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# Unethical Pro-Organizational Behaviors: Antecedents and Boundary Conditions

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Unethical Pro-Organizational Behaviors: Antecedents and Boundary Conditions

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree  
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## Abstract

The goals of the current study were to examine the antecedents and boundary conditions of a new construct called unethical pro-organizational behavior (UPB) defined as behaviors that are unethical but at the same time helping the organizations (e.g., giving a low performing employee a letter of recommendation to help him/her find a job in another organization). Drawing from social exchange theory, antecedents such as leader-member exchange, perceived organizational support, idiosyncratic deals, and leader-member exchange were hypothesized to be positively related to UPB. Three moderators of the impact of the social exchange variables on UPB: were also investigated: moral identity, psychological entitlement, and supervisor's embodiment of the organization.

Data was collected in a cross-sectional survey from 269 employees and 144 supervisors. The hypotheses were tested using correlations and moderated multiple regressions. The results indicate that none of the hypotheses were supported. However, there were some interesting unexpected findings as some social exchange variables were found to correlate negatively with UPB. Implications for future research and practice are discussed.



## Introduction

The number of high profile corporate financial and accounting scandals suggests that unethical acts are almost common place in contemporary organizations. A number of explanations have been proposed as to why employees engage in such acts (Umphress, Bingham, & Mitchell, 2010): for their own benefit (e.g., Greenberg, 2002), as a form of retaliation against the organization (e.g., Skarlicki & Folger, 1997), or to harm the organization and/or stakeholders (e.g., Spector & Fox, 2005; Thau, Aquino, & Poortvliet, 2007). The purpose of this paper is to identify antecedents and boundary conditions on a neglected type of unethical behavior: unethical pro-organizational behavior (UPB; Umphress et al., 2010). In the next sections, I will define UPB, examine differences between UPB and similar constructs, and advance theoretically derived antecedents and boundary conditions.

### *Unethical Pro-Organizational Behaviors*

Umphress and Bingham (2010) recently introduced the concept of unethical pro-organizational behaviors (UPB), which refers to employees' engagement in unethical acts that benefit the organization and/or its members. UPB comprises acts that are illegal or that violate societal norms and values (Jones, 1991; Umphress et al., 2010). Moreover, although UPB is a type of pro-organizational behavior not formally required in job descriptions, employees carry out these acts with the specific intention of helping the organization. Sometimes, engaging in UPB may result in destructive outcomes for the

organization. However, when defining UPB, Umphress et al. (2010) take into account the pro-organizational aspect of these unethical behaviors and disregard the potential negative consequences associated with performing these acts. Umphress et al. (2010) developed a measure of UPB based on interviews with executive MBA students. Given the conceptual similarity between UPB and in-role, organizational citizenship behaviors defined as discretionary behaviors that are not part of the job requirements that contribute to organizational functioning (Borman, Penner, Allen, & Motowidlo, 2001), and counterproductive work behaviors, defined as voluntary employee behaviors that harm or intend to harm the organization and/or its stakeholders (e.g. clients, employees, coworkers, Spector & Fox, 2005), it is important to establish the discriminant validity of UPB. Umphress et al. (2010) conducted a CFA and found that UPB is conceptually distinct from measures of in-role behaviors, OCB-I, and OCB-O. In a separate sample, they found that a three-factor solution containing UPB, interpersonal deviance, and organizational deviance provided better fit to the data compared with the alternative models. Therefore, they found evidence of construct validity for the UPB measure. Based on social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), which argues that individuals define themselves based on their social group memberships, Umphress et al. (2010) conducted two field studies and investigated whether organizational identification, a form of social categorization, is positively associated with the willingness to perform UPB (study 1) and with engagement in UPB (study 2). They found that organizational identification was neither significantly related to the willingness to perform UPB, nor with actual engagement in UPB. They also investigated the moderating role of positive reciprocity beliefs. Research has shown that there are individual differences with regard to

endorsement of positive reciprocity beliefs (Clark & Mills, 1979). More specifically, individuals having strong positive reciprocity beliefs felt the need to reciprocate the favorable treatment they received from their exchange partners, whereas individuals holding low reciprocity beliefs did not feel any obligation to return the favorable treatment. Umphress et al. (2010) found support for the moderating role of the positive reciprocity beliefs in the relationship between organizational identification and the willingness to engage in UPB (study 1) and actual engagement in UPB (study 2). They conducted simple slope tests and found that at high levels of positive reciprocity beliefs there was a positive relationship between organizational identification and both the willingness to perform UPB and engagement in UPB, whereas at low levels of positive reciprocity beliefs the relationships between organizational identification and the willingness to conduct UPB and engagement in UPB were non-significant.

#### *Organizational Misbehavior and UPB*

It is important to differentiate unethical pro-organizational behaviors from other conceptually related constructs such as illegal corporate behavior (Baucus & Baucus, 1997), necessary evils (Molinsky & Margolis, 2005), organizational misbehavior (Vardi & Weitz, 2004), positive deviance (Warren, 2003), and pro-social rule-breaking (Morrison, 2006).

Baucus and Baucus (1997) defined *illegal corporate behavior* as illegal acts conducted by members or agents of the organization with the intention of benefiting the organization. While illegal corporate behavior comprises only illegal acts performed with the intention to better the organization's interests, unethical pro-organizational behavior consists not only of unlawful acts, but also of acts that violate societal norms. Further,

both conceptualizations take into account intentionality in performing illegal/unethical acts. However, illegal corporate behavior involves both illegal acts conducted volitionally and unintentionally, while UPB comprises only acts that are conducted with the specific intention to help the company. UPB excludes errors or acts of unintentional negligence. More specifically, an instance of illegal corporate behavior occurs when an employee unknowingly fails to detect a safety hazard before selling the company's product. However, the same act would not be considered UPB.

Umphress and Bingham (2010) noted similarities between UPB and necessary evils. Molinsky and Margolis (2005) argued that employees must sometimes engage in behaviors that inflict harm on the recipient of those behaviors, in order to benefit the individual, the organization, or the society at large. Molinsky and Margolis (2005) termed these acts necessary evils and defined them as “work-related task[s] in which an individual must, as a part of his or her job, perform an act that causes emotional or physical harm to another human being in the service of achieving some perceived greater good” (Molinsky & Margolis, 2005, p. 247). The authors listed examples of necessary evils, including instances when health care employees perform painful procedures as an important part of treatment, when teachers give negative feedback to their students for developmental purposes, or when police officers have to evict people from their homes. A difference between necessary evils and UPB is that necessary evils generally consist of ethical behaviors, whereas UPB consists only on unethical behaviors, or acts that violate societal norms. Similar to UPB, employees may perform necessary evils with the specific intention to help the organization. However, necessary evils may also be performed in order to benefit the society, whereas when engaging in UPB employees intend to benefit

only the organization at the expense of the larger community (e.g. customers, clients). Also, necessary evils and UPB differ with respect to the motives that drive employees to perform them. More specifically, necessary evils include behaviors which employees are expected to perform as a part of their professional role and duty, and the refusal to engage in these acts may lead to negative consequences such as disapproval or job termination (Molinsky & Margolis, 2005). In contrast, UPB comprises acts that are neither specified in job descriptions, nor encouraged by management (Umphress et al., 2010).

*Organizational misbehavior (OMB)*, a construct similar to unethical pro-organizational behavior (Umphress & Bingham, 2010), comprises “any intentional action by members of organizations that violates core organizational and/or societal norms” (Vardi & Wiener, 1996, p. 151). Vardi and his collaborators (Vardi & Weitz, 2004; Vardi & Wiener, 1996) described three distinct forms of organizational misbehavior based on the intention that motivates the enactment of the misconduct: (1) behaviors performed with the intention to benefit the self; (2) acts intended to help the employing organization; (3) acts targeted at inflicting harm either to the organization or its stakeholders.

Although Umphress and Bingham (2010) noted there is a conceptual similarity between the type of misbehavior performed with the intention to benefit the organization and UPB, they also emphasized three aspects in which the two approaches differ. UPB framework is rooted in social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), whereas the conceptualization of OMB is rooted in the theory of reasoned action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), and also in decision (March & Simon, 1958) and social information processing (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978) theories. Organizational misbehavior refers to acts that violate either organizational and/or societal norms. In contrast, UPB comprises only acts that

violate societal norms. Vardi and Wiener (1996) were concerned with the implications and negative consequences of engaging in OMB for the organization.

Another potential difference between OMB and UPB stems from the judgmental value associated with the act of violating social norms and values. UPB refers specifically to acts that are illegal or not ethically acceptable for the society at large, irrespective of whether they are deemed acceptable or not for the organization (Umpress et al., 2010). Therefore, these acts deviate from the societal norms and are perceived as negative by the members of the larger society. In contrast, OMB does not conceptualize norm-breaking behavior as being inherently undesirable and destructive. Within OMB framework the norm-breaking behavior can be negatively perceived by members of a certain group (e.g. larger community, society) and as desirable by members of another group (e.g. organization). There is more relativism embedded in the evaluation of the desirability of the norm-violating behavior.

Although much research has been conducted within the realm of destructive types of organizational deviance (Bennett & Robinson, 2000), fewer studies have investigated the *positive or constructive side of deviance* (Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2003; Warren, 2003). Robinson and Bennett (1995) defined organizational deviance as volitional behaviors that violate organizational norms and cause damage to the organization and/or its members. In contrast, positive deviance has been defined as volitional norm-breaking behaviors with honorable intentions to benefit the organization or its employees (Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2004). Although the two types of deviance mentioned above are motivated by opposite intentions, both forms of deviance involve a divergence from organizational norms. Warren (2003) developed an integrative approach of employee

deviance based on: whether acts performed by employees deviate or conform to societal norms and values; and whether employees' behavior conform or deviate from the workplace group norms. One type of deviance described by the author is destructive conformity which comprises acts that can be in conformity with group norms (e.g. coworkers supporting abusive supervision), but at the same time violate hypernorms, or societal moral standards. A similarity between unethical pro-organizational behavior and destructive conformity is that both constructs involve a departure from hypernorms, or societal benchmarks. However, UPB focuses only on unethical acts, regardless of whether they conform or deviate from the workplace group norms. UPB also considers the intention that motivates employees to engage in unethical acts, whereas Warren (2003) does not categorize deviance based on intentionality.

Pro-social rule breaking, a type of positive deviance, is a construct recently introduced in literature by Morrison (2006), which encompasses deviant behaviors conducted with constructive intentions to better the organization or its stakeholders. The author identified three forms of PSRB: (1) rule breaking acts to perform organizational tasks and duties in a more efficient way; (2) rule breaking acts to help a coworker with job tasks; (3) acts that violate rules in order to provide better customer service.

A difference between UPB and PSRB is that UPB violates hypernorms, or societal norms and values (Umphress & Bingham, 2010), whereas PSRB violates explicit organizational policies and rules that have been enforced by management (Dahling, Chau, Mayer, & Gregory, 2010). Both UPB and PSRB take into account the specific intention behind performing unethical/rule-breaking acts - to better the organization and/or others (e.g. stakeholders in the case of PSRB and the organization in the case of

UPB). More specifically, a rule-breaking behavior is considered pro-social only if it's conducted with the specific intention to benefit the organization or its stakeholders (Morrison, 2006). Therefore, PSRB is different from other destructive forms of deviance that are motivated primarily by self-interest and vengeful attitudes. Also, Umphress et al. (2010) acknowledged that although their "conception of UPB is not divorced from self-interested views of unethical behavior" (p. 770), generally an unethical behavior is considered pro-organizational if it's primarily motivated by the intention to help the organization and/or its members. Both UPB and PSRB conceptualizations exclude workplace behaviors performed accidentally or involving mistakes and errors.

