PROFESSIONALISM AND MORAL BEHAVIOR: DOES A PROFESSIONAL

SELF-CONCEPTION MAKE ONE MORE UNETHICAL?

by

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores the role of professional self-conceptions on ethical behavior. Relying on recent literature on licensing, contrary to conventional wisdom, I suggest that professional self-conceptions lead individuals to engage in unethical behaviors. The results of Study 1 demonstrated that professional self-conceptions license individuals to act unethically. Study 2 tested for differential effect of accessibility of professional self-conceptions versus concept of professionalism and showed that seeing oneself as a professional, and not the accessibility of the concept of professionalism per se, is needed to license unethical acts. Study 3, a field study, showed that membership in occupations traditionally associated with professions compared to other occupations led to higher unethical behaviors and professional self-conceptions mediated the effect of occupational membership on unethical behaviors. Together, the results of three studies demonstrate that professional self-conceptions, either measured or manipulated, can license individuals to act unethically. The theoretical and practical implications of these findings are discussed.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

In July-September 2000, prior to the disturbing corporate scandals of 2001 and 2002 –

before the collapse of Enron, Tyco, WorldCom, and many more – the U.S. Securities and

Exchange Commission (SEC) held a public hearing on auditor independence rules. The hearing

came after the fact that the partners in one of the Big Five accounting firms were discovered to

be holding investments in the companies they audited. The SEC proposed restrictions intended

to limit the range of consulting services that auditors' could provide. The accounting firms

objected the changes, referring to the "professionalism" of their personnel. In his testimony at

the public hearings, James J. Schiro, then Chief Executive Officer of PricewaterhouseCoopers,

plainly stated that "there is a fundamental quality inherent in this profession of integrity, ethics,

and ideals and we are all very client service-oriented. We put at the forefront the needs of our

clients" (SEC, 2000, September 20). Similarly, William D. Travis, then Managing Partner of

McGladrey & Pullen, said that the "proposal needs to better consider the basic personal

characteristics of the overwhelming majority of professionals who become auditors. They're

involved in the profession for much more than financial gain. They have very high personal

integrity. They take their professional responsibility to the public very seriously. And they

would never sacrifice audit quality or their reputation" (SEC, 2000, September 20). Likewise, in

his testimony before the SEC, Gary Shamis, representing the American Institute of Certified

Public Accountants stated, "We are professionals that follow our code of ethics and practice by the highest moral standards. We would never be influenced by our own personal financial well being" (SEC, 2000, September 13). As the examples point out, accounting firms' CEOs and accountants believed that auditors are prevented from behaving unethically because of their "professionalism."

In light of the epidemic of corporate fraud by organizations such as Enron in which Arthur Anderson – one of the Big Five accounting firms – turned a blind eye to Enron's shady accounting practices and did not fulfill their professional responsibilities in connection with their audits of Enron's financial statements, the accounting firms' claims of "professionalism" as the deterrent of their members' unethical behavior is unlikely. I contend that professionalism is part of the problem. The goal of this dissertation is to investigate the causal link between professionalism and the ethically relevant outcomes for individual professionals. Although my prediction of greater unethical behaviors for professionals may seem counter-intuitive, it is consistent with a number of recent studies showing that people who are led to believe that they themselves, their organization or their group are unbiased, objective or moral, are subsequently more likely to behave in biased and immoral ways (e.g., Castilla & Benard, 2010; Kouchaki, 2011; Monin & Miller, 2001; Uhlmann & Cohen, 2007).

If I am correct, then the problem is important given that according to Wilensky's (1964) notion, eventually everyone can claim to be a professional. Thus, today we have chefs, barbers, and plumbers identifying themselves as professionals. An important question challenging many scholars is why professionals' unethical behaviors persist in spite of professional associations' and individual professional efforts to the contrary; however, I believe an even more important question, given the rise of professionalism, is whether meanings, aspects, and assumptions of

professionalism may be the cause of professionals' unethical behaviors.

Researchers have focused on numerous factors – such as demographic information, limits of human cognitive capability and information processing capacity, and organizational culture – to explain unethical and corrupt behavior (Ashforth, Gioia, Robinson, & Trevino, 2008). However, despite the extent of this literature, there is a lack of research that systematically explores the consequences of professionalism for morality. I suggest that professionalism plays an important role in influencing individuals' ethical behavior. This dissertation focuses on unveiling some of the undesirable consequences of professionalism, showing that professionalism may impede professionals from meeting the professions' ethical standards.

The remainder of this dissertation unfolds as follows. First, I briefly review the literature on professions to explain what I mean by the use of the term professionalism and its close associates like profession and professional. Next, relying on the emerging literature on licensing, I argue that professionalism can lead individuals to engage in unethical behaviors. I review sociology and management literatures to better understand aspects and assumptions of professionalism. Lastly, I describe a series of laboratory and field studies designed to test the relationship between professionalism and unethical behavior.

Professionalization of Everyone

The literature on professions has evolved considerably since researchers provided initial conceptions about professionalism and professions' work and location in society. Sociologists have contributed numerous analyses of the rise and roles of professionalism in today's society, particularly in terms of changes in the structure and practice of work. Over the years, researchers have studied the appearance of professional associations and classes, the development of

professional rhetoric, practices and legitimacy, the socializations of professionals, and the properties of professionalism (for a review see MacDonald, 1995).

Generally, sociologists have treated professionalism as a unique way of controlling and organizing work and workers. The notion of a profession as a special "sort of" occupation has been central to the sociology of occupations for some decades (e.g., Millerson, 1964). The earlier researchers considered professions narrowly to refer to the traditional "learned" professions such as medicine and law. Johnson (1972) referred to these as the "true" professions, those which other occupations compared themselves against in terms of defining traits and characteristics. Most definitions considered the key traits distinguishing professions from the rest of occupations to be advanced training and education, presence of professional associations, a specialized knowledge base, lack of self-interest, professional autonomy, sense of responsibility to serve the public, and a code of ethics (Benveniste, 1987; Goode, 1957; Wilensky, 1964). However, later researchers criticized the definitions providing an exclusive list of characteristics and argued that such lists often portray the image that professions want to demonstrate to the world (Johnson, 1972). Thus, for these researchers (e.g., Freidson, 1970) what distinguished professions from other occupations was their ability to control their work, their occupation, and the power in relationships with clients and other workers.

Inspired by the work of Marx and Weber, some sociologists moved from the question of whether this occupation is a profession to the more fundamental issue of what the circumstances are in which people in an occupation attempt to turn their occupation into a profession and themselves into professional people (Hughes, 1963). Additionally, Freidson (1983) argued that profession may be described as a folk concept (i.e., as a notion that has a general, popularly understood meaning). Freidson wrote, "if profession may be defined as a folk concept then the

research strategy appropriate to it is phenomenological in character. One does not attempt to determine what a profession is in an absolute sense so much as how people in a society determine who is a professional and who is not, how they 'make' or 'accomplish' professions by their activities" (1983: 20). Freidson's approach highlights that the term "profession" is socially constructed and therefore at least subject to debate.

As Abbott (1988) suggested, because of the way professions evolved they need to be analyzed as a system. As noted earlier, the traditional model of professions emphasizes the basic properties of professionalism to be a specialized knowledge base, lack of self-interest, sense of responsibility to serve the public, autonomy, and emphasis on code of ethics (Freidson, 1970; Goode, 1957; Wilensky, 1964). Professionalism represents an ideology at social and organizational levels (Evetts, 2011), at the same time, professionalism always has been perceived as a characteristic of individuals and practice. Professionalism is reproduced at the micro-level in individual professional's self conception and attitudes toward the work.

Research emphasizing professionalism as a concept at the individual level, was started with Hall's (1968) classic work which identified five factors indicative of professionalism: (1) use of the profession and fellow professionals as a major referent, (2) a belief in public service, (3) a belief in self-regulation, (4) a sense of calling to the field, and (5) a desire for professional autonomy. Later researchers have identified similar but not identical dimensions (Bartol, 1979; Kerr, Von Glinow, & Schriesheim, 1979). More recent work (e.g., Anderson-Gough, Grey, & Robson, 2000) have "put forward a notion of 'professionalism' that is no longer primarily defined in terms of belonging to a professional institute and holding the relevant qualifications, but more in terms of showing certain ways of 'conducting oneself'"(Mueller, Carter & Ross-Smith, 2011, p. 553). The appeal of the discourse of professionalism in all occupations lends

support to Wilensky's (1964) prediction that eventually everyone can claim to be a professional. It is not only management which is supposed to professionalize itself (Khurana, 2007), but skimming the Yellow Pages reveals that the most unlikely occupations are struggling for professionalization. Security personnel, organizers, plumbers, caterers are all offering professional services. Considering the trend towards professionalization and taking my cue from Freidson (1983), I employ the term professional in a relatively broad sense to refer to any individual who is responsible for providing a particular service to clients (Maister, 1997). Although members of an occupation may not have been classified as professionals in the strictest sense of the term (i.e., not a member of occupational domains traditionally associated with the professions such as medicine, law, and accounting), this dissertation does not intend to engage in such a debate. Instead, individuals' conceptions of themselves as professionals are important (i.e., a professional self-conception).

As we witness the generalization of the notion of professionalism, and the label is being used more and more and applied to diverse occupations, it becomes increasingly important to examine the consequences of professional self-conception for one's moral behavior. Next, I explain how and why a professional self-conception will affect moral behavior.

<center>Professionalism and Unethical Behavior</center>

Claims of knowledge and ethicality are a feature of professionalism (Abbott, 1988; Larson, 1977; MacDonald, 1995). As a result, many professionals, indeed, believe in their integrity and the ethical conduct of the professions as a whole. These professionals think that their training, their professional associations, and their devotion to professionalism protect them against unethical behavior. However, I contend that professionalism and the sociological and

psychological processes associated with it, may lead to unethical behavior. Particularly, I emphasize that meanings, aspects, and assumptions of professionalism as promoted by professional associations as well as individual professionals can lead to professionals' unethical behaviors.

