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Flexible moral behavior in the workplace

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FLEXIBLE MORAL BEHAVIOR IN THE WORKPLACE

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Flexible Moral Behavior in the Workplace

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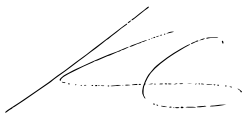
2019

I hereby declare that this PhD dissertation is my original work
and it has been written by me in its entirety.
I have duly acknowledged all the sources of information
which have been used in this dissertation.

This PhD dissertation has also not been submitted for any degree
in any university previously.



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Abstract

In my dissertation, I systematically examine what it means to be morally flexible. I develop a scale to capture an individual's willingness to adapt their moral behavior and examine both positive and negative consequences of this type of moral flexibility in the workplace. My dissertation consists of three studies. In Chapter 2, I draw from the personality strength literature and research on within-person variability in moral behavior to introduce the construct of *moral adaptability* (MA) defined as the willing to adjust moral behavior depending on the situation. I argue MA functions in a similar manner to personality strength (but in the moral domain), such that when individuals are low in MA, they are most likely to express their moral values, while being high in MA makes individuals much more susceptible to situational influences and less likely to express their moral preferences. I develop and validate a scale assessing the construct and demonstrate in six independent samples (four samples of undergraduate students at a university in Singapore and two samples of working adults in the United States) that the scale shows good psychometric properties. I also develop initial empirical evidence for how the scale functions and in two independent samples illustrate how low MA strengthens the positive relationship between moral character (i.e., internalization dimension of moral identity, Honesty-Humility) and moral behavior (i.e., charitable behavior) and explains both positive and negative employee outcomes (i.e., constructive deviance, unethical pro-organizational behavior).

Building from these results, in Chapter 3, I draw from feelings-as-information theory and propose that individuals high in MA use situations to justify their past unethical behavior and therefore experience less guilt and shame. An experience-sample study with a sample of 55 undergraduate students in Singapore shows that respondents high in MA experienced lower guilt and shame in the aftermath of their unethical behavior as compared to those low in MA and that MA explained the felt emotions above and beyond a wide array of other traditional moral constructs.

In Chapter 4, I integrate the concept of ethical leadership to examine the implications of MA for workplace interpersonal relationships and leader influence on subordinates. Drawing from research on role modeling and moral self-threat, I hypothesize that subordinates who perceive ethics to be highly relevant to them and work under an ethical leader with low MA are more likely to experience higher self-threat due to the leader and become less likely to perceive their ethical leader as a role model. A two-wave sample of 486 subordinate-supervisor dyads in organizations in India provides partial support that subordinates who perceive ethics to be highly relevant and work under an ethical leader with low MA experience higher self-threat due to the leader.

In each chapter, I discuss the contributions of this dissertation to the organizational ethics literature, practical implications for managers in organizations, limitations, and directions for future research.

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DEDICATION

To Mom, Klin-Keo, Thank you very much for always standing behind me.

To Dad and my family

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In this dissertation, I examine the consequences of flexible moral behavior in the workplace. To do so, I approach the study of flexible moral behavior from an individual difference perspective and propose a new construct of *moral adaptability* (MA). I define moral adaptability as the willingness to adjust moral behavior depending on the situation. This dissertation consists of three studies which examine the consequences of MA from different angles. In Chapter 2, I draw from the density distribution model of personality to argue for the existence of MA and show that MA behaves like personality strength constructs but in the moral domain. In this chapter, I show implications of MA on workplace behavior and empirically illustrate that high levels of MA lead to both positive and negative workplace behavior (i.e., constructive deviance, unethical pro-organizational behavior). In Chapter 3, I examine the implications of MA in the emotion domain. In an experience-sampling study, I show that morally adaptable individuals experience lower levels of felt guilt and shame after they have engaged in unethical behavior. In Chapter 4, I extend the scope of MA and examine the implications of MA on interpersonal relationship quality between subordinates and supervisors. In particular, I examine the implications in the context of ethical leadership and how the level of leader MA affects the extent to which subordinates perceive their ethical leader as their role model.

In each of these chapters, I also discuss how MA may help future organizational ethics research by extending its traditional criterion space which tends to be limited to outcomes such as lying and stealing, to other outcomes resulting from right vs. right dilemmas, or unethical workplace

climate such as employee work motivation, employee burnout, and relationship quality among work colleagues.

CHAPTER 2: MORAL ADAPTABILITY

Introduction

That positive moral character facilitates ethical behavior and inhibits unethical behavior in the workplace is one of the most important assumptions within the organizational ethics literature (e.g., Cohen & Morse, 2014; Shao, Aquino, & Freeman, 2008). Fueled by high-profile corporate scandals (e.g., the Enron scandal, the collapse of Barings Bank), research on organizational ethics in the past 20 years has been largely about understanding what makes a person more moral, or of high moral character (e.g., moral identity; see Jennings, Mitchell, & Hannah, 2015, for a recent review). Indeed, empirical support for the belief that positive moral character inhibits unethicality in the workplace is remarkably consistent (e.g., Cohen, Panter, Turan, Morse, & Kim, 2014; Hertz & Krettenauer, 2016). This is not to say that people of high moral character do not engage in unethical behavior at times; they do. However, when they do, it is usually argued that social or situational factors (e.g., obedience to authority, group loyalty) have short-circuited their moral compass and prompted them to violate their moral conscience (Moore & Gino, 2013). Thus, a strong, stable, positive moral character is said to be generally desirable for both employees and those who employ them.

Nevertheless, being morally inflexible or rigid is not without its pitfalls. People who are more morally rigid are likely to hold their values as more sacred (Tetlock, Kristel, Elson, Green, & Lerner, 2000) and, as a result, experience strong negative emotional responses (e.g., disgust, anger) to issues that are in conflict with those values (Skitka, Bauman, & Sargis, 2005; Tetlock et al., 2000). This is similar to research on moral conviction suggesting that

individuals can perceive their moral beliefs and values as facts, rather than opinions, and when they do so they become rigid and view their values as universally applicable to others across cultures and societies (Skitka et al., 2005). For example, people experience heightened anger and outrage when a hospital administrator, instead of saving the life of a child, chooses to save on hospital expenses in order to be able to fund new medical equipment (Tetlock et al, 2000). Despite the possibility that the new medical equipment might save many more lives in the future, sacrificing the life of one child to do so is abhorrent. The moral value around the importance of preserving human life (especially the life of a child) can be seen as sacred and people become angry and unwilling to compromise even when the cost of saving that one child outweighs the benefits (indeed even writing this last sentence can feel morally unsettling). Individuals who are morally rigid may distance themselves from others with dissimilar moral attitudes and experience strong negative emotional responses when witnessing conduct that violates their moral beliefs on issues they care about (Skitka et al., 2005). This phenomenon also plays out in the workplace. Managers with high levels of moral clarity, defined as the extent to which individuals are certain about their judgment whether situations or actions are right or wrong, report more certainty in their judgment of potential wrongdoings and are more likely to give harsh and potentially inappropriate punishment to their subordinates (Wiltermuth & Flynn, 2013).

Indeed, more recent evidence suggests that moral rigidity or strong moral character is not a prerequisite for being ethical. People seem to vary quite substantially in their moral behavior even over the course of a few days (Bleidorn & Denissen, 2015; Meindl, Jayawickreme, Furr, & Fleeson, 2015).

Individuals do seem to have an average level of moral behavior or morality, usually captured with measures such as moral identity (e.g., Aquino & Reed, 2002) or Honesty-Humility (e.g., Ashton & Lee, 2009). However, they also deviate from this average level quite reliably (Bleidorn & Denissen, 2015; Meindl et al., 2015) and different individuals may be more or less likely to deviate from their average. Thus, two individuals can be equally ethical on average but vary widely in their ethical or unethical behavior around that average. Not just that, but if one accepts that people do have an average level of moral behavior, by definition this means people deviate in both a negative (engaging in more unethical behavior than suggested by their average) and a positive (engaging in more ethical behavior than suggested by their average) direction.

In this research, I build on these early findings for variance in moral behavior to propose that individuals differ in the extent to which they are willing to adjust their moral behavior in response to the situation. I argue that this willingness is an individual difference and influences the extent to which individuals act in accordance with their moral character. Skitka et al. (2005) suggested that moral conviction is issue-specific and individuals become morally rigid with moral issues that they care about. However, I propose that the willingness to adjust moral behavior is not limited to specific moral issues but applies to broad, overall moral behavior. I further propose that this individual difference contributes to not only negative but also positive moral behavior. I draw from both micro and macro perspectives for theoretical support to develop the construct of *moral adaptability (MA)*, or the willingness to adjust moral behavior depending on the situation.

From the micro perspective, I point to the evidence for variance in moral behavior within persons (Bleidorn & Denissen, 2015; Meindl et al., 2015) and draw from the density distribution model of personality (Fleeson, 2001) to argue for the relevance of MA. Fleeson's (2001) density distribution model of personality illustrated via experience-sampling studies that individuals manifest their everyday Big Five traits (e.g., extraverted behavior) as a distribution consisting of the stable average level and variation around that average. This fits with the larger concept of personality strength which suggests that "a strong personality theoretically reduces variability in behavior across situations within persons" (Dalal et al., 2015: 264). Subsequent experimental studies revealed that person factors do explain the majority of variance in the expression of each Big Five trait (Fleeson & Law, 2015). Like personality, there is evidence that individuals seem to have an average level of moral behavior that they express but they also a relatively stable variation around that level (Meindl et al., 2015). This evidence extends prior research on within-person variability in moral behavior (i.e., moral licensing, moral cleansing), typically limited to a single snapshot of a change of moral behavior from one occasion to another occasion in an experimental lab, and illustrates that within-person variability in moral behavior exists and that indeed people can fluctuate widely, even over the course of a single day. As a result, two persons with the same average level of moral behavior can have very different patterns of moral behavior: one being more rigid and staying closer to their average level, and the other being more variable around their average level. I propose that MA partly helps explain how people may differ in their everyday moral behavior. In addition, because a density distribution of behavior, by

definition, suggests behaviors on both sides of the average level of behavior, I propose that high levels of moral adaptability increase individuals' tendencies to engage in both negative behavior (e.g., destructive deviance) and positive behavior (e.g., constructive deviance) in the workplace.

From the macro perspective, I argue that much like how individuals internalize moral values or norms from their culture (e.g., Markus & Kitayama, 2010), they also internalize the degree to which they can deviate from those values or norms without being sanctioned (Li, Fock, Mattila, 2012). The concept of cultural tightness-looseness is relevant here. Cultural tightness-looseness refers to the level of tolerance for deviant behavior or the strength of norms in a society: members of tight cultures are less tolerant of behavior that violates socially accepted standards and impose stronger sanctions on deviants than members of loose cultures (Gelfand, Nishii, & Raver, 2006; Gelfand et al., 2011). Consequently, compared to those in loose cultures, individuals in tight cultures have higher levels of felt accountability, or the extent to which individuals feel that their norm-violating actions are monitored and subject to potential sanctions by others (Gelfand et al., 2006). Those in loose cultures have lower felt accountability and are more likely to solve existing problems by using unconventional or unorthodox methods (Gelfand et al., 2006). Thus, I propose that individuals are socialized in the extent to which their society or culture permits them to engage in behavior that deviates from societal norms, and acquire different levels of *MA* from this process of day-to-day internalization. Over time, strong social pressure and sanctions in tight cultures likely influence members' moral behavior to become more rigid and non-compromising and lower their tendencies to be

willing to adjust moral behavior. In contrast, loose cultures are more tolerant of deviants and promote individuality and self-expression (Gelfand et al., 2006), thereby likely encouraging members to be more adaptable in their moral behavior.

In this paper, I make four contributions to the ethics literature. First, I draw from the density distribution model of personality and the concept of cultural tightness-looseness to propose the concept of MA, or the willingness to adjust moral behavior to fit the situation. I develop and validate a scale to capture it. I suggest and provide evidence that MA reflects personality strength in the moral domain and offer the scale as a tool for future research to help examine the implications of moral adaptability in the workplace. Second, I demonstrate how moral adaptability, like personality strength does for personality characteristics, moderates the impact of moral character on moral behavior. I then discuss how MA (both the construct and its scale) may help us better understand and study within-person variability in moral behavior. Third, I explore the implications of MA and illustrate that while being adaptable in one's moral behavior can lead to negative outcomes (akin to the idea of moral flexibility proposed by Gino and colleagues, Gino, 2016; Gino & Ariely, 2012; Lu et al., 2017), it is not always a bad thing. I show that high levels of MA lead to both destructive deviance (i.e., unethical pro-organizational behavior) and constructive deviance in the workplace. Fourth, in my discussion section, I leverage my discussion of moral adaptability to expand the conversation around the implications of rigid moral behavior in the workplace beyond the typical criteria predicted with moral constructs. Past research shows that rigidity in moral attitudes may lead to negative outcomes

for an actor (e.g., felt anger and disgust, violence, undermined interpersonal relationship quality) due to the strong moral objections that any violation of a moral attitude engenders (Skitka et al., 2005; Tetlock et al., 2000). Typically, however, the criterion space has been limited to traditional outcomes related to ethical behavior (e.g., cheating, lying, stealing; e.g., Kish-Gephart, Harrison, & Treviño, 2010). MA, because of the emphasis on variability in moral behavior, highlights the potential for other types of outcomes including stress due to unethical issues or moral dilemmas in the workplace (e.g., hospitals), burnout, work motivation, liking, leader effectiveness, or even relationship quality with peers.

The Uniqueness of Moral Adaptability

Given the importance of moral behavior in the workplace, there exists a plethora of moral constructs that are said to predict or explain those behaviors. I briefly discuss those constructs (or clusters of constructs) that are, to my minds, most theoretically proximal to the construct of MA (i.e., Moral Relativism, Moral Character, Moral Strength) and explain the similarities, and more importantly the differences, among them.

Differentiating moral adaptability from moral relativism. Moral relativism argues that moral standards differ across societies and posits the existence of more than one appropriate moral judgment for any given moral issue (e.g., Forsyth, 1980). Morally relativistic individuals reject moral absolutism and the use of universal moral rules to address moral questions (e.g., Forsyth, 1980). Thus, to morally relativistic individuals, what is considered moral varies across individuals, situations, cultures, or societies. This implies that morally relativistic individuals likely adjust their moral values and beliefs

to accommodate their contexts (e.g., situations, cultures, or societies). MA is distinct from moral relativism in that it reflects the willingness to adjust moral behavior. For instance, morally relativistic individuals may believe that whether bullfighting or child labor is morally wrong varies across societies and cultures. However, morally adaptable individuals are able to adjust their behavior to fit in with the locals in cultures and societies that practice bullfighting or child labor, while maintaining their original values and beliefs regarding the ethicality of bullfighting or child labor. The willingness to adjust moral behavior without a strong need for modifying one's moral values and beliefs differentiates moral adaptability from moral relativism.

Differentiating moral adaptability from constructs capturing moral character. Moral adaptability does not necessarily indicate whether individuals have positive or negative moral character. It reflects an individual's willingness to adjust their moral behavior in both positive and negative directions. Thus, the concept of moral adaptability corresponds to the concept of personality strength: high (low) personality strength lowers (increases) within-person variability in an individual's behavior (Dalal et al., 2015). For instance, a person who is generally conscientious can have either high or low personality strength. Those with high personality strength are consistently conscientious, but those with low personality strength are highly conscientious at times but much less so at other times. Likewise, moral adaptability does not reflect moral character, but rather a tendency to vary one's moral behavior around the average level of moral behavior (i.e., moral character). Moral adaptability is therefore distinct from traditional moral constructs such as moral identity (Aquino & Reed, 2002) and moral disengagement (Moore, Detert,

Treviño, Baker, & Mayer, 2012) because these constructs reflect moral character, rather than variability of moral behavior. Moral identity reflects the extent to which individuals internalize moral values (e.g., caring, honest) and portray those values through their daily activities (Aquino & Reed, 2002) while high levels of moral disengagement reflect negative moral character, because individuals with high levels of moral disengagement are prone to search for justifications that will allow them to engage in unethical behavior without experiencing regret or self-directed negative emotions (Bandura, 1999).

Differentiating moral adaptability from constructs related to moral strength. Moral strength refers to the tendency to engage in positive moral actions in the presence of resistance, pressure, and threats (Hannah, Avolio, & Walumbwa, 2011), as well as being unwilling to violate moral principles despite costs or temptation (Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Schlenker, 2008). Existing constructs such as moral courage and integrity are closely related to moral strength (Hannah et al., 2011; Schlenker, 2008). Individuals with high moral strength can be assumed to have very high levels of positive moral character. However, moral adaptability is distinct from moral strength (e.g., moral courage, integrity) in that high moral adaptability does not reflect levels of moral character but the willingness to vary moral behavior (without regard to values or beliefs). If one has moral strength, it is almost impossible to also have low moral character. This is not the case with moral adaptability.

The Development and Validation of the Moral Adaptability Scale

I developed the moral adaptability (MA) scale in five stages using six independent samples. In Stage 1, I adopted the deductive approach recommended by Hinkin (1995) to generate an initial pool of items and relied

on experts to evaluate the content validity of these items. In Stage 2, I examined the factor structure of the newly developed scale, conducting Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) with two independent samples: undergraduates in Singapore (sample 1) and working adults in the US (sample 2). I also examined the internal consistency of the scale and its susceptibility to social desirability response bias at this stage. In Stage 3, I examine the convergent and discriminant validity of MA in four independent samples: sample 2 and three additional samples consisting of undergraduates in Singapore. Specifically, I examined MA's relations with three categories of constructs: 1) moral character (including moral relativism) or strength, 2) individual differences reflecting conformity to norms, rules, or laws, and to distinguish MA from general tendencies to vary 3) other individual differences related to behavioral variability. In Stage 4, I examined MA's influence on the relationship between moral character and moral behavior (i.e., charitable behavior). In Stage 5, I conducted a two-wave survey with a sample of working adults to examine the incremental predictive validity for workplace behaviors as well as the test-retest reliability of MA.

Stage 1: Item Generation and Reduction

To generate items, I followed the deductive approach recommended by Hinkin (1995). This involves developing the construct's definition based on a theoretical argument, generating items reflecting the definition, and assessing the content validity of each item.

Item generation. I generated an initial pool of 27 items reflecting the willingness to adjust moral behavior according to the situation. During this

process, I created items that were simple and avoided generating double-barrelled or negatively worded items.

Item reduction. I relied on experts knowledgeable in the ethics literature (6 faculty members and 1 Ph.D. student) to conduct a Q-sort assessing the content validity of each of the initial 27 items. These experts had no prior knowledge of the definition of MA. The Q-sort helped to first, increase the content validity of the finalized scale (Hinkin, 1995) and second, to decrease overlap between MA and existing moral constructs. To avoid cognitively overloading the participants, I included the definitions of eight moral constructs. These were MA, moral disengagement, internalization and symbolization dimensions of moral identity, utilitarianism, formalism, moral clarity, and moral imagination. Five items which passed the 75 percent threshold (6 of 7 participants matched these 5 items to the definition of MA) recommended by Hinkin (1995) were retained as a result of the Q-sort (see Table 1).

Insert Table 1 about here

Stage 2: Initial Psychometric Properties of the MA Scale

In Stage 2, I investigated the initial psychometric properties of the five-item scale. In two independent samples, I examined the scale's factor structure, internal consistency, and susceptibility to social desirability bias. I examined the internal consistency and susceptibility to social desirability bias in both samples but conducted an EFA on sample 1 and a CFA on sample 2.

Participants and procedures.

Sample 1. Two hundred and twenty-one undergraduate students were recruited to participate in a 20-minute computer-based survey in a laboratory at a university in Singapore. The respondents were awarded one extra course credit for successfully completing the survey. All survey materials were in English. Twelve respondents incorrectly responded to an attention check question and were removed from the sample. The final sample size was 209 respondents (118 females and 91 males; average age = 20.92 [range of 18 to 27, *SD* = 1.40]; 196 Singaporeans; 188 individuals of Chinese ethnicity, 10 individuals of Indian ethnicity, and 3 individuals of Malay ethnicity).

Sample 2. Two hundred and thirty-nine full-time working adults in the United States were recruited via MTurk to participate in a 15-minute computer-based survey. The respondents were compensated USD1.50 for successfully completing the survey. Ten respondents did not complete the survey, and 19 respondents incorrectly answered an attention check question and were removed from the sample for a final sample size of 210 respondents (95 females and 115 males; average age = 40.34 [range of 24 to 72, *SD* = 11.83]; 208 Americans; 165 Caucasians, 17 African Americans, 13 Hispanics or Latinos, and 9 Asians; average organizational tenure = 83.98 months [*SD* = 74.08]; 109 individuals in a non-management position, 42 individuals in a first-line supervisor position, 46 individuals in a middle management position, and 13 individuals in a upper-management position; 90 individuals with some college or high school education, 88 with a bachelor's degree, 24 with a master's degree, and 8 with an advanced graduate or doctorate degree).

Measures. In both samples, participants completed the 5-item MA scale (1 = *strongly disagree* and 5 = *strongly agree*). Cronbach's alpha was 0.92 in sample 1 and 0.94 in sample 2 indicating good internal consistency. Participants also completed a social desirability scale and reported whether each item (e.g., "I always try to practice what I preach") accurately reflected them (*True* and *False*) (Strahan & Gerbasi, 1972). Cronbach's alpha was .56 in sample 1 and .79 in sample 2 for the social desirability scale. In addition, in each sample, participants completed other morality-related scales to test for discriminant and convergent validity as will be further explained in Stage 3 of the scale development process.

Results.

EFA. To examine the factor structure of the 5-item MA scale, I conducted an EFA with principal axis factoring and an oblique rotation in sample 1. Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant (χ^2 (10) = 796.54, $p <$ 0.001) and Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was high (KMO = .88). Thus, the results indicated that it was appropriate to conduct the factor analysis with this sample. Overall, the five items formed one dimension (see Table 1). All factor loadings were above 0.50, meeting the recommended 0.40 threshold (Hinkin, 1998), and the first factor explained about 70.72 percent of the total variance, well above the recommended 60-percent explanation (Hinkin, 1998).

CFA. In sample 2, to confirm my one factor model I conducted a CFA analysis using Mplus Version 7.4 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2015). The comparative fit index (*CFI*) and standard root-mean-square residual (*SRMR*)

indicated the hypothesized one-factor model fit the data well ($\chi 2$ (5) = 14.64, p < 0.05; CFI = .99; SRMR = .02) (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

Social desirability. To examine whether the MA scale was susceptible to social desirability bias I examined the correlations in both samples between responses to the MA scale and the social desirability scale. The results indicated no significant relation in both sample 1 (r = .00, p = .99) and sample 2 (r = -.10, p = .14).