#### *A Social Exchange Perspective on UPB*

According to social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), organizations and their employees engage in both economic (e.g., salary and fringe benefits as rewards for work) and social exchanges (e.g., the employees respond to fair treatment from the organization by engaging in behaviors such as organizational citizenship behaviors). Organizations and their employees are involved in an interdependent relationship (the outcomes are based on a combination of both the organization and the employees' efforts). The social exchanges between employees and their organizations are guided by norms of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Generally speaking, exchange imbalances are resolved in a quid pro quo fashion: positive treatment from the organization is reciprocated by the employees with positive attitudes and behaviors (e.g., Wayne, Shore, & Liden, 1997), while negative treatment is reciprocated with negative attitudes and behaviors (e.g., Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007).



As applied to the current paper, employees are more likely to engage in UPB when they receive positive treatment from their organization. In the next sections, I will discuss specific forms of favorable treatment received by employees that may lead to their engagement in UPB.

#### *Leader-Member Exchange and UPB*

The Leader-Member Exchange approach is grounded in social exchange theory (Sparrowe & Liden, 1997). Leader-member exchange (LMX) theory investigates the quality of the exchange relationship between leaders and subordinates. LMX postulates that some employees have a high quality leader-subordinate relationship, whereas others develop a low-quality exchange relationship with their supervisors (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Liden, Sparrowe, & Wayne, 1997; Schriesheim, Castro, & Cogliser, 1999). In high-quality LMX relationships, employees receive more resources from the leader (e.g. information, support, attention, latitude) and tend to reciprocate by performing their job better, by having higher loyalty and commitment, and by engaging in more citizenship behaviors. At the emotional level, these high-quality exchange relationships are characterized by feelings of mutual trust, respect, and shared values (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Liden & Maslyn, 1998). In contrast, in low-quality exchange relationships, supervisors and followers exchange resources within the boundaries specified by the formal employment contract (Erdogan & Liden, 2002; Martin, Egitropaki, Thomas, & Topakas, 2010).

Previous research made a distinction between in-group and out-group employees. The in-group members, also named “trusted assistants” had high-quality LMX relationships with their supervisors, whereas out-group employees developed low-quality

exchange relationships with their leaders (Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1975; Dienesch & Liden, 1986).

Meta-analytic work by Gerstner and Day (1997) provided evidence that subordinate ratings of LMX quality were positively associated with objective job performance, job performance rated by supervisors, and with attitudinal reactions such as overall job satisfaction, satisfaction with leadership, and organizational commitment. The authors also reported negative relationships between LMX ratings and turnover intentions. Furthermore, research shows that high exchange relationships between leaders and subordinates have also been associated with employee outcomes such as: decreased turnover (Graen, Liden, and Hoel, 1982), innovative behaviors (Janssen and Van Yperen, 2004; Tierney, Farmer, and Graen, 1999), and citizenship behaviors (Ilies, Nahrgang, & Morgeson, 2007). Therefore, employees who have good exchange relationships with the supervisor tend to perform their jobs better, to engage more in extra-role behaviors and to hold more positive attitudes than their coworkers in low-quality exchange relationships.

Employees in high LMX relationships may increase their in-role and extra-role efforts as a way of reciprocating for the positive resources they receive from the supervisor (Settoon, Bennett, & Liden, 1996). In addition, research shows that employees who have high quality exchanges with their supervisors are less likely to engage in harmful acts against the organization such as retaliatory behaviors compared with their counterparts in low quality LMX relationships (Townsend, Philips & Elkins, 2000).

Umphress and Bingham (2010) place UPB within the social exchange framework. The authors suggest that employees may engage in UPB as a way of reciprocating the positive LMX relationship with their supervisors. These employees may overlook the

moral implications of their acts for the society at large in their rush to engage in acts that support the organization's best interests. Based on these arguments, I propose the following hypothesis:

*Hypothesis 1: there will be a positive relationship between LMX quality and engagement in UPB.*

Recent research suggests that employees may differ in their perceptions of the degree to which the supervisor identifies with the organization (Eisenberger, Karagonlar, Stinglhamber, Neves, Becker, Gonzales-Morales, & Steiger-Mueller, 2010), which is reflected in a new construct termed *supervisor's organizational embodiment* (SOE). If SOE is high employees perceive the supervisor as being a representative of the organization. The treatment employees receive from the leader (e.g. praise, criticism) is considered as coming from the organization itself. In contrast, at low levels of SOE the leader is perceived as acting independently from the organization and employees view their relationship with the supervisor as less indicative of their exchange with the organization (Eisenberger et al., 2010).

Employees are interested in appraising whether the LMX relationship with their supervisor also reflects the exchange relationship with the organization. Positive exchanges with the organization meets needs such as approval and esteem, and increase the employees' expectations that acting in the organization's best interests and achieving organizational goals will be praised and rewarded (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986). Meta-analytic work by Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) found that the positive exchange with the organization was strongly related to favorable outcomes such as increased affective commitment, higher job satisfaction, and heightened positive mood

in the workplace. In contrast, meta-analytic results showed a moderately strong negative relationship between employees' favorable social exchanges with the organization and consequences such as employee strains (e.g. fatigue, headaches, anxiety, and burnout), and withdrawal behaviors. Lee and Pecce (2007) reported a positive association between the perceived valuation of employees by the organization and organization-based self-esteem.

Eisenberger and colleagues (2010) postulated that employees with high SOE perceptions tend to extend the positive exchange relationship with the supervisor at the organizational level, which in turn leads to heightened affective organizational commitment due to three reasons. First, employees equate considerate treatment from the supervisor with favorable treatment from the organization, and based on reciprocity norm they tend to increase their affective commitment toward the organization as a way of returning the support and consideration they received. Second, the positive social exchange with the organization meets employees' socioemotional needs, which further leads to an increase in their identification with the organization and enhanced affective commitment. Finally, the transfer of the positive LMX relationship at the organizational level when SOE is high leads to increased affective commitment through enhancing employees' positive affect in the workplace.

The authors found in two studies that SOE moderated the relationship between LMX and affective commitment. In the first study LMX had a strong relationship with affective commitment at high levels of SOE, but at low levels of SOE the LMX-commitment relationship became non-significant. In the second study LMX had a

stronger relationship with affective commitment at high levels of SOE compared to low levels of SOE.

Based on similar arguments as those suggested by Eisenberger et al. (2010) (e.g. returning the considerate treatment based on the norm of reciprocity, need fulfillment, and increasing job-related affective reactions at work), I expect SOE to moderate the relationship between LMX and a behavioral outcome - UPB. The relationship between LMX and UPB should be stronger when employees perceive the positive social exchange they have with their supervisor is also indicative of a good social exchange relationship with the organization.

*Hypothesis 2: T SOE will moderate the relationship between LMX and UPB, such that the positive relationship between LMX and UPB will be stronger for employees who perceive high levels of SOE.*

#### *Social Exchange Variables and UPB*

*Perceived Organizational Support and UPB.* According to Organizational Support Theory (OST) (Eisenberger et al. 1986), employees form global beliefs with regards to the degree to which the organization appreciates their contributions and is concerned with their welfare. These beliefs were labeled perceived organizational support (POS). Based on these global beliefs, employees infer the extent to which the organization is committed to them, which in turn, shapes the degree of employees' commitment toward the organization. In addition, POS contributes to enhancing employees' emotional attachment to the organization by fulfilling socioemotional needs such as approval, emotional support, and esteem (Armeli, Eisenberger, Fasolo, & Lynch, 1998; Eisenberger et al., 1986). Due to having their needs fulfilled, employees develop a

sense of belongingness to the organization, which further encourages them to incorporate their organizational membership and their role status in their social self-definition (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

According to the reciprocity norm (Gouldner, 1960), employees who perceive they are highly valued by the organization feel the obligation to repay the considerate treatment they received from the exchange partner by engaging in behaviors that promote the organization's best interests. Moreover, high levels of POS enhance employees' expectation that the organization will value and reward their strivings toward achieving organizational goals (e.g. bonuses, salary increases). Research has shown that POS is related to attitudinal reactions, such as organizational commitment (Rhoades, Eisenberger, & Armelli, 2001; Settoon et al., 1996), job satisfaction (Eisenberger, Cummings, Armeli, & Lynch, 1997; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002) and turnover intentions (Masterson, Lewis, Goldman, & Taylor, 2000; Wayne, Shore, & Liden, 1997). Also, high POS is related to behavioral outcomes that help the organization achieve its goals, such as in-role performance (Eisenberger, Armeli, Rexwinkel, Lynch, & Rhoades, 2001), employee innovation indicated by the constructiveness of anonymous employees suggestions that benefit the organization (Eisenberger, Fasolo, & Davis-LaMastro, 1990), absenteeism (Eisenberger et al., 1986, Study 2), withdrawal behavior (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002), and organizational citizenship behaviors directed at the organization (Lynch, Eisenberger, & Armeli, 1999; Masterson et al., 2000). Therefore, employees who feel the organization values their contributions hold more constructive work attitudes, and are more likely to return the positive organizational treatment by performing their jobs better, increasing their innovative proposals, exhibiting less withdrawal, and engaging in

extra-role behaviors that benefit the organization. Moreover, Colbert, Mount, Harter, Witt, and Barrick (2004) found that employees holding high perceptions of organizational support tended to engage less in deviant acts targeted at other employees in the organization (samples 3 and 4).

UPB is rooted in social exchange framework. Employees may engage in unethical pro-organizational acts as a way of returning the considerate treatment and support they received from the organization. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

*Hypothesis 3: There will be a positive relationship between perceived organizational support and UPB.*

*Justice and UPB.* Recent conceptualizations of justice differentiate among four types of justice: distributive, procedural, interpersonal, and informational (Colquitt, 2001; Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter, & Ng, 2001). Specifically, distributive justice refers to the perceptions of equity regarding the distribution of organizational outcomes (Adams, 1965). Procedural justice refers to the fairness of the procedures that underlie the allocation of rewards (Leventhal, 1980; Thibaut & Walker, 1975). Interpersonal justice focuses on the quality of interpersonal treatment (e.g. dignity, respect) received from organizational agents that establish the processes of distributing outcomes or allocating rewards. Informational justice refers to explaining the reasons behind applying the procedures in a certain way or distributing the rewards in a certain manner (Colquitt et al., 2001). Meta-analytic results (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001) indicated that justice facets predict both employee attitudinal and behavioral outcomes. For instance, the authors reported a positive relationship of similar magnitude between procedural and

distributive justice and OCB. Also, procedural justice was most strongly related to measures of job performance and CWB. In addition, there were associations between all justice facets and measures of satisfaction, commitment and trust. Therefore, higher perceptions of justice in the workplace are related to increases in performing citizenship behaviors and job duties, better work-related attitudes, and with less involvement in behaviors that harm the organization.

