



## **Social Intelligence Moral Disengagement and Rule Breaking Behavior in University Male Students**

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ARTICLE INFO			ABSTRACT
<b>Article History:</b>			<i>The current study is to investigate male university students' "moral disengagement", "social intelligence", and rule-breaking conduct. It is predicted that among male university students, there will probably be a substantial correlation between moral disengagement and social intelligence and rule-breaking conduct. Among university students, rule-breaking behavior will be favorably predicted by moral disengagement. The study involved 200 university male students and examined how moral disengagement and social intelligence relate to rule-breaking behavior. Using established assessment tools and statistical methods (correlation and regression analysis), the results showed a significant relationship among all three variables. Specifically, moral disengagement was found to be an accurate predictor of disobedient behavior. "Moral disengagement" will positively predict rule-breaking conduct among college students. The sample consists of two hundred adolescents currently enrolled in higher education. Data was gathered using evaluation instruments such the Social Intelligence Scale (SIS), created by Chadha and Ganesan in 1986, the 32-item "Moral Disengagement Scale" (MDS), created by Albert Bandura, and the Rule-breaking Behavior Scale. Linear regression analysis is used to investigate predictive associations, while "Pearson Product-Moment Correlation" are utilized to analyze the relationship between variables. The results showed that among male university students, social intelligence, moral disengagement, and rule-breaking conduct are significantly correlated. Additionally, it showed that among male university students, social intelligence, moral disengagement, and rule-breaking conduct are significantly correlated in male students.</i>
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## **Introduction**

To This section investigates the reasons behind potential rule-breaking conduct and helps comprehend the complexity of human behavior, which is shaped by social standards, individual beliefs, and cultural contexts. Understanding the relationship between moral disengagement and social intelligence reveals why individuals may disobey the law. The ability to negotiate social relationships, comprehend the viewpoints of others, and adjust to various situations is referred to as social intelligence. It facilitates the development of strong bonds, the peaceful resolution of disputes, and the courteous accomplishment of objectives. However, "moral disengagement is the psychological" process that enables people to defend behaviors that contradict their morals, frequently with detrimental effects on both individuals and organizations.

Building social intelligence, encouraging moral participation, and fostering a polite community are all aided by researching the psychological and cultural aspects of rule-breaking. "Understanding human behavior" is crucial in today's changing world to build lasting relationships and promote wellbeing in both one's personal and professional life.

## **Definition of Social Intelligence**

Thorndike (1920) defined social intelligence as the ability to understand and help people act sensibly in social situations. Initially viewed as a combination of temperament and insight into social cues, it was later defined by David Wechsler as intellect applied to social contexts. Daniel Goleman (2006) emphasized two key components:

- Social consciousness, or the things we observe about other people
- Social ease (how we use that awareness)

However, we can now define social intelligence as a person's prior understanding of the social world. Daniel Goleman (2006) has developed an almost equally fervent devotion to social intelligence".

### **Social Consciousness**

Social consciousness includes awareness of internal states of others (empathy), emotional resonance (understanding intentions and emotions), as well as social cognition (knowing how social systems work). Understanding the intentions, feelings, and thoughts of others is known as emotional resonance. Understanding how social life functions is known as social cognition.

### **Social Ease**

Social ease involves synchrony (nonverbal communication), self-image, influence, and concern for others facilitating effective interactions based on social awareness. Together, these elements support meaningful and positive social relationships. "Social consciousness" is the foundation of social ease, which promotes safe and productive contact. The range of social ease includes:

- Synchrony: productive nonverbal communication.
- Self-image: how well he presents himself.
- Influence: influencing how social interactions turn out.
- Concern: taking other people's needs into account and responding appropriately (Goleman, 2006)

### **Approaches of social intelligence**

- Edward Thorndike's theories are the foundation of the "psychometric" understanding of social intelligence. According to him, the ability to comprehend and work with ideas is known as abstract intelligence; the ability to comprehend and work with real objects is known as mechanics intelligence; and the ability to comprehend and work with people and act sensibly in interpersonal relationships is known as social intelligence. "It is hard to test," Thorndike said in response to the question of how to measure "social intelligence." "Social intelligence" is fully demonstrated in kindergarten and on the playground. There are three primary methods:
- Thorndike's model of intangible, arbitrary, and "social intelligence" is a psychometric approach that is based on quantifiable characteristics.
- Conceptual, emphasizing personal thoughts (Cantor, Kihlstrom, and Taylor).
- According to Sternberg and Smith, theoretical knowledge includes both explicit and implicit information.

