

**Moral Disengagement from an Organizational Justice Perspective:  
An Exploratory Study**

by

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## **Abstract**

The current study contributes to a growing understanding of the construct of moral disengagement, in particular the role of organizational justice and individual differences as antecedents. In a study of 272 undergraduate students, no significant relationship was found between organizational justice and a tendency to morally disengage, as assessed through responses to ethical business scenarios. However, several important relationships were uncovered between individual differences and moral disengagement. Among them, aggression, cynical views of humankind, and being reserved (or “aloof”) positively related to moral disengagement, while conscientiousness and empathy exhibited negative relationships. Interestingly, the callous affect subscale of psychopathy also negatively related to moral disengagement. Furthermore, an exploratory analysis was conducted to assess differential relationships for each of the eight moral disengagement techniques. The implications of these results for future research on situational and individual antecedents of moral disengagement are discussed.

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## **Introduction**

One of the most enduring questions of the human condition revolves around the explanation of why people engage in unethical behavior. This question is particularly relevant for organizations, as the effects of such behavior can be far-reaching and often financially and emotionally disastrous for many (Bajaj, 2008; Gimein, 2008).

Unsurprisingly, many empirical studies have focused on unethical decision making in organizations. A recent review of the literature found that a bulk of unethical decision-making studies focused on individual factors and differences (e.g., age, moral philosophy), while only about half of that amount focused on organizational factors (e.g. ethics codes, rewards and sanctions; Loe, Ferrell, & Mansfield, 2000). Loe and colleagues argue that an integration of the organizational context and individual factors is a necessary future step in ultimately determining the “why” behind peoples’ unethical decisions at work (see also Funder, 2001). In response, the current study attempts to predict unethical decision-making by examining the effects of organizational justice and individual factors on the propensity to morally disengage.

Moral disengagement offers a mechanism by which otherwise moral individuals can engage in unethical decisions or behaviors. Briefly, moral disengagement allows individuals to selectively and temporarily disengage internal moral standards that would typically inhibit unethical decisions (Bandura, 1999). Recent research has focused on the antecedents that lead to moral disengagement, with the goal of uncovering important individual differences (Detert, Trevino, & Sweitzer, 2008). However, from the

interactionist perspective proposed by Trevino (1986), individual differences and the social environment are theorized to combine to explain and predict ethical decision-making. As such, if we are to explain workers' unethical decisions and behavior, we must consider the effects of the individual and the environment. To the best of the author's knowledge, no study to date has offered such a comprehensive examination of moral disengagement. As a result, the current study will focus on the unique effects of organizational justice and relevant individual differences, as well as the potential for interactive effects between them. By filling this gap in the literature, the current study will contribute to a better understanding of moral disengagement, and the ways in which individuals can be dissuaded from deactivating moral standards in response to unjust conditions and personality tendencies.

### **Moral Disengagement Theory**

Before introducing the construct of moral disengagement, it is important to outline the relevant aspects of the theory from which it arose: Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory (SCT). In SCT, human actions are conceptualized as the result of interactions between behavior, cognitive and other personal factors, and the environment. This perspective is congruent with Trevino's (1986) interactionist approach to ethical decision-making introduced above. SCT proposes that individuals employ a self-regulatory mechanism that allows them to anticipate, reflect on, and judge their actions in comparison to a set of internal moral standards. Moreover, Bandura (1986) argues that these internal standards are the result of social learning and repeated exposure of the self-regulatory mechanism, as opposed to being genetically determined. This mechanism underscores the importance of considering both the social environment and the

individual's personality in moral self-regulation. Furthermore, Bandura proposed that such regulatory mechanisms could be selectively activated or deactivated. Moral disengagement extends from the interactionist perspective of SCT and refers to the ability of individuals to selectively disengage internal moral standards via eight interrelated mechanisms, discussed in detail below (Bandura, 1999). In other words, moral disengagement is the ability of individuals to engage in unethical decision-making or behavior without experiencing distress by cognitively reframing their perceptions.

The mechanisms of moral disengagement can be logically separated into three groups, all of which involve some form of cognitive restructuring. The first group comprises mechanisms that rely on cognitive restructuring of the *act or behavior*: moral justification, euphemistic labeling, and advantageous comparison. Each of these mechanisms is intended to portray unethical behavior as less harmful or even necessary in certain contexts. As a result, such actions should be easier for the individual to carry out. For example, moral justification may involve rationalizing unethical behavior as critical in serving the greater good of the organization. Employing euphemistic language sanitizes behavior by replacing negative wording with more positive images (e.g., "massaging" the books instead of falsifying them). Finally, advantageous comparison allows individuals to consider current unethical behavior as less aversive or damaging as compared to other possibilities that are seen as being more harmful.

The second group of moral disengagement mechanisms center on the cognitive restructuring of the *role of the actor*: displacement of responsibility, diffusion of responsibility, and disregard/distortion of consequences. In these three cases, the unethical behavior is made more palatable due to perceived lack of control over the



situation. Relevant to organizations, displacement of responsibility allows an employee to blame an authority, be it a boss or supervisor. Diffusion of responsibility, on the other hand, allows an individual to attribute responsibility to the group of which the individual is a part. In both cases, the perceived role of the employee in the behavior is diminished. Disregard/distortion of the consequences will allow an individual to disconnect the results of the behavior from the act itself, reducing the role the employee has in the harm resulting from the behavior.

The final group of mechanisms involves cognitive restructuring of the *victims of unethical behavior*: dehumanization and attribution of blame. In both cases, the mechanism does not dispute or redefine the consequences of unethical behavior. Rather, the victims are conceptualized as somehow having deserved such treatment. Dehumanization, in an organizational context, may be an executive's dismissal of his employees simply as a means to generate profits instead of seeing them as individuals. In this sense, unethical behavior may then be perceived as justified, as when an executive pays himself bonuses while cutting pension funds. Attribution of blame involves placing blame on the victim of unethical acts, such that the consequences of the behavior are somehow deserved. In all, the eight mechanisms of moral disengagement, when selectively engaged, allow individuals to participate in unethical behavior without the guidance of internal moral standards.

Although moral disengagement has traditionally been studied in the domains of military or political violence (Bandura, 1999), delinquent youths (Barnes, Welte, Hoffman, & Dintcheff, 2005), or death-related professions (Osofsky, Bandura, & Zimbardo, 2005), recent efforts have begun to focus on the nuanced role in organizational

contexts (Detert, Trevino, & Sweitzer, 2008; Moore, 2007). Indeed, based on several of the above examples, it is not difficult to see how individuals in organizations are able, possibly even encouraged, to morally disengage by virtue of organizational hierarchies and bureaucracies. Critical to the consideration of moral disengagement in organizations, following from a SCT perspective, is whether or not these mechanisms are being selectively engaged. Previous research (Detert et al., 2008) has focused almost exclusively on individual differences as antecedents of moral disengagement. However, we argue that for a more complete understanding of moral disengagement, the main effects and interactions of social triggers and individual differences must be considered. It follows from SCT that cues from the environment and the interpretation of those cues based on personality differences will combine to influence the ways in which one ultimately creates internal moral standards and then chooses to activate or deactivate those standards. Because this is a critical aspect of SCT, and consequently of moral disengagement, we argue that the environment will have a large impact on the tendency to morally disengage. It is with this idea that we now turn to the construct of organizational justice as a potential organizationally based trigger.

### **Integration of Organizational Justice**

Broadly, organizational justice is conceptualized as the perception of fairness in the workplace. Where fairness has been found to relate to motivation, satisfaction and citizenship behaviors, the perception of unfairness relates to negative changes that are both affective (e.g., low commitment) and behavioral in nature (e.g., withdrawal; Latham & Pinder, 2005). Studies of organizational fairness originated from Adams' (1963) equity theory, which rests on the premise that members of an organization will

simultaneously judge their inputs (e.g., time, effort) against their outputs (e.g., pay, benefits). The degree to which an employee's inputs are perceived to be commensurate with outputs leads to perceptions of fairness, which provided early conceptualizations of distributive justice. Later research expanded the organizational justice construct to include procedural justice. Procedural justice refers to the extent that individuals perceive workplace procedures, especially those that determine outputs, to be fair, consistent, accurate and free of bias (Leventhal, 1980). Another important aspect of procedural justice specifies the role that having a "voice" or other form of control in a process leads to perceptions of procedural fairness (Folger, 1977). The most recent component of organizational justice, introduced by Bies and Moag (1986), focuses on the interactions within the organization from a justice perspective, known as interactional justice. Subsequently, these interactions have been divided further into two distinct justice components. Interpersonal justice refers to the degree that people perceive they are being treated respectfully and politely by the authority of the organization. Informational justice, on the other hand, refers to the degree that information and/or explanations have been given in a timely manner and appear reasonable. Although the distinctiveness of each of these forms of justice has been called into question, research has generally supported the four-factor structure presented above (Colquitt, 2001). Given the range of negative outcomes (e.g., turnover intentions, counterproductive work behaviors) that previously have been related to perceptions of injustice (cf. Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Colquitt et al., 2001), we propose that organizational justice is a salient construct that may lead individuals to morally disengage.

Thus far, we have proposed that organizational justice may play a role in increasing one's tendency to morally disengage. From an interactionist perspective, however, we should also expect individual differences to play a moderating role in organizational justice-moral disengagement relationships. Returning briefly to equity theory, an individual will react to perceptions of injustice in order to resolve perceived inequities (Adams, 1963). Research to date has primarily focused on the manner in which personality differences affect the tendency of certain responses to organizational justice over others. For instance, Henle (2005) reported that individuals who exhibit low socialization or high impulsivity are more likely to see organizational deviance as an acceptable response to interactional injustice, than do individuals who exhibit high socialization or low impulsivity. Similarly, van Olfen and de Cremer (2007) found that individuals with low personal control respond differently, in terms of organizational attachment, to low levels of procedural justice than do individuals with high levels of personal control. Both cases indicate the importance of simultaneously considering situational and personality factors when examining justice-outcome relationships.

