

The Concept, Development, and Influence Mechanism of Team Moral Behavior Patterns*

Yang Chunjiang¹ Chen Aobo² Yang
Xiao¹

2026-08-07

ChinaRxiv

Abstract

With the rapid popularization and diversified development of teams, collective moral behavior in teams has surpassed individual moral behavior and increasingly become a frontier issue in organizational ethics research. Traditional research has overlooked many group attributes of teams, making it difficult to reveal the true patterns of collective moral behavior. In view of this, this study focuses on the configurations and collective representations of the moral behaviors of all team members, proposes the concept of team moral behavior patterns (TMBP), and further: (1) longitudinally analyzes the formation and evolution of collective moral behavior in teams from a dynamic perspective; (2) distinguishes three typical types of teams based on the three-dimensional attributes of teams—skill-oriented, authority-oriented, and time-oriented teams—and further deduces the formation logic and evolutionary trends of their corresponding clustered, hierarchical, and egalitarian TMBP; and (3) systematically explores the effects and mechanisms of the three types of TMBP on multilevel outcomes at the individual, team, and organizational levels through theoretical analysis and logical deduction. This paper aims to more directly explain ethical phenomena in teams, address the long-standing neglect of ethical issues in team research, break through the limitations of individual-centered moral research, open up a new field of team ethics research, and provide guidance for the practice of team ethics management.

Full Text

The Concept, Development, and Influence Mechanism of Team Moral Behavior Patterns*

Yang Chunjiang¹ Chen Aobo² Yang Xiao¹

(1 School of Economics and Management, Northwest University, Xi' an 710127)

(2 School of E-Commerce, Tangshan University, Tangshan 063000)

Abstract With the rapid popularization and diversified development of teams, collective moral behavior in teams has gone beyond individual moral behavior and has increasingly become a frontier topic in organizational morality research. Traditional research has neglected many group attributes of teams, making it difficult to reveal the real patterns of collective moral behavior. In view of this, this study focuses on the combinational forms and collective manifestations of the moral behavior of all team members, proposes the concept of team moral behavior patterns (TMBP), and further: longitudinally analyzes, from a dynamic perspective, the formation and evolution process of collective moral behavior in teams; based on three-dimensional team attributes, distinguishes three typical types of teams—skill-oriented, authority-oriented, and time-oriented—and further deduces the formation logic and evolutionary trends of the corresponding clustered, hierarchical, and egalitarian TMBP; through

theoretical analysis and logical deduction, systematically explores the influence and mechanisms of the three types of TMBP on multilevel outcomes at the individual/team/organizational levels. This paper aims to explain team moral phenomena more directly, remedy the long-standing neglect of ethical issues in team research, break through the limitations of individual-centered moral research, open up a new field of team morality research, and provide guidance for the practice of team ethical management.

Keywords team moral behavior pattern, team type, dynamic evolution, multi-level influence

Classification Code B849: C93

1 Problem Formulation

A new round of technological revolution is rapidly reshaping the ways in which actions, relationships, and responsibilities are generated in organizations. It has not only shaken the traditional framework of organizational operation based on individuals, positions, and hierarchies, but has also profoundly changed the existing assumptions of organizational ethical governance (Faraj et al., 2018). In recent years, repeated business scandals—such as Volkswagen’s emissions scandal, fake accounts at Wells Fargo, and defects in the Boeing 737 MAX—have shown that unethical behavior in organizations is not merely the occasional mistake of individual employees, but rather a systemic group failure. By contrast, successful practices such as Appletree Answers’ “Dream On” program and Humax’ s “Reciprocity Ring” project (Grant, 2013) also demonstrate that moral behavior is not only an expression of individual character, but can also be transmitted, diffused, and amplified through group interaction. Together, these two contrasting types of phenomena suggest that organizational moral behavior is increasingly exhibiting collective characteristics, and that accurate prediction and explanation are difficult from an individual perspective alone. With the continuous development of digital-intelligent collaboration, platform-based organizations, and emerging forms of work, various new types of teams have become the basic units of organizational operation and directly carry cognitive judgment, moral action, and ethical responsibility (Lane et al., 2023). To correctly understand the internal logic of contemporary organizational ethical governance, it is therefore necessary to deeply reveal the manifestations, generative mechanisms, and evolutionary patterns of team moral behavior. Accordingly, individual moral laws cannot simply be transplanted to the team level, nor can team morality be reduced to the average or sum of members’ morality. Team moral behavior has its own distinctive structural foundation, interaction mechanisms, and evolutionary logic. Only by grounding analysis in the attributes and characteristics of diverse teams can we accurately reveal new laws of collective moral behavior and innovate team morality theory.

Received: 2026-04-09

* National Natural Science Foundation of China project (72572128).

Corresponding author: Yang Xiao, E-mail: yangxiao@nwu.edu.cn

To date, team moral theory remains at an initial stage and has evident deficiencies. In the moral domain, on the one hand, the absence of a research paradigm for team morality makes the transformation from individual morality to team morality difficult. Influenced by individualism, existing moral research has almost all focused on moral decision-making and behavior at the individual level; how to rise to the team level still lacks a scientific and systematic theoretical framework (Wang Xiaochen et al., 2018). On the other hand, moral research remains confined to a static perspective and lacks attention to temporal dynamics. The few existing studies on team morality mostly adopt a static perspective, neglecting the dynamic evolution of team morality along the temporal dimension (Kouchaki & Smith, 2025). In the team domain, on the one hand, existing research places excessive emphasis on efficiency outcomes while neglecting ethical outcomes—almost all is concentrated on efficiency outcomes such as performance and innovation, with little attention to team ethical outcomes such as ethical behavior and moral reputation. On the other hand, the conceptualization and operationalization of team-level constructs are overly simplistic, resulting in confusion and misuse between individual- and team-level constructs (Hu Hua et al., 2021). Traditional team research generally adopts a “cross-level homology” strategy, simply understanding team concepts as the replication or aggregation of individual concepts, while ignoring the dynamic emergent properties of teams as complex group systems (Chan, 2019).

Aiming to respond to the realities of corporate ethical governance and to remedy the shortcomings of existing theories of team morality, this paper innovatively proposes the new concept of the team moral behavior pattern (TMBP). Around key questions such as “How is TMBP formed and how does it evolve? What internal logic does this process follow? What different TMBPs will different types of teams present? How does TMBP affect members, teams, and organizations respectively? What are the underlying mechanisms? How can effective intervention be carried out?”, this paper constructs a basic framework for research on collective team morality. Specifically, the paper first focuses on “what it is”: based on the group attributes of teams, it proposes TMBP as a team-level construct and defines it as “the specific and patterned collective characteristics manifested at the team level by the personal moral behaviors of all team members.” It then turns to “why” and “how”: on the one hand, it summarizes and analyzes, at the general level, the dynamic evolutionary laws of TMBP, revealing the process through which individual moral behaviors at the team level undergo “integration—reinforcement—adjustment—reconstruction” and gradually form a relatively stable collective behavioral pattern; on the other hand, based on a three-dimensional attribute model, it distinguishes three types of teams (skill-oriented, authority-oriented, and time-oriented) and examines the formation process, evolutionary paths, and multilevel effects of each TMBP. Through the above conceptualization, this paper seeks to construct a new theory of team

moral research around the core concept of TMBP: on the one hand, it opens up a new domain for team research that attends to group moral characteristics and their behavioral manifestations, identifying and abstracting more new team features from a moral perspective and correcting the theoretical imbalance caused by the long-term neglect of moral issues in team research; on the other hand, it also opens a new theoretical window for moral research, extending the research subject from individuals to the team level, thereby discovering and explaining more phenomena of group morality that occur in team contexts and strengthening the dialogue and integration between moral research and organizational theory.

2 Research Status and Analysis of Development Dynamics

This section reviews relevant findings from three aspects—individual moral research from a static perspective, individual moral research from a dynamic perspective, and team moral research from a static perspective—and, on this basis, looks ahead to future research directions.

2.1 Individual Moral Research from a Static Perspective

Individual moral research from a static perspective mainly includes the individual-trait perspective and the interactionist perspective. The former is built on the “good apple—bad apple” assumption, holding that personality, moral cognition, values, and demographic characteristics influence moral judgment and behavior, giving rise to moral cognitive development theory, moral identity theory, the social intuitionist model, and the dual-system theory of moral decision making

model and other theoretical systems, with the main findings shown in Table 1; the latter holds that moral behavior is not determined solely by stable individual characteristics, but is the result of the joint action of individuals and the organizational environment. A particular situation may cause a “good apple” to make a wrong decision, or it may suppress the unethical behavior of a “bad apple” (Trevino & Youngblood, 1990), with the main findings shown in Table 2.

Table 1 Main empirical findings on the influence of individual characteristics on morality

Category	Variables	Findings
Personality traits	Negative personality, moral identity, Big Five personality traits	Negative personality and low moral identity increase unethical behavior, while positive personality traits help promote ethical behavior (Hegarty & Sims, 1979; Aquino & Reed, 2002; Soutter et al., 2020).
Demographic and cultural characteristics	Age, gender, nationality, collectivism and individualism	Age and gender are related to unethical decision-making, but no consistent conclusions have yet been reached regarding the effects of nationality, collectivism, and individualism (Tenbrunsel & Smith-Crowe, 2008; Craft, 2013).
Moral capacities	Moral cognitive development, moral reasoning, moral ownership, and moral courage	A higher level of moral cognitive development can inhibit unethical behavior; insufficient moral reasoning may lead to hasty judgments, while excessive reasoning may also serve to rationalize behavior (Moore & Tenbrunsel, 2014).
Moral philosophy and religion	Deontology, utilitarianism, religious belief	Deontology is associated with higher moral awareness, and religious belief is usually positively related to deontologically oriented and prosocial behavior (Reynolds, 2006; Shariff, 2015).

Category	Variables	Findings
Moral foundations	Harm, fairness, loyalty, authority, sanctity, etc.	Harm and fairness focus on protecting individual interests, whereas loyalty, authority, and sanctity place greater emphasis on group order and cohesion (Atari et al., 2023).

Table 2 Main empirical findings on the influence of interactive factors on morality

Category	Variables	Findings
Influence of leaders and colleagues	Ethical leadership, leader integrity, moral exemplars, social cues	Leaders and colleagues can influence employees' moral judgment and behavior through behavioral modeling, social cues, and ethical advocacy (Brown et al., 2005; Sonenshein, 2007; Chen et al., 2020).
Ethics systems	Codes of conduct, ethics training, supervisory sanctions, organizational socialization	Formal systems can regulate and constrain behavior, but overly personalized standards or excessive monitoring may also induce hypocritical behavior and responsibility shifting (Kouchaki et al., 2019; Thiel et al., 2023).

