To Act Ethically or Not to Act Ethically:

A Whole Person-Situation Interactionist Perspective to Prediction

by

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Abstract

The concept of what it means to be ethical and therefore the types of decisions that comprise ethical decision making had been a widely debated topic for centuries. This may be due in no small part to the proposed contextual nature of the construct itself. The primary goal of this project was to investigate the interaction between personality and situational context effects on the prediction of ethical decision making in a workplace setting. In addition, a comparison of major personality theories as predictors was conducted. This was done using a between-subject experimental design that allowed for the manipulation of two aspects of organizational ethical culture. All research was conducted online with an undergraduate student sample. Results indicated the predictive value of using the trait of Honesty-Humility as a predictor of ethical decision making. However, the results did not support the interaction effect with organizational context. Overall findings and implications are discussed. It is recommended that future research learn from the limitations of this study to develop more immersive contextual manipulations and/or use other ethical decision outcome measures.

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Ethical decision making has been a prominent topic in a variety of fields, including philosophy, psychology, and organizational behavior (Bazerman & Gino, 2012; Craft, 2013; Hattwick, 1986; Little, 2017; Solomon, 2004; Treviño, Weaver, & Reynolds, 2006). The theoretical works of Aristotle marked what some may consider the beginning of empirical and written attempts to define and discover the potential causes of ethical behavior or morality in Western society. Aristotle argued that the definition of morality was situationally dependent. Centuries later, the philosopher Immanuel Kant proposed views of morality that he viewed as being in opposition to the views of Aristotle (Little, 2017). Kant theorized a more intrinsic perspective, whereby the motivation of the individual to engage in ethical behavior is based primarily on the emotions of the individual. In essence, Kant's arguments proved to vary little from those originally posited by Aristotle despite the fact that Kant continuously insisted that his views were of a very different nature. The arguments of these philosophers point to not only a long-standing interest in moral philosophy and ethicality, but also a long-standing debate between person and situation-based perspectives of morality. Philosophers such as Aristotle, Kant, and Leviñas have all proposed ideas regarding the nature of morality or ethicality, but few have reached an agreement on either the causes or definition of truly ethical behavior (Ellertson, Ingerson, & Williams, 2016; Little, 2017). Within scientific and theoretical communities, ethicality is also often paralleled with morality and/or integrity within the scientific literature. As such, it is not surprising that there is relatively little consensus regarding the nature of ethical behavior.

This paper aims to discuss the nature of ethical decision making and the factors that proceed what may be noted as ethical behavior. In so doing, the paper begins with a brief review of ethical decision making literature and recent attempts at defining the construct. This will be followed by a discussion of commonly used methods for predicting ethical behavior in individuals. One of the most commonly used methods for predicting ethicality/integrity happens to be the implementation of personality tests. As such, a discussion of personality correlates of ethical or unethical behavior will also be discussed as will the most commonly used measures for those personality traits. Additionally, it is argued that personality may not be the only predictor of ethical decision making and that situational context of the decision may play an equally important role as an antecedent of ethical behavior. The effect of situational strength on behavior is also discussed prior to a brief discussion of how the interaction between personality and context may affect ethical decision making.

Ethical Decision Making

Most researchers and theorists would agree that acting in a moral or ethical way requires "doing good." The trouble lies with the way in which we define what "good" really is. While many models have been proposed regarding what may or may not constitute an ethical decision, relatively few researchers have sought to validate such a definition empirically. A recent review of the ethical decision making literature (cf. Craft, 2013) cited the primary foundational theories of ethical decision making as ones explicitly dealing with morality, such as those proposed by Rest (1986) and Jones (1991). While Rest (1986) viewed morality as being largely subjective to the individual and focused more on the internal processes relevant to the individual, Jones (1991) applied a more subjective perspective on the situation whereby he viewed moral behavior as occurring due to the cognitive impressions of the moral issue itself. These two theories require

further elaboration as they each provide a working framework for understanding the processes related to ethical decision-making.

According to Jones (1991), ethical decision making may be defined as "a decision that is both legal and morally acceptable to the larger community. Conversely, an unethical decision is either illegal or morally unacceptable to the larger community" (p. 367). Rest's model on the other hand focused on the steps leading up to an ethical decision which involved (1) recognizing the issue as a moral one, (2) making a judgment about the morality of the situation, (3) deciding to act upon the moral concerns over other concerns, and (4) acting on the moral concerns (Rest, 1986). This Four Component Model as proposed by Rest indicated the cognitive process individuals must go through prior to engaging in ethical or moral behavior. As indicated by Figure 1, Jones (1991) later added on to the ideas posited by Rest and others to propose a theory of moral intensity. Jones theorized that each stage of the Four Component Model proposed by Rest may be affected by varying degrees of moral intensity whereby the likelihood to recognize and engage in a moral act would be greater if the situation presented higher levels of moral intensity. According to Jones, the moral intensity of a situation is a reflection of characteristics unique to the situation itself and describes the "issue-related moral imperative in a situation" (p. 372). Jones theorized that every ethical issue can be defined in terms of its moral intensity and the six key elements that comprise moral intensity. The first element is the *magnitude of consequences* which comprises all potential benefits or harms to those involved in the situation. The second element is that of *social consensus* which is related the social norms regarding the situation and potential behaviors or actions. *Probability of effect* relates to the expected probability of the suspected consequences actually occurring. *Temporal immediacy* involves the length of time present between the event and the expected outcome of said event. In particular,

this facet is targeted at those effects that are related to temporal discounting. Temporal discounting can be thought of simply as the extent to which an individual discounts larger rewards in the future and instead favors smaller rewards that are more immediate (cf. Lowenstein & Thaler, 1989). In general, individuals tend to place more worth and emphasis on those decisions in which the outcome is closer in temporal proximity (e.g. Gubler & Pierce, 2014). Subjective *proximity* (social, cultural, psychological, and physical) to the victim or beneficiary of a moral or immoral act also plays a role in ethical decision making. Lastly the *concentration of effect*, or the diffusion of consequences of an event, also play a role in the actor's evaluation of a moral or ethical dilemma. Accordingly, both this framework and that expressed by Rest (1986) give us a lens through which to categorize and attempt to rationalize research on ethical dilemmas. As such, it is impossible to consider either theory without an examination of the other.

Much of the research categorized by Craft (2013), O'Fallon and Butterfield (2005), Lehnert, Park, and Singh (2013), and Treviño et al. (2003) was classified in accordance with the theories posited by Rest (1986) and Jones (1991). While it may be possible to categorize research articles according to both of these theories one may argue, as Jones (1991) did, that what comprises a moral or immoral situation can be defined by the characteristics described in these theories as well. For instance, Kelley and Elm (2003) attempted to use such a basis for an examination of organizational factors that affected moral intensity of various situations. Kelley and Elm found an interaction between temporal immediacy, probability of effect, and magnitude of consequences post hoc. Unfortunately, this research was limited by a qualitative design and potential confounds from a lack of a priori hypotheses, inherent in their exploratory study design. Kelley and Elm sought contextual influences on degrees of moral intensity by interviewing 22 social service managers regarding ethical issues they had previously experienced in the

workplace. Each manager was asked to name several instances, but only go into detail on two or three instances, including why they thought these were ethical issues. Responses were then transcribed and analyzed to determine the organizational characteristics that affected each issue. For the purpose of their investigation, Kelly and Elm then linked these contextual factors to the aspects of moral intensity that they believed to be congruent.

Other researchers that have tried to replicate and test Jones' original theory found that a three-factor solution best fit the data when using questions derived from Jones' (1991) findings (McMahon & Harvey, 2006). More specifically, the first factor of moral intensity found by McMahon and Harvey was comprised of items related to magnitude of consequences, probability of effect, and temporal immediacy. McMahon and Harvey referred to this factor as the *Probable Magnitude of Consequences.* Due to the combination of characteristics, this factor can be thought of as the subjective likelihood and severity of consequences occurring when temporal discounting is taken into account. The items related to *proximity* and *social consensus* each loaded onto their own factors and those factors were thus labelled accordingly. Thus, there is significant debate regarding not only the definition, but the factor structure of ethicality or ethical decision making as well. For the purpose of this essay, ethical decision making can be considered in the form of the definition proposed by Jones (1991). By emphasizing what is both socially acceptable and legal within a given environment, this definition offers some idea of how ethical decision making improvement might be measured within an organization. This definition also appears to present the most concrete operationalization of ethical decision making in the literature (Bazerman & Gino, 2012). While it is nice to have an idea of the types of behaviors we would like individuals to engage in, it is just as important to know how we would go about predicting said behaviors.

Integrity Testing

Integrity tests are designed to assess whether an individual is likely to engage in moral or ethical behavior within a job context. Although they are designed for a fairly specific purpose, these tests have been found not only to predict contextual performance such as organizational citizenship behaviors (Ones, Viswesvaran, & Schmidt, 2012), but overall job performance as well (Tett et al., 1991). Currently, there seems to be some debate regarding the potential factor structure of integrity whereby some individuals argue that it is comprised of specific facets while others argue that integrity is best thought of as a single trait (Van Iddekinge et al., 2005; Wanek, 1999). This debate is further convoluted by the seemingly interchangeable terms of *integrity*, *ethicality*, and *morality* within the literature. Additionally, the evaluation of an individual's integrity is likely to be heavily contingent upon social norms and may therefore be dependent on the culture in which the evaluation is made. Accordingly, research such as that conducted by Mumford, Connelly, Helton, Strange, and Osburn (2001) found that the likelihood to engage in ethical behavior was dependent upon the influence of peer groups. Thus, peer groups and social norms may act as an important factor when considering the situational specificity of moral behavior. This supports ideas posited by Jones (1991) and others (cf. Craft, 2013) that argued ethical behavior is highly contingent upon a variety of factors in the environment. Each of these factors may also be subject to other situational factors specific to the job or organization, as noted by trait activation theory (Tett & Burnett, 2003). Given the lack of a clear and agreed upon definition and the wide array of contextual factors that may play a role in ethical decision making, it comes as no surprise that there is much disagreement regarding the best methods for assessing integrity as well.

Integrity is often assessed for selection purposes using either implicit (i.e., personality-based) or explicit (i.e., overt) tests (Berry, Sackett, & Weimann, 2007). Overt integrity tests are likely to ask participants how they feel about other people engaging in certain immoral or unethical behaviors as well as the likelihood that they themselves would engage in such behaviors. In some cases, overt tests may be preferred due to the context-specific nature of the questions and apparent face validity (Fine, 2013). Implicit tests, on the other hand, attempt to assess the likelihood of an individual engaging in ethical or unethical behavior based on their scores on personality correlates of ethical/unethical behavior. Unlike more overt testing methods, personality-based integrity tests may be less susceptible to applicant faking due to coaching. In a study conducted by Alliger, Lilienfeld, and Mitchell (1996), it was found that coaching methods, similar to those found online, significantly improved the integrity scores of test takers on explicit integrity tests, but not on implicit personality tests. This study has since been replicated and the same results have been found (e.g., Hurtz & Alliger, 2002). Thus, particularly where integrity tests are concerned, it may be wise for hiring personnel to focus on personality-based tests despite any previous arguments regarding the prevalence of faking in general. Of course, in order to best know which tests to use, it is first important to understand the theory and personality traits behind the tests.

Personality

According to the APA Dictionary of Psychology, an individual difference can be thought of as "a trait or other characteristic by which one individual may be distinguished from others" (VandenBos, 2007). Individual differences are often highlighted and researched in personality psychology as a way of explaining why some individuals may act or think differently than others. There has been much debate as to how many factors reflect an accurate depiction of

personality (e.g. Fleeson & Jayawickreme, 2014; Schmitt, 2014). Some of the most popular theories used in the research literature today include the HEXACO (Lee & Ashton, 2004), the Big Five (McCrae & Costa, 1985), and the Dark Tetrad (previously known as the Dark Triad; Paulhus, 2014). Other types of individual differences that are frequently used in the literature include mindfulness (e.g. Giluk, 2009), self-esteem (e.g. Judge & Bono, 2001), and self-efficacy (e.g. Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998; Sadri & Robertson, 1993). Personality is most frequently assessed using self-report measures (Morgeson et al., 2007a). However, recent research has begun to explore alternative methods of assessing personality such as running complex algorithms on individual's personality profiles (e.g. Youyou, Kosinski, & Stillwell, 2015). Although tests vary in their predictive validity (Schmitt, 2014), personality variables and individual differences can predict a wide range of outcomes including work engagement (Akhtar, Boustani, Tsivrikos, & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2015), workaholism (Aziz & Tronzo, 2011), organizational deviance (Berry, Ones, & Sackett, 2007), and job satisfaction (Judge, Heller, & Mount, 2002). Due to the wide range of outcomes that can be predicted by personality, it comes as no surprise that organizations frequently use the assessment of personality as a selection tool for predicting job performance or industry/organizational fit (e.g., Chatman, 1991).

