



“Everyone else does it”: Influence of colleagues’ cheating and psychological mechanisms on individuals’ cheating in an organization

Natpron Inthuyos*, Apitchaya Chaiwitikornwanich†, Sunthud Pornphrasertmani

Faculty of Psychology, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok 10330, Thailand

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Abstract

Do people who see other people cheat end up cheating? This research not only answered this question, but also examined the mechanisms regarding how this occurs through the concepts of psychology and Buddhism. The participants were 1,043 employees from across Thailand of a large organization obtained by using the multistage random sampling method. Self-report questionnaires without identity were used. Results of the structural equation model analysis demonstrated that individuals’ cheating in the organization is significantly influenced by colleagues’ cheating, both directly and indirectly, and in which the indirect influence is passed on through fear of ostracism the most, followed by moral disengagement, whereas “*Hiri-Ottappa*”, or moral shame and moral dread—a Buddhist concept—could significantly inhibit individuals’ propensity to cheat after seeing colleagues cheat.

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Introduction

Cheating is a long-standing problem and can cause enormous damage within the organization. Researchers have attempted to find causes and remedies. Notably, the application of the findings to practice failed. Cheating was not reduced. Even worse, cheating spreads throughout various parts of society and becomes a commonly accepted social behavior, i.e. “everyone is doing it” (Aronson, Wilson, & Akert, 2013). We were therefore interested in studying cheating from a new perspective in order to obtain information and ideas for dealing with cheating more efficiently.

In the past, cheating studies often focused on external factors that lead to cheating. Cheating that results from seeing colleagues cheat is often considered the most likely to answer to the question of how cheating can become pervasive. Some studies have found that seeing others cheat did not necessarily lead to individuals’ cheating (Staats, Hupp, Wallace, & Gresley, 2009), while other studies have found that cheating by others, especially friends (Farnese, Tramontano, Fida, & Paciello, 2011), has a strong influence over a person’s likelihood to cheat. A detailed examination of how this happens would be especially useful in addressing the problem of cheating; however, it has been undertaken by very few. Our work therefore focused specifically on this issue. We chose to examine the occurrence of this behavior by delving into internal factors of the decision to cheat using both principles from psychology and Buddhism in relation to important influences on human behavior.

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: anitjunk@hotmail.com (N. Inthuyos).

† Co-first authors.

E-mail address: Apitchaya.C@chula.ac.th (A. Chaiwitikornwanich).

The literature review about the internal factors associated with and leading to cheating, the relationship between the factors themselves, and supporting theories were considered together with our research objectives to seek explanations covering individual and society differences. Finally, the researchers used three psychological and one Buddhist variable as mediating variables: (1) psychological entitlement, (2) fear of ostracism, (3) moral disengagement, and (4) *Hiri-Ottappa*. The structure equation model of individuals' cheating in an organization was developed based on the concept of the human behavioral process. We positioned and ordered these variables according to their characteristics, the relationships between them, and supporting theories. We hypothesized that the developed model was consistent with empirical data showing that colleagues' cheating would affect the individual's cheating in an organization both directly and indirectly. In this research, the definition of cheating in the organization was defined as the offenses or any acts that violated the regulations and the code of ethics of the organization for a person's own benefit, and which had varying degrees of severity; for example, not working at their best, doing personal work during work hours, taking material or property of the organization for personal use, presenting false information to the organization for their own benefit, abusive performance to give themselves the benefit they did not deserve.

Literature Review

The literature review of the four mediated variables in our research model was as follows: Psychological entitlement is the belief that one deserves to be rewarded or get a share without being aware of the actual performance, participation, or actual effort (Campbell, Bonacci, Shelton, Exline, & Bushman, 2004). It is an outstanding variable in an individualistic society (Hong, Huang, Lin, & Lin, 2017), which is a social characteristic that is beginning to show more and more in Thailand today (Dulyakasem, n.d.; Thai Encyclopedia for Youth, n.d), especially in the new generation (Wongswang, Likitanusorn, Palittapongarnpim, & Sabuyjai, 2016). In addition, psychological entitlement is an internal factor of individuals that has a significant positive correlation with greed (Krekels & Pandelaere, 2015) that it is available in every human being, and materialism (Žemojtel-Piotrowska, et al., 2015), which is a distinctive feature of Thai people today and is also a factor that leads to cheating. According to Schwartz (2015), Psychological entitlement can be triggered by knowing or seeing the actions of others, which is supported by the social comparison theory

