

How Personality and Moral Identity Relate to Individuals' Ethical Ideology

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ABSTRACT: Two studies tested the relationship between three facets of personality—conscientiousness, agreeableness, and openness to experience—as well as moral identity, on individuals' ethical ideology. Study 1 showed that moral personality and the centrality of moral identity to the self were associated with a more principled (versus expedient) ethical ideology in a sample of female speech therapists. Study 2 replicated these findings in a sample of male and female college students, and showed that ideology mediated the relationship between personality, moral identity, and two organizationally relevant outcomes: organizational citizenship behavior and the propensity to morally disengage. Implications for business ethics are discussed.

THE CONCEPT OF IDEOLOGY is most commonly used in discourse concerning politics, but people hold ideological beliefs about a variety of matters ranging from social roles (e.g., gender), the legal system (presumption of innocence), epistemology (empiricism, rationalism, constructivism), and ideas about right and wrong (e.g., abortion, euthanasia, death penalty). The Oxford English Dictionary defines ideology as “a system of ideas or ideals” that are “characteristic of a social group or individual.” In this paper, we focus on a particular type of ideology, referred to as ethical ideology, and its application to understanding behavior in business settings. Our aim is not to engage in philosophical debate about the merits of any particular ideology, rather we investigate ethical ideology as a psychological phenomenon. By doing so, we contribute to the growing literature in behavioral ethics that seeks to understand and explain how people express their ethical and moral convictions, or lack thereof, in organizational contexts.

Our study draws from the psychological construct of ethical ideology proposed by Schlenker and his colleagues (Schlenker, 2008; Schlenker, Miller, & Johnson, in press; Schlenker, Weigold, & Schlenker, 2008). According to Schlenker, Miller, & Johnson, ethical ideology is “an integrated system of beliefs, values, standards, and self-assessments that define an individual's orientation toward matters of right and wrong” (Schlenker, Miller, & Johnson, in press: 2). Schlenker (2008) argues that people's ethical ideology rests on a continuum between two dimensions labeled *principled* and *expedient*. A person who adopts a principled ideology believes that moral principles exist, are important to one's self-definition, and should dictate personal behavior, irrespective of the social or personal consequences for doing so. In contrast, a person with an expedient ideology assumes that moral principles have flexibility and that deviations for personal gain are justifiable. Intuitively, both types of ethical ideologies have their appeal, but they also have their drawbacks.

On the one hand, many people admire those who hold firmly to their principles; however, these principles can also be straightjackets that lead to inertia and inflexible decision-making. Similarly, a rogue character willing to bend the rules to achieve what is necessary is often romanticized, but a hyper-Machiavellian form of extreme expediency, unbounded by ethical principles, could lead to behavior that is amoral at best and barbarous and inhumane at worst. According to Schlenker (2008), the adoption of a principled ideology characterizes those who are committed to living ethically from those who show less commitment to this goal, a commitment he equates with integrity. Schlenker and his colleagues (Schlenker, 2008; Schlenker, Miller, & Johnson, in press; Schlenker, Weigold, & Schlenker, 2008) developed a measure of the principled-expedient continuum of ethical ideology that we use to examine possible correlates to having a commitment to holding a principled ideology, as well as some of the possible consequences of this commitment in organizational settings.

It is important to acknowledge that other researchers have discussed ethical beliefs in terms of being either principled or expedient. Notably, Forsyth (1980) distinguishes between relativist and idealist positions, using a two-factor model. While Forsyth's model aims at understanding the content of one's ethical ideology, Schlenker's measure aims to tap an individual's commitment to a particular ideology. As well, Brady and Wheeler (1996) showed that people possess ethical predispositions, which correspond somewhat to Schlenker and colleagues' distinction between principled and expedient ethical ideologies. Schlenker (2008) argues that the principled-expedient distinction lies on a continuum, and he provides empirical evidence supporting this claim (Schlenker et al., in press). However, Forsyth and Brady and Wheeler found the dimensions to be orthogonal, despite hypothesizing a continuum approach. One possible reason for the difference could be due to methodology: while Brady and Wheeler's measure of ethical predispositions uses vignettes to assess peoples' ethical predisposition, Schlenker and colleagues' measure uses general questions about one's ethical beliefs to measure ideology. It is unclear from the existing data which of the conceptions of ethical ideology just discussed is more valid, and so we believe it is reasonable to adopt a continuum-based view of ethical ideology for the purposes of hypothesis testing. It is also theoretically more parsimonious to propose hypotheses that involve a single unitary construct—ethical ideology—rather than two constructs that could vary from high to low within each orthogonal dimension. Since there is empirical evidence supporting the conception of ethical ideology as lying on a continuum, and because this conception greatly simplifies our theorizing, we chose to adopt Schlenker and colleagues' approach for measuring this construct in the present study. We are not claiming it is superior to other conceptions of ethical beliefs; rather, we leave it as a matter for future research to resolve more conclusively.

Having adopted a conception of the commitment to a particular ethical ideology as lying on a continuum, we propose two factors that are likely to predict whether a person adopts a more principled or expedient ideology. The first factor consists of three facets of *personality*—conscientiousness, agreeableness, and openness to experience—that some writers (Colquitt, Scott, Judge, and Shaw, 2006; McAdams,

in press) have identified as being constituents of a higher-order “moral personality.” The second factor is *moral identity*, which we conceptualize as a mental representation of one’s moral character that is held internally and projected to others. In addition to examining constructs related to ethical ideology, we also consider two possible outcomes of one’s ethical ideology: 1) the willingness to exhibit pro-social behavior towards co-workers and 2) the willingness to engage in cognitive rationalizations that can allow people to override moral self-sanctions against acting unethically. Bandura (1986, 1999) refers to these rationalizations as mechanisms of *moral disengagement*.

