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Prosocial Rule Breaking In The Working Environment: An Empirical Analysis Of The
Outcomes

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Abstract

Integrating theorizing across the prosocial rule breaking and burnout literature, we hypothesize that prosocial rule breaking increase emotional exhaustion and decreases, instead, personal effectiveness. We further propose that process of moral disengagement and moral identity mediate this effect.

Overall, results proved substantial evidence that prosocial rule breaking is positively related to moral disengagement and negatively to moral identity. While the study did not find any evidence that prosocial rule breaking can affect burnout, a strong mediation effect was found with moral identity which can actually predict the relation between prosocial rule breaking and personal effectiveness.

Keywords

Burnout, Emotional Exhaustion, Moral Disengagement, Moral Credits, Prosocial Rule Breaking, Prosocial Impact, Cynicism, Personal Efficacy, Constraints to help, Organization Environment , Moral Identity, Interpersonal citizenship behavior, Person-focus, Task-focus

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Introduction

Breaking the rules of an organization is normally considered to be deviant and unethical (e.g., Griffin and Lopez 2005), related to the perspective of unhappy and unsatisfied employees violating the organizational rules because not complying with the values of the company or are not satisfied with their job (Dalal 2005).

However, in spite of the popular viewpoint of rule breaking as deviant, a different perspective has emerged with Morrison (2006). Morrison has discussed the concept of Prosocial rule breaking which is defined as "any instance where an employee intentionally violates a formal organizational policy, regulation, or prohibition with the primary intention of promoting the welfare of the organization or one of its stakeholders" (2006, p. 6).

This new vision can be explained by the idea that the working environment is becoming unpredictable, competitive, and intricate, characterized by intense workload, a deficit of proper guidance and mentorship, slow and not well-organized promotions system (Kuruüzüm Anafarta and Irmak 2008; Prafder 2017; Sarabakhsh, Carson, and Lindgren 1989).

Therefore, in such a dubious environment complying with the rules does not seem to be a commitment anymore, so much that organizational personnel frequently need to disrupt the formal corporate obligations in order to attain what is appropriate for the enterprise (Morrison 2006; Wang and Shi 2020).

At this point, a question needs to be raised: What are the factors that can predict pro-social rule breaking behaviors, and what are the outcomes of engaging in such actions?

Starting from this question, the thesis takes into consideration the predictors of prosocial rule breaking, which we will name PSRB and it will focus on the possible outcomes of engaging in such immoral and deviant behaviors.

We consider both the individual and the organizational level in order to analyze the determinants of engaging in Prosocial rule breaking. The organizational environment plays an

important role in predicting PSRB; indeed, the constraints that an employee can face while performing his or daily tasks, such as poor machines or information, can influence his/her work behavior and encourage him to break the rules.

Moving to the individual level, we need to take into account the interpersonal organizational citizenship behavior (ICB) (Settoon and Mossholder 2002), which has a huge impact on whether the employee will break or not the rules.

Looking at the outcome of PSRB, morality plays an important role in regard with two specific aspects: moral identity and moral disengagement. When the employee is morally disengaged, he/ she is more likely to break the organizational rules due to a deactivation of the moral schemas; at the same time when the employee does not define him/herself as a moral person, the willingness to participate in such behavior is greater.

The previous research focused on the antecedents that can cause PSRB, such for instance morality which has been considered the key to predicting any moral or immoral behavior. Several studies have analyzed how the centrality of our morality can predict the willingness to engage in PSRB (Nisan and Horenczyk 1990; Bradley, King, and Hebl 2009), but our research, instead, is more focused on how engaging in this kind of immoral behavior can actually shape, or not, our morality. Therefore, our paper studies the relationship between PSRB and the possible outcomes.

When we break the rules, we also realize that what we are breaking is actually useless, obsolete if not harmful, therefore, we also expect PSRB to have a strong relationship with burnout for those employees with high moral disengagement and low moral identity.

The present study focuses on finding the correlation between PSRB and two dimensions of burnout, naming Personal Effectiveness and Emotional Exhaustion. We, therefore, expect that the more you break the rules, the more you feel drained of energy and the more you feel ineffective in your daily tasks. The moral dimensions of moral identity and moral

disengagement, even have always been considered to be central in this topic, were never taken into consideration. We instead consider these dimensions to be a good and significant mediator in the relationship between PSRB and Personal Effectiveness and also Emotional Exhaustion.

Literature Review and Theoretical Background

In this chapter, we will investigate the theoretical background of PSRB, navigating the different variables and consequent definitions of the main predictors and estimated outcomes, of prosocial rule breaking.

Prosocial rule breaking

Morrison (2006) introduced the construct of prosocial rule breaking into management literature stating defining it as "Any instance where an employee intentionally violates a formal organizational policy, regulation, or prohibition with the primary intention of promoting the welfare of the organization or one of its stakeholders" (p. 6).

Morrison (2006) distinguishes three dimensions related to prosocial rule breaking, which are "efficiency, desire to help a subordinate or colleague, and customer service" (p. 10). The first category refers to circumstances where the employee is trying to more efficiently accomplish his or her job tasks. The second one is related to the idea of helping another employee, while the last one is focused on the customer's needs.