(Myers, 2015). Psychological entitlement is also a mediator variable leading to dishonest behavior (Poon, Chen, & DeWall, 2013). In addition, individuals tend to have their own ethical standards and prefer to believe that they are virtuous (Mazar, Amir, & Ariely, 2008). Thus, possibly, a situation in which individuals are aware of colleagues' cheating is likely to cause them to have an ethical dilemma and use psychological mechanisms to free themselves from the pressures of punishment or blaming the moral negative self. Therefore, we expected that psychological entitlement would mediate the positive influence from colleagues' cheating to individuals' cheating and would also indirectly positively influence moral disengagement before leading to individuals' cheating in the organization.

Fear of ostracism refers to the fear of being ignored, shunned, socially excluded, or banished from a colleague's group within an organization (Forsyth, 2019). It is an outstanding variable in a collectivist society, which is the social characteristic of Thai people originally, and negatively affects the mind and body (Forsyth, 2019). Therefore, it is an undesirable situation and is a strong threat that influences people to comply with the group's needs and cooperate with the group in both good and bad behaviors (Kerr et al., 2009). When this is combined with the concept of group influence and the social norm theory (Myers, 2015), we expected that fear of ostracism would mediate the positive influence between colleagues' and individuals' cheating. We also expected that fear of ostracism would have positive indirect influence through moral disengagement before leading to individuals' cheating in the organization.

Moral disengagement is defined as a psychological thought process that helps support or justify unethical behavior by restructuring or creating a new interpretation such that the unethical behaviors are less harmful or even redefining them into righteous behaviors or personally and socially acceptable actions that do not lead to punishment anymore (Bandura, 1999). This process results in people engaging in those unethical behaviors without feeling distress or guilt and feeling that they continue to be good, moral persons (Bandura, 1999; Mazar et al., 2008). Studies have found that the social cognitive mechanism of moral disengagement is a critical variable that could lead to many inappropriate behaviors, including deviant behaviors in organizations (Hystad, Mearns, & Eid, 2014). A number of factors could stimulate the use of moral disengagement, including peers' cheating (Farnese et al., 2011). Moreover, moral disengagement is also a mediated variable that could lead to many offenses including cheating (Hystad et al., 2014). Therefore, we

expected that moral disengagement would have a direct positive effect on individual's cheating in the organization and it would mediate the positive influences from colleagues' cheating, psychological entitlement, and fear of ostracism to individuals' cheating in the organization.

Hiri-Ottappa (equivalent to Moral Shame and Moral Dread) is a dharma concept in Buddhism and often occurs together between “*Hiri* or moral shame” or shame to sin and “*Ottappa* or moral dread” or fear of having committed a sin and fear of the consequences of committing a sin (Phra Phrom Kunaporn (P. Payutto), 2011). In our study, the word “sin” equates with the term “*akusoulakarma 10*” or 10 unwholesome actions, and the consequences of sin are the evil that results from committing the sin according to the principle of the “law of *karma*” - one of the doctrines of Buddhism that most Thai people have long respected until now. The matter of the “law of *karma*” is embedded in the thoughts, beliefs and behaviors of Thai people in general, and it is not new to human beings. “*Karma*” in Buddhism refers to the actions of human beings, and the “law of *karma*” is the natural law of truth about human action. It is the law of cause and effect. When individuals have done something, they are the recipient of that action, like in the proverb “As you sow, so shall you reap.” The result will be either good or bad, consistent with what individuals do. Therefore, *karma* influences the control of human behavior to coexist happily and as a guiding tool of society (Phra Promkhanaporn (P. Payutto), 2012). It relates to all human beings. *Hiri-Ottappa* was used in the research to represent the moral and ethical variables. Several studies have found that there is a negative relationship associated with, and it can prevent or deter both moral disengagement (Bandura, 1999) and cheating (Staats et al., 2009). Moral standards can be changed by seeing or perceiving other people's actions, especially those of one's friends or significant others (Aronson et al., 2013). In addition, moral and ethical variables can also be mediator variables that negatively affect cheating (Brunell, Staats, Barden, & Hupp, 2011). Thus, we expected that *Hiri-Ottappa* would mediate the negative influence between colleagues' and individuals' cheating and would have an indirect negative influence through moral disengagement before leading to individuals' cheating in the organization.