Currently, there is much debate regarding the best methods for assessing personality as well as the types of personality variables that should be used when selecting personnel for various occupations (e.g. Morgeson et al., 2007a; Morgeson et al., 2007b; Ones, Dilchert, Viswesveran, & Judge, 2007; Tett & Christiansen, 2007). In their paper based on a panel discussion at a conference, Morgeson and colleagues asserted differing opinions regarding the various strengths and weaknesses of personality assessments (Morgeson et al., 2007a). For instance, the authors in their conference discussion appeared to disagree as to the extent to which

applicant's faking on personality tests is a serious issue. Two of the authors involved, Robert Dipboye and Kevin Murphy, suggested that the lack of ability to fake in a selection context may be indicative of a character flaw, other authors such as Jon Hollenbeck argued that although faking occurs, it does not occur to an extent that would make any meaningful difference in the predictive validity of test scores. Of course, one of the main points of the Morgeson et al. (2007a) discussion paper is that personality tests are in and of themselves not very predictive. Thus, any small change in the predictive validity is likely to be meaningless. However, Tett and Christiansen (2007) contested these assertions in their response to Morgeson et al. (2007a). As pointed out by Tett and Christiansen (2007), Morgeson and his colleagues based their assumptions largely on average correlation coefficients found in two meta-analyses. By basing opinions on a solitary average, Morgeson and colleagues failed to account for any interactions that personality variables may have with the situation or other personality variables. Therefore, it can be argued that the correlation coefficients cited in the original paper underestimate the predictive validity of personality tests. This would be especially true for situations in which the personality assessments used are based on a thorough examination of the job, via a personality-oriented job analysis, prior to selection. Ones, Dilchert, Viswesvaran, and Judge (2007) also wrote a commentary in response to Morgeson et al. (2007a). Although, Ones et al. (2007) differ slightly in their interpretation of the faking literature, they reach many of the same conclusions posited by Tett and Christiansen (2007). Of course, Morgeson et al. (2007b) responded to these assertions by making minor clarifications to their original article and holding steadfast to the conclusions they had reached in Morgeson et al. (2007a). However, Morgeson et al (2007b) continued to base their conclusions on bivariate correlations found between broader personality traits and job performance. Debates such as these and a lack of clear, concise opinions regarding

the use of personality tests in selection have only served to provide further confusion within the field.

Many authors have argued that, in order to be effective, personality assessments used for selection should be tailored to the specific occupation for which they are intended (e.g., Ashton, 1998; Ones et al., 2007; Tett & Burnett, 2003; Tett & Christiansen, 2007; Tett, Jackson, & Rothstein, 1991). Although some researchers argue that there may be a general factor of personality (e.g., Van der Linden, te Nijenhuis, & Bakker, 2010), this theory has yet to be proven (Schmitt, 2014). Thus, measuring personality at the trait level appears to be much more common in the literature. More recent research has indicated that the use of specific facets theoretically related to the criterion of interest may provide better predictions of performance (cf. Schmitt, 2014). In many cases however, it is thought that the scope of the predictor should match the scope on the criterion. Thus, more specific facet level tests should be used when looking for particular kinds of behavior such as the tendency to seek out new information for intellectual stimulation (i.e., the "ideas" facet of Openness to Experience in the NEO-PI-R; Costa & McCrae, 1995). This seems to be particularly true of integrity testing for selection purposes. For instance, research by Van Iddekinge, Taylor, and Eidson (2005) found that specific facets of integrity (i.e., "honesty image and norms of general dishonesty") were more predictive of job performance ratings among sales people than the broader integrity measure in which the items were contained. Indeed, integrity testing seems to provide an excellent example of many of the types of, and issues regarding, personality testing. Thus, it is important to address and discuss some of the most commonly used methods for measuring personality and thereby predicting integrity.

Personality assessment. There are several methods for assessing personality, all of which have previously been used to investigate applicant/participant integrity. These methods

include the use of measures such as the NEO-PI-R (Costa & McCrae, 1995) which assesses all of the commonly used Big Five traits (i.e., Conscientiousness, Agreeableness, Neuroticism, Openness to Experience, and Extraversion). These types of personality assessments often ask participants to rate their agreement or disagreement with items that may relate to them on a Likert-type scale. The generalizability and widespread knowledge of these types of tests makes them particularly well-suited for the realm of personnel selection. Many integrity tests often pick and choose several traits from these scales to predict ethical behavior in applicants as opposed to assessing all five personality traits (Ones & Viswesveran, 2001). Neuroticism, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness from the five factor model appear to have the strongest bivariate correlations with integrity (Berry, Ones, & Sackett, 2007). However, Conscientiousness stands out not only as the strongest predictor of integrity, but counterproductive workplace behaviors as well (Murphy & Lee, 1994; Ones & Viswesveran, 2001). More recently, the Honesty-Humility trait from the HEXACO model of personality (Lee & Ashton, 2007) has shown particular promise when assessing and predicting integrity. Comprised of some aspects previously found in the Big Five trait of Agreeableness, honesty-humility consists of the facets *sincerity, fairness, greed avoidance*, and *modesty* (Lee & Ashton, 2004). For a complete breakdown of the traits of each theory and how they relate to one another see Table 1. The authors of this six-factor theory of personality have developed a new interstitial scale comprised of aspects found in the Honesty-Humility, Agreeableness, and Emotionality traits of the HEXACO (Ashton, Lee, & de Vries, 2014). This new scale, labelled Altruism, is theoretically designed to predict giving behavior that may result from an individual's unselfish nature (i.e., Honesty-Humility) as well as that which may result from a tolerance to the selfish behavior of others (i.e., Agreeableness). Additionally, due to previous findings that related aspects of Emotionality to kin-related altruism (Ashton &

Lee, 2007), this scale is designed to predict aspects of kin-related giving behavior as well (Ashton et al., 2014), Thus, between the Honesty-Humility and Altruism scale assessments based on the HEXACO model of personality, Honesty-humility and Altruism may be particularly useful for research and personnel selection moving forward. However, the vast majority of research regarding the use of HEXACO measures versus Big Five measures when predicting integrity or giving behaviors appears to be conducted by staunch proponents of one theory or the other (e.g. Lee, Ashton, & de Vries, 2005), if these measures are both included in the research study at all. Thus, one of the goals of this study was to examine whether or not there are differences between Big Five and HEXACO traits when attempting to predict ethical decision making. More specifically we hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 1: Models in which Honesty-humility was included as a predictor would account for significantly more variance in individual ethical decision making that those that did not.

Hypothesis 1a: This would be especially true of models in which only HEXACO personality traits are used as opposed to those that include Big Five predictors of ethical decision making as well.

Additionally, various types of ethical decisions may be engaged in differently by different individuals. For instance, individuals with high levels of concern for others may pay less attention to personal outcomes (monetary rewards, personal harm, etc.) and be more sensitive to risk when making decisions (Korsgaard, Meglino, & Lester, 1996). This may help to explain in part why some personality traits that are known to be associated with lower levels of empathy (e.g. narcissism, machiavellianism, psychopathy) are more likely to engage in unethical behavior (Lee, Ashton, Morrison, Cordery, & Dunlop, 2008). Individuals with high levels of

power may also be influenced less by social norms when faced with ethical decisions (Pitesa & Thau, 2013). Therefore, it comes as no surprise that some of the traits characterized by a lack of empathy also appear more common in individuals with high levels of power (Lee, Ashton, Wiltshire, Bourdage, Visser, & Gallucci, 2013). Individuals that are less able to regulate their own emotions or are impulsive are also less likely to engage in sensemaking when faced with an ethical issue (Kligyte, Connelly, Thiel, & Davenport, 2013; Eisenberg, Smith, Sadovsky, & Spinrad, 2004). Again, high levels of impulsivity are also characteristic of some of the aforementioned traits (e.g. narcissism & psychopathy). Thus, we hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 2: Dark Triad personality traits would be negatively correlated with ethical decision making.

Despite the fact that several aspects associated with Dark Triad traits (i.e., narcissism, machiavellianism, psychopathy) are related to unethical behavior, research attempting to link these traits to ethical or unethical decision making has also shown mixed results. To that end, it appears that in some researchers find significantly negative relationships between Dark Triad traits and ethical decision making whereas other researcher find mixed or no relationships (Craft, 2013). Thus, it is highly probable that the relationships between Dark Triad traits and ethical behavior depend on some other factor, such as context. By elucidating the role that contextual effects may have on integrity we are better able to understand the construct and predict the desired behaviors.

Contextual Effects

Different personality traits, including those associated with unethical decision making, have been attributed to different occupations in different industries (e.g. Brown, Sautter, Littvay, Sautter, & Bearnes, 2010; Domino et al., 2015; Svensson, Wood, & Callaghan, 2010). For

example, a recent book by Kevin Dutton (2012) suggested that surgeons were more likely to possess psychopathic traits than the vast majority of other professions. Of course, this does not mean that all surgeons are psychopathic or that those with high levels of the trait exhibit antisocial behaviors while at work (e.g. Stevens, Deuling, & Armenakis, 2012). Hospitals with clearly defined rules and social norms regarding ethical conduct are likely to encourage ethical behavior in these individuals despite any tendency to behave unethically. Within healthcare in particular, any ethical codes of conduct supported by the organization are also more likely to be a reflection of legal guidelines and standards of practice set by governing bodies. This would act as a reinforcing agent strengthening the situation even further due to the high stakes nature of potential ramifications, such as a lawsuit or loss of license. However, not all industries are as heavily regulated as the healthcare industry. In those types of organizations, it may be more important to hire employees on the basis of whether or not they are likely to engage in ethical behavior and/or strengthen the situation by improving the organizations ethical context: be it via ethical culture, corporate social responsibility, or corporate ethical values.

Clear depictions of how personality and organizational variables interact to predict behavior may allow organizations to establish broad personality assessments for general workplace selection practices. However, organizational constructs are extremely complex and multifaceted in nature, making their manipulation in an experimental setting incredibly difficult. For instance, if one were to consider how ethical context at large interacts with personality to predict ethical decision making, one would also have to consider all aspects of ethical context in order to have an insightful view of any existing relationships. Ethical context in an organizational setting is comprised of three aspects: corporate ethical values, ethical culture, and corporate social responsibility (Valentine, Nam, Hollingworth, & Hall, 2014). However, these

three aspects of ethical context do not all possess the same relationships with ethical decision making. Each aspect of ethical context may predict ethical intentions differentially based on either the personality of the individual involved or the situation itself. Research has indicated that social desirability, ethical culture, and corporate social responsibility may be related to an individual's likelihood to recognize an issue as ethical in nature (Valentine et al., 2014). On the other hand, Valentine et al. also found that the presence of corporate ethical values was not related to whether or not an individual recognized an issue as being ethical in nature, but was related to whether or not an individual perceived the issue to be important. However, all three aspects of ethical context were related to whether or not an individual intended to behave ethically. Unfortunately, Valentine et al. (2014) limited their study by only using one ethical decision scenario as the sole measure of ethical decision making. However, other researchers have indicated that the nature of ethical scenarios may moderate the relationship between ethical context and ethical intent such that different forms of ethical scenarios call into mind different aspects of ethical context when an individual is making a decision (Sims & Keon, 1999). The nature of the ethical context may also affect the subjective moral intensity of ethical decisions (Kelley & Elm, 2003).

