Character Traits in the Workplace:

A Three-Month Diary Study of Moral and Immoral Organizational Behaviors

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Abstract

The Work Experiences and Character Traits (WECT) project investigated how moral character, personality, emotions, and treatment by managers and coworkers affected how frequently workers engaged in ethical and unethical behavior at their jobs. Over three months, we administered 14 surveys to more than 1,500 adults living in the United States, who worked in a diverse array of occupations in the private and public sectors. The initial and final surveys assessed personality and moral character traits, as well as job and organizational characteristics. Twelve weekly surveys assessed work behaviors, work experiences, and emotions. A coworker survey assessed coworkers' judgments of the targets' personality and moral character traits, as well as their observations of the targets' work behaviors. Our research showed that individual differences in moral character have consistent, meaningful effects on employees' work behaviors, and our findings contest situationist perspectives that de-emphasize the importance of individual differences in predicting behavior.

Keywords: morality; ethics; character; personality; individual differences; counterproductive work behaviors; organizational citizenship behaviors;

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What is moral character? Can we measure it by asking people about their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors? Do people's self-perceptions of character correspond to other people's perceptions of them? Can measuring moral character with self-reports and/or observer reports help us predict and explain employees' harmful and helpful behaviors in the workplace? These are some of the questions we set out to study in the Work Experiences and Character Traits (WECT) project (www.WECTProject.org). Our goal in designing this project was to investigate how moral character, personality, emotions, and treatment by managers and coworkers affect the frequency with which workers engage in ethical and unethical behavior at their jobs. The research is at the intersection of social/personality psychology and organizational behavior. As such, we think it has the potential to offer important theoretical and practical insights about character to both fields. Our hope is that the interdisciplinary nature of the project will create bridges between psychological, philosophical, and organizational research on morality, character, behavioral ethics, and workplace deviance.

Guided by four key questions related to moral character initially raised by the Character Project at Wake Forest University, we have investigated: (1) Are there reliable and meaningful individual differences in dispositions to think, feel, and act in morally relevant ways?; (2) Is there evidence, including consistency evidence, for the existence of character traits?; (3) If character traits do stand up to empirical scrutiny, are they best conceptualized as general traits, such as those in the Big Five approach (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism), or are they better understood as hundreds of highly localized traits? If they are general traits, does the Big Five approach capture all of them?; and (4) How

accurate is the understanding people typically have of their own character traits? And how accurate is the understanding people have of other people's character traits?

To address these questions, we have drawn on empirical findings from the WECT Project, and other related studies we have conducted (Cohen, Wolf, Panter, & Insko, 2011; Cohen, Panter, & Turan, 2013a; Cohen, Panter, Turan, Morse, & Kim, 2013b; Cohen, Panter, Turan, Morse, & Kim, 2014; Wiltermuth & Cohen, 2014; for a review of this work, see Cohen & Morse, 2014). Because the WECT project results are so foundational to our emerging insights about moral character in the workplace, we begin by describing the methods used in this research, and then move on to discussing how our findings relate to the four key questions outlined above.

The WECT Project

In the WECT project, 1,514 U.S. adults with full-time employment participated in a three-month online diary study about “weekly experiences in the workplace.” We conducted the study in two separate administrations. Data collection for the first iteration began in September 2011, and data collection for the second iteration began in January 2012. Both iterations had the same procedures. In the initial survey, participants first provided detailed information about their jobs and completed a battery of measures assessing various dimensions of character and personality. To measure “moral character,” we asked participants about 22 individual differences that have been linked to ethical and unethical choices in prior research. These variables were also measured again in the final survey, which largely paralleled the initial survey (a complete description of the individual difference variables we investigated is provided in Cohen et al., 2014). These variables were: the six HEXACO personality factors (Honesty-Humility, Emotionality, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Openness to Experience);

guilt proneness, shame proneness, and guilt and shame action tendencies (guilt-repair orientation, shame-withdrawal orientation); empathic concern and perspective taking; moral identity-internalization and symbolization; consideration of future consequences and future self-continuity; moral idealism and moral relativism; cognitive moral development; narcissism; Machiavellianism; and self-control.