Professionalism generally has been accepted as a virtue, but the recent scandals have shown that professionals like other people can be unethical. The recent evidence of corrupt professionals is not surprising to some theorists who have long argued that the claims of professionalism is about seeking and maintaining status, privilege, and power, not so much about knowledge, skill, and ethical orientations (Freidson, 1970; Larson, 1977). Moreover, there is a growing body of work on bounded ethicality that suggests that cognitive biases and psychological factors may result in unethical behavior (Bazerman & Tenbrunsel, 2011). Particularly, relying on recent work on licensing, a number of scholars have shown that people who are led to believe that they themselves, their organization or their group are unbiased, fair or moral, are subsequently more likely to behave in biased and unethical ways (e.g., Castilla & Benard, 2010; Kouchaki, 2011; Monin & Miller, 2001).

I posit that a professional self-conception may lead to unethical behavior. As why this occurs, I argue that claims of technical and moral superiority by professional associations and professionals can lead individuals to make a normative association of professionalism such that it is assumed to be inherently moral. Recent work on licensing has demonstrated that engaging in moral behavior can liberate people to subsequently behave in immoral ways, for their past behavior has established their credentials as moral persons (Monin & Miller, 2001). Importantly, one does not even need past good deeds for licensing; writing about a minority friend (Bradley, King, Hebl, & Skorinko, 2010), being a member of an organization that emphasizes meritocracy

as a core organizational value (Castilla & Benard, 2010), or other in-group members non-prejudiced behavior (Kouchaki, 2011) can license people to engage in unethical behaviors.

Therefore, any type of psychological license, defined as "the perception that one's behavioral history, social context, or category membership permit one to legitimately do or say something that otherwise would discredit the self" (Miller & Effron, 2010, p. 116) can lead to immoral behavior. Consistent with this notion, I suggest that the aspects and assumptions of professionalism inscribing moral and technical superiority of professionals and professional practices can lead one to establish "professional credentials," which may ironically lead to more unethical behaviors.

In the next sections, I turn to past treatment of professionalism and its related concepts to gain better understanding of professionalism. More specifically, I rely on sociology and management literatures to understand the links between professionalism and morality and what that would entail for a professional's moral behavior.

Professionalism and Professional Self-Conception

In sociology, the literature on professions is both extensive and contested. I examine two past dominant sociological interpretations of professions. In differentiating professions from other occupations, traditional sociological accounts of professions have used functionalist and trait models (e.g., Goode, 1957; Marshall, 1965), with their roots in the perspectives of Durkheim and Parsons, while later sociologists have adopted conflict theory and interactionism models (e.g., Freidson, 1970, Johnson, 1972; Larson, 1977), taking their theoretical lead from the work of Marx and Weber.

Early sociologists, working in the functionalist tradition of analysis, advanced the notion

of the profession as a particular kind of occupation, or an institution with special characteristics and set out to identify the set of distinctive characteristics that set professions aside from the rest of occupations. This sociological analysis of professions catalogued prominent features of occupations widely recognized as professions. Among the reported central characteristics of professions are the presence of professional associations, advanced training and education, a specialized knowledge base, a service orientation, professional autonomy and self-control, and a code of ethics (Carr-Saunders & Wilson, 1964; Goode, 1957; Wilensky, 1964). For example, in the "Division of Labor in Society" (1964/1893) and "Professional Ethics and Civic Morals" (1957), Emile Durkheim saw professionalism as an important social phenomenon and emphasized that the professions are or could become communities that would cultivate order, discipline, and duty. Durkheim (1957) described professionalism as a form of moral community based on occupational membership and saw certain responsibilities such as altruistic motivation (avoiding dominating self-interest, or making appeals to an internal ethical motive) as transcending professional communities. Similarly, from a study of medical professionals in the Boston area, Parsons (1951) observed that the self-interested behavior of professionals was held in check by prevailing normative standards within the medical profession.

In sum, sociologists taking a functionalist perspective view professionals as displaying characteristics of altruism/lack of self-interest, service orientation, dedication, integrity, and ethicality. The claim is that the professions' orientation is service to humanity rather than profit (Marshall, 1965; Parsons, 1951). For these sociologists, the code of ethics is an inherent characteristic setting apart a profession from other occupations by proclaiming that professionals engage in "ethical" conduct. In this tradition, it is widely held that every decision a professional makes is based on his/her sense of what is right, not on his/her self-interest (Marshall, 1939).

Here professions are presented as structures that effectively cultivate competence and conscientiousness, developing a distinctive professional conscience. This tradition implies that rules of professional conduct occupy a central position in the professional's moral life by defining obligations such as competence, diligence, loyalty, candor, and confidentiality.

However, the difficulties of defining the inherent characteristics of professions, and distinguishing them form other occupations, troubled some sociologists (e.g. Wilensky, 1964), they criticized the presumed altruistic orientation of professionals (Freidson, 1970, 1986; Johnson, 1972; Larson, 1977), and believed that professions cannot be trusted to control their work without taking advantage of such control. For Malagi Larson in "The Rise of Professionalism" (1977), professions are economic interest groups trying to gain monopoly rights for their expertise and dominate the market for expert services and not for the service of mankind. In her view, all their efforts are directed at gaining status and power. In this rather extreme position, professions are charged with the use of their privilege and expertise for their own self-interest instead of using it in the service of society and clients. The assumption, in the more recent scholarly literature, is that "the category of professional is a semi-mythic construct, fashioned by members of an occupation for the purpose of obtaining social and economic advantages, who then successfully persuade the rest of the society to accept their construct and honor their claim for special protection and privileges" (Newton, 1982, pp. 33-34). Becker claimed that "professions" are "simply those occupations which have been fortunate enough in the politics of today's work world to gain and maintain possession of that honorific title" (Becker, 1970, p. 92).

Sociologists in this tradition treat knowledge, skill, and ethical orientations not as objective characteristics but rather as ideology, as claims by spokespersons for professions

seeking to gain or to preserve status and privilege. Here, the professional codes of ethics are part of professional ideology, "a carefully polished image to win elite support, designed for public relations and justification for the status and prestige" which professions assume in comparison with other occupations (Newton, 1982, p. 34). These are devices thought to be used to mislead both the government and the public into thinking that the occupation is a worthy recipient of professional autonomy and prestige, creating illusions of professions' ethicality for the sake of maintaining power (Cullen, 1978; Newton, 1982). Indeed, in this view, professionals are perceived to be habituated to use the rhetoric of service to explain their actions to themselves and others (Kultgen, 1988). Professionals are thought to be persuaded that service is the goal of professional practices apart from personal interests and motives. Moreover, professional bodies emphasize codes of ethics to maintain the moral prestige and reputation of professionals in society, to inspire trust in the professionals, to advance and protect the interests of their members.

In sum, while some sociologists take professional ethics as the institutionalized manifestation of the service ideal (e.g., Parsons), others emphasize the social status and interpret professional ethics as merely a manifestation of professional ideology, a public relations ploy (e.g., Larson). In brief, the research reviewed in this section assumes an ethical approach to the work as a basic aspect of professionalism, as either the objective characteristic or ideology of professions (Freidson, 1986). Furthermore, as reviewed, professionalism is also understood to be infused with expectations of technical and intellectual superiority (Larson, 1977). Indeed, professionals are expected to be competent, knowledgeable, cool, distant, and objective, and highly rational (Cheney, Ritz, Lair, & Kendall, 2010). In their book, Cheney and colleagues (2010) provide many examples of expectations for professional behavior ("quality," "doing the

best job," and "good work"). Therefore, efforts by professional associations and individual professionals have led professionals – and even the public – to believe moral and technical superiority are an integral aspect of professionalism. As a result of the prevalent discourse of the moral superiority of professionals, there are good reasons to assume that professionals in particular and even the public hold a general understanding of the moral nature of professionalism, believing that an inherent aspect of professionalism is morality.

However, importantly, the beliefs in the moral and intellectual superiority of professionals do not necessarily mean that professionals are indeed ethically and technically superior. Institutional theorists have argued that practices and structures (e.g., professions) can be adopted but are not necessarily effective in accomplishing their stated goals (e.g., Edelman, 1992; Meyer & Rowan, 1977). For instance, Kalev, Dobbin, and Kelly (2006) showed that the adoption of affirmative action and diversity policies have been ineffective at decreasing managerial bias and increasing workplace diversity. Furthermore, recent work shows that diversity policies and practices not only may fail to accomplish their stated purpose, but also may accomplish the opposite, leading to more workplace inequality. Castilla and Benard (2010) demonstrated that participants in an organization that emphasizes meritocracy as a core organizational value had greater levels of bias in translating employee performance evaluations into monetary bonuses than participants in an organization that does not emphasize meritocracy. The authors manipulated whether the company's core values emphasized meritocracy in evaluations and the gender of the employees being evaluated. They consistently found that when an organization is explicitly presented as meritocratic, individuals in managerial positions favor a male employee over an equally qualified female employee by awarding him a larger monetary reward.

As noted, moral and technical superiority of professionals are emphasized in everyday life. Individuals learn assumptions about the nature of professionalism through their personal experiences as well as public media such as advertising and popular press books (e.g., Anderson & Bolt, 2010). Individuals with a professional self-conception can easily translate moral and intellectual superiority into their self-conceptions (Evetts, 2003). Individuals who view themselves as a professional come to see themselves with prescribed intellectual and moral superiority (i.e., qualities of competence, integrity, trustworthiness, and so forth). This becomes part of their self-conceptions and they believe that they are highly rational, moral, and more importantly, not susceptible to psychological processes that can lead them to unethical behavior.