The aforementioned relationships among personality, moral identity, ethical ideology, and workplace outcomes are tested in two separate studies. In the first study, we test whether facets of the moral personality and moral identity are associated with a person’s commitment to living with a principled (as opposed to an expedient) ideology. The second study tests whether ideology is associated with prosocial behavior at work and the willingness to morally disengage. The model in Figure 1 shows the hypothesized relationships among our study variables.

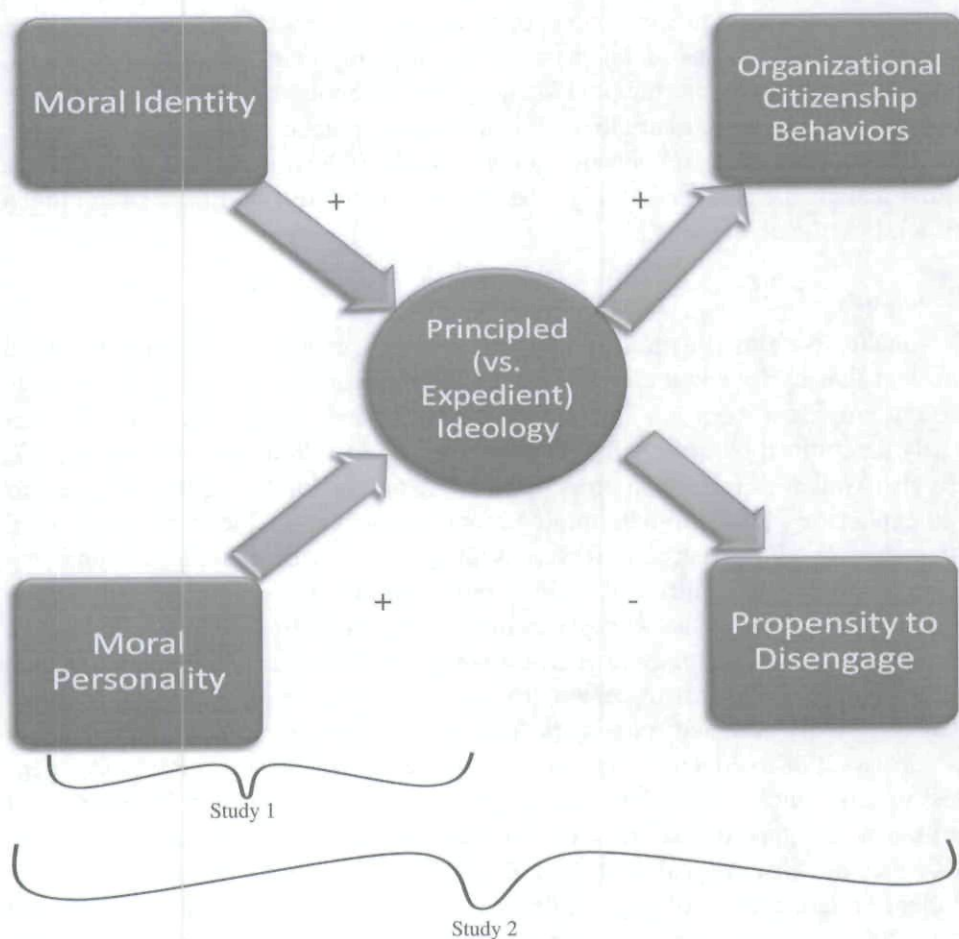


Figure 1. Theoretical model tested by study

ETHICAL IDEOLOGY AND ITS CORRELATES

Empirical research by Schlenker and his colleagues (see Johnson & Schlenker, 2007; Schlenker, 2008; Schlenker et al., in press) shows that people who adopt a principled, rather than expedient, ethical ideology have higher standards for moral conduct, report telling fewer lies, are less likely to rationalize unethical and immoral behaviors, and exhibit greater benevolence and helping behaviors (provided the helping was not performed to avoid costs or gain personal benefit). These findings hold not only for self-reports, but also for reports from observers (Schlenker, 2008). Generally, most people will not claim to be unprincipled, so the scale score on Schlenker's measure represents a *relative* strength of commitment to moral principles rather than an indicator of whether one is (un)ethical or possesses a "true" or "superior" moral compass. The tendency of people holding a principled ideology to behave in ways that are consistent with their principles has been shown to persist in the face of social pressure to violate personal behavioral codes (Schlenker et al., in press). One explanation for this finding is that people adopting a principled ideology believe themselves to be more accountable to themselves than to others. Therefore, they give less weight to what others think and are willing to do what they believe is right, even if it means social chastisement. It is important to note that there can be costs to espousing a principled ideology. For example, whistleblowers or those unwilling to join co-workers in unethical business practices often face ostracism, retribution, and social exclusion for doing so. In the following section, we introduce individual characteristics that might be associated with the likelihood of holding a principled ethical ideology.

Personality

Personality is defined as trait(s) that denotes some uniqueness to the individual life and that can account for differences in behavior across time and situation. Recent empirical work has shown that the likelihood of moral action is at least partly determined by personality. In one empirical test, Walker and Frimer (2007; see also Walker & Frimer, in press) showed that a host of personality dimensions add explanatory power in determining moral action. Other research in behavioral ethics (see Treviño, Weaver, & Reynolds, 2006, for a review) has also documented a link between personality and various antisocial outcomes (e.g., theft, deviance, unethical behavior) in the workplace. In a recent study, Berry, Ones, and Sackett (2007) found that workplace deviance was negatively related to agreeableness and conscientiousness factors of personality.