Moreover, Detert and colleagues (2008) note that some personality traits may make individuals more prone to moral disengagement. For example, they argue that empathy lessens the tendency to morally disengage because individuals are more likely to identify with the circumstances of others. Conversely, trait cynicism facilitates moral disengagement by virtue of distancing individuals from the victims, actions, or consequences of unethical or immoral behavior. In line with these findings and those from the organizational justice literature, the current study will consider several individual differences that may affect the way in which organizational justice perceptions

relate to a tendency to morally disengage. Namely, we sought personality types that lead to either a distancing effect, such as that shown by cynicism, or an increased likelihood of unethical or dysfunctional behavior, as was shown for deviance. In this manner, we will be able to more accurately capture moral disengagement as a response to perceptions of injustice.

Specifically, a number of frequently researched dysfunctional personalities are considered in the current study, including trait aggression, Machiavellianism, subclinical psychopathy, and subclinical narcissism. We opted to consider aggression due to its role in a large range of workplace deviant behaviors, including retribution, obstructions, displaced aggression, and counterproductive performance (James, McIntyre, Glisson, Bowler, & Mitchell, 2004). Aggressive individuals have been shown to be more inclined to perceive injustice (Kennedy, Homant, & Homant, 2004), and as a result, may be more likely to respond to such injustices with one of the moral disengagement mechanisms. We also will consider dysfunctional dispositions outside of aggressive tendencies, which have been shown to relate to higher potential for work-related problems (Hogan & Hogan, 2001). Several examples of these dispositions include being *excitable*- defined as “moody and hard to please” with “intense but short-lived enthusiasm”- and *leisurely*- defined as “ignoring other people’s requests and becoming irritated or argumentative if they persist” (Hogan & Hogan, 2001, p. 42). Given the higher incidence of organizational issues among these individuals, it is of empirical interest to determine the extent that these personality types and perceptions of injustice lead to a tendency to morally disengage.

Finally, we will consider three common undesirable personality traits, referred to in the literature as the “dark triad” of personality (Paulhus & Williams, 2002). The dark triad includes some of the more researched traits, including Machiavellianism, narcissism, and subclinical psychopathy. Christie and Geis (1970) originally introduced the concept of a Machiavellian personality construct, when they created a measure derived from statements found in Machiavelli’s original books. They found that individuals who agreed with such statements were more likely to behave coldly and manipulatively. In the case of both subclinical narcissism and psychopathy, researchers translated clinical criteria from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) into a form more applicable for nonclinical samples. For example, Raskin and Hall (1979) outlined the criteria for the narcissistic personality as one involving high levels of self-importance, responses to criticism that are either indifferent or full of rage, and a lack of empathy, among others. Psychopathy, on the other hand, long having been defined solely from prison sample data, began to accumulate interest, especially those individuals that are “successful” psychopaths (Babiak, 2000; Widom, 1977). This shift in focus was aided by numerous efforts to create self-report measures (e.g., Hare, 1985; Levenson, Kiehl, & Fitzpatrick, 1995) to be used in place of impractical clinical interviews. Again, low empathy was defined as a hallmark, but this time, it was combined with a high degree of impulsivity or thrill seeking and selfishness.

Although it can be seen that all three of the dark triad share certain features (i.e., social malevolence, self-promoting tendencies, emotional coldness, duplicity, and aggressiveness; Paulhus & Williams, 2002, p. 557), the authors also found the three personality constructs of the dark triad to be distinct from each other. The question then

becomes one of determining which combinations relate to higher tendencies of moral disengagement and why. In fact, prior research has hinted that perhaps the combination of these traits may lead to different perceptions of justice, as well as differences in the selection of responses to injustice. For example, a study that focused on the effect of such personalities in organizations found a positive relationship between Machiavellianism and increased job strain and decreased satisfaction (Gemmell & Heisler, 1972). In explaining such results, the authors hypothesized that the cynical and untrusting nature of such individuals might lead them to perceive more unfairness than others (e.g., being passed over for a promotion they deserved). Some support for this proposition has been offered. Schmitt, Gollwitzer, Maes, and Arbach (2005) found that self-concern constructs correlated highly with a measure of victim sensitivity, or tendency to perceive victimization. These results suggest that individuals having these traits may be more likely to perceive and respond to organizational injustice than others without such traits. Combine this finding with the tendency for emotional coldness, such individuals might show decreased empathy and, as Detert et al. (2008) found, be more likely to select moral disengagement as a response. In summary, we believe that these dispositional traits may have unique main effects, as well as interact with the perception of organizational justice and result in specific patterns of moral disengagement.

In the current study, we broadly hypothesize unique main effects of organizational injustice and individual differences, as well as interactive effects of these two factors on moral disengagement. Of particular interest to the current study, specific patterns of moral disengagement may emerge in response to the experience of organizational justice; theoretically, we may trace the similarities between the experience of certain injustices

and the justifications underlying disengagement mechanisms. For example, interpersonal injustice relates to treating people with disrespect, where the mechanisms of dehumanization and attribution of blame relate to reconceptualizing the victim as subhuman or somehow blameworthy. In organizational cultures where workers are seen only as generating profits or are otherwise treated poorly, unethical behaviors may be rationalized by similarly ignoring the human qualities of the workers. In another instance, procedural injustice refers to processes that are unfair or in which individuals have no voice, which may encourage people to be more likely to morally disengage by using the following mechanisms: diffusion of responsibility or displacement of responsibility. If an individual has no say in a given process, it is likely that they may rationalize unethical behavior along similar lines, by blaming the boss or the group. Furthermore, the tendency of individuals to morally disengage may also be a function of the individual differences presented earlier. As one illustrative example, aggressive individuals who must balance the maintenance of a positive self-concept and aggressive tendencies may rely more on moral disengagement mechanisms than non-aggressive individuals. Finally, individual differences and the perception of organizational justice may also interact to uniquely predict moral disengagement. Using the same example as above, aggressive individuals may be more sensitive to certain types of organizational injustice (e.g. interpersonal as opposed to informational), and as a result, more likely to resort to moral disengagement than in response to other forms of disengagement. A summary of the major relationships between the constructs is depicted in Figure 1.



## **Method**

### **Participants and Procedure**

The current study consists of two waves of online data collection at a large, public university in the Southeast. Participants were undergraduates who received course credit in exchange for completion of the surveys. The first wave of data collection consisted of a number of demographic variables and the individual difference measures, presented in randomized order. Upon completion of the first wave, participants were then eligible to complete the second wave of data collection, which involved responding to several scenarios depicting ethical dilemmas. Each scenario depicted a different aspect of organizational justice and presented the participant with an issue requiring resolution. Participants responded to each scenario by rating their approval of a rationale for the solution of the ethical dilemma. Each participant completed a different scenario for each organizational justice condition, resulting in a within-subjects design. These two waves were disguised as unrelated studies to prevent participants from ascertaining our hypotheses. The final sample for the current study consisted of 272 students who completed both waves. The average age of participants was 20.18 years old ( $SD = 2.13$  years), 68.8% female, and consisted of the following ethnic backgrounds: 92% Caucasian/White, 5% African American/Black, 2% Asian American/Pacific Islander, and 1% Hispanic. Because data collection took place over the Fall and Spring semesters, we also ran independent groups t-tests to verify that the samples from each semester were

equivalent on these demographic variables. None of the results of these tests were significant, so all of the analyses will be conducted on the combined sample.

## **Measures**

**Scenario Development.** Although the use of scenarios in ethical decision making studies is debated, the benefits of such an approach often outweigh the disadvantages (Loviscky, Trevino, & Jacobs, 2007). Along with Loviscky and his colleagues, we argue that scenarios present standardized stimuli for participants to respond to, allowing us to manipulate the organizational justice component, as well as possible solutions reflecting strategies of moral disengagement. The four scenarios used in the current study (see Appendix A) were modified from scenarios originally presented in Loviscky et al. (2007), in which managerial moral judgment was assessed. For each scenario, several phrases were added in order to manipulate the organizational justice condition (e.g., for Informational Justice: “Ray blames the situation on his boss not communicating important details about the project in a timely manner”). The phrasing for each organizational justice manipulation reflects commonly accepted dimensions provided by Colquitt (2001; see Table 1). For the informational justice example provided above, the defining measurement item derived from Colquitt was as follows: “communicated details in a timely manner” (p. 389). Each one of the four base scenarios was modified to depict the four forms of organizational justice. This approach resulted in 16 unique scenarios and allowed for them to be counterbalanced across participants.

Following each scenario, participants were asked to respond to statements according to their level of approval for justifying an unethical solution. Participants rated each justification on a 7-point Likert response format ranging from 1 (‘I strongly

disapprove’) to 7 (‘I strongly approve’). Rationales for the solution to each scenario were written to represent a moral disengagement technique, with each statement representing a single technique. The basis for each statement was derived from a moral disengagement scale presented by Detert et al. (2008; see appendix A). For example, “It’s ok to steal to take care of your family’s needs,” measuring moral justification, was modified for an organizational setting to read, “He needs to take care of his own company first and foremost.” These statements were designed to provide the participant with possible rationales for following an unethical path (e.g., “It’s okay for Ray to focus on deadlines at the expense of quality because...”). The responses to the scenario also included an option to capture ethical decision-making (i.e., “It’s never okay to focus on deadlines at the expense of quality.”).

Once the scenarios were constructed, they were subjected to a pilot study, in which graduate students in the Management and Industrial/Organizational Psychology programs performed a Q-Sort. In this process, participants were asked to read each scenario and then categorize it according to the form of organizational justice they believed it represented. Descriptions of each form of organizational justice were also provided to assist individuals in making their decisions. In the first round of pilot testing, 25 participants rated the scenarios. Six scenarios that did not have greater than 75% agreement were revised and subjected to further pilot testing. In the second round, 16 participants rated the revised scenarios. All scenarios achieved greater than 75% agreement with the exception of a single scenario that achieved 67% agreement.