Conceptions of the Self and Professional Self-Conception

Social psychologists have devoted a considerable amount of research to the study of personal self-views or identities (using these interchangeably; Swann & Bosson, 2010) recognizing that people possess self-schemas that systematically guide information processing about the self and mediates and regulates behavior (Baumeister, 1998; Higgins, 1996a; Markus & Warf, 1987; Swann & Bosson, 2010). Most of research supports a multifaceted conception of self that features enduring, as well as relatively fleeting, components (Markus & Warf, 1987; Swann & Bosson, 2010). The self refers to the set of representations about oneself and the amount of self-knowledge – beliefs, evaluations, perception, and thoughts that people have about themselves – is theoretically unlimited in quantity and scope (Swann & Bosson, 2010). Some of self-knowledge is active within one's working self-concept (Markus & Kunda, 1986), while the rest is held in memory. Not all of the self-representations that comprise the self-concept are alike. "Central conceptions of the self are generally the most well elaborated and are presumed to

affect information processing and behavior most powerfully. Yet, more peripheral or less well-elaborated conceptions may still wield behavioral influence" (Markus & Warf, 1987, p. 302). Moreover, self-representations differ from a temporal framework perspective arranged by what was (past selves, Albert, 1977), what is (actual self, Higgins, 1987), and what one would like to be, could be, ought to be (i.e., ideal self, Higgins, 1987; possible selves, Markus & Nurius, 1986; ought self, Higgins, 1987).

Individuals differ in terms of their professional self-conceptions. I argue that a professional self-conception is a form of self-knowledge that is cognitively accessible to most adults. It is either part of the actual self or ideal/possible /ought self (Higgins, 1987; Markus & Nurius, 1986) and thus is accessible, where accessibility is understood to mean the "activation potential of available knowledge" (Higgins, 1996a, p. 134). A particular self-conception is stronger "with a history of frequent, consistent, clear, and significant instantiations" and that strong self-knowledge would be high in accessibility (Higgins, 1996b, p. 1067). It is worth noting that an important assumption underlying my hypothesis is that the likelihood of engaging in more unethical behavior is higher only when individuals secure "professional credentials" by conceiving of oneself as a professional (i.e., activation of a professional self-conception). Thus, accessibility of the concept of professionalism per se is not enough; actual self or ideal/possible /ought self must be activated to lead to unethical behavior. This prediction is based on the assumption that the proposed effect is a product of conceiving the self as a professional as part of one's working self-concept.

Individuals with a strong professional self-conception secure for themselves credentials as people with technical and moral superiority. Accordingly, consistent with past work showing that individuals who are led to believe that they are unbiased, objective or moral, are likely to

behave in biased and unethical ways (e.g., Monin & Miller, 2001; Uhlmann & Cohen, 2007); I suggest that because of the assumptions regarding the inherent morality of professionalism, a strong professional self-conception (i.e., conceiving oneself as a professional) provides people with moral credentials thus increasing the likelihood of engaging in unethical behaviors. As a result, individuals with a professional self-conception could be subject to the negative impact of professionalism on moral behavior.

> *Hypothesis 1:* Professional self-conception will increase the likelihood of
>
> individuals engaging in unethical behavior.

Now, given that self-concept activation is context sensitive (DeSteno & Salovey, 1997), an important question is what predicts the differential strength and accessibility of professional self-conception in one's working self-concept. As noted earlier, some self-conceptions, because of their importance to the self, are considered as part of the core self and are likely to be chronically accessible. Other self-conceptions vary in their accessibility depending on the social conditions and with individual's motivational and affective states (Swann & Bosson, 2010). Chronically accessible self-conceptions include factual self-conceptions (Gordon, 1968; e.g., ascribed characteristics, major roles and memberships) and self-schemas (e.g., Markus, 1977; e.g., self-conceptions that are especially significant) (Markus & Nurius, 1986). Accordingly, I argue that occupational membership is a basis of differing levels of strength and accessibility of professional self-conceptions. As noted, earlier researchers considered professions narrowly to refer to the traditional "learned" professions such as medicine and law. The term professional traditionally referred to an individual who was employed in a profession.

Some professions such as medicine are thought to be a prototypical profession (Hughes, 1956). Thus, with the historic emphasis on professionals as members of certain occupations, a

professional self-conception is generally more accessible and salient for members of these traditional occupations (e.g., accounting, law) compared to other occupations since self-conceptions form over time with varied experiences and feedback that allow people to gain insight about their conceptions (Swann, 1983; Swann & Hill, 1982). However, occupations vary in the extent to which they meet the traditional model of professions criteria and are classified on a continuum of professionalism. Particularly, the appeal of the discourse of professionalism has led many occupations to "professionalize". Furthermore, I explore the relationship between occupational membership and professional self-conceptions and the link to moral behavior. Since occupational membership is a basis of differing levels of accessibility of professional self-conceptions, I suggest that a professional self-conception is more likely to be accessible as part of one's working self-concept for members of traditional occupations compared to members of other occupations. Thus, according to Hypothesis 1, greater likelihood of engaging in unethical behavior is expected from members of traditional occupation upon the activation of professional self-conceptions.

> *Hypothesis 2:* Membership in occupations traditionally associated with professions compared to other occupations will lead to stronger professional self-conceptions.
>
> *Hypothesis 3:* Professional self-conception mediates the relationship between occupational membership and unethical behavior such that membership in occupations traditionally associated with professions will lead to stronger professional self-conception which leads to more likelihood of engaging in unethical behavior.

In summary, my primary goal in the current research is to test whether professional self-

conceptions lead people to engage in unethical behaviors. Relying on licensing phenomenon, I suggest that aspects of professionalism inscribing the moral and technical superiority of professionals may lead individuals to secure "professional credentials" and behave in unethical ways. My second goal is to investigate under what conditions the proposed effect occurs. Specifically, I argue that the accessibility of the concept of professionalism per se is not enough and one needs to conceive of oneself as a professional to lead to more unethical behavior. Furthermore, I investigate the relationship between occupational membership, professional self-conceptions and ethicality. In the remainder of the dissertation, I test my predictions in a series of studies.

CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In the previous chapter, I proposed a relationship between professional self-conceptions and unethical behaviors. Here, my predictions are tested in a series of laboratory and field studies.

Three studies investigate the effects of professional self-conceptions on unethical behavior. Study 1 tests the main effect of accessibility of professional self-conceptions on moral behavior through the use of a scenario that asks participants to imagine that they are a new hire. Study 2 seeks to further test the main effect of professional self-conceptions on ethicality and examines the conjecture that the proposed effect is caused by changes in the self-concept and thus should occur only when participants conceive themselves as a professional. Consequently, accessibility of the concept of professionalism per se is not enough to lead to more unethical behavior. In Study 3, I measure, rather than manipulate, professional self-conceptions and in addition, test the role of occupational membership on professional self-conceptions and ethical behaviors.

Study 1

The purpose of Study 1 was to examine Hypothesis 1, specifically, whether making a professional self-conception accessible leads to more unethical behavior. Primes have been

shown to exert effects on perceptions and behavioral choices by increasing the accessibility of relevant and applicable cognitive constructs (Higgins, 1996a). In this study, professional self-conception was manipulated by asking participants to read a short story about a new employee in a service firm and imagine themselves as the person being described. Through perspective taking, a perceiver attempts to put him- or herself in the shoes of an actor, thereby imagining that person's behaviors, thoughts, and feelings. Perspective takers psychologically take on the characteristics of others, seeing others' central attributes as more self-descriptive (Galinsky, Ku, & Wang, 2008).

Method

Thirty-four (24 males and 10 females) MBA students from a university in the United States participated in the study. Participants were, on average, 26 years old ($SD = 2.6$). They had an average of 4.6 years ($SD = 2.8$) of part-time work experience and 4.1 years ($SD = 2.3$) of full-time work experience. The design of the study was a single factor between participants with two conditions (professional condition, control condition).

According to the condition to which they were randomly assigned, participants read one of two short stories of about 500 words. In the professional story (see Appendix A), participants imagined graduating from university, looking for a job, and deciding to go work for a well-known professional services firm because it offers the greatest chance of working as a professional. The story described the person's first week of work, focusing on the professional features of the workplace. Participants took a first-person perspective and were asked to put themselves in the shoes of the main character. In the control condition, participants read the same story (see Appendix B), where references to profession and professionalism were omitted.

As mentioned, the professional story compared to the control story was designed to make a professional self-conception accessible within one's working self-concept. To test this, in a pilot study, a separate group of participants ($n = 41$) were asked to read one of the two stories with the same instructions. Then, I assessed professional self-conceptions using both self-rating and ranking procedures frequently used by researchers to measure a particular self-conception (e.g., Swann & Hill, 1982) and accessibility of a particular self-conception within the working self-concept (Aquino, Freeman, Reed, Lim, & Felps, 2009). Here participants were asked to first rate the extent to which the following qualities (professional, competent, knowledgeable, articulate, physically attractive, likable, compassionate, and, dominant) characterize themselves on 5-point scales ranging from 1 (not at all like me) to 5 (very much like me). Three items professional, competent, and knowledgeable measure the accessibility of a professional self-conception and the rest of items are used as fillers. Items were displayed in random order for each participant. I used several items for professional self-conception to avoid a fluency effect such that the repeat of the word professional in the story may have led to greater fluency of the word and a change in self-report of that particular item. The use of several items can measure the accessibility of this particular self-conception in working self-concept. The three items were averaged to form a professional attributes score for each participant ($\alpha = .65$).

Next, participants in the pilot study were asked to rank items listed in terms of who they are at the present moment from 1 (most reflect how I see myself) to 5 (least reflect how I see myself). These items were also displayed in random order. The professional option was "a professional person." The additional self-conceptions are "a successful person," "an independent person," "a creative person," and "an intelligent person." Rankings were coded such that higher values indicate greater accessibility of the professional self-schema within the working self-

concept relative to other descriptions. As expected compared with the control story, the professional story elicited higher professional attributes scores ($M_{professional}$ = 4.32, SD = .40 vs. $M_{control}$ = 3.85, SD = .64, $t(39)$ = 2.80, p = .008) and ranking of professional self-conception ($M_{professional}$ = 3.86, SD = 1.01 vs. $M_{control}$ = 2.35, SD = .99, $t(39)$ = 4.82, $p < .01$). After completing the professional self-conception measures, all participants rated the following manipulation check items on a 7-point scale (1 = not at all, 7 = very much): "To what extent the person/people in the story were professionals?" and "How professional the person in the story was?" As predicted, those participants in the professional story (M = 5.90, SD = .70) compared to those in control story (M = 5.30, SD = .99) were more likely to perceive the person described in the story as a professional (α = .80, $t(38)$ = 2.29, p = .028) based upon the average of the two items.