Category	Variables	Findings
Ethical context	Ethical climate, ethical culture, moral nudges	Benevolent and principled ethical climates can inhibit unethical behavior, whereas egoistic ethical climates increase unethical intentions; moral nudges help promote altruism and cooperation (Kish-Gephart et al., 2010; Capraro et al., 2019).
Work and occupational factors	Job satisfaction, organizational identification, performance pressure, occupational identity	Job satisfaction usually reduces deviant behavior, but overly strong organizational identification, work passion, and performance pressure may prompt employees to rationalize unethical behavior (Judge et al., 2006; Mitchell et al., 2018; Wang et al., 2019).
Identity, hierarchy, and power	Work identity, family identity, sense of power	Identity separation may increase inauthenticity and unethical behavior; power may strengthen an individual's existing moral inclinations, but it may also weaken moral judgment through self-focus (Lammers et al., 2015; Ebrahimi et al., 2020).

Category	Variables	Findings
External institutional environment	Economic conditions, laws and regulations	Economic conditions influence ethical decision-making through profit opportunities and job insecurity; laws and regulations constrain behavior by increasing the costs of violations and strengthening social norms.
Characteristics of ethical issues	Severity of consequences, scope of impact, urgency, proximity, social consensus	The higher the moral intensity of an ethical issue, the more likely individuals are to recognize its moral attributes, and the less likely they are to make unethical choices (Jones, 1991; Kish-Gephart et al., 2010).

2.2 Research on Individual Morality from a Dynamic Perspective

Research on individual dynamic morality has broken with the assumption of moral consistency, arguing that individuals' moral states are not fixed but instead dynamically adjust between moral and immoral behavior in order to maintain moral equilibrium (Zhong et al., 2009). This process is referred to as moral self-regulation and includes two pathways: moral licensing and moral cleansing (Mullen & Monin, 2016). Moral licensing means that individuals use prior moral behavior to provide psychological legitimacy for subsequent immoral behavior (Blanken et al., 2015). It mainly includes two mechanisms: moral credits and moral credentials. In the former, past moral behavior is regarded as "credit" that can offset future immoral behavior; in the latter, past moral performance serves as a credential, weakening negative evaluations of current immoral behavior (Mazar & Zhong, 2010; Miller & Effron, 2010). Moral cleansing refers to individuals repairing a damaged moral self-evaluation through compensatory behavior after engaging in immoral behavior (West & Zhong, 2015). Forms of compensation include direct compensation such as apology and restitution, cross-domain compensation such as donation, and symbolic purification such as handwashing (Mulder & Aquino, 2013). For example, after abusive leaders harm subordinates, they may increase considerate and directive behaviors, or

they may turn to impression management rather than genuinely making amends for the harm (Liao et al., 2018; McClean et al., 2021). In sum, moral licensing and moral cleansing reveal a dynamic process in which individual moral behavior continually fluctuates around a moral reference point. Perkins et al. (2024) further proposed a four-stage moral self-regulation model of “initial behavior evaluation → compensation goal selection → compensation behavior evaluation → adjustment of the moral reference point.”

2.3 Research on Team Morality from a Static Perspective

Research on morality at the team level is relatively limited and is mainly grounded in social learning theory, social exchange theory, moral identity theory, and moral disengagement theory. Social learning theory holds that team members acquire ethical norms by observing and imitating the behaviors of leaders and colleagues, especially under the influence of ethical leadership as a role model (Bandura, 1977). Social exchange theory emphasizes that reciprocal, trusting, and high-quality exchange relationships can promote cooperation, organizational citizenship behavior, and compliance with ethical norms (Blau, 1964). Moral identity theory points out that shared moral values and collective moral identity help improve the quality of team ethical decision-making, strengthen members' trust, and reduce immoral behavior (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Reynolds, 2006). Moral disengagement theory, by contrast, argues that team members may reduce their personal sense of responsibility through diffusion of responsibility, collective attribution, and behavioral rationalization, thereby allowing immoral behavior to become normalized and diffuse within the team (Bandura, 1999; Klotz & Bolino, 2013). Relevant empirical research mainly includes three aspects: first, team moral concepts and their measurement, with emphasis on team norms such as ethical climate as well as trust, responsibility, respect, honesty, inclusion, and collaboration (Liu Bing et al., 2015; Cabana & Kaptein, 2021); second, the antecedents of team morality, mainly examining factors such as leadership behavior, team composition, industry characteristics, and laws and regulations (Zhang Fawang, Liao Jianqiao, 2017; Cheng & Wang, 2015); and third, the consequences of team morality, mainly analyzing the effects of team ethical climate on outcomes such as team performance, satisfaction, and cohesion (Peng Zhenglong et al., 2015; Kim & Vandenberghe, 2020).

2.4 Analysis of Research Trends

Drawing on the experience of moral research and the characteristics of teams, this paper proposes three directions worthy of further advancement.

First, future research should break through the limitations of individual-level moral research and expand toward the team, organizational, and cross-level levels. Existing research on organizational morality has long been centered on individuals and has accumulated substantial findings around moral traits,

moral judgment, moral identity, and moral behavior. However, as research on individual morality becomes increasingly saturated, the difficulty of achieving theoretical breakthroughs in this field continues to increase. At the same time, organizational operations increasingly take teams as their basic units, which also requires the research perspective to extend toward the collective level. Team behavior

characterized by sharedness, interactivity, and emergence; simply applying individual moral theories cannot adequately explain its distinctive patterns. Therefore, future research should attend to how team moral behavior emerges from member interactions, how stable collective moral patterns are formed, and how such behavior exerts cross-level effects on members and organizations.

Second, the research perspective should expand from static description to the formation and evolutionary processes of team morality. Although research on individual morality has already examined moral development and dynamic regulation, existing studies of team morality still often regard it as a relatively stable state and pay insufficient attention to its formation, change, and evolution. In fact, interactivity, dynamism, and evolution are important attributes of teams. As member composition, relational structures, power distribution, task stages, and the external environment change, team morality also adjusts continuously. Therefore, future research should adopt a whole-process and long-time-window perspective, examining how member interactions and changes in team structure affect the formation, development, and evolution of collective moral behavior, and thereby construct and test dynamic theories of team morality.

Third, team research should move beyond efficiency-centeredness and increase attention to ethical and moral issues. For a long time, team research has focused mainly on performance, efficiency, innovation, and collaboration, while issues of team ethics and morality have remained relatively marginal. This imbalance not only limits understanding of the operating patterns of team morality, but also makes it difficult to provide sufficient guidance for ethical governance of teams in practice. In addition, research on team efficiency and team morality has long been fragmented, making it easy to overlook the intrinsic connection between the two. In fact, efficiency and morality are not mutually exclusive; rather, they may promote one another. Therefore, future research should advance the cross-integration of studies on team efficiency and morality, expanding the research goal from building “efficient teams” to building “efficient and moral teams.”

3 Research Framework

This study proposes three parts of research content: the conceptualization and dynamic analysis of TMBP, research on TMBP in different types of teams, and the identification of the multilevel effects and mechanisms of TMBP. Figure 1 presents the structural arrangement of this part.

Text in Figure 1

- Construction and analysis of a dynamic cyclical model of team moral behavior
Answer: What is TMBP, and what characteristics does it have?
Lays the foundation for the studies in Sections 3.2 and 3.3.
- Section 3.1
- Team moral behavior pattern (TMBP)
- Section 3.2
 - 3.2.1 The pattern, formation, and evolution of TMBP in “skill-oriented” teams
 - 3.2.2 The pattern, formation, and evolution of TMBP in “authority-oriented” teams
 - 3.2.3 The pattern, formation, and evolution of TMBP in “time-oriented” teams
 - Clustered type
 - Hierarchical type
 - Equal type
 - Team moral behavior pattern: emergence process and dynamic evolution
Answer: How does TMBP form, and how does it evolve?
- Section 3.3
 - 3.3.1 The mechanism through which clustered TMBP produces influence effects
 - 3.3.2 The mechanism through which hierarchical TMBP produces influence effects
 - 3.3.3 The mechanism through which equal TMBP produces influence effects
 - Clustered type
 - Hierarchical type
 - Equal type
 - Team moral behavior pattern: multilevel influences and mechanisms
Answer: What will TMBP lead to, and why?

Figure 1. Overall research framework of this paper

3.1 Construction and Analysis of the Dynamic Cyclical Model of Team Moral Behavior Patterns

Social cognitive theory holds that behavioral agents, under the joint influence of cognition, motivation, behavioral standards, and self-evaluation, continuously revise their own behavior through forethought, regulation, and reflection (Bandura, 2001). This study extends this logic to the team level, viewing the formation and evolution of TMBP as a process of collective self-regulation. Specifically, based on the cyclical logic of “moral forethought—moral regulation—moral

self-reflection,” it analyzes how, driven by moral events, team moral standards, behavioral intentions, moral behavior, and behavioral evaluation evolve cyclically under the influence of team and organizational factors, and on this basis constructs a dynamic cyclical model of TMBP (see Figure 2).

Labels in Figure 2: external moral events; internal moral events; moral forethought; moral regulation; moral self-reflection; team factors: moral awareness, self-control, moral humility, moral responsibility; team behavioral intention; team moral standards; team moral behavior; team behavioral evaluation; organizational factors: moral intensity, moral ambiguity, moral reflection, incentives, costs.

Figure 2. Dynamic Cyclical Model of Team Moral Behavior Patterns

Team moral standards, behavioral intentions, moral behavior, and moral-behavior evaluation constitute the four key links in the TMBP dynamic cycle, and are embedded respectively in the mechanisms of moral forethought, moral regulation, and moral self-reflection (Bandura, 2001). Among them, team moral standards are the values, beliefs, and judgment criteria jointly recognized by members, used to demarcate “right” from “wrong”; team behavioral intention is the collective tendency toward action formed by members through discussion, consultation, information sharing, and emotional resonance; team moral behavior refers to the concrete ethical actions that the team implements or follows in accordance with shared standards and intentions; and team moral-behavior evaluation is reflection on behavioral outcomes and their normative meaning, in order to judge whether they conform to established standards and to decide whether correction is needed. These four links correspond in sequence to norm formation, action preparation, behavioral implementation, and feedback correction, together forming a complete closed loop in the dynamic evolution of TMBP (Marks et al., 2001). The four include not only the positive effect running from standards to behavior, but also the feedback mechanism by which behavior and its evaluation outcomes reversely adjust moral standards. Therefore, in practice, teams continuously revise their moral standards and modes of action, causing TMBP to present a dynamic evolutionary process of cyclical recurrence.

