Understanding Recidivism in the Aftermath of Wrongdoing

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
(Business Administration)
in the University of Michigan
2017

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To my loving family and dearest friends

To put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

Ephesians 4:22-24

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Dave, you have been amazing as a dissertation chair. I have been working with you since my very first day in the PhD program, and you have been such a source of support for me these past five years. I am especially grateful for your dedicated and committed mentorship – thank you for being so invested in my career, and in me as a person. I have grown so much because of you! I am so proud to have you as my dissertation chair, and I look forward to continuing and developing research collaborations with you in the years to come.

Next, I want to thank Sue. I have learnt a great deal from you since my first day of your OB seminar. I was fortunate to have various opportunities to work with you on research over the years, and I look forward to many more exciting opportunities to come. I know I can always rely on you for smart, thoughtful feedback, and for pushing me to develop my theorizing. Thanks for your confidence in me and for wanting me to be the best I can be. I really look up to you.

I am grateful to Leigh, who I can always count on for creative ideas on how to improve my theory and study designs. You provided me with exposure to different ideas and approaches, and I admire how you are able to tackle a big question while being productive as a junior scholar. Thank you for believing in me, and for always cheering me on with enthusiasm.

I also want to thank both Scott and Ethan for being great members of my committee. Your insightful and constructive comments have really helped to improve the quality of my dissertation. Thanks for your generosity with your time and ideas. I am sure current and future doctoral students from my department will feel the same when they have you in their committee.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

ABSTRACT

Behavioral ethics research generally suggests that after making a small transgression there is a "slippery slope" that leads people to make bigger transgressions in the future (Gino & Bazerman, 2009; Tenbrunsel & Messick, 2004). In contrast to this dominant lens, I am interested in how transgressors might change their behavior after committing an offense, instead of repeating their offenses or engaging in more serious offenses. Paper 1 consists of an archival study and an experiment that explore how transgressors' evaluations of their past transgressions influence their likelihood of recidivism. Paper 2 consists of a series of five studies (i.e., one survey and four experiments) that explore how people's beliefs about moral character influence their motivation to change in the aftermath of wrongdoing. Overall, my dissertation aims to makes several theoretical contributions. First, it contributes to the conversation on the downstream consequences of wrongdoing, complementing the existing literature's focus on the antecedents of wrongdoing. Second, it adds to the emerging perspective that ethical judgments and decisions are person-centered (i.e., moral behaviors are used as cues to make evaluations about the person who performed those behaviors). This complements the existing literature's behavioral or act-centered perspective. Finally, my dissertation draws attention to the positive change that transgressors can experience in the aftermath of wrongdoing.

Chapter 1:

Introduction

1.1 Theoretical Contributions

Although people behave in accordance with their moral principles and personal values most of the time, they also commonly engage in behaviors that violate these moral principles and values. For example, an individual might be dishonest with someone to gain an advantage, or use unfair means to get ahead of others at work. Regardless of the specific behavior and whether the individual was caught, one major question is whether or not s/he will repeat this behavior, or change for the better. Mankind has pondered this question for centuries, as reflected in the fact that many of the world's religions include teachings on the nature of sin, forgiveness and redemption (Ayoub, 1978; Cohen, 1987; Murray, 1955). These common themes address how humans deal with the aftermath of their wrongdoing and suggest that it is possible for transgressors to change for the better. In my dissertation, I explore how individuals might positively change their behavior after committing an offense, instead of repeating their offenses or engaging in more serious offenses.

In my dissertation, I investigate the psychological factors that shape individuals' attitudes and behavior in the aftermath of wrongdoing. Ethics researchers have investigated the individual and contextual factors that lead to individuals' unethical behavior (Moore & Gino, 2015;

Treviño, Weaver, & Reynolds, 2006 for reviews). For example, individual factors such as moral awareness (Reynolds, 2006) and moral identity (Aquino & Reed, 2002), and contextual factors such as ethical infrastructure (Tenbrunsel, Smith-Crowe, & Umphress, 2003) and ethical leadership (Brown, Treviño, & Harrison, 2005) have been linked to (un)ethical decision making and conduct. In contrast to the current literature's focus on antecedents of unethical behavior, this dissertation aims to contribute to the conversation about the downstream consequences of unethical behavior. Research on the "slippery slope" of unethical behavior (Gino & Bazerman, 2009; Tenbrunsel & Messick, 2004; Welsh, Ordóñez, Snyder, & Christian, 2015; Zhang, Cornwell, & Higgins, 2014) suggests that after committing a transgression, individuals may easily slip into engaging in potentially more serious unethical behavior. In contrast, my dissertation focuses on how individuals might change for the better in the aftermath of wrongdoing, therefore answering the repeated calls for more research on the recovery process in the aftermath of a transgression (Goodstein & Butterfield, 2010; Moore & Gino, 2015; Schminke, Caldwell, Ambrose, & McMahon, 2014).

In my dissertation, I also aim to add to the growing research on a "person-centered" approach to moral psychology. Most research in moral psychology has focused on the question of how individuals make judgments on whether a particular act or behavior is right or wrong (Pizarro & Tannenbaum, 2012). For instance, some moral psychology researchers compare and contrast individuals' deontological concerns (based on moral principles) and utilitarian concerns (based on cost-benefit analyses) when judging immoral actions (Ditto & Liu, 2012; Conway & Gawronski, 2013; Greene, Morelli, Lowenberg, Nystrom, & Cohen, 2008; Tanner, Medin, & Iliev, 2008). Other moral psychology researchers explore the various cognitive and/or affective mechanisms that influence individuals' judgments about whether an act is immoral or not

(Greene & Haidt, 2002; Haidt, 2001). All of this work reflects a fundamentally act-based approach that is concerned with figuring out the appropriateness of various types of transgressions. The acts-based approach attempts to answer the following question: "What should I do?" However, a growing stream of has introduced a person-centered approach (Tannenbaum, Uhlmann, & Diermeier, 2011; Uhlmann, Pizarro & Diermeier, 2015). This research stream highlights that individuals judge others' moral character from their actions. In fact, these researchers argue that judgments about morality are not only about immoral acts, they are also about what those acts reflect about an agent's moral values and standards. This perspective is consistent with modern and classic virtue ethics philosophies (Anscombe, 1958; Aristotle, 4th Century, B.C./2011), which highlight that one's actions act as clues to one's underlying moral traits. The person-centered approach addresses the following question: "How should I live?" How-to-live questions, as opposed to what-to-do questions, have less to do with particular actions at a specific point in time, and more to do with one's general disposition and character, and the sequence of life choices one makes over one's lifespan (Michaelson, 2016). My dissertation joins this stream of research and aims to explore how one's evaluations of one's own moral character might influence one's future moral behavior. Specifically, I explore how one's future behavior is determined by whether one sees oneself as a moral person (Chapter 2), or as having fixed or malleable moral character (Chapter 3).

Finally, this dissertation features an adaptive and constructive approach to understanding wrongdoing. Research in psychology suggests that successful cognitive processing of traumatic events can lead to post-traumatic growth (Calhoun, Cann, Tedeschi, & McMillan, 2000; Calhoun & Tedeschi, 2006; Maitlis, 2009; Park & Helgeson, 2006; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004; Watkins, 2008). Related research (Ayduk & Kross, 2010; Kross, Gard, Deldin, Clifton, & Ayduk, 2012)

suggests that people are able to make positive meaning out of their negative experiences. In the spirit of this work, this dissertation aims to explore how positive outcomes might emerge from the negativity of wrongdoing. This view adds an important moral dimension to the current research on learning from failure (Ellis, Carette, Anseel, & Lievens, 2014; Myers, Staats, & Gino, 2014), suggesting that learning might emerge from moral failures, not just task failures. The moral development and growth that occurs in the aftermath of moral failures is novel because it is not just about the acquisition of new insights or knowledge, but also involves a re-evaluation and re-alignment of one's moral values. Therefore, it is important to better understand the dynamics underlying these unique processes.

1.2 Definitions and Scope Conditions

This dissertation takes an inclusive view of wrongdoing, and uses the term wrongdoing interchangeably with transgression, offense, infraction, misconduct and unethical behavior, as is typical in the literature. In addition, like in Treviño et al. (2006), the terms moral and ethical are used interchangeably. Wrongdoing is broadly defined as acts that violate widely held moral principles, such as fairness and care for others. Since care for others is one of the central moral principles (Haidt, 2012), interpersonal transgressions (i.e., those that involve inflicting harm on a victim, such as saying something hurtful to someone) also fall within the scope of this definition. Furthermore, my dissertation considers a wide range of transgressions such as dishonesty, cheating, theft, or harming others. Although each specific type of transgression might have a nuanced definition that distinguishes it from other types of transgressions, there is a lot of overlap in terms of the specific behaviors they cover and they generally have similar effects on individuals (Robinson, Wang, & Kiewitz, 2016). Therefore, I do not focus on their differences in

my dissertation, and instead concentrate more on developing a broad understanding on what generally happens in the aftermath of all kinds of transgressions.

Importantly, this dissertation examines wrongdoing that is limited to situations in which (a) the wrongdoing is severe enough that the wrongdoer is aware that the behavior is questionable and might consider changing his or her future behavior and (b) the wrongdoing is not so severe that there is close to no chance of recidivism. These scope conditions are not excessively restrictive and should include most situations that occur in organizations. My theorizing is also limited to situations where transgressors are aware that they have committed an act that is considered ethically inappropriate, improper, or questionable. Others may not necessarily be aware of the transgression, and the transgressor may not necessarily have been punished for his or her behavior. Therefore, these may be private transgressions that only the transgressor himself or herself knows of, that the transgressor has not been punished for, but that the transgressor feels are at least somewhat unethical. Even when transgressors feel that their actions are justified or reasonable, they only engage in those cognitions when they first realize that they may have done something ethically questionable.

Many positive outcomes can emerge in the aftermath of wrongdoing. For example, transgressors might show repentance by publicly accounting for their actions (Bies, 1987; Bies & Shapiro, 1987), apologize to those affected (Fehr & Gelfand, 2010; Kim, Ferrin, Cooper, & Dirks, 2004), compensate victims (Desmet, De Cremer, & Van Dijk, 2011; Okimoto & Tyler, 2007), and seek reconciliation (Andiappan & Treviño, 2010; Aquino, Tripp, & Bies, 2001, 2006). Some individuals might even be spurred to engage in generative behavior (McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992; McAdams, Hart, & Maruan, 1998), such as advising others to help others learn from their mistakes (Effron & Miller, 2015). These examples represent all the ways that the

literature has examined how wrongdoers might constructively respond after committing a transgression. However, I contend that the most constructive response in the aftermath of wrongdoing is for wrongdoers to not repeat their previous transgression. Corporate ethical scandals have often been described as resulting from repeated small infractions that accumulate over time (e.g., Kirchner, 2010; McLean & Elkind, 2003). Thus, recidivism is costly and consequential for organizations. Nonetheless, reducing recidivism can help prevent day-to-day transgressions from blowing up into costly business scandals. Therefore, my dissertation focuses on reducing recidivism, or *not repeating a transgression,* as the outcome.

1.3 Summary

This dissertation will empirically explore factors that might reduce wrongdoers' recidivism in the aftermath of wrongdoing. Specifically, Paper 1 teases apart the act-centered and person-centered judgments that wrongdoers make when evaluating their wrongdoing, and explores how they interact to influence wrongdoers' likelihood of recidivism. Paper 2 focuses on wrongdoers' beliefs about the malleability of their moral character, and examines the role of reflection and motivation to change in reducing their likelihood of recidivism.

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Chapter 2:

Act-Centered and Person-Centered Judgments in the Aftermath of Wrongdoing

2.1 Theoretical Development

As described in the previous chapter, after wrongdoing has been committed, wrongdoers are generally expected to repeat that wrongdoing (Gino & Bazerman, 2009; Tenbrunsel & Messick, 2004; Welsh, Ordóñez, Snyder, & Christian, 2015; Zhang, Cornwell, & Higgins, 2014). In the business context, repeat transgressions may occur when individuals repeatedly over-report their sales figures to meet performance targets (Tenbrunsel & Messick, 2004), repeatedly overstate firm earnings in financial reports (Schrand & Zechman, 2012), or repeatedly accept or offer bribes (Ashforth & Anand, 2003). These minor but frequently recurring transgressions may escalate over time into large scandals that damage the reputation and performance of organizations in which these transgressions take place. Welsh and colleagues (2015) argue that the slippery slope of unethical behavior is likely the result of a process of rationalization over time, whereby transgressions are justified through cognitive misconstrual of the nature of those transgressions and the extent of their consequences. Zhang and colleagues (2014) offer a slightly different explanation – they argue that the slippery slope of unethical behavior is the result of transgressors' concern with maintaining the status quo. In my dissertation, I hope to question these current views on the inevitability of recidivism. My overarching goal is to investigate the

psychological factors that that might influence transgressors' recidivism, or the likelihood of them repeating their transgression.

Changing one's behavior is often a goal-driven process of self-regulation (Bandura, 1991). Therefore, reducing recidivism involves a motivational process where the transgressor sets a goal of not repeating a transgression and strives to achieve that goal. Various theories of work motivation describe how individuals' motivation to perform a behavior depends on how they evaluate the *valence* or value of the behavior, as well as the *expectancy* or expectation that they are actually capable of performing the behavior (e.g., Ajzen, 1991; Atkinson, 1964; Feather, 1982; Lawler & Porter, 1967; Vroom, 1964). Some motivation theories, such as Feather's (1982) expectancy-value theory, focus primarily on valence and expectancy as the two main components of motivation. Other motivation theories, such as Vroom's (1964) expectancy theory, focus on three components: valence, expectancy and instrumentality. Instrumentality refers to how individuals evaluate their likelihood of attaining a certain reward as a result of performing a behavior. In this chapter, I adopt the deontological perspective that moral behavior should be performed as an end in itself (i.e., that moral behavior is performed as the outcome or reward itself), rather than the consequentialist perspective that moral behavior should be performance as a means to an end (i.e., that moral behavior is performed to achieve the best outcomes for all, or for some financial or social reward). The deontological view makes the instrumentality component of motivation less relevant since I view the performance of moral behavior as equivalent to the outcome or reward (for further explanation of the difference between deontological and consequentialist perspectives on morality, see Tanner, Medin, & Iliev, 2007). Therefore, I focus in particular on the valence and expectancy components of motivation, and leave out the instrumentality component. In this chapter, I apply theoretical

insights from expectancy-valence motivational frameworks to understand how people evaluate

their past moral transgressions and how these evaluations influence their motivation to not repeat

those transgressions. Therefore, this chapter integrates insights from the work motivation

literature and the moral psychology literature to explore the different ways in which wrongdoers

evaluate their past transgressions, and what these evaluations mean for their motivation to

change their behavior.

Research in moral psychology suggests that when making moral judgments of others'

behaviors, people distinguish between act-centered moral judgments and person-centered moral

judgments (e.g., Pizarro & Tannenbaum, 2012; Uhlmann, Pizarro, & Diermeier, 2015). Act-

centered moral judgments are focused on the permissibility of the transgression, while person-

centered moral judgments are focused on the transgressor's moral character, or his or her moral

traits and dispositions. Moral psychology has traditionally focused on the act-centered approach

– how people assess the permissibility of acts – as characterized by debates on trolley problems

and considerations of the acceptability or severity of immoral acts based on rule-based versus

utilitarian concerns (e.g., Cushman, Young, & Hauser, 2006; Greene, Sommerville, Nystrom,

Darley, & Cohen, 2001). Recent perspectives argue that people also use others' behaviors as

cues to make inferences about what others are like. In fact, there is strong empirical evidence that

people's judgments of moral acts can be dissociated from their judgments of moral character

(Inbar, Pizarro, & Cushman, 2012; Pizarro, Tannenbaum, & Uhlmann, 2012; Tannenbaum,

Uhlmann, & Diermeier, 2011; Uhlmann & Zhu, 2013; Uhlmann, Zhu, & Tannenbaum, 2013).

At least for third-party evaluations of observed acts, which the literature has largely been

focused on, considerations of control and intentionality appear to influence the relationship

between act-centered and person-centered judgments (Pizarro & Tannenbaum, 2012). For

example, if a person has absolutely no control over an action (e.g., was forced to commit the transgression), or if the person did not intentionally commit the transgression, then the act is less indicative of that person's underlying moral character. However, an act that is evaluated as relatively harmless can nonetheless be evaluated as highly indicative of a person's immorality when it was committed intentionally and when the person had full control over the act. Therefore, the act-person distinction in moral judgments would suggest four possible combinations of act-centered and person-centered judgments. First, an act may be evaluated as extremely unethical and as highly indicative of a person's immorality. For example, intentionally causing serious injury to someone would fall in this category. Second, an act may be evaluated as extremely unethical but less indicative of a person's immorality. For example, accidentally causing serious injury to someone would fall in this category. Third, an act may be evaluated as relatively harmless, yet highly indicative of a person's immorality. For example, intentionally causing minor injury to someone would fall in this category. Fourth, an act may be evaluated as relatively harmless and also not indicative of a person's immorality. For example, accidentally causing minor injury to someone would fall in this category.

Most of the work described above uses vignette-style experiments to study how observers evaluate a hypothetical person's immoral actions. However, it is also important to understand how individuals make sense of their own past immoral actions. For instance, a person who has committed a transgression might wonder about how permissible his or her actions were, and also what that transgression signals about himself or herself as a person. I argue that after committing a transgression, transgressors make both act-centered judgments about what they did and person-centered judgments about who they are. These judgments can be distinguished and have different motivational implications. They correspond with the expectancy-valence motivational

frameworks discussed earlier – act-centered judgments determine the valence or value placed on not repeating the transgression, while person-centered judgments determine the expectancy or expectation that they have the ability to not repeat the transgression. In the sections below, I describe how act-centered judgment and person-centered judgment of a transgression independently and jointly influence transgressors' motivation to not repeat the transgression.