Stage 3: Additional Psychometric Properties: Convergent and Discriminant Validity

In stage 3, I proceeded to test the convergent and discriminant validity of the MA scale. In addition to sample 2, I used another three independent samples (i.e., sample 3, sample 4, sample 5) to examine the relationship of MA with moral relativism and the following categories of constructs: 1) individual differences reflecting moral character or strength (as discussed earlier), but also more broadly, 2) individual differences regarding conformity to norms, rules, and laws, and 3) individual differences affecting behavioral consistency or variability.

Participants and procedures.

Sample 3. Two hundred and twenty-one undergraduate students were recruited to participate in a 20-minute computer-based survey in a laboratory at a university in Singapore. The respondents were awarded one extra course credit for successfully completing the survey. All survey materials were in English. Ten respondents incorrectly responded to an attention check question and were removed from the sample for a final sample size of 211 respondents (119 females and 92 males; average age = 21.68 [range of 18 to 29, *SD* =

1.59]; 194 Singaporeans; 189 individuals of Chinese ethnicity, 7 individuals of Indian ethnicity, and 7 individuals of Malay ethnicity). Respondents responded to the measures on a 5-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree* and 5 = *strongly agree*) unless otherwise stated.

Sample 4. Two hundred and sixty-seven undergraduate students participated in a 20-minute computer-based survey in a laboratory at a university in Singapore. They were awarded one extra course credit for successfully completing the survey. All survey materials were in English. Two respondents did not complete the survey and 15 respondents incorrectly responded to an attention check question for a final sample size of 250 respondents (132 females and 118 males; average age = 21.65 [range of 18 to 28, *SD* = 1.63]; 213 Singaporeans; 214 individuals of Chinese ethnicity, 13 individuals of Indian ethnicity, and 4 individuals of Malay ethnicity). Respondents responded to the measures on a 5-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree* and 5 = *strongly agree*) unless otherwise stated.

Sample 5. Two hundred and forty-three undergraduate students participated in a 20-minute computer-based survey in a laboratory at a university in Singapore. They were awarded one extra course credit for successfully completing the survey. All survey materials were in English. Five respondents incorrectly responded to an attention check question and were removed from the sample for a final sample size of 238 respondents (105 females and 133 males; average age = 21.79 [range of 18 to 35, *SD* = 1.95]; 195 Singaporeans; 200 individuals of Chinese ethnicity, 19 individuals of Indian ethnicity, and 5 individuals of Malay ethnicity). Respondents

responded to the measures on a 5-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree* and 5 = *strongly agree*) unless otherwise stated.

Individual differences reflecting moral character or strength. Given my earlier arguments that positive moral character or strength should be less associated with a willingness to adjust moral behavior, I expected MA to negatively correlate with individual differences reflecting positive moral character or strength and positively correlate with individual differences reflecting negative moral character or strength. However, the magnitudes are expected to be low to moderate because morally adaptable individuals are not inherently immoral, they are simply more likely to adapt to the situation (much as people who are low in personality strength are likely to adapt their personality-driven behaviors to the situation).

Moral relativism. Earlier I argued that moral adaptability is conceptually distinct from moral relativism in that moral adaptability is about adjusting moral behavior across situations rather than moral values across contexts (e.g., situations, cultures, or societies). However, I still expect a low to moderate positive relationship between the two constructs. Morally relativistic individuals are able to embrace different moral values across different contexts (e.g., societies, cultures) and thereby should be willing to adjust moral behavior as well. I assessed moral relativism in sample 5 with Forsyth's (1980) 10-item scale. An example item is "What is ethical varies from one situation and society to another." The respondents reported on a 9-point scale (1 = *completely disagree* and 9 = *completely agree*). Cronbach's alpha was .80.

Moral identity. Moral identity consists of two dimensions: internalization and symbolization. Internalization is the extent to which individuals perceive moral values (e.g., caring, honest) as important while symbolization reflects how much individuals demonstrate their moral values (Aquino & Reed, 2002). Individuals with high internalization have positive moral character, refrain from unethical behavior and are less likely to engage in behavior inconsistent with their moral values (e.g., Hertz & Krettenauer, 2016). Thus, I expect a low to moderate negative correlation with MA. The relationship between symbolization and moral character is less clear. Individuals with high symbolization express their moral values via their daily activities and lifestyles (e.g., hobbies, clothing, organizational membership). However, such expression does not necessarily reflect moral character or variability in moral behavior. Therefore, I expect little to no relationship between MA and symbolization. I assessed moral identity in sample 2 with Aquino and Reed's (2002) 10 item scale (5 for each dimension). Respondents read a set of moral characteristics (e.g., caring, honest) and reflected on the extent to which this set of moral characteristics represented them. An example item for internalization is "I strongly desire to have these characteristics." An example item for symbolization is "I often wear clothes that identify me as having these characteristics." Cronbach's alpha was .81 for internalization and .91 for symbolization.

Moral attentiveness. Moral attentiveness refers to the extent to which individuals pay attention to moral stimuli in daily life (Reynolds, 2008). Highly morally attentive individuals tend to see the world through a moral lens and perceive everyday issues as having moral implications. There are two

dimensions to moral attentiveness; the perceptual dimension refers to the tendency to automatically reflect on moral stimuli or experiences and the reflective dimension refers to the tendency to reflect upon those stimuli or experiences. Given that attentiveness does not necessarily mean taking action, paying attention to a moral issue does not mean individuals will change their morally based behavior. As such I expect a low relation between MA and moral attentiveness. I assessed moral attentiveness with Reynolds' (2008) scale in sample 2. 7 items assessed perceptual moral attentiveness and 5 items assessed reflective moral attentiveness. An example for perceptual dimension is "Many of the decisions that I make have ethical dimensions to them." An example for reflective dimension is "I often reflect on the moral aspects of my decisions." The respondents reported on a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree* and 7 and *strongly agree*). Cronbach's alpha was .96 and .92 for the perceptual dimension and reflective dimension, respectively.

Honesty-Humility, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. Recent research has associated Honesty-Humility, agreeableness, and conscientiousness with positive moral character (Cohen & Morse, 2014), and as such I expected MA to have a moderately negative correlation with Honesty-Humility, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. Individuals with high levels of Honesty-Humility are modest, sincere, honest and fair, and they have strong tendencies to refrain from unethical behavior (Cohen & Morse, 2014). Agreeable individuals value others' needs and desires, put others' interest above that of themselves, and have tendencies to conform to and abide by social norms and rules (Cohen & Morse, 2014). Finally, conscientious individuals have strong self-discipline and remain committed to their values

and beliefs including moral ones (Cohen & Morse, 2014). I used Ashton and Lee's (2009) 10-item scale to assess Honesty-Humility and the International Personality Item Pool (IPIP) representation of Costa and McCrae's (1992) revised NEO personality inventory (NEO-PI-R) to assess agreeableness and conscientiousness in sample 3. An example item of Honesty-Humility is "I would never accept a bribe, even if it were very large". Cronbach's alpha was .73. For agreeableness and conscientiousness each trait was captured with 10 items. An example for agreeableness is "I accept people as they are". An example for conscientiousness is "I make plans and stick to them". Respondents reported on a 5-point scale (1 = *very inaccurate* and 5 = *very accurate*). Cronbach's alpha was .80 for agreeableness and .84 for conscientiousness.

Integrity. Integrity reflects the strength of commitment to one's principles (e.g., honesty, promise-keeping) and an unwillingness to approve of illicit behavior in the presence of external pressure or temptation. Integrity strengthens the relationship between one's moral values and behavior and reflects *moral strength* (Schlenker, 2008), but low levels of integrity do not weaken it. Although higher integrity should relate to a lower willingness to adjust moral behavior and might be mistaken for the opposite of MA, I posit that MA is distinct from integrity. Recall that MA is similar to the idea of personality strength but as applied to the domain of ethics. Thus, high levels of MA refer to higher tendencies for both positive and negative moral behavior (e.g., constructive and destructive deviance). On the other hand, high levels of integrity or moral strength refers to a higher tendency for positive moral behavior, but a lower tendency for immoral behavior. Thus, because of this

fundamental difference between MA and integrity, I expect the correlation between MA and integrity to be moderate. In addition, because morally adaptable individuals are not inherently moral or immoral but can be either, while I expect moderate relationships between MA and constructs reflecting moral character (as discussed above, e.g., internalization, moral disengagement) I also expect the magnitude of those relationships to be relatively lower than those between integrity and the same moral character constructs. I measured integrity with Schlenker, Weigold, & Schlenker's (2008) 18-item scale in sample 2. An example item is "No matter how much money one makes, life is unsatisfactory without a strong sense of duty and character." Cronbach's alpha was .89.

Moral disengagement. Moral disengagement refers to the tendency of an individual to come up with justifications to engage in unethical behavior without experiencing cognitive dissonance, psychological discomfort, and self-directed negative emotions (e.g., guilt) (Bandura, 1999). I hypothesize that MA should have a moderately positive relationship with moral disengagement. While morally adaptable individuals likely rely on moral disengagement to avoid cognitive dissonance when they adjust their moral behavior, moral disengagement likely represents only one potential mechanism. I assessed moral disengagement with Moore et al. (2012)'s 8-item scale in sample 2. An example item is, "People can't be blamed for doing things that are technically wrong when all their friends are doing it too." Respondents reported on a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree* and 7 = *strongly agree*). Cronbach's alpha was .88.

Dark triad traits. Dark triad traits consist of three socially undesirable traits: Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy (Paulhus & Williams, 2002). I hypothesize that MA should have low positive correlations with Machiavellianism and psychopathy. However, I expect no relation between MA and narcissism. Machiavellians are manipulative, deceptive, and willing to engage in behavior for self-gain. Therefore, Machiavellians should be more willing to adjust moral behavior when it accommodates their self-interested pursuits. Psychopaths lack empathy, are impulsive, and act without careful consideration. Therefore, they should be more willing to adjust moral behavior without careful consideration of others, norms, rules, or laws. Finally, narcissists have a high ego and tend to excessively admire themselves. Given this definition, narcissism is not directly related to moral behavior and I expect no relation between MA and narcissism. I assessed Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy with Jones and Paulhus' (2014) scale in sample 3. Each trait consists of nine items. An example for Machiavellianism is "Most people can be manipulated", narcissism is "I know that I am special because everyone keeps telling me", and psychopathy is "Payback needs to be quick and nasty". Cronbach's alpha coefficient was .76 for Machiavellianism, .71 for narcissism, and .71 for psychopathy.

Individual differences reflecting conformity to norms, rules, or laws. Individuals who strictly follow norms, rules, or laws should be less willing to adjust their moral behavior or violate moral guidelines in general. As such I expect a generally negative relationship between MA and constructs that capture a higher tendency to conform to norms, rules, or laws.

Formalism and utilitarianism. Formalism refers to the tendency to use norms and rules to inform and guide one's moral behavior (Brady & Wheeler, 1996). Thus, formalists should be reluctant to adjust their moral behavior as that might lead to norm and rule violations. Therefore, I expect a low negative correlation between MA and formalism. Utilitarianism refers to the tendency to use an outcome to evaluate whether a course of action is morally justifiable for the greater good (Brady & Wheeler, 1996). This tendency may influence the willingness to adjust moral behavior. Therefore, I expect a low positive correlation between MA and utilitarianism. I measured formalism and utilitarianism with Brady and Wheeler's (1996) scale in sample 2. The measure consists of six adjective items for formalism (e.g., law-abiding) and seven items for utilitarianism (e.g., results-oriented). The participants responded on a 7-point scale (1 = *not important to me* and 7 = *very important to me*). Cronbach's alpha was .83 for formalism and .82 for utilitarianism.

Normlessness. Normlessness refers to the tendency to violate norms, rules, or laws to achieve one's self-interested goals (Kohn and Schooler, 1983). Thus, normless individuals should be willing to bypass norms and rules that put constraints on their self-interest. The pursuit of self-interest without consideration of others reflects the lack of moral conscience and underlies the fundamental difference between MA and normlessness. Morally adaptable individuals who are ethical may also adjust their moral behavior for the interest of others while normless individuals simply do so for their self-interest. Thus, I expect MA to be distinct and have only a moderate positive correlation with normlessness. I measured normlessness with a 4-item measure developed by Kohn and Schooler (1983) in sample 2. An example

item is “It is all right to get around the law as long as you don’t actually break it.” Cronbach’s alpha was .77.

Individual differences affecting behavioral variability. I expected that MA should be correlated with individual differences that expand or restrict behavioral variability in general. However, I expect the correlations to be low in general because these constructs are not directly related to behavior in the moral domain and may not be as affect-laden as moral behaviors tend to be.

Self-monitoring. Self-monitoring reflects the tendency to monitor one’s behavior, expression, and others’ impression of oneself (Snyder & Gangestad, 1986). High self-monitoring individuals are adept at controlling and adjusting behavior to accommodate situations and fit in. Thus, high self-monitoring individuals should be willing to adjust their moral behavior if that helps them fit in with others. Thus, I expect MA to have a low positive correlation with self-monitoring. I evaluated self-monitoring with Snyder and Gangestad’s (1986) 18-item scale in sample 4. Respondents reported whether each item (e.g., “I guess I put on a show to impress or entertain others”) accurately reflected them (*True* and *False*). Cronbach’s alpha was .79.

Neuroticism. Neuroticism refers to the tendency to experience negative feelings such as anxiety, nervousness, and worry (e.g., Costa and McCrae, 1992) and leads to inconsistency in behavior (Sherman, Nave, & Funder, 2010). Neurotic individuals tend to have lower self-esteem and adjust their behavior to gain social approval (Denissen & Penke, 2008). Thus, I expect MA to have a low positive correlation with neuroticism. I used the IPIP representation of Costa and McCrae’s (1992) revised NEO-PI-R to assess neuroticism in sample 3. An example of the 10 items is “I panic easily”.

Respondents reported on a 5-point scale (1 = *very inaccurate* and 5 = *very accurate*). Cronbach's alpha was .84.

Preference for consistency. High preference for consistency individuals prefer consistent behavior and want to be seen as stable and reliable (Cialdini, Trost, & Newsom, 1995). Thus, being seen as morally inconsistent should cause cognitive dissonance and discomfort (e.g., Cialdini et al., 1995; Festinger, 1957). I hypothesize that MA should have a low negative correlation with preference for consistency. I used Cialdini et al.'s (1995) 9-item measure to assess preference for consistency in sample 4. An example item is "I typically prefer to do things the same way." Respondents reported on a 9-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree* and 9 = *strongly agree*). Cronbach's alpha was .87.

Self-control. High self-control individuals suppress temptation and refrain from engaging in socially undesirable behavior (Tangney, Baumeister, & Boone, 2004). When high self-control individuals encounter situations inconsistent with their moral values, they are likely to be less willing to adjust moral behavior. Thus, MA should have a low negative correlation with trait self-control. I evaluated trait self-control with Tangney et al.'s (2004)'s 13-item scale in sample 4. An example item is "I am good at resisting temptation." Respondents reported on a 5-point scale (1 = *not at all like me* and 5 = *very much like me*). Cronbach's alpha was .84.

Results.

Convergent and discriminant validity. Recall that MA demonstrated Cronbach's alpha of .92 in sample 1 and .94 in sample 2. In the three new samples, alpha was .90 in sample 3, .91 in sample 4, and .87 in sample 5.

Bivariate correlations between MA and the categories of constructs (see Table 3 - sample 2, 4 - sample 3 and 5 - sample 4) largely show the expected pattern of convergent and discriminant validity.

To ensure that MA was distinct from moral relativism, integrity, Honesty-Humility, moral disengagement and normlessness (the magnitudes of the correlations between MA and these variables are all above .30) I followed the recommendations of Shaffer, DeGeest, and Li (2016) and conducted a series of tests comparing the fit of one-factor versus two-factor models in which I paired each construct with MA. In addition to the chi-square ($\chi 2$) difference test between the unconstrained model and constrained model, Shaffer et al. (2016) recommend two additional indices to demonstrate distinctiveness: first, a CFI difference between the unconstrained model and constrained model greater than 0.002 (Meade, Johnson, & Braddy, 2008) and second, a factor correlation between the constructs lower than 0.85 (e.g., van Mierlo, Vermunt, & Rutte, 2009). Overall, the results indicated that MA is distinct from moral relativism, integrity, Honesty-Humility, moral disengagement and normlessness (See Table 6) and that it maintains its distinctiveness regardless of the sample.

MA is also related to its associated constructs in expected directions and at the expected level of strength (see Table 3 and 4). First, MA was positively related to moral relativism ($r = .31$, $p < .01$) but not so much that it can be said to be the same thing. Second, in terms of constructs related to moral character or strength, MA was negatively related to constructs reflecting positive moral character or strength: integrity ($r = -.53$, $p < .01$), Honesty Humility ($r = -.43$, $p < .01$), the internalization dimension of moral identity (r

= -.18, $p < .01$), conscientiousness ($r = -.17$, $p < .05$), and agreeableness ($r = -.16$, $p < .05$) and positively related to moral disengagement ($r = .35$, $p < .01$), Machiavellianism ($r = .27$, $p < .01$), and psychopathy ($r = .22$, $p < .01$). Thus, the results confirm my expectation of low to moderate relations between MA and these moral character-related constructs. In addition, the results confirm my expectation that the magnitudes of the relationships between MA and constructs related to moral character are relatively lower than those of the relationships between integrity and the same moral character constructs. Integrity was positively related to internalization ($r = .54$, $p < .01$) and negatively related to moral disengagement ($r = -.51$, $p < .01$). Tests of the difference between the correlations indicated the correlation between integrity and internalization is significantly stronger than between MA and internalization ($z = 6.44$, $p < .01$), and the correlation between integrity and moral disengagement is significantly stronger than between MA and moral disengagement ($z = -7.62$, $p < .01$). Thus, unlike moral strength (e.g., integrity) high moral adaptability does not necessarily reflect levels of moral character. As expected, MA was not significantly related to those constructs from which it should be theoretically distinct, the symbolization dimension of moral identity ($r = -.07$, $p = .31$), perceptual ($r = .03$, $p = .63$) and reflective ($r = .04$, $p = .59$) moral attentiveness, and narcissism ($r = .06$, $p = .42$).

In terms of constructs related to the extent to which individuals adhere to norms and rules, the pattern is again largely as expected (see Table 3). MA is related to formalism ($r = -.24$, $p < .01$) and normlessness ($r = .36$, $p < .01$). However, unexpectedly, MA is not related to utilitarianism ($r = .00$, $p = .95$).

In terms of constructs related to behavioral consistency or change, MA showed the expected pattern, neuroticism (r = .14, p < .05), self-monitoring (r = .25, p < .01), preference consistency (r = -.19, p < .01) and trait self-control (r = -.11, p = .08) (see Table 4 and 5)

Insert Table 3 about here

Insert Table 4 about here

Insert Table 5 about here

The consistency of relationships across samples. I deliberately ensured that there was considerable overlap across samples in a number of the constructs assessed. This was done so that I could examine whether the correlations (especially for morality-based constructs) were stable across samples. For example, both sample 1 and sample 2 respondents completed the scales assessing formalism, utilitarianism, integrity, internalization and symbolization dimensions of moral identity, perceptual and reflective moral attentiveness, and moral disengagement, while sample 2 and sample 3 respondents completed normlessness. In support of the validity of the MA scale the correlations between MA and moral constructs (see Table 2 - sample 1, 3 - sample 2 and 4 - sample 3) are generally strongly consistent across samples even when those samples are from different countries or with different levels of experience (i.e., working adults in the U.S. for sample 2, Singaporean undergraduate students for sample 1 and sample 3). The only variable that shows inconsistency between sample 1 and sample 2 is perceptual moral attentiveness (r = .16, p < .05) in sample 1 and (r = .03, p =

.63) in sample 2. Note also that the distinctiveness of MA as assessed with Shaffer et al.'s recommendation was also stable across samples.

Insert Table 2 about here

Stage 4: MA as Personality Strength (but in the Moral Domain)

Recall my argument that MA is akin to personality strength. The extant literature suggests various operationalizations of personality strength (e.g., self-monitoring, attitude strength; Dalal et al., 2015). These operationalizations share one common characteristic: personality strength moderates the relationship between a trait and its associated behavior, higher personality strength makes internal cues salient regardless of situational influences (Dalal et al., 2015). Therefore, in Stage 4, I examined whether MA possesses this primary characteristic of personality strength: such that low MA strengthens the positive relationship between moral traits and positive moral behavior and high MA weakens it. With two different samples (i.e., sample 2 and 3) I used two different operationalizations (that prior researchers have used, Cohen & Morse, 2014) of moral character to test this implication: the internalization dimension of moral identity and Honesty-Humility.

As discussed earlier, both internalization and Honesty-Humility are important components of moral character and lead to positive moral behavior (Cohen & Morse, 2014). High internalization is related to positive moral behavior (e.g., Hertz & Krettenauer, 2016) and high Honesty-Humility has been linked to increased organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). Thus, individuals with high internalization or high Honesty-Humility possess positive moral character and are more likely to engage in positive moral

behaviors such as charitable behavior (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Cohen & Morse, 2014).

I expected MA to strengthen the positive relationship between moral character and positive moral behavior (i.e., charitable behavior). Low MA should make internal cues (moral character) more salient to individuals with high moral character and make it more likely that they would engage in behaviors that are in line with those cues (i.e., charitable behavior).

> *Hypothesis 1:* MA moderates the positive relationship between moral character and charitable behavior, such that as a level of moral character increases, the relationship becomes stronger for those with low MA.

Participants and procedure. To test my hypotheses I used my samples 2 and 3. In addition to the measures assessing internalization and MA reported in Stage 3, sample 2 participants completed Reynolds' (2008) 3-item scale assessing charitable behavior by reporting the frequency with which they engaged in charitable behavior over the past year on a 4-point scale (1 = *never* and 5 = *many times, e.g.,* "I donated non-money items (clothes, food, etc.) to the needy"). Sample 3 participants likewise completed Reynolds' (2008) scale, in addition to the Honesty-Humility and MA measures reported in Stage 3.