**Individual Differences.** A number of relevant individual difference variables were assessed during the first wave of data collection. Among them, participants

completed the Hogan Development Survey (HDS; Hogan & Hogan, 2009), which is designed to assess 11 common dysfunctional work behaviors. Responses consist of ‘True’ or ‘False’ answers to a total of 168 items. Given the exploratory nature of the current study, we want to capture potential individual differences in workplace behavior, especially those factors that would lead an individual to be more likely to respond unethically to a given situation. Although this measure is typically geared towards the assessment of employees, an independent samples *t*-test was used to verify that responses did not significantly differ between individuals with work experience and those without work experience.

Participants also completed the Conditional Reasoning Test for Aggression (CRT-A; James & MacIntyre, 2000). The CRT-A is based on inductive reasoning problems, to which the participants are asked to respond, as opposed to traditional self-report methods of aggressive behaviors. The rationale behind the CRT-A is that aggressive individuals employ different justification mechanisms (e.g., hostile attribution bias, derogation of target bias) about the world than do prosocial individuals, and these mechanisms inform an individual’s reasoning. The overall reliability estimate in the current study is .59, although typical estimates range from .74 to .87 (James, McIntyre, Glisson, Bowler, & Mitchell, 2004). A summary of 10 empirical validation studies indicate that the mean uncorrected validity coefficient of the CRT-A is .44, which is above the typical .40 value for single predictors measuring aptitudes and .30 for personality (James et al., 2004).

The International Personality Item Pool (IPIP; Goldberg, 1999) measured participant’s personality along the common five-factor model, which includes scales to assess openness to experience, extraversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness, and

emotional stability (previously neuroticism). Scales for each factor will be used, consisting of 10 items each. Participants will be asked to respond to each item on the basis of how well it describes themselves on a 5-point response format (1 = “Very inaccurate,” 5 = “Very accurate”). The alpha reliability estimates for each of the five factors are .85 (neuroticism), .77 (openness), .83 (conscientiousness), .81 (agreeableness), and .87 (extraversion).

The scale for Empathy was also sourced from the IPIP. Although it is labeled sympathy on that site, Detert et al. (2008) note that differences between sympathy and empathy are largely semantic in nature, sympathy simply being the more outdated term. This scale consists of ten items, rated on a 5-point response format (1 = “Very inaccurate,” 5 = “Very accurate”). A sample item is “I suffer from others’ sorrows.” The reliability estimate for empathy is .73.

Machiavellianism, often defined as having a manipulative personality, was measured using the MACH-IV inventory (Christie & Geis, 1970). The inventory consists of 20 5-point Likert items, 10 of which indicate high Machiavellianism and 10 indicate low Machiavellianism. Participants are asked to respond to items based on the extent to which they agree or disagree with the items, phrased either in Machiavellianism terms or not. Reported alpha coefficients have consistently been found to be around .79 (e.g., Jakobwitz & Egan, 2006; Paulhus & Williams, 2002). The overall reliability estimate for the current study is .76.

Narcissism was measured using the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI-16; Ames, Rose, & Anderson, 2006), which is a short form of the NPI-40 developed by Raskin and Hall (1979). This measure is a 16-item forced-choice questionnaire.

Participants responded to each set of items, selecting the option that most closely matched their own feelings. Statements are constructed such that one option is in opposition with its pair (e.g., “I am more capable than other people” and “I like having authority over other people”). The reliability estimate for the current study is .70. Reported reliability for the short measure have traditionally ranged from .68 to .78 (Ames et al., 2006), while the reported reliability for the 40-item scale is .83 (Raskin & Terry, 1988). Ames et al. (2006) also reported a correlation of .90 between the 16-item and the 40-item scales.

Subclinical psychopathy was measured using the Self Report Psychopathy Scale (SRP III; Paulhus, Hemphill, & Hare, in press). The SRP-III is a 64-item measure, representing a four-factor structure of psychopathy: interpersonal manipulation, criminal tendencies, erratic lifestyle, and callous affect. The measure is an improvement over previous 2-factor versions of the SRP and is an attempt to more closely align with four-factor structures represented in clinical psychopathy instruments (Williams, Paulhus, & Hare, 2007). Respondents are asked to rate the extent to which each statement describes them on a Likert-type response format, ranging from 1 (“Strongly Disagree”) to 5 (“Strongly Agree”). Sample items include “I am a rebellious person” and “I never feel guilty over hurting others.” The overall alpha reliability estimate is .79.

## Results

Basic descriptive statistics, scale reliability estimates and bivariate correlations are presented in Tables 1-3. Additionally, the correlations between the individual moral disengagement mechanisms are provided in Table 4. To assess the potential for a direct relationship between organizational justice and moral disengagement, a repeated measures analysis was conducted using a linear mixed model approach. For this analysis, the dependent variable was participants' moral disengagement scores, which were calculated as the mean rating across the moral disengagement mechanisms for each scenario. The within-subject, fixed factor comprised the four forms of organizational justice that were depicted by the scenarios: distributive, procedural, informational, and interpersonal. The results from the final model, assuming an unstructured covariance structure and after controlling for age, grade point average, and previous employment, indicate that organizational justice likely does not significantly affect one's tendency to morally disengage,  $F(3,217) = .223, p = .880$ ; a summary of the estimated marginal means is provided in Table 5. Pairwise inspection of these means, using a Bonferroni correction, suggests there are no significant differences in moral disengagement score between any of the conditions of organizational justice, all  $p$ 's = 1. In the event that the mean moral disengagement score masks some of the variability among individual mechanisms, disengagement mechanisms, grouped by organizational justice type, were plotted against participants' moral disengagement score (see Figure 2). Visual inspection of the means corroborates the results from the overall analysis, showing scant differences

between the forms of organizational justice for each type of moral disengagement mechanism. Taken together, these results suggest that organizational justice has no significant effect on moral disengagement, either measured at the overall level or at the level of the individual mechanisms.

Although the primary research questions in the current study pertained to the potential interactive effects of situational and individual factors in predicting moral disengagement, the previous results suggest that it may be more worthwhile to turn attention to individual difference antecedents instead. For the subsequent analyses, moral disengagement scores were averaged across the conditions of organizational justice, resulting in a between-subjects design. At this stage, a multiple hierarchical regression was conducted to determine which of the individual difference variables predict moral disengagement. The dependent variable of moral disengagement was calculated as the overall mean score across both mechanisms and justice conditions. In the first step, the control variables of age, grade point average, and previous employment were entered. In the subsequent step, scores representing the individual difference variables were entered in a stepwise fashion. The full results from the models are provided in Table 6. The final model predicted 32% of the variance in moral disengagement, with significant predictors of the Cynical Views subscale of Machiavellianism ( $B = .193, t = 2.124, p = .035$ ), aggression ( $B = .434, t = 2.682, p = .008$ ), conscientiousness ( $B = -.207, t = -2.867, p = .005$ ), the Reserved dimension of the HDS ( $B = .049, t = 2.758, p = .006$ ), the Callous Affect dimension of psychopathy ( $B = -.288, t = -3.127, p = .002$ ), and empathy ( $B = -.239, t = -2.442, p = .016$ ).



In addition to the primary analysis of overall moral disengagement, an exploratory regression analysis was conducted at the level of individual mechanisms. The overall score for each mechanism was computed as the mean score across the four scenarios. A mean score was also computed for overall unethical decision-making based on the final response to each scenario, in which participants rated their disapproval of the action presented in the scenario, which was reverse-coded to maintain consistency with the other moral disengagement items. Similar to the overall analysis, the first step in the regression contained the control variables of age, GPA, and previous employment. The second step involved the stepwise inclusion of the individual difference variables to determine which have the best predictive ability. The results from these analyses are presented in Tables 7a through 7i.

Although the values in the tables represent the standard significance levels, it is also worth noting the predictors remain significant after controlling for Type I error rate using the conservative Bonferroni correction,  $p < .00625$ . For the moral justification, displacement of responsibility, and distortion of consequences mechanisms, no predictors satisfied this stringent criterion. The Cynical View subscale of Machiavellianism emerged as significant for the euphemistic language mechanism ( $B = .346, t = 2.951, p = .004$ ), the dehumanization mechanism ( $B = .402, t = 3.357, p = .001$ ), and the attribution of blame mechanism ( $B = .347, t = 3.012, p = .003$ ). Aggression emerged as a significant predictor for the diffusion of responsibility mechanism ( $B = .847, t = 3.257, p = .001$ ), the attribution of blame mechanism ( $B = .659, t = 2.823, p = .005$ ), and the measure of unethical decision-making ( $B = .677, t = 2.755, p = .006$ ). Conscientiousness emerged as significant for the advantageous comparison mechanism ( $B = -.425, t = -4.318, p < .001$ ),

and the dehumanization mechanism ( $B = -.323, t = -3.265, p = .001$ ). Openness to experience was also a significant predictor for the dehumanization mechanism ( $B = -.381, t = -4.560, p < .001$ ), as well as the measure of unethical decision-making ( $B = -.311, t = -3.329, p = .001$ ). Finally, the Reserved subscale ( $B = .073, t = 2.977, p = .003$ ) and the Diligent subscale ( $B = -.072, t = -3.453, p = .001$ ) of the Hogan Development Survey significantly predicted the attribution of blame mechanism. In general, the individual results tend to corroborate the results from the analysis of overall moral disengagement.

## **Discussion**

The current study initially set out in an effort to determine the situational and individual antecedents of the moral disengagement construct. Whereas previous studies have focused primarily on individual differences (e.g., Detert et al., 2008), this study attempted to uncover some of the more interesting reactions that individuals have to situational factors that might encourage either more or less moral disengagement. Therefore, the primary interest was on the relationship between perceptions of organizational justice and the resultant propensity to morally disengage. Of secondary interest were the personality factors that might interact with or influence perceptions of organizational justice. Although the possibility exists to study this same model with the situational factors moderating the relationship between personality and moral disengagement, the model in the current study was intended merely to reflect the respective strength of situational versus individual factors, particularly in response to the strong situations generated by the manipulated scenarios. Unfortunately, the differences between these two perspectives became moot as the situational factors emerged as nonsignificant.

