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Proactive Workplace Bullying in Teams: Test of a Rational and Moral Model of Aggression

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Proactive Workplace Bullying in Teams:

Test of a Rational and Moral Model of Aggression

A Thesis

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Biography

The author was born in Youngstown, Ohio on January 22nd, 1977. He graduated from Poland Seminary High School and received his Bachelor of Arts degree with Honors in Psychology from Youngstown State University in 2002.

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Abstract

This study tested part of a recently developed theoretical model of proactive workplace aggression put forth by Dixon, Chang, and Johnson (2015). The model postulates distinct motives underlying why perpetrators will morally justify their aggressive behavior, dependent upon the relative in/out-group status and relative hierarchical status of the target. Participants from Amazon's MTurk community were shown one of four vignettes that described a team workplace scenario where the participant was presented with the choice to act aggressively toward a coworker in order to help facilitate the team's goal. All four of the model's dyadic perpetrator-target relationships were represented, but the focal compliance motive was held constant. Moral justifiability of the aggressive behavior was measured, as was psychological collectivism and just-world beliefs; impression management served as a control variable. Multiple regression analyses did not support the tested model. Although participants did believe proactive aggression to ensure compliance was more morally justifiable when the target was within the same group and of a lower hierarchy, only target group membership status proved a significant predictor. Partial support was found for predictions surrounding the relationships between moral justifiability of aggression and the constructs of just-world beliefs and one facet of psychological collectivism. Theoretical and practical implications are discussed, as are directions for future research.

Proactive Workplace Bullying in Teams:

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Introduction

The use of teams in organizations has steadily increased throughout the last three decades—a trend that is likely to continue (Alliger, Cerasoli, Tannenbaum, & Vessey, 2015). Teams empower organizations to efficiently and quickly complete tasks (Ayoko, Callan, & Härtel, 2003) and meet growing technological and economic demands (Fisher, Bell, Dierdorff, & Belohlav, 2012). More than simply a collection of individuals (Paris, Salas, & Cannon-Bowers, 2000), a team can be defined as "a distinguishable set of two or more people who interact, dynamically, interdependently, and adaptively toward a common and valued goal/objective/mission, who have each been assigned specific roles or functions to perform, and who have a limited life-span of membership" (Salas, Dickinson, Converse, & Tannenbaum, 1992, p. 4). Indeed, teams have now become ubiquitous (Tannenbaum, Mathieu, Salas, & Cohen, 2012).

Another organizational phenomenon that has become more common is workplace bullying (Carden & Boyd, 2010), prompting researchers all around the world to focus their efforts on achieving a better understanding of this issue (Clifford, 2006). Workplace bullying has become a popular research topic throughout the last two decades (Chirilă & Constantin, 2013; Hershcovis, 2011).

Workplace bullying can be challenging for organizations to manage (Kemp, 2014), as it is a complex issue (Jacobson, Hood, & Van Buren, 2014). These behaviors can result in negative multilevel effects (Ramsay, Troth, &

Branch, 2011) that range from reduced physical and psychological health (e.g., anxiety, depression, symptoms of PTSD) to work-related outcomes such as reduced job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and absenteeism (Nielsen & Einarsen, 2012). This type of aggressive behavior within organizations has been labeled a global health epidemic (McTernan, Dollard, & LaMontagne, 2013) and an occupational hazard (Demir, Rodwell, & Flower, 2013).

Bullying is now illegal in the United Kingdom, Australia, Finland, Sweden, France, Serbia, Ireland, and parts of Canada. However, "while it may be immoral and unprofessional, it is not universally illegal in the United States for managers to threaten, insult, humiliate, ignore or mock employees" (Daniel, 2009, p. 83). These aggressive behaviors are not always provoked. Employees may engage in proactive (unprompted) bullying—not done in retaliation—in order to force others into compliance.

The increased prevalence of both teams and workplace bullying merits research that combines these important topics to generate recommendations for the effective management of bullying within organizations. This is particularly important because contemporary teams tend to be ongoing, existing for long periods of time (Bell & Marentette, 2011), and because the duration of bullying behaviors is an important element of the phenomenon (Hansen, Hogh, & Persson, 2011). This study fills this gap and responds to calls for research related to workplace bullying that focus on teams (Skogstad, Torsheim, Einarsen, & Hauge, 2011), as there is little empirical and theoretical work on the phenomenon at the

team level (Escartín, Ullrich, Zapf, Schlüter, & van Dick, 2013; Ramsay et al.,

2011).

Additionally, this study involves examining upwards, subordinate-initiated

bullying, which (although less common than top-down bullying) is not

uncommon (Meier & Gross, 2015). Indeed, subordinate-initiated bullying is an

underrepresented topic in the literature (McKay, Arnold, Fratzl, & Thomas, 2008)

that merits further research (Namie & Lutgen-Sandvik, 2010). The relative

hierarchy of the target of such aggressive behaviors may impact whether or not an

aggressor would feel it is morally justified to try to force compliance.

The paper opens by introducing teams and workplace bullying and then

shifts into a discussion of the framework to be tested. The model's theoretical

foundation is presented and the paper then narrows its focus to one of the model's

four predictions—the compliance motive. Detailed sections focusing on

workplace bullying are included to highlight the importance of better

understanding this damaging phenomenon. A discussion of related research

streams—with a special focus on psychological collectivism and just-world

beliefs—is followed by an overview of the vignette methodology that leads to this

study's hypotheses and research design.

A Rational and Moral Model of Workplace Aggression

Workplace bullying is a form of interpersonal aggression, which can be

reactive or proactive (i.e., it can be prompted or unprompted, provoked or

unprovoked, retaliatory or non-retaliatory, dispute-related or predatory). Most of

the research examining the motivations that drive aggressive behaviors has

focused on reactive behaviors, namely how aggression occurs in response to provocation (Felson, 2004); such is the case with the retaliation literature, for example. This study focused on the less-understood phenomenon of proactive workplace aggression, as there is a lack of attention in this area (Felson, 2004).

Acts of proactive aggression are common in the workplace. Examples include abusive supervision, ostracism, and sexual harassment. Workplace bullying, the focus of this study, is another form of workplace aggression that can be initiated from proactive or reactive motivations (Dixon et al., 2015). This study tested aspects of the recently-developed rational and moral model for proactive workplace aggression (Dixon et al., 2015). Dixon and colleagues theorized that perpetrators judge their conscious, rational decisions to behave aggressively toward targets as morally acceptable as a means to achieve various goals. The specific moral justifications are believed to depend on the targets' higher- versus lower-status, and in- versus out-group membership. The framework has its roots in social interactionist theory (Felson, 1993; Felson & Tedeschi, 2003) and draws from Rai and Fiske's (2011) moral motives model of behavior and Felson's (1993) rational choice model of aggression.

The point of the model is to, "expand the current understanding of workplace aggression to include proactive aggression that is not reactive toward an incendiary event or injustice" (Dixon et al., 2015, p. 104). It can be used to provide explanations of what drives these aggressive behaviors. In addition, the model facilitates the development of interventions aimed at preventing proactive workplace aggression.

The new model seeks to provide a reason why a team leader may feel morally justified when behaving aggressively towards a subordinate, and how this justification may differ if the target is part of the team or in another team (in-group/out-group). In contrast, the moral justifications are believed to be different if the perpetrator is the team member and the target is higher on the status hierarchy (e.g., team leader). The framework (Table 1) results in a 2x2 model that crosses target hierarchy with target in/out-group status.

It is unknown to what extent perpetrators engage in proactive aggression that is rational and purposeful. Certainly some percentage of aggressive behaviors in the workplace takes place outside of such information-processing paradigms. Some of these behaviors—perhaps most—are goal-driven, and therefore a deeper understanding of the phenomenon can aid theoretical and practical applications. The following sections present a brief account of Dixon et al.'s (2015) conceptual framework.

Table 1

Conceptual Framework of Moral Aggression from Dixon et al. (2015)

Model of Moral Aggression		
Target Group Membership	Target Hierarchy Level	
	Higher or equal (identity)	Lower (instrumental)
In-group	**Value establishment**	**Compliance**
Out-group	**Preservation**	**Exploitation**

Perpetrator Motives

There have been three overarching themes surrounding the theoretical development of workplace aggression as it concerns perpetrator motives: (a) aggression as a product of the environment (e.g., social norms may encourage these behaviors), (b) aggression as vigilantism (e.g., perpetrators reacting to unfair treatment), and (c) aggression as a catharsis-seeking response to negative emotions and/or a lack of self-control (via the frustration-aggression hypothesis, Berkowitz, 1989). These theoretical perspectives have largely focused on reactive aggression, and very little is understood regarding the motivations that drive proactive, non-retaliatory workplace aggression (Dixon et al., 2015).

Social Interactionist Theory and Rational Choice

Felson's (1993) rational choice model of aggression is based on the instrumental value of aggression and violence. Harm-doing is "a means to an end… individuals harm others because it brings them some benefit or reward" (p.104). According to social interactionist theory, "an individual engages in harmful actions in order to gain compliance, redress grievances, and promote or defend valued identities" (Felson & Tedeschi, 2003, p.295). From this perspective, individuals are engaging in aggressive actions as calculated decisions that are intended to serve their interests, and these aggressive actions are best viewed as social events between individuals (Dixon et al., 2015).

Felson (1993) describes three motivations that drive aggression: compliance, social identity, and justice. These can either be dispute-related (reactive) or predatory aggression (proactive). Justice as a motivation involves the

drive to get "payback" (Felson, 1993) and involves reactive aggression. Proactive

aggression involves compliance and social identity as drivers of behavior.

Compliance. Compliance as a motive for aggressive behavior involves the

forcing of coworker's behavior to match the perpetrator's expectations (Dixon et

al., 2015). Felson and Tedeschi (1993) note that this can involve compelling or

deterring specific behaviors. Felson (1993) provides the example in the "typical

blackmail, the offender threatens to reveal information to legal authorities for

punishment unless the victim complies" (p.108), and notes that tactics such as

promises, persuasion, and control of environmental contingencies are some of the

many ways to achieve behavioral changes in others. An example from the

workplace is abusive supervision (Tepper, 2007), where supervisors may use

aggressive behavior to control the actions of subordinates.

Social identity. Another motivation for proactive aggression can come

from concerns related to social identity, or how a perpetrator is socially perceived

(Felson, 1993). Dixon and colleagues (2015) describe an example of workplace

aggression motivated by identity management as giving a coworker the silent

treatment in order to portray a more powerful status within a workgroup. Dixon et

al. note that this motivation differs from compliance in that the focus is not on

changing another's behavior.

In relation to proactive aggression, concerns regarding social identity can

motivate aggressive behaviors because perpetrators may attempt to present

themselves in a particular way (Felson, 1993). Dixon et al. (2015) argue that

social identity motives may help explain workplace bullying behaviors, as Felson

(1993) note that bullying behaviors are a vehicle for enforcing a self-image of power and assertiveness.

Dixon et al.'s (2015) framework focuses on the motivations of predatory aggression by different concerns described by Felson (1993) and also identifies scenarios where these proactive aggressive acts are viewed as morally justifiable from the perpetrators' perspective by drawing from Rai and Fiske's (2011) moral motives model.

