ORGANIZATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

Holistic view of unethical pro-organizational behavior: literature review

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Abstract. *Purpose*. The current study aims to use existing literature to examine the antecedents and constraints of new constructs, namely unethical yet beneficial for the organization. *Approach*. We conducted an extensive literature review of 46 published papers between 2010 and 2020 using multiple sources such as Web of Science and Scopus. *Findings*. Literature addressed two essential characteristics of unethical behavior within an organization. Initially, market intensity, followed by misleading favorable to hierarchical behavior, known as unethical pro-organizational behavior (UPB). Findings also suggest that to eliminate such behavioral inclinations, organizations should clearly communicate their values and goals. *Implications for practice.* The current study has a lot of management implications. As past literature implies that employees are more likely to engage in UPB, firms must ensure that systems are in place to limit the chance that workers would engage in such conduct, considering it is potential to harm an organization's reputation.

Keywords: leadership, unethical pro-organizational behavior, social exchange theory, moral utility theory, motivation, employee behavior.

Introduction

Although the growth of the economy enriches our lifestyles, we also hear about several corporate scandals in our societies, such as the Enron Scandal, the Sanlu Company Melamine Event, and the Volkswagen diesel emissions scandal (Dou et al., 2019; Moore, Gino, 2013). As a result, researchers have lately started to pay closer attention to unethical workplace behavior. Employees commit a financial crime to save the organization from taxes (Amernic, Craig, 2010) or bribe authorities to gain an edge over rivals (Effelsberg et al., 2014). These actions are referred to as "unethical pro-organizational behavior" (UPB) in scholarly papers (Umphress et al., 2010). Employee participation in unethical acts that benefit the organization, or its members is defined as unethical pro-organizational behavior. Thus, employees perform UPB acts with the specific intention of actively assisting the organization, even though it isn't required in job descriptions. An organization can sometimes be negatively affected by UPB. There is widespread evidence of unethical pro-organizational behavior in the workplace (Moore et al., 2012). The following research questions served as a significant guide for this review: (a) What are the antecedents of UPB? (b) What are the motives behind UPB? Studies suggested that employees may

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engage in unethical behavior to gain greater benefits for the organization (Lee et al., 2017). However, most research has observed that employees engage in unethical behavior for their gain. According to research, there are individual differences in the endorsement of positive reciprocity beliefs (Clark, Mills, 1979). Individuals with strong positive reciprocity beliefs felt obligated to reciprocate the favorable treatment they received from their exchange partners, whereas those with low reciprocity beliefs felt no obligation to return the favorable treatment. Several aspects of the organizational environment are influenced by leadership. Leaders have a critical role in changing and influencing the ethical environment in any firm. A leader's contribution to defining an organization's ethics is crucial to creating a culture of ethics (Mayer et al., 2010). When potential and existing employees perceive that the company emphasizes morals and values, they are more likely to become involved with it and develop moral identification with it. Companies that rely on ethical identification are more likely to attract and retain workers who respect ethical principles (Holtom et al., 2008).

Social exchange theory

Social exchange theory (SET) is a deep philosophical framework that encompasses many social science fields, including administration, behavioral science, and sociology. SET views consider social interaction to be a sequence of simultaneous exchanges involving multiple people. (Mitchell et al., 2012). Services are traded in a reciprocal mechanism in which each participant intends to refund the positive or often bad action of someone else. The interaction between both the participant (actor) and the target will also affect the consistency of these exchanges (Back, 1965). Some of the most critical subjects in interpersonal action have already been examined via the prism of SET at some stage. Using this conceptual model, for instance, equality or justice, employee engagement, organizational citizenship behaviors, and both managerial and organizational assistance have been successfully studied (Bishop, Scott, 2000; Ladd, Henry, 2000; Organ, 1990; Tepper, Taylor, 2003). In this analysis, we explore present and future trends in exchange theory, identify critical issues of the exchange relationships research that need more attention and provide novel perspectives to help overcome the shortcomings of the established paradigm. When an individual participant or victim, often a boss or colleague, treats a person (target victim) in a constructive or negative manner, the social interaction process starts (Eisenberger et al., 2004). Initiatives such as delivering corporate assistance are examples of good behavior. Bad behaviors can include coercive monitoring and abuse (Riggle et al., 2009; Tepper et al., 2009). In reaction to the initiating behavior, the subject, who is often a supervisor, subordinate or colleague will choose to oblige such treatment with positive or negative behavior. According to exchange theory, Participants will usually respond to it with favorable inducing acts by participating in even more constructive initiating actions and less adverse initiating replies (Eisenberger et al., 1987). Moreover, a series of active mutual interactions, in particular, will turn a financial exchange relationship into a strong social interaction process. Individuals would become more constructively committed to associations and be more trustworthy as a result of such desired behavior (Konovsky, Pugh, 1994; Meyer et al., 2002).