Despite the best efforts to validate and emphasize the manipulations in the scenarios, there was no significant relationship between organizational justice and moral disengagement, either at the overall level or at the level of the individual mechanisms. At this point, the focus of the study shifted from one following a situation-person interactionist perspective to one focused on the individual differences that predict moral

disengagement. Collapsing moral disengagement across the conditions of organizational justice, several individual differences emerged to predict one's propensity to morally disengage. Specifically, aggression, cynical views of human kind, and what Hogan and Hogan (2009) refer to as being reserved all positively predicted one's tendency to morally disengage. On the other hand, conscientiousness, empathy, and the Callous Affect subscale of psychopathy all negatively relate to the tendency to morally disengage (a more detailed treatment of the callous affect relationship will be provided below). All of these individual differences, with the exception of empathy, also emerged as significant predictors of at least half of exploratory analyses of the individual moral disengagement mechanisms.

The presence of relationships between cynical views of humankind, empathy, and moral disengagement reinforces previous findings by Detert et al. (2008). It appears that individuals with high levels of empathy are more likely to take the perspective of others, and are therefore less likely to utilize moral disengagement tactics. At the other end of the spectrum, those individuals who have an inherent distrust of people will be more likely to distance themselves from others, in turn facilitating the use of moral disengagement tactics. These findings are in line with previous research that has focused on the relationship between perspective-taking and moral behavior (Eisenberg, 2000). Beyond the extant literature, this study also offers a preliminary examination of the specific mechanisms that these traits predict. For example, the current findings suggest that cynicism may predict a higher likelihood of the use of the euphemistic language, dehumanization, and attribution of blame mechanisms. Understanding which mechanisms certain individuals tend to employ is potentially important in generating

interventions to prevent moral disengagement. For example, interventions aimed to limit the possibility of diffusion of responsibility may have little effect on individuals who rate highly on measures of cynicism. Without analyses geared towards the level of specific mechanisms, our understanding of the construct of moral disengagement will be inherently limited.

Turning to the other main findings, the current study is among the first to demonstrate relationships between being reserved, trait aggression, and conscientiousness with moral disengagement. Hogan and Hogan (2009) define the trait of reserved as “seeming socially withdrawn and lacking interest in or awareness of the feelings of others” (p. 13). In many ways, this description contains some conceptual overlap with the previous discussions of empathy and cynicism, although it remains distinct. In general, this relationship further supports a trend where the inability to connect with others is at the root of increased tendencies to morally disengage, whether that inability is defined in terms of low empathy, high distrust, or merely a disinterest in others. The current study has therefore contributed to the growing nomological network of antecedents that rely on one’s relationships to other people. Interestingly, based on the analyses of individual mechanisms, being reserved predicts one’s likelihood to utilize attribution of blame. One possible mechanism connecting the trait to the mechanism may lie in the distance that one feels towards others, and as a result, more of a reliance on the fundamental attribution error that those others have somehow deserved their fate instead of a consideration of situational forces. Certainly, future research would benefit from probing this relationship further.

Although some previous studies have examined the relationship between moral disengagement and aggression, the latter is most commonly defined in terms of behavior (e.g., Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 1996; Pornai & Wood, 2010). The current study is the first, to the author's knowledge, to investigate the role of trait aggression as an antecedent to moral disengagement. Furthermore, this study is the first to explore the mechanisms that are predicted by trait aggression: diffusion of responsibility, attribution of blame, and the overall assessment of unethical decision-making. One conceptualization of trait aggression has posited the presence of conflicting forces: the motivation to be aggressive and the simultaneous motivation to hold a positive view of the self (James et al., 2005). The results here suggest that one way in which individuals navigate this conflict may be through the use of moral disengagement. Indeed, there is some conceptual overlap between the rationalizations that James et al. (2005) proposed (e.g., derogation of target) and the mechanisms included under the concept of moral disengagement (e.g., attribution of blame). Generally speaking, moral disengagement tactics may allow one to reconceptualize or minimize the consequences of aggressive tendencies or behaviors, while allowing the maintenance of a positive self-concept. Although moral disengagement has typically been used to explain how otherwise "typical" individuals engage in unethical decisions or behavior (Bandura, 1999; Detert et al., 2008), the current study offers some initial insight into the use of moral disengagement tactics by individuals who may already be predisposed to aggressive and/or unethical behaviors.

Although there was no *a priori* hypothesis for a negative relationship between conscientiousness and moral disengagement, there is some conceptual basis for expecting

such a link. Becker (1998) notes the disagreement among definitions of the concept of conscientiousness, especially across the five-factor model of personality and the more morally-laden view from research on integrity. For the purposes of the current study, the moral aspects of conscientiousness (i.e., integrity-based approach) are of primary interest, as they directly relate to whether or not one will be more likely to engage in moral disengagement tactics. From this view, conscientiousness is defined as having responsibility, dependability, and carefulness. There are several potential mechanisms through which these characteristics might negatively relate to moral disengagement, although at this point, they would primarily be conjecture. For example, a conscientious individual, through careful thought and anticipation of responsibility, may be more likely to avoid situations in which moral disengagement is necessary. On the other hand, such individuals may simply be more comfortable in taking responsibility for their actions and may not need to find ways to justify such actions. From the exploratory analysis, the findings suggest the conscientious individuals are less likely to engage in advantageous comparison and dehumanization. Future research should examine the potential mechanisms, especially in light of these findings, and also focus on the facets of conscientiousness to further elucidate these relationships.

Perhaps most surprisingly, however, was the negative relationship between dimensions of psychopathy and moral disengagement. At the overall level, callous affect was negatively related to moral disengagement, while at the individual mechanism level, overall psychopathy was negatively related to one's use of euphemistic language, and criminal tendencies were negatively related to one's use of advantageous comparison. Although these relationships are in the opposite direction as originally hypothesized,

there may yet be reason to expect these findings. Returning to the original conception of moral disengagement, Bandura (1996; 1999) argued that the justification mechanisms allowed one to disengage from one's internal moral standards. It may very well be the case that individuals who score highly on measures of psychopathy either lack the ability to consider the moral consequences of their actions (Glenn, Iyer, Graham, Koleva, & Haidt, 2009) or are simply more comfortable in violating them (Cima, Tonnaer, & Hauser, 2010). Although an in-depth discussion of specific mechanisms is outside the scope of the current study, it may generally be posited that psychopaths simply do not require disengagement mechanisms to facilitate unethical decision making as they are already "well-equipped" to do so. Future research should examine the boundary conditions of moral disengagement.

Using the Bonferroni-corrected analysis of the individual mechanisms, the predictors of aggression and the Cynical View subscale of Machiavellianism demonstrated negative relationships with at least two or more of the specific moral disengagement mechanisms, while the predictors of conscientiousness and openness to experience positively related to at least two or more of the mechanisms. For the most part, these predictors also emerged as significant as the primary analysis on moral disengagement. As the one exception, openness to experience predicted the individual mechanisms, but did not emerge in the overall analysis. Although this relationship was not explicitly hypothesized, there is some empirical evidence to support the current findings. For example, Dollinger and LaMartina (1998) found a positive relationship between openness to experience, defined as the extent to which individuals are receptive to and tend to seek out inner experiences, and moral reasoning. The authors argue that



the underlying mechanisms may be explained by the tendency of open individuals to avoid conventional thinking and to seek out answers for themselves. Extended to the construct of moral disengagement, these observations may suggest that open individuals are more likely to possess higher levels of moral reasoning, and may thus be less likely to encounter situations where moral disengagement would be required. However, future research would benefit from examining this potential relationship and its mechanisms further.

It is also potentially informative to note the individual differences that were hypothesized to relate to moral disengagement, but emerged as nonsignificant throughout the current study. Specifically, although narcissism was thought to relate to an increased tendency towards moral disengagement, it failed to emerge as a significant predictor for the overall construct as well as the individual mechanisms. One potential explanation for this result is that the aspects of narcissism that should contribute to moral disengagement (i.e., low empathy, aggressive responses to criticisms) were already captured by other predictors in the model, while the core characteristic of narcissism, namely self-interest, may not be expected to contribute to one's moral reasoning or justifications. These results further support findings that the three constructs of the Dark Triad (Paulhus & Williams, 2002), are indeed distinct from one another despite some degree of overlap, as evidenced by their differential patterns of prediction in the current study.

Finally, it is important to note that this model, after controlling for GPA, previous employment, and age, only explained a limited amount of the variability in moral disengagement. This result indicates the potential for other individual differences, as

well as potential situational factors that can further contribute to predicting moral disengagement.

### **Limitations and Directions for Future Research**

In an attempt to determine the source of the nonsignificant relationship between organizational justice and moral disengagement, several possible explanations emerge. The first could be that participants simply did not read the scenarios closely enough to pick up on the manipulation. Unfortunately, the lack of a manipulation check in the current study precludes any definitive answer. However, as a proxy, subsequent analyses were run selecting only those cases that were deemed to have taken potentially sufficient time to read and process the scenarios. In two separate analyses mirroring the repeated measures analysis, participants that took under five minutes and under ten minutes were screened from the data. The results from both were substantively equivalent to the original analysis, resulting in a nonsignificant relationship between organizational justice and moral disengagement. Therefore, one may likely posit that the explanation that they were not carefully reading the scenarios is not the sole culprit.

A second explanation is simply that the manipulations in the scenarios were not strong enough to elicit perceptions of organization justice in the participants. Here too, a manipulation check would provide definitive evidence had it been included in the study. Unfortunately, one may only speculate that this is perhaps a possible explanation and cannot rule out that organizational justice truly has no effect on one's tendency to morally disengage. Future research should include a manipulation check as well as perhaps make such manipulations stronger and more easily perceptible.