Moral Motives

Dixon et al. (2015) note that Rai and Fiske (2011) developed a framework of moral motives that expands Fiske's (1992) relational models theory, which serves as a means for characterizing and understanding motivated coordination of social relationships. The framework identifies four moral motives that can be used to explain various judgments concerning morally ambiguous situations and "serve as the driving force behind social behaviors that are considered to be moral or immoral in some way" (Dixon et al., 2015, p. 94). In essence, the motives define what is immoral and what is moral in various social situations. These four moral motives are unity, hierarchy, equality, and proportionality, defined according to Rai and Fiske (2011) as follows:

> Unity is the motive to care for and support the integrity of in-groups by avoiding or eliminating threats of contamination and providing aid and protection based on need or empathic compassion. Hierarchy is the motive to respect rank in social groups where superiors are entitled to deference and respect but must also lead, guide, direct, and protect subordinates.

Equality is the motive for balanced, in-kind reciprocity, equal treatment, equal say, and equal opportunity. Proportionality is the motive for rewards and punishments to be proportionate to merit, benefits to be calibrated to contributions, and judgments to be based on a utilitarian calculus of costs and benefits (p.57).

In forming their model of proactive workplace aggression, Dixon et al. (2015) note that (a) these differences in morality judgments can help explain why perpetrators engage in workplace aggression and how they believe these behaviors are morally justifiable, (b) aggression can be considered a way to maintain moral balance, rather than a necessarily antisocial act, (c) the key to their new model of moral workplace aggression is the aggression driven by different rational choices and the interplay between these moral motives, and (d) these moral motives can be divided into reactive motives and proactive motives. Proactive moral motives of unity and hierarchy drive behavior to maintain an established environment of morality; equality and proportionality are reactive motives and restore moral balance or justice in relationships. Because their framework and this study are focused on proactive workplace aggression, unity and hierarchy are discussed.

Proactive Moral Motives

Understanding proactive aggression as a moral or morally justifiable behavior from the perpetrators' perspective depends on the proactive moral motives of unity and hierarchy as outlined by Rai and Fiske (2011).

Unity. The motive of unity is based on the judgment of in- versus out-group status of the target of aggression. Behaviors are considered moral if they benefit the perpetrator's in-group. Individuals in the in-group are thought to deserve fair or preferential treatment. In contrast, behaviors that may otherwise be considered immoral can be justified as moral if they serve to protect the in-group when someone threatens the in-group.

Dixon et al. (2015) share the example of, "from an aggression perspective, behavior will also be driven by group membership: a person might consider stealing from an out-group member to be acceptable if it benefits his or her in-group, but would not feel the same way about stealing from an in-group member" (p.97), and summarize by noting that "…unity as a moral value highlights the importance of considering the targets' in- versus out-group status when perpetrators determine whether to engage in aggression."

Hierarchy. The second moral motive involved in proactive workplace aggression is based on maintaining the tiered system that individuals use to define the relative status of themselves in comparison to the target (Rai & Fiske, 2011). Higher-ranked individuals are expected to assist and protect those of lower ranks; lower-ranked individuals are then expected to serve and respect those of higher ranks. Relative to aggression in the workplace, Dixon et al. (2015) note that

> Within the designations of this motive, higher-ranked individuals are justified to behave in aggressive ways toward lower-ranked individuals if the latter have been disrespectful or challenging the existing hierarchy. On the other hand, lower-ranked individuals are entitled to act in an

aggressive manner if high-ranked individuals do not fulfill their roles and responsibilities of protecting and leading the lower-ranked members of the group (p.97).

In forming their framework, Dixon et al. (2015) state that the interaction between these two proactive moral motives is the foundation for understanding both why perpetrators of these aggressive behaviors view them as justifiable and why proactive aggression occurs in the workplace.

Focusing on Compliance

This study focused on the compliance motive of Dixon et al.'s (2015) framework, within the context of teams. This occurs in situations where the targets of the aggressive behavior are lower in status and are in-group members; and contrasts with the exploitative- and identity-based motives of the other three contexts. The framework proposes that proactive aggression to ensure compliance will be viewed as morally justifiable when the target is an in-group member and of lower status.

In such situations where the target is in-group and lower status, the perpetrator has more power and a responsibility to lead his or her subordinates in ways that will ultimately benefit the group (Rai & Fiske, 2011). Proactive aggressive behaviors that might be deemed morally justifiable, then, would need to serve the interests of the in-group.

Dixon et al. (2015) provide examples of compliance-motivated proactive aggression, such as removing cubicle decorations without asking, in order to ensure a certain type of work environment; or engaging in abusive behaviors in

order to correct counterproductive work behaviors. They note that, "threatening subordinates when they first arrive at their new jobs can be used as a way to ensure their compliance with organizational norms and future directions from leaders (p. 101)." The next section presents a more detailed discussion of workplace bullying, a set of behaviors comprising a subset of workplace aggression, as this study focuses on workplace bullying in its test of Dixon et al.'s (2015) model.

Workplace Bullying Defined

Although there is still no agreed-upon definition of workplace bullying (DeSanti, 2014; Yamada, Cappadocia, & Pepler, 2014), most of the definitions used by researchers include similar criteria (Kemp, 2014). Workplace bullying is typically defined as negative behaviors that are directed at employees or their work context and occur repeatedly and regularly over a period of time (Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, & Cooper, 2011). It is deliberate interpersonal hostility that is "status-blind," sufficiently severe, and repeated frequently enough as to harm the target emotionally and/or financially (Namie, 2003). Workplace bullying is "systematic aggression and violence targeted towards one or more individuals by one individual or by a group" (Einarsen, 2000, p. 381), wherein the target has difficulty defending herself or himself (Olweus, 1991).

Some key concepts within these definitions are that the behaviors are status-blind and, as such, are not discrimination towards age, sex, religion, disability, and other federally protected classes. Additionally, the behaviors are

linked with intention and power differences (Keashly & Jagatic, 2011). They are also ongoing and sufficiently severe as to be capable of causing harm.

Bullying should be differentiated from related constructs such as conflict (Namie, 2007), abusive supervision (Tepper, 2007), workplace incivility (Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Lutgen-Sandvik, Tracy, & Alberts, 2007), and other forms of interpersonal torment (Namie, 2003), as those constructs are not synonymous with bullying (Clifford, 2006; Keashly, 2012; Kemp, 2014). Differentiating workplace bullying from related topics has been frequently explored in the literature (e.g., Agervold, 2007; Bowling, Camus, & Blackmore, 2015; Branch, 2008; Crawshaw, 2009; Einarsen, 2000; Hershcovis, 2011; Keashly & Jagatic, 2011; Saunders, Huynh, & Goodman-Delahunty, 2007). Key ideas are briefly reviewed next.

These types of targeted, intentional behaviors are often differentiated from conventional organizational conflict in that the aggression is severe, prolonged and repeated (Hallberg & Strandmark, 2006), existing within the structure of a power imbalance (Baillien, Neyens, De Witte, & De Cuyper, 2009) that empowers perpetrators and diminishes targets' abilities to defend themselves (Keashly & Jagatic, 2010). The power imbalance often results in worsening aggression towards the targets if they try to actively address the problem (Richman, Rospenda, Flaherty & Freels, 2001). In cases where the aggressor holds a lower hierarchical position, that individual may actually hold more organizational (informal) power than the target, who may be a team leader or member of management (see French & Raven, 1959).

Additionally, the study yielded results that are differentiated from research on retaliation and revenge (e.g., Aquino, Tripp, & Bies, 2001; Duniewicz, 2015; Lian, Brown, Ferris, Liant, Keeping, & Morrison, 2014; Moreno-Jiménez, Rodríguez-Muñoz, Pastor, Sanz-Vergel, & Garrosa, 2009; Skarlicki & Folger, 1997). These studies are predicated on the idea that supervisor-directed, or upward, aggression/bullying are responses to (perceived-or-real) behaviors. For example, Liu and colleagues (2010) found that both supervisor-directed deviance and revenge cognitions directed towards supervisors were both positively related to abusive supervision. The study investigated situations where the target did not instigate the bullying behavior, freeing the participants to respond to the scenarios without contextual cues as to whether or not any particular agent may or may not have deserved to be retaliated against.

Prevalence

Workplace bullying is widespread in the United States (Lutgen-Sandvik et al., 2007), although seldom reported in U.S. organizations (Van Fleet & Van Fleet, 2012). Underreporting may be due to the stigma attached to being bullied (Einarsen, 1999). Researchers have found different rates of workplace bullying prevalence in their samples. One study showed 97% of respondents reported some form of bullying at work within the past five years, with over 15% reporting it as occurring "quite often" or "extremely often" (Fox & Stallworth, 2005). Other research has pointed to it affecting approximately half of working adults (Lutgen-Sandvik & Tracy, 2012; Rayner, 1997), with Rayner also noting that 77% have witnessed workplace bullying. Other studies have reported more conservative

numbers, ranging from approximately 10% to 25% (Demir, Rodwell, & Flower, 2013; Glambek, Matthiesen, Hetland, & Einarsen, 2014; Karatuna & Gök, 2014; Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2007). Even small prevalence estimates affect a substantial number of U.S. workers.

Direction of Abuse

Workplace bullying occurs in three directions—downward, upward, and horizontal. Downward, or top-down, bullying is the most common form of workplace harassment or bullying; this occurs when a person of higher rank/status/power is the perpetrator. Upward harassment has also been referred to as bottom-up, supervisor-targeted, and contrapower harassment (Benson, 1980), and bullying travelling horizontally has also been referred to as lateral, coworker, and peer harassment (Benson, 1980). A recent national survey conducted by the U.S.-based Workplace Bullying Institute (WBI, 2014) found that downward bullying constituted 56% of bullying cases. This is not surprising, as this is what is typically considered to be the typical "higher-power-to-lower-power" direction of bullying behaviors. Coworkers of the same rank comprised 33% of the reported cases, while 11% reported upwards bullying—instances where subordinates were the perpetrators.

Consequences of Bullying

Workplace bullying negatively affects individuals, teams, and organizations (Ramsay et al., 2011) and can create a highly toxic workplace and stressful environment not only for the targets, but for bystanders as well (Vickers, 2011). This ongoing and intentional harassment has also been linked with

considerable financial losses for organizations in nations around the world. Those losses are estimated to be in the hundreds of millions to billions of dollars due to losses associated with absenteeism, lost productivity, turnover, psychological trauma and stress, and depression (Giga, Hoel, & Lewis, 2008; Lamberth, 2014; Keashley & Neuman, 2004; McTernan et al., 2013; Xie & Schaubroeck, 2001).

The detrimental effects of bullying can be long-lasting and potent (Cooper, Hoel, & Faragher, 2004). Two large meta-analyses examining the effects of workplace bullying were recently conducted by Nielsen and Einarsen (2012). The first examined cross-sectional data (N = 77,721), and found that workplace bullying was positively associated with anxiety ($r = .27$; $p < 001$), depression ($r = 34$; $p < 001$), symptoms of PTSD ($r = .37$; $p < .001$), burnout ($r = .27$; $p < 001$), and problems with physical health ($r = .23$; $p < 001$). With regard to work outcomes, they found significant relationships with job satisfaction ($r = -.22$; $p < 001$), organizational commitment ($r = -.19$; $p < 001$), intent to leave ($r = .28$; $p < 001$), and absenteeism ($r = .11$; $p < 001$). Their second study focused on longitudinal data (N = 62,916) and found that problems associated with workplace bullying persisted over time; baseline exposure to bullying was significantly related to mental health problems ($r = .20$; $p < .001$) and absenteeism ($r = .12$; $p < 001$) at follow-up.

