"RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MORAL DISENGAGEMENT AND WORKPLACE DEVIANCE AMONG LAW ENFORCEMENT PERSONNEL: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF SELF-JUSTIFICATION"

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Abstract

This study explored the relationship between moral disengagement and workplace deviance among law enforcement personnel in Pakistan, focusing on the mediating role of self-justification. A quantitative, correlational research design was used, and data were collected from 350 police officers in Lahore and Faisalabad through purposive sampling. Standardized questionnaires were used to measure moral disengagement, self-justification, and workplace deviance. Statistical analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and hierarchical regression. The findings revealed that moral disengagement positively predicted workplace deviance and that self-justification partially mediated this relationship. These results highlight the significant role of internal cognitive processes in contributing to unethical behavior among police officers. The study recommends implementing ethical training programs, psychological support services, and stronger accountability mechanisms within law enforcement institutions. Limitations include the use of self-reported data, non-random sampling, and a restricted geographical scope. Future research should examine additional psychological and organizational factors influencing workplace deviance in law enforcement settings.

Keywords: moral disengagement, self-justification, workplace deviance, police officers, law enforcement, mediation, Pakistan

Introduction

Law enforcement institutions are foundational pillars of societal governance, responsible for maintaining order, enforcing the law, and protecting the rights of citizens. Officers are not only enforcers of legal codes but also representatives of state authority, tasked with making swift decisions in complex and often volatile environments.The decisions and actions of these persons can have a tremendous impact on people's lives, how they view the criminal justice system, and how real it is. As a result, law enforcement professionals are required to display unflinching honesty, responsibility, and commitment to both legal and moral norms. But because police work is so stressful, full of surprises, and full of pressure from the organisation, it can be hard to tell the difference between right and wrong. In these kinds of situations, officers may have to do things that go against their own moral values or the rules of behaviour they are supposed to follow.

In recent years, the number of documented examples of police misconduct around the world has gone up, which has made both academics and the general public more interested in figuring out what psychological and situational elements lead to bad behaviour at work in law enforcement situations. Not only are these behaviours wrong because they go against professional duty, but they also go against society's trust. Organisational culture, lack of

oversight, and outside pressures have all been named as possible causes. However, more and more people are realising how individual-level psychological mechanisms can lead to deviant behaviour. Specifically, ideas like as moral disengagement and self-justification have emerged as crucial in explaining why individuals in places of authority—who allegedly comprehend right from wrong—engage in wrongdoing while keeping a positive self-concept. These internal thought processes can easily override moral self-regulation, which means that people can act in ways that are not normal without feeling too bad about it.

It is the important job of law enforcement to uphold the law, keep people safe, and keep society in order. People who work in these organisations are expected to set the greatest standards for honesty, moral behaviour, and professionalism. But the stressful nature of police job, which includes dealing with trauma, being in high-stress situations, and having a lot of power to make decisions, may occasionally lead to unethical behaviour and unethical behaviour at work. There have been more and more reports of misbehaviour, from little offences to major ones. This has raised worries about the psychological factors that make police officers behave this way.

Workplace deviance is when people choose to act in ways that go against the rules of the organisation and put the health and safety of the organisation or its members at risk. When it comes to law enforcement, deviant behaviours can include being racist, misusing power, using too much force, being corrupt, and other sorts of crime. These actions hurt the legitimacy of law enforcement agencies and the trust of the public, and they may also make problems in the justice system worse. A lot of research has been done on moral disengagement in relation to bad behaviour. Bandura (1990) was the first to introduce the phrase "moral disengagement" to describe a set of mental processes that allow people to justify immoral action. These processes help people avoid punishing themselves and make them feel less guilty or ashamed. These methods work by using moral justification, euphemism branding, favourable comparison, shifting and spreading responsibility, distorting consequences, dehumanising, and blaming others (Yasser & Asghar 2024). People can use these tricks to make bad behaviour seem appropriate or even necessary, especially when morals aren't clear.

