term "self-herding" to describe when people look at past behavior to guide their future behavior. This repetitive, consistent pattern of behavior does not only apply to moral action. Indeed, the literature presents a long standing history of research on behavioral consistency whereby past behavior is indicative of future behavior (Festinger, 1957; Taylor, 1975). First, I will review specific studies that highlight behavioral consistency; then, I will discuss how behavioral consistency informs other theories of moral behavior.

Much of the early work on behavioral consistency is rooted in Fritz Heider's (1946) balance theory of attitude change. This theory holds that all individuals have a psychological need for cognitive consistency that motivates one to maintain values and beliefs over time. Many researchers use behavioral consistency theory to demonstrate the important role that consistency in action and thought plays in our lives (Bem, 1967; Markus & Kunda, 1986; Taylor, 1975). One study develops a measure of preference of consistency (the PFC scale) to examine the individual differences between those that are and are not susceptible to consistency-based effects (Cialdini, Trost, & Newsom, 1995). One of the effects tested is cognitive balance, derived from Heider's (1946) research. The two other effects that they study are a foot-in-the-door technique and dissonance, both of which I will elaborate on later in this section.

Later research applied the notion of behavioral consistency to moral behavior. Moral philosophy already had much work on consistency in moral systems, which are long-lasting governing beliefs regarding moral behavior (Donagan, 1984; McConnell, 1978). However, within moral philosophy, this inquiry of behavioral consistency is narrow and lacking in empirical examination. Conversely, social science work on self-regulation and motivation allowed for the intersection of behavioral consistency and ethicality that goes beyond theoretical inquiry (Bandura, Blanchard, & Ritter, 1969; Bar-Tal, 1976; Thomas & Batson, 1981). More specific than behavioral consistency, work on moral consistency suggests that individuals who engage in an ethical or unethical behavior are likely to behave in the same fashion in the future (Cornelissen et al., 2013). Thus, ethical acts are repeated over time, or, alternatively, unethical acts are repeated over time.

One explanation behind moral consistency is that individuals behave in a particular way that matches with self-perception (Colby & Kohlberg, 1981). For example, a study by Thomas and Batson (1981) shows that when individuals are induced to perceive themselves as altruistic, they are more likely to offer help to others than those who are not induced to feel altruistic. Another study demonstrates that when individuals are reminded of their prior environmental conservation efforts, they are more likely to engage in pro environmental behaviors (Cornelissen, Pandelaere, Warlop, & Dewitte, 2008). Alternatively, moral consistency can serve to make people feel less moral. For example, Gino, Norton, and Ariely (2010) find that individuals who are told that they have been given counterfeit sunglasses to wear are more likely to participate in unethical behaviors versus individuals wearing the corresponding brand-name sunglasses.

Another study that incorporates self-perception is with regard to repeated unethical decisions being more prevalent in prevention-focused individuals over promotion-focused individuals. People who are prevention-focused are concerned with maintaining security through maintaining the status quo; alternatively, promotion-focused individuals are motivated to make advancement by making changes to the status quo (Brockner & Higgins, 2001). Zhang, Cornwell, and Higgins (2013) apply this same idea of maintaining the status quo to unethical behavior. They examine repeated unethical behavior and find that, controlling for the initial decision and the need for consistency, prevention-focused individuals are more likely to make the same decision they previously made, even when it was an unethical decision. Further, they found that these results were consistent regardless of whether the individuals had a chronic disposition towards a prevention focus or the prevention focus was situationally induced.

In addition to these direct tests of moral consistency, there are many theories in social science research that expand on or assume moral consistency. Below I will review the literature on two major themes that fall under the moral consistency umbrella that are pertinent to my dissertation. First, I briefly overview the notion of cognitive dissonance, and then I provide a thorough review of moral identity theory and some notable research in this area.

The theory of cognitive dissonance was proposed by Leon Festinger (1957) to account for how individuals are motivated to achieve internal consistency. The theory holds that inconsistency between two or more contradictory cognitions induces psychological discomfort such that individuals experiencing dissonance will either alter their behavior or cognition to alleviate the discomfort (Bem, 1967; Festinger, 1962). Cognitive dissonance theory inspired work in defense motivation, which is defined by Chaiken, Giner-Sorolla, and Chen (1996) as "the desire to hold attitudes and beliefs that are congruent with existing self-definitional attitudes and beliefs" (p.557). Thus, a defense motivation may uphold an individual's moral ideology in an effort to preserve existing perceptions of one's own morality (Haidt, 2001). This may occur even at the expense of others. For example, Lerner's (1965) *just world hypothesis* proposes that individuals have a strong desire to feel that they live in a world where people get what they deserve in life; e.g. bad people get punished. However, when witness to the suffering of people for no reason, this belief in a just world is threatened. Evidence shows that individuals will adjust their moral judgments by derogating or blaming innocent victims rather than changing their underlying belief in a just world (Lerner & Miller, 1978; Tetlock, Kristel, & Lerner, 2000; Tetlock & Levi, 1982). Because preserving self-image

is important, a defense motivation and avoiding cognitive dissonance may drive one's moral identity (Gausel & Leach, 2011).

Also under the moral consistency rubric, moral identity serves a type of self-regulatory mechanism that motivates moral behavior (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Blasi, 1984; Damon & Hart, 1992). There are two perspectives of moral identity, the character perspective, and the social cognitive perspective (Shao, Aquino, & Freeman, 2008). The character perspective of moral identity is grounded in self-concept and social identity theories (Tajfel, 1974; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner & Oakes, 1986). This perspective is similar to other forms of identity as an individual's moral identity may be associated with particular beliefs, values, and behaviors (Cheryan & Bodenhausen, 2000; Forehand, Deshpandé, & Reed, 2002). Erikson (1964) developed the idea that identity involves being true to oneself in action and is at the core of every individual's being (Aquino & Reed, 2002). Hart, Atkins, and Ford (1998) build on this idea as they define moral identity as "a commitment to one's sense of self to lines of action that promote or protect the welfare of others" (p.515). This definition also highlights the role of self-regulation in moral action. Indeed, Damon and Hart (1992) assert that moral identity may be the most influential factor affecting the concordance between moral judgment and moral behavior.

Using the character perspective, much of the work by management scholars on moral identity focuses on behavioral consequences. For example, several studies demonstrate the effect of moral identity on prosocial behaviors. Reed and Aquino (2003) show that individuals with a higher moral identity are less adversely affected by out-group hostility compared to individuals with a lower moral identity. Specifically, their study demonstrates that subjects with higher moral identity were more likely to donate

money to out-group members in need of financial assistance. Reynolds and Ceranic (2007) also find a positive association between moral identity and pro-social behavior through capturing the relationship between moral identity and money donated to a children's relief fund.

In addition to the positive relationships between moral identity and pro-social behavior, there is evidence that supports the negative relationship between moral identity and antisocial behavior. Studies of adolescents (Barriga, Morrison, Liau, & Gibbs, 2001) and adults (Sage, Kavussanu, & Duda, 2006) demonstrate this relationship. There are also other interesting themes that scholars study in conjunction with moral identity. Some notable research in the management field connects higher levels of moral identity to increased honesty during negotiations (Aquino, Freeman, Reed, Lim, & Felps, 2008), better customer treatment (Skarlicki, Van Jaarsveld, & Walker, 2008), and increased ethical leadership (Brown & Mitchell, 2010; Mayer, Aquino, Greenbaum, & Kuenzi, 2012).

Despite these findings that highlight behavioral consistency in moral action, one newer conceptualization of moral identity allows for contextual factors to influence moral action. Different from character conceptualizations of moral identity, the social cognitive perspective holds that situational cues can inform social information processing thereby activating or deactivating knowledge structures such as moral self-concept (Bargh, Bond, Lombardi, & Tota, 1986; Shao et al., 2008). Essentially, the regulatory influence of moral identity may vary in salience depending on the situation (Skitka, 2003). The possibility of competing identities also adds to the idea that moral identity may be suppressed (Markus & Kunda, 1986). Paradoxically, though much of the moral identity research emphasizes

behavioral consistency through self-regulation, self-regulatory mechanisms may be selectively used. For example, the social cognitive perspective allows for theories, such as moral balancing, whereby self-regulation is selectively utilized.

Moral balancing. Moral balancing is the notion that performing an ethical or unethical behavior at one point in time reduces the likelihood of performing that same type of behavior again in the future (Cornelissen et al., 2013; Merritt et al., 2010). Although research in the social sciences on moral balancing is considered new, the notion of moral balancing has been in the literature without a label for quite some time. Even early works on moral consistency recognize, either implicitly or explicitly, that an individual's tendency towards consistency is not absolute as there may be other intervening factors that prevent total consistency (McGuire, 1960). Interestingly, one study that intended to demonstrate moral consistency actually provides evidence for moral balancing.

In an attempt to investigate how effective the 'foot-in-the-door' technique of solicitation is in convincing people to donate blood, Foss and Dempsey (1979) found an effect that they considered to be the opposite of moral consistency. The foot-in-the-door technique is a method of solicitation whereby compliance with a small request will, ideally, lead to compliance with a more substantial request (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004; Freedman & Fraser, 1966). Early research demonstrates that individuals who complied with a small request, were more likely to comply with a greater, more critical, request in the future (Freedman & Fraser, 1966; Pliner, Hart, Kohl, & Saari, 1974). For example, an individual that sees himself/herself as a helper is more likely to help a stranger in the future when asked to do so (Snyder & Cunningham, 1975). Foss and Dempsey (1979),

however, find the opposite. In a series of three experiments, they find that when individuals comply with a small request initially they are actually less likely to comply with future requests. These contradictory findings are possibly a result of differences in individual moral cognition. While factors such as high moral identity may cause individuals who perform a small good deed to later acquiesce to more a more critical request (Blasi, 1984; Conway & Peetz, 2012), some individuals use good deeds as an excuse to perform later bad deeds (Blasi, 1984). This effect is called moral balancing.

Theories of moral balancing fall into two categories: moral self-licensing (also described just as moral licensing) and moral compensation. Moral licensing is a concept that refers to individuals using prior performance of a good deed to excuse subsequent wrongdoings (Merritt et al., 2010). In the case of the Foss and Dempsey (1979) study, the subjects, who were college students, that complied with displaying a poster to donate blood on their door were less likely to then accept the request to actually donate blood than the subjects who did not comply with displaying the poster.

There are two different ways through which individuals morally license themselves: moral credentials and moral credits. The moral credentialing model makes up the bulk of moral licensing research (Effron & Monin, 2010). This model takes on the perspective of causal attribution as good deeds change how the individual views their subsequent behavior. Thus, individuals who engage in moral licensing via credentialing may feel that because of their former good deeds, a later behavior is not a transgression (Merritt et al., 2010). For example, Effron, Cameron, and Monin (2009) find that participants are more likely to favor Whites over Blacks for a job after expressing support for President Obama, but not after expressing support for a White Democrat. In this case,

participants credentialed themselves as being unprejudiced because they supported a black president. They did not view their favoritism of Whites over Blacks as prejudice because of their self-perception as being unprejudiced. Several other studies also demonstrate this same effect regarding moral credentials and prejudiced behaviors (Bradley-Geist, King, Skorinko, Hebl, & McKenna, 2010; Krumm & Corning, 2008; Leslie, King, Bradley, & Hebl, 2008; Monin & Miller, 2001). Using a similar concept, *social licensing*, one study finds that prejudiced behaviors occur when individuals engage in vicarious moral licensing. Through social licensing, individuals excuse the unethical actions they perform by credentialing themselves based on group members' past good behavior (Kouchaki, 2011). Similarly, moral licensing may be in the form of excusing the transgressions of others based on perceptions of past behavior (Effron & Monin, 2010).

The second type of moral licensing is licensing via the use of credits. The moral credits model of moral licensing holds that there is a one-to-one tradeoff between good and bad behaviors such that engaging in a single good deed may license an individual to internalize a credit which is subsequently used to excuse bad behavior (Merritt et al., 2010). Whereas the moral credentials framework suggests that individuals no longer perceive such behaviors as improper due to their prior behavior, the moral credits perspective argues that moral licensing is performed when individuals excuse later transgressions that they know are improper behaviors. Essentially, this trading of bad and good behaviors are an attempt to achieve a moral balance (Miller & Effron, 2010). Different from personal philosophies of morality that may affect business practices (Forsyth, 1992), the licensing process may be performed at a subconscious level (Miller & Effron, 2010). Consequently, an individual engaged in moral licensing may not even

know that this internal exchange of good credit for bad credit has taken place. Initial theories regarding the concept of internal balancing emerged from the conformity literature; after adhering to group norms, group members later deviated from these norms but felt that they had earned the right or a credit to do so (Hollander, 1958). Applying this concept of an internal bank account to moral behavior, later researchers proposed the term moral credits to describe the positive behavior that will later be balanced out by immoral behavior, or moral debits (Jordan et al., 2011; Nisan, 1990). This perspective of moral licensing holds that positive and negative behaviors serve to subsequently offset one another. The moral credits model has been used to study behaviors regarding monetary donations (Cheung & Chan, 2000), church attendance (Gruber, 2004), and green product purchasing (Mazar & Zong, 2010). More recently, the management literature has adopted moral licensing theory as an explanation as to why individuals at work may engage in both organizational citizenship behaviors as well as counterproductive work behaviors (Klotz & Bolino, 2013).

The moral licensing process can work in reverse as well: when individuals perform bad deeds, they seek to restore their moral equilibrium by consequently performing good deeds. This manifestation of good deeds stemming from bad deeds is known as moral cleansing (Merritt et al., 2010). Research on self-worth supports the notion that a person's self-worth is largely defined by how moral they see themselves (Dunning, 2007). Thus, because behaving unethically may negatively influence self-worth, individuals may engage in moral behaviors to compensate for this loss of worth (Tetlock, Kristel, Elson, Green, & Lerner, 2000). For example, Sachdeva and colleges (2009) demonstrate the effect of moral cleansing by having participants write a self-

relevant story using words that contained either positive or negative traits. The group that used negative self-relevant traits donated five times more money than the group that used positive self-relevant traits in their stories. Interestingly, having a deficit in moral credits may elicit the need for individuals to not only morally cleanse themselves, but physically cleanse themselves as well in order to 'wash away the sins,' as Zhong and Liljenquist (2006) put it. Clearly, literature on moral consistency and moral cleansing expands our understanding of moral behavioral pattern; however, these two literature streams do not encompass all the theories of how unethical behavior may unfold over time. Below I review research on unethical behavior over time that does not fall under either the moral consistency or the moral compensation rubric.

Other models of unethical behavior over time. Outside of the moral consistency and moral balancing literatures, there are various other models that examine unethical behavior over time. For example, Tenbrunsel and Messick (2004) put forward the idea of ethical fading, which they define as "the process by which the moral colors of an ethical decision fade into bleached hues that are void of moral implications" (p.224). Essentially, individuals engage in self-deception such that they may engage in unethical behavior without feeling like their moral principles were compromised. One form of ethical fading is known as the slippery slope effect whereby ethical behavior gradually changes such that a perpetrator's behavior increases in severity or occurrences as time progresses (Baack, Fogliasso, & Harris, 2000; Earle, Spicer, & Peter, 2010). Welsh et al. (2015) test this effect by examining moral disengagement as a way through which participant ethical behavior progressively erodes over a series of indiscretions that

gradually increase in severity. The slippery slope effect has also been studied in the context of the excusing of others' unethical behavior (Gino & Bazerman, 2009).

Kouchaki and Gino (2016) also present a model of unethical behavior over time. They provide evidence supporting the notion that memories of unethical behavior are not as salient as those of good behavior. Because an individual may have forgotten about a past unethical deed and the repercussions of their behavior, they may be prone to engaging in the same behavior in the future. Findings from Shu et al. (2011) also support this notion. They find that individuals engage in 'motivated forgetting' whereby they selectively recall past events in ways that support their choices (Mather & Johnson, 2000; Mather, Shafir, & Johnson, 2000). Further, the authors propose that moral disengagement is a mediating factor between cheating and motivated forgetting. Later in this chapter, I will thoroughly review the literature on moral disengagement as well as the literature on contextual factors that affect unethical behavior over time.

Different types of unethical behavior and how it is measured. Because most definitions of unethical behavior are broad (Kish-Gephart et al., 2010), there is much room for interpretation as to what is ethical and what is unethical. In this section, I review how prior studies measure unethical behavior. Further, I discuss other behaviors that are generally considered a detriment to the organization, but may not be so severe that they are considered to be unethical by the collective.

Much of the research in behavioral ethics is done in a lab. Some of the most common dependent variables in these studies include dishonesty (Shu et al., 2011), donation decisions (Zhang et al., 2013), exaggeration or over reporting on task performance (Mazar, Amir, & Ariely, 2008), and behaviors that are not pro-

environmental (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001). These variables are common because of the validity and efficiency that each can have in a lab study. Despite potential difficulties in data collection, there do exist studies that are able to capture more severe unethical behavior such as stealing (Harbaugh et al., 2013), prejudiced behaviors (Monin & Miller, 2001), and sexism (King et al., 2012).

There are also constructs that may be considered as unethical behavior, but are not necessarily used in studies utilizing the 'unethical behavior' label. For example, petty tyranny is a description scholars use for leaders who abuse the power that they have over their subordinates by engaging in behaviors such as self-aggrandizement, giving punishments for no or little reason, and belittling subordinates (Ashforth, 1994). Studies such as the one performed by Kant, Skogstad, Torsheim, and Einarsen (2013), who connect leader traits with subordinate-rated petty tyranny, do not mention unethical behavior. However, the authors do detail the negative effects that such tyranny can have on an organization. Similar research can be found in the literature on abusive supervision which is linked to negative organizational outcomes such as decreased employee creativity (Lui, Liao, & Loi, 2012), justice perceptions (Tepper, Duffy, Henle, & Lambert, 2006), and trust (Brown, Treviño, & Harrison, 2005). Despite these popular themes, unethical behavior in organizations is certainly not limited to leaders. For example, workplace vengeance whereby an employee intentionally aims to subvert another employee as retaliation for a perceived prior behavior (Sievers & Mersky, 2006).

There is also a large literature on specific behaviors that are counterproductive to the workplace. Counterproductive work behavior (CWB) is any behavior that is "harmful to the organization by directly affecting its functioning or property, or by hurting

employees in a way that will reduce their effectiveness (Fox, Spector, & Miles, 2001: 292). Further, CWB is considered to be voluntary (Rotundo & Sackett, 2002). Just as with the definition I used for unethical behavior, this definition is broad. As such, there are certainly behaviors that fall under both categories. For example, theft of company or employee property and physically attacking someone are two measures of CWB that are also considered to be unethical behavior as well (Gruys & Sackett, 2003; Martin, Brock, Buckley, & Ketchen, 2010). Despite this crossover, researchers do not tend to conceptualize CWBs as so severe that they constitute unethical behavior.

Other behaviors that are measured as CWB include destruction of property, misuse of time and resources, unsafe behavior, poor attendance, poor quality of work, alcohol use, drug use, and inappropriate verbal actions; each of these categories are higher-order factors of CWBs as measured by Gruys and Sackett (2003). There are many forms of counterproductive behavior that stem from traits, contextual factors, and affective states Spector and Fox (2010). Finally, the effect of affective states on CWB is captured by several studies that focus on the link between emotions and CWB (Lam, Weiss, Welch, & Hulin, 2009; Spector & Fox, 2002; Spector et al., 2006). In a similar vein, stress is also linked to an increase in CWB (Bruk-Lee & Spector, 2006; Penney & Spector, 2005).

Withdrawal behaviors are also associated with CWB. Withdrawal is a general term used to describe the social and dispositional reactions that are a result of being dissatisfied in the workplace (Johns, 2001). Lateness, absenteeism, and turnover are all considered withdrawal behaviors; and the first two themes have received much attention by researchers interested in CWBs (Penney & Spector, 2005; Rehman, 2016). However,

some researchers argue that CWB and withdrawal are not empirically distinct. Specifically, Harrison and Newman (2013) state that "withdrawal behavior has been subsumed to a large extent under the concept of CWB" (p. 283). To refute this notion, Carpenter and Berry (2014) perform a meta-analysis that shows the empirical distinctiveness of each.

Other behaviors that receive attention in this area are social loafing and cyberloafing. Social loafing is the notion that individuals have a tendency to expend less effort when working in a group versus working as an individual (Latane, Williams, & Harkins, 1979). Research from Hoon and Tan (2008) find that conscientiousness and motives for performing citizenship behaviors negatively relate to social loafing, but that contextual factors regarding the job task may alter these relationships. Supporting this notion, a meta-analysis by Anderson, Lindsay, and Bushman (1999) finds that task meaningfulness and culture have especially strong associations with social loafing. Evaluation potential and expectations of co-worker performance are also found to influence social loafing. Cyberloafing is another form of loafing behavior; however, unlike social loafing, cyberloafing refers to the use of Internet and e-mail during work hours for non-work related purposes (Lim, 2002). Because this form of workplace deviance is prevalent at many jobs that give employees access to the internet, the literature incorporates many articles that investigate the effects of monitoring software and other methods that capture employer responses to cyberloafing (Henle & Blanchard, 2008).

Clearly there are many different types of behaviors that are unethical, counterproductive, or deviant in the workplace. In my next section I refer to some of

these themes as they pertain to social cognitive theory and, more specifically, moral disengagement. First, I discuss social cognitive theory. I then discuss moral disengagement and each mechanism that is associated with disengagement. In this section I also point out what I believe is lacking in the moral disengagement literature and how my dissertation may address this problem.

Social Cognitive Theory

Social cognitive theory (SCT) puts forward that the interplay between behavioral, cognitive, and environmental factors are what determines human motivation and behavior. This theory, originally labeled as *social learning theory* was made popular by psychologist Albert Bandura (1991b). From SCT, Bandura spun off several other research streams such as work on self-efficacy, motivation, and learning. Further in his work, Bandura explored how SCT applies to moral thought and action. In this section of my dissertation I offer a brief overview of SCT; I then discuss how SCT lays down a foundational framework for research done in moral disengagement.

In the 1940s, the theory of social learning was originally proposed by Miller and Dollard (1941). Their theory was developed as an explanation of why we see patterns of behaviors. They put forward that social motivation is guided by imitation and social cues (Grusec, 1992; Miller & Dollard, 1941). About 20 years later, Bandura and Walters (1963) expand on social learning theory by discussing how observational learning and vicarious reinforcement apply to behavioral patterns, this theory became known as social cognitive theory. Observational learning is a type of learning that happens when observing the behavior of others; it is a social form of learning that goes beyond imitation (Bandura, Grusec, & Menlove, 1966).

Now considered a keystone experiment in the field of psychology (Hock, 2009), Bandura and his colleagues performed what is commonly referred to as the 'bobo doll experiment,' which tested observational learning on a group of children between thirty-seven and sixty-nine months old (Bandura, Ross, & Ross, 1961). The bobo doll is a weighted inflatable toy that stands about three feet tall and was often painted to look like a clown. After watching an adult demonstrate aggressive actions, such as hitting and kicking, towards the bobo doll, the children were more likely to exhibit the same aggressive behaviors as compared to the children who did not witness the adult modeling aggressive behavior. Another notable difference that the study found was the tendency for the male children to be more likely to aggress against the bobo doll than the female children (Bandura et al., 1961).

The findings of the bobo doll experiments made significant contributions to SCT. For instance, observational learning lays the foundation for four key stages in SCT (Bandura, 2003). These stages are attention, retention, initiation, and motivation (Bandura, 2003; Bandura & Walters, 1977). Attention is the first stage because if there is a lack of attention given by the observer, then less learning will occur. Attention is more likely to be given by an observer if they like or identify with the model; this notion has been supported in workplace research as well (Brown et al., 2005). Retention is the second stage and is dependent on the ability of the observer to remember the modeled behavior (Bandura, 2003). The third stage is initiation; this stage involves the observer's capacity to perform behaviors that were observed. Finally, motivation is the fourth stage; an individual must be motivated, whether intrinsically or extrinsically to perform a behavior (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1979).

A second key theme to social learning theory is vicarious reinforcement. This is the idea that, in addition to observational learning, learning may occur by observing others get rewarded or punished (Bandura, 1991b). Thus, the consequences of a behavior may be known without one having to experience the consequences themselves. Bandura, Ross, and Ross (1963) extended their initial bobo doll experiment to test vicarious reinforcement. Although a similar lab was set up, this experiment involved a confederate either giving candies to the adult who modeled aggressive behaviors towards the bobo doll or punished them with a verbal warning. The children who observed the punishment of the individual modeling the behavior were less likely to be aggressive towards the bobo doll than the children who observed the candy reward for the modeled aggressive behavior (Bandura & Walters, 1963).

Building from ideas rooted in these experiments, Bandura developed SCT as it is known today. The concept of self-regulation is a cornerstone of SCT. Self-regulation is a process through which individuals are able to control their behavior. Bandura and Simon (1977) put forward that self-regulation is important because intentions and motivation alone are futile if an individual lacks the ability to exercise influence over their own behaviors. Self-monitoring, self-guidance, and corrective self-reaction are regulatory processes that motivate an individual's behavior to match their standards (Bandura, 1986, 1999).

Self-monitoring involves an individual paying attention to their behaviors and actions. However, it is more than a reflexive audit of one's own performance; preexisting cognitive structures and beliefs may influence how performance is perceived and remembered (Bandura, 1991b). The level of self-monitoring may be affected by an

individual mood. For example, self-perceptions may be distorted at the time of a particular behavior as well as when the behavior is being remembered (Kuiper, Derry, & MacDonald, 1983; Mehra, Kilduff, & Brass, 2001). The second subfunction of self-regulation is self-guidance; this process is concerned with the judgment that is given to the performance that was observed in the self-monitoring phase (Bandura, 1991b). Performance will either be perceived as favorable or unfavorable based upon a set of personal standards that the individual uses as a tool for evaluation. These standards may be based on self-comparison (comparison to one's own prior behaviors) (Judge, Erez, Bono, & Thoresen, 2003), how others react to their behavior (Bong & Clark, 1999; McCall, 1977), and social comparison (Mussweiler, 2003) among other determinants (Bandura, 1991b).

After a judgment about one's behavior is made, a self-reactive mechanism is activated such that standards are established to regulate future behavior. This mechanism works by creating internal incentives for behavior via the anticipation of affective reactions (Bandura, 1991b). For example, if individuals know from past experience that performing a specific behavior resulted in feelings of satisfaction, they will perform the same behaviors in anticipation of the same affective reactions. Conversely, a transgressive behavior may bring about internalized self-sanctions that individuals may not wish to experience in the future (Bandura, 1991a). This self-reactive mechanism serves as a guiding tool for human motivation (Bandura, 1986). Each subfunction that makes up the structure of an individual's self-regulation mechanism helps to set the stage for self-efficacy. There are various processes that underlie personal agency; the most central of these is self-efficacy, which are beliefs about one's ability to organize and

perform the actions necessary to achieve various types of performance outcomes (Bandura, 1986; Pugh, Groth, & Hennig-Thurau, 2011). I elaborate more on self-efficacy in this chapter when reviewing feedback.

In the next section I discuss how SCT is applied to ethical behavior. I do this by providing a brief overview of SCT as it applies to moral thought and action. Then, I discuss moral disengagement theory as well provide a review of select papers that have empirically examined moral disengagement.

Social cognitive theory of moral thought and action. In 1991, Bandura applied SCT to moral conduct and action and put forward the idea that individuals develop a sense of morality by learning what is right versus wrong from their external environment. Specifically, the environment interacts with internal factors such as thoughts, emotions, and personal standards to establish moral behavior. As such, moral standards may fluctuate depending on changes in either internal factors or situational variables. With regard to internal factors, self-regulatory mechanisms play an important role in motivating behavior. As discussed in the above section, Bandura (1991b) suggests that moral conduct is in part motivated by self-reactive influence, one of the subfunctions of self-regulation. In the context of unethical behavior, there are two types of sanctions that may occur, internalized self-sanctions and social sanctions; I elaborate on each below.

An internalized self-sanction is a self-reactive control mechanism by which individuals guide their behavior (Bandura, 1991b). Self-sanctions are initiated by the judgment subfunction of self-regulation. The judgment subfunction evaluates behavior or potential behavior against a set of moral standards and situational factors. Moral judgment will then lead to an affective self-reaction which in turn regulates future

behavior (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 1996). Positive judgments may lead to the anticipation of increased self-worth and self-satisfaction. Alternatively, a negative moral judgment may lead to anticipatory self-condemnation. Thus, an individual may ordinarily refrain from behaviors that violate their moral standards such that self-condemnation is elicited. This notion of self-satisfaction and self-condemnation for positive and negative judgments, respectively, seems simple; however, contravening influences such as in a moral dilemma highlight the complexity of self-regulation (Bandura, 1991b). Further, it is important to note that individuals encountering a similar pattern of events time and time again do not necessarily actively engage in the same moral judgment process of weighing out each decision option and thinking through possible self-sanctions regarding bad behaviors. Rather, judgments may be routinized such that behaviors are executed with little thought (Bandura, 1991b; Kahneman, 2011).

The second type of sanction is social sanctions whereby individuals may receive negative consequences from an external entity. In SCT, the self is an integrated part of a broader social reality which includes general, widely-accepted codes of conduct. Social sanctions, when these codes are violated, are thus a part of normal life. Just like with self-sanctions, the effect of social sanctions operates anticipatorily. Thus, self-regulation occurs as individuals who engage or do not engage in ethical transgressions make this decision based on the anticipation of social acceptance or potential social consequence. Social sanctions along with self-sanctions often work harmoniously to guide behavior, however, these regulatory mechanisms are not always in sync.

At the core of SCT is the interaction of individual variables with environmental influences (Bandura, 1986). As such, this interaction may cause discord in self-regulatory

process when internal standards do not match with social standards. Often, individuals strive to make their moral standards congruent to social standards. For instance, people are more likely to associate with those who share similar beliefs thus supporting their own self-regulatory system (Emmons & Diener, 1986; Escalas & Bettman, 2005). However, when self-produced standards and social standards do not match, individuals may experience conflict. One such conflict may arise when individuals feel socially pressured to engage in behavior that does not align with their moral standards. Alternatively, if individuals are socially sanctioned for behaviors that they highly value, then the self-regulatory system is also conflicted. However, this conflict only occurs when self-regulatory systems are activated. In the next section I discuss how moral self-regulation may be deactivated. This deactivation often occurs when potential self-regulatory conflicts, whether due to internal competing values or internal versus social competing values, arise.