In addition, targets of bullying tend to commit more counterproductive work behaviors, and generally experience more negative emotions at work (Aleassa & Megdadi, 2014; Fox & Stallworth, 2005). The presence of bullying behaviors at work can affect more than the target—the ripple effect can spill over

to coworkers and the entire organization (Pilch & Turska, 2014). A high level of

perceived organizational support can buffer some of the negative effects of

bullying (Cooper-Thomas, Gardner, O'Driscoll, Catley, Bentley, & Trenberth,

2013), but organizational support can only go so far if the organization continues

to tolerate the bullying behaviors. Given the negative consequences to the

organization as well as the targets, it is no surprise that workplace bullying has

recently been described in terms of being workplace corruption (Vickers, 2014).

Related Team Research

Aspects of Dixon et al.'s (2015) model overlap or are related to existing

research relative to groups and teams. Such research areas include norm

enforcement, socialization tactics, and in- vs. out-group behavior.

Group norms are the "informal rules that groups adopt to regulate and

regularize group members' behavior" (Feldman, 1984, p. 47), and include

"behavioral guidelines and expectations established and/or enforced within the

team or organization as a whole" (Weems-Landingham, 2004). Norms make

members' behaviors more predictable, enhance group functioning and survival,

express core values, and help members avoid embarrassing interpersonal

situations (Feldman, 1984). Norms are enforced in situations where the applicable

behaviors have some significance for the group. Proactive workplace aggression

in order to gain instrumental compliance can be framed as a form of norm

enforcement.

When proactive workplace aggression is directed at new members, the

literature base on group/team socialization is useful. Anderson and Thomas'

(1996) chapter on work group socialization provides a review of existing research into work group socialization.

A substantial body of research surrounds how feeling part of the in vs. the out-group can affect behavior. At the heart of this work is social categorization theory. According to social categorization theory, individuals tend to categorize themselves and others into groups which can then lead to in-group and out-group biases and behaviors (Tajfel, 1982; Turner, 1985), such as treating members of their group with favoritism (Stahl, Maznevski, Voigt, & Jonsen, 2010). This is clearly related to Rai and Fiske's (2011) work on unity, and Felson's (1993) work on identity—both incorporated by Dixon et al. (2015) into the new framework.

Individual Difference Variables

Psychological collectivism and just-world beliefs are constructs that may affect the extent to which individuals feel that proactive aggression in order to force compliance from a coworker is, or is not, morally justifiable. Both are included as predictor variables, and are presented in this section.

Psychological collectivism. In general, collectivism refers to the extent to which someone identifies with his or her collective or group (Erez & Earley, 1987), and is the opposite of individualism. This construct has been studied as a cultural variable (e.g., collectivistic Japanese culture vs. the individualistic United States) and as an individual difference variable (e.g., psychological collectivism, see Jackson, Colquitt, Wesson, & Zapata-Phelan, 2006). Psychological collectivism is included in this study's methodology because it represents a

fundamental individual trait that is central to understanding the importance someone would likely put on the in- and out-group distinction.

Individuals higher in collectivism display a stronger focus on one's group—in this case one's team. Such individuals identify more with their team, and with the group's common goals. Indeed, collectivists value the welfare of the group more than the welfare of the individual (Kirkman & Shapiro, 1997), and "teams composed of more collectivistic individuals should engage in behaviors that promote the effective functioning of the team" (Dierdorff, Bell, & Belohlav, 2011, p. 248). For these reasons, collectivistic individuals may be more willing to view aggressive behaviors to force compliance as more morally justifiable (compared to those low on collectivism) when these behaviors promote the effective functioning of the team.

It may be counterintuitive that team members with collectivistic orientations would behave aggressively towards their teammates, because they place so much value on the group. Research seems to support such beliefs. For example, teams composed of highly collectivistic members are more likely to be supportive of one another (Drach-Zahavy, 2004) and demonstrate better cooperation (Eby & Dobbins, 1997). Jackson and colleagues (2006) found that collectivistic orientations were positively associated with citizenship behaviors and task performance, and negatively correlated with counterproductive work behavior. It does not necessarily sound like collectivists would be too eager to behave aggressively towards others, particularly fellow teammates.

However, it is important to remember that the Dixon et al. (2015) model is specifically making predictions about instrumental aggression, where the aggressor has (purposefully and rationally) decided that it is moral to behave aggressively in order to achieve some sort of goal—namely compliance for the benefit of the team. The model is not referencing aggressive behaviors done with the goal of hurting the target, or as retaliation for some real-or-perceived injustice.

It is important to view such behaviors as a means-to-an-end. An aggressor may think that bullying someone is the only way to force compliance so that the team's superordinate goal can be achieved. In sum, it seems intuitive to predict that an individual that was highly collectivistic may believe it was ethical to aggressively force compliance, so long as such behaviors were thought to ultimately benefit the team.

Just-world beliefs. The belief in a just world is defined as a self-sustained belief (or illusion) in a just world to preserve one's sense of cognitive balance while dealing with crisis (Lerner, 1978). Informally, it is the belief that people generally get what they deserve and deserve what they get (Lerner, 1980). The belief in a just world (or lack thereof) influences social judgments and how one evaluates others (Maes, Tarnai, & Schuster, 2011), and may affect participants' willingness to morally justify unprompted aggressive workplace behaviors.

The variable is an important correlate of social responsibility (Bierhoff, 1994), and research has revealed relationships with injustice and inequalities (Malahy, Rubinlicht, & Kaiser, 2009), discrimination (Schaafsma, 2013),

commitment to just means (Sutton & Winnard, 2007), rule-breaking behavior (Correia & Dalbert, 2008), and victim blaming (Parent, 2010).

Just-world beliefs can help individuals cope with stressful and negative events (Poon & Chen, 2014), such as events that may be attached to proactively bullying a coworker into compliance. Strong just-world beliefs can inhibit antisocial urges in situations that involve conflict (Nesbit, Blankenship, & Murray, 2012), and individuals with strong (as opposed to weak) just-world beliefs often believe that victims deserve their negative experiences (see Dalbert, 2009; Furnham, 2003; Hafer & Bègue, 2005).

Just-world beliefs have been shown to moderate the relationship between ostracism and aggression such that, after ostracism, individuals with weak just-world beliefs behaved more aggressively, while those with strong just-world beliefs did not (Poon & Chen, 2014). The authors noted that individuals with weak just-world beliefs may have been more likely to believe that they didn't deserve ostracism, and therefore behaved more aggressively.

In sum, people who believe that others get what they deserve—and deserve what they get—are more prone to morally justifying aggressive behavior towards coworkers, especially when committed in the service of a goal. Individuals with strong just-world beliefs do tend to focus on long-term goals (Hafer, 2000), possibly allowing them to justify temporary aggressive behavior if the forced compliance helps achieve a more distal goal. Because individuals with strong just-world beliefs perceive negative outcomes as less unfair than those with weak just-world beliefs (Hafer & Olson, 1989), employees that engage in

proactive aggression with the intent of forcing compliance should be more or less apt to morally justify these behaviors partially as a function of whether or not they believe the world is just.

Vignette Methodology

The study utilized written vignettes presented in an online format. A vignette is ''a short, carefully constructed description of a person, object, or situation, representing a systematic combination of characteristics'' (Atzmüller & Steiner, 2010, p. 128). Aguinis and Bradley (2014), in their recent article describing best practices for designing and implementing vignette studies, note that there have been calls from scholars to implement such research designs that can improve our understanding of causal relationships, as published articles in management and related fields that utilize causal designs only constitute a small minority.

Researchers have successfully used vignettes to examine bullying (Ardolino, 2013). Such scenarios offer several advantages for studying this topic (Bauman & Del Rio, 2006). Vignettes are widely used in social science research (e.g., studying attitudes, attributions, emotional responses). They eliminate potential observer effects and provide an alternative to field observation, which is often time consuming, expensive, and where obtaining an adequate sample size may be problematic (Bauman & Del Rio, 2006; Bauman & Newman, 2013). In another vignette study on bullying, Salin (2011) notes the value of non-observing third parties (rather than observers), because third parties who did not witness the incident (e.g., HR managers) often play a role in such situations.

The experimental vignette methodology enables researchers to manipulate and control independent variables and examine the effects on dependent variables such as opinions by giving participants scenarios that have been carefully constructed, enhancing experimental realism (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014). Vignettes afford the researcher flexibility to design an instrument specifically for a given topic and permit depersonalization (Schoenberg & Ravdal, 2000), especially important for sensitive topics such as workplace bullying. Respondents are able to remain safe from any fear of personal threat (Bauman & Newman, 2013).

Vignettes offer the ability to examine issues that may otherwise be difficult to access empirically (Finch, 1987). They are valuable when practical or ethical issues are involved (Hughes & Huby, 2002), such as this study's examination of workplace bullying within a team context. Ethical considerations warrant avoiding making the participant the target or direct observer of bullying that is severe enough (and repetitive) to elicit the types of reactions and effects being examined. Indeed, "the combination of the vignette technique with a traditional survey is a promising but too infrequently used research method for investigating respondents' beliefs, attitudes, or judgments" (Atzmüller & Steiner, 2010, p. 128). For these reasons, vignettes were utilized despite their disadvantages (e.g., generalizability, and a disconnection between participants' experiences as research respondents and those of the vignette characters they are asked to assume; Hughes & Huby, 2002).

Related Vignette Research

Vignettes and scenarios are frequently used to study workplace aggression and bullying. For example, researchers have examined victim outcomes and attributions for workplace aggression (Hershcovis & Barling, 2010), how previously enduring emotionally distressing events like workplace bullying affects evaluations of others who fail to endure such events (Ruttan, McDonnell, & Nordgren, 2015), and perceptions of political reasons for organizational peer/horizontal bullying (Katrinli, Atabay, Gunay, & Cangarli, 2010). Researchers have also examined determinants of helping decisions and how equity judgments and perceived responsibility are influenced by bullying, revictimization, and victim work behavior (Desrumaux, Machado, Przygodzki-Lionet, & Lourel, 2015), how perceived responsibility, gender, and anticipated stigma by association affect bystanders' helping behavior towards victims of workplace bullying (Mulder, Pouwelse, Lodewijkx, & Bolman, 2014), workplace incivility towards women (Chui & Dietz, 2014), and the relationship between counterproductive workplace behaviors, situational factors, and personal integrity (Mikulay, Neuman, & Finkelstein, 2001).

Vignettes have been used to study many topics traditional to industrial and organizational psychology and management, such as personality and performance appraisals (Ogunfowora, Bourdage, & Lee, 2010), justice (Scheuerman, 2013), and, in particular, leadership (Christie, Barling, & Turner, 2011; Kark, Katz-Navon, & Delegach, 2015; Weichun Zhu, Riggio, Avolio, & Sosik, 2011). Additionally, vignettes are commonly used to examine bullying and aggression outside of research focusing on the workplace.

Vignettes have been utilized in sexual harassment research (e.g., Herrera, Herrera, & Expósito, 2014; Pierce, Aguinis, & Adams, 2000). They have also been used to examine views on bullying from the perspective of the roles of the perpetrator, target, and bystander (Myers & Cowie, 2013), perceptions about strategies and intervention (Blood, Blood, Coniglio, Finke, & Boyle, 2013), and the interventions and attitudes of teachers in bullying situations (Yoon, 2004).