Recent research has demonstrated that moral disengagement is a major reason why people act badly at work. Moore et al. (2022) completed a meta-analysis that found that moral disengagement is associated to greater misconduct at work and more people wanting to leave their jobs, but it is also linked to less organizational citizenship behaviors and worse job performance. The study by Asghar (2025) also indicated that moral disengagement is caused by people who are not very honest, are not very guilty, and have a lot of narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy. Also, things like harsh monitoring and the idea of organizational politics were found to greatly foster moral disengagement, whereas things like ethical leadership and justice in the workplace were found to discourage it.In positions with a lot of responsibility, like law enforcement, moral disengagement can be very troubling. Police officers often have to make quick decisions in situations where the right thing to do is not clear. The outcomes of those decisions can be highly important. Officers who have to deal with these kinds of circumstances a lot may become less sensitive to them, less inclined to follow moral standards, and more likely to consider moral disengagement as a technique to deal with stress or even as a normal behavior (Asghar & Nabeel 2025). A research by Thapar and Brar (2022) looked at the differences between police officers and industrial managers. They found that police officers were less ethically engaged, especially when it came to spreading blame, blaming others, and explaining their acts.

There is a lot of proof that moral disengagement causes negative behavior, but it's crucial to know how this works. In this instance, the idea of self-justification becomes a very crucial

mediator. People use self-justification to explain or defend their actions to themselves, which helps them preserve a good image of themselves even when they do something wrong. People use this to protect themselves by modifying how they think about what they do so that it fits with their moral self-image.

Moral disengagement and self-justification are two ideas that go hand in hand. In both cases, you have to defend and change how you think about terrible behavior, but they do so in different ways. Moral disengagement stops moral self-regulation for a short time by using a wider variety of cognitive processes. Self-justification, on the other hand, is often more personal and uses internal conversations and stories that link behavior to personal beliefs. In law enforcement, self-justification could entail believing that adopting violent measures is necessary to keep the peace, that it's okay to cut shortcuts in processes if they lead to excellent outcomes, or that profiling people based on their color or ethnicity is a good way to stop crime.These factors make the person feel less guilty or humiliated, which makes them more likely to resume doing bad things. Self-justification could be a crucial link between not caring about morals and acting badly at work. People who are likely to stop following their values may be more likely to think in ways that justify what they do, which makes it easier for them to do things that go against their beliefs. By understanding this mediating link, we can learn more about the mental processes that make police officers act unethically and uncover important spots where we can make a difference through ethical training and changing the way the organization works.

Because of the nature of the job and the way the police work, the profession is especially open to moral disengagement and self-justification. In organizations with a hierarchy, officers usually have to obey directions, be loyal, and work together. This might make it hard to be honest and accountable. When this happens, moral disengagement can develop on a group level, where whole groups or units agree on why it's okay to do bad things. This starts a cycle where poor behavior is okay, and moral disengagement and self-justification become part of the organization's culture. We need more than just punishment to deal with these trends. We need to properly understand the mental and cultural causes of moral decay.

Adding moral disengagement and self-justification to the study of workplace deviance makes sense in the context of social-cognitive theory. Bandura's theory suggests that moral agency isn't fixed; it can change depending on things like the situation, society, and the person. The interaction between moral disengagement and self-justification exemplifies how internal cognitive mechanisms, shaped by external conditions, can facilitate or inhibit ethical behavior. Researchers can go beyond simple cause-and-effect models and find the complicated relationship between individual thinking and the organisational context that leads to deviance by looking at these dimensions together. This study also has important real-world effects. Legal knowledge, tactical skills, and following procedures are frequently the main things that law enforcement training programs teach. These are important, but they might not be enough to cover the mental and emotional aspects of making ethical decisions. By illuminating the mediating role of self-justification in the relationship between moral disengagement and workplace deviance, this research can inform the development of targeted interventions aimed at enhancing moral awareness, promoting accountability, and fostering ethical resilience. Some examples of these kinds of interventions are scenario-based ethical training, reflective practices, and changes to the way the organisation works that make it easier for people to talk about moral issues and how to make decisions.

Also, legislators and organisational leaders who want to create a culture of honesty in law enforcement organisations need to grasp these psychological processes. Policies that only punish bad behaviour without looking at why it happens are unlikely to bring about

sustainable change. On the other hand, programs that promote moral involvement, educate people to think critically about themselves, and break up stories that explain bad behaviour can make it such that people not only expect ethical behaviour but also make it a part of who they are. In the end, creating a culture like this can build public trust, lower crime rates, and make law enforcement agencies more legitimate.