Although focusing on specific types of justice is not without its merits, recent research emphasizes the benefits of investigating overall justice judgments. For instance, Greenberg (2001) argues that when people form their appraisals of justice they generally make a holistic judgment based on the availability of information. People are particularly sensitive to poor interpersonal treatment, since it's perceived as being difficult to ignore. In a similar fashion, Lind (2001b) argues that although people can differentiate among distinct forms of justice when responding to survey items, the overall perception of fairness has the biggest impact on behavior. He also pointed out that justice researchers have focused extensively on distinguishing among the types of justice and have ignored the common aspects connecting the various forms of justice judgments. Moreover, Tornblom and Vermunt (1999) suggested that the components of fairness cannot be separated from the overall fairness of the situation. Therefore, focusing on separate forms of justice instead of an overall assessment of justice may not be the best way to understand how people form their justice judgments.

In a recent study, Ambrose and Schminke (2009) posited that overall justice is a proximal antecedent of outcomes, whereas distinct justice types represent more distal antecedents. The authors conducted two studies to investigate the mediating role of



overall justice judgment between distinct justice forms and outcomes. In Study 1 they found evidence that overall justice mediated the relationship between the distinct types of justice and self-reported attitudinal reactions such as: job satisfaction, affective commitment, and turnover intentions. In Study 2 they found evidence that overall justice judgments mediated the relationship between specific forms of justice and supervisor rated employee behavioral outcomes, such as: OCB, task performance and deviance.

Based on the findings presented above which show that overall justice might be a more proximal predictor of employee outcomes compared with distinct types of justice, I will focus on overall justice instead of specific facets of justice. Consistent with social-exchange theory, I propose that employees who perceive fair treatment from the organization are more likely to reciprocate by engaging in UPB.

*Hypothesis 4: there will be a positive relationship between employees' overall appraisal of justice at work and unethical pro-organizational behaviors.*

*Idiosyncratic Deals and UPB.* In a competitive labor market, organizations are motivated to retain valued employees by customizing work arrangements that meet the employees' needs and preferences (Rousseau, 2001). The new concept describing this organizational reality, termed idiosyncratic deals or i-deals, refers to special employment arrangements that are bargained between an employee and his or her employer (Rousseau, 2004). Four characteristics that differentiate i-deals from other social exchange transactions have been proposed in the literature (Rousseau, Ho, & Greenberg, 2006). The first feature is that i-deals are *individually negotiated*. Since certain employees possess more marketable knowledge and skills, and their contributions are valued more by their employers, they tend to ask for more work arrangements compared

to their less valued counterparts. The second feature refers to *heterogeneity*, which indicates that certain employees have work arrangements that differ from those of their coworkers in a similar position or performing the same work. These employment terms are tailored to meet the specific needs and preferences of core employees. The idiosyncratic arrangement differs from other types of person-specific work arrangements such as preferential treatment (e.g. promoting a less qualified employee at the expense of other skilled coworkers due to personal or political reasons) or unauthorized taking (e.g. using organizational supplies without permission for personal purposes) (Rousseau, 2004). The third characteristic refers to the *beneficial impact* of i-deals both for the employee and the employer. The firm is interested in retaining and motivating a highly valued employee. In return for his or her services, the employee asks for a desirable employment term, which is granted by the organization. The last feature refers to the *scope* of i-deals. More specifically, some employees may negotiate only a few aspects of their employment arrangement, whereas others may customize their work arrangements to a greater extent by negotiating almost all their conditions of employment: salary, job tasks, schedule flexibility, location, etc.

The i-deals literature is grounded in social exchange theory, which studies the dynamics of resource exchanges that occur between employees and the employer (Blau, 1964; Greenberg et al., 2004, Rousseau, 2001). From employees' standpoint i-deals convey information about the quality of their exchange relationship with the employer (Rousseau et al., 2006). In turn, based on the norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960), signals of appreciation and support by the organization may shape employees' attitudes and behaviors. For instance, Rosen, Slater, Chang, and Johnson (2011) developed a

measure of i-deals negotiated by employees and also examined the attitudinal outcomes of i-deals. They found that work and task responsibility and schedule flexibility i-deals were the strongest predictors of attitudinal reactions (e.g. organizational commitment, and job satisfaction). Moreover, employees who receive i-deals may engage in voluntary behaviors that benefit the employer, such as organizational citizenship behaviors, as a way of reciprocating the considerate treatment they received (Greenberg et al., 2004). In a recent study, Anand, Vidhyarthi, Liden and Rousseau (2010) argued that granting an i-deal to an employee may sometimes have a negative impact on other employees. For instance, if a worker is granted schedule flexibility in order to balance the demands of his or her work and family life, the other coworkers may need to perform some of the core employees' duties during the time when he or she is absent. Also, the idiosyncratic nature of these work arrangements may sometimes foster perceptions of unfair treatment among the immediate coworkers (Rousseau, 2004). However, Lai, Rousseau, and Chang (2009) postulated that establishing workplace friendship with one's coworkers and the nature of employment relationships are important factors that may contribute to peer's acceptance of the core employee's i-deal. Using 20 formal groups they found that coworker's willingness to accept i-deals is greater for group members with whom they share friendship relationships compared with those with whom they are not friends. Also, if coworkers share a social exchange relationship with the employer, they are more willing to accept other employees' i-deals, than when they have an economic exchange relationship with the employer. Furthermore, coworker's belief in gaining a comparable opportunity in the future is positively associated with the acceptance of peer's i-deals. Anand et al. (2010) postulated that recipients of i-deals may engage in discretionary

behaviors targeted at individuals, such as OCBs as a way of alleviating the burden placed on their coworkers, due to the customization of their work arrangements. In addition, they posited that since the organization is the entity that facilitates the negotiation of i-deals, recipients of i-deals may also direct their discretionary contributions toward the organization itself. The authors tested these hypotheses with multilevel modeling and found a positive relationship between i-deals and OCBs targeted both at individuals and at the organization. Therefore, the recipients of i-deals return the favorable treatment they received by engaging in discretionary behavioral outcomes that benefit the employer. UPB is also a discretionary behavior that is intended to benefit the organization. Based on social exchange framework (Blau, 1964), recipients of i-deals may reciprocate the benefits of being granted the favorable work arrangements by engaging in unethical acts with the intention to help the organization.

*Hypothesis 5: There will be a positive relationship between i-deals and UPB.*

Anand et al. (2011) suggested that there may be differences among employees in the degree to which they value i-deals. Research has shown that employees in high quality exchange relationships with their leaders tend to reciprocate the considerate treatment by engaging in citizenship behaviors (Ilies et al., 2007). However, Anand and her colleagues (2010) argued since employees in high quality LMX relationships already enjoy the supervisor's trust and support, and receive more valued resources (e.g. attention, support, latitude, Graen & Scandura, 1987) compared with their coworkers, an additional increase in benefits granted by the organization such as i-deals may not lead to corresponding increases in employees' reciprocation efforts toward the organization, such as more engagement in OCBs. In contrast, in low LMX relationships the exchanges

between supervisors and subordinates do not extend beyond the contractual boundaries (Anand et al., 2010; Martin et al., 2010). These out-group employees receive less support, fewer job benefits, fewer opportunities for career advancement, and also experience less job satisfaction, less organizational commitment, and stronger turnover intentions compared with their high LMX counterparts (Gerstner & Day, 1997; Graen & Uhl Bien, 1995; Vecchio, 1997). Anand et al. (2010) suggested that since i-deals are benefits granted by the organization, they may compensate for the lack of advantages associated with a low LMX relationship. The authors postulated that recipients of i-deals in low LMX relationships may be motivated to return the favorable treatment by engaging in OCBs. Anand and her colleagues (2010) found that LMX moderated the relationship between i-deals and OCBs directed both at individuals and at the organization. More specifically, at low levels of LMX there was a positive relationship between i-deals and OCB-I variables, whereas at high levels of LMX quality the relationship between i-deals and OCB-I was not significant. Similarly, there was a positive relationship between i-deals and OCB-O at low levels of LMX, and a non-significant association between i-deals and OCB-O at high quality LMX.

I-deals negotiation does not occur between employees and the organization itself, but between employees and representatives of the organization (Rosen et al., 2011). Although team members and senior executives can also act as organizational agents (Shore et al., 2004), the immediate manager is most likely to represent the organization during the process of i-deal bargaining (Greenberg et al., 2004; Rosen et al., 2011). Recent research has shown that employees differ in their appraisal of the degree to which the supervisor identifies with the organization, a concept termed supervisor

organizational embodiment (SOE) (Eisenberger et al., 2010). At high levels of SOE employees view the leader as an organizational agent. They extend the considerate treatment received from the leader at the organizational level. Promises and benefits granted by the supervisor are perceived as promises and rewards granted by the organization. However, at low levels of SOE, employees perceive the supervisor as being an independent agent, and subordinate-supervisor exchanges are less informative about the exchanges with the organization (Eisenberger et al., 2010).

Therefore, at high levels of SOE employees may perceive that i-deals granted by the supervisor are also granted by the organization itself. Since an increase in benefits granted by their supervisor signal their contributions are also valued by the organization, recipients of i-deals may engage in more unethical acts that help the organization as a way of returning the positive treatment. In contrast, at low levels of SOE recipients of i-deals view the supervisor as an independent agent and consequently do not extend the positive exchange with the supervisor to the organization. Since receiving benefits from the supervisor is not viewed as an indicator of organizational support and appreciation, recipients of i-deals may not be motivated to reciprocate the increase in i-deals by more engagement in UPB. Therefore, I propose the following hypothesis:

*Hypothesis 6: SOE will moderate the relationship between i-deals and UPB, such that the positive relationship for high SOE employees is stronger than the positive relationship for those low in SOE.*

### *Moral Identity as Moderator*

In addition to investigating the antecedents of UPB, it's also important to investigate the potential moderators of the relationship between the variables grounded in social exchange theory and UPB. Research has shown that moral identity is a construct that has large implications for unethical behaviors (Bennett, Aquino, Reed, & Thau, 2005). Research in moral identity is grounded in social identity theory, which postulates that social group membership serves as a basis for self-definition. More specifically, individuals' self-concept consists of both personal identity (e.g. one's idiosyncratic features) and various social identities such as one's political affiliation, organizational membership, gender, age, and status (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Tajfel, 1979; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). People's multiple social identities form their social self-schema, defined as generalized cognitive representations about the self in the social domain. The social self-schema organizes and categorizes information about one's social identities and guides future processing of relevant information about the self in social situations (Markus, 1977). Drawing from a social-cognitive perspective, Aquino and Reed (2002) argued that moral characteristics may serve as a basis for self-definition, and that moral identity may be another type of social identity that contributes to one's overall social self-schema. However, even earlier conceptualizations of moral identity such as the character perspective (Blasi, 1984) emphasized that individuals differ in the extent to which being moral is central to their self-concept. This differentiation is important since the self-importance of moral identity has large motivational implications for moral behavior (Hart, Atkins, & Ford, 1998). Damon and Hart (1992) proposed that the centrality of morality to the self may be the most important mechanism that links moral judgment and

behavior. They also argued that individuals who define themselves based on moral characteristics are more likely to act according to those beliefs in a consistent manner. Therefore, moral identity is a strong self-regulatory mechanism that may prompt engagement in moral behavior.