Following the initial survey, participants completed an online survey once a week for 12 weeks in which they reported the frequency with which they performed organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB) and counterproductive work behaviors (CWB). The OCB items assessed ethical organizational behaviors (e.g., helping coworkers with work and personal responsibilities, coming in early or staying late without pay), whereas the CWB items assessed unethical organizational behaviors (e.g., verbally or physically abusing coworkers, stealing from one's employer). Prior to conducting the WECT project we conducted a pilot study of approximately 400 working adults to verify our assumption that people judge acts of OCB to be "moral" and acts of CWB to be "immoral" (see Appendix in Cohen et al., 2014 for a description of the pilot study about employees' moral judgments of OCB and CWB).

In addition to measuring self-reported OCB and CWB, the weekly surveys also asked participants about how they were treated by managers and coworkers (e.g., the frequency of interpersonal conflict, discrimination, ostracism, and abusive supervision) and the extent to which they experienced various emotions during the previous week, both at work and outside of work. Finally, the WECT Project also included observer reports of personality and behavior. We collected observer reports halfway through the project by asking coworkers of the participants to complete an online survey about the target employees' guilt proneness, shame proneness, and the six HEXACO factors, as well as the target employees' CWB and OCB during the previous

month (see Cohen et al., 2013b, for more information about the observer reports and related findings). Collecting observer reports and self-reports of the same individual differences and work behaviors allowed us to examine the correspondence between employees' perceptions of themselves and coworkers' perceptions of them, with regard to both personality traits and ethical and unethical work behaviors.

Participants in the WECT Project were recruited from an online panel administered by a survey research firm specializing in web-based research. These individuals were a diverse group of American adults. They lived in all 50 U.S. states and their ages ranged from 18 to 71 years ($M = 39.3$ years; $SD = 11.4$). Half of them were women. The sample contained White (75.2%), Black (9.2%), Hispanic (5.5%), Asian (3.6%), and other /multiracial (6.3%) participants. The jobs and organizations these individuals worked in were also diverse. All 23 occupational categories classified by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics were represented in the sample. Employees worked in private for-profit companies (66.6%), government (14.7%), non-profit organizations (10.6%), and some were self-employed (8%). The median income in the sample was \$44,000, but there was wide variability ($M = \$52,962$; $SD = \$43,547$).

Participants received compensation for their participation. Those in the first iteration of the study (WECT2011) received \$53, and those in the second iteration (WECT2012) received \$37. Individuals who missed surveys or terminated their participation early received partial compensation based on the number of surveys they completed. We structured the payments so that the initial and final payments were larger than the interim payments for the weekly surveys. We did this to incentivize participants to complete the entire study. In WECT2011, participants received \$6 for the initial survey, \$1 for each weekly survey, and \$35 for the final survey; the coworkers received \$20 for completing the coworker survey. In WECT2012, participants

received \$5 for the initial survey, \$1 for each weekly survey, and \$5 for the final survey; coworkers' received \$15 for the final survey. We downwardly adjusted payment rates in the second iteration of the data collection because we learned from our experience with the first iteration that financial incentives did not need to be large to attract and retain participants. Indeed, it was surprising to us that payments to participants did not need to be substantial to incentivize them to complete the repeated surveys. Based on responses participants provided in open-ended comment boxes at the end of each survey, we learned that by and large, the participants we surveyed were at least somewhat intrinsically motivated to participate in this research. They enjoyed being able to talk about their work experiences with a team of researchers from prestigious universities. Through our surveys, we were giving voice to employees who may not typically encounter such opportunities in their daily lives. We speculate that this may have been particularly important for those who had difficult work environments, such as an abusive boss or difficult coworkers—they were happy to have someone to talk about these issues with, even if only in an online survey format.

Having provided details about the methods we used in this research, we now turn our attention to addressing what we learned from the project about moral character and ethical work behaviors.

Question 1: Are there reliable and meaningful individual differences in dispositions to think, feel, and act in morally relevant ways?

We included multiple potential measures of character in our study because our key goal was to investigate the importance of different traits in determining a person's likelihood of behaving ethically. This is in contrast to most extant research on character, which tends to focus on a single character trait, or a small set of character traits. We conducted a variety of different

statistical analyses to analyze the measures, including correlation analysis, regression analysis, latent profile analysis, and factor analysis (see Cohen et al., 2014 for a complete description of these analyses and results). Based on these analyses, our response to question number 1 is an unequivocal yes—there are indeed reliable and meaningful individual differences in dispositions to think, feel, and act in morally relevant ways. Of particular importance, most of the individual differences measured in the initial survey predicted subsequent ethical and unethical behavior in the workplace (i.e., OCB and CWB), supporting the claim that individual differences in moral character exist.