To clarify the starting point of this cycle, this paper introduces moral events—discrete events within a team or organization that have ethical significance and can trigger members’ moral cognition, emotions, and behavioral responses (Liu et al., 2023). Moral events mainly play three roles: first, as triggering factors, they activate the team’s response to moral standards and action approaches through novelty, criticality, or disruptiveness.

attention to the case; second, continuously influencing the entire evolutionary process through member interaction, feedback, and adjustment; and third, breaking the original behavioral patterns and prompting the team to readjust its moral standards, behavioral intentions, and moral practices (Morgeson et al., 2015). In this process, team moral behavior may evolve in different directions,

such as improvement, maintenance, or deterioration.

Proposition 1: Moral events are the key triggering factors that initiate the evolution of TMBP.

According to social cognitive theory, teams, as collective behavioral agents, possess the functions of forethought, self-regulation, and self-reflection. These functions link moral events, moral standards, behavioral intentions, moral behavior, and behavioral evaluation into an evolutionary pathway of TMBP (Bandura, 2001). Specifically: (1) Moral forethought is the process by which a team, when facing moral decisions, predicts future behaviors and their consequences and, on this basis, forms moral orientations and action plans. External moral events mainly originate from the industry environment, organizational systems, regulatory requirements, competitors, public opinion, and ethical crises, and they directly or indirectly affect the team's moral standards, behavioral intentions, and decision-making models. (2) Moral self-regulation refers to the team's monitoring and adjustment of its own behavior so that actual actions conform to moral standards, or to the reduction of psychological conflict caused by unethical behavior through rationalization and other means. Internal moral events are usually triggered by members or leaders, including divergence in values, responsibility conflicts, disputes over resource allocation, ethical decision-making, and leadership behavior; these events directly trigger the team's moral judgment and behavioral adjustment. (3) Moral self-reflection refers to the team's review, evaluation, and revision of existing moral standards, decision-making processes, and behavioral outcomes after an event has occurred (Morgeson et al., 2015). Through reflection, teams may absorb experience and optimize moral practice; they may also rationalize unethical behavior by distorting facts, weakening standards, or shifting responsibility. Therefore, moral self-reflection has a dual effect: it may promote the improvement of team morality, but it may also lead to the continuation or reinforcement of unethical behavior.

Proposition 2: The team's functions of moral forethought, moral self-regulation, and moral self-reflection are key mechanisms for interpreting the dynamic cycle of TMBP.

In the dynamic process of TMBP, team and organizational factors influence the identification of moral events, adherence to moral standards, the transformation of behavioral intentions into actual actions, and whether behavioral evaluation can promote subsequent correction. Based on the three criteria of mechanism fit, hierarchical fit, and process influence, this paper divides moderating factors into identifiable conditions that affect moral forethought, constraining conditions that affect moral regulation, and reflective conditions that affect moral self-reflection. Among them, team factors are proximal boundary conditions that directly influence members' shared interpretation of moral events, behavioral regulation, and reflection on outcomes; organizational factors are distal boundary conditions that mainly influence the motivation, pressure, and opportunities for teams to make moral judgments and revise behavior through systems, culture, incentives, and situational cues (Treviño et al., 2014). Based

on the above three-stage mechanism, this paper classifies moderating factors into three categories.

First, moderating factors that affect moral forethought. The key to moral forethought lies in whether the team can identify the moral meaning of an event and anticipate its ethical consequences (Reynolds & Miller, 2015). Moral awareness at the team level enables the team to recognize the moral implications of decisions and foresee possible ethical consequences, thereby making it more likely to engage in behavior that conforms to moral standards. Moral intensity at the organizational level, by strengthening the importance and salience of the issue, increases the team's attention to moral events. Therefore, team moral awareness and organizational moral intensity mainly moderate the influence of moral events on team moral standards and behavioral intentions.

Second, moderating factors that affect moral regulation. The key to moral regulation lies in whether the team can transform existing moral standards and behavioral intentions into actual actions. Team self-control reflects the team's ability to resist short-term temptations, competitive pressures, and immediate gratification. Teams with high self-control are better able to inhibit opportunistic behavior and promote the transformation of moral behavioral intentions into actual actions.

(Duckworth & Steinberg, 2015). Organizational incentives and costs affect teams' behavioral choices when moral standards conflict with practical interests by rewarding moral behavior, increasing the cost of unethical behavior, and strengthening accountability mechanisms (Locke & Latham, 2019). Therefore, team self-control and organizational incentives and costs mainly regulate the relationship between team behavioral intentions and team moral behavior.

Third, regulatory factors that influence moral self-reflection. Moral self-reflection requires teams to reflect truthfully after behavior occurs and to revise standards based on evaluation results. Team moral responsibility and moral humility help teams face behavioral deviations squarely and reduce defensive attribution and rationalization (Hochwarter et al., 2007; Owens et al., 2019); organizational mechanisms for moral reflection can provide frameworks for review and learning, whereas moral ambiguity may weaken responsibility and standards. Therefore, these factors mainly regulate the effect of evaluations of team moral behavior on subsequent revisions of moral standards.

Proposition 3: In the dynamic cyclical process of TMBP, team moral awareness, self-control, moral responsibility, and moral humility, as well as organizational moral intensity, incentives and costs, organizational moral reflection, and moral ambiguity, function as boundary conditions that influence the operation of the mechanisms of moral foresight, moral regulation, and moral self-reflection.

3.2 Patterns, mechanisms, and dynamic evolution of team moral behavior

Based on the three-dimensional attribute model of teams, this paper classifies teams along three dimensions: skill differentiation, authority differentiation, and temporal stability. This model originates from Hollenbeck et al.'s (2012) summary of team division of labor, power allocation, and member stability. The three dimensions correspond respectively to teams' capability structure, power structure, and temporal structure, and can explain how team members divide labor and collaborate, allocate decision-making authority, and form sustained interactive relationships. On this basis, this paper analyzes the TMBP patterns corresponding to different team types and their formation and evolutionary laws. Specifically, skill-oriented teams form a "clustered" TMBP, in which moral behavior is locally clustered around subgroups, manifested as convergence within groups and differentiation between groups; authority-oriented teams form a "hierarchical" TMBP, in which moral behavior is vertically distributed along levels of authority, with convergence within the same level and differentiation between different levels; time-oriented teams form an "egalitarian" TMBP, in which differences in moral behavior among members are relatively small, and the whole exhibits balance and low dispersion.

The theoretical explanations for the formation mechanisms of the three types of TMBP follow the principle of matching "team-dominant attribute–formation mechanism–theoretical perspective." Clustered TMBP mainly involves the process by which members form subgroups based on skills, needs, and relationships, and can be explained by self-determination theory and social network theory; hierarchical TMBP focuses on the process by which moral events diffuse along power hierarchies and form hierarchical norms, and can be explained with the help of event system theory and social hierarchy theory; egalitarian TMBP emphasizes the process by which moral information spreads within a limited period and forms shared norms, and can be explained from theories such as moral voice, emotional contagion, and social identity. To compare different team attributes and the formation and effect mechanisms of their TMBP, this paper summarizes the three types of teams and their TMBP patterns, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3 Classification and comparison of different types of teams and their TMBP

	Skill-oriented teams	Authority-oriented teams	Time-oriented teams
Three-dimensional attribute characteristics	Low authority differentiation, high temporal stability, and high skill differentiation	Low skill differentiation, high temporal stability, and high authority differentiation	Low skill differentiation, low authority differentiation, and low temporal stability

	Skill-oriented teams	Authority-oriented teams	Time-oriented teams
Typical real-world contexts	Cross-functional teams, R&D teams, multidisciplinary collaborative teams	Pyramid-shaped teams, hourglass-shaped teams, rectangular teams, self-managing teams	Temporary task teams, emergency response teams, short-cycle project teams
	Skill-oriented team	Authority-oriented team	Time-oriented team
TMBP type	Clustered TMBP	Hierarchical TMBP	Egalitarian TMBP
TMBP characteristics	Convergence within subgroups and differentiation between subgroups; overall, a pattern of multicenter and clustered distribution	Convergence within the same authority level and differentiation between different authority levels; overall, a pattern of hierarchical and gradient distribution	Small differences among members and a relatively low degree of dispersion; overall, a balanced and low-dispersion distribution pattern
Drivers of TMBP formation	Individual members' needs—autonomy needs, competence needs, and relatedness needs	Moral events triggered by members or leaders	Moral voice
Logic of TMBP formation	Instrumental clustering networks and affective clustering networks	Power structure, hierarchical role expectations, and moral hierarchy norms	Moral evaluation, moral emotions, emotional contagion, and team emotional resonance
Theoretical perspective on TMBP effects	Social network theory	Social hierarchy theory	Social identity theory

	Skill-oriented team	Authority-oriented team	Time-oriented team
Multilevel mediators of TMBP effects	Group embeddedness, team relationship conflict, and organizational learning	Psychological safety, hierarchical mobility, and organizational change	Diffusion of responsibility, team cohesion, and corporate social responsibility

3.2.1 In “skill-oriented” teams, the patterns, formation processes, and dynamic evolution of team moral behavior

A “skill-oriented” team is a team with relatively low authority differentiation, relatively high temporal stability, and dominance by skill attributes. Its members possess diverse professional knowledge and skills, solve complex problems through the integration of multiple skills, and team collaboration depends heavily on members’ professional capabilities (Hall et al., 2018). In this type of team, individual needs such as skill improvement drive member interaction and the formation of TMBP. According to self-determination theory, members’ needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness jointly shape the network structure within the team.

(1) Clustered relational networks in “skill-oriented” teams

Autonomy needs drive instrumental clustering networks. In skill-oriented teams, members have relatively high autonomy and can choose collaborators according to tasks and skill goals. On the one hand, members seek out those with complementary skills in order to complete complex tasks; on the other hand, those with similar skills and backgrounds also draw closer to one another because of knowledge sharing and professional identification, thereby forming several instrumental subgroups. Competence needs further strengthen instrumental clustering networks. Complex tasks and challenging goals prompt members to improve their skills, expand their knowledge, and proactively cooperate with members who possess relevant expertise. Members with similar competence needs, cooperation goals, and problem-solving approaches are more likely to establish stable ties, thereby strengthening the instrumental clustering structure within the team (Ni Xudong et al., 2015). Relatedness needs drive affective clustering networks. Shared values can enhance trust, identification, and a sense of belonging among members, promoting stable affective ties; differences in values, by contrast, may weaken willingness to cooperate and cause relational differentiation. Therefore, members form affective subgroups around similar values. Overall, skill-oriented teams form instrumental clustering networks driven by autonomy and competence needs, and affective clustering networks driven by relatedness needs.

