

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

We analyzed the organizational literature on moral disengagement, reviewing the sample of the business ethics literature selected by Newman et al. (2019). We excluded 6 from their sample of 62 papers: The review of the moral disengagement literature by Moore (2015); three proceedings abstracts (Astrove et al. 2015; Huang and Yan 2014; Pryor et al. 2015), because manuscripts were not received by the authors; Fooks et al. (2013), which did not contain the search term “moral disengagement”; and the auto-ethnographic account by Kempster and Gregory (2017). We recorded how papers explicitly conceptualized moral disengagement. In addition, we assessed whether moral disengagement was conceptualized or studied as an independent, dependent, mediator, or moderator variable. On this basis, we classified variables as either process moral disengagement (state) or propensity to morally disengage (trait): If moral disengagement was specified as a mediator, we classified the variable as process moral disengagement; if moral disengagement was specified as a moderator, we classified the variable as propensity to morally disengage; if moral disengagement was studied as an independent or dependent variable, we classified the variable as either process moral disengagement or propensity to morally disengage, depending on the broader study context or the paper’s conceptualization of moral disengagement. We recorded the study method (conceptual, qualitative, cross-sectional, experimental) on a paper level or – in the case of different methods across studies – on a study level. In addition, we recorded the measures used in order to determine whether scholars measured moral disengagement as a process (state) or propensity (trait). We leveraged the analysis of moral disengagement measures in Newman et al. (2019), who identified measures by Bandura et al. (1996) as state-like, and the measures by Detert et al. (2008), McFerran et al. (2010), and Moore et al. (2012) as “trait-like.” In the case of experimental studies, however, these measures would be recorded as state-like. Last, we concluded whether a paper consistently conceptualized and operationalized moral disengagement as process, as propensity, or whether the two constructs were inconsistently invoked, rendering the study ambiguous.

Table 1 Overview of conceptualization, variable type, operationalization of the review sample of Newman et al. (2019)

Paper				Moral disengagement conceptualization			Variable Type		Moral disengagement operationalization		
Author	Year	Study Method No.	Moral disengagement definition	Class	Structure ^a	MD variable type	Class	Moral disengagement measure	Measure type	Literature type	
Alnuaimi et al.	2010	Experimental	cognitive mechanisms that enable otherwise considerate people to perform self-serving activities that have detrimental social effects	Process	B3	Mediator	Process	Self developed	State	Process	
Baron et al.	2015	Cross-sectional	a cognitive process that deactivates moral self-regulation, thus enabling individuals to behave in ways inconsistent with their own values	Process	B8	Mediator	Process	Detert et al. (2008)	Trait	ambiguous	
Barsky	2011	Cross-sectional	cognitive mechanisms to disengage moral self-sanctions as a means of allowing self to act in deviant ways	Process	B2	Independent	Process	Self-developed	State	Process	
Beaudoin et al.	2015	Experimental	an individual cognitive orientation that significantly affects unethical behavior	Propensity	B8	Mediator	Process	Moore et al. (2012)	Trait	ambiguous	
Beu and Buckley	2004	Conceptual	self-sanctions do not affect conduct unless they are activated and the process of moral disengagement prevents this activation	Process	B8		n/a		n/a	Process	
Bonner et al.	2016	Cross-sectional	supervisor and employee moral disengagement as individual traits	Propensity	B8	Independent / Moderator	Propensity	Moore et al. (2012) adapted to context of work	Trait	Propensity	
Chen et al.	2016	Cross-sectional	a set of cognitive justification mechanisms that allow an individual to commit unethical acts while disengaging from the moral norms and self-sanctions that ordinarily inhibit such acts	Process	B8	Mediator	Process	Moore et al. (2012)	Trait	ambiguous	
Christian and Ellis	2014	Cross-sectional	individuals exhibit dispositional differences in the expression of moral disengagement (trait instantiation of moral disengagement)	Propensity	B8	Independent	Propensity	20 items from Detert et al. (2008)	Trait	Propensity	
Chugh et al.	2014	Experimental	individual difference that is also sometimes referred to as the propensity to morally disengage	Propensity	B8	Dependent	Propensity	Detert et al. (2008)	Trait	Propensity	
Claybourn	2011	Cross-sectional	cognitive processes involved in the prevention or circumvention of moral decision-making and moral behavior	Process	B8	Dependent	Process	Bandura et al. (1996), adapted to work context	State	Process	
Cohen et al.	2014	Cross-sectional	moral disengagement as individual difference / trait	Propensity	B8	Independent	Propensity	Moore et al. (2012)	Trait	Propensity	
D'Arcy et al.	2014	Experimental	state instantiation of moral disengagement, moral disengagement from information security policy violations that is triggered by security-related stress	Process	B8	Mediator	Process	Bandura et al. (1996) adapted for ISPV context	State	Process	
Dang et al.	2017	Experimental and cross-sectional	individual difference termed "moral disengagement propensity"	Propensity	B8	Moderator	Propensity	Moore et al. (2012)	Trait	Propensity	
Detert et al.	2008	Cross-sectional	a set of cognitive mechanisms that deactivate moral self-regulatory processes and thereby help to explain why individuals often make unethical decisions without apparent guilt or self-censure; AND: some people will be more predisposed to moral disengagement than others	Process and Propensity	B8	Mediator	Process	Detert et al. (2008)	Trait	ambiguous	
Duffy et al.	2012	Cross-sectional	set of cognitive justifications that allow an individual to commit acts such as social undermining while avoiding the self-sanctions that ordinarily deter such behavior	Process	B8	Mediator	Process	claims to use 15-item MD at work measure from McFerran et al. (2010)	State	Process	