Specifically, our data suggest that individuals with high levels of moral character can be characterized in a certain profile. This profile can be described with a tripartite model (Cohen & Morse, 2014). According to this model, moral character consists of a variety of virtuous traits, some of which influence the motivation to be moral (i.e., one's desire to do right and avoid doing wrong), others of which influence the ability to be moral (i.e., one's capacity to do right and avoid doing wrong), and others that influence moral identity (i.e., one's identity as a good versus bad person). The three components of our tripartite model are not orthogonal, so it is certainly possible, and likely, that some character traits relate to more than one component.

In our view, the motivational component of moral character encompasses traits related to the consideration of the needs and interests of others, as well as how one's own actions affect others. Examples of traits that we think relate to the consideration of others include honesty-humility, low Machiavellianism, empathic concern, perspective taking, guilt proneness, and guilt repair orientation, each of which we describe below.

Honesty-humility is a broad personality dimension indicative of a person's fairness, sincerity, modesty, and greed-avoidance (Ashton & Lee, 2007, 2009). A person who is high on

honesty-humility is fair and genuine in dealing with others, even when doing so could put them at risk for being taken advantage of. For example, they would strongly agree with the following statements: “I wouldn’t use flattery to get a raise or promotion at work, even if I thought it would succeed”; and “Having a lot of money is not especially important to me.”

Machiavellianism refers to the extent to which a person is manipulative and dishonest in their interactions with others (Christie & Geis, 1970). It is the opposite of honesty-humility in many ways. A person who is high on Machiavellianism treats other people as objects and exploits them for personal gain. A person who is low on Machiavellianism values honesty and believes that people get ahead in the world by leading moral lives. For example, a person who is low on Machiavellianism would strongly disagree with the statement: “Never tell anyone the real reason you did something unless it is to your benefit to do so.”

Empathic concern refers to the affective component of empathy, whereas perspective taking refers to the cognitive component of empathy (Davis, 1983). Both are relevant to moral character. A person who is high on empathic concern experiences feelings of sympathy, compassion, and concern for others’ well-being. For example, they would strongly agree with the following statement: “I often have tender, concerned feelings for people less fortunate than me.” A person who is high on perspective taking adopts the perspectives of other people and tries to understand how they think and feel. They imagine themselves in “other people’s shoes.” For example, they would strongly agree with the following statement: “I try to look at everybody’s side of a disagreement before I make a decision.”

Guilt proneness can be thought of as the strength of one’s conscience—would the person feel badly about committing a transgression, such as harming another person, even if no one knew about what they did (Cohen et al., 2011)? A person who is high on guilt proneness feels

badly about wrongdoing, even when the wrongdoing is private. For example, they would respond “very likely” to the following question: “After realizing you have received too much change at a store, you decide to keep it because the sales clerk doesn’t notice. What is the likelihood that you would feel uncomfortable about keeping the money?”

Guilt-repair orientation is related to guilt proneness (Cohen et al., 2011). A person who is high on this trait engages in corrective behaviors following wrongdoing, even when the wrongdoing is private. That is, they anticipate that they would make reparations for past mistakes by changing their future behavior, even if no one knew about their mistakes. For example, they would respond “very likely” to the following question: “You reveal a friend’s secret, though your friend never finds out. What is the likelihood that your failure to keep the secret would lead you to exert extra effort to keep secrets in the future?”

The ability component of the model comprises various traits related to the regulation of one's behavior, specifically with reference to regulating behavior that may have positive short-term consequences, but negative long-term consequences for one's self or others. Personality characteristics relevant to this aspect of the model are indicative of an ability to act ethically and refrain from acting unethically, should the person be motivated to act in such a way. If motivations or intentions to behave in an ethical manner are absent, it is unlikely that self-regulatory abilities, on their own, would facilitate ethical behavior. However, when motivations and intentions to be moral are present, individual differences in self-regulation can foster helpful behaviors and deter harmful behaviors. Examples of traits that relate to self-regulation include conscientiousness, self-control, and consideration of future consequences.

