

Dark Triad Personality Traits, Locus of Control and Workplace Deviance Among Lawyers: Mediating Role of Moral Disengagement

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Abstract

Background. This study is conducted to investigate the role of moral disengagement as mediator between dark triad personality traits (machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy) and workplace deviance among lawyers. Additionally, the mediating role of moral disengagement between internal locus of control which is dimension of LOC (locus of control) and external control locus (powerful others and chance locus of control dimensions) among lawyers were also explored.

Method. This is a cross-sectional research design, in which, purposive sampling technique is used. The sample comprised of 300 lawyers working under supervision of senior lawyers as their junior advocates/associates including genders, men and women, with age ranging from 22 to 46 years. The Measure of Short Dark Triad Scale by Jones & Paulhus, 2014, Propensity to Morally Disengage Scale by Moore et al., 2012, Multidimensional Locus of Control Scale by Levenson, 1981 and Workplace Deviance Scale modified for lawyers by Bennett & Robinson, 2000 were used.

Results. Results of this study showed that moral disengagement acted as mediator between dark triad personality traits and workplace deviance. As well as moral disengagement has showed mediation between subscales of dark triad personality traits which include machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy. Furthermore, results revealed that moral disengagement did not play role as a mediator in internal locus of control and workplace deviance, showing a negative relationship, but moral disengagement positively mediated the relationship between powerful others and chance locus of control which are external control locus dimensions.

Keywords. Dark triad personality traits, moral disengagement, workplace deviance, Locus of control, internal locus, chance, powerful others.



Introduction

Dark triad personality traits are machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy (Paulhus & Williams, 2002). Machiavellianism is defined by disregard for traditional morality and a conviction in the efficacy of deceitful tactics for pursuing power and material gain (Paulhus & Williams, 2002). A greater sense of grandiosity, entitlement, dominance, and superiority are characteristics of narcissism (Paulhus & Williams, 2002). Psychopathy is characterized by traits which include excessive impulsivity, as well as a lack of remorse and less concern for others (Paulhus & Williams, 2002).

Locus of control refers to individual's expectations that their behavior will be encouraged or impacted by their own choices or by aspects of their personality versus the degree to which individual's expect that the encouragement or a consequence is a component of chance, good fortune, or under the control of powerful figures which is simply unclear. Literature suggests two distinct loci of control: an internal locus of control based on person's talents, capabilities, and self-determination. However, the external locus of control involves work expectations and is dependent upon on other people's actions (Mulki et al., 2019). Both social and physical contexts are elements that affect the development of locus of control (Kusuma, 2018).

The moral disengagement theory explains why people act immorally yet don't seem to feel guilty or self-conscious about it (Moore et al., 2012). Workplace deviance is described as deliberate activities that go against important organizational standards that endanger the workplace, its members, or mental wellbeing of both. Interpersonal deviance and organizational deviance were identified as two distinct categories in the border term of workplace deviance defined by the authors. Organizational deviance are basically actions that are performed against the workplace itself, while interpersonal deviance refers to actions that are targeted against other members of the workplace, such as supervisors, coworkers, or subordinates (Bennett & Robinson, 2000).

Lawyers strive to act professionally and with integrity, which is why their clients regard them as their mentors and place their complete trust in them. Lawyers have to meet deadlines within the time constraints and have to face decision pressures, the intricacy of laws and juridical procedures, the desire of being notified on judicial decisions, legal principles, and have to face high level of client expectations and even hostility from other rival lawyers (Elwork, 2007).

By excelling in graduate school and in the legal profession, lawyers usually exhibit type A personality traits (target oriented, hardworking, calm, and highly achieving etc.) There are undoubtedly a lot of mental and social problems among lawyers created by blend of their personal traits and professional expectations (Azeem et al., 2020). However, there is a prevalent misconception in the society that all lawyers and law students have unethical and "dark" personalities and those possessing these dark triad personalities are more likely to be drawn to certain occupations than others (Dutton, 2012). Lawyers, media professionals, and business chief executive officers are the professions which attract dark triad leaders whereas care assistants, nurses, and various "health" therapies are the occupations that are least likely to draw such people with dark triad personality traits (Manne, 2013).

A trend in the six jobs (farmers, physicists, musicians, teachers, lawyers, and accountants) was analyzed in literature (Cramer et al., 2009). Results of this study revealed that lawyers showed higher prevalence of dark triad traits. The reason could be because participants' think of lawyers as using those same tactics as weapons in court, and the reason for these results could be because manipulation and deceit of machiavellianism is seen as advantageous for lawyers due to their professional demands. Participant might think that lawyers as narcissistic based on the image of an attorney delivering an ardent argument (Cramer et al., 2009). Literature evidence supports this assumption, portraying lawyers as narcissistic, psychopathic, and possessing machiavellian tendencies (Newton, 2015).

According to Elwork and Benjamin (1995), the confrontational entire judicial system in which lawyers practice leads to paranoia, which makes lawyers judge others intentions as suspicious. As long as a lawyer manages his defense in a moral and legal way, he is just carrying out his professional responsibility as an attorney. He may be deemed a lawyer engaging in misconduct if he uses his defense to circumvent the law and professional ethics (Shreya et al., 2021).

Three variables have been put out in the literature as potential determinants of lawyer misconduct or deviance. The first is a lack of practice time or, more particularly, a lack of experience in workplace. With experience, lawyers acquire stability, practical knowledge, and resources that aid in upholding ethical standards and also help in avoidance of severe punishments. Due to their lower professional revenues, poorer individual clients, lawyers with less time in practice face more pressures and have more opportunities for misconduct than lawyers with more work experience. The stratification hierarchy of the profession is another element that affects legal misconduct. The legal profession is extremely stratified even though it presents itself formally as a single profession with a shared set of credentials. There are several methods for identifying this hierarchy, but it is generally agreed that solo practitioners are at the bottom. Lower court settings are often associated with solo practitioners. According to research, lawyers at the bottom of the status hierarchy are suitably vulnerable to do violation of rules; they are under high pressure to break ethical standards. Macroeconomic changes in society as a whole are the third factor that affects lawyers' misconduct. Despite their position in the profession, lawyers are susceptible to changes in the economic cycle (Arnold & Hagan, 1992 as cited in Sklar, 2020).

