1. Moral awareness
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Part 1: Introduction

Moral sensitivity has served as the conceptual starting point for most ethical decision-making models since James Rest (1986) placed it at the forefront of his four-component model of moral action. Yet, until recently, scholarly research on moral sensitivity has been largely overlooked and rarely empirically explored (Reynolds, 2006b). While explanations for the lack of research vary, the noticeable scholarly gap has recently spurred greater interest in the construct. As research into moral sensitivity and the cluster of constructs related to it has gathered momentum, scholars have called for greater precision and care in the discussion (Treviño, Weaver, and Reynolds, 2006).

The need for greater precision and order for the construct is immediately seen in the naming of the construct itself. While even the most rigorous scholars have long used "moral" and "ethical" interchangeably (e.g., Bryant, 2009; Jones and Ryan, 1997; Treviño, 1986) with reasonable justification, the construct of moral/ethical sensitivity has suffered from misspecification and lack of definition clarity as scholars have interchangeably used terms such as "awareness" and "sensitivity" (Jordan, 2009). Kathryn Weaver (2007) notes that "ethical sensitivity has been used interchangeably with moral sensitivity, clinical sensitivity, moral perception, ethical perception, clinical perception, ethical intuition and moral or ethical sensibility" (p. 143). A construct sometimes regarded as the antithesis of awareness, *moral disengagement*, likewise appears in various forms and with various names. Interchangeable usage and, further, multiple definitions for each of these terms have clouded the constructs and led to a lack of clarity and precision within and across disciplines.

In response to this confusion, this chapter is designed to provide a resource to help scholars understand the conceptual boundaries, distinctions, and overlap of these closely related constructs. The chapter focuses on landmark studies that have clarified either the terms or construct definitions. Furthermore, consistent with Treviño et al.'s (2006) appeal that "greater care must be taken to align the theory of moral awareness with the

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methods used to study it" (p. 954), this chapter includes brief reviews and scholarly assessments of some of the most methodologically rigorous instruments used to measure moral awareness and its related constructs.

Call for More Moral Awareness Research

Most behavioral ethics scholars who examine decision making have focused the majority of their empirical research on moral judgment. In a review of 384 separate findings related to Rest's (1986) model of moral decision making, O'Fallon and Butterfield (2008) reported that 185 of these studies related to moral judgment while only 28 related to moral awareness. Although moral judgment is no doubt important, by some accounts it explains only 10–15 percent of the variance in moral-related behavior, leaving much of the moral decision-making process unexplained (Blasi, 1980; Thoma, Rest, and Davison, 1991). Jordan suggests that the emphasis on moral judgment may be due to the reliability and popularity of several measures of moral judgment (e.g., the Defining Issues Test [DIT] per Rest, 1979; and the Moral Judgment Interview [MJI] per Colby and Kohlberg, 1987). The lack of a recognized moral awareness measure coupled with the field's struggle to define moral awareness has slowed the scholarly research of moral awareness. Despite the overwhelming focus on moral judgment, Jordan asks, "Can one convincingly argue that judging which action is most morally justified is more important than interpreting a situation as involving moral components and understanding how those components impact relevant individuals?" (2007, p. 324).

   Some scholars have asserted that moral awareness is the logical first step and foundation to moral reasoning and ethical decision making (Rest, 1986; see also Bryant, 2009; Clarkeburn, 2002), even though research has not established a temporal progression through Rest's model. Still, because it is the conceptual starting point in many moral-decision-making models, moral awareness is an important construct. Some assert that, without recognizing the moral nature of a situation, it is unlikely that the decision maker will use a moral lens in assessing and acting on the issue (Gioia, 1992; Jordan, 2007; Sparks and Hunt, 1998; Thoma, 1994). Though such a lens does not determine moral or immoral behavior, it is a critical "point of departure whereby the decision-making process can be characterized as either moral or amoral" (Tenbrunsel and Smith-Crowe, 2008, p. 553). Thus, without awareness of an issue's moral component, it is unlikely that those components will be factored into the judgment process (Jordan, 2009; Fiske and Taylor, 1991), resulting in a low likelihood for future moral action as a result of the decision-making process (Jones, 1991; Jordan, 2009; Rest, 1986).

Complementing the awareness literature is a closely related research stream involving *moral disengagement*, the process through which individuals rationalize or justify their behavior. Rest (1986) included conscious disengagement in his seminal model; more recent theorists (e.g., Bazerman and Tenbrunsel, 2011) emphasize instantaneous, subconscious disengagement. Placing disengagement at several points in the decision-making process, rather than just at the end, these authors question the ability of even the most conscientious decision makers to avoid moral blind spots and biases based on self-interest.

Clearly, awareness and disengagement are critical variables in the decision-making process. Hall (1992) called for greater attention and research on those who are morally blind or insensitive than on those who callously commit immoral acts. Others (e.g., Karcher, 1996) additionally argued that the vast amount of time and resources expended to solve ethical problems is largely wasted if the decision maker is unable to see the problem.

Chapter Outline and Boundaries

The purpose of this chapter is to chart the terrain of moral awareness research. We examine the major threads in the research and reveal some of the underlying assumptions in order to bring to light opportunities that exist for future research. We also point to research trends that help increase the academic precision with which terms are used and review measures used to examine moral awareness. (See Table 1.1 for our list of constructs, definitions, and measures.) Although this chapter is not meant to be an exhaustive review of moral awareness and its related constructs, by including studies that guide the current research agenda we intend to stimulate dialog for future work.

Definitional Considerations

Moral awareness is the main construct of interest in this chapter. Definitions vary so much that we discuss five definitional components of awareness separately. Yet the main concept we try to address is how researchers have talked about and measured an individual's level of awareness about moral issues. Researchers have discussed different aspects of moral awareness, such as whether it entails cognitive or affective recognition, whether the individual takes the perspective of others, and whether the individual assigns any significance or importance to moral issues.

Table 1.1 Constructs, definitions, and measures of ethical awareness

Constructs	Definitions	Measures
Moral/ethical awareness/ sensitivity	*Generally defined using one or more of the definitional components listed below*	Reynolds (2006b), general business context scenarios; Blair (1995), measure of perceived "moral" versus "conventional" transgressions; Robertson, Snarey, Ousley, Harenski, Bowman, Gilkey, and Kilts (2007), fMRI to locate brain activity; thematically coded qualitative interviews (Bryant, 2009; Lind et al., 1997; Sadler, 2004); see also measures listed with each definitional component
Cognitive recognition	"Spontaneous recognition of moral issues, [and] the interpretation of a situation in moral terms" (Clarkeburn, 2002, p. 443); "The realization that one's behavior may … violate a moral principle" (Erwin, 2000, p. 116)	Lists from scenarios (no distinction between cognitive and affective recognition): Butterfield, Treviño, and Weaver (2000), competitive intelligence scale; Clarkeburn (2002), Test for Ethical Sensitivity in Science (TESS); Fowler, Zeidler, and Sadler (2009), TESS adapted for socio-scientific domain; Erwin (2000), Moral Sensitivity Scale for Supervisors (MSSS) for the general counseling domain; Herbert, Meslin, and Dunn (1992), vignettes for medical students

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Affective recognition	"There can be a strong affective response before extensive cognitive coding" (Clarkeburn, 2002, p. 441)	Weighted lists from scenarios (again, no distinction between cognitive and affective recognition): Shaub (1989), auditor scenario; Sparks and Hunt (1998), marketing research scenario; Yetmar and Eastman (2000), accounting scenarios; Jordan (2009), Moral Awareness in Business Instrument (MABI); Wittmer (2000), Ethical Sensitivity Test
Cognitive perspective taking	"A person's recognition that his/her potential decision or action could affect the interests, welfare, or expectations of the self or others in a fashion that may conflict with one or more ethical standards" (Butterfield et al., 2000, p. 982); "The realization that one's behavior may negatively affect others" (Erwin, 2000, p. 116); "Moral awareness occurs when an individual is aware that his/her actions affect the interests and welfare of others in negative ways" (De Cremer, Mayer, and Schminke, 2010, p. 3)	
Affective perspective taking	"[Includes] interpreting reactions and feelings of others ... empathy and role-taking skills" (Sadler and Zeidler, 2004, p. 341)	

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Constructs	Definitions	Measures
Ascription of importance	"The ascription of importance to the ethical issues [in a] decision-making situation." (Sparks and Hunt, 1998, p. 95)	Survey: Lützén, Dahlqvist, Eriksson, and Norberg (2006), Moral Sensitivity Questionnaire (MSQ) (for use in the health care profession); Ascription of Importance also measured in conjunction with recognition; see "Weighted lists from scenarios," above.
Unconscious awareness	*No definition*	
Moral awareness-related constructs		
Moral attentiveness	"Extent to which an individual chronically perceives and considers morality and moral elements in his or her experiences" (Reynolds, 2008, p. 1028)	Reynolds (2008), scale measuring moral attentiveness
Moral construal	"the process in which general moral values are brought to bear on specific situations" (Bersoff, 1999, p. 414); "The process by which individuals recognize, perceive, and/or interpret particular situations or decisions as moral" (Sadler and Zeidler, 2004, p. 7; Saltzstein, 1994 for original)	Wojciszke (1994, 1997), approaches to rating moral construal; Van Bavel et al. (2012), method of measuring moral construal; Sadler and Zeidler (2004), approach to measuring moral construal