Results. Table 8 and 9 show the results for the moderating effects of MA controlling for gender (women are shown to be more ethically caring than men, Gilligan, 1982). The results support Hypothesis 1. In sample 3, MA significantly moderates the relationship between Honesty-Humility and charitable behavior (B = -.24, $p < .05$; $\Delta R^2 = .02$, $p < .05$), such that as Honesty-Humility increases, the relationship becomes more positive for those

with low MA (low MA, B = .35, $t(206)$ = 2.23, p < .05; high MA, B = -.04, $t(206)$ = -.29, p = .77). Similar results emerged with a different operationalization of moral character in Sample 2. MA moderates the relationship (although the interaction term might be called marginally significant given p = .05) between internalization and charitable behavior, (B = -.17, p = .05, ΔR^2 = .02, p = .05), such that as internalization increases, the relationship becomes more positive for those with low MA (low MA, B = .39, $t(205)$ = 2.96, p < .01; high MA, B = .04, $t(205)$ = .32, p = .75). Thus, MA exhibits one key characteristic of personality strength across two samples with different characteristics (i.e., working adults in the US, university students in Singapore) and with different operationalizations of moral character. In addition, the insignificant slope for respondents with high MA in both sample 2 and 3 suggests that when MA is high people with very different levels of moral character perform the same level of charitable behavior.

Insert Table 7 about here

Insert Table 8 about here

Insert Table 9 about here

Insert Figure 1 about here

Insert Figure 2 about here

Stage 5: Incremental Predictive Validity, Test-Retest Reliability, and Workplace Implications

In Stage 5, I examine the stability of MA over time and demonstrate the predictive validity of MA for important workplace outcomes above and beyond a host of established measures.

MA and unethical pro-organizational behavior (UPB). UPB refers to behaviors that are beneficial to an organization, but violate societal norms and are harmful to society (e.g., withholding negative information about a product from clients, hiding negative information that could hurt the organization from the public) (Umphress, Bingham, & Mitchell, 2010). The literature on UPB suggests that employees engage in these types of behaviors for several reasons. First, they may be self-interestedly trying to advance their own career based on the belief that the organizations' gain from the UPB will translate to personal gain (Umphress et al., 2010). Second, they may see UPBs as part of a process of social exchange. Social exchange theory posits that when one party helps another, the other party is motivated to reciprocate and return the help (e.g., Gouldner, 1960; Homans, 1958; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). Thus, when employees feel well cared for by their organization, they may perceive UPBs as a way to reciprocate (Umphress & Bingham, 2011). Third (and relatedly), UPBs become more likely when employees strongly identify with their organization. Highly identified employees perceive organizational failures and successes as their own and thus are willing to commit UPBs at the expense of outsiders (Umphress et al., 2010). Finally, individual differences reflecting moral character may also influence an employee's willingness to engage in UPB. For example, Machiavellian

employees are said to engage in more UPBs to advance their career self-interest (Castille, Buckner, & Thoroughgood, 2018) and employees with high levels of the internalization dimension of moral identity are less likely to engage in UPBs (Wang, Long, Zhang, & He, 2018).

I argue high levels of MA are related to higher levels of UPB beyond employees' career self-interest, organizational identification, social exchange relationships with their organizations (e.g., felt obligation, affective commitment), Machiavellianism, and the internalization dimension of moral identity. Recall that the macro-theoretical perspective of MA suggests that morally adaptable individuals experience less felt accountability, or the subjective experience that their norm-violating actions are less scrutinized by others and are less likely to be punished. Thus, morally adaptable employees likely feel that their UPB will likely go unnoticed and unpunished. Consequently, all things considered, when opportunities to enact UPB arise, morally adaptable employees should be more prone to engage in UPBs, controlling for their exchange relationships with their organizations, organizational identification, their career self-interest, and moral character (i.e., internalization, Machiavellianism).

Hypothesis 2: MA incrementally and positively predicts UPB above and beyond established predictors.

MA and constructive deviance. In contrast to UPB, constructive deviance refers to behaviors that deviate from organizational norms while conforming to hypernorms (i.e., globally held values; Donaldson & Dunfee, 1994), and are intended to benefit the organization (e.g., Warren, 2003; Galperin, 2012). Constructive deviance is said to be "constructive" because it

promotes organizational functioning and effectiveness (e.g., violating organizational procedures to solve a problem, disobeying one's supervisor to improve work procedures, Galperin, 2012). The literature on constructive deviance has identified three main antecedents: intrinsic motivation, felt obligation, and psychological empowerment (Vadera, Pratt, & Mishra, 2013). Intrinsically motivated employees are inherently engaged with and enjoy their work; thus, they take risks, explore new concepts and ideas, and are more likely to engage in constructive deviance. Employees who believe their organization cares for them and supports them may develop social exchange relationships with their organizations and a felt obligation to reciprocate this treatment (Eisenberger, Armeli, Rexwinkel, Lynch, & Rhoades, 2001). Thus, employees high on felt obligation are more likely to look for ways to make a positive impact on their organizations, even when it means engaging in behaviors (i.e., constructive deviance) that deviate from their organizations' norms and rules (Vadera et al., 2013). Finally, psychological empowerment consists of four components that influence employees' beliefs about the amount of control they have over their work process: meaning (i.e., a work purpose or goal), competence (i.e., a belief in one's capacity to perform the work), self-determination (i.e., autonomy in decisions at work), and impact (i.e., personal influence on procedures and outcomes at work) (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). Vadera et al. (2013) argued that the competence and self-determination components, in particular, are likely to give employees' the capacity to perform constructive deviance because employees high on these factors are also higher in confidence in their abilities and autonomy in decisions at work. Therefore, these employees feel that they have the freedom

to pursue courses of action that allow them to work effectively and facilitate organizational success and that they have the abilities to successfully execute those actions (e.g., constructive deviance).

I argue high levels of MA are related to high levels of constructive deviance, controlling for intrinsic motivation, felt obligation, and psychological empowerment. Constructive deviance is positive, norm-violating behavior. The macro perspective of moral adaptability suggests that morally adaptable employees are inclined to challenge prevailing practices and rules and solve problems with perspectives and ideas unorthodox to the established system. In addition, because morally adaptable employees experience less felt accountability, they should believe that any constructive deviance will remain less scrutinized by other work colleagues. Thus, when existing norms and rules prevent employees from performing effectively, morally adaptable employees are more likely to constructively deviate from these norms and rules.

Hypothesis 3: MA positively predicts constructive deviance above and beyond established predictors.

Participants and procedure.

Sample 6. I recruited 725 working adults in the U.S. via MTurk to complete a two-wave survey. Each survey took about 12 minutes to complete. Only participants who had a past MTurk work approval rating of at least 99% and an approved number of HITs greater than 1,000 were allowed to participate in the study (these are participants who completed more than 1,000 studies on MTurk with over 99% percent of their responses accepted as valid by other researchers). I awarded respondents USD1.45 for successfully

completing Survey 1 at Time 1 and another USD2.45 for successfully completing Survey 2 at Time 2. Six hundred and eighty-three respondents successfully completed Survey 1 without missing an attention check question. To ensure that I would not include multiple responses from the same participant in the analysis, I excluded 79 responses with duplicate IP addresses from my invitation to participate in Survey 2. Thus, I invited 604 of these 683 respondents to participate in Survey 2 one week after the completion of Survey 1. Of these, 430 respondents participated and 424 successfully completed Survey 2 without incorrectly answering an attention check question. All responses had unique IP addresses. Thus, the final sample size consists of 424 respondents (191 females and 232 males; average age = 38.90 [range of 20 to 71, *SD* = 10.97]; 420 Americans; 335 Caucasians, 29 African Americans, 27 Asian, and 19 Hispanics or Latinos; average organizational tenure = 82.17 months [*SD* = 74.75]; 250 individuals in a non-management position, 83 individuals in a first-line supervisor position, 78 individuals in a middle management position, and 12 individuals in a upper-management position; 175 individuals with some college or high school education, 179 with a bachelor's degree, 53 with a master's degree, and 14 with an advanced graduate or doctorate degree).

Measures. In wave 1, respondents completed the same scales assessing the internalization dimension of moral identity and Machiavellianism as did Sample 2 and 3, respectively. Cronbach's alpha was .78 and .76, respectively. In addition, the respondents completed the 10 other measures described below. Responses were on a 5-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree* and 5 = *strongly agree*) unless otherwise stated.

MA (Wave 1 and 2). Respondents completed the 5-item MA scale. Cronbach's alpha was .94 in Wave 1 and .95 in Wave 2.

Affective Commitment (Wave 1). I assessed affective commitment with Allen and Meyer's (1990) 8-item scale (1 = *strongly disagree* and 7 = *strongly agree,* e.g., "This organization has a great deal of personal meaning to me"). Cronbach's alpha was .76.

Organizational Identification (Wave 1). I measured organizational identification with Mael and Ashforth's (1992) 6-item scale (e.g., "When someone criticizes my organization, it feels like a personal insult"). Cronbach's alpha was .93.

Felt Obligation (Wave 1). I measured felt obligation with the 7-item scale of Eisenberger et al. (2001) (e.g., "I feel a personal obligation to do whatever I can to help my organization achieve its goals"). Cronbach's alpha was .88.

Intrinsic Motivation (Wave 1). I used Grant's (2008) 4-item scale to assess intrinsic motivation. Respondents reported why they were motivated to do their work on a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree* and 7 = *strongly agree*, e.g., "Because I find the work engaging."). Cronbach's alpha was .97.

Psychological Empowerment (Wave 1). I measured psychological empowerment with Spreitzer's (1995) scale. The scale consists of three items in each of its four dimensions: meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact. Respondents responded on a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree* and 7 = *strongly agree*, e.g., "I have mastered the skills necessary for my job" - competence; and "I can decide on my own how to go about doing my work" -

self-determination). Cronbach's alpha was .81 for competence and .92 for self-determination.

Career Self-Interest (Wave 2). I measured career self-interest with Collins' (2006) 6-item scale (e.g., "I will do whatever it takes to enhance my promotion potential.") Cronbach's alpha was .95.

UPB (Wave 2). I assessed UPB with Umphress et al.'s (2010) 6-item scale. Respondents responded on a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree* and 7 = *strongly agree*, e.g., "If it would help my organization, I would misrepresent the truth to make my organization look good."). Cronbach's alpha was .90.

Constructive Deviance (Wave 2). I assessed constructive deviance with Galperin's (2012) scale. The scale consists of two dimensions: organizational and interpersonal deviance with five items each (e.g., "I sought to bend or break the rules in order to perform my job" - organizational and "I disobeyed my supervisor's instructions to perform more efficiently" – interpersonal; 1 = *never* and 7 = *daily*). Cronbach's alpha was .89.

Results.

Test-retest reliability. The correlation between Wave 1 MA and Wave 2 MA of .70 ($p < .01$) provides support for the stability of MA over time.

Incremental predictive validity. Table 10 and 11 show the results for MA's incremental predictive validity with UPB and constructive deviance as dependent variables. In Sample 5, I show the incremental predictive validity of MA for UPB beyond career self-interest, organizational identification, felt obligation, affective commitment, internalization, and Machiavellianism ($B = .22$, $p < .01$; $\Delta R^2 = .02$, $p < .01$). Thus, Hypothesis 2 was supported. MA also predicted organizational deviance beyond intrinsic motivation, felt obligation,

and competence and self-determination dimensions of psychological empowerment (B = .17, p < .01; ΔR^2 = .02, p < .01). However, I did not find that MA incrementally predicted interpersonal deviance (B = .08, p = .15). Thus, Hypothesis 3 was partially supported.

Insert Table 10 about here

Insert Table 11 about here

General Discussion

This research draws from both micro perspective (i.e., the density distribution model of personality) and macro perspective (i.e., cultural tightness and looseness) to introduce the construct of moral adaptability and develops a scale to measure it. MA captures a person's willingness to adjust their moral behavior according to the situation. Results from six independent samples provide support for the construct validity and reliability of the scale. MA is related to moral relativism and three categories of constructs in the expected directions and magnitude: 1) individual differences reflecting moral character and strength, 2) individual differences reflecting conformity to norms, rules, or laws, and 3) individual differences affecting behavioral variability. The relations between MA and traditional, established moral constructs (e.g., moral identity, propensity to morally disengage) were highly consistent across two independent samples with different characteristics on a number of dimensions including age, experience, and culture: 1) undergraduate students in a university in Singapore and 2) working adults in the US. In addition, I show that MA behaves in a similar way to personality strength in that it moderates the relationship between a trait (in this case moral

character, i.e., internalization, Honesty-Humility) and a trait relevant behavior (i.e., charitable behavior) such that as MA decreases, the relationship between moral character and moral behavior strengthens. Finally, MA has implications for behavior at work in that it relates to both positive and negative behavior (i.e., constructive deviance, unethical pro-organizational behavior) beyond a host of established constructs that had been suggested to explain constructive deviance or unethical pro-organizational behavior.

Theoretical Implications and Future Research

This research makes a number of theoretical contributions to the ethics literature. First, I introduce the idea of strength (as derived from the personality strength literature) to the moral domain. This potentially opens a number of new avenues for research on ethics more broadly and ethical behavior at work specifically. For example, MA can help further our understanding of the role of moral emotions in moral behavior. Moral emotions are an important component of one's moral experience. Research on moral conviction, as well as research on taboo trade-offs, suggests that when morally convicted individuals encounter situational cues that are in conflict with their moral values, they experience negative emotions such as anger and disgust. Haidt (2001) posited that emotions can precede rational thinking and that individuals use their emotions as information that shapes how they judge morally-laden situational cues. Given the idea that individuals with high personality strength search for cues that fit their trait profile and will even try to shape situations to fit that trait profile (Dalal et al., 2015), I would predict that low MA may help shape individual reactions to moral situational cues and evoke negative emotions if those cues

are in conflict with their moral trait profile such that the lower the MA the greater the negative reaction.

Second, the concept of MA offers a better understanding of the individual difference perspective on within-person variability in moral behavior. Research on within-person variability in moral behavior (e.g., moral licensing, moral cleansing) is still relatively new and our understanding of those tends to be limited to one change in moral behavior from one occasion to another within laboratory settings. However, both Bleidorn and Denissen (2015) and Meindl et al. (2015) showed that within-person variability in moral behavior is part of our daily life and is relatively stable across individuals. Although I did not show that high MA employees are more likely to vary their moral behavior, I illustrated that MA is related to both positive and negative behavior in the workplace (i.e., constructive deviance, unethical pro-organizational behavior) as would be expected. More importantly, MA treats within-person variability in moral behavior as an individual difference. This makes it far easier for future research to examine consequences of within-person variability in moral behavior outside laboratory settings such as workplace settings.

Third, MA may offer a framework for how to motivate individuals to become more ethical. Past research suggests that when individuals compare themselves to others of higher moral standards, they may experience moral self-threat and react negatively (Monin, 2007). This suggests that ethical role models can sometimes demotivate others. MA may help explain which ethical role models will inspire others to become more ethical and which will come across as more threatening. Individuals that are more willing to adjust their moral

behavior while maintaining a high average level of ethicality may (by virtue of their lack of perfect moral behavior) be seen as a better, or at least a more attainable, role model. Thus, by including MA in models of moral exemplars and self-threat we may be able to better understand what types of leaders are the best example for improving the ethical behavior of employees and make better use of social learning theories to understand these relationships.

Managerial Implications

This research also has potential implications for practitioners. First, MA may help identify employees who are most likely to experience moral distress at work. Moral distress refers to a combination of negative emotions (e.g., guilt, shame) and poor psychological well-being (e.g., feelings of helplessness, depression). This phenomenon is said to be common among medical professionals who have to work within institutional constraints that can prohibit them from pursuing the course of action that they think is right for their patients (Jameton, 1984). They find themselves in right (following the rules of their organization) vs. right (the welfare of the patient) situations on a distressingly regular basis. The resulting higher levels of moral distress are themselves linked to negative work outcomes (e.g., job burnout, turnover intention) and even suicide in some extreme cases (Gold, Sen, & Schwenk, 2013; Schernhammer & Colditz, 2004). However, institutional constraints or right/right decisions are not unique to medical professionals. Researchers are applying the concept of moral distress to a wider range of professions such as law enforcement officers (e.g., DeTienne, Agle, Phillips, & Ingerson, 2012; Huhtala, Kaptein, & Feldt, 2016; McCafferty, Souryal, & McCafferty, 1998). Societies or organizations plagued with unethical or corrupt practices (e.g., bribery) may also drive moral

distress. In a corrupt system, ethical employees likely have no say or are without adequate means to counter widespread unethical practices within their organizations and those employees who want to "do the right thing" are likely to experience the greatest levels of moral distress, feelings of helplessness, depression, and burn out (e.g., McCafferty et al., 1998). Future research could examine how MA plays a role in mitigating moral distress. For instance, medical professionals who are more morally adaptable may be less prone to moral distress and better able to continue treating their patients to the best of their ability within the confines of institutional rules. Indeed, as I have shown in my results these employees may also, while persisting in their work, strive to make things better by engaging in constructive deviance (conditional on their level of moral character). The same may be true for generally ethical employees in unethical organizations. Higher levels of MA may allow these employees to remain at their posts and strive to improve the situation rather than burn out and quit. Such insight will allow practitioners to identify employees who are less prone to moral distress and strive to improve organizational functioning.

Second, this research suggests that it is inadequate to exclusively rely on traditional approaches and identify individuals with high or low moral character to improve ethicality within the workplace. Individuals, including ethical ones, may be flexible with their moral behavior with those with higher levels of MA more open to situational influences. Thus, individuals with high levels of MA may be those most impacted by the ethical climate of the organization. Thus, companies should be thinking about selecting both on moral character and on MA. Companies with lower levels of ethical climate can expect employees high in MA to be more ready to engage in unethical behavior while

those companies with positive and strong ethical climates can freely select employees with high MA and anticipate equally high levels of ethicality from them.

Third, past research has suggested that the tendency to engage in unethical behavior may lead to desirable behaviors such as creative behavior (Gino & Ariely, 2012). This research suggests that it may not be that low moral character contributes to the desirable behaviors, but it is the willingness to adjust moral behavior that prompts individuals to violate existing norms and rules and brings about positive changes to their organizations. Thus, flexible moral behavior is not necessarily a bad thing because it could prompt employees to engage in constructive deviance. With the availability of MA scale, practitioners could use MA in conjunction with other moral character constructs (i.e., moral identity, Honesty-Humility) and measures of ethical climate to identify individuals who have both high moral character and MA and as such who would be most likely to improve the likelihood of divergent and creative thinking in their units.

Limitations

My research is not without its limitations. First, this study develops a new construct drawing from a relatively new concept within the ethics literature: the density distribution model of personality. While Meindl et al. (2015) found that moral behavior consists of the average level and within-person variability around the average, I did not show that MA predicts within-person variability. Nevertheless, I do show that MA predicts behaviors at both ends of the distribution of moral behaviors: unethical pro-organizational behavior and constructive deviance. In the future, it would be interesting to

look at MA and actual variance in moral behavior over time. However, the relationship may be more complicated than it appears at first. One might argue that higher MA predicts higher variance in ethical behavior. However, when thinking about the role of emotions and MA, it may be that individuals higher in MA feel less of the "corrective" emotions after doing something unethical and thus are less likely to morally cleanse (and thus likely to have less variance). This represents a complicated yet intriguing puzzle for future studies of MA.

Second, four of the six samples were of undergraduate students in Singapore. This potentially raises a concern regarding the external validity of the MA scale. Nevertheless, my sample 2 consisting of working adults in the US and the factor structure of MA held up well. In addition, I also illustrated that the relations between MA and traditional moral constructs were highly consistent between sample 1 and sample 2. This should alleviate some concerns regarding the external validity of MA scale. Finally, in my second sample of working adults (sample 6), the scale continued to show high levels of reliability (both internal consistency reliability and test-retest reliability) as well as the expected relationships with outcomes.

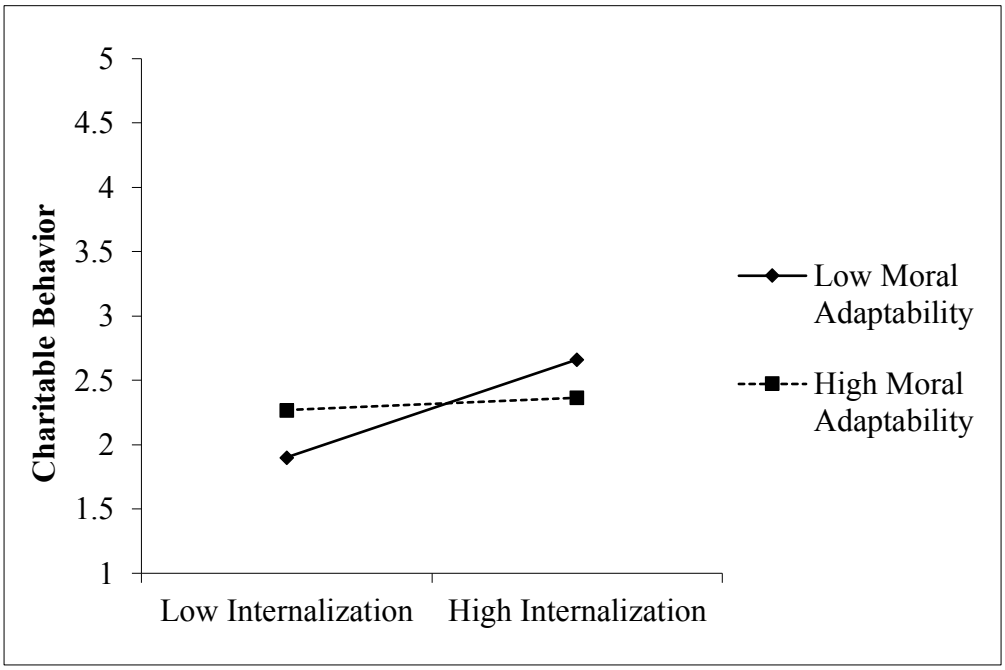

Figure 1. The moderating effect of moral adaptability on the relationship between internalization and charitable behavior (sample 2). Low and High levels of internalization and moral adaptability correspond to one standard deviation below and above the mean, respectively.

