The Relationship between Team Performance Pressure and Unethical Pro-Team Behavior: The Mediating Role of Collective Moral Disengagement

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Abstract.
The increasing reliance of organizations on team-based work systems has intensified the pressure placed on team members to achieve, maintain, or improve collective performance targets. While such pressure is often assumed to enhance productivity, it may also create conditions under which team members are willing to violate ethical norms to protect or benefit their team, a phenomenon labeled unethical pro-team behavior (UPTB). This study examined the relationship between team performance pressure (TPP) and UPTB, as well as the mediating role of collective moral disengagement (CMD) in that relationship. A quantitative correlational design with a cross-sectional survey was employed, involving 357 employees working in teams across public and private organizations in East Java, Indonesia, selected through quota sampling. Data were collected using modified Likert-type instruments adapted from established scales and analyzed using PROCESS Macro Model 4 with 5,000 bootstrap resamples. Results indicated that TPP had a significant positive total effect on UPTB ($B = 0.612$, $p < 0.001$), supporting Hypothesis 1. Mediation analysis showed that TPP significantly predicted CMD ($B = 0.562$, $p = 0.003$), and CMD significantly predicted UPTB after controlling for TPP ($B = 0.487$, $p < 0.001$). The indirect effect of TPP on UPTB through CMD was significant (effect = 0.274, 95% CI [0.090, 0.450]), while the direct effect remained significant ($B = 0.338$, $p < 0.001$), indicating partial mediation and supporting Hypothesis 2. These findings extend Social Cognitive Theory and Moral Disengagement Theory to the team level, demonstrating that performance pressure shapes unethical behavior both directly and through collectively shared moral rationalization. Practical implications for performance management, team leadership, and human resource interventions are discussed.

Keywords: *team performance pressure, collective moral disengagement, unethical pro-team behavior, mediation, Social Cognitive Theory.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Organizations operating in dynamic, complex, and competitive environments increasingly depend on team-based work systems to manage human resources effectively and to achieve organizational goals [1]. Because most contemporary work is accomplished through the collaboration of team members, teams have become central units through which organizations pursue coordination, innovation, and goal attainment [1], [2]. Team members are therefore expected not only to cooperate and contribute to collective success, but also to uphold ethical values, honesty, and responsibility in every work activity they perform [3].

In practice, however, loyalty toward a team is not always expressed through behavior that conforms to ethical standards. Under certain conditions, team members

may violate moral norms or organizational rules with the intention of helping their team gain an advantage, meet a target, or protect its reputation [4]. This tendency to prioritize team success over ethical compliance illustrates that the desire to support a team does not always translate into ethical conduct; in some circumstances it instead gives rise to unethical behavior performed on the team's behalf.

This phenomenon is conceptualized in the literature as unethical pro-team behavior (UPTB), a construct derived from unethical pro-organizational behavior (UPB). UPB was originally defined as actions intended to support the effective functioning of an organization or its members while simultaneously violating broader social, moral, legal, or behavioral standards [4]. The extension of this concept to the team level draws on evidence that individuals may act unethically to benefit their working group, particularly when they perceive a risk of social exclusion from that group [5]. Accordingly, UPTB in this study is defined as behavior that deliberately violates prevailing norms, moral values, or rules for the purpose of benefiting a work team, even though the behavior may harm other individuals, groups, or the wider organization. In many cases such behavior does not stem from malicious intent, but rather from a narrow interpretation of loyalty and organizational success [6].

Empirical evidence supports the conceptual account of UPTB. Employees with strong identification with their work group are more willing to engage in norm-violating behavior when that behavior is perceived to benefit the group [7]. Related work shows that team members may conceal information, provide inaccurate reports, or engage in manipulation to help their group achieve desired outcomes [5], and more recent studies indicate that strong group norms, high team identification, and pressure to sustain group success can increase the likelihood of engaging in group-beneficial but ethically questionable behavior [8].