Moral disengagement. Bandura puts forward a theory of moral disengagement to account for cases where self-reactive influences are not activated. Moral disengagement is a set of cognitive mechanisms that disengage an individual's moral self-regulatory processes such that the individual may engage in an ethical transgression without having guilty feelings (Bandura, 1986; Detert et al., 2008). Moral disengagement extends SCT by accounting for what happens if self-regulation is not activated due to cognitive conflict. Regulatory processes such as self-monitoring and self-reaction serve to equalize one's behavior in accordance with their standards; thus, when these process do not take place, individuals may not live up to their own moral standards (Bandura, 1986, 1999). This can occur because moral self-regulation processes can be activated and deactivated

selectively; as Bandura (1999) points out, it is moral disengagement that underlies this deactivation process.

There are eight mechanisms that underlie moral disengagement. In line with Bandura (1986), I organize these mechanisms into four categories: cognitive misconstrual, minimization of role, obscuring or distorting consequences, and reducing identification with the targets of harmful acts. Here I review the body of work on moral disengagement by discussing works of other researchers and group them by the categories offered in Bandura's original framework.

In the first category of cognitive misconstrual, moral justification occurs when an individual re-construes harm to others to make it more acceptable and less harmful. One way moral justification may occur is when an individual reframes unethical behaviors as for the benefit of the greater good. As such, instances of war and justification of military atrocities are commonplace for moral justification (Green, 1991; Rapoport & Alexander, 1982). Moral justification may also entail the recasting of unethical behavior to protect family, friends or even one's workplace (Moore, 2008). For example, Umphress, Bingham, and Mitchell (2010) find a positive relationship between employees' level of organizational identification and the likelihood that they engage in unethical behavior that they consider to be helpful to the organization as a whole.

A second form of cognitive misconstrual is euphemistic labelling. This form of cognitive misconstrual is also studied in the context of morally disengaging during wartimes (Lakoff, 1991). Euphemistic labelling occurs when an individual camouflages bad behavior as innocent usually by the use of sanitizing language (Bandura, 1999; Corrion, Long, Smith, & d'Arripe-Longueville, 2009). For instance, instead of lying, a

manager may say that they are “strategically misrepresenting” (Bandura, 1990; Safire, 1979). Or in the case of a corrupt organization, individuals party to the collusion are positively labeled as “team players” (Jackall, 1988). Jackall (1988) and Brief, Buttram, and Dukerich (2001) offer an example of an industry notorious for euphemistic labelling, the nuclear industry; they specifically point out how toxic fluoride being released in a neighboring community was referred to euphemistically as “release beyond the fence line.”

A third cognitive misconstrual is advantageous comparison which encompasses comparing harmful behaviors with something even worse. Brown (2014) test this mechanism by investigating a manger’s likelihood to manage (falsely report) earnings after being exposed to information regarding the earnings management of other managers. The study finds that the participants who are exposed to an egregious example of earnings management are more likely to believe that the earnings management they perform is relatively harmless versus the participants who are not exposed to the egregious example.

Although not in Bandura’s (1996) original eight mechanisms of moral disengagement, Shepherd et al. (2013) present a fourth type of cognitive misconstrual. Rather than distorting perceptions of value-inconsistent decisions, as is the case with moral justification and euphemistic labelling, a decision maker may adjust the relationship between values and the weight assigned to a specified harm. The authors test this disengaging mechanism in the context of pro-environmental behavior and business opportunity assessments from entrepreneurs. They find that entrepreneurs who are environmentally conscious will give more weight (place more emphasis on) an

opportunity that may have a negative impact on the environment than entrepreneurs with weaker environmental values. Thus, pro-environmental entrepreneurs misconstrue the attractiveness of a business opportunity by believing it to be more attractive if there is a potential for greater harm to the environment (Shepherd et al., 2013).

The second category of mechanisms that Bandura (1999) says underlie the deactivation of moral self-regulation process is the minimization of one's role in causing harm. Two of these distortions, as reviewed by Cohan (2002) include: displacement of responsibility whereby responsibility is passed on, and diffusion of responsibility whereby in a group context no one in group feels personally liable for the collective's bad behavior. One famous test that incorporates displacement of responsibility are the experiments performed by Milgram (1963) whereby subjects administer a (fake) shock to confederates of the experimenter when being told to do so by an authority figure. Displacement of responsibility is tested by Hinrichs, Wang, Hinrichs, and Romero (2012) who find that employees are more likely to blame their leaders for their unethical behavior if the leader condones the behavior. Examinations of the diffusion of responsibility mechanism are especially prevalent in the literature. Consequences may be as innocuous as less responsiveness to e-mail requests when including multiple e-mail recipients (Barron & Yechiam, 2002), or they may be more severe such as the ignoring of victims during an emergency situation when others are around (Darley & Latane, 1968). This latter phenomenon is sometimes referred to as the bystander effect (Latane & Darley, 1968). Similar to the diffusion and displacement mechanisms, there may be a simple denial of responsibility which is used as moral rationalization as discussed by Anand, Ashforth, and Mahendra (2004).

The third category is the distortion of consequences. Not only do people have the tendency to reduce the number of consequences they believe resulted from their actions, but they also underestimate the extent of the effect of a single consequence (Messick & Bazerman, 1996). Because individuals who distort consequences minimize the seriousness of the effects of their actions, self-regulatory mechanisms are not activated as there is little reason for self-censure (Bandura, 1999). For example, Benson (1985) illustrates that some individuals believe that stealing from a large and profitable corporation is a victimless crime.

The final category is the reduction of identification with the targets of harmful acts. There are two deactivation mechanisms that fall into this category (Bandura, 1986). Similar to the distortion of consequences, dehumanization and attribution of blame mechanisms may reduce or eliminate the harm one perceives to be causing a victim (Moore, 2008). Dehumanization is the framing of victims as undeserving of basic human consideration (Bandura et al., 1996). This effect can take form by an individual or group of individuals having an us-versus-them mentality (Gaertner & Insko, 2000). Theories of moral exclusion (Hewstone, Rubin, & Willis, 2002; Opotow, 1990) and unconnectedness (Brass et al., 1998) are closely tied to the concept of dehumanization. Abraham (2000) relates organizational cynicism to dehumanization. Specifically, she postulates that in certain service industries where there may be high work cynicism—negative attitudes towards one's employer—there may be a greater instance of the dehumanization of customers as cynical individuals attempt to distance themselves from these customers when they treat them badly as a way to revolt against their organization. The last mechanism is attribution of blame whereby fault is placed with prejudice. Aquino, Tripp,

and Bies (2001) study this mechanism in the context of revenge seeking in the workplace. They find that employees who blame a victim for a particular offense are more likely to take revenge on them and less likely to engage in reconciliation.

There are other studies of moral disengagement that incorporate several of the disengagement mechanisms. For example, McAlister, Bandura, and Owen (2006) find that after the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon various disengagement mechanisms occurred. These mechanisms included the negation of personal responsibility for detrimental effects of a subsequent military action, minimization of civilian casualties, attribution of blame, and dehumanization of the enemy. Also in the context of the September 11 attacks, Aquino, Reed, Thau, and Freeman (2007) find similar effects regarding the moral disengagement of individuals regarding a military response after the attacks occurred. Further, despite the differences in the mechanisms, moral disengagement is measured as a single higher-order construct (Duffy, Scott, Shaw, Tepper, & Aquino, 2012; McFerran, Aquino, & Duffy, 2010).

There are also studies of moral disengagement that tie disengagement to particular antecedents and outcomes. For example, Yan Liu and Loi (2012) postulate that through cognitive and emotional influence, ethical leaders make it less likely that subordinate moral disengagement occurs. Organizational factors may also effect moral disengagement. For example, Huang et al. (2016) find that moral disengagement mediates the relationship between job insecurity and three adverse outcomes: organizational deviance, behavior that it hurtful to the organization, interpersonal deviance, behavior that it hurtful to other employees, and turnover intentions. Moral disengagement also serves as a mediating variable of the relationship between envy and

social undermining in organizations (Duffy et al., 2012). Finally, Moore et al. (2012) develop a measure for an individual's propensity to morally disengage, however, this conceptualization of moral disengagement as a propensity is less common in the literature.

Although moral disengagement is a theme that is now prevalent throughout the management literature, scholars are primarily focused on the intra-individual level. Because moral disengagement focuses on individual cognition, there have not been studies on how an individual may activate a moral disengagement mechanism of another person. This missing piece of the literature is one of the issues I address in this dissertation.

Some studies do, however, capture how moral disengagement may be induced by external factors. Although these studies do not examine the direct influence that one individual may have on another via activation of moral disengagement mechanisms, they help to shed light on the role that context plays in ethical behavior. In the next section of my literature review I discuss scholarly work that examines social influence on moral disengagement. Here I will also briefly review other research streams that examine the role of social influence on ethicality.

Social influence and ethics. Various streams of research incorporate the effect of environmental factors on ethical behavior. Specific to moral disengagement, scholars have examined how environmental factors may affect individuals' self-regulatory systems. For example, one study that captures how moral disengagement may be induced via external environmental factors does so by examining the effect of the September 11 attacks, with unmatched population samples (McAlister et al., 2006). Scholars have also

explored the connection between individual-level unethical behavior and organizational factors. Contextual conditions such as ethical climate (Barnett & Vaicys, 2000), culture (Kaptein, 2008), goal setting (Schweitzer, Ordóñez, & Douma, 2004), organizational support (Randall, Cropanzano, Bormann, & Birjulin, 1999), and CEO ethical leadership (Shin, 2012) may influence employees' propensity to engage in unethical behavior.

Studies of social influence on unethical behavior have also looked at how such factors may influence individuals over time. For example, in their research on Enron, a multibillion dollar company that crashed after grievously misstating earnings and getting caught, Sims and Brinkmann (2003) propose that the culture of Enron, which put profits ahead of legal protocol, led to individuals engaging in unethical behavior. Through systematic analysis of Enron's culture, they find that leadership flaws created a bad barrel. Subsequently, this bad barrel had the ability to turn good apples bad (Kish-Gephart et al., 2010). Brass et al. (1998) also discuss the effects of contextual influences on the unfolding of unethical behavior. Similar to the effect of an unethical culture, unethical people within one's social network may gradually lead that individual to engage in increased unethical behavior. Finally, group membership may also affect unethical behavior over time. For instance, as individuals develop stronger ties to their group, they may engage in pro-group (Thau, Derfler-Rozin, Pitesa, Mitchell, & Pillutla, 2015) or pro-organizational unethical behavior (Umphress et al., 2010) whereby they believe that their attempts to benefit their collective group or organization merit engaging in an unethical behavior.

Although this research captures how external factors may lead to increased unethical behavior, there has yet to be a study of how one individual can directly

influence the moral disengagement of another. My dissertation addresses this issue by examining how feedback may be a mechanism though which moral disengagement is triggered. The remainder of my literature review focuses on feedback. I first offer a brief overview of the literature on feedback and feedback interventions. Within this section of my review, I review both feedback as a general theme, as well as a more specific version of feedback, moral feedback.

Feedback

Feedback is a very important part of organizational life and is one of the most powerful influences on learning and performance (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Early literature on feedback uses the term ‘feedback intervention’ to account for actions taken by an external source to offer information regarding an individual’s performance (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996). Much of this research within this early stage focused on knowledge of results (KR). The idea of KR is that the feedback provider—usually a supervisor—has information about the feedback recipient’s results regarding a particular task (Brand, 1905; Jones, 1910). Later, empirical research shifted towards the examination of knowledge of the performance (KP). KP takes into consideration the performance of the actual task in addition to final task outcomes (Kim & Hamner, 1976; Kluger & DeNisi, 1996). Although this distinction between KR and KP is important to note, my dissertation does not differentiate between these two types of feedback. Rather I focus on the type of feedback given, whether it is harsh or lenient, and characteristics of the feedback provider as well as the feedback recipient. As such, I concentrate on these particular themes in my review.

In both past and present research on feedback there are mixed results as to its effects (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996). Some studies find strong support for feedback making a positive impact on future behavior of the feedback recipient (Ammons, 1956), while other studies find that feedback has no effect or even an adverse effect (DeNisi & Kluger, 2000; Waters, 1933). Clearly there exist a variety of boundary conditions that influence the effect of feedback on future performance. In the remainder of this section I review a subset of literature that may account for the mixed results of feedback.

The type of feedback has a significant effect on the future behavior of feedback recipients (Podsakoff & Farh, 1989). Research on feedback strongly supports the notion that feedback sign (positive or negative) is one of the most important characteristics of feedback; surprisingly, however, most theoretical models of feedback do not differentiate between positive and negative feedback (Audia & Locke, 2004; Fedor, 1991; Ilgen et al., 1979; Larson, 1989; Morrison & Bies, 1991). However, positive feedback versus negative feedback is more likely to be given by managers and more likely to have a receptive audience (Fisher, 1979). Even when intending to deliver only negative feedback, managers may 'sandwich' the feedback between two compliments to soften the delivery and receipt of the feedback (Archer, 2010). However, some researchers say this attempt at delivering negative feedback is inefficient as the positive feedback may drown out the more important critical feedback (Grant, 2016).

Clearly, managers may be reluctant to deliver critical feedback because the exchange is usually perceived as a negative experience for both the manager and the feedback recipient (Bond & Anderson, 1987). This problem is further exacerbated as evidence demonstrates that critical feedback often fails to lead to desirable changes in the

recipient's behavior (DeNisi & Kluger, 2000). Additionally, hostile feelings from the recipient of critical feedback towards the feedback provider may remain present for years, sometimes even causing the feedback recipient to retaliate against the organization (London, 1995).

A feedback recipient's motivation may also be undermined after receiving direct critical feedback (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Deci et al., 1999). Despite these negative effects of critical feedback, there is evidence that demonstrates the importance of negative feedback in the learning and development of an employee (Cannon & Witherspoon, 2005; Chen et al., 2007; Locke & Latham, 1990). For example, Audia and Locke (2004) propose that individuals may benefit from negative feedback by deriving meaning from it such that their current knowledge is extended. In other words, constructive criticism, over critical feedback that lacks specific guidelines to improve future performance, is more likely have a positive impact on the feedback recipient's future behavior.

Positive feedback has also received much attention in the literature. Specially, the theme of feedback-seeking behavior largely revolves around positive feedback. Indeed, individuals who receive feedback are most likely those are engaged in feedback-seeking behaviors (Ashford, Blatt, & Walle, 2003). Such feedback-seeking usually occurs from individuals who already believe their performance to meet or exceed organizational expectations (Jordan & Audia, 2012). Thus, these high-performers are more likely to receive positive, self-affirming feedback. Even when individuals receive both positive and negative feedback regarding their performance, they are more likely to discredit the negative aspects while being receptive to the positive aspects (Baron, 1993; Fisher, 1979). Further, positive feedback is more likely to be remembered than negative feedback

(Feather, 1968; Wyer & Frey, 1983). Interestingly, there is evidence that shows that poor performers may also engage in feedback-seeking behavior (Earley, Northcraft, Lee, & Lituchy, 1990; Fedor, Rensvold, & Adams, 1992). However, these individuals are not seeking additional criticism, rather they are seeking positive feedback as an affirmation of the correction of past errors (Audia & Locke, 2004).

Aside from the type of feedback, another factor that may explain the mixed results of feedback effectiveness are characteristics of the feedback provider and the feedback recipient (Johnson, 2013; Jordan & Audia, 2012). Some researchers refer to a feedback provider as the feedback source, which is the individual (or device) that presents feedback information to the recipient; the majority of feedback comes from a supervisor (Alvero, Bucklin, & Austin, 2001). The effect of a feedback source may be so significant that a feedback recipient may react differently to the same feedback when delivered by different sources (Ashford & Tsui, 1991). For example, van de Ridder et al. (2015) examine how dispositional factors may account for how feedback providers frame feedback such that a negative message may be positively framed (Johnson, 2013; Jordan & Audia, 2012; van de Ridder, Peters, Stokking, de Ru, & ten Cate, 2015). Further, the type of feedback given may be contingent on trait factors such as self-efficacy, or may even be due to state variables such as the current mood of the feedback provider (Harris, 1994; Kane, 1994; London, 1995). Additionally, a feedback provider’s perceptions of the relationship between themselves and the feedback recipient affect whether or not the provider offers constructive versus critical feedback when giving negative feedback (London, 1995).

Characteristics of the feedback recipient may also affect the relationship between feedback and future behavior. For example, McCarty (1986) finds that self-confidence in women is elevated to the same level as men's self-confidence after receiving positive feedback, thus helping the development of female employees. Locus of control is also an important personality factor that contributes how the effect of feedback. Individuals who have an internal locus of control—those who believe that they have a high level of control over the events that happen to them—have better future performance when the feedback source is task-supplied. Alternatively, individuals with an external locus of control perform better in future tasks when the feedback source is the experimenter (Baron, Cowan, Ganz, & McDonald, 1974; Ilgen et al., 1979). Self-efficacy also plays a significant role in how feedback is perceived as individuals who do not believe that they have the capability to alter their performance will not even be motivated to do so (Ajzen, 1991; Ilgen et al., 1979; Vroom, 1964).

Another boundary condition that affects the relationship between feedback and future performance involves the type of task. For example, Kanfer and Ackerman (1989) find that feedback associated with tasks that have a high level of complexity are more likely to result in a decrease in future performance. The authors postulate that this effect occurs because such feedback may distract the recipient from performing the complex task that may require full attention or because the recipient shifts his/her focus into learning, yet still lacks sufficient information to perform the task well.

Although the literature on performance feedback has greatly extended our knowledge of organizations, Ashford and Cummings (1983) criticize this literature for its narrow focus on performance appraisal. Since their publication, the research in this area

has gained further depth through investigation of feedback as it relates to individual, relational, and situational variables (Ashford et al., 2003) as well as other variables related to feedback, such as feedback availability, that go beyond the historical feedback themes of sign, specificity, and frequency (DeRue & Wellman, 2009). However, there is relatively little overlap between this research and the notion of moral feedback. Below I discuss the literature on moral feedback. Then, I draw on the criminology literature on repeat offenders to point out some similar themes to repeated unethical behaviors in the workplace.

Moral feedback. My conceptualization of moral feedback—which is feedback that is in response to an ethical transgression—is similar to performance feedback in that the feedback sign (i.e. valence) may either be positive or negative. Specifically, I draw from Holroyd's (2007) definition of a moral appraisal which allows for either praise of blame towards the targeted feedback recipient. In my dissertation, I also rely on the assumption that the individual receiving the feedback does not actively seek it out. This assumption stems from research by Springer (2008) who conceptualizes moral feedback as unsolicited morally pertinent feedback that is critical in nature. However, unlike Springer's notion of moral feedback as critical, my definition of moral feedback allows for the valence of feedback to be either positive or negative.

Despite this difference between my definition and Springer's definition, it is important to note her work here because the term 'moral feedback' is not common in the social science literature. However, there is some research on feedback regarding unethical behavior. For instance, Stead, Worrell, and Stead (1990) discuss the importance of a feedback system that serves to reinforce and support ethical behavior by employees.

One specific recommendation they proposed was that managers severely punish employees who engage in unethical behavior and immediately spread the news of this offense and the consequence.

Though few, empirical investigations of the link between feedback and ethical behavior are also in the literature. One study by Massey and Thorne (2006) finds that when feedback that provides guidance about what cognitive decision-making process should be used is given, subjects used higher ethical reasoning to resolve accounting dilemmas. Additionally, a study by Kim, Diekmann, and Tenbrunsel (2003) demonstrates differences in negotiation strategy based on individuals' feedback regarding negotiation partners' ability and ethicality. Specifically, they show that negative feedback makes individuals more honest yet less skillful when engaging in negotiations. Further, these effects were mediated by feedback provider expectations of negotiating partner competitiveness and cooperativeness.

At the organizational level, ethics-oriented performance appraisals are also in the literature. Indeed, various studies of corporate social responsibility include feedback given to organizations regarding ethical practices. Unlike feedback offered from one person to another, as discussed above, feedback at the strategic level may not necessarily be a process that occurs between two individuals. Specifically, feedback is often operationalized as investor or market response in organizational- and institutional-level studies, often corporate social responsibility has psychological foundations rooted in ethical behavior (Spiess, Mueller, & Lin-Hi, 2013). For example, feedback may be in the form of government sanctions regarding corporate social irresponsibility (Weaver, Treviño, & Cochran, 1999). In addition, such appraisals may affect how firms move

forward regarding their social responsibility efforts. For instance, research by Chatterji and Toffel (2010) examines firm response to corporate environmental ratings; they find that firms not deemed environmentally responsible by a prominent independent social rating agency likely to respond to the negative appraisal by improving subsequent social performance. Supporting this finding, a meta-analysis by Orlitzky, Schmidt, and Rynes (2003) find that organizations keep up with social and environmental responsibility strategies in an effort to avoid negative repercussions from external stakeholders and ultimately benefit financial performance.

Feedback regarding ethical behavior is sometimes viewed in terms of punishing employees for unethical behavior and rewarding employees for ethical behavior. Organizational citizenship behaviors, for instance, are increasingly added to overall performance evaluations as more companies move towards formally measuring and rewarding these pro-social behaviors (Becton, Giles, & Schraeder, 2008). Encouraging employees to behave ethically may also have intrinsic value as well. For example, Fudge and Schlacter (1999) root their arguments on motivating ethical behavior from employees in expectancy theory, which holds that motivation is a function of an individual's perception of the environment and what they expect based on these perceptions (Latham & Pinder, 2005; Vroom, 1964). Thus, positive feedback and explicitly rewarding employees for acting ethically may provide intrinsic motivation for future ethical behavior more so than feedback that is not oriented towards moral behavior (Fudge & Schlacter, 1999).

Negative feedback regarding an unethical behavior, however, may have different effects which may depend on how the feedback provider perceives the ethical

transgression (Cushman, Knobe, & Sinnott-Armstrong, 2008). For instance, bad behavior may be perceived differently depending on the feedback provider's assessment of the transgressor's intentionality (Knobe, 2006; Leslie, Knobe, & Cohen, 2006). If the feedback provider feels like the transgressor was intentionally engaging in wrongful behavior, then morally intense feedback—feedback that evokes a moral imperative—may be used by the feedback provider to try and alter future behavior.

Intentionality aside, critical moral feedback given by leaders to employees is an important tool for managing unethical behavior (Gini, 1998; Treviño & Ball, 1992). Not only does the employee who has performed the ethical transgression receive an appropriate consequence, but other employees may vicariously learn which behaviors are punished and which are rewarded (Treviño & Brown, 2005). However, there are questions in the literature regarding the effectiveness of critical feedback with regard to how others learn. Treviño and Ball (1992) address some of these issues by examining the effects of different severity levels of punishment. Their findings show that only the harshest disciplinary responses to an employee's unethical behavior influences the emotional responses, outcome expectancies, and justice evaluations of observers.

In addition to punishing unethical behavior, feedback providers may offer social support to the ethical transgressor. Although in certain contexts, peers may actually be the source of employees getting punished, such as through peer-reporting (Treviño & Victor, 1992), there exist some situations where peers actually offer support to transgressors (Vardi, 2001). For example, employees are more likely to excuse the unethical behavior of others if they believe this behavior to be for the good of the organization (Heath, 2008; Umphress et al., 2010). One study of retired Fortune 500

company managers found that social support for an ethical transgressor may be so strong that whistleblowers of the unethical behavior are condemned (Clinard, 1983; Heath, 2008).

Although social support is usually linked to positive organizational outcomes, it is clear that this is not always the case. In some scenarios, social support for an ethical transgression may even eventually lead to ‘one bad apple spoiling the barrel” (Sutherland & Cressey, 1970; Treviño & Youngblood, 1990). For instance, Brass et al. (1998) offer a social network perspective to describe a potential social contagion effect whereby employees within the same social network may behave more or less ethically depending on the level of centrality (amount of connection among employees) and density (interconnectedness among employees) within the network. Social support has also been linked to unethical behavior through other mechanisms such as group think (Sims, 1992), (un)ethical climate (Peterson, 2002), and pro-group behaviors (Thau et al., 2015).

The study of the reward, punishment, and social support of behaviors that have a moral connotation has certainly increased our knowledge of moral feedback, however missing from these themes that come from the management, psychology, and social-psychology literatures are specific considerations as to why past transgressions are repeated despite a moral feedback intervention. In the next section of my review I provide a brief assessment of criminology literature as it relates to repeat offenders and other pertinent themes in my dissertation.

Repeat offenders. The criminology literature offers many interesting studies on recidivism, which refers to an individual’s relapse into engaging in criminal behavior after the individual has undergone consequences for their previous crime (Maruna &

Mann, 2006). The majority of recidivism cases happen within a short time frame, less than one year, of prison release (Durose et al., 2014). Some reasons for these repeat offenses (such as mental health, anti-social orientation, sexual aggression, etc.) do not broadly apply to individuals who are able to function normally in the social world (Hanson & Bussiere, 1998). However, barring these behaviors as well as severe mental disease that may inhibit normal social functioning, there are aspects of recidivism that may be applicable to the workplace. For example, lack of self-control (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990; Hanson & Bussiere, 1998), low self-esteem (Gendreau, Grant, & Leipciger, 1979; Thornton, Beech, & Marshall, 2004), and anxiety (Gendreau, Little, & Goggin, 1996) are dynamic (malleable) factors that may cause convicted criminals to repeat their crimes. Self-esteem is a notable factor because low self-esteem at one point in life may predict criminal behavior at a later point in life. Specifically, Trzesniewski et al. (2006) find that, controlling for gender, adolescent depression, and low socioeconomic status, low self-esteem in adolescence may lead to higher levels of criminal behavior. The lack of self-control in criminals is also interesting to juxtapose against organizational agents as various aspects of everyday life act to deplete one's self-control which in turn may lead to unethical behavior (Gino et al., 2011).

Although unethical behavior in organizations may certainly overlap with criminal behavior, here I continue my focus on criminal acts that are more severe in nature and require incarceration. Regulatory agencies and legal enforcement agencies are in constant discussion regarding how to deter repeat offenders. The current system is set up such that there exist increasing sanctions for repeat offenders; individuals who do not abide by the law will receive a more severe punishment for the second offense than the same first

offense (Emons, 2003). Besides being used in cases of crimes such as murder and theft, this notion of penalty escalation has been adopted by regulatory systems to combat organizational issues such as environmental regulation violations and tax evasion. However, some researchers believe that this system is inefficient in deterring future criminal behavior. For example, if offenders are punished by paying a severe monetary penalty, they may actually be driven to future criminal behavior due to newly constrained resources (Emons, 2007; Miceli & Bucci, 2005).

One could extend this logic by assuming that punishments given to employees, such as loss of autonomy or pay (Arvey & Ivancevich, 1980), may similarly constrain employee resources such that they may be prone to more unethical behavior. Indeed, (Zoghbi Manrique de Lara, 2006), in a study on cyberloafing, finds that formal punishment may lead to more workplace internet deviance. This is interesting because, though punishment and negative feedback may have similar themes, negative moral feedback appears to be a more effective means to correct unethical behavior, as I discussed in an above section (Gini, 1998; Treviño & Ball, 1992). Thus, the focus of my arguments will be regard to feedback as a reaction and potential intervention to the cycle of unethical behavior rather than as a form of transgressor punishment.

Summary of Chapter 2

In this chapter I reviewed the literature on behavioral ethics, social cognitive theory, and feedback with regard to how these themes are relevant to my dissertation. Specifically, I reviewed two models of moral development from which much of the ethics research in the social sciences derives. Kohlberg’s (1969) model of moral development holds that there are different stages of moral development that align with the

development of moral reasoning. As such, ethical behavior may depend on an individual's developmental stage in ethical reasoning. Rest (1986) offers an alternative model that puts forward that a person must first recognize that there is a moral issue at hand before making a moral judgment. After a judgment is made, the third stage is that there is motivation to execute the judgment, and the final stage is that action is taken (Rest, 1986). Both of these models lay down the theoretical groundwork for much of the management research in behavioral ethics including work on moral consistency and moral balancing.

I also reviewed SCT and how this theory applies to moral behavior. In this section, I focused on the theory of moral disengagement and how this phenomenon allows for individuals to turn off self-regulatory processes such that unethical behavior may occur. I reviewed Bandura's (1986) eight original mechanisms of moral disengagement as well as an additional mechanism recently proposed by Shepherd et al. (2013). My next section reviewed the topic of feedback. I started this discussion with some empirical research regarding performance feedback as there may be some aspects of performance feedback that may be applicable to my dissertation, and I also specifically discussed moral feedback. In addition to reviewing literature on negative feedback, I briefly reviewed some research on an opposite effect—social support being offered to an ethical transgressor. Finally, I drew from the criminology field to discuss some research that has been done on repeat offenders. Clearly, there are many studies regarding unethical behavior, some of which focus on unethical behavior over time. However, none of these studies captures how feedback from one individual may affect an ethical

transgressors moral cognition such that the transgressors moral behavioral pattern is altered.

CHAPTER 3

THEORY DEVELOPMENT AND HYPOTHESES

In the previous chapter, I reviewed the theory and research that is applicable to my dissertation topic. In this chapter, I build on this research to develop a theoretical model of the effect of moral feedback on unethical behavior. Specifically, the model pertains to how others may have the ability to affect individuals' subsequent behavior with respect to unethical behavior patterns. In addition to developing my theoretical arguments, I offer a set of four testable hypotheses.

This chapter is organized as follows: First, I develop theory surrounding the different types of moral feedback. In this section I introduce a typology of moral feedback based on moral intensity and affective tone. Following my theoretical development, I present and provide arguments for each of my hypotheses. First I propose that the moral intensity of the transgression as conveyed by the feedback provider will decrease transgressor moral disengagement (Hypothesis 1). My argument in developing this hypothesis is rooted in the social cognitive literature on self-regulation. As I discussed in Chapter 2, moral disengagement refers to the cognitive mechanisms that neutralize self-regulatory processes such that an individual may behave unethically without feeling guilty afterwards (Bandura, 1986). Here, I theorize that when ethical transgressors receive moral feedback that is high in moral intensity, their self-regulatory system is heightened as guilt is elicited. Thus, they may be less likely to engage in moral disengagement.