Finally, researchers have used vignettes to study educators' likelihood of intervening, level of empathy, and perceptions of the seriousness of bullying behaviors in LGBTQ or gender-nonconforming victims (Perez, Schanding, & Dao, 2013), how perceptions of bullying are influenced by gender and parenting style (Ardolino, 2013), sibling versus peers bullying (Hoetger, Hazen, & Brank, 2015), perceptions of bullying in students and teachers/staff (Maunder, Harrop, & Tattersall, 2010), empathy and responses to verbal, physical, and relational bullying scenarios (Bauman & Del Rio, 2006; Blood, Boyle, Blood, & Nalesnik, 2010; Duy, 2013), as well as traditional bullying compared to cyberbullying (Bauman & Newman, 2013; Boulton, Hardcastle, Down, Fowles, & Simmonds, 2014; Morrow & Downey, 2013).

Rationale

Proactive workplace aggression is an important yet underdeveloped research area, and both teams and workplace bullying continue to become more common in modern organizations. Dixon et al.'s (2015) recently developed rational and moral model for proactive workplace aggression merits empirical

testing, as results will serve to inform the model's continued development and can lead to both theoretical and practical implications as described below.

A more in-depth understanding of cases where perpetrators instigate aggression is important (Felson, 2004). We understand more about the motivations and causes driving workplace aggression when perpetrators are reactors (e.g., when bullying behaviors are engaged in as a form of retaliation) than we do about the motivations behind proactive, unprovoked aggression; indeed "by ignoring the proactive forms of workplace aggression, our understanding of the full range of motivations underlying such behaviors is limited." (Dixon et al., 2015, p.83).

Specifically, the study investigated whether the compliance motive behind workplace bullying is more justifiable across different situations, and examined the extent to which psychological collectivism and just-world beliefs were related to the moral justification of aggressive behavior. A better understanding of the motivations and moral justifications that can drive proactive workplace aggression can lead to both theoretical and practical implications.

Theoretical Implications

Whereas the motive of justice in aggression research has received wide attention in the literature (e.g., Hershcovis et al., 2007), the motives of identity management and compliance should also be considered, as they may improve understanding of proactive workplace aggression (Dixon et al., 2015). The model extends the relational model of aggression (Hershcovis & Barling, 2007) by highlighting the importance of the relationships between perpetrators and their

targets, and suggests that these relationship characteristics may drive perpetrators'

moral justifications and motivations to engage in unprovoked aggression.

Practical Implications

A better understanding of when and why perpetrators feel aggression is

justified in the workplace can facilitate intervention strategies. Dixon et al. (2015)

note that workplace aggression may be prevented by reducing incentives for

identity management and compliance through the use of workplace aggression

and by highlighting equality as a moral motive (Rai & Fiske, 2011). Such changes

may counter views of aggression as morally justifiable. Also, organizations can

consider new policies that would make the costs of aggression outweigh the

benefits. The aim of such policies is to eliminate the desirability of achieving the

goals (e.g., compliance or identity management) that motivate the aggressive

behavior (Felson, 1993).

Aggressive behaviors can be seen as a tool that leaders could potentially

use to force compliance from subordinates. At the same time, the negative

outcomes associated with bullying suggest that tactics other than aggressive

behavior would be appropriate. Also, perceptions of moral justification (as this

study addresses) are not necessarily the same as actual moral behavior.

<center>**Hypotheses**</center>

Hypothesis I: There will be an interactive effect between target in/out-

group status and target hierarchical status on ratings of the moral

justifiability of proactive aggression such that proactive aggression to

ensure compliance will be viewed as most morally justifiable when the

target is an in-group member and of lower status.

Hypothesis II: Individual collectivistic orientation will be positively

related to moral justifiability across all four conditions.

Hypothesis III: Just-world beliefs will be positively related to moral

justification across all four conditions.

Method

General Overview

This study utilized a 2x2 experimental design and vignettes to develop

scenarios that manipulate the target's in-group/out-group membership as well as

their relative hierarchical positon to the perpetrator. The study tested in which

cases perpetrators felt that proactive aggression—namely behaviors aimed at

forcing compliance that could reasonably be labeled bullying—were believed to

be morally justified. The remaining three elements of the framework (value

establishment, identity preservation, and exploitation) will be investigated in

future research.

In this study participants were instructed to imagine that they are either a

team leader or a team member. The participants were presented with a scenario

where they are involved in a team task. They decided whether or not it would be

moral to act aggressively in order to force compliance from a coworker. The

coworker was either in-group (inside the team) or out-group (in a different team).

Participants were told that the coworker has a skill that holds the key to the team's

success but is not adequately contributing. This approach permitted measuring

morality judgments from participants that covered all four of the model's

contexts, specifically: (1) target = lower status and in-group; (2) target =

higher/equal status and in-group; (3) target = lower status and out-group; (4)

target = higher/equal status and out-group. This methodology juxtaposed morality

judgments between these four conditions to test the model's theoretical

predictions.

Participants

Individuals were recruited from Amazon's Mechanical Turk (i.e., MTurk)

user community. Participation was limited to individuals in the United States who

have worked in teams and are at least 18 years of age. The sample size was

determined by a power analysis calculated using G*Power 3.1.9.2 (Faul,

Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2007). The full analysis can be found in Appendix

A. A total sample size of 92 participants was determined by calculating for

multiple regression with a medium effect size set at .15, α error probability 0.05,

power set at .80, with 5 predictor variables (1 control, 2 individual differences, 2

dummy coded). To account for attrition, suspicious response patterns, and

incomplete or missing survey responses, data were collected from 160

participants.

The initial sample needed to be discarded, as the conditions that the

participants were randomly assigned to were not coded (there was no way of

knowing who was in which condition). An analysis of this initial dataset revealed

that a significant number of individuals failed manipulation checks and/or the

attention checks. Attention checks are utilized to ensure that participants are

actually reading the questions, rather than simply clicking through the survey (e.g., "Please check the middle box to complete this question"). Therefore, a second sample was necessary and the sample size was increased to ensure the final dataset contained an appropriate number of cases. The survey was modified to code the participants' respective conditions into the final dataset.

The second sample utilized 320 participants. Individuals were removed from the dataset if they failed any of the manipulation check or attention check items, or stated that they had never worked in a team. The final dataset contained 220 individuals, meaning roughly a third of the initial participants were removed.

Participants ranged in age from 20 years to 81 years, with a mean age of 39.60 years ($SD = 12.17$). With respect to gender, 52.3% described themselves as female ($N = 115$), and 47.7% of participants described themselves as male ($N = 92$). Participants' ethnicities were as follows: 75.9% Caucasian/White ($N = 167$), 10.0% African American/Black ($N = 22$), 7.3% Asian/Pacific Islander ($N = 16$), 4.5% Hispanic/Latino/a ($N = 10$), 1.4% Bi-Racial ($N = 3$), 0.5% Native American ($N = 1$), 0.5% Other ($N = 1$). Participants reported working between 1 and 50 years, with an average of 20.20 years ($SD = 11.87$). With regard to full-time work, responses ranged from 0 to 47 years, with an average of 16.59 years ($SD = 11.05$). Participants were asked, "In your total job experience, estimate what percent of the time you worked in a team." 15.0% listed between 1% - 25% of the time ($N = 33$), 25.5% between 25% - 50% of the time ($N = 56$), 31.8% between 50% - 75% of the time ($N = 70$), and 27.7% responded that they worked in a team between 75% - 100% of the time ($N = 61$).

Procedures

Participants on the MTurk system responded to all survey measures through a link to Qualtrics. Participants were limited to individuals that had team experience in their job history. MTurk participants were compensated $0.50 U.S. dollars for their participation. Participants were administered an informed consent form (Appendix E) and first read a brief list of instructions for the study. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the four study conditions, read the associated vignette and responded to a moral justifiability measure, measures for psychological collectivism, just-world beliefs, and impression management, as well as the vignette manipulation check items. Demographic items (Appendix D) were collected and a debriefing page (Appendix F) was displayed and was made available for participants to print.

Manipulation check. To ensure that participants understood the manipulations, and that their data could be analyzed, manipulation-check items were administered (see Appendix C).

Materials

Vignettes. This investigation approaches these topics using vignettes. Aguinis and Bradley (2014) note the recent calls from scholars to implement such research designs, as they can improve our understanding of causal relationships in fields related to management. One vignette that could be modified to create four conditions was developed for this study (complete four in Appendix B).

Readability was aimed at high-school level or below, and was found to be an 8.5 grade level. The readability score was calculated by averaging several

readability formulas (Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level, Coleman-Liau Index, SMOG Index, and Automated Readability Index). This grade level of readability aligns with similar vignettes from extant research. The vignettes showed a Flesch-Kincaid Reading Ease score of 67.8. A higher score indicates easier readability; scores usually range between 0 and 100. This readability assessment shows that the vignettes are appropriate for the intended audience.

The vignettes portrayed scenarios that manipulate the target's in-group/out-group membership as well as their relative hierarchical position to the perpetrator and tested in which cases perpetrators felt that proactive aggression—namely behaviors aimed at forcing compliance that could reasonably be labeled bullying—were believed to be morally justified. Participants were asked to imagine that they were either a team leader or a team member, and were presented with a scenario where they are involved in a team task. They had the option of consciously deciding whether or not it would be moral to act aggressively in order to force compliance from a coworker in order to facilitate the team's success. The coworker was either be in-group (inside the team) or out-group (in a different team). This approach permitted measuring morality judgments from participants that cover all four of the model's contexts, specifically (1) target = lower status and in-group, (2) target = higher/equal status and in-group, (3) target = lower status and out-group, (4) target = higher/equal status and out-group. This methodology provided a juxtaposition of morality judgments between these four conditions to test the model's theoretical predictions.

Vignettes across conditions contained the same language throughout, apart from the minimal phrasing differences that designated the hierarchy and in/out-group status of the perpetrator-target relationship. Care was taken in order to be sure that the vignettes described a situation where the aggression would be proactive and not overtly reactive/retaliatory. Language was added to make it more believable for someone with lower power in the team to be able to act aggressively towards someone with higher power, and not face consequences. Individuals with less hierarchical (formal) power sometimes can have more power that one's boss, and could bully the boss without consequences (e.g., he/she may be the owner's relative, or possess skills that are difficult to replace). Confounds such as references to gender were purposefully excluded.

Vignettes were pilot tested with the help of graduate students ($N = 41$) to ensure manipulations were successful and to gather feedback.

Measures

Moral justification. Moral justification (see Appendix G) was measured with two items adapted from Mikula (2003). "Aggressively forcing compliance from my coworker would be morally justified (ethical)," and "Aggressively forcing compliance from my coworker could be excused." In addition, a third item was added, "Aggressively forcing compliance from my coworker would be acceptable." Anchors on the 7-point Likert scales ranged from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Collectivism. Psychological collectivism was measured using the instrument developed by Jackson et al. (2006), found in Appendix J. This scale

was developed to address problems with the reliability and validity of existing

collectivism measures. The instrument consisted of 15 items broken into five

facets: Preference, Reliance, Concern, Norm Acceptance, and Goal Priority. Each

item is measured on a 5-point scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree).

Sample items included, "I preferred to work in those groups rather than working

alone" and "I felt comfortable counting on group members to do their part."

Just world beliefs. Participants were administered the 20-item Belief in a

Just World Scale (Rubin & Peplau, 1975); this is the standard measure used to

assess this construct. Sample items were, "People who get 'lucky breaks' have

usually earned their good fortune," and (reverse scored) "I've found that a person

rarely deserves the reputation he or she has." A 5-point scale ranging from

"Strongly agree" to "Strongly disagree" was used (Appendix H).