Act-Centered Moral Judgments

When making act-centered judgments of a particular transgression they committed, transgressors consider the extent to which their behavior was inappropriate and whether there is any value or reason to not repeat that transgression. This corresponds with the valence component of the expectancy-valence motivational frameworks discussed earlier. Valence relates to why or whether one would be motivated to set a particular goal. In simple terms, valence provides a reason to strive for a particular goal (Parker, Bindl, & Strauss, 2010). Act-centered judgments of past transgressions concern the value that transgressors place on not repeating their transgressions. Transgressors need to have a compelling reason to not repeat a transgression and need to see value associated with not repeating their transgression.

Act-centered judgments involve considerations about "the acceptability or permissibility of a given behavior" (Tannenbaum, Uhlmann, & Diermeier, 2011, p. 1250) from the perspective of the evaluator. In a deontological approach, actions are considered morally unacceptable or impermissible if they violate one's moral duties or obligations. This view implies that transgressors will accept *moral responsibility* for their actions when they know they had the ability to do otherwise (Pizarro & Tannenbaum, 2012, p. 94). Theories of responsibility and blame suggest that transgressors might accept responsibility for their transgression when they

believe they did it intentionally and played a causal role in the outcome (Malle & Knobe, 1997; Shaver, 1985), or when they had control over the outcome (Alicke, 2000; Schlenker, Britt, Pennington, Murphy, & Doherty, 1994; Weiner, 1995). This process of self-blame that is focused on evaluations of various aspects of one's actions is what Janoff-Bulman (1979) calls behavioral self-blame. Behavioral self-blame involves the belief that one's behavior is inappropriate, and leads to considerations about how the behavior should be corrected in the future. In short, when transgressors believe they played a causal role in committing the transgression and had control over it, they feel a sense of moral responsibility for their past transgression. As they accept moral responsibility for their actions and view their actions as not acceptable or permissible, they are more likely to believe it is important and valuable to not repeat that transgression in the future. Therefore, they will be less likely to repeat the transgression.

Conversely, when transgressors engage in *moral disengagement*, they evaluate their transgression as acceptable or permissible.[1] Moral disengagement is a cognitive process that deactivates moral self-regulation, allowing individuals to circumvent their internalized moral standards (Bandura, 1990, 1999). Moral disengagement has been depicted as a collection of mechanisms that allow wrongdoers to disengage their actions from moral self-censure (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 1996). For example, they might reframe the harmful behavior as benevolent or well intentioned. They might also reduce personal accountability for the transgression, and shift the responsibility for the transgression to other parties. When transgressors morally disengage from their transgression through the various mechanisms described above, they view their actions as acceptable or permissible, and there is no need

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[1] I view moral responsibility and moral disengagement as existing on the same continuum, with moral responsibility on one end of the continuum and moral disengagement on the other end of the continuum.

compelling reason for them to not repeat the transgression. Therefore, they will be more likely to repeat the transgression.

Hypothesis 1: Transgressors' act-centered judgments of their past transgressions influence their likelihood of recidivism, such that those who take moral responsibility for their actions have a lower likelihood of recidivism than those who morally disengage from their actions.

Person-Centered Moral Judgments

Beyond having a compelling reason to not repeat a transgression, transgressors also need to feel personally capable of doing so. This is where person-centered judgments come into play. Person-centered judgments involve considerations about what the transgression signals about the transgressor's ability to act morally (Pizarro & Tannenbaum, 2012). When transgressors make person-centered judgments of a particular transgression they themselves committed, they consider what their behavior signals about themselves, and therefore whether they personally have what it takes to not repeat their transgression. Indeed, self-perception theory asserts that people develop their self-perceptions from observations of their own recent behavior (Bem, 1972). It is important to note that, here, person-centered moral judgments refer to the evaluations transgressors make about themselves based on a particular transgression, rather than their global self-evaluations that are not anchored around any particular transgression. In the current literature, person-centered moral judgments are examined as a third party's evaluation of a person based on a particular transgression that person committed. Similarly, when it comes to self-evaluations, I conceptualize person-centered moral judgments as one's evaluation of oneself based on a particular transgression that one has committed. These moral self-evaluations,

anchored around a particular transgression, inform their thoughts about whether they have the ability to act morally in the future. These evaluations correspond with the expectancy component of the expectancy-valence motivational frameworks discussed earlier. Expectancy relates to perceptions of self-efficacy, or beliefs in one's ability to achieve goals (Bandura, 1977). Thus, person-centered judgments of past transgressions relate to the self-efficacy that transgressors have in being able to not repeat the transgression.

After committing a transgression, people may infer that they lack the ability to act morally, resulting in *negative moral self-evaluations*. For example, they may attribute their transgressions to personal flaws (Janoff-Bulman, 1979). When these character deficits are believed to be relatively stable, global and unchangeable, they might feel incapable of changing their behavior. Seeing oneself as having poor moral character may lead to diminished self-esteem and a sense of helplessness (Janoff-Bulman, 1979). Furthermore, transgressors may experience shame when they evaluate themselves negatively in the aftermath of a transgression (Tangney, 1990; Tangney, Miller, Flicker, & Barlow, 1996; Tangney, Stuewig, & Mashek, 2007). Because shame is associated with the feeling that one is defective at one's core, it often results in an avoidance orientation, driving people's desire to hide, withdraw or disappear (Haidt, 2003). This helplessness or passivity in correcting one's perceived faults means that transgressors may not be motivated to change their behavior. Furthermore, research on self-verification suggests that people desire to confirm and validate their self-views, even if their self-views are negative (Swann, 1983, 1987). For example, people with negative self-views prefer to interact with partners who have unfavorable impressions of them and they solicit feedback that confirms their negative self-views (e.g., Swann, De La Ronde, & Hixon, 1994; Swann, Stein-Seroussi, & Giesler, 1992). They may intentionally behave in ways to elicit self-verifying responses from

others (Brockner, 1985; Swann & Read, 1981). Therefore, when individuals make negative moral self-evaluations, they may further behave in ways (e.g., repeat a transgression) that confirm their negative self-views.

On the other hand, others may infer that despite the recent transgression, they still possess the ability to act morally. They may continue to maintain a positive view of their moral selves (Mazar, Amir, & Ariely, 2008; Shalvi, Handgraaf, & De Dreu, 2011), resulting in *positive moral self-evaluations*.[2] For example, instead of internalizing the recent transgression, they might remember experiences in the past when they behaved in an ethical way or times when they were commended for their moral traits, and thus interpret their recent transgression as an outlier that does not represent whether they are an immoral person. As transgressors observe the negative consequences that their transgression has had on others, they might also reinforce their moral identity, which refers to the importance they place on being people who possess moral traits and dispositions (Aquino & Reed, 2002). In these ways, transgressors are able to make positive moral self-evaluations. Although moral licensing theory (e.g., Monin & Miller, 2001) would suggest that positive moral self-evaluations license one to act immorally in future, I subscribe to a moral consistency perspective that individuals tend to act in a manner that is consistent with their self-concept (e.g., Aquino, Freeman, Reed, Lim, & Felps, 2009; Blasi, 1980).[3] When they evaluate themselves positively, they strengthen their beliefs that they have the necessary personality traits and dispositions to change their behavior. As a result, they will be less likely to repeat the transgression.

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[2] I view positive moral self-evaluations and negative moral self-evaluations as existing on the same continuum, with positive moral self-evaluations on one end of the continuum and negative moral self-evaluations on the other end of the continuum.

[3] Several researchers have explored moderators influencing when moral consistency occurs, as opposed to moral licensing (e.g., Conway & Peetz, 2012; Joosten, van Dijke, Van Hiel, & De Creamer, 2014; Schnall & Roper, 2012).

Hypothesis 2: Transgressors' person-centered judgments of their past transgressions influence their likelihood of recidivism, such that those who make positive moral self-evaluations have a lower likelihood of recidivism than those who make negative moral self-evaluations.

Combining Act-Centered and Person-Centered Moral Judgments

Classic theories of motivation argue that motivation towards goals is the result of interactions of valences and expectancies (Feather, 1982; Lewin, Dembo, Festinger, & Sears, 1944; Tolman, 1955; Vroom, 1964).[4] These multiplicative models of motivation suggest that as valence (i.e., value placed on the goal) increases, the impact of expectancy (i.e., one's efficacy beliefs about reaching the goal) on motivation increases. The greater the value that individuals place on a particular goal (act-centered), the more sensitized they become to considering how they themselves have the ability to reach that goal (person-centered). In the context of moral transgressions, I argue that when individuals accept moral responsibility for their actions (act-centered), this heightens their sensitivity to their self-evaluations about whether they have the ability to act morally (person-centered). In contrast, moral disengagement (act-centered) reduces their sensitivity to their moral self-evaluations (person-centered). In other words, act-centered judgments moderate the relationship between person-centered judgments and likelihood of recidivism.

When individuals feel a sense of moral responsibility for their actions, they might experience a heightened sense of moral awareness (Butterfield, Treviño & Weaver, 2000). This heightened moral awareness leads them to be more likely to view themselves and their future

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[4] Vroom's (1964) expectancy theory proposed that motivation is the result of interactions of three components: valences, expectancies and instrumentalities. However, as described earlier on page 11, I adopt a deontological perspective that moral behavior should be performed as an end in itself, rather than a means to an end. Therefore, the instrumentality component is less relevant to my theorizing.

decisions and actions through a moral lens. As their sense of identity becomes more closely tied

to their sense of morality (Aquino & Reed, 2002), I argue that their behavior will be more likely

to be influenced by their moral self-evaluations and considerations about whether they have the

ability to change their moral behavior. In contrast, when individuals morally disengage from

their actions, they might experience a process of amoralization, whereby their attitudes towards

themselves and their future actions and decisions become devoid of any moral relevance or

meaning (Lucas & Waytz, 2014). In other words, their sense of self-worth becomes decoupled

from their sense of morality, and their behavior will be less likely to be influenced by their moral

self-evaluations. In sum, I propose that transgressors' act-centered judgments moderate the

relationship between person-centered judgments and likelihood of recidivism, such that moral

responsibility strengthens this relationship while moral disengagement weakens this relationship.

Hypothesis 3: Act-centered judgments moderate the link between person-centered

judgments and likelihood of recidivism. Specifically, moral responsibility strengthens the

relationship between person-centered judgments and likelihood of recidivism, while moral

disengagement weakens the relationship.

2.2 Study 1

Context and Data

The context of Study 1 is athletes' public statements in response to their suspensions in

the top four sports leagues in the United States – National Football League (NFL), National

Basketball Association (NBA), National Hockey League (NHL) and Major League Baseball

(MLB). Specifically, I explore whether the act-centered and person-centered judgments that

athletes make in their responses to their suspensions influence their likelihood of being

suspended again. The sports context is especially conducive for exploring my research question because the enhanced public attention on athletes leads their wrongdoings to come to the fore more frequently than in other typical work settings. Since information about sports suspensions is generally openly reported in the news, I was able to collect rich data.

The sports context bears many similarities to other work contexts. In many competitive workplaces, individuals feel strong tensions between their performance concerns, status concerns and integrity concerns. Likewise, in sports, doing the right thing and playing by the rules is not always aligned with performing well or attaining status. In many business organizations, there are grey areas about what behaviors are appropriate in order to get ahead; formal disciplinary policies are often vague and open to interpretation, and organizational norms and senior leaders may even endorse improper actions. Similarly, there are grey areas in sports about what behaviors are subject to punishment and what behaviors are just "part of the game." Nevertheless, there are several ways that the sports context is not like a typical organizational context. When players are suspended, they receive more public scrutiny as compared to when regular employees are punished for their transgressions. Suspended players are accountable to multiple parties: their teammates, coach, the league, fans, and the media. However, depending on the severity of the work transgression, employees who are punished may only need to be accountable to those they personally know: their direct supervisor or close peers.

Data about players' suspensions were obtained from a publicly shared database from Spotrac. Spotrac is an online sports system for data on team payrolls, player contracts, salaries and other relevant information. The suspensions database includes information about 318 NFL suspensions (2002 – present), 233 NHL suspensions (2010 – present), 191 MLB suspensions (2009 – present), and 162 NBA suspensions (2010 – present), aggregating to a total of 904

suspension committed by 728 players across the four sports. The data include information about the date of the suspension, length of the suspension, suspension fees (if any) and the reason for the suspension.

I collected online news articles about all 904 suspensions. Given that sports suspensions are not systematically reported by any one news outlet, I used a multi-source approach to collect news articles about each suspension. News articles about each suspension were obtained from multiple sports news websites (e.g., espn.com, sbnation.com, si.com, bleacherreport.com, cbssports.com, foxsports.com, sportingnews.com, usatoday.com/sports, sports.yahoo.com), the respective sports league websites (i.e., nfl.com, nhl.com, mlb.com, nba.com), as well as the respective team city's news websites (e.g., nydailynews.com for New York Yankees, chicagotribune.com for Chicago Bears). Given the strong Canadian representation in the NHL, I also looked at Canadian websites (e.g., sportsnet.ca, cbc.ca) for suspensions from this league.

For each suspension, using the Google search engine, I visited the news websites listed above to search for news articles about the suspension, paying particular attention to news articles containing public statements made by the player. Using this approach, I searched for and collected news articles about each suspension, extracting any quotes from the public statement made by the suspended player. In some cases, the exact same public statement would appear across news articles from different news sources. For such cases, extracting the public statement was relatively straightforward. In other cases, news articles from different news sources would contain different segments of a public statement (although they concern the same suspension), with either no overlap or varying degrees of overlap across news articles. For such cases, I combined all the different segments of a public statement the player made about his suspension from different sources. I continued collecting new segments until a saturation point was reached

where nearly all new news articles contained segments of the public statement that I already collected through other news articles. Given that my focus is on extracting specific quotes contained within news articles rather than identifying entire news articles based on a key word search, my approach of manually browsing through multiple news websites allowed me to gather more comprehensive and accurate data than pulling up articles from an electronic database like LexisNexis by entering a limited number of key words.

In terms of extracting player statements, I focused only on direct quotations from the player that appeared in the news articles (i.e., statements made by the player that appear within quotation marks). Only quotes in response to the suspension were extracted; quotes about tangential issues that appeared in the same news article were not extracted. Some news articles embedded videos of the player making his public account. In these cases, the videos were manually transcribed verbatim.

Descriptive Statistics

Offenders. In the data, there were a total of 728 players who received a total of 907 suspensions. Of the 728 players found in the data, 610 (83.79%) are one-time offenders (i.e., only one suspension) and 118 (16.21%) are repeat offenders (i.e., multiple suspensions). All players in this sample were male.

Suspensions. Of the 904 total suspensions found in the data, 728 (80.53%) are first-time suspensions and the remaining 176 (19.47%) are repeat suspensions. I reviewed the disciplinary policies of the four sports leagues to familiarize myself with the context of my data (Major League Baseball, 2016; National Basketball Association, 2015; National Football League, 2015; National Hockey League, 2015). Across the four sports, suspensions typically fall into one or more of the following categories: performance-enhancing drugs violation (17%), substance

abuse violation (e.g., use of marijuana; 19%), player safety violation (e.g., hitting or striking another player; 43%), umpire-related violation (e.g., physical contact with umpire; 5%), conduct detrimental to team violation (e.g., skipping practice, skipping games; 4%), personal conduct violation (e.g., domestic abuse, hit and run; 8%) and other miscellaneous violations (e.g., harming a fan, making homophobic slurs; 5%)

Public statements. I found players' statements for 47.6% of suspensions ($N = 430$ out of 904). 80.9% of the 430 statements were for first-time suspensions, while the remaining were for repeat suspensions. On average, a player's public statement contained 106 words.

Content Analysis

Using the textual data collected on 430 players' public statements, I conducted a content analysis to identify when players were making act-centered and person-centered judgments about their suspension. The statements were coded on two dimensions. On the first dimension, act-centered judgments, statements were either coded as 1 for moral responsibility, or zero for moral disengagement. On the second dimension, person-centered judgments, statements were coded as 1 for positive moral self, or zero for negative moral self.

Act-centered judgments. This variable was coded as 1 when the player's public statement contained examples of how they took personal responsibility for their actions. For example, "*...I am not here to make excuses for my conduct...how I conduct myself is my responsibility...*" and "*...I take full responsibility for putting myself in this situation... I understand the rules and accept my punishment...*" were coded as 1.

However, this variable was coded as zero when the player's public statement contained examples of how they tried to justify their behavior, downplay the negative consequences of their behavior and/or shift responsibility to other parties or circumstances. For example, "*...It*

was more like a reflex thing...I wasn't targeting his head or trying to injure him. It was a quick play that happened..., " "*...It was just a heat of the moment thing at the time...,*" "*...I did not use steroids or any other substance that would enhance performance....I felt bloated after eating Chinese food and ingested a pill that turned out to be a diuretic...,*" "*...It's the game of hockey and I play that style of game...*" and "*...I think unfortunately the league's protecting certain players and making it not that old-school, prestigious way of baseball...*" were coded as zero.

Person-centered judgments. This variable was coded as 1 when the player's public statement contained positive expressions about their moral self. These statements typically appealed to their pride in their values and principles. For example, "*...My parents brought me up with strong values as far as how you represent yourself and the family...,*" "*...I've prided myself for a long time to stay within the lines...,*" and "*...In my 12 years in the NFL, I have taken tremendous pride in upholding the integrity of the NFL shield and all that it entails...*" were coded as 1.

However, this variable was coded as zero when the player's public statement contained negative expressions about their moral self. These statements typically revealed their shame or disappointment in themselves. For example, "*...it makes me feel like a bag of garbage...,*" "*...I'm disappointed in myself because I feel like I let people down...,*" and "*...I was stupid...*" were coded as zero. Although some of these statements appear to be more generally about self-evaluations rather than *moral* self-evaluations, I consider them moral self-evaluations since these statements were expressed in the context of a suspension.

Recidivism. This variable was coded as 1 when the player received multiple suspensions, and zero when he received only one suspension. This coding was derived from quantitative data on each player's history of suspensions.