The legal sector has long suffered with a negative reputation. Negative stereotypes are also associated with lawyer's personality as being manipulative, showing work deviance and exhibiting psychopathic, narcissistic tendencies because of their professional demands and the

nature of their job. The practice of law is a demanding one, and the pressure lawyers face from clients, fellow lawyers, and the judiciary contributes to more severe problems that leads them towards performing acts that are harmful to others in society. While the majority of lawyers perform their professional duties with morality and discretion, a small minority of them engage in dishonest or unethical behaviors that harms clients. Misbehavior on the part of lawyers happens in the context of their personal and professional life, but not in isolation (Rutten et al., 2017).

It means that all lawyers do not exhibit these symptoms and will not show deviance from norms or moral disengagement in their legal profession, only a few of them will engage themselves in such practices and that is because of their professional demands and to fulfill their needs.

Role of Moral Disengagement as a Mediating Factor between Dark Triad Personality Traits and Workplace Deviance

The "dark trio" of psychological traits, which include machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy, is subject of wealth of study. These attributes have frequently been put up as indicators of immoral actions, either together or separately (Jakobwitz & Egan, 2006). Numerous factors that are linked to the dark triad personalities and workplace deviance are highly correlated with moral disengagement. In one study, abusive supervision was shown to activate manipulation tendencies which results in demonstrating deviance at workplace (Greenbaum et al., 2017).

According to empirical research, normal personality traits, such as agreeableness, conscientiousness, and emotional stability, as well as the dark personality traits, such as narcissism, machiavellianism, and psychopathy are strongly correlated with one another and with moral disengagement (Caprara et al., 2013; Fossati et al., 2014). These findings of this study made clear that those who are ethically detached are more likely to act in atypical ways and are more prone to engage in destructive deviance.

Studies on machiavellianism have shown a positive relationship between various undesired aspects that are harmful for the workplace such as workplace deviance (Bennet & Robinson, 2000; Galperin, 2012). According to research, those with a strong machiavellian orientation are more prone to engage in detrimental deviant practices at work. However, prior research also suggested a positive correlation between deviance at workplace and moral disengagement (Christian & Ellis, 2014; Hystad et al., 2014; Samnani et al., 2014).

Previous studies have established a favorable relationship between moral disengagement and psychopathy (DeLisi et al., 2014). Furthermore, narcissists egoistic character drives them to be arrogant, callous, domineering and conforming to morally righteous social norms is not a concern for them. They are more likely to use technique of moral disengagement called as distortion of consequences to rationalize their own behaviors. Previous studies looked at how moral disengagement acted as mediator between individual-level predictors and detrimental behavioral consequences (Moore, 2015). Arvan found associations among the dark triad facets of personality and judgments of immorality (Arvan, 2013). Recent studies on the dark triad characteristics and the processes of moral disengagement showed that these three personality attributes that constitute up the dark triad are linked to antisocial conduct in a group of young people (Sijtsema et al., 2019).

Researches anticipate that moral disengagement will be the connecting element between dark triad personality traits and harmful deviant workplace actions based on the above mentioned justifications.

Role of Moral Disengagement as Mediating Factor between Internal and External Locus of Control and Workplace Deviance

Locus of control encompasses the two different types of individual mentalities pertaining to their vision towards the life & work environment. People with internal locus of control are inclined to assert that they have the power to influence all the events, consequences, and outcomes of day-to-day life. They hold that

only humans and conditions that are within human control can bring about changes. However, those with external locus of control assert that uncontrolled external factors like chance, destiny, social forces, and people with power have the potential to control one's life (Farhadi et al., 2015).

Moore and his colleagues (2015) discovered that moral disengagement was linked with dishonesty, skepticism, and is core of external locus of control they found connection between external locus of control and moral disengagement (Moore et al., 2015). Findings of the Ogunyemi (2013) study demonstrated that external locus of control might aggravate unethical conduct, despite the fact that internal locus of control is not a guarantee that people would act ethically (Ogunymemi, 2013). According to the findings of a different study, managers with an internal locus of control exhibit ethical behavior that is more consistent with their evaluations than managers with an external locus of control (Chiu's 2003). According to Karimi and Alipour (2011), people with internal locus of control consider themselves to be in charge of their own lives (Karimi & Alipour, 2011).

A study investigated the link between rule breaking, athletes locus of control, and moral disengagement as well as whether moral disengagement acts as a mediator in this relationship. The findings showed that frequent rule breaking and moral disengagement in sports were positively correlated with external locus of control (Tsai et al., 2014). Another research examined link among external locus of control and work productivity deviance among public sector employees. The study's findings revealed role of moral disengagement as a mediator in this interaction (Latipun, 2019).

In Pakistan, people with different kind of personalities perform their duties in the workplace at the same time. Personality characteristics have a level of impact on deviating actions of persons working in any workplace or part of any legal firm, with serious repercussions for the workplaces. People who feel they have complete internal control over life events are less likely to participate in workplace deviance and regard their workplace as

supportive of meeting their needs compared to people with an external locus of control.

The objective of this study was to investigate the potential mediating effects of moral disengagement between the dark triad personality characteristics and subscales of the dark personality (machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy) and workplace deviance among lawyers. Furthermore, role of moral disengagement as a mediator in both internal locus of control and external locus of control (powerful others and chance locus of control) dimensions has been explored in the present study.