Morrison (2006) distinguishes between the term prosocial rule breaking as a "non-selfish" action and that employees voluntarily take in violating organizational rules to make the best interests of the organization or stakeholders.

To determine the probability of a person engaging in prosocial rule breaking, Morrison (2006) introduced the positive deviance model of Spreitzer and Sonenshein (2003). Positive deviant behavior can be represented as "behaviors with honorable intentions independent of outcomes" (Spreitzer and Sonenshein 2004, p. 833). Therefore, in order to understand better the definition, it seems to be important to analyze prosocial organizational behavior as well.

Prosocial organizational behavior

Prosocial organizational behavior, generally, indicates a "correct" way to behave (Baruch et al. 2004), therefore it can be considered to be socially desirable. People engaging in these behaviors have the intention to benefit "the person, group, or organization to which the behavior is conducted" (George 1990). In the organizational literature, these behaviors can also refer to other definitions such as organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) or extra-role behavior in the workplace (Baruch et al. 2004; Brief and Motowidlo 1986; Organ 1988).

One important element of organizational citizenship behavior is interpersonal citizenship behavior (ICB) (Settoon and Mossholder 2002), also mentioned as altruism (Moorman 1993), and helping (Lepine and Van Dyne 2001).

Organization citizenship behavior (OCBI) can be directed towards a person or a task (e.g., DePaulo, Brown, and Greenberg 1983) and therefore we consider two different dimensions, respectively OCBI-Task and OCBI-Person. The latter contributes to maintaining self-esteem and is related to more individual and personal problems. The former involves the resolution of work-related problems of a less personal nature and deals with organization-based issues. In our study, we expect OCBI both task and person-related to be a strong predictor of PSRB.

Individual differences as antecedents of PSRB

Analyzing the antecedents of PSRB, first, we need to focus on the individual level. Following Morrison (2006) we can theorize three individual-level determinants that are significantly linked to PSRB: job autonomy, risk-taking propensity, and co-worker behavior.

In addition to that, we can also recognize other individual-level variables that can drive PSRB which represent the fundamentals of self-evaluations, such as self-esteem, self-efficacy, neuroticism, and locus of control (Judge, Locke, and Durham 1997).

Recalling Dahling et al. (2010) conscientiousness seems to be linked to PSRB as well but in a negative way since people who are more conscientious are less inclined to violate the organizational rules.

Job Autonomy

The level of freedom that an employee experiences at work, as well as the feeling of control, represents an antecedent of rule breaking, considering job autonomy as the amount of autonomy have when executing work tasks (Hackman and Oldham 1976).

Risk-taking propensity

Risk-propensity can be identified as the propensity to overvalue the probability of success when taking dangerous actions (Sitkin and Pablo 1992), which forms a strong and solid pattern; then risk-takers would be more likely to engage in pro-social rule breaking (Morrison 2006).

Coworker PSRB behavior

In order to evaluate the possible reaction of our own's actions, a coworker's reaction is an important signal (Dutton et al. 1997). Therefore, if looking at the colleagues' behavior, employees notice that the rules have been broken, then the probability of repeating the same action is very high.

Core self-evaluation (CSE)

Following Judge and Larsen (2001), core self-evaluations are basic attributes that people detain about themselves and their performances in the world. CSE is composed of four characteristics: "self-esteem, or one's overall appraisal of his/her self-worth" (Rosenberg 1965), "self-efficacy", which can be considered one's belief in his/her capacity to act in different situations (Bandura 1986), "neuroticism, or one's tendency of being insecure and feeling timid", and internal "locus of control", one's credence that she/he has the command over his/her own fate (Rotter 1966).

We just looked at the individual antecedents of engaging in PSRB, but morality also plays an important role in determining whether a person will break or not the organizational rules.

Moral Consequences of PSRB

Before examining how morality can actually be influenced by breaking the rules, it's important to clarify the conditions under which employees can feel confident in breaking the rules. Individuals can mostly obtain the trust from their previous moral behaviors, in order that an unblemished past behavior increases their inclination to carry out some actions that would normally be immoral. Therefore, we can explain this with the concept of "self-licensing" (Monin & Miller, 2001), which occurs when past moral behavior makes people more likely to engage in possible deviant actions without feeling bad or appearing immoral. We state that moral self-licensing occurs because good performances make individuals self-assured from a moral point of view.

At this point, we need to introduce the concept of "moral self" (Jennings, Mitchell, Hanna, 2014) which results relevant in determining moral functioning. Past behaviors act like a lens through which one decodes present actions, therefore, when individuals have had a

chance to act good, they should worry less about acting in some ways that might appear to violate prosocial norms.

In research, Sachdeva, Iliev, and Medin (2009) made the sample write an anecdote regarding themselves or another person they knew utilizing nine positive words like generous or nine negative words like mean. Participants, then, had the possibility to give part of their compensation to some charity organizations. In accordance with the self-licensing theory, participants who used positive words donated the least. While, on the other hand, participants who used negative attributes donated the most of all, just as they were making amends for feeling immoral.