With these things in mind, this study aims to look into the link between moral disengagement and deviant behaviour at work among law enforcement officers, with an emphasis on how self-justification plays a role. The main goal is to find out how moral disengagement affects deviant behaviour and if self-justification processes play a big role in this relationship. The study adds to the expanding corpus of research on ethical behaviour in law enforcement, gives a more nuanced view of the psychological processes at work, and gives useful ideas for change and intervention.

Literature Review

Law enforcement work is often very difficult and complicated, which can put officers in circumstances where it is hard to tell what is right and wrong. Because of this, it is becoming more and more vital to understand the psychological factors that lead to unethical behaviour in police organisations. More and more research indicates to cognitive issues, especially moral disengagement, workplace deviance, and self-justification, as being very important in how officers operate. Each of these variables contributes to our understanding of how individuals who are expected to uphold the law may, under certain conditions, violate it. The literature tells a convincing story: moral disengagement is the mental framework that makes workplace deviance possible, and self-justification is the mental bridge that makes deviant activities seem reasonable. This review brings together the most recent research on these concepts, looks at how they are related to each other, and points out areas where the current study wants to fill in the gaps.

Moral Disengagement

Bandura (1990) originally came up with the idea of moral disengagement as a social-cognitive process to explain how people stop regulating their own morals, which lets them do bad things without feeling bad about it. Bandura found eight ways that people can morally detach, such as by justifying their actions, using euphemisms, making comparisons that are good for them, shifting and spreading responsibility, distorting the consequences, dehumanising others, and blaming others. These mechanisms work to change the way people think about immoral behaviour so that it seems less harmful or even morally acceptable, which means that people don't have to punish themselves. These mechanisms can be especially important in the context of law enforcement. Officers might state that employing too much force is essential to keep the peace, or they might downplay the repercussions of their actions because they have backing from their organisation or peers (Fida et al., 2024). Moore et al. (2022) observed that people who are morally disengaged are more prone to conduct a number of harmful behaviors at work. This reveals that being morally disengaged is a substantial indication of bad behavior. Thapar and Brar (2022) also found that police officers were more likely to be morally disengaged than other professionals, especially when it came to blaming others and sharing culpability. This illustrates how vital it is for police.

Workplace Deviance

Robinson and Bennett (1995) say that workplace deviance is behavior that breaks the rules of an organization and puts the health and safety of its members or the organization itself at risk. There are two main types of deviance: organizational deviance, which includes stealing, sabotaging, and squandering resources, and interpersonal deviance, which includes harassment and verbal abuse. Deviance in policing might be clear, like being corrupt or using too much force, or it can be less clear, like lying on reports or treating minority groups

unfairly. This kind of behavior has major consequences, such as issues within the organization, loss of public trust, and damage to its reputation (Gill et al., 2023). Researchers have found that workplace deviance isn't just driven by flaws with the system or outside influences; it's also greatly affected by how people think and feel inside (Wang et al., 2022). For example, police officers who act in a deviant fashion usually do so after coming up with explanations that make them feel better about what they did. Fatima and Naqvi (2023) also stress that a person's personality and moral framework are very important in figuring out how likely they are to act inappropriately at work. Moral disengagement is one of the most important factors.

Self-Justification

Self-justification is a psychological defence mechanism that helps people explain their actions in a way that keeps their self-image positive. Festinger's (1957) theory of cognitive dissonance helped us comprehend self-justification as a way to deal with the discomfort that comes from having ideas and actions that don't match up. Tsang (2002) went further and said that self-justification lets people see their bad behaviour as morally acceptable, which helps them keep their sense of self. When it comes to law enforcement, self-justification may show itself as the idea that breaking the rules is required to keep justice or protect other officers. These reasons help to calm moral disagreements and make transgression easier to accept. It's important to note that self-justification is not just a result of bad behaviour; it also helps people do bad things by making them fit with their own or their organization's beliefs. This is why it is so important to understand how moral disengagement leads to action. Studies show that moral disengagement mechanisms often cause people to justify their actions, which in turn leads to more deviant behaviour at work (Fida et al., 2024; Fatima & Naqvi, 2023).

Moral Disengagement and Workplace Deviance

Bandura's (1991) social cognitive theory gives rise to the idea of moral disengagement, which explains how people can ignore moral standards and act unethically without feeling guilty. This cognitive process permits individuals to view unethical behavior as acceptable, limiting personal accountability and emotional discomfort (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 1996). There are several ways to morally disconnect, such as using euphemisms, shifting blame, spreading blame, changing the consequences, and dehumanising others (Moore, Detert, Treviño, Baker, & Mayer, 2012). These processes work as excuses that make people feel less guilty and make it easier for them to do bad things.