Moral utility theory

Moral utility theory (MUT) means individuals would act immorally if subjective perceived utility (SEU) of the unethical action is greater than the subjective perceived utility of the moral action (Kant, 1997). Kant was the first person to work on the groundbreaking foundation of Morals. This theory is presented as a multidisciplinary mechanism for comprehending the motivational factors of immoral decisions. Using the concept of anticipated utility maximization and the philosophy of reinforcement, the proposed paradigm explains the motivational origins of immoral behaviors by drawing on concepts from psychology, economics, and organizational behavior (Hirsh et al., 2018). Emotional attachment to someone who acts immorally can cause resentment, which can lead to a

loss of contact with one's ethics and enhance one's inclination to imitate the immoral action as well as indulge in moral disengagement (Gino, Galinsky, 2012). It is logical to anticipate immoral behavior to be higher in groups due to moral disengagement such as obligation diffusion or because those groups may have more or less control over unethical behavior (Treviño et al., 2014). In expectation philosophy, the concept of SEU optimization was extended to the study of motivation (Vroom, 1994).

According to these ideas, people select actions that are meant to yield the most valuable results. People are essentially asked to make SEU decisions on how much work they can put into certain tasks at hand. People become committed and active because they feel that their decisions will result in the intended results. However, if they do not see a connection between their behaviors and the achievement of desired results, their morale would decline. Multiple studies have integrated the notion that behavior preference is motivated by arbitrary estimates of the desires and utilities associated with each intervention, rendering SEU enhancement a central feature of inspirational philosophy (Ajzen, 1991; Bandura, 1977; Kanfer, Ackerman, 1989; Petrinovich et al., 1993; Wigfield, Eccles, 2000). Based on the moral licensing theory it was proposed that when individuals partake in socially commendable actions, they often give themselves a spiritual justification to participate in unethical conduct (Klotz, Bolino, 2013).

Literature review

Ethics has to do with the ideals and principles that are vital for people or society in general. Ethics is related to the virtue of people and motivations. Ethical viewpoint lays out a structure of laws and values that direct people in making choices about what is right or wrong in a given situation in which they have to decide themselves. It is therefore ethical to be a socially decent human being (Kabeyi, 2020). Scholars in Behavioral ethics have studied three types of similar outcomes: immoral behavior that doesn't match with moral values of society such as untruthful, dishonest, theft, conduct that satisfies society's least ethical standards continuously such as equality and respect for all; and exceptional ethical behavior exceeds the minimum moral values of society such as: engaged in charity and whistleblowing (Treviño, 2014).

Organizational honesty refers to the morality of individual employees, the ethical climate of their cooperation just as overwhelming principles, policies, and dynamic techniques organization. Hierarchical uprightness begins from managerial or leadership honesty and is beyond just the presence of employees with great characters inside the organization. The involvement of "great managers" is essential for hierarchical trustworthiness, however, it cannot save the organizations from happening awful immoral outcomes until the organizations seriously design policies that can change the attitude of unethical pro organizational behavior (Askew et al., 2015).

Unethical behavior from Warren's perspective means behavior can be distinguished because it involves only behaviors that go beyond the boundaries of social norms and ideals, i.e. immoral acts, and it represents the motivation inside those activities. Y. Vardi and E. Weitz has identified organizational misbehavior which is another form of advantageous unethical behavior focused on the motives that drive the immoral acts within the organization (Vardi, Weitz, 2004). It is founded on the frameworks of planned behavior judgment and social knowledge. Misbehavior in the organization is characterized as any deliberate action being taken by organization members that diverge from core organizational and social expectations.