An additional limitation is related to the low estimated reliability of the Cynical Views subscale of the measure of Machiavellianism and the lack of a reliability estimate for the 2-item Generalized Morals subscale. Despite widespread use in the literature, some authors have noted that reliability estimates of this measure have typically been inconsistent (Dahling, Whitaker, & Levy, 2009). As such, the conclusions related to these scales should be interpreted with caution; however, it is also important to note that the results obtained in the current study support previous research and theory (Detert et al., 2008). Future research should therefore examine more recent alternative measures of Machiavellianism (e.g., Dahling et al., 2009) to support such findings.

Another limitation of the current study is that the measures were all web-based, allowing participants to complete them in a variety of environments and conditions. In an attempt to avoid confounds, participants were asked about the location in which they were taking the survey. When this indicator was included as a control in the prior analysis, it emerged as nonsignificant, suggesting that an individual participant's location did not affect their responses. Other limitations related to the use of online measures include the potential for common method bias (Shadish, Cook & Campbell, 2002). The current study attempted to avoid this issue by separating the measures across two waves of data collection and by alternating the response modalities (i.e., forced choice, frequency measures, agreement measures). Consistent with these limitations and with the recommendations of Kish-Gephart, Harris, and Trevino (2010), future research on ethical decision-making should move away from scenario-based designs and move towards more elegant laboratory-based studies. Laboratory-based studies will also provide the researcher with the ability to generate stronger manipulations, controlling the experience

of injustice, and allowing the participants to engage in certain strategies more behaviorally as opposed to merely hypothetically.

Finally, as with all undergraduate samples, care must be taken with regard to generalizability. This issue is especially pertinent given the nature of the constructs being assessed. For example, it is questionable whether college-aged students have had sufficient life experience to encounter many ethical dilemmas such as those that occur in the workplace. Additionally, one must also consider the degree of range restriction that may impact the relationships between measures, especially with regard to the constructs of psychopathy, for example, which includes measures of criminality and antisocial behavior. Future research should examine these phenomena in real-world samples of working adults.

### **Practical and Theoretical Implications**

Although the current study does not offer much in the way of explicit implications for situational factors that contribute to moral disengagement, it is far too soon to disregard such factors all together. Indeed, with individual differences explaining only 32% of the variability in moral disengagement, it is certainly worthwhile to continue the search for stronger situational factors. Kish-Gephart et al. (2010) provide some insight here with a recent meta-analysis on the situational antecedents of unethical decision-making. Based on their results, future research should examine those factors that displayed stronger relationships to unethical decisions and actions, such as organizational ethical climate and culture, as well as the role of explicit ethical codes of conduct. Moral disengagement is a prime construct for these types of interactionist studies, because it offers an explanation as to why typically ethical individuals can make unethical

decisions. To fully understand how this process unfolds, it is necessary to simultaneously consider individual differences and the environmental or organizational cues that influence this form of disengagement.

Practically speaking, if we can assume that moral disengagement is a function of the environment and the individual within that environment then organizations would be well served to understand the factors that contribute to such moral disengagement. This implication may be approached in the context of the opportunity-pressure-predisposition model of organizational misconduct (Baucus, 1994), in which wrongdoing is more likely to the extent that organizational factors encourage the action in question (pressures), limit the probability of detection (opportunity), all the while taking into account the specific traits of the individuals that simultaneously predispose them to wrongdoing. Considering these three factors together should allow organizations to acknowledge individual predispositions that lead to higher tendencies towards moral disengagement, and focus on appropriate interventions that either prevent pressures from occurring or increase the chances of detection of such behavior. Such efforts may be in the form of job redesign or the implementation and enforcement of ethics codes (Kish-Gephart et al., 2010).

In sum, the current study offers another piece of the puzzle in explaining the process of moral disengagement. The findings suggest that individuals who are typically aggressive, or have a cynical view of humankind are more likely to morally disengage. Furthermore, individuals who are highly conscientious or empathic are less likely to morally disengage. Although the findings for organizational justice were nonsignificant, it may still be important to consider how such individuals interact with their environment to either lessen or exacerbate the potential for moral disengagement.

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Table 1. Means, standard deviations, reliability estimates, and bivariate correlations of covariates and personality variables with moral disengagement.

<i>Variable</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Rel.</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>9</i>
1. Grade Point Average	3.17	0.53	~	--								
2. Previous Employment	0.33	0.47	~	-.09	--							
3. Gender	0.69	0.46	~	.09	-.08	--						
4. Neuroticism	2.50	0.68	.85	-.20**	-.02	.10	--					
5. Openness to Experience	3.49	0.62	.77	.04	.08	.02	.00	--				
6. Conscientiousness	3.62	0.62	.83	.29**	.08	.16**	-.39**	.08	--			
7. Agreeableness	3.78	0.56	.81	.20**	-.04	.31**	-.45**	.11	.50**	--		
8. Extraversion	3.54	0.67	.87	.12	-.09	.12*	-.30**	.03	.08	.18**	--	
9. Moral Disengagement	3.42	0.64	.87	-.12*	-.16**	-.06	.16**	-.17**	-.35**	-.24**	-.09	--

Note. \* signifies correlations are significant at the .05 level, \*\* signifies correlations are significant at the .01 level. Gender is coded as: 0 = Male, 1 = Female. Previous employment is coded as: 0 = No previous work experience, 1=Previously employed.

Table 2. Means, standard deviations, reliability estimates, and bivariate correlations for the Dark Triad variables, aggression, empathy and moral disengagement.

<i>Variable</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Rel.</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>11</i>
1. Empathy	3.58	0.53	.73	--										
2. Narcissism	0.31	0.19	.70	-.34**	--									
3. M - Interpersonal Tactics	2.59	0.54	.65	-.44**	.27**	--								
4. M - Cynical Views	2.69	0.49	.57	-.45**	.19**	.47**	--							
5. M - Generalized Morals	2.42	0.79	~	-.24**	.24**	.41**	.32**	--						
6. Aggression	-0.47	0.26	.60	-.26**	.09	.14*	.28**	.07	--					
7. P - Interpersonal Manipulation	2.46	0.62	.87	-.48**	.47**	.60**	.54**	.40**	.18**	--				
8. P - Callous Affect	2.20	0.58	.83	-.67**	.38**	.45**	.45**	.32**	.25**	.65**	--			
9. P - Erratic Lifestyle	2.57	0.62	.83	-.37**	.37**	.38**	.34**	.30**	.11	.60**	.56**	--		
10. P - Criminal Tendency	1.52	0.53	.81	-.36**	.18**	.30**	.31**	.30**	.32**	.46**	.51**	.49**	--	
11. Moral Disengagement	3.42	0.64	.87	-.25**	.06	.25**	.32**	.05	.25**	.20**	.14*	.20**	.16**	--

Note. M = Machiavellianism subscale, P = Psychopathy subscale; \* signifies correlations are significant at the .05 level, \*\* signifies correlations are significant at the .01 level. The Generalized Morals subscale of Machiavellianism comprises only two items; therefore, a reliability estimate is not provided.

Table 3. Means, standard deviations, and bivariate correlations for the Hogan Development Survey variables and moral disengagement.

<i>Variable</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>12</i>
1. Excitable	5.74	3.34	--											
2. Skeptical	6.97	2.62	.42**	--										
3. Cautious	6.04	2.96	.41**	.17**	--									
4. Reserved	5.21	2.45	.36**	.32**	.23**	--								
5. Leisurely	6.94	2.73	.22**	.36**	.24**	.35**	--							
6. Bold	6.98	3.04	.09	.38**	-.29**	.14*	.33**	--						
7. Mischievous	6.47	2.73	.20**	.34**	-.25**	.21**	.13*	.45**	--					
8. Colorful	7.10	2.81	.02	.19**	-.44**	-.10	.16*	.56**	.46**	--				
9. Imaginative	6.05	2.76	.22**	.32**	-.15*	.30**	.25**	.46**	.52**	.36**	--			
10. Diligent	9.14	2.74	-.04	.13*	.13*	-.01	.12	.07	-.17**	-.10	-.06	--		
11. Dutiful	9.13	2.39	-.09	-.05	.25**	-.22**	.10	-.14*	-.09	-.07	-.20**	.22**	--	
12. Moral Disengagement	3.42	0.64	.18**	.23**	.14*	.28**	.14*	.08	.23**	.04	.12	-.24**	.09	--

Note. \* signifies correlations are significant at the .05 level, \*\* signifies correlations are significant at the .01 level. Please reference

Hogan and Hogan (2009) for a complete description of these variables.

Table 4. Means, standard deviations, and bivariate correlations between the mechanisms of moral disengagement.

<i>Variable</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>10</i>
1. Moral Justification	4.06	0.96	--									
2. Euphemistic Language	3.38	0.83	.47**	--								
3. Advantageous Comparison	4.00	0.83	.40**	.50**	--							
4. Displacement of Responsibility	3.66	0.87	.45**	.54**	.46**	--						
5. Diffusion of Responsibility	3.50	0.94	.38**	.52**	.36**	.61**	--					
6. Distortion of Consequences	3.20	0.84	.26**	.48**	.42**	.44**	.51**	--				
7. Dehumanization	2.85	0.89	.26**	.57**	.31**	.49**	.54**	.64**	--			
8. Attribution of Blame	2.70	0.92	.23**	.52**	.29**	.45**	.53**	.57**	.75**	--		
9. Unethical Decision-making	2.96	0.93	.13*	.41**	.32**	.30**	.32**	.47**	.48**	.50**	--	
10. Moral Disengagement	3.42	0.64	.60**	.79**	.64**	.76**	.77**	.74**	.78**	.75**	.50**	--

Note. \* signifies correlations are significant at the .05 level, \*\* signifies correlations are significant at the .01 level.

*Table 5.* Estimated marginal means of moral disengagement predicted by organizational justice, controlling for age, GPA, and previous employment.