Covariate

Impression management. The Balanced Inventory of Desirable

Responding (Paulhus, 1983) was used to measure 2 constructs: self-deceptive

positivity (the tendency to give self-reports that are believed but that have a

positivity bias) and impression management (deliberate self-presentation to some

form of audience). The measure is frequently used in research as a control to

address the possible influence of social-desirability tendencies in participants.

For the purposes of this study the 20 items that assess impression

management were administered. Impression management refers to the conscious

adjustment of how one responds to questionnaires with the goal of making a

favorable impression (Paulhus, 1986). Impression management represents

defensiveness (Peebles & Moore, 1998), and may be particularly important in organizational settings (Warr, 1999). Sample items are, "I never cover up my mistakes" and "I always obey laws, even if I'm unlikely to get caught." This scale's 7-point response format ranges from "Not true" to "Very true."

Results

All analyses were conducted using the SPSS statistical package (Version 24) for Windows. Descriptive statistics and correlations for study variables are presented in Table 1. Hypotheses were evaluated using multiple regression with dummy coded variables. Impression management was controlled for in each hypothesis test.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics, Reliabilities, and Zero-Order Correlations

	M	SD	α	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1 Moral Justifiability	3.98	1.75	.95								
2 Just World Beliefs	3.58	.63	.84	.04							
3 Impression Management	4.01	.95	.84	-.15*	.08						
4 Collectivism - Overall	4.74	.99	.91	.05	.23***	.14*					
5 Collectivism - Preference	3.85	1.64	.95	.09	.25***	.08	.79***				
6 Collectivism - Reliance	4.42	1.58	.91	-.01	.16*	.21**	.79***	.63***			
7 Collectivism - Concern	5.48	1.07	.90	-.06	.12†	.12†	.74***	.39***	.48***		
8 Collectivism - Norm Accept	5.56	.86	.89	.12†	.19**	.06	.62***	.33***	.37***	.54***	
9 Collectivism - Goal Priority	4.46	1.44	.92	.02	.13†	.09	.67***	.34***	.32***	.49***	.35***

Note:
Significance levels (2-tailed): † = *p* < 0.1, * = *p* < .05, ** = *p* < .01, *** = *p* < .001
N varies from 217 to 220 due to removal of outliers (removal explained in General Assumptions section).

Psychometrics / Reliabilities

Cronbach's alpha was calculated for all measures. Moral justification was measured with three items which were highly reliable (α = .95): "Aggressively forcing compliance from my coworker would be morally justified (ethical)," Aggressively forcing compliance from my coworker could be excused," and "Aggressively forcing compliance from my coworker would be acceptable." The scale for psychological collectivism consisted of 15 items broken into five facets. Cronbach's alpha for the entire scale (.91) and the facets are: Preference (.95),

Reliance (.91), Concern (.90), Norm Acceptance (.89), and Goal Priority (.92).

Alpha reliabilities for both the Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding and

the Belief in a Just World Scale were both .84.

General Assumptions

Outliers were defined as observations that were greater than 3.29 standard

deviations from the mean of their standardized distributions (Tabachnick &

Fidell, 2007). Outliers were removed for their respective statistical procedures.

All analyses of the proposed hypotheses in this study used multiple regression,

and relevant assumptions were tested throughout.

Multiple Regression Assumptions

Linear regression assumes a linear relationship between the response

variable and the predictors. This assumption was confirmed by plotting and

examining standardized predicted values and standardized residuals.

Homoscedasticity refers to the variance of the residuals being homogeneous

across levels of the predicted values, and was tested with a visual inspection of

the aforementioned scatterplot. In linear regression, the residuals must be

normally distributed. This was visually confirmed (i.e., points clustered around

the line) by inspecting a P-P (normal probability plot). Multicollinearity, the

existence of problematically high multiple correlations among predictors, was

determined by inspecting the tolerance (percentage of a predictor's variance that

cannot be explained by other predictors), and the VIF values (Variance Inflation

Factor; reciprocal of tolerance). Tolerance values or .10 or less, and/or VIF

(Variance Inflation Factor) scores of 5 or more indicate problematic

multicollinearity. Influential observations were determined using Cook's Distance

for all observations, with values larger than $4/(n\text{-}k\text{-}1)$ being considered influential.

Any influential observations were examined to ensure that data were entered

correctly and did not reflect human error. Results are reported both with and

without the influential observations where applicable. Any violations of

regression assumptions are detailed in the respective sections below.

Hypotheses Testing

      Hypothesis 1: The first hypothesis stated that there will be an interactive

effect between target in/out-group membership status and target hierarchical

status on ratings of the moral justifiability of proactive aggression, such that

proactive aggression to ensure compliance will be viewed as most morally

justifiable when the target is an in-group member and of lower status.

      Descriptive statistics show that, as predicted by the tested framework and

displayed in Table 2, participants in the "In / Lower" condition reported the

highest mean ratings of moral justifiability. As compared to the other conditions,

those who imagined that they were a team leader, and that the potential target of

aggression was a subordinate member within their own team indicated it was most

morally justifiable to engage in aggressive behavior to force compliance.

Table 2
Moral Justifiability Statistics Across Conditions with Descriptions

Condition	N	M	SD	Condition Description
*In / Lower	61	4.28	1.71	Participant = leader, Target = Member of the same team
Out / Lower	56	3.91	1.68	Participant = leader, Target = Member of a different team
In / Higher	56	4.20	1.80	Participant = member, Target = Member of the same team
Out / Higher	47	3.39	1.73	Participant = member, Target = Member of a different team

* Condition predicted to have the highest mean score

To test Hypothesis 1, moral justifiability was regressed onto membership and hierarchy (dummy coded) and their interaction term, and impression management. Results are presented in Table 3. Impression management was entered in Step 1 of the regression. This yielded a significant model ($F[1,218] = 5.29$, $p = .02$), accounting for 2% of the variance in moral justifiability (a weak effect, per Cohen, 1988), with impression management negatively predicting moral justifiability ($B = -.29$, $p = .02$). Participant membership and hierarchy status and their interaction term were added into the second step of the regression. The total sample was $N = 220$. This yielded a significant model ($F[4,215] = 3.49$, $p = .01$), accounting for 6% of the variance in moral justifiability (a weak effect). In this second step, impression management scores negatively predicted moral justifiability ($B = -.29$, $p = .02$). As predicted, target membership status predicted moral justifiability ($B = -.78$, $p = .02$), such that participants rated aggressive behavior to force compliance as more morally justifiable when the target belonged to the in-group (i.e., the same team). However, target hierarchy and the interaction between membership and hierarchy did not significantly predict moral justifiability ($B = .14$, $p = .67$ and $B = .48$, $p = .30$, respectively).

Several influential observations were flagged ($N = 9$) and the analyses were re-run to test for robustness of the observed effects with a sample of 211. Impression management was entered in Step 1 of the regression. This yielded a significant model ($F[1,209] = 17.02$, $p < .001$), accounting for 8% of the variance in moral justifiability (a weak effect), with impression management negatively predicting moral justifiability ($B = -.53$, $p < .001$). Participant membership and

hierarchy status and their interaction term were added into the second step of the

regression. This yielded a significant model ($F[4,206] = 7.55$, $p < .001$),

accounting for 13% of the variance in moral justifiability (a medium effect, per

Cohen, 1988). In this second step, impression management scores negatively

predicted moral justifiability ($B = -.54$, $p < .001$). As predicted, target membership

status predicted moral justifiability ($B = -.77$, $p = .02$), such that participants rated

aggressive behavior to force compliance as more morally justifiable when the

target belonged to the in-group (i.e., the same team). Target hierarchy and the

interaction between membership and hierarchy did not significantly predict

justifiability ($B = .33$, $p = .27$ and $B = .33$, $p = .45$, respectively).

These results show that, both including and excluding influential

observations, participants reported that it was significantly more justifiable to

aggressively force compliance when the target was within the same team (in

group) as compared to outside of the team (outgroup). No support for target

hierarchy or the interaction between membership and hierarchy was found.

Effects sizes were weak in all models except for when influential observations

were removed and all predictors were added, which resulted in a moderate effect.

The addition of the experimental-condition predictors (membership, hierarchy,

interaction) resulted in large R-squared values over impression management

alone, demonstrating these predictors' ability to explain additional variance in the

dependent variable of moral justifiability; this was true in models both with and

without influential observations. In sum, Hypothesis 1 was not supported.

Table 3

Summary of Regression Results of Impression Management and Target's Membership/Hierarchical Status as Predictors of Moral Justifiability

	Coefficients			Model Statistics					
	B	*SE B*	β	*N*	*R*	R^2	ΔR^2	ΔF	*F*
Step 1									
(*Constant*)	5.12	.51		220	.15	.02	.02	5.29	5.29*
Impression Management	-.29	.12	-.15*						
Step 2									
(*Constant*)	5.31	.53		220	.25	.06	.04	2.84	3.49**
Impression Management	-.29	.12	-.16*						
Membership	-.78	.34	-.22*						
Hierarchy	.14	.32	.04						
Mem x Hier	.48	.46	.12						
Reanalysis without Influential Observations									
Step 1									
(*Constant*)	6.07	.53		211	.27	.08	.08	17.02	17.02***
Impression Management	-.53	.13	-.27***						
Step 2									
(*Constant*)	6.18	.53		211	.36	.13	.05	4.14	7.55***
Impression Management	-.54	.13	-.28***						
Membership	-.77	.33	-.23*						
Hierarchy	.33	.30	.10						
Mem x Hier	.33	.44	.09						

Note: Mem x Hier = interaction between membership and hierarchy.
† indicates *p* <.10; * indicates *p* < .05; ** indicates *p* < .01; *** indicates *p* < .001
Coding = Target Membership Group (0 = In, 1 = Out), Target Hierarchy (0 = Up, 1 = Down [subordinate])

Hypothesis 2: The second hypothesis predicted that individual collectivistic orientation would be positively related to moral justifiability across all four conditions (controlling for impression management). To test this hypothesis, a regression was conducted between individual collectivistic orientation and moral justifiability, with impression management as a control variable. Results are presented in Table 4. The total sample was $N = 220$.

Impression management was entered in Step 1 of the regression, and yielded a significant model ($F[1,218] = 5.29$, $p = .02$) that explained 2% of the

variance in moral justifiability (a weak effect, per Cohen, 1988), with impression management negatively predicting moral justifiability ($B = -.29$, $p = .02$). Collectivistic orientation was entered into the second step of the regression equation. This yielded a significant model ($F[2,217] = 3.28$, $p = .04$), accounting for 3% of the variance in moral justifiability (a weak effect). In this second step, impression management scores negatively predicted moral justifiability ($B = -.30$, $p = .02$), however collectivistic orientation was not a significant predictor ($B = .13$, $p = .26$).

Several influential observations were flagged ($N = 13$) and the analyses were re-run to test for robustness of the observed effects. The total sample was $N = 207$. As before, impression management was entered in Step 1 of the regression. This yielded a significant model ($F[1,205] = 10.88$, $p < .001$), accounting for 5% of the variance in moral justifiability (a weak effect), with impression management negatively predicting moral justifiability ($B = -.44$, $p < .001$). Collectivistic orientation was entered into the second step of the regression equation. This yielded a significant model ($F[2,204] = 5.62$, $p = .004$), accounting for 5% of the variance in moral justifiability (a weak effect). In this second step, impression management scores negatively predicting moral justifiability ($B = -.46$, $p < .001$), however collectivistic orientation was not a significant predictor ($B = .08$, $p = .53$). An examination of the influential data indicated no reason to believe these observations represented errors, as opposed to valid observations. Effects sizes were small in all models. Removing influential observations resulted in larger R-squared values, with the predictors explaining greater variance in the

dependent variable of moral justifiability, yet each effect remained weak as per

Cohen (1988). In sum, Hypothesis 2 was not supported.