### **Development of Social Intelligence**

Social intelligence begins to develop as early as six weeks of age. By 18 months, children start recognizing social cues. As we grow, we learn to handle more complex social demands, making social intelligence a key lifelong skill.

### **Adaptability to Changing Social Contexts**

What was considered typical in 2020 may become a source of memory in 2021 since the modern world is evolving so swiftly. If the "COVID-19 pandemic" has proven to us anything, it is that while knowledge and skills are valuable, the ability to adjust to changing conditions is what is most crucial for survival and mental health. Since social intelligence is much about understanding though often overlooked, social intelligence significantly impacts mental, emotional, and even physical health. It fosters deeper understanding and healthier relationships. As social expectations evolve rapidly (e.g., due to events like the COVID-19 pandemic), the ability to adapt and remain emotionally resilient becomes essential. Enhancing social intelligence helps people respond better to dynamic environments.

### **Mental and Physical Well-Being**

Social intelligence enhances emotional and personal well-being by helping individuals interpret emotional cues and understand both their own and others' feelings. People with high social intelligence tend to experience less stress, better mental health, and improved physical health due to stronger social bonds and increased positivity.

### **Economic Success**

To conclude, one of the most widespread myths regarding social intelligence is that it also helps with financial success by fostering relationships, teamwork, emotional self-control, and adaptability.

## **Moral Disengagement**

The mental processes that enable people to defend damaging or immoral behavior without experiencing shame or self-blame are known as moral disengagement. Moral disengagement is a four-stage process:

- First and foremost, the person or group must mentally rewrite or tell personally a scenario in which whatever actions are being or are about to be taken are not recognized as immoral or unethical. This may involve using strategies like "others are doing it" or "it's not against the law," for instance.
- Secondly, their acts typically diminish their personal sense of agency or significance. This is typically accomplished by attributing the motivation or origin of the activities to other people, the organization, the circumstance, or the setting.
- They will next be unable to recognize or ignore the repercussions of their acts or inaction.
- At last, they must change their perspective on the victim or victims by either reducing their position, importance, or the impact and effect on them.

## **Social cognitive theory**

It suggests that as we grow, we become acquainted with a variety of moral standards. Among the many ways we can learn them is by seeing how others behavior. This theory suggests we learn moral standards through observing others and internalizing social norms. These moral guidelines help us live in harmony and contribute to society's well-being. Moral action requires self-regulation through monitoring one's actions, comparing them with internal norms, and correcting behavior when necessary (Knoll et al., 2016).

## **Moral Disengagement Mechanisms**

Self-regulatory processes are vital, but they only function when they are triggered. Therefore, if people specifically separate from their own inner moral control systems, they may act contrary their own requirements.

- Moral defense
- Indirect category
- Helpful judgement

## **Diffusion of Responsibility**

People may spread or conceal responsibility in order to deny their involvement in harmful behavior downplaying consequences, or blaming victims through dehumanization or assigning fault. People can do so via two specific mechanisms:

- Dehumanization
- Attribution of blame

## **Rule-breaking behavior**

The deliberate violating of laws of customs in society is referred to as rule-breaking. The severity and societal perception of these behaviors, which are frequently classified as deviant conduct, varies.

## **Theories of Organizational Rule Breaking (Individual Rule Breaking)**

Although they are not the same, rule-breaking behavior and counterproductive workplace conduct (CWB) are related concepts. According to Spector et al. (2006), CWB can be defined as acts that cause harm to organizations or are intended to cause harm to them. It is a general word that encompasses a wide range of actions, including willfully harming office equipment, disregarding coworkers, and feigning busyness without actually working.

While some of these behaviors may involve breaking organizational rules, not all rule-breaking falls under CWB, and not all CWBs are necessarily rule violations. The overlap exists, but the two are distinct in how they are measured and understood. For example, someone might break several rules without scoring high on a CWB scale, or someone could engage in high levels without intentionally violating formal rules. Therefore, although related, rule-breaking and counterproductive work behavior are two separate but occasionally intersecting aspects of workplace misconduct.