(2) Clustered TMBP characterized by convergence within subgroups and dif-

ferentiation between subgroups

In clustered relational networks, the moral behavior of members within a subgroup is often highly convergent. Social network theory holds that members occupying similar network positions and social roles form similar senses of moral obligation, and come to understand one another's ethical attitudes and behaviors through stable information channels, thereby promoting consistency in moral performance (Erickson, 1988). Clique theory further points out that the more frequently and closely members interact with one another, the more easily a subgroup forms stronger cohesion and shared ethical norms,

enable members to perceive and comply with the group's expectations regarding moral behavior. Social identity theory holds that members categorize themselves into particular subgroups on the basis of shared values and social characteristics, and tend to remain consistent in attitudes and behaviors with others who have similar identities (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Hogg & Terry, 2000). Self-categorization theory further suggests that members adjust their group affiliation according to the situation and modify their own behavior under the influence of group norms. The stronger the group identification, the more significant its influence on members' moral judgments and behaviors (Ellemers et al., 2002). Therefore, in clustered networks, interactive ties, shared norms, and group identification jointly promote convergence in moral behavior within subgroups.

Proposition 4: In the clustered relational network formed by a “skill-oriented” team, moral behavior within subgroups exhibits a high degree of homogenization.

In clustered relational networks, the moral behavior of members in different subgroups often displays marked differences. Self-categorization theory holds that behavior converges within groups and differentiates between groups; when individuals activate self-categorization at the group level, they place greater emphasis on intergroup differences and strengthen ingroup identification and outgroup differentiation. The meta-contrast principle also indicates that members tend to magnify differences between groups and perceive outgroups through stereotypes (Hogg & Turner, 1987). However, excessive differentiation can also weaken members' sense of belonging and loyalty to the team as a whole (Kozlowski & Bell, 2003). At the same time, social network theory points out that when subgroups are situated in relatively loose networks, members are subject to weaker constraints from the whole and are more likely to form differentiated moral obligations and behavioral norms at the overall level on the basis of subgroup moral beliefs, thereby exhibiting diverse and dispersed moral behaviors (Jones, 1991).

Proposition 5: In the clustered relational network formed by a “skill-oriented” team, moral behavior between subgroups exhibits significant differentiation.

Proposition 6: In a “skill-oriented” team, moral behavior within subgroups will exhibit homogenized characteristics, whereas moral behavior between sub-

groups will exhibit heterogeneous characteristics. Accordingly, the team's overall moral behavior takes the form of a clustered distribution characterized by "convergence within subgroups and differentiation between subgroups," namely clustered TMBP.

(3) Dynamic attributes of clustered TMBP

Clustered TMBP is distinctly dynamic and adjusts with changes in time, tasks, and the environment. From the perspective of social networks, this dynamism is mainly manifested as follows: cooperative or competitive tasks change the network density within subgroups; cross-group tasks affect information sharing and resource integration between subgroups; the nature of tasks drives the transfer of central network roles among different members; and external challenges or internal competition prompt group boundaries to weaken or strengthen. These changes in network structure jointly drive the continuous evolution of team TMBP (Leenders et al., 2016). The moral behavior of subgroup members also adjusts with changes in social identity and self-categorization. Members usually have multiple identities; the dominant identity shifts with the task context and correspondingly affects moral behavior. During cross-subgroup cooperation, team-level identity is more readily activated, and moral differences between subgroups tend to weaken; during internal competition, subgroup identity becomes more salient, and moral differentiation may intensify (Turner et al., 1987). Therefore, the clustered TMBP of skill-oriented teams is not a static distribution, but a dynamic process that is continuously generated and adjusted amid changes in network structure and group identity.

3.2.2 In "authority-oriented" teams, the pattern, formation process, and dynamic evolution of team moral behavior

(1) The triggering role of moral events under power structures

An "authority-oriented" team refers to a team with low skill diversity and high temporal stability, dominated by the attribute of "authority." We

will explain the formation and dynamic evolution of this type of team TMBP from the perspective of social hierarchy. Social dominance theory holds that the basic features of society lie in hierarchical power structures and superordinate-subordinate relations, and that individuals at different levels display corresponding behaviors according to their hierarchical roles (Pratto et al., 1994; Sidanius et al., 1994). In team contexts, formal power is mainly reflected in legitimate power, distributive power, and reward-and-punishment power (French & Raven, 1959). Existing research on leadership, power status, and team processes also shows that the distribution of power within a team profoundly shapes members' cognition, attitudes, and behavior (Magee & Galinsky, 2008; Sauer, 2011; Tost et al., 2013). Therefore, in "authority-oriented" teams, team structure and operation are built upon clear hierarchical and power relations, and their moral behavior patterns have obvious exogenous characteristics: team moral behavior is often triggered by moral events at the individual level, and then expands

along the team' s power structure into a collective-level TMBP.

Event system theory points out that individual events can evolve from the bottom up into collective phenomena through member interaction (Morgeson et al., 2015). Members' moral violations or exemplars elicit the team' s affective, cognitive, and behavioral responses, and further influence moral standards, behavioral intentions, and collective behavior. Depending on the status of the event initiator, moral events can be divided into those initiated by low-authority individuals and those initiated by high-authority individuals: the former usually have limited influence, whereas the latter have broader influence because of their exemplary nature and power status. Thus, the TMBP of authority-oriented teams begins with individual moral events at different authority levels and gradually diffuses along the team' s power structure to moral standards, behavioral intentions, moral behavior, and behavioral evaluation.

- (2) A hierarchical TMBP jointly driven by individual motivation and collective norms

The motivation for individual moral behavior in "authority-oriented" teams is manifested in the fact that, after a moral event occurs, members respond on the basis of social hierarchy. Social hierarchy theory points out that asymmetries in power and status within organizations shape social interaction: high-power individuals tend to maintain their status, whereas low-power individuals are constrained by hierarchical norms and display obedience (Sidanius et al., 2003). The moral behavior of high-authority individuals is mainly driven by the motive to maintain authority. They use moral behavior to accumulate symbolic capital such as moral reputation and social respect, thereby enhancing the legitimacy of their own authority; they also adopt moral-salience strategies, shaping an image of trustworthiness by assuming responsibility, mediating conflicts, and participating in public-interest activities; and when they perceive their status to be threatened, they further strengthen their moral performance in order to consolidate leadership legitimacy (Keltner et al., 2003; Blader et al., 2016). Therefore, high-authority individuals tend to display a greater quantity or a higher level of moral behavior in order to maintain their hierarchical status. The moral behavior of low-authority individuals is shaped jointly by hierarchical norms and group pressure. On the one hand, they take high-authority individuals as moral referents, internalizing superiors' moral performance as their own behavioral threshold to ensure that their behavior conforms to leaders' expectations; on the other hand, they also take members at the same level as referents, aligning their own moral behavior with that of their peers through observation, imitation, and conformity, so as to avoid being isolated or excluded by the group (Fragale et al., 2011). Therefore, low-authority individuals are more inclined to be other-centered, adjusting their own behavior between obeying high-authority individuals and converging with members of the same stratum.

Proposition 7: In "authority-oriented" teams, high-authority individuals, driven by the motive to maintain power, exhibit a high level of moral behavior; low-authority individuals, constrained by group pressure—the demands and expecta-

tions of high-authority individuals—and by hierarchical norms—maintaining consistency with members at the same level—exhibit moral behavior that is lower than that of high-authority individuals and consistent with that of members at the same level.

In “authority-oriented” teams, high-authority individuals manifest and maintain authority through moral behavior, whereas low-authority individuals maintain hierarchical order by obeying superiors and converging with peers. As this interaction continues to accumulate, the team develops morally role-based expectations and behavioral standards with hierarchical characteristics; that is, members at different power levels “should” assume different degrees of moral responsibility: high-authority individuals

assume greater responsibility, while those with lower authority observe hierarchical boundaries and maintain consistency with peers at the same level, thereby forming hierarchical moral norms in which moral behavior is matched to authority rank (Rai & Fiske, 2011).

On this basis, authority-oriented teams develop a hierarchical TMBP, presenting an overall behavioral pattern of “higher at the top, lower at the bottom, and convergence among peers.” For example, in team donations, members with higher authority are usually expected to donate more, whereas those with lower authority are expected both to donate less than their superiors and to remain consistent with peers at the same level. A hierarchical TMBP may manifest as virtuous behavior, but it may also manifest as immoral behavior: when hierarchical norms are consistent with universal moral principles, high-authority members shape moral authority through supererogatory virtue, while low-authority members provide support and follow their lead; when the two conflict, high-authority members may reconstruct moral standards and rationalize improper behavior, while low-authority members become involved under the pressures of obedience and conformity, creating systematic ethical risks (Ashforth & Anand, 2003).

Proposition 8: In “authority-oriented” teams, status differences among members give rise to hierarchical moral norms within the team. These norms constrain team members to adjust their moral behavior in accordance with normative requirements, thereby producing a hierarchical TMBP at the collective level.

(3) The dynamic attributes of hierarchical TMBP Hierarchical TMBP is not static or unchanging; rather, it is a visible, open, and mutable framework of collective behavior. As members observe, participate in, experience, and evaluate this pattern, they reflect on its legitimacy and consequences and adjust their own behavior accordingly. This dynamic process can be explained by self-regulation theory and cognitive dissonance theory, and is manifested specifically in two mechanisms: moral resonance and moral dissonance. Moral dissonance refers to negative reactions such as guilt, disgust, and discomfort that arise

when members realize that the existing TMBP is inconsistent with their own moral standards (Barkan et al., 2015). Moral resonance, by contrast, refers to positive reactions such as satisfaction, pride, and hope that members experience when they feel that the pattern is fair, reasonable, and consistent with their own moral ideals (Andreoni, 1990).

Moral resonance strengthens members' recognition of the existing hierarchical moral norms and leads them to continue following the established pattern. High-authority members consolidate the current TMBP by continuously assuming moral responsibility and serving as role models, whereas low-authority members maintain the pattern by responding to leaders' calls, participating in moral activities, and preserving consistency with peers. Conversely, moral dissonance prompts members to adopt two types of strategies: improvement or compromise. Improvement refers to members' efforts to raise the team's moral standards through more proactive moral agency: high-authority members can optimize existing norms through fairer allocation, more transparent decision-making, and stronger moral exemplarity, while low-authority members can also promote upward adjustment of the team as a whole by providing feedback on problems, offering suggestions, and actively participating in public-interest activities. Compromise refers to members' reduction of their own moral standards to alleviate psychological conflict by ignoring, defending, or rationalizing existing practices—for example, excusing immoral behavior with statements such as “I was only following orders” or “everyone does it this way.” The former may promote the optimization and upgrading of the team's TMBP, whereas the latter may lead to a decline in the team's moral standards and even trigger more serious moral crises. In sum, hierarchical TMBP is not a static pattern of moral behavior; rather, through team members' participation, experience, and evaluation, it is continuously adjusted under the joint influence of moral resonance and moral dissonance, thereby displaying the characteristics of dynamic evolution.