Table 4

Summary of Regression Results of Impression Management and Individual Collectivism as Predictors of Moral Justifiability

	Coefficients			Model Statistics					
	B	SE B	β	N	R	R²	ΔR²	ΔF	F
Step 1									
(*Constant*)	5.12	.51		220	.15	.02	.02	5.29	5.29*
Impression Management	-.29	.12	-.15*						
Step 2									
(*Constant*)	4.56	.71		220	.17	.03	.01	1.26	3.28*
Impression Management	-.30	.13	-.16*						
Individual Collectivism	.13	.12	.08						
Reanalysis without Influential Observations									
Step 1									
(*Constant*)	5.74	.55		207	.22	.05	.05	10.88	10.88***
Impression Management	-.44	.14	-.22***						
Step 2									
(*Constant*)	5.43	.74		207	.23	.05	.00	.40	5.62**
Impression Management	-.46	.14	-.23***						
Individual Collectivism	.08	.12	.04						

† indicates $p < .10$; * indicates $p < .05$; ** indicates $p < .01$; *** indicates $p < .001$

Hypothesis 3: The third hypothesis stated that just-world beliefs would be

positively related to moral justification across all four conditions (controlling for

impression management). To test this hypothesis, moral justifiability was

regressed onto just-world beliefs with impression management entered as a

control variable. The total sample was $N = 220$. Results are presented in Table 5.

First, impression management was entered in Step 1 of the regression.

This yielded a significant model ($F[1,218] = 5.29$, $p = .022$), accounting for 2% of

the variance in moral justifiability (a weak effect, per Cohen, 1988), with

impression management negatively predicting moral justifiability (B = -.29, p =

.02). Just-world beliefs was entered into the second step of the regression

equation. This yielded a significant model (F[2,217] = 2.96, p < .05), accounting

for 3% of the variance in moral justifiability (a weak effect). In this second step,

impression management scores negatively predicting moral justifiability (B = -

.29, p = .02), yet just-world beliefs was not a significant predictor of moral

justifiability (B = .15, p = .42).

Several influential observations were flagged (N = 17) and the analyses

were re-run without the influential observations to test for robustness of the

observed effects. For this analysis, the total sample was N = 203. As before,

impression management was entered in Step 1 of the regression. This yielded a

significant model (F[1,201] = 7.06, p < .01), accounting for 3% of the variance in

moral justifiability (a weak effect), with impression management negatively

predicting moral justifiability (B = -.36, p < .01). Just-world beliefs was entered

into the second step of the regression equation. This yielded a significant model

(F[2,200] = 5.72, p < .01), accounting for 5% of the variance in moral

justifiability (a weak effect). In this second step, impression management scores

negatively predicted moral justifiability (B = -.44, p < .01), and just-world beliefs

became a significant positive predictor of moral justifiability (B = .41, p < .05).

Although just-world beliefs was not a significant predictor of moral

justifiability in the regression model that included the influential observations, it

was a significant predictor when influential observations were removed. An

examination of the influential data indicated no reason to believe these

observations represented errors, as opposed to valid observations. Effects sizes

were small in all models. Removing influential observations resulted in larger R-

squared values, with the predictors explaining greater variance in the dependent

variable of moral justifiability, yet each effect remained weak as per Cohen

(1988). In sum, this hypothesis was partially supported.

Table 5

Summary of Regression Results of Impression Management and Just-World Beliefs as Predictors of Moral Justifiability

	Coefficients			Model Statistics					
	B	$SE\ B$	β	N	R	R^2	ΔR^2	ΔF	F
Step 1									
(*Constant*)	5.12	.51		220	.15	.02	.02	5.29	5.29*
Impression Management	-.29	.12	-0.15*						
Step 2									
(*Constant*)	4.62	.81		220	.16	.03	.00	.64	2.96*
Impression Management	-.29	.124	-.16*						
Just-World Beliefs	.15	.19	.05						
			Reanalysis without Influential Observations						
Step 1									
(*Constant*)	5.47	.56		203	.18	.03	.03	7.06	7.06**
Impression Management	-.36	.14	-.18**						
Step 2									
(*Constant*)	4.32	.79		203	.23	.05	.02	4.27	5.72**
Impression Management	-.44	.14	-.22**						
Just-World Beliefs	.41	.20	.15*						

† indicates $p < .10$; * indicates $p < .05$; ** indicates $p < .01$; *** indicates $p < .001$

Discussion

This research investigated part of a recently developed theoretical model of proactive workplace aggression in teams put forth by Dixon et al. (2015). In doing so, the study responded to calls for research related to workplace bullying that focuses on teams (Skogstad, Torsheim, Einarsen, & Hauge, 2011), and for management-related studies employing methodologies that permit causal attributions (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014). Additionally, the study helps fill a gap in research examining upwards, subordinate-initiated bullying (Namie & Lutgen-Sandvik, 2010) and the little-understood phenomenon of proactive workplace aggression (Felson, 2004).

Tests of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1 predicted that there would be an interactive effect between target in/out-group membership and target hierarchical status on ratings of the moral justifiability of proactive aggression such that aggression to ensure compliance would be viewed as most morally justifiable when the target is an in-group member and of lower status (controlling for impression management). This hypothesis was not supported.

As predicted by the model, participants reported the highest mean ratings of moral justifiability when they imagined they were a team leader, and that the potential target of aggression was a subordinate member within their own team (i.e., target was in-group and lower status). However, the only statistically significant finding was that participants reported that it was more justifiable to aggressively force compliance when the target was within the same team.

Significant results were not found for target hierarchy or the interaction between membership and hierarchy. In sum, irrespective of whether the target was a superior or subordinate, aggressively forcing compliance to meet a team goal was viewed as more acceptable when the target was within the same team.

Relative to the first hypothesis, this study represents an intersection of theories that predict how individuals will behave with respect to fellow in-group members. Social categorization theory may typically predict that members would be more likely to behave aggressively toward members of a different team, but when the aggressive behaviors are committed in the service of a team goal members may more readily believe these behaviors to be ethical when the targets are fellow team members. This would represent the influence of social interactionist theory, Felson's rational choice theory of aggression, and Rai and Fiske's moral motives theory of behavior; essentially, such aggressive behaviors serve a greater good. These findings emphasize the importance of context, and the intentions underlying aggressive behaviors.

These results have several theoretical implications. First, the Dixon et al. (2015) theoretical model focuses on four motives that perpetrators are predicted to use to morally justify proactive and instrumental aggression, as a function of the target's membership status and hierarchy. The lack of findings regarding hierarchy and an interactive effect show the compliance motive was not limited to being salient only in instances when the target was in-group and lower status. This may suggest a modified model of how status and hierarchy shape workplace aggression.

There are several possible explanations for these findings. First, it may be that the context influences the extent to which the target's relative hierarchical status impacts ratings of moral justifiability of aggression to force compliance. For example, the importance played by a target's relative hierarchical status may be affected by a number of other factors such as the unique power dynamics of the organization or the team (see French & Raven, 1959), group norms, and the severity of the aggressive behaviors in question (e.g., yelling vs. threatening). In addition, the target's relative status will not be as salient in an online vignette study as in a real organization, where behaving aggressively toward one's boss may very well result in harsher consequences than if the target was a subordinate.

Second, social categorization theory (Tajfel, 1982; Turner, 1985) predicts that team members will tend to treat members of their own team with favoritism (Stahl, Maznevski, Voigt, & Jonsen, 2010). This study, though, showed that participants found behaving aggressively toward their own team members to be more morally justifiable than members of a different team. In instances where the aggressive behaviors were retaliatory, or meant to cause harm, this would seem to contradict social categorization theory. However, the Dixon et al. (2015) model, rooted in social interactionist theory (Felson, 1993; Felson & Tedeschi, 2003), Felson's (1993) rational choice theory of aggression, and Rai and Fiske's (2011) moral motives theory of behavior, focuses on proactive aggressive behaviors that are engaged in with instrumental purpose—the planned outcomes of these behaviors are to achieve goals, rather than to hurt. Therefore, individuals may

believe it to be morally acceptable to aggressively force compliance from in-group team members when such behaviors are intended to serve a group goal.

Third, the tested model extends Hershcovis and Barling's (2007) relational theory of aggression by highlighting the importance of the relationships between perpetrators and their targets, and suggests that these relationship characteristics may drive perpetrators' moral justifications and motivations to engage in unprovoked aggression.

The second hypothesis predicted that individual collectivistic orientation would be positively related to moral justifiability across all four conditions (controlling for impression management). However, Hypothesis 2 was not supported. Relevant theory can serve to inform these results. Collectivism refers to the extent to which someone identifies with his or her collective or group (Erez & Earley, 1987). The Dixon et al. (2015) theoretical model makes predictions about instrumental aggression, as opposed to aggressive behaviors committed with the goal of hurting the target, or as retaliation for some real-or-perceived injustice.

There are counteracting forces at play that can help explain these results. For example, collectivistic individuals tend to value group goals and the welfare of the group (Kirkman & Shapiro, 1997), and aggressive behavior to achieve those goals may therefore be considered ethical. Hence, aggressive behaviors to force compliance to help achieve a team goal may be viewed as morally justifiable. However, collectivistic individuals are also more likely to engage in citizenship behaviors and less likely to commit counterproductive work behavior

(Jackson et al., 2006). Therefore, such aggressive behaviors to force compliance for achieving a group goal may not be viewed as morally justifiable. Such counteracting forces could explain the very small correlation between collectivism and moral justifiability.

One exception was found during a closer examination of collectivism-related results at the facet level. The five facets (preference, reliance, concern, norm accept, and goal priority) have shown to be uniquely predictive at both the individual level (Jackson et al., 2006) and the team level (Dierdorff, Bell, & Belohlav, 2011). The facet of Norm Acceptance was significantly positive related to moral justifiability of aggressive behaviors across conditions. The items associated with this facet are: "I followed the norms of those groups," "I followed the procedures used by those groups," and "I accepted the rules of those groups." It may be the case that individuals who are more focused on following and accepting group norms more readily endorse aggressively enforcing them, as norms can enhance group functioning and survival (Feldman, 1984). In the vignette, the target was violating norms by being the only team member not contributing adequately. If individuals did not care about the norms of the group, instrumental aggressive behavior to force compliance (e.g. norm enforcement) would indeed seem to be less important, and less morally justifiable. Finally, the finding that overall collectivism was not a significant predictor of moral justifiability, but that one of the facets was, supports the theory that collectivism as an individual-difference variable is a multi-faceted construct.

The third hypothesis stated that just-world beliefs would be positively related to moral justification across all four conditions (controlling for impression management). This hypothesis received partial support. Just-world beliefs were significantly related to moral justification when influential observations were removed, but they were not related for analyses on the full data set.