This moral mechanism can be explained by what Tetlock, Kristel, Elson, Green, & Lerner (2000) and Zhong & Liljenquist (2006) has defined as "moral cleansing" which represents the other extremity of self-licensing. We can, therefore, state that good deeds set up some moral credits (cf. Hollander, 1958) that can be taken back to pursue the right to do bad actions.

Following that, people are confident in breaking the rules, even if they know that what they are about to do is bad because their past track record gives them the ability to have still some sort of positive balance regarding their moral behavior.

"We call it the moral credentials model, characterized by the fact that the past track record is an important piece of information casting light on one's present behavior" (Merritt, Effron, Monin, 2010).

In the organizational environment, this model works as well: when people are confident about their morality, they sometimes act less morally (moral credentials), therefore acting against the rules.

Following the concept of "moral self" which plays an important role in predicting PSRB, we can consider two different approaches: a person-centered one, focused on the stability of

moral self during the time, and a situation-based one which, instead, emphasizes how contextual signals may control the moral self.

Actually, both approaches can be integrated, following the principle of a social-cognitive model (Bandura, 1960) that is based on the assumption for situational factors have the ability to temporarily influence social information processing by turning on or not some fixed knowledge structures (e.g., one's national identity) or schemas.

However, the model seems to take into consideration also the tendency of some people to be more readily available for such processing than others (Bandura, 2001). This is what we call moral identity which identifies whether the moral self is a central schema for a person's self-definition.

Following the model of moral identity, developed by Aquino and Reed (2002), two dimensions need to be included: internalization and symbolization, corresponding to the private and public aspects of the self, respectively. Internalization indicates the chronic, subjective experience of having a moral identity (Aquino & Reed, 2009). The symbolization dimension, instead, represents the importance of showing the public moral self as a way of proclaiming one's morality (Winterich et al., 2013).

Another important distinction to consider is related to the two aspects of moral regulation which are prescriptive and proscriptive. The former refers to the good deeds that someone is doing to help others in order to lessen their suffering or improve their welfare. The latter, instead, is based on discouraging motivations to do bad actions.

Accordingly, we can suggest that those employees who do not strongly internalize morality and locate high value on the figurative dimension of it, are motivated also by situational factors, which can highlight the reputational achievement when engaging in good actions.

At the same time, those who highly incorporate moral identity, are very sensitive to menaces to their moral self, coming from situational cues or their own unethical record of actions.

Therefore, those employees with an emphasized symbolic dimension, are expected to implement compensatory prescriptive morals and other configurations of behaviors directed to reaffirm their moral self-image.

In simple words, when the employee is more focused on the judgment of others, it is easier for him to help a colleague, for example, by breaking the rules, in order to improve his image in the eyes of others and of himself.

Once, we understood how morality works, we can now focus on how engaging in prosocial rule breaking can actually influence our morality. We have just seen that morality has a huge impact on our decision-making mechanism such that, the less moral identity the employee has, the more likely he/she will break the organizational rules.

When we engage in deviant actions, we decrease our morality meaning that the more immoral actions we carry out, the less central becomes the moral identity, therefore, breaking the rules, in turn, shapes our morality.

Our moral self, defined as a "complex system of self-defining moral attributes involving moral beliefs, orientations, dispositions, and cognitive and affective capacities that engage regulatory focus toward moral behavior" (Jennings, Mitchell, Hanna, 2014) changes once we act against the rules. Breaking the rules implies a change in our morality which is explained as "a self-conception organized around a set of moral traits" (Aquino and Reed, 2002, p. 1424), therefore our morality becomes less central. We, then state the following:

Hypothesis 1a: PSRB is negatively related to moral identity

PSRB decreases morality and, accordingly, increases moral disengagement, deactivating moral standards. This mechanism, known as "moral disengagement" (Bandura, 1996), considers the personality as a "dynamic disposition", a sort of an apparatus that is characterized by the reciprocal causation between three dimensions: behavior, cognition, and environment which are all linked to each other and work simultaneously.

Moral disengagement works as a moral justification through mainly two processes: euphemistic labeling, and advantageous comparison. Euphemistic labeling is the usage of clean words to rename some deeds that are unethical and make people, engaging in such actions appear better (Bolinger, 1982). The advantageous comparison uses the difference between deviant behavior and another one that is even worse to make the previous seem harmless (Bandura, 2002).

At the same time, there are other mechanisms related to moral disengagement such as the displacement and diffusion of responsibility that has a great ability to obscure the moral authority of the actor.

Displacement of responsibility, in particular, refers to the allocation of authority for one's deed to some dominant positions who may have justified implicitly or instead explicitly prompted those specific actions (Kelman & Hamilton, 1989; Milgram, 1974; Sykes & Matza, 1957). Diffusion of responsibility operates similarly but refers to dispersing responsibility of an individual within a group.