A commonly accepted framework from psychology conceptualizes personality as consisting of five factors (the "Big 5"): extraversion, conscientiousness, openness to experience, agreeableness, and neuroticism (e.g., Goldberg, 1993). Several writers have argued that some of these dimensions have implications for morality, with each dimension speaking to a slightly different moral function. Based on the evidence relating facets of personality to various forms of moral behavior (Colquitt et al., 2006; McAdams, in press), we operationalize the moral personality this paper studies as being a composite of conscientiousness, agreeableness, and openness to

experience. We argue that several behavioral outcomes found in previous research to be associated with these dimensions of personality are consistent with holding and living out a principled ethical ideology. Conscientiousness, which describes characteristics like being organized, dependable, and goal oriented, has been shown to predict honesty and a likelihood of engagement in prosocial activities (Lodi-Smith & Roberts, 2007; McAdams, in press), including volunteering with needy people or organizations. In the workplace, people high in conscientiousness have been found to be less likely to engage in dishonesty (Roberts & Hogan, 2001). Agreeableness, which describes characteristics like being friendly and cooperative, has been related to loyalty, which may be associated with an unwillingness to justify harming a colleague or workplace indiscretions (see McAdams, in press). Those high in agreeableness also have a keener sense of fairness, justice, and reciprocity (Matsuba & Walker, 2004; McAdams, in press), which are associated with high moral functioning. These findings have led some researchers to label people scoring high in both conscientiousness and agreeableness as possessing "trait morality" (Colquitt et al., 2006; de Raad, Hendriks, & Hofstee, 1992; Hofstee, de Raad, & Goldberg, 1992; Saucier & Goldberg, 1996). McAdams (in press) argues that openness to experience, a trait that describes whether people are imaginative, artistic, and broad-minded, may have even greater moral implications than either of these traits. He cites research that correlates openness with ego development (Loevinger, 1976; McCrae & Costa, 1980), which is positively associated with higher levels of moral reasoning (as conceptualized by Kohlberg, 1969). He argues that low openness, on the other hand, is associated with right wing authoritarianism (Altemeyer, 1996; Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003), which tends to be associated with lower levels of moral reasoning, manifested as rigidity, intolerance, and high levels of prejudice against various out-groups. While openness, conscientiousness, and agreeableness have considerable moral implications, the other two dimensions, neuroticism and extraversion, show little empirical relationship with ethical behavior (e.g., Colquitt et al., 2006), and so we did not consider them in our studies.

We build on Schlenker, Miller, and Johnson's (in press; Schlenker, 2008) work by testing whether a combination of three "moral" facets of personality is related to one's ethical ideology as they define it. By doing so, we provide a test of the association between the moral facets of personality and the likelihood of endorsing a principled (versus expedient) ethical ideology. The following hypothesis tests our prediction:

Hypothesis 1: People high in conscientiousness, agreeableness, and openness to experience are more likely to endorse a principled rather than expedient ethical ideology.

Personality is only one type of individual difference; there are others that may be equally good, or perhaps stronger, correlates of a person's commitment to an ethical ideology. One individual difference that has received significant attention in the psychology literature is moral identity.

Moral Identity

We adopt Aquino and Reed's (2002) definition of moral identity as a self-conception organized around a set of moral trait associations (e.g., honest, kind, caring). Theirs is not the only conception of moral identity that one could adopt (see Shao, Aquino, & Freeman, 2008, for a review), but it has been shown to be empirically tractable and, more importantly, Aquino and Reed (2002) have developed a measure of moral identity that possess good psychometric properties. According to Aquino and Reed (2002), moral identity can be conceived as a mental representation of one's character that is held internally and projected to others. This mental representation of the moral self, also referred to in psychology as a *schema*, acts as regulator of moral behavior because people strive to make their behavior consistent with how they view themselves (Blasi, 1984). However, in contemporary views of the self, it is possible for an individual to have many identities. For example, a person can adopt an identity as a musician, a woman, a philosopher, or a moral person, and each of these identities can vary in their *centrality*, or importance to the self at any given time (Markus & Kunda, 1986). Theories of identity-based motivation (e.g., Blasi, 1984; Oyserman, 2007) assume that the more central a particular identity is to the person, the more likely this identity is to influence thoughts, emotions, and behavior (Higgins, 1996). Based on this argument, and the idea that people strive to maintain consistency between their moral selves and their actions, we expect the centrality of moral identity to be associated with a commitment to adopt a more principled, as opposed to expedient, ethical ideology. This is because the former reflects a belief in the importance in maintaining (or at least attempting to maintain) consistency between one's espoused moral beliefs and one's actions in the world. The following hypothesis tests this prediction:

Hypothesis 2: High moral identity will be associated with the endorsement of a principled rather than expedient ethical ideology.

STUDY 1

Method

Participants and Procedure

Fifty-two female employees of a mid-sized organization participated in the study. The organization delivers speech therapy services to various schools in a Southeastern U.S. city. All of the therapists employed by the organization at the time of the survey were female. Their average age was 30.07 years ($SD = 6.79$). Data were collected using an online survey. Participants were recruited for the study through an employee, and were told the purpose of the study was "to investigate certain beliefs and characteristics of employees in various organizations and to see how these relate to the way people behave and interact with one another at work." Participants were asked to complete measures of moral identity, moral personality, basic demographic information, the ethical ideology measure, as well as other measures unrelated to the present study, and were compensated for their participation with a \$20 gift certificate to a national retailer.