As for the dependent variable for Study 1, I used a conflict of interest task (see Appendix C, adapted from Cain, Loewenstein, & Moore, 2011) as the measure of unethical behavior. Participants were told that they would be randomly and anonymously paired with another person on an estimation task. They were asked to give advice to the other person (the "estimator") who is trying to estimate how many jelly beans are in a jar that is depicted in a photo.

Participants were told that their decision in the estimation task would determine the number of lottery tickets they would receive. The winner of this lottery would receive 100 U.S. dollars. It was explained that the number of tickets for the random drawing would be assigned based on how much the estimator estimates the number of jelly beans in the jar. The higher the estimator's estimate, the more tickets they would get. Participants were also told that "The true number of jelly beans in the jar is between 2,000 and 2,200." They were told that the estimator knows that they have better information than he or she has and that the estimator is merely told, "There are thousands of jelly beans in the jar." In addition, to minimize advisors' moral

considerations for the estimators, participants were told that estimators would be paid a flat rate for participation, not for accuracy, nevertheless the estimators would try to make as accurate an estimate as possible. Then participants were asked to provide a numerical response (between 0 to 10,000) indicating the exact advice that they would give in this situation. I used a potential conflict of interest task because this is a situation that many professionals encounter daily.

Afterwards, participants answered the manipulation check items and the professional self-conception measures used in the pilot study.

Results and Discussion

As a manipulation check, I first examined whether participants in the professional story condition compared to those in the control story condition were more likely to perceive the person described in the story as a professional. On average, participants in the professional condition perceived the people in the story as more professional ($\alpha = .71$; $M_{professional} = 6.00$, $SD = .87$ vs. $M_{control} = 5.41$, $SD = 1.00$) but this difference was only marginally significant, $F(1, 32) = 3.35$, $p = .077$.

As predicted, the average advice (number of jelly beans) differed significantly between conditions. Compared to those in the control condition, participants in the professional condition gave a higher estimate of the number of jelly-beans in the jar ($M_{professional} = 3767$, $SD = 2984$ vs. $M_{control} = 2225$, $SD = 233$). An independent sample t-test (with equal variance not assumed[1]) showed a significant difference between conditions, $t(32) = -2.12$, $p = .049$. Moreover, the professional attribute scores ($\alpha = .68$) were significantly higher in the professional condition ($M = 4.24$, $SD = .97$) compared to those in the control condition ($M = 3.71$, $SD = .47$), $F(1, 32) =$

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[1] Because of the difference in variance between the two conditions, I ran an independent sample t-test with equal variance not assumed.

4.10, $p = .051$. In sum, the accessibility of a professional self-conception led to higher professional self-conceptions[2] and unethical behaviors.

The results of this study demonstrated that individuals who are led to view themselves as a professional subsequently engaged in more unethical behavior. Study 1 provided initial support for the proposed relationship between the accessibility of a professional self-conception and unethical behavior.

Study 2

The purpose of Study 2 was to further test Hypothesis 1 and investigate the effect of accessibility of a professional self-conception versus accessibility of the concept of professionalism on ethical behavior.

A potential difficulty with Study 1 was that the results may have been produced as a result of accessibility of the concept of professionalism rather than activation of a professional self-conception. That is, the accessibility of the concept of professionalism itself may be enough to lead to unethical behavior. However, as I argued, I predict that the likelihood of engaging in more unethical behavior is higher only when individuals secure "professional credentials" by conceiving of oneself as a professional (i.e., activation of a professional self-conception).

To attempt to rule out this alternative explanation, I rely on a perspective taking manipulation, asking participants to read a short story about a new employee (from Study 1) with either a first-person or third-person perspective. Neuroimaging studies have shown that when compared to the third-person perspective, a first-person perspective results in a blurring of the distinction between self and other (Ames, Jenkins, Banaji, & Mitchell, 2008; Ruby & Decety,

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[2] The self-ranking measure was dropped from the studies given that most people skipped this question and had a hard time understanding it.

2001). Therefore, a third- versus first-person perspective taking manipulation allows testing the assumption that the likelihood of engaging in more unethical behavior is higher only when individuals conceive oneself as a professional.

Study 2 employs a 2 (perspective of reader: first-person vs. third-person) by 2 (role of actor: professional employee vs. employee) between-subjects design. Using the stories from Study 1, I manipulate the accessibility of professional self-conception versus the concept of professional using first-person versus third-person perspective taking instructions. Moreover, Study 2 generalizes the findings by using a different group of participants – undergraduate students instead of MBA students and a different dependent measure. As noted, accessibility of a professional self-conception in working self-concept is an important assumption underlying the proposed effect. Though, I argued that a professional self-conception is a form of self-knowledge that can be cognitively accessible for most adults, undergraduate students generally may have lower degree of professional self-conceptions. As such, Study 2 represents a conservative test of the proposed effect.

Method

One hundred one (68 males and 33 females) undergraduate students at a university in the United States participated in exchange for partial course credit in a business course. Their mean age was 24 years ($SD = 3.9$). They had an average of 4.1 years ($SD = 3.0$) of part-time work experience and 2.8 years ($SD = 4.4$) of full-time work experience. Participants were randomly assigned to one of four conditions in a 2 (perspective: first-person vs. third-person) by 2 (actor: professional employee vs. employee) between-subjects design.

Participants in the first-person perspective condition read the story from Study 1 in first-

person and were instructed to put themselves in the shoes of the character (similar to Study 1). In the third-person perspective condition, the same story was read from a third-person perspective. As noted, the first-person professional story compared to the third-person professional story would make a professional self-conception more accessible within one's working self-concept. To test this, in a pilot study, I asked a separate group of participants ($n =$ 39) to read the professional story with either first- or third-person instructions. Then, I assessed professional self-conceptions using the professional self-ratings used in the previous pilot study. As expected compared with the third-person instructions, the first-person instructions elicited higher professional attributes scores ($\alpha = .71$, $M_{1st} = 4.35$, $SD = .39$ vs. $M_{3rd} = 4.08$, $SD = .37$, $t(37) = 2.18$, $p = .035$). Moreover, to assess the effectiveness of first versus third person instructions, the perceived degree of closeness between self and the person in the story was assessed by using a pictorial measure of interpersonal closeness – the IOS scale (Aron, Aron, & Smollan, 1992). In the IOS Scale, respondents selected the picture that best described their relationship from a set of Venn-like diagrams, each representing different degrees of overlap of two circles. The circles were labeled as "self" and "the person in the story". The pictures were ordered from 1 (farthest separation between circles) to 7 (complete overlap of the two circles). As predicted, the perceived degree of closeness between self and the person in the story showed that those in the first-person ($M = 5.26$, $SD = 1.05$) felt more overlap with the person in the story than those in the third-person story ($M = 4.45$, $SD = 1.50$), $t(37) = 1.95$, $p = .057$.

As for the dependent variable in Study 2, participants were asked to complete a perceptual task (adapted from Gino, Norton, & Ariely, 2010). Participants would have the opportunity to engage in unethical behavior (i.e., cheating) in this task. In the visual perception task, participants were presented with a square divided by a diagonal line into two triangles (See

Appendix D). In each trial, participants were informed that a total of 20 dots scattered inside the square between the two triangles would appear for one second and then disappear. Participants were then asked to identify which of the two triangles, the left or right side, contained more dots. Participants were further told that to motivate their efforts, they would be paid based on their performance and since most people can more easily estimate the number of dots on the left side, they would be paid 0.5 cent for each trial identified as having more dots on the left (left trial) and 5 cents for each trial identified as having more dots on the right (right trial). The pay-off structure is such that participants earn ten times as much for every right trial.

Participants were first provided with the structure of the task and an example. To make sure that participants understand the task, they were given a 100 practice trials without pay. In the practice trials, in every trial they received feedback as to how much money they could have earned if they were playing for pay and their cumulative earnings up to that point. Importantly, the practice trials help participants notice that the program would pay based on the their answer, regardless of correct answer and thus individuals have an opportunity to earn more money by always indicating that there are more dots on the right side. After the practice rounds, participants played for 100 trials (they can earn up to $5 by always indicating more dots on the right side) in which they earned money. After they were done, they were asked to report their performance as indicated on the computer on a receipt to be paid accordingly.

Among the 100 trials, there were 16 trials (right trials) in which the answer was clearly "more on right" (i.e., the ratio of the number of dots on the right to the number of dots on the left was greater than or equal to 1.5). In 34 of the trials (left trials), there were clearly "more on left" (i.e., the ratio of the number of dots on the right to the number of dots on the left was less than or equal to .67). And finally there were 50 ambiguous trials in which the answer was not clear right

(i.e., the ratio of the number of dots on the right to the number of dots on the left was between .67 and 1.5). In the visual perception task, I compared the number of times participants chose "right" in trials between conditions. I expected that participants in the first-person professional condition would choose right more frequently than participants in the other three conditions. However, I expected no significant difference among the other three conditions.

After completing the dependent variables, participants responded to the manipulation check items. I further assessed the perceived degree of closeness between self and the person in the story by the IOS scale (the same one used in Pilot Study). Next, all participants were asked to complete the professional self-ratings used in previous studies.

Results and Discussion

As a manipulation check, I first examined whether participants in the professional story condition compared to those in the control story condition were more likely to perceive the person described in the story as a professional. Indeed, the analysis demonstrated that those in the professional condition perceived the people in the story as more professional ($\alpha = .78$), $M_{professional} = 5.77$, $SD = .96$, $M_{control} = 5.16$, $SD = .93$, $F(1, 99) = 10.68$, $p = .001$. Moreover, as for the manipulation of perspective taking, I examined whether participants in the first-person condition compared to those in the third-person condition felt more closeness between self and the person in the story. Using the IOS Scale, the perceived degree of closeness between self and the person in the story showed that those in the first-person ($M = 4.86$, $SD = 1.73$) felt more overlap than those in the third person story ($M = 4.06$, $SD = 1.68$), $F(1, 97) = 5.39$, $p = .022$.