3.2.3 The pattern and formation process of team moral behavior in “time-oriented” teams

(1) Team members' moral evaluation triggered by moral voice “Time-oriented” teams are teams in which both skill differentiation and authority differentiation are relatively low and in which temporal attributes are dominant. This article regards moral voice as the primary driver of TMBP formation in such teams. Moral voice is the autonomous behavior through which individuals or groups, on the basis of ethical principles, express approval, questioning, criticism, or suggestions regarding behaviors or decisions (Zhao et al., 2023). Its flows include those among members, mem-

toward leaders, from external members toward organizational leaders, and from members toward external stakeholders; among these, moral voice among team members is most closely related to TMBP. Time-oriented teams usually face situations characterized by urgent tasks and limited time. Because member relationships are short-term, goal orientation is salient, and interpersonal con-

cerns are relatively few, moral viewpoints are more readily expressed. At the same time, immediate reminders, feedback, and discussion can quickly enter team interactions and spread rapidly through open and efficient communication channels, thereby influencing the team's overall moral behavior within a short period. After receiving moral voice, members evaluate the relevant behaviors according to ethical norms, distinguish between "good things" and "bad things," and assign positive or negative moral attributes to the behaviors and their actors. Equity theory indicates that people tend to support moral behavior and oppose immoral behavior (Cropanzano et al., 2003). This evaluation is based on personal moral standards and is also influenced by colleagues, leaders, organizational culture, and social norms.

- (2) The generation of equalizing TMBP—from individual emotional responses to team emotional resonance

After completing the evaluation of "whether moral standards are met," members will generate corresponding moral emotional responses. Moral emotions are individuals' affective responses to interpersonal interactions involving the moral order (Haidt, 2003). When members perceive that moral voice reveals violations, harm, or injustice, they may experience inhibitory emotions such as disgust, contempt, guilt, shame, and embarrassment; when they perceive that moral voice reflects good deeds, responsibility, or noble qualities, they may experience promotive emotions such as compassion, pity, pride, and gratitude. These emotions will further influence members' subsequent moral judgments and behavioral tendencies.

Proposition 9: Members' moral evaluation of moral voice will evoke individual moral emotional responses that are inhibitory (such as fear and shame) or promotive (such as pity, compassion, and pride).

In the above process, attribution plays a key moderating role. Individuals interpret the causes of behavior, attributing them to internal factors (such as personality, motives, or malice) or external factors (such as pressure, systems, or situations) (Mikula, 2003). If immoral behavior is attributed to stable traits of the actor, members are more likely to experience strong condemnatory emotions such as anger and disgust; if it is attributed to external circumstances, they are more likely to experience milder emotions such as understanding and sympathy. Conversely, if moral behavior is attributed to noble character, it is more likely to elicit admiration and gratitude; if it is attributed to rewards or pressure, positive emotions may be weakened.

Proposition 10: Attribution plays an important moderating role in the influence of moral evaluation on moral emotions (affecting the type or intensity of emotions).

Individuals' moral emotions spread to the team level through emotional contagion and emotional synchrony, forming team emotional resonance (Barsade, 2002). Emotional contagion emphasizes that members unconsciously transmit and receive emotions during interactions, causing emotional states to gradually

converge; emotional synchrony emphasizes that the rhythms of members' emotional changes over time tend to become consistent. The two work together so that team members are not only similar in emotional content but also convergent in patterns of emotional fluctuation, ultimately forming emotional resonance at the collective level.

Proposition 11: Individual members' moral emotions will, through the mechanisms of emotional contagion and emotional synchrony, achieve emotional resonance at the team collective level (including emotional states and rhythms of change).

Team norms are established on the basis of shared principles and guide member behavior through reward and punishment mechanisms (Beller, 2008). We believe that team emotional resonance promotes the formation of two types of norms. The first is a norm of moral approval, meaning that the team gradually forms a consensus about which behaviors should be recognized and which should be rejected. Because a team does not reward or punish all behaviors with equal intensity, members, through continuous emotional feedback and mutual evaluation, gradually clarify which behaviors are objects of strong team support or condemnation, thereby forming stable standards of moral evaluation. The second is a norm of perspective taking, meaning that team members, in decision-making and

In their interactions, members become accustomed to taking others' perspectives and understanding how their own behavior affects others. Emotional resonance strengthens emotional bonds and mutual understanding among members, making it easier for them to engage in perspective taking; stronger perspective-taking norms, in turn, encourage members to attend to others' situations and reinforce emotional resonance and self-regulation. It is precisely through the interaction between moral approval norms and perspective-taking norms that "time-oriented" teams gradually develop an egalitarian TMBP characterized by relatively balanced moral expression and mutual constraint among members.

Proposition 12: Team emotional resonance promotes the formation of two types of team norms—moral approval norms and perspective-taking norms; these two types of team norms, in turn, promote a new round of emotional resonance among team members. Through their interwoven effects, "time-oriented" teams gradually form an egalitarian TMBP at the collective level.

3.3 A Study of the Differentiated Mechanisms Underlying the Effects of Team Moral Behavior Patterns

This section aims to use TMBP to establish a theoretical connection between team moral behavior patterns and multilevel efficiency outcomes, thereby addressing the relative separation between team morality and efficiency in existing research. As a research conception, this paper does not attempt to exhaust all outcome variables of TMBP; instead, it selects performance and innovation as representative efficiency indicators. Performance reflects the short-term ef-

efficiency with which individuals, teams, and organizations achieve established goals, whereas innovation reflects long-term efficiency in knowledge integration, problem solving, and sustainable development. These two variables are not only the most commonly used outcome variables in team research, but also help compare the differentiated mechanisms of the three types of TMBP within a unified framework. Therefore, this paper regards performance and innovation as shared distal outcome variables rather than direct outcome variables of TMBP.

Given that the three types of TMBP differ in structural characteristics and underlying logics, this paper adopts an analytical framework of “different TMBPs—different theoretical perspectives—different mediating mechanisms—the same efficiency outcomes.” Specifically, clustered TMBP has multicentric and clustered distribution characteristics and is mainly explained from the perspective of social networks; hierarchical TMBP exhibits vertical stratification and gradient distribution and is mainly explained from the perspective of social dominance; egalitarian TMBP has low dispersion and uniform distribution characteristics and is mainly explained from the perspective of social identity. On this basis, this paper selects corresponding mediating variables and analyzes the differentiated mechanisms through which the three types of TMBP affect performance and innovation. The conceptual model is shown in Figure 3.

- Organizational level
 - Organizational learning
 - Organizational change
 - Corporate social responsibility
 - Organizational performance
 - Organizational innovation
- Team level
 - Clustered TMBP
 - Hierarchical TMBP
 - Egalitarian TMBP
 - Team relationship conflict
 - Status mobility
 - Team cohesion
 - Team performance
 - Team innovation
- Individual level
 - Group embeddedness
 - Psychological safety
 - Diffusion of responsibility
 - Individual performance
 - Individual innovation
- Influence paths:
 - Influence path in clustered TMBP
 - Influence path in hierarchical TMBP
 - Influence path in egalitarian TMBP

Note: Dashed lines indicate that team-level variables may have cross-level effects on individual-level and organizational-level variables.

Figure 3. Conceptual model of the effects of the three types of TMBP on performance and innovation

3.3.1 Mechanisms Underlying the Effects of Clustered TMBP

Clustered TMBP enhances individuals' performance and innovation through the mechanism of group embeddedness. Group embeddedness refers to an individual's overall perception of the various attachment relationships with the group to which they belong in their current work, including three aspects: links, fit, and sacrifice. As noted above, under the constraints of team social-network relations, members form clustered TMBP at the team level. Further, the implicit information conveyed by this pattern is consistent with members' psychological expectations formed on the basis of network relationships, thereby maintaining the stability of network relationships and strengthening members' sense of connection with co-network members, sense of value fit, and willingness to stay (Chen Aobo et al., 2025). Higher group embeddedness, on the one hand, reinforces employees' identity as group members, prompting them to meet team and organizational expectations and improve performance; on the other hand, it also enables employees to possess more psychological and relational resources, thereby increasing their innovation input and the likelihood of innovation success.

Proposition 13: Group embeddedness mediates the influence of clustered TMBP on individual performance and innovation.

Clustered TMBP weakens team effectiveness outcomes, such as performance and innovation, through the mechanism of relationship conflict within the team. Team relationship conflict refers to disharmonious phenomena such as tension, hostility, and annoyance among members, which are often triggered by member heterogeneity (Friedman et al., 2000). This paper argues that, under clustered TMBP, team members' moral behaviors are concentrated in different subgroups and become differentiated; the resulting moral heterogeneity among subgroups will induce relationship conflict. On the one hand, differences in moral behavior among different subgroups will make intergroup self-image distance salient through social comparison; high-morality subgroups may threaten the self-esteem and self-evaluation of members of other subgroups, thereby triggering negative emotions and relational tension. On the other hand, differences in moral behavior may also change the distribution of influence and status across different subgroups, shifting moral influence toward the subgroup with higher moral behavior, thereby inducing interpersonal friction, power struggles, and relationship conflict within the team. Relationship conflict, in turn, undermines team functioning, resource allocation, and trust relationships, and is detrimental to team performance and innovation (Mohammed & Angell, 2004).

Proposition 14: Team relationship conflict mediates the influence of clustered

TMBP on team effectiveness outcomes, such as performance and innovation.

Clustered TMBP weakens organizational effectiveness outcomes, such as performance and innovation, through the mechanism of organizational learning. Organizational learning is the process by which an organization collects, absorbs, and integrates internal and external information, forms shared knowledge and organizational memory, and thereby responds to environmental changes and maintains competitive advantage (Chen Guoquan & Ma Meng, 2000). Clustered TMBP may intensify fragmentation, isolation, and even opposition within and between teams, hindering the flow of information, knowledge, skills, and experience through the organization's social network. At the same time, the clustering effect solidifies members' positions in the social network, limiting the scope of their collaboration to fixed subgroups and thereby restricting the dissemination of diverse knowledge and rich information across broader networks, ultimately harming organizational learning. Because organizational learning plays an important role in promoting organizational performance and organizational innovation, therefore:

Proposition 15: Organizational learning mediates the influence of clustered TMBP on organizational effectiveness outcomes, such as performance and innovation.

3.3.2 Mechanisms Underlying the Effects of Hierarchical TMBP

Hierarchical TMBP enhances individual effectiveness outcomes, such as performance and innovation, through the mechanism of psychological safety. Psychological safety refers to a positive psychological state in which individuals dare to display and express themselves in an organization without worrying about negative consequences (Edmondson & Lei, 2014). As noted above, in "authority-oriented" teams, members exhibit moral agency consistent with their own social rank: higher-ranking members exhibit more, lower-ranking members exhibit less, and members of the same rank tend to be consistent. This hierarchical TMBP strong

...standardized the team's hierarchical norms and clarified "what members should do" and "to what extent they should do it," thereby enabling members to gain a stronger sense of psychological safety within a stable hierarchical structure. Furthermore, psychological safety helps employees devote more energy to their work and improve performance; it can also reduce anxiety, unease, and concern about the consequences of failure in innovation, thereby promoting innovation.