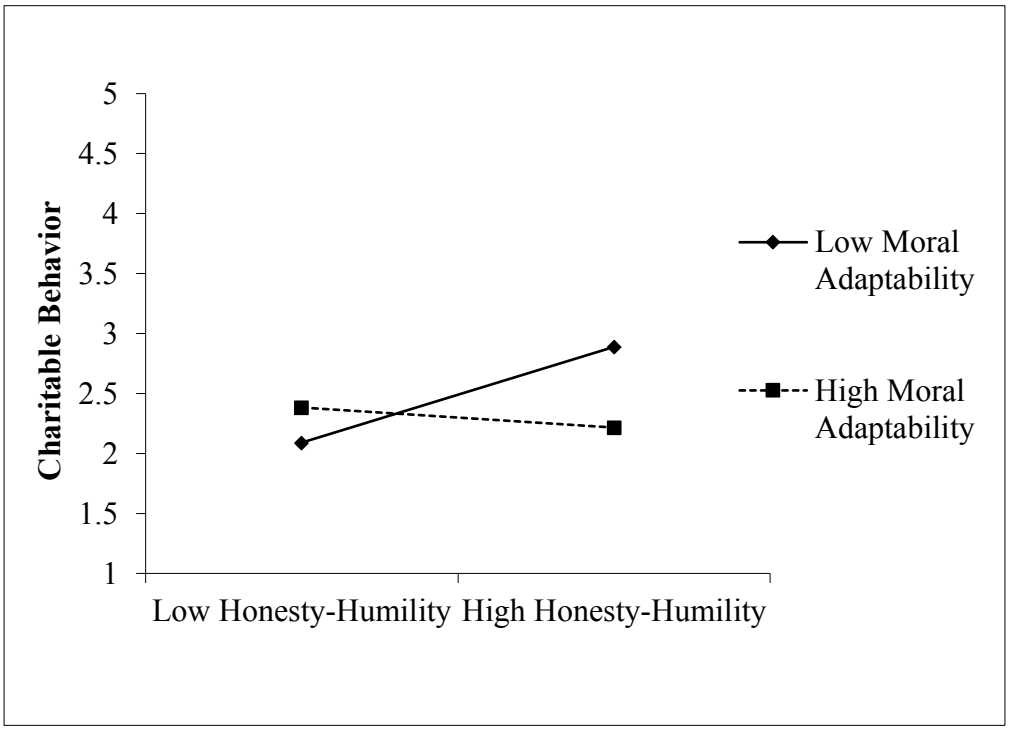

Figure 2. The moderating effect of moral adaptability on the relationship between Honesty-Humility and charitable behavior (sample 3). High and low levels of internalization and moral adaptability correspond to one standard deviation above and below the mean, respectively.

Table 1
Exploratory Factor Analysis for Sample 1 and Confirmatory Factor Analysis for Sample 2

Items	Factor loading (Sample 1)	Fit Indices (Sample 2)
1. I deviate from my moral values and beliefs if a situation requires.	0.76	
2. I am flexible with my moral behavior.	0.93	
3. I adjust my moral behavior to accommodate the situation.	0.87	
4. I adjust my moral behavior to fit those around me.	0.73	
5. My moral behavior is adaptable.	0.89	
Eigen value	3.54	
Percentage of variance explained	70.72	
X^2 (5)		14.64*
Comparative fit index		.99
Standardized root-mean-square residual		.02

Note. Extraction method: principal axis factoring with oblique rotation. All items loaded onto the same factor. *N*= 209 individuals for the EFA analysis (sample 1). *N*= 210 individuals for the CFA analysis (sample 2)

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for Sample 1

	M	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Moral adaptability	3.11	0.85	-										
2. Internalization	4.30	0.55	-.19**	-									
3. Symbolization	3.20	0.63	.02	.38**	-								
4. Integrity	3.55	0.50	-.52**	.46**	.19**	-							
5. P. moral attentiveness	3.52	1.22	.16*	-.01	.14	.00	-						
6. R. moral attentiveness	4.23	1.30	-.06	.17*	.25**	.26**	.50**	-					
7. Formalism	6.08	0.68	-.30**	.48**	.24**	.54**	.02	.30**	-				
8. Utilitarianism	5.73	0.67	.00	.09	.06	.07	.05	.11	.30**	-			
9. Moral disengagement	2.72	0.77	.38**	-.21**	-.03	-.53**	.22**	-.08	-.26**	.06	-		
10. Social desirability	0.47	0.19	.00	.16*	.15*	.27**	-.04	.10	.18**	-.07	-.21**	-	
11. Gender	0.56	0.50	-.10	.08	.03	.11	-.13	-.10	.03	-.11	-.25**	-.02	-

Note. $N = 209$. Gender was coded as 0 (male) and 1 (female). P. moral attentiveness = perceptual moral attentiveness. R. moral attentiveness = reflective moral attentiveness.
*p < .05. **p < .01.

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for Sample 2

	M	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. Moral adaptability	2.84	1.04	-													
2. Internalization	4.29	0.70	-.18**	-												
3. Symbolization	3.03	1.01	-.07	.34**	-											
4. Integrity	3.69	0.62	-.53**	.54**	.25**	-										
5. P. moral attentiveness	3.69	1.51	.03	-.07	.21**	.04	-									
6. R. moral attentiveness	4.27	1.51	.04	.14*	.27**	.20**	.75**	-								
7. Formalism	6.07	0.85	-.24**	.57**	.28**	.51**	-.02	.11	-							
8. Utilitarianism	5.31	0.93	.00	.19**	.28**	.12	.12	.16*	.50**	-						
9. Moral disengagement	2.24	1.02	.35**	-.52**	-.02	-.51**	.20**	.00	-.38**	-.01	-					
10. Normlessness	2.12	0.78	.36**	-.39**	-.09	-.61**	.07	-.04	-.33**	.06	.59**	-				
11.Charitable behavior	2.44	0.92	-.05	.19**	.44**	.25**	.16*	.23**	.30**	.18**	-.12	-.17*	-			
12. Social desirability	0.42	0.27	-.10	.12	.24**	.23**	-.05	.06	.16*	.08	-.11	-.01	.26**	-		
13. Gender	0.45	0.50	-.10	.24**	.12	.21**	-.12	-.08	.20**	-.06	-.25**	-.19**	.18*	.09	-	
14. Age	40.34	11.83	-.20**	.14*	-.06	.21**	-.09	-.07	.20**	-.02	-.27**	-.21**	.11	.14*	.14*	-

Note. $N = 210$. Gender was coded as 0 (male) and 1 (female). Age is reported in years. P. moral attentiveness = perceptual moral attentiveness. R. moral attentiveness = reflective moral attentiveness. *p < .05. **p < .01.

Table 4
Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for Sample 3

	M	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Moral adaptability	3.18	0.81	-											
2. Honesty-Humility	3.29	0.61	-.43**	-										
3. Agreeableness	3.62	0.57	-.16*	.43**	-									
4. Conscientiousness	3.42	0.62	-.17*	.22**	.14*	-								
5. Neuroticism	2.77	0.70	.14*	-.18**	-.41**	-.45**	-							
6. Machiavellianism	3.32	0.58	.27**	-.54**	-.57**	-.11	.26**	-						
7. Narcissism	2.87	0.54	.06	-.27**	.04	.35**	-.31**	.18**	-					
8. Psychopathy	2.29	0.56	.22**	-.50**	-.55**	-.09	.12	.52**	.22**	-				
9. Normlessness	2.64	0.75	.44**	-.48**	-.30**	-.18*	.10	.41**	.13	.47**	-			
10. Charitable behavior	2.53	0.85	-.16*	.14*	.20**	.12	-.15*	-.06	.19**	-.11	-.04	-		
11. Social desirability	0.48	0.20	-.11	.38**	.39**	.16*	-.30**	-.36**	.03	-.37**	-.14*	.16*	-	
12. Gender	0.56	0.50	-.05	.11	.12	-.14*	.14*	-.06	-.16*	-.32**	-.17*	.08	-.07	-

Note. $N = 211$. Gender was coded as 0 (male) and 1 (female).

*p < .05. **p < .01.

Table 5
Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for Sample 4

	M	*SD*	1	2	3	4
1. Moral adaptability	3.21	0.86	-			
2. Preference for consistency	6.08	1.31	-.19**	-		
3. Trait self-control	3.06	0.69	-.11	.06	-	
4. Self-monitoring	0.51	0.23	.25**	-.30**	-.13*	-

Note. $N = 250$.
*p < .05. **p < .01.

Table 6
Tests for MA Distinctiveness from Related Constructs.

Models	Correlation corrected for attenuation	Comparison of constrained vs. unconstrained models: Constrained Model χ2	Constrained Model df	Constrained Model CFI	Unconstrained model χ2	Unconstrained model df	Unconstrained model CFI	Factor correlation	Δχ2	ΔCFI
MA and moral relativism	0.38	278.42	90.00	0.85	265.87	89.00	0.86	0.51	12.55**	0.01
MA and integrity										
Sample 1	-0.58	678.32	230.00	0.76	408.91	229.00	0.90	-0.32	269.41**	0.14
Sample 2	-0.58	959.42	230.00	0.72	748.08	229.00	0.80	-0.45	211.34**	0.08
MA and Honesty-Humility	-0.53	416.46	90.00	0.70	235.11	89.00	0.86	-0.34	181.35**	0.17
MA and moral disengagement										
Sample 1	0.47	164.27	65.00	0.91	135.14	64.00	0.93	0.45	29.13**	0.02
Sample 2	0.38	217.29	65.00	0.90	201.25	64.00	0.92	0.37	16.04**	0.02
MA and normlessness										
Sample 2	0.42	96.36	27.00	0.94	65.72	26.00	0.97	0.37	30.64**	0.03
Sample 3	0.60	87.33	27.00	0.93	64.14	26.00	0.96	0.46	23.19**	0.02

Note. The degree of freedom is one for all χ2 difference tests. The covariance between each construct pair was set to 1.0 in constrained models.

Table 7
Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for Sample 6

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1. Moral adaptability - T1	2.26	0.92	-															
2. Moral adaptability - T2	2.18	0.93	.70**	-														
3. Internalization	4.36	0.63	-.25**	-.26**	-													
4. Machiavellianism	2.82	0.74	.33**	.38**	-.27**	-												
5. Moral disengagement	2.06	0.87	.36**	.37**	-.41**	.53**	-											
6. Intrinsic motivation	4.82	1.74	-.05	-.10*	.22**	-.13**	-.13**	-										
7. Competence	6.06	0.74	-.19**	-.19**	.21**	-.13**	-.30**	.19**	-									
8. Determination	5.41	1.12	-.10*	-.09	.10*	-.06	-.15**	.40**	.28**	-								
9. Affective commitment	4.37	1.50	-.03	-.08	.22**	-.10*	-.12*	.74**	.14**	.39**	-							
10. Felt obligation	5.12	1.16	-.11*	-.12*	.34**	-.19**	-.21**	.63**	.15**	.27**	.67**	-						
11. Organizational identification	3.14	1.04	.04	.02	.17**	.00	-.01	.63**	.08	.31**	.79**	.62**	-					
12. Organizational deviance	2.04	1.22	.14**	.21**	-.07	.26**	.28**	-.16**	-.04	-.09	-.13**	-.14**	-.07	-				
13. Interpersonal deviance	2.03	1.00	.06	.13**	.04	.16**	.16**	-.08	.03	-.02	-.04	-.02	.03	.63**	-			
14. Unethical pro-organizational behavior	2.51	1.19	.33**	.40**	-.20**	.39**	.48**	-.03	-.21**	-.05	.07	-.03	.17**	.32**	.15**	-		
15. Career self-interest	2.82	0.99	.25**	.37**	-.08	.42**	.30**	.19**	-.03	.14**	.22**	.09	.27**	.08	.06	.41**	-	
16. Gender	0.45	0.50	.02	-.04	.17**	-.10*	-.17**	.10*	.11*	.05	.10*	.05	.17**	-.06	.04	-.10*	-.04	-

Note. $N = 424$. T1 = Time 1, T2 = Time 2. Gender was coded as 0 (male) and 1 (female). Age is reported in years. Organizational deviance = organizational dimension of constructive deviance. Interpersonal deviance = interpersonal dimension of constructive deviance.
*p < .05. **p < .01.

Table 8
The Moderating Effect of Moral Adaptability on the Relationship between Internalization and Charitable Behavior for Sample 2

	Charitable Behavior		
Variable	*B*	*SE*	β
Model 1			
Constant	2.33	.09	
Gender	.26*	.13	.14*
Internalization	.21*	.09	.16*
Moral Adaptability	-.01	.06	-.01
R^2	.06		
F	3.99**		
Model 2			
Constant	2.30	.09	
Gender	.27*	.13	.14*
Internalization	.22*	.09	.17*
Moral Adaptability	.02	.06	.02
Internalization x Moral Adaptability	-.17†	.08	-.14
ΔR^2	.02		
Δ*F*	3.87		

Note. $N = 210$. Gender was coded as 0 (male) and 1 (female).
†p = .05 *p < .05. **p < .01.

Table 9
The Moderating Effect of Moral Adaptability on the Relationship between Honesty-Humility and Charitable Behavior for Sample 3

	Charitable Behavior		
Variable	*B*	*SE*	β
Model 1			
Constant	2.46**	.09	
Gender	.12	.12	.07
Honesty-Humility	.12	.11	.08
Moral Adaptability	-.12	.08	-.12
R^2	.04		
F	2.57		
Model 2			
Constant	2.39**	.09	
Gender	.15	.12	.09
Honesty-Humility	.16	.11	.11
Moral Adaptability	-.10	.08	-.09
Honesty-Humility x Moral Adaptability	-.24*	.12	-.14*
ΔR^2	.02		
ΔF	4.05*		

Note. $N = 211$. Gender was coded as 0 (male) and 1 (female).
*p < .05. **p < .01.

Table 10
Regression Analysis with Unethical Pro-organizational Behavior as the Dependent Variable for Sample 6

	Unethical Pro-organizational Behavior		
Variable	*B*	*SE*	β
Model 1			
Constant	1.28**	.49	
Career Self-Interest	.32**	.06	.27**
Affective Commitment	-.05	.06	-.06
Felt Obligation	-.05	.06	-.05
Organizational Identification	.23**	.08	.20**
Internalization	-.22*	.09	-.12*
Machiavellianism	.37**	.08	.23**
R^2	.25		
F	23.51**		
Model 2			
Constant	.77	.50	
Career Self-Interest	.29**	.06	.24**
Affective Commitment	-.04	.06	-.06
Felt Obligation	-.04	.06	-.04
Organizational Identification	.21*	.08	.18*
Internalization	-.17	.09	-.09
Machiavellianism	.32**	.08	.20**
Moral Adaptability	.22**	.06	.17**
ΔR^2	.02		
ΔF	13.83**		

Note. $N = 424$.
*p < .05. **p < .01.

Table 11
Regression Analysis with Constructive Deviance as the Dependent Variables for Sample 6

	Organizational (Constructive) Deviance			Interpersonal (Constructive) Deviance		
Variable	*B*	*SE*	β	*B*	*SE*	β
Model 1						
Constant	2.95**	.54		1.76**	.45	
Felt Obligation	-.06	.07	-.06	.05	.05	.05
Intrinsic Motivation	-.08	.05	-.11	-.07	.04	-.13
Competence	-.01	.08	.00	.06	.07	.04
Determination	-.04	.06	-.03	.01	.05	.01
R^2	.03			.01		
F	3.12*			1.09		
Model 2						
Constant	2.26**	.59		1.44**	.50	
Felt Obligation	-.05	.07	-.04	.05	.05	.06
Intrinsic Motivation	-.09	.05	-.12	-.08*	.04	-.13*
Competence	.03	.08	.02	.07	.07	.06
Determination	-.03	.06	-.03	.01	.05	.01
Moral Adaptability	.17**	.07	.13**	.08	.05	.07
ΔR^2	.02			.01		
ΔF	7.08**			2.11		

Note. $N = 424$. Competence = competence dimension of psychological empowerment. Determination = self-determination dimension of psychological empowerment. *p < .05. **p < .01.

CHAPTER 3: MORAL ADAPTABILITY AND FELT GUILT AND SHAME IN THE AFTERMATH OF (UN)ETHICAL BEHAVIOR

Introduction

Globally, in 2017, employee unethical behavior contributed to a total loss of more than $7 billion (Association of Certified Fraud Examiners, 2018) in organizations. This may be unsurprising given that the unethical act of even a single employee can have devastating effects on organizational survival. Nick Leeson and the collapse of Barling Bank in 1995 is one example (Rodrigues, 2015). The collapse was particularly striking given that Barling Bank was the second oldest merchant bank in the world. As an employee at Barling Bank, Nick Leeson committed unauthorized trades and falsified trading accounts repeatedly between 1992 and 1995, incurring the total loss of $1.3 billion to the Bank and causing thousands of employees to lose their job (Rodrigues, 2015). In a similar example, for nine years Samuel Israel III ran a $450 million-dollar Ponzi scheme in which he embezzled investment funds for his personal use, continuously attracted new investors to his Bayou Hedge Fund Group to make up for the losses, and fraudfully used the new funds to pay profits to current investors (Sorkin, 2012). Both examples illustrate the severe damage workplace unethical behavior can cause, but both examples also demonstrate that unethical acts are not typically a one-time thing. Employees who commit unethical acts tend to commit similar unethical acts over time (Welsh, Ordóñez, Snyder, & Christian, 2015). As such it becomes important to understand not just which employees will be unethical at one point in time, but also the process by which they continue to be unethical over time.

To date, there is a dearth of research on within-person unethical behavior (see Welsh et al., 2015 for an exception) so it makes it difficult to predict when people will repeat their unethical behavior or what types of people are more likely to be repeatedly unethical. Past research primarily examines the between-person factors that make certain individuals more or less prone to commit an unethical behavior than others (see Kish-Gephart, Harrison, & Treviño, 2010; Treviño, Nieuwenboer, & Kish-Gephart, 2014 for recent reviews). As useful as these studies have been, the cross-sectional survey or experimental approach they use (Treviño et al., 2014) have limited ability to make predictions about within-person behavior. This renders an incomplete picture. While we may have an understanding of who is more likely to commit an unethical act, we lack an understanding of the factors which lead employees to repeat an unethical act. Thus, in order to begin understanding the tendency to repeat unethical behavior it is important to begin adopting experience-sampling methods to examine repeated unethical behavior in naturalistic settings (see Bleidorn & Denissen, 2015; Meindl et al., 2015 for examples of how this can be done).

In this chapter, I take some first steps to exploring the mechanics behind what makes people more likely to repeat unethical behavior. I draw on the ethics and emotion literatures to argue that when people are more morally adaptable, they are less likely to feel negative emotions as a result of their own unethical behavior. I explore what this means for understanding whether people will repeat their unethical behavior, and suggest further directions to unpack these processes. In doing so this chapter makes three contributions to the literatures on ethics and emotions. First, I contribute to the small but

growing set of experience-sampling studies examining the influence of individual differences on the relations between unethical behavior and emotions. To date most studies on unethical behavior tend to rely on creating artificial opportunities in laboratory settings for respondents to engage in unethical behavior (e.g., Gino & Ariely, 2012) or asking the respondents to recall their past unethical behavior (e.g., Kouchaki & Gino, 2016). By employing the experience-sampling approach, I allow unethical behavior and experienced emotions to occur naturally, rule out memory bias and allow respondents to decide what is ethical or unethical behavior, all increasing the external validity of the study's findings.

Second, I examine the effects of a number of different categories of morality-related individual differences and their unique effects on two discrete emotions said to be highly relevant to ethical behavior, felt guilt and shame (e.g., Daniels & Robinson, 2019; Rebega, Apostol, Benga, & Miclea, 2013). These include moral character (i.e., internalization dimension of moral identity, moral disengagement), moral strength (i.e., integrity), guilt- and shame proneness, and MA[1]. Past studies have suggested that these individual differences (with the obvious exception of MA) affect felt guilt and shame (e.g., Cohen, Wolf, Panter, & Insko, 2011; Ding et al., 2016; Stanger, Kavussanu, Boardley, & Ring, 2013). However, studies of ethical behavior tend to focus on one or two individual differences at a time. Given that these individual differences are not entirely independent from one another – for instance, individuals high in integrity likely have high internalization as well,

[1] See Chapter 2 for differences among moral character, moral strength and personality strength in the moral domain.

it is possible that the effects of these individual difference on felt guilt or shame are redundant. In this chapter, I simultaneously examine the effects of all these individual differences on felt guilt and shame and allow a comparison of their relative impact.

Finally, I introduce a new individual difference, MA that might help explain why some individuals are more likely to repeat an unethical act (above and beyond the existing measures of individual differences mentioned earlier). In doing so I develop the idea of a moral equivalent to personality strength that helps explain the dynamic relationship between an individual's ethical values, their emotions, and their likelihood of behaving unethically again.

Hypothesis Development

Guilt, Shame and, Unethical Behavior

Guilt and shame are self-conscious emotions which provide self-evaluative information and make individuals reflect upon themselves (Tangney & Tracy, 2012). Thus, the emotion literature sometimes labels guilt and shame as moral emotions because guilt and shame help align individuals' behavior with societal norms, promote harmony and coordination among societal members (Tangney, Stuewig, & Mashek, 2007), and influence the individuals' tendencies to repeat unethical behavior (e.g., Tangney & Tracy, 2012). Guilt and shame are closely related emotions; however, there are a number of important distinctions between them. Guilt makes individuals regret their past negative action (e.g., unethical behavior) and motivates the individuals to amend and repair the action (e.g., Baumeister, Stillwell, & Heatherton, 1994). Shame makes individuals feel unworthy and flawed and motivates self-improvement (e.g., refraining from repeating an unethical act)

to repair damaged self-concept (e.g., Lickel, Kushlev, Savalei, Matta, & Schmader, 2014).

In many cases, guilt is seen positively, because it is argued to discourage unethical, anti-social behavior and promote prosocial behavior (e.g., Baumeister et al., 1994; Tangney & Tracy, 2012). When individuals feel guilty, they regret their past wrongdoing and find ways to make it up to those they have hurt. Thus, guilt motivates individuals to repair wrongdoing, improve themselves, and act prosocially toward others (Tangney & Tracy, 2012). This is also true in the workplace. Grant and Wrzesniewski (2010) found that guilt motivates employees to engage in extra-role behavior. Guilt also helps prevent people from engaging in unethical behavior in the first place. Motro, Ordóñez, Pittarello, and Welsh (2018) found in an experiment that, even when incentivized to lie, participants who felt guilty were less likely to do so, and Cohen, Panter, and Turan (2012) found that employees high in guilt proneness were less likely to engage in counterproductive behavior. In one case, guilt was shown to relate to a lower likelihood to repeat an unethical act. Dunn, Farrar, and Hausserman (2018) found that individuals who feel guilty are less likely to recommit income tax fraud and are more likely to disclose past fraud.