As for professional self-conception, the professional attribute scores ($\alpha = .81$) were significantly higher in the professional condition ($M = 4.21$, $SD = .60$) compared to those in the

control condition ($M = 3.93$, $SD = .72$), $F(1, 99) = 4.60$, $p = .034$.

To test my hypothesis, a 2 (perspective: first-person vs. third-person) by 2 (actor: professional employee vs. employee) analysis of variance demonstrated that the overall model was significant $F(3, 97) = 3.89$, $p = .011$. This analysis yielded a main effect of the role of actor, $F(1, 97) = 5.35$, $p = .023$, indicating that there was a significant difference in the number of times participants chose right between the conditions when the participants read the professional story ($M = 68.82$, $SD = 20.42$) compared to the those who read the control story ($M = 60.50$, $SD = 16.89$). The main effect of the perspective of the reader (first- or third-person) was only marginally significant, $p = .089$. The predicted interaction effect between the perspective of the reader by the role of actor was also marginally significant, $F(1, 97) = 3.45$, $p = .066$. To interpret these effects, I conducted multiple planned comparisons. As hypothesized, results showed that within the professional story condition, participants in the first-person condition ($M = 75.48$, $SD = 20.05$) chose right more than those in the third-person condition ($M = 62.42$, $SD = 19.01$), $F(1, 49) = 5.70$, $p = .021$. Moreover, the role of the actor (professional or control) did not significantly influence the number of right clicks in the third-person perspective conditions, $p = .74$. The results are depicted in Figure 1.

Furthermore, I compared the number of times participants chose right between different types of trials. I examined clear cheating by looking at the number of times participants chose right when there were clearly more dots in the left side. In trials where there were clearly more dots on the left, there was a main effect of the role of actor, $F(1, 97) = 3.96$, $p = .049$, a marginally significant interaction effect of the perspective of the reader by the role of actor, $F(1, 97) = 2.82$, $p = .096$, and no main effect of perspective of the reader ($p = .16$).

Figure 1. Mean number of right clicks by the perspective of the reader and the role of actor in Study 2 (interaction between the perspective of the reader and the role of actor).

A similar pattern emerged when I compared the number of times they chose right in the ambiguous trials. There was a main effect of the role of actor, $F(1, 97) = 5.47$, $p = .021$, a marginal main effect of perspective of the reader ($p = .10$) and the predicted interaction effect of perspective of the reader by the role of actor, $F(1, 97) = 4.10$, $p = .046$. Finally, I examined the number of times participants chose right when there were clearly more dots in the right side. The analysis revealed no significant main and interaction effects (all $p > .16$).

The performance task used in this study helped to generalize the findings from Study 1 in two important ways. First, participants completed 100 trials rather than providing one single number as an estimate. Thus, they had to engage in unethical behavior (i.e., lying and telling that there were more dots on the right sides across trials) over time rather than one single decision. Second, the trials were different in nature such that some trials were indicator of clear cheating

(left trials), some were ambiguous situations (ambiguous trials), and in some honest answer would have earned more money (right trials). The difference in trials provided the opportunity to examine the impact of professional self-conceptions on both ambiguous and clear cheatings instances.

In sum, participants who read the professional story from a first-person perspective engaged in more unethical behavior compared to other conditions. In fact, the accessibility of the concept of professionalism lead to more unethical behavior only when participants took a first-person perspective, but not when they took a third-person perspective.

Study 3

This study was designed to test Hypotheses 2 and 3, examining the role of occupational membership on professional self-conceptions and ethical behaviors. Moreover, my aim was to provide evidence for my hypothesis that professional self-conceptions lead to unethical behavior by capitalizing on naturally occurring differences in professional self-conceptions between working adults from different occupations. Studies 1 and 2 involve an experimental manipulation of professional self-conceptions which help to establish that the results observed in Study 3, in natural settings, are not due to self-selection.

Method

Two hundred seventy-six (156 males and 120 females) working adults were recruited from the continuing education unit of a university in the United States. The link to the survey was posted on their website as well as sent out in an email to their alumni. Participants were, on average, 34 years old ($SD = 9.2$). At the time of the study, 97% were employed with an average

of 10.5 years (*SD* = 4.7) of work experience. The design of the study entailed measuring participants' occupational membership, professional self-conception, and ethical behaviors. I draw participants from a wide range of occupations, both the traditional professions (e.g., accountants, medical doctors) and non-professional occupations (e.g., clerks, managers, paralegals).

As for occupational membership, all participants were asked to report in which profession/occupation they were doing most of their work and if they do not work currently, to characterize their work in the past. Participants characterized their major work into professional and technical occupations (such as doctor – engineer – accountant), higher administrator occupations (such as banker – executive), clerical occupations (such as secretary – office manager), sales occupations (such as sales manager – shop assistant), service occupations (such as waiter – barber), skilled worker (such as foreman – motor mechanic), semi-skilled worker (such as bus driver– carpenter), unskilled worker (such as laborer – porter – unskilled factory worker), farm worker (such as farmer – farm laborer), other (please specify), and never had a job. The distribution of as occupations in the sample is presented in Table 1. The category professional and technical occupations was coded as 1 (i.e., professions) and the rest of the categories were coded as 0 (i.e., other occupations).

To measure participants' professional self-concept they were asked to indicate to what extent they consider themselves a professional (defined in terms of holding occupationally relevant qualifications and showing certain ways of conducting themselves at work) from 1 (not at all) to 9 (very much). Similar to previous studies, participants also were asked to rate themselves on several attributes (professional, competent, knowledgeable) to form a professional attributes score.

Table 1. Distribution of occupations in the sample

Occupational Group	Frequency	Percent
Professional and technical occupations	170	61.6
Higher administrator occupations	20	7.2
Clerical occupations	25	9.1
Sales occupations	10	3.6
Service occupations	26	9.4
Skilled worker	6	2.2
Farm worker	1	.4
Other	18	6.5
Never had a job	0	0

n = 276

As for dependent variable, participants completed the estimation task (i.e., conflict of interest task) similar to that in Study 1, where participants were led to believe they were giving advice to another person (the "estimator") who is trying to estimate how many jelly beans are in a jar that was depicted in a photo. Participants were told that their decision in the estimation task would determine the number of lottery tickets they would receive. They further were told that five winners each would receive 100 U.S. dollars. It was explained that the number of tickets for the random drawing would be assigned based on how much the estimator estimates the number of jelly beans in the jar. In this study, however, participants were not told that estimators would be paid a flat rate for participation. They were told that the estimators would try to make as accurate an estimate as possible. Then participants were asked to provide a numerical response (between 0 to 10,000) indicating the exact advice that they would give.

The order of completing the tasks varied between participants. As noted earlier, like most self-perceptions and identities, a professional self-conception may not always be cognitively accessible or salient (Higgins, 1996a; Turner, 1999) and it is plausible that the professional self-conception measures may increase the accessibility of this self-concept. I

varied the order of professional self-conception measure to look at a possible order effect on

dependent measure such that half of the participants completed that before, and the other half,

after the estimation task. As such, I empirically investigated whether the order by which

participants complete the professional self-conception measures would influence their behavior

or not. Finally, as part of the demographic questionnaire, I collected data on participants'

education level, work-experience, gender, age, and income to be able to control for these factors.

Results and Discussion

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics and correlations for all measures. The placement

of professional self-conception measure did not have a significant impact on any of the variables

analyzed. In particular, the order of measures did not significantly affect professional self-

conception ($\beta = -.05$, $p = .46$) or unethical behaviors ($\beta = -.02$, $p = .81$). For ease of presentation,

I collapsed the two orders into one in subsequent analyses given that order made no difference.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics and correlations

Variable	Mean	s.d.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Advice (DV)	3135.38	2069.88							
2. Professional self-conception	7.64	1.20	.184**						
3. Professional attributes score	3.76	.54	.116	.368**					
4. Age	34.06	9.20	-.087	.229**	.142*				
5. Gender	.55	.50	.049	-.025	.022	-.188**			
6. Education	5.88	1.614	.016	.154*	-.053	-.183**	.043		
7. Personal income	5.17	2.06	.099	.206**	.147*	.183**	.220**	.209**	
8. Work experience	10.45	4.73	-.077	.140*	.137*	.824**	-.194**	-.410**	.102

* Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).
** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).
n = 276

As predicted (Hypothesis 1), professional self-conception (i.e., whether participants considered themselves as a professional defined in terms of holding occupationally relevant qualifications and showing certain ways of conducting themselves at work) was a significant predictor of unethical behaviors ($\beta = .18$, $p = .002$). Controlling for participants' education level, work-experience, gender, age, and income yielded consistent findings and the professional self-conception was the only significant predictor of unethical behaviors. Table 3 shows the results of the regression analyses. Similarly, the self-reports of professional attributes ($\alpha = .44$) predicted the advice given to the estimator such that higher professional self-conception led to higher unethical behavior ($\beta = .12$, $p = .054$).

Given that the low reliability of the professional attributes score ($\alpha = .44$), I tested the relationship between each professional attribute (professional, competent, and knowledgeable) and the dependent variable separately. The items competent ($\beta = .12$, $p = .041$) and professional ($\beta = .11$, $p = .074$) each separately (though professional was marginally significant) predicted the advice given to the estimator while the item knowledgeable was not a predictor of the advice given ($\beta = -.005$, $p = .94$).