Type of sports and suspension. I also coded for sports type (e.g., NFL, NHL) and

suspension type (e.g., performance-enhancing drugs violation, player safety violation).

Inter-coder agreement. After creating a codebook explaining the coding schemes that I

used, I hired two research assistants (RAs) to code the data based on the coding scheme. The

RAs were blind to the hypotheses of this study and coded the statements independently using

guidelines in the codebook. The coding by the two RAs showed a high level of inter-coder

reliability ($> .90$). In all of the cases in which there was disagreement, the RAs discussed the

disagreement and made the final decision regarding the appropriate code.

Results

Given that all independent and dependent variables are binary categorical variables, I

analyzed the data using Pearson's chi-squared tests. I only conducted analyses on players'

statements on their first suspensions ($N = 348$), which were either the player's only suspension

(i.e., the player was not suspended again) or followed by subsequent suspensions (i.e., the player

was suspended again). Across all players and sports, the average likelihood of recidivism was

16.7% (SD = .37).

I first ran some initial analyses to explore if there were any general differences between

players who were suspended again and those who were not suspended again. In terms of type of

sport, recidivism was not significantly more likely to appear in the NFL, $\chi^2(1) = .48$, $p = .55$, $\Phi =$

.04, NHL, $\chi^2(1) = .13$, $p = .72$, $\Phi = .02$, MLB, $\chi^2(1) = .05$, $p = .83$, $\Phi = .01$, or NBA, $\chi^2(1) = .70$,

$p = .40$, $\Phi = .05$, suggesting repeat suspensions was not more common in any one sport. Players

who were not suspended again were not significantly more likely to have had shorter first

suspensions in terms of number of games or weeks suspended ($b = -.00$, $SE = .00$, $t = -1.04$, $p =$

.30), suggesting that the magnitude of punishment of the first offense did not influence players'

likelihood of recidivism. Finally, players who were not suspended again were not significantly more likely to make longer statements in terms of the number of words (b = .00, SE = .00, t = -1.08, p = .28), suggesting that those who had only one suspension did not differ from those who had multiple suspensions in terms of the extent to which they felt they needed to account to the public about their initial suspensions.

Main effects. Across all sports and types of suspensions, the main effect of act-centered judgments on likelihood of recidivism was not significant, $\chi^2(1)$ = .40, p = .53, Φ = .04. Players who expressed moral responsibility had a 15.2% likelihood of recidivism and those who expressed moral disengagement had a 18.2% likelihood of recidivism, but these differences were not significant. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 about the influence of act-centered judgments on likelihood of recidivism was not supported.

However, the main effect of person-centered judgments on likelihood of recidivism was significant, $\chi^2(1)$ = 7.70, p = .01, Φ = .25. Players who spoke positively about themselves had a 12.0% likelihood of recidivism and those who spoke negatively about themselves had a 32.6% likelihood of recidivism. This finding supports Hypothesis 2 about the influence of person-centered judgments on likelihood of recidivism.

Interaction effects. Results suggest that act-centered judgments moderated the relationship between person-centered judgments and likelihood of recidivism (see Figure 2.1). When players expressed moral responsibility, person-centered judgments had a significant influence on likelihood of recidivism, $\chi^2(1)$ = 4.18, p = .04, Φ = .28. Those who spoke positively about themselves had a 8.3% likelihood of recidivism and those who spoke negatively about themselves had a 30.8% likelihood of recidivism. However, when players expressed moral disengagement, person-centered judgments did not have a significant influence on likelihood of

recidivism, $\chi^2(2) = 2.15$, $p = .34$, $\Phi = .12$. Those who spoke positively about themselves had a 12.8% likelihood of recidivism and those who spoke negatively about themselves had a 30.8% likelihood of recidivism, but these values were not significantly different. In short, these findings show support for Hypothesis 3 that act-centered judgments moderate the relationship between person-centered judgments and likelihood of recidivism.

Figure 2.1: Interaction between Act-Centered and Person-Centered Judgments in Study 1.
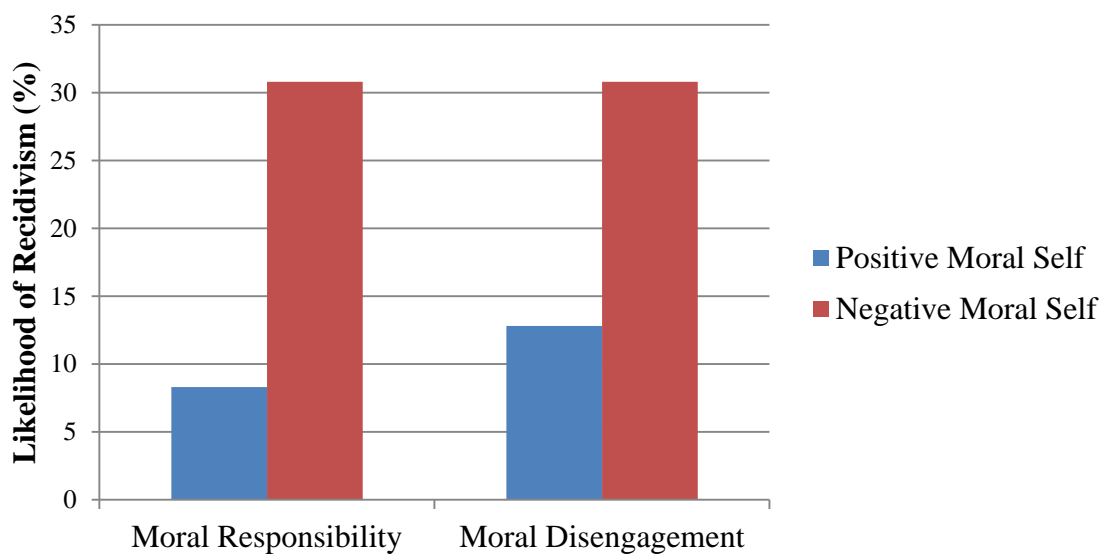
Robustness Checks

For recent first suspensions (e.g., those occurring two months prior to the study data collection), not enough time may have elapsed for the player to be suspended again. Therefore, I re-ran analyses on only the first suspensions that occurred at least one year prior to the study data collection, which gives sufficient time for players to be suspended more than once ($N = 294$). The results do no change with this stricter procedure. I found support for Hypotheses 2 and 3 and no support for Hypothesis 1.

I conducted additional analyses to see if there were differences in results among types of sports and suspensions. However, analyzing the data this way would lead to inaccurate inferences being drawn from the chi-squared tests. Chi-squared tests are sensitive to small expected frequencies in one or more of the cells, so inferences that are drawn from chi-squared test that have expected counts of five or less per cell are often inaccurate (Dixon & Massey, 1969). In these data, for example, analyzing the interaction effects for cases in the NFL versus cases not in the NFL would lead to expected counts (statistically computed based on projected frequencies) as low as .8 and 2.2 in some cells, making any inferences from such analyses problematic.

Table 2.1: Summary of Hypotheses and Findings in Study 1.

	Hypotheses	Findings
H1	Main effect of act-centered judgments	Not Supported
H2	Main effect of person-centered judgments	Supported
H3	Act-centered judgments moderate the main effect of person-centered judgments	Supported

Discussion

Overall, the results suggest that players' person-centered judgments (i.e., how they evaluated themselves) were significantly related to their likelihood of recidivism, supporting Hypothesis 2. Those who spoke positively about themselves had a lower likelihood of recidivism than those who spoke negatively about themselves. As theorized earlier, it is possible that positive moral self-evaluations increase individuals' self-efficacy in terms of their ability to act morally in the future. Their sense of efficacy or confidence drives their actual future moral behavior, and they are less likely to repeat their transgression. However, due to the negative

consequences of shame and self-verification, when individuals make negative moral self-evaluations, they are more likely to repeat their transgressions.

Furthermore, players' act-centered judgments (i.e., how they evaluated their actions) moderated the main effect of their person-centered judgments on their likelihood of recidivism, supporting Hypothesis 3. When players expressed moral responsibility for their actions, their person-centered judgments significantly and negatively influenced their likelihood of recidivism; when they expressed moral disengagement from their actions, their person-centered judgments did not significantly influence their likelihood of recidivism. In my earlier theorizing, I proposed that moral responsibility heightens individuals' moral awareness, which makes them more attentive to and susceptible to their moral self-evaluations. However, the results for Study 1 suggest that there may be a particular "virtuous synergy" that emerges when individuals take moral responsibility for their actions and they evaluate themselves positively (double positive). When individuals take moral responsibility for their actions, their positive moral self-evaluations become particularly influential in driving their future moral behavior. From this perspective, moral responsibility not only increases individuals' sensitivity to their moral self-evaluations in general, but it specifically increases individuals' sensitivity to their positive moral self-evaluations.

However, players' act-centered judgments did not have a main effect on their likelihood of recidivism as predicted in Hypothesis 1. This is theoretically consistent with some researchers' arguments that person-centered judgments are more consequential than act-centered judgments (Pizarro & Tannenbaum, 2012), which is why they propose the person-centered approach as an alternative, rather than a complement, to the act-centered approach. These researchers argue that people are primarily concerned with evaluating others' character traits.

When it comes to self-evaluations, individuals' tendency to make person-centered judgments may be driven by their innate and universal desire to understand and define themselves (Leary & Tangney, 2011). Their actions themselves matter less than what their actions signal about who they are, and their self-perceptions play an influential role in driving their future behavior.

One major limitation of this study is that athletes face intense pressures to manage their public reputations and could have hired the help of public relations consultants to craft their public statements. Their public statements may not necessarily accurately reflect their inner thoughts and beliefs. Therefore, I conducted a lab experiment to overcome the limitations associated with this archival study. In the lab experiment, which I will present in the next section as Study 2, participants faced significantly less public scrutiny than the athletes in Study 1. They were also assured that their responses would be anonymous, allowing them to express themselves more freely without the fear of being penalized. Another important goal of Study 2 was to replicate the findings found in Study 1 with a different research methodology.

2.3 Study 2

Sample

Two hundred and sixty students at a large Midwestern university were recruited to participate in this study. All participants received a show-up fee ($5) and had the opportunity to earn an extra $5 during the study.

Procedure

I randomly assigned participants to one of five conditions: *moral responsibility-positive moral self*, *moral responsibility-negative moral self*, *moral disengagement-positive moral self*, *moral disengagement-negative moral self*, and *control*.

I first asked participants to recall a time when they cheated.[5] Then, I asked them to write about their thoughts about their actions, thereby manipulating act-centered judgments (i.e., moral responsibility, moral disengagement), as well as their thoughts about themselves, thereby manipulating person-centered judgments (i.e., positive moral self, negative moral self).

Act-centered judgments manipulation. In the *moral responsibility* conditions, participants were first asked to "Please think of a recent time when you cheated to get ahead, and you took personal responsibility for your actions that were against your principles and/or were harmful to others." In the *moral disengagement* conditions, participants were asked to "Please think of a recent time when you cheated to get ahead, and you felt that your behavior was justified or not that harmful to others, and/or that responsibility for your behavior should be shifted to other parties or circumstances." After these prompts, participants were asked to spend some time writing about what happened.

Person-centered judgments manipulation. Next, in the *positive moral self* conditions, participants were asked to "Now, please spend some time writing down reasons for why the behavior you recalled does not reflect your true moral character, and why you still feel like you are a good person." In the *negative moral self* conditions, participants were asked to "Now, please spend some time writing down reasons for why the behavior you recalled reflects poorly on your moral character, and why you feel like you are a bad person."

Control condition. In the control condition, participants were asked to write about the incident, but were not given any prompts to make act-centered or person-centered judgments. They were simply asked to "Please think of a recent time when you cheated to get ahead." Then,

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[5] This approach of getting participants to recall a previous behavior and then observing their subsequent behavior in the lab has been widely used by several published psychological studies investigating the phenomenon of moral licensing, whereby participants that recalled their previous moral behavior felt licensed to engage in subsequent immoral behavior in the lab (Conway & Peetz, 2012; Jordan, Mullen, & Murnighan, 2011; Schnall & Roper, 2012).

they were asked to "Please spend some time writing about what happened. How did you cheat to get ahead?" They were not given any additional prompts to manipulate their act-centered or person-centered judgments.

Dependent variable: Likelihood of recidivism. Finally, they engaged in a paper and pencil problem-solving task that gave them an opportunity to cheat. All participants were led to believe that this was a separate study. Once participants were done with the computer-based portion of the study, a lab assistant handed out two sheets of paper. The first sheet was a worksheet with 20 matrices, each containing 12 three-digit numbers. Participants were told that they would be given four minutes to find two numbers per matrix that add up to 10. For each matrix solved, participants were told that they would receive $0.25. The second sheet was a score sheet where participants were told to report how many matrices they correctly solved. This sheet also contained an example of a correctly solved matrix for participants to refer to. This experimental paradigm has been used in prior research (e.g., Mazar, Amir, & Ariely, 2008) to induce participants to cheat by over-reporting their score. After the four minutes have passed, participants were instructed to walk to a recycling box located in the corner of the room to deposit the first sheet (worksheet), and then to submit the second sheet with their self-reported score to the experimenter. This paradigm contains a direct measure of participants' cheating. It is possible to calculate the extent to which each unique participant cheats by comparing the score they report on the score sheet with their actual worksheet. The dependent variable was calculated as a percentage likelihood of recidivism (i.e., number of matrices over-reported / number of unsolved matrices).

I excluded data from 14 students who indicated that they were familiar with the problem-solving matrix task as an experimental paradigm, as this would undermine the deception used in

this study (i.e., they would be aware that the experimenters could track whether or not they over-reported their score). Also, the final section of the experiment involved participants in the same lab session completing the problem-solving matrix task at the same time, guided by verbal instructions from the experimenter. Thus, some participants who completed the previous writing section of the study quickly had to wait a significant amount of time for other participants to complete their writing. Thus, I also excluded data from 23 students who waited for more than 15 minutes between sections. This resulted in a final sample of 223 students who were 20.35 years old on average (SD = 3.14), and 59.5% female.

Results

      Manipulation checks. I included several items as manipulation check items. Results suggest that the manipulations were successful. Participants in the moral responsibility conditions (*M* = 4.34, *SD* = 1.30) were significantly more likely than those in the moral disengagement conditions (*M* = 3.51, *SD* = 1.46) to report that they wrote about how their actions were (1) unjustifiable, (2) harmful to others, and (3) morally blameworthy (α = .70), $F(1,180) = 16.31$, *p* = .00. Participants in the positive moral self conditions (*M* = 4.49, *SD* = 1.43) were significantly more likely than those in the negative moral self conditions (*M* = 3.00, *SD* = 1.44) to report that they wrote about how they (1) feel like a good person, (2) have positive moral qualities and (3) have good moral self (α = .92), $F(1, 177) = 48.50$, *p* =.00. All these items were rated on a 7-point scale (1 = *to a small extent*; 7 = *to a large extent*).

      Planned comparisons across five conditions. I first conducted planned comparison tests to compare the *control* condition to all other conditions (see Figure 2.2). Across all conditions, the average likelihood of recidivism was 5.85% (*SD* = .19). Participants in the *moral disengagement-negative moral self* condition (*M* = .14, *SD* = .35) had a higher likelihood of

recidivism than those in the *control* condition ($M = .06$, $SD = .17$), $b = .08$, $SE = .04$, $t = 1.99$, $p = .048$. However, those in the *control* condition did not significantly differ from those in the *moral responsibility-positive moral self* condition ($M = .04$, $SD = .10$; $b = .02$, $SE = .04$, $t = .46$, $p = .64$), those in the *moral responsibility-negative moral self* condition ($M = .03$, $SD = .09$; $b = .03$, $SE = .04$, $t = .65$, $p = .51$), and those in the *moral disengagement-positive moral self* condition ($M = .01$, $SD = .04$; $b = .05$, $SE = .04$, $t = 1.20$, $p = .23$).

Figure 2.2: Differences Across Five Conditions in Study 2 in Likelihood of Recidivism.
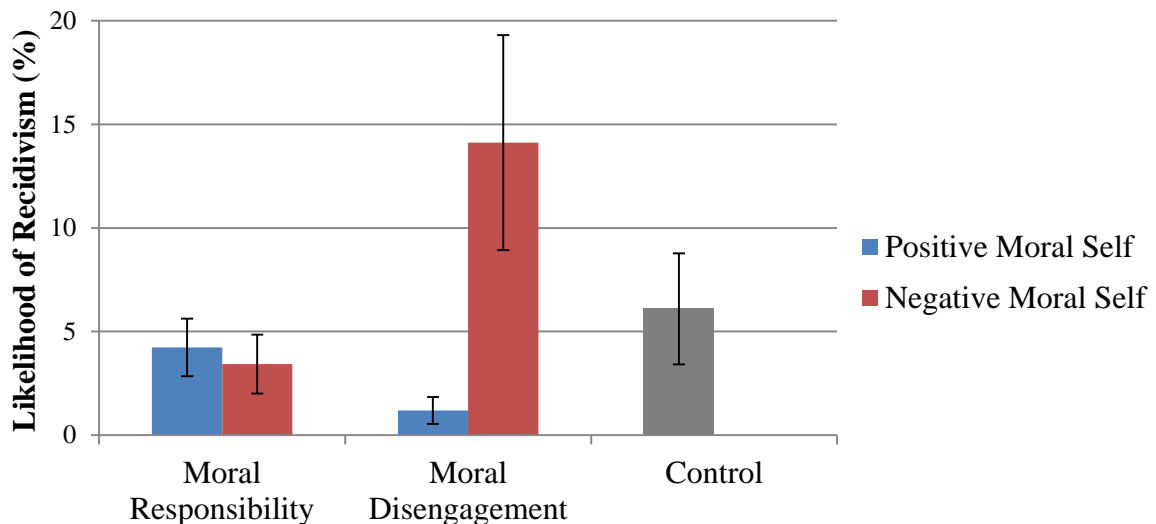
2 × 2 ANOVA analyses. Next, I conducted a 2 (act-centered judgments: moral responsibility, moral disengagement) × 2 (person-centered judgments: positive moral self, negative moral self) ANOVA with likelihood of recidivism as the dependent variable. There was no main effect of act-centered judgments, $F(1,178) = 1.82$, $p = .18$, $\eta^2_p = .01$. Those in the *moral responsibility* conditions ($M = .04$, $SD = .09$) and those in the *moral disengagement* conditions ($M = .08$, $SD = .26$) did not differ in their likelihood of recidivism. However, there was a significant main effect of person-centered judgments, $F(1,178) = 4.58$, $p = .03$, $\eta^2_p = .03$, such that those in the *negative moral self* conditions ($M = .09$, $SD = .26$) had a higher likelihood of

recidivism than those in the *positive moral self* conditions (M = .03, SD = .08). These results show support for Hypothesis 2 about the main effect of person-centered judgments but no support for Hypothesis 1 about the main effect of act-centered judgments.