Hypotheses

1. Moral disengagement play mediating role between dark triad personality traits (machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy) and workplace deviance among lawyers.
2. Moral disengagement play mediating role between internal locus of control, external locus of control (powerful others and chance) dimensions and workplace deviance among lawyers.

Method

Purposive sampling technique was used in the current study to get the data from lawyers working under supervision of senior lawyers as their associates or junior advocates ($N=300$). It is comprised of both males ($n= 197$) and females ($n= 103$) with age range from 22-46 years ($M= 29.59$, $SD= 4.76$). Married individuals were ($n=142$) and single were ($n= 158$). Lawyers belonging to joint family system were ($n=186$), while the number of those belonging to nuclear family system were ($n=114$). (75.65%) of sample had minimum of 1 year to 5 year experience and (24.3%) of them had 6 years of experience to 10 years of experience ($M= 3.71$, $SD= 2.53$). 13.7 percent of the lawyers were dealing with criminal cases, 7.3 percent deal with civil cases, 1 percent only deal in corporate sector, 5.7 percent of them deal with family related cases. Lawyers working in different courts and law firms in areas of Pakistan included Rahim Yar Khan, Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Bahawalpur, and Sadiq Abad were part of this study.

Assessment Measures

Short Dark Triad Scale. The short dark triad questionnaire is a self-report questionnaire designed to examine three components of the dark triad personality characteristics machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy (Jones & Paulhus, 2014). This is a 27-item measure, with nine items for each of the traits. It is a 5-point Likert scale with a range of 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 5 (*Strongly Agree*) to measure the brief dark triad traits. The first subscale in short dark triad is machiavellianism. It is comprised of first 9 items in the scale. There is no reverse scored items in machiavellianism subscale. The scoring range for machiavellianism subscale is 9-45. The next subscale is narcissism. This subscale is also comprised of 9 items. There are reversed scored items in this subscale which are item no. 11, 15, and 17. The scoring range for this subscale is from 9-45. The last subscale of short dark triad scale is psychopathy. This one is also comprised of 9 items. There are also reversed scored items in this subscale. Item number 20 and 25 are reversed scored items. The scoring range for this subscale is also from 9-45. Short dark triad scale had alpha .76 for machiavellianism, .73 for psychopathy, and .78 for narcissism and the inter correlations ranged from .22 to .40 (Jones & Paulhus, 2014).

The Multidimensional Locus of Control. Hanna Levenson created the multidimensional locus of control scale (Levenson, 1981). The scale contains 24 items that assess person's locus of control. The Likert scale has six points, with the range being 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 6 (*Strongly Agree*). This measure generates three separate components. Eight questions make up the internal locus of control subscale (items 1, 4, 5, 9, 18, 19, 21, 23), which measures a person's conviction in his or her skills to influence life events. The powerful others subscale also contains eight items (items 2, 6, 7, 10, 12, 14, 16, 24) it assesses how much a person believes his or her life is being directed by persons in positions of power. The chance subscale consists of eight items (items 3, 8, 11, 13, 15, 17, 20, 22), estimating the beliefs that chance and fate dictate a person's life, offering him or her little to no influence over his or her

personal circumstances. The reliability of internal locus of control dimension is $\alpha = .67$, powerful others $\alpha = .82$ and chance subscale $\alpha = .79$. The overall scoring range for the scale is 24-144. There are no reverse scored items present for this scale. A person's score on all three aspects might be high or low. High scores expressed a high level of internal locus of control or external locus of control (powerful others) or fate (chance) (Levenson, 1981).

Workplace Deviance Scale. The study measured workplace deviance by using the Bennett-Robinson workplace deviance scale (Bennett & Robinson, 2000). This scale contains 19 items. It comprised of 12 items on organizational deviance and 7 items on interpersonal deviance. Organizational deviance subscale items are (1,2,4,6,8,9,11,12,13,16,17,19). Interpersonal deviance subscale items are (3, 5, 7, 10, 14, 15, 18). The response format included seven options, with a 1 indicating (*Never*) in that behavior and a 7 indicating (*Daily*). The scoring range for the workplace deviance scale ranges from 19-133. The scoring range for organizational deviance subscale was from 12-84, whereas for interpersonal deviance subscale scoring range was from 7-49. The internal reliabilities of organizational and interpersonal workplace deviant behaviors are .81 and .78. The alpha reliability of workplace deviance scale is .88. There are no reversed scored items in the scale (Bennett & Robinson, 2000).

Propensity to Morally Disengage Scale. Propensity to morally disengage scale was employed to assess moral disengagement which was made by (Moore et al., 2012) for adult population. There are 24 items on a 7-point Likert scale, with 1 being (*Strongly Disagree*) and 7 being (*Strongly Agree*). This measure evaluates each of Bandura's eight suggested moral disengagement mechanisms. First three items of scale measure moral justification (item no. 1, 2, and 3). Euphemistic labeling subscale items are from item no. 4, 5, and 6. Advantageous comparison items are 7, 8, and 9. Displacement of responsibility subscale items are 10, 11, 12. Diffusion of responsibility subscale items are from 13, 14, and 15. Distortion of consequences subscale items are 16, 17, and 18.

Dehumanization subscale includes items 19, 20, and 21. Attribution of blame subscale items are 22, 23, and 24. The alpha reliability of overall scale is $\alpha = .80$. It was found in previous studies initial findings that each of the subscales had alpha coefficients greater than .70 (Moral justification $\alpha = .85$; Euphemistic Labeling $\alpha = .83$; Advantageous Comparison $\alpha = .82$; Displacement of Responsibility $\alpha = .87$; Diffusion of Responsibility $\alpha = .88$; Distortion of Consequences $\alpha = .85$; Dehumanization $\alpha = .80$; Attribution of Blame $\alpha = .78$), showing good reliability of the subscales. As there are eight subscales of propensity to morally disengage scale. Each sub-scale has a possible score range of 3 to 21, and higher scores on all subscales indicate a stronger inclination to morally disengage, whilst lower scores on the propensity to morally disengage scale represent an individual's reduced predisposition to do moral disengagement. Possible total score range for total propensity to morally disengage scale ranges from 24-168. There are no reversed scored items present in this scale.