These patterns are corroborated by industry-level evidence. The Association of Certified Fraud Examiners reported that occupational fraud is inherently concealed, typically involving collusion and organized deception, and requires on average approximately fourteen months to detect [9]—a characteristic consistent with unethical acts carried out cooperatively to protect group or organizational interests. Similar characteristics have been observed in Indonesian organizational fraud cases; the ACFE Indonesia Chapter reported that many forms of organizational fraud in Indonesia involve collusion among internal parties to achieve specific goals or protect the interests of a work unit [10]. One illustrative case occurred at PT Indofarma Tbk in 2024, where internal stakeholders reportedly collaborated to record fictitious transactions, issue false claims, and manipulate financial statements so that the company appeared to meet its performance targets [11].

The consequences of UPTB extend across multiple organizational levels. At the individual level, engaging in unethical behavior may increase moral conflict, diminish personal integrity, and produce guilt and psychological discomfort when individuals recognize that their actions contradict their own values [12].

At the group level, unethical behavior performed for the sake of the team can foster a permissive culture in which members increasingly justify norm-violating conduct as long as it is perceived to benefit the group [13]. Beyond these effects, unethical behavior may degrade decision-making quality, damage organizational credibility, and increase the risk of larger future violations, ultimately eroding stakeholder trust and threatening organizational sustainability [14], [15].

Given these substantial consequences, understanding the antecedents of UPTB is an important research priority [16]. UPTB is shaped by both individual characteristics and situational factors, consistent with the view that unethical workplace behavior results from an interaction between personal and contextual conditions [17]. Individual-level antecedents include low moral identity [18], high Machiavellian orientation [19], moral disengagement tendencies [20], [21], and strong loyalty or identification with a group or organization [7]. Situational and organizational antecedents include weak organizational ethical climate [22], low ethical leadership [23], and pressure to achieve high performance targets [24].

One situational factor of particular relevance is team performance pressure (TPP), an extension of the individual-level performance pressure construct to the team context. TPP is defined as team members' shared perception of the demand to achieve, maintain, or improve an established level of performance for their work group; this pressure arises when members face high expectations to meet team targets accompanied by consequences for failing to do so [25], [26]. Under such conditions, both success and failure are perceived as shared responsibilities, which pushes members to prioritize the attainment of group targets. Prior studies have linked high performance pressure to an increased tendency to violate ethical norms in pursuit of desired targets [24], [25], suggesting that performance demands can shift individual attention away from moral considerations and toward target attainment—a dynamic expected to increase UPTB in team-based work.

Nevertheless, the relationship between TPP and UPTB is not uniformly direct. Although several studies show that TPP increases the likelihood of team members engaging in unethical behavior for the sake of the group [27], [28], not every team member exposed to high performance pressure engages in UPTB; some maintain ethical standards under the same conditions while others do not. This variability suggests the presence of an underlying psychological mechanism explaining how TPP develops into UPTB.

Collective moral disengagement (CMD) has been proposed as one such mechanism. CMD extends Bandura's moral disengagement theory [29], [30] to the group level, referring to a shared belief among team members that allows them to justify, excuse, or overlook the moral consequences of actions that actually contravene ethical standards [30]–[32]. As a result, conduct once regarded as unethical may come to be perceived as acceptable when it is believed to protect group interests or enhance

the likelihood of team success. When team members face pressure to achieve performance targets, they do not only make individual moral judgments but also collectively construct justifications for actions deemed acceptable for the benefit of the group—a process consistent with evidence that team-oriented pressure fosters moral disengagement, which in turn increases pro-group unethical behavior [28].