The ANOVA analyses also revealed a significant interaction between act-centered and person-centered judgments, $F(1,178)$ = 5.90, p = .02, η^2_p = .03. Act-centered judgments moderated the main effect of person-centered judgments on likelihood of recidivism, but results were different than what was predicted in Hypothesis 3. There was a significant difference between those in the *moral disengagement-positive moral self* condition and the *moral disengagement-negative moral self* condition, $F(1,178)$ = 10.34, p = .00, η^2_p = .06. However, the difference between those in the *moral responsibility-positive moral self* condition and the *moral responsibility-negative moral self* condition was not significant, $F(1,178)$ = .04, p = .84, η^2_p = .00. In other words, the main effect of person-centered judgments on likelihood of recidivism was strengthened when participants morally disengaged from their actions, rather than when they took moral responsibility for their actions. In sum, although there was a significant interaction between act-centered and person-centered judgments, the pattern of these interactions was different than what was predicted in Hypothesis 3.

Supplementary Analyses

After recalling the cheating incident, participants were also asked to indicate the extent to which they accept accountability or blame for their behavior. A three-item blame measure (α = .87; Bauman, Tost, & Ong, 2016) was used: (1) What I did is completely my fault, (2) I am solely to blame for my behavior, and (3) I am fully responsible for my actions (1 = *strongly disagree*; 7 = *strongly agree*). They were also asked to rate themselves on their moral self-efficacy. A three-item moral self-efficacy measure (α = .85) was created based on an established

generalized self-efficacy measure (Chen, Gully, & Eden, 2001) and insights from theoretical work on moral self-efficacy (Hannah & Avolio, 2010; Hannah, Avolio, & May, 2011). Participants first read the question stem, "Given the behavior I recalled, I believe that…", followed by three items: (1) In the future, I will be able to reach most of the moral standards I have set for myself, (2) In the future, when facing difficult situations, I am certain that I will do the ethical thing, and (3) In the future, compared to other people, I can act in an ethical manner in most situations (1 = *not at all confident*; 7 = *totally confident*). I also asked participants about their state negative affect using four negatively-valenced items (α = .89) from the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS; Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988): (1) sad, (2) distressed, (3) ashamed and (4) guilty (1 = *very slightly or not at all*; 5 = *extremely*).

Blame. There was a significant main effect of act-centered judgment on blame, $F(1,173)$ = 17.79, p = .00, η^2_p = .09, such that those in the moral responsibility conditions (M = 6.09, SD = .99) were more likely to accept blame for their actions than those in the moral disengagement conditions (M = 5.34, SD = 1.38). There was also a significant main effect of person-centered judgment on blame, $F(1,173)$ = 4.31, p = .04, η^2_p = .02, such that those in the negative moral self conditions (M = 5.89, SD = 1.12) were more likely to accept blame for their actions than those in the positive moral self conditions (M = 5.54, SD = 1.36). The interaction between act-centered and person-centered judgments was not significant for blame, $F(1,173)$ = .79, p = .38, η^2_p = .01.

Moral self-efficacy. There was a significant main effect of act-centered judgment on moral self-efficacy, $F(1,171)$ = 10.68, p = .00, η^2_p = .06, such that those in the moral responsibility conditions (M = 5.57, SD = 1.00) reported a higher level of moral self-efficacy than those in the moral disengagement conditions (M = 5.09, SD = .88). The main effect of person-centered judgment on moral self-efficacy was not significant, $F(1,171)$ = 2.13, p = .15,

$\eta^2_p = .01$. The interaction between act-centered and person-centered judgments was not significant for moral self-efficacy, $F(1,171) = .1.48$, $p = .23$, $\eta^2_p = .01$.

Negative affect. The main effect of act-centered judgment on negative affect was not significant, $F(1,167) = .31$, $p = .58$, $\eta^2_p = .00$. There was a significant main effect of person-centered judgment on negative affect, $F(1,167) = 6.12$, $p = .01$, $\eta^2_p = .04$, such that those in the negative moral self conditions ($M = 2.41$, $SD = 1.05$) reported more negative affect than those in the positive moral self ($M = 2.04$, $SD = .91$).The interaction effect between act-centered and person-centered judgments was marginally significant for negative affect, $F(1,167) = .3.25$, $p = .07$, $\eta^2_p = .02$. However, the interaction pattern looked different from that with likelihood of recidivism as the dependent variable. There was a significant difference in negative affect between those in the *moral responsibility-positive moral self* condition ($M = 1.96$, $SD = .87$) and the *moral responsibility-negative moral self* condition ($M = 2.60$, $SD = 1.10$), $F(1,167) = 9.31$, $p = .00$, $\eta^2_p = .05$. However, the difference between those in the *moral disengagement-positive moral self* condition ($M = 2.14$, $SD = .96$) and the *moral disengagement-negative moral self* condition ($M = 2.24$, $SD = .98$) was not significant, $F(1,167) = .22$, $p = .64$, $\eta^2_p = .00$.

Discussion

Overall, the results suggest that participants' person-centered judgments influenced their likelihood of recidivism, supporting Hypothesis 2. However, their act-centered judgments did not have a main effect on their likelihood of recidivism as predicted in Hypothesis 1. Therefore, Study 2 replicated the main effect findings in Study 1. Across both studies, there was consistent support for the main effect of person-centered judgments, and consistent lack of support for the main effect of act-centered judgments on likelihood of recidivism. Again, this is theoretically consistent with some researchers' arguments about the primacy of person-centered judgments as

compared to act-centered judgments (Pizarro & Tannenbaum, 2012). Furthermore, research on identity and the self (Leary & Tangney, 2011) argues that individuals' self-concepts are central to motivating their behavior. In this study, their moral self-evaluations in response to a past transgression appear to have an influential role in driving their likelihood of repeating that transgression.

In Study 2, there was a significant interaction effect between act-centered and person-centered judgments. However, a closer examination of the interaction patterns suggests that they were different than what was predicted in Hypothesis 3. Act-centered judgments did moderate the link between person-centered judgments and likelihood of recidivism. However, it was moral disengagement that strengthened the relationship between person-centered judgment and likelihood of recidivism, rather than moral responsibility as predicted. Unlike the "virtuous synergy" described in the discussion of Study 1, the results for Study 2 suggest that there may be a "negative spiral" that emerges when individuals morally disengage from their actions and they evaluate themselves negatively (double negative). When individuals morally disengage from their actions, their negative moral self-evaluations become particularly influential in driving their future moral behavior.

2.4 General Discussion

In conclusion, across the two studies presented in this chapter, there was consistent support for the main effect of person-centered judgments and consistent lack of support for the main effect of act-centered judgments. While classic motivational theories suggest that both valence (act-centered) and expectancy (person-centered) are important factors driving motivation, it appears that at least in the two studies presented in this chapter, expectancy had a more influential role in driving likelihood of recidivism than valence. These findings highlight

the value and importance of considering a person-centered approach to understanding unethical behavior. It appears that act-centered judgments alone are insufficient for explaining transgressors' likelihood of recidivism.

Table 2.2: Summary of Hypotheses and Findings in Study 1 and Study 2.

	Hypotheses	Study 1	Study 2
H1	Main effect of act-centered judgments	Not Supported	Not Supported
H2	Main effect of person-centered judgments	Supported	Supported
H3	Act-centered judgments moderate the main effect of person-centered judgments	Supported	Not Supported

Theoretically, the lack of support for the main effect of act-centered judgments could be explained by the dominance of person-centered judgments over act-centered judgments (Pizarro & Tannenbaum, 2012). Individuals' moral self-concepts are central to their self-identities (Blasi, 1983). People care about being a moral person and behaving ethically (Aquino & Reed, 2002). Most perceive themselves as moral and ethical (Epley & Dunning, 2000; Paulhus & John, 1998) and desire to maintain a positive moral self-concept (Mazar et al., 2008; Shalvi et al., 2011). Given the importance people place on their moral self-concepts, it is perhaps not surprising that their moral self-evaluations play a stronger role in influencing their future behavior than their act-centered evaluations. Empirically, the lack of support for the main effect of act-centered judgments could be due limitations in my operationalization of act-centered judgments. In both studies, I examined transgressors' act-centered judgments about a specific *event* involving a transgression. For instance, in Study 1, players made statements about a specific event in where they were suspended, and in Study 2, participants wrote about a specific event where they cheated. It is possible that the value that transgressors place on not repeating a transgression is behavior-specific (or transgression-specific) rather than event-specific. For instance, the value

that transgressors place on not cheating again depends on their evaluations of the behavior of cheating in general, rather than their evaluations of a specific cheating event (e.g., cheating on the SAT when they took it in 2011). For example, in Study 2, participants' cheating on the problem-solving task might not only be influenced by the one time they cheated in a college exam, but also all of the other times they cheated in high school, middle school and elementary school. This possibility should be explored in future research. For example, to manipulate act-centered judgments in a lab experiment, participants might be instructed to recall and evaluate all of the times they have cheated rather than to recall and evaluate just one specific cheating event. The moral responsibility condition would instruct them to accept moral responsibility for the multiple instances in their lives in which they cheated; the moral disengagement condition would instruct them to morally disengage from the multiple instances in their lives in which they cheated. Since these act-centered judgments are behavior-specific (or transgression-specific) rather than event-specific, I would expect to find more support for my hypothesis regarding act-centered judgments.

Across both studies, I found that act-centered judgments moderated the main effect of person-centered judgments. However, the exact pattern of these interactions varied across studies. In Study 1, the main effect of person-centered judgments was strengthened when individuals expressed *moral responsibility* for their actions. However, in Study 2, the main effect of person-centered judgments was strengthened when individuals *morally disengaged* from their actions. Shah and Higgins' (1997) paper provides valuable insights that might explain the difference in interaction patterns between Study 1 and Study 2. In their paper, they propose and find that the interaction of expectancy and valence shows opposite effects depending on the regulatory focus of the end goal. Regulatory focus theory proposes that those who are

promotion-focused are concerned with achieving a desirable goal, while those who are prevention-focused are concerned with avoiding an undesirable goal (Higgins, 1997). In the moral domain, those who are promotion-focused might be concerned with being ethical, while those who are prevention-focused might be concerned with avoiding unethical behavior (Gino & Margolis, 2011). The theorizing in my hypotheses assumed that transgressors would hold a promotion-focus towards being ethical. However, it is possible the players in Study 1 and participants in Study 2 differed in their regulatory focus. Perhaps the players in Study 1 were more focused on becoming a "clean" player (promotion-focused), while participants in Study 2 were more focused on avoiding being a cheater (prevention-focused). In the sports context in Study 1, players may receive public recognition for being a clean player, leading them to hold a promotion-focus. However, in the lab setting in Study 2, participants did not expect to receive any recognition if they did not cheat, although they may have feared receiving punishment for cheating in the lab. Therefore, they may have been more likely to hold a prevention focus. Future research should explore how regulatory focus influences the interaction between act-centered and person-centered judgments. For example, it will be helpful to conduct an experiment with a 2 (act-centered judgments: moral responsibility, moral disengagement) $\times$ 2 (person-centered judgments: positive moral self, negative moral self) $\times$ 2 (regulatory focus: promotion, prevention) study design. I would expect to see results similar to Study 1 for participants induced to have a promotion-focus, and results similar to Study 2 for participants induced to have a prevention-focus.

Across both studies, I focused primarily on what happens after transgressors take moral responsibility for their actions or morally disengage from their actions, as well as after they evaluate themselves positively or negatively. However, there are likely many potential

moderators that determine which transgressors are more likely to take moral responsibility or morally disengage, as well as which transgressors are more likely to make positive moral self-evaluations or negative moral self-evaluations. For instance, transgressors who have a higher level of moral awareness (Reynolds, 2006) or moral identity (Aquino & Reed, 2002) may be more likely to take moral responsibility for their actions rather than morally disengage from their actions. Also, transgressors who find themselves in contexts that strongly value ethical behavior (Tenbrunsel, Smith-Crowe, & Umphress, 2003) or around people with strong ethical principles (Brown, Treviño, & Harrison, 2005) may be more likely to take moral responsibility for their actions. In terms of moral self-evaluations, transgressors who are more prone to shame (Tangney, Wagner, & Gramzow, 1992) or those who believe that individual characteristics are fixed (Chiu, Hong, & Dweck, 1997) may be more likely to make negative moral self-evaluations. In contrast, when transgressors have strong social support and encouragement from those around them, they may be more likely to make positive moral self-evaluations despite their wrongdoing.

In conclusion, using two different research methodologies (i.e., an archival study and a lab experiment), I found consistent support for a significant main effect of person-centered judgments on likelihood of recidivism. Moving forward, more studies should be conducted to better understand when act-centered judgments might influence the likelihood of recidivism, as well as how act-centered and person-centered judgments interact to influence the likelihood of recidivism.

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Chapter 3:

Reflection and Beliefs about Moral Character in the Aftermath of Wrongdoing

3.1 Theoretical Development

The previous chapter put forth the idea that after wrongdoing has been committed, wrongdoers evaluate their actions to make inferences about their moral selves. Whereas the previous chapter examines how wrongdoers make post-hoc judgments about their moral selves by observing their own actions, this chapter examines wrongdoers' a priori assumptions about the malleability of their moral selves. Specifically, this chapter considers how wrongdoers' implicit theories about moral character affect their motivation to change in the aftermath of wrongdoing. I describe how the transformational potential of wrongdoing is only unleashed when wrongdoers believe that they can change.

Research on implicit person theories suggests that people differ in the unconscious lay theories they hold regarding the malleability of personal attributes (Chiu, Hong, & Dweck, 1997; Dweck, 1996; Dweck, Chiu, & Hong, 1995), such as intelligence, ability, and moral character. "Entity theorists" is the term used to describe those who believe that people's personal attributes are fixed. Therefore, they believe that no amount of learning or effort can change or improve a person's basic traits. Those with entity theories about traits tend to avoid challenging situations, fail to take actions to improve their ability and persist less in difficult situations or failure

(Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Heine et al., 2001; Hong, Chiu, Dweck, Lin, & Wan, 1999; Mueller & Dweck, 1998). In contrast, "incremental theorists" is used to describe those who believe that personal attributes can be developed. They believe that people can learn new things and that their personal attributes are cultivatable. Those with incremental theories about traits tend to confront anxiety-provoking situations and perceive these challenges as opportunity to improve; they engage in actions to develop their abilities and expend effort to improve (Carr, Dweck, & Pauker, 2012; Heine et al., 2001; Hong et al., 1999; Mueller & Dweck, 1998).

Most of the present empirical research on implicit person theories focuses on people's beliefs about intelligence, and has mostly been conducted within the academic context (Blackwell, Trzesniewski, & Dweck, 2007; Henderson & Dweck, 1990; Hong et al., 1999; Mangels, Butterfield, Lamb, Good, & Dweck, 2006; Rattan, Good, & Dweck, 2012). More recently, researchers have brought ideas about implicit person theories into the organizational literature to explain employees' work ability, work performance and leadership (Heslin, Latham, Vandewalle, 2005; Heslin & Vandewalle, 2011; Heslin, Vandewalle, & Latham, 2006; Hoyt, Burnette, & Innella, 2012). For example, they have found that managers' implicit theories about the malleability of personal attributes affect how they coach employees (Heslin et al., 2006), how they appraise employees' performance (Heslin et al., 2005), and employees' perceptions of those performance appraisals (Heslin & Vandewalle, 2011).

In this chapter, I extend the current scope of research on implicit person theories by applying it to the moral domain and the non-academic context. To date, only one published paper has attempted to do this. Schumann and Dweck's (2014) paper found that individuals who see personality as malleable are more willing to accept blame for their transgressions. The research presented in this dissertation chapter builds on this initial work in several significant ways. First,

their paper examined the influence of beliefs about the malleability of personality rather than the malleability of moral character specifically. Early work on implicit person theories suggests that implicit theories are domain-specific (Chiu et al., 1997). For example, someone might believe that intelligence is fixed but that moral character can be developed, and vice versa. Given the domain-specificity of implicit theories, it is important to recognize and understand the specific role of implicit theories about moral character. Second, their paper examined admitting responsibility as the dependent variable, but not how individuals are motivated to change in the aftermath of their wrongdoing. While admitting responsibility is concerned with past behavior, individuals' motivation to change likely has more direct implications for their future behavior. Finally, their paper primarily used vignette studies (e.g., participants imagined committing a hypothetical transgression). However, it is likely that more practical insights can be derived from examining participants' responses to actual transgressions that they committed, and to link these responses to their actual motivational and behavioral outcomes. In this chapter, I plan to investigate how individuals' implicit person theories about *moral character* impact their *motivation to change* in the aftermath of their *actual* transgressions.

Research on implicit person theories in the non-moral domain has consistently found that those who believe that intelligence can be developed are more likely to adopt learning goals (Blackwell et al., 2007; Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Hong et al., 1999; Mangels et al., 2006; Meece, Blumenfeld, & Hoyle, 1988; Miller, Greene, Montalvo, Ravindran, & Nichols, 1996; Robins & Pals, 2010). In the aftermath of task-oriented or academic failures, they are more likely to be motivated to improve and develop their technical skills or knowledge. Building on this work that has largely been situated in the academic context, I argue that transgressors who believe that moral character can be developed are more motivated to improve their moral behavior in the

aftermath of wrongdoing. In other words, they display more motivation to change compared to transgressors who believe that moral character is fixed.