The framework is divided into three parts: 1) actions committed to supporting oneself; 2) actions undertaken to harm others intentionally; 3) actions are performed to favor the entity. In comparison to the Vardi's theory, concept of UPB is based on social exchange theory; people consider the possible seriousness of the act until participating in UPB (Umphress, Bingham, 2011). Individuals differ in

their perceptions about and decisions to engage in UPB activities due to the future severity. The highlighted arguments suggest that the conceptualization of UBP differs from the conceptualization of organizational misbehavior. Later another kind of profitable immoral conduct was coined as "necessary evils" by (Molinsky et al., 2005). The term was described as "work-related activities in which a person is forced to act that induces physical or emotional damage to another human being as part of his or her job to accomplish some presumed collective good." And then, E. W. Morrison introduced another form of constructive depravity to the field of organizational behavior known as Pro-Social Rule Breaking. The concept applies to unethical actions committed with the goal of benefiting either the company or its owners (Morrison, 2006). UBP and pro-social rule-breaking both concentrate on immoral conduct and understand the motivation underlying certain actions. While both share certain similarities, however, their conceptions vary slightly. Pro-social rule breaking deviates from corporate standards and policies defined by the organization, whereas UPB on the other hand completely ignores the global expectation of societal values and norms.

Individual level

C. Moor with colleagues discovered that individuals who performed badly on a job were more likely to lie if they had been made to believe that the assignment was fairly easy as opposed to all those who predicted a more tough challenge; this impact appears to be influenced by willful ignorance caused by unfulfilled expectations (Moore et al., 2014). Objectives induce deviant behavior by rationalizing immoral action to reach the goal; this becomes a weapon for leaders who want to urge their people to accomplish at any cost (Barsky, 2008; Beu, Buckley, 2004). Demanding performance standards have become a focal area of corporate life. Furthermore, goal chasing appears to contribute to unethical conduct by reducing self-regulatory capabilities (Welsh, Ordóñez, 2014). Goal-based incentives enhanced fraud but did not enhance performance in comparison to piece rate and tournament-based compensation packages (Cadsby et al., 2010). Likewise, it was discovered that results pay schemes with randomized incentives enhanced fraud while having no impact on the performance (Gill et al., 2013). When promotion opportunities are few, greater performance goals could be highly susceptible to induce dishonesty (Clor-Proell et al., 2015). Apart from somebody's drive to attain an objective in terms of getting a benefit, the interpersonal comparison has been demonstrated to encourage immoral conduct since the comparison of a greater pay system gives a point of reference for those receiving little (John et al., 2014). A recent study has revealed cases in which the goal-setting approach in companies could have unexpected repercussions, especially cases where that has been linked to unethical conduct. According to the studies, one of the likely elements impacting the link between goal setting and immoral practices is how objectives are created. According to a prominent Maltese financial institution, a lack of staff engagement in goal development as well as the manner incentives was related to goal completion might lead to inappropriate behavior while advertising financial items. Personality has also been proposed as a factor impacting the likelihood of participating in unethical action (Catania, 2014). Additional features of goals that might enhance the likelihood of goal formation leading to unethical action. Goal setting approach (participatory vs. imposed tasks), tying benefits to goal fulfillment, and the complexity and precision of objectives are examples of these. Differences in individual employees, particularly related to goal dedication and conscientiousness, as well as organizational elements such as ethical atmosphere, were expected to influence the link. Goals can result in increased risk-taking, less collaboration, and greater dishonesty, as well as an increase in devotion to unsuccessful initiatives, which can contribute to the concealment of unfavorable result information (Larrick et al., 2009; Poortvliet et al., 2012).