Theory suggests that individuals high on just world beliefs endorse the idea that people get what they deserve and deserve what they get (Lerner, 1980). It would seem that people that hold these views (high scorers in just-world beliefs) would more readily justify aggressive behavior towards coworkers, when committed in the service of a goal. The model focuses on proactive aggression, and the vignettes attempted to reduce or eliminate any behaviors by the target that would make the participants feel the aggression was reactive (e.g., retaliatory). However, it could be that the fact that the targets in the stories were not adequately completing their work tasks caused participants to believe the targets deserved aggressive behavior.

High scorers in just-world beliefs could have simply felt that the target was not doing his/her job—that the target had it coming. These results align with research that has found that individuals with strong just-world beliefs tend to focus on long-term goals (Hafer, 2000), perceive negative outcomes as less unfair than those with weak just-world beliefs (Hafer & Olson, 1989), and have an increased ability to cope with stressful and negative events (Poon & Chen, 2014). Individuals with strong just-world beliefs tend to more readily feel that victims deserve their negative experiences (see Dalbert, 2009; Furnham, 2003; Hafer &

Bègue, 2005). This study showed that individuals who score high on just-world beliefs may more readily rate proactive aggressive behaviors to enforce compliance as being morally justifiable.

Practical Implications

Results from this study can serve to inform organizational leaders attempting to better manage workplace aggression and bullying, as a more in-depth understanding of cases where perpetrators instigate aggression is important (Felson, 2004). Indeed, any related empirical evidence that can guide leaders can be valuable, as workplace bullying is a complex issue (Jacobson, Hood, & Van Buren, 2014) across the world (McTernan, Dollard, & LaMontagne, 2013), and can be challenging for organizations to manage (Kemp, 2014). Failure to successfully manage such behaviors can result in negative effects across various organizational levels (Ramsay, Troth, & Branch, 2011). A better understanding of when and why perpetrators may feel that proactive and instrumental (goal-driven) aggression is justified in the workplace can facilitate intervention strategies and policymaking.

Managers should consider, as evidenced in this study, that employees may believe it to be more morally justifiable to bully or aggressively force compliance from members of their own team, compared to individuals outside of the team. It may be that individuals think it is acceptable to use aggression within their team, especially if these behaviors serve a team goal. Accordingly, managers should ensure that employees understand that this is not acceptable. To accomplish this, leaders should ensure that organizational practices, policies, norms, and the

culture all serve to foster and reward healthy workplace behaviors. The lack of significant findings surrounding target hierarchy suggests that employees may feel justified in aggressively forcing compliance from higher-status targets, not just subordinates. Although subordinates behaving aggressively towards their supervisors or leaders is less common than "top-down" bullying, it is not uncommon (Meier & Gross, 2015).

Individual differences such as psychological collectivism and just-world beliefs did not significantly affect individuals' ratings of moral justifiability; this may point to the robustness of the findings surrounding moral justifiability of aggression. Other individual difference variables (e.g., negative affectivity) may affect the extent to which individuals believe aggression can be used to force compliance. However, the two individual-difference variables measured in this study measure the extent to which individuals are group-oriented or individualistic, and also the degree to which they believe that people generally get what they deserve and deserve what they get (Lerner, 1980). In sum, managers should consider that team members may think it is more ethical and acceptable to use aggression to force compliance from members of their own team, compared to members of other teams.

Strengths, Limitations, and Future Research

A strength of this study is that participants were randomly assigned to conditions, and the independent variables of target group membership and hierarchy were manipulated. A sizable percentage of participants were removed due to failing the numerous checks utilized (both manipulation and attentional

checks). Therefore, the inclusion criteria for data to be included in the analyses were relatively stringent, which may lend strength to the results. The alternative is that many participants were removed because they were confused, and that some percentage of those that submitted correct responses for the checks was due to chance. In addition, participants were asked to place themselves in a role and provide answers about how morally justified aggressive behavior would be. Some participants may have had difficult imagining themselves in this role, and the "paper people" limitation applies.

Because workplace aggression is an emotionally charged topic, an anonymous online vignette-and-questionnaire study cannot reproduce the psychological realism, emotional valence, or pressure of social norms that would be found in an actual field or lab study. As such, it could that that the lack of findings was due to an overall lack of salience from the vignette methodology. At the same time, the control in the studies helps to rule out potential confounds such as organizational culture, the gender of the perpetrator and target, and other contextual variables.

Future research is needed to replicate the results here, and further examine Dixon et al.'s (2015) theory of moral proactive aggression. This study tested the compliance motive of the theory, which is posited to morally justify proactive aggression when the target is within the same group and of a lower hierarchy. The other three motivations are exploitation, value establishment, and identity preservation, and can be tested in future studies.

Another possibility for future research is to utilize videos rather than written vignettes. Workplace aggression and bullying are emotionally charged issues, and reading about them may not present an adequate level of salience to elicit effects. The videos would introduce confounds such as the sex and other surface-level characteristics of the targets and teammates. These confounds were not present in the written vignettes, however the trade-off to increase the realism of the scenarios may be worthwhile.

Finally, studies can investigate the possibility of theoretically advancing the Dixon et al. (2015) model. For example, the model notes that the target of aggression is either in-group or out-group. However, in today's world of multi-team systems and multiple-group membership, it may be too limiting to categorize individuals in such a dichotomous fashion—as either within a group or outside of it. In addition, the model makes predictions about when individuals will believe aggressive behavior is morally justifiable. The mean values of the dependent variable of moral justifiability in this study show that participants never believed aggressive behavior to force compliance was morally justifiable. Variability existed within the lower scores of the Likert scale, which indicated a range of opinions concerning to what extent the behaviors were not morally justifiable. Therefore, new research can seek to examine whether the theory would be improved by shifting the consideration of aggressive behaviors away from a binary, morally-justified-or-not-morally-justified focus, and toward a more continuous interpretation of justifiability. In this way, beliefs about moral justifiability would fall on a continuum (e.g., more justifiable or less justifiable).

Conclusion

As predicted by Dixon et al.'s (2015) theoretical model, participants believed proactive aggression to ensure compliance was most morally justifiable when the target was within the same group and of a lower hierarchy. However, regression analyses revealed that only target group membership status (i.e., within-team or a member of a different team) proved a significant predictor. Overall collectivism as an individual difference variable was not significantly predictive of moral justifiability of aggressive behavior, although the facet of norm acceptance was. Additionally, individuals who scored higher on just-world beliefs more readily rated proactive aggressive behaviors to enforce compliance as being morally justifiable.

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Appendix A

- Power Analysis

F tests – Linear multiple regression: Fixed model, R^2 deviation from zero

Analysis: A priori: Compute required sample size

Input:	Effect size f^2	= 0.15
	α err prob	= 0.05
	Power (1–β err prob)	= 0.80
	Number of predictors	= 5

Output:	Noncentrality parameter λ	= 13.8000000
	Critical F	= 2.3205293
	Numerator df	= 5
	Denominator df	= 86
	Total sample size	= 92

Actual power =   0.8041921

Appendix B

- Vignettes

_ Vignette - Target = In / Lower status

        Instructions: Please read through the following workplace situation carefully. You will be asked to make judgments about what actions you would take in the situation. You will also be asked several questions about the situation, so please read each part carefully.

        Imagine that you work in a team at a large company. The company has many teams that work in different parts of the organization, and there are usually around five people in each team. Each team has one leader and the team leaders manage their teams. Team leaders are a part of supervision, and are one rank above team members.

        In your team, you are a team leader.

        Your team has five members and has been together for about two years. People in your team, including you, seem to feel a tight bond with everyone else in the team. You have always felt proud to be on the team, and you strongly identify as a member of your team.

        Your team has been working with another team on a major project for several weeks and the final presentation to the customer is in a few days. Your team usually works alone, but for this project your team is cooperating with the second team.

        Although the rest of your team has done their share and completed their tasks, one of your team members has been overwhelmed with other work and has not been able to complete their team tasks for your project.

        This person is the only one who knows how to run the complex computer program needed to finish the project. Without this person's work, your presentation will be unacceptable and the company will likely lose the customer. This would be a serious financial loss for the company.

        Because of the upcoming presentation and the importance of this project, you begin considering whether or not you should try another approach to get the person to focus on completing the task. You decide that you need to be the one to take action, because no one else is, and things need to get done fast and there is no time to waste.

You are now considering various tactics in order to get this person to give priority to your team's project. It may be necessary to threaten or intimidate (but not physically) the person and tell them if they don't help that you will make it a point to let everyone know they are not a team player. Or maybe you would convince other people to start ignoring the person until the person complies. Regardless of the specifics, you decide it might be time to use some strength to get the person to comply. Your team's success depends on the person's contribution. Also, because of several reasons, you are not concerned about getting into trouble if you act aggressively.

In summary, you are a leader of a team that is working with another team to complete a very important project. You need one of your team members to dedicate more effort to helping with the project, and time is running out, so you are considering acting aggressively to get the person to comply.

_ _ Vignette - Target = Out / Lower status

Instructions: Please read through the following workplace situation carefully. You will be asked to make judgments about what actions you would take in the situation. You will also be asked several questions about the situation, so please read each part carefully.

Imagine that you work in a team at a large company. The company has many teams that work in different parts of the organization, and there are usually around five people in each team. Each team has one leader and the team leaders manage their teams. Team leaders are a part of supervision, and are one rank above team members.

In your team, you are a team leader.

Your team has five members and has been together for about two years. People in your team, including you, seem to feel a tight bond with everyone else in the team. You have always felt proud to be on the team, and you strongly identify as a member of your team.

Your team has been working with another team on a major project for several weeks and the final presentation to the customer is in a few days. Your team usually works alone, but for this project your team is cooperating with the second team.

Although your team has done their share and completed their tasks, a team member from another team has been overwhelmed with other work and has not been able to complete their team tasks for your project.

This person is the only one who knows how to run the complex computer program needed to finish the project. Without this person's work, your presentation will be unacceptable and the company will likely lose the customer. This would be a serious financial loss for the company.

Because of the upcoming presentation and the importance of this project, you begin considering whether or not you should try another approach to get the person to focus on completing the task. You decide that you need to be the one to take action, because no one else is, and things need to get done fast and there is no time to waste.

You are now considering various tactics in order to get this person to give priority to your team's project. It may be necessary to threaten or intimidate (but not physically) the person and tell them if they don't help that you will make it a point to let everyone know they are not a team player. Or maybe you would

convince other people to start ignoring the person until the person complies. Regardless of the specifics, you decide it might be time to use some strength to get the person to comply. Your team's success depends on the person's contribution. Also, because of several reasons, you are not concerned about getting into trouble if you act aggressively.

In summary, you are a leader of a team that is working with another team to complete a very important project. You need a team member from another team to dedicate more effort to helping with the project, and time is running out, so you are considering acting aggressively to get the person to comply.

_ _ _ Vignette - Target = In / Higher status

Instructions: Please read through the following workplace situation carefully. You will be asked to make judgments about what actions you would take in the situation. You will also be asked several questions about the situation, so please read each part carefully.

Imagine that you work in a team at a large company. The company has many teams that work in different parts of the organization, and there are usually around five people in each team. Each team has one leader and the team leaders manage their teams. Team leaders are a part of supervision, and are one rank above team members.

In your team, you are a team member.

Your team has five members and has been together for about two years. People in your team, including you, seem to feel a tight bond with everyone else in the team. You have always felt proud to be on the team, and you strongly identify as a member of your team.

Your team has been working with another team on a major project for several weeks and the final presentation to the customer is in a few days. Your team usually works alone, but for this project your team is cooperating with the second team.