Table 3. Results of regression analysis

| | Dependent Variable (Advice) | | | |
| | Model 1 | | Model 2 | |
Variables	β	t	β	t
Constant		.91		1.09
Professional Self-conception	.18	3.09**	.19	2.97**
Age			-.09	-.78
Gender			.01	.07
Education			-.07	-.90
Personal annual income			.12	1.87
Work experience			-.07	-.55
Model R^2		.03**		.06*

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

Next, testing Hypothesis 2, as predicted, membership in occupations traditionally associated with professions compared to other occupations led to stronger professional self-conceptions. Occupational membership predicted participants' level professional self-conception (i.e., whether participants considered themselves as a professional defined in terms of holding occupationally relevant qualifications and showing certain ways of conducting themselves at work), $\beta = .18$, $p = .003$. However, using the professional attribute score did not provide support for the hypothesis ($\beta = -.001$, $p = .98$). Once again because of the low reliability of this score, I ran the analysis separately for each professional attribute item and occupational membership predicted none of them (all $p > .6$).

Moreover, I tested for the effect of occupational membership on unethical behavior and membership in a profession led to higher unethical behavior, $\beta = .12$, $p = .046$. Indeed, those participants who identified themselves as a member of a profession provided a higher estimate ($n = 170$, $M = 3334$, $SD = 1653$) compared to those in other occupations ($n = 106$, $M = 2821$, $SD = 2227$). Table 4 shows the results of the regression analyses. Again, controlling for participants' education level, work-experience, gender, age, and income yielded consistent findings and the professional self-conception was the only significant predictor of unethical behaviors.

Furthermore, to test for mediation, Hypothesis 3, I used the bootstrapping approach outlined by Preacher and Hayes (2004). Their SPSS macro estimates the indirect effect not only using Sobel's normal theory approach but also uses a bootstrapping approach. The results of the bootstrapping analysis (with 5000 iterations) are presented in Table 5.

Table 4. Results of regression analysis

Variables	Dependent Variable (Advice)			
	Model 1		Model 2	
	β	t	β	t
Constant		14.09**		1.09
Occupation code	.12	2.03*	.21	2.73**
Age			-.05	-.43
Gender			-.02	-.24
Education			-.15	-1.71
Personal annual income			.12	1.82
Work experience			-.04	-.33
Model R^2		.02*		.05*

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

The bootstrap analysis showed that the 95% bias-corrected confidence interval for the size of the indirect effect excluded zero [27.28, 266.21], suggesting that professional self-conception mediated the effect of occupational membership on unethical behavior (see Figure 2). Running the mediation analysis with professional attributes score, the bootstrap analysis showed that the 95% bias-corrected confidence interval for the size of the indirect effect includes zero (-73.24, 76.82). The ratings of professional attributes did not mediate the effect of occupational membership on the unethical behavior (see Table 6 and Figure 3). I ran the analysis with each professional item separately and none of the items mediated the effect.

As results of Study 3 demonstrated, in spite of significant correlation between the professional self-conception and the professional attributes score measures, professional self-conception was the only significant predictor of unethical behavior, and not the professional attributes score. Similarly, occupational membership only predicted the professional self-conception, and professional self-conception mediated the relationship between occupational membership and unethical behavior. To address this inconsistency, I offer the explanation that each of these questions measures different aspects of self-concept. The professional attributes

measure a general perception of one as competent and knowledgeable, while the professional

self-conception is more specific to the conception of oneself as a professional and holding

occupationally relevant qualifications. Therefore, it is not surprising that occupational

membership could alter people's self-conception in terms of seeing themselves as a professional

by not in terms of general attributes of competency and knowledge.

Table 5. Results of mediational analysis with professional self-conception measure as the
mediator

Variables in mediation model						
DV (Y)	Advice					
IV (X)	Occupation code					
M	Professional self-conception					

Descriptive statistics and Pearson correlations						
	Mean	SD	1	2		
1. Advice	3135	2069				
2. Occupation code	.62	.49	.12			
3. Professional self-conception	7.64	1.20	.18	.18		

Sample size						
276						

Direct and total effects						
	B	SE	t	p		
b (YX)	516.94	254.73	2.03	.043		
b (MX)	0.44	0.15	2.99	.003		
b (YM. X)	288.40	103.87	2.78	.005		
b (YX. M)	390.63	255.74	1.53	.128		

Indirect effect and significance using normal distribution						
	Value	SE	LL 95	UL 95	z	p
Effect	126.31	63.89	1.07	251.54	1.98	0.048

Bootstrap results for indirect effect						
	Data	Mean	SE	LL 95	UL 95	
Effect	126.30	127.60	61.32	27.28	266.21	

Number of bootstrap resamples 5000

Professional self-conception

$\beta = .18$** $\beta = .18$**

Occupational membership
(Profession = 1, Other occupations = 0)

Reported number
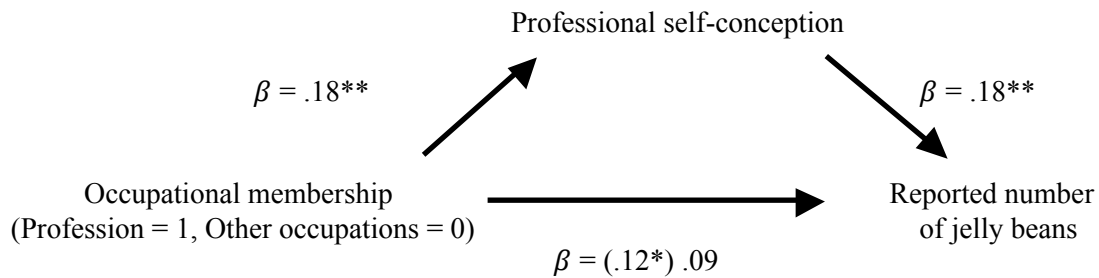of jelly beans

$\beta = (.12$*$) .09$

Figure 2. Mediation model of the effect of occupational membership on ethical behavior, with professional self-conception as mediator in Study 3. Path coefficients are standardized regression coefficients, where the value in parentheses is the coefficient prior to the inclusion of professional self-conception into the predictive equation.
*$p<.05$. ** $p< .01$.

Professional attributes score

$\beta = -.009$ $\beta = .11^{+}$

Occupational membership
(Profession = 1, Other occupations = 0)

Reported number
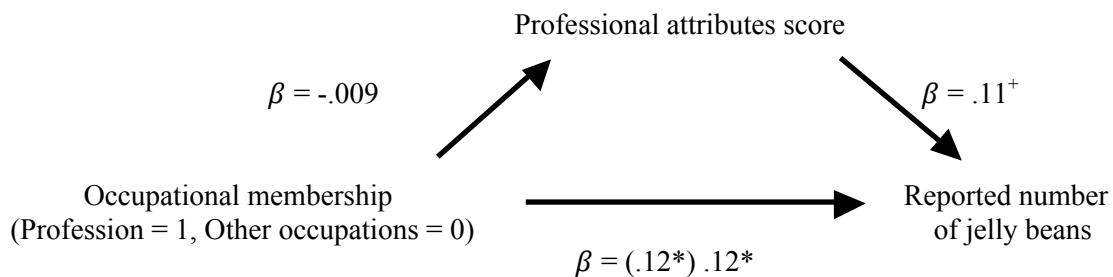of jelly beans

$\beta = (.12$*$) .12$*

Figure 3. Mediation model of the effect of occupational membership on ethical behavior, with professional attributes score as mediator in Study 3. Path coefficients are standardized regression coefficients, where the value in parentheses is the coefficient prior to the inclusion of professional attributes score into the predictive equation.
$^{+} p<.1$. *$p<.05$.

Table 6. Results of mediational analysis with professional attributes score as the mediator

Variables in mediation model		
DV (Y)	Advice	
IV (X)	Occupation code	
M	Professional attributes score	

Descriptive statistics and Pearson correlations

	Mean	SD	1	2
1. Advice	3134	2074		
2. Occupation code	.61	.49	.12	
3. Professional attributes score	3.76	.54	.12	-.002

Sample size

275

Direct and total effects

	B	SE	t	p
b (YX)	515.95	255.48	2.02	.044
b (MX)	-0.002	0.07	-.02	.981
b (YM. X)	441.23	227.58	1.94	.054
b (YX. M)	516.68	254.20	2.03	.043

Indirect effect and significance using normal distribution

	Value	SE	LL 95	UL 95	z	p
Effect	-.72	33.56	-66.51	65.06	-.02	0.983

Bootstrap results for indirect effect

	Data	Mean	SE	LL 95	UL 95
Effect	-.72	.55	34.81	-73.24	76.82

Number of bootstrap resamples 5000

These findings provided a better understanding of the underlying process responsible for differences in unethical behavior. Consistent with my argument, professional self-conceptions mediated the effect for occupational membership. Study 3 not only examined the underlying mechanism driving the differential unethical behavior, but also extended the results from

previous studies and examined the role of occupational membership. Moreover, Study 3

generalized the findings by using a different population: working adults with substantial work

experience. Thus, Study 3 offered more realism in its assessment of the influence of professional

self-conceptions on moral behavior.

CHAPTER 3

GENERAL DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Contrary to conventional wisdom that associates professions and professionalism with high moral standards, this research suggests that a professional self-conception, seeing oneself as a professional, can lead to more unethical behavior. Given the scale of recent corporate scandals and their devastating effects on public, investigating the morality of professions and professionals is critical. Sociologists have long suggested that codes of conduct and service to the public are essential characteristics of professions, nevertheless, the series of studies presented here demonstrated that professional self-conceptions lead to more unethical behaviors. In all studies, participants had the opportunity to act unethically by providing a higher estimate to their advisee or overstating their performance, and the results showed a positive relationship between professional self-conceptions, either manipulated or measured, and unethical behaviors.

Study 1 investigated the effect of accessibility of professional self-conceptions on moral behavior. In this study, professional self-conception was manipulated by asking participants to read a short story about a new employee in a service firm and imagine themselves as the person being described. A conflict of interest task was used to measure unethical behavior. Results showed that individuals who imagined themselves as being a professional employee compared to an employee provided more biased estimates (i.e., more unethical behaviors).