Shame, on the other hand, is argued to have more mixed effects on ethical behavior (See Daniels & Robinson, 2019 for a recent review) leading to either positive or negative behavior (e.g., Stuewig, Tangney, Heigel, Harty, & McCloskey, 2010; de Hooge, Breugelmans, & Zeelenberg, 2008). Shame, like guilt, can motivate individuals to improve themselves, engage in positive behavior to feel better about themselves, and fix their damaged self-concept

(de Hooge et al., 2008; Lickel et al., 2014) following an unethical act. For example, Lickel et al. (2014) found that when induced to feel shame, participants reported a stronger desire to improve who they were in the long run. In the workplace, Bonner, Greenbaum, and Quade (2017) found that when employees feel shame because of their unethical behavior (e.g., discussing their organization's confidential information with outsiders), they attempted to repair their self-image by engaging in more prosocial actions (e.g., coming to work on Saturday or Sunday or staying late at work to show dedication). However, shame can also lead to negative effects. If repair is not possible, individuals who feel shame are more likely to protect their self-concept from further damage by becoming aggressive, engaging in negative behavior, or recommitting past wrongdoings (e.g., Stuewig et al., 2010). Hosser, Windzio, and Greve (2008) showed in a 24-month longitudinal study of 1,243 young ex-convicts that those who experienced shame more frequently during imprisonment were more likely to blame others, become aggressive, and reoffend.

Emotions as Evaluative Information

That individuals use guilt and shame to evaluate themselves is well-recognized. Feelings-as-information theory (Schwarz, 2012) suggests a similar process by which individuals use their feelings (e.g., emotions) as a source of information to make evaluations and come to a judgment. When individuals encounter a situation or an object, they evaluate the situation or object by asking themselves "How do I feel about this" (Schwarz, 2012, p. 292). This allows individuals to become aware of their implicit preferences and derive their judgment and evaluations. "If it feels good, it is good" (Clore &

Storbeck, 2006, p. 128). Thus, individuals attend to their feelings for information about what they like or do not like and what is desirable or undesirable. For instance, colleges students evaluate instructors more positively if they feel good about the instructor or like the instructor (e.g., Frenzel, Goetz, Lüdtke, Pekrun, & Sutton, 2009; Mainhard, Oudman, Hornstra, Bosker, & Goetz, 2018).

Feelings-as-information theory further argues that the influence of feelings on evaluations or judgments is so powerful that individuals may reach a conclusion based on a feeling or emotion unrelated to the target being evaluated. For instance, Schwarz and Clore (1983) used weather conditions (i.e., sunny and rainy weather) to manipulate participants' moods and found that participants in a positive mood condition reported higher life satisfaction than those in a negative mood, even though the weather conditions were irrelevant to the participants' life satisfaction. That effect is evident in other domains as well. Hirshleifer and Shumway (2003) and Saunders (1993) found that sunny weather (assumed to induce positive moods) positively contributed to stock returns and that that increase in stock returns could not be explained by economic factors or market imperfection (information is not fully disclosed and competition is not perfect). This effect of unrelated emotions influencing judgment plays out in terms of moral judgments as well. In a series of experiments, participants who were induced to feel disgust (e.g., smelling a bad odor, recalling a disgusting incident, watching a disgusting film scene) evaluated moral transgressions in unrelated vignettes more harshly than participants in the control conditions.

However, this effect is not inevitable. While feelings-as-information theory argues that feelings can powerfully shape judgment, it also argues that, at times, individuals will consider the source of their feeling and dissociate the target being evaluated from the feelings. Feelings-as-information theory labels this phenomenon the *discounting effect*. Individuals may discount the informational value of a feeling and dissociate the feeling from the evaluated object if they perceive that the object is not responsible for the feeling (Schwarz, 2012). For example, when Schwarz and Clore (1983) made the participants from the same study mentioned above aware of the impact of weather conditions on their life satisfaction by first asking the participants about the weather condition, the participants in the two conditions (i.e., sunny and rainy weather) did not report different levels of life satisfaction. They argued that after realizing that their feelings came from an unrelated source and was irrelevant to the target being evaluated, the participants were able to discount the impact of that emotion on their judgment.

As applied to feelings of guilt and shame and unethical acts, feelings as information theory suggests that upon experiencing guilt and shame from their actions, unethical actors will judge themselves negatively (and presumably act to correct their past behavior). However, the discounting effect implies that some individuals may dissociate themselves from felt guilt and shame if they think that another source (e.g., a situation) is responsible for their wrongdoing. Thus, individuals may initially feel guilty or shameful in the aftermath of their wrongdoing, but some individuals may be better able to attribute their actions to the situation, discount the role of those emotions in their self-judgment and subsequently experience lower guilt or shame.

The Role of MA in the Relationships among Unethical Behavior, Guilt, and Shame

While individuals should generally experience guilt and shame following an unethical act, some individuals are more likely to consider the source of guilt and shame in the aftermath of their unethical behavior. That is, a phenomenon similar to *discounting effect* may occur during moral situations: some individuals may be more aware of the role of situational factors in their unethical behavior. Those individuals are more likely to use the situations to justify their unethical behavior and experience lower guilt and shame.

MA is defined as the willingness to adjust one's moral behavior depending on the situation. This is akin to the idea of low personality strength (people with lower personality strength may not express their preferred personality-driven behaviors across situations) but as applied to the moral domain. I propose that MA affects the extent to which individuals use situational factors to justify their unethical behavior and experience guilt and shame. Recall that feelings-as-information theory suggests that individuals may *discount felt emotions* by considering the influence of an external situation on their emotion and disassociating the emotion from the target being evaluated. Thus, those with high MA likely attribute the source of their guilt and shame to situational factors rather than themselves, thereby experiencing subsequently lower guilt and shame. On the other hand, those with low MA likely discard situational factors and attribute the blame to themselves, thereby experiencing heightened guilt and shame.

There are of course other individual differences that are related to guilt and shame. High levels of internalization or integrity likely intensify felt guilt

and shame. Internalization reflects the extent to which individuals feel that positive moral traits (e.g., caring, compassionate, fair, honest) are important to them and perceive themselves as ethical individuals (Aquino & Reed, 2002). Integrity refers to the extent to which individuals remain committed to their moral principles despite temptation or external pressure or threats (Schlenker, Weigold, & Schlenker, 2008). Thus, individuals with high levels of internalization or integrity should experience heightened felt guilt and shame after they have committed unethical behavior which violates their moral values or principles (Stets & Cartel, 2006). Supporting this line of reasoning, Ding et al. (2016) showed that individuals with higher levels of internalization experience stronger guilt after recalling their past unethical behavior. Moral disengagement refers to the cognitive process of searching for justifications for engaging in unethical behavior, thereby allowing individuals to engage in unethical behavior without getting caught up with associated self-directed negative emotions such as guilt and shame (Bandura, 1999). Because individuals high in moral disengagement tend to justify their unethical behavior before they commit the behavior, they likely experience low guilt and shame due to the unethical behavior. Empirical evidence shows that individuals (e.g., athletes) high in moral disengagement were able to engage in antisocial behavior (e.g., illegal drug doping, injuring opponents on an opposite sport team, sexual harassment) by suppressing their anticipated guilt and/or shame (Page, Pina, & Giner-Sorolla, 2016; Ring & Kavussanu, 2018; Stanger et al., 2013). Finally, Guilt- and shame proneness refer to tendencies to experience guilt and shame, respectively, for being involved in situations that provoke the emotions. Thus, those with high guilt- and shame proneness

should experience the heightened emotions following their unethical behavior. High guilt- and/or shame proneness have been empirically shown to inhibit a wide array of unethical behaviors such as physical and verbal aggression, lies and false promises (Cohen et al., 2011; Wolf, Cohen, Panter, & Insko, 2010).

I argue that the effects of MA should explain felt guilt or shame in the aftermath of unethical behavior above and beyond any effect of internalization dimension of moral identity, integrity, moral disengagement, and guilt- or shame proneness. This is because the process by which MA explains felt guilt and shame is unique: It involves the use of situational factors to justify unethical behavior after individuals already experience the emotions. Although there may be some similarities with one individual difference, in particular, moral disengagement, the difference is that moral disengagement involves, "deactivating the moral self-regulatory processes" (Detert et al., 2008, p.374) entirely and enables an individual to engage in unethical behavior and not experience the emotion at all (Bandura, 1999). Thus, I suggest that MA will affect the extent to which individuals use situational factors to justify their experienced guilt and shame and dissociate themselves from their unethical behavior. Individuals high in MA likely attribute the cause of their unethical behavior to situational factors and experience subsequently lower guilt and shame. On the other hand, individuals low in MA likely discard situational factors, blame themselves for their unethical behavior and experience subsequently heightened guilt and shame.

Hypothesis 1: *MA moderates the negative relationship between prior moral behavior and felt guilt, such that as MA increases, the relationship becomes weaker.*

Hypothesis 2: *MA moderates the negative relationship between prior moral behavior and felt shame, such that as MA increases, the relationship becomes weaker.*

See Figure 1 for the hypothesized model.

Insert Figure 1 about here

Method

Respondents and Procedures

Sixty-two students at a university in Singapore participated in a series of studies that consisted of an introductory survey, an experience-sampling study, and a concluding survey. The introductory online survey lasted about 15 minutes and was conducted in a behavioral lab at a university in Singapore. The following week, the respondents were asked to complete 2-minute daily surveys assessing their moral behavior and felt guilt and shame five times a day for five days on their smartphones, from Monday through Friday. On each day, the respondents received an email notification at 11 a.m., 2 p.m., 5 p.m., 8 p.m., and 11 p.m. to complete the surveys. The week after the respondents completed the experience-sampling component, they attended a concluding session at the behavioral lab and completed another 15-minute online survey. The respondents also received their compensation for their participation at the concluding session; consisting of one extra course credit and a financial reward based on the number of daily surveys the respondents completed. Respondents who incorrectly responded to an attention check question in the concluding survey received only the financial reward but not the extra course credit. The financial reward scheme was as follows: SGD15 for completing

13-18 daily surveys, SGD25 for completing 19-21 surveys, and SGD 30 for completing 22-25 surveys. Seven respondents were dropped from the analysis: one for not completing the concluding survey, two for incorrectly responding to an attention check question in the concluding survey, and four for having zero variance in their moral behavior across their daily surveys. The respondents were instructed to complete the daily surveys within two hours after each notification. Any responses given after that two-hour window were also excluded. Thus, there were a total of 1,194 observations nested within 55 individuals (33 females and 22 males; average age = 21.36 [range of 19 to 27, *SD* = 1.34]; 53 Singaporeans; 51 individuals of Chinese ethnicity and 1 individual of Indian ethnicity).

Measures

Introductory survey.

Moral adaptability. Respondents completed the 5-item MA scale (1 = *strongly disagree* and 5 = *strongly agree*). I estimated Cronbach's alpha to be .86.

Internalization dimension of moral identity. Respondents completed Aquino and Reed's (2002) scale assessing internalization (1 = *strongly disagree* and 5 = *strongly agree*). An example item for internalization is "I strongly desire to have these characteristics." I estimated Cronbach's alpha to be .75.

Concluding survey.

Integrity. Respondents completed Schlenker et al.'s (2008) 18-item scale. An example item is "It is important to me to feel that I have not compromised my principles." I estimated Cronbach's alpha to be .83.

Moral disengagement. Respondents completed Moore et al.'s (2012) 8-item scale (1 = *strongly disagree* and 7 = *strongly agree*). An example item is "Considering the ways people grossly misrepresent themselves, it's hardly a sin to inflate your own credentials a bit." I estimated Cronbach's alpha to be .78.

Guilt- and shame proneness. Respondents completed Cohen et al.'s (2011) scale (1 = *very unlikely* and 7 = *very likely*). The scale has four dimensions with four items each: Guilt–Negative-Behavior-Evaluation (GNBE), Guilt–Repair (GR), Shame–Negative-Self-Evaluation (NSE), and Shame–Withdraw (SW). For this study only the GNBE and NSE dimensions were used because the two dimensions capture individuals' tendencies to experience guilt and shame, respectively. An example item for GNBE is "After realizing you have received too much change at a store, you decide to keep it because the salesclerk doesn't notice. What is the likelihood that you would feel uncomfortable about keeping the money?". I estimated Cronbach's alpha to be .70. An example item for NSE is "You give a bad presentation at work. Afterward your boss tells your coworkers it was your fault that your company lost the contract. What is the likelihood that you would feel incompetent?". I estimated Cronbach's alpha to be .73.

Daily (experience-sampling) surveys.

Moral behavior. Moral behavior was captured with a scale developed specifically for this study. Based on the work of Meindl et al. (2015) who used honesty, compassion, and fairness to reflect moral behavior in an experience-sampling study, the scale consisted of three questions and asked respondents to report the extent to which they have been "honest", "compassionate" and

"fair" in the past two hours on a 6-point scale (1 = *very dishonest* and 6 = *very honest;* 1 = *very uncompassionate* and 6 = *very compassionate; 1 = very unfair* and *6 very fair).* Following Bledow, Rosing, & Frese (2013) and Bledow, Schmitt, Frese, & Kühnel (2011), I calculated Cronbach's alpha across 1,194 observation and estimated the alpha to be .84.

Guilt and Shame. Felt guilt and shame were captured with Fredrickson, Tugade, Waugh, & Larkin's (2003) scale. The scale consists of three items for each emotion. Items assessing guilt include "repentant", "guilty", and "blameworthy". Items assessing shame include "ashamed", "humiliated", and "disgraced". Respondents reported the extent to which they currently felt each emotion as a result of behavior they just reported on a 5-point scale (1 = *very slightly or not at all* and 5 = *extremely*). I estimated Cronbach's alpha across 1,194 observations to be .89 for guilt and .92 for shame.

Distinctiveness Between Guilt and Shame

I averaged guilt and shame within person (N = 55) and estimated the correlation across participants and found the two variables to be highly correlated (r = .92) (See Table 1). Thus, I proceeded to examine correlations among guilt, shame, and moral behavior at the within-person level across all occasions (N= 1,194): guilt and shame (r = .84, $p < 0.01$), guilt and moral behavior (r = -.30, $p < 0.01$), and shame and moral behavior (r = -.27, $p < 0.01$) (e.g., Bledow et al., 2011).

In order to further demonstrate the distinctiveness of these emotions, I conducted a CFA for a two-factor model which consisted of guilt and shame. The model had acceptable fit indices ($\chi^2_8 = 443.00$, $p < .01$, CFI = .94, SRMR

= .04) and fitted better than a one-factor model (χ^2_9 = 563.37, $p < .01$, CFI = .92, SRMR = .04) combining guilt and shame ($\Delta\chi^2_1$ = 120.37, $p < .01$).

Insert Table 1 about here

Analysis

Because the daily surveys were administered five times a day from Monday through Friday and thus nested within persons, the analysis was conducted with the HLM 7 (Raudenbush, Bryk, & Congdon, 2011) software. The model had two levels: self-reported moral behavior and felt emotions (i.e., guilt, shame) were at the within-person level (Level 1) and the individual differences (i.e., internalization, moral disengagement, integrity, guilt- and shame proneness, MA) were at the between-person level (Level 2). I thus tested for cross-level interactions and examined whether MA (i.e., a level 2 variable) explains guilt or shame at the moment (e.g., 5 pm) in the aftermath of moral behavior in the past two hours (e.g., 3 pm – 5 pm). Following the recommendation of Aguinis, Gottfredson, & Culpepper (2013), a random intercept and random slope model was employed; both the intercept of the model and the relationship between moral behavior and guilt or shame were allowed to vary depending on levels of MA.

Results

Table 1 shows descriptive statistics and intercorrelations among variables (both between-person and within-person variables) in the study. For within-person variables each respondent's repeated responses were aggregated and the average score was used to produce the correlation matrix. Before testing Hypothesis 1 and 2, I examined null models to test whether there

existed adequate within-person variance for each within-person variable to justify the use of multi-level modeling analysis. The results indicate sizable within-person variance for all three variables: 48.20%, 36.20%, and 33.10% for moral behavior, shame and, guilt, respectively. Thus, multilevel modeling is appropriate.

Of note is the fact that MA did not correlate significantly with any of the other individual differences related to morality (especially Moral Disengagement) which supports my earlier argument about the distinctiveness of MA.

To test multi-level effects, I first ran analysis for a cross-level interaction model with MA as the only second-level variable. Table 2 shows that the interaction between MA and prior moral behavior significantly predicted felt guilt (λ = .20, p < .01; low MA, λ = -.47, t(53) = -6.63, p < .01; high MA, λ = -.17, t(53) = -2.38, p < .05) and Table 4 shows that the interaction between MA and prior moral behavior significantly predicted felt shame (λ = .16, p < .01; low MA, λ = -.30, t(53) = -5.13, p < .01; high MA, λ = -.05, t(53) = -.93, p = .36).

Insert Table 2 about here

Insert Table 4 about here

Table 3 provides results for a cross-level interaction model with guilt as the dependent variable and multiple cross-level moderators. The results provide support for Hypothesis 1: the interaction between MA and prior moral behavior for the random slope remained significant (λ = .14, p < .05), such that individuals high in MA experience lower guilt than those low in MA (low

MA, λ = -.41, t(49) = -6.22, p < .01; high MA, λ = -.21, t(49) = -3.21, p < .01) even after controlling for a number of other individual differences. Figure 2 shows the nature of the interaction and its effect on felt guilt: MA significantly moderates the negative relationship between prior moral behavior and guilt such that as MA increases, the relationship becomes weaker. The results also reveal that the interaction between integrity and prior moral behavior for the random slope was significant (λ = -.45, p < .01). However, the interaction for internalization dimension of moral identity (λ = -.01, p = .90), moral disengagement (λ = -.02, p = .68), and guilt proneness (λ = .06, p = .25) were not significant. Overall, the results provide support that those high in MA experience less guilt because of their negative moral behavior and those low in MA experience heightened guilt because of their negative moral behavior.

Insert Table 3 about here

Insert Figure 2 about here

Table 5 provides results for a cross-level interaction model with shame as the dependent variable and multiple cross-level moderators. The results provide support for Hypothesis 2: the interaction between MA and prior moral behavior for the random slope was significant (λ = .10, p < .05), such that individuals low in MA experience heightened shame (low MA, λ = -.25, t(49) = -4.41, p < .01; high MA, λ = -.09, t(49) = -1.73, p = .09). In addition, the interactions between prior moral behavior and internalization dimension of moral identity (B = -.08, p = .36) and moral disengagement (B = -.02, p = .70) were not significant. The other significant interactions were those between integrity and prior moral behavior (B = -.34, p < .01) and shame proneness

and prior moral behavior (B = .07, p = .05) for the random slope. Thus, overall, the analysis shows that individuals with different levels of MA differ in their experienced shame after they have engaged in unethical behavior. Figure 3 shows the nature of the interaction and its effect on felt shame: MA significantly moderates the negative relationship between prior moral behavior and shame such that as MA increases, the relationship becomes weaker: Those low in MA experience heightened shame because of their prior negative moral behavior.

Insert Table 5 about here

Insert Figure 3 about here

General Discussion

In an experience-sampling study, I found support that MA relates to both guilt and shame due to prior moral behavior. High MA individuals experience lower guilt and shame in the aftermath of their unethical behavior than those low in MA.

This study was useful in a number of ways. First, the design itself was very novel for this area of the literature. Moral behavior was examined in naturalistic settings across multiple situations and was allowed to emerge without any artificial manipulations or elicited emotions. Respondents also reported their emotions not long after their moral behavior and hence were less likely to experience memory bias, and they were allowed to deem for themselves what was moral or immoral behavior.

Theoretical Implications and Future Research

Aside from the methodological contribution, this chapter also has theoretical implications. First, the findings suggest that individuals high MA experience less guilt and shame due to their unethical behavior. These findings imply that MA may be relevant for future research on employee well-being. Employees often face dilemmas or situations that trigger self-blame and self-directed negative emotions such as guilt and shame. For instance, employees may experience survivor guilt after witnessing their colleagues being laid off (Brockner, Davy, & Carter, 1985), law enforcement officers who work in corrupt organizations alongside corrupt colleagues may find it difficult to express their concerns about unethical practices and experience self-blame and distress, and medical professionals who cannot follow a course of action that they believe to be the most ethical or that is in the best interest of their patients may experience more moral distress along with shame and guilt. Future research can examine whether a high level of MA allows employees to use situations to justify their action and dissociate themselves from self-directed negative emotions when the situation gives them little choice. If this is the case, individuals with higher MA should have better well-being and be able to remain at their organizations.

This research also highlights some surprising differences among the effects of different individual differences related to moral behavior. For example, the findings show that moral character does not affect within-person felt guilt and shame because of their prior unethical behavior. This suggests that while individuals with more positive moral character (e.g., those with high levels of internalization or low level of moral disengagement) may be less likely

to initiate an unethical act, they may more easily fall victim to the slippery slope effect if they make an initial unethical mistake. They do not experience the negative self-directed emotions that should lead to their correcting their behavior. The same conclusion even applies to individuals high in guilt proneness: guilt proneness does not affect individuals' felt guilt because of their prior unethical behavior. This despite that fact that Cohen et al. (2012) suggested that high guilt proneness is an important characteristic of those with positive moral character. The only individual difference with a significant effect was integrity. This fits with the point made earlier that integrity, like MA, is a "strength" related construct. Integrity (sometimes referred to as moral strength) and MA affect individuals' tendencies to experience the emotions because of their prior unethical behavior. So, although integrity is different from MA, some of the relationships are similar.[2] One possible explanation for the differential effects across individual differences is that among all the individual differences measured, MA is the only one meant to capture something that occurs within persons and as such should be most closely related to immediate reactions to unethical behavior. This is borne out by the fact that it has the highest correlation with moral behavior in the sample.

Although this paper did not model the effects on subsequent behavior, the findings inform our thinking about variability in moral behavior over time (e.g. moral balancing, slippery slope effects). The results suggest that variability in moral behavior is complex and perhaps counterintuitive. For example, while on the face of it, individuals with high levels of MA might be expected to vary

[2] See Chapter 2 for the discussions regarding integrity as moral strength and differences between integrity and moral adaptability.

most in their moral behaviors, they may instead vary quite little. This makes sense if one considers that the literature on moral balancing argues individuals morally cleanse (which is akin to increasing variance in moral behavior) because they experience guilt and shame following their wrongdoing (see Mullen & Monin, 2016 for a recent review). However, our findings reveal that individuals with high MA – or those who are more willing to adjust their moral behavior – do not experience guilt and shame as much as those low in MA. Thus, they may not need to morally cleanse at all in a given situation. This means that those who are most willing to vary may vary the least. They can be expected to vary only when the situation itself changes and demands a different level of moral behavior from them. Similarly, if one considers the literature on slippery slopes, an initial transgression gradually leads to subsequent and more severe unethical acts over time – hence, unethical behavior becomes more prevalent and may restrict within-person variability in moral behavior over the long term (Welsh et al., 2015). In this case, someone with high MA may again show even less variance than someone with low MA. Given that low MA individuals are more likely to regret their unethical past, future research should connect the felt emotions to subsequent ethical behavior. The prediction based on these results would be that low MA helps halt the slippery slope effect, prevents a small transgression from repeating and becoming more severe over time, and paradoxically increases within-person variability in moral behavior because when they do engage in an unethical behavior (and almost everyone does) low MA individuals would be most likely to look for a chance to correct that behavior and morally cleanse.