The workplace provides enough occasions for moral disengagement: companies lean towards stratification, contributing to the dispersal of responsibility; work is usually organized in different teams, contributing to the dispersal of responsibility; the company organization allows the creation and differentiation between internal and external members of the group, encouraging moral justification and the minimization of the consequences for those who are not part of the organization.

At the same time, the organizational environment plays an important part in increasing the moral disengagement of the employees due to organizational constraints, interpersonal conflict, and workload.

Organizational constraints represent circumstances or tools that impede employees to use their abilities to obtain high levels of job performance, such as faulty equipment and

incomplete or poor information. Interpersonal conflict in the workplace can involve small arguments between colleagues to physical assaults. Workload refers to the total volume of work that an employee has to do. "Both constraints and conflict are psychosocial stressors" (Spector, 1998) coming from an exchange between individuals. Workload, instead, concerns mostly tasks.

Indeed, when we encounter situations or means that prevent us from carrying out our work actions correctly, then we are more incentivized to behave contrary to the norm. Therefore, we expect organizational constraints to be a strong predictor of prosocial rule breaking.

As Jackall (1988) indicates in *Moral Mazes*, "organizations are particularly effective at assisting individuals in gathering together moral schemas that lead behavior elsewhere".

Therefore, highly moral disengagement has been found to amplify unethical actions as well as to influence other contextual factors that might drive one's actions to immoral behavior.

For instance, organizations can be too stratified, they can present several limitations for the normal daily work, or even, they can have a corporate culture with which the employee does not identify himself/herself, all of these reasons can lead to the deactivation of the employee' moral schemes.

In this way, the employee does not feel more some sort of moral judgment when acting immoral and in this way, the more they feel less forced to evaluate their actions according to moral schemes, the more they are likely to break the organization's rules.

In this way, a vicious circle is generated such that the more immoral or deviant actions we perform, the more morally detached and disengaged we become.

We, then, theorize as follows:

Hypothesis 1b: PSRB is positively related to moral disengagement.

We have just seen that acting immoral and engaging in prosocial rule-breaking actions changes our morality, moreover, we predict that PSRB increases burnout.; for instance, when

the rules are broken to do the right thing for other people or the company, the employee who is engaging in such deviant actions realize that, in reality, those rules are not all that right, but on the contrary obsolete and counterproductive.

Burnout

Maslach (1976) defined burnout as chronic stress produced by contact with clients that led to exhaustion and emotional distancing from them at work. Initially, the research on burnout was mainly focused on helping professionals (Maslach, Leiter, and Jackson 1981), and was defined as a consequence of the relationship between the professional and the service user. Based on this model, the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI; Maslach, Leiter, and Jackson 1981) was created, and burnout was soon noticed in other jobs that involved chronic stress but did not require working directly with people.

Later, the MBI was modified and became the MBI-General Survey (MBI-GS), and burnout was reorganized as a crisis regarding one's work, in a general meaning (Maslach, Leiter, and Jackson 1981).

According to Maslach, Schaufeli, and Leiter (2001) burnout comprises three dimensions: emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and reduced personal effectiveness. When a person is exhausted feels drained, and exhausted and it seems for her/him to recover from this state. Cynicism is defined as distancing oneself from one's work in such a way that one cannot be affected by the negative effects of the work itself. Personal effectiveness is generally explained as a feeling of professional accomplishment that is reduced during burnout.

Job burnout involves a continued reaction of internal and external stress factors in the workplace for instance, such as inconsistency, workload, or misfit between the employee and the job or the task he/she is completing. These stressors stimulate a response that involves

overwhelming exhaustion, feelings of cynicism and detachment from the job, and a sense of ineffectiveness and lack of accomplishment.

Therefore, the more the employee engages in prosocial rule-breaking more he/she realizes that the rule is obeying is absurd, obsolete, or inefficient, therefore, the emotional exhaustion experienced is increasing as well. The worker feels depleted of every kind of energy and nothing seems adequate to help him to navigate the current situation the efficiency is thus reduced the more fatigue the employee experiences, the more inefficiency he/she develops.

When an employee is engaging in prosocial rule-breaking actions is more likely to experience more burnout, which turns out to be emotional exhaustion or feelings of cynicism and detachment from the job or either a sense of ineffectiveness and lack of accomplishment or also a combination of all of them.

To cope with the awareness that the rule is absurd, obsolete, or inaccurate will increase the feeling of exhaustion as well as the cynicism and sense of ineffectiveness and lack of accomplishment. Therefore, we expect a strong relationship between personal effectiveness and emotional exhaustion in predicting the outcome of PSRB.

Hypothesis 2a: PSRB will be associated with Emotional exhaustion.

Hypothesis 2b: PSRB will be associated with Personal effectiveness.

Combining our previous hypothesis, we speculate that the relationship between prosocial rule-breaking and personal effectiveness is mediated by moral identity. When someone's moral identity is low, to feel better, they are more likely to engage in PSRB is high.

Acting immoral becomes the right thing to do in order to compensate for the low morality; in this way, all future actions will then be modeled on past immoral choices.