Next, I argue that moral disengagement by the transgressor will mediate the negative relationship between the moral intensity of the feedback and future unethical

behavior (Hypothesis 2). Here I argue that ethical transgressors who receive feedback that is low in moral intensity may engage in future unethical behavior that occurs due to being morally disengaged. Specifically, I posit that, due to the autonomy-supportive nature of the feedback (meaning feedback that does not aim to control the feedback recipient), the transgressor morally disengages such that they continue to perform unethical behavior without guilt. Alternatively, morally intense feedback, which is aimed at controlling future transgressor behavior, will not lead to transgressor moral disengagement.

Following these predictions, I offer two hypotheses regarding the moderating role of affective tone. First, I propose that affective tone will moderate the relationship between the moral intensity of the feedback and moral disengagement. Specifically, I predict that when the affective tone of the feedback is positively valenced rather than negatively valenced, the negative relationship between feedback moral intensity and moral disengagement will be strengthened (Hypothesis 3). Then I hypothesize that positively valenced feedback affective tone will moderate the mediated relationship between feedback moral intensity, moral disengagement, and unethical behavior by strengthening this relationship (Hypothesis 4).

A Typology of Moral Feedback

Serving as the primary contribution of my dissertation, I present a typology of moral feedback which is based on moral intensity and affective tone. The literature on feedback intervention cites the *content* and the *delivery* of feedback as two of the most important components of feedback (Alder, 2007; Ilgen et al., 1979; Kluger & DeNisi, 1998). Within a moral context, I translate these components to moral intensity and

affective tone. In the following sections of my manuscript, I first define and discuss moral intensity. I then discuss moral intensity in the context of feedback. Next I define and discuss the second dimension of moral feedback, affective tone. Here I present a typology of moral feedback that is based on the interaction between moral intensity and affective tone. This typology serves as the baseline for much of my hypotheses development.

Moral intensity has been broadly conceptualized as the degree to which a moral imperative, which is a strongly held moral principle, is evoked in a given situation (Jones, 1991; Morris & McDonald, 1995). The notion of moral intensity was first articulated in the management literature by Jones (1991) who used the term in conjunction with various determinants of moral decision making and behavior. The focus of moral intensity is on the moral issue rather than the moral actor. Specifically, Jones (1991) puts forward that moral intensity does not incorporate decision maker traits nor does it consider organizational factors. Factors that constitute moral intensity as a multidimensional construct may include the severity of consequences, social consensus, probability of effect, temporal immediacy, proximity, and concentration of the effect of an ethical decision. Although these various dimensions contribute to moral intensity, I view the construct through a broad lens such that morally intense feedback does not necessarily include each dimension. In line with prior research, not all factors need to be present to evoke individuals' moral principles (May & Pauli, 2002; Morris & McDonald, 1995).

Specific to my dissertation, I use moral intensity to capture the extent to which an individual's morals are induced though feedback[1]. While morally intense feedback makes the morality of transgressor behavior more salient, feedback lacking in moral intensity does not make the morality of actions salient to the ethical transgressor. For instance, Bennett (2014) demonstrates that some individuals make excuses for the misbehavior of others by offering feedback that is neither critical nor constructive. Similar sentiments may be conveyed through feedback that is low in moral intensity.

The second dimension of moral feedback that I put forward is affective tone. Affective tone, also sometimes referred to as feeling tone, reflects individuals' attitudes that corresponds with a certain encounter or situation (Bower, 1981; Stock, 1949). Based on their context, individuals adopt a unique affective tone that they use to convey. Specifically, they convey these feelings through the use of language, implicit cues, and level of emotional arousal (Friedman & Förster, 2010; Lindauer, 1968; Mattila et al., 2003). Research from education, social psychology, and psychology demonstrates that individuals use affective cues to infer another person's causal thoughts (Bower, 1981; Lindauer, 1968; Weiner, Graham, Stern, & Lawson, 1982). This may occur both at the group and the individual level. Indeed, some of the management literature that incorporates affective tone does so in a group context. This research looks at group affective tone as the aggregate of affective reactions within a group and captures overall mood (George, 1990; Sy, Côté, & Saavedra, 2005). In my dissertation, however, I focus

[1] A similar concept to moral intensity is used in the education literature. Doherty (2015) offers the notion of moral gravity to capture the degree to which feedback in the classroom evokes moral order.

on the individual as affective tone at this level refers to reactions to a situation rather than a more generalized mood.

Affective tone may have a positive, neutral, or negative valence (Stock, 1949). In the context of moral feedback, I focus on the positive and negative valences as indicative of either pleasant or unpleasant emotion conveyed by the feedback provider with regard to the ethical transgression (Aspinwall, 1998; Lindauer, 1968). In the remainder of this section I detail a typology of moral feedback that is based on the interaction of affective tone and moral intensity. As depicted in Figure 2, the four different types of moral feedback I present are punitive, obligatory, formative, and permissive moral feedback.

Moral feedback with a negatively valenced affective tone

Punitive feedback. The bottom right quadrant of Figure 2 represents feedback that is given with a negatively valenced affective tone and is high in moral intensity. I label this type of feedback as punitive feedback. Moss and Martinko (1998) offer four statements that constitute punitive feedback: (1) feedback that demands more effort from the transgressor, (2) feedback that challenges transgressor morals, (3) feedback that attempts to elicit guilt, and (4) feedback that conveys sarcasm or cynicism. I adopt these same four criteria for my categorization of punitive feedback.

Punitive feedback may be an effective type of moral feedback as employees who engage in unethical behaviors are appropriately reprimanded (Treviño & Brown, 2005). As presented in my literature review, critical feedback is a tool often used by leaders to deter a continuance of unethical behavior (Gini, 1998; Treviño & Ball, 1992). Indeed, one can imagine a situation whereby a leader provides an employee with scathing feedback in an attempt to make the employee feel guilty about their actions that the

leader feels are immoral. Supporting this example, research by Treviño and Ball (1992) find that the most severe disciplinary responses to employees' unethical behaviors impacts factors such as the employees' emotional responses and outcome expectancies. In my hypotheses development section, I discuss how punitive feedback, as it is oriented towards changing transgressor behavior patterns, will lessen the likelihood that the transgressor will morally disengage with regard to future transgressive behavior.

Obligatory feedback. Also within the bottom half of Figure 2 is feedback that is lacking in moral intensity yet is still delivered with a negatively valenced affective tone. Although unpleasant emotions are conveyed through the feedback, in this scenario the feedback provider does not bear the message that the transgression was a severe moral violation. This type of feedback may occur if feedback providers may be required, per their position or organizational rules, to provide feedback if they observe organizational wrongdoing. For example, some organizations require union employees to call out safety violations of their fellow union members. Although they may not necessarily want to offer feedback to the individual who violated a rule, they may be contractually obligated to. In line with Pitkänen and Lukka (2011), I call this type of feedback obligatory feedback. Different from the punitive feedback that I discussed above, obligatory feedback concerns the responsibilities outlined by official organizational procedures without necessarily attempting to control future behavior.

Because this type of feedback is formally required by an organization, it may by compulsory for feedback providers to deliver feedback even if they do not feel the offense is a severe moral violation. Indeed, research demonstrates that managers sometimes force themselves to give negative feedback to their subordinates, even when

they don't want to (Ashford & Tsui, 1991). Thus, moral feedback of this nature may be negatively valenced, yet still lack in moral intensity. In the hypotheses development section of this chapter I put forward that because obligatory feedback is not aimed at controlling future behavior, there will be little to no change in transgressor moral disengagement.

Moral feedback with a positively valenced affective tone

It is easy to imagine situations whereby ethical transgressors receive feedback in a tone that is negatively valenced. Instances of employees getting reprimanded for unethical behavior are apparent in the workplace (Deery, Iverson, & Walsh, 2002). More difficult to conceptualize may be instances where an ethical transgressor may receive feedback that is not negative in tone, even when engaging in a behavior that is unethical or not allowed in the workplace. In contrast with moral feedback that has a negatively valenced affective tone, I now explore what may happen when an ethical transgressor receives moral feedback that has a positively valenced affective tone.

Feedback given with a positive affective tone may occur because the nature of moral feedback is different from performance feedback. Specifically, moral feedback encompasses a much more subjective evaluative component than feedback that pertains to job performance or task accomplishment (Springer, 2008). While organizations often establish performance rubrics that help managers to objectively rate their subordinates (Borman & Motowidlo, 1997), often there is a lack of specific guidelines that managers may use to evaluate ethical behavior (Park & Blenkinsopp, 2009; Victor, Treviño, & Shapiro, 1993). Thus, managers rely on their own personal beliefs of what is ethically acceptable and what is not when giving moral feedback (Jones, 1991). Within my

typology, there are two types of feedback that have a positively valenced affective tone, formative and permissive feedback.

Formative feedback. In the upper right quadrant of Figure 2 is the third type of moral feedback which occurs when the feedback given to an ethical transgressor is high in moral intensity and has a positive affective tone. In line with prior research, I label this type of feedback as formative feedback as it aims to improve and accelerate learning through self-regulation (Fluckiger, Vigil, Pasco, & Danielson, 2010; Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006; Sadler, 1998). This type of feedback is oriented toward change because the moral context of the transgression is made salient through the high moral intensity of the feedback. Yet, this change is not elicited through criticism or punishment, as may be the case with punitive moral feedback. One example of formative feedback may be a supervisor who has a vested interest in the long term development of an employee. Thus, their feedback is constructive, as they do not want the employee to continue making unethical decisions, but they also want the employee to learn how to behave when confronted with the same or a similar situation.

Formative feedback facilitates learning by prompting feedback recipients to regulate their thinking, motivation, and future behavior in a developmental way (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006; Pintrich & Zusho, 2007). This learning approach is similar to a mentorship paradigm whereby mentors take a constructive approach in the teaching of their mentees (Donaldson, Ensher, & Grant-Vallone, 2000; Lankau & Scandura, 2002). Thus, future behavior is better accounted for through learning how to better self-regulate (Sadler, 1998). In the hypotheses development section of this chapter, I further discuss how such self-regulation affects moral disengagement and subsequent behavior.

Permissive feedback. In the left top quadrant of Figure 2 is permissive feedback, the final type of moral feedback with my typology. Permissive feedback lacks moral intensity and has a positively valenced affective tone. Thus, it is a lenient reaction by the feedback provider. I put forward that feedback of this nature is the least severe type of moral feedback because it is the most understanding and supportive despite being in response to an ethical transgression (Harber, 1998; Madsen, Gygi, Hammond, & Plowman, 2009). With this type of feedback, feedback providers may bring notice to transgressor wrongdoing, but the content of their feedback reflects a response that is not critical or reprimanding in nature. An example of permissive feedback may be a situation whereby a peer uses a pleasant tone to offer feedback regarding a decision made by a fellow employee without bringing attention to the ethical context surrounding that decision. In such a case, the feedback provider may wish to discuss certain aspects of the work decision, but may either not see the ethical implications of the situation or may not wish to highlight the ethical implications of the situation.

Further, similar to obligatory feedback, permissive feedback does not encourage the transgressor to change. Specifically, permissive feedback is autonomy-supportive; that is, this type of feedback promotes current behavior rather than aims to control transgressor behavior (Carpentier & Mageau, 2013). In the theoretical development section of this chapter, I further discuss the effect of permissive feedback on future transgressor behavior. Namely, I will propose that transgressors who receive permissive moral feedback may increase in engaging in unethical behavior because the feedback they receive may activate mechanisms of moral disengagement.

Hypotheses development

The main effect of feedback moral intensity on moral disengagement

In this section I draw from feedback theory and social cognitive theory to present my first hypothesis regarding the effect of morally intense feedback on moral disengagement. Specifically, I propose that feedback that is high in moral intensity may make morality more salient to the feedback recipient, reducing their likelihood of morally disengaging. I first describe how feedback that lacks morally intensity affects moral disengagement. Then, I discuss how morally intense feedback affects moral disengagement in a manner that is different from feedback that lacks moral intensity. To make these arguments, I rely on the concept of self-regulation to support the idea that morally intense feedback may elicit guilt, therefore activating self-monitoring mechanisms.

One historic example of an individual who used moral intensity to bring ethics to the forefront of people's minds was Marcus Tullius Cicero. During a speech in 63 B.C. he is believed to have said *o tempora, o mores*, which translates to "oh, the times, oh, the morals." This speech was in reference to the corruption in Rome during this period, and Cicero used morally intense language to convey the seriousness of the corrupt behaviors of his opposers (Cicero, 63 B.C.; Everitt, 2003). Beyond targeting those in political office, Cicero conveyed similar sentiments that were intended for the populace of both present and future. From a translated excerpt from his book on duties (*de officiis III*), he wrote: "*What is morally wrong can never be advantageous, even when it enables you to make some gain that you believe to be to your advantage. The mere act of believing that some wrongful course of action constitutes an advantage is pernicious"* (Cicero, 44 BC; Grant, 1971). With this statement Cicero uses moral content within his language to draw

out an emotional response from the reader. Particularly, he may be eliciting guilt from the reader by stating it is wrong to ever believe that an immoral course of action could be the right thing to do.

Guilt is a negative emotion that encompasses remorse for one's thoughts, feelings, or actions (Blum, 2008). Generally, the feeling of guilt is accompanied by a sense of wrongdoing, such as in response to a transgression (Kim, Thibodeau, & Jorgensen, 2011; Klass, 1987). Similarly, Kugler and Jones (1992) present guilt as the dysphoria associated with recognizing that one has violated either moral or social standards. Guilt may occur as the direct result of thoughts or actions or may be brought about by the influence of others (Amodio, Devine, & Harmon-Jones, 2007; Johnson et al., 1987). Thus, lexical content, such as the morally intense language that Cicero used, may cause guilty feelings within those who listened to his orations or read his texts..

Although guilt is a discrete emotion, it serves as a foundation for self-regulatory processes (Baumeister & Heatherton, 1996; Baumeister, Stillwell, & Heatherton, 1994). Self-regulation is the mechanism that aligns action with values; thus, when morally intense feedback is used, moral principles are evoked which may simultaneously elicit guilt and activate self-regulation (Aquino et al., 2008; Eisenberg, 2000). These self-regulative processes consequently may prevent moral disengagement (Amodio et al., 2007; Oc, Bashshur, & Moore, 2015). Specifically, I argue that it is the self-monitoring component of self-regulation that affects transgressor cognition and moral disengagement. This may occur because self-monitoring that may not have taken place during an act of wrongdoing by the transgressor, may subsequently occur after the transgressor receives feedback that is high in moral intensity.

Self-monitoring is being mindful of one's actions and the moral consequences that may be associated with those actions (Bandura, 1991b). This introspective mechanism is the first on the frontier of self-regulatory processes. Essentially, it serves as an initial step in making moral judgments—which is a judgment that takes place before performing an action within a moral context. Although self-monitoring is an internal mechanism that take place at the psychological level, it may be induced by external forces. Specifically, I argue that morally intense feedback may serve as an external influence to individuals' self-monitoring cognitions. This is because morally intense feedback conveys a critical assessment of transgressors' actions (Cannon & Witherspoon, 2005; Moss & Martinko, 1998). This assessment, in turn, serves as a social sanction and may also lead to transgressor guilt and subsequent self-monitoring cognition (Cox, Lopez, & Schneider, 2003).

As presented in Chapter 2, SCT proposes that the self-regulatory process is, in part, guided by social sanctions. A social sanction may elicit unpleasant feelings, such as guilt, due to individuals receiving an adverse reaction from an external source (Bandura, 2001). Further, a social sanction may come in the form of consequences such as punishment, shame, disapproval, and undesirable feedback, like morally intense feedback. Research demonstrates that critical feedback may elicit strong emotional responses from a feedback recipient (Ilies, De Pater, & Judge, 2007). These affective outcomes may be even more severe in the context of moral feedback. Specifically, morally intense feedback, whether through cynicism, punitive consequences, or questioning of moral commitment, may elicit a greater emotional response than critical feedback alone (Moss & Martinko, 1998; Tepper, 2000). Thus, social influence, through

sanctions within a moral context, is an especially powerful tool in eliciting guilt and prompting self-monitoring. According to Bandura (1991a), these social influences may operate anticipatorily, just like with internalized self-sanctions, and affect human processes in three major ways.

The first way that social influence affects the self is by allowing for collective moral standards to contribute to individual morality (Bandura, 1991a). For example, many individuals have moral standards that are either directly linked to or are inspired by religion (Ebstyne King, 2003). Treating others with respect and kindness may be difficult for some, but they do so in order to adhere to their religious identity (MacLean, Walker, & Matsuba, 2004). However, it is important to note that such collective standards can actually facilitate immoral behavior (Reicher, Haslam, & Rath, 2008). For example, some religious standards allow for the practice of female genital mutilation, a process whereby a part of a child's genitalia is altered or cut off. Despite the medical risk involved in this painful and unnecessary procedure, individuals in many parts of the world accept this as common practice based on religious doctrine (Gupta, 2013; Hellsten, 2004).

Next, social influences affect individual ethical decision making through the activation of self-regulatory mechanisms and the development of moral self-regulatory competence (Bandura, 1991a). Bandura (1991a) discusses the activation and development process as two separate outcomes of social influence; here, however, I discuss them concurrently as they are closely related. Specifically, self-regulatory competence is developed through the exercise of self-regulation. Thus, social influence, such as morally intense feedback, affects the self by directly facilitating the activation of

self-monitoring cognition. Over time, aptitude in self-regulation is developed as social factors continue to influence the individual.

These mechanisms of self-regulation may occur as individuals make ethical decisions based on anticipated adverse social consequences. This may occur as prior morally intense feedback may elicit strong negative emotions, such as guilt, if an ethical transgressor is thinking about engaging in the same ethical transgression. These emotions may stem from the anticipation of receiving critical feedback again and are potent enough to activate self-monitoring (Baumeister, Vohs, DeWall, & Zhang, 2007). However, it is important to note that morally intense feedback does not necessarily have to be disciplinary. Feedback high in moral intensity may also be constructive and include actionable tasks; this may lead to learning and better future behavior even with little or no castigation is involved (Cannon & Witherspoon, 2005).

There are various ways through which morally intense feedback may lessen moral disengagement. Using Bandura's (1986) four categories of moral disengagement, here I discuss how morally intense feedback may affect mechanisms from each category. The first category is cognitive misconstrual whereby unethical behavior is reframed to be less harmful. The first type of cognitive misconstrual is moral justification, which occurs when an individual cognitively re-construes the situation such that harmful effects are more acceptable. Umphress et al. (2010), for example, demonstrate that employees may be engaging in moral justification when they frame their unethical acts such that their behavior benefits the greater good of the organization. A similar effect may take place with feedback that lacks moral intensity. For instance feedback lacking in moral intensity may highlight a positive aspect of the transgressors behavior, and this justification may

then cause transgressors to lack self-monitoring with regard to thoughts about future unethical behaviors of similar nature.

Another cognitive misconstrual mechanism that may prompt transgressor moral disengagement is euphemistic labeling, which is the use of sanitizing language (Bandura, 1999). Feedback providers that use sanitizing euphemisms instead of morally intense and direct language may induce moral disengagement on the part of the ethical transgressor. For example, Corrion et al. (2009) demonstrate that competitive athletes use euphemistic labels as a way to camouflage or lessen transgressive behaviors when describing rule breaking instances. The third cognitive misconstrual is advantageous comparison. Feedback providers may forgo the use of morally intense feedback and instead compare the transgressors' unethical actions to the more severe actions of other employees, or even themselves (Bandura, 1999). As long as the comparison paints transgressors in a more positive light relative to the comparative targets, then transgressors may be induced to morally disengage and potentially continue in their unethical behavior without guilt. Alternatively, morally intense feedback would have the opposite effect whereby feedback providers may evoke transgressor morality by painting transgressors in a negative light as compared to others. In this case, less transgressor moral disengagement will occur as guilt is elicited, thus activating the self-monitoring element of self-regulation (Amodio et al., 2007).

The second category of moral disengagement is the minimization of the transgressor's role in causing harm (Bandura, 1999). This can be done either by displacing responsibility, which is passing the responsibility to others, or diffusion of responsibility, which is the lessening of personal accountability in group settings.

Because feedback that lacks moral intensity does not make morality salient to the transgressor, a feedback provider may induce transgressor moral disengagement by giving moral feedback that displaces or diffuses the responsibility of moral conduct away from the transgressor and towards others in the organization. This category captures two, potentially simultaneous, effects.

First, the displacement or diffusion can occur by the feedback provider offering feedback that is low in moral intensity if she/he places the blame on others; i.e. if the feedback provider tells the transgressor that it is not the transgressor's fault that the behavior occurred because she/he was just doing what her/his supervisor instructed or what everybody else appears to be doing. Although blame may be discussed, this feedback lacks in moral intensity because the blame is placed on others, rather than the transgressor. Thus, transgressor morality is not made salient. Alternatively, morally intense feedback in this context would be such that blaming the ethical transgressor is precisely what a feedback provider may do. In this case, transgressor self-monitoring will occur such that it is less likely for them to morally disengage with regard to subsequent behavior.

Another way that a feedback provider can affect transgressor moral disengagement is by displacing or diffusing the responsibility onto themselves. In this scenario, a feedback provider may use feedback that lacks in moral intensity as they blame themselves by admitting personal fault regarding ethical transgressor's behavior. In the workplace, a feedback provider may feel responsible for transgressor mistakes because they may have given the transgressor faulty directions or they may have previously modeled unethical behavior that the transgressor subsequently copied.

Alternatively, the mere act of giving feedback that lacks in moral intensity may induce the transgressor to place responsibility on the feedback provider rather than themselves for future transgressions. For example, Hinrichs et al. (2012) demonstrate that individuals often place blame on their leaders for their own errors. Such blame may be more likely if the transgressor receives feedback that lacks in moral intensity.

The third category of moral disengagement mechanisms is the distortion of consequences. The distorting of consequences occurs when individuals underestimate the extent of the damage caused by their actions. For example, research by Pornari and Wood (2010) demonstrates that cyber aggression is often the result of distorting consequences; in the case of internet bullying, it is especially easy to minimize the harmful effects of one's actions because transgressors are less exposed to the affective reactions of their targets (Campbell, 2005). I put forward that a similar effect can be induced by the social influence of a feedback provider. Specifically, feedback providers may subdue transgressor moral self-monitoring with regard to self-regulation if the feedback they provide is low in moral intensity and portrays the ethical transgression as having minimal adverse effects. Because transgressors are conditioned not to see the adverse effects of their own behavior, self-monitoring remains inactive, and they may be likely to morally disengage.

The fourth category of moral disengagement mechanisms is the reduction of identification with the victims. This mechanism is especially important in the context of feedback lacking in moral intensity as it is likely that such feedback may be given because the feedback provider identifies with the transgressor. For example, if a feedback provider and the feedback recipient are in a group together, they may identify themselves

as being in the in-group and others as being in the out-group (Arvey & Murphy, 1998). Thus, feedback that lacks moral intensity, because it is aimed at singling out other individuals or groups of individuals as inferior, may lead to moral disengagement by the transgressor as they feel like their victims are either at fault—attributing blame to the victims—or are undeserving of basic human consideration.

There may be several reasons why the feedback provider who offers feedback that lacks moral intensity may activate one type of mechanism over the other. For example, feedback providers whose primary intention is to offer social support may tailor their feedback such that they word their feedback in a manner that best appeals to the transgressor. Another reason why feedback providers may induce transgressor moral disengagement using one mechanism over another is because that mechanism personally appeals to them. It is possible that they themselves have engaged in this behavior in the past and they are imposing their disengagement mechanism on to someone else to lessen their own possible cognitive dissonance. Indeed, individuals engaged in unethical behavior sometime seek out others who are engaged in the same unethical behavior to lessen the potential of guilt that they may experience (Gino, Gu, & Zhong, 2009).

Unlike feedback that lacks moral intensity, feedback that is morally intense serves one primary purpose, to aid in the development of transgressor self-monitoring. As previously stated, transgressor self-monitoring may take place as the transgressor becomes cognizant of the moral context surrounding their transgression. This occurs as self-regulative emotions, such as guilt, are elicited by the feedback provider. By using morally intense feedback to promote guilty feelings on the part of the transgressor, the feedback provider changes transgressor cognition. Specifically, transgressor cognition is

altered such that internal control mechanisms are activated, allowing for transgressors to better self-monitor. This stands in contrast to feedback that lacks moral intensity which may promote transgressor status quo with regard to self-regulation as morality is not evoked.

Thus, I predict that, relative to feedback that is higher in moral intensity, feedback that is lower in moral intensity is more likely to lead to transgressor moral disengagement. While individuals in the workplace tend to feel uncomfortable with providing negative feedback, practitioners still use it as a tool to alter future behavior (Baron, 1993; Bond & Anderson, 1987; Fisher, 1974; Oc et al., 2015). Hence, morally intense feedback is a social influence that can directly alter moral disengagement. Because self-regulation serves as the basis of human social interaction, it is a critical factor in influencing individual attitudinal factors. However, when individuals receive morally intense feedback, guilt is elicited such that self-regulatory mechanisms, specifically self-monitoring, may become more in tune with personal and social expectations, thus lessening the potential of moral disengagement.

Hypothesis 1: Morally intense feedback will be negatively related to subsequent transgressor moral disengagement.

The mediating effect of moral disengagement on the moral feedback-unethical behavior relationship

This section focuses on moral disengagement as a mediating mechanism between moral feedback and unethical behavior. First, I briefly point to research in the management field that demonstrates the link between moral disengagement and unethical behavior. Next, I discuss how the self-reactive component of self-regulation serves to

guide ethical behavior; this is done through self-sanctioning. I then discuss each category of moral disengagement and how each is connected to future unethical outcomes. Here, I elaborate on why moral disengagement may mediate the relationship between morally intense feedback and future unethical behavior. Next, I suggest retaliation as a potential reason to why moral disengagement may not always mediate this relationship. Finally, I offer my hypothesis.

Various studies of moral disengagement focus on its positive relationship with outcomes related to childhood aggressive behavior (Bandura et al., 1996; Bandura, Underwood, & Fromson, 1975), and feelings regarding war (Aquino et al., 2007). Management scholars have also adopted this construct to explain why employees not apparently predisposed to organizational misbehavior may nonetheless engage in it without guilt. As I reviewed in Chapter 2, the literature offers much support for the link between moral disengagement and future unethical behavior at work. Although much of this research is performed in a lab setting, various scales for moral disengagement exist so that it may be captured via survey responses as well (Barsky, 2011; McFerran et al., 2010; Moore et al., 2012). Finally, research also demonstrates that certain individuals may be predisposed to morally disengage based on factors such as moral identity, empathy, cynicism, and locus of control (Detert et al., 2008).

It is clear that moral disengagement is a construct that has been successfully used by management scholars to examine wrongdoing relevant to organizational settings. However, this concept has only been studied in an intra-individual context, meaning that the literature focuses on within-person processes of moral disengagement. In my dissertation, I extend moral disengagement theory by proposing how moral

disengagement can be induced by others and thus serve as a mediator between moral feedback and future unethical behavior. Voltaire (1765) is credited with saying, “Those who can make you believe absurdities can make you commit atrocities.” This captures the sentiment that much of the unethical behavior committed in the workplace is performed by seemingly ordinary people who are under the influence of others (Kish-Gephart et al., 2010). Here I argue that this social influence in the form of moral feedback either evokes or prevents transgressor moral disengagement which ultimately affects future transgressor behavior.

While the self-monitoring aspect of self-regulation serves to match personal standards with moral judgment, self-reaction aims to match personal standards to moral action. The activation of self-regulative mechanisms means that internal control processes may ultimately affect moral behavior. After an individual makes a judgment about their behavior, self-reaction takes place such that standards are established to regulate future behavior. This mechanism works by creating internal incentives for behavior via the anticipation of affective reactions (Bandura, 1991b). For example, if individuals know from past experience that performing a specific behavior resulted in feelings of satisfaction, they will perform the same behaviors in anticipation of the same affective reactions. Conversely, a transgressive behavior may bring about internalized self-sanctions that individuals may not wish to experience in the future (Bandura, 1991a).

A self-sanction refers to situations whereby individuals have unpleasant feelings from thinking about engaging in a behavior that goes against their own code of conduct (Bandura, 1991b). The unpleasant feeling is a punishment that the individual imposes on oneself. This self-reactive mechanism serves as a guiding tool for human motivation and

promotes individuals to behave in accordance with personal moral standards (Bandura, 1986).

Alternatively, when self-reaction is absent, the deactivation, or disengagement, of self-regulation allows for unethical behavior to occur without the transgressor feeling as if they have lowered their moral standards (Bandura, 1991a). When an individual is induced to morally disengage, internal control processes that serve to enhance self-reaction may remain dormant. This may cause the normal self-sanctions that would occur during a morally heightened situation to be overridden (Bandura, 1991a). This process of disallowing self-sanctions, which facilitates moral disengagement, may stem from feedback that lacks in moral intensity. To more precisely explicate how moral feedback affects future unethical behavior through moral disengagement, I utilize a similar approach to my development of my arguments for Hypothesis 1. That is, I present my Hypothesis 2 arguments specifically with relation to each category of moral disengagement.

With regard to cognitive misconstrual, an ethical transgressor may be prone to repeating their same transgression based on the justification, euphemistic labeling, or advantageous comparison of their actions. If an ethical transgressor is morally disengaged, via one of these mechanisms, then they may continue to behave unethically because they view their actions as less injurious than what is evidenced by reality (Bandura et al., 1996). For example, if a feedback provider offers feedback that justifies the actions of the transgressor, then the transgressor may repeat the same behaviors because they adopt this justification. Further, feedback lacking in moral intensity may be such that euphemistic labels are used instead of moral language; these labels may also be

adopted by transgressors. For instance, if feedback providers do not use morally intense feedback and label *stealing* from the organization as *borrowing*, then transgressors may be prone to increasing their stealing behavior as they now believe that they are engaged the more benign action of borrowing (Corrion et al., 2009; Moore et al., 2012). Finally, if transgressors are made to feel that their actions are of little consequence as compared to the actions of others, then this mechanism of moral disengagement will also lead to continued unethical behavior (Bandura et al., 1996; Brown, 2014). For example, when told by a feedback provider that others in the organization are engaged in activities that could physically harm employees, the transgressor may feel like their, more minor, offense is not injurious. Alternatively, if cognitive misconstrual does not occur because they were given morally intense feedback, then transgressors would be less likely to engage in repeated unethical behavior as they feel guilty and thus develop self-sanctions to stifle continued unethicality.