Conscientiousness is a broad personality dimension indicative of a person’s organization, diligence, perfectionism, and prudence (Ashton & Lee, 2007, 2009). A person who is high on

conscientiousness organizes their time and their physical surroundings, works in a disciplined way toward their goals, strives for accuracy and perfection in their tasks, and deliberates carefully when making decisions. For example, they would strongly agree with the following statements: “I plan ahead and organize things, to avoid scrambling at the last minute”; and “I always try to be accurate in my work, even at the expense of time.” Conscientiousness is the broad personality factor linked most closely to the ability to self-regulate—an ability that is usually required for forgoing the temptation of short-term gains that generally result from unethical behavior. Self-control is related to conscientiousness, and refers to an ability to override desires and work effectively toward long-term goals (Tangney, Baumeister, & Boone, 2004). A person who is high on self-control refrains from acting on undesired behaviors and adapts oneself to act in a desirable way. They would strongly agree with the following statement: “I am good at resisting temptation.”

Consideration of future consequences refers to the extent to which individuals think about the long-term consequences of their behavior and modify their future behavior accordingly (Strathman et al., 1994). A person who is high on consideration of future consequences would strongly agree with the following statement: “I consider how things might be in the future, and try to influence those things with my day to day behavior.” Consideration of future consequences facilitates self-control and conscientiousness, and is important for self-regulation.

The third category in the model is moral identity. A person with a highly internalized moral identity has a deep concern about being a moral person and viewing himself or herself accordingly (Aquino & Reed, 2002). Specifically, a person who scores highly on measures of moral identity-internalization would feel very good to be a person who possesses the following characteristics: “caring, compassionate, fair, friendly, generous, helpful, hardworking, honest,

and kind.” They would strongly agree that being someone who has these characteristics is an important part of who they are (for more on the development of this measure and why this list of moral identity characteristics were chosen, see Aquino & Reed, 2002). Moral identity is related to the motivation and ability elements of moral character in that a person could identify as a person who is very considerate of others (e.g., generous), and/or as a person who has a strong ability to self-regulate (e.g., hardworking). That is, they could identify with different aspects of moral character, some of which might be more relevant to the motivation to be moral, others of which might be more relevant to the ability to be moral.

Drawing on this model and our empirical results from the WECT project, we can describe people with high levels of moral character as follows. They refrain from manipulating others (low levels of *Machiavellianism*; Christie & Geis, 1970). They consider other people’s perspectives and feelings (high levels of *perspective taking* and *empathic concern*; Davis, 1983). They value integrity and want to see themselves as moral (high levels of *internalized moral identity*; Aquino & Reed, 2002). They anticipate feeling guilty and engaging in repair-oriented actions when they do something wrong (high levels of *guilt proneness* and *guilt-repair orientation*; Cohen et al., 2011). They are disciplined, prudent, organized, and good at resisting temptations (high levels of *conscientiousness* and *self-control*; Ashton & Lee, 2009; Tangney, Baumeister, & Boone, 2004). They think about future consequences of their behavior and act accordingly (high levels of *consideration of future consequences*; Strathman, Gleicher, Boninger, & Edwards, 1994). And in general, they are characterized as being sincere, modest, and fair (high levels of *honesty-humility*; Ashton & Lee, 2009). All of the traits described above were found to predict subsequent counterproductive and citizenship behaviors, as reported by the employees themselves, and by their coworkers (Cohen et al., 2014).

Just as interesting as knowing the traits that predict ethical behavior is knowing the traits that do not. Not every potential variable we explored correlated with the character traits we identified above, nor did every variable predict CWB and OCB. There were two results that we found particularly surprising—variables that seem to be relatively undiagnostic of moral character according to our analyses of how the variables we measured relate to one another and to ethical behavior. Identifying such variables helps us determine the scope of our model of moral character and provides insight into its structure.

Emotionality and cognitive moral development did not differentiate individuals with a moral profile versus those with immoral or amoral profiles. Emotionality is a broad personality dimension indicative of a person's fearfulness, anxiety, dependence, and sentimentality (Ashton & Lee, 2007, 2009). Prior research on five-factor personality models has suggested that emotional stability (a variable closely related to emotionality) predicts unethical behavior (Berry, Ones, & Sackett, 2007; Henle & Gross, 2013), but our study did not find any evidence of this. Indeed, of all the 22 variables we investigated, emotionality had the weakest relationships with the other moral character traits and ethical and unethical work behaviors. It was uncorrelated with CWB and OCB and did not differentiate the employees in the sample in the same way as the variables we found to be important for understanding the profile of moral individuals.