Once immoral actions become the norm according to our morality, a sense of ineffectiveness and detachment from one's work develops and becomes more alive and intense.

Therefore, when an employee is acting immoral with the goal of helping someone else, he/she experiences a diminishing accomplishment and effectiveness and more exhaustion. In the same way, once the employee implements immoral actions to help others, it creates a sense of exhaustion that devours all of his energy.

We, moreover, predict that moral disengagement is a strong mediator of the relationship between PSRB and both emotional exhaustion and personal effectiveness. The more morally disengaged we are, the more we feel exhausted and ineffective in our tasks.

Having said that, we speculate our last hypotheses:

Hypothesis 3a: The PSRB-Personal effectiveness relationship is mediated by moral identity and moral disengagement.

Hypothesis 3b: The PSRB-Emotional exhaustion relationship is mediated by moral disengagement.

Methodology and Conceptual Framework

This chapter represents the result of the statistical procedures and tests which were analyzed using the statistical program IBM SPSS, version 28.0.1.1. The following include (1) Sampling frame, (2) Questionnaire instrument, (3) Measures, and (4) Results and Discussion.

Sampling frame

Questionnaires were distributed to 180 MBA students from a Chinese university. The results were collected through a general survey which was proposed every two weeks three times. Most of the sample (47.78%) hold a non-management role while only 7.22% have a management position. Demographically, 47.78% were males, while 62.22% were female and

the average age was 31.31 years (SD= 4.30). Their average tenure in the organization was 4.70 years (SD= 4.16).

Questionnaire Instrument

The questionnaire instrument was comprised of 5 sections: 1.) a first section assessing demographic information of gender, age, occupation, industry type, education level, job type, years with the current position, years in the company, and days of working from home; 2.) a second part assigned to the analysis of the co-variants of perceived constraints to helping and the organizational citizenship behavior in the person-focus and task-focus interpersonal variables; 3) a section was focused on evaluating the independent variable of prosocial rule-breaking; 4) the fourth part was aimed at assessing the role of the mediator of moral credit in the study; 5) the last sections estimates the three predicted outcome: propensity for moral disengagement, prosocial impact, and lastly burnout.

Measures

Control Variables. I assess the organizational constraints ($\alpha= 0.92$) with the Organizational Constraints Scale (Spector, Dwyer and Jex 1998), a validated and widely used scale that registers 8 areas of constraints, e.g., faulty equipment, or incomplete information. One item assesses each of 11 (expanded from the original 8) constraint areas, and all items are summed into a total score. Respondents are asked to indicate how often it is difficult or impossible to do their job because of each item. (1= "Never", 5= "Always").

The Person-focus (OCBIP) and task-focus (OCBIT) interpersonal citizenship behavior scale were taken from the work of Settoon and Mossholder (2002), indicating the extent to which each of the students engage in OCB. All the responses were on five-point scales ranging from 1= Never to 5=Always. A sample item for a propensity for OCBIP is "Take a personal

interest in coworkers", while a sample item for OCBIT is "Assist coworkers with heavy workloads even though it is not part of the job".

PSRB. Prosocial Rule Breaking was measured with a 13-item scale derived from the study of Dahling et al. (2010). All the responses were on five-point scales ranging from 1= Never to 5=Always. For the prosocial rule-breaking for the coworker assistance subscale ($\alpha= 0.947$), a sample item is "Assist other employees with their work by breaking organizational rules", for the customer service subscale ($\alpha= 0.934$) a sample item is "Break organizational rules to provide better customer service for the organization", for the organization subscale ($\alpha=0.946$) a sample item is "Break organizational rules when those rules interfered with your job duties" and $\alpha= 0.967$ for the overall scale.

Moral Identity. I used the scale from the work of Lin, Ma, and Johnson (2016) where all the responses were on five-point scales ranging from 1= Strongly disagree to 5= Strongly agree. For the moral identity scale, there were listed some positive employee characteristics such as "Generous, Fair, Friendly, Honest" and the respondents were asked to evaluate them and how they might be important to them, a sample item is "Having these characteristics is not important to me" ($\alpha=0.851$)

Moral disengagement. I assessed moral disengagement ($\alpha=0.931$) using a 24-items scale from Moore, Detert, Klebe Treviño, Baker, and Mayer (2012) and the responses were on a five-point scale ranging from 1= Strongly disagree to 5= Strongly agree". Sample items are "People cannot be blamed for misbehaving if their friends pressured them to do it" or "It's okay to treat badly somebody who behaves like scum".

Burnout. To assess burnout ($\alpha=0.842$), I used the Maslach Burnout Inventory-General Survey (MBI-GS) which comprises three subscales that parallel those of the original MBI: Emotional Exhaustion ($\alpha= 0.950$), Cynicism ($\alpha=0.863$) and Professional Efficacy ($\alpha=0.921$). the

responses were on five-point scales ranging from 1= Strongly disagree to 5= Strongly agree". A sample item for the Emotional exhaustion is "I feel emotionally drained from my work", while for the personal efficacy is "I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job" and for the cynicism is "I doubt the significance of my work".