Procedure

Permission to use the questionnaires in this study was first acquired from the authors of the scales. Authors of the scales were contacted through emails and their permissions were sought. Then the permission for data collection was acquired from authority figures that belonged to legal profession. Those authority figures helped to collect data from different courts and law firms of Pakistan. First an informed consent form was given to the participants and their voluntary participation in the study was made sure. In that consent form, they were properly debriefed about the purpose of the study and its potential benefits. All the research variables were clearly mentioned in that informed consent form. But before handing over research questionnaire to them, lawyers were clearly told that we will be checked for dark personality traits, moral disengagement, locus of control and workplace deviance and even inclusion criteria was also made clear to them. They were informed that only those lawyers working under your supervision as their junior advocates will be part of this study. Next they were asked about various kinds of deviant practices

their junior advocates/ associates do in their courts or firms. Lawyers were interviewed for this purpose. On the basis their responses which we got from them, helped us in modification of workplace deviance scale specifically designed for lawyers in this research study. Their queries regarding the present study was answered by the researcher. Then the questionnaires were administered in both individual and group setting. The respondents were ensured that ethical boundaries will be maintained in the present study, and their information will not be shared with anybody. All participants had voluntary participation in this study. In the end, all those who participated in the study were thanked for their cooperation. As study participants were informed that their responses would be kept anonymous and the results would only be used for research so chances of social desirability in that case were reduced.

Results

The mediation analysis was performed, which assisted in determining how and why there is a link between the dependent and independent variables (Hayes, 2017). The goal of present analysis was to determine the mediating role of variables in single mediation. This level involves mediation analysis which is comprised of single mediation; such that there is one mediator between dark triad personality traits (X) and its subscales (machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy) and workplace deviance (Y). Tables as well as conceptual model for all each single mediator are given below. The role of moral disengagement (M) as mediator and the relationship between locus of control dimensions (internal locus, powerful others, and chance locus of control) (X), and workplace deviance (Y) was carried out by using Model 4 of PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2017). The findings of the analysis are given as follows:

Table 1

Moral Disengagement as Mediator between Dark Triad Personality Traits and Workplace Deviance (N = 300)

Models	95% CI					
	R^2	F	B	LL	UL	p
Total effect – DT → WPD (c)			.12	-.04	.29	.15
	.00	1.99				
Model with mediator						
DT → MD (a)	.07	24.77	.56	.34	.78	.00
MD → WPD (b)		52.75	.38	.30	.45	.00
Direct effect – DT → WPD (c')			-.09	-.24	.05	.21
Indirect effect – DT → MD → WPD	.26		.21	.12	.33	.00
Sobel's Test (Z) = 4.45						

Note. DT= Dark Triad Personality Traits, MD= Moral Disengagement, WPD= Workplace Deviance

Table 1 indicated that dark triad personality traits are associated with workplace deviance in case of total effect (B=.12, $p > .05$). The coefficient of direct effect (B=-.09 $p > .05$) shows that direct effect is not explaining the relationship between the predictor and the outcome variable. But in indirect effect is explaining the relationship between predictor and outcome variable, the relationship between dark triad personality traits and workplace deviance is explained by the mediating variable that is moral disengagement (B=.21, $p < 0.05$). The findings provide support for our hypotheses (Moral disengagement act as a mediator between dark triad personality traits and workplace deviance). The mediation is shown by given figure:

Figure 1. Moral Disengagement as Mediator between Dark Triad Personality Traits and Workplace Deviance

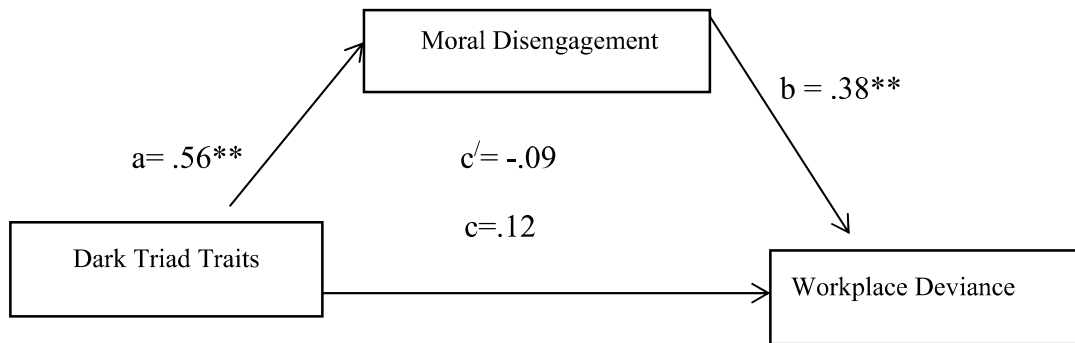


Table 2

Moral Disengagement as Mediator between Machiavellianism and Workplace Deviance (N = 300)

Models	R^2	F	B	95% CI		p
				LL	UL	
Total effect – Mach → WPD (c)			.04	-.31	.41	.79
	.00	.06				
Model with mediator						
Mach → MD (a)	.07	9.89	.78	.29	1.27	.00
MD → WPD (b)		53.35	.38	.30	.45	.00
Direct effect – Mach → WPD (c')			-.25	-.56	.06	.12
Indirect effect – Mach → MD → WPD	.26		.29	.08	.53	.00
Sobel's Test (Z) = 2.99						