Measures

Moral identity (MI). We used the ten-item Aquino and Reed (2002) moral identity instrument to measure this construct. The measure first lists traits that are examples of those a moral person might have (e.g., compassionate, generous, honest), followed by a number of questions about how these characteristics relate to the respondent's self. According to Aquino and Reed (2002), the scale consists of two five-item subscales. The *Internalization* subscale captures the degree to which a person's moral identity is rooted at the core of one's being. Sample items include "I strongly desire to have these characteristics," and "Being someone who has these characteristics is an important part of who I am." The *Symbolization* subscale captures the extent to which morality is displayed outwardly in one's actions. Sample items include "The fact that I have these characteristics is communicated to others by my membership in certain organizations," and "The kinds of books and magazines that I read identify me as having these characteristics." Respondents answered each item on a seven-point Likert scale (1=Strongly Disagree; 7=Strongly Agree). Items were averaged to form the measure for each subscale. (Internalization $M=6.69$, $SD=.53$; Symbolization $M=5.26$, $SD=1.18$)

Moral personality. Following theorizing reported in Colquitt et al. (2006) and McAdams (in press), we conceptualize moral personality as the sum of three Big 5 personality traits: agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to experience. Each dimension was measured with six items, and respondents answered each item on a five-point Likert scale (1=Very Inaccurate; 5=Very Accurate). Sample items for each trait include "accept people as they are," "am always prepared," and "enjoy hearing new ideas," for agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to experience, respectively. For the purposes of our study, the three scales were summed to create a single measure of moral personality (Openness to experience $M=3.96$, $SD=.60$; agreeableness $M=3.74$, $SD=.63$; conscientiousness $M=3.95$, $SD=.71$).

Ethical Ideology. Ethical ideology was measured with Schlenker's (2008; Schlenker, Weigold, & Schlenker, 2008) eighteen-item scale. Sample items include "The true test of character is a willingness to stand by one's principles, no matter what price one has to pay," "If one believes something is right, one must stand by it, even if it means losing friends or missing out on profitable opportunities," and "If done for the right reasons, even lying or cheating are ok." Items were measured with a seven-point Likert scale (1=Strongly Disagree; 7=Strongly Agree), and scores were summed so that higher scores represent a (relatively) greater degree of a principled ideology, and lower scores reflect a (relatively) greater degree of an expedient ideology ($M=5.42$, $SD=.84$). While we did not measure it in this sample, the scale has been shown to exhibit little social desirability bias (see Schlenker et al., 2008).

Control variables. We include measures of age and religiosity as control variables in our analysis. Religiosity has also been linked to the development of morality and altruism (Kedem & Cohen, 1987; Donahue & Benson, 1995; Lippman, Michelsen, & Roehlekepartain, 2005). Religiosity was measured with the single item "How frequently did you attend religious services in the past year?" which was measured with 4 items (1=regularly (once per week or more; 2=occasionally; 3=only on special days (e.g., Christmas); 4=not at all) ($M=1.98$ $SD=.93$). We controlled for

age because it is possible that the adoption of a more principled ideology occurs as cumulative life experiences lead to a stronger integration of one's personal identity with one's moral principles.

Analysis and Results

Descriptive Results

Descriptive statistics and correlations are shown in Table 1. Scale reliabilities were .65 for internalization, .83 for symbolization, .87 for ideology, .72 for openness to experience, .76 for agreeableness, and .78 for conscientiousness.

Table 1. Study 1 variable correlations and descriptive statistics

	M (SD)	1	2	3	4	5
1. Ideology	5.4 (0.84)					
2. Age	30.1 (6.79)	.26				
3. Religiosity	1.98 (0.93)	-.09	-.03			
4. MI-Internalization	6.69 (0.53)	.44*	.13	-.31+		
5. MI-Symbolization	5.26 (1.18)	.17	.06	-.03	.49*	
6. Moral Personality	12.1 (1.33)	.41*	.02	.04	.38*	.30+

+ $p < .05$

* $p < .01$

Hypothesis Tests

Following Aiken & West (1991), hierarchical regression analysis was used to test our hypotheses. Step 1 of the analysis included age and religiosity. Step 2 of the analysis added the internalization and symbolization subscales, as well as the index of moral personality. In line with our expectations, both the internalization subscale of moral identity ($B=.35$, $t=2.03$, $p=.05$) and moral personality ($B=.31$, $t=2.06$, $p=.04$) measures were significantly related to participants' likelihood of holding a principled (relative to expedient) ethical ideology. However, neither symbolization ($B=-.09$, ns) nor any control variables were significantly related to ethical ideology. Results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Study 1 Hierarchical multiple regression results: Ideology

	Step 1	Step 2
Age	.26	.21
Religiosity	-.08	.01
MI (Internalization)		.35+
MI (Symbolization)		-.09
Moral Personality		.31+
R^2	.07	.32
ΔR^2	.07	.24*
F	1.64	3.55*
df	2,41	5,38

Standardized regression weights are presented

+ $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Discussion

We found that moral identity and moral personality were independently associated with the endorsement of a principled versus expedient ethical ideology. Past research has largely examined the self from either a personality or identity perspective, but rarely the two concurrently. We attempted to combine these two individual differences to see which factor is related to one's ethical ideology, and our data show that taking a broader definition of what constitutes the "moral personality" may have practical utility for explaining ethical behavior. Consistent with past findings (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Aquino, Reed, Thau, & Freeman, 2007; Reed & Aquino, 2003), we found that the internalization dimension of moral identity was more strongly related to the commitment to a principled ideology than the symbolization dimension. This is perhaps not so surprising since the internalization dimension, according to Aquino and Reed (2002), captures the centrality of morality to the self, whereas the symbolization dimensions captures the public expression of the moral self. It makes sense given these distinctions that internalization would be more closely related to another internalized construct—the commitment to a principled ideology—than symbolization. We found that people who were high in agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to experience were more likely to endorse a principled ideology, as was expected based on previous empirical research. Our findings further strengthen the claim that ethical ideologies may be deeply rooted in stable aspects of personality, as well as being influenced by one's working self concept and, perhaps, by situational factors.

Endorsing a principled ideology has been associated with a number of pro-social outcomes, and thus identifying factors related to one's ideology seems particularly germane. Study 1 empirically demonstrated the relationship between personality, identity, and ideology among employees sharing the same workplace. Study 2 aims to replicate and extend these results by testing whether these variables have downstream effects on other variables through one's ethical ideology that are theoretically relevant, but more specific to workplace environments.