Research gaps. Despite the theoretical and empirical attention devoted to performance pressure, moral processes, and unethical behavior, several gaps remain. First, a *theoretical gap* exists because most prior studies rely on individual-level mediators such as moral justification [25], job strain [27], or self-serving cognition [24], leaving team-level psychological mechanisms comparatively underexplored. Second, an *empirical gap* persists because findings on the relationship between performance pressure and unethical behavior remain inconsistent, with some studies reporting a direct effect and others suggesting the effect depends on specific psychological mechanisms [33], [34]. Third, a *contextual gap* exists because most prior models were tested in general organizational settings rather than team-specific contexts, and research examining TPP, CMD, and UPTB within Indonesian organizations—characterized by distinct collectivistic values and social interaction patterns [35]—remains limited. Fourth, a *methodological gap* exists because few studies have simultaneously modeled TPP as an independent variable, CMD as a mediator, and UPTB as a dependent variable within a single design.

To address these gaps, this study integrates TPP, CMD, and UPTB into a single conceptual model to develop a more complete understanding of how unethical behavior emerges within team dynamics. The novelty of this research lies in positioning CMD as a team-level psychological mechanism explaining the relationship between TPP and UPTB within the Indonesian organizational context, specifically East Java Province—a model that, to the researchers' knowledge, remains rarely tested in the existing literature.

Based on the background outlined above, this study proposes the following research questions and hypotheses:

- RQ1: Is there a relationship between team performance pressure and unethical pro-team behavior?
- RQ2: Does collective moral disengagement mediate the relationship between team performance pressure and unethical pro-team behavior?
- **H1:** There is a positive relationship between team performance pressure and unethical pro-team behavior.
- **H2:** Collective moral disengagement mediates the relationship between team performance pressure and unethical pro-team behavior.

This study is expected to contribute theoretically by enriching the literature on industrial and organizational psychology, particularly regarding factors that give rise to UPTB among team-based employees, and practically by informing organizations, team

leaders, and human resource practitioners on how to design performance management systems that sustain productivity without compromising ethical standards.

II. METHODS

2.1 Research Design

This study used a quantitative correlational approach with a non-experimental, explanatory design [36]. The explanatory design was chosen to test the hypothesized relationships among TPP, CMD, and UPTB, including the indirect effect transmitted through the mediating variable. Data were collected using a cross-sectional design, in which all data were gathered from participants at a single point in time.

2.2 Population and Participants

The population of this study consisted of employees working in teams within public- and private-sector organizations in East Java Province, Indonesia. Because the exact size of the population meeting the study's inclusion criteria was unknown, the minimum sample size was determined using statistical power analysis conducted with G*Power [37]. Using a medium effect size ($f^2 = 0.15$), a significance level (α) of 0.05, statistical power of 0.95, and two predictors, the minimum required sample size was calculated at 107 participants.

Table 1. Minimum Sample Size Calculation Using G*Power

Parameter	Value
Effect size (f^2)	0.15 (medium)
Significance level (α)	0.05
Statistical power ($1-\beta$)	0.95
Number of predictors	2
Minimum required sample size	107

A quota sampling technique, a form of non-probability sampling, was used to obtain participants meeting predetermined characteristics. Data collection in the field yielded 357 participants who met the inclusion criteria, exceeding the required minimum and thus considered adequate for testing the proposed mediation model.

Data Collection Instruments

Data were collected through both online (Google Forms) and offline (printed) questionnaires. Both formats contained identical item content, sequence, and response options to ensure equivalence. The instrument consisted of three scales—UPTB, TPP, and CMD—together with items assessing respondents' demographic characteristics.

Unethical Pro-Team Behavior. UPTB was operationally defined as an individual's tendency to act against moral norms or ethical standards for the benefit of the team, reflected in rule-violating actions, prioritizing team interest over moral considerations, providing unethical benefits to the team, and willingness to act unethically for team success. UPTB was measured with a six-item scale adapted from Umphress and Bingham [4], modified from an organizational to a team context and

treated as unidimensional. Items used a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree); the seven-point format was selected because it offers a wider response range and allows participants to express agreement more precisely [38].