In Study 2, I examined whether the higher unethical behavior observed in Study 1 was as

the result of accessibility of a professional self-conception or that the accessibility of the concept of professionalism per se is enough to lead to more unethical behaviors. This study was a 2 (role of actor: professional employee vs. employee) by 2 (perspective of reader: first-person vs. third-person) design in which the stories from Study 1 were used to manipulate the accessibility of professional self-conception versus the concept of professional and a first-person versus third-person perspective taking instructions to manipulate perspective. The results from this study confirmed my hypothesis and showed that participants who read the professional story from a first-person perspective engaged in more unethical behavior compared to other conditions. Thus, the accessibility of professional self-conceptions rather than the concept of professionalism is responsible for the observed unethical behaviors.

Study 3, a field study, tested Hypotheses 2 and 3 and extended the results from previous studies by examining the role of occupational membership on unethical behaviors. Moreover, this study generalized the effect to naturally occurring differences in professional self-conceptions between working adults rather than experimental manipulation of the accessibility of professional self-conceptions. Furthermore, this study provided a better understanding of the underlying process responsible for differences in unethical behavior. Based on data collected in a naturally occurring setting, professional self-conceptions mediated the effect of occupational membership on unethical behavior such that membership in occupations traditionally associated with professions lead to stronger professional self-conceptions which lead to more unethical behaviors.

Theoretical Implications

These findings have significant theoretical implications. From a theoretical standpoint, the concepts of profession, professionalism, and similar terms have a long history of use in the sociological literature. Those researchers who have studied these concepts have mostly drawn on the methodological and conceptual tools of sociology, rather than those of psychology. Indeed, the psychology of professionalism has received relatively little attention. Understanding the psychological processes that influence professionals' behavior thus becomes important. In this dissertation I investigated the psychological consequences of seeing oneself as a professional. I provided a psychological account of why individual professionals may act unethically. More specifically, a substantial body of research and writing about professionalism and ethics exists (e.g., Abbott, 1983; Newton, 1982). As noted earlier, codes of ethics are considered an inherent characteristic of professions setting them apart from other occupations. Nearly all professions have some form of ethical code that governs behavior. Despite the centrality of professional codes of ethics, there has been very limited empirical analysis of the connection between the existence of professional codes of ethics and behavior (Abbott, 1983). This dissertation advances research by empirically testing, for the first time in the literature, the relationship between a personal sense of professionalism and individual professionals' moral behaviors.

Researchers have focused on numerous factors to explain unethical and corrupt behavior (Ashforth et al., 2008). I extend previous work by considering one possible explanation for why we see unethical behaviors from professionals. I suggest that professional self-conceptions (i.e., seeing oneself as a professional) by establishing professional credentials license people to act unethically. Such psychological perspective helps to explain the persistence of unethical

behavior despite institutional and personal pressures towards morality.

This research significantly extends prior work on licensing. While previous research has shown that past good deeds can liberate individuals to engage in morally questionable behaviors (for reviews, see Merritt, Effron, & Monin, 2010; Miller & Effron, 2010), the emphasis has been on one's own prior involvement in the process (i.e., thinking of oneself as good, moral, or unbiased). Exceptions to this observation are the work of Castilla and Benard (2010) and Kouchaki (2011) who showed that people who are led to believe that their organization or their group are unbiased, fair or moral, are subsequently more likely to behave in biased and unethical ways. Similarly, here, I showed that credentials could be established by membership in a group that is implicitly associated with morality; that is the mere activation of professional self-conceptions can be enough to establish credentials and explicit prior moral actions by one's self or group are not necessary.

Furthermore, while I argued that the observed unethical behaviors are the result of professional credentials licensing individuals to engage in unethical behaviors, this is an untested proposition. Future research is needed to understand what it is about a professional self-conception that leads to more unethical behavior. In the literature so far two possible explanations for licensing have emerged (see Merritt et al., 2010; Miller & Effron, 2010): moral credits and moral credentials. In the moral credits model, past moral behaviors serve as moral credits that balance out subsequent immoral behavior, while in the moral credentials model, past moral behaviors serve to change the meaning for subsequent acts such that it is not perceived as unethical. In sum, in moral credits accounts individuals know what they are about to do is wrong but it seems permissible while in the credentials model the way subsequent acts are construed has changed. I was not able to empirically test the underlying mechanism; future research could

investigate different underlying mechanism (credit vs. credentials) perhaps by looking at the difference between the actual or real behavior and the predicted or forecast behavior in a moral situation (Tenbrunsel, Diekmann, Wade-Benzoni, & Bazerman, 2010). A moral credentials model would predict that there would no difference between predictions and actual behavior given that a professional self-conception changes the construal of a situation while a moral credit account predicts a difference such that one would recognize the unethical nature of a situation.

Moreover, an important limitation in the past work investigating unethical behaviors has been the use of scenarios or self-reports. Based on literatures on discrepancies between predictions, recalls, and actual moral behaviors (Tenbrunsel, Diekmann, Wade-Benzoni, & Bazerman, 2010; Tepper, Inzlicht, & Page-Gould, 2011) and construals and moral behaviors (Eyal & Liberman, 2011; Trope & Liberman, 2003), investigating the impact of professionalism on actual behavior rather than self-reports is critical. In the course of a workday, professionals are likely to encounter a wide range of ethical issues. When asked, most professionals are likely to insist that they would act ethically. Thus, this dissertation addressed this concern by providing individuals with opportunities to engage in unethical behaviors rather than asking for their predictions or judgments.

This dissertation provided further support for the more recent discussions of "bounded ethicality" (Banaji & Bhaskar, 2000; Banaji, Bazerman, & Chugh, 2003) that suggests unethical behavior might be due to the psychological processes that lead individuals to engage in unconscious acts of ethically questionable behavior. Here, I suggest that professionals might be vulnerable and professional self-conception may lead them to act in ethically questionable ways. Even the most honest professionals can engage in ethically questionable behavior and might act in ways that violate their own ethical standards. As shown, a professional self-conception can

lead to systematic failure of professionals. For instance, in my studies, I showed that a professional self-conception results in failure to act morally. Importantly, I was not able to examine whether participants were aware that what they were doing is morally wrong and felt entitled or that they were unaware of the moral consequences of their acts. Further research should investigate this question.

Moreover, most organizational research on professionalism has focused on the social and psychological processes by which people construct or modify their professional image and identity (Ibarra, 1999; Roberts, 2005). My research contributes to that literature by examining the consequences of professional identities and images on moral behavior. I also investigated the impact of occupational membership and focused on the behaviors of members of both occupations predetermined to be professions and non professions. Furthermore, this dissertation attempted to extend the proposed relationship at the individual level between individuals' professional self-conceptions and unethical behavior and examined occupational membership. I suggested that attempts by professional associations promoting professions could lead to professionals' unethical behaviors. Building upon psychological processes, I argued that perceptions of technical and moral superiority of professionals could help individual professionals to establish professional credentials and thus license them to engage in unethical behaviors. Interdisciplinary research considering both psychological and sociological factors complement each other and this research was an attempt to do so. This research unpacked the impact of the implicit assumption of moral and technical superiority on moral behavior and argued that this may underlie the observed corruption by professionals.

Finally, more and more professionals are hired by organizations. Some researchers have conceptualized "organizational professionalism" (Evetts, 2011; Faulconbridge & Muzio, 2008)

in contrast to "occupational professionalism." Essentially, they argue that the demands of organizations can restrict the standards of professionalism. Faulconbridge and Muzio (2008) showed that dedication to particular organizational norms and procedures can take attention from broader professional values and principles. Indeed, professionals can find themselves in conflict between professions and their employer organization. Moreover, the organizational professionalism may support and encourage different evaluative and normative standards compared to occupational professionalism more in line with a business frame of mind and self-interest rather service to the public. Past research has shown the link between a business frame of mind and unethical behaviors (Gioia, 1992; Tenbrunsel & Messick, 1999). Further research is needed to understand different types of professionalism and their effect on moral behavior.

Practical Implications

As for practical implications, most of recent scandals involved direct or indirect assistance of professionals. This dissertation tried to address the question of why professionals may violate the ethical standards. I argued that the problem may lie in the claims of technical and moral superiority, namely that professionals think that their training, their professional associations, and their devotion to professionalism protect them against unethical behavior. I contend that aspects and assumptions of professionalism inscribing moral and technical superiority of professionals and professional practices as promoted by professional associations as well as individual professionals can lead to professionals' unethical behaviors. The results of three studies provide supporting evidence for this proposition. Drawing from these results, the straightforward implication may be that occupational groups need to be more cautious in terms of their effort towards professionalization of their field.

However more importantly, it is not to say that groups should not attempt to become professionals, but just need to be more cautious how their efforts are framed and articulated. We need a change in societal and individual mindsets from embracing professionals (an automatic consideration of experts as better than others with high ethical standards) to a focus on professional responsibilities. By reframing and repositioning the way professionalism is discussed and taught, we can reduce the instances of unethical behaviors. For instance, an emphasis on professional responsibilities as the moral duty and obligation of a professional to comply with rules of professional conduct and to apply his or her knowledge in ways that benefit clients, and the wider society may result in more ethical behaviors. The point is that the rhetoric of professional ethics, the everyday talks and practices about professions and ethics, shapes individuals' beliefs about the moral nature of professionalism and subsequently their behaviors. Ultimately, the goal is to help professions and individual professionals to make ethical decisions and behave ethically and to bring their behaviors in closer alignment with their own ethical views and those of the professions.

Despite my findings, it would be a mistake to conclude that professionalism always leads to more unethical behaviors. Indeed, professionalism if framed and articulated properly can result in positive consequences. Professionalism is likely to lead to more ethical behavior, for example, when the emphasis is on professional responsibilities and accountability to the profession and public.

Moreover, I acknowledge that the results of current research do not provide an excuse or a justification for immoral actions of professionals. I believe that unethical behaviors of professionals can be reduced. Further research is necessary to find strategies to help professionals to stand by their moral standards. For instance, promoting a culture of high

accountability can inhibit instances of unethical behaviors (Ashton, 1992).