Proposition 16: Psychological safety mediates the effect of hierarchical TMBP on individual efficiency outcomes (performance, innovation, etc.).

Hierarchical TMBP exerts a positive influence on team performance and a negative influence on team innovation by inhibiting hierarchical mobility. Positions within teams are not completely fixed; in addition to formal power, moral behavior is also an important pathway through which members obtain status (Bai

et al., 2020). Hierarchical TMBP means that high-status members display more moral behavior while low-status members display less moral behavior, thereby maintaining rather than challenging the existing hierarchical order. As a result, it becomes difficult for members to change their original status through a “moral halo,” and hierarchical mobility within the team declines. A stable hierarchical structure helps reduce costs such as relationship conflict and role ambiguity, allowing members to focus more on established tasks and thereby improving team performance. However, the solidification of hierarchy also lowers members’ expectations of obtaining benefits through innovation, reinforces a conservative atmosphere, and increases concerns about innovation failure, which is not conducive to team innovation.

Proposition 17: Hierarchical mobility mediates the effect of hierarchical TMBP on team efficiency outcomes (performance, innovation, etc.).

Hierarchical TMBP weakens organizational performance and organizational innovation by impeding organizational change. Organizational change is the process by which an organization adjusts, renews, and innovates its elements in order to adapt to changes in the internal and external environment (Barnett & Carroll, 1995). Hierarchical TMBP not only maintains the hierarchical order among members, but also reflects members’ conceptual pursuit of stability and aversion to change. Because collective moral behavior has relatively strong visibility and social praise, this behavioral cue of “hierarchical solidification” will spread over a wider range, weakening the atmosphere within the organization that supports change. Furthermore, organizational change helps organizations adapt to the environment, improve operational efficiency, and create an environment that encourages change and supports innovation. Therefore, hierarchical TMBP has an adverse effect on organizational performance and innovation by inhibiting organizational change.

Proposition 18: Organizational change mediates the effect of hierarchical TMBP on organizational efficiency outcomes (performance, innovation, etc.).

3.3.3 Mechanisms of the Effects of Egalitarian TMBP

Egalitarian TMBP has a negative effect on individual efficiency outcomes (such as performance and innovation) through responsibility diffusion. Responsibility diffusion means that an individual’s sense of responsibility within a group is weaker than that of an individual acting alone; consequently, the responsibility that should have been borne by oneself is more easily regarded as collective responsibility and shifted away (Bandura et al., 1996). This mechanism also applies to team members’ perceptions of responsibility toward the team (Mynatt & Sherman, 1975). “Time-oriented” teams are temporary and short-term in nature, and members’ relationships more readily exhibit homogenization and equalization. The social cues of “sameness” and “equality” conveyed by egalitarian TMBP strengthen members’ “free-rider” mentality, causing them to develop a sense of diffused responsibility for team operations and outcomes, which in turn

weakens their own sense of responsibility and reduces work input and challenging innovative behavior.

Proposition 19: Responsibility diffusion mediates the effect of egalitarian TMBP on individual efficiency outcomes (performance, innovation, etc.).

Egalitarian TMBP improves team efficiency outcomes (such as performance and innovation) through team cohesion. Team cohesion is the tendency of members to bind together in the pursuit of shared goals, reflecting the degree of close connection among members in completing team tasks (Mach et al., 2010). On the one hand, egalitarian TMBP conveys to members a signal of consistency in moral behavior, strengthening shared cognition among members; on the other hand, it also reduces the risks and differentiation caused by differentiated moral behavior, prompting members to maintain unity and cooperation. Furthermore, higher team cohesion helps strengthen team spirit and collaboration efficiency, thereby improving team performance;

At the same time, trust among members is also more conducive to knowledge sharing and resource integration, thereby promoting team innovation.

Proposition 20: Team cohesion mediates the effect of egalitarian TMBP on team efficiency outcomes (performance, innovation, etc.).

Egalitarian TMBP exerts a negative influence on organizational efficiency outcomes (such as performance and innovation) through corporate social responsibility. Corporate social responsibility emphasizes that, beyond pursuing economic interests and complying with the law, firms should also assume broader social responsibilities (McWilliams & Siegel, 2001). However, egalitarian TMBP may generate spillover effects at the organizational level, making it difficult for prominent moral stars or moral teams to emerge within the organization and weakening their role-modeling effect. In the long run, this “averaged” moral expression may lead the organization to form an atmosphere insufficiently sensitive to moral issues, which is unfavorable to public-interest participation and the fulfillment of corporate social responsibility. Given that corporate social responsibility has a significant promoting effect on organizational performance and innovation, egalitarian TMBP may thus have an indirect adverse effect on organizational efficiency.

Proposition 21: Corporate social responsibility mediates the effect of egalitarian TMBP on organizational efficiency outcomes (performance, innovation, etc.).

4 Theoretical Construction and Contributions

In response to the managerial reality in which emerging teams are rapidly proliferating and group moral effects are becoming increasingly salient, this paper creatively proposes TMBP as a core concept at the team level, and, on the basis of a three-dimensional team-attribute model, designs a scientific and practical team classification framework. With the help of this classification framework and the

concept of TMBP, this paper distinguishes three typical types of teams—skill-oriented, authority-oriented, and time-oriented—and further derives three types of TMBP: clustered, hierarchical, and egalitarian. It also systematically analyzes their formation mechanisms, dynamic evolution processes, and their effects and mechanisms of action at multiple levels of the individual/team/organization. Accordingly, this paper constructs an overall theoretical system of team (collective) morality composed of a team classification system, the core concept of TMBP, mechanisms of TMBP formation and evolution, and the multilevel effects and mechanisms of TMBP. In doing so, for different types of teams, it more accurately identifies, describes, and explains the combined characteristics and operating patterns of all members' collective moral behavior. This paper not only attempts to open up a new analytical perspective for team research centered on patterns of moral behavior, but also promotes the expansion of the main body of organizational morality research from the individual to the team level, thereby revealing and explaining more group moral phenomena that occur in team contexts. Specifically:

First, by constructing a systematic team classification system, this paper analyzes the characteristics, formation, evolution, and effects of different types of TMBP, breaking through the long-standing limitations of “de-typification” and “single discrete classification” in team morality research, and promoting the development of team morality theory in terms of both generality and specificity. Although existing studies have achieved fruitful results, because they neglect team types, the relevant theories are often overly broad and have difficulty responding in a timely manner to ethical phenomena in emerging teams. Even when teams are classified along a single dimension such as virtual/physical, temporary/long-term, such approaches can easily result in fragmented research questions, difficulty integrating conclusions, and an inability to accurately depict the multiple intersecting attributes of emerging teams. This paper can precisely solve the above problems.

On the one hand, this paper designs a unified team classification system to enhance the generality and applicability of team morality theory. Based on the three-dimensional team-attribute model of Hollenbeck et al. (2012), this study takes skill heterogeneity, authority heterogeneity, and temporal stability as the X, Y, and Z axes, respectively, constructs a three-dimensional spatial model, and determines the specific positions of different teams in that space through quantitative scoring. This system can incorporate emerging teams of different forms into a unified framework, making it easier for researchers to compare the common characteristics, research questions, and research findings of different teams, and promoting the systematic accumulation of relevant knowledge and theoretical integration.

On the other hand, this paper subdivides team types and places the formation, evolution, and effects of TMBP within specific team contexts.

within them, thereby enhancing the specificity and accuracy of team moral theory. By integrating team attributes, group-dynamics mechanisms, and moral

behavior, three types of collective moral behavior patterns are identified, and their mechanisms of action are analyzed from perspectives such as social networks, social dominance, and social identity. Specifically, skill-oriented teams are influenced by heterogeneity in professional skills, authority cores, and skill-network structures, and exhibit a “clustered” distribution; authority-oriented teams are influenced by centralized power structures, authority modeling, and moral compromise, and exhibit a “hierarchical” distribution; time-oriented teams are influenced by cooperation cycles, interaction frequency, and ethical consensus, and exhibit an “egalitarian” distribution. Thus, team moral theory can describe the moral characteristics of different teams more clearly, predict related moral phenomena more accurately, and reveal their underlying regularities more deeply.

Second, this study proposes TMBP as a wholly new concept, seeking to summarize and describe more directly and objectively the ways in which team collectives enact morality, thereby providing a new theoretical perspective for understanding group moral behavior. Although a small number of existing studies have also attempted to link team characteristics with moral issues—for example, examining the relationships between factors such as leadership, team climate, and human-resource management practices and team ethical outcomes—such studies, overall, still remain within the traditional paradigm of analyzing relationships among variables. Although existing research has touched upon the connection between teams and morality, it is still insufficient for forming a systematic and accurate depiction of the collective moral characteristics of teams.

By contrast, TMBP directly takes as its object of analysis the configuration of team members’ moral behaviors at the collective level, focusing on the overall patterns of their form, structure, interaction, and change. First, TMBP focuses on observable, manifest moral behaviors rather than members’ subjective perceptions of the moral environment; these behaviors are easier to observe, compare, and imitate, and they form normative constraints through interaction. Second, TMBP is not a simple summation of individual members’ morality; rather, it reveals the overall characteristics of the team through combinations of behaviors, which better accords with the nature of the team as a collective unit of action. Finally, TMBP incorporates the team’s internal social structure, relational networks, and interaction dynamics into the analysis, explaining the formation, maintenance, and evolution of team moral behavior from a dynamic perspective. Accordingly, TMBP advances the field in three respects: first, it breaks through the “additive thinking” that regards team morality as the sum or average of individual morality, establishing the central status of the team’s collective characteristics; second, it reduces reliance on members’ subjective reports and emphasizes identification of the team’s collective behavioral manifestations themselves; third, it overcomes the limitation of “viewing the collective from the individual,” more fully presenting the team’s internal social structure, interactive relationships, and dynamic evolution. Overall, TMBP aligns with the complexity, collectivity, and dynamism of teams, providing a new theoretical foundation for explaining the characteristics, formation, and evolution of

collective team morality.

Third, this paper proposes a series of propositions around the formation, evolution, and multilevel influence mechanisms of TMBP in multiple types of teams, constructing a theoretical framework that incorporates both horizontal classification and longitudinal process. Horizontally, it systematically distinguishes among different team types and their corresponding TMBP types, formation mechanisms, evolutionary paths, and effects; longitudinally, it breaks through the traditional static analysis of “time points” and shifts toward a “timeline” research perspective that covers the processes of formation, adjustment, stabilization, and transformation.