Team Performance Pressure. TPP was operationally defined as the perceived pressure to achieve high team performance targets and standards, reflected in demands to reach team targets, meet team performance standards, contribute to team success, avoid team failure, and sustain team performance. TPP was measured with a four-item scale adapted from Mitchell et al. [26], modified from an individual to a team context and treated as unidimensional, using the same seven-point Likert format.

Collective Moral Disengagement. CMD was operationalized based on the moral disengagement construct developed by Moore et al. [31], adapted to the team context. It captures individuals' tendency to use moral justification when facing team-related situations, reflected in regarding norm-violating behavior as acceptable, diffusing responsibility, minimizing negative consequences, and displacing blame onto other parties or situations. CMD was measured with an eight-item scale, treated as unidimensional, using the same seven-point Likert format.

Validity and Reliability

Instrument validity was tested using Pearson Product-Moment correlation, and reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, with an acceptable threshold of ≥ 0.60 [39].

Table 2. Summary of Validity and Reliability Testing

Scale	Number of items	r (range)	r table	Cronbach's Alpha
Unethical Pro-Team Behavior	6	0.758 – 0.850	0.104	0.889
Team Performance Pressure	4	0.592 – 0.778	0.104	0.889*
Collective Moral Disengagement	8	0.802 – 0.877	0.104	0.946

*As reported in the original source document, the reliability coefficient of 0.889 for the Team Performance Pressure scale was described as pertaining to "six items," despite the scale consisting of four items. This inconsistency is reproduced here exactly as stated in the source material and should be verified against the original SPSS output before further use.

All item-total correlations exceeded the critical r table value of 0.104 at $p < 0.05$, indicating that all items across the three scales were valid. All three scales exceeded the minimum reliability threshold of 0.60, indicating adequate internal consistency.

Preliminary Assumption Testing

Prior to hypothesis testing, three preliminary tests were conducted.

Multivariate outlier test. Multivariate outliers were identified using Mahalanobis Distance (D^2), with a cut-off value derived from the chi-square distribution at df = 3 and p = 0.001, yielding $\chi^2(3, 0.001) = 16.27$ [40]. Cases with D^2 greater than this cut-off were classified as multivariate outliers.

Linearity test. Linearity was tested for three variable pairs: TPP–CMD, TPP–UPTB, and CMD–UPTB. A relationship was considered linear if the significance value on the Linearity row was below 0.05 [41].

Multicollinearity test. Multicollinearity among the independent variables was examined using Tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values. A regression model was considered free from multicollinearity when Tolerance > 0.10 and VIF < 10.00 [42].

Hypothesis Testing Procedure

Hypotheses were tested using PROCESS Macro Model 4 [43], implemented in IBM SPSS Statistics version 25. Model 4 was selected because it corresponds to a simple mediation design, in which CMD functions as the mediator linking TPP (independent variable) to UPTB (dependent variable). Indirect effects were estimated using a bootstrapping technique with 5,000 resamples at a 95% confidence level, a method that does not require the assumption of normally distributed data and is therefore appropriate for estimating the typically non-normal distribution of indirect effects [44].

Hypothesis 1 was evaluated by examining the significance of the total effect (c) of TPP on UPTB before the mediator was entered into the model; H1 was considered supported if the 95% confidence interval of the total effect coefficient did not include zero. Hypothesis 2 was evaluated by simultaneously examining three components: the total effect (c), the direct effect (c′), and the indirect effect (a × b). H2 was considered supported if the 95% bootstrap confidence interval of the indirect effect did not include zero. The type of mediation was determined based on the significance of the direct effect (c′) after the mediator was controlled: if the direct effect remained significant, mediation was classified as partial; if it became non-significant, mediation was classified as full [43].

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Demographic Characteristics

The study involved 357 respondents meeting the inclusion criteria of being employees working in teams within East Java Province.