Adopting a social-cognitive framework of moral agency, Aquino and Reed (2002) defined moral identity as a “self- conception organized around a set of moral traits” (p. 1424). Similar to the earlier character approach (Blasi, 1984), their conceptualization of moral identity emphasizes that individuals differ with respect to the degree of self-importance of moral identity within their self-conception and that moral identity prompts one’s engagement in moral conduct due to the desire to maintain self-consistency (Shao, Aquino, Freeman, 2008). However, drawing from the social cognitive theories of the self (Kihlstrom & Klein, 1994), Aquino and Reed (2002) proposed that the trait-based approach of moral identity addresses the limitations of previous conceptualizations because it considers that moral traits exist in a network of components and can be activated based on their associations with other traits. Therefore, in order to measure moral identity one does not need to identify the entire range of moral traits that may form one’s moral identity. The self-importance of moral identity can be measured by activating a sample of moral traits that share linkages with other traits that occupy a higher centrality for one’s self-conception. Aquino and Reed (2002) postulated that moral identity has two components: internalization and symbolization. Internalization refers to the degree to which moral characteristics are central for one’s self-conception, whereas symbolization refers to the extent to which individuals express their moral traits publicly through their behaviors. The distinction between the private and the public aspect of



moral identity is consistent with Erikson's (1964) earlier conceptualization of identity as being deeply rooted in one's core self and involving authenticity to oneself in action.

Previous research has shown there are linkages between moral identity and engaging in beneficial behaviors toward others. For instance, Aquino and Reed (2002) found in their Study 5 that a higher centrality of moral identity for one's self-definition was related to a greater likelihood of self-reported engagement in voluntary behaviors intended to promote others' welfare within the prior 2 years. They also showed in their Study 6 that the higher centrality of moral identity, as indicated by the internalization dimension, was associated with a higher likelihood of engaging in donation behaviors. Moreover, Reynolds and Ceranic (2007) found that the other dimension of moral identity, symbolization, predicted charitable giving even after accounting for individuals' moral judgments about giving.

In a recent study, Aquino, McFerran, and Laven (2011) found that participants' exposure to the uncommon goodness condition (as compared to a positive story without moral content) led to a higher engagement in beneficial behaviors toward the exchange partner only when their moral self-schema was highly activated. Reed and Aquino (2003) proposed that the self-importance of moral identity may contribute to expanding individuals' "circle of moral regard" toward out-group members in the context of intergroup conflict. In their Study 3 they examined the influence of two competing self-important identities (moral identity versus national identity) on the American participants' willingness to donate money to the out- versus the in-group members. Results showed that both a higher centrality of moral identity and the strength of American identity exerted an effect on the amount of money donated to the out-group,

represented by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Emergency Effort for Afghan Children and Families. More specifically, the self-importance of moral identity, indicated by the internalization dimension was positively related to donation behaviors to the out-group. In contrast, a stronger American identity was negatively associated with donating money to the out-group. Interestingly, the authors also found that participants' high versus low scores on the centrality of moral identity internalization were associated with an increased likelihood of donating more money to the out-group than to the in-group. In contrast, participants' high scores on the strength of the American identity were associated with a lower probability of favoring the out-group. Therefore, a higher centrality of moral identity can overcome participants' tendency to benefit the in-group and even lead to providing more financial aid to the out-group at the expense of the in-group members.

Previous research indicated that moral identity is also related to unethical workplace behaviors. Aquino, Freeman, Reed, Lim, and Phelps (2009) found that participants with a low versus high centrality of moral identity had a tendency to lie more during business negotiations. Moreover, Skarlicki, van Jaarsveld, and Walker (2008) investigated whether moral identity moderated the relationship between employees' experiences of customer mistreatment and engagement in sabotage behaviors targeted at customers. They found that the 3-way interaction between the two facets of moral identity, internalization and symbolization, and employees' mistreatment by customers predicted retaliation against customers. More specifically, there was a stronger relationship between employees' customer mistreatment and engagement in sabotage for those with high versus low scores in symbolization. However, the relationship between

customer unjust treatment and sabotage did not vary as a function of symbolization for employees high versus low in internalization. Skarlicki et al. (2008) proposed that a highly internalized moral identity tends to suppress sabotage reactions when receiving bad customer treatment due to employees' beliefs that sabotaging others is an immoral and unethical act in itself. In contrast, at low levels of internalization, employees who highly symbolize their moral identity tend to engage in sabotaging behavior as a response to customer mistreatment. Reed and Aquino (2003) postulated that individuals with high self-importance of moral identity may extend the size of the in-group members toward whom they feel obligated to show moral concerns. Moreover, the authors suggested that individuals with high centrality of moral identity tend to increase the psychological boundary of in-group membership to more social groups, and "in the extreme, this psychological boundary might include all of humanity" (p. 1271). Since UPB consists of engaging in acts that violate moral standards within society at large, I propose that individuals with high centrality of moral identity are less likely to engage in UPB as a way of returning the favorable organizational treatment. Therefore, I hypothesize that the relationship between variables grounded in social exchange theory (POS, overall justice, and i-deals) and UPB varies as a function of the centrality of moral identity, such that the positive relationship between a) POS and UPB, b) overall justice and UPB, and c) i-deals and UPB is stronger for individuals with low self-importance of moral identity than for those with high centrality of moral identity.

*Hypothesis 7: The relationship between POS and UPB will be moderated by moral identity such that the relationship is stronger for those low on moral identity.*

*Hypothesis 8: The relationship between overall justice and UPB will be moderated by moral identity such that the relationship is stronger for those low on moral identity.*

*Hypothesis 9: The relationship between i-deals and UPB will be moderated by moral identity such that the relationship is stronger for those low on moral identity.*

#### *Entitlement as Moderator*

Psychological entitlement, another potential moderator in the relationship between variables rooted in social exchange theory and UPB, is a construct which has received only limited attention in the organizational sciences (Harvey & Martinko, 2009). Research suggests that psychological entitlement can be conceptualized as an individual difference variable that can exert an impact on people's attitudes and behaviors (Campbell, Bonacci, Shelton, Exline, & Bushman 2004). Moreover, Campbell and his colleagues (2004) have also found that the entitlement construct displays temporal stability and suggested it may also display cross-situational stability. Snow, Kern, and Curlette (2001) defined entitlement as one's preference to receive special treatment in social settings. They also argued that highly entitled individuals generally tend to expect important life events to "go their way" (p. 106). Furthermore, Naumann, Minsky, and Sturman (2002) reviewed the conceptualization of entitlement across several disciplines and defined entitlement perceptions as "the compensation expected as a result of an individual participating in an employment relationship" (p. 150). The authors further mentioned that entitlement is not a function of one's job performance, which means that highly entitled employees may expect compensation and benefits simply as a result of

their participation in the employment relationship, without necessarily being motivated to reciprocate the favorable organizational treatment by increasing their job performance. Although the definition provided by Snow et al. (2001) focuses on entitlement in social settings, and Naumann et al.'s (2002) definition focuses on entitlement in the workplace, both definitions capture the idea that entitlement involves the preference for receiving special treatment, attention and benefits irrespective of one's performance (Harvey & Martinko, 2009).

Entitlement has also been investigated using the equity sensitivity framework, which showed that individuals differ with respect to preferences for equity. More specifically, equity sensitivity has been conceptualized on a continuum that ranges from benevolence to entitlement as its two poles. Benevolent individuals prefer being under-rewarded (their output/input ratio is lower than the comparison other's ratio), equity sensitives adhere to the norm of equity and feel dissatisfied when either underrewarded or overrewarded, whereas entitled individuals prefer higher outcome/input ratio than the referent standard (Huseman, Hatfield, & Miles, 1987). King, Miles, and Day (1993) found that in underreward conditions, entitleds tend to report lower satisfaction than the benevolents. Also, results showed that when overrewarded, entitled individuals tend to report higher satisfaction compared with equity sensitive individuals. Therefore, entitled individuals tend to have a lower tolerance for underreward situations and a higher tolerance for being overrewarded than the comparison others. Equity sensitivity research has shown that entitlement perceptions are associated with a range of attitudinal reactions such as: lower job satisfaction (King & Miles, 1994; King, Miles, & Day, 1993), lower pay satisfaction (Graham & Welbourne, 1999), decreased organizational commitment

and higher turnover intentions (King & Miles, 1994). Naumann et al. (2002) argued that generally highly entitled individuals tend to be dissatisfied with the employment relationship due to its perceived failure to meet their expectations. Akan, Allen, and White (2009) investigated the relationship between equity sensitivity and individuals' engagement in discretionary behaviors toward the organization within a team context. They argued that highly entitled individuals generally prefer situations where the ratio of received outcomes is greater than their input, and since performing OCBs requires putting forth extra efforts on the team's behalf, they are less likely to engage in discretionary behaviors that help the team's functioning. Rather, they expect other members to engage in citizenship behaviors and enjoy taking advantage of the resulting outcomes of their teammates' extra-role behaviors. There was a positive relationship between equity sensitivity orientation and the organizational compliance dimension of OCB, which indicates that individuals high in entitlement tend to engage less in OCB (Akan et al., 2009).

In a recent study, Harvey and Martinko (2009) attempted to expand the nomological network of entitlement and used an attribution framework in order to explain the impact of entitlement on several work outcomes. They found evidence that the need for cognition, defined as "a need to understand and make reasonable the experiential world", (Cohen, Stotland, & Wolfe, 1955, p. 291) partially mediated the relationship between entitlement and self-serving attribution style. Therefore, highly entitled individuals tend to make less rigorous cognitive evaluations, which consequently will decrease their efforts toward attributional rigor and accuracy. In turn, exerting less cognitive effort when processing information will lead to the activation of attribution

styles that maintain a favorable self-view by interpreting work outcomes in a self-protective manner. In addition, the authors found a positive relationship between entitlement and conflict with supervisors. Previous work by Campbell et al. (2004) showed that highly entitled individuals are selfish, less empathic, less respectful, and less prone toward perspective taking in interpersonal relationships, therefore their lack of effective social skills may explain their tendency to report increased conflict with their supervisors. Although there is empirical evidence for the relationship between entitlement and several workplace outcomes, previous research did not explicitly investigate the link between entitlement and workplace deviant behaviors. Along the same lines, in a recent theoretical article, Fisk (2010) argued that based on empirical evidence linking personality markers of excessive entitlement to workplace deviance, and based on research showing the co-existence of different forms of deviance, excessively entitled individuals are more likely to engage in CWB. Therefore, employees high in entitlement may be more likely to engage in harmful acts directed at the organization, compared with their less entitled counterparts. Since entitled individuals are characterized by “a stable and pervasive sense that one deserves more and is entitled to more than others” (Campbell et al., 2004, p. 31), they generally expect being granted special privileges without any desire to reciprocate the favorable treatment by corresponding engagement in behaviors that benefit the exchange partner (Naumann et al., 2002). Therefore, the entitled individuals’ belief they deserve more outcomes relative to the input level than other people (Huseman et al., 1987), leads to a breach of the norms of social exchange. Due to entitled employees’ beliefs that despite having received privileges and rewards, they always deserve and have the right to more, it’s likely that an

increase in the benefits granted by the organization will not correspondingly lead to an increase in the motivation to reciprocate the favorable treatment by greater engagement in behaviors that benefit the organization, such as UPB. In contrast, less entitled individuals do not endorse the idea of deserving more than others, and therefore may be more inclined to return the increase in benefits granted by the organization by higher engagement in unethical acts that benefit the organization. Therefore, I propose the following hypotheses:

*Hypothesis 10: Psychological entitlement will moderate the relationships between perceived organizational support and UPB such that the positive relationships between POS and UPB is stronger for employees with low scores on psychological entitlement compared with employees with high scores on entitlement.*

*Hypothesis 11: Psychological entitlement will moderate the relationship between overall justice and UPB such that the positive relationship between overall justice and UPB is stronger for employees with low scores on psychological entitlement compared with employees with high scores on entitlement.*

*Hypothesis 12: Psychological entitlement will moderate the relationship between i-deals and UPB such that the positive relationship between i-deals and UPB is stronger for employees with low scores on psychological entitlement compared with employees with high scores on entitlement.*

*Additional Predictors: Job Satisfaction and UPB Norms*

In addition to the variables presented above, I also decided to include job satisfaction in this study in order to have one variable in common with the study by



Umphress et al. (2010), even though I did not make any formal predictions about the relationship between job satisfaction and UPB.