Although the rest of your team has done their share and completed their tasks, your team leader has been overwhelmed with other work and has not been able to complete their team tasks for your project.

This person is the only one who knows how to run the complex computer program needed to finish the project. Without this person's work, your presentation will be unacceptable and the company will likely lose the customer. This would be a serious financial loss for the company.

Because of the upcoming presentation and the importance of this project, you begin considering whether or not you should try another approach to get the person to focus on completing the task. You decide that you need to be the one to take action, because no one else is, and things need to get done fast and there is no time to waste.

You are now considering various tactics in order to get this person to give priority to your team's project. It may be necessary to threaten or intimidate (but not physically) the person and tell them if they don't help that you will make it a point to let everyone know they are not a team player. Or maybe you would

convince other people to start ignoring the person until the person complies. Regardless of the specifics, you decide it might be time to use some strength to get the person to comply. Your team's success depends on the person's contribution. Also, because of several reasons, you are not concerned about getting into trouble if you act aggressively.

In summary, you are a member of a team that is working with another team to complete a very important project. You need your team leader to dedicate more effort to helping with the project, and time is running out, so you are considering acting aggressively to get the person to comply.

_ _ _ _Vignette - Target = Out / Higher status

Instructions: Please read through the following workplace situation carefully. You will be asked to make judgments about what actions you would take in the situation. You will also be asked several questions about the situation, so please read each part carefully.

Imagine that you work in a team at a large company. The company has many teams that work in different parts of the organization, and there are usually around five people in each team. Each team has one leader and the team leaders manage their teams. Team leaders are a part of supervision, and are one rank above team members.

In your team, you are a team member.

Your team has five members and has been together for about two years. People in your team, including you, seem to feel a tight bond with everyone else in the team. You have always felt proud to be on the team, and you strongly identify as a member of your team.

Your team has been working with another team on a major project for several weeks and the final presentation to the customer is in a few days. Your team usually works alone, but for this project your team is cooperating with the second team.

Although your team has done their share and completed their tasks, the team leader from another team has been overwhelmed with other work and has not been able to complete their team tasks for your project.

This person is the only one who knows how to run the complex computer program needed to finish the project. Without this person's work, your presentation will be unacceptable and the company will likely lose the customer. This would be a serious financial loss for the company.

Because of the upcoming presentation and the importance of this project, you begin considering whether or not you should try another approach to get the person to focus on completing the task. You decide that you need to be the one to take action, because no one else is, and things need to get done fast and there is no time to waste.

You are now considering various tactics in order to get this person to give priority to your team's project. It may be necessary to threaten or intimidate (but not physically) the person and tell them if they don't help that you will make it a point to let everyone know they are not a team player. Or maybe you would

convince other people to start ignoring the person until the person complies. Regardless of the specifics, you decide it might be time to use some strength to get the person to comply. Your team's success depends on the person's contribution. Also, because of several reasons, you are not concerned about getting into trouble if you act aggressively.

In summary, you are a member of a team that is working with another team to complete a very important project. You need the team leader from another team to dedicate more effort to helping with the project, and time is running out, so you are considering acting aggressively to get the person to comply.

Appendix C

- Manipulation Check Items

Instructions: Please answer the following questions about the workplace situation you just read.

1.) What was your role in the team?
   a. Team leader
   b. Team member (not a leader)

2.) What has your team been involved with for several weeks?
   a. Finding new members
   b. Correcting a mistake that another team made
   c. A major project
   d. Training because your company merged with another company

3.) Who did you believe was the key to the team's success? This is the person that you were considering behaving aggressively towards.
   a. The leader of your team
   b. The leader from another team
   c. A team member on your team
   d. A team member from another team

4.) Why was your coworker not contributing?
   a. Didn't like the team
   b. Was overwhelmed with other work
   c. Did not have the computer skills to complete the task
   d. Was ill

Appendix D

- Demographic Items

1. What is your gender?

2. What is your age [in years]?

3. What is your ethnicity/race?

    ____ Caucasian/White
    ____ African American/Black
    ____ Asian/Pacific Islander
    ____ Hispanic/Latino/a
    _____Native American
    ____ Bi-Racial
    ____ Other

4. How many years have you worked?

5. Do you have experience working in a team?

6. In your total job experience, estimate what percent of the time you worked in a team [0-100%]

Appendix E

- Participant Information Sheet

Principal Investigator: Anthony S Colaneri, Graduate Student

Institution: DePaul University, USA

Faculty Advisor: Suzanne Bell, Ph.D., Psychology Department

Hello, and thank you for taking part in this survey.

You will now be asked to read a short description of a workplace situation and answer questions about that situation. The survey will include questions about whether you feel certain workplace decisions are morally justified. We will also collect some personal information about you such as your age, gender, and the amount of time you spent working in a team. The survey will be conducted online. If there is a question you do not want to answer, you may skip it.

This study will take about 20 minutes of your time. Research data collected from you will be anonymous.

Your participation is voluntary, which means you can choose not to participate. There will be no negative consequences if you decide not to participate or change your mind later after you begin the study.
You can withdraw your participation at any time prior to submitting your survey. If you change your mind later while answering the survey, you may simply exit the survey. Once you submit your responses, we will be unable to remove your data later from the study because all data is anonymous and we will not know which data belongs to you.

You will be paid $0.50 (to your MTurk account) for your participation in the research.

Since you are enrolling in this research study through the Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) site, we need to let you know that information gathered through Amazon MTurk is not completely anonymous. Any work performed on Amazon MTurk can potentially be linked to information about you on your Amazon public profile page, depending on the settings you have for your Amazon profile. Any linking of data by MTurk to your ID is outside of the control of the researcher for this study. We will not be accessing any identifiable information about you that you may have put on your Amazon public profile page. We will store your MTurk worker ID separately from the other information you provide to us. Amazon Mechanical Turk has privacy policies of its own outlined for you in Amazon's privacy agreement. If you have concerns about how your information will be used by Amazon, you should consult them directly.

You must be age 18 or older to be in this study. This study is not approved for the enrollment of people under the age of 18.

If you have questions, concerns, or complaints about this study or you want to get additional information or provide input about this research, please contact Anthony Colaneri at ACOLANER@depaul.edu or (773) 325-7887.

If you have questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact Susan Loess-Perez, DePaul University's Director of Research Compliance, in the Office of Research Services at 312-362-7593 or by email at sloesspe@depaul.edu. You may also contact DePaul's Office of Research Services if:

- Your questions, concerns, or complaints are not being answered by the research team.
- You cannot reach the research team.
- You want to talk to someone besides the research team.

You may keep [or print] this information for your records.

By completing the survey you are indicating your agreement to be in the research.

Appendix F

- Debriefing Form

This completes the survey.

Debriefing:

The purpose of the present study is to examine how certain characteristics of the potential target of aggressive behavior can affect how individuals morally justify those behaviors. We randomly assigned participants into one of four survey conditions, which altered some of the characteristics of the target/under-performing employee in the story.

In some of the stories the target was a team member, and in others a team leader. In some, the target was part of the same team, in others a different team. It is hypothesized that moral justifiably will be highest when the target of potential aggressive behavior is within the same team, and a lower rank than the aggressor. The additional questionnaires will gather data (such as one's level of collectivism) to test additional hypotheses.

Your participation is greatly appreciated. Thank you.

If you would like to know more information or have any questions about the research, feel free to contact the primary investigator on the project:

Tony Colaneri (acolaner@depaul.edu)

Appendix G

- Moral Justifiability Items

Instructions: In the scenario that you just read, you had a choice whether or not to aggressively force compliance from your coworker. In other words, you had a choice to force your coworker to help with the project. Please answer the following 3 questions using this scale:

Level of Agreement

1 – Strongly disagree
2 – Disagree
3 – Somewhat disagree
4 – Neither agree nor disagree
5 – Somewhat agree
6 – Agree
7 – Strongly agree

Questions:

1. Aggressively forcing compliance from my coworker would be morally justified (ethical).

2. Aggressively forcing compliance from my coworker could be excused.

3. Aggressively forcing compliance from my coworker would be acceptable.

Appendix H

- Just World Scale

(Rubin & Peplau, 1975)

Indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements using the scale provided.

5 = strongly agree
4 = moderately agree
3 = slightly agree
2 = slightly disagree
1 = moderately disagree
0 = strongly disagree

1. I've found that a person rarely deserves the reputation he or she has.
2. Basically, the world is a just place.
3. People who get "lucky breaks" have usually earned their good fortune.
4. Careful drivers are just as likely to get hurt in traffic accidents as careless ones.
5. It is a common occurrence for a guilty person to get off free in American courts.
6. Students almost always deserve the grades they receive in school.
7. People who keep in shape have little chance of suffering a heart attack.
8. The political candidate who sticks up for his or her principles rarely gets elected.
9. It is rare for an innocent person to be wrongly sent to jail.
10. In professional sports, many fouls and infractions never get called by the referee.
11. By and large, people deserve what they get.
12. When parents punish their children, it is almost always for good reasons.
13. Good deeds often go unnoticed and unrewarded.
14. Although evil individuals may hold political power for a while, in the general course of history, good wins out.
15. In almost any business or profession, people who do their job well rise to the top.
16. American parents tend to overlook the things most to be admired in their children.
17. It is often impossible for a person to receive a fair trial in the USA.
18. People who meet with misfortune have often brought it on themselves.
19. Crime doesn't pay.
20. Many people suffer through absolutely no fault of their own.

Appendix I

- Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding

(Paulhus, 1983)

(Using only the impression management items)

Indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements using the scale provided.

1 = Not true
2
3
4 = Somewhat true
5
6
7 = Very true

21. I sometimes tell lies if I have to.
22. I never cover up my mistakes.
23. There have been occasions when I have taken advantage of someone.
24. I never swear.
25. I sometimes try to get even rather than forgive and forget.
26. I always obey laws, even if I'm unlikely to get caught.
27. I have said something bad about a friend behind his/her back.
28. When I hear people talking privately, I avoid listening.
29. I have received too much change from a salesperson without telling him or her.
30. I always declare everything at customs.
31. When I was young I sometimes stole things.
32. I have never dropped litter on the street.
33. I sometimes drive faster than the speed limit.
34. I never read sexy books or magazines.
35. I have done things that I don't tell other people about.
36. I never take things that don't belong to me.
37. I have taken sick-leave from work or school even though I wasn't really sick.
38. I have never damaged a library book or store merchandise without reporting it.
39. I have some pretty awful habits.
40. I don't gossip about other people's business.

Appendix J

- Psychological Collectivism Scale

Jackson, Colquitt, Wesson, and Zapata-Phelan (2006)

Instructions:

Think about the work groups (teams) to which you currently belong and/or have belonged to in the past. The items below ask about your relationship with, and thoughts about, those particular groups. Respond to the following questions, as honestly as possible, using the following response scale.

1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree

ITEM	FACET
I preferred to work in those groups rather than working alone. Working in those groups was better than working alone. I wanted to work with those groups as opposed to working alone.	Preference
I felt comfortable counting on group members to do their part. I was not bothered by the need to rely on group members. I felt comfortable trusting group members to handle their tasks.	Reliance
The health of those groups was important to me. I cared about the well-being of those groups. I was concerned about the needs of those groups.	Concern
I followed the norms of those groups. I followed the procedures used by those groups. I accepted the rules of those groups.	Norm acceptance
I cared more about the goals of those groups than my own goals. I emphasized the goals of those groups more than my individual goals. Group goals were more important to me than my personal goals.	Goal priority