Results and Discussion

To test hypotheses 1-2(a, b), we conducted a linear regression analysis to test the correlation between the variable considered. We separated the control variables into two blocks to get a more precise model, therefore in the first block, we inserted demographical variables such as age and gender, while in the second one we added the Organizational constraints, the OCBI-Task, and Person.

PSRB significantly predicted moral identity scores, $b = -0,33$, $t(169) = -4.16$, $p < 0.01$. PSRB also explained a significant negative variance in moral identity $R^2 = 0.14$, $F(6,169) = 4.53$, $p < 0.01$. The results show that, engaging in PSRB, is negatively related to moral identity, therefore the more central the morality in the way the participant defines themselves, the less they are likely to act against the rules.

PSRB predicted moral disengagement scores, $b = 0.31$, $t(169) = 4.58$, $p < 0.001$, explaining a significant correlation $R^2 = 0.20$, $F(6, 169) = 7.15$, $p < 0.001$. The regression analysis confirmed, therefore, hypothesis 1b demonstrating that PSRB is a significant predictor of morally disengagement.

While testing the former hypothesis, a strong negative correlation was also found between moral disengagement and OCBI in the task-focused variable; indeed, the more morally disengaged they are, the less they help their coworkers. These results show that engaging in

PSRB can hurt our moral scheme, meaning that the more central the morality in the way the participant define themselves, the less they are likely to act against the rules.

On the other side, if morality plays an important role, people are more willing to engage in prosocial interpersonal organizational behaviors, helping, for instance, the coworkers in performing some tasks.

No significant correlations were found between personal effectiveness and PSRB $b = -12$, $t(6,169) = -1.73$, $p < 0.001$ as well as between emotional exhaustion and PSRB $b = -.05$, $t(6,169) = -.50$, $p < 0.001$. We had, then, to reject Hypothesis 2a and 2b.

However, a significant and strong relationship was found between emotional exhaustion and constraints to helping $b = 0.41$, $t(6,169) = < 0.001$, $p < 0.001$. Constraints to helping, therefore, seem to be a strong predictor of emotional exhaustion. When an organization has several limitations or obstacles to the normal fulfillment of the daily work tasks, then the employee is more likely to feel more exhausted and burnout.

Table 6. Regression results with moral disengagement and moral identity as dependent variables

	Moral Disengagement				Moral identity			
	Unstandardized		95.0% Confidence		Unstandardized		95.0% Confidence	
	B	Std. Error	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	B	Std. Error	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
(Constant)	2,34	0,45	1,46	3,23	3,49	0,53	2,44	4,53
T1Age	0,01	0,01	-0,01	0,03	0,00	0,01	-0,02	0,02
T1Gender	-0,12	0,09	-0,30	0,06	-0,05	0,11	-0,27	0,16
T2 Prosocial Rule-breaking	0,31	0,07	0,18	0,44	-0,33	0,08	-0,49	-0,18
T2 Constraints to helping	0,05	0,07	-0,08	0,19	0,02	0,08	-0,14	0,18
T2 OCBI - Person	-0,01	0,09	-0,18	0,17	0,04	0,11	-0,17	0,25
T2 OCBI - Task	-0,28	0,08	-0,43	-0,13	0,29	0,09	0,11	0,47

Note: Results in bold are significant predictors as 95% CI do not contain 0

Table 7. Regression table of Personal Effectiveness and Emotional Exhaustion

	Personal Effectiveness					Emotional Exhaustion						
	Unstandar		95.0%			Unstandar		95.0%				
	B	Std. Error	Lower Bound	Upper Bound		B	Std. Error	Lower Bound	Upper Bound			
(Constant)	3,601	0,471	2,672	4,530					2,665	0,694	1,295	4,035
T1Age	0,010	0,011	-0,011	0,032					-0,010	0,016	-0,042	0,022
T1Gender	-0,078	0,097	-0,270	0,114					0,123	0,143	-0,160	0,405
T2 Prosocial Rule- breaking	-0,124	0,071	-0,264	0,017					-0,053	0,105	-0,260	0,154
T2 Constraint s to helping	-0,114	0,073	-0,258	0,029					0,414	0,107	0,203	0,625
T2 OCBI - Person	-0,149	0,094	-0,334	0,036					-0,110	0,138	-0,383	0,164
T2 OCBI - Task	0,333	0,082	0,171	0,495					-0,117	0,121	-0,356	0,122

Note: Results in bold are significant predictors as 95% CI do not contain 0

Mediation analysis. To test whether moral identity and moral disengagement would mediate the relationship between PSRB-Personal effectiveness and PSRB-Emotional exhaustion, we conducted a mediational analysis.

We first included the three different dimensions of PSRB: willingness to help the organization, coworkers, and the customers. Consistent with hypothesis 3a, the mediation relationship between PSRB and personal effectiveness through moral identity is negative and significant -0.1592 , $SE=0.046$, $p<0.05$, 95% CI $[-0.2618, -0.0804]$. In contrast, the indirect effect for moral disengagement was not significant (0.030 , $SE=0.032$, $p=0.00$, 95% CI $[-0.026, 0.11]$)

The indirect effect of moral identity as well as moral disengagement on the relationship between PSRB and emotional exhaustion is not significant at all at -0.139 , $SE = 0.11$, $p = 0.22$, 95% CI $[-0.36, 0.08]$.