Since UPB involves doing illegal and/or morally unacceptable acts with the intention to benefit the company, it is likely that the employees' engagement in these behaviors may be shaped by their perception of whether other employees engage in similar behaviors, or how the management of the organization feels towards these acts. Therefore, I also investigated the role played by descriptive and injunctive norms. Cialdini, Reno, and Kallgren (1990) emphasized social norms as motivational forces that guide human behavior. According to Cialdini et al. (1990), it's important to distinguish between two types of norms: descriptive and injunctive. Descriptive norms reflect what the majority of people do, whereas injunctive norms reflect rules that specify morally acceptable behaviors. Thus, descriptive norms capture what is typically done by most people, whereas injunctive norms refer to what should/ought to be done. In this specific context, UPB descriptive norms reflect employees' perception of their coworkers' engagement in UPB, whereas UPB injunctive norms capture the extent to which individuals perceive the management of their organization would approve of their employees' engagement in UPB.

### *The Current Study*

The purpose of the current study is to investigate new social-exchange antecedents of UPB (LMX, POS, overall justice and i-deals) and the potential moderating role played by supervisor's organizational embodiment, moral identity, and psychological entitlement.

In the current study I used a multi-source cross-sectional survey with data collected from employees-supervisor dyads. Employees self-reported all the study variables, while their supervisors reported the employees' unethical pro-organizational behavior and idiosyncratic deals.

## Method

### *Participants*

The participants were 269 employees (187 females, 80 males, two did not report their gender) with a mean age of the participants was 24.12 ( $SD = 6.97$ , range 18 to 58). Approximately 57.1% were White, 20.7% were Hispanic, 16.5% were Black, 5% Asian, and 0.8% American Indians. All the participants worked at least 20 hours/week and had an average tenure of approximately 2 ½ years (with a  $SD$  of around 2 ½ years). Additionally, I obtained supervisor ratings from 144 supervisors (65 females, 64 males, 15 did not report their gender). The supervisors' mean age was 37.42 ( $SD = 11.54$ , range 20 to 72). The number of matched employee-supervisor dyads was 133. In terms of industry type, 149 participants worked in retail/service, 16 in professional type of jobs, 9 in manufacturing, 7 in technical jobs, 8 in government agencies, and 66 reported other types of jobs.

### *Procedure*

The participants were recruited from the participant pool and several classes of a large south-eastern university, as well as from downtown Tampa. Participation was voluntary and the student participants were rewarded with course credit points. In the downtown location, participants were approached by a research assistant and asked if they were willing to fill out a survey. Those who agreed either filled out the survey on the

spot or took the surveys in self-addressed envelopes with them and mailed them to me. After completing self-reported surveys, the participants were given an envelope with the supervisor survey. The supervisor surveys were mailed directly to me. The employee and supervisor surveys were matched using an alphanumeric code. All the surveys were paper-and-pencil.

### *Measures*

*Unethical Pro-Organizational Behaviors.* In order to measure unethical pro-organizational behavior (UPB) I used Umphress, Bingham, and Mitchell's (2010) six-item scale. The items assess the frequency with which participants engaged in UPB using a 5-option response scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (always). Sample items are: "Because it benefited my organization, I have withheld negative information about my company or its products from customers and clients", "Because my organization needed me to, I have given a good recommendation on the behalf of an incompetent employee in the hope that the person would become another organization's problem instead of my own". Umphress et al. (2010) reported good internal consistency reliability ( $\alpha = .91$ ) for their scale.

*Idiosyncratic Deals.* In order to measure i-deals I used the scale used by Hornung, Rousseau, and Glaser (2008), which was based on the scale developed by Rousseau and Kim (2006) and was also used by Anand et al. (2010). The scale is comprised of 6 items that assess employees' negotiation of idiosyncratic deals across two dimensions: flexibility, and development using a five-option response scale ranging from 1 = not at all to 5 = to a very great extent. Flexibility sample items are: "Flexibility in starting and ending the workday", and "Individually customized work schedule". Development

sample items include: “Training opportunities”, “Special opportunities for skill development”. Anand et al. (2011) reported a Cronbach’s alpha of .86 for developmental i-deals. I-deals were self-reported by the employees and also rated by their supervisors.

*Overall Justice.* In order to measure overall justice I used the Perceived Overall Justice scale (POJ; Ambrose & Schminke, 2009). In order to develop the scale the authors used a deductive approach and followed Lind’s (2001a) and Colquitt and Shaw’s (2005) recommendations for measuring overall justice. The scale is comprised of 6 items, with 3 items measuring individuals’ personal justice experiences, and with the other 3 items assessing the general experience of the fairness of the organization. Items were presented (e.g. “Overall, I’m treated fairly by my organization”, “For the most part, this organization treats its employees fairly”) along with seven response options ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree. Ambrose and Schminke (2009) reported Cronbach’s alpha of .90 for the three personal justice experience items (both for Study 1 and Study 2). They also reported Cronbach’s alpha of .85 (Study 1), and .84 (Study 2), respectively, for the general experience items.

*Leader-Member Exchange.* I measured the quality of the leader-member exchange reported by subordinates using the 12-item scales developed by Liden and Maslyn (1998). The scale consists of four dimensions: affect, contribution, loyalty and professional respect. Previous research has shown that the scale can be used as a single-factor measure to assess the overall LMX quality (Erdogan & Enders, 2007, Liden, Erdogan, Wayne, & Sparrowe, 2006). As recommended by Liden and Maslyn (1998), in order to capture the overall quality of the LMX relationship I combined the 12 items into a composite. Items were presented, along with seven response options ranging from 1 =

strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree. Sample items are: “I like my supervisor very much as a person”, “My supervisor would come to my defense if I were “attacked” by others”, “I do work for my supervisor that goes beyond what is specified in my job description”, “I admire my supervisor’s professional skills”. The authors reported a reliability coefficient of .89.

*Perceived Organizational Support.* In order to measure perceived organizational support I used the 8-item version of the Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (Eisenberger, Cummings, Armeli, & Lynch, 1997). The scale measures the extent to which individuals believe the organization appreciates their contributions and cares about their welfare using a seven-option response scale ranging from 1 = strongly agree to 7 = strongly disagree. Sample items are: “My organization really cares about my well-being”, “My organization is willing to help me if I need a special favor”. Eisenberger et al. (1997) reported a Cronbach’s alpha of .90 in their study.

*Job satisfaction.* Job satisfaction was measured using the three item Camman et al. (1979) scale (alpha =.89). Higher scores indicate higher job satisfaction. A sample item is “All in all, I am satisfied with my job.”

*UPB Norms.* In order to measure descriptive and injunctive UPB norms I adapted the items from the original UPB scale (Umphress et al., 2010). The UPB descriptive norms scale measures individuals’ perception of their coworkers’ engagement in unethical behaviors intended to benefit the organization. Items were presented, along with five response options ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. Sample items are: “To benefit my organization, my coworkers withhold negative information about the company or its products from customers and clients”, “To benefit

my organization, my coworkers give a good recommendation on the behalf of an incompetent employee in the hope that the person would become another organization's problem instead of their own".

The UPB injunctive norms scale measures the individuals' perception of the extent to which the management of their organization would approve of the employees' engagement in UPB. Items were presented, along with five response options ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. Sample items are: "In order to benefit the company, the management of my organization would approve of employees withholding negative information about the company or its products from customers and clients", "In order to benefit the company, the management of my organization would approve of employees giving a good recommendation on the behalf of an incompetent employee in the hope that the person would become another organization's problem instead of their own".

*Supervisor's Organizational Embodiment.* Supervisor organizational embodiment was measured using the nine-item scale developed by Eisenberger et al. (2010) ( $\alpha = .91$ ), that reflects the extent to which employees perceive the supervisor shares characteristics with the organization and the treatment received from the supervisor reflects treatment from the organization. Items were presented (e.g. "When my supervisor encourages me, I believe that my organization is encouraging me", "My supervisor and my organization have a lot in common"), along with 7 response options ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree.

*Moral Identity.* Moral identity was measured using the 10-item Moral Identity Scale developed by Aquino and Reed (2002) which has two dimensions: Internalization

and Symbolization. The scale assesses the degree to which moral identity is central to one's self-definition using a five-option response scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. Aquino and Reed (2002) reported Cronbach's alpha of .83 (study 2) for the Internalization dimension and of .82 (study 2) for the Symbolization dimension.

*Psychological Entitlement.* Psychological entitlement was measured using the 9-item Psychological Entitlement Scale (PES; Campbell et al., 2004), which assesses the degree to which individuals believe they deserve and are entitled to more compared with other people. Items were presented (e.g. "I honestly feel I'm just more deserving than others", "I feel entitled to more of everything"), along with seven response options ranging from 1 = strong disagreement to 7 = strong agreement. Campbell et al. (2004) reported internal consistency reliability coefficients ranging from .83 to .87.



## Results

### *Data Analysis.*

Hypotheses 1, 3, 4, and 5 refer to the direct relationships between the antecedents of UPB (LMX, POS, overall justice, and i-deals), and UPB. To conduct tests of these hypotheses I used bivariate correlations.

To test the rest of my hypotheses, I used moderated multiple regression (Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2003). The interaction term was created by multiplying the independent and moderating variables. Next, a hierarchical regression analysis was conducted by entering in Step 1 the independent and moderating variables and in Step 2 the interaction term. If significant, the nature of the interaction was examined through simple slope tests that examine the relationship between the independent and the dependent variable at two levels of the moderating variable: 1 SD below and 1 SD above the mean.

### *Descriptive Statistics*

Descriptive statistics for the study's variables are presented in Table 1. The correlations between the study's variables and the scales' internal consistency reliabilities are presented in Table 2. All the scale reliabilities are above .80.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

	Variable	N	M	SD	Possible Range	Observed Range
1	LMX	266	49.78	8.71	12-60	16-60
2	POS	266	30.60	6.54	8-40	10-40
3	Justice	267	24.31	4.99	6-30	6-30
4	I-Deals Self	268	18.94	6.28	6-30	6-30
5	I-Deals Supervisor	142	16.56	7.44	6-30	6-30
6	Embodiment	268	33.80	8.81	9-45	9-45
7	Moral Identity	264	52.84	6.45	13-65	29-65
8	Entitlement	268	25.08	6.96	9-45	9-43
9	UPB Norms Mgmt	269	11.46	5.65	6-30	6-30
10	UPB Norms Co-worker	266	11.30	5.44	6-30	6-30
11	UPB Self	269	9.02	3.87	6-30	6-23
12	UPB Supervisor	142	7.68	3.21	6-30	6-28

*Note:* LMX = Leader Member Exchange; POS = Perceived Organizational Support; UPB = Unethical Pro-Organizational Behaviors.