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Moral imagination	"An ability to imaginatively discern various possibilities for acting within a given situation and to envision the potential help and harm that are likely to result from a given action" (Johnson, 1993, p. 202); "The ability in particular circumstances to discover and evaluate possibilities not merely determined by that circumstance, or limited by its operative mental models, or merely framed by a set of rules or rule-governed concerns... The ability to empathize, to understand another point of view, and to be creative in ethical decision making" (Werhane, 1999, p. 93, 96); (see also Buchholz and Rosenthal, 2005)	*No known measures of moral imagination*
Moral perception	"Perceiving (what are in fact the morally significant) features of a situation confronting one" (Blum, 1991, p. 714) "Anything contributing to or encompassed within the agent's take on the situation – his salience-perception – prior to his deliberating about what to do" (Blum, 1991, p. 707)	*No known measures of moral perception*
Implicit assumptions and associations	"Knowledge structures, [or] schematic mental structures that describe relationships between concepts" (Reynolds, Leavitt, and DeCelles, 2010, pp. 752–3)	Greenwald, McGhee, and Schwartz (1998), Implicit Association Test (IAT)

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Constructs	Definitions	Measures
Moral disengagement constructs		
Moral disengagement	"[The result of] social and psychological maneuvers by which moral self-sanctions can be disengaged from inhumane conduct" so that "self-regulatory mechanisms do not come into play" during the moral reasoning process (Bandura, 1999, p. 194); The deactivation of moral self-regulation that frees individuals "from the self-sanctions and the accompanying guilt that would ensue when behavior violates internal standards, [making them] more likely to make unethical decisions" (Detert, Treviño, and Sweitzer, 2008, p. 375); "A process that allows us to selectively turn our usual ethical standards on and off at will" (Bazerman and Tenbrunsel, 2011, pp. 69–70).	Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, and Pastorelli (1996), scales for moral disengagement
Ethical fading	"The process by which the moral colors of an ethical decision fade into bleached hues that are void of moral implications" (Ann E. Tenbrunsel and Messick, 2004, p. 224); "A process by which ethical dimensions are eliminated from a decision" (Bazerman and Tenbrunsel, 2011, pp. 30–31)	*No known measures of ethical fading*
Moral neutrality	*No definition*	*No known measures of moral neutrality*
Bounded ethicality	"Cognitive limitations that can make us unaware of the moral implications of our decisions" (Bazerman and Tenbrunsel, 2011, p. 30)	*No known measures of ethical fading*

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Major Constructs

As noted, moral awareness has been used interchangeably with several different terms including moral sensitivity (Rest's original term), ethical awareness, ethical sensitivity, moral and ethical perception, intuition, and sensibility. We discuss all of this literature under the heading "moral awareness." The awareness-related constructs, which we will discuss separately, are *moral attentiveness*, *moral construal*, *moral imagination*, *moral perception*, and *implicit assumptions*. Finally, under the heading "moral disengagement," we discuss constructs that relate in a contrasting sense to moral awareness – including *ethical fading*, *moral neutrality*, and *bounded ethicality*. Seldom-used constructs not discussed in this chapter include moral blindness, moral invisibility, and moral indifference.

Puzzles and Complications

Two problems with moral awareness research are common to ethics research in general. We address the ubiquitous lack of definitional clarity surrounding usage of "moral" and "ethical" before turning to problems specific to moral awareness.

    Definitions of "moral" or "ethical." Despite the increased attention to moral awareness, the field has struggled to define the core dependent variable: "moral" (or "ethical"). The magnitude of this problem is clearly seen; Jordan stated, "central to the study of moral awareness is the question of what is and is not a *moral-related issue*" (Jordan, 2009, p. 243, italics in original). Most authors make no attempt at a definition; others note the difficulty and explicitly avoid defining "moral."

    Even some of the most rigorous work fails to adequately define these core terms. For example, Tenbrunsel and Smith-Crowe (e.g., 2008) lament in their review of ethical decision making: "Of all noted criticisms, the lack of definitions for these terms (which we use interchangeably) is without a doubt the most crucial, for without a universal understanding of the core dependent variable, research will remain inconsistent, incoherent and atheoretical" (p. 548). Tenbrunsel and Smith-Crowe (2008) note the difficulty of defining the term moral or ethical and that only a "few brave researchers" (p. 549) have made the attempt (Jones, 1991; Rest, 1986; Treviño et al., 2006), though even some of these attempts become muddled as "moral" and "ethical" are used to define each other.

    Distinguishing between "moral" and "ethical." Many authors use "moral awareness" and "ethical awareness" interchangeably (often noted

explicitly) and at times within the same paper (e.g., Karcher, 1996). The interchangeable use of "moral" and "ethical" may derive from the similar meaning between their noun forms, "morality" and "ethics." Rest defined morality as "standards or guidelines that govern human cooperation – in particular, how rights, duties, and benefits are to be allocated" (Rest, 1983, p. 558). Corey, Corey, and Callanan (1998) defined ethics as "the judgments made of situations and actions compared to standards adopted by an individual or a group in order to provide guidelines for appropriate professional behavior" (as described in Erwin, 2000, p. 115) .

Using the two definitions above, Erwin (2000) created a distinction between these two constructs by explaining, "Morality and ethics are related concepts because both have principles upon which they rest (e.g., non-maleficence, justice, fidelity). The two constructs differ in that ethics are viewed according to an ethical code that is created by a professional organization" (p. 115). Gioia (1992) also distinguished between the terms, noting that "ethical" typically focuses on business and cultural codes or standards, while the term "moral" tends to deal with inner, personal conceptions of right and wrong. Weaver (2007) observed that moral and ethical share etymological roots, lending support to those who use the terms interchangeably. But her extensive literature review of over 200 articles and books on moral/ethical awareness and related terms found some general distinctions. One distinction was that "ethical" often denotes a more reasoned, philosophical approach to right and wrong, relative to "moral," which tends to be more based on societal norms. Weaver (2007) also noted that ethical tends to apply to professional spheres, while moral is applied more broadly.

While some authors do differentiate between moral and ethical, neither definitions nor distinctions have been universally adopted across the literature. And, perhaps for ease of research, most scholars simply conflate the definitions or avoid defining the terms altogether.

In this chapter we do not attempt to resolve the definitional quandary; nor do we delineate the difference between ethical and moral. We do, however, call attention to the dilemma and urge researchers to work toward a deeper understanding of these fundamental questions. Finally, it may be important to note that several recent reviews (Butterfield, Trevino, and Weaver, 2000; Reynolds, 2006b; Tenbrunsel and Smith-Crowe, 2008) have explicitly treated these terms as equivalent.

Interchangeable usage of "sensitivity" and "awareness." Ambiguity about labeling is not only found in the terms "moral" and "ethical"; scholars have noted similar inconsistency and overlap for the terms "sensitivity" and "awareness" (Jordan, 2007; Weaver, 2007). While some

confusion remains, two patterns may help researchers see how these terms are used in this literature.

The first pattern is that the use of awareness or sensitivity depends in part on the perspective from and field in which the construct is being studied. Rest (1983, 1986) originally used "moral sensitivity" in his moral decision-making model. However, stemming from Fiske and Taylor's (1991) research on cognitive awareness, many researchers renamed Rest's original construct "moral awareness" to be consistent with cognition research. Research in the business domain has typically followed this trend of preferring the term "awareness" to sensitivity" (Butterfield et al., 2000; Reynolds, 2006b; Tenbrunsel and Smith-Crowe, 2008).

The fields of medicine, psychiatry, and nursing have more frequently tied their research directly to Rest's original work. As a result, these disciplines have continued to use Rest's original term, "sensitivity" (Lützén, Blom, Ewalds-Kvist, and Winch, 2010; Maxwell and Le Sage, 2009; Weaver, 2007).

Second, because Fiske and Taylor's (1991) model of awareness was based in cognition, research that builds from a similar cognitive framework tends to use the term "awareness" rather than "sensitivity." Though Rest's (1986) model was built upon a cognitive foundation, research examining the construct as affective, or as both cognitive and affective (frequently the case in medicine research), tends to refer directly to his work, using the word *sensitivity*.

Measuring moral awareness. Besides the definitional difficulties tied to moral awareness research, another especially thorny issue is construct measurement. Tenbrunsel and Smith-Crowe (2008) sum up the problem-ridden state of the literature, noting, "it is not clear from most of the research on moral awareness then whether … moral awareness has actually been measured" (p. 556).