Hypothesis 1: In the aftermath of wrongdoing, individuals who believe that moral character can be developed are more likely to be motivated to change than individuals who believe that moral character is fixed.

Prior research has also shown that those who believe that intelligence can be developed are more motivated to learn because they find negative goal feedback less threatening and are therefore more willing to expend cognitive effort confronting that negative goal feedback (e.g., Dupeyrat & Mariné, 2005; Mangels et al., 2006; Meece et al., 1988; Miller et al., 1996; Nolen, 1988). Their deep cognitive engagement with negative goal feedback heightens their commitment to learning goals. In contrast, those who believe that intelligence is fixed find negative goal feedback anxiety provoking, so they are more likely to avoid such cognitive engagement. Deep cognitive processing is associated with greater effort expenditure, persistence and the use of learning strategies such as elaboration or organization, while shallow cognitive processing is associated with the avoidance of such effort, persistence and strategies (Dupeyrat & Mariné, 2005; Miller et al., 1996).

Similarly, in the moral domain, it is likely that those who believe that moral character can be developed are more motivated to change in the aftermath of wrongdoing because they find that negative feedback less threatening and are more likely to spend time and effort contemplating on what went wrong, and what they might do to improve in the future. In contrast, those who believe that moral character is fixed will only engage in shallow cognitive processing since the negative feedback is threatening to them. These arguments suggest that deep cognitive

engagement with negative feedback occurs more automatically in those who believe that moral character can be developed.

Nevertheless, cognitive engagement in the aftermath of negative events has been conceptualized as both an automatic and a deliberate process (Park, 2010). In other words, although people have varying natural propensities to cognitively engage with negative feedback, this cognitive engagement can also be deliberately structurally enabled. In the organizational behavior literature, there is a growing literature on reflection with similar arguments. Although individuals might have varying natural propensities to reflect on their work (e.g., Ong, Ashford, & Bindl, 2016), reflection on work events can also be enabled through structured interventions (e.g., DeRue, Nahrgang, Hollenbeck, & Workman, 2012). Although these interventions typically involve cognitive engagement with task-related feedback, I argue that they might have helpful benefits in the moral domain. Indeed, multiple studies have found that reflection and cognitive engagement improve moral outcomes (Derfler-Rozin, Moore, & Staats, in press; Gunia, Wang, Huang, Wang, & Murnighan, 2012; Moore & Tenbrunsel, 2014; Shalvi, Eldar, & Bereby-Meyer, 2012). For example, Gunia and colleague (2012) found that compared to making an immediate moral decision, contemplating the moral decision results in more ethical decision-making in a lab-based role play scenario. Shalvi and colleagues (2012) instructed participants to privately roll a die and report the outcome. Participants who were given more time to report their outcome were less likely to be dishonest. Whereas these studies are largely focused on contemplation on hypothetical moral decisions or moral dilemmas in an experimental lab setting, I argue that reflection on one's own lived experiences also has positive implications for one's subsequent moral behavior. Furthermore, these studies emphasize reflection on a future moral decision or moral behavior before making that decision or performing the behavior. I argue that reflection on

one's past moral decisions or moral behavior will also have implications for one's future moral decisions or moral behavior.

In the aftermath of wrongdoing, the guidance of structured reflection interventions may be particularly useful for those who do not naturally cognitively engage with negative feedback, which is necessary for driving motivation to change. When individuals who believe that moral character is fixed are deliberately prompted to reflect on their wrongdoing, their motivation to change may match up to those who believe that moral character can be developed. Therefore, I propose that structured reflection moderates the relationship between implicit person theories about moral character and motivation to change, such that when those who believe that moral character is fixed are engage in structured reflection, they are just as likely to be motivated to change as those who believe that moral character can be developed.

Hypothesis 2: Structured reflection moderates the relationship between implicit person theories about moral character and motivation to change. Specifically, without structured reflection, those who believe that moral character is fixed are less likely to be motivated to change than those who believe that moral character can be developed. However, when those who believe that moral character is fixed engage in structured reflection, they are just as likely to be motivated to change as those who believe that moral character can be developed.

Educational psychology researchers have found that students with a higher motivation to learn display higher levels of achievement (Blackwell et al., 2007; Meece & Holt, 1993; Miller et al., 1996; Greene & Miller, 1996; Phillips & Gully, 1997; Pintrich & DeGroot, 1990; Pintrich & Garcia, 1991). In work settings as well, employees with a higher motivation to learn show higher levels of work performance (Brett & VandeWalle, 1999; Sujan, Weitz, & Kumar, 1994;

VandeWalle, Brown, Cron, & Slocum, 1999; VandeWalle, Cron, & Slocum, 2001). These findings are consistent with earlier theoretical work on implicit person theories about intelligence (Dweck, 1986; Dweck & Leggett, 1988). These studies have primarily explained the link between motivation and performance from a self-regulation perspective. For example, VandeWalle and colleagues (2001) argue that when individuals are motivated to learn, they feel a higher level of self-efficacy for performing well, they exert a higher level of effort to perform well, and they display a higher level of goal setting. Extrapolating to the moral domain, I propose that when transgressors are motivated to change, they similarly feel a higher level of self-efficacy for changing their moral behavior, they exert a higher level of effort to change their moral behavior, and they also display a higher level of goal setting with respect to their future moral behavior. Thus, in the aftermath of wrongdoing, individuals with a higher motivation to change are more likely to have a lower likelihood of recidivism.

Hypothesis 3: In the aftermath of wrongdoing, motivation to change leads to a lower likelihood of recidivism.

3.2 Study 1

Study 1 is a survey study that aims to test Hypothesis 1.

Sample

Participants ($N = 101$, 37.6% female) were working adults recruited from Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk). On average, the participants were 34.09 years of age ($SD = 10.34$). All participants reported that they were currently employed. The majority of them (83.2%) were currently working full-time, while 16.8% were currently working part-time. They reported having an average of 14.02 years ($SD = 9.82$) of work experience. An attention check question

was embedded in the middle of the survey to ensure that participants were paying attention to all the instructions and questions in the survey. All participants passed the attention check.

Procedure

Implicit person theory about moral character. Participants were first asked to report the extent to which they agreed with the following three statements measuring their implicit theory of character ($\alpha = .94$; Chiu et al., 1997): (1) "A person's moral character is something very basic about them and it can't be changed much," (2) "Whether a person is responsible and sincere or not is deeply ingrained in their personality. It cannot be changed very much," (3) "There is not much that can be done to change a person's moral traits (e.g., conscientiousness, uprightness, and honesty)." Participants responded on a seven point Likert-type scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). Those who receive a high score on this measure are more likely to agree that moral character is fixed, while those who receive a low score on this measure are more likely to agree with that moral character can be developed.

Recall task. Next, participants were asked to recall a personal experience and write about it. They were instructed that the writing exercise would be the most beneficial for them if they took the exercise seriously and reported their experience as honestly as possible. They were also assured that their responses would be kept completely confidential.

Participants were told to think of a time when they did something at work that they felt was wrong or unethical, and as a result experienced guilt, remorse, and regret. Some examples of unethical work behaviors were given to them, such as reporting inaccurate information on business or financial documents, using company time or services to conduct personal activities, falsifying their expense report, lying to a coworker, or doing something else that was harmful or potentially harmful to themselves, other coworkers, or their organization. Participants were asked

to take their time to ponder on the event and write about it in the textbox provided. They were also reminded that if multiple events come to mind, they should choose just one event. Participants spent an average of 274s (4m 34s) writing about the event. Additional analyses show that participants' implicit person theory did not significantly influence how long they spent on this task ($B = .56$, $SE = 11.13$, $t = .05$, $p = .96$), or how many words they typed in this task ($B = .13.39$, $SE = 20.27$, $t = .66$, $p = .51$).

Motivation to change. After the recall task, participants answered questions about their motivation to change. Woodyatt and Wenzel's (2013) self-forgiveness scale ($\alpha = .86$) was used to measure this. Examples of items used include: "I am trying to learn from my wrongdoing," and "Since committing the offense I have tried to change." Participants responded on a seven point Likert-type scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*).

Results

Implicit person theory ($M = 3.89$, $SD = 1.67$) and motivation to change ($M = 4.93$, $SD = 1.14$) were significantly correlated ($r = -.22$, $p = .03$). Further regression analyses indicated that there was a statistically significant main effect of implicit person theory on motivation to change such that those who believe that moral character is fixed were less likely to be motivated to change than those who believe that moral character can be developed, $b = -.15$, $SE = .07$, $t = -2.24$, $p = .03$. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 was supported.

Discussion

Results from Study 1 show initial support for Hypothesis 1 that individuals' implicit beliefs about the malleability of moral character influence their motivation to change in the aftermath of wrongdoing. However, one major limitation of this study is that it only suggests a correlational relationship between implicit theories about moral character and motivation to

change. Therefore, I conducted Study 2 to experimentally manipulate people's implicit theories about moral character and test if they have a causal influence on motivation to change in the aftermath of wrongdoing.

3.3 Study 2

Study 2 is an experiment that tests Hypothesis 1. This study aims to replicate the results in Study 1 and to establish a causal relationship between people's implicit theories about moral character and their motivation to change in the aftermath of wrongdoing.

Sample

Participants (N = 96, 45.9% female) in this study were working adults recruited from MTurk. Individuals who had participated in Study 1 were not allowed to participate in this study. On average, the participants were 34.01 years of age (SD = 11.60). All participants reported that they were currently employed. Majority of them (83.7%) were currently working full-time, while 16.3% were currently working part-time. They reported having an average of 13.57 years (SD = 10.66) of work experience. An attention check question was embedded in the middle of the survey to ensure that participants were paying attention to all the instructions and questions in the survey. All participants passed the attention check.

Procedure

At the beginning of the study session, participants were told that they would be participating in two studies. The first study would involve reading an article and assessing its appropriateness for high school students. The second study would involve a recall task.

Implicit person theory about moral character manipulation. Participants first read an article that was ostensibly being pilot tested for a future study to be conducted on high school

students. This paradigm has been used in prior research to manipulate participants' implicit theories (e.g., Chiu et al., 1997; Rattan & Dweck, 2010; Schumann & Dweck, 2014). I adapted the articles used in previous studies for this study; for instance, phrases like "personality" and "personal traits" were replaced with phrases like "moral character" and "moral traits." Participants either read an article that presented arguments that moral character is fixed (*fixed mindset* condition) or that moral character can be developed (*growth mindset* condition). For example, the article in the *fixed mindset* condition contained quotes such as: "Moral character seems to be rather fixed and to develop consistently along the same path over time. Character traits might start as a bundle of possibilities, but in the early years, the possibilities appear to solidify into a cohesive personality profile." The article in the *growth mindset* condition contained quotes such as: "Moral character is changeable and can be influenced over time. In fact, moral traits are basically a bundle of possibilities that wait to be developed and cultivated." The overall structure of these articles mirrored the structure of the articles used in previous paradigms manipulating implicit theories about personality in general.

After reading their randomly assigned article, to uphold the cover story, participants answered questions about whether the article was appropriate for high school students' reading level. An online timer was included in the study to time how long participants spent reading the article and answering questions about the article. The timers were set so that all participants were required to spend at least 90s reading the article. Three participants were dropped from the study at this point as they spent more than 20 minutes reading the article and answering questions, suggesting that they might not have been paying full attention to the manipulation materials (e.g., switching windows to look at other online materials).

Recall task and motivation to change. Participants then moved on to the "next" study in which they would recall a personal experience. Participants were given the same instructions as in Study 1. Participants also responded to the same measure (α = .87) as in Study 1.

Manipulation Check

As a manipulation check, participants were asked to respond to three items about their implicit person theory (α = .92) after the manipulation. The same items used in Study 1 were used here. Participants in the fixed mindset condition ($M = 3.56$, $SD = 1.36$) had significantly different responses from those in the malleable mindset condition ($M = 2.53$, $SD = 1.38$), $F(1, 92) = 13.07$, $p < .001$, $d = .75$, suggesting that the manipulation was successful. Additional analyses revealed that participants in the two conditions did not differ in terms of the time they spent on the recall task, $F(1, 92) = .00$, $p = .98$, or the number of words they wrote during the recall task, $F(1, 92), = .13$, $p = .72$.

To check if participants in the different conditions were recalling different transgressions, I asked two questions: "How would you rate the extent to which your actions were severe (morally wrong and harmful)?" (1 = *not severe at all*, 7 = *extremely severe*) and "How long ago did the event you recalled take place?" (1 = *less than a week ago*, 7 = *more than 2 years ago*). The transgressions recalled by participants in the two conditions were equally severe, $F(1, 92) = 1.02$, $p = .32$, and occurred an equally long time ago, $F(1, 92) = 1.06$, $p = .31$.

Results

A one-way ANOVA analysis revealed that participants in the *fixed mindset* condition ($M = 4.56$, $SD = 1.05$) reported lower motivation to change than those in the *growth mindset* condition ($M = 5.27$, $SD = 1.08$), $F(1, 92) = 10.17$, $p < .001$, $d = .67$. Thus, Hypothesis 1 was supported.

Discussion

In this study, participants' implicit theories about moral character were successfully manipulated. Participants in the *fixed mindset* condition were significantly less motivated to change compared to participants in the *growth mindset* condition. Study 2 found support for a causal relationship between people's implicit theories about moral character and their motivation to change in the aftermath of wrongdoing. The manipulations developed for Study 2 were used in all subsequent studies.

3.4 Study 3

Study 3 is an experiment that aims to replicate the main effect findings from earlier studies, as well as to test Hypothesis 2 regarding the moderating effect of structured reflection interventions. This study has a 2 (implicit person theory: fixed mindset, growth mindset) × 3 (reflection: reflection, recounting, no reflection) between-subjects design. Among participants who do not engage in reflection, if those in the *fixed mindset* condition are less motivated to change than those in the *growth mindset* condition, then Hypothesis 1 is supported. Also, if structured reflection can enable those in the *fixed mindset* condition to be just as likely as those in the *growth mindset* condition to be motivated to change, then Hypothesis 2 is supported.

Sample

Participants ($N = 315$, 45.7% female) were adults recruited from MTurk for a 20-minute study. Again, participants who participated in the earlier studies were not allowed to participate in this study. On average, the participants in this study were 33.48 years of age ($SD = 10.09$). Majority (80.4%) of the remaining participants were currently working full-time, while 19.6% were currently working part-time. They reported having an average of 13.16 years ($SD = 9.08$) of work experience. An attention check question was embedded in the middle of the survey to

ensure that participants were paying attention to all the instructions and questions in the survey. Four participants who failed the attention check were dropped from the study, leaving a final sample of 311 participants.

Procedure

  Implicit person theory about moral character manipulation. This study used the same manipulation for implicit person theory as in Study 2. Participants were randomly assigned to the *fixed mindset* or the *growth mindset* condition. Using the same criteria as in Study 2, five participants were dropped from the study at this point due to inattention.

  Reflection manipulation. Participants then moved on to the "next" study in which they would recall a personal experience. With the same instructions as in Studies 1 and 2, participants were asked to recall a time when they did something unethical at work. Participants were randomly assigned to one of three conditions. In the *reflection* condition, participants were given prompts to induce a deeper level of cognitive engagement. They were asked to think about questions like "Why did you do what you did?," "How are you learning from your wrongdoing?" and "How might you try to change?" In the *recounting* condition, participants were given prompts to induce a shallower level of cognitive engagement. They were asked to think about questions like "How long ago did the event happen?," "Who else was involved in the event?" and "Where did the event occur?" In the *no reflection* condition, participants were instructed to recall an event and were not given time to reflect on it.

  Motivation to change. After writing down their reflections or recalling the event, participants responded to the same measure of motivation to change ($\alpha = .89$) as in Study 2.

Manipulation Check

Participants responded to three items about their implicit person theory ($\alpha = .92$) after the first manipulation. Participants in the fixed mindset condition ($M = 3.60$, $SD = 1.61$) had significantly different responses from those in the malleable mindset condition ($M = 2.51$, $SD = 1.22$), $F(1, 305) = 45.28$, $p < .001$, $d = .77$, suggesting that the manipulation was successful.