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Author	Year	Study No.	Method	Moral disengagement definition	Class	Structure ^a	MD variable type	Class	Moral disengagement measure	Measure type	Literature type
Egels-Zandén	2017		Qualitative (case studies)	propensity to evoke cognitions which restructure one's actions to appear less harmful, minimize one's understanding of responsibility for one's actions, or attenuate the perception of the distress one causes others	Propensity	B8			n/a	n/a	Propensity
Eriksson	2016		Conceptual	moral disengagement occurs when the individual is able to act in contravention of his or her morals, without feeling bad	Process	B8			n/a	n/a	Process
Eriksson and Svensson	2016		Qualitative (case studies)	the dissonance between individuals' sense of right and wrong and their actions	Process	B8			n/a	n/a	Process
Fida et al.	2015		Cross-sectional	social-cognitive processes by which a wrongful, deviant, and antisocial behavior is psychologically altered such that it is dissociated from these negative qualities that would serve to deter the actor from performing it	Process	B8	Mediator	Process	Self-developed	State	Process
Fida et al.	2018		Cross-sectional	the set of cognitive mechanisms that alter or reframe misconduct, allowing people to engage in this	Process	B8	Independent, Mediator, and Dependent	Process	Farnese et al. (2011)	State	Process
He et al.	2019		Cross-sectional	a set of cognitive justifications that enable an individual to eliminate self-deterrents to unethical behaviors while avoiding self-sanctions and the accompanying guilt	Process	B8	Mediator	Process	Moore et al. (2012)	Trait	ambiguous
Hiekkataipale and Lämsä	2017		Qualitative (critical incidents)	deactivation of moral self-regulation	Process	B8			n/a	n/a	Process
Hinrichs et al.	2012		Cross-sectional	the selective suspension of the internal self-regulatory standards people have that prevent them from committing inhumane or reprehensible acts	Process	B5	Dependent	Process	5 items from Bandura et al. (1996)	State	Process
Huang et al.	2017		Cross-sectional	the self-regulation process that typically inhibits behavior considered to be "wrong" can be deactivated, enabling individuals to maintain a favorable view of themselves when they contemplate or engage in deviant actions	Process	B8	Mediator	Process	claim to use a scale published in McFerran et al. (2010)	State	Process
Hystad et al.	2014		Cross-sectional	a flexible property of the individual that results from the interplay between the individual and the environment or social context that he or she operates in, rather than resulting from innate dispositions	Process	B2	Mediator	Process	Eight modified items from Bandura et al. (1996)	State	Process
Johnson and Buckley	2015		Conceptual	mechanisms through which moral self-sanctions are selectively activated and disengaged from detrimental behavior at different points in the self-regulatory process	Process	B8			n/a	n/a	Process
Keem et al.	2018	1	Cross-sectional	individuals behave according to their moral standards to avoid self-sanctions, but not when moral disengagement interrupts the link between unethical behavior and self-retributions	Process	B8	Mediator	Process	Moore et al. (2012)	Trait	ambiguous
		2							Self-developed 8-item scale based on Bandura et al. (1996); items modified to vignette scenario	State	Process