The minimization of one's role in causing harm is the second category of moral disengagement and can be achieved through either the displacement of diffusion of responsibility. When transgressors receive feedback that is lacking in moral intensity, they may continue to engage in unethical behavior because they may feel like someone else is at fault (Hargie, Stapleton, & Tourish, 2010). For instance if transgressors are lead to believe that their unethical actions were the fault of their supervisor as they were merely following directions, then they may continue to engage in similar behavior as they don't feel responsible for the consequences (Cohan, 2002). Similarly, if transgressors' personal agency is weakened through group decision making or a division of labor, then they may continue to repeat their unethical behaviors as they place blame on others

instead of themselves (Sims, 1992). Bandura and his colleagues (1996) put it succinctly when they stated "*When everyone is responsible, not one really feels responsible*" (p.365). However, if transgressors receive morally intense feedback, then the moral context of the situation is highlighted such that the transgressors would be less likely to diffuse or displace responsibility on to others. In such a case, the potential of future unethical behavior of the same nature would be thwarted due to the development of self-regulatory processes. Specifically, self-sanctions may serve to prevent potential thoughts of unethical behavior into manifesting to action.

The third category of moral disengagement, the distortion of consequences, can be achieved by conceptualizing the consequences as less severe than they actually are. Feedback that lacks moral intensity may motivate repeated unethical behavior as this feedback makes it more likely that transgressors would recall the benefits of their transgression while failing to recall the harmful effects (Kouchaki & Gino, 2016). Alternatively, morally intense feedback would bring forward the moral gravity of the transgression. Self-sanctions are developed such that transgressor guilt and mindfulness of how deleterious their actions were may help to subdue the continuation of the same harmful behavior.

The final category of moral disengagement focuses on the targets of unethical behavior. The ability to feel guilt and develop moral self-sanctions depends, in part, on how transgressors view the people that they mistreat (Bandura et al., 1996; Baumeister et al., 1994). In the case of feedback that lacks in moral intensity, such self-sanctions may not be developed due to either the dehumanization of those affected by the unethical act, or the attribution of blame to the victim of the unethical act. For example, viewing

customers as characters instead of actually human beings may cause employees to repeatedly engage in the unethical behavior by mistreating them (Hartmann & Vorderer, 2010; Wang, Liao, Zhan, & Shi, 2011). Alternatively, if a transgressor received morally intense feedback and they are made to understand that real people were harmed by their actions, then through self-reaction, they may be less likely to engage in that same behavior.

Blaming the victim is another moral disengagement mechanism that focuses on the target of unethical behavior. Moral disengagement via this mechanism may occur if transgressors receive feedback that lacks in moral intensity and attributes blame to those affected by the unethical behavior rather than the transgressor. For example, if feedback providers tell transgressors that customers sometimes deserve to be mistreated, the transgressors may morally disengage such that their mistreatment of customers is perpetuated (Skarlicki & Rupp, 2010; Skarlicki et al., 2008). However, morally intense feedback may thwart future mistreatment of customers because the blame would be placed on the transgressor, thus eliciting guilt and setting the stage for future self-reaction through self-sanctioning.

It is clear that through moral disengagement morally intense feedback may influence future moral action of ethical transgressors. Notably, this effect is not limited to the short term. For example, there are multiple studies of the Pygmalion effect whereby a leader or teacher's expectations are later matched by the behavior of their subordinates or students (Hurley, 1997; Merton, 1948; Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968). In the management context, these expectations are matched over time because the leader, or feedback provider, treats subordinates in a manner that is consistent with initial expectations (Eden,

1984). Thus, future unethical behavior may occur as individuals become morally disengaged due to the justifications offered to them in the feedback.

Despite the various moral disengagement mechanisms that allow for moral feedback to lead to unethical behavior, it is important to acknowledge that there may be other explanations for the connection between moral feedback and future unethical behavior. Specifically, due to retaliation, individuals may actually be more likely to engage in unethical behavior after receiving morally intense feedback. Retaliation is defined as an adverse reaction to perceived unfairness in the workplace (Skarlicki & Folger, 1997). If individuals receive moral feedback that they perceive as unwarranted or unjust, they may potentially retaliate by engaging in unethical behaviors to a greater extent than their original behaviors for which they received feedback. For instance, Alder (2007) demonstrates that perceptions of unfair treatment will attenuate the relationship between an individual's desire to improve and their actual performance.

Although there exists the possibility of retaliation being an underlying mechanism connecting moral feedback and future unethical behavior, I hold that this would occur only in the case of morally intense feedback. Whereas retaliation is caused by feelings of injustice, moral disengagement may occur due to the lack of guilt that may stem from receiving feedback that lacks in moral intensity. Thus, morally disengaged individuals are likely to engage in future transgressions as they have not received any indication to do otherwise. Specifically, feedback that lacks in moral intensity may have the effect of confirming or reinforcing current behavior, even if that behavior violates workplace rules. Because morality is not evoked, the nature of the feedback is autonomy-supportive, rather than controlling of the transgressor's behaviors (Carpentier & Mageau, 2013). That

is, feedback that does not explicitly cite any apparent violation may allow for an ethical transgressor to maintain the status quo rather than alter their behavioral trajectory trough the development of self-sanctioning mechanisms.

Conversely, when morally intense feedback is received, future behavior may be altered in an attempt to avoid similar feedback (Bong & Clark, 1999; McCall, 1977). This notion is rooted in Thorndike's (1913) influential theory called the law of effect. The law of effect equates positive feedback with reinforcement and negative feedback with punishment; either positive or negative feedback works to facilitate learning thus altering future behavior as correct behaviors are rewarded and bad behaviors are punished (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996; Thorndike, 1927).

In the case of moral feedback, moral disengagement is the mechanism through which morally intense feedback may affect future transgressor unethical behavior. Because the moral context of the transgression is made salient to the transgressor, guilt is elicited thereby activating the self-sanctioning subcomponent within self-regulatory systems. This, in turn, may decrease the potential that the transgressor will continue to engage in their bad behavior. Specifically, this occurs because morally intense feedback lessens the likelihood of moral disengagement, allowing for transgressor self-sanctioning mechanisms to thwart notions of continued unethical behavior. In sum, I propose the following hypothesis that reflects the mediating role of moral disengagement on the relationship between morally intense feedback and future unethical behavior.

Hypothesis 2: Moral disengagement will mediate the negative relationship between morally intense feedback and unethical behavior.

The moderating effect of affective tone of feedback on the moral feedback-moral disengagement relationship

In this section I propose a moderator that affects my prior two predictions. Specifically, I propose that the affective tone of feedback can alter the relationship between morally intense feedback and moral disengagement. I first discuss the prevalence and role of affective experiences in the workplace. Second, I introduce literature on Emotions as Social Information Theory to establish the importance of affective tone in feedback. Next I discuss the various reasons as to why individuals may either receive moral feedback delivered in a positive affective tone or negative affective tone. I then discuss how affective tone affects moral feedback at high levels of moral intensity and low levels of moral intensity. Finally, I summarize these ideas in two hypotheses.

Individuals often have emotional reactions to workplace events (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). These affective experiences exist as either discrete emotions or more generalized affective states (Blum, 2008; Judge, Hulin, & Dalal, 2009). That is, an affective experience could be due to a specific event or could be the experience of a mood that is not tied to a specific cause. Here I focus on the portrayal of affect based on one specific cause, feedback. Indeed, research demonstrates that the giving and receiving of feedback are affective events that may have long-lasting effects on individuals (Gaddis, Connelly, & Mumford, 2004). For example, Alder and Ambrose (2005) reveal that feedback delivered by a supervisor is associated with higher levels of perceived fairness as compared to feedback delivered via an automated computer message. This

demonstrates the influence that affective tone may have on ultimate outcomes of feedback.

The Emotions as Social Information Theory (EASI) research further demonstrates that individuals' emotions can affect the behavior of others (Lemerise & Arsenio, 2000; Van Kleef et al., 2010). At its core, this theory puts forward that emotions are a social influence. A principal assumption of EASI theory is that emotional expressions provide information (Van Kleef, 2009; Van Kleef et al., 2010). Specifically, individuals may use the emotions of others to make sense of a situation, as emotions are indicative of the importance of deep-seated feelings (Frijda, 1986). One manner through which emotions are conveyed is through affective tone.[2]

In the case of more critical moral feedback, the affective tone of the feedback may be negatively valenced. That is, it is easy to imagine that an ethical transgression that warrants moral feedback is predisposed to unpleasant emotions from the feedback provider. The unpleasant emotions as conveyed by the feedback provider in turn affect the transgressor. Indeed, feedback is a source of emotional contagion (Kelly & Barsade, 2001). Thus, when the affective tone of feedback given is negatively valenced, the relationship between morally intense feedback and moral disengagement is different than if the affective tone of the feedback were to be positively valenced.

More difficult to conceptualize may be instances where a positive affective tone is used when delivering moral feedback. Here I detail several reasons why individuals may

[2] EASI literature uses the term *emotional expression* to refer to the conveying of emotions; specifically, most EASI literature focuses on such emotional expression as stemming from facial, vocal, and postural movements. Although I adopt an EASI theory for this dissertation, I utilize *affective tone* rather than *emotional expression* because affective tone is broader can be conveyed through mediums other than face-to-face interaction.

use a positively valenced affective tone when delivering feedback in response to an ethical transgression of another. First, feedback providers may not care about the ethical transgression if it does not directly affect them. The condoning of unethical behavior in the workplace occurs from both employees and managers. An employee may condone an ethical transgression of another employee, especially in cases where any potential negative consequences would not affect the condoning employee (Brass et al., 1998). Research demonstrates that employees may be so engaged at work that they fail to invest effort into caring about the behavior of others unless it directly affects them (Schaufeli, Bakker, & Van Rhenen, 2009; Smith, Sansone, & White, 2007). Even managers tend to overlook unethical behavior by their subordinates (Ashkanasy, Windsor, & Treviño, 2006).

Taken one step further, feedback providers may actually appreciate the behavior that the transgressor engaged in if the behavior may benefit them or the organization. Indeed, research demonstrates that unethical behavior may take place as an attempt to ultimately benefit the organization (Umphress et al., 2010). Further, there is evidence to support the notion that some managers even pressure employees to act unethically (Ashkanasy et al., 2006). In such cases a manager may believe the employee is doing the right thing; thus, feedback of a moral nature may be encouraging as opposed to reprimanding (Cohan, 2002).

A third reason why the feedback provider may provide moral feedback in a positively valenced affective tone is because they personally have engaged in unethical behavior. Thus, reproaching someone else for also engaging in unethical behavior may elicit cognitive dissonance whereby inconsistency between contradictory thoughts

induces a state of discomfort such that attempts are made to either alter behavior or cognition to assuage the discomfort (Festinger, 1957; Paugh, Groth, & Hennig-Thurau, 2001). Indeed certain types of leaders may have a strong ability to induce their followers to engage in morally dubious behaviors without question. Graham (1991), for instance, provides a critical assessment of charismatic leaders as having the potential to be dangerously inspirational. A charismatic leader is a leader that provides followers with a sense of meaning and affective engagement through using a future-oriented vision that serves to motivate others (Bass, 1990; Conger & Kanungo, 1987). While not commonly associated with immoral behavior, Graham (1991) uses the example of Hitler as a charismatic leader who enticed others to engage in heinous behavior.

Finally, feedback providers may use a positive affective tone when giving moral feedback because they are attempting to offer a supportive environment to the ethical transgressor. Many organizations encourage social support through both formal and informal mechanisms (Viswesvaran, Sanchez, & Fisher, 1999). Some organizations pay special attention to the training of their employees to be supportive of one another during difficult circumstances (Fontaine, 1986; Smith, Smoll, & Barnett, 1995). This is especially true in a team environment where individuals work closely together and have strong interpersonal ties.

Clearly, there are many reasons that a feedback provider may offer feedback that is positively valenced over feedback that is more negatively valenced in affective tone. In the following section I specifically detail the interaction between feedback moral intensity and feedback affective tone and how this interaction affects moral disengagement. First I discuss in more detail EASI theory and how this theory applies to

the interaction between morally intense feedback and affective tone of feedback. Next, similar to my theoretical development section, I will first discuss feedback that has a negatively valenced affective tone, then I will discuss feedback that is delivered with a positively valenced affective tone.

According to EASI theory, the emotional expressions of others may affect individuals' behavior via two processes. One is by triggering inferential processes, and another is through eliciting affective reactions in the observers; these affective reactions have the ability to affect subsequent behavior (Van Kleef, 2009). In the context of feedback, emotions may serve to either amplify or obscure the content of the message (Buss, Gomes, Higgins, & Lauterbach, 1987). As discussed, morally intense feedback may elicit guilt from transgressors as the moral implications of their transgressions are made salient. Thus, when feedback recipients feel guilty after receiving morally intense feedback, this guilt may be either intensified or subdued depending on the affective tone that accompanies the content of the feedback. Further, the guilt that is caused by affective tone alone may be enough to subdue potential transgressor moral disengagement (Moore et al., 2012; Russell, 2003; Russell, Bachorowski, & Fernández-Dols, 2003).

In my theoretical development section, I presented punitive feedback as feedback that is morally intense and negatively valenced in affective tone. With this type of feedback, I argue that the guilty feelings brought about by morally intense feedback may increase via a negatively valenced affective tone. This occurs as the guilt from the content of the moral feedback is amplified by the harsh tone of the feedback (Firestone, 1987). Research demonstrates that emotional expression alone has the ability to elicit an affective response (Ekman et al., 1987; Russell et al., 2003). For instance van Doorn, van

Kleef, and van der Pligt (2015) demonstrate that mere *looks of disappointment* may elicit guilt. Thus, a negatively valenced affective tone interacts with the content of morally intense feedback to increase transgressor guilt such that self-regulatory systems are activated, preventing the transgressor from morally disengaging.

Also delivered with a negatively valenced affective tone is obligatory feedback. Unlike punitive feedback, this type of moral feedback lacks moral intensity. Although the feedback affective tone may not convey satisfaction with the actions of the transgressor, the lack of moral content in the message makes it such that there is no compounding effect between the guilt that would have occurred from morally intense feedback and guilty feelings based on the negatively valenced affective tone of the feedback. As discussed, guilt is an emotion that originates from the perceived violation of moral or social standards (Blum, 2008). However, as research by Smith, Webster, Parrott, and Eyre (2002) demonstrates, guilt that occurs from a moral violation inflicts a much stronger affective response than guilt that occurs from violations in a non-moral context. Consequently, the lack of moral intensity in obligatory feedback prevents guilt from manifesting as strongly as guilt that stems from morally intense feedback, such as punitive feedback. This occurs even as the affective tone is negatively valenced. This negative affective tone may cause other negative feelings, such as sadness, but not necessarily guilt as there is no reference to moral standards (Gaddis et al., 2004; Gibson & Roberts Callister, 2010; Lewis, 2000; Nygaard & Lunders, 2002). Thus, any elicited guilt would only be slight if at all in comparison to punitive feedback since the guilt is derived solely from the negatively valenced affective tone. Because of the subtlety of

guilt, I hold that obligatory feedback causes little to no change in subsequent transgressor moral disengagement.

Opposite of obligatory feedback (see Figure 2) is formative feedback which is morally intense feedback that is delivered in a positive affective tone. Similar to punitive feedback, the content of formative feedback elicits a strong sense of guilt from the transgressor. This guilt is what prevents transgressor moral disengagement (Cox et al., 2003). However, in the case of formative feedback, the positively valenced affective tone may hinder the effects of the guilt brought upon by the moral intensity of the feedback. Specifically, guilt may actually be somewhat subdued by the positive feelings conveyed by the feedback provider.

According to research using EASI theory, social situations are often fuzzy as they are characterized by insufficient information regarding the intentions, goals, and desires of others around them (Van Kleef et al., 2010). To compensate for this ambiguity, individuals look to additional cues, such as a communication partner's emotions, to make sense of a situation (Van Kleef, 2009; Van Kleef et al., 2010). Thus, it is not just the content of a message, but how the message is conveyed that allows for understanding. For example, research by Nygaard and Lunders (2002) demonstrates that individuals rely on the tone of voice to alleviate the lexical ambiguity in messages. In the context of moral feedback, a positively valenced affective tone may convey that the feedback provider has good feelings towards the transgressor, despite the moral intensity of the feedback. These positively valenced emotions, in turn, may be adopted by the transgressor.

Research from George and Bettenhausen (1990), for instance, demonstrates that when positively valenced emotions are expressed by team leaders, they elicit positive affective responses from their followers. Further, emotional contagion may take place such that the transgressor adopts the same positive feelings that they observe from the feedback provider (Brass et al., 1998; Kelly & Barsade, 2001; Van Kleef et al., 2010). These positive feelings may override negative feelings that a transgressor may have that were derived from the actual content of the message (Carver & Scheier, 1990; Tice, Baumeister, Shmueli, & Muraven, 2007). Because transgressor guilt arises from the morally intense feedback is subdued, formative feedback may be less effective than punitive feedback in preventing transgressor moral disengagement.

Extending this line of reasoning one step further, moral feedback that does not elicit guilt may actually cause moral disengagement. Specifically, permissive feedback, or feedback that is delivered with a positively valenced affective tone, yet is lacking in moral intensity, I argue, will incite moral disengagement. When individuals encounter a pattern of events that is similar to a prior situation, they do not have to go through the same moral judgment and decision making processes as they did before; they simply rely on past experience (Bandura, 1991a; Blasi, 1980; Donagan, 1984). Indeed, theories of behavioral consistency hold that individuals are likely to behave similarly to their past actions barring external intervention (Bem, 1967; Taylor, 1975). This applies to behaviors in the moral context as well (Cialdini et al., 1995). In the case of permissive feedback, a lack of guilt may result in the subsequent behavior of a transgressor to increase in unethicality. Without feelings of guilt, transgressors may engage in moral disengagement and in the future increase their unethical behavior because they have not

developed self-sanctions that could be anticipatorily applied to these future situations (Bandura, 2002; Carpentier & Mageau, 2013).

In addition to the lack of inciting feelings of guilt, feedback with a positively valenced affective tone may also encourage moral disengagement by allowing for the cognitive flexibility to enhance various disengagement mechanisms. Indeed, research by Vincent, Emich, and Goncalo (2013) demonstrates that positive affect promotes dishonesty by allowing for the cognitive flexibility to morally justify dishonest acts. Specifically, individuals who experience positive affect are more likely to morally disengage, via rationalization techniques, versus those who are experiencing neutral or negative affect. Similar research uses the term moral flexibility, which refers to the ability of individuals to justify their unethical actions by generating various rationalizations (Gino & Ariely, 2012).

I apply similar logic to the effect of feedback affective tone on the relationship between morally intense feedback and moral disengagement. Because feedback providers' positive affect may be adopted by transgressors, not only are transgressors' self-regulatory mechanisms not activated as no guilt is elicited, but they now also have the cognitive flexibility that may promote moral disengagement. Specifically, feedback that uses a positive affective tone may elicit positive affect in transgressors such that moral flexibility takes place. Such flexibility may work to enhance moral disengagement mechanisms that may have been elicited by feedback providers offering moral feedback that lacks in moral intensity (Baas, De Dreu, & Nijstad, 2008; Moore & Malinowski, 2009). Accordingly, I predict a moderating effect such that moral feedback that is conveyed using a positive affective tone will lead to more moral disengagement by the

transgressor than moral feedback that is conveyed with a negative affective tone. Figure 3 is a simple slopes depiction of my prediction.

Hypothesis 3: The negative relationship between moral intensity and moral disengagement will be made weaker when feedback affective tone is more positively valanced.

My final argument focuses on the different levels of moral disengagement produced by the interaction of feedback moral intensity and affective tone and how these differences may ultimately influence future unethical behavior. As previously discussed in the development of my prior hypothesis, feedback that is high in moral intensity (punitive and formative feedback) will make salient the moral implications of the transgression, thus eliciting guilty feelings from the transgressor which may enhance self-regulation with regard to future behavior (Fluckiger et al., 2010; Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006; Pintrich & Zusho, 2007). As the moral consequences of unethical actions are made salient to transgressors, the more likely it is that they develop self-regulatory processes such that subsequent transgressions are curtailed (Bandura et al., 1996; Detert et al., 2008). Specifically, guilty feelings provoke future self-sanctioning mechanisms to take place such that an individual who previously engaged in an ethical transgression is made more mindful with regard to future potential transgressions of a similar nature that may violate personal moral standards. This self-sanctioning cognition aids in preventing future unethical behavior as transgressors do not morally disengage. Alternatively, feedback that lacks in moral intensity, I argue, will have a weaker effect in preventing future unethical behavior as moral disengagement may occur. Specifically, permissive

feedback, which may promote moral disengagement, would lead to an increase in unethical behavior as self-regulatory systems are not activated.

Hypothesis 4: The affective tone of feedback will moderate the mediated relationship between moral intensity of feedback, moral disengagement, and unethical behavior by strengthening this relationship when feedback affective tone is more positively valenced.

Summary of Chapter 3

In this Chapter I presented a typology of moral feedback. Inspired by this typology, I developed theory to support the notion that moral disengagement can be externally induced. Specifically, I proposed that through the use of feedback that lacks moral intensity, transgressor moral disengagement may increase to subsequently effect future transgressor behavior. Alternatively, morally intense feedback may bring about a decrease in unethical behavior. This occurs as guilt may induce mechanisms of self-regulation, such as self-monitoring and self-reaction—which serves to develop self-sanctioning cognitions—to aid in the prevention of continues unethicality. Finally, I explained the moderating role that the affective tone of feedback may have on the relationship between morally intense feedback, moral disengagement, and future transgressor behavior. Here I proposed that the valence of the affective tone of feedback may serve to either enhance or attenuate the guilt and other potential emotions that may take place after moral feedback. In the next chapter I detail the methodology I will use to test my hypotheses.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this Chapter, I describe the methodology I used to test my hypotheses in a lab setting. A lab experiment is an appropriate way to conduct my study as it allows for the manipulation of variables and randomization of participants between groups, all within a controlled environment (Anderson et al., 1999; Franzen & Pointner, 2012; McGrath, 1982). When it comes to the recollection of past unethical behavior, individuals tend to paint themselves in a more positive light. Essentially, people tend to remember their moral actions and forget about or lessen the severity of their past transgressions (Kouchaki & Gino, 2016). This would make it difficult to utilize methods such as a critical incident report which may rely on individuals to remember prior unethical acts. Further, comparable recollections of different types of feedback may be difficult in a non-lab setting where I would have to rely on self-reports of the type of feedback received rather than an experiment where the type of feedback is manipulated. For these reasons, I chose the lab study as the method to test my hypotheses. In the remainder of this chapter, I describe the study design and procedure. First, I discuss the sample that I used and the two tasks that the participants completed. I then discuss how I manipulated my independent and moderating variables, and detail the steps I took to establish the validity of my manipulations. Finally, I describe the statistical procedures that I used to test my hypotheses.

Design and procedure

For the experiment, I use a 2 (high moral intensity; low moral intensity) x 2 (positively valenced affective tone; negatively valenced affective tone) between-subjects

factorial design. Each participant was randomly assigned to one of the four conditions that correspond with the four different types of feedback: punitive, obligatory, formative, and permissive. The study took place at two separate times. First, participants completed a business task in which complying with the experimental task instructions involves making a recommendation that could be construed as unethical. This task is intentionally designed such that most participants picked the less moral yet better business choice. At a later period, the participants came into the lab to receive feedback on the business task as well as complete an additional task. The feedback that participants received varied based on the experimental condition to which they were assigned. After participants received their feedback, the participants filled out a short moral disengagement survey. Following the survey, the participants completed the final task. This ultimate task allowed for participants to engage in unethical behavior.

When signing up for the initial task, the lab brief informed participants that the study focuses on business decision-making. However, when the students were in the lab, I provided them with additional information that stated that the study also examines the effect of different incentives on the quality of a business decision. Specifically, the instructions detailed to the students that half the participants (the half that they are in; Group 1) were given a task that was to be evaluated by a graduate student. The incentive to do well on the task was a high amount of $50, but is only awarded to the best submission. The instructions also informed participants that the other half of the participants were put into a group (a fictitious Group 2) that had to complete a similar business decision-making task that is to be evaluated by other students, rather than a graduate assistant.

When in the lab, I told the participants that they are actually the individuals who have to perform the evaluation. Different from the first task that the participants completed, the incentive for doing well on the task they are evaluating is not based on a comparison of which individual has the best submission, but is based on the evaluation of the submission per a rubric offered in the lab. The instructions informed the participants that they have the authority to evaluate the quality of the Group 2 participants' submissions. Further, the instructions detailed that the incentive structure offered to the other participant was such that they, the fictitious Group 2 participant, may receive up to $10 for completing the task. The instructions were explicit in that a bad (fictitious) participant submissions should receive a low dollar amount, and a good submission should receive a high dollar amount. The instructions further stated that any amount not awarded to the participant in Group 2 may be kept.

Sample. The sample I used is undergraduate students from a large public U.S. university in the southwest. I recruited the students through a professor teaching their class in the management department. Because the professor in this course required students to participate in the lab to receive credit for class, I did not use a financial incentive to encourage lab involvement. However, the final task includes the potential of keeping a monetary sum instead of giving it away. My original goal was to have 200 students participate in the experiment; on completion of the lab study a total of 277 students participated in the study.

Initial task. The initial task is adapted from Mayer, Nurmohamed, Treviño, Shapiro, and Schminke (2013). Prior research using this task presents the task as being part of a virtual team assignment (Mayer et al., 2013; Wellman, Mayer, Ong, & DeRue,

2016); however, I altered the task such that participants completed it as individuals. The task involves a hypothetical business decision regarding whether or not to expand the business by adding an additional product line. The assignment specified that the additional product line may potentially involve the use of child labor by a third party supplier to make the product, handmade rugs. Despite the information regarding the potential of child labor, the directions on the task specified that the participant is to make the best business decision. I gave participants directions to use one of the five forces from Porter's (1979, 2008) Five Forces model to make this decision. All participants were told that the specific force they are to focus on is *competitive rivalry*. The directions for this task may be found in Appendix A.

This task was e-mailed to participants within one week of their scheduled lab visit. It was part of the enrollment survey that students completed online when they signed up to participate in the lab. I instructed the students that this is a two-part study, worth 2 credits. These credits count towards a grade in the management class they were recruited from. The first part of the study was an initial task done online, and the second part was in the lab. Further, I requested that the task be completed at least 48 hours prior to their scheduled lab date. This allowed for time to pass whereby the participants were told that their assignments were being evaluated by a graduate student. This hypothetical evaluation is what the participants perceived that their feedback is based on.

The feedback was given while participants were present in the lab. For participants who missed the deadline, I allowed them to submit their task at a later date; however, their scheduled lab time was moved. For participants who chose not to expand the product line, my initial plan was to exclude them from further participation in the

study because I anticipated that the majority of students would complete the task as instructed (Mayer et al., 2013; Wellman et al., 2016). However, during the pilot study, I later altered this plan to include these participants in Part 2 of the lab study. In my results section, I discuss the feedback that I gave these participants who chose not to expand the product line.

Feedback and survey. Research on feedback timing demonstrates that feedback may be the most effective if it occurs immediately prior to individuals' beginning their next task (Druskat & Wolff, 1999). Thus, I gave participants feedback within a close timeframe of their completion of the final task; this final task was done while participants were physically in the lab. The directions the participants received stipulated that the feedback provider is a graduate student. Further, the directions informed each participant that their feedback is specifically tailored to their submission for the task. However, unbeknownst to the participant, there are only four types of feedback that the graduate student provides.

In a workplace context, feedback is usually given by individuals who are in a more superior position than the employee receiving feedback. Thus, feedback from a graduate student more closely mimics a workplace context without bringing about potentially confounding factors into my study. For example, if feedback were to be given by the students' professor, then they may feel the need change their behavior to maintain a good image or avoid perceived consequence. Feedback from a graduate student aligns well with the cover story that the participants were randomly assigned into a group that has their task evaluated by an external source, a graduate assistant, while participants assigned to a second group (the fictitious group) will have their reports evaluated in a

different manner. Further, it was important for the participants to feel like their task was evaluated by the same individual if they were to believe that they are being fairly judged to potentially win the $50. After the feedback was given, and before the final task, the respondents filled out a short survey measuring moral disengagement.

To increase believability regarding the feedback being unique to each participant, each participant had an assigned lab ID number. I required the participants to use this number when they checked into the lab and signed onto the survey software on the computers.

Final task. To measure unethical behavior, I used a variant of the dictator game. The dictator game is a popular economic decision theory game that has been used to examine moral distance (Aguiar, Brañas-Garza, & Miller, 2008), bribery (Banerjee, 2016), altruism (Bekkers, 2007), fairness perceptions (Bolton, Katok, & Zwick, 1998), reciprocity (Diekmann, 2004), social norms (Krupka & Weber, 2013), moral balancing (Ploner & Regner, 2013), and many other themes both within and outside the moral context. In a traditional dictator game (Eckel & Grossman, 1996; Hoffman, McCabe, & Smith, 1996), individuals are assigned to one of two roles, the allocator (dictator) or the recipient. The allocator has a certain amount of money given to them and can allocate any desired amount to the recipient. In my experiment, I assigned all participants the role of an allocator, while the recipient is a fictitious character.

After the feedback was received by the participants, they read instructions regarding the second part of their assignment. Appendix B contains the instructions of the task that participants thought was given to a second group of participants. This final task involved the evaluation of the work of other (fictitious) participants. Specifically, I

instructed the participants to appraise and provide feedback regarding the work of another participant, one who is assigned to Group 2. The task that was evaluated is similar to the task that the participants completed as their first task, however, I altered the company name and specifics regarding the product; further, I removed any mention of potential child labor from the instructions. Thus, there was no moral context surrounding this task.