## **Significance of Study**

The research on "interpersonal intelligence, moral disengagement, and rule-breaking behavior" is extremely pertinent as it provides a wealth of data that enhances understanding of the complex nature of human behavior, which underlies or even structures roles and functions. This study thoroughly examines these concepts to explore ways of promoting positive relationships and interactions in both personal and professional settings, ultimately leading to better social outcomes and overall wellbeing. Additionally, by examining how to correct the psychological processes behind moral disengagement and rule-breaking behavior, suitable interventions can be created to prevent harmful conduct and foster a culture of responsibility. The study also offers insights into developing programs that encourage social intelligence, ethical leadership, collaborative communication, and conflict resolution. It may have practical use in leadership development, team management, and education or training initiatives. By clarifying these important aspects of human behavior, the research may help form more effective strategies to gain greater benefits and reduce the negative effects of ethical disengagement and rule-breaking behavior.

## **Literature Review**

Gómez & Landinez-Martínez (2021) explored the connections among bullying, aggression, and moral disengagement in university students, showing that moral disassociation accounted for significant variance in both verbal and physical aggression. Alireza et al. (2024) investigated how values, mood, and IQ estimate moral disengagement, finding that negative mood positively correlated while ethical values and positive mood negatively correlated with disengagement. Ayala et al. (2023), applying Bandura's theory, found that tolerance toward academic dishonesty significantly predicted misconduct, supported by cases from Latin American universities.

Rengifo & Laham (2022) studied how personality traits like agreeableness mediate moral disengagement, identifying civility and empathy as key traits. Xie et al. (2025) examined bullying and cyberbullying, showing how different types of educational bullying are associated to particular types of moral disengagement. Ogunfowora and associates (2022) validated Bandura's theory in the workplace, showing that moral disengagement was associated with lower performance and more misconduct, with partial remorse still present even after unethical behavior. Agudelo Rico et al., (2024) compared school rule-breakers with controls, finding that

dehumanization was a key component of moral disengagement. Luo & Bussey (2023) emphasized the impact of individual and contextual circumstances, including inadequate parental supervision and peer rejection in activating ethical disinterest. Nocera et al. (2022) highlighted that dehumanization and positive comparison were predictors of cyber aggression among young adults, demonstrating the utility of ethical estrangement as a predictor.

Maryluz et al., (2022) found that antisocial behavior in Colombian teens was linked to classroom SES and levels of moral disengagement. Montero-Carretero et al., (2021) highlighted how school climate, victimization, and moral disengagement relate to bullying. Schmitt et al., (2024), using Situational Action Theory, showed that moral distaste and low self-control together predicted a variety of deviant behaviors including assault and drug use.

Cabrera et al., (2020) found that males showed more aggressive behaviors, while females supported victims, and moral disengagement reduced supportive actions. Heradstveit et al., (2022) validated a six-item scale for rule-breaking among over 297,000 Norwegian adolescents, while Hennigan & Cohn (2022) distinguished prosocial and antisocial rule-breaking. According to Yildiz Cakir et al., (2024), student-athletes' moral disengagement was lessened by their religious dedication and moral identity.

Alessandri et al., (2020) studied COVID-19 behaviors in Italy, linking traits like narcissism to social distancing via moral disengagement. Li, Guo, & Hu (2023) found that low The correlation with moral disconnect and cyberbullying was mediated correlation between moral disconnect and cyberbullying was mediated by self-control, particularly in those with high levels of callous-unemotional features. While Saladino et al., (2024) emphasized how poor parental ties and ethical disengaged predicted violence in juvenile offenders, Sjögren et al., (2020) demonstrated how moral engagement and self-efficacy affected bystander involvement in bullying.

Madeha Naz et al., (2022), who connected breaking the rules and mental health to control of emotions and dark triad traits. Abbas Abdollahi et al., (2020) found that Chameleon behavior and perfectionism predict moral disengagement. Siddiqui et al., (2025) found that frustration and dominance beliefs drove bullying, with boys more likely to bully. Abdelaliem (2024) found that moral disassociation and enjoyment fueled cyberbullying. Naz & Subhan (2022) showed how CBT-based emotional training helped reduce rule-breaking tied to anger.