We, the, carried out additional analysis to test the significance of the relationship of every single dimension of PSRB but only the dimension of the organization showed some significance in the moral identity -0.13 , $SE = 0.04$, $p < 0.05$, 95% CI $[-0.26, -0.08]$. the other dimensions did not report any significant relation between the variables analyzed.

Discussion. Overall, the research provides considerable support for Hypotheses 1a and 1b; the linear regression analysis showed, indeed, a clear and positive relationship between PSRB and moral disengagement. When the employee is morally disengaged, he/she is more willing to act against the rules if it is needed in order to help a coworker or either provide a better service to the customer or do the good of the company and its stakeholders.

At the same time, an important contribution of the current study is the negative and strong relationship that we found between PSRB and Moral Identity. The study demonstrated that the more central and important is the morality within an employee's mindset, the less is going to act against the rules. Having a strong morality, indeed, impedes a person to act immorally.

No strong relations, however, were found between prosocial rule breaking and the dimensions of burnout, meaning that breaking the organizational rule is not strongly correlated to an increase in emotional exhaustion or a decrease in personal effectiveness.

Another important contribution of the present study concerns the significant relationship found between emotional exhaustion and constraint to helping. The fact that constraints to helping are a strong predictor indicates how crucial it is to rethink the rules and the managerial structure of the organizations.

Many companies are, still, based on obsolete and antiquated corporate rules and policies and fail to adapt to the needs of employees, who are the main resource for a company. If we do not want to fall back into the stereotype that "rules are made to be broken" then we should rethink them and adapt them to our times and needs.

Our research makes a valid contribution to the growing literature on the effect of PSRB; the mediation analysis showed that instead, the effect of PSRB on personal effectiveness is through moral identity; a strong and negative indirect effect was found. As we have just seen, the centrality of our schemas plays an important role in whether we decide to engage or not in deviant actions and this decision influences the efficacy in performing our work tasks.

Therefore, engaging in deviant and immoral actions and breaking the organizational rules has an effect on the personal effectiveness only when our moral identity is very high, meaning that the more we care about morality the more we decrease our efficacy at work when we act against the organizational rules.

While carrying out the mediation analysis, an interesting finding was that not all the three dimensions of PSRB are significant in causing burnout, but only the organizational one.

This outcome can be explained by the idea that when the employee breaks the rules to increase the benefit of the organization as a whole, the chance of causing burnout is bigger compared to helping the coworker or the customers.

Strengths, Limitations, and Future Research

The current research should be considered in light of its strengths and limitations. A strength of the present study is the consistency of the main finding that prosocial rule breaking is facilitated by moral disengagement and it's, instead, contrasted by moral identity.

While a limitation of our study is the small sample analyzed, however it allowed for direct replications anyway because the sample is representative of the study population. Moreover,

most studies focus on the antecedents of prosocial rule-breaking, while we investigated the possible outcomes and the relationships between them.

Another limitation is the time frame, the present study considers the short-term, the survey, but it would be more reliable if the research could have considered a longer-term perspective.

Moreover, the analysis did not make a distinction between corporate and individual factors that lead to immoral actions. However, this distinction seems to be important in the prediction of PSRB.

Having said that, future research could test a bigger sample and examine the effect of PSRB in the longer term. Further, scholars could also focus on the impact of PSRB at the team level, versus at the individual level, as in the present research.

Finally, future research needs to further investigate the antecedents of PSRB and the different outcomes that the organizational factors, as well as the individual ones, can cause.

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Appendix

Table 1. Correlation, Mean and Standard Deviation and Reliability Analysis

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1.Age	31,31	4,301	1												
2.Gender ^a	1,62	0,486	-0,114	1											
3.Constraints to helping	2,5136	0,67242	-0,045	-0,054	1	(0,879)									
4.OCBI - Person	3,2535	0,64614	0,108	-0,029	0,128	1	(0,845)								
5.OCBI - Task	3,0380	0,77832	0,054	0,080	0,094	.640**	1	(0,901)							
6.Prosocial Rule-breaking	2,0688	0,74529	0,117	-0,124	.311**	.240**	.379**	1	(0,858)						
7.Moral Credit	3,4933	0,77802	0,017	0,029	0,053	.470**	.341**	0,023	1	(0,945)					
8.Moral Identity	3,9244	0,75284	-0,082	0,093	-0,049	.258**	.202**	-.177*	.418**	1	(0,93)				
9.Moral Disengagement	2,4299	0,60135	.157*	-.280**	.231**	0,054	-0,077	.404**	-0,051	-.312**	1	(0,931)			
10. Emotional Exhaustion	2,8789	0,87229	-0,042	0,000	.365**	-0,076	-0,097	0,011	-0,045	-0,096	.258**	1	(0,842)		
11. Personal Effectiveness	3,8241	0,66474	0,056	-0,040	0,037	.370**	.289**	-0,088	.438**	.435**	-0,119	-0,058	1	(0,913)	
12. Cynicism	2,6967	0,81863	-0,079	0,075	.351**	-0,112	-0,116	-0,025	-0,134	-0,082	.147*	.657**	-.186*	1	(0,864)

