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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study is to develop a scale to measure individual's ethical misconduct perceptions in the workplace. The Ethics Resource Center (2014) identified the most frequent types of ethical misconduct within the United States. These behaviors served as the 28 initial items for the implicit perceptions of ethical misconduct scale. A previous study identified four dimensions of unethical misconduct: Deceit, Use of Drugs and Alcohol, Sexual Misconduct, and Theft. The perceptions of ethical misconduct survey items were reduced to reflect the four dimensions. Therefore, we propose a confirmatory factor analysis on a separate data set will confirm these dimensions. We also believe that perceptions of ethical misconduct will be positively correlated with counterproductive work behaviors (CWBs). Additionally, individuals with dark personality traits, such as psychopathy, narcissism, and Machiavellianism, are more likely to perceive unethical misconduct as ethical.

## INTRODUCTION

In the past decade, there has been a slow but steady rise in the number of organizations with stated ethics and compliance standards. For example, 76% of organizations had training programs in place in 2011 (Ethics Resource Center, 2012). Despite the increased focus on ethical conduct, there has not been a noticeable decline in overall observed ethical misconduct (Ethics Resource Center, 2012). Organizations may be failing to adequately equip workers with skills and attitudes necessary to follow through with the behaviors that should result from making ethical decisions. This could be because people may not view ethical misconduct as unethical, or even know they are unethical.

### Ethical Misconduct

Ethical misconduct is behavior that is prescribed as violating socially acceptable norms of behavior (Sims, 1992). Accordingly, the same behavior can be viewed as ethical by one social group and unethical by a different social group. Generally, however, in the U.S., there appears to be uniformity in what is viewed as ethical and unethical. For instance, the Ethics Resource Center (2014) reported the 28 most frequent types of ethical misconduct that occurred within the U.S.

### Counterproductive Work Behaviors

Organizational researchers have become increasingly interested in volitional behaviors that directly violate organizational norms and contrast with organizational interests. These behaviors are called counterproductive work behaviors (CWBs). CWBs often may involve unethical behavior, such as manipulating time records or behaving aggressively toward other employees.

### The Dark Triad

The dark triad is composed of narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy, which are socially aversive personality traits (Paulhus & Williams, 2002).

**Narcissism:** an individual with grandiose inflated views of the self, they feel entitled, and they may be interpersonally exploitative (Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001)

**Machiavellianism:** someone who is manipulative, cynical and may not value the principle of things (O'Boyle, Forsyth, Banks & McDaniel, 2012)

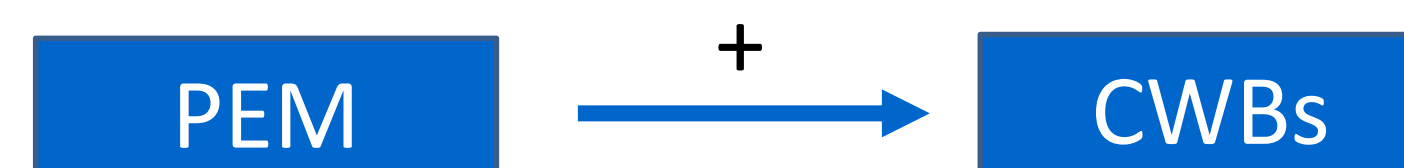
**Psychopathy:** an employee who acts impulsively, or hurts a coworker and does not feel remorse for it (O'Boyle et al., 2012)

## RESEARCH QUESTION

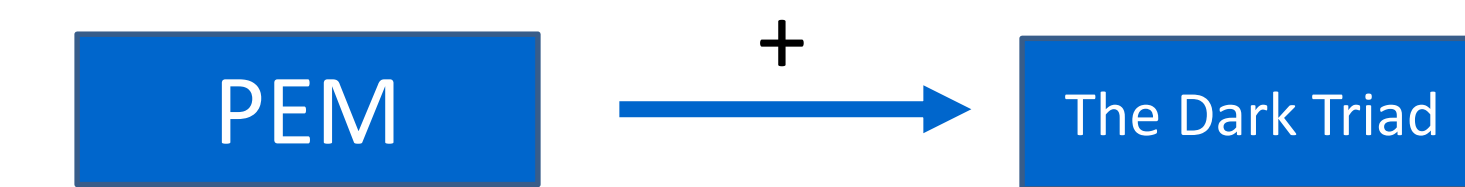
A previous study was conducted in which 714 participants completed a 60-item scale based on the most frequently reported acts of ethical misconduct. An exploratory factor analysis was previously conducted that identified four dimensions: Deceit, Use of Drugs and Alcohol, Sexual Misconduct, and Theft (Meggison et al., under review). The scale was then reduced to 22 items. This study proposes to extend previous research to further examine the validity of this scale. Specifically, this study proposes to conduct a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) on a separate data set to confirm these dimensions. As such, we hypothesize the following:

*Hypothesis 1:* The CFA will confirm that the 22 survey items will load onto the four dimensions of Deceit, Use of Drugs and Alcohol, Sexual, and Theft.

*Hypothesis 2:* Perceptions of ethical misconduct will be positively correlated with CWBs.



*Hypothesis 3:* Perceptions of ethical misconduct will be positively correlated with the dark triad.



## METHODS

### Participants

Participant survey responses will be used from archival data and a new data set.

### Materials and Procedure

Perceptions of ethical misconduct behaviors were measured using the reduced reduced 22-item survey. Additionally, to measure CWBs, Bennett and Robinson's Interpersonal and Organizational Deviance Scale (IODS) was used. The Dark Triad was assessed through Jonason and Webster's (2010) dirty dozen scale.

### Results

Confirmatory factor analysis will be conducted to confirm the four dimensions. To analyze relationships with CWBs and the dark triad, Pearson's correlation will be used.

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