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>	<i>95 % Confidence Interval</i>	
			<i>Lower</i>	<i>Upper</i>
Distributive Justice	3.385	.059	3.268	3.501
Procedural Justice	3.370	.059	3.254	3.485
Interpersonal Justice	3.357	.063	3.233	3.481
Informational Justice	3.333	.062	3.211	3.454

*Note.* Means are evaluated at the following covariate values: age = 20.23, GPA = 3.1761, and previous employment = .34386.



Table 6. Hierarchical regression analysis predicting overall moral disengagement.

	Model 1		Model 2	
	(R <sup>2</sup> =.111)		(R <sup>2</sup> =.324)	
<i>Variables</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>B<sub>SE</sub></i>	<i>B</i>	<i>B<sub>SE</sub></i>
GPA	-.266**	.079	-.137	.077
Age	-.061**	.019	-.033	.018
Previously Employed	-.186*	.090	-.156	.081
Machiavellianism - Cynical Views			.193*	.091
Aggression			.434**	.162
Conscientiousness			-.207**	.072
Hogan - Reserved			.049**	.018
Psychopathy - Callous Affect			-.288**	.092
Empathy			-.239*	.098

*Note.* Model 1 represents the first step in which only control variables were entered.

Model 2 represents the second step, in which variables were entered in a stepwise fashion. N=201 for all analyses. *B* = unstandardized regression coefficient, and

*B<sub>SE</sub>* = standard error for the unstandardized regression coefficient. \*p<.05; \*\*p<.01.

Tables 7a-i. Hierarchical regression analysis predicting individual mechanisms of moral disengagement.

Table 7a. Moral Justification.

	Model 1		Model 2	
	(R <sup>2</sup> =.057)		(R <sup>2</sup> =.082)	
<i>Variables</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>B<sub>SE</sub></i>	<i>B</i>	<i>B<sub>SE</sub></i>
GPA	-.048	.124	-.050	.123
Age	-.070*	.030	-.064*	.030
Previously Employed	-.298*	.141	-.272	.140
Hogan - Dutiful			.063*	.027

*Note.* For all subsequent tables, Model 1 represents the first step in which only control variables were entered. Model 2 represents the second step in which individual difference variables were entered in a stepwise fashion. N=201 for all analyses. *B* = unstandardized regression coefficient, and *B<sub>SE</sub>* = standard error for the unstandardized regression coefficient. \* p<.05; \*\* p<.01. † denotes variables that are significant using the Bonferroni correction of p<.00625.

Table 7b. Euphemistic language.

	Model 1		Model 2	
	(R <sup>2</sup> =.098)		(R <sup>2</sup> =.243)	
<i>Variables</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>B<sub>SE</sub></i>	<i>B</i>	<i>B<sub>SE</sub></i>
GPA	-.277**	.099	-.178	.100
Age	-.082**	.024	-.059*	.023
Previously Employed	-.178	.113	-.117	.106
Machiavellianism - Cynical Views <sup>†</sup>			.346**	.117
Aggression			.419*	.211
Conscientiousness			-.236*	.094
Hogan - Leisurely			.046*	.019
Psychopathy - Callous Affect			-.227*	.103

Table 7c. Advantageous comparison.

	Model 1		Model 2	
	(R <sup>2</sup> =.041)		(R <sup>2</sup> =.157)	
<i>Variables</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>B<sub>SE</sub></i>	<i>B</i>	<i>B<sub>SE</sub></i>
GPA	-.144	.102	.014	.104
Age	-.041	.025	-.019	.024
Previously Employed	-.214	.116	-.139	.110
Conscientiousness <sup>†</sup>			-.425**	.099
Hogan - Skeptical			.048*	.020
Psychopathy - Criminal Tendencies			-.242*	.116

Table 7d. Displacement of responsibility.

	Model 1		Model 2	
	(R <sup>2</sup> =.074)		(R <sup>2</sup> =.146)	
<i>Variables</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>B<sub>SE</sub></i>	<i>B</i>	<i>B<sub>SE</sub></i>
GPA	-.329**	.114	-.268*	.112
Age	-.070*	.028	-.052	.027
Previously Employed	-.172	.129	-.190	.125
Hogan - Reserved			.067**	.025
Aggression			.542*	.248

Table 7e. Diffusion of responsibility.

	Model 1		Model 2	
	(R <sup>2</sup> =.052)		(R <sup>2</sup> =.200)	
<i>Variables</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>B<sub>SE</sub></i>	<i>B</i>	<i>B<sub>SE</sub></i>
GPA	-.319*	.123	-.199	.117
Age	-.055	.030	-.022	.028
Previously Employed	-.164	.140	-.190	.130
Aggression <sup>†</sup>			.847**	.260
Empathy			-.315*	.125
Hogan - Reserved			.057*	.027

Table 7f. Distortion of consequences.

	Model 1		Model 2	
	(R <sup>2</sup> =.084)		(R <sup>2</sup> =.218)	
<i>Variables</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>B<sub>SE</sub></i>	<i>B</i>	<i>B<sub>SE</sub></i>
GPA	-.398**	.108	-.223*	.108
Age	-.056*	.026	-.021	.025
Previously Employed	-.138	.122	-.123	.115
Empathy			-.293**	.111
Aggression			.594**	.224
Conscientiousness			-.266**	.101

Table 7g. Dehumanization.

	Model 1		Model 2	
	(R <sup>2</sup> =.072)		(R <sup>2</sup> =.331)	
<i>Variables</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>B<sub>SE</sub></i>	<i>B</i>	<i>B<sub>SE</sub></i>
GPA	-.297*	.114	-.096	.106
Age	-.075**	.028	-.032	.025
Previously Employed	-.169	.129	-.157	.112
Openness to Experience <sup>†</sup>			-.381**	.083
Machiavellianism - Cynical Views <sup>†</sup>			.402**	.120
Conscientiousness <sup>†</sup>			-.323**	.099
Hogan - Reserved			.059*	.023
Machiavellianism - Generalized Morals			-.170*	.074



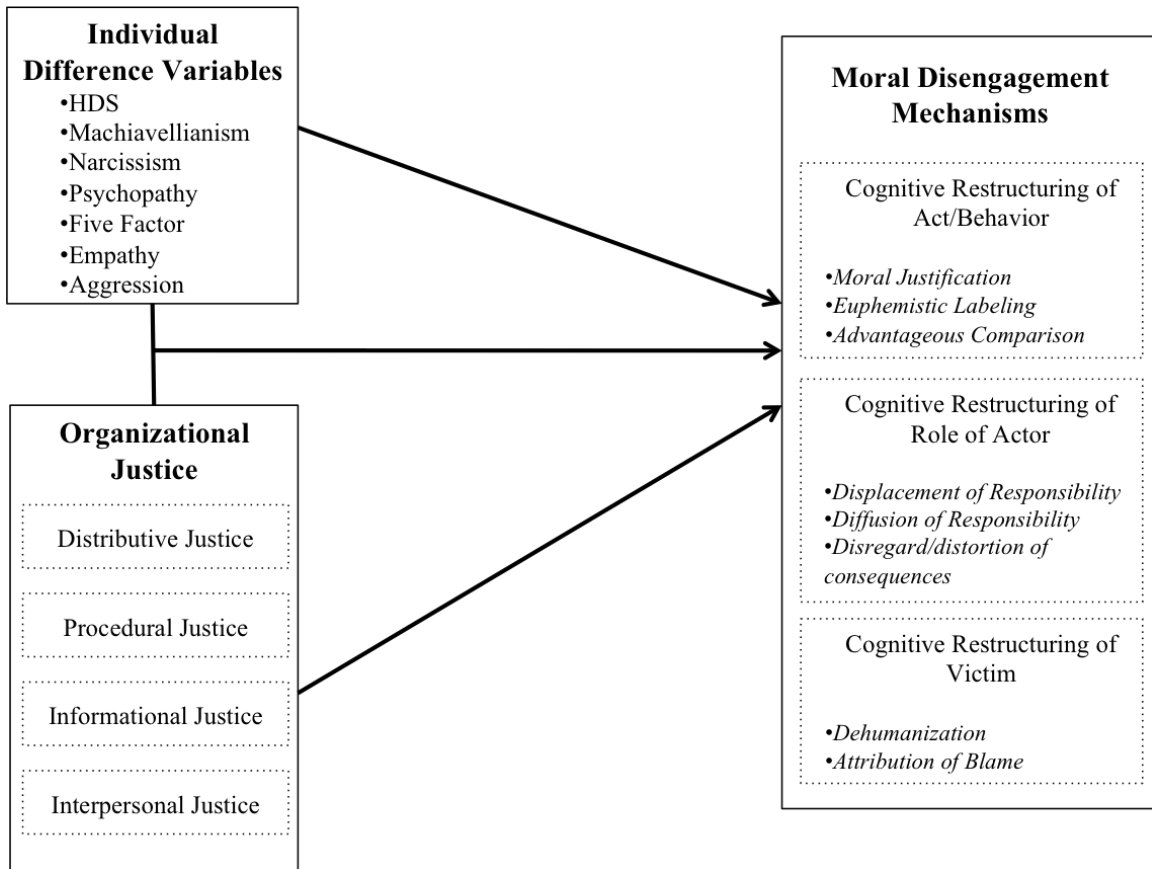
Table 7h. Attribution of blame.

	Model 1		Model 2	
	(R <sup>2</sup> =.048)		(R <sup>2</sup> =.270)	
<i>Variables</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>B<sub>SE</sub></i>	<i>B</i>	<i>B<sub>SE</sub></i>
GPA	-.314**	.115	-.124	.106
Age	-.037	.028	.001	.025
Previously Employed	-.158	.131	-.142	.116
Machiavellianism - Cynical Views <sup>†</sup>			.347**	.115
Hogan - Reserved <sup>†</sup>			.073**	.025
Hogan - Diligent <sup>†</sup>			-.072**	.021
Aggression <sup>†</sup>			.659**	.234

Table 7i. Unethical decision-making.