Aziz Ul Nisa et al., (2022) revealed cultural predictors of bullying, and “Zahra Hashoush Hami Al-Zaidy” & Hassan Ali Sayed Al-Darraj (2021) found social media to be the largest contributor to moral disengagement. Jahandideh et al., (2023) demonstrated how moral intelligence training improved peer relationships in bullying boys. Lastly, Chen et al., (2022) linked punishment reactivity in the brain to rule-breaking and alcohol misuse, and Meléndez Guevara et al., (2021) revealed that among Latinx youth, the association between prejudice and rule-breaking was mediated by trauma.

## **Research Objectives**

1. To investigate the relationship of Social Intelligence and Moral Disengagement on Rule breaking behavior among University Male students.
2. To study gender differences between Moral Disengagement and Rule breaking behavior among University Male students.
3. Among male university students, there is probably a strong correlation between moral disengagement and social intelligence and rule-breaking conduct.

4. Moral Disengagement will positively predict Rule Breaking Behavior among University students.

### **Hypothesis**

1. Among male university students, there is probably a substantial correlation between moral disengagement, social intelligence, and breaking conduct.
2. Moral Disengagement will positively predict Rule Breaking Behavior among University students.

### **Methodology**

The current study employed a correlational research method to evaluate the association between male university students' rule-breaking behavior, moral disengagement, and social intelligence.

### **Research Design**

To assess the relationship between breaking the rules actions, moral disengage, and social intelligence in male university students, the current study used a correlational research methodology.

### **Sampling Strategy**

To find volunteers, a non-probability purposive sampling technique was employed. In accordance with inclusion and exclusion criteria, a sample was chosen for data collection.

### **Sample**

200 young adults were chosen for the sample. Male university students were included in the sample.

### **Inclusion criteria**

- Only those participants were included who have at least Intermediate level of education.

### **Exclusion Criteria**

- Individuals with any type of physical disability were excluded
- Individuals with education level less than intermediate
- Individuals suffering from any psychological disorder were excluded

### **Ethical Considerations**

Ethical Guidance by APA provided the research study adhered to the code of conduct for studies involving human subjects. The considerations are as follows:

- Research proposal will be approved from the Institute.
- To initiate study, permission will be taken from the scale's authors.
- Those involved will receive assurances on the privacy of their personal data.
- Contributors will be assured that their anonymity will be maintained.

- Participant will be assured that is no potential form of any physical, social, or psychological harm in this research.
- Results will be reported and analyzed accurately.

## Results

The purpose of this study was to investigate the connection between male university students' rule-breaking behavior, moral disengagement, and social intelligence. The test hypothesis was examined using statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics was applied to see the demographic characteristics of sample (N=200). The association between male university students' rule-breaking conduct, moral disengagement, and social intelligence was assessed using a Pearson correlation. Differences according to gender in both the dependent and independent variables were evaluated using the independent sample T-test. Regression analysis was run to measure that what are the predictors of rule breaking behavior.

**Table 1: Demographic Information of the Participants**

Variable	<i>M(SD)</i>	<i>f</i>
Age	23.16 (3.94)	200
Birth order	2.03(.715)	
1 <sup>st</sup> born		44
Middle born		110
Last born		42
Only child		4
Qualification	1.98(.763)	
Intermediate		52
Graduation		106
Master		38
M.Phil.		2
PhD		2
Family structure	1.43(.496)	
Joint		114
Nuclear		96
Residence	1.26(.440)	
Urban		148
Rural		52
Marital Status	1.86(.449)	
Single		156
Married		36
Divorced		8
Occupation	2.62(.691)	
Business		24
Govt Job		28
Others		148

It was predicted that among male university students, social intelligence, moral disengagement, and rule-breaking conduct would all likely have a positive and significant association. The analysis that follows is then displayed below.



**Table 2: "Correlations" and "descriptive statistics" for the factors under investigation**

Variable	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2
SIS	200	17.24	3.48	-	
RBB	200	40.37	6.63	-.164*	-

Note = N= sample(N=2000),M=mean, SD=standard deviation,  $p>0.05$ .

The results revealed that there is significant relation between social intelligence (IV) and rule breaking behavior (DV) with scores  $r = -.164$ ,  $p > .05$ .

**Table 3: Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for study variables**

Variable	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2
BDM	200	79.72	18.14	-	
RBB	200	40.37	6.63	-.125**	-

Note= N= sample(N=200), M=mean, SD=standard deviation,  $p<.01$ \*\*.