Of particular interest to researchers investigating ethical decision making in organizations is the influence of ethical culture. The strength of ethical culture may affect ethical decision making via a variety of paths. To clearly discuss the ways in which this organizational variable may interact with personality to affect ethical decision making in particular, it is important to first define exactly what is meant by the term "ethical culture." Ethical culture is a sub component of organizational culture whereby ethical culture is particularly concerned with the formal or informal organizational systems that encourage or discourage ethical behavior

(Treviño, den Nieuwenboer, & Kish-Gephart, 2014). An ethical organizational culture may be comprised of eight factors including clarity of organizational norms, congruency of management, congruency of supervisors, feasibility, supportability, transparency, discussability, and sanctionability (Kaptein, 2008). *Clarity of organizational norms* refers to the extent to which the organization makes clear, and employees are aware of, how employees are expected to act in a variety of situations such as when interacting with stakeholders or handling company assets. *Congruency of management* refers to the extent to which individuals within the organization view senior management as acting in an ethical manner while *congruency of supervisor* relates to the ethical actions of an employee's direct supervisor. The extent to which ethical decisions are *feasible* within an organization is also highly important, in that employees may need time to consider an ethical dilemma and act accordingly. Of course, while is important to make sure that employees have the time and information needed to make an ethical decision, there is always the possibility that this particular aspect of ethical culture may not be as influential for employees that are likely to act in an impulsive manner regardless of whether or not they have the time to deliberate. Additionally, there has been some research to suggest that deliberation may, in some cases, lead to more unethical behavior (Zhong, 2011). This effect may be buffered in part by other aspects of ethical culture such as *discussability* and *sanctionability.* Ethical cultures with high levels of *discussability* foster a sense of the ability to communicate with peers and supervisors regarding ethical dilemmas and unethical conduct. The lack of systems in which individuals feel capable of discussing ethical matters with others may have other harmful consequences, such as the external reporting of ethical misconduct (Kaptein, 2011). However, the ability to discuss sensitive topics with others may require a basic level of agreeableness or openness. *Sanctionability,* or the tendency for an organization to reward ethical behavior and

punish unethical behavior, on the other hand appears to be a powerful component of ethical culture. This may be especially true for individuals that are driven more by reward systems (such as Machiavellians) or those that have more external loci of control. These types of performance systems may also receive greater support from employees based on the level of *supportability* within the organization's ethical culture. If an employee supports the views of the organization and identifies with company values and norms, that employee is more likely to engage in the desired behavior. Additionally, if an individual perceives the organizational culture as being ethical and it coincides with their beliefs they are not only more likely to engage in ethical behavior (Sims & Keon, 1999), but they are also less likely to experience burnout and other effects of job stress (Grandey, Foo, Groth, & Goodwin, 2012). Employees that are more likely to be skeptical of company policies and/or that are more sensitive to violations of organizational justice may also benefit particularly well from the final aspect/factor of ethical culture, *transparency*. The extent to which actions throughout the organization are visible to the judgment of feedback may increase the level of trust in an organization by employees which may in turn increase employee health outcomes and safety behaviors (Cropanzano & Wright, 2011; Robbins, Ford, & Tetrick, 2012). Increased levels of *transparency* within an organization may also increase the salience of social norms and expectations. So long as those norms are indeed ethical in nature, transparency may make ethical behavior more likely for all employees, but especially for those that are influenced more by social norms, such as those with high levels of agreeableness. Thus, even seemingly minute aspects of the latent variable known as ethical culture may interact with different personality types to predict ethical decision making. Given these findings it was hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 3: The relationship between ethical culture and ethical decision making would be stronger for those individuals that are more subject to social norms (*3a;* i.e. agreeableness) or rule-abiding behavior (*3b;* i.e. conscientiousness).

Hypothesis 4: Individuals presenting high levels of Dark Triad personality types would also be more likely to exhibit ethical behavior in situations with higher levels of *sanctionability* but will be unaffected by other aspects such as the *clarity of organizational norms.*

Regarding the rule-abiding aspect of organizational culture, some individuals may be more likely to act in accordance with these policies as well. For instance, individuals with higher levels of conscientiousness may be more apt to engage in rule-abiding behavior, regardless of whether or not it has an ethical component (Becker, 2008). Additionally, possessing high levels of conscientiousness is not contingent upon possessing high levels of other traits. Therefore, it may be possible for more antisocial personality types to be affected by strict ethical performance policies so long as they possess moderate to high levels of conscientiousness. Thus, it would come as no surprise that:

Hypothesis 5: Individuals possessing high levels of Conscientiousness would behave more ethically than individuals with low levels of the trait regardless of their levels of antisocial personality traits.

Hypothesis 6: Individuals possessing high levels of both Machiavellianism and Conscientiousness would be (a) more likely to engage in ethical behavior in situations dealing specifically with rule-abiding behavior and (b) less likely to engage in ethical behavior in situations that focus on interpersonal relationships as opposed to organizational rules/norms.

Of course, the type of situation is not the only contextual variable that should be considered. It is important as well to consider how much control of their own behavior and

individual has in any given scenario. One way to think of an individual's freedom to act in a given setting is through Mischel's view of situational strength (Mischel, 1977).

Situational strength. In 1977, Walter Mischel introduced personality researchers to the concept of strong and weak situations. In his paper on the future of personality research, Mischel argued that there may be a wide range of labels (e.g. weather, social climate, population density, etc.) that we can use to identify situations and that, due to an infinitesimal number of potential descriptors, a unifying taxonomy of situations may not be possible. However, Mischel did note that the strength or salience of the environmental characteristics of the situation may interact with individual differences in cognition. Mischel argued that "when situational variables are weak, information about personal variables becomes essential" (p. 251, Mischel, 1977). He proposed four individual differences that may play a key role in such regards. These include the ability to recognize and engage in the desired behavior, how the individual categorizes the situation and what they expect the outcomes to be, their subjective values regarding any potential outcomes, and their pre-conceived plans and self-regulatory systems in question. The fluidity of these dimensions makes it exceptionally important that personality researchers investigate the situation in addition to any individual differences, especially when trying to predict behavior (Funder, 2006).

Beaty, Cleveland, and Murphy (2001) later extended Mischel's original conceptions of strong versus weak situations by investigating them in a workplace setting. Although other researchers had investigated situational moderators in relation to job performance (e.g. Barrick & Mount, 1993), Beaty et al. (2001) examined the potential for situational strength to moderate the relationship between broad personality traits and the intent to engage in helping behaviors. Although their field study fell short of statistical significance, their lab study and the trends

found in the field study displayed characteristics in accordance with their hypotheses of a personality-situation relationship. The lack of statistical significance in the field study may have been due in part to the small sample size used or the inherently subjective nature of way in which the helping behaviors criterion was assessed. The contextual manipulations used in these studies involved the use of scenarios similar to vignettes describing performance criteria that were labelled as being weak, having a strong task emphasis, having a strong contextual performance emphasis, or those having both a strong task and contextual performance. Therein, the authors operationalized both task performance criteria and contextual performance criteria as being either weak or strong in nature. Many other researchers have used similar methods of operationalizing situations as strong or weak when investigating topics such as the treatment of anxiety disorders (Lissek, Pine, & Grillon, 2006), social dilemmas (de Kwaadsteniet, van Dijk, Wit, & de Cremer, 2006), ostracism (McDonald & Donnellan, 2012), and narcissism (MaaB & Ziegler, 2017) to name a few. In 2006, Marshall and Brown expanded the idea of strong and weak situations by suggesting three potential levels (i.e., strong, moderate, and weak) of situation strength and two potential levels of personality strength as a means of testing for curvilinear effects. The model developed from this line of thought was known as the Traits as Situational Sensitivities (TASS) model (Marshall & Brown, 2006). According to the model proposed by Marshall and Brown, trait scores represent varying sensitivities to situational conditions and strength. For example, individuals low in trait aggression may be less sensitive to frustrating situational cues than those with high levels of trait aggression. By examining situational cues in this way researchers may find that individuals high in trait aggression may react faster to frustrating situations and reach a peak level of anger faster. Individuals low in trait aggression on the other hand may not respond as quickly, but when they finally do they reach the same peak

level of anger as those high in trait aggression. Thus, each trait level may have a different curvilinear relationship with situational strength: a relationship that would be obscured if only two levels of situational strength were investigated.

Schmitt and colleagues (2013) later expanded even further by proposing a model in which three levels of situational strength might be assessed in conjunction with three levels of personality to imply curvilinear relationships between variables in their Nonlinear Interaction of Person and Situation (NIPS) Model. However, these later two models suffer in their operationalization of the aspects of personality. It is well known that the division of continuous variables into categorical variables reduces the amount of information derived from individuals, resulting in smaller effect sizes and statistical power (Aiken & West, 1991; MacCallum, Zhang, Preacher, & Rucker, 2002). Unfortunately, both of these models operationalize personality as a categorical variable when it is likely measured and theorized to be a continuous scale type variable. Additionally, testing for a curvilinear moderation does not require the artificial categorization of data so long as the appropriate statistical procedures are used (Dawson, 2014). Thus, although describing personality traits as being strong, moderate or weak in nature may be beneficial for the purposes of explication of the concept, the use of the data in this manner would be ill advised. It is instead recommended that researchers consider personality as a continuous measure, or one with a continuous underlying latent variable, when examining how varying levels of personality may be related to important outcomes or other moderating variable.

The measurement of situational strength in three parts also appears to present some psychometric complications (Schmitt et al., 2013). For instance, situational strength when measured as being either strong or weak can be operationalized as possessing the presence or absence of a particular characteristic (Beaty et al., 2001). Although Mischel (1977) originally

conceptualized situational strength as having four components, the testing of strength by evaluating whether the situation is ambiguous or not regarding specific criteria for performance is not uncommon (Cooper & Withey, 2009). Schmitt et al. (2013) used a variety of methods in their attempts to label situations according to three categories. Their first attempt was to manipulate the amount of situation-relevant information to varying degrees. Their second attempt involved using a method similar to that employed by Wilkowski, Robinson, Gordon, and Troop-Gordon (2006) wherein situations were rated on their level of intensity by a separate sample pool prior to use. Situations were grouped according to ratings that had high inter-rater agreement. Situations with low inter-rate agreement were dropped. The third method used by Schmitt et al. (2013), and the method that they eventually settled on using, was to rate situations according to the aggregation of individual behavior within those situations. However, since the ultimate goal of manipulating context is to determine the effect of the situation as a moderator of behavior one might question this form of rating situational strength by proxy. Admittedly, more work should be done to investigate the individual contributions of Mischel's four situational strength components and whether or not they differentially influence behavior patterns among individuals (Cooper & Withey, 2009). However, it only requires three levels in order to display a curvilinear relationship between variables, and it may thus be fruitful to start off at this level while research in this area is still in its exploratory stage. This may be particularly true when applying this research to organizational settings wherein more parsimonious measures are often preferred.

Organizations are complex systems comprised of many moving parts. Therefore, the attempt to label them as either strong or weak would be contextual in nature depending on the research question being asked. Beaty et al. (2001) operationalized situational strength within an

organization as being the presence or absence of a single characteristic relevant to the individual. However, organizational decisions are not often made in isolation with only one situational factor taken into consideration (Hattwick, 1986). Thus, when trying to characterize an organization in and of itself as either strong or weak, it may be more useful to consider more comprehensive measures of organizational factors, such as those of organizational culture or climate. In these cases, because it is not theoretically possible to have the complete absence of culture or climate, situational strength would need to be measured on a continuous scale with the use of appropriate statistical measures such as those proposed by Kaptein (2008) and Schein (2004). Indeed, these types of measures may be useful for depicting a broader view of the organization as a whole and how the organization at large interacts with various personalities to predict behavior (e.g., Kaptein, 2011). Measurement at this more macro level may also be beneficial when attempting to consider person-environmental (P-E) fit for the purposes of selection. Clear depictions of how personality and organizational variables interact to predict behavior may allow organizations to establish broad personality assessments for general workplace selection practices. However, organizational constructs are extremely complex and multifaceted in nature, making their manipulation in an experimental setting incredibly difficult. For instance, if one were to consider how ethical context at large interacts with personality to predict ethical decision making, one would also have to consider all aspects of ethical context in order to have an insightful view of these relationships. Knowledge of this interaction between different personality types and their environment would prove incredibly useful when trying to steer the behavior of individuals within an organization.

The Interaction of Situation and Person

As a whole, the effectiveness of ethical culture appears to rely on social phenomena and rule-abiding behavior. Although certain aspects of attraction-selection-attrition may also be at play in that individuals with higher moral standards are more likely to be drawn to highly ethical organizations (Domino, Wingreen, & Blanton, 2013), there are other aspects of personality that may be more susceptible to organizational systems associated with ethical culture. For instance, individuals with high levels of Agreeableness may be more apt to modeling their behavior after the behavior of their peers (Graziano & Tobin, 2002) whereas individuals displaying more antisocial qualities, such as those with high levels of dark triad traits, may be more resistant to social norms (Paulhus & Williams, 2002). The same could be said for individuals possessing high levels of empathy such as those with high levels of Honesty-Humility. These individuals may be more likely to abide by ethical policies with a highly social component. However, individuals with high levels of Honesty-Humility are unique in that they are also more likely to be whistleblowers if appropriate reporting policies are not in place or if the social norms of the organization are more unethical in nature (Kaptein, 2011). However, as is the case for individual differences interacting with any situation, if the ethical culture is strong enough personality variables may not be as important for predicting ethical behavior. Therefore, we expected:

Hypothesis 7: The relationship between personality and ethical decision making would be moderated by context. More specifically, the ability for personality variables (including Conscientiousness, Agreeableness, Honesty-Humility, and Dark Triad traits) to predict ethical decision making would be less apparent in situations with a "strong" ethical climate.

Method

Participants

Participants were recruited through the undergraduate psychology research participation platform as well as undergraduate business statics courses at Auburn University. Previous research has indicated that personality-based measures may account for as much as 43.7% of the variance in counterproductive work behaviors (Ones, Viswesveran, & Schmidt, 1993). Based on these estimates and an a priori power analysis it was expected that 18 participants would be needed for each of the four experimental conditions to achieve a statistical power of .95 or greater, resulting in a total sample size of 72 individuals. A total of 138 participants recruited through the psychology research participation pool completed the survey. Of these individuals, 20 responses were removed from analysis due to careless responding. This resulted in 118 responses from 15 male and 103 female participants with an average age of 19. An additional 96 participants recruited through the undergraduate business program at the same university completed the study. Of those participants, 33 cases were removed from analyses due to careless responding. This resulted in an additional 63 participants: 26 of which were male, 30 were female, and 7 were undisclosed. The mean age of these participants was 21 years old. No differences were found between the two samples in regard to the ethical decision making outcome, $t(173) = .77$, $p = .44$. As such, it was deemed that the two samples could be combined into one larger sample for the purpose of testing our hypotheses. The combination of the two samples resulted in a total of 181 participant: 41(22.65%) of which were male, 133(73.48%) female, and 7(.04%) undisclosed. A clear breakdown of the sample demographics by college of study may be found in Table 2.