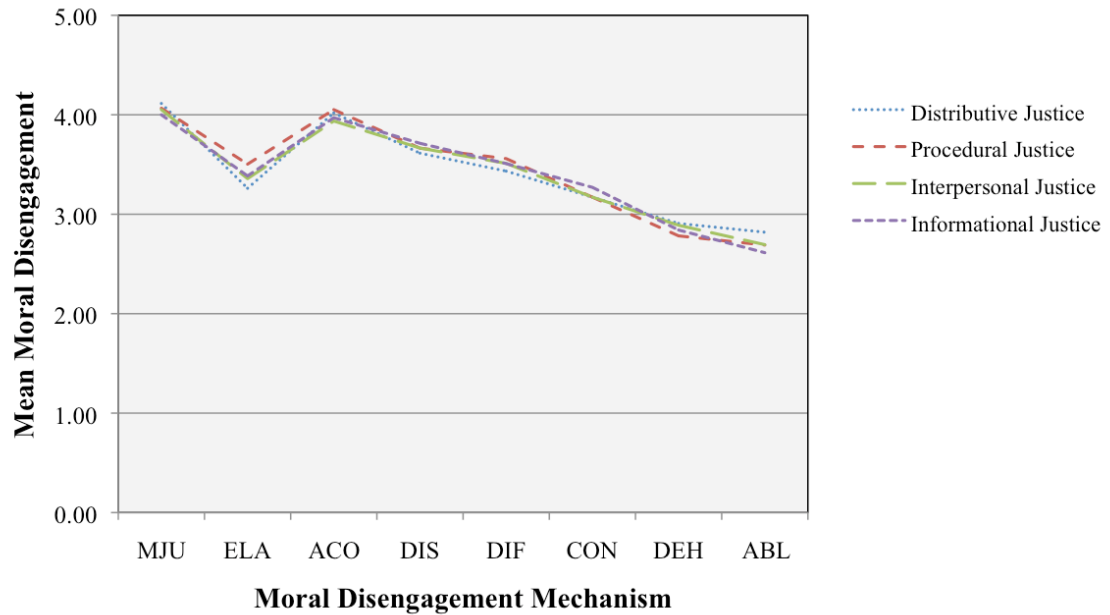
	Model 1		Model 2	
	(R <sup>2</sup> =.011)		(R <sup>2</sup> =.220)	
<i>Variables</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>B<sub>SE</sub></i>	<i>B</i>	<i>B<sub>SE</sub></i>
GPA	-.178	.122	.012	.115
Age	-.001	.030	.020	.027
Previously Employed	-.003	.139	.043	.126
Aggression <sup>†</sup>			.722**	.246
Hogan - Diligent			-.074**	.023
Openness to Experience <sup>†</sup>			-.312**	.094
Psychopathy - Criminal Tendencies			.396**	.126

Figure 1. Summary of theoretical relationships between organizational justice, individual difference variables, and moral disengagement mechanisms.



Note. HDS = Hogan Development Survey, Five Factor = Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Openness, Neuroticism, and Agreeableness.

Figure 2. Mean moral disengagement scores by moral disengagement mechanisms, grouped by form of organizational justice.



Note. MJU = moral justification, ELA = euphemistic language, ACO = advantageous comparison, DIS = displacement of responsibility, DIF = diffusion of responsibility, CON = distortion of consequences, DEH = dehumanization, ABL = attribution of blame.

## Appendix

*Note.* Ethical business scenarios are illustrated, along with their respective response options. Sentences in bold indicate organizational justice manipulations to the base scenarios. Response options are presented here in order of: moral justification, euphemistic language, advantageous comparison, displacement of responsibility, diffusion of responsibility, distortion of consequences, dehumanization, and attribution of blame; the final option for each scenario assesses ethical decision-making. In the actual survey administration, the scenarios did not display the text as bold and the scenarios and their response options were both randomly presented.

## Scenario 1 Versions

### *Procedural Justice*

Ray manages a unit in a company that calls itself a “total quality” organization. Part of the organization’s mission statement says that employees should strive to continually improve their performance. Lately, Ray’s unit has been extremely busy trying to get its work done on several important projects. **Ray blames the situation on the fact that he has no say in the decision-making process about how much work gets assigned.** Ray asked his boss for advice about how to meet all of the deadlines, and the boss basically told him that his unit would have to cut corners on quality in order to get everything done on time. The boss also told Ray that meeting deadlines is the best way to keep clients off their backs, and that the clients rarely complain about substandard work because its effects show up much later. However, Ray knows that doing substandard work for clients will only hurt the company’s reputation in the long run. **Ray knows he wouldn’t be in this situation if he were able to have input regarding the amount of work being assigned.**

### *Distributive Justice*

Ray manages a unit in a company that calls itself a “total quality” organization. Part of the organization’s mission statement says that employees should strive to continually improve their performance. Lately, Ray’s unit has been extremely busy trying to get its work done on several important projects. **Ray blames the situation on the fact that his boss asks his subordinates to work extra hours without providing any overtime pay.** Ray asked his boss for advice about how to meet all of the deadlines, and the boss basically told him that his unit would have to cut corners on quality in order to get everything done on time. The boss also told Ray that meeting deadlines is the best way to keep clients off their backs, and that the clients rarely complain about substandard work because its effects show up much later. However, Ray knows that doing substandard work for clients will only hurt the company’s reputation in the long run. **Ray knows he wouldn’t be in this situation if his boss would pay for the overtime required to do quality work.**

### *Informational Justice*

Ray manages a unit in a company that calls itself a “total quality” organization. Part of the organization’s mission statement says that employees should strive to continually improve their performance. Lately, Ray’s unit has been extremely busy trying to get its work done on several important projects. **Ray blames the situation on the fact that his boss failed to communicate important details of one of the projects in a timely manner and forced Ray’s unit to redo much of their previous work.** Ray asked his boss for advice about how to meet all of the deadlines, and the boss basically told him that his unit would have to cut corners on quality in order to get everything done on time. The boss also told Ray that meeting deadlines is the best way to keep clients off their backs, and that the clients rarely complain about substandard work because its effects show up much later. However, Ray knows that doing substandard work for clients will only hurt the company’s reputation in the long run. **Ray knows he wouldn’t be in this situation if his boss would have just shared important project information.**

### *Interpersonal Justice*

Ray manages a unit in a company that calls itself a “total quality” organization. Part of the organization’s mission statement says that employees should strive to continually improve their performance. Lately, Ray’s unit has been extremely busy trying to get its work done on several important projects. **Ray blames the situation on the fact that his boss frequently yells at and demeans his subordinates, resulting in unmotivated and stressed out employees.** Ray asked his boss for advice about how to meet all of the deadlines, and the boss basically told him that his unit would have to cut corners on quality in order to get everything done on time. The boss also told Ray that meeting deadlines is the best way to keep clients off their backs, and that the clients rarely complain about substandard work because its effects show up much later. However, Ray knows that doing substandard work for clients will only hurt the company’s reputation in the long run. **Ray knows he wouldn’t be in this situation if his boss would just treat his subordinates with a little respect and dignity so that they were motivated to do quality work.**

### Scenario 1 Responses

It's okay for Ray to tell his unit to focus on meeting deadlines at the expense of doing quality work because (1 = 'Strongly Disapprove' and 7 = 'Strongly Approve')

1. He needs to take care of his own company first and foremost.						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. This is just the way that the game is played.						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. Cutting corners is better than losing a client because of a missed deadline.						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. Ray's boss gave the go-ahead to do it.						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. All the managers of the other units will be doing the same thing.						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. The clients won't even notice the decline in quality.						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. If the clients want their deadlines to be met, then they don't deserve quality work.						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. The clients have brought this on themselves by being too demanding.						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. It's never okay to focus on deadlines at the expense of quality.						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Which options presented above would you consider to be the:

\_\_\_ best option

\_\_\_ 2<sup>nd</sup> best option

\_\_\_ 3<sup>rd</sup> best option

## Scenario 2 Versions

### *Procedural Justice*

Pat is responsible for providing estimates of business expenses for his unit to his boss, who then determines the budget for all units in the company. Upper management has always emphasized the importance of providing timely and accurate financial estimates, and they have backed up this policy by disciplining managers for inaccurate or late estimates. Pat recently realized that the figures he supplied contained a mistake. **If Pat had the chance to voice his opinion about needing more time to get accurate estimates, the mistake probably would not have happened.** The mistake was that an expense was projected to be larger than it should have been. It will not affect the ability of the company to stay within the budget. However, the money could be used to cover other company expenditures. Up to this point, no one else has identified the mistake and it is unlikely that they will. **Pat believes this wouldn't even be an issue if he was able to have input on the actual process of providing financial estimates.**

### *Distributive Justice*

Pat is responsible for providing estimates of business expenses for his unit to his boss, who then determines the budget for all units in the company. Upper management has always emphasized the importance of providing timely and accurate financial estimates, and they have backed up this policy by disciplining managers for inaccurate or late estimates. Pat recently realized that the figures he supplied contained a mistake. **Pat believes that the mistake would probably not have occurred if his amount of pay reflected the amount of effort actually needed to do the estimates.** The mistake was that an expense was projected to be larger than it should have been. It will not affect the ability of the company to stay within the budget. However, the money could be used to cover other company expenditures. Up to this point, no one else has identified the mistake and it is unlikely that they will. **Pat believes this wouldn't even be an issue if his pay matched the effort that was required.**

### *Informational Justice*

Pat is responsible for providing estimates of business expenses for his unit to his boss, who then determines the budget for all units in the company. Upper management has always emphasized the importance of providing timely and accurate financial estimates, and they have backed up this policy by disciplining managers for inaccurate or late estimates. Pat recently realized that the figures he supplied contained a mistake. **If Pat's boss had provided accurate information about when the estimates were due, Pat would have had more time and the mistake probably would not have happened.** The mistake was that an expense was projected to be larger than it should have been. It will not affect the ability of the company to stay within the budget. However, the money could be used to cover other company expenditures. Up to this point, no one else has identified the mistake and it is unlikely that they will. **Pat believes this wouldn't even be an issue if his boss had given him accurate information about deadlines for the estimates.**