Blurring the line between awareness and judgment.   First, scholars have noted the danger of priming participants to notice moral dilemmas by revealing the moral nature of the research (Reynolds, 2006a; Tenbrunsel and Smith-Crowe, 2008; Treviño et al., 2006). For example, in a study measuring ethical sensitivity to racially charged issues (Braebeck et al., 2000), subjects were told that the measure tested "attentiveness and sensitivity to issues that can arise in school settings" (personal communication with Braebeck, as cited in Jordan, 2007, p. 332). In another study, subjects were asked about the ethical implications of a situation (Blodgett, Lu, Rose, and Vitell, 2001), while in another, participants were asked "to list all the ethical issues related to each vignette" they read (Hébert, Meslin, Dunn, Byrne, and Reid, 1990, p. 141).

Priming participants to recognize moral dilemmas becomes problematic with empirical research, because scholars encounter difficulties in distinguishing the boundaries of awareness and judgment, and several scholars (see especially Jordan, 2007, 2009; Reynolds, 2006b, 2008) contend that the blurred distinction has resulted in very little valid measurement of bona fide ethical awareness. Jordan's (2007) review of existing ethical awareness measures contends (as Reynolds, 2008 supports) that placing research subjects in ambiguous situations – that is, not priming them to look for ethical issues – is the only valid way to test for ethical awareness. Merely asking for Likert-scale responses to questions about ethical issues conflates judgment with actual awareness. Asking more general questions such as "What are the issues involved?" should yield better measurement of moral awareness than questions such as "What are the moral/ethical issues involved?"

Entangling of context familiarity and moral awareness.   Second, it may be difficult to disentangle moral awareness from context familiarity. After Rest and Bebeau began developing a measure for moral sensitivity in dentistry (the Dental Ethical Sensitivity Test, or DEST; see Bebeau, Rest, and Yamoor, 1985), measures for moral awareness have been developed for a number of fields. For example, Ameen, Guffey, and McMillan (1996) adapted items from the DEST to test workplace moral awareness; Betz, O'Connell, and Shepard (1989) adapted the DEST for an academic environment. Shaub (1989) developed a measure in accounting. Clarkeburn (2002) developed a measure for ethical sensitivity in science (the Test for Ethical Sensitivity in Science, or TESS). More recently, two measures (Jordan, 2009; Reynolds, 2006b) were developed for the general business domain. Because measures for moral awareness have been domain-specific, a challenge facing researchers is measuring moral awareness rather than an individual's acculturation into a specific domain.

Conflating a person's awareness and an issue's intensity.   A third common challenge is to avoid conflating moral awareness and moral intensity, or the moral severity of an issue (Jones, 1991). Because the intensity of the moral issue at hand plays a role in the participant's moral awareness, and because there is a substantial overlap in the variance between the two constructs, it is easy for researchers to blend moral awareness with moral intensity. Whether something about the individuals allows them to pay particular attention to certain types of moral issues, or whether moral issues themselves are particularly likely to stand out to certain individuals, conflation threatens construct validity in the measurement of moral awareness. For example, a moral dilemma that involves harm to animals could be especially salient to pet owners. In this case, it

would be challenging to determine how much of the increased "moral awareness" for pet owners would be applicable to the general domain of moral awareness.

Potential Solutions

We have listed several puzzles and complications associated with defining and measuring moral awareness. Definitional challenges primarily arise from failing to explicitly define the constructs used in ethics research, or from being inconsistent with adopted definitions throughout the study's discussion and measurement. This leads to our proposed solution for researchers: at the very least, explicitly define and be consistent with definitions throughout a study. In this chapter we list several components that are used by various authors to make up moral awareness. We suggest that authors scrupulously specify which components they are using to define the construct. Also, to ensure construct validity, they must take care to align the measure for moral awareness with the definition chosen. We encourage conceptual discussion and development to further clarify definitions of the components of moral awareness. Finally, we suggest that an additional alternative to avoid many of the methodological and theoretical pitfalls associated with moral awareness is to use moral attentiveness rather than moral awareness as the construct of inquiry.

We also listed three measurement problems: distinguishing between moral judgment and moral awareness; disentangling context familiarity from moral awareness; and separating a person's awareness from an issue's intensity. A few suggestions may help researchers avoid improperly measuring moral awareness. First, avoid alerting subjects to the fact that moral awareness is being measured. One may do this by giving a general instruction such as, "Please list the relevant issues to making a decision in this situation." Also it is usually best to avoid scenarios where the moral salience is so great that subjects become immediately aware of the moral nature of the study. Second, address context familiarity by assessing its level separately for statistical control purposes. Design scenarios that minimize the need for context familiarity. Finally, perform adequate pre- and post-testing to ensure that alternative explanations of moral issue identification are eliminated; in particular, seek to determine other antecedents of issue salience (e.g., determine pet ownership for moral issues involving pets, or race for moral issues involving racial discrimination).

We now turn to specific definitions and measures. We hope that this compilation will help researchers avoid (or at least address) the complications inherent in moral awareness scholarship.

Part 2: Constructs and Measures

1.1 MORAL AWARENESS

In understanding the definitions of moral awareness, it is important to understand the historical context in which those definitions were shaped. For example, assumptions undergirding early models help to explain the emphasis on cognitive recognition that continues today. Historical context can also help fledgling researchers grasp the evolution and nuances of moral awareness definitions, which we group into several domains.

History of Moral Awareness Research

While scholars generally recognize Rest as the father of moral sensitivity research (1983, 1986), Weaver (2007) noted that moral sense and sensitivity have been studied in philosophical writings for centuries. In the eighteenth century, "the early Scottish philosophers Hutcheson and Hume… described moral sense as a reflective and intuitive sentiment guiding the ability to perceive rightness and wrongness" (Weaver, 2007, p. 142). By the late twentieth century, the subject had found a place in feminist and behavioral literatures. In addition to moral sensitivity's use as derived from humanities and religion, the construct has also been "used synonymously with conscience" (Lützén, Dahlqvist, Eriksson, and Norberg, 2006, p. 190; see also Davis, 1979). Despite the prior attention given the subject, Rest's work in defining and measuring moral sensitivity endowed the construct with both significance and recognition, launching further academic inquiry into the subject (Weaver, 2007).

Rest's work in moral development was built upon the work of his professor, Lawrence Kohlberg (though Kohlberg did not work on or develop the construct *moral sensitivity*). In 1958, Kohlberg developed his theory of moral stages of development, a cognitive theory of moral development. Twenty-eight years later, Rest published his foundational tome, *Moral Development: Advances in Research and Theory*. In it he explained a four-component model of moral decision making, which included (1) moral sensitivity, (2) moral reasoning, (3) moral motivation, and (4) moral character. Moral sensitivity for the first time was placed at the forefront as the logical first step in the moral decision-making

process. Since Rest's work, multiple models have been proposed, with most either implicitly or explicitly recognizing moral sensitivity as a major component in the moral decision-making process (Ferrell and Gresham, 1985; Hunt and Vitell, 1986; Jones, 1991; Treviño, 1986).

The importance of the pedigree resides in the assumptions that Rest's model inherited from Kohlberg's cognitive framework. These assumptions were used to define both the model and its components. For example, the components were conscious, internally situated, and were governed primarily by cognition rather than affect. As research on moral awareness developed (Jordan, 2009; Reynolds, 2006b), researchers incorporated the findings from Fiske and Taylor's (1991) model of cognitive awareness, further entrenching awareness in the assumptions associated with cognition. These assumptions guided moral awareness research for the next two decades.

More recently, however, scholars have been exploring the affective components of moral awareness (Maxwell and Le Sage, 2009). Similarly, while the construct has been typically researched as a conscious, individual trait (Chan and Leung, 2006), some scholars have begun to examine it as a subconscious process (Reynolds et al., 2010), a social cognitive construct (Jordan, 2009), and a construct that is issue contingent (Jones, 1991). (See also our discussion under *moral attentiveness*.) Still, in their 2008 review, Tenbrunsel and Smith-Crowe expressed disappointment "that most research assumes that the [decision-making] process is a reason-based one (in the traditional sense), thus ignoring the roles of emotions, the subconscious, and intuition" (p. 547). We discuss *unconscious awareness*, particularly the work of Haidt (2001), later in this chapter.

Moral Awareness Domains

Although Rest's conceptualization remains the landmark work for most researchers of moral awareness, researchers' interpretations of Rest's work have varied. Jordan (2007) notes that, since Rest's 1983 book, researchers have built upon Rest's model by restructuring the definitional boundaries primarily in three ways. First, some scholars have simplified Rest's definition to include only the recognition aspect (Owhoso, 2002; Reynolds, 2006b; Shaub, Finn, and Munter, 1993). Second, some scholars have maintained Rest's original definition by including both a recognition and affective response element in addressing a moral issue (Braebeck et al., 2000; Butterfield et al., 2000; Lind, Swenson-Lepper, and Rarick, 1998). Finally, the last group of scholars added to recognition

an ascription of importance to moral issues (Jordan, 2009; Karcher, 1996; Sparks and Hunt, 1998).