Table 2. Correlations

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1 LMX	(.93)											
2 POS	.48***	(.90)										
3 Justice	.35***	.68***	(.89)									
4 I-Deals Self	.09	.27***	.22***	(.87)								
5 I-Deals Supervisor	-.13	.00	.07	.18*	(.93)							
6 Embodiment	.32***	.69***	.50***	.30***	-.04	(.95)						
7 Moral Identity	.29***	.19**	.14*	.03	.09	.18**	(.81)					
8 Entitlement	-.08	-.11	-.13*	.27***	.02	.02	-.03	(.86)				
9 UPB Norms Mgmt	-.17**	-.34***	-.35***	-.02	-.04	-.16*	-.16*	.07	(.88)			
10 UPB Norms Co-worker	-.19**	-.31***	-.40***	.01	-.07	-.14*	-.17**	.00	.65***	(.88)		
11 UPB Self	-.09	-.23***	-.31***	.00	-.03	-.11	-.17**	.01	.57***	.73***	(.80)	
12 UPB Supervisor	-.11	-.02	.00	.07	.18*	-.09	-.18*	.05	.10	.09	.19*	(.82)

Note:  $N = 261-269$  for self-reported variables, and  $N = 131-141$  for supervisor rated variables. Reliabilities are presented on the diagonal. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ . LMX = Leader Member Exchange; POS = Perceived Organizational Support; UPB = Unethical Pro-Organizational Behaviors.

*Hypothesis Testing*

Hypothesis 1 postulated there will be a positive relationship between LMX quality and engagement in UPB. However, results indicated that both the relationship between LMX quality and self-reported UPB and the relationship between LMX and supervisor-rated UPB were non-significant,  $r = -.09, p > .05$ , and  $r = -.11, p > .05$ , respectively. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 was not supported.

Hypothesis 2 postulated that SOE will moderate the relationship between LMX and UPB such that the relationship between LMX and UPB will be stronger for employees who perceive high levels of SOE. To test this hypothesis, I conducted hierarchical multiple regression by entering LMX and SOE in Step 1, and the interaction term created by multiplying LMX and SOE in Step 2. The full results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3  
SOE, LMX and Self-reported UPB

Step	Independent variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	$\Delta R^2$
1	SOE	-.04	.03	-.08	.01
	LMX	-.03	.03	-.06	
2	SOE	.33	.17	.76*	.02
	LMX	.20	.10	.44	
	SOE x LMX	-.01	.00	-1.11*	

Note:  $N = 265$ . \* $p < .05$  \*\* $p < .01$

The interaction term explained a significant amount of variance,  $\beta = -1.11$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\Delta R^2 = .02$ ,  $F(1, 261) = 4.98$ ,  $p < .05$ . In order to clarify the nature of the interaction, I conducted simple slope tests, which indicated that at high levels of SOE (+1 SD above the mean), there is a negative relationship between LMX and UPB,  $\beta = -.25$ ,  $p < .05$ . At lower levels of SOE (-1 SD below the mean), the relationship between LMX and UPB was not significant,  $\beta = .03$ ,  $p > .05$ . The interaction is depicted in Figure 1.

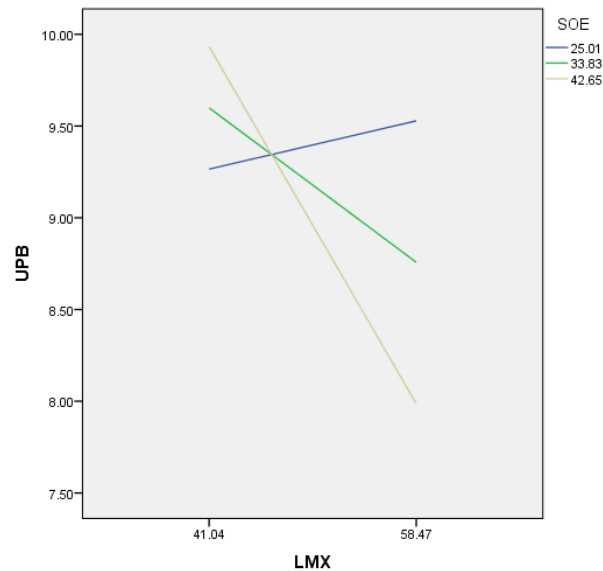


Figure 1. Embodiment, LMX and UPB

Although the interaction effect was statistically significant, it was in the opposite direction. I repeated the same analysis with supervisor-reported UPB (see Table 4), and found that the interaction term did not explain a significant amount of variance,  $\Delta R^2 = .00$ ,  $F(1, 127) = .02$ ,  $p > .05$ . Therefore, Hypothesis 2 was not supported.

Table 4

## SOE, LMX and Supervisor-Reported UPB

Step	Independent variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	$\Delta R^2$
1	SOE	-.02	.03	-.06	.02
	LMX	-.03	.03	-.10	
2	SOE	-.05	.19	-.14	.00
	LMX	-.05	.11	-.15	
	SOE x LMX	.00	.00	.11	

Note:  $N = 131$ . \* $p < .05$  \*\* $p < .01$

Hypothesis 3 postulated that there will be a positive relationship between perceived organizational support and UPB. However, results showed that there is a negative relationship between perceived organizational support and self-reported UPB,  $r = -.23, p < .01$ . The relationship between perceived organizational support and supervisor-reported UPB was non-significant,  $r = -.02, p > .05$ . Therefore, hypothesis 3 was not supported.

Hypothesis 4 postulated that there will be a positive relationship between employees' overall appraisal of justice at work and unethical pro-organizational behaviors. However, results indicated there is a negative association between justice perceptions and self-reported UPB,  $r = -.31, p < .01$ . The relationship between justice

perceptions and supervisor-reported UPB was not significant,  $r = .002, p > .05$ .

Therefore, hypothesis 4 was not supported.

Hypothesis 5 postulated that there will be a positive relationship between i-deals and UPB. Results indicated the relationship between self-reported i-deals and self-reported UPB was non-significant,  $r = .00, p > .05$ . Also, the relationship between supervisor-reported i-deals and self-rated UPB and the relationship between self-reported i-deals and supervisor-reported UPB were non-significant,  $r = -.03, p > .05$ , and  $r = .07, p > .05$ , respectively. In contrast, the relationship between supervisor-rated i-deals and supervisor-reported UPB was positive,  $r = .18, p < .05$ . Therefore, hypothesis 5 was supported only for the supervisor-rated variables.

Hypothesis 6 predicted the moderating role of SOE in the relationship between i-deals and UPB. I conducted hierarchical multiple regression by entering self-rated i-deals and SOE in Step 1, and the interaction term in Step 2. The interaction term did not explain a significant amount of variance,  $\Delta R^2 = .00, F(1, 263) = .11, p > .05$ .

Table 5

SOE, Self-rated I-deals and Self-rated UPB

Step	Independent variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	$\Delta R^2$
1	SOE	-.05	.03	-.12	.01
	I-deals	.02	.04	.03	
2	SOE	-.07	.08	-.17	.00
	I-deals	-.03	.15	-.05	
	SOE x I-deals	.00	.00	.11	

Note:  $N = 267$ . \* $p < .05$  \*\*  $p < .01$

I also conducted hierarchical multiple regression by entering supervisor-rated i-deals and SOE in Step 1, and the interaction term in Step 2. UPB was self-reported. The results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6

SOE, Supervisor-rated I-deals and Self-rated UPB

Step	Independent variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	$\Delta R^2$
1	SOE	-.02	.03	-.06	.01
	I-deals	-.02	.04	-.03	
2	SOE	-.20	.07	-.54**	.05
	I-deals	-.39	.15	-.86**	
	SOE x I-deals	.01	.00	.96**	

Note:  $N = 134$ . \* $p < .05$  \*\*  $p < .01$

The interaction term explained a significant amount of variance,  $\beta = .96$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\Delta R^2 = .05$ ,  $F(1, 130) = 6.95$ ,  $p < .01$ . In order to clarify the nature of the interaction I conducted simple slope tests, which indicated that at high levels of SOE (+1 SD above the mean), the relationship between supervisor-rated i-deals and UPB is non-significant,  $\beta = .18$ ,  $p > .05$ , whereas at low levels of SOE (-1 SD below the mean), there is a negative relationship between supervisor-rated i-deals and engagement in UPB,  $\beta = -.27$ ,  $p < .05$ . The interaction is presented in Figure 2.



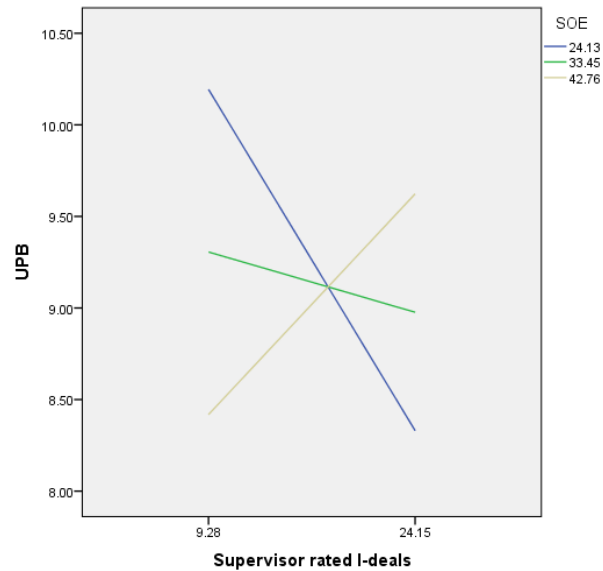


Figure 2. Embodiment, Supervisor-rated I-deals and UPB.

Finally, I tested this hypothesis with supervisor rated i-deals and UPB. The interaction term did not explain a significant amount of variance,  $\Delta R^2 = .00$ ,  $F(1, 129) = .10$ ,  $p > .05$ . The results are presented in Table 7. Based on the results reported above, it's safe to conclude that Hypothesis 6 was not supported.

Table 7

SOE, Supervisor-rated I-deals and UPB

Step	Independent variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	$\Delta R^2$
1	SOE	-.03	.03	-.06	.04
	I-deals	.08	.04	.17*	
2	SOE	-.01	.07	-.02	.00
	I-deals	.12	.15	.27	
	SOE x I-deals	-.00	.00	-.12	

Note:  $N = 133$ . \* $p < .05$  \*\* $p < .01$

Hypothesis 7 predicted the moderating role of moral identity in the relationship between perceived organizational support and UPB. I then conducted hierarchical multiple regression by entering perceived organizational support and moral identity in Step 1, and the interaction term in Step 2. UPB was self-reported. The results are presented in Table 8. The interaction term did not explain a significant amount of variance,  $\Delta R^2 = .00$ ,  $F(1, 257) = .87$ ,  $p > .05$ .

Table 8

Moral Identity, POS and Self-rated UPB

Step	Independent variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	$\Delta R^2$
1	Moral identity	-.07	.04	-.12*	.07
	POS	-.13	.04	-.21**	
2	Moral identity	.09	.18	.15	.00
	POS	.17	.31	.28	
	Moral identity x POS	-.01	.01	-.60	

Note:  $N = 261$ . \* $p < .05$  \*\* $p < .01$

I also conducted hierarchical multiple regression by entering perceived organizational support and moral identity in Step 1, and the interaction term in Step 2. UPB was supervisor-reported. The results are presented in Table 9. The interaction term did not explain a significant amount of variance,  $\Delta R^2 = .00$ ,  $F(1, 126) = .03$ ,  $p > .05$ . Therefore, Hypothesis 7 was not supported.