Methodology

Measures

Every scale was designed in a short version of not more than 20 items (Pfeiffer, Hagemann, & Backenstrass,

2011) and used a seven-point Likert scale. For the English scales, a 3-step translation quality control method was used. The reliabilities using Cronbach's Alpha of all constructs were equal to or higher than .70, which provide adequate reliability. Below, details of each scale are provided.

Psychological Entitlement

Psychological entitlement was measured using a 9-item Psychological Entitlement Scale (PES) developed and validated by Campbell et al. (2004). Each item (e.g., “I demand the best because I'm worth it.”) was rated from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) ($\alpha = .79$).

Fear of Ostracism

The Fear of Ostracism Scale (FOS) from the Workplace Ostracism Scale of Ferris, Brown, Berry, & Lian (2008), and a series of five items to assess fear of social exclusion, from Cavazza, Pagliaro, & Guidetti (2014) were adapted. The processes used to develop this scale were: testing content validity, analysis for discriminant power of each item, using exploratory factor analysis to group the items as indicators of the variable, selecting the top 5 of factor loading for each factor or indicator to make a short version of the scale, and checking the construct validity of the short version of the scale with confirmatory factor analysis. As a result of the whole process, the short version of Fear of Ostracism Scale containing 10 items and two subscales was obtained: (1) disregarding (e.g., “In the workplace, you are afraid that no one will think of you when there are various social activities”) ($\alpha = .89$), and (2) excision (e.g., “You are afraid that colleagues will not accept you as a member”) ($\alpha = .90$). Each item was rated from 1 (not at all) to 7 (the most).

Moral Disengagement

Moral disengagement was assessed using Moore, Detert, Trvino, Baker, and Mayer's (2012) Propensity to Morally Disengage Scale (PMDS). The 16-item measure covered all eight sub-components of moral disengagement. Each item (e.g., “It is alright to lie to keep your friends out of trouble.”) was rated from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) ($\alpha = .87$).

Colleagues' Cheating and Individuals' Cheating

The Cheating of Colleagues in the Organization

Scale (CCOS) and the Cheating of Individuals in the Organization Scale (CIOS) were created by the definition of cheating, as defined in this research. The items of the 2 scales were graded according to the severity from a little cheating to very severe cheating. In the development of these 2 scales, a number of processes were used, as well as creating the Fear of Ostracism Scale. We also examined convergence validity of the scales with the workplace delinquency scale of De Vries and Van Gelder (2015). The results showed that the CCOS and CIOS had positive correlations with the workplace delinquency scale ($r = .224$ and $r = .596$), respectively, $p < .01$. Both had the same items, except for changing the actor from “your colleagues” to “you”. Each cheating scale comprised of 15 items classified into three subscales: (1) Not working full time (e.g., “Your colleagues/you often have lunch over time”) ($\alpha = .75, .70$), (2) no intention to work faithfully (e.g., “Your colleagues/you report their performance in a straightforward manner in every matter”) ($\alpha = .86, .91$), and (3) illegal exploitation from working (e.g., “When there is an opportunity, your colleague/you often receive money or other benefits not appropriate from doing work”) ($\alpha = .84, .83$). Each item was rated from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

Hiri-Ottappa or the Moral Shame and Moral Dread

Hiri-Ottappa or the Moral Shame and Moral Dread in the Workplace Scale (HOWS) was created by the definition of Hiri-Ottappa in the workplace as defined in this research. The processes used to develop this scale were: testing content validity, analysis for discriminant power of each item, separated into each factor, analysis of the corrected item-total correlation (CITC), selecting the top 10 of CITC values that cover “akusoulakarma 10” for each factor or indicator to make a short version of the scale, and checking the construct validity of the short version of the scale with the multitrait-multimethod analysis (Cohen, Swerdlik, & Sturman, 2013) and the convergent validity with the Guilt and Shame Proneness Scale (GASP Scale) of Cohen, Wolf, Panter, and Insko (2011) ($r = .518, p < .01$). Hiri-Ottappa in the workplace scale contained ten situations most likely to be found in the workplace followed by the three items of the three sub scales: (1) shame to sin ($\alpha = .87$), (2) fear of having committed a sin ($\alpha = .91$), and (3) fear of the consequences of committing a sin ($\alpha = .87$). The participants were asked to read the situation and imagine that if they were in the situation, how much they would think, feel, or respond to that situation. It was rated from 1 (very unlikely) to 7 (very likely). For example, situation 1: “If