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

The research presented here has some limitations that should be considered for future research. First, although I paired a field study with two lab studies, measuring participants' professional self-conception in one and manipulating in the other two, I do recognize the need to investigate the phenomenon using more samples and different methodological approaches. For instance, qualitative data collected from professionals and non professionals in a wide variety of occupations would certainly broaden our perspective and help us better understand individuals' perception and behavior in different moral situations. Professionals' narratives, for example, help us better understand the role of moral awareness (or bounded awareness) in the process.

In addition, these studies were limited to the cultural context of North America, and thus the usual caveats about potential cultural differences should be considered. Moreover, though professional and other value-laden similar terms have a wide usage in everyday, the Anglo-American usage may not have direct equivalent in other cultures. Given that I heavily relied on the Anglo-American perceptions of professions and professionals, future research could investigate the interpretation of the concept of professionalism in other societies and cultures.

In this research, although I examined ambiguous as well as clear unethical situations, those situations that have clear right or wrong responses, these situations still constitute a subset of moral situations. Future research should explore how professional self-conception may influence other ethical situations both prevalent in organizational settings and outside the workplace. It is possible that a professional self-conception leads to unethical behavior in more peripheral activities as well. For instance, a professional not only would provide biased advice,

but also would be less likely to donate. Moreover, it would be interesting to look at differences between unethical behaviors that would benefit the self (self-interested behaviors) versus those unethical behaviors that would serve a client and may even be oppose to one's own interest to see whether a professional self-conception would predict the second type of unethical behaviors as well or not.

Additionally, in this dissertation, I looked at differences across professions, but future work can enrich our understanding via an examination of individual difference variables that may play a role. For instance, moral identity (Aquino & Reed, 2002) can play an important role such that a strong moral identity would weaken the effects of professional self-conceptions.

The present research also raises interesting questions about the differences across professions that should be addressed in future research. Here, I investigated the role of the occupational membership and relied on individuals' categorization of their occupations, further research is needed to test the hypotheses with a different operationalization of professions versus non-professions. For example, occupations can be coded based on well-referenced dimensions of professionalism such as length of training, prevalence of licensure and so forth (Cullen, 1978, 1983). Furthermore, occupational groups are recognized by different levels of professionalism and legitimacy, some professions such as medicine have been traditionally considered a profession while others such as nursing may be less legitimate (Etzioni, 1969). Future studies could look at the levels of professionalism. For example, it could be argued that professional self-conceptions would have a stronger effect in the context of a struggling profession since a professional self-concept in this situation provides a bigger boost to self-concept. In sum, the proposed phenomenon could play out differently for members of different professions. Moreover, perhaps they may be differences within an occupation in terms of norms of conduct

such that a strong professional self-conception would not necessarily lead to more unethical behaviors. For instance, public defenders and tax lawyers may both have strong professional self-conceptions, but it is likely that one would engage in more unethical behaviors than the other.

Furthermore, in this research I did not investigate the role of organizations. Given that more and more professionals work in organizations rather than having their own practice, this is an important future avenue. The literature on organizational–professional conflict (Sorensen & Sorensen, 1974) could be helpful in proposing differences, if any, between professionals in professional organizations, in non-professional organizations, and on their own.

Finally, this dissertation did not set out to investigate the role of organizational factors. For example, organizational culture would definitely play an important role influencing individuals' moral behaviors. In organizations in which professional values are aligned with organizational cultures and practices, the licensing effects of professional self-conceptions may be weakened or reversed.

Conclusion

Counter to conventional wisdom, the present findings raise a cautionary flag for those – in particular professionals themselves and professional associations – who believe that the mere fact of being a professional prevent people from engaging in unethical behaviors. In the series of studies presented here, I have demonstrated that professional self-conceptions can license individuals to act unethically.

APPENDIX A

PROFESSIONAL CONDITION PRIMING INSTRUCTION

Instructions: Please carefully read the following scenario. As you're reading the scenario, try to put yourself in the shoes of the main character and experience the person's thoughts and feelings.

Imagine you recently graduated. You were offered several jobs and decided to go work for a well-known professional service firm. Besides paying well, this job offers you the greatest chance of working as a professional and gaining experience in management and strategic consulting. You're thrilled to be working at such a professional company and you feel that this is exactly the kind of job you deserve.

On your first week of work, you went over the basic tools of the trade, beginning to appreciate what makes the job of consulting challenging, and, through it all, you start to get anxious about beginning client engagement work. You spent the first few days going over very general and somewhat basic things to know as a professional. By day three, however, you were digging into training that was more specific to your areas of practice and getting to know your team. There were a few new hires in the team, and you have spent a lot of time with these folks already. You feel you are working with really smart, professional individuals.

Shortly after your training, you start working on your first project. The team is doing strategic analysis, process redesign, organizational design, change management, and program management for a client firm. The work brings together a team of professional consultants from different departments.

You are asked to meet your manager for the first time; you wait for him in his office. As you wait in his office, you notice his professional certifications.

He comes in and greets you. As you sit down, he tells you that "The company hires only a few people out of thousands of applicants each year. I personally viewed your file and felt that you have the potential to become a great consulting professional; I see many similarities between myself and you." Hearing that you can become a successful professional like him sends a rush of pride through your body.

"In the next few months, you will work hard. Excel at what you do and do it in the best possible way. Put your maximum efforts without holding back. You are now among the professionals of the field, so act like a professional. Maintain the quality of your work. We expect high

performance from you."

"Although it would be tough, I believe you can succeed." You remind yourself that you were hired for a good reason and that you deserve a spot at the top. You sit up straighter and start acting like a professional, the manager continues, "take the job very seriously, follow disciplined routines and take pride in your work. I see a lot of potential in you, I believe you are a professional."

Feeling your heart beating faster, you're anxious and excited. As manager finishes up the speech, you're so eager to get started.

APPENDIX B

CONTROL CONDITION PRIMING INSTRUCTION

<u>Instructions:</u> Please carefully read the following scenario. As you're reading the scenario, try to put yourself in the shoes of the main character and experience the person's thoughts and feelings.

Imagine you recently graduated. You were offered several jobs and decided to go work for a well-known service firm. Besides paying well, this job offers you the greatest chance of gaining experience in management and strategic consulting. You're thrilled to be working at such a company and you feel that this is exactly the kind of job you deserve.

On your first week of work, you went over the basic tools of the trade, beginning to appreciate what makes the job of consulting challenging, and, through it all, you start to get anxious about beginning client engagement work. You spent the first few days going over very general and somewhat basic things to know. By day three, however, you were digging into training that was more specific to your areas of practice and getting to know your team. There were a few new hires in the team, and you have spent a lot of time with these folks already. You feel you are working with really smart individuals.

Shortly after your training, you start working on your first project. The team is doing strategic analysis, process redesign, organizational design, change management, and program management for a client firm. The work brings together a team of consultants from different departments.

You are asked to meet your manager for the first time; you wait for him in his office. As you wait in his office, you notice his certifications.

He comes in and greets you. As you sit down, he tells you that "The company hires only a few people out of thousands of applicants each year. I personally viewed your file and felt that you have the potential to become a great consultant; I see many similarities between myself and you." Hearing that you can become successful like him sends a rush of pride through your body.

"In the next few months, you will work hard. Excel at what you do and do it in the best possible way. Put your maximum efforts without holding back. Maintain the quality of your work. We expect high performance from you."

"Although it would be tough, I believe you can succeed." You remind yourself that you were

hired for a good reason and that you deserve a spot at the top. You sit up straighter, the manager continues, "take the job very seriously, follow disciplined routines and take pride in your work. I see a lot of potential in you."

Feeling your heart beating faster, you're anxious and excited. As manager finishes up the speech, you're so eager to get started.

APPENDIX C

ESTIMATION TASK

You will be randomly and anonymously paired with another person on an estimation task. Neither of you will ever know the identity of the other. Your role is "advisor." The other person's role is "estimator."

Your chance to make money will depend upon the decision you make.

The estimator is shown the picture below and is asked to guess how many jelly beans are in the jar. However, before the estimator guesses the number of jelly beans, you will give him or her a suggestion about how many jelly beans are in the jar.

The true number of jelly beans in the jar is between 2,000 and 2,200. The estimator knows that you have better information than he or she has. The estimator is merely told, "There are thousands of jelly beans in the jar."

The estimator will be paid $10 for participating, so his or her earnings will not depend on how accurate he or she is, but assume that the estimator will try to make as accurate an estimate as possible.

You will earn lottery tickets according to how much the estimator estimates the number of jelly beans in the jar. The more jelly beans the estimator estimates, the more chance you have to win money.

After all advisors complete the study, a random drawing will determine the winners.

One winner will receive 100 dollars.

Your number of tickets for the random drawing will be assigned based on how much the estimator estimates the number of jelly beans in the jar.

 The higher the estimator's estimate, the more tickets you get.

Remember that you are the advisor and the estimator is asking for your suggestion before guessing how many jelly beans are in the jar.

Please provide a numerical response indicating the advice that you would give.

Your estimate on how many jelly beans are in the jar (to be communicated to the estimator): _____ (a number between 0 to 10,000)

APPENDIX D

VISUAL PERCEPTION TASK

On each trial, 20 dots were displayed in a square divided by a diagonal line into two triangles. Participants were asked to identify which of the two triangles, the left or right side, contained more dots.
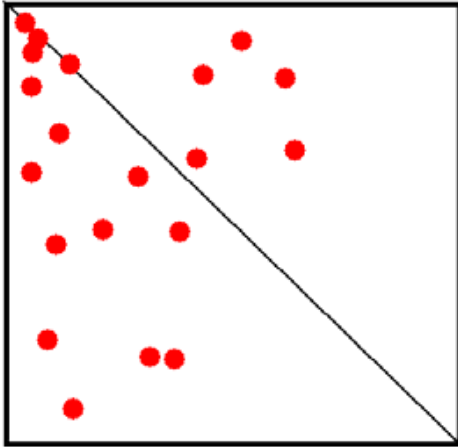
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