Table 9

## Moral Identity, POS and Supervisor-rated UPB

Step	Independent variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	$\Delta R^2$
1	Moral identity	-.09	.04	-.19*	.03
	POS	.02	.05	.05	
2	Moral identity	-.06	.21	-.12	.00
	POS	.08	.37	.16	
	Moral identity x POS	-.00	.01	-.15	

Note:  $N = 130$ . \* $p < .05$  \*\*  $p < .01$

Hypothesis 8 postulated that moral identity would moderate the relationship between overall justice and UPB. I conducted hierarchical multiple regression by entering overall justice and moral identity in Step 1, and the interaction term in Step 2. The results are presented in Table 10.

Table 10

## Moral Identity, Justice and Self-rated UPB

Step	Independent variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	$\Delta R^2$
1	Moral identity	-.07	.04	-.12*	.11
	Justice	-.23	.05	-.30**	
2	Moral identity	.01	.16	.02	.00
	Justice	-.05	.35	-.06	
	Moral identity x Justice	-.00	.01	-.30	

Note:  $N = 262$ . \* $p < .05$  \*\*  $p < .01$

The interaction term did not explain a significant amount of variance,  $\Delta R^2 = .00$ ,  $F(1, 258) = .29, p > .05$ . I repeated the analysis with supervisor-reported UPB, and found that the interaction term did not explain a significant amount of variance,  $\Delta R^2 = .00$ ,  $F(1, 126) = .06, p > .05$ . The full results are presented in Table 11. Therefore, hypothesis 8 was not supported.

Table 11

Moral Identity, Justice and Supervisor-rated UPB

Step	Independent variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	$\Delta R^2$
1	Moral identity	-.09	.04	-.19*	.03
	Justice	.03	.06	.04	
2	Moral identity	-.05	.20	-.09	.00
	Justice	.12	.41	.19	
	Moral identity x Justice	-.00	.01	-.19	

Note:  $N = 130$ . \* $p < .05$  \*\* $p < .01$

Hypothesis 9 predicted that moral identity would moderate the relationship between i-deals and UPB. I conducted hierarchical multiple regression by entering self-reported i-deals and moral identity in Step 1, and the interaction term in Step 2. UPB was self-reported. The results are presented in Table 12. The interaction term did not explain a significant amount of variance,  $\Delta R^2 = .00$ ,  $F(1, 259) = .38, p > .05$ . I repeated the analysis presented above with supervisor-reported UPB (see Table 13) and found that the interaction term did not explain a significant amount of variance,  $\Delta R^2 = .00$ ,  $F(1, 259) = .38, p > .05$ .

Table 12

## Moral Identity, Self-rated I-deals and UPB

Step	Independent variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	$\Delta R^2$
1	Moral identity	-.10	.04	-.17**	.03
	I-deals	.01	.04	.01	
2	Moral identity	-.04	.11	-.06	.00
	I-deals	.18	.29	.29	
	Moral identity x I-deals	-.00	.01	-.31	

Note:  $N = 263$ . \* $p < .05$  \*\*  $p < .01$

Table 13

## Moral Identity, Self-rated I-deals and Supervisor-rated UPB

Step	Independent variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	$\Delta R^2$
1	Moral identity	-.09	.04	-.18*	.04
	I-deals	.05	.05	.09	
2	Moral identity	-.03	.12	-.06	.00
	I-deals	.23	.33	.43	
	Moral identity x I-deals	-.00	.01	-.37	

Note:  $N = 131$  \* $p < .05$  \*\*  $p < .01$

I also conducted hierarchical multiple regression by entering supervisor-reported i-deals and moral identity in Step 1, and the interaction term in Step 2. UPB was self-reported. The results are presented in Table 14. The interaction term did not explain a significant amount of variance,  $\Delta R^2 = .02$ ,  $F(1, 127) = 2.14$ ,  $p > .05$ . The results for

supervisor rated i-deals and UPB are presented in Table 15. The interaction term did not explain a significant amount of variance,  $\Delta R^2 = .01$ ,  $F(1, 126) = 1.45$ ,  $p > .05$ .

Therefore, hypothesis 9 was not supported.

Table 14

Moral Identity, Supervisor-rated I-deals and Self-rated UPB

Step	Independent variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	$\Delta R^2$
1	Moral identity	-.08	.04	-.16	.03
	I-deals	-.01	.04	-.01	
2	Moral identity	-.24	.12	-.47*	.02
	I-deals	-.50	.34	-1.08	
	Moral identity x I-deals	.01	.01	1.15	

Note:  $N = 131$ . \* $p < .05$  \*\*  $p < .01$

Table 15

Moral Identity, Supervisor-rated I-deals and UPB

Step	Independent variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	$\Delta R^2$
1	Moral identity	-.09	.04	-.19*	.07
	I-deals	.09	.04	.20*	
2	Moral identity	.03	.11	.06	.01
	I-deals	.48	.32	1.06	
	Moral identity x I-deals	-.01	.01	-.93	

Note:  $N = 130$ . \* $p < .05$  \*\*  $p < .01$

Hypothesis 10 postulated that psychological entitlement would moderate the relationships between perceived organizational support and UPB. I conducted hierarchical multiple regression by entering entitlement and perceived organizational support in Step 1, and the interaction term in Step 2. The results are presented in Table 16. The interaction term did not explain a significant amount of variance,  $\Delta R^2 = .00$ ,  $F(1, 262) = 1.05$ ,  $p > .05$ . I repeated the analysis with supervisor-reported UPB (see Table 17), and found that the interaction term did not explain a significant amount of variance,  $\Delta R^2 = .01$ ,  $F(1, 129) = .67$ ,  $p > .05$ . Therefore, hypothesis 10 was not supported.

Table 16

Entitlement, POS and Self-rated UPB

Step	Independent variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	$\Delta R^2$
1	Entitlement	-.01	.03	-.02	.05
	POS	-.14	.04	-.23**	
2	Entitlement	.15	.16	.26	.00
	POS	-.00	.14	-.01	
	Entitlement x POS	-.01	.01	-.35	

Note:  $N = 266$ . \* $p < .05$  \*\*  $p < .01$

Table 17

## Entitlement, POS and Supervisor-rated UPB

Step	Independent variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	$\Delta R^2$
1	Entitlement	.03	.04	.05	.00
	POS	-.01	.04	-.02	
2	Entitlement	-.13	.20	-.27	.01
	POS	-.15	.18	-.30	
	Entitlement x POS	.01	.01	.44	

Note:  $N = 133$ . \* $p < .05$  \*\*  $p < .01$

Hypothesis 11 predicted the moderating role of psychological entitlement in the relationship between overall justice and UPB. I conducted hierarchical multiple regression by entering entitlement and overall justice in Step 1, and the interaction term in Step 2. The results are presented in Table 18. The interaction term did not explain a significant amount of variance,  $\Delta R^2 = .00$ ,  $F(1, 262) = .69$ ,  $p > .05$ . I repeated the analysis with supervisor-reported UPB (see Table 19) and found that the interaction term did not explain a significant amount of variance,  $\Delta R^2 = .00$ ,  $F(1, 128) = .27$ ,  $p > .05$ . Therefore, hypothesis 11 was not supported.



Table 18

## Entitlement, Justice and Self-rated UPB

Step	Independent variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	$\Delta R^2$
1	Entitlement	-.02	.03	-.03	.10
	Justice	-.25	.05	-.32**	
2	Entitlement	.10	.15	.19	.00
	Justice	-.12	.16	-.15	
	Entitlement x Justice	-.01	.01	-.26	

Note:  $N = 266$ . \* $p < .05$  \*\*  $p < .01$

Table 19

## Entitlement, Justice and Supervisor-rated UPB

Step	Independent variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	$\Delta R^2$
1	Entitlement	.02	.04	.05	.00
	Justice	.00	.06	.01	
2	Entitlement	.12	.19	.25	.00
	Justice	.11	.21	.17	
	Entitlement x Justice	-.00	.01	-.26	

Note:  $N = 132$ . \* $p < .05$  \*\*  $p < .01$

Hypothesis 12 predicted the moderating role of psychological entitlement in the relationship between i-deals and UPB. I conducted hierarchical multiple regression by entering entitlement and self-reported i-deals in Step 1, and the interaction term in Step 2. UPB was self-reported. The results are presented in Table 20. The interaction term did not explain a significant amount of variance,  $\Delta R^2 = .01$ ,  $F(1, 263) = 3.12$ ,  $p > .05$ . ( $p = .08$ ).

I repeated the analysis presented above with supervisor-reported UPB (see Table 21) and found that the interaction term did not explain a significant amount of variance,  $\Delta R^2 = .00$ ,  $F(1, 129) = .08$ ,  $p > .05$ .

Table 20

Entitlement, Self-rated I-deals and Self-rated UPB

Step	Independent variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	$\Delta R^2$
1	Entitlement	.01	.04	.01	.00
	I-deals	.00	.04	-.00	
2	Entitlement	.18	.10	.32	.00
	I-deals	.22	.13	.36	
	Entitlement x I-deals	-.01	.01	-.54	

Note:  $N = 267$ . \* $p < .05$  \*\* $p < .01$

Table 21

Entitlement, Self-rated I-deals and Supervisor-rated UPB

Step	Independent variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	$\Delta R^2$
1	Entitlement	.01	.05	.03	.01
	I-deals	.03	.05	.06	
2	Entitlement	.05	.12	.10	.00
	I-deals	.08	.16	.15	
	Entitlement x I-deals	-.00	.01	-.13	

Note:  $N = 133$ . \* $p < .05$  \*\* $p < .01$

I also conducted hierarchical multiple regression by entering entitlement and supervisor-reported i-deals in Step 1, and the interaction term in Step 2. UPB was self-reported. The results are presented in Table 22. The interaction term did not explain a significant amount of variance,  $\Delta R^2 = .01$ ,  $F(1, 129) = .77$ ,  $p > .05$ . I repeated the same analysis with supervisor-rated UPB (see Table 23), and found that the interaction term did not explain a significant amount of variance,  $\Delta R^2 = .00$ ,  $F(1, 128) = .08$ ,  $p > .05$ . Therefore, hypothesis 12 was not supported.

Table 22

Entitlement, Supervisor-rated I-deals and Self-rated UPB

Step	Independent variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	$\Delta R^2$
1	Entitlement	.04	.05	.09	.01
	I-deals	-.01	.04	-.02	
2	Entitlement	.13	.11	.26	.01
	I-deals	.13	.16	.27	
	Entitlement x I-deals	-.01	.01	-.35	

Note:  $N = 133$ . \* $p < .05$  \*\* $p < .01$

Table 23

## Entitlement, Supervisor-rated I-deals and UPB

Step	Independent variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	$\Delta R^2$
1	Entitlement	.02	.04	.04	.04
	I-deals	.08	.04	.18*	
2	Entitlement	-.01	.11	-.02	.00
	I-deals	.04	.15	.09	
	Entitlement x I-deals	.00	.01	.11	

Note:  $N = 132$ . \* $p < .05$  \*\*  $p < .01$

In terms of UPB norms, the results indicate a pattern of relationships between norms and other variables that closely mirrors the results for self-reported UPB. Also, self-reported UPB was highly correlated with both UPB coworkers:  $r = .73, p < .05$  and UPB management  $r = .57, p < .05$ ; also UPB coworkers was highly correlated with UPB management,  $r = .65, p < .05$ . These results seem to indicate that the employees do not distinguish between engagement in UPB and UPB norms.