Table 3. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Category	Group	n	%
Age	19–25 years	139	39.0
	26–30 years	75	21.0
	31–35 years	80	22.4
Tenure at current organization	1–3 years	156	43.7
	4–6 years	87	24.4
Tenure with current supervisor	1–5 years	265	74.2
	6–10 years	48	13.4

Category	Group	n	%
Gender	Female	218	61.1
	Male	139	38.9
Marital status	Unmarried	216	60.5
	Married	141	39.5
Employment status	Permanent employee	226	63.3
	Contract employee	129	36.1
	Intern	1	0.3
	No formal contract	1	0.3
Job field (top five)	Administration	72	20.2
	Marketing	61	17.1
	Sales	58	16.2
	Production	57	16.0
	Operations	49	13.7

The largest age group was 19–25 years (39.0%), followed by 31–35 years (22.4%) and 26–30 years (21.0%). Most respondents had worked at their current organization for 1–3 years (43.7%) and had worked under their current supervisor for 1–5 years (74.2%). The sample was predominantly female (61.1%), unmarried (60.5%), and employed as permanent staff (63.3%). Administration, Marketing, Sales, Production, and Operations were the most represented job fields, together with a long tail of smaller occupational categories (e.g., Customer Service, Retail, Accounting, HR, Finance, and various technical and professional roles), each represented by only one or two respondents.

Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Variable	Items	Theoretical range	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Team Performance Pressure	4	4–28	8	28	22.14	3.843
Collective Moral Disengagement	8	8–56	8	56	28.39	13.720
Unethical Pro-Team Behavior	6	6–42	6	42	25.36	9.570

The relatively high mean score for TPP (22.14 out of a maximum of 28) suggests that respondents, on average, perceived a fairly strong demand to achieve and sustain team performance targets. In contrast, the mean CMD score (28.39 out of 56) fell close to the scale midpoint, indicating moderate levels of collective moral rationalization, while the mean UPTB score (25.36 out of 42) likewise fell in the moderate range, suggesting that unethical pro-team behavior, while present, was not uniformly endorsed across the sample.

Preliminary Assumption Test Results

The Mahalanobis Distance calculation produced a maximum value of 21.497, which exceeded the cut-off value of 16.27. Consequently, one respondent was

identified as a multivariate outlier and removed from the analysis, reducing the dataset from 358 to 357 valid responses.

The multicollinearity test between TPP and CMD yielded a Tolerance value of 0.975 (> 0.10) and a VIF value of 1.025 (< 10.00), indicating no problematic correlation between the two predictor variables and confirming that each could independently explain variance in UPTB.

Linearity testing showed a significant linear relationship for all three variable pairs: TPP–CMD (Linearity sig. = 0.002), TPP–UPTB (Linearity sig. = 0.000), and CMD–UPTB (Linearity sig. = 0.000), all below the 0.05 threshold, confirming that the assumption of linearity was met for subsequent regression-based mediation analysis.

Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis 1: Total effect of TPP on UPTB. The total effect model yielded R^2 = 0.060, indicating that TPP explained 6.0% of the variance in UPTB, with the remaining 94.0% attributable to factors outside the model. The regression coefficient showed that TPP had a significant positive effect on UPTB (B = 0.612, SE = 0.128, t = 4.778, p < 0.001, 95% CI [0.360, 0.864]). Because the confidence interval did not cross zero, H1 was supported: higher perceived team performance pressure was associated with a greater tendency to engage in unethical pro-team behavior.

Hypothesis 2: Mediation by CMD. Mediation testing proceeded through four steps.

Path a (TPP → CMD). The model yielded R^2 = 0.025, indicating that TPP explained 2.5% of the variance in CMD. The regression coefficient was significant (B = 0.562, SE = 0.187, t = 3.005, p = 0.003, 95% CI [0.194, 0.930]), indicating that higher TPP was associated with greater collective moral rationalization within teams.

Path b (CMD → UPTB, controlling for TPP). The combined model yielded R^2 = 0.535, indicating that TPP and CMD together explained 53.5% of the variance in UPTB. CMD had a significant positive effect on UPTB (B = 0.487, SE = 0.026, t = 19.014, p < 0.001, 95% CI [0.436, 0.537]), indicating that higher collective moral disengagement was strongly associated with greater unethical pro-team behavior.