Cognitive moral development also did not predict ethical and unethical behavior in our study. This construct is sometimes referred to as moral reasoning (Kohlberg, 1969; Rest, 1986) and is indicative of the complexity of a person's thoughts about difficult moral dilemmas. There are decades of social science research that focuses on moral reasoning ability, with the assumption that it relates to moral behavior (Kish-Gephart, Harrison, & Treviño, 2010; Narvaez, 2010). We found it particularly interesting that this variable did not predict helpful and harmful

work behaviors and did not differentiate the employees in the sample in the same way as the variables that we found to be important for understanding the profile of moral individuals. Our view is that cognitive moral development likely predicts complex ethical decision making, but is not particularly well-suited to predicting more common and mundane choices, such as the decision to commit CWB or OCB, where there is widespread agreement about the ethicality of the behaviors in question (Cohen et al., 2014).

Certainly, there are limitations of our study of moral character in the workplace and opportunities for future research that extends and clarifies our tripartite framework and related findings. We do not know whether the three components we have identified are comprehensive of the character landscape, nor do we know how these components fit together to determine moral behavior—is any one necessary or sufficient? Is their sum greater than their parts? We hope that the framework we propose paves the way to further research by scholars in different fields that tests, extends, and challenges our current thinking on what moral character is and what moral character does.

Furthermore, we recognize that the conclusions we are drawing about the relationship between moral character and ethical behavior are based on survey data rather than experimentation. Thus, despite the causality implied by our assumptions and observations of how character traits influence work behaviors over time, our results are still subject to alternative causal explanations. Indeed, we believe the relationship between personality and behavior is a dynamic one, and causality may run in both directions. While being disposed to act in a particular way predicts relevant future behaviors, behaving in a particular way over time changes one's disposition. Currently, there is little research examining character and behavior dynamically over time, so there is much opportunity for future research that examines the causal

structure of these relationships in more depth.

Question 2: Is there evidence, including consistency evidence, for the existence of character traits?

As with Question 1, based on our research from our WECT project, we think the answer to this question is also a resounding yes. When we asked our participants to self-report about the moral character traits we described above, these traits were all reasonably stable across the 14 weeks between the initial and final surveys in our project. Specifically, test-retest correlations (i.e., the correlation of a variable with itself at a later time point) were in the range of .60 to .70, similar in magnitude to test-retest correlations for other dimensions of personality less relevant to moral character, such as extraversion and openness to experience. Furthermore, self-reports of moral character traits predicted coworker reports of CWB and OCB 5 weeks later, and self-reports of CWB and OCB 12 weeks later (see Cohen et al., 2013b, 2014, for more on these results). Thus, our empirical findings indicate that self-reports of moral character have a strong degree of consistency in adults over a period of several months.

Despite the strong consistency over time that we observed in our data, we do not think that moral character is fixed. Like others who take a trait theory view of moral character, we assume character traits are “stable and general, but also shaped by the individual’s setting and thus capable of change” (Peterson & Seligman, 2004, p. 10). Indeed, we found differences in moral character depending on the age of the respondent. Individuals who classified as low in moral character were, on average, seven years younger than those classified as high in moral character. We think this age difference makes sense in light of our tripartite framework. As people age, they likely become more considerate of others and more skilled at self-regulation in a variety of settings; both of these developmental changes could make them more moral.

Question 3: If character traits do stand up to empirical scrutiny, are they best conceptualized as general traits, such as those in the Big Five approach (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism), or are they better understood as hundreds of highly localized traits? If they are general traits, does the Big Five approach capture all of them?

Moral character, according to our data, is captured by both broad and narrow traits, many of which were described earlier. The two broad traits that we identified as particularly important elements of moral character were honesty-humility and conscientiousness. While conscientiousness is a factor in the Big Five, honesty-humility is not. Thus, the Big Five model does not capture all relevant personality and character traits. Instead, our results suggest that the HEXACO framework is superior to the Big Five framework when it comes to conceptualizing moral character (Ashton & Lee, 2007).

Research on the HEXACO model of personality indicates that there are six broad traits that encompass the entire landscape of personality. Honesty-humility is not fully captured by five-factor models. The six broad traits described by the HEXACO model can be detected in most, and possibly all, cultures throughout the world. More than a decade of research by Michael Ashton and Kibeom Lee supports this claim (for reviews, see Ashton & Lee, 2008; Lee & Ashton, 2012). In our work, honesty-humility predicted the frequency with which employees reported CWB and OCB in the workplace, as did conscientiousness (Cohen et al., 2013b, 2014), replicating previous work with the HEXACO scales and work behaviors (Bourdage, Lee, Lee, & Shin, 2012; Marcus, Lee, & Ashton, 2007). Honesty-humility and conscientiousness are also related to other more narrow facets of moral character, such as guilt proneness and moral identity, which as described earlier, also predict ethical and unethical behaviors (Cohen et al.,

2014).