STUDY 2

Outcomes Associated with Ethical Ideology

As noted earlier, Schlenker found that people holding a principled ethical ideology exhibit greater benevolence, helping behaviors, and are less likely to rationalize unethical and immoral behaviors (Johnson & Schlenker, 2007; Schlenker, 2008; Schlenker et al., in press). In Study 2, we sought to replicate these findings in a workplace context and extend them by testing whether one's ethical ideology mediates the relationship between moral personality, moral identity, and these outcomes. In other words, we expect people who are high in conscientiousness, agreeableness, and openness to experience, as well as those whose moral identity is central to their self-definition, to be more helpful and to engage in less rationalization of unethical conduct at work. We hypothesize that the reason this will occur is because they are more likely to endorse a principled rather than expedient ethical ideology.

We tested our hypothesis by examining two outcomes that are conceptually consistent with Schlenker's (2008) findings and that are relevant for organizations. The first was *organizational citizenship behavior* (OCB), which is defined as discretionary actions (i.e., not formally required by the job) that promote organizational effectiveness including helping coworkers with work-related problems, not complaining about trivial problems, behaving courteously to coworkers, and supporting the organization to outsiders (Organ, 1988; Zellars, Tepper, & Duffy, 2002). OCBs are generally beneficial to an organization, but also present a dilemma for an employee because they require a tradeoff between short-term personal interests and costs and long term collective benefits (Joireman, Kamdar, Daniels, & Duell, 2006).

Schlenker (2008) documented a relationship between the ideology measure and volunteerism, a behavior that is conceptually similar to OCB because it is discretionary and contributes to the welfare of others. Schlenker (2008) argued that this relationship occurs because ideology is associated with specific *non-egotistical* forms of helping behavior, including help offered for principled reasons (i.e., "it was the right thing to do") and altruistic reasons (i.e., it focused on the welfare of others, rather than egotistical reasons such as "looking good"). If Schlenker's (2008) arguments are correct, then it is likely that when employees think about whether to engage in OCBs, the potential costs to the self of doing so will be less salient if they hold a principled ethical ideology, at least relative to benefits that might be bestowed upon their colleagues and the organization. The following hypothesis tests this prediction:

Hypothesis 3: People adopting a principled ethical ideology are more likely to perform OCBs than people adopting an expedient ethical ideology.

Study 1 showed how both a moral identity and a moral personality were associated with endorsing a principled ideology. Hypothesis 3 states that ideology should be associated with the likelihood of engaging in OCBs. Therefore, we hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 4: Ideology mediates the relationship between moral identity and facets of the moral personality and the willingness to perform OCBs.

OCBs are a behavioral consequence of ideology. We also investigated a possible cognitive consequence that might influence peoples' willingness to engage in unethical behavior at work. The construct of interest was *moral disengagement*. Moral disengagement consists of a set of cognitive justifications (referred to as mechanisms) that allow one to commit harmful acts while avoiding internalized self-sanctions (e.g., self-condemnation, self-loathing) against such behavior (Bandura, Caprara, Barbanelli, Pastorelli, & Regalia, 2001). As long as personal sanctions against harm doing are engaged, people are neither as willing nor as likely to actually harm others. However, when people disengage these self-sanctions, personal responsibility for such conduct is relieved, and the meaning assigned to the behavior may change even to the point where it is viewed as benign (e.g., Batson, Thompson, Seufferling, Whitney, & Strongman, 1999; Brief, Buttram, & Dukerich, 2000; Reich, 1990). For example, failure by Ford executives to recall the *Pinto* was considered a "good business decision even if people might be dying" (Gioia, 1992: 382). Evidence

regarding the role of moral disengagement can be found in behaviors ranging from the perpetration of cruel and violent acts to everyday social situations (Bardes & Ambrose, 2008; Detert, Treviño, & Sweitzer, 2008). Research in organizational contexts suggests that unethical harmful employee conduct may also be linked to moral disengagement processes (e.g., Bardes & Ambrose, 2008; Duffy, Aquino, Tepper, & O'Leary-Kelly, 2006).

The potentially harmful consequences of moral disengagement have been shown in several studies; fewer studies have examined its possible correlates (for an exception see Detert et al., 2008). We hypothesize that the propensity to morally disengage will be related to an expedient ethical ideology for several reasons. First, most people would probably not describe themselves as lacking ethics, but people do espouse different levels of comfort with "ethical adaptability" (Schlenker et al., in press). People who express a comfort with "ethical adaptability" (i.e., they endorse an expedient ethical ideology) believe that one should take advantage of opportunities and that deviations from principles are often justifiable (Schlenker et al., in press). Second, research suggests that people holding expedient ideologies are likely to be cynical, and maintain an exploitative orientation towards others (Schlenker et al., in press). Taken together, we argue that these beliefs can be supported if the person also has a propensity to engage in the self-serving rationalizations that characterize moral disengagement (e.g., Schlenker, 2008). In contrast, people who adhere to a principled ethical ideology would find it more difficult to engage in self-serving rationalizations, and hence would show a lower propensity to do so. As Schlenker and his colleagues (in press) argue, "moral disengagement is an option that seems to be more cognitively available and likely to be used by those with expedient rather than principled ideologies" (Schlenker et al., in press: 25). Those holding a principled ideology have a stronger link between the self and personal commitment and responsibility (which results in fewer excuses or justifications preceding or following immoral action) and greater internal control (which could result in fewer attempts to blame others or the situation for one's transgressions (Detert, Treviño, & Sweitzer, 2008; Duffy et al., 2006). The following hypothesis tests these arguments:

Hypothesis 5: People holding a principled ethical ideology have a lower propensity to use mechanisms of moral disengagement than people who endorse an expedient ideology.