Table 5. Summary of Mediation Analysis Results (PROCESS Model 4, Bootstrap n = 5,000)

Effect	Path	B	SE	t	p	95% CI
Total effect (c)	TPP → UPTB	0.612	0.128	4.778	0.000	[0.360, 0.864]
Path a	TPP → CMD	0.562	0.187	3.005	0.003	[0.194, 0.930]
Path b	CMD → UPTB	0.487	0.026	19.014	0.000	[0.436, 0.537]
Direct effect (c′)	TPP → UPTB (controlling CMD)	0.338	0.091	3.703	0.000	[0.159, 0.518]
Indirect effect (a×b)	TPP → CMD → UPTB	0.274	0.093*	—	—	[0.090, 0.450]**

*Bootstrap standard error (BootSE). **Bootstrap confidence interval (Bootllci, Bootulci).

Indirect and direct effects. The bootstrapped indirect effect of TPP on UPTB through CMD was 0.274 (BootSE = 0.093, 95% bootstrap CI [0.090, 0.450]). Because this interval did not include zero, the indirect effect was statistically significant, confirming that CMD channels part of the influence of TPP on UPTB. The direct effect of TPP on UPTB after controlling for CMD remained significant (B = 0.338, SE = 0.091, t = 3.703, p < 0.001, 95% CI [0.159, 0.518]). Compared with the total effect estimated under H1 (B = 0.612), the direct effect coefficient decreased to B = 0.338, indicating that part of the influence of TPP on UPTB is transmitted through CMD, while another part continues to operate directly.

IV. DISCUSSION

The first research objective—examining the relationship between TPP and UPTB—was achieved. Hypothesis testing confirmed a positive relationship: as team members' perceived pressure to meet or sustain performance targets increased, so did their tendency to engage in behavior that violated ethical norms when such behavior was perceived to benefit the team. This finding indicates that pressure arising from performance demands does not always produce constructive work behavior; under certain conditions it instead encourages team members to set aside ethical considerations in favor of group success.

This pattern can be understood through Social Cognitive Theory [45], which holds that individual behavior emerges from the reciprocal interaction of personal, behavioral, and environmental factors. In the present study, TPP functions as an environmental factor shaping the cognitive processes through which team members evaluate their own actions. As demands to achieve targets intensify, attention shifts toward outcome attainment rather than the moral consequences of the means used to attain it, such that behavior ordinarily regarded as unethical becomes acceptable if believed to support team success.

This result is consistent with Mitchell et al. [26], who found that performance pressure increases individuals' orientation toward outcome attainment at the expense of attention to process, making individuals more tolerant of deviant behavior when it is perceived to help meet performance demands. It also aligns with Chen and Chen [25], who reported a positive relationship between performance pressure and unethical pro-organizational behavior. The present study extends this line of research by demonstrating that a comparable pattern occurs at the team level rather than solely at the organizational level, indicating that performance pressure can motivate unethical behavior intended to protect or benefit a work group, not only the wider organization.

The second research objective—examining the mediating role of CMD—was likewise achieved. Results confirmed that CMD mediates the relationship between TPP and UPTB, and the mediation observed was partial. This indicates that the effect of TPP on UPTB operates through two channels: a direct path in which performance pressure is directly associated with unethical behavior, and an indirect path in which

performance pressure first increases collective moral rationalization within the team, which subsequently increases unethical behavior.

This result can be explained through Moral Disengagement Theory [29]. According to this theory, individuals possess cognitive mechanisms that deactivate moral standards as behavioral controls once an action has been successfully rationalized. At the group level, this mechanism develops into CMD, a shared belief among team members that norm-violating actions are acceptable when believed to serve the group's interest. As a result, behavior that would otherwise be regarded as unethical becomes more readily accepted because members' attention is directed toward the benefits obtained rather than the moral consequences involved.