in the discussion at work, you and your colleague have strong arguments because of different opinions, you, (1) feel ashamed, if you judge the problems by using force to attack a colleague who has different opinions from you, (2) are concerned that using force to attack the colleague who has different opinions from you will be wrong, and (3) are afraid that using force to attack others in this case will cause you to be attacked.

Participants and Data Collection

The sample size was calculated based on multivariate statistical analysis (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010). Three control variables were applied: (1) sex (Koul, 2012), (2) Buddhist, and (3) working experience; however, only individuals who worked in the organization for at least 5 years were included so that they would have a clear understanding of the culture in the organization. The data were obtained from personnel in one organization with branches all over Thailand by multistage random sampling method. We started by grouping the population across Thailand into 4 groups by region, then selecting 3 provinces from each region by simple random sampling and selecting branches of the organization from each province with stratified random sampling (STRS) by determining the strata according to organizational branch size. At each organizational branch, the researcher used a quota sampling from qualified personnel. There were the same number of male and female personnel and proportionate to the size of that organization branch. In collecting data, questionnaires were distributed with documents “Information for demographic groups or research participants” that have been considered from the Ethics Review Committee for Research Involving Human Research Subjects to all randomized subjects. These documents and one sticker sheet were put in a brown envelope with a sealable adhesive strip. The randomized subjects were given an opportunity to refuse to participate or withdraw from the research at any time by sealing the given questionnaire envelope, putting the sticker over the sealing mark again and returning it to the researcher without answering the questionnaire and without giving any reasons. As for those who voluntarily participated in the research, they were asked to anonymously complete the self-report questionnaire. The socially desirable response scale was used as a “lie detector” and 111 people were removed by using this scale. Twelve outliers were excluded by using the Mahalanobis distance. The final sample was 1,043 participants (475 males; 568 females). The research was approved by Chulalongkorn university’s ethics committee.

Data Analysis

The descriptive statistics, alpha reliabilities, and correlations among observed variables were examined by using IBM SPSS Statistics 22. The assumption of multicollinearity hypothesis was tested and found that the pair of observed variables, having a correlation coefficient greater than .8 but not more than .9 (Harlow, 2014) was 3 pairs. It is a relationship between the 3 factors of the Hiri-Ottappa: (1) shame to sin (2) fear of having committed a sin, and (3) fear of the consequences of committing a sin. These are consistent with the Buddhist concept that Hiri and Ottappa are “a paired dharma” that always happen together (Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya, 1996). The tolerance and the variance inflation factor (VIF) values of all independent variables were examined with the SPSS program and found that none of the variables had a tolerance lower than .10 with values from .22 to 1.00, or had VIF values higher than 10 with values from 1.00 to 4.48 (Kline, 2015), or had a condition index higher than 30 with values from 1.00 to 19.51 (Wiratchai, 2005). These indicate that there are no

extreme multicollinearity problems (Kline, 2015). An analysis of the statistics of Bartlett’s test of sphericity found that the significance level was lower than .05. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin index was equal to .75. This result showed that the relationship between variables was sufficient to be used to analyze the causal model of individuals’ cheating in the organization (Hair et al., 2010). All are shown in Table 1.

Results and Discussion

Results of the SEM analysis show that the causal model of individuals’ cheating in the organization was consistent with the empirical data, determined by the relative chi-square value (χ^2/df) ($\chi^2 = 233.66$, $df = 50$, $p = .00$), equal to 4.67, which is less than 5.00 (Harlow, 2014) CFI = .98, TLI = .96, RMSEA = .06 and SRMR = .06. Colleagues’ cheating, psychological entitlement, fear of ostracism, *Hiri-Ottappa*, and moral disengagement explained 60 percent ($R^2 = .60$) of the variance of individuals’ cheating in the organization. All influences are presented in Figure 1 and Table 2.