Note. Mach= Machiavellianism, MD= Moral Disengagement, WPD= Workplace Deviance

Table 2 indicated that machiavellianism is associated with workplace deviance and ($B=.04$, $p>.05$) in case of total effect. The coefficient of direct effect ($B= -.25$, $p>.05$) shows that direct effect is not explaining the relationship between the predictor and the outcome variable. But in indirect effect is explaining relationship between predictor and outcome variable, the relationship between machiavellianism and workplace deviance is explained by the mediating variable that is moral disengagement ($B=.29$, $p<0.05$). The mediation is shown by given figure:

Figure 2. Moral Disengagement as Mediator between Machiavellianism and Workplace Deviance

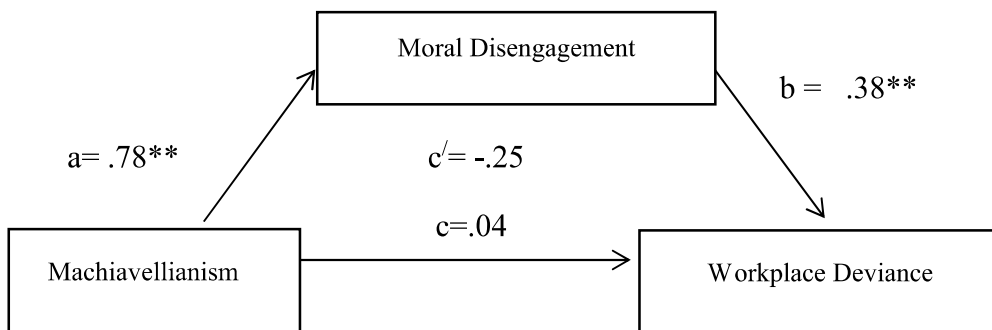
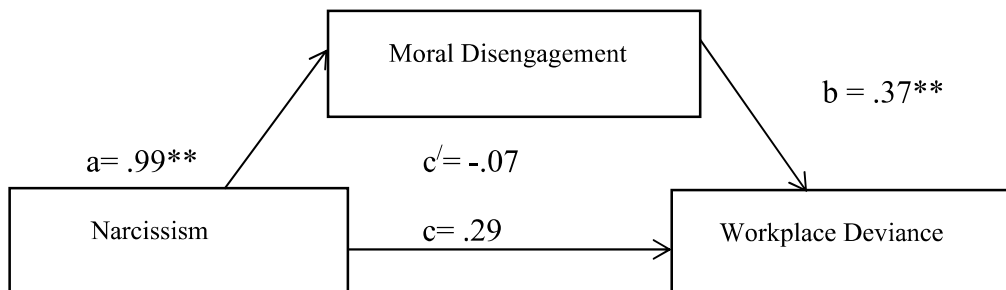


Table 3*Moral Disengagement as Mediator between Narcissism and Workplace Deviance (N = 300)*

Models	R^2	F	B	95% CI		p
				LL	UL	
Total effect – Narc \rightarrow WPD (c)			.29	-.14	.73	.18
	.00	1.78				
Model with mediator						
Narc \rightarrow MD (a)	.03	11.0	.99	.40	1.58	.00
MD \rightarrow WPD (b)		51.82	.37	.30	.44	.00
Direct effect – Narc \rightarrow WPD (c')			-.07	-.46	.31	.70
Indirect effect – Narc \rightarrow MD \rightarrow WPD	.25		.37	.11	.65	.00
Sobel's Test (Z) = 3.13						

Note. Narc= Narcissism, MD= Moral Disengagement, WPD= Workplace Deviance

Table 3 indicated that narcissism is associated with workplace deviance ($B=.29, p>.05$) in case of total effect. The coefficient of direct effect ($B= -.07, p>.05$) shows that direct effect is not explaining the relationship between the predictor and the outcome variable. But in indirect effect is explaining relationship between predictor and outcome variable, the relationship between narcissism and workplace deviance is explained by the mediating variable that is moral disengagement ($B=.37, p<0.05$). The mediation is shown by given figure:

Figure 3. Moral Disengagement as Mediator between Narcissism and Workplace Deviance**Table 4***Moral Disengagement as Mediator between Psychopathy and Workplace Deviance (N = 300)*

Models	R^2	F	B	95% CI		p
				LL	UL	
Total effect – Psy \rightarrow WPD (c)			1.01	.62	1.41	.00
	.07	25.39				
Model with mediator						
Psy \rightarrow MD (a)	.03	11.0	1.86	1.33	2.38	.00
MD \rightarrow WPD (b)	.34	54.30	.34	.26	.41	.00
Direct effect – Psy \rightarrow WPD (c')			.38	-.002	.76	.05
Indirect effect – Psy \rightarrow MD \rightarrow WPD	.26		.63	.40	.90	.00
Sobel's Test (Z) = 5.43						

Note. Psy= Psychopathy, MD= Moral Disengagement, WPD= Workplace Deviance

Table 4 indicated that psychopathy is associated with workplace deviance ($B=1.01, p < .05$) in case of total effect. The coefficient of direct effect ($B = .38, p = .05$) shows that direct effect is explaining the relationship between the predictor and the outcome variable. But in indirect effect is more strongly explaining the relationship between predictor and outcome variable, the relationship between psychopathy and workplace deviance is explained by the mediating variable that is moral disengagement ($B = .63, p < 0.05$). The mediation is shown by given figure:

Figure 4. Moral Disengagement as Mediator between Psychopathy and Workplace Deviance

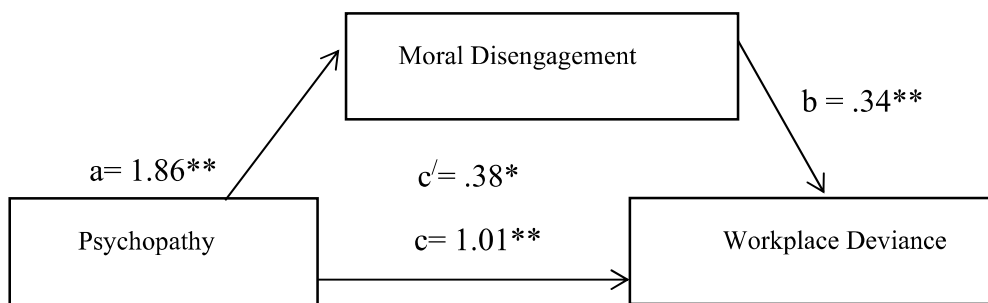


Table 5

Moral Disengagement as Mediator between Internal Locus of Control and Workplace Deviance (N = 300)