Managerial Implications

This chapter offers practical implications for managers in organizations as well. First, insight from this chapter may assist managers in identifying employees who are less likely to repeat their unethical behavior or fall victim to the slippery slope effect. The examples of Nick Leeson and Samuel Israel III at the beginning of the chapter illustrate that employees can fall victim to the slippery slope effect after their first unethical act and become more and more unethical over time (Welsh et al., 2015). Although it was not tested here, it seems reasonable to expect that employees who feel more guilt and shame after an unethical act and are less likely to blame the situation will also be less likely to act unethically a second time. Thus, the ability to identify employees who regret their unethical past may help practitioners prevent repeated unethical behavior in their organizations.

Practitioners can also use insights from this chapter to identify employees who are prone to moral distress. Moral dilemmas or moral distress are prevalent in some occupations. Doctors and nurses often find themselves in right (following the rules of their organization) vs. right (the welfare of the patient) situations. Judges often have to follow laws against their better judgment (e.g., punish accused individuals harshly or inappropriately). Studies have linked moral distress to many negative employee outcomes such as employee burnout, intention to quit, or even suicide attempts (Gold, Sen, & Schwenk, 2013; Schernhammer & Colditz, 2004). Thus, practitioners could use the insight that MA affects felt guilt and shame to identify employees who are prone to moral distress, assign them work responsibilities or positions that better

suit them, and introduce well-being interventions that help them deal with moral dilemmas or moral distress and retain them at the organizations.

Limitations

This study is not without limitations. Most obviously is that the sample was undergraduate students. This raises two concerns: first, whether the findings from this study generalize to the workplace context. For one thing, working adults may have more life experience than undergraduate students and may have different emotional reactions to their moral behavior. While the results fit well with theory on emotions and moral behavior more generally, future studies may want to replicate the results from this study in a sample of working adults.

Second, there was a difference in the effects of MA on guilt and shame although I did not predict this. Individuals high in MA experienced the same level of (low) shame regardless of whether they had acted morally or not. In contrast, while individuals high in MA felt less guilt than those low in MA, the slope of the line for high MA individuals was significant. From a theoretical perspective, shame is different from guilt in a number of ways. Most importantly, shame is more emotionally painful than guilt (Tangney & Dearing, 2002). It may be that because shame is so self-reflective and painful, high MA individuals work harder at diluting it and dissociating themselves for their unethical act. Future research can experimentally test these propositions whether high MA individuals are more likely to use situations to justify their unethical behavior than those low in MA and whether the situations makes feel them less guilty, shameful, or both.

Third, I asked the respondents to report their emotional responses to their moral behavior they had just reported. This can be viewed as both a strength and a weakness. The reference to the reported behavior alleviated the concern about whether felt guilt and shame were due to reported (im)moral behavior or incidents irrelevant to the study (e.g., a bad presentation). However, it may have artificially triggered felt guilt or shame when the respondents recalled (im)moral incidents. A future study may ask respondents to report their emotional responses without the reference to reported (im)moral behavior to strengthen the findings of this study.

Finally, although I argued that higher MA individuals will attribute their emotions to the situation, I did not explicitly measure those attributions. In addition, I did not model the effects of the felt emotions on subsequent behaviors. In future studies, I will seek to replicate this effect and model more of the process by with I argue it unfolds, including attributions and subsequent behaviors.

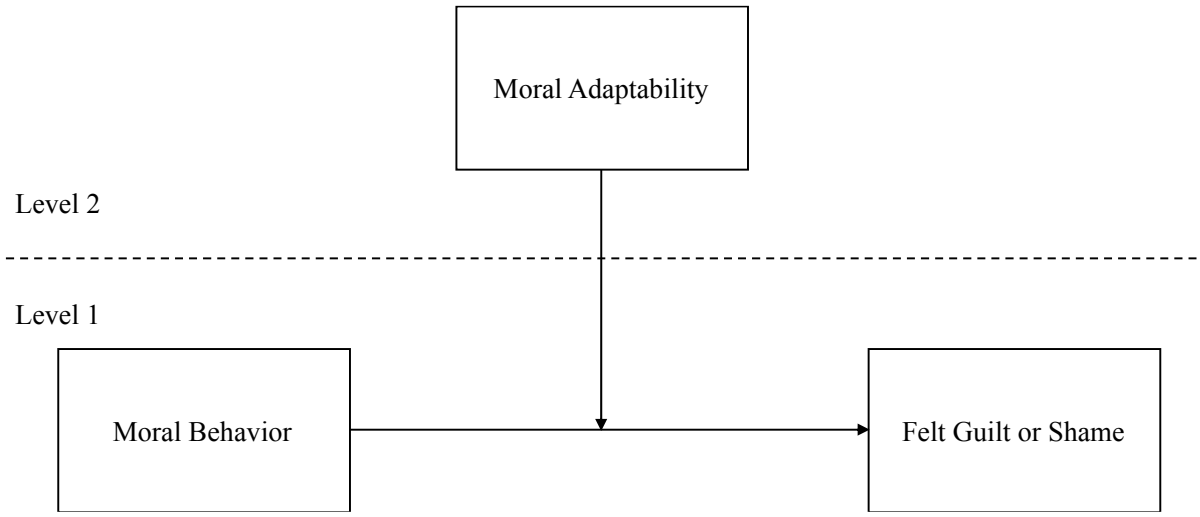

Figure 1. The Hypothesized Model.

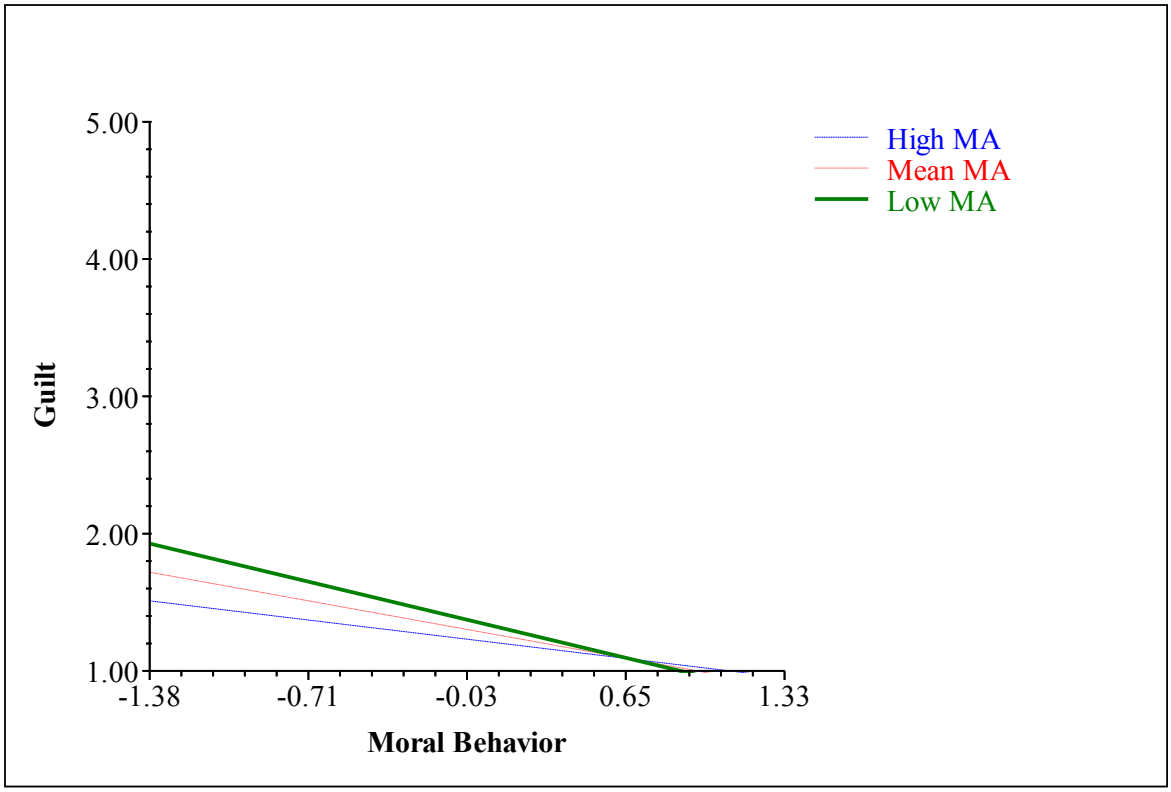

Figure 2. The moderating effect of moral adaptability on the relationship between moral behavior and state guilt. High and low levels of moral adaptability correspond to one standard deviation above and below the mean, respectively. Values for moral behavior represent one or two standard deviation(s) above and below the mean.

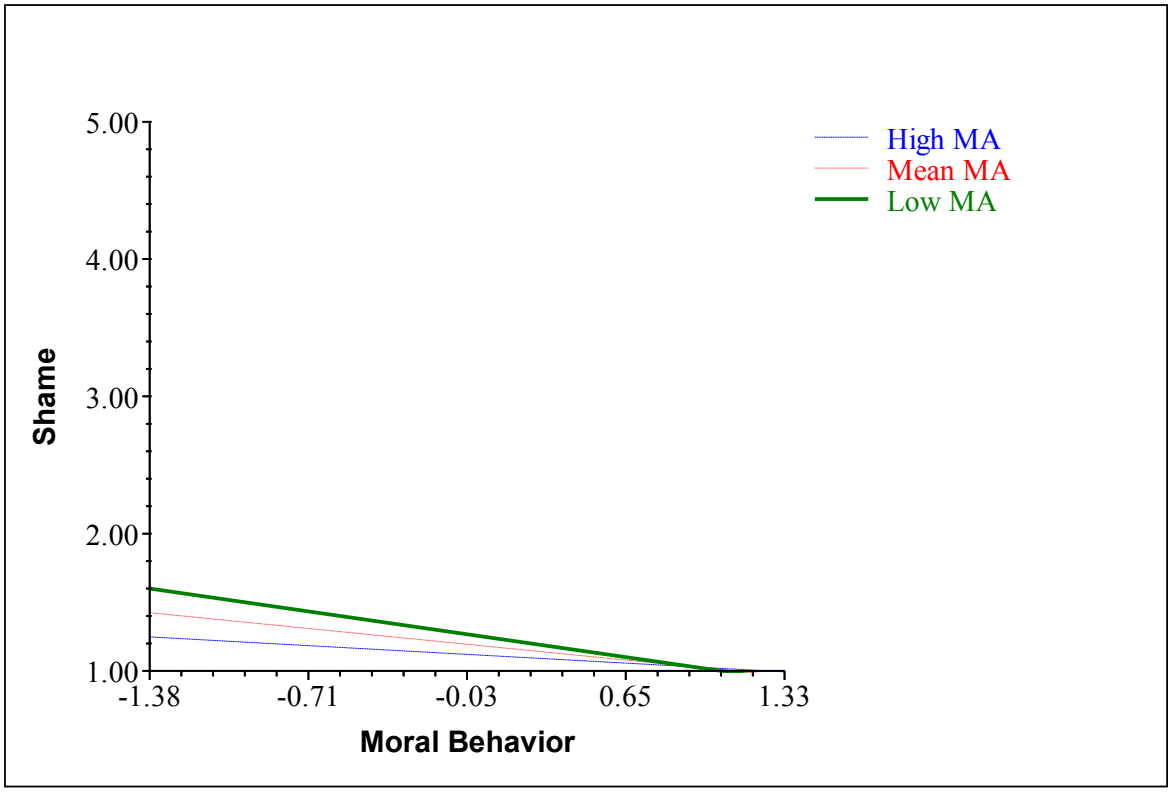

Figure 3. The moderating effect of moral adaptability on the relationship between moral behavior and state shame. High and low levels of moral adaptability correspond to one standard deviation above and below the mean, respectively. Values for moral behavior represent one or two standard deviation(s) above and below the mean.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

	M	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Moral Adaptability	3.11	0.75	-										
2. Internalization	4.40	0.46	.05	-									
3. Integrity	3.51	0.48	-.21	-.06	-								
4. Moral Disengagement	2.73	0.86	.14	-.03	-.51**	-							
5. Guilt Proneness	5.36	1.21	-.17	.24	.49**	-.40**	-						
6. Shame Proneness	5.74	1.15	.13	.34*	.41**	-.20	.67**	-					
7. State Guilt	1.28	0.39	-.18	-.02	.10	.13	.11	.03	-				
8. State Shame	1.18	0.32	-.21	-.01	.06	.10	.06	-.01	.92**	-			
9. Moral Behavior	4.61	0.52	.24	.05	.07	-.04	-.09	-.07	-.25*	-.27*	-		
10. Age	21.36	1.34	-.14	-.24	-.11	.15	-.18	-.34*	.12	.06	-.17	-	
11. Gender	0.60	0.49	.11	.30*	.04	-.14	.14	.28*	-.08	-.04	.16	-.67**	-

Note. $N = 55$. Gender was coded as 0 (male) and 1 (female). The following within-person variables were aggregated across occasions *(*$n = 1194$): State guilt, state shame, and moral behavior.
*p < .05. **p < .01.

Table 2
Cross-Level Moderation of MA (MA as the Only Moderator) with Guilt as the Dependent Variable

Predictor	Model 1		Model 2	
	Est.	*SE*	*Est.*	*SE*
Level 1 (within-person)				
Intercept	1.29**	.05	1.29**	.05
Moral Behavior	-.32**	.06	-.32**	.05
Level 2 (between-person)				
MA			-.10	.08
Cross-level moderation				
Moral Behavior x MA			.20*	.08

Note. N = 1194 observations nested within 55 individuals. *Est.* = estimate; *SE* = standard error. State Guilt is the dependent variable. Estimate values are unstandardized parameter estimates (λ).
*p < .05. **p < .01.

Table 3
Cross-Level Moderation of MA (Multiple Moderators) with Guilt as the Dependent Variable

Predictor	Model 1		Model 2	
	Est.	*SE*	*Est.*	*SE*
Level 1 (within-person)				
Intercept	1.29**	.05	1.29**	.05
Moral Behavior	-.30**	.04	-.31**	.04
Level 2 (between-person)				
Integrity	.13	.10	.11	.10
Internalization	-.03	.10	-.02	.10
Moral Disengagement	.12*	.06	.13	.06
Guilt Proneness	.05	.05	.04	.05
MA			-.09	.07
Cross-level moderation				
Moral Behavior x Integrity	-.51**	.13	-.45**	.10
Moral Behavior x Internalization	.00	.09	-.01	.09
Moral Behavior x Moral Disengagement	-.02	.05	-.02	.05
Moral Behavior x Guilt Proneness	.05	.05	.06	.05
Moral Behavior x MA			.14*	.05

Note. N = 1194 observations nested within 55 individuals. *Est.* = estimate; *SE* = standard error. State Guilt is the dependent variable. Estimate values are unstandardized parameter estimates (λ).
*p < .05. **p < .01.

Table 4
Cross-Level Moderation of MA (MA as the Only Moderator) with Shame as the Dependent Variable

Predictor	Model 1		Model 2	
	Est.	*SE*	*Est.*	*SE*
Level 1 (within-person)				
Intercept	1.19**	.04	1.19**	.04
Moral Behavior	-.18**	.05	-.18**	.04
Level 2 (between-person)				
MA			-.09	.07
Cross-level moderation				
Moral Behavior x MA			.16*	.06

Note. N = 1194 observations nested within 55 individuals. *Est.* = estimate; *SE* = standard error. State Shame is the dependent variable. Estimate values are unstandardized parameter estimates (λ).
*p < .05. **p < .01.

Table 5
Cross-Level Moderation of MA (Multiple Moderators) with Shame as the Dependent Variable

Predictor	Model 1		Model 2	
	Est.	*SE*	*Est.*	*SE*
Level 1 (within-person)				
Intercept	1.19**	.04	1.19**	.04
Moral Behavior	-.17**	.04	-.17**	.04
Level 2 (between-person)				
Integrity	.12	.09	.07	.09
Internalization	.02	.08	.01	.08
Moral Disengagement	.07	.06	.07	.06
Shame Proneness	-.02	.03	.00	.03
MA			-.09	.08
Cross-level moderation				
Moral Behavior x Integrity	-.40**	.11	-.34**	.09
Moral Behavior x Internalization	-.09	.09	-.08	.09
Moral Behavior x Moral Disengagement	-.02	.04	-.02	.04
Moral Behavior x Shame Proneness	.09**	.03	.07†	.03
Moral Behavior x MA			.10*	.04

Note. N = 1194 observations nested within 55 individuals. *Est.* = estimate; *SE* = standard error. State Shame is the dependent variable. Estimate values are unstandardized parameter estimates (λ).
†p = .05 *p < .05. **p < .01.

CHAPTER 4: MORAL ADAPTABILITY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF ETHICAL LEADERSHIP

Introduction

If organizations are to improve the average level of ethical behavior among their employees, a crucial element will be having leaders who are ethical. This is because leaders who are ethical tend to have their ethical behavior "trickle-down" (Mayer, Kuenzi, Greenbaum, Bardes, & Salvador, 2009, p. 2) to their subordinates. This is said to occur because ethical leaders serve as role models to subordinates who observe, learn, and imitate appropriate workplace behavior from the leaders (e.g., Brown, Treviño, & Harrison, 2005). Empirically, ethical leadership has been positively linked to positive employee outcomes including increased organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), decreased relationship conflicts among employees, and lower employee unethical behavior (e.g., Mayer, Aquino, Greenbaum, & Kuenzi, 2012; Mayer et al., 2009; Ng & Feldman, 2015). However, the findings for the positive effects of ethical leadership on employees are not conclusive. Other research demonstrates that, in some cases, high levels of ethical leadership relate negatively to employee behaviors such as OCBs (e.g., Stouten, van Dijke, Mayer, De Cremer, & Euwema, 2013). This suggests that there are times when ethical leaders can somehow demotivate or at least fail to inspire ethical or prosocial behavior in their employees, but it remains unclear why that may be the case. In this chapter, I argue that certain types of ethical leaders, depending on who their employees are, are less likely to be seen as role models and thus less likely to motivate ethical behavior from their employees. To do this I combine arguments from the role modeling literature

(Lockwood & Kunda, 1997; Lockwood & Kunda, 1999) with work on moral self-threat to demonstrate how leaders who are highly ethical, but have followers who see their leaders' level of ethicality as unattainable and see ethics as highly relevant, generate self-threat in those followers and are no longer seen as a good role model.

This paper makes contributions to the ethics, leadership and role modeling literatures. First, I unpack the trickle-down effect and demonstrate empirically that the reason ethical leaders have this effect is, in part, because they are seen as role models and are more likely to be imitated by followers. This idea of ethical leaders as role models is a fundamental assumption within the ethical leadership literature (e.g., Brown et al., 2005). However, to date, studies have not empirically investigated this assumption and treat the mediator between ethical leadership and employee outcomes as a black box. As a result, there is limited understanding of when and why ethical leaders are effective or ineffective at motivating subordinates' ethical workplace behavior.

Second, I broaden the theoretical rationale for the effects of ethical leadership to position social comparison as an alternative mechanism to social learning theory (the predominant theoretical framework in the ethical leadership literature). Social learning arguments for the effects of ethical leadership state that subordinates observe their ethical leader and learn and imitate appropriate workplace behavior from the leader. However, this assumption fails to explain when ethical leaders fail to motivate subordinate ethicality. Thus, I integrate social comparison theory with social learning theory explanations to argue that subordinates learn and imitate positive

workplace behavior from their ethical leader after they have upwardly compared themselves to their ethical leader and feel they can become as ethical as their leader.

Third, I explicitly examine the implications of moral self-threat in the workplace. While this concept is common in everyday life (e.g., meat eaters' resentment toward vegetarians, coworkers' rejections of whistleblowers), little research has empirically examined whether moral self-threat has an impact in the workplace. In this chapter, I apply the concept of moral self-threat in the leadership context and suggest that subordinates can experience moral self-threat due to their leader being overly (in their eyes) ethical.

Hypothesis

Ethical Leaders as Role Models

Ethical leadership is defined as leaders who demonstrate, "normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships" and who promote, "such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making" (Brown et al., 2005, p. 120). So ethical leaders both act ethically themselves and promote such behavior in others. They demonstrate appropriate workplace behavior, set ethical examples, attend to employees' problems and concerns, protect subordinates' interests, are fair and sincere, and discipline unethical behavior (e.g., Brown et al., 2005; Fehr, Yam, & Dang, 2015).

Brown et al. (2005) draw on social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) to argue that ethical leaders have an impact on subordinate behaviors because subordinates observe their ethical leader's positive behavior and come to understand the expected appropriate behavior, roles, and responsibilities.

Empirically, many of these processes have been born out. Subordinates have been shown to admire and identify with ethical leaders (Lee, 2016), try to imitate those behaviors (Badrinarayanan, Ramachandran, & Madhavaram, 2018), and earn and maintain a reputation of being ethical members of their organization (Fehr et al., 2015). This is generally a good thing for followers too. Most research has linked ethical leadership to various positive employee outcomes (e.g., higher admiration of the leaders, higher trust and fairness perceptions, higher employee performance, increased employee OCBs, lower employee unethical behavior, decreased relationship conflicts among employees; Mayer et al., 2012; Mayer et al., 2009; Ng & Feldman, 2015). So the argument is that ethical leaders are role models, the behavior they model then is imitated by their followers, and the outcomes tend to be good for all concerned (e.g., Brown et al., 2005). This is the "trickle-down effect of ethical leadership (Mayer et al., 2009). However, to date, no one has examined whether ethical leaders are actually seen as role models by their followers. It is implicit in most studies but never directly measured. As such for my first hypothesis based on the existing literature, I directly test this assumption and argue that:

Hypothesis 1: Ethical Leadership is positively related to subordinates' perception of their leader as a role model.