Interpersonal level

None of the interpersonal relationships that individuals establish at the workplace are more relevant than those they share with their direct supervisor. Indeed, the consistency of department

manager relationships has been related to employees' motivation, success, job achievement, wellbeing, and professional advancement (Wayne et al., 1997). According to researchers, abusive supervision is responsible for employees' deviant behavior in organizations (Bennett, Robinson, 2000; Mitchell, Ambrose, 2007; Tepper et al., 2009). The peer influence "help to set up a norm for moral conduct through their activities or inaction" (Moore, Gino, 2013b). Research on in-group employee impacts revealed that when an in-group employee cheats, other in-group individuals are additionally bound to cheat. As indicated by an investigation this may be identified with mental closeness and feeling associated with somebody who carries on immorally, as this "can make distance from one's ethical compass" and increment one's penchant to duplicate that exploitative conduct just as to take part in good separation. The impact of out-group individuals on deceptive conduct is more unpredictable than in-group individual unethical conduct.

Table 1. Unethical pro-organizational behavior-motives

Author (s)	Motive(s)
Xiong et al., 2021	Leader-member exchange relationship
Lee et al., 2020	Role of perceived status
Naseer et al., 2020	Psychological entitlement
Hsieh et al., 2020	Moral disengagement and ethical behavior
Miao et al., 2019	Mechanism of reflective moral attentiveness
Cheng et al., 2019	Leader-follower value congruence
Graham et al., 2019	Egoistic norms and organizational identification
Grabowski et al., 2019	Organizational commitment and UPB
Bryant, Merritt, 2019	Higher leader-employee interpersonal relationship
Shaw, Liao, 2018	Authoritarian leadership and work stressor
Johnson, Umphress, 2018	Identification and moral identity
Xu, Lv, 2018	High performance working systems
Dou et al., 2019	Job satisfaction and organizational belongingness
Lee et al., 2019	Psychological entitlement
Yurtkoru, Ebrahimi, 2017	Higher affective commitment towards organization
Chen et al., 2016	Organizational identification and recognition
Castille et al., 2018	Dark trait of "Machiavellianism" and the perception that ethical standards matter less than organizational performance
Thau et al., 2015	Higher need for inclusion but higher risk of exclusion from the group or organization
Graham et al., 2015	Inspirational and charismatic transformational leadership
Miao et al., 2013	Low to moderate ethical leadership
Matherne, Litchfield, 2012	Employee affective commitment towards organization
Umphress, Bingham, 2011b	Positive social exchange relationship

Source: Literature Survey.

An out-group individual who cheats impacts individuals' untrustworthy conduct less than the in-group individuals. The study found that individuals in the in-group blamed themselves for their out-group friend's dishonest behavior as a result of seeing the out-group individual. Past literature on the phenomenon of retribution and revenge in companies, workers avoid from reacting to alleged unfair treatment of the offender, that means when the offender is the accused's direct manager, because it is predictable that employee will face coercive unfair treatment, like supervisor cruel behavior which leads to employee deviant behavior as they have less authority than the offender, and, as a result of engaging in deviant behavior will provoke punitive consequences or elicit more hierarchical conflict (Aquino et al., 2001; Khushk, 2020).

Organizational level

The prevailing conceptual viewpoint that has arisen from the debate on S. Levine's exchange theoretic approach incorporated inter-organizational ties. These philosophers merely used

exchange theory to provide a loose logical basis for empirical studies (Levine, White, 1961). There have been several efforts to propose a systemic approach of exchange theory to inter-organizational interactions. An advancement in exchange theory facilitates this mission. R. M. Emerson defines exchange relations as "interactive agreement between the two entities dependent on mutual reinforcement" which clarifies the essence of this mutual contingency (Emerson, 1976).