Measures

Big Five. The 50-item IPIP (Goldberg, 1992) was used to assess participants levels of personality traits that are directly comparable to traits in the five-factor model. These traits include Extraversion (α = .93), Agreeableness (α = .86), Conscientiousness (α = .86), Emotional Stability (α = .82), and Intellect/Imagination (α = .77).

HEXACO. The 100-item HEXACO-PI-R (Lee & Ashton, 2016) was used to measure HEXACO trait theory traits including Honesty-Humility (α = .82), Emotionality (α = .86), Extraversion (α = .91), Agreeableness (α = .86), Conscientiousness (α = .83), and Openness to Experience (α = .79) as well as the newly developed interstitial scale known as Altruism (α = .66).

Dark Triad. Based on recommendations found in previous research (i.e., Maples, Lamkin, & Miller, 2014), the Short Dark Triad (SD3; Jones & Paulhus, 2014) was used to assess participant dark triad personality types. Reliability estimates for Machiavellianism (α = .80), Psychopathy (α = .74), and Narcissism (α = .72) personality traits appeared to be sufficient for use.

Ethical Decision Making. A combination of eight ethical decision scenarios (see Appendix B for complete wording) was used to assess ethical decision making. This measure included the use of scenarios included in previous research (i.e. Brown et al., 2010) as well as some newly developed scenarios. Responses to these items were rated on a 11-point Likert scale ranging from a 0% to a 100% likelihood to engage in a particular decision. A reliability analysis indicated a lower than ideal Cronbach's alpha of .48. Based on further investigation, the first and seventh scenarios in the measure were removed from analyses, resulting in a final 6-item

measure (α = .57). Of the remaining 6 items, 3 items were of an interpersonal nature (items 2, 4 & 6; α = .43) and 3 were more rule-based/solitary in nature (items 3, 5, & 8; α = .58).

Procedure

After being informed of their rights and agreeing to participate in the study, participants were asked to complete all personality measures and then a brief distractor task that tested their general decision making ability. Participants were then be told to imagine that they had been accepted for position at a hypothetical organization known as Palatium Technologies, Inc. All participants were presented with a short welcome video followed by a job description and a company Code of Ethics. All videos were approximately 2m13s in length and featured a male speaker discussing information about the organization. In order to ensure adequate interpretation of results relating to the experimental analysis, cases in which participants watched the video for less than 133s were removed from analyses that investigated the manipulation variables of *sanctionability* and *clarity of organizational norms*. There was no relationship between whether or not the participants viewed the videos for the minimum length of time needed to complete the video and the ethical decision making outcome measure (r_{pb} = .03, p = .70). A randomized between-subjects experimental design was used such that the wording of the video seen depended on the experimental condition to which the participant was assigned. Complete wording for each of the experimental conditions can be found in Appendix A of this manuscript.

Context Manipulation

In order to assess the effects of situational strength as it relates to ethical decisions, four different scenarios were used in which the strength of two aspects of ethical culture (Kaptein, 2008) were manipulated. In particular, the *clarity of organizational norms* and *sanctionability,* was manipulated. *Clarity of organizational norms* was manipulated via the discussion of and

quiz on a company Code of Ethics. Those individuals in the "weak" condition in this regard had access to a Code of Ethics which was briefly mentioned, but not discussed. Individuals in the "strong" condition also had access to a Code of Ethics that were discussed in their welcome video and were quizzed on details from the Code of Ethics. *Sanctionability* was manipulated in the opening part of the welcome video. Individuals in the "weak" *sanctionability* conditions were given information about the job, but there was no mention of a punishment or reward system. Individuals in the "strong" condition were told that a violation would result in immediate termination. All participants were asked to make several ethical decisions based on the information that they receive.

Results

Descriptives

Although not the original purpose of this paper, the method of recruiting college of business and psychology students simultaneously warranted a brief investigation of demographics between the two departments. In addition to the gender differences found in Table 2, personality scales scores for each department as well as an aggregated total may be found in Table 3. Of note, Business and Psychology students appeared to differ on the HEXACO traits of Emotionality ($t(179) = -3.58$, $p < .001$) and Altruism ($t(179) = -2.44$, $p < .05$). More specifically, Business students seemed to possess lower levels of Emotionality ($\mu = 3.24$) and Altruism ($\mu = 3.82$) than Psychology students (Emotionality $\mu = 3.60$; Altruism $\mu = 3.82$). With regard to Big Five personality, the only trait in which student samples were found to be significantly different was that of Agreeableness ($t(179) = -3.32$, $p = .001$) whereby Business students were found to display significantly lower level of this trait ($\mu = 3.75$) that their counterparts who were recruited through the Psychology department ($\mu = 3.97$). Differences between student samples were also

found in relation to the Dark Triad traits of Narcissism ($t(179) = 3.00$, $p < .01$) and Psychopathy ($t(179) = 2.48$, $p < .05$). Business students were found to demonstrate significantly higher levels of Narcissism ($\mu = 3.01$) and Psychopathy ($\mu = 2.16$) than their counterparts in the Psychology department (Narcissism $\mu = 2.75$; Psychopathy $\mu = 1.93$). It should be noted that business students were more than twice as likely to be removed from the dataset prior to analyses due to careless responding (33%) than the Psychology students (14.5%). Of those students that were not removed due to careless responding, a crosstabs analysis indicated that Business students were significantly more likely that Psychology students to move through the survey without completing the onboarding video ($\chi^2(1) = 13.92$, $p < .001$). However, no differences were found between Business and Psychology students in relation to ethical decision making scores ($t(173) = .77$, $p = .44$). Thus, the two samples were combined and used as a single sample for all analyses relevant to hypothesis testing. Correlations between all personality scale variables assessed and ethical decision making based on this combined sample may be found in Table 4. Table 4 also includes correlations between all variables of interest and whether or not participants watched the onboarding video for the minimum length of time needed to complete the video (133s).

Of note, many of the relationships between personality variables and ethical decision making were similar to the relationships between personality variables and whether or not participants completed the onboarding video. There were differences in the nature of relationships between four of the HEXACO personality traits ethical decision making or completion of the onboarding video. In particular, Honesty-Humility was positively related to ethical decision making ($r = .51$, $p < .001$), but unrelated to video completion ($r = .13$, $p = .09$). Agreeableness from the HEXACO model also appeared to be significantly positively related to ethical decision making ($r = .29$, $p < .001$), but unrelated to video completion ($r = -.05$, $p = .50$).

On the other hand, video completion was found to be significantly related to Emotionality (r = .23, p <.01) and Extraversion (r = -.19, p <.01) while neither Emotionality (r = .04, p = .59) nor Extraversion (r = -.01, p <.99) were related to ethical decision making.

Hypothesis 1

In order to test our first hypothesis, multiple regression analyses were conducted for each of the dominant trait theories. In our first model we tested the effects of agreeableness, conscientiousness, and emotional stability from the Big Five theory on ethical decision making. As shown in Table 5, this model was statistically significant (F (3,171) = 3.56, p < .05) which indicated that these results were not likely to have occurred by chance. The adjusted R^2 indicated that 4.2% of the variance on the ethical decision making measure could be accounted for by the variance in these predictors. Agreeableness appeared to be the best predictor of ethical decision making (β = .18, t = 2.39, p = .02). Emotional stability from the Big Five trait theory was also found to be a significant predictor of ethical decision making (β = .15, t = 2.02, p = .05). Conscientiousness on the other hand was the least effective predictor of ethical decision making and was not found to be predictive in this particular model (β = .06, t = .78, p = .44). These results changed slightly after the inclusion of the Honesty-Humility trait as a predictor of ethical decision making in the second step of the model. Upon inclusion of this personality trait, ΔR^2 was found to be .23 (p <.001) which resulted in an overall adjusted R^2 of .24. This indicated that variance in the four predictor variables in the model accounted for 27% of the total variance in the ethical decision making outcome measure. In support of our first hypothesis, Honesty-Humility contributed significantly to overall model fit (F (4,170) = 17.11, p < .001) and was found be a significant predictor of ethical decision making (β = .50, t = 7.38, p < .001). Emotional stability remained a significant predictor of ethical decision making (β = .16, t = 2.38,

p = .02) while conscientiousness remained a lesser and nonsignificant predictor of ethical decision making (β = .06, t = .96, p = .34). Of note, the inclusion of Honesty-Humility in the model resulted in agreeableness becoming a nonsignificant predictor of ethical decision making (β = .02, t = .31, p = .76).

Exploratory analyses using binary logistic regression indicated similar findings when attempting to use the same variables to predict onboarding video completion. An initial model in which the Big Five traits of Agreeableness, Emotional Stability, and Conscientiousness were used was found to be significantly predictive of whether or not individuals completed the onboarding video assigned to them ($\chi^2(3)= 13.33$, $p < .01$). A Nagelkerke R^2 in this case indicated that the combination of the three variables accounted for 10.5% of the variance in video completion Similar to previous analyses, Agreeableness (β = .68, Wald = 5.99, $p < .05$) and Emotional Stability (β = -.75, Wald = 6.65, p = .01) were significant predictors whereas Conscientiousness was not (β = .05, Wald = .03, p = .86). In contrast to predicting ethical decision making however, the inclusion of Honesty-Humility did not contribute significantly to overall model prediction of onboarding video completion ($\chi^2(1)= 1.32$, p = .25).

Hypothesis 1a. Regarding the prediction of ethical decision making, results similar to those in Hypothesis 1 were found for regression analyses in which HEXACO traits were used in place of dominant Big Five traits. A multiple linear regression analysis model in which agreeableness, conscientiousness, and emotionality from the HEXACO trait theory of personality were used as predictors of ethical decision making (Table 6) was found to be statistically significant ($F(3,171) = 6.58$, $p < .001$). The adjusted R^2 for this model indicated that the variance in the three predictor variables accounted for 8.8% of the variance in ethical decision making. Similar to the previous model, agreeableness was found to be the strongest predictor of ethical

decision making (β = .31, t = 4.19, p < .001). Conscientiousness (β = .14, t = 1.92, p = .06) and emotionality (β = .03, t = .34, p = .73) on the other hand were not significant predictors. In accordance with our first hypothesis, the inclusion of Honesty-Humility contributed to overall model fit (ΔR^2 = .18, p < .001) and resulted in the newer model accounting for 26.5% of the variance in ethical decision making (F(4,170) = 16.69, p < .001). Honesty-Humility was the most significant predictor of ethical decision making (β = .46, t = 6.50, p < .001) followed by agreeableness (β = .14, t = 2.01, p = .05). Conscientiousness (β = .10, t = 1.44, p = .15) and emotionality (β = -.05, t = -.81, p = .42) remained nonsignificant predictors. However, in contrast to our Hypothesis 1a, Honestly-Humility contributed more to a model in which Big Five traits were used as predictors (ΔR^2 = .23) than when the same HEXACO traits were used (ΔR^2 = .18).

Hypothesis 2

In accordance with our second hypothesis, each of the Dark Triad personality traits was found to be significantly related to ethical decision making. Machiavellianism appeared to have the strongest relationship with ethical decision making (r = -.42, p < .001). Psychopathy represented the second strongest correlation with ethical decision making (r = -.35, p < .001). Narcissism possessed the weakest correlation of the three variables with ethical decision making (r = -.19, p = .01). Correlations between the other two dominant trait theories and ethical decision making may be found in Table 4. When analyzed as predictors in a regression model, Dark Triad traits continued to be significantly predictive of ethical decision making as a whole (F(3,171) = 17.16, p < .001). An overall model adjusted R^2 of .218 indicated that the total model accounted for 21.8% of the variance in ethical decision making. Machiavellianism appeared to be the most predictive trait in the model (β = -.35, t = -4.11, p < .001) followed by Psychopathy

(β = -.19, t = -2.36, p = .02). Narcissism appeared to be a nonsignificant predictor in the model (β = -.01, t = -.13, p = .89).

Additional exploratory analyses using a binary logistic regression revealed the combination of Dark Triad variables to be predictive of video completion as well ($\chi^2(3)$= 11.56, p < .01) with an Nagelkerke R^2 indicating that the model predicted 9.2% of the variance in whether or not participants completed the onboarding video. Machiavellianism appeared to be the only nonsignificant predictor in this case (β = .36, Wald = 1.12, p = .29) whereas Narcissism (β = -.86, Wald = 6.02, p = .01) and Psychopathy were both significantly predictive (β = -.69, Wald = 4.11, p = .04) of video completion.