The Limits of Ethical Leadership, Social Comparison, and Self-Threat

However, some recent research on ethical leadership suggests that high levels of ethical leadership can sometimes have negative consequences on employee outcomes. Stouten et al. (2013) found that there is an inverted-U shape relationship between ethical leadership and employee OCBs. Thus,

moderate levels of ethical leadership are more effective at motivating employees to perform OCBs as compared to high and low levels of ethical leadership. Stouten et al. (2013) suggested this effect is due to subordinates experiencing feelings of moral reproach from their overly ethical leader. They feel that their leader considers them to be morally inferior and passes judgment on them, and they withhold their OCBs. In a similar finding, Babalola, Stouten, Camps, and Euwema (2019) found that subordinates working under leaders with strong ethical convictions feel a lack of autonomy and voice opportunities in the workplace and as a result engaged in lower levels of OCBs. Finally, Yam et al. (2019) found that subordinates seem to dislike highly ethical leaders partly because these leaders seem to lack a sense of humor. Overall, this set of findings implies that there are times when an ethical leader can be seen as too ethical by their followers and not be seen as someone to emulate or admire.

One explanatory mechanism proposed in the prior set of studies, feelings of moral reproach, fits well with work on social comparisons and self-threat. Individuals regularly engage in self-evaluations and compare themselves to similar others to identify their standing and develop their identity (Festinger, 1954). In his theory of social comparison, Festinger posited that individuals have an innate drive to evaluate their abilities and opinions in an effort to maintain an accurate self-view. Thus, in the absence of objective standards, individuals compare themselves to others to gather information about their own abilities and opinions. Social comparisons are very common and individuals compare themselves to others in almost all domains relevant to them (e.g., income, academic achievement, personal

appearance, wealth) (Festinger, 1954). Comparisons are said to be upwards when referent others are better off, or downwards when referent others are worse off (e.g., Wills, 1981; Wood, 1989). Subsequent work on the theory suggested that individuals may strategically use social comparisons to improve their view of themselves. They will compare themselves to inferior or less fortunate others (downward comparisons) to feel superior and better about themselves (e.g., Wills, 1981). On the other hand, upward social comparisons may have either positive or negative effects on self-view and are said to be motivational (e.g., Wood, 1989). They can lead to a motivation to improve, or feelings of inferiority and self-threat (e.g., Wood, 1989; Wood & Taylor, 1991).

Individuals also engage in social comparisons in the domain of ethics (Monin, 2007). In fact, morality is a key component of one's overall self-view (Allison, Messick, & Goethals, 1989; Narvaez & Lapsley, 2009). Allison et al. (1989) empirically showed that in terms of maintaining a positive self-view, individuals would rather perceive themselves as morally superior than intellectually superior to others. Leach, Ellemers, and Barreto (2007) found that individuals will weight morality over competence and sociability when evaluating other in-group members. As with all social comparisons, individuals both downwardly and upwardly compare their morality to others. Monin (2007) suggested that individuals reassure themselves that they are ethical individuals by engaging in downward social comparisons with morally inferior others. When they strive for improvement, they will engage in upward social comparisons. However, as mentioned earlier, this comes with risks. Upward social comparisons around morality may lead to either moral

elevation or moral resentment. Morally superior others (e.g., moral exemplars) can be uplifting to observers and inspire them to improve themselves to be more ethical (Haidt, 2000; 2003). However, morally superior others can also make others experience self-threat (Monin, 2007). In these cases, observers may feel morally inferior and flawed, experience moral reproach, and believe that morally superior others question their morality and pass judgment on them. This experience of moral self-threat is actually very common in everyday life. The fact that meat eaters can resent vegetarians (Minson & Monin, 2012) is based on feelings of self-threat as is the rejection of a whistleblower by his or her colleagues or the denigration of a moral exemplar (e.g., a doctor who refuses to accept gifts from pharmaceutical companies and is disliked by others who accept such gifts; Monin, Sawyer, & Marquez, 2008). Thus, when making an upward social comparison individuals can experience moral self-threat and become defensive. They may deny the virtue of superior others, put the superior others down, or treat the superior others with disrespect and distance themselves (Monin, 2007).

The question is when will subordinates who make upwards comparisons feel morally elevated and motivated to imitate and when will they feel self-threat and motivated to reject the comparison? In the next sections, I discuss the circumstances under which I expect ethical leaders to elevate versus threaten their followers.

Moral Excellence, Moral Elevation, and Subordinate Experienced Self-Threat

Despite the possibility that very high levels of ethical leadership might impose self-threat upon subordinates, I draw from research on ethical

leadership and moral elevation to suggest that in general, high ethical leadership should make subordinates feel positive about their leader and thereby less likely to experience self-threat due to their leader. Moral elevation is described as, "a warm or glowing feeling in the chest" (Haidt, 2000, p. 1) people can feel after witnessing "virtue or moral beauty" (Haidt, 2003, p. 276) and is said to engender a desire for self-improvement. Vianello, Galliania, and Haidt (2010) examined moral elevation in the subordinate-leader context and found that positive leader behavior (e.g., self-sacrifice, interpersonal fairness) elicited moral elevation in subordinates and consequently increased their organizational commitment and OCBs. Given that ethical leaders engage in virtue and praiseworthy behaviors such as being fair to the subordinates, being concerned about subordinates' problems and interests, and setting examples for positive workplace behavior and ethical business practices (Brown et al., 2005), this suggests that in general ethical leaders should elicit moral elevation and lower feelings of self-threat.

Hypothesis 2: Ethical leadership is negatively related to subordinates' experienced self-threat due to their leader.

Self-threat prevents individuals from accepting an admirable or exceptional individual as their role model (Lockwood & Kunda 1997; Lockwood & Kunda, 1999). This is similar to the argument on threat and the moral self that individuals deal with experienced moral self-threat by becoming defensive: they perceive a morally superior person negatively, reject, or distance themselves from the person, instead of embracing the morally superior person. In the workplace, research has shown that experienced self-threat hampers affective trust among work colleagues (Dunn,

Ruedy, & Schweitzer, 2012). Thus, subordinates who feel threatened by their leader should be less likely to have a positive view of their leader, likely distance themselves from the leader, and are less likely to embrace their leader as their role model. However, ethical leaders lead with virtue and are more likely to elect positive emotions (e.g., moral elevation) from subordinates thereby downplaying the potential for moral self-threat. When subordinates feel lower levels of self-threat, they should be less likely to reject the leader's example and more likely to embrace their ethical leader as their role model.

Hypothesis 3: Subordinates' experienced self-threat mediates the positive relationship between ethical leadership and subordinates' perception of their leader as their role model.

Boundary Conditions around Subordinate Self-Threat due to Ethical Leadership

As discussed above, conflicting perspectives exist regarding whether very ethical leaders inspire or impose self-threat upon their subordinates. The fundamental assumption within the ethical leadership literature is that ethical leaders inspire and serve as role models to subordinates. This assumption aligns with research on moral elevation: individuals experience elevation after witnessing virtuous behavior, and is supported by a number of empirical studies demonstrating a positive effect for ethical leadership (e.g., the trickle-down effect). On the other hand, research on moral self-threat suggests that there may be times when individuals may experience self-threat from morally superior others (e.g., Stouten et al., 2013). I propose that there exist boundary conditions around the likelihood of an ethical leader being embraced as a role model.

The concept of self-threat due to upward social comparisons is central to research on role modeling. Without upward social comparisons, individuals would not feel inspired by a superior person and perceive the person as their role model (Lockwood & Kunda, 1997). At the same time, research on role modeling posits that it is possible for individuals to upwardly compare themselves to a superior person, feel threatened by the person's superiority and excellence, and reject the person as their role model (Lockwood and Kunda, 1999). For instance, Tesser, Millar, & Moore (1988) found that high relationship closeness or task relevancy made upward social comparisons more self-threating. Tesser et al. found participants experienced higher self-threat when they were outperformed in a task highly relevant to their self than in an irrelevant task. In addition, Tesser et al. also found that participants experienced higher self-threat when a person who outperformed them was their friend, rather than a stranger. While these findings may suggest that subordinates for whom ethics is relevant would be most threatened by ethical leaders, research on role modeling has suggested that this effect is itself qualified. Lockwood and Kunda (1997) proposed that there are two conditions that determine whether someone is seen as threatening or inspiring: relevancy and attainability. Relevancy refers to the extent to which a superior person or a domain of excellence of the superior person is relevant to the self of the person being outperformed. High relevancy increases the likelihood of upward social comparisons and is the first condition. Lockwood and Kunda (1997, 1999) suggested that once upward social comparisons occur, attainability is the second condition and that this is the element determining whether the observer feels inspired or threatened by the superior person. Attainability

refers to the observer's belief whether they can achieve the same level of performance as the person they are observing. If attainability is high, the observer will feel inspired and motivated by the superior person and perceive the superior person as a role model. On the other hand, if attainability is low, the observer will feel threatened by the superior person and reject them as a role model. For instance, Lockwood and Kunda (1997) found that a successful story of an academically gifted student was more likely to inspire other students who believed that they could improve their intelligence (high attainability) than students who did not (low attainability).

Integrating the literature on role modeling and research on moral self-threat with ethical leadership, I suggest that relevancy and attainability are two important boundary conditions determining whether subordinates of an ethical leader will experience self-threat and subsequently accept or reject their leader as their role model. Subordinates who work under an ethical leader and perceive ethics as relevant to them will be more likely to take the first step and make an upward comparison with their leader. If the subordinates believe that they can become as ethical as their leader and that the level of ethicality is attainable, they will feel inspired by their leader and perceive their leader as their role model. However, if the subordinates do not believe that they can become as ethical as their leader, they will experience moral self-threat and be less likely to perceive their leader as their role model.

Because much of the role modeling literature is experimental, explicit measures of relevance and attainability are not available. However, there do exist a number of constructs in the ethics literature that capture what it means to be relevant and attainable in terms of ethical behavior. I suggest that the

internalization dimension of moral identity should capture whether subordinates think ethics is relevant to them. Internalization reflects the extent to which an individual thinks that moral traits (e.g., compassion, fair, helpful) are relevant to them and part of their self-concept (Aquino & Reed, 2002). Studies have shown that high levels of internalization are related to higher levels of ethical behavior (e.g., Hertz & Krettenauer, 2016). Thus, individuals high in internalization should feel that ethics is an important and relevant part of their self-concept.

I suggest that a leader's level of moral adaptability (MA) affects whether subordinates feel that it is attainable for them to become as ethical as their leader. MA reflects the willingness to adjust moral behavior. Leaders with low MA are not willing to change their ethical behavior regardless of circumstances, situations, or influence from surrounding others. Thus, ethical leaders low in MA can be thought of as individuals who are very competent in dealing with immoral issues, persist with their ethical behavior regardless of circumstance and do not make immoral choices. On the other hand, ethical leaders with high MA are willing to adjust their moral behavior to fit circumstances and take into account surrounding others. Thus, others may perceive ethical leaders with high MA as ethical individuals who occasionally make minor moral mistakes or are more human. These minor moral mistakes should make subordinates feel that it is attainable for them to become as ethical as their ethical leader, and being ethical does not necessarily mean they have to ignore circumstances and others' opinions. In addition to signaling high attainability, high MA may paradoxically make ethical leaders more likable because of their perceived moral mistakes. This is akin to the pratfall

effect. The idea is that when someone highly competent makes a mistake, we tend to like them more (Aronson, Willerman, & Floyd, 1966; Helmreich, Aronson, & LeFan, 1970). For instance, Aronson et al. (1966) asked their participants to listen to tape recordings of competent individuals answering college quiz questions. In one condition, participants listened to a competent individual who made a mistake (i.e., spilling coffee on a new suit) at the end of the tape, and in another condition, participants listened to a competent individual without the mistake. Aronson et al. found their participants rated the competent individual with the mistake to be more attractive and perceived the competent individual without the mistake to be "too good" (Aronson et al., 1966, p. 228). Thus, subordinates of an ethical leader with high MA likely feel that while their leader is competent in terms of ethics and is an ethical leader, the level of ethicality of the leader is more attainable. On the other hand, subordinates of an ethical leader with low MA likely feel that it is not attainable for them to be as ethical and morally straightforward as their leader and might also perceive their leader to be "too good".

Hypothesis 4: ethical leadership, leader MA, and subordinates' internalization dimension of moral identity interact to influence subordinates' experienced self-threat due to their leader, such that the negative relationship between ethical leadership and subordinates' experienced self-threat become weakest when subordinates' internalization is high and leader MA is low.

Hypothesis 5: ethical leadership, leader MA, and subordinates' internalization interact to indirectly influence the subordinates' perception of their leader as a role model via subordinates' experienced self-threat,

such that the positive indirect effect of ethical leadership on the subordinates' perception of their leader as a role model is weakest when subordinates' internalization is high and leader MA is low.

Insert Figure 1 about here

Method

Participants and procedures

To recruit full-time, working adult respondents to participate in this study, I hired Maction Consulting Pvt. Ltd. (Maction) to conduct a field survey in various organizations in India. The survey respondents consisted of subordinate-supervisor dyads who worked closely together. The respondents received study compensation from Maction. Both subordinates and supervisors received INR600 for their participation in the study. For the purpose of this study the subordinates completed two questionnaires separated over 2 weeks. Supervisors completed one questionnaire at time 1.

At time 1, 554 dyads participated in the study. Of those, 493 subordinate-supervisor dyads successfully completed the subordinate and supervisor questionnaires. 48 dyads did not finish the questionnaires, 13 dyads failed an attention check question. At Time 2, the 493 subordinates were invited to continue participating in the study and 486 successfully completed the questionnaire. Two subordinates voluntarily dropped out of the study, 4 subordinates failed an attention check question and 1 subordinate had left their organization.

The final sample consists of 486 subordinate-supervisor dyads from various organizations in various industries (26.30% information technology;

19.3% manufacturing; 11.3% finance, 8.7% pharmaceutics, 2.9% health care, 2.7% construction, 2.5% insurance, the rest were from other industries). For subordinates the average age was 29.71 years old (*SD* = 5.86), 139 females and 347 males, and the average organizational tenure was 53.84 weeks (*SD* = 74.75). All subordinates were Indian with three different ethnicities (323 Indo-Aryans, 162 Dravidians, and 1 of another ethnicity) and 479 held a bachelor's degree or above as their highest educational attainment. For supervisors the average age was 34.43 years old (*SD* = 6.43), 111 females and 375 males, and the average organizational tenure was 85.93 weeks (*SD* = 44.91). All supervisors were Indian with three different ethnicities (314 Indo-Aryans, 171 Dravidians, and 1 of another ethnicity). 301 held a bachelor's degree and 185 a master's degree.

Measures

Subordinate component.

Ethical Leadership. Subordinates completed Brown et al.'s (2005) 10-item scale assessing ethical leadership of their leader (1 = *strongly disagree* and 5 = *strongly agree*) at Time 1. An example item is "My supervisor disciplines employees who violate ethical standards." Cronbach's alpha was estimated to be .80.

Internalization dimension of moral identity. Subordinates completed Aquino and Reed's (2002) scale assessing internalization (1 = *strongly disagree* and 5 = *strongly agree*) at Time 1. The scale consists of 5 items for internalization. The subordinates indicated the extent to which a set of moral traits (e.g., honesty, compassion) was important to them. Cronbach's alpha was estimated to be .81.

Self-threat. Subordinates completed Dunn et al.'s (2012) 12-item scale assessing their experienced self-threat due to their leader (1 = *strongly disagree* and 7 = *strongly agree*) at Time 2. An example item is "I feel repulsed by him/her." Cronbach's alpha was estimated to be .97.

Role modeling. Subordinates completed Ragin and Cotton's (1999) 3-item scale assessing their perception of their leader as their role model (1 = *strongly disagree* and 7 = *strongly agree*) at Time 2. An example item is "My supervisor serves as a role model for me." Cronbach's alpha was estimated to be .73.

Leader component.

Moral adaptability. Supervisors completed the 5-item MA scale (1 = *strongly disagree* and 5 = *strongly agree*) at Time 1. Cronbach's alpha was estimated to be .66.

Results

Construct Distinctiveness

Before testing the hypotheses I examined distinctiveness of the constructs in the study by conducting confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and chi-square difference tests (See Table 1). I first conducted a CFA for a five-factor model which included ethical leadership, internalization dimension of moral identity, supervisor MA, self-threat, and role modeling. The indices reveal an acceptable fit for the five-factor model ($\chi^2_{550} = 1685.66$, $p < .01$, CFI = .90, RMSEA = .07, SRMR = .07). I then compared the five-factor model to other more parsimonious models. In a four-factor model, I combined internalization and supervisor MA to load onto one factor. For three-factor model I combined ethical leadership, internalization, and supervisor MA to

load onto one factor. For a two-factor model I collapsed variables to form two overall factors: the first consisted of ethical leadership, internalization, and supervisor MA and the second consisted of self-threat and role modeling. In the last model, I collapsed all five constructs to create a one-factor model. Then I conducted chi-square difference tests and found the five-factor model had a significantly better fit than the four-factor model ($\Delta\chi^2_4 = 214.55$, $p < .01$), three-factor model ($\Delta\chi^2_7 = 330.76$, $p < .01$), two-factor model ($\Delta\chi^2_9 = 673.03$, $p < .01$), and one-factor model ($\Delta\chi^2_{10} = 1768.76$, $p < .01$).

Insert Table 1 about here

Correlational Analysis

Table 2 reveals the means, standard deviations, correlations among the variables. The initial results indicated support for Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2. Ethical leadership was positively related to role modeling ($r = .56$, $p < .01$) and negatively related to self-threat ($r = -.45$, $p < .01$). In addition, the analysis revealed that self-threat was negatively related to role modeling ($r = -.42$, $p < .01$).

Insert Table 2 about here

Hypothesis Testing

I first conducted ordinary least square (OLS) regression analysis to test Hypothesis 1. Table 3 shows regression results with role modeling as a dependent variable. Results from Table 3 reveal that ethical leadership positively predicted role modeling above self-threat ($B = .86$, $p < .01$).

Insert Table 3 about here

I then proceeded to test Hypothesis 2 and 3. Given that the result from the correlational analysis suggests that ethical leadership was significantly related to self-threat, and self-threat was significantly related to modeling, I tested whether ethical leadership positively affected role modeling via self-threat. Results from Table 4 provide support for both Hypothesis 2 and 3: first, ethical leadership was negatively and significantly related to self-threat (the effect = -.1.44; 95% CI [-1.70 , -1.19]) and second, self-threat significantly mediated the positive relationship between ethical leadership and role modeling (the indirect effect = .17; 95% CI [.09 , .26]).

Insert Table 4 about here

In the next step, I tested whether the three-way interaction among ethical leadership, subordinate internalization (relevancy) and leader MA (attainability) significantly explained self-threat and then role modeling via self-threat. Table 5 shows the regression analysis with ethical leadership, subordinate internalization, leader MA, and the interactions among these variables as predictions of self-threat. The result from Model 4 does not provide support for Hypothesis 4: the three-way interaction among ethical leadership, subordinate internalization, and leader MA did not significantly explain subordinates' experienced self-threat due to their leader (B = .09, p = .81). As can be seen in Table 6 Hypothesis 5 was also not supported. When internalization (relevancy) was high and leader MA (attainability) was low, self-threat did not significantly mediate the relationship between the three-way

interaction of ethical leadership, internalization, and leader MA and role modeling (the indirect effect = .06; 95% CI [-.06, .18]).

Insert Table 5 about here

Insert Table 6 about here

Supplementary Analysis

To fully explore the data, I tested Hypothesis 4 with a different operationalization of relevancy, reflective moral attentiveness. Moral attentiveness captures the extent to which an individual pays attention to moral stimuli in everyday life (Reynolds, 2008). Moral attentiveness consists of two dimensions: perceptual and reflective dimensions. The perceptual dimension refers to an individual's tendency to automatically notice moral stimuli without contemplating the experiences. The reflective dimension refers to the tendency to think about those moral stimuli or experiences. Individuals high in reflective moral attentiveness perceive their daily life as full of moral implications, and pay close attention to and contemplate those implications. Thus, I suggest that reflective moral attentiveness may closely capture whether individuals perceive ethics to be relevant to them. In addition, in this analysis, I controlled for self-esteem[3]. Major, Testa, and Bylsma (1991) suggested that individuals high in self-esteem are less likely to experience self-threat due to upward social comparison. Thus, I take into account that subordinates high in self-esteem may not experience self-threat even when their ethical leader is

[3] I controlled for self-esteem in the three-way interaction analysis with internalization as relevancy. The three-way interaction result was not significant and thereby I did not include self-esteem as a control variable in the final report.

more ethical than them and they do not think it is attainable for them to become as ethical as the leader. I used Rosenberg's 1965 10-item self-esteem scale for this analysis.

I tested whether the three-way interaction among ethical leadership, reflective moral attentiveness (relevancy) and leader MA (attainability) significantly explained self-threat. The results suggest they do. As can be seen in Table 7 the three-way interaction significantly explains subordinates' experienced self-threat due to their leader (B = -.35, $p < .05$).

Figure 2 illustrates the nature of this three-way interaction and Table 8 shows results for slope difference tests. For subordinates high in relevancy (high reflective moral attentiveness) and low attainability (low MA) as ethical leadership increases, self-threat increases. On the other hand, for subordinates high in relevancy (high reflective moral attentiveness) and high attainability (high MA) as ethical leadership increases, self-threat decreases. In addition, the slope difference test reveals that both lines significantly differ from each other. These results align with the prediction of research on role modeling that individuals can feel threatened by a superior person if relevancy is high but attainability is low.

Note that when subordinates perceive ethics to be irrelevant (low reflective moral attentiveness – Line 2 and Line 4), the slopes of both lines are flat, indicating that self-threat does not change as ethical leadership increases as well as attainability changes. Finally, note that Line 3 and line 4 (the case in which leader MA is low) are not significantly different from each other. The research on role modeling would suggest that at high levels of ethical leadership, subordinates for whom ethics are relevant should experience

higher self-threat from low MA leaders than subordinates for whom ethics are not relevant. While the graph aligns with the prediction, the slopes are not significantly different.