In her review of over 200 books and research articles on moral-awareness-related constructs, Weaver (2007) found that moral awareness was identified with five different "concept domains": cognitive, affective, skill, responsibility, and knowledge. In this chapter, we combine the Jordan (2007) and Weaver (2007) observations to describe the definitional components, or domains, most often referenced in studies of moral awareness.

Definitional Components of Moral Awareness

Weaver's (2007) and Jordan's (2007) reviews are helpful for understanding the state of the literature and the conceptual evolution of moral awareness. To build from both of their frameworks for categorizing extant moral awareness research, we have singled out definitional components for specific consideration: (1) cognitive recognition; (2) affective recognition; (3) cognitive perspective taking; (4) affective perspective taking; and (5) ascription of importance. Note that these definitional components are often bundled together, and may be conceptually overlapping (e.g., see research by Anand, Holbrook, and Stephens, 1988, on the relationship between cognition and affect). Whether some of these definitional components should become particular to moral sensitivity or moral awareness, and whether particular bundles of components are especially coherent, we leave to future theorizing.

Following the five elements, we introduce unconscious awareness as a theoretical counterpoint. *Measures for moral awareness are sorted by methodological category and discussed at the end of this section.*

1.1.1   Cognitive Recognition

> *"Spontaneous recognition of moral issues, [and] the interpretation of a situation in moral terms"* (Clarkeburn, 2002, p. 443).

> *"The realization that one's behavior may … violate a moral principle"* (Erwin, 2000, p. 116).

Cognitive recognition is a common definitional component in ethics research. Cognitive recognition links closely to the notion of *awareness* from the social cognitive literature. By itself, cognitive recognition makes for a basic version of moral awareness – as long as an individual realizes a situation "has ethical content" (Shaub, 1989, p. 7), then that person is morally aware. If other definitional elements were absent, this definition

could refer to a person being merely intellectually aware that a situation has moral implications. That person could be morally aware without having any kind of emotional or affective component, or any sense of how their actions might affect others, and may not ascribe any priority to the moral implications of the situation. For example, this basic level of moral awareness could be satisfied in the case of a salesperson merely being aware that lying to a client represents a moral situation. The salesperson may experience no feelings one way or another, and may not even think of it as an important issue – mere mental cognition of the situation's moral content is enough for this version of the definition.

Finally, cognitive recognition is often paired with other definitional components or even partially removed from the definition of moral awareness. Erwin (2000) includes cognitive recognition as only one component of the entire awareness definition, while other authors (Tenbrunsel and Smith-Crowe, 2008) state that an explicit cognitive moral awareness (i.e., participants' labeling the dilemma as moral) is not a necessary component.

1.1.2   Affective Recognition

"There can be a strong affective response before extensive cognitive coding" (Clarkeburn, 2002, p. 441).

This definition suggests mere intellectual recognition of an issue's moral content is not sufficient for it to be categorized as moral awareness – an affective component (e.g., an emotional dimension) must also be present (Rest, 1986).

On this expanded definition, the salesperson in the previous example (under *Cognitive Recognition*) would also have to have some kind of affective response to the morality of the situation – such as regret for having lied or some apprehension about lying. Still, the salesperson may largely ignore the affective response or fail to place any level of priority or importance on the moral implications of the situation.

1.1.3   Cognitive Perspective Taking

"A person's recognition that his/her potential decision or action could affect the interests, welfare, or expectations of the self or others in a fashion that may conflict with one or more ethical standards" (Butterfield et al., 2000, p. 982).

"The realization that one's behavior may negatively affect others" (Erwin, 2000, p. 116).

"Moral awareness occurs when an individual is aware that his/her actions affect the interests and welfare of others in negative ways" (De Cremer, Mayer, and Schminke, 2010, p. 3).

Cognitive perspective taking is the act of cognitively considering how others may be affected by one's actions. While Erwin (2000) includes both recognition of a moral issue and perspective taking in his definition, the second definitional component could stand alone. An individual need not be aware of the morality of a situation in the traditional sense of discerning a right or wrong at stake in order to consider how his or her decisions might affect those involved. Even without labeling an issue's content as moral/ethical, if an individual realizes that a situation may negatively impact another's "interests and welfare" (De Cremer et al., 2010), then that individual is considered morally aware. Continuing our salesperson example, if the salesperson realizes that lying to the client could harm that client's interests or welfare, then the salesperson is considered morally aware under this definitional component.

1.1.4   Affective Perspective Taking

"[Includes] interpreting reactions and feelings of others … [and] empathy and role-taking skills" (Sadler and Zeidler, 2004, p. 341).

Affective perspective taking is the ability to empathize with others. While cognitive perspective taking is strictly a cognitive process, developed from the framework and assumptions Rest (1986) adopted, affective perspective taking is more than a cognitive process. With a definitional history that originates from philosophers such as Hume (1739–1740) and Hutcheson (1728), moral sensitivity is a construct based on sensation, not only on cognition. As a result, in affective perspective taking individuals become morally aware as they feel how others would be affected by the choices made.

Again using the salesperson example (from the *Cognitive Awareness* discussion), moral awareness would develop as the salesperson would empathize with the client, feeling what the client would experience. Currently researchers who include this component in their definition of moral awareness are publishing in nursing, medical, or psychology journals and often use the term *moral sensitivity* rather than *moral awareness*.

1.1.5 Ascription of Importance

> *"[T]he ascription of importance to the ethical issues [in a] decision-making situation"* (Sparks and Hunt, 1998, p. 95).

The final definitional component is whether an individual considers morality important, and to what extent priority should be given to it. Sparks and Hunt (1998), as well as Jordan (2007), discuss how some definitions include this ascription of importance component and others do not. Even given an ascription of importance, Sparks and Hunt (1998) are careful to distinguish between "*ethicality*" (p. 95, italics in original) and *ethical awareness*, noting that unethical individuals can still be highly aware of ethical issues "involved in their decisions" (p. 95). To return to our salesperson, following this definition of moral awareness, an ethical salesperson would consider it important to take moral aspects of customer encounters seriously.

1.1.6 Unconscious Awareness

Whether awareness presupposes conscious processes is a matter for debate. Unconscious processes preceding moral decision making may constitute an alternative to conscious moral awareness, or a different type of moral awareness. In either case, unconscious processing, which has been largely unexamined, may be another avenue for future research in moral awareness.

Since Rest developed his moral decision-making model, only a few scholars have explored the idea that moral awareness may include something other than conscious thought. As Tenbrunsel and Smith-Crowe (2008) stated, in decision-making research, "reason [is] king" (p. 573).

Bucking tradition, Haidt (2001) explored non-cognitive areas of moral awareness to develop a social intuitionist model, also called the moral intuition model, as the default process in moral reasoning. The process he proposes is "generally the result of quick, automatic evaluations (intuitions)" (p. 814). Through the moral intuition model, conclusions appear in a moment, suddenly and effortlessly, with little realization of the process involved. Haidt explained that moral intuitions negate the need for the individual to have a conscious awareness of how he or she reached a conclusion. From this explanation one could infer that conscious recognition of an issue's moral components, ascription of importance, or empathetic construction of possible outcomes may be unnecessary or unattached to the moral intuition model.

Reynolds, Leavitt, and DeCelles (2010) also explore the moral decision-making process from a reflexive or automatic framework. However, where Haidt's model emphasized the influence of social and cultural influences, Reynolds et al. emphasized past experience "stored in what are referred to as knowledge structures, schematic mental structures" (p. 752). These structures mix with contextual cues to shape moral behavior. Narvaez (1996) also explored a dual framework incorporating both conscious and unconscious processes into moral sensitivity. She divided moral sensitivity in two: moral perception and moral interpretation, with the former construct described as a preconscious process and the latter as a conscious process.

Robertson et al. (2007) synthesized the theories as follows:

> Moral conflicts engage the automatic, implicit recruitment of cognitive structures, such as the activation of social schemas or tacit knowledge (D. Narváez and Bock, 2002), that allow the detection and interpretation of a moral issue or situation (J.R. Rest, 1994). These processes may occur below the level of conscious awareness (D. Narváez and Bock, 2002; J. Rest, Thoma, Narváez, and Bebeau, 1999), and are generally analogous to the processes of moral sensitivity and moral intuition, which have been described by Rest (1994) and Haidt (2001), respectively. (p. 755)

Scholars of unconscious awareness have helped to push the boundaries of the rational frameworks of moral awareness by "suggesting instead that biases, intuition, and emotion also must be considered" (Tenbrunsel and Smith-Crowe, 2008, p. 576). In so doing, they have cleared the way for further direction and exploration of the non-cognitive or subconscious aspects of moral awareness.

Measures of Moral Awareness

Generally speaking, most measures of moral awareness consist of a number of scenarios in which are embedded some type of moral dilemma. Because domain-specific knowledge is an important part of moral awareness (e.g., a lay person is not familiar with many of the moral challenges faced by dentists), most instruments for moral awareness have been modified to target a specific domain.