Hypothesis 3

An analysis of covariance was conducted to compare the effects of our organizational culture variables, *sanctionability* and *clarity of organizational norms*, while controlling for agreeableness and conscientiousness as operationalized by the HEXACO trait theory. Contrary to our third hypothesis, there was no statistically significant interaction between the two organizational culture variables when controlling for agreeableness and conscientiousness, F(1, 130) = .00, p = .99, partial η^2 = .00 (see Table 7). Additionally, there were no significant differences between *clarity of organizational norms* (F(1, 130) = .49, p = .49, partial η^2 = .00) or *sanctionability* (F(1, 130) = 1.25, p = .27, partial η^2 = .01) when controlling for agreeableness and conscientiousness. There was however a significant main effect of Agreeableness on ethical decision making outcomes (F(1, 130) = 10.33, p < .05, partial η^2 = .07).

Hypothesis 4

As shown in Table 8, an analysis of covariance was conducted to test for interaction effects between organizational culture variable and dark triad personality traits. Contrary to our

fourth hypothesis, there was no relationship between *clarity of organization norms* ($F(1, 129) = .17$, $p = .68$, partial $\eta^2 = .00$) or *sanctionability* ($F(1, 129) = 1.72$, $p = .19$, partial $\eta^2 = .01$) and ethical decision making when controlling for Dark Triad traits. However, there was a main effect of Machiavellianism on ethical decision making outcomes ($F(1, 129) = 10.78$, $p < .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .08$).

Hypothesis 5

In contrast to our fifth hypothesis, there was not relationship between Conscientiousness and ethical decision making (see Table 9) when controlling for Dark Triad personality traits ($\beta = .09$, $t = 1.24$, $p = .22$). The inclusion of Conscientiousness in a model using all three Dark Triad Traits also did not add significantly to overall model fit ($\Delta R^2 = .01$, $p = .22$). This appeared to be the case whether we excluded individuals who watched the onboarding video (Table 10) or not (Table 9).

Hypothesis 6

A multivariate linear regression analyses indicated partial support for this hypothesis (Table 11). Within this initial model Conscientiousness and Machiavellianism both appeared to be significant predictors of rule-based scenarios, but only Machiavellianism was found to be a significant predictor of interpersonal scenarios. However, when an interaction term was added to the two models (Table 12) there appeared no main or interaction effects indicating that it would in inappropriate to interpret an interaction between the two variables.

Hypothesis 7

An analysis of covariance indicated no effect of either organizational context on ethical decision making when accounting for personality variables (see Table 13). Thus, we failed to find support for our seventh hypothesis. However, it should be noted that in this more inclusive

model Honestly-Humility remained a significant predictor of ethical decision making ($F(1,126) = 14.16$, $p < .001$).

Exploratory Analyses

Based on the previous results, additional analyses were conducted to explore the data further. Because all of these results are post hoc, interpretation should be taken with caution. Due to the tendency for Machiavellianism, Honesty-Humility, Agreeableness, and Psychopathy to arise as significant predictors of ethical decision making, a stepwise linear regression analysis was conducted in which all four of these variables were listed as potential predictors. As indicated in Table 14, only Honesty-Humility and Machiavellianism were retained as predictors of overall ethical decision making. These results appeared slightly different when interpersonal scenarios were used as the about come (Table 15) than when solitary scenarios where used as an outcome (Table 16). More specifically, Machiavellianism and Agreeableness appeared to be the strongest predictors of ethical decision making in an interpersonal context and predicted 11% of the total variance in those scenarios. With regards to more solitary rule-based settings, Honesty-Humility and Machiavellianism appeared to be the strongest predictors, accounting for 31% of the total variance in ethical decision making in these settings.

Discussion

The construct of ethical decision making and what it means to be ethical has long been a nebulous topic filled with debate. This research aimed to provide clarity around the construct by examining both personality and situational effects as they relate to ethical decisions. Of note in the findings is the clear support of Honesty-Humility as a predictor of ethical decision making. This personality trait combined with the Dark Triad trait of Machiavellianism arose as the strongest predictors of ethical decision making in our study. Given the previous work of

researchers such as Lee and Ashton (2007), Paulhus (2014) and others (e.g. Schmitt, 2014), these results are not surprising. As recently as 2014, Schmitt argued that general or broad personality traits may not be as useful for predicting behavioral outcomes and more specific measures of personality are more practical and accurate for behavioral prediction. Lee and Ashton (2007) and Paulhus (2014) have made similar arguments by proposing that their personality theories add value to the literature and allow for better prediction of more specific behaviors than the big five. The current research supports these assertions by providing evidence that Honesty-Humility and Machiavellianism contribute significantly to the prediction of ethical decision making. Perhaps more surprising is the extent to which these traits add predictive power. Previously, personality researchers have noted implicit integrity tests based on Big Five traits as being able to predict around 10-25% of behavior (Morgeson et al., 2007a). However, the current research found that the inclusion of one or both of these traits may account for 21-31% of the variance in ethical decision making. It is of course, important to note that the strongest estimates of predictive power came as a result of including both Honesty-Humility and Machiavellianism in the same model in a post hoc linear regression analysis. However, the exploratory nature of this model offered additional insights in that no other personality variables were retained as contributing predictive ability above and beyond what Honesty-Humility and Machiavellianism were able to provide. Based on these findings, if it is our desire to select employees for positions based in part on their level of ethical integrity it would be beneficial to consider the use of a measure such as the one provided by Lee and Ashton (2016) for the prediction of this behavior. For the purpose of prediction, it may also be wise to include a Machiavellianism scale such as that provided by the Short Dark Triad (Jones & Paulhus, 2014), depending on the context in which participants are expected to behave in an ethical manner.

The context of any given situation is important when attempting the predict an outcome behavior (Funder, 2006) and, to that end, the strength of the situation may play a key role as well (Mischel, 1977). Our study attempted to investigate these antecedents of ethical behavior by manipulating two aspects of ethical culture (Kaptein, 2008) in the script of a virtual onboarding video. However, no differential effects were found relevant to these different organizational contexts. This may be due to a variety of reasons. For one, the sample used was drawn from a student population. Although attempts were made to ensure a diverse group through recruitment in both Business and Psychology departments, it could be that the online nature of the study in and of itself resulted in a situation that was not strong enough to be impactful and gain buy-in from the students recruited. This idea is further supported by the high rate of careless responding within the original dataset and the tendency for students to leave the onboarding video page prior to completing the video. The lack of support for contextual results in the given study may also be due in part to the hypothetical nature of the situation and scenarios themselves. In fact, some researchers have argued as of late that the decision processes leading to ethical choices in a hypothetical versus real-life situation may indeed be different (Bostyn, Sevenhant, & Roets, 2018). Additional post hoc analyses, indicate some support for this idea by investigating the relationship between the decision to skip through the onboarding video (in clear defiance of the rules) and ethical decision making scores.

It is important to note that there were some similarities and differences between the personality correlates of failing to complete the onboarding video and ethical decision making. Of note, Honesty-Humility appeared to be related to scores on the ethical decision making scenarios, but not the decision to leave the onboarding video early. The same was true for Machiavellianism. However, Altruism, Agreeableness (as defined by the Big Five), Narcissism,

and Psychopathy all displayed similar relationships with the two outcome variables. This emphasizes an important point as noted by Bostyn, Sevenhant, and Roets (2018) in that there may not be a direct relationship between actual behavior and hypothetical decision scenarios. This is not to argue that aspects of careless responding, such as failing to engage fully in some part of an assessment are completely unethical in nature. Although these may violate the rule-based part of the definition of ethical behavior proposed by Jones (1991), there is no guarantee that they violate the societal norms aspect of the definition. It is highly likely that there may be a norm amongst students that participation in a survey is not worthy of extra care and attention. The fact that Business students were more likely to engage in careless responding and less likely to watch the onboarding video that their Psychology counterparts may be an indication of such norm differences. Although attempts were made to further elucidate the differences between ethical decision making in interpersonal and rule-based settings, attempts at predicting these two different types of ethical decision scenarios were unclear. Again, this could be due in part to a lack of engagement from participants in the study, regardless of their college of origin, or it could be in part an artifact of the ethical decision making measure itself.

This study attempted to contribute to the ethical decision making literature by developing scenarios that could be used for future research in this area. Similar to previous work in the decision sciences (e.g. Brown et al. 2010), responses to short decision scenarios were used as an indication of ethical decision making. However, in contrast to previous work, a variety of scenarios were used with the hope that the combination would provide some sort of internally consistent measure. Akin to the work conducted by Brown et al. (2010), there was little relationship between the individual scenarios yet average scores across the given scenarios were still used as an overall indication of an ethical decision making outcome. Despite the lack of

internal consistency, there was still some indication that differences may exist between antecedents of ethical decision making in interpersonal versus solitary situations. These findings should be taken lightly as they were primarily found in post hoc analyses, but they are indicative of areas in which future research may further elucidate the ethical decision making construct and its antecedents.

Limitations and Future Directions

The findings from the current study should be taken with caution due in large part to the lack of reliability in the ethical decision making outcome measure. Although this current study attempted to use organizational scenarios that would be relevant to students, the lack of internal consistency in the measure proved to be a problem. The fact that honesty-humility, agreeableness, and dark triad measures continued to be useful predictors despite this flaw only serves as testament to the usefulness of these measures when attempting to predict other ethical decision making measures. Future research may attempt to remedy this situation by examining responses to the decisions as a latent variable upon which each of the ethical decisions would be loaded, similar to the methods used in structural equation modeling. It may also be useful to replicate this study with a more clearly developed scale of organizational ethical decision making such as that developed by Casali (2011) and compare it to the results found in the current study. Future research may also benefit from the use of newer measures of HEXACO personality traits such as the situational judgment test developed by Oostrom, de Vries, and de Wit (2018). The inclusion of personality tests such as these would allow for a comparison of the predictive validity of more contextualized personality measures across ethical decision making types.

It has been mentioned by other researchers that there may be differences between ethical behavior outcomes in hypothetical versus real-life situations (Bostyn, Sevenhant, & Roets,

2018). Thus, it is recommended that future research examine and compare the relationships between ethical decision scenarios and real-life behavior. Unfortunately, this is no small feat in real-life settings, especially those of an organizational nature, where that ability to capture ethical/unethical behavior is extremely limited. Further examination of embedded data and the nature of careless responding may provide one avenue by which such differences could be detected. Future research may expand upon the findings contained in this paper by thoroughly examining the tendency to take shortcuts, such as failing to complete experimental manipulations, and determining whether or not this may suffice as a proxy for ethical decision making outcomes. Due to technological advances, it may also be fruitful to investigate the use of other forms of embedded data such as eye tracking in selection settings such as assessment center simulations. Additionally, more research is needed to investigate the effects of virtual workplaces and whether or not programs in these environments are salient enough to influence behavior. With the emergence of the gig economy and a more virtual workforce, future research should investigate the effects of these new organizational contexts on the ethical decisions of employees.

This research was also limited by the production quality and the nature of the onboarding videos themselves. It stands to reason that many companies investing in an onboarding video for employees would do so in a manner that would be more professional and carry more weight than that of a graduate student's recording. For example, if being released to employees across an organization, a company may choose to have the video spokesperson be an organizational member that has more authority within the organization, such as the company president or chief executive officer. This change, although relatively subtle in nature, may affect individual attentiveness to the videos in question and as a result may affect their behavior. Additionally, the

videos used for this research presented participants with only one speaker who was a young male. Individual reactions to the videos may have changed had there been a speaker of a different demographic background or if there had been multiple speakers. Therefore, future studies may examine changes in speaker demographics to see if this has more or less of an effect on participant behavior than the change of wording.

Of course, this study was not able to affect all parts of an organizational ethical culture due to the limited scope of the study and the format. Future research may use the eight aspects of ethical organizational culture as presented by Kaptein (2008) and gamification to build a wholly immersive simulation for testing ethical decisions given particular contexts. The use of virtual reality in candidate selection and employee development is gaining popularity among organizations. Future research stands to benefit from these developments as well and would be wise to implement the same technologies when testing theoretical constructs. More research is needed to test whether or not these simulations have the potential to bridge the cognitive process differences experienced by hypothetical and real-life situations.

Conclusion

Despite the fact that the moderating effect of context was not able to be adequately assessed in this study due to clear limitations, the current study may act as a starting point for future work regarding virtual workplace situations and organizational implementations. It also provides insight into potential correlates of ethical decision making in real-life and hypothetical situations. It also became clear in this research that the HEXACO model may be particular useful for, and should be included in, future discussion of ethical decision making in the organizational sciences. These discussions stand to benefit from the inclusion of the Dark Triad theory of personality as well and should try to avoid an overreliance upon the Big Five theory of

personality. Although often more popular in personality research, the Big Five theory of personality may not have as much benefit or bearing on integrity than the HEXACO. In particular, both the applied and research communities stand to benefit from the use of Honesty-Humility and Machiavellianism scales when attempting to predict ethical decision making in their target populations.