Studies in the real world show that there is always a positive link between moral disengagement and deviant behaviour at work. Robinson and Bennett (1995) describe workplace deviance as voluntary behaviour that goes against the rules of the organisation and puts the health and safety of the organisation or its members at risk. There are several types of workplace deviance, such as production deviance, property deviance, political deviance, and personal aggressiveness. People who score high on tests of moral disengagement are more likely to do things at work that are bad for them (Barsky, 2011; Christian & Ellis, 2011). In jobs with a lot of stress, like law enforcement, where officers often have to make tough decisions and deal with ethically grey circumstances, the risk of moral disengagement may be higher. Officers may mentally justify actions that go against professional norms because of the use of force, the freedom to make arrest choices, and the moral temptations that come with having power and authority (Harris, 2014). For example, police officers might use the phrase "maintaining control" to describe using too much force, which would make ethical problems go away. These kinds of excuses can create a culture where bad behaviour is accepted and even encouraged.

Also, studies in police departments show that moral disengagement is greatly affected by the culture of the organisation, the norms of the group, and the pressures of the role (Ivkovic &

Shelley, 2005).   Officers who work in departments where ethical standards are weak or not always enforced may be more likely to lose their moral compass, which leads to bad behaviour.   So, the study supports the assumption that there is a direct, positive correlation between moral disengagement and bad behaviour at work, especially in law enforcement.

Self-Justification and Moral Behavior

Self-justification refers to the internal process through which individuals rationalize their behavior to maintain a positive self-concept (Schlenker, 1997). Unlike moral disengagement, which is a broader cognitive restructuring of moral standards, self-justification is a motivational mechanism aimed at reducing cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957). When individuals behave in ways that contradict their values or societal norms, they may experience discomfort, which they resolve through justifications that preserve their self-image (Tsang, 2002). Research shows that self-justification plays a crucial role in ethical decision-making and moral behavior. For example, Mazar, Amir, and Ariely (2008) demonstrated that people engage in dishonesty to the extent that they can justify their actions to themselves. Similarly, Tenbrunsel and Messick (2004) found that ethical fading—where the ethical aspects of a decision are overlooked—often arises from self-justification. Individuals convince themselves that their actions are not unethical, enabling them to act dishonestly while perceiving themselves as moral.

In organizational settings, self-justification allows employees to violate norms without damaging their self-concept. This is particularly relevant in occupations with high public scrutiny, such as law enforcement. Officers may justify unethical behavior by emphasizing their difficult work conditions, claiming necessity, or minimizing the impact of their actions. These justifications may not only protect self-esteem but also reinforce deviant patterns, creating a cycle where misconduct is both enacted and rationalized. Several studies suggest that self-justification is associated with workplace deviance. For instance, Aquino, Tripp, and Bies (2006) found that employees who perceive themselves as victims of injustice are more likely to justify and engage in retaliatory behavior. Similarly, Shu, Gino, and Bazerman (2011) found that moral reminders and signature honesty pledges reduce unethical behavior by interrupting self-justification mechanisms. These findings highlight self-justification as a critical link between ethical cognition and behavior.

Mediating Role of Self-Justification between Moral Disengagement and Workplace Deviance

The potential mediating role of self-justification in the relationship between moral disengagement and workplace deviance has been theorized but remains underexplored in empirical literature. However, theoretical models and related research provide strong support for this relationship. According to Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory, cognitive processes such as moral disengagement interact with motivational processes like self-justification to influence behavior. While moral disengagement allows individuals to reinterpret moral norms and lower ethical standards, self-justification provides the internal motivation to act in alignment with these altered beliefs without damaging the self. This two-step process can explain how morally disengaged cognitions are translated into actual deviant behavior. In this framework, moral disengagement serves as the antecedent that facilitates unethical behavior by cognitively reframing it, while self-justification acts as a psychological mechanism that enables individuals to commit the behavior without self-reproach. For example, a law enforcement officer may morally disengage by perceiving the use of force as necessary or justified. However, it is through self-justification—such as telling themselves they were "just doing their job" or that "the suspect deserved it"—that the officer can act on these beliefs and still view themselves positively.