Methods of measurement. In this chapter, in order to clarify the measures and increase the usage of moral awareness instruments, we have organized the measures into three methodological groups, plus an "other" category. We describe a few notable studies from each group and point out which awareness components are actually measured by the research tools we describe.

Many measures use some type of moral scenario(s) as a key component. Our first group includes scenarios to which participants respond by listing different issues they observe. The second group of measures additionally asks subjects to rate the issues they list. The third group entails written surveys, and the last group employs other measurement techniques, such as interviewing or fMRI.

Guidelines for measurement. Because scenarios (also called "vignettes") play such an important part of measuring moral awareness, and also because researchers may want to create their own domain-specific scenarios, it may be useful to consider Sparks and Hunt's (1998) list of seven criteria when creating scenarios aimed at measuring moral awareness.

1. The scenario should not be structured solely around a moral issue or only moral issues (Similar to Clarkeburn's 2002 recommendation).
2. It should be an issue commonly faced.
3. It should be realistic.
4. It should be short.
5. The researcher should be careful that the scenarios do not include any unintended moral issues.
6. The severity of the moral issues should vary.
7. There should not be any overtly unethical acts.

In addition to these guidelines, Jordan (2007) pointed out that a key to obtaining valid measures of moral awareness lies not only in definitional clarity, but also in the disguise of each study's intent. Alerting participants that moral or ethical dimensions are being studied may artificially heighten their attention to the moral aspects of issues presented. (For a discussion about the feasibility and ethicality of deceiving participants, see Chapter 8.)

Group 1:   Lists from Scenarios

In the first group of measures, the subject is presented with a certain number of scenarios and then is asked to list the issues. Many of the measurement tools are highly industry specific, because generally workplace ethical issues are of interest. In order to test awareness of work-related ethical issues, the study materials need to be highly enriched with contextual details so as to disguise ethical issues within them. In Table 1.1 and in the following section, we cite some of the

major studies measuring moral awareness, but because of the high amount of industry-specific content in each study, replications are rare.

Butterfield, Treviño, and Weaver (2000), competitive intelligence scenarios. Butterfield et al.'s (2000) measure gauges the recognition aspect of moral awareness without distinguishing between affective and cognitive. The authors, measuring moral awareness in the competitive-intelligence domain, embed several "realistic and engaging, ethically ambiguous situations that might or might not elicit moral awareness" (Butterfield et al., 2000, p. 993). The subject receives one of two scenarios and, after reading the scenario, is asked to write down the issues the protagonist would see as important – and *not* to offer up their own opinions or to assume the role of the protagonist. The researcher then scores the list based on the number of moral issues the subject lists.

Clarkeburn (2002), Test for Ethical Sensitivity in Science (TESS). The TESS considers both the recognition and perspective-taking components; however, the rating of these two components is mixed and indistinguishable. Furthermore, affective and cognitive aspects of the components are not considered. In the measure the subject is given an unstructured problem in which ethical content is embedded. The subject is then told to write down no more than five questions or issues that should be considered before a solution can be decided. Scorers then rate the moral awareness of the responses based on a four-tier scoring guide, which considers recognition of the moral issue and perspective taking.

In order to create a measure more specific to socio-scientific issues, Fowler, Zeidler, and Sadler (2009) extended the TESS by including an additional scenario (cloning infertile parents), then called their measure the TESSplus. While this measure focused on moral awareness of socio-scientific issues, it also failed to distinguish between the recognition and perspective-taking aspects or the cognitive and affective components.

Erwin (2000), Moral Sensitivity Scale for Supervisors (MSSS). Building on Volker's (1984) measure for the general counseling domain, Erwin created a measure to assess both the recognition and perspective-taking components of moral awareness (cognitive and affective aspects are not distinguished), and potentially moral imagination (see *Moral Imagination*). To some extent, ascription of importance may be measured by whether participants identify a moral dilemma

without prescribing action, but that is unclear. Respondents read two scenarios from the counselor supervisory perspective. Participants are asked to respond in writing from that perspective by indicating the important issues in each case, listing what additional information would be helpful, and, finally, recommending actions. Responses are then evaluated on a 5-point scale developed by Volker (1984). The scores were 1: moral dilemma was not mentioned at all; 2: critical facts associated with the moral issue were mentioned, but no moral dilemma or negative consequences to others were discussed; 3: the situation was termed a moral dilemma but only negative consequences for the client were mentioned; 4: negative consequences to the client and others were mentioned, but no action was recommended; 5: actions were recommended to remedy the moral issues. Thus higher scores are intended to signify higher levels of moral awareness.

Hebert, Meslin, and Dunn (1992), vignettes for medical students. Hebert and colleagues (1992) created four vignettes for testing medical-student ethics. In one vignette, for example, a dying patient's requests to be off life support conflict with his wife's demands. Participants were given about half a page to record their written response to each dilemma. Hebert and colleagues listed the number of ethical issues in each case (between six and nine in total), categorized by type: autonomy, beneficence, and justice. Each response was then scored according to how many of the issues were identified (see Appendix I and Appendix II in Hebert et al., 1992).

Group 2: Weighted Lists from Scenarios

Like the measures in Group 1, the measures in Group 2 present one or more scenarios. However, these measures also directly assess the subject's ascription of importance to the issue. Researchers who add ascription of importance into their measure feel that, unless an individual ascribes importance to the ethical issue, it will be filtered out of the moral decision-making process. None of the measures in this group distinguishes between the cognitive and affective components of awareness.

Shaub (1989), auditor scenario. Shaub (1989) developed his measure in part from the work of Bebeau et al. (1985). The measure is used to assess the recognition components of moral awareness (not distinguishing between the affective or cognitive components) as well as relative ascription of importance (Sparks and Hunt, 1998). In the study,

subjects receive one scenario in which ten personal and professional issues are embedded, three of which are moral in nature. Subjects are then asked to list the important issues and to rank them in terms of relative importance.

Chan and Leung (2006) adapted this measure to test moral awareness in accountants. VanSandt, Shepard, and Zappe (2006) used a similar measure to Shaub's (1989), although they used video clips to create the scenarios.

Sparks and Hunt (1998), marketing researcher scenario. In their landmark study, Sparks and Hunt (1998) built upon Shaub's single-scenario measure (1989), but measured the ascription-of-importance component along with the recognition component of moral awareness. Importantly, Sparks and Hunt did not ask subjects to list only important or difficult issues, but rather all issues. Subjects were then asked to briefly describe the issue and rate the importance on a 7-point scale. Two scores were then calculated, the first consisting of how many issues the subject noticed, and the second measuring correct ascription of importance to identified moral issues. Sparks and Merenski (2000) also used this measure.

Yetmar and Eastman (2000), accounting scenarios. Yetmar and Eastman (2000) assessed moral awareness of accountants, then measured the accountants' ascription of importance to the moral issues. In this measure, participants are given eight embedded moral issues across four scenarios, then are asked to "state the nature of any issue(s) of concern and the significance of the discovered issue(s) on a Likert scale" (p. 280). A score is then compiled to measure moral sensitivity, with 0 given if they did not recognize the moral issue and 7 given if they recognized the most significant ethical issue.

Jordan (2009), Moral Awareness in Business Instrument (MABI). One of the few moral awareness measures intended for a general business context, the MABI assesses participants' recognition of and ascription of importance to moral issues. Subjects are randomly assigned one of three vignettes (healthcare coverage for employees, drug development for poor clients, or potential lead poisoning from a factory) and told that, for this study on "decision making," they will be asked to imagine themselves as a committee member for the corporation featured in the case. Subjects are asked to record three to five issues they would like to "discuss" with the committee in order to come

to a decision. They are then asked why they would choose those issues, and finally instructed to rank-order them.

Jordan (2009) provides an evaluation framework to rate written responses on a 1–8-point scale of six dimensions, broadly grouped into two types of concerns: *shareholder and corporate concerns* and *non-shareholding stakeholder and responsibility concerns*. Further, Jordan (2009) supplements the written response with a multiple-choice quiz administered by computer so that the responses can be tabulated along with the subject's response time to each item in milliseconds.

Wittmer (2000), Ethical Sensitivity Test (EST). Wittmer (2000) measured both the recognition and the ascription-of-importance components of moral awareness. In the Ethical Sensitivity Test, the subject assumes a managerial role and sifts through nine tasks in which one moral issue is embedded. Open-ended questions are then asked to assess moral awareness. Wittmer also includes a 12-item Likert scale, similar to the structure found in the Defining Issues Test.

Group 3:   Surveys

A third type of moral awareness measures relies on written questionnaires. In surveying the literature, we found few measures that use this methodological approach.

Reynolds (2006b), general business context scenarios. Working with his own definition of moral awareness – "a person's determination that a situation contains moral content and legitimately can be considered from a moral point of view" (p. 233) – Reynolds (2006b) wrote vignettes that included (or did not include) harm to others and violations of behavioral norms. In the first study, three 7-point Likert-type items allowed participants to indicate (a) whether the single vignette they read reflected moral content and (b) whether they would report the incident to an ethics committee (Cronbach's alpha = 0.70). In the second study, participants read four vignettes and responded to each separately (average alpha = 0.78). Reynolds's vignettes can be found at the end of his 2006 research article.