Whereas the first task told students that their assignments are to be evaluated by a graduate assistant and that they may potentially be awarded $50 if they had the best submission, for this task, I assigned the participants the role of an evaluator/allocator. Specifically, I directed participants to evaluate the work of a fictitious Group 2 participant, although no such participant actually exists. The cover story was that students from a different class completed a similar assignment to their first task—using Porter's Five Forces model to make a business decision. However, instead of a graduate student evaluating the assignment, participants anonymously evaluate the assignment. Additionally, instead of awarding the best submission $50, I told the participants that since different people are doing the evaluations, each participant, as an evaluator, decides how much money to award the recipient. The participants had $10 to allocate, and I gave them instructions that any money not awarded to the recipient can be kept because the money came from the department's petty cash fund, and could not be returned to the department or the experimenter.

When in the lab, I gave the participants various different materials to complete this second task. These materials include the instruction sheet (Appendix B), the fictitious submitted assignment (Appendix C), which the participants were led to believe was written by other participants who have been assigned to a different lab study group

(Group 2), an evaluation rubric (Appendix D), $10 in $1 bills, and an envelope in which to put the feedback and money. The evaluation rubric provides detailed instructions on how to assess the submission from the fictitious participant in Group 2.

The fictitious submission is written such that it should receive very positive feedback as it meets all the evaluation criteria specified in the evaluation rubric. In addition to providing written feedback, participants are responsible for putting money into the envelope that they thought would accompany the feedback back to the student whose assignment they evaluated. Thus, any money not put into the envelope that accompanies the feedback form was what the participant kept for themselves.

The directions also informed the participants that the feedback they give is anonymous; however, I matched each submission (the envelope with the money and feedback inside) with each participant when I collected the envelopes as participants exited the lab. Specifically, as participants handed each envelope to me, I put them in the order I received them and later made sure the envelopes matched the order that the participants signed the university's petty cash form and the debriefing consent form.[3] My original intention was to have unique numerical code on each envelope to track and match the money allocation decisions of the participants. However, it was not necessary to do this since I used the petty cash form. Despite providing identifying information on this form upon completion of the lab study, while in the lab, participants assumed that the

[3] Because my lab experiment was sponsored by the university, I had to keep a record of each student who kept money and request that they sign a form indicating how much money they kept. During the lab study, I requested that all the participants sign this form and simply mark "0" if they did not keep any money. Further, per the request of the Internal Review Board at Arizona State University, my lab experiment required a debriefing consent form for participants to sign after they completed all portions of the study. This debriefing consent form was required in addition to an initial consent form as deception was involved in the lab study. No participant opted out of the lab study during the debrief.

evaluation process was double-blind. This guise of anonymity served to reinforce the cover story that the participants evaluated the submissions of other students. I also told participants that preserving anonymity is important, which is why we weren't able to video tape them providing the feedback. This further enhanced the believability of the video recorded feedback as it was not necessary that the graduate assistant hide their identity.

Manipulations and measures

There are four different types of moral feedback that I theorized in my dissertation: punitive, obligatory, formative, and permissive. I created scripts for these different feedback types for the lab experiment by manipulating the level of moral intensity of the feedback and the valence of the affective tone. The word count of each original script ranges from 155 to 164 words. Further, the language and structure of each script is similar besides the parts that I intentionally manipulated for the experiment. These manipulations are detailed below; the original script for each manipulation is provided in Appendix E, however I further refined the scripts after the dissertation proposal process. In Chapter 5 I discuss these slight modifications.

Moral intensity. As presented earlier in my manuscript, moral intensity refers to the degree to which morality is evoked in a given situation (Jones, 1991). I manipulated the moral intensity of the feedback by adding words that highlight the moral implications of the task. Feedback that is high in moral intensity includes the words: moral, unethical, heartless, suffer, shady, hurt, and awful. I selected these words because they either bring notice to the harm that is caused by their decision, or question the ethicality of the participant, thereby highlighting the moral implications of the task (Kelly, Stich, Haley,

Eng, & Fessler, 2007). Several of the words are in reference to the child labor practices that may be employed based on the business decision that was chosen by the participant in the initial task. These references increase the moral intensity of the feedback (Blum, 2008). Further, morally intense feedback (punitive and formative moral feedback) places a strong emphasis on the moral consequences of the decision while feedback that lacks moral intensity (permissive and obligatory moral feedback) places a strong emphasis on the business consequences of the decision without mention of moral significance.

Affective tone. As stated, affective tone refers to an individual's attitude regarding a certain situation or encounter (Bower, 1981; Stock, 1949). To manipulate affective tone I altered several key words in the feedback scripts. The majority of these words appear in the ANEW (Affective Norms for English Words) manual. The ANEW manual was developed by researchers at the University of Florida's Center for Emotion and Attention by Bradley and Lang (1999). It is a document that contains a catalog of English words and their normative ratings. Specifically, each word in the manual is rated based on three standard semantic differentials: valence, arousal, and dominance (Diener & Emmons, 1985; Dodds & Danforth, 2010; Osgood, Suci, & Tannenbaum, 1957). In line with other research that focuses on just the valence aspect of a word (Dodds & Danforth, 2010), I do not utilize the arousal and dominance ratings of the ANEW words. Although other similar documents exist (Bellezza, Greenwald, & Banaji, 1986; Mehrabian & Russell, 1974), the ANEW manual is the most recent and comprehensive of the existing catalogs that assign affective ratings to words. Each word is given a rating based on cumulated data from surveys that assess valence based on a 1 to 9 scale of the

extent to which a certain word makes the rater unhappy versus happy. Words with a higher score are more positively valenced.

The four words I derived from the ANEW manual that were included in the positively valenced feedback are: *excellent, outstanding, great*, and *successful*. As exhibited in Table 2, these words are strongly positively valenced as they have a valence mean of 8.38, 7.75, 7.47, and 8.20 respectively. The words from the ANEW manual that I used for my feedback that conveyed a negatively valenced affective tone are: *terrible, disappointing, miserably*, and *failed*. These words have much lower valence scores at 1.93, 2.39, 1.93, and 1.70 respectively.

In addition to the words from the ANEW manual, there are two phrases in each of the feedback types that serve to manipulate affective tone. For the positively valenced affective tone, these words are *sophisticated grasp*, in reference to the business knowledge/child labor, and *high level*, in reference to critical thinking skills/moral consideration. In the feedback scripts that have the negatively valenced affective tone manipulation, the corresponding negatively valenced words are *naïve grasp* and *low level*, which are also in reference to business knowledge/child labor and critical thinking skills/moral consideration. As can be seen in Appendix E, each word is placed in the same or similar location within the structure of the feedback.

Although affective tone may be conveyed through written language, it can also be conveyed via implicit cues given by the feedback provider. Specifically, research demonstrates that feedback delivered by an individual, such as a supervisor, has different effects on perceived fairness than the same feedback delivered via a written computer message (Alder & Ambrose, 2005). Thus, to further convey affective tone, I video

recorded a confederate delivering the feedback. In line with past research that manipulates affective tone (Mattila et al., 2003), I used a video recording of each feedback script. A video recording is ideal as a confederate giving the feedback face-to-face may not be able to maintain the same tone across all participants.

In addition to the reading of the scripts, I trained the feedback provider to convey affective tone by changing his vocal cues, facial expressions, and body movements (Sessa, 1996). It is important to note that the video recording of the feedback may not only have strengthen the manipulation of affective tone, but may have also strengthen the moral intensity manipulation. Indeed, research demonstrates that feedback given through a medium that is more rich than verbal or written feedback alone is more effective (Balcazar et al., 1985).

Content validation and manipulation checks. Beyond the aforementioned methods that I used to develop the original scripts for the lab experiment, I also performed an initial content validation to ensure that each script reflects its corresponding feedback type. Within organizational behavior research, content validation is generally used to assess the degree to which survey items match what the items are intended to measure, such as a construct (Bryant, 2000; Himkin & Tracey, 1999). However, validation techniques may also be used to support the accuracy of content beyond just constructs (Horswill & McKenna, 1999). Here I used content validation techniques to assess how closely each feedback script accurately reflects each feedback type.

To perform this content validation, I first created items that reflect the definition of each type of feedback. Two other individuals familiar with this content area reviewed the items, and I made minor changes to the items based on the feedback I was given. I

then created a survey in Qualtrics and used Amazon Mechanical Turk (henceforth, MTurk) to hire 200 workers (henceforth, participants) to take a survey. The survey was set up such that the 200 participants were randomly assigned into four different groups, one group per each type of feedback. Participants were shown the script for one feedback type and asked to rate the feedback on a Likert scale between 1-7 based on how strongly the feedback script matches with each item. There were four sets of items that each feedback script was rated against. One batch included items that matched with the feedback type; the other three sets of items were based on items that matched the other three feedback types. This process allowed me to examine both the convergent and discriminate validity of the feedback scripts I developed. Using mean comparisons, the results of the initial survey demonstrated that the associated items were most closely matched with the appropriate feedback script except for a mismatch between the punitive feedback script and the items for obligatory feedback.

Due to the obligatory feedback items being more closely related to the punitive feedback items ($\mu = 6.19$ for the punitive feedback items; $\mu = 5.87$ for the obligatory feedback items), I revisited the items for each feedback type. With the assistance of another individual familiar with the content area, I refined the items by adding language (between one to four words added per item) that better represented the moral context for the punitive feedback and the business context for the obligatory feedback. I then conducted another attempt at content validation through MTurk using 50 participants to take a survey that specifically evaluated the punitive feedback. Again, I examined the means to look for convergent and discriminant validity between the sets of items and the punitive feedback script. With the refined items, the punitive feedback script was more

closely related to the punitive feedback items (μ = 5.80) than any other feedback measure, including the items for obligatory feedback (μ = 4.36).

Despite the mean comparisons offering evidence towards both convergent and discriminant validity, I conducted t-tests that demonstrated that there was no statistical difference between the measure for formative feedback and the measure for punitive feedback. Thus, I further refined the items by adjusting the formative feedback items to better reflect the context given in the formative feedback script. As with the minor modifications made to the punitive and obligator items, only a few words were changed. In comparing the new items to the definitions of each feedback type, the items now more closely reflect each type of feedback I am testing.

The final list of items for the content validation appears in Appendix F. Using these modified items (all except for the permissive feedback items were modified at this stage), I then sent out another round of surveys. Rather than using the *randomize branch* and *equal split* functions in Qualtrics, I sent out four separate surveys. Each survey went to 50 MTurk participants. I was able to restrict my survey such that the MTurk participants who have completed a prior survey would not be able to complete subsequent surveys. Following recommendations set forth by Meade and Craig (2012), I embedded three attention checks in the survey to identify careless responses. Out of the 200 respondents, a total of 17 respondents failed the attention checks and were excluded from further analysis. Thus, the final sample included 44, 45, 49, and 45 participants for obligatory, punitive, permissive, and formative feedback, respectively.

These surveys were all successful in providing evidence to support that each feedback script more closely portrays the corresponding type of feedback over the other

feedback types. The tables of means and standard deviations for the items for each feedback type are in Table 3 and Table 4, respectively. The mean comparison shows that each feedback script is now more highly associated with the set of items that reflects its respective definition more than the other measures which reflect different feedback types. Further, I performed t-tests to gauge whether or not differences between the groups of items were statistically significant. All t-tests were statistically significant ($p < 0.01$) further providing evidence supporting that each script accurately conveys each feedback type.

In addition to the content validation, I tested several items (Appendix G) to use for a manipulation check for the lab experiment. I included measures for how much each feedback script conveys moral intensity, positive affective tone, and negative affective tone. Again, I performed a means comparison between feedback types. Table 5 shows that the items used for the manipulation check correspond appropriately with each feedback type. Using these items as well as items used in the content validation, I will give the lab participants a short survey when the final task is complete to ensure the manipulations are effective. In addition to the manipulation checks, the final survey had questions regarding the believability of the feedback as well as three additional items that ask about age, gender, and ethnicity.

Moral disengagement. After the feedback was received, the participants filled out a survey that measured moral disengagement. I administered this survey on same computer that participants received feedback on. Further, the survey had a unique code assigned to each participant so that the survey responses could later be matched with the materials for the final task.

To measure moral disengagement I adapted items from Moore et al. (2012). I specifically adapted the moral disengagement measures to reflect the theme of exploitation that is present in the initial task as well as the final task. For example, instead of “compared to other illegal things people do, taking something small from a store without paying for it isn’t worth worrying about,” my item is “compared to what other people do, taking advantage of others for a business opportunity isn’t worth worrying about.” This item reflects a cognitive misconstrual. Additionally, I draw from the three other moral disengagement categories for the survey, minimization of role, obscuring consequences, and reduction of identification with targets. Appendix H includes all the items in the survey. I measured items on a 7-point Likert scale that ranges from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.”

Unethical behavior. I captured unethical behavior by measuring the amount of money that the participant kept to themselves rather than awarded to the fictitious student. As stated above, the evaluation rubric directs students to use very specific criteria to assess the fictitious Group 2 student’s work. The fictitious submission from the Group 2 student is well written and designed to deserve positive feedback based on the evaluation criteria. Specifically, the submission meets the specified criteria as outlined in the evaluation rubric for a submission that should receive a high reward. Because I instructed participants that well-written assignments are to be rewarded by giving the Group 2 student more money, those who do not give the fictitious Group 2 student an appropriate amount of money, and kept it to themselves instead, engaged in an unethical act that I captured as my dependent variable.

It is important to note that the potential awarding of money aligns with the cover story that the research team is interested in how different types of financial rewards motivate business decision-making. Group 1, the group that the participants were assigned to, were told that their potential $50 reward is based on comparisons with the rest of the participants in their group. Thus, the participants perceived that this is the reason that just one person, the graduate assistant, evaluated their work. The fictitious Group 2, as the participants were told, will be awarded based on peer evaluation using an evaluation rubric. The peers who are evaluating the submission happen to be the participants themselves. This supports the cover story that the Group 2 participants are incentivized to turn in a well-written submission in the hopes of gaining $10.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS

This chapter includes the results of my empirical analyses. Because the feedback scripts were slightly altered based on input during the dissertation proposal process, I first discuss changes to the original scripts. In addition to these modifications, I also discuss the process of recording the scripts. Second, I present the pilot lab study that I conducted and the changes that I made based on this pilot study. Next, I provide an overview of the execution of the lab study. In this section I review the validity of my manipulations within the lab. Following this, I offer the results of the study in the order of my hypotheses. Finally, I present a series of additional analyses conducted to further examine my model.

Feedback scripts

I incorporated feedback received during my dissertation proposal by making minor adjustments to the wording in my feedback scripts. Appendix I contains revised feedback scripts for each type of moral feedback. The primary difference in the language used between Appendix E (the original scripts developed and content validated using MTurk participants) and Appendix I is the focus on the unethical behavior rather than the individual as an unethical actor. Specifically, based on causal attribution theory, feedback may be better received if it is specific to the behavior rather than the individual performing the behavior. Further, attacking a participant's moral character rather than an isolated behavior may invite defensiveness. Because of these concerns, I made slight modifications to the feedback scripts.

One example of a change I made is the first sentence in the punitive moral feedback script. The original script states “From reading your terribly written submission for this task, it is clear that you are an unethical person and you made a shady decision with regard to expanding the product line.” In this portion of the script, the feedback provider refers to the transgressor as an unethical person. The first sentence of the revised script for the punitive moral feedback states “From reading your submission, it is clear that you made a terribly unethical choice, specifically you made a shady decision with regard to whether East Oak should expand its product line to include hand-made rugs.” Here, the focus is clearly on the action of the transgressors themselves, rather than their overall moral character. It is important to note that the feedback scripts still contained the same ANEW words and consistency regarding the valence levels between the scripts.

After I refined the feedback scripts, the actor chosen to play the part of the graduate student evaluating the participants’ first task recorded each feedback type. The first set of recordings took place in a professional video recording studio offered through the university. Although we recorded the initial takes in the studio, upon reviewing the videos, I later decided that the professional recording studio did not match with the cover story of a graduate student reviewing each of the participants’ initial task and recording individualized feedback. Specifically, the recording studio appeared to be in a very formal environment. We recorded the second set of videos on a personal laptop in the office of an actual graduate student. The office was an informal space with books and another desk in the background. This space allowed for the actor to be closer to the video recorder, which presented a more intimate display of affective tone. The actor created over a dozen recordings for each feedback type. From of each batch, I chose the feedback

that I felt most accurately conveyed the moral intensity and affective tone that matched with the condition. Below, during the pilot lab study, I explain how these feedback videos were validated.

Pilot lab study

The aim of conducting a pilot study was to ensure the validity of the manipulations and the believability of the cover story. Over the course of 14 lab sessions, 39 participants partook in the pilot study. There were 7 participants in the formative moral feedback condition, 8 participants each of the other three conditions, and an additional 8 students in the newly created control condition.

Control Group. Although the initial plan was to exclude participants who did not choose to expand the product line, I later decided to allow them in the same part 2 of the lab as the other participants who did chose to expand the product line. I labeled this condition the control condition since this group did not receive moral feedback. Instead, I prepared a written script that was given to the participants in this group. The script said "The response you submitted for the business decision making task was received. You have fulfilled your requirements for Part 1 of this lab study." The wording of the script was intentionally nonspecific. My purpose was not to convey either moral intensity or a positively or negatively valenced affective tone. Thus, the participants who did not choose to expand the product line, regardless of citing ethical reasons not to do so, received this written feedback.

Manipulation Checks. The manipulation checks, which appeared during the exit survey, successfully demonstrated that each manipulation matched with the intended feedback type. Similar to the content validation process I used when developing the

scripts, I performed a means comparison for the manipulation check. The tables of means and standard deviations for the items for each feedback type are in Table 6 and Table 7, respectively. Comparing the means of each feedback type shows that each manipulation is most highly associated with the set of items that reflects its respective definition more than the manipulations that reflect different feedback types. I also performed t-tests to assess whether or not differences between the groups of items were statistically significant. All t-tests were statistically significant ($p < 0.01$) further providing evidence supporting the effectiveness of the manipulations.

Changes made. In addition to adding the written feedback for the control group, I made a couple of other changes during the pilot study. In the initial task in Qualtrics I forced the participants to make a "Yes" or "No" decision regarding the expansion of the product line in addition to the justification of their decision. I made this change to prevent participants from making no discernable choice. However, I did not alter the language regarding explaining their choice in a paragraph form. A final change that I made during the pilot data collection was my presence in the lab. For the first two days that the lab was conducted, I sat inside the lab. Upon the advice of others who have done research in the behavioral lab, I moved to sitting outside the lab and closing the door. I instructed participants to exit the lab when they completed their task, moral disengagement survey, and exit survey. I made these changes between the first and seventh lab session. Pilot data collected after these changes were included in the full sample, as I made no further alterations to the study design. Further, I did not change the cover story. Based on participant debriefs as well as by examining the written responses to the final exit survey

question, there was evidence to support that the cover story of the lab study was believable.

Lab study results

I conducted the lab study over the course of 7 weeks. In total, 277 participants took part in the study, however I excused 3 participants from the study during the second portion of the lab because they did not follow the directions. Thus, a total of 274 participants completed the study. However, of this number, 26 participants answered "no" to expanding the product line. These participants were not used for hypotheses testing as they did not receive moral feedback.

The first step of my analyses was ensuring that the manipulations were effective, thus, I performed analyses similar to the procedures I used for the content validation and an initial manipulation checks for my pilot data. Specifically, I compared the means of each set of moral feedback items against each moral feedback type. The items were the same items that I used for the pilot lab study, they may be found in Appendix F. Table 8 provides evidence for effective manipulations by demonstrating that the highest numbers across each set of items appropriately corresponds to the matching moral feedback type. Table 9 includes the standard deviations of the items.

Further providing evidence to support successful manipulations, I performed another means comparison using the same one-word manipulation check items that I used in the content validation process. There are three sets of items that speak to the valence of the affective tone (one set of items for a positive valence and a separate set of items for negative valence) and the moral intensity of the feedback. The list of items may be found in Appendix G. Again, a means comparison provides support that each type of moral

feedback manipulation successful conveyed the appropriate affective tone and level of moral intensity. Table 10 includes these results.

After insuring successful manipulations, I then examined my dependent variable. A first glance at the data shows that most participants did not take any money. Out of the 248 participants who chose to expand the product line, 131 of them did not take any of the $10. Of the 117 participants that did take money, they took an average of $4. Further, participants in each condition took a similar average amount. Specifically, participants in the punitive, formative, permissive, and obligatory feedback conditions took an average of $4.37, $3.80, $3.96, and $3.89 respectively. There was more variation in the number of people who took money. The punitive, formative, permissive, and obligatory feedback conditions respectively had 30, 25, 27, and 35 participants take money. This information is also reported in Table 11. Further, additional descriptive statistics such as the means, standard deviations, and correlations of key variables are reported in Table 12. It is important to note that none of the correlations of the variables within my model were significant at $p < .10$.

For hypothesis testing, I used dummy coding to represent experimental conditions for moral intensity (0 = feedback lacking moral intensity; 1 = feedback high in moral intensity) and affective tone (0 = negatively valenced affective tone; 1 = positively valenced affective tone). I also tested the reliability of the moral disengagement scale and I found the reliability to be good ($\alpha = .87$). To test Hypothesis 1, which predicts a negative relationship between morally intense feedback and moral disengagement, I used a one-way ANOVA to examine differences between groups. Results of the one-way ANOVA do not support Hypothesis 1 as there is no significant effect of moral intensity

of feedback on moral disengagement [F(1,246) = .565, p = .451]. The non-significant result is confirmed using bootstrapped-based regression methods using the PROCESS macro in SPSS (Preacher & Hayes, 2008); (B = -.083 ; 95% CI =-.301, .134; p = .451). This macro relies on OLS regression to test both direct and indirect effects. Tables 13 and 14 show the results of the one-way ANOVA and the regression, respectively.

I also used the PROCESS macro to test the mediation path predicted by Hypothesis 2 which stated that moral disengagement mediates the negative relationship between morally intense feedback and unethical behavior. Following recommendations by Preacher and Hayes (2008), I specified Model 4 to estimate the indirect effect of feedback moral intensity on subsequent behavior. I conducted the bootstrapping procedure with 10,000 resamples to produce bias-corrected 95% confidence intervals around the estimated indirect effects. The bootstrapped indirect effect is significant if the 95% confidence interval excludes zero. Results demonstrate that there is not a significant indirect effect on morally intense feedback on subsequent unethical behavior. Specifically, the indirect effect confidence interval includes 0 (CI = -.748, .565) and p = .599, demonstrating that Hypothesis 2 is not supported. Table 15 includes these results as well as the direct effects.

Hypothesis 3 states that the relationship between morally intense feedback and moral disengagement will be moderated by the affective tone of the feedback. I tested this hypothesis using a univariate ANOVA. Upon examining the interaction between affective tone and morally intense feedback, I found that there is no significant effect [F(1,242) = .028, p = .867]. Thus, Hypothesis 3 is not supported.

Finally, Hypothesis 4 states that affective tone will moderate the mediated relationship between morally intense feedback, moral disengagement, and unethical behavior. To test this prediction I again used the PROCESS macro and used bootstrapping procedures outlined by Preacher, Rucker, and Hayes (2007). Here, the PROCESS macro allowed for me to estimate conditional indirect effects as well as determine significance values via confidence intervals. Again, I used bootstrap procedures to develop bias-corrected intervals using random samples with replacement from the full sample (Shrout & Bolger, 2002) as is similar to prior research that uses PROCESS for organizational behavior research (Hewlin, Dumas, & Burnett, 2017; Miron-Spektor, Ingram, Keller, Smith, & Lewis, 2017). Research on simulations demonstrates that bootstrapping is one of the most powerful and effective ways to test intervening effects (MacKinnon, Lockwood, Hoffman, West, & Sheets, 2002; MacKinnon, Lockwood, & Williams, 2004). Specifically, these bootstrapping procedures are recommended over alternative statistical methods (e. g. Baron & Kenny, 1986; Sobel, 1982) because it does not assume a normal sampling distribution of indirect effects, and is thus an ideal statistical method to employ when indirect effects are tested (Hayes, 2013; van Bunderen, Greer, & van Knippenberg, 2017; Yam, Christian, Wei, Liao, & Nai, 2017). Using Model 7 and 10,000 resamples, results demonstrate that the predicted effect is not significant. As shown in Table 16, the conditional indirect effect on subsequent transgressor behavior is not significant for the negatively valenced affective tone condition (B = -.496, CI = -.171, .029), nor is it significant for the positively affective tone condition (B = -.504, CI = -.172, .037). The index of the moderated

mediation was also non-significant (B = .007, CI = -.082, .175), confirming that Hypothesis 4 is not supported.

Supplemental analyses

After finding that the correlations of key variables and regression results were not significant, I conducted a series of post-hoc analyses to further examine the data. The remainder of this results section is dedicated to these supplemental analyses. First, I discuss different regression methods that I used to test my hypothesis. Then, I discuss and graphically present the effects of moral disengagement and keeping money differences between those who received morally intense feedback and those who did not. Next, I discuss the moral disengagement variable and explore different ways of operationalizing the variable. Finally, I present scatter plots of each of the four moral feedback conditions to compare how each condition affected moral disengagement and subsequent transgressor behavior.

The first step in supplemental analyses was to try different regression methods to see whether operationalizing the dependent variable in a different way would alter my results. The first analysis I performed was a logistic regression which is a type of regression technique that is used when the dependent variable is dichotomous (Berry, DeMeritt, & Esarey, 2010; Hoetker, 2007). The first step of this analyses was to create a binary variable out of the money kept. To do this, I made a new dependent variable in which participants either took money or did not take any money (0 = no money kept; 1 = $1 or more dollars were kept). Next I used logit regression in STATA to test my hypotheses, however, this approach did not yield significant results.

The second type of regression technique I tried was a Poisson regression. I felt that a Poisson regression model may be an appropriate fit for my dependent variable because there is the potential that my original analysis was biased based on the over-dispersed nature of the dependent variable (Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2003). Specifically, the bootstrapping procedures I used rely on OLS assumptions, which may not be appropriate for dependent variables that include an excess of zeros (Coxe, West, & Aiken, 2009). Considering that 131 out of 248 participants did not keep any money, posing money kept as a count variable, and using a Poisson regression to truncate the zeros in the sample, may allow for a more accurate estimate of effects. Despite the potential of this technique, hypotheses testing again demonstrated insignificant results. Because testing the dependent variable using different statistical regression techniques did not change the significance of my findings, I then turned to graphs to visually decipher any potential patterns in the data.

Figure 4 is a scatterplot that graphically depicts the group differences with the effect of morally intense feedback on moral disengagement (0 = feedback lacking moral intensity; 1 = feedback high in moral intensity). Looking at the distribution of dots, each of which represents a participant's overall moral disengagement score, both groups are similar in that most individuals have a low level of moral disengagement.

Because the results do not support the notion that moral disengagement is a mediating mechanism between morally intense feedback and future unethical behavior, I also examined the direct effect of moral intensity on subsequent transgressor behavior. In examining the output of the results from the bootstrapping procedure I performed to test Hypotheses 2, I was also able to examine direct effect results. Table 12 includes these

results and demonstrates that there is no support for a direct effect between these two variables (B = -.091; 95% CI =-.748, .566). Figure 5 is a scatterplot that also demonstrates an unlikely significant direct effect between moral intensity of feedback and transgressor unethical behavior. Specifically, the graph demonstrates that participants in both groups exhibited similar behaviors regarding taking the money.

It is clear that a large portion of individuals in both groups did not take the money, and the distribution between groups on the various amount taken is also similar. Interestingly, not a single participant took the amount of $9. Figures 6 and 7 are scatterplots that depict the differences between each of the four moral feedback conditions with regard to moral disengagement and money taken, respectively.

I further probed the moral disengagement scale by investigating whether there were single moral disengagement items that demonstrated a significant relationship with the dependent variable. The first step of this investigation was to examine correlations between each moral disengagement item and the dependent variable. I created a correlation table and discovered that item 2 from the moral disengagement scale is significantly correlated with subsequent transgressor behavior (p =.026). This item reflects an advantageous comparison. Specifically, item stated, “Exploiting the work of others is not so bad if you are still paying them more than they were making without you.” This was the only item that was significantly correlated with transgressor behavior. To further investigate item 2, I used the same procedures I used to test Hypothesis 2. Specifically, I performed an analysis to examine potential direct effects as well as mediating effects of item 2 on the relationship between moral intensity of feedback and subsequent transgressor behavior. Again, I conducted the bootstrapping procedure with

10,000 resamples to produce bias-corrected 95% confidence intervals around the estimated indirect effects. Consistent with my findings for Hypothesis 2, I did not find support for an indirect effect on morally intense feedback on subsequent unethical (B = -.068; 95% CI = -.719, .584). However, I did find support for a direct effect of the moral disengagement item 2 on subsequent transgressor behavior (B = .259; 95% CI = .030, .488). Table 17 includes these results.

In further examining moral disengagement, I performed similar regressions to see whether testing the moral disengagement items by category may yield a significant relationship with the dependent variable. Items 1 through 3, the advantageous comparison items, when considered as a single factor, were significantly positively associated with money kept (B = .301; 95% CI = .026, .576); however, this factor did not mediate the relationship between the moral intensity of feedback and money kept as predicted in Hypothesis 2. Items put together based on the other three categories of moral disengagement did not significantly relate to money kept or serve as mediators between the moral intensity of feedback and money kept.

It is important to acknowledge that after testing my hypotheses, I also performed similar analyses incorporating various control variables. I captured these control variables during the exit survey that each lab participant took. Variables such as gender, prior knowledge of the study, and English as a native language served as the first set of control variables I examined. Out of the 247 participants, 83 were female, 72 were not native English speakers, and 24 disclosed that they had prior knowledge of the lab study. Incorporating these variables into my model did not alter the lack of support for my hypotheses. First, I ran these variables as controls and they did not alter the significance

of my results. Next, I tested my hypotheses using a sample of only native English speakers. Running the analyses on the remaining 175 native English speakers did not affect results. Along the same vein, I wanted to make sure that individuals who were rushing through the surveys did not affect my results. Thus, I also conducted analyses that excluded the 10% of participants who completed the surveys the quickest. My analyses of the remaining 222 participants did not yield significant results with regard to hypothesis testing.

I also examined a second set of control variables that were more theoretically-based. After the proposal of my dissertation, I later incorporated three additional scales into the exit survey for the purposes of supplementary analyses. Each scale and associated items may be found in Appendix J. The variables are moral awareness, guilt, and gratitude. When prompting the participants to answer each item, each statement referred the participant to rate how they felt immediately after the feedback. Thus, my aim was to capture participants' psychological states upon receiving the feedback.