Table 1 Correlations among observed variables, alpha reliabilities (in parentheses), and descriptive statistics

<i>n</i> = 1043													
Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. NWFC	(.85)	.43**	.52**	.07*	.04	.09**	-.07*	-.07*	-.06*	.13**	.42**	.10**	.10**
2. NIWFC		(.75)	.42**	-.05	.01	.08**	-.02	-.02	-.04	.07*	.07*	.23**	.01
3. IEWC			(.84)	.12**	.11**	.24**	-.16**	-.16**	-.17**	.22**	.23**	.20**	.31**
4. ENT				(.83)	.26**	.31**	-.14**	-.13**	-.08**	.20**	.18**	.05	.18**
5. DIS					(.89)	.69**	-.02	-.01	.03	.22**	.20**	.06*	.21**
6. EXC						(.90)	-.14**	-.15**	-.10**	.32**	.23**	.17**	.35**
7. SS							(.85)	.88**	.81**	-.24**	-.07*	-.27**	-.33**
8. FHCS								(.87)	.87**	-.23**	-.06	-.30**	-.34**
9. FCCS									(.87)	-.19**	-.02	-.28**	-.30**
10. MD										(.87)	.32**	.26**	.45**
11. NWFI											(.80)	.19**	.34**
12. NIWFI												(.70)	.29**
13. IEWI													(.83)
M	3.77	3.06	2.28	3.28	2.77	2.11	5.44	5.63	5.41	2.38	2.95	2.35	1.65
SD	1.25	0.98	1.14	1.00	1.33	1.33	1.25	1.22	1.23	0.84	1.10	0.91	0.88

Note: NWFC = Not working full time of colleagues, NIWFC = No intention to work faithfully of colleagues, IEWC = Illegal exploitation from working of colleagues, ENT = Psychological entitlement, DIS = Disregarding, EXC = Excision, SS = Shame to sin, FHCS = Fear of having committed a sin, FCCS = Fear of the consequences of committing a sin, MD = Moral disengagement, NWFI = Not working full time of individuals, NIWFI = No intention to work faithfully of individuals, IEWI = Illegal exploitation from working of individuals.

* $p < .05$, two-tailed. ** $p < .01$, two-tailed.

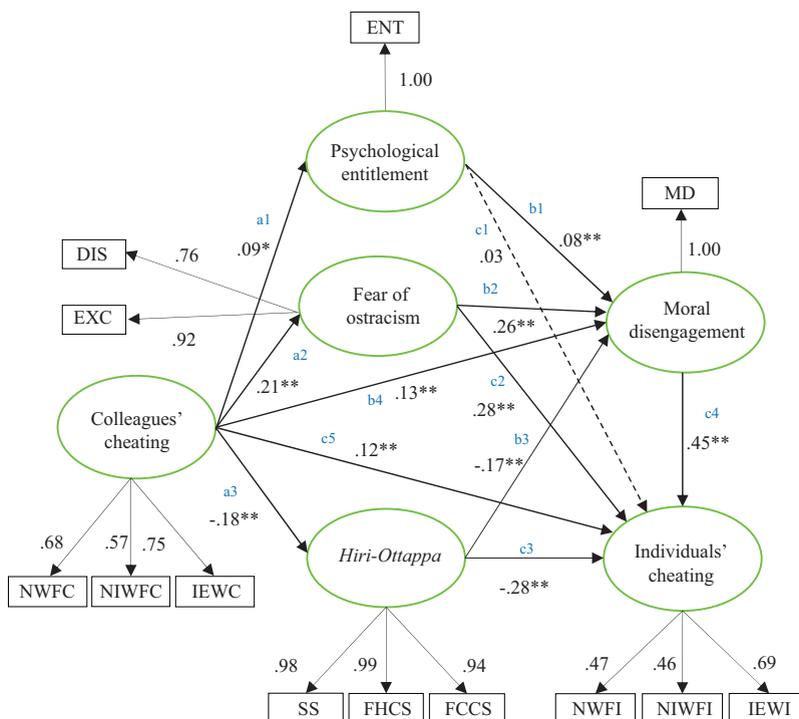


Figure 1 Causal model of individuals' cheating in the organization that was consistent with empirical data

Note: dotted line = nonsignificant path.