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (-2 tailed)
 * . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (-2 tailed)
 Notes: N= 180. Scale reliabilities (Cronbach alphas) in parentheses.
^a Male=0, Female=1

Table 2. Anova Analysis of Moral Identity

ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	0,089	2	0,044	0,084	.919 ^b
	Residual	91,190	173	0,527		
	Total	91,279	175			
2	Regression	12,667	6	2,111	4,539	<.001 ^c
	Residual	78,612	169	0,465		
	Total	91,279	175			

a. Dependent Variable: T3 Moral Identity

b. Predictors: (Constant), T1Gender, T1 Age

c. Predictors: (Constant), T1Gender, T1Age, T2 Constraints to helping, T2 OCBI - Task, T2

Table 3. Anova analysis of Moral Disengagement

ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2,780	2	1,390	3,529	.031 ^b
	Residual	68,135	173	0,394		
	Total	70,914	175			
2	Regression	14,358	6	2,393	7,151	<.001 ^c
	Residual	56,556	169	0,335		
	Total	70,914	175			

a. Dependent Variable: T3 Moral Disengagement

b. Predictors: (Constant), T1Gender, T1 Age

c. Predictors: (Constant), T1Gender, T1Age, T2 Constraints to helping, T2 OCBI - Task, T2

Table 4. Anova analysis of Personal Effectiveness

ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	0,365	2	0,182	0,448	.640 ^b
	Residual	70,463	173	0,407		
	Total	70,828	175			
2	Regression	8,417	6	1,403	3,799	.001 ^c
	Residual	62,410	169	0,369		
	Total	70,828	175			

a. Dependent Variable: T3 Maslach Burnout - Personal Effectiveness

b. Predictors: (Constant), T1Gender, T1 Age

c. Predictors: (Constant), T1Gender, T1Age, T2 Constraints to helping, T2 OCBI - Task, T2

Table 5. Anova analysis of Emotional Exhaustion

ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1,399	2	0,700	0,802	.450 ^b
	Residual	150,850	173	0,872		
	Total	152,249	175			
2	Regression	16,604	6	2,767	3,448	.003 ^c
	Residual	135,645	169	0,803		
	Total	152,249	175			

a. Dependent Variable: T3 Maslach Burnout - Emotional Exhaustion

b. Predictors: (Constant), T1Gender, T1 Age

c. Predictors: (Constant), T1Gender, T1Age, T2 Constraints to helping, T2 OCBI - Task, T2

Table 6. Regression results with moral disengagement and moral identity as dependent variables

	Moral Disengagement				Moral identity			
	Unstandardized		95.0% Confidence		Unstandardized		95.0% Confidence	
	B	Std. Error	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	B	Std. Error	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
(Constant)	2,34	0,45	1,46	3,23	3,49	0,53	2,44	4,53
T1Age	0,01	0,01	-0,01	0,03	0,00	0,01	-0,02	0,02
T1Gender	-0,12	0,09	-0,30	0,06	-0,05	0,11	-0,27	0,16
T2 Prosocial Rule-breaking	0,31	0,07	0,18	0,44	-0,33	0,08	-0,49	-0,18
T2 Constraints to helping	0,05	0,07	-0,08	0,19	0,02	0,08	-0,14	0,18
T2 OCBI - Person	-0,01	0,09	-0,18	0,17	0,04	0,11	-0,17	0,25
T2 OCBI - Task	-0,28	0,08	-0,43	-0,13	0,29	0,09	0,11	0,47

Note: Results in bold are significant predictors as 95% CI do not contain 0

Table 7. Regression table of Personal Effectiveness and Emotional Exhaustion

	Personal Effectiveness					Emotional Exhaustion						
	Unstandar		95.0%			Unstandar		95.0%				
	B	Std. Error	Lower Bound	Upper Bound		B	Std. Error	Lower Bound	Upper Bound			
(Constant)	3,601	0,471	2,672	4,530					2,665	0,694	1,295	4,035
T1Age	0,010	0,011	-0,011	0,032					-0,010	0,016	-0,042	0,022
T1Gender	-0,078	0,097	-0,270	0,114					0,123	0,143	-0,160	0,405
T2 Prosocial Rule- breaking	-0,124	0,071	-0,264	0,017					-0,053	0,105	-0,260	0,154
T2 Constraint s to helping	-0,114	0,073	-0,258	0,029					0,414	0,107	0,203	0,625
T2 OCBI - Person	-0,149	0,094	-0,334	0,036					-0,110	0,138	-0,383	0,164
T2 OCBI - Task	0,333	0,082	0,171	0,495					-0,117	0,121	-0,356	0,122

Note: Results in bold are significant predictors as 95% CI do not contain 0