## Discussion

Using a multi-source cross-sectional survey I empirically investigated whether several social-exchange variables (LMX, POS, overall justice, and i-deals) were positively related to UPB, and whether supervisor's organizational embodiment, moral identity, and psychological entitlement played a moderating role in the relationship between social-exchange antecedents of UPB and UPB.

Except for the significant relationship between supervisor-rated i-deals and supervisor-rated UPB in the expected direction, results did not provide support for the correlational hypotheses. More specifically, the correlations between both self-reported and supervisor-reported UPB and LMX were non-significant. Also, the relationships between supervisor-rated UPB and perceived organizational support and overall justice were non-significant.

Surprisingly, I found significant negative associations between self-rated UPB and perceived organizational support, and overall justice perceptions. This seems to indicate that when employees perceive higher organizational support and justice in the workplace, they tend to engage less in unethical acts that benefit the organization. A potential explanation could be that individuals in a favorable exchange relationship with the organization may not consider that concealing negative information and misrepresenting the truth about the organization is a positive thing. On the contrary, when they have the opportunity to perform these behaviors they may take into account the fact

their engagement in unethical acts may lead to serious negative consequences for the organization later. Therefore, employees who perceive the organization cares about their welfare and that are treated fairly by the organization are less likely to perform unethical acts as a way of avoiding engaging in acts that may bounce back and harm the organization in the long run. These negative relationships are still based on social exchange, but they reflect an avoidance-oriented type of social exchange. It would be interesting to investigate whether the commonly assessed CWB antecedents (e.g., trait anger, workplace stressors) also predict a higher engagement in UPB. Umphress et al. (2010) found that UPB and CWB were positively correlated. Similar to CWB (Berry et al., 2012), although self and supervisor rated CWB were positively correlated ( $r = .19, p < .05$ ), employees self-reported higher levels of UPB ( $M = 9.06, SD = 3.41$ ) compared to the supervisor ratings of UPB ( $M = 7.66, SD = 3.27$ ),  $t(133) = 3.82, p < .001$ , indicating that supervisors may not be aware of the employees' engagement in UPB. Furthermore, moral identity was correlated negatively with both self-rated and supervisor-rated UPB, similar to the Skarlicki et al. (2008) study in which one dimension of moral identity (internalization) was negatively related to CWB.

The relationship between self-rated i-deals and supervisor-reported i-deals and UPB were non-significant. Also, the correlation between self-reported i-deals and supervisor-reported UPB was non-significant. However, there was a significant positive relationship between supervisor-rated i-deals and supervisor-reported UPB. Thus, it appears that the direction of the correlation differs based on the source.

Umphress, Bingham, and Mitchel (2011) found in their study a positive relationship between job satisfaction and UPB, however, in the current sample, I found a

significant negative correlation between job satisfaction and self-rated UPB:  $r = -.19, p < .05$ . So, the higher employees' job satisfaction, the lower their engagement in UPB.

The hypotheses that postulated moderating effects were not supported. Interestingly, results indicated that the interaction between LMX and SOE was significant, in a different direction that was originally hypothesized. Individuals who perceive their supervisor as an agent of the organization and have good leader-member exchange relationships are less likely to engage in UPB. The employees extend the good relationship with their leader at the organizational level, and appraise the favorable treatment from their supervisor as coming from the organization itself. As a way of reciprocating this favorable treatment, employees tend to avoid engaging in unethical behaviors that might backfire and harm the organization later.

Also, results showed that the interaction between supervisor-reported i-deals and SOE was significant, in a different direction that was originally hypothesized. Employees who perceive the supervisor acting as an independent agent and are rated by their supervisor as higher in i-deals, tend to engage less in UPB.

In this study I used a behavioral measure of UPB, since the participants had to report the frequency with which they engaged in these unethical acts that are intended to benefit the company. Umphress, Bingham, and Mitchell, (2010) claimed in study 2 they used a behavioral measure of UPB. However, in order to assess employees' engagement in UPB they used an agree/disagree response format. Recent research suggested that the agreement response format may capture individuals' attitudes toward engaging in certain behaviors, rather than the actual engagement in those behaviors (Dalal, 2005; Spector, Bauer, & Fox, 2010). For instance, meta-analytic work by Dalal (2005) indicated that the

negative relationships between OCB and CWB were larger when agreement formats were used than when frequency formats were used. Along the same lines, Spector et al. (2010) conducted an experiment in which they manipulated the response format for the CWB and OCB scale (agreement vs. frequency) and found that the correlations between CWB and OCB were stronger with agreement response formats compared to frequency response formats. Based on these findings, a potential avenue for future research would be to employ an experimental design in order to investigate whether the relationship between antecedents of UPB and UPB tend to vary as a function of response format (agreement vs. frequency). The only variable in common between the current study and the study by Umphress et al. (2010) was job satisfaction and the results show differences between the two studies: when agreement was used, there was a positive association between job satisfaction and UPB (Umphress et al., 2010); when frequency ratings were used (the current study), there was a negative association between job satisfaction and UPB.

Also, in their conceptualization of UPB Umphress et al. (2010) focused only on the pro-organizational aspect of these unethical behaviors and disregarded the potentially negative and destructive consequences of these acts on the organization itself in the long-run. For instance one of the UPB items states that “Because my organization needed me to, I have withheld issuing a refund to a customer or client accidentally overcharged”. A higher frequency of engaging in these types of behaviors may increase the likelihood that the company’s customers/clients may file a complaint against the organization, sue the company, or choose to do business with a competing organization. Also, other UPB items involve misrepresenting the truth or exaggerating the truth about the company’s products



or services to clients or customers in order to help the company. Although these types of acts seem to serve the purpose in the short term, there is a chance that the clients will eventually become aware of the lower quality of the products or services, and choose to end their business relationship with the organization. Also, they may make these facts public to other organizations, which may lead to corporate scandals, and other companies might also decide to end their business relationship with the organization in question.

The following UPB items “Because it was needed, I have concealed information from the public that could be damaging to my organization”, and “Because it benefited my organization, I have withheld negative information about my company or its products from customers and clients”, also indicate that these acts contribute to help the organization in the short run, but in the long run these types of behaviors might lead to catastrophic consequences for the organization itself. For instance if a pharmaceutical company conceals some negative information about potential side-effects of the drugs they are trying to sell, this can lead to serious health-related consequences. In return, the clients of the company can sue the organization, and ask for compensation for their health-related damages. This way, the company in question may draw negative attention to itself, and the engagement in these unethical acts may also lower the public’s perception of the organization’s corporate social responsibility. Therefore, even if employees engage in these behaviors that violate societal norms with the intention to benefit the organization, it is likely that in the long run the outcomes associated with these acts will backfire and may lead to destructive consequences for the organization itself, both legally and financially.

A potential direction for future research may be to investigate whether the engagement in UPB has an impact on the indicators of organizational performance over time. Also, it's important to see whether the employees who engage in UPB are aware or not of the potentially detrimental organizational effects of their behaviors.

Also, one item from this scale about giving a good recommendation on the behalf of an incompetent employee may apply only to certain types of jobs, particularly managerial ones. Future research should focus on categories of jobs where the employees have the opportunity to engage in these types of unethical acts.

In terms of limitations, in the present study, I used a cross-sectional design, therefore I cannot draw any causal conclusions. A suggestion for future research would be to use longitudinal and experimental designs. Most of the predictor variables were assessed using self-reports, which opens up the possibility that common method variance can bias the findings, however, there are several very small and non-significant correlations, which decreases the possibility of common method variance (Spector, 2006).

Another limitation is the type of sample. Ideally, this research should have been conducted using only participants who actually have the opportunity to engage in UPB at their workplace. Examples include customer service jobs (see item 2 which is focused on withholding refunds from customers) and more managerial jobs (see item 6 of the UPB scale which is focused on providing letters of recommendation on behalf of an incompetent employee)

To address this issue I re-tested the hypotheses on the 149 employees and 66 supervisors who reported working in retail/service positions. Results with this subsample

were not much different than for the full sample. None of the 12 hypotheses were supported in either case.

The current study also has several strengths. Both self and supervisor ratings of UPB were used, extending the Umphress et al. (2010) study which focused exclusively on self-reported UPB. Although self and supervisor reports were positively related, the correlation was relatively small. Future research is needed to examine why this is the case. Given the nature of the behaviors included in UPB (beneficial to the organization), I expected stronger associations between self and supervisor reports of UPB. This lends further support to the idea that UPB is a type of CWB since it appears that the supervisors might not be aware of the employees' engagement in these behaviors. Also, I tested the hypotheses with employed individuals who worked in a variety of jobs (customer service, professionals, manufacturing, technical, government agency), which increases the generalizability of results. Also, the relatively small sample size for the dyads raises the possibility of low statistical power. A power analysis revealed that for a power of .80, assuming a small effect size, I would have needed 278 participants, which is very close to the number of self-reports.

In conclusion, the current study contributes to the limited empirical literature on UPB (I am only aware of the Umphress et al., 2010 study). I examined additional predictors of UPB, such as variables rooted in social exchange theory (overall justice, POS, i-deals) and supervisor related variables (SOE and LMX). Although most of the hypotheses were not supported, the findings revealed an interesting and unexpected pattern of results which indicates that the social exchange theoretical perspective advanced by Umphress and colleagues (employees reciprocate favorable treatment from

the organization by engaging in UPB) might work in a different direction (employees treated favorably by the organization refrain from engaging in UPB) which makes UPB similar to CWB. Given the conflicting findings between the only two empirical studies on UPB (Umphress et al., 2010 and the current study) future theoretical and empirical research is sorely needed to clarify the antecedents of UPB and the relationship between UPB and CWB.

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## Appendices

## Appendix A: IRB Approval



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December 9, 2011

Alexandra Ilie  
Psychology

RE: **Exempt Certification** for IRB#: Pro00005833  
Title: **Unethical Pro-Organizational Behavior: Antecedents and Boundary Conditions**

Dear Alexandra Ilie:

On 12/9/2011, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) determined that your research meets USF requirements and Federal Exemption criteria as outlined in the federal regulations at 45CFR46.101(b):

(2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless:  
(i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

As the principal investigator for this study, it is your responsibility to ensure that this research is conducted as outlined in your application and consistent with the ethical principles outlined in the Belmont Report and with USF IRB policies and procedures. Please note that changes to this protocol may disqualify it from exempt status. Please note that you are responsible for notifying the IRB prior to implementing any changes to the currently approved protocol.

The Institutional Review Board will maintain your exemption application for a period of five years from the date of this letter or for three years after a Final Progress Report is received, whichever is longer. If you wish to continue this protocol beyond five years, you will need to submit a continuing review application at least 60 days prior to the exemption expiration date. Should you complete this study prior to the end of the five-year period, you must submit a

request to close the study.

We appreciate your dedication to the ethical conduct of human subject research at the University of South Florida and your continued commitment to human research protections. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please call 813-974-5638.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John A. Schinka, Ph.D." The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "J".

John Schinka, PhD, Chairperson  
USF Institutional Review Board

Cc: Various Menzel, CCRP, USF IRB Professional Staff