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Table 1

Relationships between Big Five and HEXACO Trait Theories

	Big Five	HEXACO
Similar Traits		
Extraversion		
Conscientiousness		
Openness to Experience		
Different Traits		
Agreeableness	High levels indicate altruism, kindness, and prosocial behavior. Low levels indicate a competitive and manipulative nature.	High levels indicate gentleness, flexibility, and patience. Low levels indicate a tendency towards anger, hostility, or aggression.
Emotionality	High levels indicate increased anxiety, depression, hostility, self-consciousness, impulsiveness, and vulnerability. Low scores on this trait indicate less of the aspects characterized by higher scores.	High levels of this trait are indicative of increased sentimentality, dependence, and anxiety. Low levels are indicative of bravery and toughness.
Honesty-Humility	N/A	High levels of this trait indicate increased levels of sincerity, greed avoidance, fairness, and modesty. **Note: this trait is derived from aspects of Agreeableness in the Big Five model.

Note. Trait theory differences and similarities adapted from Lee, Ashton, Morrison, Cordery, and Dunlop (2008).

Table 2

Participant Sample Demographics

	Male	Female	Undisclosed	Total	Age
College of Business	15	103	--	118	19
Psychology	26	30	7	63	21
Sample Combined	41	133	7	181	20

Note: The combined sample of the two colleges was used for the purposes of all analyses in this study.

Table 3

Personality Scale Descriptives

	Business		Psychology		Total Sample		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	α
HEXACO							
Honesty-Humility	3.29	.52	3.39	.58	3.36	.56	.82
Emotionality***	3.24	.65	3.60	.63	3.48	.66	.86
Extraversion	3.38	.59	3.25	.77	3.30	.71	.91
Agreeableness	2.94	.57	2.98	.60	2.96	.59	.86
Conscientiousness	3.70	.48	3.77	.55	3.75	.53	.83
Openness	3.05	.58	2.96	.55	2.99	.56	.79
Altruism*	3.82	.65	4.07	.68	3.98	.68	.66
Big Five							
Extraversion	3.22	.88	3.11	.98	3.15	.94	.93
Agreeableness**	3.75	.60	4.08	.65	3.97	.65	.86
Conscientiousness	3.66	.66	3.78	.68	3.77	.65	.86
Emotional Stability	3.12	.64	2.92	.71	2.99	.69	.82
Intellect	3.42	.55	3.52	.57	3.49	.56	.77
Dark Triad							
Machiavellianism	2.99	.61	2.80	.70	2.87	.67	.80
Narcissism**	3.01	.50	2.75	.62	2.84	.59	.74
Psychopathy*	2.16	.58	1.93	.61	2.01	.61	.72

Note. Big Five traits measure using the 50-Item IPIP (Goldberg, 1992); HEXACO traits measured using the HEXACO-PI-R (Lee & Ashton, 2016); Dark Triad traits measured using the Short Dark Triad (SD3; Jones & Paulhus, 2014); Total sample descriptives based on the combination of business and psychology student samples; Personality variable notations indicate significant differences between business and psychology participants on that scale; *p <.05, **p <.01, ***p <.001

Table 4

Personality Trait and Ethical Outcome Correlations

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
HEXACO																
1. H-H																
2. Emot	.15*															
3. Extra	-.17*	.02														
4. Agree	.34***	.03	.05													
5. Consc	.06	.09	.20**	-.14												
6. Open	.04	-.15*	-.05	.19**	-.11											
7. Altruism	.43***	.55***	.19*	.31***	.19*	-.04										
Big Five																
8. Extra	-.24**	.05	.87***	-.05	.10	-.07	.09									
9. Agree	.31***	.60***	.29***	.29***	.09	-.02	.72***	.27***								
10. Consc	.01	-.03	.22**	-.10	.82***	-.15	.08	.14	.05							
11. Emot	.01	-.50***	.38***	.36***	.03	.09	-.05	.25***	-.05	.11						
12. Intel	-.20	-.06	.13	.04	.12	.63***	-.04	.09	.11	.06	.15*					
Dark Triad																
13. Mach	-.59***	-.32	.01	-.44***	.07	.10	-.55***	.02	-.43***	.11	-.04	.13				
14. Narc	-.49***	-.14	.65***	-.21**	.18*	.04	-.15*	.67***	-.06	.20**	.23**	.17*	.41***			
15. Psyc	-.46***	-.47***	-.12	-.31***	-.28***	.12	-.63***	-.01	-.49***	-.18*	-.01	-.01	.54***	.21**		
16. Video Complete	.13	.23**	-.19**	-.05	.01	-.05	.23**	-.17*	.18*	.01	-.19**	-.07	-.08	-.20**	-.17*	
17. EDM	.51***	.04	-.001	.29***	.10	-.04	.30***	-.06	.18*	.08	.15*	.01	-.45***	-.20**	-.38***	.03

Note. Big Five traits measured using the 50-Item IPIP (Goldberg, 1992); HEXACO traits measured using the HEXACO-PI-R (Lee & Ashton, 2016); Dark Triad traits measured using the Short Dark Triad (SD3; Jones & Paulhus, 2014); H-H = Honesty Humility; Emot = Emotionality/Emotional Stability; Extra = Extraversion Agree = Agreeableness; Consc = Conscientiousness; Open = Openness; Intel = Intellect; Mach = Machiavellianism; Narc = Narcissism; Psyc = Psychopathy; Video Complete = a binomial categorical variable indicating whether participants viewed the onboarding video for the minimum mount of time needed to complete the video; EDM = Ethical Decision Making; n = 181 for all variable relationships except those involving EDM; EDM correlations n = 175; *p <.05; **p <.01; ***p <.001

Table 5

Predicting Ethical Decision Making with Big Five Traits

	Model 1			Model 2		
	B(SE)	β	*t*	*B*(SE)	β	*t*
(Constant)	3.00(1.06)		2.84**	-.30(1.03)		-.29
Agreeableness	.43(.18)	.18	2.39*	.05(.17)	.02	.32
Emotional Stability	.35(17)	.15	2.02*	.35(.15)	.16	2.38
Conscientiousness	.14(.17)	.06	.78	.15(.15)	.06	.96
Honesty-Humility				1.42(.19)	.50	7.38***
R^2			.06			.29
F			3.56**			17.11***
ΔR^2						.23***

Note. *$p < .05$; **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$

Table 6

Predicting Ethical Decision Making with HEXACO Traits

	Model 1			Model 2		
	B(SE)	β	*t*	*B*(SE)	β	*t*
(Constant)	2.01(1.18)		1.77	.19(1.10)		.17
Agreeableness	.81(.19)	.31	4.19***	.37(.19)	.14	2.01*
Emotionality	.06(.18)	.03	.34	-.13(.16)	-.05	-.81
Conscientiousness	.41(.22)	.12	1.92	.28(.20)	.10	1.44
Honesty-Humility				1.30(.20)	.46	6.5***
R^2			.10			.28
F			6.58***			16.69***
ΔR^2						.18***

Note. *$p < .05$; **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$

Table 7

Using Culture and HEXACO to Predict Ethical Decision Making

	df	Mean Square	*F*	partial η^2	Observed Power
Intercept	1	12.03	5.78*	.04	.67
Agreeableness	1	21.49	10.33**	.07	.89
Conscientiousness	1	5.77	2.77	.02	.38
Sanctionability	1	2.60	1.25	.01	.20
Norm Clarity	1	1.02	.49	.00	.11
Sanctionability x Norm Clarity	1	.001	.00	.00	.05
Error	130	2.08			
Total	135				

Note. Results based on an analysis of covariance. $R^2 = .11$; Adjusted $R^2 = .07$ *$p < .05$; **$p < .01$

Table 8

Using Culture and Dark Triad to Predict Ethical Decision Making

	df	Mean Square	*F*	partial η^2	Observed Power
Intercept	1	351.47	184.40***	.59	1.00
Machiavellianism	1	20.54	10.78**	.08	.90
Narcissism	1	.61	.32	.00	.09
Psychopathy	1	2.79	1.47	.01	.23
Sanctionability	1	3.28	1.72	.01	.26
Norm Clarity	1	.33	.17	.00	.07
Sanctionability x Norm Clarity	1	.01	.01	.00	.05
Error	129	1.91			
Total	136				

Note. Results based on an analysis of covariance. R^2 = .11; Adjusted R^2 = .07*p < .05; **p <.01; ***p <.001

Table 9

Conscientiousness and Dark Triad on Ethical Decision Making (Complete Sample)

	Model 1			Model 2		
	B(SE)	β	*t*	*B*(SE)	β	*t*
(Constant)	9.66(.59)		16.37***	8.70(.97)		8.97***
Machiavellianism	-.82(.20)	-.35	-4.11***	-.87(.20)	-.37	-4.27***
Narcissism	-.03(.20)	-.01	-.13	-.07(.20)	-.03	-.35
Psychopathy	-.48(21)	-.19	-2.36*	-.38(.22)	-.15	-1.72
Conscientiousness				.27(.22)	.09	1.24
R^2			.23			.24
F			17.16***			13.29***
ΔR^2						.01

Note. No participants were excluded from this analysis on the bases of whether or not they completed the onboarding video; To see the results of the same analysis with participant failing to watch the video excluded from analysis please view Table 9; *$p < .05$; **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$

Table 10

Conscientiousness and Dark Triad on Ethical Decision Making (Partial Sample)

	Model 1			Model 2		
	B(SE)	β	*t*	*B*(SE)	β	*t*
(Constant)	9.30(.68)		13.77***	8.30(1.10)		
Machiavellianism	-.75(.22)	-.33	-3.42**	-.79(.22)	-.35	-3.56**
Narcissism	-.12(.22)	-.05	-.56	-.16(.22)	-.06	-.73
Psychopathy	-.30(.23)	-.11	-1.27	-.19(.26)	-.07	-.75
Conscientiousness				.27(.24)	.10	1.15
R^2			.18			.18
F			9.36***			7.36***
ΔR^2						.01

Note. Participants failing to complete the onboarding video removed from this analysis. See Table 10 for the same analysis with those individuals included; *$p < .05$; **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$

Table 11

Using Personality to Predict Different Types of Ethical Decision Making

	Interpersonal						Solitary/Rule-Based					
	df	Mean Square	*F*	B(SE)	partial η^2	Observed Power	df	Mean Square	*F*	B(SE)	partial η^2	Observed Power
Intercept	1	105.08	30.87***	6.27(1.13)	.15	1.00	1	242.22	71.83***	9.51(1.12)	.30	1.00
Conscientiousness	1	1.89	.56	.20(.26)	.00	.12	1	17.26	5.12*	.59(.26)	.03	.61
Machiavellianism	1	49.93	14.67***	-.80(.21)	.08	.97	1	145.77	43.23***	-1.36(21)	.20	1.00
Error	172	3.40					172	3.37				
Total	175						175					

Note. Results based on a multivariate analysis of covariance in which interpersonal and solitary scenarios were used as distinct outcomes; Interpersonal R^2 = .08 (Adjusted R^2 = .07); Solitary R^2 = .21 (Adjusted R^2 = .20); *p < .05; **p <.01; ***p <.001.

Table 12

Using Personality Interactions to Predict Different Types of Ethical Decisions

	Interpersonal						Solitary/Rule-Based					
	df	Mean Square	*F*	B(SE)	partial η^2	Observed Power	df	Mean Square	*F*	B(SE)	partial η^2	Observed Power
Intercept	1	13.27	3.88*	8.46(4.30)	.02	.50	1	10.54	3.11	7.54(4.28)	.02	.42
Conscientiousness	1	.402	.12	-.39(1.13)	.00	.06	1	3.31	.98	1.12(1.13)	.01	.17
Machiavellianism	1	3.97	1.16	-1.55(1.44)	.01	.19	1	.77	.23	-.69(1.44)	.00	.08
Consc*Mach	1	.96	.28	.20(.38)	.00	.08	1	.77	.23	-.18(.38)	.00	.08
Error	171	3.42					171	3.39				
Total	175						175					

Note. Results based on a multivariate analysis of covariance in which interpersonal and solitary scenarios were used as distinct outcomes; Consc*Mach = the interaction between Conscientiousness and Machiavellianism; Interpersonal $R^2 = .08$ (Adjusted $R^2 = .07$); Solitary $R^2 = .21$ (Adjusted $R^2 = .20$); *$p < .05$; **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$.