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

Table 2 Standardized effects of the causal model of individuals' cheating in the organization

Variables	Individuals' cheating in the organization		
	Standardized Total Effects	Standardized Indirect Effects	Standardized Direct Effects
Colleagues' cheating	.33**	.21**	.12**
Psychological entitlement	.06	.03*	.03
Fear of ostracism	.40**	.12**	.28**
Hiri-Ottappa	-.36**	-.08**	-.28**
Moral disengagement	.45**	-	.45**

Note: Statistical significance is based on 95% bootstrap confidence interval of unstandardized effect not including 0.

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

Table 2 and Table 3 indicate that individuals' cheating in the organization is significantly influenced by colleagues' cheating, both directly and indirectly, supporting the hypothesis set. These findings confirmed that our mediating variables could explain the influence process of colleague's cheating on individuals' cheating in the organization. The direct influence is positive, but the indirect influences that pass on various variables are both positive and negative. These show that individuals can respond to colleague's cheating differently—cheating or not cheating accordingly—based on the internal factors such as fear of ostracism,

Hiri-Ottappa. This result is consistent with the psychological and Buddhist concepts that hold that the characteristics and cognitive processes of individuals are an important part in determining human behavior and allow people to respond differently to the same stimuli (Aronson et al., 2013; Phra Phrom Kunaporn (P. Payutto), 2012). This result therefore also implies that the internal factors are important in deterring cheating—in particular, facilitating or allowing people to think in the right view before they act. This is consistent with the Buddhist concept that the right view or “*sammathithi*” leads to the right action.

Table 3 The results of the analysis and comparison of standardized indirect effects that passed through each mediated variable, and of standardized direct effect with standardized total indirect effect of the causal model of individuals' cheating in the organization

Analysis	Unstandardized Effect	95% CI		Standardized Effect
		Lower	Upper	
Standardized indirect effects that passed through each mediated variable				
1 Psychological entitlement ($a_1*b_1*c_4$) + (a_1*c_1)	.00	-1.14	0.01	.01
2 Fear of ostracism [$(a_2*b_2*c_4) + (a_2*c_2)$]	.05*	0.03	0.09	.08
3 <i>Hiri-Ottappa</i> [$(a_3*b_3*c_4) + (a_3*c_3)$]	.04*	0.02	0.06	.06
4 Moral disengagement (b_4*c_4)	.04*	0.02	0.07	.06
Comparing standardized indirect effects that passed through each mediated variable				
5 Psychological entitlement versus Fear of ostracism (1-2)	-.05*	-0.08	-0.02	-.08
6 Psychological entitlement versus <i>Hiri-Ottappa</i> (1-3)	-.04*	-0.06	-0.02	-.06
7 Psychological entitlement versus Moral disengagement (1-4)	-.03*	-0.06	-0.01	-.05
8 Fear of ostracism versus <i>Hiri-Ottappa</i> (2-3)	.01	-0.02	0.04	.02
9 Fear of ostracism versus Moral disengagement (2-4)	.01	-0.02	0.05	.02
10 <i>Hiri-Ottappa</i> versus Moral disengagement (3-4)	.00	-0.03	0.03	.00
Standardized direct effect and standardized total indirect effect				
11 Standardized direct effect of colleagues' cheating on individuals' cheating in the organization.	.07*	0.02	0.14	.12*
12 Standardized total indirect effect that passed through psychological entitlement (1), fear of ostracism (2), <i>Hiri-Ottappa</i> (3), and moral disengagement (4)	.13*	0.09	0.19	.21*
13 Comparing of standardized direct effect (11) with standardized total indirect effect (12)	.06	-0.14	0.01	-.09

Note: CI = confidence intervals; * $p = .05$ (95% CI that do not include zero).

As for the indirect influence, it was found that positive influence mediated significantly through fear of ostracism and moral disengagement. These findings showed that colleagues' cheating led to individuals' cheating because an individual was afraid of being excluded from the group and/or that individual used psychological mechanisms of moral disengagement. These results are consistent with finding that a fear of social exclusion (Cavazza et al., 2014) and moral disengagement (Farnese et al., 2011) are likely to be mediating variables and positively affected workplace deviance or cheating. The negative influence mediated significantly through *Hiri-Ottappa*, which also had a significant negative influence on moral disengagement. This shows that *Hiri-Ottappa* would effectively inhibit both moral disengagement and individuals' cheating in the organization, just like other ethical virtues that have been found in several other studies (Brunell et al., 2011). In addition, the results also showed that *Hiri-Ottappa*

would decline when seeing colleagues cheat. When *Hiri-Ottappa* is reduced, the individuals' cheating will increase. This result is probably because a person's reduced morals cause him/her to judge the wrong behaviors as being less wrong or less morally condemnable, resulting in less guilt and less shame in displaying those behaviors (Abraham & Giovanni Pea, 2020; Bandura, 1999). These results are consistent with other studies that have investigated how morals affect cheating (e.g. Brunell et al., 2011).