Results

The results of the 2×3 study design are displayed in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1: Interaction of Implicit Theory and Reflection on Motivation to Change in Study 3.
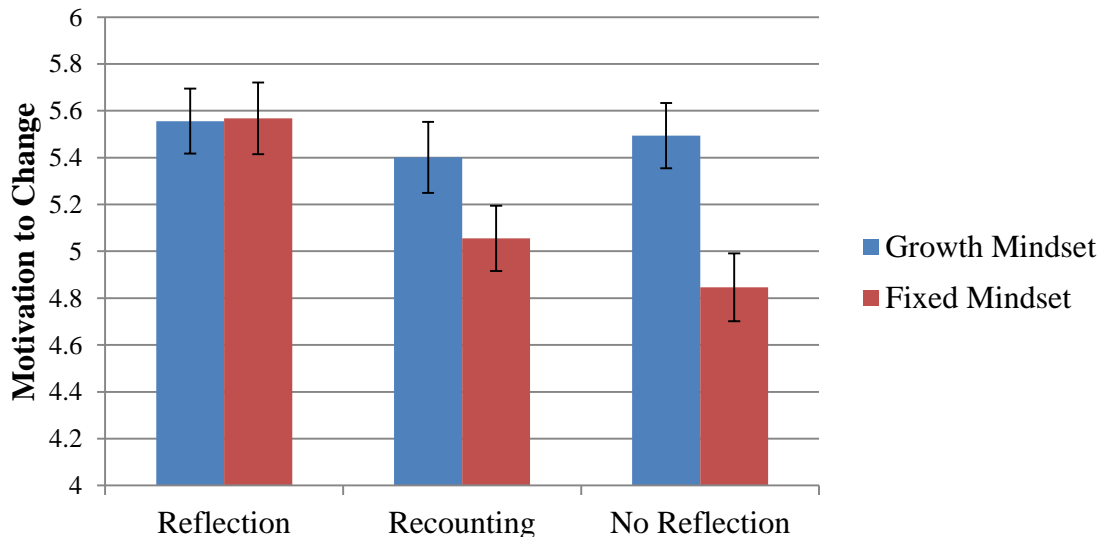
Among participants in the *no reflection* conditions, those in the *growth mindset* condition ($M = 5.49$, $SD = .96$) reported greater motivation to change than those in the fixed mindset condition ($M = 4.85$, $SD = 1.28$), $F(1, 300) = 10.40$, $p = .00$, $\eta^2_p = .03$. Among participants in the *recounting* conditions, those in the *growth mindset* condition ($M = 5.40$, $SD = .77$) also reported greater motivation to change than those in the *fixed mindset* condition ($M = 5.05$, $SD = 1.06$), but this difference was marginally significant, $F(1, 300) = 2.84$, $p = .09$, $\eta^2_p = .01$. Finally, among

participants in the *reflection* conditions, those in the *growth mindset* condition ($M = 5.56$, $SD = 1.04$) and those in the *fixed mindset* condition ($M = 5.57$, $SD = .99$) did not differ in their motivation to change, $F(1, 300) = .00$, $p = .95$, $\eta^2_p = .00$. Further planned comparisons tests show that among those in the *fixed mindset* conditions, those in the *reflection* condition reported significantly more motivation to change than those in the *no reflection* condition, $b = .72$, $SE = .21$, $t = 3.42$, $p = .00$, and those in the *recounting* condition did not significantly differ from those in the *no reflection* condition, $b = .21$, $SE = .20$, $t = 1.04$, $p = .30$.

In summary, these results show that in the *no reflection* conditions, those in the *fixed mindset* condition reported lower motivation to change compared to those in the *growth mindset* condition. Thus, Hypothesis 1 was supported. However, *reflection* enabled those with a *fixed mindset* to become just as motivated to change as those with a *growth mindset*. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 was also supported. Furthermore, there was a marginally significant difference in motivation to change between *fixed mindset* and *growth mindset* for those who were in the *recounting* conditions. This suggests that *recounting* resulted in more motivation to change than *no reflection* on one's transgressions, but it was not as influential in bringing about motivation to change compared to *reflection*.

Discussion

The results of Study 3 show that without reflection, those with a fixed mindset are less likely to be motivated to change compared to those with a growth mindset. Nevertheless, motivation to change can be structurally induced through a reflection intervention. For the intervention to be effective at helping those with a fixed mindset, it has to entail more than mere recounting of the facts of the wrongdoing. It should involve deeper cognitive engagement with questions about why one acted the way one did, how one is learning from the wrongdoing, and

how one might try to change. Reflection enables deeper cognitive engagement, which forces individuals to confront with negative feedback stemming from their past transgression, even if that negative feedback is personally threatening. Although recounting a transgression enables more cognitive engagement with negative feedback compared to no reflection on the transgression, it is not as effective as deep reflection on the transgression.

3.5 Study 4

Study 4 is a lab experiment that aims to replicate the results in Study 3, and to test Hypothesis 3, which proposes a negative causal link between motivation to change and likelihood of recidivism. In addition, instead of having a no reflection condition, this study involves a different control condition, which will be described below.

This study has a 2 (implicit person theory: fixed mindset, growth mindset) $\times$ 3 (reflection: reflection, recounting, control) between-subjects design. Among participants in the *control* conditions, if those in the *fixed mindset* condition are less motivated to change than those in the *growth mindset* condition, then Hypothesis 1 is supported. Also, if structured reflection can enable those in the *fixed mindset* condition to be just as likely as those in the *growth mindset* condition to be motivated to change, then Hypothesis 2 is supported. Finally, if motivation to change leads to a lower likelihood of recidivism, then Hypothesis 3 is supported.

Sample

Participants ($N = 334$, 41.0% female) were students enrolled in an undergraduate organizational behavior class in a Midwestern business school who participated in this study as part of a class requirement. All participants received research credit for their participation and

had the opportunity to earn an extra $5 during the study. On average, the participants in this

study were 20.09 years of age (*SD* = .47).

Procedure

There were three parts to this study and participants were led to assume that they were

three separate studies. First, participants were told to read and evaluate an article, which served

as the manipulation of implicit person theory. Second, they were asked to recall a time when they

cheated and engage in a writing task, which served as the manipulation of reflection. Following

the reflection manipulation, participants answered several scale items. Third, participants did a

paper and pencil problem-solving task that gave them an opportunity to cheat. An attention

check question was embedded in the middle of the study. Twelve participants who failed the

attention check were dropped from the study. In addition, 25 participants were excluded from

analyses because they indicated that they were not able or did not want to recall a cheating

incident as instructed in the reflection manipulation. Finally, since the last part of the study

required participants in the same lab session to complete the problem-solving matrix task at the

same time, some participants had to wait for other participants to complete the recall and writing

task before moving on to the next task altogether. Thus, I also excluded data from 66 students

who waited for more than 15 minutes between the tasks. This resulted in a final sample of 231

students.

Implicit person theory about moral character manipulation. This study used the same

manipulation for implicit person theory as in Studies 2 and 3. Participants were randomly

assigned to the *fixed mindset* or the *growth mindset* condition. Participants either read an article

that presented arguments that moral character is fixed (*fixed mindset* condition) or that moral

character can be developed (*growth mindset* condition).

Reflection manipulation. The instructions participants received for the *reflection* condition and the *recounting* condition were similar to those in Study 3. In the *reflection* condition, participants were given prompts to induce a deeper level of cognitive engagement (e.g., How are you learning from this?). In the *recounting* condition, participants were given prompts to induce a shallower level of cognitive engagement (e.g., How long ago did the event happen?).

The only difference is that instead of getting participants to recall a time when they did something at work that they felt was wrong or unethical, participants were specifically instructed to recall a time when they "cheated to get ahead, that is, acted dishonestly or unfairly to gain an advantage." This was done to more closely parallel the measure of the dependent variable in this study (i.e., likelihood of cheating on the problem-solving matrix task).

In the *control* condition, participants were first asked to recall a time when they cheated to get ahead. However, unlike the participants in the *no reflection* condition in Study 3 who did not engage in any writing, participants in the *control* condition in this study engaged in a writing task. Specifically, they were instructed to write about the last time they went grocery shopping (Gino & Desai, 2012), instead of the time they cheated. They were given prompts such as, "How long ago did this happen?," "Who else was with you?" and "Where did you go?"

Motivation to change. After the reflection manipulation, participants responded to the same measure of motivation to change ($\alpha = .90$) as in earlier studies.

Dependent variable: Likelihood of recidivism. The matrix task used in Chapter 2 Study 2 was administered to participants in this study. As before, the dependent variable was calculated as a percentage likelihood of recidivism (i.e., number of matrices over-reported / number of unsolved matrices).

Results

        Motivation to change. The results of the 2×3 study design are displayed in Figure 3.2. Among participants in the *control* conditions, those in the *growth mindset* condition ($M = 4.25$, $SD = 1.44$) and those in the *fixed mindset* condition ($M = 4.12$, $SD = 1.35$) did not differ in their motivation to change, $F(1, 224) = .16$, $p = .69$, $\eta^2_p = .00$. Among participants in the *recounting* conditions, those in the *growth mindset* condition ($M = 4.47$, $SD = 1.23$) and those in the *fixed mindset* condition ($M = 4.68$, $SD = 1.37$) did not differ in their motivation to change, $F(1, 224) = .44$, $p = .51$, $\eta^2_p = .00$. Lastly, among participants in the *reflection* conditions, those in the *growth mindset* condition ($M = 4.66$, $SD = 1.41$) and those in the *fixed mindset* condition ($M = 4.57$, $SD = 1.43$) also did not differ in their motivation to change, $F(1, 224) = .10$, $p = .76$, $\eta^2_p = .00$.

Figure 3.2: Interaction of Implicit Theory and Reflection on Motivation to Change in Study 4.
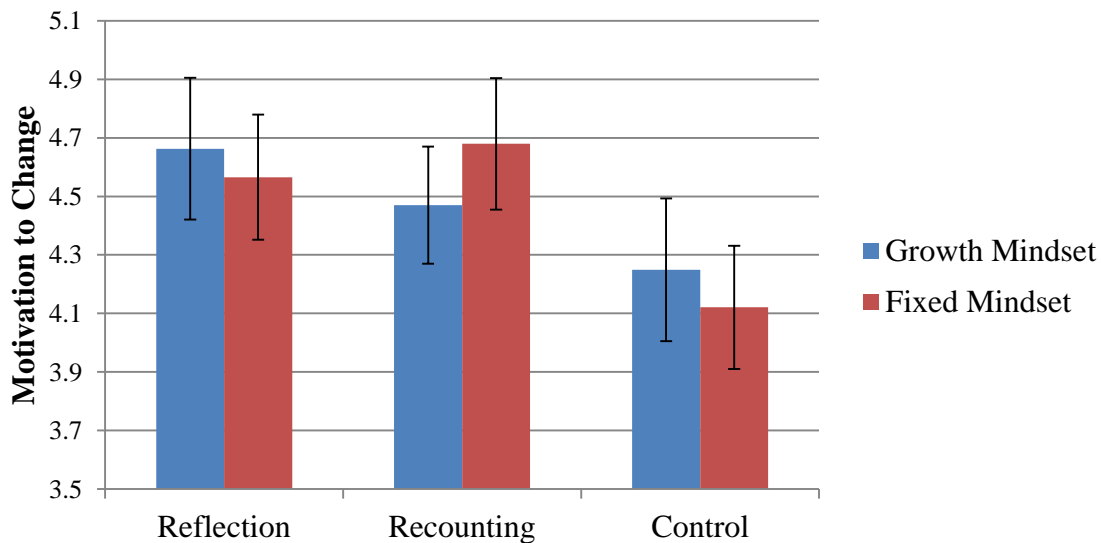
        In summary, these results do not show support for Hypothesis 1 and 2. It is possible that compared to the *no reflection* condition in Study 3, the *control* condition in this study introduced other confounding mechanisms (e.g., psychological dissonance) that interfered with participants'

motivation to change. Specifically, participants in the control conditions were first asked to recall a time they cheated, then they were asked to write about a time they went grocery shopping. This design was used to give an equivalent writing task to participants who were not asked to engage in reflection or recounting of their past experience. However, the lack of coherence between these two sets of instructions could have confused participants, which affected their responses to the implicit person theory about moral character manipulation.

Likelihood of recidivism. To test Hypothesis 3, I used regression analyses (Table 3.1). Across all conditions, the average likelihood of recidivism was 7.8% ($SD = .19$). Motivation to change ($M = 4.45$, $SD = 1.38$) had a significant positive relationship with likelihood of recidivism ($M = .08$, $SD = .19$), after controlling for participants' actual performance on the matrix task, $b = -.02$, $SE = .01$, $t = -2.03$, $p = .04$, $R^2 = .02$. This supports Hypothesis 3.

Table 3.1: Study 4 Regression Analyses.

Variables	DV = Likelihood of Recidivism	
	Model 1	Model 2
(Constant)	.14 (.03)**	.22 (.05)**
Actual Performance	-.01 (.00)*	-.01 (.00)**
Motivation to Change		-.02 (.01)*
R^2	.03*	.04**
ΔR^2		.02*

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

However, because the manipulations did not influence motivation to change as predicted (i.e., no support for Hypothesis 1 and inconclusive support for Hypothesis 2), there were no

significant differences in likelihood of recidivism between conditions (see Figure 3.3). Among

participants in the *control* conditions, those in the *growth mindset* condition ($M = .05$, $SD = .17$)

and those in the *fixed mindset* condition ($M = .07$, $SD = .18$) did not differ in their likelihood of

recidivism, $F(1, 224) = .16$, $p = .69$, $\eta^2_p = .00$. Among participants in the *recounting* conditions,

those in the *growth mindset* condition ($M = .09$, $SD = .17$) and those in the *fixed mindset*

condition ($M = .08$, $SD = .18$) did not differ in their likelihood of recidivism, $F(1, 224) = .04$, $p =$

$.85$, $\eta^2_p = .00$. Lastly, among participants in the *reflection* conditions, those in the *growth mindset*

condition ($M = .12$, $SD = .28$) and those in the *fixed mindset* condition ($M = .07$, $SD = .18$) also

did not differ in their likelihood of recidivism, $F(1, 224) = 1.25$, $p = .27$, $\eta^2_p = .01$.

Figure 3.3: Interaction of Implicit Theory and Reflection on Likelihood of Recidivism in Study 4.
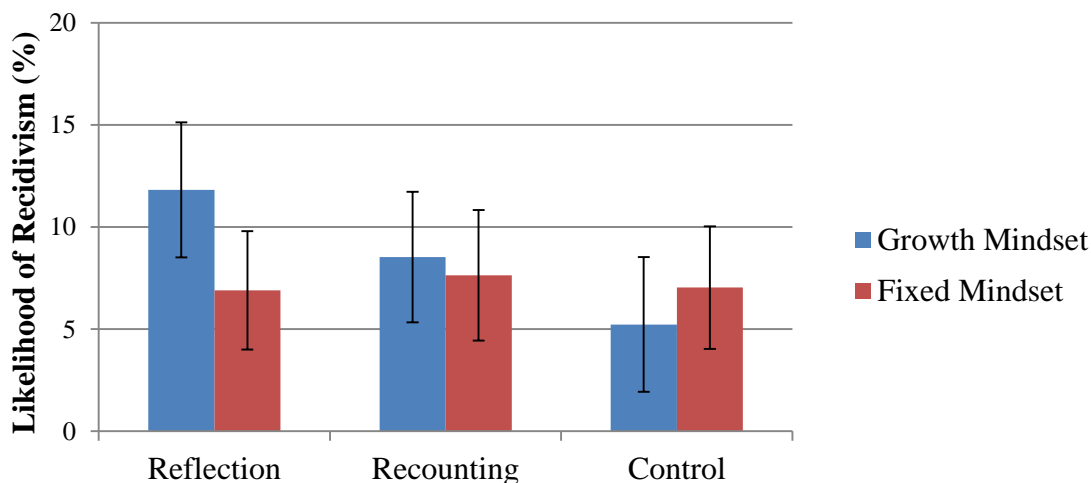
Supplementary Analyses

After participants rated their motivation to change, they were also asked to think about

the time they cheated and to rate their causal attributions for their cheating behavior (1 = *strongly*

disagree, 7 = *strongly agree*). Lack of effort was measured with two items: This incident

occurred due to (1) a lack of effort on my part and (2) a lack of willpower on my part ($\alpha = .73$).

Lack of moral character was measured with two items: This incident occurred due to (1) my poor moral character and (2) flaws in my moral character ($\alpha = .87$). These items were developed based on theoretical insights from Hong et al. (1999). Participants also responded to four items from Skinner and Brewer's (2002) measure of cognitive appraisal style. Challenge appraisal style was measured with two items: (1) I have tended to focus on the positive aspects of this incident, and (2) I believe that this incident contains the potential for positive benefits ($\alpha = .82$). Threat appraisal style was measured with two items: (1) This incident makes me feel like a failure, and (2) This incident makes me concerned that others will not approve of me ($\alpha = .84$).

Causal attributions. There were no significant differences in lack of effort attributions between the *growth mindset* and the *fixed mindset* condition, for those in the *control* condition, $F(1, 219) = .58$, $p = .45$, $\eta^2_p = .00$, the *recounting* condition, $F(1, 219) = 2.33$, $p = .13$, $\eta^2_p = .01$, and the *reflection* condition, $F(1, 219) = 3.52$, $p = .06$, $\eta^2_p = .02$. Similarly, there were no significant differences in lack of moral character attributions between the *growth mindset* and the *fixed mindset* condition, for those in the *control* condition, $F(1, 219) = 1.21$, $p = .27$, $\eta^2_p = .01$, the *recounting* condition, $F(1, 219) = 2.32$, $p = .13$, $\eta^2_p = .01$, and the *reflection* condition, $F(1, 219) = .77$, $p = .38$, $\eta^2_p = .00$. Therefore, it is unlikely that causal attributions drive any of the results in this study.

Appraisal styles. As for appraisal styles, there were no significant differences in challenge appraisal style between the *growth mindset* and the *fixed mindset* condition, for those in the *control* condition, $F(1, 218) = .46$, $p = .50$, $\eta^2_p = .00$, the *recounting* condition, $F(1, 218) = .01$, $p = .93$, $\eta^2_p = .00$, and the *reflection* condition, $F(1, 218) = .18$, $p = .67$, $\eta^2_p = .00$. Similarly, there were no significant differences in lack of moral character attributions between the *growth mindset* and the *fixed mindset* condition, for those in the *control* condition, $F(1, 218) = .28$, $p =$

.60, $\eta^2_p = .00$, the *recounting* condition, $F(1, 218) = 1.20$, $p = .28$, $\eta^2_p = .01$, and the *reflection*

condition, $F(1, 218) = 2.11$, $p = .15$, $\eta^2_p = .01$. Therefore, it is unlikely that appraisal styles drive

any of the results in this study.

Discussion

Study 4 found support for Hypothesis 3, but no support for Hypothesis 1 and 2. That is,

although the experimental manipulations for implicit person theory and reflection failed to

influence participants' motivation to change, their motivation to change did have the proposed

negative impact on their likelihood of recidivism.[6]

One reason the findings from Study 3 (i.e., support for Hypotheses 1 and 2) were not

replicated could be the changes in the wording of the reflection manipulations. Studies 1 to 3

asked participants to "think of a time when they did something at work that they felt was wrong

or unethical, and as a result experienced guilt, remorse, and regret." This instruction leads

participants to think about incidents that they feel some degree of guilt and remorse about.