Models	R^2	F	B	95% CI		p
				LL	UL	
Total effect – ILC \rightarrow WPD (c)			-.50	-.77	-.24	.00
	.04	14.03				
Model with mediator						
ILC \rightarrow MD (a)	.001	.50	.13	-.23	.50	.47
MD \rightarrow WPD (b)		67.55	.37	.30	.44	.00
Direct effect – ILC \rightarrow WPD (c')			-.55	-.78	-.33	.00
Indirect effect – ILC \rightarrow MD \rightarrow WPD	.31		.05	-.08	.20	.48
Sobel's Test (Z) = .70						

Note. ILC= Internal locus of control, MD= Moral Disengagement, WPD= Workplace Deviance

As values in the above table 5 indicated that total effect of IV (Internal locus of control) on DV (workplace deviance) is significant ($B = -.50, p < 0.05$), but when mediator (moral disengagement) is added in the model (path a) the effect became nonsignificant ($B = .13, p > 0.05$). In path b, moral disengagement (mediator) and workplace deviance (DV) have significant effect as ($B = .37, p < 0.05$). In the above table, direct effect is negatively explaining the relationship between internal locus of control (IV) and workplace deviance (DV) ($B = -.55, p < 0.05$). As internal locus of control will be high, workplace deviance will be less. In case of indirect effect, this is the product of coefficient of predictor-mediator relationship and the mediator-outcome relationship lead to mediation that is nonsignificant. Sobel test was also found to be nonsignificant ($p > .05$). In conclusion, direct effect negatively and significantly explained the relationship between internal locus of control and workplace deviance, as internal locus of control will get high, workplace deviance will

be less, but when moral disengagement as a mediator is added in this relationship the effect became nonsignificant, means moral disengagement is not acting as a mediator in the relationship between internal locus of control and workplace deviance. The mediation is shown by given figure:

Figure 5. Moral Disengagement as Mediator between Internal Locus of Control and Workplace Deviance

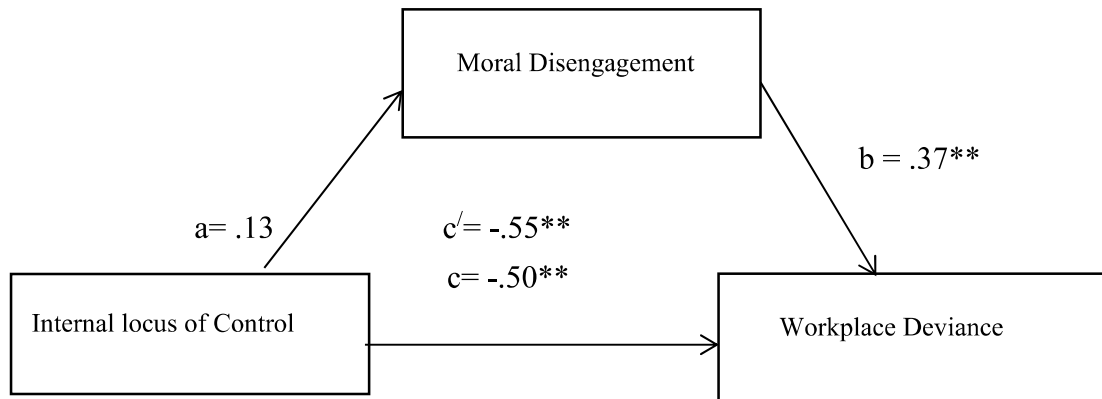


Table 6

Moral Disengagement as Mediator between External Locus of Control (Powerful Others) and Workplace Deviance (N = 300)

Models	R^2	F	B	95% CI		p
				LL	UL	
Total effect – EL (PO) → WPD (c)			.76	.51	1.02	.00
	.10	35.89				
Model with mediator						
EL (PO) → MD (a)	.18	65.52	1.36	1.03	1.69	.00
MD → WPD (b)		55.95	.32	.25	.40	.00
Direct effect – EL (PO) → WPD (c')			.32	.06	.57	.01
Indirect effect – EL (PO) → MD → WPD	.27		.44	.29	.63	.00
Sobel's Test (Z) = 5.75						

Note. EL (PO) = External locus of control (Powerful others), MD= Moral Disengagement, WPD= Workplace Deviance

As values given in the above table show that total effect of IV (external locus of control (powerful others) on DV (workplace deviance) is significant ($B = .76, p < 0.05$), but after adding the mediator the direct effect also became significant ($B = .32, p < .05$) which means the mediator moral disengagement plays a role of strong mediator in the relationship between external locus of control (powerful others and workplace deviance). Similarly the indirect

effect which is the product of coefficient of predictor-mediator relationship ($a = 1.36$) and the mediator-outcome relationship ($b = .32$) leading to positive sign which means both direct and indirect effects are explaining the relationship between predictor variable and the outcome variable. Moral disengagement is acting as a mediator in the relationship between external locus of control and workplace deviance. As external locus of control individuals are more

likely to do workplace deviance and this relationship is mediated by moral disengagement. Sobel test was also found to be significant ($p < .05$) and have a nonzero value indicating difference between total effect (c) without mediator and direct effect (c') and direct

effect ($B = .32, p < .05$) is less than total effect ($B = .76, p < .05$) which indicates that moral disengagement acts as mediator between external locus of control (powerful others) and workplace deviance. This mediating role is shown in following figure:

Figure 6. Moral Disengagement as Mediator between External locus of control (Powerful others) and Workplace Deviance

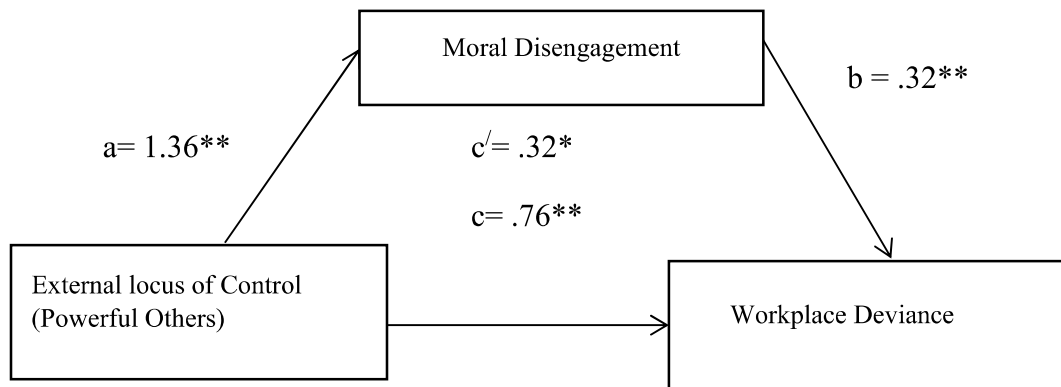


Table 7

Moral Disengagement as Mediator between External Locus of Control (Chance locus of Control) and Workplace Deviance (N = 300)

Models	R^2	F	B	95% CI		p
				LL	UL	
Total effect –EL (CH) → WPD (c)			.19	-.09	.48	.19
	.00	1.69				
Model with mediator						
EL (CH) → MD (a)	.06	22.24	.92	.54	1.31	.00
MD → WPD (b)		52.73	.38	.30	.45	.00
Direct effect – EL (CH) → WPD (c')			-.16	-.42	.09	.22
Indirect effect - EL (CH) → MD → WPD	.26		.35	.19	.55	.00
Sobel's Test (Z) = 4.26						

Note. EL (CH) = External locus of control (Chance locus), MD= Moral Disengagement, WPD= Workplace Deviance

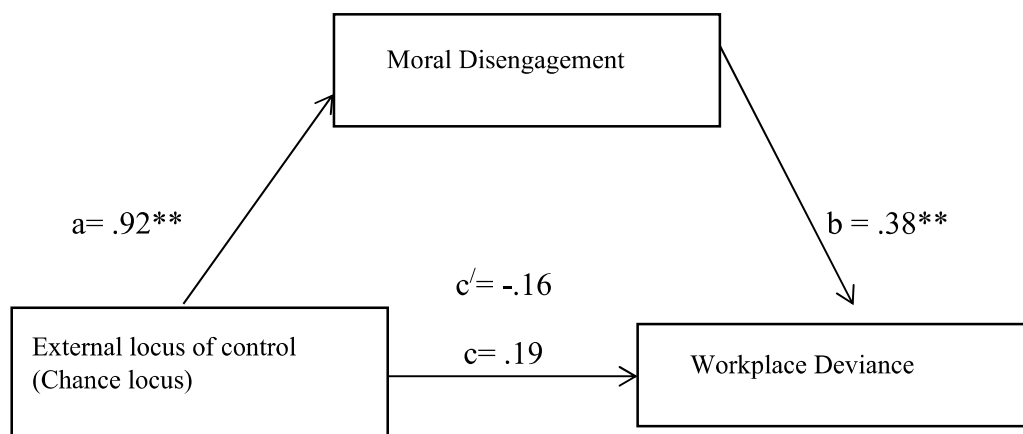
As values given in the above table show that total effect of IV (external locus of control (chance locus of control) on DV (workplace deviance) is nonsignificant ($B = .19, p > 0.05$), after adding the mediator in this relationship as

shown in path a, the effect become significant ($B = .92, p < .05$) which means the mediator moral disengagement played a role of strong mediator in the relationship between external locus of control (chance locus of control and workplace

deviance). The coefficient of direct effect ($B = -.16, p > 0.05$) is not explaining the relationship between predictor that is external locus of control (chance locus of control) and outcome (workplace deviance). But when moral disengagement is added as mediator in this path, indirect effect is explaining the relationship between external locus of control (chance locus of control) and workplace deviance. As the indirect effect which is the product of coefficient of predictor-mediator relationship ($a = .92$) and the mediator-outcome relationship ($b = .38$) leading to positive sign which means that indirect effects is explaining the relationship between predictor variable and the outcome variable.

Moral disengagement is acting as a mediator in the relationship between external locus of control and workplace deviance. As external locus of control individuals are more likely to do workplace deviance and this relationship is mediated by moral disengagement. Sobel test was also found to be significant ($p < .05$) and have a nonzero value indicating difference between total effect (c) without mediator and direct effect (c') and direct effect ($B = -.16, p > .05$) is less than total effect ($B = .19, p > .05$) which indicates that moral disengagement acts as mediator between external locus of control (chance locus) and workplace deviance. This mediating role is shown in following figure:

Figure 7. Moral Disengagement as Mediator between External Locus of Control (Chance locus) and Workplace Deviance



Discussion

Moral disengagement has played mediating role between dark triad personality characteristics (machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy) and workplace deviance. Individuals with dark personalities are more likely to be morally disengaged, and this allows them to readily rationalize activities that are against their moral norms, so they can display schadenfreude more freely. Research elaborated role of moral disengagement as mediator between dark triad personality traits and negative emotions. Moral disengagement enhances link between dark traits. The research study provided evidence on moral disengagement as mediator between dark triad personality traits and

schadenfreude, in addition to that interpersonal aggressiveness was also found to be mediated through moral disengagement (Erzi, 2020).