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Author	Year	Study No.	Method	Moral disengagement definition	Class	Structure ^a	MD variable type	Class	Moral disengagement measure	Measure type	Literature
Kennedy et al.	2017		Cross-sectional	an inter-related set of cognitive rationalizations that allow people to violate their ethical standards without feeling guilty or critical of themselves	Process	B8	Mediator	Process	Bandura et al. (1996) adapted to the negotiation context	State	Process
Kish-Gephart et al.	2014		Cross-sectional	cognitive mechanisms that can deactivate the moral self-regulatory process, thereby preventing self-censure or guilt in the face of unethical behavior	Process	B7	Dependent	Process	Coded justifications of ethically charged behavior	State	Process
Knoll et al.	2016		Cross-sectional	individual differences in self-related processes associated with moral disengagement	Propensity	B8	Mediator	Process	Moore et al. (2012)	Trait	ambiguous
Lee et al.	2016		Cross-sectional	contextually triggered moral justification in which individuals rationalize their norm violations	Process	B8	Mediator	Process	Moore et al. (2012)	Trait	ambiguous
Lee et al.	2019	2	Cross-sectional	the deactivation of moral self-regulatory processes through the use of several interrelated cognitive mechanisms	Process	B6 or B8 (unclear)	Mediator	Process	6-item scale (sic!) of Moore et al. (2012)	Trait	ambiguous
Liu & Berry	2013		Conceptual	dispositional moral disengagement	Propensity	B8	Moderator	Propensity	n/a		Propensity
Loi et al.	2015		Conceptual	a set of cognitive justifications or psychosocial maneuvers that deactivate people's moral self-regulation and allow them to commit acts such as abusive supervision	Process	B8	Mediator	Process	n/a		Process
Loyens	2014		(Qualitative) Ethnographic study	cognitive mechanisms used by individuals to reframe their behavior in ways that downplay their ethical content or moral implications	Process	B5		n/a	n/a		Process
Martin et al.	2014		Conceptual	the cognitive capability to rationalize inconsistencies in espoused moral beliefs and behavior in practice	Process	B8		n/a	n/a		Process
McFerran, Aquino & Duffy	2010		Cross-sectional	the willingness to engage in cognitive rationalizations that can allow people to override moral self-sanctions against acting unethically / a more general tendency to use mechanisms of disengagement	Propensity	B8	Dependent	Propensity	15 items from unpublished paper by Duffy and colleagues	Trait	Propensity
Moore	2008		Conceptual	an individual predisposition to evoke cognitions that allow individuals to restructure their actions to appear less harmful, minimize their role in the outcomes of their actions, or attenuate the distress that they cause to others	Propensity	B8	Independent	Propensity	n/a		Propensity
Moore et al.	2012		Cross-sectional	propensity to morally disengage, an individual difference that represents a generalized cognitive orientation to the world	Propensity	B8	Independent	Propensity	Moore et al. (2012)	Trait	Propensity
Moore et al.	2019	1	Cross-sectional	individual's propensity to morally disengage; the extent to which individuals agree with statements that reflect morally disengaged thinking	Propensity	B8	Mediator	Process	Moore et al. (2012), prefixed with stem "at work"	Trait	ambiguous
		2	Experimental	in-the-moment morally disengaged cognitions, not dispositional moral disengagement	Process	B4	Mediator	Process	set of four items designed to measure temporally activated moral disengagement adapted from Moore et al. (2012)	State (exp)	Process