Table 13

Combining Trait Theories and Context to Predict Ethical Decisions

	df	Mean Square	*F*	partial η^2	Observed Power
Intercept	1	2.19	1.58	.01	.20
Machiavellianism	1	4.52	2.64	.02	.36
Narcissism	1	.77	.45	.00	.10
Psychopathy	1	.06	.04	.00	.05
Honesty-Humility	1	24.23	14.16***	.10	.96
Agreeableness	1	.87	.51	.00	.11
Conscientiousness	1	1.24	.72	.01	.114
Sanctionability	1	.95	.55	.00	.12
Norm Clarity	1	.04	.02	.00	.05
Sanctionability x Norm Clarity	1	.01	.00	.00	.05
Error	129	1.71			
Total	136				

Note. Results based on an analysis of covariance. Participants failing to complete the onboarding video were removed from this analysis. R^2 = .29; Adjusted R^2 = .24*p < .05; **p <.01; ***p <.001

Table 14

Stepwise Prediction of Ethical Decision Making

	Step 1			Step 2		
	B(SE)	β	*t*	*B*(SE)	β	*t*
(Constant)	1.47(.63)		2.34*	4.39(1.16)		3.80***
Honesty-Humility	1.43(.19)	.51	7.73***	1.03(.22)	.37	4.60***
Machiavellianism				-.55(.19)	-.24	-2.99**
R^2			.26***			.29**
F			59.73***			35.68***
ΔR^2						.04**

Note. Excluded variables: Agreeableness and Psychopathy; n= 175 *p < .05; **p <.01; ***p <.001

Table 15

Stepwise Prediction of Interpersonal Ethical Decision Making

	Step 1			Step 2		
	B(SE)	β	*t*	*B*(SE)	β	*t*
(Constant)	6.97(.61)		11.37***	4.48(1.22)		3.69***
Machiavellianism	-.79(.21)	-.28	-2.79***	-.55(.23)	-.19	-2.42*
Agreeableness				.61(.26)	.19	2.36*
R^2			.08***			.11**
F			14.39***			10.17***
ΔR^2						.03**

Note. Excluded variables: Honesty-Humility and Psychopathy; n= 175 *$p < .05$; **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$

Table 16

Stepwise Prediction of Solitary Ethical Decision Making

	Step 1			Step 2		
	B(SE)	β	*t*	*B*(SE)	β	*t*
(Constant)	1.23(.81)		1.51	4.23(1.50)		2.81**
Honesty-Humility	1.96(.24)	.53	8.25***	1.56(.29)	.42	5.34***
Machiavellianism				-.57(.24)	-.19	-2.36**
R^2			.28***			.31**
F			68.03***			37.69***
ΔR^2						.02**

Note. Excluded variables: Honesty-Humility and Psychopathy; n= 175 *p < .05; **p <.01; ***p <.001

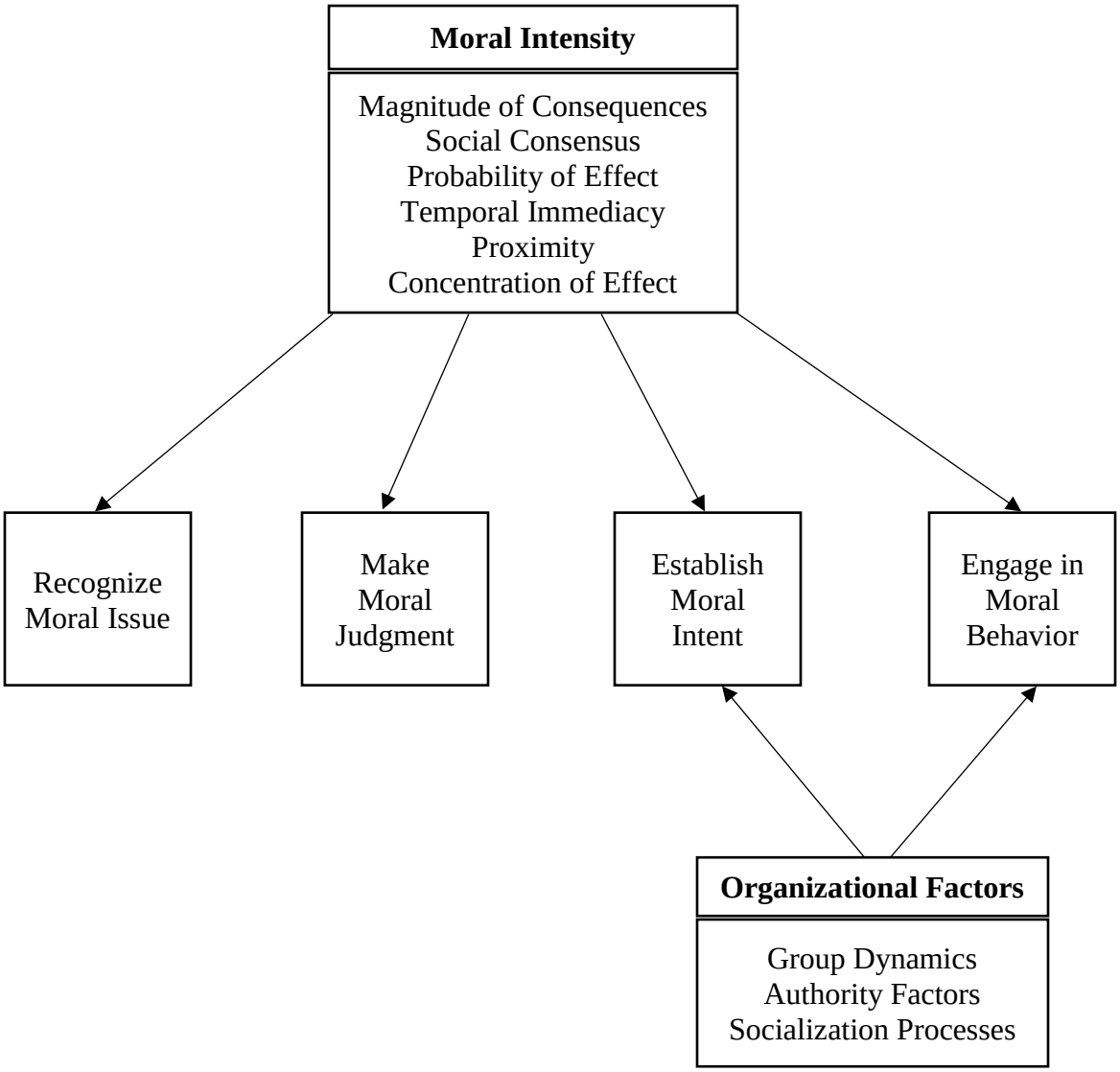

Figure 1. Jones (1991) Issue-Contingent Model of Ethical Decision Making in Organizations

Appendix A

Welcome Video Materials

Low Sanctionability

Hello! Congratulations on your new job and welcome to Palatium Technologies, Inc. This video is designed to welcome you to the company and give you a little bit of insight into the organization. Palatium is a large, global thought leader in the tech industry. We deal with large complex data sets and systems for clients around the globe and pride ourselves on producing the best algorithms and data-driven insights possible.

High Sanctionability

Hello! Congratulations on your new job and welcome to Palatium Technologies, Inc. This video is designed to welcome you to the company and give you a little bit of insight into the organization. Palatium is a large, global thought leader in the tech industry. Because of the sensitive nature of our work, failures to uphold our policies and integrity can result in severe consequences for the organization and, in some cases, termination of the company.

Weak Organizational Norms

We have a large in-house Human Resources department with representatives assigned to each of our departments. Please reach out to these individuals at any time if you have any questions or would like to discuss your benefits at the organization. Our organizational campus is very large so you will see map stations posted around the campus to help you find your way. If you have a hard time finding a particular department or person, you can always swing by or call the front desk attendant of your building who will be happy to assist you. We also have several prominent meeting areas around the campus, such as the food courts, courtyards, and atrium. While you're taking your time to get used to the campus it may be helpful to meet with others in these common spaces and have them show you to their offices themselves. The courtyards and atrium are open to employees anytime between 6am and 9pm Monday through Saturday and the food courts are open from 7 to 7 on workdays so you can enjoy these resources anytime you feel you need to take a break. The employee gym and showers are also open 7 days a week in case you want to let of some steam with a quick workout. You should have received a formal job description from your recruiter. Please take the time to look over your job description and the company Code of Conduct summary. These documents should be considered as guidelines for your responsibilities and duties at Palatium. Our organizational culture and employees are extremely important to us at Palatium and we want to make sure we are doing everything we can to help you adjust to the organization effectively. Please feel free to drop us a line anytime through the contact form on your employee portal. Good luck and enjoy!

Strong Organizational Norms

We have a large in-house Human Resources department with representatives assigned to each of our departments. Please reach out to these individuals at any time if you have any questions or would like to discuss your benefits at the organization. As an organization, we pride ourselves on our integrity and the integrity of our employees. Our primary organizational culture revolves around encouraging our employees to "be good and do good work." This means that we expect our employees to behave honorably, treat clients and co-workers with respect, and follow the letter of the law. Do not be afraid to speak up if you see something that looks suspicious. Contact our Ethics & Compliance department if you are unsure about the decisions of others or decisions that you may have to make yourself. We also have methods in place for anonymous reporting if

you are nervous about reporting a violation. We encourage a happy and respectful work environment where employees are free from the hostility, discrimination or harassment that may affect other organizations and we trust our employees to help make this environment a reality. Please take the time to look over your job description and the company Code of Conduct summary. These documents should be considered as guidelines for your responsibilities and duties at Palatium. To ensure your understanding of the Code of Conduct you will be given a quiz on details from the code shortly after this video. Our organizational culture and employees are extremely important to us at Palatium and we want to make sure we are doing everything we can to help you adjust to the organization effectively. Please feel free to drop us a line anytime through the contact form on your employee portal. Good luck and enjoy!

Job Description

Administrative Coordinator

As administrative coordinator it is your job to supervise staff in your department, manage departmental funds, and act as a point of contact for employees and vendors alike. Additionally, you are for responsible for coordinating meetings and may serve as a support person on special committees. You are also responsible for providing confidential support and handling confidential matters relevant to your department. As such, you also prepare and review operational reports to ensure accuracy and efficiency.

Knowledge, Skills and Abilities Required

- Knowledge of business and management principles involved in strategic planning, resource allocation, human resources modeling, leadership technique, production methods, and coordination of people and resources.
- Knowledge of administrative and clerical procedures and systems such as word processing, managing files and records, stenography and transcription, designing forms, and other office procedures and terminology.
- Knowledge of circuit boards, processors, chips, electronic equipment, and computer hardware and software, including applications and programming.
- Managing one's own time and the time of others.
- Using logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions or approaches to problems.
- Identifying complex problems and reviewing related information to develop and evaluate options and implement solutions.
- The ability to listen to and understand information and ideas presented through spoken words and sentences.
- The ability to communicate information and ideas in speaking so others will understand.
- The ability to read and understand information and ideas presented in writing.
- The ability to shift back and forth between two or more activities or sources of information (such as speech, sounds, touch, or other sources).
- The ability to come up with unusual or clever ideas about a given topic or situation, or to develop creative ways to solve a problem.

Organizational Code of Ethics

Preface

"Be good and do good work." Here at Palatium Technologies, Inc. we pride ourselves on excellence for our clients, employees and communities alike. Doing good work goes with out saying, but what do we mean by "doing good?" As a member of the global market we strive for integrity in all that we do. This means that we expect our employees to behave honorably, treat clients and co-workers with respect, and follow the letter of the law. To maintain an ethical culture and environment we encourage you to read this Code of Ethics and address any comments or questions that you may have to your supervisor or our Ethics & Compliance Department.

Questions and Concerns

At Palatium, we understand that decisions may not always be black and white and may instead lie somewhere in a "grey area." For this reason, we encourage you to address any ethical questions or concerns to your supervisor, human resources representative, or the Ethics & Compliance department. If you feel as though your concerns are more sensitive in nature, please feel free to ask a question or report a concern anonymously through our Ethics Hotline. The number for the Ethics Hotline can be found on the bottom of the company Careers page and has live operators ready to assist you from 8am to 5pm weekdays. For more pressing concerns, please leave a message so we can address the issue as quickly as possible. We understand that in order to ensure a healthy and ethical environment for all, we must as a company go above and beyond to promote such an environment.

Organizational Culture

Our reputation is our most valuable asset, second only to our employee. Thus, it is important to continually earn our employees' and clients trust through the utmost integrity. As an employee, this means a few things to you personally. First, if you suspect that something suspicious is taking place do not be afraid to speak up. You can be a champion for your clients and co-workers by bringing your concerns to anyone that you trust in the organization through any means you feel comfortable with. In some cases, this may mean asking a co-worker for a solution and in some cases, it may mean contacting Human Resources. Whatever the case, know that you are supported by both the people you work with and the organization you work for. Second, be supportive of your co-workers to ensure a happy and healthy environment for them as well. All employees, regardless of position are expected to create a culture that is free from hostility, harassment, and discrimination. Third, maintain accurate and complete records. Data is an important part of the technology industry. In order to be useful and promote the healthiest environment possible, this means keeping thorough and accurate records in legal compliance at all times. We understand that this may take some effort so if you have any questions about how long you should keep documents please contact your human resources representative.

Conclusion

Our people and our culture are our pride and our legacy so don't forget to "be good and do good work" in all that you do! Don't be afraid to speak up and ensure a happy healthy workplace for us all.