Like our prediction regarding OCB, we tested a more complete model where the moral personality and moral identity influence the propensity to morally disengage through ideology. The following hypothesis tests these relationships:

Hypothesis 6: Ethical ideology mediates the relationship between the moral personality, moral identity, and the propensity to morally disengage.

STUDY 2

*Methods**Participants and Procedure*

One hundred forty-five undergraduate students (83 males, 54 females, 8 not reporting gender) from a mid-sized Canadian university participated in the study for partial course credit. Average age = 20.0 ($SD = 1.42$). All were currently employed, holding at least part-time positions.

Data were collected using an online survey. Participants were recruited for a study entitled "Well Being and Prosocial Behavior in the Workplace," and were told the study was investigating "certain beliefs and characteristics of employees in various organizations and to see how these relate to the way people behave and interact with one another at work." Participants were asked to complete measures of moral identity, moral personality, basic demographic information, the ethical ideology measure, as well as other measures unrelated to the present study.

Measures

Moral identity, Moral personality, and Ethical Ideology. These variables were measured as they were in Study 1. Reliabilities were .81 for internalization ($M=6.14$, $SD=.92$), .85 for symbolization ($M=4.69$, $SD=1.03$), .64 for openness to experience ($M=3.60$, $SD=.59$), .56 for agreeableness ($M=3.67$, $SD=.64$), .65 for conscientiousness ($M=3.48$, $SD=.59$), and .84 for ethical ideology ($M=4.73$, $SD=.71$).¹

Moral disengagement. The propensity for people to morally disengage was assessed with fifteen items from Duffy, Tepper, and O'Leary Kelly's (2002) measure of moral disengagement. Rather than focusing on a single incident, it assesses a more general tendency to use mechanisms of disengagement. This scale was adapted to the social context of workplace from Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, and Pastorelli's (1996) measure of propensity to morally disengage, and measures the extent to which individuals construe injurious conduct as serving a morally justified purpose, masquerade censurable activities through euphemistic language or advantageous comparison, disavow or displace responsibility for harm, and blame and devalue targets of harmful conduct (Bardes & Amrbose, 2008, Porath, Duffy & Guttentag, 2005). Sample items include "It is alright to lie to keep your coworkers out of trouble" and "Talking about people behind their backs at work is just part of the game." Response options ranged from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 7 = Strongly Agree ($\alpha = .88$, $M=2.98$, $SD=0.85$).

Organizational Citizenship. Organizational citizenship was measured with 6 items from Smith, Organ, and Near (1983). Sample items include "I willingly help others who have work related problems," "I orient new employees even though it is not required of me," and "I volunteer to help my supervisor on tasks." Response options ranged from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 7 = Strongly Agree ($\alpha = .90$, $M= 5.29$, $SD=1.0$).

Control variables. We again controlled for age and religiosity ($M= 2.91$, $SD=.99$). We also control for gender (1=male; 2=female) in Study 2, as both were represented in this sample.

Analysis and Results

Descriptive Results

Descriptive results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Study 2 variable correlations and descriptive statistics

	M (SD)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Ideology	4.73 (0.71)								
2. Age	20.0 (1.42)	-.05							
3. Religiosity	2.91 (0.99)	-.23*	.21*						
4. Gender	1.39 (0.49)	.19+	-.11	.00					
5. MI-Internalization	6.14 (0.92)	.43*	.01	.01	.37*				
6. MI-Symbolization	4.69 (1.03)	.22*	-.02	-.02	.21+	.44*			
7. Moral Personality	10.7 (1.35)	.35*	.14	.06	.27*	.47*	.35*		
8. OCB	5.29 (1.0)	.35*	.17	-.06	.39*	.41*	.18+	.37*	
9. Moral Disengagement	2.98 (.85)	-.55*	.06	.18+	-.29*	-.45*	-.23*	-.45*	-.24*

+p < .05

*p < .01

Gender, 1 = male, 2 = female

Hypothesis Tests

Ethical ideology. Hierarchical regression analysis was again utilized for hypothesis testing. Step 1 of the analysis included gender, religiosity, and age. Step 2 of the analysis added the internalization and symbolization subscales, as well as the index of moral personality. In line with our expectations, in addition to infrequency of religious service attendance being negatively related to participants' ideology score ($B = -.24, t = -3.06, p = .003$), both the internalization subscale of moral identity ($B = .31, t = 3.27, p = .001$) and moral personality ($B = .22, t = 2.50, p = .01$) measures were significantly associated with participants' likelihood of endorsing a principled (relative to expedient) ideology. However, the symbolization subscale was again unrelated to ideology ($B = .02, ns$).

Table 4. Study 2 Hierarchical multiple regression results: Ideology

	Step 1	Step 2
Age	.01	-.04
Religiosity	-.23*	-.24
Gender	.18+	.00
MI (Internalization)		.31*
MI (Symbolization)		.02
Moral Personality		.22+
R ²	.08	.27
ΔR ²	.08+	.18*
F	3.80+	7.46*
df	3,126	6,123

Standardized regression weights are presented

+ p < .05

* p < .01

Organizational Citizenship. In line with our expectations, in addition to age ($B=.20$, $t=2.43$, $p=.02$) and gender ($B=.30$, $t=3.50$, $p=.001$), both the internalization subscale ($B=.20$, $t=2.10$, $p=.04$) of moral identity and moral personality ($B=.17$, $t=1.87$, $p=.06$) measures were related to participants' likelihood of endorsing a principled (relative to expedient) ideology, although the latter only reached marginal significance. However, the symbolization subscale was not related to organizational citizenship ($B=-.07$, ns).