Table 18 is a correlation table of the scale variables that I included in my post-hoc analyses along with the original variables in my model. It is interesting to note that guilt has a significant positive association with moral disengagement and a significant negative correlation with moral intensity. Both of these correlations are counterintuitive as theory would support the notion that individuals who feel guilt are less likely to morally disengage (Detert et al., 2008), and research also supports the idea that feedback highlighting the moral implications of one actions may induce guilt (Amodio et al., 2007; Oc et al., 2015). Based on interesting correlations such that this, I performed various analyses to probe the role of moral awareness, guilt, and gratitude in my study.

The first scale is moral awareness. As discussed in my literature review section, moral awareness refers to an individual's ability to recognize a moral problem that exists in a given context (Rest, 1986; Treviño et al., 2006). To measure this variable, I included a moral awareness scale into my exit survey using three items adapted from Reynolds (2006a). A sample item is "It was clear to me that the business choice I made involved ethical repercussions." Although I cited the lack of incorporating moral awareness into my original model as a boundary condition of my dissertation, I collected this data for post-hoc analyses. Specifically, I thought it may be interesting to examine the potential role that moral awareness plays in an individual's reaction to moral feedback. Though including moral awareness as a control variable did not affect the conclusions of my hypotheses, nor was it significantly associated with moral disengagement or money kept, I did find some interesting relationships between moral awareness and certain key variables.

For example, in examining moral awareness as a dependent variable, there is a significant positive relationship between the moral intensity of feedback and moral awareness (B = 1.384; 95% CI = 1.074, 1.695). However, this relationship was not significantly mediated by moral disengagement. Similarly, I found support for the effect of affective tone on moral awareness (B = .417; 95% CI = .064, .770) that was not significantly mediated by moral disengagement. I also examined the potential mediating effects that moral awareness may have on the relationships between both of my manipulations—the moral intensity of the feedback and the affective tone of the feedback—and moral disengagement and money kept, however, none of these relationships were significant. Finally, I examined the potential role of moral awareness

as a moderator to these relationships. I found a significant negative interaction effect of moral intensity of feedback and moral awareness on moral disengagement [$F(3,243) = 5.429$, $p = .001$], but not on money kept. Further, I did not find moral awareness to moderate the relationship between affective tone and either moral disengagement or money kept.

Guilt was the second theoretical variable that I included in my exit survey to use for supplemental analyses. I adapted three items from a scale developed by Kugler and Jones (1992). One sample item reads "After my feedback, I felt like I had done something I regret." Similar to the supplemental analyses I conducted with moral awareness, I again used statistical procedures to explore the role that guilt played in my study. Using the same bootstrapping procedures, I employed for hypotheses testing, results demonstrate that guilt has a direct positive association with moral disengagement (B= .169, 95% CI = .036, .303), though, no significant relationship between guilt and subsequent transgressor behavior was found. Further, examining the relationship between moral intensity of feedback and moral disengagement with guilt as a control variable, the overall model is significant ($R^2 = .027$ $p = .034$), however the association between moral intensity of feedback and moral disengagement is still not significant.

In examining guilt as a dependent variable, there is a direct significant relationship between the moral intensity of feedback and guilt (B= -.335; 95% CI = -.537, -.133), and a direct significant relationship between moral disengagement and guilt (B = .147; 95% CI = .031, .263). However, moral disengagement was not a significant mediator between the moral intensity of feedback and guilt. Similarly, moral disengagement does not mediate the relationship between the affective tone of feedback

and guilt, which were positively associated (B = .411; 95% CI = .211, .611). When examining guilt as a mediator, there were no significant indirect effects of the moral intensity of feedback on money kept, however, guilt did mediate the indirect relationship between moral intensity of feedback and moral disengagement (95% CI = -.146, -.009; p = .034). I ran the same analyses replacing the moral intensity of feedback with affective tone of feedback. Though guilt did not significantly mediate the relationship between the affective tone of feedback and money kept, it did statistically mediate the relationship between the affective tone of feedback and moral disengagement (95% CI = .014, -.009; p = .181).

Next I examined guilt as a moderator to the relationship between key variables. Guilt positively moderated the relationship between the moral intensity of feedback and moral disengagement [F(3,243) = 6.982, p < .001], however it did not moderate the relationship between the moral intensity of feedback and money kept. When I substituted affective tone for moral intensity of feedback, guilt had no statistically significant interactive effects with the affective tone of feedback on moral disengagement or money kept.

Lastly, I included gratitude as the final variable in the exit survey for the purposes of post-hoc analyses. Gratitude is a type of social exchange that reflects a feeling of thankfulness towards others (Blau, 1964; Grant & Gino, 2010). This construct was of interest because I felt that it may be important to capture how the participant may have viewed the feedback provider. I adapted three items from a scale developed by Emmons and McCullough (2003). One sample item is “After my feedback, I felt thankful towards the feedback provider.” Similar to moral awareness, gratitude was not significantly

associated with moral disengagement, nor did it change the significance of the model as a control variable. However, there was a direct effect of gratitude on money kept (B = -.209; 95% CI = -.375, -.043).

Probing gratitude as a dependent variable, there was no significant effect of the moral intensity of feedback and moral disengagement. There was a significant direct effect of the affective tone of feedback on gratitude (B = 2.503; 95% CI = 2.121, 2.886), yet this relationship was not mediated by moral disengagement. When replacing moral disengagement with gratitude as a mediator, I found that gratitude did not significantly mediate the relationship between the moral intensity of feedback and moral disengagement or money kept. Further, I found that gratitude did not significantly mediate the relationship between the affective tone of feedback and moral disengagement. The only significant result when posing gratitude as a mediator is the indirect effect of the affective tone of feedback on money kept (95% CI = -1.120, -.054; p=.048).

Finally, I tested gratitude as a moderator to relationships between key variables. Again I tested the same combinations of variables as with moral awareness and guilt. The only statistically significant effect was the interaction between the affective tone of feedback and gratitude on moral disengagement (B = -.161; 95% CI = -.315, -.006), however, the overall model was not significant [F(3,243) = 1.904, p = .130].

Based on these supplementary analyses as well as the correlations between moral awareness, guilt, and gratitude and the variables I included in my model, I believe that are interesting points to discuss with regard to how these variables may have affected my study. In the discussion section I discuss in more detail the roles that these variables may

have played in the lab. Additionally, I further explore both study design and theoretical reasons behind my findings.

CHAPTER 6:

CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

While research on workplace unethical behavior is a well-recognized topic in management scholarship, the literature lacks investigations of what occurs after an ethical transgression takes place. By examining transgressor reactions to feedback, my aim was to push the scope of behavioral ethics scholarship beyond the focus on causal explanations of unethical behavior. To achieve this aim, I developed theory regarding the change in behavior of an ethical transgressor based on the type of moral feedback she/he receives. I also developed a typology of moral feedback. This typology is based on the moral intensity and valence of the affective tone of the feedback.

To test the validity of my typology, I first developed feedback scripts that mapped onto each different type of moral feedback: punitive, formative, obligatory, and permissive. The initial content validation exercises using MTurk participants demonstrated the validity of the preliminary draft of the scripts. Further, the manipulation checks in the exit survey in the main study demonstrated that the feedback offered by the actor in the video reflected each intended feedback type accurately. Despite my confidence in both the moral feedback typology as well as the accuracy of the manipulations in the lab, my hypotheses were not supported. Much of this chapter is dedicated to suggesting the potential causes for the null results.

In discussing the non-significant results, I first explore potential issues related to the design of my study and the participant pool. Next, I explore more distal reasons for my insignificant findings. Specifically, I look towards theoretical rationales to explain the divergence of results from my postulated model. In this section, I discuss the role of

emotions, retaliation, and the Pygmalion effect. Following this section, I posit future avenues of research that may be inspired by my dissertation.

Study Design

One potential problem with my study is one inherent to lab studies—the divergence between a lab and a workplace setting. As discussed in Chapter 4, testing my hypotheses in a lab setting offers advantages regarding the ability to manipulate the type of feedback that the participant receives. Specifically, my intention was to manipulate moral intensity and affective tone with the aim of influencing participant moral disengagement and future behavior. This would allow for my study to demonstrate causality, thus having a high internal validity (Cook & Campbell, 1979). However, lab studies also impose limitations, and it is possible that those limitations affected the results.

One limitation that is particular to my experiment is that receiving moral feedback in a lab environment may be different from the experience of receiving moral feedback at work. For example, with regard to the timing of feedback, some authors hold that, to be most effective, feedback should occur immediately after the undesirable behavior is performed (Blanchard & Johnson, 1983; Geller, 1994). Indeed, one could imagine a situation in which an individual performs an unethical behavior at work and immediately gets feedback regarding this behavior. However, my study used delayed feedback. During the study design phase of my dissertation, I recognized that this timing may hinder the generalizability of the findings as not all organizational feedback occurs in a delayed fashion. Despite this concern, I felt that it was not fatal to the validity of my study because research demonstrates that feedback in the workplace can also occur at intervals,

such as during formal performance ratings, rather than immediately after undesired behavior (Balcazar et al., 1985; Prue & Fairbank, 1981). Further, some research suggests that feedback may actually be more effective if given before the next task occurs, rather than immediately following the undesired behavior (Druskat & Wolff, 1999). Despite my belief during the study design phase of my dissertation that the timing of the moral feedback in the lab is both ideal and applicable to a work context, upon post-hoc reflection, it may be the case that the delayed feedback contributed to the lack of support in my findings. Specifically, if participants did not make the connection between their unethical decisions in the initial task and the feedback they subsequently received in the lab, it would lessen the likelihood that the feedback would induce the intended feelings.

Additionally, I developed much of my theory by researching past work on the use of feedback as a tool to change the behavior of a feedback recipient. Because this research generally examines feedback coming from a credible source, such as a supervisor or a teacher, feedback recipients may be more likely to change their future behavior. In the lab, I was not able to closely mimic this relationship between the feedback provider—the graduate student—and the participant. This may have caused an effect whereby the participant did not take the feedback seriously. Further, this effect may have been exacerbated by the fact that the participants partook in the lab study anonymously. Whereas in a classroom or workplace setting, accountability is fostered thorough visibility and tenure (Sparrowe, Liden, Wayne, & Kraimer, 2001; Webb, 2005), the lab setting lacks both of these aspects.

A related issue may be the nature of the lab participants. The lab participants were undergraduate university students recruited through one of the large lecture classes

offered by the management department. As discussed, lab studies overall are often questioned for their generalizability (Mook, 1983). Specifically, there are doubts regarding the external validity of a lab study because experiments using undergraduate students in a lab or individuals recruited through the internet are much different from field studies that capture the behaviors of actual employees in their workplace (Colquitt, 2008). Thus, the nature of a lab study that used undergraduate university students potentially tainted my intended effects.

A second study design issue that may have affected my results is that the final task is different from the initial task that the participants completed. Generally, experiments that examine behavioral ethics overtime have the same types of tasks throughout the study (Gino & Bazerman, 2009; Welsh et al., 2015). Thus, by using different tasks in my study, it is possible that I altered the self-regulatory processes of the participants with regard to decisions made in a similar context to the initial task; however, this potential moral disengagement may not have transferred to tasks that are outside the scope of the initial task. In the design of the experiment, I made efforts to attenuate this possibility by aligning the moral theme within each task. Specifically, the initial task involved exploitation via the potential use of child labor, and similarly, the final task also had an exploitative theme as participants are given the opportunity to exploit (fictitious) others. Despite these efforts, it is possible that any moral disengagement that may have happened was domain specific to the theme of child labor.

A third potential study design issue may be related to the moral disengagement survey that participants completed immediately before they did the final task. When designing my study, I wanted to capture moral disengagement immediately after the

participant received the feedback. Further, it was important for the moral disengagement survey to be completed after the feedback and before capturing the dependent variable, taking money, to establish a causal relationship. Unfortunately, the moral nature of the questions may have incited moral awareness in the participants. One of my boundary conditions is that I intentionally did not make a moral awareness distinction as I wanted both conscious and subconscious unethicality to be treated the same. However, it is possible that this distinction played a role in my study.

An individual who is morally aware is able to recognize a moral problem that exists in a given context (Rest, 1986; Treviño et al., 2006). In the context of my experiment, this translates to an awareness that the final task incorporates a moral aspect. During the proposal phase of my dissertation, I predicted that moral awareness may be triggered by feedback that is high in moral intensity (the punitive and formative moral feedback conditions), and indeed this may have occurred as evidenced by the positive relationships between moral awareness and the moral intensity and affective tone conditions. However, I did not anticipate the potential effect of the moral disengagement survey on moral awareness. Because each participant received the same set of survey questions, all participants may have been morally primed. This priming potentially affected my results by causing ethicality to be salient among participants. Thus, regardless of the potential moral salience felt by participants in the conditions high on moral intensity, participants in the low moral intensity conditions may also have been morally primed. This postulation is consistent with the lack of differences between groups with regard to how much money participants took from the envelope.

Another potential issue with the moral disengagement scale was that I used 12 moral disengagement items from the four different types of moral disengagement. As reviewed in Chapter 2, the four categories of moral disengagement are cognitive misconstrual, minimization of role, obscuring or distorting consequences, and reducing identification with the targets of harmful acts (Bandura, 1986). Although some research uses all moral disengagement types (Huang et al., 2016; Moore et al., 2012; Vincent et al., 2013), there also exists research that focuses on just one or two types or even one or two mechanisms of moral disengagement. For instance, research by Barsky (2011) only measures the moral justification and displacement of responsibility aspects of moral disengagement. Potentially using fewer items, or a more focused approach to picking which mechanisms of moral disengagement to include in the survey may have benefited my study. Indeed, my supplemental analyses demonstrate that using just one type of moral disengagement category, advantageous comparison, may have yielded more significant results.

Relatedly, there may have been problems with my stringent approach in adapting the originally moral disengagement scale I used from Moore et al. (2012). Prior research that creates context specific moral disengagement items has had success in finding proposed relationship between moral disengagement and ultimate outcomes. For instance, an example of a context specific adaptation of the moral disengagement scale can be found in research by Kish-Gephart, Detert, Treviño, Baker, and Martin (2014). In a survey of undergraduate university students, one of their advantageous comparison items states "Just asking friends about topics covered is not as bad as looking at the actual exam in advance." Although I made efforts to adapt all the items to reflect an exploitation

theme, it may be the case that I did not sufficiently adapt the items to be applicable to strongly fit both the initial and final tasks. Indeed, there was only one item, item 2 on the moral disengagement scale that was significantly correlated with subsequent transgressor behavior. The item stated "Exploiting the work of others is not so bad if you are still paying them more than they were making without you." In comparing this item to the other scale items, it appears to be the most closely related to Task 1 and Task 2 while also incorporating the potentially exploitative behavior that the participants will themselves engage in.

Another issue regarding study design may have been that I did not incorporate guilt in my model. Supplemental analyses demonstrate the important role that guilt had in influencing moral disengagement and as a mediator between manipulated variables and moral disengagement. One surprising factor is the positive direct effect of guilt on moral disengagement. Research and theory on moral disengagement holds that individuals who feel guilty about their actions would not be inclined to morally disengage (Bandura, 2002; Detert et al., 2008). However, the research does not take into account the interplay between guilt and moral disengagement during continued unethical behavior. Considering the positive effects that the moral intensity and affective tone of feedback had on guilt as well as the mediating role of guilt in the relationship between these variables and moral disengagement, it is possible that, participants who felt the guiltiest were more likely to morally disengage in order to shield themselves from future feelings of guilt. This is one potential explanation regarding the interesting effects I found in my supplemental analyses.

A final issue related to study design is that I was not able to isolate guilty feelings from other emotions. For instance, although the punitive feedback moral condition may have elicited feelings of guilt, such feelings may have been confounded by other emotions such as anger. Below, in the theoretically-oriented section of my discussion section, I further explore how the emotion of anger may have confounded the potential guilt that participants felt.

Theoretical Considerations

Whereas the above section explores possible errors that are proximal to my study design that may have contributed to the lack of support for my hypotheses, in this section I offer various other ideas that may explain my results. First, I discuss the role of felt emotions. Specifically, I focus on the role that anger may have played in participants' reactions to feedback. Relatedly, I discuss how anger and other associated emotions may have led to retaliatory behavior by the participants. Finally, I discuss the potential role of the Pygmalion effect.

Anger. One aspect of my study design that I originally did not take into account was the effect that anger may have on my lab study. Specifically, the experiment may have confounded feelings of guilt with anger if both were induced by the moral feedback (Sigall & Mills, 1998). Research demonstrates that moral language has a high level of semantic arousal and may be perceived as negatively valenced (Aspinwall, 1998; Bradley & Lang, 1999; Kelly et al., 2007). Thus, both the punitive and formative conditions may have simulated the participants to be angry. Gibson and Roberts Callister (2010) define anger as "an emotion that involves an appraisal of responsibility for wrongdoing by another person or entity and often includes the goal of correcting the perceived wrong."

Eliciting a strong feeling of anger was not something that I anticipated as research demonstrates that angry feelings arise from an attribution of negative personally relevant outcomes to factors that are controlled by others (Weiner, Graham, & Chandler, 1982). Said differently, individuals are more prone to angry feelings if they attribute personally hurtful events to an external entity that is in control of allowing for the hurtful event to occur. Because my assumption was that individuals would attribute the hurtful event (receiving morally intense feedback) to their own actions, I did not predict a strong level of participant anger. That said, it is possible that anger affected the findings of my lab study as participants perhaps felt state anger if they felt their feedback was unwarranted.

Although I did not have items in the exit survey capturing state anger—a temporary emotional state—I did note that some participants were visibly angry with their feedback. Anger is one of the basic discrete emotions that individuals can reliably recognize the expressions of (Ekman, 1992), thus it was not difficult for me to identify when participants exited the lab study and were angry. Further, I spent time with each participant when I performed the study debrief and requested that participants sign a debriefing consent form if they agree for their data to be used. This debriefing time allowed me to listen to participant sentiment regarding the feedback they received; it was clear to me that some participants felt angry with their feedback. Specifically, some felt that the feedback given to them was unjustified. Based on my observations and time spent debriefing the participants, it appeared to me that the condition that I anticipated would bring about the most guilt, punitive moral feedback, may have brought about the greatest amount of anger. Thus, relative to the other conditions that were intended to

induce less guilt than the punitive condition, anger may have negated potential guilty feelings.

An alternative perspective is that guilt may have altered how potentially angry feelings were handled. For instance, if an individual receives feedback that induces both anger and guilt, their guilty feelings may attenuate negative manifestations of anger. Research by Tangney, Wagner, Hill-Barlow, Marschall, and Gramzow (1996) supports this idea. Specifically, they demonstrate that individuals who are prone to experiencing guilt are more likely to develop constructive means of managing their anger, thus avoiding hostility towards the target of the anger and destructive action. Extending this notion to what may have occurred in the lab study, the morally intense feedback conditions may have fostered feelings of anger that manifested into taking money if individuals who are not guilt prone and/or weren't sufficiently induced to feel guilty have maladaptive responses to their anger. One way this anger might have manifested could have been through retaliatory behavior which I explore more in the following section.

Retaliation. When developing my hypotheses during the proposal phase of my dissertation, I anticipated the possibility that retaliation may affect the outcome of my study. Specifically, I presented the case that retaliatory behaviors may cause participants to increase their level of unethical behavior. Individuals retaliate when they perceive that they have been treated unfairly (Skarlicki & Folger, 1997). Thus, there may be participants who felt like their feedback was unjust based on their submission. More specifically, if participants did not think it is unethical to use child labor, then those in the morally intense feedback conditions may have felt that the feedback was unjustified.

Participants also may have felt that their feedback was unjustified based on the initial task instructions. The directions of the initial task requested that participants make the best business decision. The precise instructions asked participants to develop an argument explaining "why it makes financial sense or doesn't make financial sense for East Oak to enter the hand-made rug market." This language clearly instructs students to make a good financial decision without mention of being evaluated on a basis other than the financial aspect of the decision. Therefore, it is likely that some participants may have felt that the feedback they received was not fair because they were simply following the instructions per the initial task. Prior research supports this notion; for example in a classroom setting, students who feel like their instructor is unjust regarding the transparency of what students will be graded on may retaliate against the instructor by exhibiting aggressive behavior after receiving a bad grade they feel is unfair (Chory-Assad, 2002; Chory-Assad & Paulsel, 2004).

Whether feelings of injustice arose from participants disagreeing with the moral implications of their decision or came about because of the perception that they were unfairly evaluated based on the instructions in the initial task, justice perceptions may have affected the results of my study. When individuals in the workplace feel that the organization has behaved unjustly towards them, empirical evidence demonstrates that employees seek to "get even" for these perceived injustices. For example, Greenberg and Scott (1996) find employee theft to be a response to compensation inequity. Similarly, Hollinger and Clark (1983) demonstrate that employees engage in acts to hurt the organizations they work for in order to correct perceptions of injustice.

Applying these ideas to the context of the lab study, participants may have retaliated to a perceived injustice by taking more money than they otherwise would have. In addition to the content of the feedback, the delivery of the feedback may have amplified injustice perceptions. Whereas automated feedback is not conducive to interpersonal connections, including the human factor in feedback allows for individuals to feel a deeper connection with the feedback source (Walther, 1992). Specifically, participants were able to establish an interpersonal perception of the feedback provider via the use of a media rich source—a video. On one hand, the media richness permitted for an accurate display of affective tone. Yet, on the other hand, this interpersonal component of the feedback introduced the problem of interactional justice. Thus, in addition to the procedural injustice that may have been felt by participants with regard to the divergence between the instructions and the evaluation criteria, participants may have felt interpersonal injustice regarding their treatment by the feedback provider. Further, it is possible that the combination of perceived procedural and interpersonal justice violations caused some participants to retaliate by taking money from the envelope even if they felt like the (fictitious) student deserved all of the $10. Indeed, research by Skarlicki and Folger (1997) demonstrates that different types of justice violations may interact to increase retaliatory behavior in the workplace.

Such workplace retaliation is generally aimed at the source of justice infractions (Sheppard, Lewicki, & Minton, 1992). For instance, employees seeking retribution feel most gratified when the entity responsible for their injustice suffers (Neuman & Baron, 1998; Rehg et al., 2008). Based on this research, my intuition during the hypotheses development stage of my dissertation was that retaliation would not play a major role in

my study as the participants would not have a way of seeking vengeance against the target of retaliation—the feedback provider. Further, I did not expect that participants would seek retribution by adversely impacting the fictitious student. Specifically, because the participants were themselves students, prior research on in-group versus out-group treatment supports the notion that the participants would be less likely to hurt peers they see in their in-group versus outside others (Fiske, 2002; Hewstone et al., 2002; Sherif, 1956).

Despite this prior research, scholars also note the tendency for individuals to "lash out" to others when they are in a state of distress (Miceli & Near, 1997). For example, research by Xu, Huang, Lam, and Miao (2012) shows that abused subordinates respond to mistreatment from their supervisors by lashing out at coworkers. This idea possibly accounts for instances in my study where participants may have reciprocated perceived injustice from the feedback provider by being unjust to the fictitious student. Exemplifying this perspective is an observation I made during a lab debriefing session. Upon exiting the room, the participant stated "that guy ruined my day, so I ruined someone else's;" 'that guy', referring to the feedback provider, and 'someone' in reference to the fictitious student. Thus, it is likely that retaliatory behaviors affected the results of the lab study.

Pygmalion effect. Whereas anger and retaliation focus on the reasons why participants who received morally intense feedback, especially the punitive feedback condition, did not react to feedback the way I predicted, in this section I shift the discussion to what may have happened with participants who received feedback that lacked moral intensity. Specifically, I focus on why participants in the permissive moral

feedback condition may not have taken as much money as I anticipated. I based my original prediction on the idea that individuals who receive positively-oriented feedback would be more likely to engage in unethical behavior than individuals who were induced to feel guilty. Despite prior research on moral disengagement supporting this notion, my study did not yield results to this end. One possible explanation may be the Pygmalion effect.

As discussed in an earlier chapter, the Pygmalion effect occurs when the expectations of an authoritative figure are later matched by the behavior of a subordinate (Hurley, 1997; Merton, 1948). This effect occurs in a wide variety of settings, including organizational and academic contexts (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968). While some research on this effect focuses on the negative aspects of a self-fulfilling prophecy induced by others, scholars also recognizes the positive aspect of the Pygmalion effect (Jussim, Eccles, & Madon, 1996). Indeed, management researchers have proposed the use of the Pygmalion effect as a tool to motivate employees (Eden, 1984). For instance, practical implications from this research encourage managers to raise employee self-efficacy, performance, and innovative behavior by empowering workers (Chen & Klimoski, 2003; Scott & Bruce, 1994; Wayne, Shore, & Liden, 1997). Essentially, managers can affect performance outcomes by telling their employees that they have high expectations of them.

Applying a Pygmalion perspective to my study context, it is possible that participants in the permissive feedback condition perceived themselves as good decision makers and carried this cognition forward when performing the final task. For example, regardless of their justification regarding the expansion of the product line in the initial

task, participants may have believed that they were indeed good decision makers. Indeed, the supplemental analyses demonstrate that some participants were grateful based on the affective tone of their feedback. Thus, because the permissive feedback script reiterates the strong decision making skills of the participants it is possible that these participants took the final task—evaluating a student's work—more seriously than participants assigned to other groups. Similar to an organizational context where a Pygmalion effect assumption would be that employees who are told that they are good performers will increase subsequent performance, in the lab study, participants who felt they did well in in the initial task may aim to also do well in the final task.

Considering that the final task entailed appraising the work of a student per the criteria given on an evaluation rubric, participants concerned with living up to the expectation that they are good decision makers may have been more engaged in this task than participants who did not receive feedback promoting their decision making skills. Taking the final task seriously, in turn, may have steered participants into giving a fair evaluation.[4] Further realizing the self-fulfilling prophecy aspect of the Pygmalion effect, participants playing the part of a good decision maker would have appropriately rewarded the student by not taking money from the envelop. Moreover, this effect may have been amplified if participants' moral awareness was increased due to either their assigned condition, in the case of the formative condition, or because of the nature of the questions on the moral disengagement scale. In examining the differences between groups regarding the total number of participants who took money, 25 and 27 participants

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[4] As discussed in the study design section of Chapter 4, various graduate students and professors reviewed the fictitious student submission and deemed it to be a submission worth of a 10/10 score based on the evaluation rubric). Thus, a fair evaluation entails a high score.

assigned to the formative and permissive conditions, respectively, took money, while 30 and 35 participants in the punitive and obligatory conditions, respectively, took money. Given the potential role that the Pygmalion effect may have played in my study, future research may benefit examining the Pygmalion effect in the context of behavioral ethics. Specifically, it would be interesting to investigate whether self-fulfilling prophecies regarding moral behavior may be induced by others. In the next section I further discuss other potential avenues of future research.

Future Research

Because my lab study did not find support for my hypotheses, I believe that a fruitful avenue of research is a redesign of the lab study such that guilt, anger, retaliation, moral awareness, the Pygmalion effect, and other similar factors are accounted for. I believe that the theoretical framework used to develop my model is strong. As such, my intuition is that the primary issue regarding the lack of support lies in the study design aspect of my hypotheses testing. Moving forward, research that utilizes the moral feedback typology I developed either as a theoretical foundation or to test empirically is perhaps the first step in making useful the work I accomplished for this dissertation.

My intuition is that guilt, especially, is a key variable that may be under researched with regard to ongoing cycles of unethical behavior. Specifically, I speculate that the positive association between guilt and moral disengagement may be because the participants who felt guilty, were upset enough with their own behavior that instead of wanting their own moral standards to be more salient, they may be engaged in a sort of self-preservation mindset whereby they are more likely to morally disengage to prevent future guilty feelings from occurring. Cognitive dissonancy theory may serve as a

foundation to future inquiries of this effect as individuals engage in reframing techniques in order to cope with mismatches between values and actions (Festinger, 1957).

Additionally, future research could test my theory using a different set of moral disengagement items. Specifically, the moral disengagement scale I used could be further adapted to be more context specific. Moreover, items specific to just one type of moral disengagement may be a more successful approach.

Aside from future research adapting my framework and testing it differently in an experiment, there are several other future research avenues I foresee stemming from my dissertation. As noted as a limitation above, I only studied feedback that is given at one particular time period. Future research may explore the difference between moral feedback that is given immediately versus moral feedback at a delayed time. Currently there is research that supports the use of immediate feedback (Geller, 1994) as well as delayed feedback (Druskat & Wolff, 1999). However, this research is not within the behavioral ethics domain. Examining the timing of moral feedback is interesting because this would allow researchers to investigate what may make the consequences of a transgression more salient. On one hand, it may be the case that moral feedback given immediately after a transgression may compound the effects of guilt and make it less likely that transgressors would perform the same or a similar transgression. On the other hand, delayed feedback may bring about moral awareness that may not have been present at a time that is so distant from the original transgression. Further, self-perceptions based on the moral feedback may be tainted by other feedback that is subsequently received (Murphy, Gannett, Herr, & Chen, 1986).

A third interesting avenue for future research would be to examine characteristics of the ethical transgressor that may affect their propensity to morally disengage after moral feedback is given. In a meta-analysis of feedback interventions, Kluger and DeNisi (1996) propose a theory on feedback intervention suggesting that characteristics of the feedback recipient may alter how feedback is perceived and therefore alter future behavior. Indeed, there is ample evidence that supports the moderating effect of personality variables on the relationship between feedback and future behavior (Ilgen et al., 1979; Kluger & DeNisi, 1996). For example, variables such as self-esteem (Fedor, Davis, Maslyn, & Mathieson, 2001), self-efficacy (Gaudine & Saks, 2001; Latham & Frayne, 1989), locus of control (Hegarty & Sims, 1978; Ilgen et al., 1979; Shalley & Perry-Smith, 2001), altruism (Korsgaard, Meglino, & Lester, 1997), and moral identity (Reynolds & Ceranic, 2007) significantly affect how individuals react to feedback. An extension of this research in the moral feedback domain would expand our knowledge on both moral feedback as well as unethical decision making.