In light of our results, we disagree with claims that character traits are highly localized to particular settings. People with a tendency to behave unethically at work also have a tendency to behave unethically at home, and in a variety of other social situations (e.g., Cohen et al., 2011, 2013b, 2014). This does not mean that a person low in moral character will behave unethically in every aspect of his or her life. Rather, it means that we can measure and observe general tendencies in people's patterns of behaviors, and these patterns are often apparent regardless of the particular context in which you observe them.

Question 4: How accurate is the understanding people typically have of their own character traits? And how accurate is the understanding people have of other people's character traits?

Evidence related to this set of questions can be gleaned from the coworker reports that we were able to collect from a subset of the respondents in our weekly diary study. We asked employees to nominate a well-acquainted coworker who could complete self-ratings as well as ratings about the participant on several key moral character traits including honesty-humility, conscientiousness, guilt proneness, and guilt-repair orientation. Because of time constraints, we could not administer the full battery of measures that we had the employees complete, so we focused on a subset with strong empirical and theoretical support for their relevance to moral character and behavior.

Self-other agreement refers to the extent to which an individual's self-ratings correspond to an observer's ratings of him or her. In our study, this agreement was captured by the correlation between a participant's self-report and their coworker's observer report. All of the self-other agreement correlations that we examined were substantial (ranging from $r = .50$ to

.60), with the exception of guilt-repair orientation, which was lower for reasons that are unclear ($r = .32$). These correlations were similar to those observed for other personality dimensions that we investigated (i.e., the other HEXACO traits and shame proneness), and the relationships held even after controlling for the similarity and assumed similarity between the participants and the coworkers (Cohen et al., 2013b). Similarity refers to whether two individuals rate themselves similarly. Assumed similarity refers to whether a perceiver sees himself or herself akin to how they see others; it captures projection of one's own personality onto others. The fact that we observed moderately strong self-other agreement correlations after controlling for similarity and assumed similarity correlations implies that neither projection of one's own traits on others (i.e., assumed similarity) nor actual similarity fully explains the consensus between self and observer ratings of moral character.

This consensus between how employees rate themselves and how well-acquainted coworkers judge them gives us confidence in the accuracy of both self-ratings and observer ratings. While neither method is free from limitations, the convergence between the two reporting methods goes a long way toward alleviating concerns about the problems associated with each method. Moreover, regardless of the reporting method, the moral character traits correlated negatively with unethical behavior. That is, coworker ratings of honesty-humility, conscientiousness, guilt proneness, and guilt-repair orientation all inversely predicted self-reports of CWB. Likewise, self-ratings of honesty-humility, conscientiousness, guilt proneness, and guilt-repair orientation all inversely predicted coworker reports of CWB (Cohen et al., 2013b).

Conclusion

When we planned the WECT project, we prioritized certain objectives for the project. We wanted to build on our prior research in the areas of moral character, personality, emotions, and

behavioral ethics, while recognizing that there were several unknown aspects of how moral character traits manifested themselves in real world settings such as one's work environment. We did not want to be limited by a single reporting source (usually self), a single operationalization of moral character, a single point in time, a single generalized context that ignored how most of the U.S. adult population spend their time, and a single disciplinary perspective. We were motivated to bridge existing psychological research on morality with organizational research on behavioral ethics and workplace deviance.

By designing a research project that was consistent with those objectives, we were able to gain insight into the structure of moral character, including dimensions of personality and the self that are not as relevant to moral character. Moreover, we were able to show convergence in perceptions of moral character across multiple reporters, and demonstrate strong relevance of moral character to understanding and predicting behaviors that occur in the workplace. Our current research is building on this work by focusing on methods that allow us to observe specific, relevant behaviors in the workplace. For example, we are looking at the extent to which trained observers can identify moral character traits and relevant behaviors in responses to job interview questions. We are investigating the types of interview questions that could elicit material that includes moral character information and testing the extent to which trained interviewers can reliably detect this information. Related to our tripartite model, we are considering an interviewee's motivation to be moral, their ability to provide strong examples of past moral behavior as perceived by others, and their own self-perception as having a moral identity. By establishing strong ties to observed behavior in workplace contexts, we can move forward in describing and testing the role that individual differences in moral character play in our social and work lives.

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