Table 5. Study 2 Hierarchical multiple regression results: Organizational Citizenship Behavior

	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Age	.24*	.20+	.21+
Religiosity	-.09	-.09	-.04
Gender	.40*	.30*	.30*
MI (Internalization)		.20+	.14
MI (Symbolization)		-.07	-.07
Moral Personality		.17#	.12
Ideology			.21+
R ²	.19	.26	.30
ΔR^2	.19*	.07*	.03*
F	10.00*	7.36*	7.36
df	3,126	6,123	7, 122

Standardized regression weights are presented

+ $p < .05$

* $p < .01$

$p = .06$

Moral Disengagement. As hypothesized, in addition to infrequency of religious service attendance being related to participants' moral disengagement ($B=.20$, $t=2.59$, $p=.01$), both the internalization subscale of moral identity ($B=-.28$, $t=-3.07$, $p=.003$) and moral personality ($B=-.33$, $t=3.87$, $p<.001$) measures were significantly related to participants' likelihood of moral disengagement. However, the symbolization subscale was not associated with moral disengagement ($B=.004$, ns).

Mediation

To test whether ethical ideology mediated the relationship between the independent measures (moral identity and moral personality) and organizational citizenship, two additional regression analyses were run. First, ideology significantly predicted organizational citizenship ($B=-.35$, $t=4.38$, $p<.001$). Second, including the ideology measure in the original model predicting organizational citizenship caused both independent variables to fall in significance ($B=.14$, $t=1.39$, $p=.17$ for internalization; $B=.12$, $t=1.34$, $p=.18$ for moral personality), whereas the ideology measure itself remained highly significant ($B=.21$, $t=2.39$, $p=.02$). The results of Sobel tests (Sobel, 1982) were shown to be significant for both variables ($t=2.64$, $p<.01$ for internalization; $t=2.16$, $p=.03$ for moral personality). Following the criteria set by Baron and Kenny (1986), this is evidence of full mediation.

Table 6. Study 2 Hierarchical multiple regression results: Moral Disengagement

	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Age	.00	.07	.06
Religiosity	.18+	.20+	.11
Gender	.27*	-.07	-.07
MI (Internalization)		-.28*	-.18+
MI (Symbolization)		.00	.01
Moral Personality		-.33*	-.26*
Ideology			-.34*
R ²	.10	.33	.42
ΔR ²	.10*	.23*	.08*
F	4.88*	10.21*	12.39*
df	3,126	6,123	7, 122

Standardized regression weights are presented

+ $p < .05$

* $p < .01$

To test whether ideology mediated the relationship between the independent measures (moral identity and moral personality) and moral disengagement, two additional regression analyses were run. First, ideology significantly predicted moral disengagement ($B = -.55$, $t = -7.63$, $p < .001$). Second, including the ideology measure in the original model predicting moral disengagement caused both independent variables to fall in significance ($B = -.18$, $t = -1.96$, $p = .05$ for internalization; $B = -.25$, $t = -4.17$, $p < .001$ for moral personality), whereas the ideology measure itself remained highly significant ($B = -.34$, $t = -4.17$, $p < .001$). The results of Sobel tests (Sobel, 1982) were shown to be significant for both variables ($t = 3.02$, $p < .01$ for internalization; $t = 2.36$, $p = .02$ for moral personality), again indicating full mediation.

Discussion

We replicated the findings from Study 1 by showing that both moral personality and moral identity are independently associated with the likelihood of endorsing a principled ideology. We extend Study 1 by empirically demonstrating the positive relationship between a principled ethical ideology and organizational citizenship, and the negative relationship the former has with moral disengagement. Finally, we tested a full mediational model examining both moral identity and moral personality as antecedents, and OCBs and moral disengagement as consequences of an ethical ideology, and find support for our theorizing. The results of our mediation tests demonstrated that the relationship between moral personality and moral identity on organizational citizenship and moral disengagement can be fully accounted for by the extent to which one holds a principled versus expedient ethical ideology.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Our research examined ethical ideology alongside associated constructs, and uses empirical studies to test the proposed relationships. We show that a principled ideol-

ogy has significant value to organizations, both in increasing pro-social behaviors and in decreasing rationalizations for socially undesirable behaviors. Two studies show that the likelihood of adopting a principled (versus expedient) ethical ideology is associated jointly with the possession of personality traits linked to morality (conscientiousness, agreeableness, and openness to experience) as well as the self-importance of moral identity one has internalized. We contribute to the literature by not only examining how moral identity and moral personality are related to ideology, but we also document how ideology may be related to outcomes in a business setting, namely an increase in OCBs and a decrease in moral disengagement.

The model we proposed in our study suggests that ethical ideology is influenced by personality and moral identity. An earlier study by Reynolds and Ceranic (2007) looked at moral identity and moral predispositions as predictors of moral outcomes (e.g., lying and cheating) and tested a slightly different model, in which moral identity moderated the relationship between these predispositions and moral outcomes. Similar to other theorists (e.g., Aquino, Freeman, Reed, Lim, & Felps, in press; Blasi, 1984), Reynolds and Ceranic argued that moral identity acts as a motivational force that translates peoples' moral cognitions into behavior because of a desire for self-consistency. In contrast, our model proposes that moral identity might also influence the content of one's moral beliefs, such that people who view their moral identity as a highly self-defining characteristic are more likely to endorse a principled (as opposed to expedient) ideology. This is a different (but related) theoretical question to the one addressed by Reynolds and Ceranic, and the fact that we found support for our model does not negate the possibility that moral identity might also moderate the relationship between ethical ideology and moral behavior. While we believe it can play this role, but showing this was not the primary purpose of our study, as it has already been demonstrated in previous work.