This finding is consistent with Gini et al. [46], who showed that collective moral disengagement increases group members' tendency to act against social norms by weakening moral self-regulation. The present study extends this work by showing that TPP is one condition associated with the development of CMD, indicating that performance-related pressure not only directly affects team members' behavior but also creates conditions conducive to the development of shared moral rationalization within the group.

Nonetheless, because the direct effect of TPP on UPTB remained significant after CMD was introduced into the model, CMD is evidently not the sole mechanism explaining this relationship. Other factors not modeled in this study—such as organizational ethical climate, ethical leadership, team identification, or group norms—may also play explanatory roles and warrant investigation in future research.

Taken together, these findings provide empirical support for both Social Cognitive Theory and Moral Disengagement Theory at the team level, showing that unethical behavior performed for the benefit of a team results from the combination of situational pressure and a cognitive rationalization process that develops through interaction among team members. Practically, these results suggest that performance management cannot focus solely on target attainment; the process by which targets are pursued also warrants managerial attention. While challenging performance goals can enhance team productivity, excessive pressure—if not balanced by an organizational culture that upholds ethical standards—may encourage moral rationalization. Organizations therefore need work systems that balance outcome orientation with moral accountability, enabling teams to achieve optimal performance without compromising ethical standards.

3.6 Limitations

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting its findings. First, CMD was measured based on individual perceptions of the team rather than through a genuinely team-level (aggregated) measurement approach, so the results do not fully capture CMD as a construct that emerges at the team level. Second, the study tested only CMD as a mediator between TPP and UPTB, leaving other potential psychological or organizational mechanisms unaccounted for in the model. Third, the

tested model explained 53.5% of the variance in UPTB, meaning that 46.5% of the variance remains unexplained, indicating that additional factors beyond this model likely contribute to unethical pro-team behavior.

V. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that team performance pressure has a significant positive relationship with unethical pro-team behavior: the greater the pressure team members perceive to achieve performance targets, the greater their tendency to engage in behavior that violates ethical norms for the benefit of their team. This finding indicates that performance pressure influences not only performance outcomes but also the ethical quality of the decisions made when team success is treated as the overriding priority.

This study further demonstrates that collective moral disengagement acts as a partial mediator in the relationship between team performance pressure and unethical pro-team behavior. Performance pressure fosters the development of moral rationalization within teams, making norm-violating behavior more readily accepted when it is believed to serve the group's interest. Because the direct effect of team performance pressure on unethical pro-team behavior remained significant after accounting for the mediator, collective moral disengagement should be regarded as one mechanism—rather than the sole mechanism—explaining this relationship.

Overall, this study provides empirical evidence that unethical pro-team behavior arises from a combination of situational and psychological factors: performance pressure functions as the situational driver, while collective moral disengagement explains how that pressure translates into behavior through morally rationalized justification developed within the group. These findings enrich the field of industrial and organizational psychology, particularly regarding unethical behavior in team-based work contexts.

Organizational management is advised to design realistic performance targets, establish workload distribution guidelines, and implement periodic workload monitoring to reduce excessive team performance pressure while sustaining organizational performance. Team leaders are advised to assign tasks according to member competencies, set clear timelines and accountable ownership for each task, redistribute workload when imbalances are detected, and maintain open communication that reinforces ethical standards alongside performance targets. Human resource divisions are advised to develop ethics-focused interventions—such as ethical decision-making training, code-of-conduct socialization, and structured discussions on workplace ethical dilemmas—and to integrate ethical conduct into performance management systems so that employee evaluation considers not only outcomes but also the process by which those outcomes are achieved. Future researchers are advised to adopt longitudinal designs to better capture the dynamics among these variables over time, and to extend the model by incorporating additional variables such as ethical

leadership, ethical climate, moral identity, or organizational justice to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the antecedents of unethical pro-team behavior.

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