Relatedly, a fourth avenue for future research is to examine the characteristics of the feedback provider and how these factors may influence how effective the moral feedback is with regard to the future behavior of the ethical transgressor. Specifically, I believe that the credibility of the feedback provider may have a strong effect on how effective their feedback is. In a review of feedback source credibility, Pornpitakpan (2004) suggests that there are two primary factors that establish source credibility: expertise and trustworthiness. In the absence of expertise or trustworthiness in a feedback provider, the feedback recipient may not perceive the feedback as legitimate (Rhee & Fiss, 2014).

Expertise is the extent to which a feedback provider possesses the knowledge that is relevant to a situation in order to make a judgment (Lupia, 2000). In a moral context, expertise may refer to someone who possesses familiarity with the rules. Research demonstrates that feedback is seen as less reliable when a feedback provider is perceived as lacking in expertise by the feedback recipient (Ilgen et al., 1979). Trustworthiness is the degree to which the feedback recipient believes that the feedback provider is revealing her/his knowledge (Pornpitakpan, 2004). Hovland and Weiss (1951: 647) put it succinctly when they said "the effect of an untrustworthy communicator is to interfere with the acceptance of the material." Clearly these factors are an important part of feedback, thus a future study may investigate how pertinent source credibility factors such as expertise and trustworthiness are to a moral context.

Another area of future research that incorporates characteristics of the feedback provider is investigating the difference between feedback that comes from an authority figure, such as a direct supervisor, versus feedback that comes from a peer. My experiment was set up such that the feedback provider was a graduate assistant who has the responsibility of grading the initial task. This individual was not a peer of the participants, nor were they necessarily an authority figure. Prior research demonstrates that feedback from a supervisor is more likely to elicit change than feedback from a peer (Fedor et al., 2001; Larson, 1989). Yet only a limited application of this notion has been applied to an ethical behavior context (Fudge & Schlacter, 1999). Scholars who wish to add to the literature on leadership as well as behavioral ethics may benefit from investigating peer versus leader moral feedback. Specifically, because individuals tend to look towards their peers (rather than leaders) for social support, negative feedback

regarding unethical behavior may be more effective in eliciting guilt than similar feedback from a supervisor (Badaracco & Webb, 1995). This would introduce an alternate perspective on the feedback literature which generally supports the notion that feedback from a supervisor is more likely to elicit ultimate desired results than feedback from a peer.

Similarly, while peers look towards one another for social support, they may also learn from one another. An interesting line of research may be to examine the vicarious effects of moral feedback. Specifically, one may not necessarily need to personally receive the morally intense feedback in order for self-regulation to occur. Learning can be achieved vicariously. As I discussed in Chapter 2, a series of experiments known as the bobo doll experiments exposed children to conditions whereby one group of children watched an adult get reprimanded for hitting the bobo doll while another group saw the adult receive a reward for hitting the bobo doll. The group of children that saw the reprimand after the aggressive action against the bobo doll were less likely to aggress against the bobo doll than the group that saw the reward given to the adult who hit the bobo doll (Bandura et al., 1961). Thus, the examination of vicarious development of self-regulation and how this may influence future behavior may be an interesting line of research to explore.

Conclusion

The foundation of my study lies at the intersection of moral behavior and feedback. While research examining unethical behavior in the workplace is growing, scholarship has been somewhat mute on investigating what ensues after an unethical behavior, and what are potential interventions that may be applied to prevent further

unethicality. With my dissertation, my aim was to expand behavioral ethics scholarship by exploring these themes. I did so by developing a typology of the different kinds of moral feedback that an individual may receive after performing an unethical action. Although an empirical test of this typology did not provide evidence to support my predicted effects that moral feedback may have on future transgressor behaviors, I believe that the typology may be a valuable framework for which scholars may use as the groundwork for future research in this area. In sum, by shedding light on moral feedback as a possible intervention to thwarting unethical behavior, my study opens the doors for scholars to explore other potential applications of feedback in the moral domain.

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Table 1

List of Hypotheses

H1: Morally intense feedback will be negatively related to subsequent transgressor moral disengagement.

H2: Moral disengagement will mediate the negative relationship between morally intense feedback and unethical behavior.

H3: The negative relationship between moral intensity and moral disengagement will be made weaker when feedback affective tone is more positively valanced.

H4: The affective tone of feedback will moderate the mediated effect of moral intensity of feedback on unethical behavior through moral disengagement such that this negative relationship will weaken when feedback affective tone is more positively valenced.

Table 2

ANEW Words used for affective tone manipulation

Word*	Valence Mean (SD)
1. Terrible	1.93 (1.44)
2. Disappointing (Disappoint)**	2.39 (1.44)
3. Miserably (Misery)**	1.93 (1.60)
4. Failed (Fail)*	1.70 (1.07)
1. Excellent	8.38 (0.96)
2. Outstanding	7.75 (1.75)
3. Great (Good)**	7.47 (1.45)
4. Successful (Success)**	8.20 (0.94)

* Each of the numbers for positive and negatively valenced words correspond with each other by number (e.g. 1. Terrible and 2. Excellent).
** Words in parentheses are the words as they appear in ANEW

Table 3

Means of comparison for moral feedback typology content validation

Means	**Feedback Type**			
	Obligatory	Punitive	Permissive	Formative
Obligatory feedback items	5.52	4.36	1.97	3.28
Punitive feedback items	3.72	5.80	1.90	4.04
Permissive feedback items	1.89	1.77	6.20	3.60
Formative feedback items	2.93	4.72	3.75	5.65

Table 4

Standard deviations of moral feedback typology content validation

Standard Deviations	**Feedback Type**			
	Obligatory	Punitive	Permissive	Formative
Obligatory feedback items	1.63	2.04	1.72	1.84
Punitive feedback items	2.07	1.41	1.67	2.03
Permissive feedback items	1.75	1.40	1.04	1.76
Formative feedback items	2.21	2.29	2.43	1.36
N =	44	45	49	45

Table 5

Moral intensity and affective tone manipulation check (pilot data)

Manipulation	**Feedback Type**			
	Obligatory	**Punitive**	**Permissive**	**Formative**
Moral Manipulation	2.79	5.86	3.53	6.06
Negative Affect Manipulation	6.62	6.24	1.57	3.94
Positive Affect Manipulation	1.36	1.71	5.40	4.31

Table 6

Means of moral feedback manipulation check (pilot data)

Means	**Feedback Type**			
	Punitive	Formative	Permissive	Obligatory
Punitive feedback items	5.58	5.00	2.41	2.57
Formative feedback items	3.46	5.76	4.92	2.52
Permissive feedback items	1.33	3.48	6.33	2.29
Obligatory feedback items	3.46	2.67	1.63	4.76

Table 7

Standard deviations of moral feedback manipulation check (pilot data)

Standard Deviations	**Feedback Type**			
	Punitive	Formative	Permissive	Obligatory
Punitive feedback items	1.31	0.69	0.44	1.90
Formative feedback items	1.28	0.85	1.27	1.73
Permissive feedback items	1.40	0.50	0.56	0.82
Obligatory feedback items	0.96	1.30	1.42	2.06
N =	8	7	8	8

Table 8

Means of moral feedback manipulation check (final data)

Means	**Feedback Type**			
	Punitive	Formative	Permissive	Obligatory
Punitive feedback items	5.34	3.50	2.14	3.72
Formative feedback items	5.01	5.43	3.16	2.87
Permissive feedback items	1.85	4.62	6.22	1.62
Obligatory feedback items	3.76	2.91	2.12	5.08

Table 9

Standard deviations of moral feedback manipulation check (final data)

Standard Deviations	**Feedback Type**			
	Punitive	Formative	Permissive	Obligatory
Punitive feedback items	1.35	0.80	1.63	1.70
Formative feedback items	1.06	0.95	1.16	1.58
Permissive feedback items	1.85	1.06	1.06	0.84
Obligatory feedback items	1.42	1.06	1.23	1.42
N =	62	60	62	63

Table 10

Moral intensity and affective tone manipulation check (final data)

Manipulation	**Feedback Type**			
	Punitive	Formative	Permissive	Obligatory
Moral Intensity	5.35	5.56	4.66	3.49
Negatively valenced affective tone	5.78	4.02	2.02	5.85
Positively valenced affective tone	2.11	4.20	6.29	2.04

Table 11

Means of money taken by condition

	Feedback Type			
	Punitive	Formative	Permissive	Obligatory
Average $$ taken (117 obs)	$4.37	$3.80	$3.96	3.89
N =	30	25	27	35
Average $$ taken (248 obs)	$2.11	$1.56	$1.73	$2.16
N =	62	61	62	63

Table 12

Means, standard deviations, and correlations

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4
1. Money kept	1.89	2.61	-			
2. Moral Disengagement	2.50	.87	.06	-		
3. Moral Intensity	.50	.50	-.02	-.05	-	
4. Affective Tone	.50	.50	-.10	-.06	.00	-

N = 248, M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation

Moral intensity manipulation 0 = feedback lacking moral intensity; 1 = feedback high in moral intensity

Affective tone manipulation 0 = negatively valenced affective tone; 1 = positively valenced affective tone

Note that no correlations were significant at $p < .10$

Table 13

One-way ANOVA for Hypothesis 1

Moral Intensity	**df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**
Between Groups	1	.431	.569	.451
Within Groups	246	.756		

Moral intensity manipulation 0 = feedback lacking moral intensity; 1 = feedback high in moral intensity

Table 14

Regression analysis for Hypothesis 1

	B	**(SE)**	**LLCI**	**ULCI**
Moral Intensity	-.083	.111	-.301	.134

Moral intensity manipulation 0 = feedback lacking moral intensity; 1 = feedback high in moral intensity

Table 15

Mediation results for Hypothesis 2

	DV= Moral disengagement				DV= subsequent transgressor behavior			
	B	**(SE)**	**LLCI**	**ULCI**	**B**	**(SE)**	**LLCI**	**ULCI**
Moral intensity	-.185	.111	-.301	.134	-.091	.333	-.748	.566
Moral disengagement					.185	.192	-.194	.563

Moral intensity manipulation 0 = feedback lacking moral intensity; 1 = feedback high in moral intensity

Table 16

Moderated mediation results for Hypothesis 4

Affective tone	**B**	**(SE)**	**LLCI**	**ULCI**
	Dependent variable model: subsequent transgressor behavior			
Negatively valenced	2.79	5.86	3.53	6.06
Positively valenced	6.62	6.24	1.57	3.94
Index of moderated mediation	1.36	1.71	5.4	4.31

Moral intensity manipulation 0 = feedback lacking moral intensity; 1 = feedback high in moral intensity
Affective tone manipulation 0 = negatively valenced affective tone; 1 = positively valenced affective tone

Table 17

Mediation results for post-hoc analyses

	DV= Moral disengagement- Item 2				DV= subsequent transgressor behavior			
	B	**(SE)**	**LLCI**	**ULCI**	**B**	**(SE)**	**LLCI**	**ULCI**
Moral intensity	-.150	.181	-.507	.206	-.068	.331	-.719	.584
Moral disengagement					.259	.116	.030	.488

Moral intensity manipulation 0 = feedback lacking moral intensity; 1 = feedback high in moral intensity

Table 18

Means, standard deviations, and correlations for post-hoc analyses

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Money kept	1.89	2.61	-						
2. Moral disengagement	2.50	.87	.06	-					
3. Moral intensity	.50	.50	-.02	-.05	-				
4. Affective tone	.50	.50	-.10	-.06	.00	-			
5. Moral awareness	4.98	1.42	-.07	-.12	.49*	.15*	-		
6. Guilt	3.89	.83	.06	.17*	-.21*	.24*	-.17*	-	
7. Gratitude	4.34	1.96	-.16*	-.06	-.01	-.64*	.27*	.21*	-

N = 248, M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation.
Moral intensity manipulation 0 = feedback lacking moral intensity; 1 = feedback high in moral intensity
Affective tone manipulation 0 = negatively valenced affective tone; 1 = positively valenced affective tone
* Correlation is significant at $p < .05$

Figure 1. Theoretical diagram

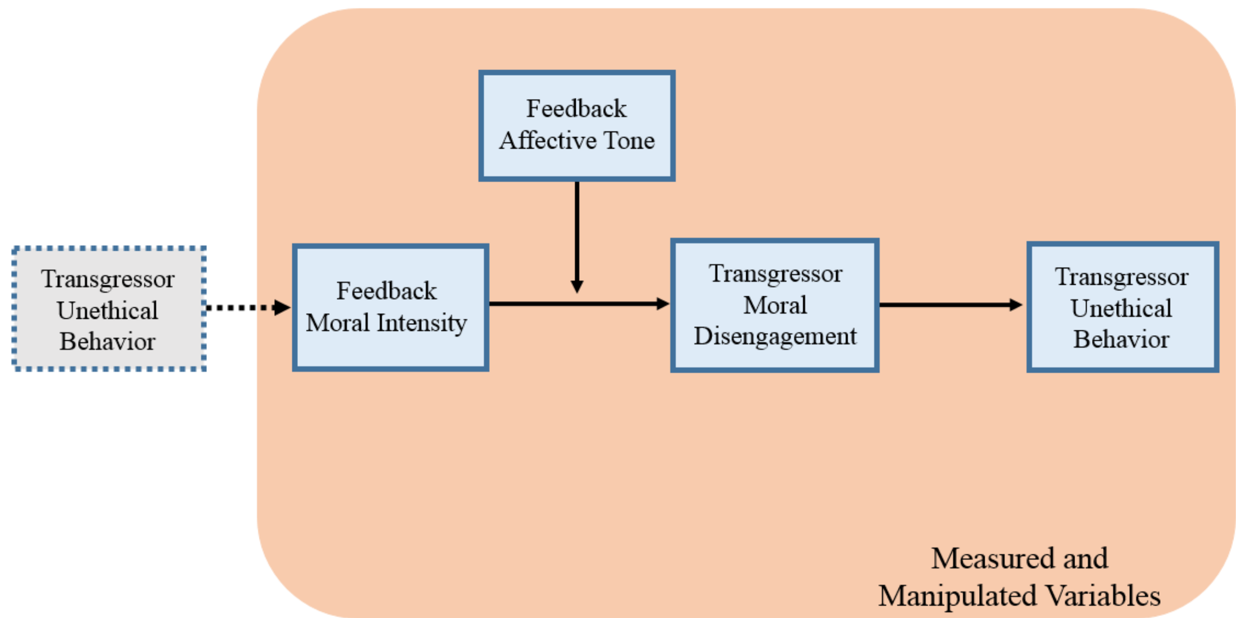


Figure 2. A framework for understanding moral feedback

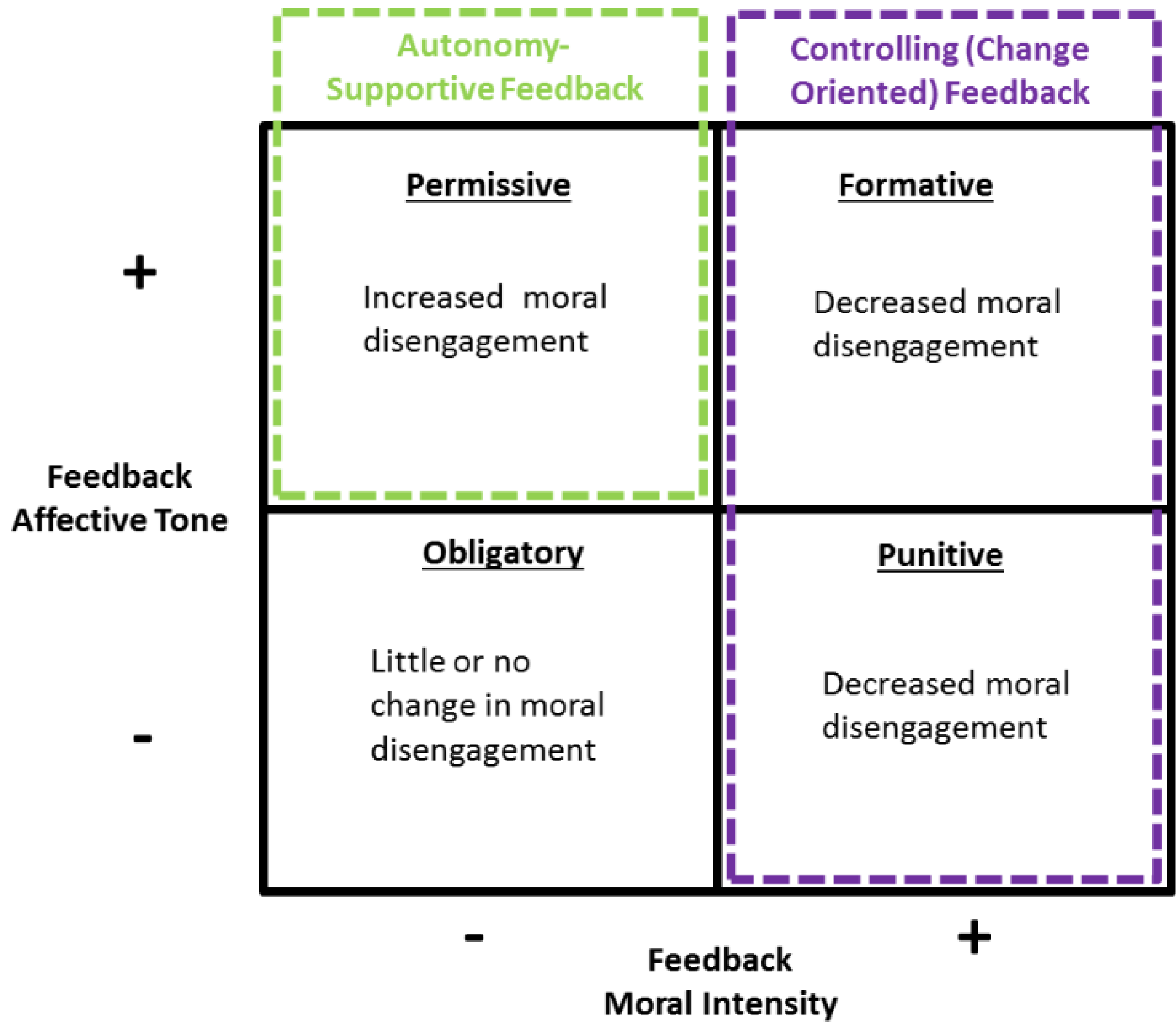


Figure 3. Hypothesis 3 simple slopes prediction

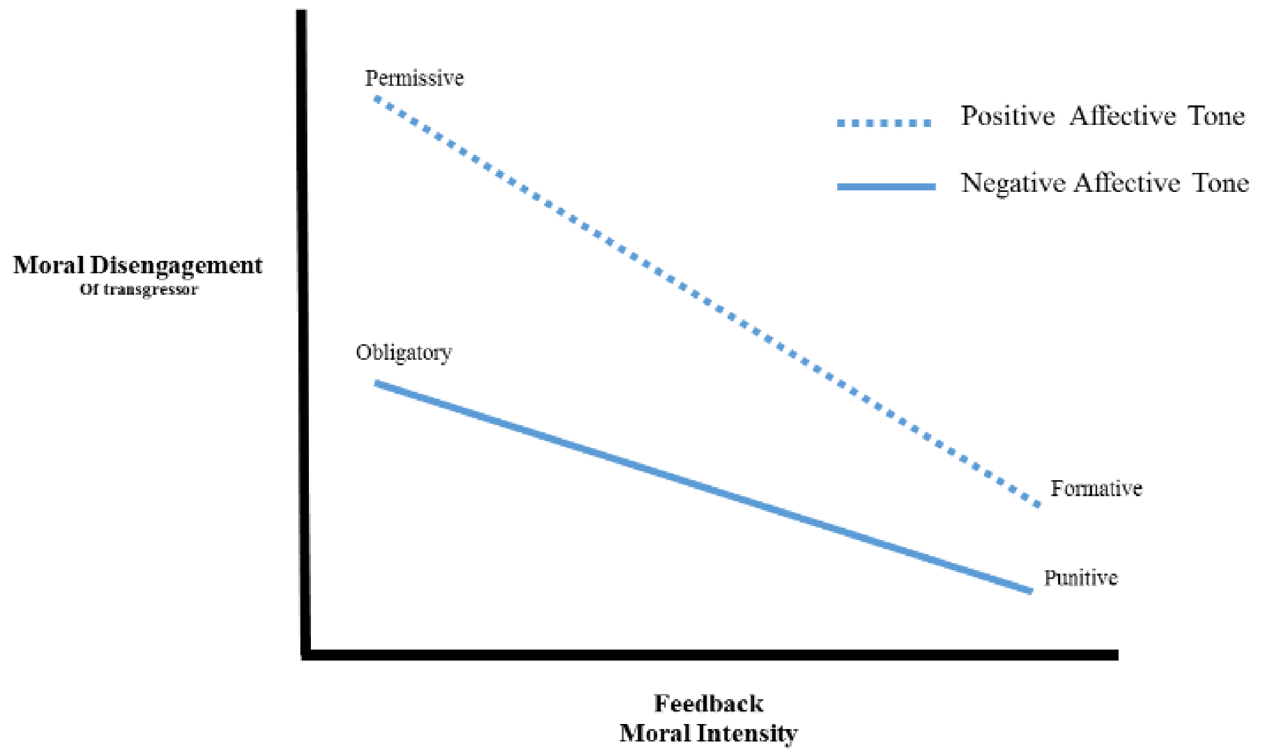
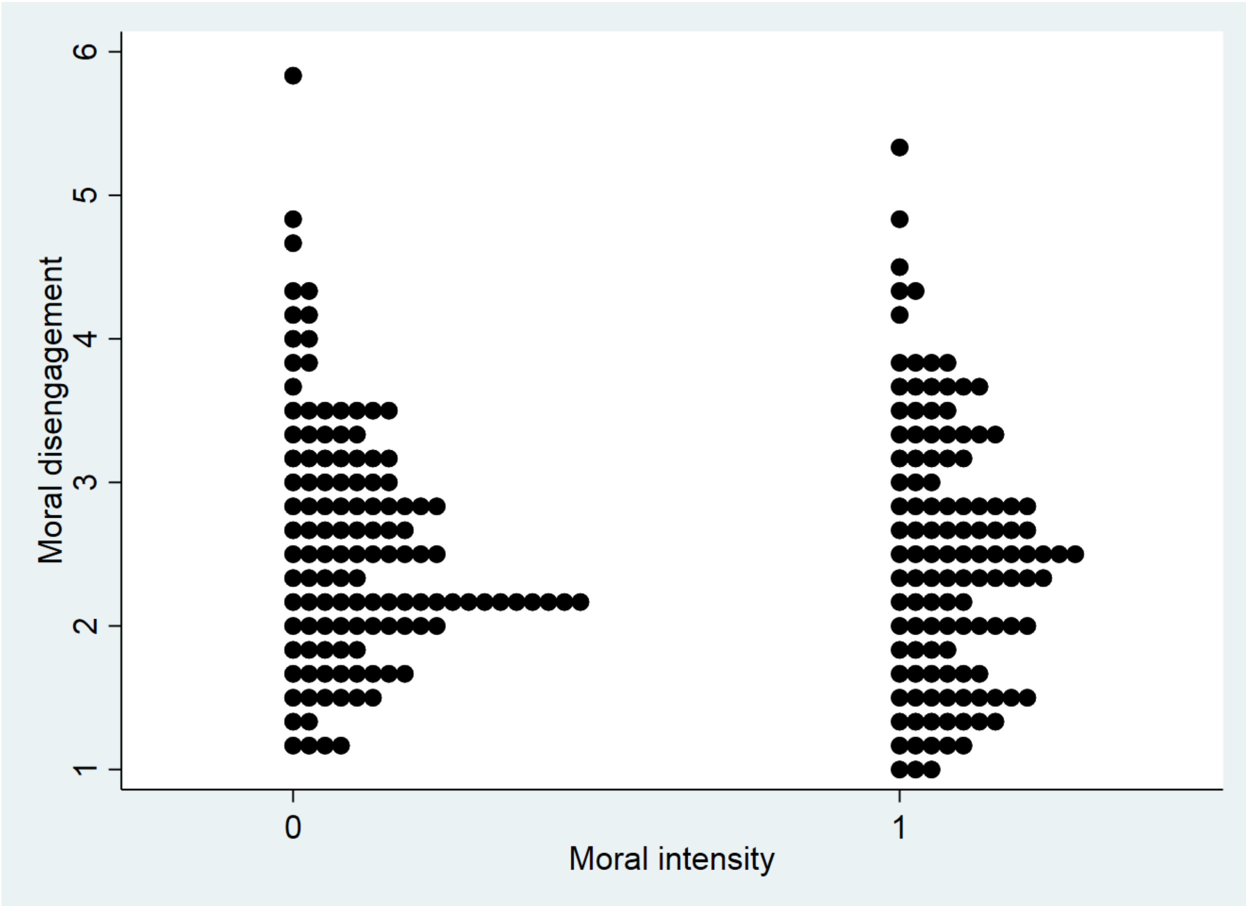


Figure 4. Scatterplot of moral intensity and moral disengagement



0 = feedback lacking moral intensity; 1 = feedback high in moral intensity

Figure 5. Scatterplot of moral intensity and transgressor unethical behavior

0 = feedback lacking moral intensity; 1 = feedback high in moral intensity

Figure 6. Scatterplot of feedback type and moral disengagement

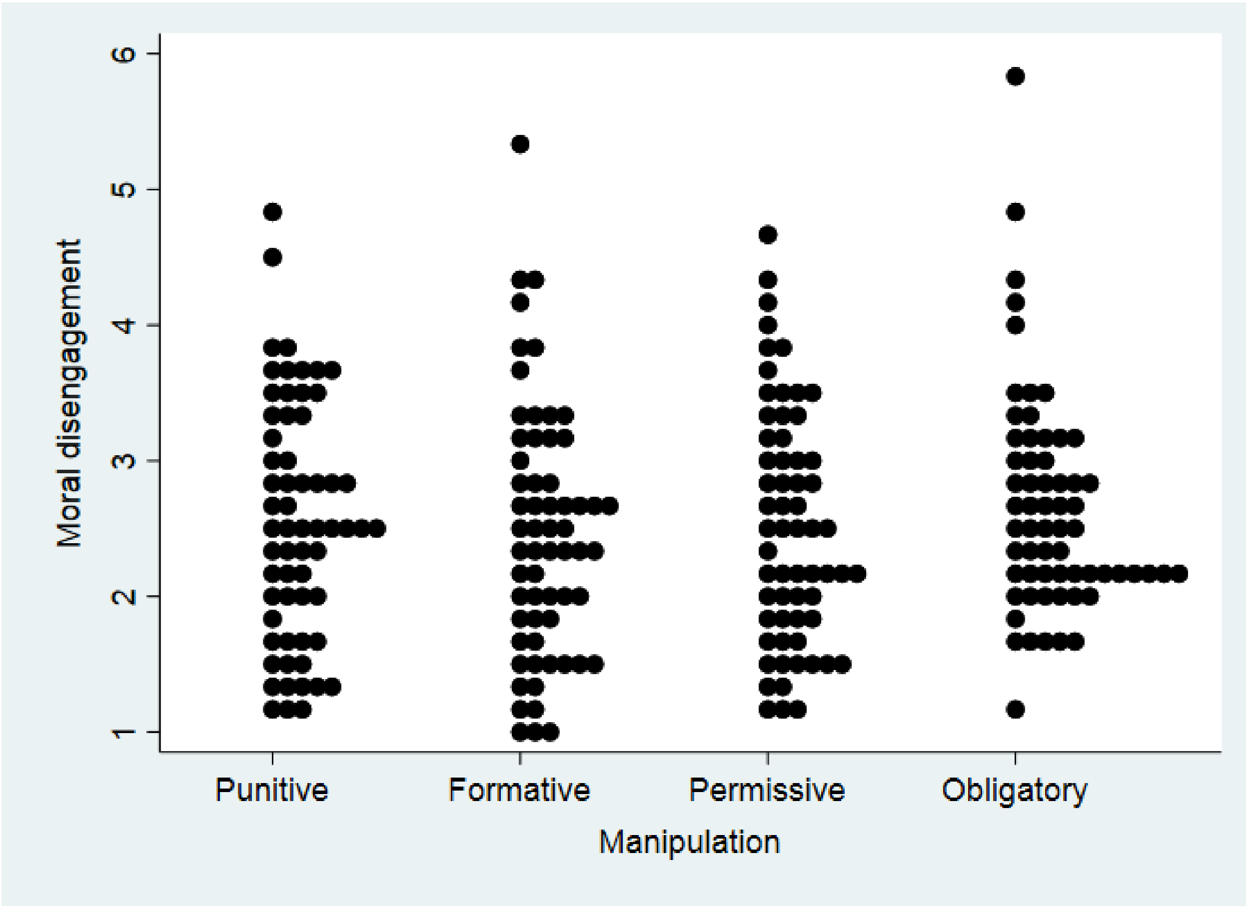
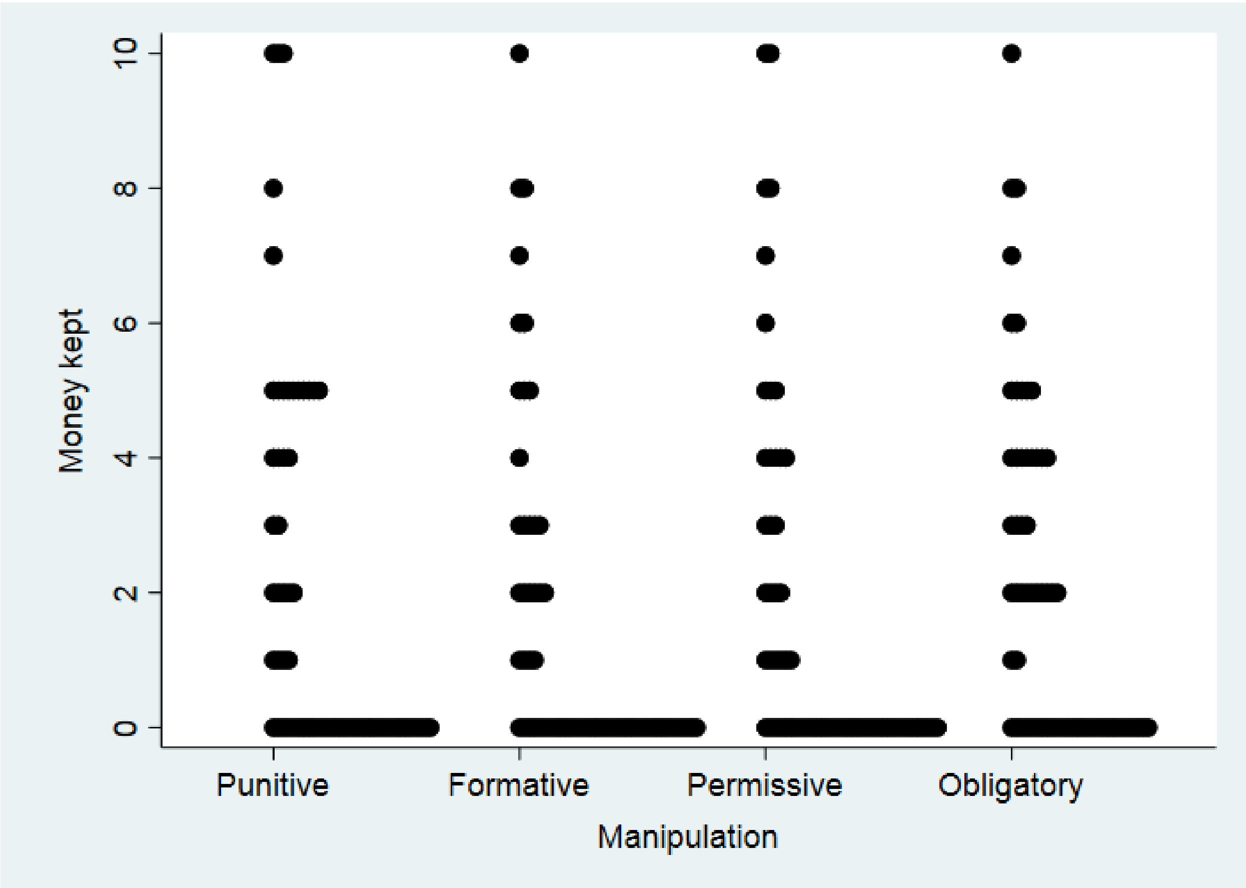


Figure 7. Scatterplot of feedback type and money kept



APPENDIX A

INITIAL TASK

Thank you for participating in this study which takes place at two different times. First, you will complete a business case study. Following your submission of the case study, you will be asked to attend the lab. At the lab you will receive feedback about the assignment you are doing today. You have been randomly selected to be in Group 1. This group of participants will receive feedback from a graduate assistant. The other group, Group 2, will be receiving feedback from other students. Additionally, you will be asked to complete another short task. Please e-mail the experimenter if you have any questions. Please enter your student ID below. We will use your student ID to generate a unique lab participant ID number. You will later use this number to be matched to the feedback regarding your written submission. Please enter your ASU ID number below and click the button to proceed.