Lützén, Dahlqvist, Eriksson, and Norberg (2006), Moral Sensitivity Questionnaire (MSQ). This nine-item instrument, based on an instrument developed a decade earlier (Lützén, Nordin, and Brolin, 1994), is tailored specifically to the healthcare profession. Unlike most of the other measures reviewed, the MSQ depicts moral awareness as more

than just a cognitive construct. For instance, survey questions ask respondents to rate their "feelings" of responsibility, suffering, inadequacy, and their "sense" for needs and poor care. The measure also assesses the perspective-taking component of moral awareness, but does not directly measure recognition or ascription of importance.

Group 4:   Other Moral Awareness Measures

Measures placed in Group 4 use approaches rarely seen in the moral-awareness literature. Some of these measures tease apart less common constructs. Others may be hard to replicate in organizations because they require specialized technology or time-consuming qualitative methods.

Blair (1995), measure of perceived "moral" versus "conventional" transgressions. In this measure, which is tailored to a school context, respondents rate and explain their ratings of several *moral transgressions* (defined as those that harm others) and several *conventional transgressions* (defined as those that may be rude or impolite, but do not inflict harm directly). The words moral, conventional, and transgression do not appear in the instrument items, which may be used as they are or adapted to other contexts.

Blair's (1995) instrument is notable in that it takes two closely related types of transgressions, and then facilitates measurement of the difference between perceptions of each type. Using the instrument, Blair (1995) and Dolan and Fullam (2010) demonstrated that psychopaths have difficulty distinguishing between moral transgressions and conventional transgressions.

Robertson, Snarey, Ousley, Harenski, Bowman, Gilkey, and Kilts (2007), fMRI to measure brain activity associated with moral issues. Functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) is a technology that allows researchers to view the location of subjects' brain activity. By mapping where brain activity is taking place when subjects are prompted to think about particular topics, researchers infer relationships between types of thought processes. For example, in Robertson et al.'s (2007) study, subjects were prompted to think about real-life moral issues by being shown different story prompts. Meanwhile, through fMRI, subjects were observed for which areas of the brain "lit up" with activity. Based on which parts of the brain showed activity, connections were suggested. In this case, "sensitivity to moral issues" was associated with parts of the brain that led Robertson et al. (2007) to conclude that their "results suggest a role for access to self histories

and identities and social perspectives in sensitivity to moral issues, provide neural representations of the subcomponent process of moral sensitivity originally proposed by Rest, and support differing neural information processing for the interpretive recognition of justice and care moral issues" (p. 755).

Bryant (2009), coded, unstructured interviews. Bryant conducted and transcribed 30 interviews of founder/entrepreneurs, then thematically coded the transcriptions with the qualitative data analysis tool NVivo (a computer application). Other qualitative efforts to explore moral awareness have also used open-ended interviews (Lind, Rarick, et al., 1997; Saddler, 2004), but we do not include those measures here because they may be difficult to replicate.

1.2   AWARENESS-RELATED CONSTRUCTS

1.2.1   Moral Attentiveness

"[The] extent to which an individual chronically perceives and considers morality and moral elements in his or her experiences" (Reynolds, 2008, p. 1028).

Moral attentiveness is one's tendency to pay attention to moral issues (Ruedy and Schweitzer, 2010). Drawing from social cognitive theory on attention (Fiske and Taylor, 1991), Reynolds argued that attentiveness is both conceptually and theoretically different from awareness. While moral awareness is situational, triggered by the issue's salience (Jones, 1991) or influenced by internal factors such as gender (Ameen et al., 1996), nationality (Blodgett et al., 2001), or education (Sparks and Hunt, 1998), moral attentiveness "pertains to the process by which an individual actively screens and considers stimuli related to morality" (Reynolds, 2008, p. 1028).

Attentiveness as a construct developed, in part, to resolve "theoretical, methodological, and practical problems" with awareness research (Reynolds, 2008, p. 1027). Specifically, with their foundation in cognitive moral development, awareness scholars tend to ignore how individuals uniquely construct moral issues. By contrast, attentiveness scholars do not rely on objectively moral issues (e.g., stealing, lying). Instead, they decouple attentiveness from the moral event, measuring attentiveness as a mediating or moderating variable.

This decoupling helps to resolve another issue with moral awareness: the tendency of scholars to study awareness in domain-specific ways,

which, Reynolds (2008) argued, limited predictive and external validity. Attentiveness studies tend to apply more broadly to general populations (rather than to professional groups and their job-specific situations).

In particular, attentiveness scholars often seek to understand how attentiveness influences general conduct (Reynolds, 2008). Theoretically, those high in moral attentiveness are more likely to view the world through a moral lens. In one study, they "were more likely to notice ethical infractions by themselves and others, and acted more ethically" (Ruedy and Schweitzer, 2010, p. 82). Since the construct's formulation, Reynolds and others have suggested that moral attentiveness influences *moral awareness*, moral behavior (Reynolds, 2008), and *moral imagination* (Whitaker and Godwin, 2013); moderates *moral stress* (Reynolds, Owens, and Rubenstein, 2012); and is related to business education (Wurthmann, 2013).

> **Reynolds (2008), scale measuring moral attentiveness.** Reynolds developed a set of items that loaded on two separate dimensions of moral attentiveness: *perceptual moral attentiveness* and *reflective moral attentiveness*. Perceptual moral attentiveness was measured by seven items, which captured "the extent to which the individual recognized moral aspects in everyday experiences" (2008, p. 1030). Reflective moral attentiveness was captured by five items, which signified "the extent to which the individual considered, pondered, and ruminated on moral matters" (ibid.). The 12 items are available in Reynolds (2008).

1.2.2   Moral Construal

> *"The process in which general moral values are brought to bear on specific situations"* (Bersoff, 1999, p. 414).

> *"The process by which individuals recognize, perceive, and/or interpret particular situations or decisions as moral"* (Sadler and Zeidler, 2004, p. 7; Saltzstein, 1994 for original).

Individuals may look at, or *construe*, events through multiple perspectives. One type of construal is moral construal. Construal is not necessarily a conscious process. "In fact," note Sadler and Ziedler, "it is more likely that a person's immediate reactions, which are informed by emotions, previous experiences, and habits, contribute significantly to construal" (p. 7).

Though moral awareness and most of the constructs related to moral awareness originate from Rest's (1986) model, moral construal stems

from Saltzstein's (1994) model of moral behavior, which places moral construal after issue confrontation and before application of moral rules. Saltzstein's model carries different assumptions than Rest's (1983, 1986) model, but perhaps the critical difference between the constructs is that construal is consciously malleable. Van Bavel, Packer, Haas, and Cunningham (2012) note that people can flexibly construe an action as moral or amoral. Thus, while it is difficult for an individual to consciously become morally unaware after becoming aware of the moral content in a situation, that same morally aware individual can still consciously control whether they consider actions or potential actions to be moral, immoral, or amoral. This suggests that moral awareness is a theoretical precondition to moral construal.

Moral construal has also been used by Bersoff (1999) to explain unethical action as a result of the breakdown of the construal process. Wojciszke (1994) found that individuals tend to morally construe the actions of others while construing their own actions as competence-based. Furthermore, when similar actions are perceived with moral construal, those actions elicit faster, more extreme, and more universal evaluations than those perceived with non-moral construal (Van Bavel et al., 2012).

Wojciszke (1994), approaches to rating moral construal. Wojciszke employed three approaches to measuring moral construal across two studies. In the first study, respondents gave one-word interpretations of the behavior of others. After interpreting eight brief episodes, subjects gave the rationale behind each of their one-word descriptions. Separate sets of raters rated the one-word descriptions or the rationales behind the descriptions on a 7-point scale of moral interpretation, from 0 (*does not involve morality at all*) to 6 (*strongly involves moral considerations*). This measure was also used in Wojciszke (1997). A second study elicited experiences involving others and asked for interpretations of their behavior. Their interpretations were evaluated on the same 7-point scale used for the first study.

Van Bavel, Packer, Haas, and Cunningham (2012), method of measuring moral construal. Van Bavel and colleagues (2012) used moral construal as a manipulation variable. Study participants were asked to perform *pragmatic* (good/bad in a practical sense), *hedonic* (tastes and preferences), and *moral* (right or wrong) evaluations of various objects and actions. Participants were told that moral evaluations involved "evaluating an action … by thinking about how moral or ethical it is. Rather than thinking about what would benefit you

personally, these moral judgments focus on whether or not you ought to do something because it is the right or the wrong thing to do" (p. 4). When prompted to morally evaluate, participants rated the object/action on a 7-point scale (1= *very wrong* to 7= *very right*).