Table 2. Factors affecting unethical pro-organizational behavior

Level	Factor(s)	Author(s)
Individual level	Employee response to unethical leaders	Fehr, R., Welsh, 2019
	Perceived job insecurity	Jiang, 2018
	High performance pressure	Li, Wang, Zhu, Zhan, 2018
	Psychological ownership	Xu, Lv, 2018
	Level of ego and its moral disengagement	Liu, 2018
	Ethical / Moral disengagement	Zhao, Zhou, 2017
	Employee performance expectations	Chen, Liang, 2017
	Moral identity	Wu, Shen, Sun, 2016
	Employee recognition	Zhang, 2016
	Individual tendency for moral/immoral standards	David, Marc, Jochen, 2014
	Employee ethical development	Umphres, Bingham, 2011
	Positive reciprocity beliefs	Umphress, Bingham, Mitchel, 2010
Interpersonal level	Leader member exchange	Xiong, G., Huang, H. 2021
	Supervisor bottom line mentality	Zhan, X., & Liu, Y. 2020
	Leader's UPB and follower behavior	Peng Wen, Cheng, 2020
	Paternalistic leadership	Li, Xu, Wu, 2019
	Superior-subordinate relationship	Zhong, Wang, Luo, Song, 2018
	Organizational embodiment	Wang, Ying, 2018
	Psychological empowerment	Xu, Wang, Fan, 2018
	Leader-subordinate exchange and differential leadership	Lin, Cheng, 2017
	Servant leadership	Wu, Shao, Sun, Li, 2017
	Impact of Leaders' on ethical behavior	Kalshoven, Van, Dijk, Boon, 2016
	Chronic regulatory focus	Li, 2016
	Ethical leadership	Kalshoven, Van, Dijk, Boon, 2016
	Influence of leadership style	Graham, Ziegert, Capitano, 2015
	Transformational leadership	David, Marc, Jochen, 2014
	Identification with leader/supervisor	Mulder, Aquino, 2013
	Perceived social exchange relationship	Umphress, Bingham, 2013
	Perceived social exchange and organizational identity	Umphress, Bingham, 2010
Organizational level	Organizational ethical climate	Zhang, Jiang, Zhao, 2017
	HRM practices	Luo, Xu, 2017
	Organizational culture	Herchen, 2015
	Commitment towards organization	Matherne, Litchfield, 2012
	Organizational support	Alexandra, 2012
	Organizational identity	Umphress, Bingham, Mitchel, 2010

Source: Literature Survey

More elevated levels of pioneer intellectual good advancement are identified with worker impression of moral leadership (Mayer et al., 2012). Most moral administration research has analyzed the results of this kind of initiative, finding that moral authority improves representative mentalities, for example, job fulfillment, full feeling responsibility, and work commitment, and diminishes turnover aims. However, many studies cover the variables that support unethical practices by the business leaders such as research in Nigeria despite having moral initiative abilities and information. This examination was grounded in the structure of the good improvement hypothesis by Lawrence Kohlberg (Odole, 2018).

The researcher has sought to explain why dominant individuals take part in negative or "deviant" work. Analysis reveals that these leaders are abusive, destructive, dishonest, and deliberately subverting. Their activities are seen as deliberate and unsafe and might be the wellspring of legitimate activity against managers. Subsequently, leaders' conduct is immoral. Leaders and administrators may endorse poor and unethical actions within their organizations in the service of hierarchical goals. For example, analysis of organizational shame in Fortune 100 companies assumed that the actions carried out by the chiefs, chiefs, and government officials were the key drivers of those crimes (Clement, 2006). For example, subjective exploration shows pioneers who prize momentary outcomes, model forceful and Machiavellian conduct, don't rebuff supporters' bad behavior, and advance similarly invested people uplift deceptive conduct inside the organization. Surely, representatives participate in dishonest acts to support hierarchical execution or help the association in some alternate manner to benefit in return from the association. For instance, researchers gauge dishonest leaders' costs U.S. companies billions of dollars a year because of expanded absences, medical care costs, lost efficiency, and consumed costs related to protecting noteworthy cases (Brown, Mitchell, 2010).

Discussion

Past research covers the individual differences based on individuals' attitudes, beliefs, and practices that vary from regular guidelines, it is judged in different manners, from certain points of view, to be negative or hurtful. Hence, an assortment of characteristics connected to violation of normal practices and particularly illicit practices, all these falls under this expansive banner which is known as "Deviance" (Lucas, Friedrich, 2005). Thus, this research aims to combine all the literature based on an individual and organizational level in the context of unethical pro-organizational behavior (Table 2).