Studies in behavioral ethics support this mediational model. Tsang (2002) argued that self-justification is often the critical step between unethical cognition and unethical action. Similarly, Detert, Treviño, and Sweitzer (2008) suggested that organizational actors engage in rationalizations that facilitate unethical decisions, often driven by internal justifications. Moreover, research on ethical fading (Tenbrunsel & Messick, 2004) implies that moral disengagement leads to the erosion of ethical awareness, which then allows self-justification to take over and justify deviance. When decisions have to be made quickly and under a lot of pressure with little supervision, like in high-stakes jobs like policing, the relationship between moral disengagement and self-justification becomes even more important. Police personnel generally work under a lot of stress, unclear rules, and a strong sense of allegiance to their own group, all of which can make them less moral. In these situations, self-justification is a way to deal with moral failures and yet feel like a professional.

Additionally, police culture, which emphasizes solidarity, loyalty, and authority, may implicitly encourage moral disengagement and self-justification. Officers who witness unethical behavior may remain silent (a phenomenon known as the "blue wall of silence"), further normalizing deviance. Over time, such patterns may be internalized, making self-justification an automatic response to morally questionable actions. Therefore, the literature supports the hypothesis that self-justification mediates the relationship between moral disengagement and workplace deviance. While moral disengagement alters how individuals perceive unethical behavior, self-justification enables them to act on these altered perceptions without internal conflict. This mediating relationship is particularly relevant in law enforcement settings, where ethical standards are high, but situational pressures often encourage moral compromises.

Methodology

This study employed a quantitative, correlational research design to examine the relationship between moral disengagement and workplace deviance, with a particular focus on the mediating role of self-justification among law enforcement personnel. The research was conducted in two major cities of Pakistan—Lahore and Faisalabad. The target population included sworn police officers with a minimum of one year of professional experience. Using purposive sampling, a total of 350 participants were recruited from various police departments, training centers, and administrative offices. Questionnaires were distributed and collected in person with the cooperation of departmental contacts. All participants were briefed about the purpose of the study, and ethical considerations such as informed consent, anonymity, and confidentiality were strictly maintained.

To measure the study variables, standardized and validated instruments were used. Moral disengagement was assessed using the Moral Disengagement Scale developed by Bandura et al. (1996), self-justification was measured through an adapted version of the Self-Justification Scale by Mazar et al. (2008), and workplace deviance was evaluated using the Workplace Deviance Scale by Robinson and Bennett (1995). Each scale used a five-point Likert format ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." Data were analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). Descriptive statistics were calculated to describe demographic and variable distributions. The reliability of the instruments was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha. Pearson correlation was employed to assess the relationships among variables, and hierarchical regression analysis following Baron and Kenny's (1986) procedure was used to test the mediating effect of self-justification. A significance threshold of $p < 0.05$ was applied throughout the analysis.

Results

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics and Reliability Coefficients

Variable	Mean (M)	Std. Deviation (SD)	Cronbach's Alpha (α)
Moral Disengagement	3.45	0.67	0.88
Self-Justification	3.21	0.59	0.85
Workplace Deviance	3.09	0.64	0.87

The descriptive statistics show that the mean scores of all three variables hover around the midpoint of the 5-point Likert scale, indicating moderate levels of moral disengagement, self-justification, and workplace deviance among police officers. The reliability coefficients (Cronbach's α) for all scales are above 0.80, suggesting high internal consistency.

Table 2: Pearson Correlation Matrix

Variable	1	2	3
1. Moral Disengagement	—		
2. Self-Justification	.58**	—	
3. Workplace Deviance	.62**	.54**	—

Note: p < 0.01

There are statistically significant and positive correlations between all three variables. Moral disengagement is strongly correlated with both self-justification and workplace deviance, supporting the theoretical assumption that individuals who morally disengage are more likely to justify unethical behavior and engage in deviant acts at work.