Sadler and Zeidler (2004), approach to measuring moral construal. After subjects read a scenario not directly indicating a moral issue or solution, Sadler and Zeidler (2004) asked respondents in semi-structured interviews whether the issues chosen to discuss for the study (gene therapy and cloning) involved morality. For example, interview prompts included: "Do you think that decisions regarding gene therapy should involve moral principles, ethical guidelines, or values? If so, please describe those principles, guidelines or values and how they influence the gene therapy debate" (p. 23). Also, "Can you think of any principles or rules (ethical, religious or otherwise) that might apply to human cloning? If so, describe the principles or rules and how they inform the cloning debate" (p. 24). The researchers then found patterns in the interviews and developed a taxonomy from those patterns.

1.2.3   Moral Imagination

"An ability to imaginatively discern various possibilities for acting within a given situation and to envision the potential help and harm that are likely to result from a given action" (Johnson, 1993, p. 202).

"The ability in particular circumstances to discover and evaluate possibilities not merely determined by that circumstance, or limited by its operative mental models, or merely framed by a set of rules or rule-governed concerns … The ability to empathize, to understand another point of view, and to be creative in ethical decision making" (Werhane, 1999, pp. 93, 96).

Moral imagination has been written about across a range of disciplines, but we will focus on explaining the key concept as discussed in Johnson's (1993) and Werhane's (1999) seminal books. A key part of moral sensitivity as defined by Rest (1983) is the ability to formulate new avenues of action. As seen in the above definitions, moral imagination describes this ability.

   Essentially, moral imagination is a departure from traditional morality as consisting of principles and their application. Yet it is not an alternative to moral principles – rather it is necessarily complementary. As explained in Johnson's (1993) preface, "moral principles without moral imagination become trivial, impossible to apply, and even a

hindrance to morally constructive action … Moral imagination without principles or some form of grounding, on the other hand, is arbitrary, irresponsible, and harmful" (p. x; see also Werhane, 1999, p. 111). Werhane states that awareness of the context and situation, awareness of the scripts and schemas, and awareness of the dilemmas that might arise from the situation are all part of moral imagination.

Building upon Werhane's (1999) discussion of moral imagination, Daily and Dalton (2003) constructed a definition that implies potential skill at moral reasoning. In some ways, their construct is reminiscent of Colby and Kohlberg's (1987) stages of moral development. But while Kohlberg's theory assumes a linear progression from the lowest levels of moral reasoning to the highest, most competent levels, moral imagination describes a far more general "sense of the variety of possibilities and moral consequences of their decisions" and "ability to imagine a wide range of possible issues, consequences, and solutions" to an ethical dilemma (Werhane, 1999, p. 11). Excluding representatives from different backgrounds, ethnicities, and cultures from the decision-making process (as Kohlberg's 1964 research arguably did) would therefore limit potential moral imagination (Daily and Dalton, 2003). Although usually discussed in an organizational context, moral imagination also applies to individuals who extend "beyond the framework in which [they] currently operate" by expanding the scope of their moral considerations (ibid., p. 429). Moral imagination research is a significantly underexplored intellectual region empirically, especially experimentally (Godwin, 2008).

Some scholars closely relate moral imagination to moral awareness or sensitivity. According to Buchholz and Rosenthal (2005), moral imagination and moral awareness are two sides of the same coin. Clarkeburn (2002) draws upon Callahan (1980), who claims that ethical sensitivity "is a combination of two different abilities; moral imagination and recognition of ethical issues" (cited in Clarkeburn, 2002, p. 440).

Moral creativity has occasionally been used interchangeably with *moral imagination* in some research. However, when explicitly defined, it has been with a very different meaning. Martin (2006) defined it as creativity (e.g., in product development or other productive output) that entails positive moral externalities; Schwebel (1993) defined moral creativity as moral values rendered into artistic products.

We are not aware of any measures for moral imagination.

1.2.4   Moral Perception

> *"Perceiving (what are in fact the morally significant) features of a situation confronting one …"* (Blum, 1991, p. 714).

"Anything contributing to or encompassed within the agent's take on the situation – his salience-perception – prior to his deliberating about what to do" (Blum, 1991, p. 707).

Blum's (1991) article provides a philosophical discussion of the concept of *moral perception*, especially as it relates to moral judgment. Most authors who use the term *moral perception* draw from Blum's (1991) work, but may adapt or extend its definition and usage. For example, VanSandt et al. (2006) quote Blum's (1991) definition of moral perception and then use it interchangeably with the term *moral awareness*. Gastmans (2002, p. 498) suggests that "Blum's view [is] of [an] agent who exercises moral perception" in order to interpret "what from an ethical perspective is relevant to observe and think."

An alternative definition of the term comes from Pedersen (2009), who builds upon Narváez's (1996) work to describe moral perception as a "preconscious and unconscious processing of events as they occur" (p. 338). To Narváez, moral perception (unconscious understanding) and moral realization (conscious understanding) together comprise moral sensitivity.

We are not aware of any measures for moral perception.

1.2.5   Implicit Assumptions and Associations

"Knowledge structures, [or] schematic mental structures that describe relationships between concepts" (Reynolds, Leavitt, and DeCelles, 2010, pp. 752–3).

Implicit assumptions may play a role in moral awareness – particularly unconscious awareness. According to Reynolds et al. (2010), implicit assumptions are just one part of the automatic processing system that engages when an individual is presented with any situation or decision. Implicit assumptions are different from explicit attitudes, the "beliefs and opinions developed through cognitive deliberation" (ibid., p. 753), which are discussed in Chapter 4.

Greenwald, McGhee, and Schwartz (1998), Implicit Association Test. The Implicit Association Test (Greenwald et al., 1998) seeks to measure implicit assumptions through the proxy of implicit associations, or the closeness of concepts as accessed in an individual's stored experience. The test is taken on a computer, with responses given by striking a key on the keyboard. The participants are presented with instructions for how to pair objects (e.g., positive words must be paired with names of insects), instructed to indicate their response as

quickly and as accurately as possible, and then presented with several pairings. This is repeated for several rounds (see Greenwald et al., 1998, for a more detailed description of the IAT; Greenwald, Poehlman, Uhlmann, and Banaji, 2009).

The score of the IAT is calculated by considering how quickly the participant makes different types of pairings. The foundation of this instrument is that the longer it takes to pair something a certain way, the more that pairing goes against the participant's implicit assumptions (see Reynolds et al., 2010).

Researchers and practitioners need to exercise caution and not equate a score that indicates strong positive associations (e.g., strong association of Black and negative) with the participant's conscious thoughts (Arkes and Tetlock, 2004). The results indicate subconscious associations, not active judgments. Reported Cronbach's alphas for the IAT are around 0.80 and test–retest correlations between 0.60 and 0.70 (Teige, Schnabel, Banse, and Asendorpf, 2004). A thorough discussion of different validity issues can be found at Dr Anthony Greenwald's website: faculty.washington.edu/agg/iat_validity.htm.

The IAT method has been applied to measure many kinds of implicit assumptions, including shyness (Asendorpf, Banse, and Mücke, 2002), attitudes toward homosexuals and heterosexuals (Banse, Seise, and Zerbes, 2001), and anxiety self-concept (Egloff and Schmukle, 2002). More IATs are posted on the website for Project Implicit, implicit.harvard.edu/implicit. One IAT study related to the topic of this book is Reynolds et al.'s (2010) adaption to measure individual's association of business with morality for their research with how context clues and implicit assumptions affect moral behavior. In their test, the two target concepts were "business" and "sports," and the attributes were "ethical" and "unethical." No alphas were provided for the validity of this measure.

1.3   MORAL DISENGAGEMENT

The opposite of moral awareness – or perhaps its dark twin – is moral disengagement. Scholars note that individuals frequently frame issues, either consciously or intuitively, in ways that discourage ethical judgments. The definitions of disengagement constructs overlap, but addressing them separately helps to demonstrate the many ways individuals may distance themselves from the ethical elements of a decision in an attempt to evade negative consequences, such as psychological discomfort or having to re-evaluate their self-identity (see Bazerman and Tenbrunsel, 2011).

1.3.1 Moral Disengagement

> *"[The result of] social and psychological maneuvers by which moral self-sanctions can be disengaged from inhumane conduct [so that] self-regulatory mechanisms do not come into play [during the moral reasoning process]"* (Bandura, 1999, p. 194).

> *"[The deactivation of moral self-regulation that frees individuals] from the self-sanctions and the accompanying guilt that would ensue when behavior violates internal standards, [making them] more likely to make unethical decisions"* (Detert, Treviño, and Sweitzer, 2008, p. 375).

> *"A process that allows us to selectively turn our usual ethical standards on and off at will"* (Bazerman and Tenbrunsel, 2011, pp. 69–70).