On the one hand, based on the three-dimensional attribute model of teams, this paper takes skill differentiation, authority differentiation, and temporal stability as the basic dimensions, classifies teams as skill-oriented, authority-oriented, and time-oriented, and correspondingly derives three types of TMBP: clustered, hierarchical, and egalitarian. This framework does not use a single template to explain all teams; rather, it emphasizes that different teams, because of differences in internal structure, interaction logic, and operating conditions, will form differentiated TMBPs. Thus, the research focus advances from “whether a team has a TMBP” to “what kind of team forms what kind of TMBP, why it forms, how it evolves, and what effects it produces,” making TMBP an important theoretical hub that connects team types, group-interaction processes, and multilevel outcomes. On the other hand,

In this respect, this paper regards teams as social systems characterized by interactivity, emergence, and group dynamics. Team moral behavior patterns are not fixed and unchanging; rather, they are continuously formed, maintained, and adjusted through the joint effects of member interactions, social networks, identity cognition, moral events, and contextual changes. Therefore, TMBP is both a description of a team’s moral pattern at a given point in time and a dynamic depiction of its stabilization, reinforcement, differentiation, or transformation over time. On this basis, focusing on the formation conditions, interaction mechanisms, evolutionary trajectories, and multilevel effects of TMBP, this paper proposes empirical propositions that are operable, comparable, traceable, and testable, and incorporates the temporal dimension into the research design. Through methods such as social network analysis, grounded theory research, longitudinal surveys, and simulation, it continuously examines the formation process, evolutionary pathways, and mechanisms of action of TMBP, thereby integrating the group-dynamic processes of team-member interaction and the temporal changes in the team’s overall moral pattern into a unified analytical framework.

In summary, this paper opens up a new paradigm for research on team morality: shifting from the traditional focus on “individual members’ perceptions of moral situations” to attention to “the combination of moral behaviors actually displayed by the team collective”; shifting from “cross-level isomorphic stitching of individual-level variables” to “the development of team-level proprietary

constructs” ; and shifting from “describing static phenomena at a single point in time” to “explaining dynamic generation and evolution across temporal processes.” This paradigm shift not only enhances the theoretical explanatory power of team morality research, but also provides an empirical research framework for the formation, evolution, and mechanisms of action of TMBP that is operable, traceable, comparable, and testable.

References

- Chen Aobo, Yang Chunjiang, & Chen Yashuo. (2025). A study on the influence of multi-domain embeddedness and consistency on employee performance. *Chinese Journal of Management*, 22(4), 669-680.
- Chen Guoquan, & Ma Meng. (2000). Organizational learning: Current status and prospects. *Chinese Journal of Management Science*, 8(1), 66-74.
- Hu Hua, Zhu Zheng, Yang Mengxi, & Li Yan. (2021). Between gains and losses: A study of the impact of leaders' bottom-line mentality on employees' pro-team unethical behavior. *Foreign Economics & Management*, 43(10), 120-134.
- Liu Bing, Yuan Yuqing, & Zhang Xiaotian. (2015). A study of types of team ethical climate in Chinese enterprises. *Journal of Shandong University (Philosophy and Social Sciences)*, 1, 91-100.
- Ni Xudong, Dai Yanjun, Yao Chunxu, & Zhang Hong. (2015). Subteams: Formation, types, intervening processes, and effects. *Advances in Psychological Science*, 23(3), 496-509.
- Peng Zhenglong, Chen Xiugui, & Zhao Hongdan. (2015). The influence of ethical leadership in R&D teams on team creativity. *Science & Technology Progress and Policy*, 32(7), 140-144.
- Wang Xiaochen, Gao Xinjie, & Guo Panbo. (2018). A multilevel model of pro-organizational unethical behavior. *Advances in Psychological Science*, 26(6), 1111-1120.
- Zhang Fawang, & Liao Jianqiao. (2017). Ethical leadership and reporting ethical issues: The roles of moral efficacy and moral identity. *Management Review*, 29(12), 94-105.
- Andreoni, J. (1990). Impure altruism and donations to public goods: A theory of warm-glow giving. *The Economic Journal*, 100(401), 464-477.
- Aquino, K., & Reed, A. II. (2002). The self-importance of moral identity. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 83(6), 1423-1440.
- Ashforth, B. E., & Anand, V. (2003). The normalization of corruption in organizations. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, 25, 1-52.
- Atari, M., Haidt, J., Graham, J., Koleva, S., Stevens, S. T., & Dehghani, M. (2023). Morality beyond the WEIRD: How the nomological network of morality

varies across cultures. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 125(5), 1157-1188.

Bai, F., Ho, G. C. C., & Yan, J. (2020). Does virtue lead to status? Testing the moral virtue theory of status attainment. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 118(3), 501-531.

Bandura, A. (1977). *Social learning theory*. Prentice-Hall.

Bandura, A. (1999). Moral disengagement in the perpetration of inhumanities. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 3, 193-209.

Bandura, A. (2001). Social cognitive theory: An agentic perspective. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 52(1), 1-26.

Bandura, A., Barbaranelli, C., Caprara, G. V., & Pastorelli, C. (1996). Mechanisms of moral disengagement in the exercise of moral agency. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 71(2), 364-374.

Barkan, R., Ayal, S., & Ariely, D. (2015). Ethical dissonance, justifications, and moral behavior. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 6(12), 157-161.

Barnett, W. P., & Carroll, G. R. (1995). Modeling internal organizational change. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 21(1), 217-236.

Barsade, S. G. (2002). The ripple effect: Emotional contagion and its influence on group behavior. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 47(4), 644-675.

Beller, S. (2008). Deontic norms, deontic reasoning, and deontic conditionals. *Thinking & Reasoning*, 14(4), 305-341.

Blader, S. L., Shirako, A., & Chen, Y. R. (2016). Looking out from the top: Differential effects of status and power on perspective taking. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 42(6), 723-737.

Blanken, I., Van De Ven, N., & Zeelenberg, M. (2015). A meta-analytic review of moral licensing. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 41(4), 540-558.

Blau, P. M. (1964). Justice in social exchange. *Sociological Inquiry*, 34(2), 193-206.

Brown, M. E., Treviño, L. K., & Harrison, D. A. (2005). Ethical leadership: A social learning perspective for construct development and testing. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 97(2), 117-134.

Cabana, G. C., & Kaptein, M. (2021). Team ethical cultures within an organization: A differentiation perspective on their existence and relevance. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 170(4), 761-780.

Capraro, V., Jagfeld, G., Klein, R., Mul, M., & de Pol, I. V. (2019). Increasing altruistic and cooperative behaviour with simple moral nudges. *Scientific Reports*, 9(1), 11880.

- Chan, D. (2019). Team-level constructs. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 6(1), 325–348.
- Chen, A., Treviño, L. K., & Humphrey, S. E. (2020). Ethical champions, emotions, framing, and team ethical decision making. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 105(3), 245–273.
- Cheng, M. Y., & Wang, L. (2015). The mediating effect of ethical climate on the relationship between paternalistic leadership and team identification: A team-level analysis in the Chinese context. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 129(3), 639–654.
- Craft, J. L. (2013). A review of the empirical ethical decision-making literature: 2004–2011. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 117(2), 221–259.
- Cropanzano, R., Goldman, B., & Folger, R. (2003). Deontic justice: The role of moral principles in workplace fairness. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 24(8), 1019–1024.
- Duckworth, A. L., & Steinberg, L. (2015). Unpacking self-control. *Child Development Perspectives*, 9(1), 32–37.
- Ebrahimi, M., Kouchaki, M., & Patrick, V. M. (2020). Juggling work and home selves: Low identity integration feels less authentic and increases unethicity. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 158, 101–111.
- Edmondson, A. C., & Lei, Z. (2014). Psychological safety: The history, renaissance, and future of an interpersonal construct. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 1(1), 23–43.
- Ellemers, N., Spears, R., & Doosje, B. (2002). Self and social identity. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 53(1), 161–186.
- Erickson, B. H. (1988). The relational basis of attitudes. *Social Structures: A Network Approach*, 99(121), 443–475.
- Faraj, S., Pachidi, S., & Sayegh, K. (2018). Working and organizing in the age of the learning algorithm. *Information and Organization*, 28(1), 62–70.
- Fragale, A. R., Overbeck, J. R., & Neale, M. A. (2011). Resources versus respect: Social judgments based on targets' power and status positions. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 47(4), 767–775.
- French, J. R. P., Jr., & Raven, B. (1959). The bases of social power. In D. Cartwright (Ed.), *Studies in social power* (pp. 150–167), Institute for Social Research.
- Friedman, R. A., Tidd, S. T., Currall, S. C., & Tsai, J. C. (2000). What goes around comes around: The impact of personal conflict style on work conflict and stress. *International Journal of Conflict Management*, 11(1), 32–55.

- Grant, A. M. (2013). Givers take all: The hidden dimension of corporate culture. *McKinsey Quarterly*, 2, 52-65.
- Haidt, J. (2003). The moral emotions. In K. R. Scherer, H. H. Goldsmith, & R. J. Davidson (Eds.), *Handbook of affective sciences* (pp. 852-870). Oxford University Press.
- Hall, K. L., Vogel, A. L., Huang, G. C., Serrano, K. J., Rice, E. L., Tsakraklides, S. P., & Fiore, S. M. (2018). The science of team science: A review of the empirical evidence and research gaps on collaboration in science. *American Psychologist*, 73(4), 532-548.
- Hegarty, W. H., & Sims, H. P. (1979). Organizational philosophy, policies, and objectives related to unethical decision behavior: A laboratory experiment. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 64(3), 331-338.
- Hochwarter, W. A., Ferris, G. R., Gavin, M. B., Perrewé, P. L., Hall, A. T., & Frink, D. D. (2007). Political skill as neutralizer of felt accountability—job tension effects on job performance ratings: A longitudinal investigation. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 102(2), 226-239.
- Hogg, M. A., & Terry, D. I. (2000). Social identity and self-categorization processes in organizational contexts. *Academy of Management Review*, 25(1), 121-140.
- Hogg, M. A., & Turner, J. C. (1987). Intergroup behaviour, self - stereotyping and the salience of social categories. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 26(4), 325-340.
- Hollenbeck, J. R., Beersma, B., & Schouten, M. E. (2012). Beyond team types and taxonomies: A dimensional scaling conceptualization for team description. *Academy of Management Review*, 37(1), 82-106.
- Jones, T. M. (1991). Ethical decision making by individuals in organizations: An issue-contingent model. *Academy of Management Review*, 16(2), 366-395.
- Judge, T. A., Scott, B. A., & Ilies, R. (2006). Hostility, job attitudes, and workplace deviance: Test of a multilevel model. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 91(1), 126-138.
- Keltner, D., Gruenfeld, D. H., & Anderson, C. (2003). Power, approach, and inhibition. *Psychological Review*, 110(2), 265-284.
- Kim, D., & Vandenberghe, C. (2020). Ethical leadership and team ethical voice and citizenship behavior in the military: The roles of team moral efficacy and ethical climate. *Group & Organization Management*, 45(4), 514-555.
- Kish-Gephart, J. J., Harrison, D. A., & Treviño, L. K. (2010). Bad apples, bad cases, and bad barrels: Meta-analytic evidence about sources of unethical decisions at work. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 95(1), 1-31.