The findings showed a negative relationship between risk-based behavior and moral disengagement behavior ( $r = -.125$ ), suggesting that individuals with stronger beliefs in moral disengagement may engage in slightly lower levels of risk-based behavior. So, hypothesis was supported that there is likely to be statistically significant relationship between moral disengagement (IV) and rule breaking behavior (DV).

It was predicted that rule-breaking conduct among college students would be significantly predicted by the combination of "social intelligence" and moral disengagement. Regression analysis was used to determine the relationship between moral disengagement and social intelligence (N=200).

**Table 4: Linear regression showing predicting effect of social intelligence, Moral Disengagement and Rule breaking behavior in university males.**

Predictors	Risk Taking Behavior		
	<b>B</b>	<b><math>\beta</math></b>	<b>SE</b>
Social Intelligence	-.312	-.164	.133
Moral Disengagement	-0.28	-.137	.143
$\Delta R^2$	.179		

Note = BMD= Beliefs in Moral Disengagement, RBB=Rule breaking behavior

Table 4 shows the overall regression model is significant with  $R^2$  worth of .179 showed that the outcome variable's variation was 17% explained by the predictor variable using  $F(5.45)$ ,  $P<0.05$ . The standardized beta coefficient for moral disengagement predicting rule breaking behavior was  $\beta = -.137$  indicate statistically significant relation between moral disengagement and rule breaking behavior. The predictor of the rule was determined using multiple linear regression, breaking behavior at  $p < .05$ .

## Discussion

This study set out to investigate the connection between rule-breaking behavior, moral disengagement, and social intelligence among male college students. The hypothesis, which was

accepted, was that these factors had a substantial positive association with one another. The findings showed that among male university students, "social intelligence", "moral disengagement", "and rule-breaking" conduct were significantly correlated. The following researches further explain the relationship among these constructs in this demographic.

These results displayed both cognitive reappraisal and negative expressive suppression as significant contributors to mental health but in opposite directions of each other. They were mediated by rule-breaking behavior and dark triad traits, respectively. The dim personality traits were also positively correlated with breaking rules and mental issues. While there were no notable inter-gender variations in emotion regulation, dark triad tendencies, or rule-breaking, when compared to women, men reported having much more mental health issues. Research describes the violation of rules as a prospective mechanism underlying a negative psychological outcome of defective emotion regulation and dark triad characteristics

Additionally, it was proposed that social intelligence and moral disengagement in university males are likely to be significant predictors of rule-breaking behavior. The following studies further support the predictive effects of these variables. Ahmed Abdelaliem (2024) aimed to explore moral disengagement, motivations, and psychological mechanisms behind cyberbullying among adolescents, and to create a model that explains the connection between bullying motivations and cyberbullying behavior. According to the study by Ahmed Abdelaliem (2024), entertainment, sadism, outside influences, retaliation, and moral detachment were the next most effective sources of influence and ideology to drive cyberbullying. Males were advantaged with a number of factors because of gender attributes. Furthermore, there were notable predictive effects of moral disengagement and bullying motivations on those who engage in cyberbullying. Through structural modeling, it was also established that the effects of other incentives, such as ideology, retaliation, enjoyment, and sadism, on cyberbullying were mediated by power and moral disengagement.

## **Limitations**

The sample used in current study was of small size and a relatively larger sample could have provided more diverse set of responses. Due to short and limited time period correlational research method was applied longitudinal method should be try in future researches. Sample was taken from a specific age group (adults), other ages like late adulthood, middle age and adolescence should also be explored etc.

## **Future Directions for The Study**

The present study has great contributions for the literature work. As result shown, there is strong relation between social intelligence, moral disengagement and rule breaking behavior among male university student. To decrease rule breaking behavior in university male, counselling programs should be organized to support and understand they're on strength and power of positivity for mental peace as result shows that there is significant relationship on social intelligence and rule breaking behavior.

## **Conclusion**

The whole conversation demonstrated a considerable correlation between interpersonal skills, moral disengagement, and criminal action among male learners at universities. It was acknowledged that social intelligence and moral disengagement are indicators of depressive

illnesses. "Social intelligence" and "rule-breaking" behavior are thought to be positively and significantly correlated.

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