However, because of the need to link the reflection manipulation to cheating on the problem-

solving matrix task, this study asked students to "think of a time when they cheated to get

ahead." However, participants were not instructed that the cheating should be an incident that

they feel is "wrong or unethical," or that they feel "guilt, remorse, and regret" about. Therefore,

the incidents being recalled in Study 4 might be qualitatively different from the incidents being

recalled in earlier studies. Indeed, Study 4 participants, who were university students, mostly

recalled incidents about academic cheating, such as cheating on an exam or a homework

assignment. However, participants in earlier studies, who were working adults, recalled a wide

variety of workplace incidents, such as stealing, lying, or harming others. Also, it is possible that

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[6] Supplementary analyses also suggest that the experimental manipulations for implicit person theory and reflection did not influence participants' causal attributions and their appraisal styles.

being asked to recall an experience of cheating and then being asked to write about one's experience grocery shopping introduced psychological dissonance that interfered with participants responses. Indeed, in an open-ended comments box displayed on their computer screens at the end of the entire session, several participants in the *control* condition mentioned that they thought it was odd that they were being asked to think about their experience grocery shopping in the middle of the lab session.

Another limitation of this study was the data quality. In this study, it was necessary for all participants in the same lab session to complete the paper-and-pencil problem-solving matrix task at the same time since they were guided along by the experimenter's verbal instructions. However, due to the wide variance in the amount of time participants took to complete the implicit person theory manipulation and the reflection manipulation, many participants had to wait 15 minutes or longer to proceed on to the problem-solving matrix task. Almost 20% of the data was excluded for this reason. Also, perhaps due to the fear of getting caught or punished, a significant number of participants ($N = 25$) did not write anything about their experience cheating. For instance, they would leave the question blank or write that they were unwilling to share their experience. Studies 1 to 3 involved participants being asked questions about their wrongdoing by someone with limited ability to communicate with them or discipline them. However, Study 4 involved students being asked questions about their academic cheating by an authority figure at their academic institution. Therefore, the incidents that the participants in Study 4 wrote about might be qualitatively different from the incidents that participants in earlier studies wrote about.

In the next study, Study 5, I sought to design an improved version of Study 4. On top of the *control* condition used in this study, I included the *no reflection* condition used in Study 3. I

also used the wording of the reflection manipulation instructions that were used in Study 3, instead of those in Study 4. Finally, I conducted the study online so that participants did not have to wait for a long period while other participants in the lab finish their parts. The online study allowed each participant to work through the session at his or her own pace.

3.6 Study 5

Study 5 is an online experiment that aims to replicate the results for Hypotheses 1 and 2 in Study 3, and to replicate the results for Hypothesis 3 in Study 4. Since Study 5 is administered online, long wait times between tasks are eliminated, and since participants are not students, they might potentially feel less fearful about writing honestly about their wrongdoing.

This study had a 2 (implicit person theory: fixed mindset, growth mindset) × 4 (reflection: reflection, recounting, no reflection, control) between-subjects design. Among participants in the *no reflection* conditions, if those in the *fixed mindset* conditions are less motivated to change than those in the *growth mindset* conditions, then Hypothesis 1 is supported. Among participants in the *control* conditions, if those in the *fixed mindset* condition do not differ from those in the *growth mindset* condition, then the lack of support for Hypotheses 1 and 2 in Study 4 are likely due to the design of the control condition. Among participants in the *reflection* conditions, if those in the *fixed mindset* condition are just as likely as those in the *growth mindset* condition to be motivated to change, then Hypothesis 2 is supported. Finally, if motivation to change leads to a lower likelihood of recidivism, then Hypothesis 3 is supported.

Sample

Participants ($N = 411$, 51.9% female) were adults recruited from MTurk for a 30-minute study. All participants received $1.00 for completing the study and had the opportunity to earn

an extra $2.00 during the study. Participants who participated in the earlier studies were not allowed to participate in this study. On average, the participants in this study were 35.43 years of age ($SD = 10.99$). Majority (84.7%) of the remaining participants were currently working full-time, while the remaining 15.3% were currently working part-time or previously employed. They reported having an average of 15.47 years ($SD = 10.69$) of work experience. An attention check question was embedded in the middle of the survey to ensure that participants were paying attention to all the instructions and questions in the survey. Five participants who failed the attention check were dropped from the study. In addition, participants' survey times were examined. Those who completed the survey in less than ten minute (i.e., suggesting they rushed through the study) or took more than an hour (i.e., suggesting they were not completely focused on the study or did not complete the study in one sitting) were also excluded due to inattention, leaving a final sample of 350 participants.

Procedure

Implicit person theory about moral character manipulation. This study used the same manipulation for implicit person theory as in earlier studies. Participants were randomly assigned to the *fixed mindset* or the *growth mindset* condition. They either read an article that presented arguments that moral character is fixed (*fixed mindset* condition) or that moral character can be developed (*growth mindset* condition).

Reflection manipulation. The recall instructions from Study 3 rather than from Study 4 were used. The *reflection* and the *recounting* conditions used the same writing prompts as in Studies 3 and 4. In the *reflection* condition, participants were given prompts to induce a deeper level of cognitive engagement (e.g., How are you learning from this?). In the *recounting* condition, participants were given prompts to induce a shallower level of cognitive engagement

(e.g., How long ago did the event happen?). The *no reflection* condition is the same as in Study 3 and the *control* condition is the same as in Study 4. In the *no reflection* condition, participants were instructed to recall an event and were not given time to reflect on it. In the *control* condition, participants were instructed to recall a transgression but wrote about a different event (i.e., grocery shopping).

Motivation to change. After the reflection manipulation, participants responded to the same measure of motivation to change ($\alpha = .89$) as in earlier studies.

Dependent variable: Likelihood of recidivism. This study's problem-solving task has been used in previous research to induce participants to cheat (Gino & Wiltermuth, 2014; Vohs & Schooler, 2008; von Hippel, Lakin, & Shakarchi, 2005). The task involved eight different math and logic multiple-choice questions presented individually. Participants had 40 seconds to answer each question and could earn $0.25 for each correct answer. They were also told that the study had a programming glitch such that the correct answer would appear on their screen as they worked on each question unless they stopped it from being displayed by pressing the space bar right after the question appeared. They were also told that the research team would not be able to tell whether they had pressed the space bar, and that they should try to solve the problems on their own without looking at the answers. In fact, the programming glitch was just a cover story and I was able to record whether participants pressed the space bar or not.

In contrast to the task in Study 4, which gave participants just one opportunity to cheat (i.e., over-reporting their score), the task in Study 5 gave participants multiple opportunities to cheat over a series of eight questions. To keep the analyses parallel with Study 4, I analyzed Study 5 participants' cheating behavior at the task-level rather than question-level. Participants who looked at one or more correct answers (i.e., did not press the space bar at least once) were

coded as 1, and those who did not look at the correct answers during the task (i.e., pressed the space bar for all questions) were coded as zero.

Finally, at the end of the problem-solving task, participants were asked to rate how difficult they found the questions (1 = *not difficult at all*, 7 = *extremely difficult*).

Results

Motivation to change. The results of the 2 × 4 study design are displayed in Figure 3.4.

Figure 3.4. Interaction of Implicit Theory and Reflection on Motivation to Change in Study 5.
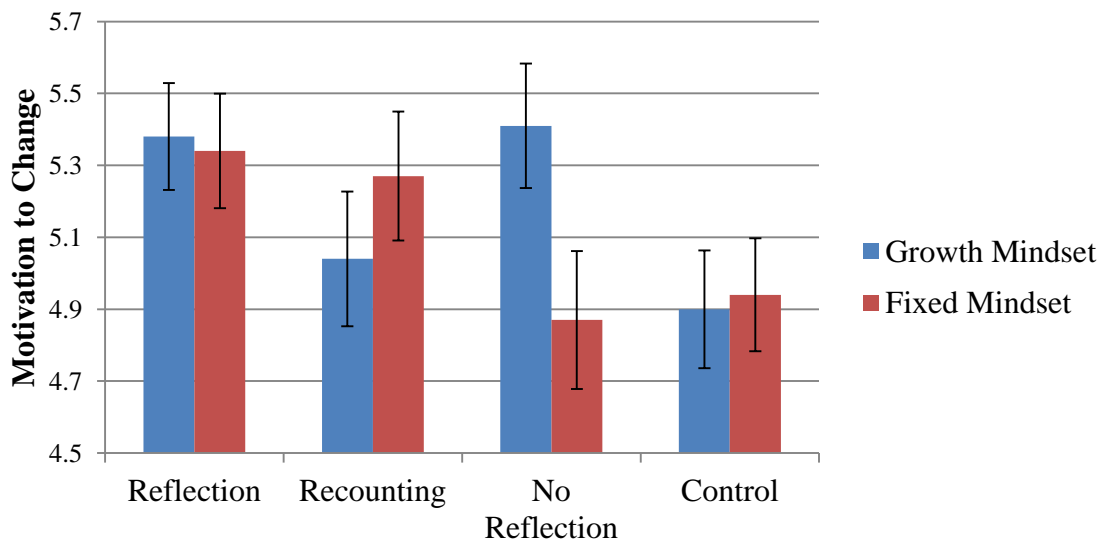
Among participants in the *control* conditions, those in the *growth mindset* condition (*M* = 4.90, *SD* = 1.18) and those in the *fixed mindset* condition (*M* = 4.94, *SD* = .99) did not differ in their motivation to change, $F(1, 342) = .03$, $p = .88$, $\eta^2_p = .00$. However, among participants in the *no reflection* conditions, those in the *growth mindset* condition (*M* = 5.41, *SD* = .96) reported significantly greater motivation to change those in the *fixed mindset* condition (*M* = 4.87, *SD* = 1.41), $F(1, 342) = 4.20$, $p = .04$, $\eta^2_p = .01$. These results show support for Hypothesis 1 – in the *no reflection* conditions, those in the *growth mindset* condition were more motivated to change than those in the *fixed mindset* condition. These results also suggest that the lack of support for

Hypothesis 1 in Study 4 was possibly due to the design of the control condition. For instance, the prompts given to participants to write about a time they went grocery shopping could have introduced psychological dissonance that affected their responses to the implicit person theory about moral character manipulation.

Among participants in the *reflection* conditions, those in the *growth mindset* condition ($M = 4.66$, $SD = 1.41$) and those in the *fixed mindset* condition ($M = 4.57$, $SD = 1.43$) did not differ in their motivation to change, $F(1, 342) = .03$, $p = .87$, $\eta^2_p = .00$. In addition, among participants in the *recounting* conditions, those in the *growth mindset* condition ($M = 4.47$, $SD = 1.23$) and those in the *fixed mindset* condition ($M = 4.68$, $SD = 1.37$) did not differ in their motivation to change, $F(1, 342) = .77$, $p = .38$, $\eta^2_p = .00$. Further planned comparison tests show that among participants in the *fixed mindset* conditions, those in the *reflection* condition reported significantly more motivation to change than those in the *control* condition, $b = .47$, $SE = .23$, $t = 2.03$, $p = .04$, and those in the *recounting* condition reported marginally significantly more motivation to change than those in the *control* condition, $b = .39$, $SE = .23$, $t = 1.72$, $p = .09$. Overall, these results suggest that Hypothesis 2 was supported. Also, these results show that *reflection* was more influential than *recounting* at leading those in the fixed mindset conditions to increase their motivation to change.

Likelihood of recidivism. To test Hypothesis 3, I used regression analyses (Table 3.2). Across all conditions, the average likelihood of recidivism was 66.0% ($SD = .47$). Even after controlling for how difficult participants found the problem-solving task, the relationship between motivation to change ($M = 5.13$, $SD = 1.16$) and likelihood of recidivism ($M = .66$, $SD = .47$) was not significant ($b = .00$, $SE = .02$, $t = .01$, $p = .99$, $R^2 = .00$). Therefore, Hypothesis 3 was not supported.

Table 3.2: Study 5 Regression Analyses.

Variables	DV = Likelihood of Recidivism	
	Model 1	Model 2
(Constant)	1.14 (.10)**	1.14 (.14)
Task Difficulty	-.09 (.02)**	-.09 (.02)**
Motivation to Change		.00 (.02)
R^2	.07**	.07**
ΔR^2		.00

** $p < .01$.

Figure 3.5: Interaction of Implicit Person Theory and Reflection on Cheating in Study 5.
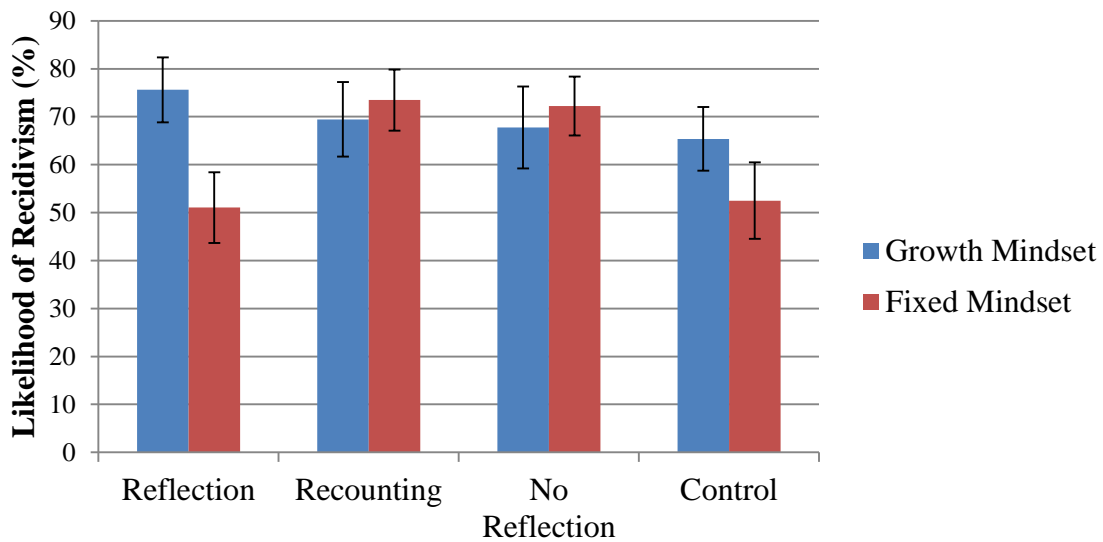
As shown in Figure 3.5, there were no significant differences in likelihood of recidivism between participants in the *growth mindset* condition and those in the *fixed mindset* condition among participants in the *recounting* conditions, $F(1, 342) = .15$, $p = .70$, $\eta^2_p = .00$, *no reflection*

conditions, $F(1, 342) = .18$, $p = .67$, $\eta^2_p = .00$, and *control* conditions, $F(1, 342) = 1.69$, $p = .19$,

$\eta^2_p = .01$. Interestingly, among participants in the *reflection* conditions, those in the *fixed mindset*

condition ($M = .51$, $SD = .51$) had a significantly lower likelihood of recidivism than those in the

growth mindset condition ($M = .75$, $SD = .43$), $F(1, 342) = 5.95$, $p = .02$, $\eta^2_p = .02$. Further

planned comparison tests show that among participants in the *fixed mindset* conditions, those in

the reflection condition ($M = .51$, $SD = .51$) had a significantly lower likelihood of recidivism

than those in the *recounting condition* ($M = .73$, $SD = .45$), $b = .22$, $SE = .10$, $t = 2.33$, $p = .02$,

and than those the *no reflection* condition ($M = .68$, $SD = .48$), $b = .21$, $SE = .09$, $t = 2.25$, $p =$

.03. This suggests that in the *fixed mindset* conditions, *reflection* reduced participants' likelihood

of recidivism, but it was not their motivation to change that drove this effect. Other mechanisms

could have driven the effect of reflection on likelihood of recidivism. For example, it is possible

that in the *fixed mindset* conditions, reflection led to a heightened moral awareness (Reynolds,

2006) or an emotional response (Haidt, 2003), which are independent and distinct from their

motivation to change. That is, when those with a fixed mindset reflect on a past transgression,

they could become more aware of the moral dimensions of their actions in general, which drives

them to be less likely to commit any transgression (thus, not necessarily in relation to the idea of

behavioral change). Alternatively, they might have an emotional reaction that drives them to be

less likely to repeat their transgression (i.e., affective pathway rather than motivational pathway).

Supplementary Analyses

      After participants rated their motivation to change, they responded to the same measures

of lack of effort attributions ($\alpha = .55$), lack of moral character attributions ($\alpha = .90$), challenge

appraisal style ($\alpha = .78$) and threat appraisal style ($\alpha = .82$) as in Study 4. Because of the low

reliability of the measure of lack of effort attributions, I conducted analyses on each item separately.

   Causal attributions. Analyses for lack of effort attributions were conducted on each item separately (i.e., lack of effort, lack of willpower) since the reliability of the two-item measure was less than .70. There were no significant differences in lack of effort attributions between the *growth mindset* and the *fixed mindset* condition, for those in the *no reflection* conditions, $F(1, 339) = .04$, $p = .84$, $\eta^2_p = .00$, the *recounting* conditions, $F(1, 339) = .30$, $p = .58$, $\eta^2_p = .00$, and the *reflection* conditions, $F(1, 339) = 1.37$, $p = .24$, $\eta^2_p = .00$. However, for those in the *control* conditions, those in the *growth mindset* condition ($M = 4.17$, $SD = 1.94$) were significantly more likely to make lack of effort attributions than those in the *fixed mindset* condition ($M = 3.30$, $SD = 1.80$), $F(1, 339) = 4.56$, $p = .03$, $\eta^2_p = .01$. As for lack of willpower attributions, there were no significant differences between the *growth mindset* and the *fixed mindset* condition, for those in the *control* conditions, $F(1, 338) = 1.78$, $p = .18$, $\eta^2_p = .01$, the *no reflection* conditions, $F(1, 338) = .69$, $p = .41$, $\eta^2_p = .00$, the *recounting* conditions, $F(1, 338) = 1.00$, $p = .32$, $\eta^2_p = .00$, and the *reflection* conditions, $F(1, 338) = .93$, $p = .34$, $\eta^2_p = .00$. As for lack of ability attributions, there were no significant differences between the *growth mindset* and the *fixed mindset* condition, for those in the *control* conditions, $F(1, 339) = .05$, $p = .83$, $\eta^2_p = .00$, the *no reflection* conditions, $F(1, 339) = .74$, $p = .11$, $\eta^2_p = .00$, the *recounting* conditions, $F(1, 339) = .00$, $p = .99$, $\eta^2_p = .00$, and the *reflection* conditions, $F(1, 339) = 1.06$, $p = .30$, $\eta^2_p = .00$. Therefore, it is unlikely that causal attributions drive any of the results found in this study.