General Discussion

In this chapter, I conducted a field survey with 486 subordinate-supervisor dyads from various organizations in India to examine when subordinates will perceive their ethical leader as a role model. Drawing from the role modeling literature, I argued that it was important to consider both the behavior of the leader as well as the perspective of the follower. I hypothesized that subordinates will perceive their leader as their role model if they think that ethics is relevant to them (relevancy) and that they can become as ethical as their leader (attainability). In addition, drawing from research on moral self-threat, I unpacked this process further and suggested that when relevancy is high but attainability is low, subordinates will experience self-threat and be less likely to perceive their leader as their role model. I did not find support for my hypothesized predictions that ethical leadership, subordinate internalization (relevancy) and leader MA (attainability) interact to determine subordinates' experienced self-threat and their subsequent perception of their leader as a role model. Nevertheless, the study yielded two important insights. First, high levels of ethical leadership reduce subordinates' experienced self-threat due to their leader and thereby make the leader more likely to be seen as a role model by subordinates. Second, in a supplementary analysis, I found that ethical leadership, subordinate reflective moral attentiveness (relevancy) and leader MA (attainability) interact to influence subordinates' experienced self-threat due to their leader, such that when

ethical leadership is high, relevancy is high (high reflective moral attentiveness), but attainability is low (low leader MA), the subordinates are most likely to experience self-threat due to their leader. The insights have implications for theories, future research, and practitioners in organizations.

Theoretical Implications and Future Research

First, I introduced social comparison theory to the ethical leadership literature. The ethical leadership literature assumes that subordinates perceive their ethical leader as their role model and observe and imitate positive workplace behavior from their leader. However, past research on ethical leadership did not empirically test the role modeling assumption, treating instead as a black box. In this chapter, I empirically demonstrated that ethical leaders are seen as role models by their subordinates. In addition, I drew from social comparison theory to introduce and test a mediator of that process, self-threat, and showed that, in general, subordinates experience less self-threat when their leaders are ethical and are subsequently more likely to see them as a role model. This supports the "trickle down" arguments for the positive effects of ethical leadership.

Second, I integrated the boundary conditions recognized in the role modeling literature with the literature on ethical leadership and tested the proposition that observers will only perceive a role model as inspiring when the domain of excellence is relevant to them and the observers think that they can obtain the same level of excellence. Although I did not find the support for the proposition with my original operationalization of relevancy, I lay the foundation for future research to test the proposition with other variables reflecting relevancy and/or attainability. In the supplementary analysis, I

suggested that reflective moral attentiveness may better capture relevancy because individuals high in reflective moral attentiveness pay close attention to moral stimuli and likely perceive ethics to be highly relevant to them. With this operationalization, I found that ethical leaders low in MA can make subordinates high in reflective moral attentiveness feel threatened. Thus, this result generalizes the overall effect of self-threat shown in the ethics literature whereby ethical individuals can make others feel inferior and threatened (Monin, 2007; Monin et al., 2008) to show that leaders who are very ethical can also be threatening to their subordinates. This understanding opens many opportunities for future research. Future research could examine various conditions (e.g., leader personality) that potentially help minimize subordinates' experienced self-threat due to their ethical leader. For instance, studies suggest personality traits such as communion and agency affect relationship quality among work colleagues. Communal individuals are more other-oriented, nurturing, and cooperative than agentic individuals who tend to be more self-oriented, independent, and ambitious. Intelligent employees who are high in communion are less likely to experience workplace victimization and have workplace conflicts than intelligent employees who are high in agency (Kim & Glomb, 2010). Thus, ethical leaders who are high in communion potentially have better relationship quality with subordinates and may be less likely to make the subordinates feel threatened. This effect could also be used to explain the (sometimes negative) reaction to the ethical actions of others in the workplace. It may help explain why virtuous and praiseworthy actions (e.g., whistle-blowing) often invoke resentment or invite backlash from others. It may be that

the non-whistleblowers see the act of whistleblowing as too difficult (unattainable) and to compensate, they lash out.

Managerial Implications

In this chapter, I draw from the role modeling literature to think about both leader behavior and subordinate beliefs and suggest that subordinates will perceive their ethical leader as a role model if they perceive ethics to be relevant to them and also believe in their potential to become as ethical as their leader. Although I did not find support for my proposed hypotheses, I outlined the mechanism that could help ethical leaders become more inspiring role models to subordinates and better motivate the subordinates to engage in positive workplace behavior. Overall, this study suggests that subordinates experience less self-threat when their leaders are ethical and are more likely to see them as a role model, but that there are cases in which ethical leadership can increase self-threat. This understanding suggests that practitioners might look for ways to introduce interventions to improve subordinates' beliefs about relevance and attainability. For example, policies that promote an ethical culture and ethical awareness among employees can help employees internalize the value of being ethical, perceive ethics to be more relevant to them, and look upon their ethical leader for appropriate workplace behavior. Similarly, such approaches might help minimize subordinates' experienced self-threat, by increasing employees' moral self-efficacy so that the employees come to believe in their potential to be ethical. Third, it may be necessary for practitioners to look beyond ethicality of leaders and consider the leaders' personality and how that might promote relationship quality between ethical leaders and subordinates and reduce feelings of self-threat. For instance, very ethical leaders who are high in

communion may be less likely to generate feelings of self-threat in subordinates than very ethical leaders who are high in agency. Very ethical leaders who are high in agency are less likely to attend to relationship quality issues and more likely to invite strong resistance, make ethical behavior feel less attainable, and induce self-threat in subordinates.

Limitations

There are a number of areas in which future research can improve on the current study design and help triangulate the effects reported in this study. First, the data for self-threat and role modeling were collected at the same time in survey 2. This raises concern that the observed relationship between the two variables may be due to common method bias. Future research may address this issue by collecting responses for these two variables at two different time points, or taking an experimental approach, manipulating self-threat, and observing changes in the acceptance of a role model.

Second, this study did not address whether subordinates really engaged in social comparison with their leaders. Thus, an experimental approach is the next likely step in this area of research since it has to be acknowledged that it is not clear that employees were always making upward social comparisons in line with social comparison theory. What this study showed is that ethical leaders can engender self-threat when employees see ethics as relevant (at least when assessed as reflective moral attentiveness) and feel that they cannot be as ethical as their leader. It did not explicitly test whether the comparisons were upwards or downwards. Individuals also engage in downward social comparisons to feel positive about themselves (Festinger, 1954). Thus, subordinates who perceive themselves to be very ethical may downwardly

compare themselves to their (less) ethical leader and experience self-enhancement. Future research may extend this study to examine both self-enhancement (e.g., pride) and self-threat as potential mediators of the relationship between ethical leadership and role modeling.

Third, although I used MA and internalization (and later reflective moral attentiveness) as proxy measures of attainability and relevancy, I did not test whether leaders high in MA were seen as more attainable or whether being high on internalization or reflective moral attentiveness actually meant that subordinates thought ethical behavior was more relevant to them. Although measures of these specific constructs do not exist in the moral domain, there may be more appropriate operationalizations of these constructs (such as relationship quality for relevancy and moral self-efficacy for attainability) available. In addition, in an experimental approach, relevancy and attainability can be manipulated and their effects more directly assessed.

Finally, I did not examine downstream behavioral outcomes of ethical leadership such as OCBs. I simply examined subordinates' perception of their ethical leader as a role model. While consistent with theoretical predictions for a behavioral effect, this perceptual outcome alone is inadequate to claim that the process of social comparison has a meaningful influence on actual employee workplace behavior. Future research should extend this study and examines actual employee workplace behaviors such as OCBs and deviance as downstream outcomes of subordinates' upward or downward social comparisons to their ethical leader.

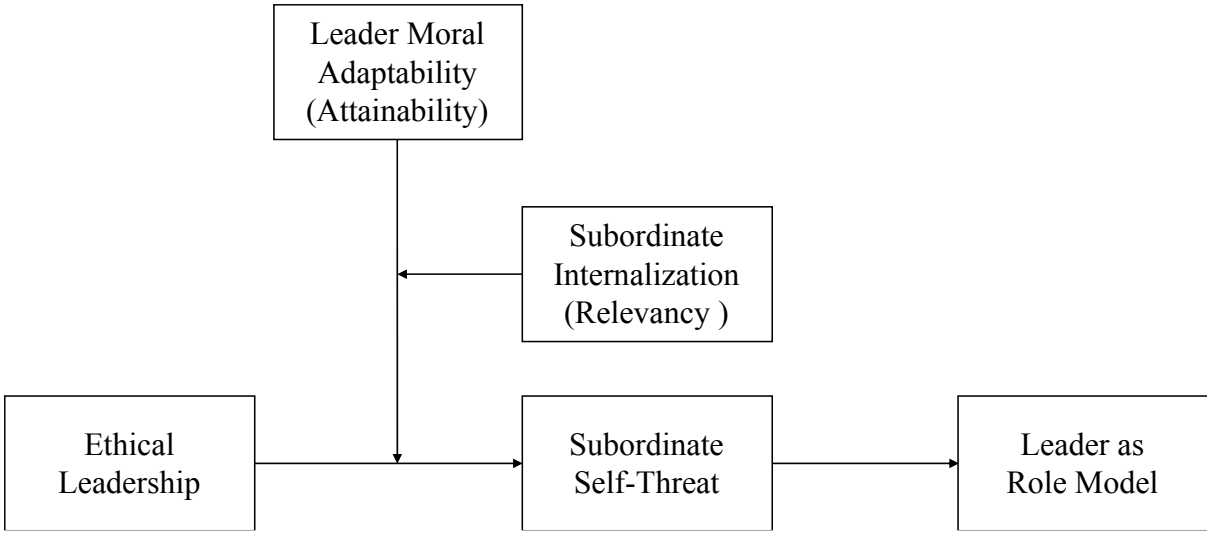

Figure 1. Hypothesized Model

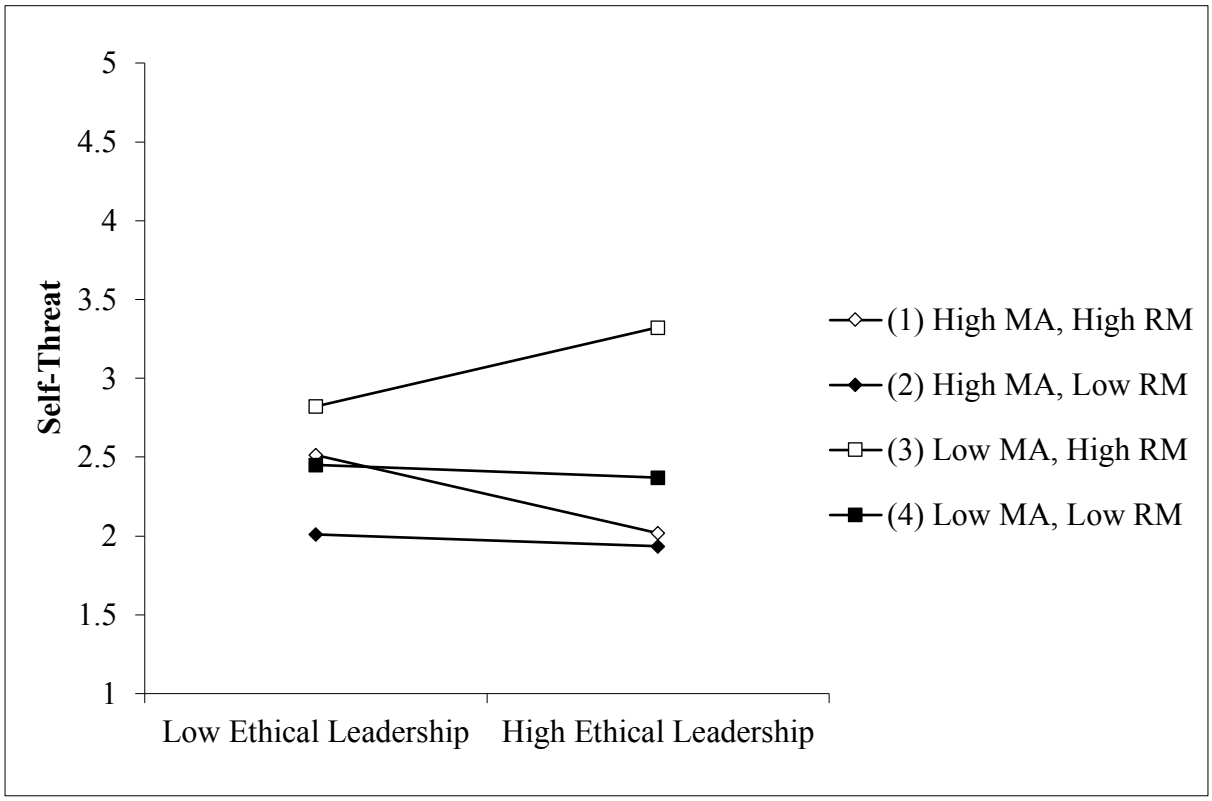

Figure 2. Supplementary Analysis: The Three-Way Interaction of Ethical Leadership, Reflective Moral Attentiveness (Relevancy), and Supervisor Moral Adaptability (Attainability) on Subordinate Self-Threat

Note. $N = 486$; The slope of line 1 differs from that of the other 3 lines; The slope of line 2 differs from that of line 3. The slopes of line 2 and line 4 do not differ; The slopes of line 3 and line 4 do not differ.

Table 1:
Results for Confirmatory Faction Analysis and Chi-square Different Tests

Model	χ^2 value	P-value of $\chi 2$	df	CFI	RMSEA	SRMR	$\Delta\chi 2$ value	df for $\Delta\chi 2$	P-value of $\Delta\chi 2$
5-factor model: No variable combined	1685.66	<0.01	550	0.90	0.07	0.07	-	-	-
4-factor model: MA and MI combined	1900.21	<0.01	554	0.88	0.07	0.07	214.55	4	<0.01
3-factor model: EL, MA, and MI combined	2016.42	<0.01	557	0.87	0.07	0.07	330.76	7	<0.01
2- factor model: EL, MA, and MI combined Self-threat and role modeling combined	2361.69	<0.01	559	0.84	0.08	0.09	673.03	9	<0.01
1-factor model: All variable combined	3454.42	<0.01	560	0.74	0.10	0.12	1768.76	10	<0.01

Note. N = 486. EL = Ethical leadership. MA = Moral adaptability. MI = Internalization. The analysis included the following variables: Ethical leadership, internalization dimension of moral identity, supervisor moral adaptability, self-threat, role modeling. χ^2 = Chi-square value. df = Degree of freedom. CFI = Confirmatory Fit Index. RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation. SRMR = Standardized Root Mean Square Residual. $\Delta\chi 2$ value = Chi-square value of nested comparison.

Table 2:
Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Ethical Leadership	4.08	0.46	-											
2. Internalization	4.13	0.61	.61**	-										
3. Reflective Moral Attentiveness	3.75	1.30	-.52**	-.39**	-									
4. Supervisor Moral Adaptability	2.36	0.60	-.46**	-.33**	.43**	-								
5. Self-Threat	2.42	1.45	-.45**	-.54**	.56**	.19**	-							
6. Role Modeling	5.76	0.84	.56**	.51**	-.42**	-.34**	-.42**	-						
7. Self-Esteem	3.13	0.39	.54**	.54**	-.60**	-.38**	-.80**	.56**	-					
8. Subordinate tenure	39.35	24.62	.00	.08	.07	.13**	-.07	-.02	.06	-				
9. Subordinate's age	29.71	5.86	-.02	.11*	.10*	.11*	-.09*	.05	.09	.64**	-			
10. Subordinate's gender	0.29	0.45	-.15**	-.15**	.12*	.26**	.12**	-.10*	-.08	.06	.05	-		
11. Supervisor's age	34.43	6.43	-.02	.05	.03	.07	-.12*	.05	.14**	.55**	.69**	.10*	-	
12. Supervisor's gender	0.23	0.42	-.10*	-.15**	.05	.26**	.06	-.11*	-.08	.08	.09*	.51**	.02	-

Note. $N = 486$. Gender was coded as 0 (male) and 1 (female). Age is reported in years. Subordinate tenure is reported in months.
*p < .05. **p < .01.

Table 3:
Results of Ordinary Linear Regression with Role Modeling as the Dependent Variable

	Role Modeling			
	Model 1		Model 2	
Variable	*B*	*SE*	*B*	*SE*
Constant	6.35**	.07	2.53**	.34
Self-threat	-.24**	.02	-.12**	.02
Ethical Leadership			.86**	.08
R^2	.17		.35	
ΔR^2			.18	

Note. $N = 486$. All coefficients are unstandardized coefficients.
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Table 4:
The Indirect Effect of Ethical Leadership on Role Modeling via Self-threat

	Effect	*SE*	95% CI
Path of ethical leadership –> self-threat	-1.44	.13	[-1.70 , -1.19]
Path of self-threat –> role modeling	-.12	.02	[-.16 , -.07]
Indirect effect	.17	.04	[.09 , .26]
Direct effect	.86	.08	[.71 , 1.01]

Note. $N = 486$. 95% CI = 95% confidence interval.

Table 5:
Results of Ordinary Linear Regression with Self-threat as the Dependent Variable

	Self-Threat							
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
Variable	*B*	*SE*	*B*	*SE*	*B*	*SE*	*B*	*SE*
Constant	2.42**	.06	2.42**	.06	2.30**	.07	2.31**	.07
Ethical Leadership (EL)	-1.44**	.13	-.69**	.16	-.57**	.17	-.58**	.17
Moral Adaptability (MA)			-.13	.10	-.05	.11	-.07	.13
Internalization (MI)			-1.02**	.11	-.86**	.12	-.85**	.13
EL x MA					.47	.31	.49	.32
EL x MI					.68**	.19	.66**	.20
MA x MI					-.48*	.22	-.49*	.22
EL x MA x MI							.09	.38
R^2	.21		.32		.36		.36	
ΔR^2 (ΔF)	(124.63**)		.11 (40.99**)		.04 (9.23**)		.00 (.06)	

Note. N = 486. All coefficients are unstandardized coefficients. EL = Ethical leadership. MA = Moral adaptability. MI = Internalization. All variables and interaction terms were centered before the analysis. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Table 6:
The Indirect Effect of Ethical Leadership on Role Modeling via Self-threat

Condition	Pxm	95% CI	Pmy	95% CI	Indirect Effect	95% CI	Direct Effect	95% CI
1. When Internalization and MA are both high	.16	[-.41 , .72]	-.12	[-.16 , -.07]	-.02	[-.08, .03]	.86	[.71 , 1.01]
2. When Internalization is high and MA is low	-.50	[-1.32 , .32]	-.12	[-.16 , -.07]	.06	[-.06 , .18]	.86	[.71 , 1.01]
3. When Internalization is low and MA is high	-.71	[-1.16 , -.27]	-.12	[-.16 , -.07]	.08	[.02 , .17]	.86	[.71 , 1.01]
4. When Internalization and MA are both low	-1.24	[-1.85 , -.63]	-.12	[-.16 , -.07]	.15	[.05 , .28]	.86	[.71 , 1.01]
Difference between 1 and 2					-.08	[-.22 , .07]		
Difference between 1 and 3					-.10	[-.21 , -.02]		
Difference between 1 and 4					-.16	[-.32 , -.04]		

Note. N = 486. Pxm is the path of ethical leadership –> self-threat. Pmy is the path of self-threat –> role modeling. MA = Moral adaptability. 95% CI = 95% confidence interval.

Table 7:
Supplementary Analysis: Results of Ordinary Linear Regression with Self-threat as the Dependent Variable and Reflective Moral Attentiveness as Relevancy

	Self-Threat							
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
Variable	*B*	*SE*	*B*	*SE*	*B*	*SE*	*B*	*SE*
Constant	2.42**	.04	2.43**	.04	2.40**	.05	2.43**	.05
Self-Esteem	-2.90**	.12	-2.76**	.13	-2.67**	.14	-2.69**	.14
Ethical Leadership (EL)	-.09	.10	-.15	.11	-.01	.13	-.04	.13
Moral Adaptability (MA)			-.45**	.07	-.40**	.08	-.52**	.10
Reflective Moral Attentiveness (RM)			.18**	.04	.22**	.04	.18**	.05
EL x MA					-.62**	.24	-.45	.25
EL x RM					-.03	.09	.03	.10
MA x RM					-.18*	.07	-.12	.08
EL x MA x RM							-.35*	.17
R^2	.64		.67		.68		.68	
ΔR^2 (ΔF)	(423.13**)		.03 (24.61**		.01 (2.88*)		.00 (4.05*)	

Note. N = 486. All coefficients are unstandardized coefficients. EL = Ethical leadership. MA = Moral adaptability. RM = Reflective Moral Attentiveness. All variables and interaction terms were centered before the analysis. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Table 8
Supplementary Analysis: Slope Difference Tests with Self-threat as the Dependent Variable and Reflective Moral Attentiveness as Relevancy

Pair of slopes	t-value for slope difference
(1) and (2)	-2.35*
(1) and (3)	-6.70**
(1) and (4)	-2.55*
(2) and (3)	-8.62**
(2) and (4)	.02
(3) and (4)	1.76

Note. $N = 486$. The main predictor is ethical leadership.
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.
1 = High Moral Adaptability and High Reflective Moral Attentiveness.
2 = High Moral Adaptability and Low Reflective Moral Attentiveness.
3 = Low Moral Adaptability and High Reflective Moral Attentiveness.
4 = Low Moral Adaptability and Low Reflective Moral Attentiveness.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY OF CONCLUSION

In this dissertation, I introduce the construct of moral adaptability (MA), or the willingness to adjust moral behavior depending on the situation, develop a scale to capture the construct, and illustrate implications of MA in the workplace. In Chapter 2, I show that MA works in a similar manner to personality strength but in the moral domain. Individuals low in MA behave more consistently with their moral character than do those higher in MA. In addition, MA explains both positive and negative workplace behavior (i.e., constructive deviance, unethical pro-organizational behavior).

In Chapter 3, I adopt an experience-sampling approach and find support for the prediction that individuals high in MA experience lower guilt and shame in response to their unethical behavior than those low in MA. The findings highlight the implications of MA for self-directed negative emotions and fit with the predictions of feelings as information theory as well as the idea that higher levels MA are related to a greater tendency to consider the context when judging one's own behavior.

In Chapter 4, I draw from role modeling literature and research on moral self-threat to suggest that subordinates will perceive their ethical leader as their role model if and only if the following two conditions are met: first, the subordinates perceive ethics to be relevant to them and second, they believe in their potential to be as ethical as their leader. However, if subordinates perceive ethics to be relevant to them but do not believe they can become as ethical as their leader, they are more likely to experience self-threat and are less likely to perceive their ethical leader as their role model. Thus, I offer future research a roadmap to investigating boundary conditions around

which ethical leaders will motivate subordinates to engage in positive workplace behavior.

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APPENDIX

Moral Adaptability Scale

Instructions: Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

1. I deviate from my moral values and beliefs if a situation requires.
2. I am flexible with my moral behavior.
3. I adjust my moral behavior to accommodate the situation.
4. I adjust my moral behavior to fit those around me.
5. My moral behavior is adaptable.

Items measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”.