Appendix B

Measures

Decision Making Situations:

Instructions*:*
Imagine that you are working in the hypothetical position that you were hired for. You will be asked to read several situations and then asked to indicate your response using the scale provided to you. We ask that you carefully consider each situation and provide the response that best describes what you would do in the situation.

Response Scale used for all situations:
0%, 10%, 20%, 30%, 40%, 50%, 60%, 70%, 80%, 90%, 100%

Sample Decision Making Situations
Situation 1:
In an effort to increase productivity, your manager has ordered ten personal computers for use by his staff. When the UPS shipment arrives, you notice that the invoice from the mail-order house bills only nine PCs, even though all ten were included with the shipment.

You have two options. (1) You can inform the mail-order house of its error and ask to be billed for the correct amount; or (2) you can pay the amount shown on the invoice and take no further action. If the you pay the amount shown, the worst thing that can happen is that the mail-order house may later discover its error and bill you for the tenth computer. There is a high probability (99% say) that the error will never be discovered.

What are the chances you would inform the mail-order house of its mistake and ask to be billed for the correct amount?

Situation 2:
Your best friend is getting married tomorrow. You requested off work months ago for the wedding. You were told today that you have to come into work tomorrow.

How likely are you to call in sick so that you can go to the wedding?

Situation 3:
You are at work and your manager asks you to do something that you know is against company policy. He warns you that if you don't comply, he will fire you.

How likely are you to do as he asks?

Situation 4:
One of your co-workers is having problems with a spouse and wants to have a night out to get their mind off of it, but they also don't want to offend their significant other. They ask you to cover for them and say that you need their help so that they can spend a night hanging out with

you and venting. You haven't hung out with this person in a bit and you have plenty of free time at the moment.

How likely are you to lie to your coworker's spouse so you can hang out together for a night?

Situation 5:
You have been working a lot of overtime lately and have not had the chance to go to the store for some much needed school supplies. However, your office has a lot of notebooks, pens, and pencils in the supply room. You have noticed other people taking the supplies home without any problem even though it is against company policy.

How likely are you to take some of the supplies home to use in class?
Situation 6:
You are trying to run for the executive coordinator position in your division, but one of your friends is running for the same position. If you run against them, you will likely lose them as a friend but you will also probably get the position that you have wanted for quite some time.

How likely are you to run against your friend?

Situation 7:
You are enjoying a night out on the town with a group of friends from work and one of your friends is not able to make it to the party. Your other co-workers start making fun of and telling awful stories about the person that couldn't make it out. You have only known the other person to be nice and respectful of everyone else in the group.

How likely are you to correct your friends on their behavior?

Situation 8:
You were recently allotted $7,500 to plan a community outreach event for the organization. Planning took moths of effort, emails, calls, and coordination on your part. Luckily, the entire even went off without a hitch. Everyone in attendance, including your supervisor, was thrilled with the outcome and had a wonderful time. After the excitement dies down, you remember that you came in $500 below budget for the event. All funds were previously loaded onto a separate purchasing card. The expenses have already been recorded so no one will notice if you use some of the money on the card.

How likely are you to spend all or part of this money on a special reward for yourself?

The Short Dark Triad (SD3):

Instructions*: Please indicate how much you agree with each of the following statements*

Disagree strongly	*Disagree*	*Neither agree nor disagree*	*Agree*	*Agree strongly*
1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

Machiavellianism

1. It's not wise to tell your secrets.
2. I like to use clever manipulation to get my way.
3. Whatever it takes, you must get the important people on your side.
4. Avoid direct conflict with others because they may be useful in the future.
5. It's wise to keep track of information that you can use against people later.
6. You should wait for the right time to get back at people.
7. There are things you should hide from other people to preserve your reputation.
8. Make sure your plans benefit yourself, not others.
9. Most people can be manipulated.

Narcissism

1. People see me as a natural leader.
2. I hate being the center of attention. (R)
3. Many group activities tend to be dull without me.
4. I know that I am special because everyone keeps telling me so.
5. I like to get acquainted with important people.
6. I feel embarrassed if someone compliments me. (R)
7. I have been compared to famous people.
8. I am an average person. (R)
9. I insist on getting the respect I deserve.

Psychopathy

1. I like to get revenge on authorities.
2. I avoid dangerous situations. (R)
3. Payback needs to be quick and nasty.
4. People often say I'm out of control.
5. It's true that I can be mean to others.
6. People who mess with me always regret it.
7. I have never gotten into trouble with the law. (R)
8. I enjoy having sex with people I hardly know
9. I'll say anything to get what I want

Note. The subscale headings will be removes before the SD3 is administered. Items will be kept in the same order. Reverse coded items are indicated with (R).

IPIP-50: (Goldberg, 1992)

Directions:

Describe yourself as you generally are now, not as you wish to be in the future. Describe yourself as you honestly see yourself, in relation to other people you know of the same sex as you are, and roughly your same age. So that you can describe yourself in an honest manner, your responses will be kept in absolute confidence. Indicate for each statement whether it is 1. Very Inaccurate, 2. Moderately Inaccurate, 3. Neither Accurate Nor Inaccurate, 4. Moderately Accurate, or 5. Very Accurate as a description of you.

1. Am the life of the party. (X)
2. Feel little concern for others. (A-)
3. Am always prepared. (C)
4. Get stressed out easily. (ES-)
5. Have a rich vocabulary. (I)
6. Don't talk a lot. (X-)
7. Am interested in people. (A)
8. Leave my belongings around. (C-)
9. Am relaxed most of the time. (ES)
10. Have difficulty understanding abstract ideas. (I-)
11. Feel comfortable around people. (X)
12. Insult people. (A-)
13. Pay attention to details. (C)
14. Worry about things. (ES-)
15. Have a vivid imagination. (I)
16. Keep in the background. (X-)
17. Sympathize with others' feelings. (A)
18. Make a mess of things. (C-)
19. Seldom feel blue. (ES)
20. Am not interested in abstract ideas. (I-)
21. Start conversations. (X)
22. Am not interested in other people's problems. (A-)
23. Get chores done right away. (C)
24. Am easily disturbed. (ES-)
25. Have excellent ideas. (I)
26. Have little to say. (X-)
27. Have a soft heart. (A)
28. Often forget to put things back in their proper place. (C-)
29. Get upset easily. (ES-)
30. Do not have a good imagination. (I-)
31. Talk to a lot of different people at parties. (X)
32. Am not really interested in others. (A-)
33. Like order. (C)
34. Change my mood a lot. (ES-)
35. Am quick to understand things. (I)

36. Don't like to draw attention to myself. (X-)
37. Take time out for others. (A)
38. Shirk my duties. (C-)
39. Have frequent mood swings. (ES-)
40. Use difficult words. (I)
41. Don't mind being the center of attention. (X)
42. Feel others' emotions. (A)
43. Follow a schedule. (C)
44. Get irritated easily. (ES-)
45. Spend time reflecting on things. (I)
46. Am quiet around strangers. (X-)
47. Make people feel at ease. (A)
48. Am exacting in my work. (C)
49. Often feel blue. (ES-)
50. Am full of ideas. (I)

Note: X = Extraversion; A = Agreeableness; C = Conscientiousness; ES = Emotional Stability; I = Intellect; - = reverse-coded

HEXACO-PI-R-100:

On the following pages you will find a series of statements about you. Please read each statement and decide how much you agree or disagree with that statement. Then write your response in the space next to the statement using the following scale:

5 = strongly agree
4 = agree
3 = neutral (neither agree nor disagree)
2 = disagree
1 = strongly disagree

Please answer every statement, even if you are not completely sure of your response.

1		I would be quite bored by a visit to an art gallery.
2		I clean my office or home quite frequently.
3		I rarely hold a grudge, even against people who have badly wronged me.
4		I feel reasonably satisfied with myself overall.
5		I would feel afraid if I had to travel in bad weather conditions.
6		If I want something from a person I dislike, I will act very nicely toward that person in
7		I'm interested in learning about the history and politics of other countries.
8		When working, I often set ambitious goals for myself.
9		People sometimes tell me that I am too critical of others.
10		I rarely express my opinions in group meetings.
11		I sometimes can't help worrying about little things.

12		If I knew that I could never get caught, I would be willing to steal a million dollars.
13		I would like a job that requires following a routine rather than being creative.
14		I often check my work over repeatedly to find any mistakes.
15		People sometimes tell me that I'm too stubborn.
16		I avoid making "small talk" with people.
17		When I suffer from a painful experience, I need someone to make me feel comfortable.
18		Having a lot of money is not especially important to me.
19		I think that paying attention to radical ideas is a waste of time.
20		I make decisions based on the feeling of the moment rather than on careful thought.
21		People think of me as someone who has a quick temper.
22		I am energetic nearly all the time.
23		I feel like crying when I see other people crying.
24		I am an ordinary person who is no better than others.
25		I wouldn't spend my time reading a book of poetry.
26		I plan ahead and organize things, to avoid scrambling at the last minute.
27		My attitude toward people who have treated me badly is "forgive and forget".
28		I think that most people like some aspects of my personality.
29		I don’t mind doing jobs that involve dangerous work.
30		I wouldn't use flattery to get a raise or promotion at work, even if I thought it would
31		I enjoy looking at maps of different places.
32		I often push myself very hard when trying to achieve a goal.
33		I generally accept people’s faults without complaining about them.
34		In social situations, I'm usually the one who makes the first move.
35		I worry a lot less than most people do.
36		I would be tempted to buy stolen property if I were financially tight.
37		I would enjoy creating a work of art, such as a novel, a song, or a painting.
38		When working on something, I don't pay much attention to small details.
39		I am usually quite flexible in my opinions when people disagree with me.
40		I enjoy having lots of people around to talk with.
41		I can handle difficult situations without needing emotional support from anyone else.
42		I would like to live in a very expensive, high-class neighborhood.
43		I like people who have unconventional views.

44		I make a lot of mistakes because I don't think before I act.
45		I rarely feel anger, even when people treat me quite badly.
46		On most days, I feel cheerful and optimistic.
47		When someone I know well is unhappy, I can almost feel that person's pain myself.
48		I wouldn’t want people to treat me as though I were superior to them.
49		If I had the opportunity, I would like to attend a classical music concert.
50		People often joke with me about the messiness of my room or desk.
51		If someone has cheated me once, I will always feel suspicious of that person.
52		I feel that I am an unpopular person.
53		When it comes to physical danger, I am very fearful.
54		If I want something from someone, I will laugh at that person's worst jokes.
55		I would be very bored by a book about the history of science and technology.
56		Often when I set a goal, I end up quitting without having reached it.
57		I tend to be lenient in judging other people.
58		When I'm in a group of people, I'm often the one who speaks on behalf of the group.
59		I rarely, if ever, have trouble sleeping due to stress or anxiety.
60		I would never accept a bribe, even if it were very large.
61		People have often told me that I have a good imagination.
62		I always try to be accurate in my work, even at the expense of time.
63		When people tell me that I’m wrong, my first reaction is to argue with them.
64		I prefer jobs that involve active social interaction to those that involve working alone.
65		Whenever I feel worried about something, I want to share my concern with another person.
66		I would like to be seen driving around in a very expensive car.
67		I think of myself as a somewhat eccentric person.
68		I don’t allow my impulses to govern my behavior.
69		Most people tend to get angry more quickly than I do.
70		People often tell me that I should try to cheer up.
71		I feel strong emotions when someone close to me is going away for a long time.
72		I think that I am entitled to more respect than the average person is.
73		Sometimes I like to just watch the wind as it blows through the trees.
74		When working, I sometimes have difficulties due to being disorganized.
75		I find it hard to fully forgive someone who has done something mean to me.

76		I sometimes feel that I am a worthless person.
77		Even in an emergency I wouldn't feel like panicking.
78		I wouldn't pretend to like someone just to get that person to do favors for me.
79		I've never really enjoyed looking through an encyclopedia.
80		I do only the minimum amount of work needed to get by.
81		Even when people make a lot of mistakes, I rarely say anything negative.
82		I tend to feel quite self-conscious when speaking in front of a group of people.
83		I get very anxious when waiting to hear about an important decision.
84		I'd be tempted to use counterfeit money, if I were sure I could get away with it.
85		I don't think of myself as the artistic or creative type.
86		People often call me a perfectionist.
87		I find it hard to compromise with people when I really think I'm right.
88		The first thing that I always do in a new place is to make friends.
89		I rarely discuss my problems with other people.
90		I would get a lot of pleasure from owning expensive luxury goods.
91		I find it boring to discuss philosophy.
92		I prefer to do whatever comes to mind, rather than stick to a plan.
93		I find it hard to keep my temper when people insult me.
94		Most people are more upbeat and dynamic than I generally am.
95		I remain unemotional even in situations where most people get very sentimental.
96		I want people to know that I am an important person of high status.
97		I have sympathy for people who are less fortunate than I am.
98		I try to give generously to those in need.
99		It wouldn't bother me to harm someone I didn't like.
100		People see me as a hard-hearted person.