### *Interpersonal Justice*

Pat is responsible for providing estimates of business expenses for his unit to his boss, who then determines the budget for all units in the company. Upper management has always emphasized the importance of providing timely and accurate financial estimates, and they have backed up this policy by disciplining managers for inaccurate or late estimates. Pat recently realized that the figures he supplied contained a mistake. **If Pat's boss had not yelled at Pat about the estimates the first time around, the mistake would probably not have happened.** The mistake was that an expense was projected to be larger than it should have been. It will not affect the ability of the company to stay within the budget. However, the money could be used to cover other company expenditures. Up to this point, no one else has identified the mistake and it is unlikely that they will. **Pat believes this wouldn't even be an issue if his boss just treated him with a little respect when asking for the estimates.**



### Scenario 2 Responses

It's okay for Pat to **NOT** report the mistake because...  
 (1 = 'Strongly Disapprove' and 7 = 'Strongly Approve')

1. He needs to protect the reputation of his unit above all else.						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. The mistake is really just a "drop in the bucket" in the overall budget.						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. Compared to other possible mistakes, this one isn't hurting the company any.						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. Managers shouldn't be doing the accountants' jobs anyway.						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. The entire team helped with the estimates, so any one person should not be blamed.						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. The estimates are just for the accountants. They don't really affect anyone.						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. If the estimate process weren't so complicated, mistakes like this wouldn't be made.						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. His boss doesn't even deserve accurate estimates.						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. Mistakes, once they've been identified, should never go unreported.						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Which options presented above would you consider to be the:  
 \_\_\_ best option                      \_\_\_ 2<sup>nd</sup> best option                      \_\_\_ 3<sup>rd</sup> best option

### Scenario 3 Versions

#### *Procedural Justice*

Kris decided that her subordinates would benefit greatly from a particular training program. In fact, Kris as much as promised these employees that they would receive the training in the near future. The employees were excited and looked forward to developing their skills. At the time that Kris made that statement she felt that her budget would easily cover the training. However, upper management recently sent Kris and the other managers at her level a memo about new financial policies. The memo demanded increased efficiency over the next quarter, and outlined new rules saying funds could only be spent on essential functions. **Kris is upset that her input was not considered in the process of making changes to current policies.** Kris believes that this focus on short-term goals would be detrimental to the long-term functioning of the unit that she manages. **Kris would not even be in this situation if she had had a voice in the changes that were made.**

#### *Distributive Justice*

Kris decided that her subordinates would benefit greatly from a particular training program. In fact, Kris as much as promised these employees that they would receive the training in the near future. The employees were excited and looked forward to developing their skills. At the time that Kris made that statement she felt that her budget would easily cover the training. However, upper management recently sent Kris and the other managers at her level a memo about new financial policies. The memo demanded increased efficiency over the next quarter, and outlined new rules saying funds could only be spent on essential functions. **Kris is upset that upper management frequently demands more and more from workers without providing adequate training or development opportunities.** Kris believes that this focus on short-term goals would be detrimental to the long-term functioning of the unit that she manages. **Kris would not even be in this situation if upper management fairly compensated her unit's efforts.**

#### *Informational Justice*

Kris decided that her subordinates would benefit greatly from a particular training program. In fact, Kris as much as promised these employees that they would receive the training in the near future. The employees were excited and looked forward to developing their skills. At the time that Kris made that statement she felt that her budget would easily cover the training. However, upper management recently sent Kris and the other managers at her level a memo about new financial policies. The memo demanded increased efficiency over the next quarter, and outlined new rules saying funds could only be spent on essential functions. **Kris is upset that upper management produced this memo without first sharing the details of the new policy with the managers.** Kris believes that this focus on short-term goals would be detrimental to the long-term functioning of the unit that she manages. **Kris would not even be in this situation if upper management had been candid in the changes that were being considered.**

#### *Interpersonal Justice*

Kris decided that her subordinates would benefit greatly from a particular training program. In fact, Kris as much as promised these employees that they would receive the training in the near future. The employees were excited and looked forward to developing their skills. At the time that Kris made that statement she felt that her budget would easily cover the training. However, upper management recently sent Kris and the other managers at her level a memo about new financial policies. The memo demanded increased efficiency over the next quarter, and outlined new rules saying funds could only be spent on essential functions. **Kris is upset that upper management simply reprimands the managers for promises made to subordinates, rather than working cooperatively towards a solution.** Kris believes that this focus on short-term goals would be detrimental to the long-term functioning of the unit that she manages. **Kris would not even be in this situation if upper management treated the managers in a fair and respectful manner.**

### Scenario 3 Responses

Kris should schedule the training for her subordinates because...  
 (1 = 'Strongly Disapprove' and 7 = 'Strongly Approve')

1. She has an obligation to look out for her own subordinates first and foremost.						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. The new rules on expenses are basically guidelines anyway.						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. Using the money for training is not as bad as using it for some other purpose.						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. The new memo is forcing her into this situation, so she can't be blamed.						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. All of the other managers are probably doing the same things.						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. Using the money on training won't really hurt the company.						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. The new rules are really just more mistreatment by upper management.						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. Upper management only thinks about money instead of people.						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. It's not okay to schedule training if it breaks company rules.						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Which options presented above would you consider to be the:  
 \_\_\_ best option                      \_\_\_ 2<sup>nd</sup> best option                      \_\_\_ 3<sup>rd</sup> best option

## Scenario 4 Versions

### *Procedural Justice*

Leigh has been looking forward to the day that a certain subordinate is rotated out of her unit. This subordinate usually works up to performance standards, but is very abrasive, mean-spirited, and hardly anyone can stand interacting with him. The subordinate is due to be rotated out of the work unit in two days. But today, Leigh has learned that the subordinate made a serious mistake. When others made the same mistake, Leigh has followed company policy by providing negative feedback and constructive criticism after writing a formal letter of discipline for the employee's personnel file. **However, Leigh and the other managers have had no say in the way that the disciplinary procedures have been created and must be carried out.** In this situation, Leigh has written up the employee, but does not know if it is worth the time and effort to engage in what will probably be a very unpleasant interaction with the subordinate. After all, the subordinate will be rotated out of the unit very soon. **This would not be an issue if Leigh had a say in the way she disciplined her own subordinates.**

### *Distributive Justice*

Leigh has been looking forward to the day that a certain subordinate is rotated out of her unit. This subordinate usually works up to performance standards, but is very abrasive, mean-spirited, and hardly anyone can stand interacting with him. The subordinate is due to be rotated out of the work unit in two days. But today, Leigh has learned that the subordinate made a serious mistake. When others made the same mistake, Leigh has followed company policy by providing negative feedback and constructive criticism after writing a formal letter of discipline for the employee's personnel file. **However, Leigh and the other managers feel they are not being paid at the same level as the amount of effort required to discipline subordinates.** In this situation, Leigh has written up the employee, but does not know if it is worth the time and effort to engage in what will probably be a very unpleasant interaction with the subordinate. After all, the subordinate will be rotated out of the unit very soon. **This would not be an issue if Leigh felt her pay matched the effort required to perform this part of her job.**

### *Informational Justice*

Leigh has been looking forward to the day that a certain subordinate is rotated out of her unit. This subordinate usually works up to performance standards, but is very abrasive, mean-spirited, and hardly anyone can stand interacting with him. The subordinate is due to be rotated out of the work unit in two days. But today, Leigh has learned that the subordinate made a serious mistake. When others made the same mistake, Leigh has followed company policy by providing negative feedback and constructive criticism after writing a formal letter of discipline for the employee's personnel file. **However, Leigh and the other managers feel that the executives rarely provide clear details about the company policy.** In this situation, Leigh has written up the employee, but does not know if it is worth the time and effort to engage in what will probably be a very unpleasant interaction with the subordinate. After all, the subordinate will be rotated out of the unit very soon. **This would not be an issue if the executives provided clear and accurate information to their managers.**

### *Interpersonal Justice*

Leigh has been looking forward to the day that a certain subordinate is rotated out of her unit. This subordinate usually works up to performance standards, but is very abrasive, mean-spirited, and hardly anyone can stand interacting with him. The subordinate is due to be rotated out of the work unit in two days. But today, Leigh has learned that the subordinate made a serious mistake. When others made the same mistake, Leigh has followed company policy by providing negative feedback and constructive criticism after writing a formal letter of discipline for the employee's personnel file. **However, Leigh and the other managers are frequently chastised by upper management for the way in which they provide the feedback.** In this situation, Leigh has written up the employee, but does not know if it is worth the time and effort to engage in what will probably be a very unpleasant interaction with the subordinate. After all, the subordinate will be rotated out of the unit very soon. **This would not be an issue if Leigh was treated in a respectful manner by upper management in the process of disciplining her subordinates.**

### Scenario 4 Responses

It would be okay for Leigh to **NOT** have the interaction with the subordinate because...  
 (1 = 'Strongly Disapprove' and 7 = 'Strongly Approve')

1. She should be spending time and effort on stable members of her unit.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. Policies like this are meant to be “flexible” in these situations anyway.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. Skipping this interaction isn't as serious as skipping one with someone staying in the unit.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. It's really the subordinate's next manager who should be taking care of feedback.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. Other managers certainly don't follow the procedures all the time.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. Having the meeting or not won't have an effect on the employee's future behavior.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. It's the subordinate's fault for being abrasive, so the effort of feedback isn't worth it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. Someone that abrasive and mean doesn't deserve to be treated like other humans.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. It's never okay to ignore disciplinary policy; Leigh needs to meet with the subordinate.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Which options presented above would you consider to be the:

\_\_\_ best option

\_\_\_ 2<sup>nd</sup> best option

\_\_\_ 3<sup>rd</sup> best option