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Author	Year	Study No.	Method	Moral disengagement definition	Class	Structure ^a	MD variable type	Class	Moral disengagement measure	Measure type	Literature type
		3	Cross-sectional	not specified		B4	Mediator	Process	4 items from Bandura et al (1996), adapted to work context	State	Process
		4	Cross-sectional	not specified		B8	Mediator	Process	Moore et al. (2012), prefixed with stem "at work"	Trait	ambiguous
Nguyen	2015	1	Cross-sectional	individual differences in moral disengagement	Propensity	B8	Moderator	Propensity	Detert et al. (2008)	Trait	Propensity
		2	Cross-sectional		Propensity	B8	Moderator	Propensity	Moore et al. (2008)	Trait	
Niven & Healy	2016		Experimental	individual differences in moral justification	Propensity	B1	Moderator	Propensity	4 items from Barsky (2011)	Trait	Propensity
Ntayi et al.	2010		Cross-sectional	process of convincing the self that ethical standards do not apply to oneself in a particular context	Process	B8	Moderator	Propensity	adapted from Bandura et al. (1996) and Hymel et al. (2005)	State	ambiguous
Ogunfowara & Bourdage	2014		Cross-sectional	moral disengagement explains how people come to engage in detrimental conducts that are otherwise incongruent with their moral standards	Process	B8	Mediator	Process	Detert et al. (2008)	Trait	ambiguous
Ogunfowara et al.	2013	2	Cross-sectional	propensity to morally disengage	Propensity	B8	Mediator	Process	Detert et al. (2008)	Trait	ambiguous
Page & Pina	2015		Conceptual	a cognitive process that enables people to convince themselves that moral principles do not apply to them in a particular context, thus creating a version of reality in which detrimental behavior becomes socially and morally acceptable	Process	B8		n/a	n/a		Process
Palmer	2013		Experimental	an end state achieved through the enactment of 'psychological maneuvers'	Process	B8	Mediator	Process	18 items from Detert et al. (2008)	State (exp)	Process
Pettita et al.	2017		Cross-sectional	the process by which individuals mitigate the consequences of their own violations of moral standards	Process	B6	Mediator	Process	Job safety MD scale (introduced in the paper)	State	Process
Reynolds et al.	2014	1, 4	Cross-sectional	propensity to morally disengage	Propensity	B8	Mediator	Process	Detert et al. (2008)	Trait	ambiguous
		2, 5		3	moral disengagement processes as they happen; moral disengagement processes <i>in situ</i>	Process				Moore et al. (2012)	Trait
		3		moral disengagement processes as they happen; moral disengagement processes <i>in situ</i>	Process				Coding of participant justifications	State	Process
Samnani et al.	2014		Cross-sectional	propensity to morally disengage	Propensity	B8	Moderator	Propensity	Detert et al. (2008)	Trait	Propensity
Stevens et al.	2012		Cross-sectional	the ability of individuals to selectively disengage internal moral standards via eight interrelated mechanisms or justifications	Process	B8	Mediator	Process	Items from Detert et al. (2008), adapted to the scenario context	State	Process

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Author	Year	Study No.	Method	Moral disengagement definition	Class	Structure ^a	MD variable type	Class	Moral disengagement measure	Measure type	Literature
Tasa & Bell	2017	1,2	Experimental	an individual's propensity; moral disengagement is an individual difference in the way people cognitively process decisions and behavior so as to behave unethically without feeling distress	Propensity	B8	Mediator	Process	Moore et al. (2012)	Trait	ambiguous
		3	Experimental	moral disengagement, as a disposition, prior to the negotiation, and as an effect of condition, after the negotiation	Process and Propensity		Mediator	Process	unclear: "Moral disengagement was assessed twice, first as a dispositional variable in an online self-assessment 4 weeks prior to the experiment, and again as a state variable in the post-negotiation survey."	unclear	ambiguous
Valle et al.	2019	1,2	Experimental	a cognitive mechanism engaged into help individuals cope with the demands of organizational politics and formulate strategies for behavioral action	Process	B8	Mediator	Process	Moore et al. (2012)	State (exp)	Process
Welsh et al.	2015	2,3,4	Experimental	a process of rationalization in which questionable conduct is justified through a cognitive misconstrual of its nature and consequences; moral disengagement as a mechanism that causally explains how reduced self-regulation increases subsequent unethical behavior; a universal phenomenon that can be contextually influenced; state moral disengagement	Process	B2 and B4	Mediator	Process	2 or 4 items from Moore et al. (2012), adapted to specifically refer to the moral disengagement regarding the task	State	Process
White et al.	2009		Qualitative (content analysis)	moral disengagement removes the restraint of self-censure from harmful practices	Process	B8	Dependent	Process	Authors' Manual for Coding Modes of Moral Disengagement	State	Process
Zheng et al.	2019		Cross-sectional	set of cognitive justifications that allow individuals to commit immoral acts without apparent guilt and self-sanctions	Process	B8	Mediator	Process	Moore et al. (2012)	Trait	ambiguous

^a B8 indicates that paper refers to eight specific mechanisms of moral disengagement curated by Bandura (e.g., 1999); B1 ... B7 indicates that paper uses a subset of these mechanisms