Limitations and Future Research

Our research makes a number of contributions to the business ethics literature, but it is important to note some limitations of our approaches. First, the Schlenker measure of ideology treats principled (deontological) and expedient (teleological) ideologies as opposite ends of a continuum representing any number of possible ideological positions. In this respect, the measure is similar to the way most people think of political ideologies: there is a far right, a more moderate group of conservatives, centrists, etc.). However, another approach with considerable empirical support exists (even as it relates to moral identity, see Reynolds and Ceranic, 2007). Brady and Wheeler (1996) found that deontological and teleological philosophies are orthogonal, rather than on a continuum. We do not advocate one approach over the other, and we are agnostic as to which is the superior measure, since both have empirical support. Future research should examine how and when each construct is more likely to predict moral behavior by including both measures in a single study.

Second, we must note that our conceptualization of the moral personality is only one way of capturing the construct. Walker and Frimer (2007) used three different typologies: dispositional traits, characteristic adaptations, and life narratives to

conceptualize a moral personality. However, their test focused on exemplars (heroic rescuers and caring service providers), contrasted with matched control participants of like age, gender, and race. While their study provides conceptual insight, exemplars represent, by definition, a very small portion of the population. Our analysis uses samples of college-aged students and employees (everyday people), and focuses on the day-to-day decisions all managers and employees must face. While we did replicate our findings in both a real organization and a college student sample (who held a variety of jobs), we cannot be certain that our results would be generalizable to all organizations in other sectors. While we can see no reason why a priori they would not, future research should examine this relationship further.

Third, our theoretical framework assumes that moral disengagement will precede unethical and antisocial behavior. However, whether moral disengagement is indeed anticipatory or post-hoc in nature is the subject of current scientific debate. It is possible that people commit unethical acts and then rationalize these acts through the process of moral disengagement (Haidt, 2001, Reynolds, 2006). If this is true, then our model may be misspecified, as moral disengagement would not be an outcome leading to allowing undesirable organizational behavior, but rather the result of this kind of behavior. We feel confident there is sufficient theoretical and empirical evidence to consider one's propensity to morally disengage as an antecedent that will ultimately lead to future unethical and antisocial behavior in the workplace (e.g., Bandura, 1991; 2001, Detert et al., 2008), but future researchers may wish to investigate this issue in attempts to disentangle the temporal sequencing.

Implications for Business Practice

Given the plethora of ethical scandals in organizations appearing in the popular press, combined with abundant reports of deviant and antisocial behaviors in the workplace, the findings of this study have clear applied value. Continuing to build our understanding of the drivers of (un)ethical and (im)moral behavior (e.g., moral identity, moral personality, ideology) is an important step. Our findings suggest that organizations should acquire a multi-pronged approach to encourage ethical and moral behavior and deter immoral or unethical behavior.

As a point of departure in this multi-pronged approach, organizations may wish to focus their attention on *attracting* the type of employees who are most likely to engage in ethical behavior and to avoid unethical behavior. To this end, our results suggest that organizations should actively strive to attract individuals higher in facets of moral personality and whose moral identity is more central to the self. As a wealth of research indicates, individuals are attracted to organizations which they perceive as being similar to themselves, or self-congruent (Schneider, 1987). Organizations wishing to attract employees higher in moral personality and identity internalization would do well to promote an organizational climate congruent with these characteristics. In addition, organizations have considerable discretion in terms of the direct and implied messages transmitted in recruiting tools, and sending strong signals may generate an applicant pool with ethical views largely in line with organizational values.

Beyond recruiting tools, Weaver (2006) notes that organizational contexts (e.g., cultural norms regarding the active use of moral language and avoidance of a bottom-line mentality) can foster the formation and promotion of strong moral identity climates in organizations. While these climates can cue organizational member moral identity salience, the "compartmentalization" of one's moral identity and personality can also be triggered by an organizational climate in favor of more relevant (and less moral) organizational identity (Weaver & Agle, 2002). It may be that organizations that can make employees' moral identities salient by creating cultures that emphasize virtues like honesty and fairness, by using moral language in their communications, or by giving employees numerous opportunities to exercise positive virtues (such as volunteerism). This may also attract potential employees whose moral identities are more central to their self-definition. Encouraging and rewarding organizational members who engage in behaviors known to be linked to either moral identity (e.g., being compassionate) or moral personality (e.g., being hardworking, timely, friendly), would allow them to better integrate their moral selves with their organizational selves, which can reduce feelings of conflict that occur when people do not act in accordance with their personal standards.

Organizations may also consider formalizing these issues into socialization programs. Newcomers could be provided information that strongly endorses traits and behaviors associated with moral personality and identity internalization. Indeed, as the selection-attrition process unfolds across time, undesirable employee behaviors are perpetuated only to the extent that newcomers ultimately begin to engage in these behaviors (Anand, Ashforth, & Joshi, 2005; Ashforth & Anand, 2003). An effective organizational socialization process can align organizational and employee moral identity through both formal (e.g., company sponsored training and programs) and informal avenues (e.g., newcomers observe the behaviors of valued and rewarded organizational members). We recommend that organizations socialize newcomers in ways that avoid the explicit or implicit acceptance of expedient ideologies and encourage principled ideologies. For example, organizations may expose newcomers to top management role models early in their employment who explicitly endorse principled ideologies (as well as moral identity) through formal programs or mentoring assignments.

NOTES

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1. Using the six items to measure agreeableness from Study 1 yielded a very low reliability in this sample, so the three underperforming items were removed to increase the reliability. We do not believe this to be a cause for concern for three reasons. First, the measures of the Big 5 are among the most used and validated measures in psychology, with thousands of papers using these items, and sample fluctuations are bound to occur. Secondly, running the model including all six items instead of three yields identical results. Thirdly, this point is particularly poignant given that if our theorizing is correct, a low reliability measure of a construct should actually work against us finding the effect, rather than increase our chances.

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