- Klotz, A. C., & Bolino, M. C. (2013). Citizenship and counterproductive work behavior: A moral licensing view. *Academy of Management Review*, 38(2), 292–306.
- Kouchaki, M., & Smith, I. H. (2025). Moral decision-making in organizations. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 12, 45–72.
- Kouchaki, M., Gino, F., & Feldman, Y. (2019). The ethical perils of personal, communal relations: A language perspective. *Psychological Science*, 30(12), 1745–1766.
- Kozlowski, S. W. J., & Bell, B. S. (2003). Work groups and teams in organizations. In W. C. Borman, D. R. Ilgen, & R. J. Klimoski (Eds.), *Handbook of psychology: Industrial and organizational psychology* (pp. 333–375). Wiley.
- Lammers, J., Galinsky, A. D., Dubois, D., & Rucker, D. D. (2015). Power and morality. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 6, 15–19.
- Lane, J. N., Leonardi, P. M., Contractor, N. S., & DeChurch, L. A. (2023). Teams in the digital workplace: Technology's role for communication, collaboration, and performance. *Small Group Research*, 54(6), 745–787.
- Leenders, R. T. A. J., Contractor, N. S., & DeChurch, L. A. (2016). Once upon a time: Understanding team processes as relational event networks. *Organizational Psychology Review*, 6(1), 92–115.
- Liao, Z., Yam, K. C., Johnson, R. E., Liu, W., & Song, Z. (2018). Cleansing my abuse: A reparative response model of perpetrating abusive supervisor behavior. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 103(9), 1039–1056.
- Liu, D., Morgeson, F. P., Zhu, J., & Fan, X. (2023). Event-oriented organizational behavior research: A multilevel review and agenda for future research. *Journal of Management*, 49(6), 2148–2186.
- Locke, E. A., & Latham, G. P. (2019). The development of goal setting theory: A half century retrospective. *Motivation Science*, 5(2), 93–105.
- Mach, M., Dolan, S., & Tzafrir, S. (2010). The differential effect of team members' trust on team performance: The mediation role of team cohesion. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 83(3), 771–794.
- Magee, J. C., & Galinsky, A. D. (2008). 8 social hierarchy: The self-reinforcing nature of power and status. *Academy of Management Annals*, 2(1), 351–398.
- Marks, M. A., Mathieu, J. E., & Zaccaro, S. J. (2001). A temporally based framework and taxonomy of team processes. *Academy of Management Review*, 26(3), 356–376.
- Mazar, N., & Zhong, C. B. (2010). Do green products make us better people?. *Psychological Science*, 21(4), 494–498.

- McClean, S. T., Courtright, S. H., Yim, J., & Smith, T. A. (2021). Making nice or faking nice? Exploring supervisors' two-faced response to their past abusive behavior. *Personnel Psychology*, 74(4), 693-719.
- McWilliams, A., & Siegel, D. (2001). Corporate social responsibility: A theory of the firm perspective. *Academy of Management Review*, 26(1), 117-127.
- Mikula, G. (2003). Testing an attribution-of-blame model of judgments of injustice. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 33(6), 793-811.
- Miller, D. T., & Effron, D. A. (2010). Psychological license: When it is needed and how it functions. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 43, 115-155.
- Mitchell, M. S., Baer, M. D., Ambrose, M. L., Folger, R., & Palmer, N. F. (2018). Cheating under pressure: A self-protection model of workplace cheating behavior. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 103(1), 54-73.
- Mohammed, S., & Angell, L. C. (2004). Surface- and deep-level diversity in workgroups: Examining the moderating effects of team orientation and team process on relationship conflict. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 25(8), 1015-1039.
- Moore, C., & Tenbrunsel, A. E. (2014). "Just think about it" ? Cognitive complexity and moral choice. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 123(2), 138-149.
- Morgeson, F. P., Mitchell, T. R., & Liu, D. (2015). Event system theory: An event-oriented approach to the organizational sciences. *Academy of Management Review*, 40(4), 515-537.
- Mulder, L. B., & Aquino, K. (2013). The role of moral identity in the aftermath of dishonesty. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 121(2), 219-230.
- Mullen, E., & Monin, B. (2016). Consistency versus licensing effects of past moral behavior. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 67(1), 363-385.
- Mynatt, C., & Sherman, S. J. (1975). Responsibility attribution in groups and individuals: A direct test of the diffusion of responsibility hypothesis. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 32(6), 1111-1118.
- Owens, B. P., Yam, K. C., Bednar, J. S., Mao, J., & Hart, D. W. (2019). The impact of leader moral humility on follower moral self-efficacy and behavior. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 104(1), 146-163.
- Perkins, B. G., Podsakoff, N. P., & Welsh, D. T. (2024). Variance in virtue: An integrative review of intraindividual (un) ethical behavior research. *Academy of Management Annals*, 18(1), 210-250.
- Pratto, F., Sidanius, J., Stallworth, L. M., & Malle, B. F. (1994). Social dominance orientation: A personality variable predicting social and political attitudes. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 67(4), 741-763.

- Rai, T. S., & Fiske, A. P. (2011). Moral psychology is relationship regulation: Moral motives for unity, hierarchy, equality, and proportionality. *Psychological Review*, 118(1), 57-75.
- Reynolds, S. J. (2006). Moral awareness and ethical predispositions: Investigating the role of individual differences in the recognition of moral issues. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 91(1), 233-243.
- Reynolds, S. J., & Miller, J. A. (2015). The recognition of moral issues: Moral awareness, moral sensitivity and moral attentiveness. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 6, 114-117.
- Sauer, S. J. (2011). Taking the reins: The effects of new leader status and leadership style on team performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 96(3), 574-587.
- Shariff, A. F. (2015). Does religion increase moral behavior?. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 6, 108-113.
- Sidanius, J., Pratto, F., & Bobo, L. (1994). Social dominance orientation and the political psychology of gender: A case of invariance? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 67(6), 998-1011.
- Sidanius, J., Van Laar, C., Levin, S., & Sinclair, S. (2003). Social hierarchy maintenance and assortment into social roles: A social dominance perspective. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, 6(4), 333-352.
- Sonenshein, S. (2007). The role of construction, intuition, and justification in responding to ethical issues at work: The sensemaking-intuition model. *Academy of Management Review*, 32(4), 1022-1040.
- Soutter, A. R. B., Bates, T. C., & Möttus, R. (2020). Big Five and HEXACO personality traits, proenvironmental attitudes, and behaviors: A meta-analysis. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 15(4), 913-941.
- Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1986). The social identity theory of intergroup behaviour. *Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, 2, 7-24.
- Tenbrunsel, A. E., & Smith - Crowe, K. (2008). 13 ethical decision making: Where we' ve been and where we' re going. *Academy of Management Annals*, 2(1), 545-607.
- Thiel, C. E., Bonner, J., Bush, J. T., Welsh, D. T., & Garud, N. (2023). Stripped of agency: The paradoxical effect of employee monitoring on deviance. *Journal of Management*, 49(2), 709-740.
- Tost, L. P., Gino, F., & Larrick, R. P. (2013). When power makes others speechless: The negative impact of leader power on team performance. *Academy of Management Journal*, 56(5), 1465-1486.
- Treviño, L. K., & Youngblood, S. A. (1990). Bad apples in bad barrels: A causal analysis of ethical decision-making behavior. *Journal of Applied Psychology*,

75(4), 378-385.

Treviño, L. K., den Nieuwenboer, N. A., & Kish-Gephart, J. J. (2014). (Un)ethical behavior in organizations. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 65, 635-660.

Turner, J. C., Hogg, M. A., Oakes, P. J., Reicher, S. D., & Wetherell, M. S. (1987). *Rediscovering the social group: A self-categorization theory*. Basil Blackwell.

Wang, L., Law, K. S., Zhang, M. J., Li, Y. N., & Liang, Y. (2019). It' s mine! Psychological ownership of one' s job explains positive and negative workplace outcomes of job engagement. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 104(2), 229-246.

West, C., & Zhong, C. B. (2015). Moral cleansing. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 6, 221-225.

Zhao, H., Chen, Y., & Liu, W. (2023). Socially responsible human resource management and employee moral voice: Based on the self-determination theory. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 183(3), 929-946.

Zhong, C. B., Liljenquist, K., & Cain, D. M. (2009). Moral self-regulation: Licensing and compensation. In D. De Cremer (Ed.), *Psychological perspectives on ethical behavior and decision making* (pp. 75-89). Information Age Publishing.

Team moral behavior patterns (TMBP): Conceptualization, formation, and multi-level influencing mechanisms

YANG Chunjiang¹, CHEN Aobo², YANG Xiao¹

(¹ School of Economics & Management, Northwest University, Xi' an 710127, China)

(² School of E-commerce, Tangshan University, Tangshan 063000, China)

Abstract: With the rapid proliferation and increasing diversity of teams, team-level moral behavior has extended beyond individual moral conduct and emerged as a frontier issue in organizational ethics research. Existing studies have predominantly adopted an individual-centered perspective and overlooked important group-level attributes, thereby limiting our understanding of the underlying dynamics of collective moral actions. To address this limitation, this study focuses on the configuration and collective expression of moral behaviors among team members, introducing the novel concept of team moral behavior pattern (TMBP). Specifically, this study: (1) adopts a dynamic perspective to longitudinally examine the formation and evolution of collective moral behavior within teams; (2) draws on the three-dimensional attributes of teams to identify three typical team types—skill-oriented, authority-oriented, and time-oriented teams—and develops the formation mechanisms and evolutionary trajectories of their

corresponding clustered, hierarchical, and egalitarian TMBPs; and (3) through theoretical analysis and logical deduction, systematically investigates the effects and underlying mechanisms of the three types of TMBPs on multilevel outcomes at the individual, team, and organizational levels. This research aims to provide a more direct explanation of team moral phenomena, address the longstanding neglect of ethical issues in team research, overcome the limitations of individual-centered approaches to morality, establish a new avenue for research on team morality, and offer guidance for ethical management practices in teams.

Keywords: team moral behavior pattern, team types, dynamic evolution, multilevel influence

Note: Figure translations are in progress. See original paper for figures.

Source: ChinaXiv. Machine translation. Verify with the original.