Individual moral identity can ensure against self-intrigued conduct with regards to the individuals who have the mental experience of feeling incredible (through either quality force or controlled force). The finding of the research suggests that organizations ought to consider the ethical character of individuals they elevate to incredible positions because an employee with weak moral identities may be forced to engage in more selfish behavior. For those generally in places of authority and who are likewise high in characteristic force, the organization ought to consider intercessions that may assist them with building up their ethical personalities (DeCelles et al., 2012). When the primary objective is high, therefore goal accomplishment via legitimate means is unclear, high goal commitment may aid in the facilitation of moral disengagement and immoral practices by expanding not just the ambition to accomplish the goal but rather encourage to explain it "by any measured way" (Ordóñez, Welsh, 2015).

Motivation is a major factor in immoral action (Rick, Loewenstein, 2008). We investigate the mechanism within which higher objectives promote motivating arguments for immoral action in quest of the objective by integrating the theory of motivated morality with goal-setting research (Ditto et al., 2009). Prior research reveals that one of the significant elements impacting the association between setting goals and unethical conduct is how objectives are created. In a discussion with workers directly associated with the goal-setting approach at major Maltese banking, it was revealed that there was a lack of job engagement in the target development exercise, as well as a lack of consistency in how incentives are linked to achieving goals (Catania, 2014).

According to Maurice E. Schweitzer, objectives inspire both productive and immoral action. We discovered that individuals who set objectives were much more prone to falsify their performance than those who tried their hardest. It was valid for both objectives with and without rewards.

Researchers also discovered that action was impacted by closeness to the goal. If individuals are close to, instead of far from the aim, they were much more inclined to exaggerate their achievement (Schweitzer, 2002). Now, the three most widely discussed issues in management practices are ethics, corporate social responsibility, and long-term competitive advantage. Clearly defined policies and leadership influence on a large extent can affect an organization's behaviors. Cultural restriction, cooperativeness, and sustainable organizational leadership that emphasizes ethics and influence can reduce this sort of behavioral tendencies. Companies can provide ethics training to their employees while at the same time discouraging undesired behavior. Thus, the intent and actions of an organization can greatly reduce unethical pro-organizational behavior.

Managerial implication

The current study has a lot of management implications. As past literature implies that employees are more likely to engage in UPB, firms must ensure that systems are in place to limit the chance that workers would engage in such conduct, considering it is potential to harm an organization's reputation. Organizations may strive to quantify levels to which they can engage in such behavior, supervisor design training, and keep eye on their workers in the selection and performance evaluation process. Considering previous research, it would be beneficial for future studies to investigate UPB as a group-level construct and to investigate what could factor impact moral value at the team level. For instance, a previous study has investigated pro-group immoral conduct, a notion that shares several characteristics with unethical pro-organizational behavior. Research can evaluate whether ethical leadership is superior to other moral leadership styles in predicting future success. Further, by examining the organizational setting in which ethical decisions are made, one is able to gain a better understanding of UPB. Further, moderating the influence of an ethical work environment on employee motivation may therefore be an important topic of future research.

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Целостный взгляд на неэтичное проорганизационное поведение: обзор литературы

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Аннотация. *Цель*. Настоящее исследование направлено на использование существующей литературы для изучения предпосылок и ограничений новых конструктов, описывающих неэтичные, но полезные для организации феномены. *Подход*. Мы провели литературный обзор 46 статей, опубликованных в период с 2010 по 2020 год, с использованием таких источников, как Web of Science и Scopus. *Результаты*. В литературе рассматриваются две основные характеристики неэтичного поведения в организации. Первоначально это интенсивность рынка, за которой следует вводящее в заблуждение благоприятное иерархическое поведение, известное как неэтичное про-организационное поведение (*unethical pro-organizational behavior, UPB*). Полученные данные также свидетельствуют о том, что для устранения таких поведенческих наклонностей организации должны чётко сообщать о своих ценностях и целях. *Последствия для практики.* Текущее исследование имеет много последствий для управления. Поскольку предыдущая литература подразумевает, что сотрудники с большой вероятностью будут осуществлять неэтичное про-организационное поведение, фирмы должны обеспечить наличие систем, ограничивающих вероятность того, что работники будут участвовать в таком поведении, учитывая, что это может нанести ущерб репутации организации.

Ключевые слова: лидерство, неэтичное про-организационное поведение, теория социального обмена, теория моральной полезности, мотивация, поведение сотрудников.