Moral disengagement is a psychological mechanism that distances an agent from a dilemma in order to cope with guilt. Bazerman and Tenbrunsel (2011) suggest that "psychological cleansing" (pp. 69–70), used by individuals to restore their self-image after acting contrary to their personal code of ethics, is an aspect of moral disengagement. Bandura, 1999 explains that disengagement influences the moral reasoning process. The subsequent definition by Detert et al. (2008) applies to decision making more broadly and entails a defined result: that moral disengagement makes agents "more likely to make unethical decisions" (p. 375). Bazerman and Tenbrunsel (2011) add that moral disengagement "allows us to behave contrary to our personal code of ethics, while still maintaining the belief that we are ethical people" (p. 70).

A multifaceted construct with several dimensions, moral disengagement takes many forms. Eight manifestations of moral disengagement as described by Bandura (1999) are as follows:

1. *Advantageous comparison.* "Exploiting the contrast principle [to make] reprehensible acts [seem] righteous" (Bandura, 1999, p. 196).
2. *Attribution of blame.* "Blaming… adversaries or circumstances … [so people can] view themselves as faultless victims driven to injurious conduct by forcible provocation" (ibid., p. 203).
3. *Dehumanization.* Disengaging "self-censure for cruel conduct … by stripping people of human qualities" (ibid., p. 200).
4. *Diffusion of responsibility.* Obscuring "personal agency … by diffusing responsibility for detrimental behavior" either by "division of labor, … group decision making, … [or] collective action" (ibid., p. 198).

5. *Displacement of responsibility.* Viewing one's "actions as stemming from the dictates of authorities [so one] do[es] not feel personally responsible for the actions" (ibid., p. 196).
6. *Disregard/distortion of consequences.* "Ignor[ing], minimiz[ing], distort[ing], or disbeliev[ing]" "the harmful results of one's conduct" so that "there is little reason for self-censure to be activated" (ibid., p. 199).
7. *Euphemistic labeling.* "Sanitizing language … [to make] activities lose much of their repugnancy," switching to "the agentless passive style in depicting events … [to create] the appearance that reprehensible acts are the work of nameless forces rather than of people," or misusing "the specialized jargon of a legitimate enterprise … to lend respectability to an illegitimate one" (ibid., p. 195).
8. *Moral justification.* Making "detrimental conduct … personally and socially acceptable by portraying it as serving socially worthy or moral purposes" (ibid., p. 194).

Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, and Pastorelli (1996), scales for moral disengagement. Bandura et al. (1996) originally developed the construct and scales for moral disengagement, but their 32-item measure is limited in application because it was designed to be used with children and young adolescent subjects. This measure has an alpha reliability coefficient of 0.82.

Detert, Treviño, and Sweitzer (2008) adapted Bandura et al.'s (1996) scale to fit an older population while still tapping into the eight subcomponents of the overarching moral disengagement construct. They retained the three best-fitting items for each subcomponent, having subjects assess them on a 5-point Likert-type scale. The 24 items expressed a reliability alpha value of 0.87 and all loaded on their expected factor at greater than 0.40, with no cross-loadings greater than 0.25.

1.3.2 Ethical Fading

"The process by which the moral colors of an ethical decision fade into bleached hues that are void of moral implications" (Tenbrunsel and Messick, 2004, p. 224).

"A process by which ethical dimensions are eliminated from a decision" (Bazerman and Tenbrunsel, 2011, pp. 30–31).

Ethical fading is a term for any process that makes the ethical elements of decisions less recognizable. This can take many forms, including

justification of unethical behavior, reframing an issue to exclude ethical considerations, and all the processes Bandura (1999) identified with moral disengagement. Ethical fading also includes the process in which an individual classifies a choice as something other than an ethical decision. This classification leads that individual to disregard the ethical elements of the situation; one example given by Bazerman and Tenbrunsel (2011) is a case where a manager disregards the ill effects of a decision because it was a "business decision." We are not aware of any measures for ethical fading.

1.3.3 Moral Neutrality

No definition.

Moral neutrality is a term used occasionally in the discussion of business ethics. Some claim that objects or systems, as well as people, can become (or naturally are) morally neutral. Objects that are morally neutral would not, in and of themselves, convey or encourage certain values or morals. Several researchers and philosophers have challenged the idea that items or systems can truly be value free (see, e.g., Hodgson, 1983; Martin and Freeman, 2004).

In relation to individuals, moral neutrality is becoming completely morally neutral, of having no preferred values. Individuals may desire to become morally neutral in order to look objectively at issues and not impose one's own morals on others, or to be able to accommodate any value system. The current cyclical and philosophical nature of this construct, especially as it relates to individuals, makes measuring it infeasible; there are currently no empirical measures of moral neutrality.

1.3.4 Bounded Ethicality

> "Cognitive limitations that can make us unaware of the moral implications of our decisions" (Bazerman and Tenbrunsel, 2011, p. 30).

Bounded ethicality is an application of the concept of "bounded rationality" from organizational theory to ethics. Much as bounded rationality suggests that human cognition and realities limit the extent to which decisions can be rational, Bazerman and Tenbrunsel (2011) suggest that human ability also places limits on the extent to which behavior can always be ethical. Thus "even good people" can behave in ways "that contradict their own preferred ethics" (p. 5), often due to unconscious

influence or pressures. The practical implications are hopeful: by redu-
cing the strain on human cognition or the situational pressures to behave
unethically, one might increase the capacity for ethical behavior. We are
not aware of any measures for bounded ethicality.

Part 3: Conclusion

We have examined five main definitional components of conscious moral
awareness: (1) mental recognition that an issue, or "situation," has ethical
content; (2) affective recognition of the ethicality of an issue or situation;
(3) the ability to cognitively take the perspectives of the other parties
involved; (4) the ability to feel the other parties' perspectives;
(5) ascription of importance to the moral aspects of an issue or situation.
We also presented a divergent view stemming from the social intuitionist
model, in which scholars assert that unconscious moral awareness guides
decision making.

While all of these aspects of moral awareness offer tractable research
paradigms and questions, ethics research has much to gain from more
careful consideration – and explicit inclusion or exclusion – of these
components in each study. A common vocabulary will allow scholars
more clearly to understand, critique, and build upon each other's
research, even when they disagree about fundamental definitions or
mechanisms.

We also briefly introduced constructs related to moral awareness,
either because they are similar (like moral attentiveness) or opposing
(like moral disengagement). Ongoing research into decision making
highlights the role – and subtlety – of disengagement, which we consider
awareness's dark twin. We now offer a few suggestions for practitioners
interested in measuring the moral awareness constructs at work in their
organizations.

Implications for Practice

Business leaders can benefit from applying a moral awareness lens to
their organizations. Understanding levels of moral awareness and how
they are affected by trainings or other interventions may help organ-
izations avert problems and even catastrophes due to lack of awareness
about moral issues. Below, we highlight some of the more useful
measures and approaches that consultants or managers may apply to
evaluate moral awareness.

Using the Moral Awareness in Business Instrument. In order to test moral awareness, practitioners may be able to use the generally business-appropriate measures found in the Moral Awareness in Business Instrument (MABI, as found in Jordan, 2009). However, care needs to be taken not to alert employees to the awareness-testing aspect of the measure, or else scores may be measuring something other than moral awareness.

Creating customized scenarios. If managers want a test that is more customized for their industry, they can construct verbal (or video) scenarios that embed several moral issues. Sparks and Hunt (1998) provide seven guiding criteria for vignette construction, listed earlier in this chapter. Ratings can then be either simply volume of ethical issues listed, or the proportion of ethical issues listed out of all issues listed, or a qualitative assessment based on interviewing respondents about their observations. The benefit of custom-made scenarios is that respondents can be tested in a more relevant context to their occupation. However, care must be taken that context familiarity (e.g., due to experience) is not mistaken for ethical awareness.

Importance of moral awareness. Employee awareness of moral issues is an essential part of ensuring strong moral conduct in the workplace. To make the right choices, employees will need to realize that there is a right and wrong choice at stake. However, awareness is not the same as good ethical conduct. Some employees may exhibit a high degree of moral awareness without subsequently exercising a high degree of morality through their behavior. Although a critical component of ethical behavior, moral awareness is just the beginning.

Conclusion

Over the past three decades, researchers have begun to shed light on moral awareness and its place in the moral decision-making process. While there has been increasing momentum and effort to understand the construct, many of the findings on moral awareness are mixed, incomplete, and at times confusing (Tenbrunsel and Smith-Crowe, 2008). As the basic terms become more tightly defined, new models and frameworks are explored, and measures of moral awareness are more rigorously considered, we are confident that greater understanding and clarity will come to our understanding of moral awareness.

We also suggest three potential fruitful and relatively untrodden directions for researchers interested in moral awareness. First, scholars might consider using the related construct moral attentiveness rather than moral awareness. Reynolds (2008) noted some of the theoretical and

practical problems that moral awareness measures face, and offered a measure of the closely related construct moral attentiveness to address these issues. The moral attentiveness measure is promising as a flexible tool that is easy to implement. Second, moral awareness research can make progress by using the construct in more refined models as a moderator or mediator. Finally, we recommend that scholars explore the role moral awareness might play in unconscious, implicit, or intuitive moral behavior.

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