Table 3: Hierarchical Regression Analysis

Model	Predictor	β	R²	ΔR²	Sig. (p)
Model 1	Moral Disengagement	.62	.39	—	<.001
Model 2	Self-Justification	.54	.29	—	<.001
Model 3 (Mediation)	Moral Disengagement	.42			<.001
	Self-Justification	.36	.45	.06	<.001

- **Model 1** shows that moral disengagement significantly predicts workplace deviance, explaining 39% of the variance.
- **Model 2** shows that self-justification also significantly predicts workplace deviance, accounting for 29% of the variance.
- **Model 3** includes both predictors and shows that the effect of moral disengagement on workplace deviance decreases (from β = .62 to β = .42) when self-justification is added, suggesting a partial mediation effect.

Discussion

The present study explored the relationship between moral disengagement and workplace deviance, with a specific focus on the mediating role of self-justification among police officers in Lahore and Faisalabad, Pakistan. The findings offer valuable insights into how cognitive mechanisms contribute to unethical behavior within law enforcement settings.

Consistent with previous research, moral disengagement was found to be a significant positive predictor of workplace deviance. This suggests that police officers who employ moral disengagement strategies—such as displacing responsibility, minimizing the consequences of their actions, or dehumanizing others—are more likely to engage in deviant behaviors at work. These findings align with Bandura's (1996) social cognitive theory, which posits that moral disengagement weakens self-regulatory processes, thereby facilitating unethical conduct.

The study also found a strong positive association between moral disengagement and self-justification. Officers who rationalized their behavior through self-justifying cognitions were more likely to also demonstrate higher levels of moral disengagement. This relationship is supported by Mazar et al. (2008), who argued that individuals often use self-justification to maintain a positive self-concept while engaging in unethical behavior.

Importantly, the mediation analysis revealed that self-justification partially mediates the relationship between moral disengagement and workplace deviance. This indicates that while moral disengagement directly influences deviant behavior, a portion of this effect occurs through self-justification. In practical terms, officers who disengage morally may also justify their actions to themselves, which in turn increases the likelihood of deviance. This finding provides empirical support for the integration of self-justification into theoretical models of moral disengagement and unethical behavior.

These results have significant implications for police departments and policy-makers. Addressing both moral disengagement and self-justification through ethics training, psychological support, and institutional accountability mechanisms could reduce the incidence of workplace deviance in law enforcement.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several practical and academic recommendations can be made: Police departments should implement targeted ethics and integrity training that specifically addresses moral disengagement and self-justification. These programs should teach officers to recognize and challenge cognitive distortions that enable unethical behavior. Introduce counseling and psychological support services within law enforcement institutions to help officers manage occupational stress and moral dilemmas, which may reduce their tendency to justify deviant behavior. Establish strong supervisory and accountability mechanisms to minimize opportunities for moral disengagement. Clear codes of conduct and prompt disciplinary actions can discourage officers from rationalizing deviant acts. Create a culture of transparency by promoting safe and anonymous reporting channels for deviant or unethical behavior. This may reduce the normalization of misconduct within departments. Future studies should explore other psychological or contextual mediators (e.g., organizational justice, job satisfaction, burnout) to build a more comprehensive model of workplace deviance in law enforcement. Research in other regions and with more diverse populations is also recommended for broader generalizability.

Limitations

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged: The study employed a cross-sectional research design, which limits the ability to draw causal inferences. Longitudinal studies would be better suited to explore the directionality of the relationships. All data were collected through self-reported questionnaires, which may be subject to social desirability bias or inaccurate self-assessment, especially in a high-risk, authoritative profession like policing. The sample was restricted to two cities (Lahore and Faisalabad), which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other regions or rural law enforcement units in Pakistan. The use of purposive sampling may limit the representativeness of the sample. Officers who agreed to participate might differ systematically from those who did not, potentially introducing sampling bias. Cultural norms in Pakistan may influence how moral disengagement and self-justification are expressed. Therefore, findings may not be directly applicable to law enforcement agencies in different cultural or institutional contexts.

Conclusion

This study contributes to the growing body of literature on workplace deviance by identifying cognitive predictors of unethical behavior among police personnel. It demonstrates that moral disengagement is a significant predictor of workplace deviance and that this relationship is

partially mediated by self-justification. These findings underscore the importance of understanding internal cognitive processes that underlie deviant behavior in high-responsibility professions such as law enforcement.

Efforts to reduce workplace deviance should not only focus on external control mechanisms but also address the internal justifications and disengagement strategies that officers use to rationalize misconduct. Future research could expand this study by incorporating longitudinal data, cross-cultural comparisons, and interventions aimed at reducing moral disengagement and self-justification in policing environments.

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