A study of Italian workers showed that moral disengagement mediated the link between unpleasant emotions and workplace deviant actions. It has been discovered that when personnel in the workplace are faced with personal problems like anxiety, they become more morally disengaged. As a result they have more opportunities to participate in unproductive work actions as a response to rationalize their aggressive acts under troublesome settings (Fida et al., 2015). Fontaine and colleagues examined data from Italian teenagers. They concluded that individuals who

are abandoned by their colleagues are socially marginalized which leads them to engage in moral disengagement, which expedites their pursuit of destructive objectives. Findings of this research discovered that the link between peer rejection and criminality is mediated by moral disengagement (Fontaine et al., 2014).

Another study looked at the effect of moral disengagement as a mediator and empathy as a moderator in the relationship between callous-unemotional characteristics and cyber bullying victimizations (Fang et al., 2020). Rice, Letwin, Taylor, and Wo (2021) emphasized the significance of supervisor moral disengagement in mediating abusive management conduct and abusive supervisor behavior, which leads to staff deviance (Rice et al., 2021).

Most investigations on the connection between moral disengagement mechanisms and the dark triad personality characteristics have focused on the study of the psychopathic personality traits (Hyde et al., 2010; Risser & Eckert, 2016). Meanwhile, Shulman came to the conclusion that individuals with psychopathic personality characteristics are more inclined to rationalize their deviant behaviors as appropriate (Shulman et al., 2011).

Locke (2009) discovered that the narcissistic personality characteristic was linked with the moral disengagement mechanism of dehumanization in a university sample (Locke, 2009). Research literature reveals strong relationship between narcissism and moral disengagement. Jones and colleagues discovered that moral disengagement mechanisms worked as mediators between misconduct and narcissistic personality characteristics in another investigation with a sample of athletes. As a result, there is documentary evidence that moral disengagement and narcissistic personality traits are related (Jones et al., 2017).

In the literature that is currently available, it is established that moral disengagement primarily serves as a mediator, as seen in the relationship between poor parenting practices and antisocial behavior in adolescents (Hyde et al., 2006). According to earlier research, workforce that acts more morally and with social

responsibility encounter a decrease in workplace deviance phenomenon (Ahmad et al., 2012).

Moral disengagement has played mediation role between internal locus of control, external locus of control (powerful others and chance locus) and workplace deviance. People who have an internal locus of control versus an external locus of control are typically identified. People who have an internal locus of control think their own activities caused the events in their lives. On the other side, those with an external locus of control believe that external factors like fate, destiny, or other people have a significant impact on life's outcomes (Kesavayuth et al., 2020). Personal attributes, character development, susceptibility to societal factors, individual circumstances, and life experiences all contribute to the development of locus of control (Dijkstra et al., 2011). Cognitive issues are a major factor in the emergence of anxiety and depressive disorders. Anxiety and depression's onset, duration, and severity have all been associated to the locus of control construct, which is a crucial cognitive susceptibility component. Locus of control is typically thought of as a personality trait that is rather stable through time (Hovenkamp-Hermelink et al., 2019).

People with a high internal locus of control orientation were more susceptible to identify wide range of morally problematic workplace behaviors as undesirable and will not engage in them. A research study hypothesized that moral disengagement would buffer the direct correlations between locus of control orientations and unethical conduct, by acting as a mediator. For example, those with internal locus of control orientations are less likely to morally disengage through processes such as diffusion or displacement of responsibility. Therefore, moral disengagement and internal locus of control have a negative relation. People with greater empathy are more focused on the requirements of others. They are less inclined to ethically detach themselves since they perceive others concerns and struggles as their own.

People with a greater chance locus of control, on the other hand, may make more immoral actions because they think that destiny or luck is accountable in causing undesirable

consequences. In addition, people with greater powerful locus of control orientations may make more immoral judgments because it is simple for them to delegate authority to strong individuals. As a result, moral disengagement processes help to explain why these three locus of control orientations increase or decrease the likelihood with which morally questionable choices will be made. Studies provide evidence on the role of moral disengagement as mediating variable between internal and external locus of control (powerful others and chance locus of control) (Detert et al., 2008).

Conclusion and Limitations

The results of this also revealed mediating role of moral disengagement between dark triad personality traits and its subscales (machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy) and workplace deviance. Moral disengagement in this study significantly mediated the relationship between dark triad personality traits (machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy) and workplace deviance. Moral disengagement as mediator also significantly mediated the relation between locus of control dimensions and workplace deviance among lawyers. These disparities in findings of the study might be attributed to professional or cultural factors. For this study, sample of lawyers was taken; further studies can do comparison between different professions like doctors, police officers, media professionals etc. Lawyers from five cities included Rahim Yar Khan, Sadiq Abad, Bahawlpur, Islamabad and Rawalpindi) were taken for the study so the generalizability of the results is limited. Further studies can be done with representative sample of lawyers from all over Pakistan to check about the certainty of results. Secondly further researches can explore some other variables which can play mediating roles. All instruments used in this study are self-reporting measures so there is chance of element of social desirability among respondents so in future research study, any measure of desirability scale can be applied to cater for this issue.

Implications

The findings of this study can serve a precursor to instigate exploration of further

avenues in the workplace deviance. Workplace deviant behaviors, dark triad personalities, moral disengagement, external locus of control are considered to be harmful for workplace, so this study will be helpful for the authorities and stakeholders (lawyers, bar councils) to know about problematic behaviors of lawyers and take precautionary steps so lawyers should try to eliminate or decrease such kind of behaviors. Exploring of dark triad personality traits tendencies prior to selection and induction of people in legal profession will lead towards creating a positive environment in law firms and courts.

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Ethics Approval and Consent to Participate. Before administration, research participants were informed and permission was obtained.

Competing Interest. The authors have declared no competing interests.

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