Enter Student ID: ___________________________________

Page Break

Your first task is to determine whether it makes sense for the company you work for to enter a new business market. Specifically, you should assume the role of an employee at East Oak, an up and coming British home furnishings company that is considering adding hand-made rugs to its product line. You will be judged based on making the best business decision, and the student who writes the best submission will receive a $50 award.

Please click "continue" to learn your specific assignment.

Page Break

We would like to provide you with more information about your task. Imagine you are an executive at East Oak, a London-based company that sells home furnishings (e.g., tables, chairs, lamps, etc.). You sell your products to all European countries but have not ventured to countries on other continents.

East Oak is considering expanding its product line to include hand-made rugs. The rugs would be produced and exported by a supplier in Southeast Asia. While the supplier has assured East Oak that it does not use child labor in the production of its rugs, a recent study by the Center for Health and Human Rights at Harvard University revealed that forced labor and bonded labor by children are used frequently by rug makers in this region of the world, and these practices are extremely difficult to police.

Your assignment is to draw on Porter's Five Forces to determine whether it is a good idea financially for East Oak to enter the rug market. Porter's Five Forces is a framework for industry analysis and business strategy development formed by Michael E. Porter of Harvard Business School. It draws upon Industrial Organization (IO) economics to derive five forces that determine the competitive intensity and therefore attractiveness of a market. The five forces are:

- The bargaining power of customers (buyers)
- The threat of substitute products or services

- The threat of new entrants to the market
- The bargaining power of suppliers
- The intensity of competitive rivalry

Attractiveness in this context refers to the overall industry profitability. An "attractive" industry is one in which the combination of these five forces acts to increase overall profitability.

In this task, you will analyze East Oak's position using one of Porter's Five Forces. Again, the individual judged to have the best report will receive $50.

Please click "continue" to learn more about your assignment.

Page Break

You have been assigned the following Force:

The Intensity of Competitive Rivalry.

You will have approximately 10 minutes to write a compelling argument for whether the intensity of competitive rivalry is too great to enter the hand-made rug market or whether it makes financial sense to enter the rug market. **You will not be able to advance from this page until the 10 minutes are up. After 10 minutes, a ">>" button will appear at the bottom of the screen and you will be able to click on the button to move ahead.** Please note: you are not permitted to use the internet for assistance during this task.

You may draw on your prior knowledge of East Oak and Porter's Five Forces in drafting your section. Because many of you will not be familiar with East Oak or Porter's Five Forces, to help you craft your response, we provide you with the following information:

- There are only three major companies in Europe that sell rugs of the type East Oak is considering
- The companies that do produce and sell these rugs have recently had financial hardships
- These companies produce and sell many other home furnishing products and hand-made rugs typically only represent 10% of their gross profits
- Unlike the other companies, East Oak has a unique distribution system that provides a competitive advantage over the other companies
- There are very few other home furnishing companies in Europe that are considering entering the hand-made rug market
- Financial reports from your company suggest that the competition in this market is relatively weak
- One of the European companies that sells hand-made rugs is considering getting out of the rug market

- Two of the European companies that sell hand-made rugs have heard East Oak may enter the market and have advertising campaigns in place to differentiate their products from East Oak's rugs
- East Oak's supplier has developed unique textiles and patterns for their rugs that other competitors do not have

Drawing on the information above and your prior knowledge of Porter's Five Forces, please write a detailed (10 minute) argument for why it makes financial sense or doesn't make financial sense for East Oak to enter the hand-made rug market given the force you have been assigned. Your analysis will be compared to others within the same category (Intensity of Competitive Rivalry) to potentially win the $50 award.

APPENDIX B

FINAL TASK

Instructions to student evaluators

Thank you for participating in this study. You have already completed a business case study that was evaluated by a graduate assistant. We now ask that you complete a second task.

In addition to our interest in business decision-making, our research group is interested in the effect that different incentives have on the quality of a business decision. You were selected into a group (Group 1) where you have the chance of receiving a $50 award if your submission is deemed to be the best report relative to others in your assigned group. However, there is a second group of students (Group 2) who received a different business case and were incentivized to do well on their task by being awarded up to $10 for their work. Because this evaluation and incentive is not comparative, all students in this group have the opportunity to receive up to $10. Further, other students are tasked with evaluating these students' submissions and make a decision on how much money to award. Today, your job is to evaluate one of these submissions. You will be matched with a student who was assigned the same Porter's Five Forces criteria that you were assigned.

The remaining pages of this document include the instructions and task that the students in Group 2 received. Please read through their instructions and business task carefully. Their case study is significantly different than the case study that you completed. After you have thoroughly read through their case study, you will then evaluate a report submitted by a student in Group 2. On a print-out of their report, you will write specific feedback to the student. Finally, you will use the envelope to place the amount of money that you allocate to the student in Group 2 whose submission you evaluated. Students who have an excellent submission should receive a high dollar amount while students who have a poor submission should receive a low dollar amount. More specific instructions regarding allocation are given on the feedback form.

Instructions for group 2 students:

Thank you for participating in this study. Your task today is to complete a business case study.

Specifically, you are to determine whether it makes sense for the company you work for to enter a new business market. You should assume the role of an employee at Hansel & Son Furnishings, an up and coming Danish home furnishings company that is considering adding ceramic pots to its product line. Following your submission of the case study, your work will be evaluated by another student and you will be awarded based on the quality of your work.

You will be judged based on the quality of your submission and making the best business decision. **Each student who completes this assignment may receive up to $10 depending on the quality of the work.** Please e-mail the experimenter if you have any questions.

Task:

We would like to provide you with more information about your task. Imagine you are an executive at Hansel & Son Furnishings, a Denmark-based company that sells home furnishings (e.g., tables, chairs, lamps, etc.). You sell your products to all European countries but have not ventured to countries on other continents.

Hansel & Son Furnishings is considering expanding its product line to include ceramic pots. The pots would be produced and exported by a supplier in a neighboring European country.

Your assignment is to draw on Porter's Five Forces to determine whether it is a good idea financially for Hansel & Son Furnishings to enter the ceramic pot market. Porter's Five Forces is a framework for industry analysis and business strategy development formed by Michael E. Porter of Harvard Business School. It draws upon Industrial Organization (IO) economics to derive five forces that determine the competitive intensity and therefore attractiveness of a market. The five forces are:

- The bargaining power of customers (buyers)
- The threat of substitute products or services
- The threat of new entrants to the market
- The bargaining power of suppliers
- The intensity of competitive rivalry

Attractiveness in this context refers to the overall industry profitability. An "attractive" industry is one in which the combination of these five forces acts to increase overall profitability.

In this task, you will analyze Hansel & Son Furnishings' position using one of Porter's Five Forces. Again, all individual participating in this assignment have the opportunity to be awarded up to $10 based on the quality of their report.

You have been assigned the following Force: **The Intensity of Competitive Rivalry.**

You will have approximately 10 minutes to write a compelling argument for whether the intensity of competitive rivalry is too great to enter the ceramic pot market or whether it makes financial sense to enter the ceramic pot market. Please note: you are not permitted to use the internet for assistance during this task.

You may draw on your prior knowledge of Hansel & Son Furnishings and Porter's Five Forces in drafting your section. Because many of you will not be familiar with Hansel & Son Furnishings or Porter's Five Forces, to help you craft your response, we provide you with the following information:

- There are only three major companies in Europe that sell ceramic pots of the type Hansel & Son Furnishings is considering
- The companies that do produce and sell these pot have recently had financial hardships
- These companies produce and sell many other home furnishing products and ceramic pots typically only represent 10% of their gross profits
- Unlike the other companies, Hansel & Son Furnishings has a unique distribution system that provides a competitive advantage over the other companies
- There are very few other home furnishing companies in Europe that are considering entering the ceramic pots market
- Financial reports from your company suggest that the competition in this market is relatively weak
- One of the European companies that sells ceramic pots is considering getting out of the ceramic pots market
- Two of the European companies that sell the ceramic pots have heard Hansel & Son Furnishings may enter the market and have advertising campaigns in place to differentiate their products from Hansel & Son Furnishings' ceramic pots
- Hansel & Son Furnishings' supplier has developed a unique porcelain material for their pots that other competitors do not have

Drawing on the information above and your prior knowledge of Porter's Five Forces, please write a detailed (10 minute) argument for why it makes financial sense or doesn't make financial sense for Hansel & Son Furnishings to enter the ceramic pots market given the force you have been assigned. Your analysis will be judged by other students who are familiar with the decision-making category you have been assigned (Intensity of Competitive Rivalry), and you have the potential to be awarded up to $10 based on the quality of your report.

APPENDIX C

SUBMISSION FROM FICTITIOUS GROUP 2 STUDENT

Based on my evaluation of the competitive rivalry between Hansel & Sons Furnishings and other potential business competitors, my decision is that the best business choice is for them to enter the ceramics pots market. If Hansel & Sons Furnishings sells ceramic pots, I believe that in the long term they will increase their profits. I have come to this conclusion using the information given to me regarding the European market for home goods. The most important reason that selling ceramic pots would lead to increased profits is because the intensity of competitive rivalry is very low. There are only three other big companies that sell this same type of product, and it appears that one of them may exit the ceramic pots market. This would leave only two big companies that Hansel & Sons Furnishings would have to compete with. A second reason that it is a good decision to enter the ceramic pots market is because there was a financial report that stated that the competition in this market is weak. Supporting this report is that fact that there are very few other companies that are trying to also enter the market. A third major reason that is also based on the intensity of competitive rivalry that would make it a good idea to enter the ceramic pots market is that the other competitors have recently had financial troubles. From this information I think it may be possible that they may exit the market which would decrease the intensity of competitive rivalry. It is due to these three primary reasons, that I believe Hansel & Sons Furnishings should enter the ceramic pots market in Europe.

APPENDIX D

EVALUATION RUBRIC FOR GROUP 2

Evaluation Instructions: Below are the evaluation criteria that you are to use to assess a submission from a student in Group 2. You are to perform your evaluation using **only** the criteria specified below. When you review the submission, please keep in mind that the student only had 10 minutes to write.

- Decision: The participant clearly indicated that Hansel & Son Furnishings should enter the ceramic pots market.
- Information: The student appropriately referred to the information provided in their task instructions to argue the merits of their decision.
- Porter's Framework: The submission primarily focused on The Intensity of Competitive Rivalry to justify their decision.
- Presentation: The submission is organized and presented well. The writing flows in a logical, consistent, clear, and understandable way.
- Writing: The spelling, grammar, style, and content are all business-appropriate.

Similar to the feedback that Group 1 received, rather getting an overall numerical score, we would like for you to offer your personalized feedback regarding the submissions. Given to you by the experimenter is an assignment submitted by a Group 2 student who had the same type of Porter's Force as you did. **We ask that you give feedback in two ways:**

1. "Short form" feedback throughout the paper- it is printed double-spaced for you to do this. Here you can make small notes and point out grammatical errors.
2. Expanded feedback in paragraph form-you can do this on the backside of the Group 2 student's submission.

When you write your feedback on the back of their submission, please be detailed and specific about the merits and/or shortcomings of their decision-making as the Group 2 student will be reading your feedback.

As stated, our research group is interested in the effects that different types of rewards have on decision-making and quality of work. While group 1 was incentivized to turn in high-quality work for the chance to get a $50 reward, Group 2 is incentivized to turn in a high-quality submission with the promise of up to $10. Thus, based on the feedback you give the students, it is up to you as the evaluator how to allocate the reward money. Given to you by the experimenter was $10 in $1 bills. Based on the quality of the submission, please put the amount you feel is appropriate (based on the evaluation criteria above) into the envelope. You will also place the student's printed submission (after writing your feedback on it) into the envelope. Please seal the envelope and give it back to the experimenter. This envelope will later be delivered to the Group 2 student whose paper you evaluated.

APPENDIX E

FEEDBACK SCRIPTS

For all (in written form): The task you performed for this study involved making a decision regarding the company, East Oak, expanding its product line to include hand-made rugs. Based on an analysis of the intensity of competitive rivalry (one of Porter's Five Forces), your decision was to expand the product line by including hand-made rugs. Please enter your assigned lab study participant ID number to receive the feedback that is created for you.

Obligatory (Low moral intensity; Negatively valenced affective tone): From reading your submission, it is clear that you did a terrible job of outlining the reasons as to why it is the optimal decision to expand the product line to include hand-made rugs. I spent quite some time looking at what you wrote, and I can see that you have a very naïve grasp of business knowledge. Despite being given clear directions and ample information on East Oak and Porter's Five Forces, your submission was disappointing. Specifically, I would like for you to know that the arguments you made in your submission reflect a low level of critical thinking. Our expectation was that you would have taken more time to think through this task. It is obvious that you did not fully consider the intensity of competitive rivalry when making your decision. To be quite frank, you miserably failed to take into account various other relevant factors when you chose expand the product line. **(155 words)**

Punitive (High moral intensity; Negatively valenced affective tone): From reading your terribly written submission for this task, it is clear that you are an unethical person and you made a shady decision with regard to expanding the product line. Clearly, you have a naïve grasp of how awful child labor is. Despite being given clear directions and ample information on East Oak and Porter's Five Forces, your submission was disappointing because your argument reflects a low level of critical thinking. Specifically, when I read your submission, it is obvious that you are heartless as you did not take into account how innocent children may suffer due to your choice. It is apparent that you did not fully consider the moral implications of your decision. To be quite frank, you miserably failed to take into account that the welfare of many children is at stake when you chose expand the product line. For the future, you should be more aware that your decisions could hurt others, as they would have in this case. **(164 words)**

Permissive (Low moral intensity; Positively valenced affective tone): From reading your submission, it is clear to me that you did an excellent job of outlining the reasons why it is the optimal decision to expand the product line to include hand-made rugs. I spent quite some time looking at what you wrote, and I can see that you have a sophisticated grasp of business knowledge. You clearly paid attention to the information on East Oak and Porter's Five Forces as your submission was outstanding. Specifically, I would like for you to know that the arguments you made in your submission reflect a high level of critical thinking. You were able to meet our expectations regarding taking the time to think through this task. It is great that you fully considered the intensity of competitive rivalry when making your decision. To be quite frank, you put forward a very successful argument, and you obviously took into account various other relevant factors when you chose to expand the product line. **(160 words)**

Formative (High moral intensity; Positively valenced affective tone): From reading your submission for this task, it is clear that you did an excellent job in outlining the reasons why it is an optimal decision to expand the product line. It is great that you read the information on East

Oak and Porter's Five Forces; however, the decision you made doesn't reflect a high level of moral consideration and may be unethical. When I read your submission, it is clear that you have a sophisticated grasp of business knowledge, but you also seemed a bit heartless as you did not take into account that children may suffer due to your choice. Frankly, your business decision was one of the most successful arguments I've seen submitted, but the choice was shady with respect to children potentially getting hurt. Your writing is outstanding. But, for the future, you should be more aware that your decisions have the potential of affecting others in awful way, that way you can change the choices you make. **(162 words)**

Color Key:

- Words highlighted in pink reflect language that aims to increase moral intensity. There are 7 pink words in the morally intense conditions. They are all the same words. The words "moral" and "hurt" are the only words cited by the ANEW scale in this group. The valence mean is 6.45, making it a positively valenced work. Hurt is the 2nd word that can be found on the ANEW scale and its valence mean is a 1.66 making it a negatively valenced word.
  - unethical
  - shady
  - awful (referencing child labor)
  - heartless
  - suffer
  - moral
  - hurt (referencing child labor)

- Yellow highlighted words reflect language attempting to convey a negative affective tone. There are 4 words from the ANEW manual in each negative affective tone condition. Additional language added to reflect a negative affective tone not from the ANEW manual are underlined below and in the scripts.
  - terrible
  - disappointing
  - miserably
  - failed
  - naïve grasp (of business knowledge/child labor)
  - low level (of critical thinking/moral consideration)

- Green highlighted words reflect language attempting to convey a positive affective tone. There are 4 words from the ANEW manual in each positive affective tone condition.
  - excellent
  - outstanding
  - great
  - successful
  - sophisticated grasp (of business knowledge/child labor)
  - high level (of critical thinking/moral consideration)

APPENDIX F

CONTENT VALIDATION AND MANIPULATION CHECKS

Set 1: Obligatory Feedback (Low moral intensity; Negatively valenced affective tone):
If I were given the above feedback, it would make me feel that…

1. There are concerns regarding my financial competency in making business judgments.
2. I am being criticized based on my analytical skills.
3. The feedback provider is displeased with my understanding of business knowledge.
4. I did not meet the business performance expectations of my company.
5. My actions were unsatisfactory with regard to making the best business decision.

Set 2: Punitive Feedback (High moral intensity; Negatively valenced affective tone):
If I were given the above feedback, it would make me feel that…

1. There was nothing at all that I did correctly.
2. There is no hint of a positive response to my work.
3. I am guilty of doing something morally wrong.
4. The feedback provider is cynical of my unethical choice.
5. Better effort in the future when making ethical decisions is being demanded of me.

Set 3: Permissive Feedback (Low moral intensity; Positively valenced affective tone):
If I were given the above feedback, it would make me feel that…

1. The feedback provider is supporting me.
2. The choice that I made is being backed by the feedback provider.
3. I did a good thing.
4. The feedback provider is promoting my behavior.
5. I should continue making the same types of choices.

Set 4: Formative Feedback (High moral intensity; Positively valenced affective tone):
If I were given the above feedback, it would make me feel that…

1. My grasp of business knowledge received an overall positive response.
2. The feedback provider felt that I put forward a well-written submission.
3. My ethical decision-making skills are being questioned.
4. The feedback provider sees some redeeming qualities in my work.
5. The feedback provider wants me to change with regard to future choices.

APPENDIX G

MORAL INTENSITY AND AFFECTIVE TONE MANIPULATION CHECKS

Moral Intensity Manipulation Check:
This next section is with regard to the moral intensity of the feedback. Moral intensity refers to the level of morality that is evoked. Please rate the extent to which you believe the feedback in the script above is morally intense by rating the following statements.

The feedback above…
1. Highlights the importance of moral behavior.
2. Is ethical in nature.
3. Is relevant to behavior in a moral context.
4. References unethical behavior.
5. Has moral implications.

Valence Manipulation Check:
This next section is with regard to the affective tone, which is the emotional tone, of the feedback. Please rate the extent to which you believe the feedback in the script above matches with each of these words.

The feedback above is…
1. Critical
2. Negative
3. Harsh
4. Severe
5. Judgmental

Again, please rate the extent to which the feedback in the script matches with each of these words.

The affective tone of the feedback is:
1. Encouraging
2. Positive
3. Lenient
4. Tolerant
5. Nonjudgmental

APPENDIX H

MORAL DISENGAGEMENT SURVEY ITEMS

1. Cognitive Misconstrual (Advantageous comparison):
    a. Compared to what other people do, taking advantage of others for a business opportunity isn't worth worrying about.
    b. Exploiting the work of others is not so bad if you are still paying them more than they were making without you.
    c. Considering the atrocities that other companies commit oversees, using questionable local laws to one's advantage is not such a bad thing.

2. Minimization of one's role (Displacement of responsibility)
    a. People should not be held accountable for doing questionable things if they were just doing what the instructions said to do.
    b. People cannot be blamed for choosing the unethical course of action if others told them to do it.
    c. You can't blame people for taking advantage of a situation if that's what they were told to do.

3. Obscuring of distorting consequences (Lessen severity of offense)
    a. It is okay to lower your ethical standards when doing an assignment for school because no one gets hurts.
    b. Taking credit for work that is not your own is no big deal.
    c. When given money to donate, it is okay to keep some for yourself as long as you also donate some.

4. Reduction of identification with targets (Attribution of blame)
    a. People who get the short end of the stick have usually done something to bring it on themselves.
    b. If people are being taken advantage of, it's probably because they did not take adequate precautions to protect themselves.
    c. It is no one else's fault but their own when individuals allow themselves to be stepped on.

APPENDIX I

REVISED FEEDBACK SCRIPT

For all (in written form): The task you performed for this study involved making a decision regarding the company, East Oak, expanding its product line to include hand-made rugs. Based on an analysis of the intensity of competitive rivalry (one of Porter's Five Forces), your decision was to expand the product line by including hand-made rugs. Please enter your student ID number to receive the feedback that is created for you.

Obligatory (Low moral intensity; Negatively valanced affective tone): From reading your submission, it is clear that you did a terrible job of outlining your reasons as to whether East Oak should expand its product line to include hand-made rugs. I spent quite some time looking at what you wrote, and I can see that your submission demonstrates a very naïve grasp of business knowledge. Despite being given clear directions and ample information on East Oak and Porter's Five Forces, your submission was disappointing. Specifically, when I read your submission, it is obvious that the arguments you made reflect a low level of critical thinking. It is apparent that in doing this task, you did not take the time to fully consider the financial implications of your decision. It is obvious that you did not completely assess the intensity of competitive rivalry when making your decision. To be quite frank, you miserably failed to take into account the relevant factors when you chose expand the product line. **(158 words)**

Punitive (High moral intensity; Negatively valanced affective tone): From reading your submission, it is clear that you made a terribly unethical choice, specifically you made a shady decision with regard to whether East Oak should expand its product line to include hand-made rugs. Clearly, you have a naïve grasp of how awful child labor is. Despite being given clear directions and ample information on East Oak and Porter's Five Forces, your submission was disappointing because your argument reflects a low level of moral consideration. Specifically, it is obvious that you made a heartless decision as you did not take into account how innocent children may suffer due to your choice. It is apparent that you did not fully consider the implications of your decision. To be quite frank, you miserably failed to take into account that the welfare of many children is at stake when you chose expand the product line. To be quite frank, in the future, you should be more aware that your decisions could hurt others. **(161 words)**

Permissive (Low moral intensity; Positively valanced affective tone): From reading your submission, it is clear to me that you did an excellent job of outlining your reasons as to whether East Oak should expand its product line to include hand-made rugs. I spent quite some time looking at what you wrote, and I can see that your submission demonstrates a very sophisticated grasp of business knowledge. You clearly paid attention to the information on East Oak and Porter's Five Forces as your submission was outstanding. Specifically, it is obvious that the arguments you made in your submission reflect a high level of critical thinking. It is apparent that you took the time to consider the financial implications of your decision. Frankly, it is great that you fully considered the intensity of competitive rivalry when making your decision. Overall, you put forward a very successful argument, and you certainly took into account the relevant factors when you chose to expand the product line. **(154 words)**

Formative (High moral intensity; Positively valanced affective tone): From reading your submission, it is clear that you did an excellent job of outlining your reasons as to whether East Oak should expand its product line to include hand-made rugs. It is great that you read the

information on East Oak and Porter's Five Forces; however, your decision doesn't reflect a high level of moral consideration and may even be unethical. Specifically, it is obvious that the arguments made in your submission demonstrate that you have a sophisticated grasp of business knowledge, but you also seemed a bit heartless because you did not take into account that children may suffer due to your choice. Your business decision was one of the most successful arguments I've seen submitted, but frankly, the choice was shady with respect to children potentially getting hurt. Your writing is outstanding. But, for the future, you should be more aware that your decisions have the potential of affecting others in awful ways, as they would have in this case. **(163 words)**

Color Key:

- Words highlighted in pink reflect language that aims to increase moral intensity. There are 6 pink words in the morally intense conditions. They are all the same words. The words "moral" and "hurt" are the only words cited by the ANEW scale in this group. The valence mean is 6.45, making is a positively valanced work. Hurt is the 2nd word that can be found on the ANEW scale and its valence mean is a 1.66 making it a negatively valenced word.
  - unethical
  - shady
  - awful (referencing child labor)
  - heartless
  - suffer
  - moral
  - hurt (referencing child labor)

- Yellow highlighted words reflect language attempting to convey a negative affective tone. There are 4 words from the ANEW manual in each negative affective tone condition. Additional language added to reflect a negative affective tone not from the ANEW manual are underlined below and in the scripts.
  - terrible
  - disappointing
  - miserably
  - failed
  - naïve grasp (of business knowledge/child labor)
  - low level (of critical thinking/moral consideration)

- Green highlighted words reflect language attempting to convey a positive affective tone. There are 4 words from the ANEW manual in each positive affective tone condition.
  - excellent
  - outstanding
  - great
  - successful
  - sophisticated grasp (of business knowledge/child labor)
  - high level (of critical thinking/moral consideration)

APPENDIX J

SCALES FOR MORAL AWARENESS, GUILT, AND GRATITUDE

Moral awareness (Reynolds, 2006)

a. I saw that there were very important aspects to the business decision-making task.
b. I felt that the business decision making task clearly involved ethical or moral issues.
c. It was clear to me that the business choice I made involved ethical repercussions.

Guilt (Kugler & Jones, 1992)

a. I didn't feel particularly guilty about anything I had done.
b. I felt like I had done something I regret.
c. I felt good about myself and what I had done.

Gratitude (Emmons & McCullough, 2003)

a. I felt grateful towards the feedback provider.
b. I felt appreciative towards the feedback provider.
c. I felt thankful towards the feedback provider.

APPENDIX K

PROOF OF IRB APPROVAL

ASU Knowledge Enterprise Development

APPROVAL: EXPEDITED REVIEW

Donald Lange
Management
480/965-7571
Don.Lange@asu.edu

Dear Donald Lange:

On 9/6/2017 the ASU IRB reviewed the following protocol:

Type of Review:	Modification
Title:	A social cognitive perspective of the influence of feedback on the perpetuation of unethical behavior over time through external influences over moral disengagement
Investigator:	Donald Lange
IRB ID:	STUDY00005507
Category of review:	(7)(b) Social science methods, (7)(a) Behavioral research
Funding:	Name: Graduate College
Grant Title:	None
Grant ID:	None
Documents Reviewed:	• Final Survey v2.pdf, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions); • Appendix 3- Group 2 fictitious student submission v2.pdf, Category: Participant materials (specific directions for them); • Debriefing Consent Form-ASU Participants v3-CLEAN.pdf, Category: Consent Form; • Consent Form-ASU Participants v4-CLEAN.pdf, Category: Consent Form; • Appendix 6- Content validation v7.pdf, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions); • Balven IRB Protocol- Influence of feedback on behavioral trajectory v8-CLEAN.docx, Category: IRB

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Rachel McCullagh Balven (formerly Rachel Valerie McCullagh) was born in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on January 19th, 1987. She received her elementary education from Sayfol International School in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (1989-1990), The International School in Calcutta, India (1990-1991), Jumeirah English Speaking School (JESS) in Dubai, UAE (1991-1993), The British School in Muscat, Oman (1993-1995), and Spicewood Elementary School in Austin, Texas (1995-1997). Her secondary education was completed at Lake Olympia Middle School in Missouri City, Texas (1997-2000), and for high school she first went to Clements High School in Sugarland, Texas (2000-2002) and later attended John Newcombe Tennis Academy while taking classes at New Braunfels High School in New Braunfels, Texas (2002-2004). She received a full athletic scholarship to attend Saint Louis University in St. Louis, MO (2004-2008) where she graduated Magna Cum Laude double majoring in Business and International Studies and minoring in Theology and Spanish. During her last year as an undergraduate she worked as an International Business Research Intern for the World Trade Center. Upon graduating she started a fulltime job at an electric utility company, Ameren, in St. Louis, MO. She worked for Ameren for just over five years (2008-2013) during which they partially sponsored her to attended school part-time at Washington University in St. Louis to receive her MBA (2009-2011). After earning her MBA, she married her husband (August 11th, 2012), adopted her first child, and in 2013 she started her doctoral program. During the doctoral program she successfully completed the PhD requirements, received several grants, gave birth to her daughter, and adopted another son.