In the direct effect, we found that it is only positive. This means that colleagues' cheating clearly leads to individuals' cheating in the organization. The more cheating by colleagues that occurred, the more individuals' cheating increased. The direct effect could also imply that cheating after others have cheated might occur directly without careful thinking or without knowing that it is wrong (Reynolds, Dang, Yam, & Leavitt, 2014). This may occur because a person has no

time to think or ponder before conducting that behavior. This phenomenon corresponds to the concept that conforming can occur automatically, particularly based on the suggestibility of other people (Myers, 2015), and the concept that if social influence is very strong, it can cause individuals to comply or act according to group needs more than following their personal values or attitudes (Forsyth, 2019). The strength of social influence would increase if there is a descriptive norm or example (Aronson et al., 2013) such as the colleagues' cheating and/or there is a collective culture such as Thai society (Forsyth, 2019).

As for a comparison of effect sizes, Table 3 shows no significant difference between the direct effect and the total indirect effect. The result implies that individuals' cheating in the organization can occur equally, both through the characteristics and thinking processes of the person and through the automatic process. This is in accordance with the psychological principle that the behaviors of a person can occur both intentionally (Bandura, 1999) and automatically (Shalvi, Eldar, & Bereby-Meyer, 2012). In all mediated variables, it was found that fear of ostracism had the most powerful effect. It also could lead to individuals' cheating directly without influencing through moral disengagement. This finding could mean that individuals who cheat after seeing colleagues cheat do not feel guilty and self-blame, including fear of others' blame. This finding is consistent with the study of Ashforth and Anand (2003), in which it was found that the mutually reinforcing processes underlying normalization could make a moral person engage regularly in corruption without experiencing conflict. Another reason may be that fear of ostracism was a variable that bound an individual to others. This result is supported by the nature of cronyism and flattering values in the organization (The National Legislative Assembly, 2016) and the idea of a collectivist society, which is a prevalent characteristic of Thai society. This could also imply that in other different societies, psychological factors that could help explain the effects of colleagues' cheating to individuals' cheating could be markedly different. Thus, this topic is notable for further research.

As for psychological entitlement, it was found that it had a significant indirect effect through moral disengagement but had an insignificant direct effect on individuals' cheating in the organization. The result implies that psychological entitlement does not encourage individuals to cheat openly, but it will do that after using the process of adjusting that cheating as an acceptable behavior. This may be due its association with greed

and selfishness (Krekels & Pandelaere, 2015), which can lead to blame from society and others, including from themselves. Consequently, people chose to find good reasons for their own cheating before doing it to maintain the feeling of being a good person and having a positive image of themselves.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The current study shows that cheating in the workplace tends to have the ability to spread from one person to another, but this is not always the case. Notably, the key to making a difference in the response to the same situation is an individual's decision-making and personality. These results are consistent with the concept of psychology and Buddhism that hold that humans have the ability and potential to think and consider things by themselves and can define their own behavior. Our research suggests that the prevention of individuals' cheating due to colleagues' cheating in an organization can be done by dealing decisively with those who cheated in order for them not to become a stimulus or model for others. It can also be done by individuals practicing the right view of thinking, or *Sammathithi*, to lead to doing the right thing, encouraging everyone to believe in themselves and have the courage to do good things, improving or developing values, rules or regulations for working in the organization to allow personnel to express their opinions or their beliefs that may be inconsistent with the ideas of the group or the boss independently. Such behavior is not an offense, but it is admirable and deserves appreciation to reduce the power of the group or of the boss, and to resolve the fear of ostracism, as well as educating individuals to develop or strengthen internal ethics and virtues, such as through the Buddhist *Hiri-Ottappa*.

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest.

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