   Appraisal styles. As for appraisal styles, there were no significant differences in challenge appraisal style between the *growth mindset* and the *fixed mindset* condition, for those in the *control* condition, $F(1, 341) = .93$, $p = .34$, $\eta^2_p = .00$, the *no reflection* condition, $F(1, 341)$

= .07, $p = .79$, $\eta^2_p = .00$, the *recounting* condition, $F(1, 341) = .10$, $p = .76$, $\eta^2_p = .00$, and the *reflection* condition, $F(1, 341) = .82$, $p = .37$, $\eta^2_p = .00$. Similarly, there were no significant differences in lack of moral character attributions between the *growth mindset* and the *fixed mindset* condition, for those in the *control* condition, $F(1, 341) = .03$, $p = .86$, $\eta^2_p = .00$, the *no reflection* condition, $F(1, 341) = .24$, $p = .63$, $\eta^2_p = .00$, the *recounting* condition, $F(1, 341) = .46$, $p = .50$, $\eta^2_p = .01$, and the *reflection* condition, $F(1, 341) = .19$, $p = .67$, $\eta^2_p = .00$. Therefore, it is unlikely that appraisal styles drive any of the results in this study.

Discussion

Study 5 found support for Hypotheses 1 and 2, replicating the interaction pattern found in Study 3 but not Study 4. Among participants in the *no reflection* conditions, those in the growth mindset condition were more motivated to change than those in the *fixed mindset* condition. Furthermore, *reflection* led those in the fixed mindset conditions to increase their motivation to change, and this was more influential than mere *recounting*. In fact, among participants in the *reflection* conditions, there was no difference in motivation to change between those in the *growth mindset* condition and those in the *fixed mindset* condition.

However, Study 5 did not find support for Hypothesis 3 regarding the link between motivation to change and likelihood of recidivism, even though support for this hypothesis was found in Study 4. Therefore, although a growth mindset and reflection can encourage transgressors' motivation to change, this motivation does not necessarily have any implications for transgressors' subsequent behavior in this one problem-solving task. The literature on learning motivation and academic performance might help explain this finding. Although several studies have found a link between motivation to learn and academic performance (e.g., Blackwell et al., 2007), a number of other studies have failed to observe any significant link relation between motivation to learn and academic performance (e.g., Harackiewicz, Barron,

Carter, Letho, & Elliot, 1997; Meece et al., 1988). In other words, even though individuals might

be motivated to put in more effort to learn, this may not necessarily translate into actual results.

Similarly, it is likely that the link between motivation to change and not repeating a

transgression is not so clear-cut, and there could be boundary conditions influencing the strength

of the link. For instance, the context of the subsequent transgression might matter. Comparing

Study 4 and Study 5, on average, participants in Study 4 ($M = .08$, $SD = .19$) showed a much

lower likelihood of cheating than those in Study 5 ($M = .66$, $SD = .47$). While the problem-

solving task in Study 4 involved students at a top-ranked university adding pairs of numbers (i.e.,

simpler task), Study 5 involved regular working adults, who were not necessarily college

educated, answering SAT-level geometry and calculus questions (i.e., more complex task).

Furthermore, since participants in Study 5 completed the problem-solving task online and were

not overseen by an experimenter, they may have felt less fearful about the punitive consequences

of cheating. However, since participants in Study 4 completed their problem-solving task in a

university-based lab and were overseen by lab staff, they may have been more mindful about the

possibility of getting caught for cheating. In short, the contextual factors surrounding the

subsequent behavior might influence the link between motivation to change and likelihood of

recidivism.

3.7 General Discussion

Across the studies in this chapter, I find general support for Hypothesis 1 (with the

exception of Study 4). Individuals with a growth mindset, either as a chronic predisposition or

experimentally induced, are more likely than individuals with a fixed mindset to be motivated to

change in the aftermath of wrongdoing. I also find general support for Hypothesis 2 (again, with

the exception of Study 4). When individuals with a fixed mindset intentionally reflect on their

wrongdoing, they are just as likely as those with a growth mindset to be motivated to change. Specifically, they should reflect on deeper questions surrounding the event (e.g., Why did this happen? What can I learn from this?), rather than a mere recounting of the facts of the event. Reflecting on deeper questions forces individuals to cognitively engage with negative feedback stemming from their past transgression, which then motivates them to change for the better. Reflection is particularly useful for those with a fixed mindset, who may not necessarily automatically cognitively engage with negative feedback as they find such feedback personally threatening.

I did not find support for Hypotheses 1 and 2 in Study 4. However, as discussed earlier, the null findings in Study 4 are possibly due to methodological limitations (i.e., poorly designed control condition). As seen in the results in Study 5, I do not find support for Hypothesis 1 about the main effect of implicit person theories about moral character among those in the *control* conditions, but I do find support for Hypothesis 1 among those in the *no reflection* conditions. Therefore, it is possible that the design of the *control* conditions in Study 4 introduced other confounding variables (e.g., dissonance), which affected participants' motivation to change.

Table 3.3: Summary of Hypotheses and Findings in Across Five Studies.

	Hypotheses	Study 1	Study 2	Study 3	Study 4	Study 5
H1	IPT → MTC	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
H2	Moderating role of reflection	-	-	Y	N	Y
H3	MTC → Recidivism	-	-	-	Y	N

Note: IPT = Implicit person theory about moral character; MTC = Motivation to change; Y = Supported; N = Not supported.

In my earlier theorizing, I proposed that deep cognitive engagement with negative feedback occurs more automatically in those who believe that moral character can be developed, and that this cognitive engagement can also be deliberately structurally enabled through reflection. Therefore, cognitive engagement with negative feedback is the primary mechanism driving transgressors' motivation to change. However, since I did not directly measure transgressors' cognitive processing, it is possible that others mechanisms are driving transgressors' motivation to change. For instance, the "processing" of information has been described as both cognitive and emotional in nature. Emotional processing is a process whereby individuals attempt to explore and understand their emotions, as well as regulate their emotions so that other experiences and behaviour can proceed without disruption (Rachman, 1980, 2001). In the aftermath of wrongdoing, transgressors may experience a multitude of emotions such as sadness, fear, anger, guilt, and shame. The effective processing of these emotions could play an important role in enhancing their motivation to change. Therefore, it is possible that those who believe that moral character can be developed have a stronger tendency to engage in emotional processing in the aftermath of wrongdoing, and that this emotional processing can be deliberately enabled through reflection.

I found mixed support for Hypothesis 3. Motivation to change led to less cheating in Study 4, but it was not linked to cheating in Study 5. It seems that motivation to change can, but does not necessarily, lead to positive behavioral outcomes. Future research should explore the boundary conditions of the relationship between motivation to change and likelihood of recidivism. For example, the situational context of the subsequent behavior might matter. Motivation to change might only have a positive effect on transgressors' behavior to the extent that transgressors find themselves in situations where the temptation to cheat is low, or where

there are punitive consequences for those who are caught cheating. In addition, self-regulation

theory (Bandura, 1991; Kanfer & Ackerman, 1989) suggests that several cognitive mechanisms

might determine the transformation of motivational force into actual behavior. For instance, how

individuals pay attention and monitor their own behavior, seek feedback from others, react to

their past actions, and evaluate their future abilities, are all part of an ongoing self-regulation

process that enable them to set their goals, modify their goals and achieve their goals (Kanfer &

Kanfer, 1991). It is likely that many of these self-regulation mechanisms determine the extent to

which transgressors' motivation to change translates into actual behavioral change

In conclusion, I found consistent support for a significant main effect of implicit person

theory on motivation to change in the aftermath of wrongdoing. Furthermore, I found that

motivation to change could be experimentally induced through a structured reflection

intervention. However, it is still unclear if motivation to change has any impact on recidivism.

More studies should be conducted to better understand the conditions under which motivation to

change translates to a reduced likelihood of recidivism and when it does not.

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Chapter 4:

Concluding Remarks

4.1 Theoretical Implications

Behavioral ethics researchers have developed a robust literature on the individual and contextual factors influencing individuals' wrongdoing (Treviño, Weaver, & Reynolds, 2006). In contrast to prior research's focus on the antecedents of wrongdoing, my dissertation examines what happens in the aftermath of wrongdoing. Specifically, I examine transgressors' cognitions in the aftermath of wrongdoing – their act-centered judgments, their person-centered judgments, and their motivation to change for the better. My work takes an important first step towards understanding transgressors' cognitions as they reflect on and make sense of their wrongdoing.

My dissertation also highlights the value of taking a person-centered approach to understanding how transgressors respond in the aftermath of wrongdoing. In Chapter 2, I found that transgressors' moral self-evaluations matter for reducing recidivism. In Chapter 3, I found that transgressors' mindsets about the malleability of moral character matters for their motivation to change in the aftermath of wrongdoing. Overall, my work answers the call for a more person-centered approach in moral psychology to complement the existing act-centered approach (Pizarro & Tannenbaum, 2012). Virtue ethics philosophies (Aristotle, 4th Century, B.C./2011) are known for their emphasis on moral character and the morality of the self. Therefore, the work

presented in my dissertation represents a re-emergence of early ideas related to moral character and the moral self.

Overall, my dissertation underscores the importance of understanding recidivism as a dependent variable. Transgressions do not occur as isolated one-off incidents. In fact, transgressions may be viewed as part of an ongoing series of similar incidents. Therefore, it is not only important to understand how to reduce the likelihood of one-off transgressions, but also how to address problems of recidivism. Reducing recidivism not only helps to prevent minor workplace transgressions from escalating over time into major business scandals, there are broader societal implications as well. Today, offender recidivism is a social problem in many countries (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2012). Research on recidivism in criminology suggests that the majority of offenders end up repeating their offenses (Durose, Cooper, & Snyder, 2014), including white-collar criminals (Murphy & Harris, 2007; Weisburd & Waring, 2001). My dissertation highlights the importance of transgressors' cognitions in the aftermath of wrongdoing, and how these cognitions might influence their recidivism.

4.2 Future Directions

The research presented in this dissertation represents the beginning of a long-term research program on transgressors' psychological responses in the aftermath of wrongdoing. I hope to continue building up this research program for the next five to ten years, or more. In the general discussions of Chapters 2 and 3, I already proposed some follow-up research studies that I hope to conduct to better understand the findings presented in this dissertation. Beyond the scope of this dissertation, there are many more research questions that I hope to answer.

In Study 1 of Chapter 2, I collected a rich archival dataset on athletes, their suspensions, and their public statements in the aftermath of those suspensions. In my dissertation, I used this dataset to explore the roles of act-centered and person-centered judgments in reducing recidivism. However, this same dataset could potentially be used to explore other questions beyond the scope of this dissertation. What other elements in athletes' public statements might predict recidivism? Beyond athletes' public statements, what individual characteristics (e.g., demographic characteristics, individual performance) or team characteristics (e.g., team performance, team culture, coach or manager characteristics) might predict their likelihood of getting suspended, or their likelihood of recidivism?

In Chapter 3, I developed new materials to experimentally manipulate participants' mindsets about moral character. I hope to conduct more studies to answer different research questions beyond the scope of this dissertation. For instance, how might one's implicit person theories about moral character influence one's reactions to others' wrongdoing? For example, following previous work examining implicit person theories in the workplace context (Heslin, Latham, & VandeWalle, 2005), how might managers' implicit person theories about moral character influence how they punish or forgive employees' wrongdoing? Or how might employees' implicit person theories about moral character influence how they respond to their manager's wrongdoing?

Overall, in my dissertation, I focused on reducing recidivism in the aftermath of wrongdoing. Moving forward, I hope to explore other positive responses that transgressors might display. For example, in the aftermath of wrongdoing, how might reflecting on their transgressions motivate transgressors to engage in generative behaviors (McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992), such as advising others based on their experiences, or giving back to the

community? Also, my dissertation focused primarily on cognitive mechanisms (e.g., moral judgments, implicit person theories about moral character, cognitive engagement with negative feedback) linking individuals' past transgressions to their future behavior. In future, it will be important to explore the affective or relational mechanisms influencing transgressors' future behavior. How might transgressors' emotional responses to their past transgressions (e.g., shame, guilt, pride, gratitude; Haidt, 2003; Tangney, Stuewig, & Mashek, 2007) influence their future behavior? How might the responses of the people around transgressors (e.g., their punitive or forgiving responses; Aquino, Tripp, & Bies, 2006) influence transgressors' future behavior?

Although the theorizing in my dissertation focuses on the individual level – that is, how transgressors psychologically respond to their own transgressions – it might be interesting in future to explore how transgressors respond to their social group's or their organization's transgressions. Individuals are often embedded in organizational contexts, and these organizations are sometimes involved in corporate wrongdoing. Might positive employee behaviors emerge in light of corporate wrongdoing? For instance, when their organization is caught in an ethical scandal, employees may be motivated to engage in more prosocial or ethical behavior outside of work to morally compensate (Zhong, Liljenquist, & Cain, 2009) for their involvement in the scandal as a member of the organization. Also, employees may be motivated to engage in whistle-blowing (Wellman, Mayer, Ong, & DeRue, 2016) or proactive behavior (Ong & Ashford, 2016) within the workplace to create positive change in their organization. It is likely that the relationship between corporate wrongdoing and employee behavior is influenced by both organizational and individual factors. Organizational factors, such as leaders' responses to the wrongdoing (e.g., apology; Basford, Offermann, & Behrend, 2014), might influence employees' behavior in the aftermath of corporate wrongdoing. Individual factors, such as the

employees' organizational commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991) or their cynicism towards change (DeCelles, Tesluk, & Taxman, 2013), might influence their behavior in the aftermath of corporate wrongdoing.

Figure 4.1: Future Research Program
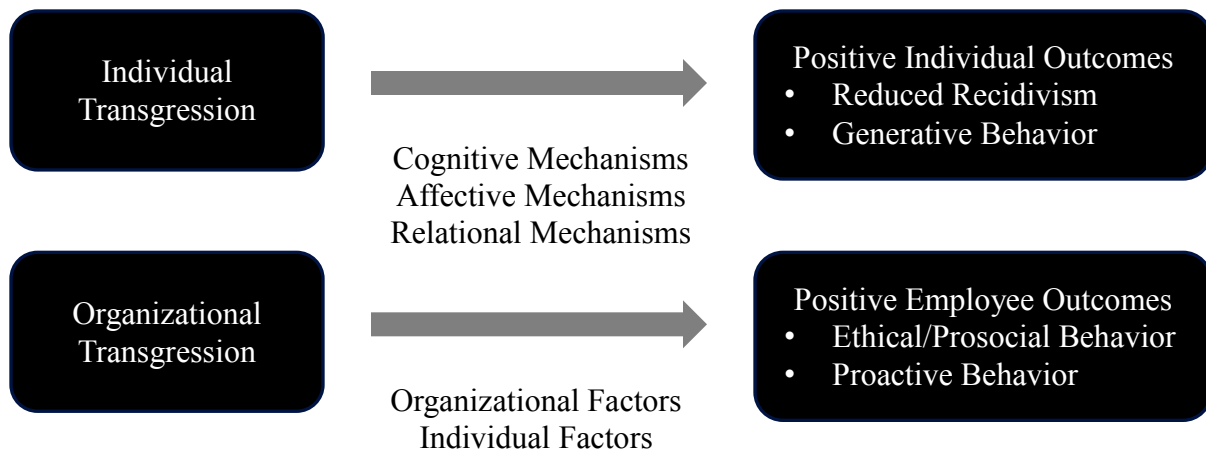
4.3 Practical Implications

Overall, this research has implications for individuals who are interested in curbing their own recidivism, as well as individuals who are interested in helping others reduce their recidivism (e.g., managers disciplining employees).

The first practical implication is that in the aftermath of wrongdoing, transgressors' positive moral self-evaluations should be encouraged and their negative moral self-evaluations should be discouraged. For example, instead of internalizing their recent transgression, transgressors might remember times in the past when they behaved morally or when they were praised for being a good person, or they might interpret their recent transgression as an anomaly that does not represent their moral values. These positive moral self-evaluations will strengthen transgressors' sense of efficacy with respect to not repeating their transgression, and therefore decrease their likelihood of recidivism.

The second practical implication is that transgressors should be encouraged to think in terms of a growth mindset – they should view their moral character as something that can be improved and developed over time. At least in the studies presented in Chapter 3, it appears that a growth mindset can be experimentally induced in a lab setting, with significant effects on participants' motivation to change in the aftermath of wrongdoing. Longitudinal field research studies have successfully developed workshops and interventions to help both children (Blackwell, Trzesniewski, & Dweck, 2007) and adults (Heslin et al., 2006) cultivate a growth mindset with respect to their intelligence and ability. Using a similar approach, I expect that it will be possible to develop interventions to help individuals cultivate a growth mindset with respect to moral character and for them to maintain this mindset over time.

Finally, transgressors should be encouraged to take time for reflection in the aftermath of wrongdoing. During this time of reflection, beyond considering the facts of the case, they should ask themselves questions like, "How am I learning from this?" and "How might I try to change?" Such questions will inspire their motivation to change, although the implications for actual recidivism remain unclear. Nevertheless, my dissertation research suggests that there is some element of truth in earlier philosophical theories suggesting that contemplation is the highest form of human activity (Aristotle, 4th Century, B.C./2011; Plato, 4th Century, B.C./2006). Individuals stand to benefit psychologically from more introspection and contemplation in the aftermath of wrongdoing.

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