



IUL School of Social Sciences

Ethical leadership and workers' moral disengagement: The mediation of ethical climate

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Resumo

A presente dissertação estuda a influência da liderança ética na desvinculação moral dos colaboradores, mediada pelo clima ético (Cuidar e Instrumental). Ainda, se utilizou a antiguidade com a chefia como moderador da relação. O modelo conceptual desenvolvido resultou numa mediação moderada em que se previa que a liderança ética diminuísse o nível de desvinculação moral dos colaboradores.

Através de questionários online recolheu-se uma amostra de 358 participantes. Os principais resultados mostraram-se significativos na presença de um clima ético instrumental, onde ocorre uma mediação total e o efeito da moderadora antiguidade com a chefia. No entanto, ao destacar o clima ético de cuidar os resultados não foram corroborados, não existindo mediação nem o efeito da moderadora.

Este estudo forneceu informações bastante pertinentes para as organizações, na medida em que, num clima ético instrumental, prevê-se que o mesmo comece a influenciar a partir dos 3 anos de relação e o líder após 16 anos de contacto. Ainda, torna-se interessante que estudos futuros procurem abordar a questão do clima ético de cuidar.

Palavras-Chave: Liderança ética, Desvinculação moral, Clima Ético, Antiguidade com a chefia

Abstract

The study focused on the influence of ethical leadership on the moral disengagement of workers, mediated by the ethical climate (care and instrumental). Additionally, we used tenure with supervisor as a moderator in this relationship. The conceptual model corresponds to a moderated mediation which previewed that ethical leadership lowers the level of moral disengagement of workers.

With an online questionnaire, we collected a valid sample of 358 participants. The main findings were significant when facing an instrumental ethical climate, where there are a total mediation and an effect of the moderator (tenure with supervisor). However, care ethical climate hypotheses were not supported, showing neither mediation nor a moderation effect.

This research provided relevant information to organizations as it suggests that the indirect effect is moderated after 3 years and the direct effect after 16 years of contact with the leader. It is additionally interesting that future research targets the caring ethical climate issue.

Keywords: Ethical leadership, Moral disengagement, Ethical climate, Tenure with supervisor

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Introduction

Leadership is a very interesting topic that has motivated much debate (Cunha, Rego, Cunha, & Cardoso, 2004). Leadership has been defined in many ways, but it is overly "an influence relationship between leaders and followers who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes" (Ciulla, 2003:7). From a social perception, approach leadership is taken as a process where an individual is seen by others as being the leader (Lord & Maher, 1991).

Independently the definition adopted, leadership is about influencing and making a difference in peoples' lives and thus the leader plays a fundamental role in the work and performance of followers (Greene, 1975). This makes it interesting to research all conditions that may influence their relationship. In line with this Cunha et al. (2004) highlight, leaders are the main sources of organizational excellence and failure. Likewise, leaders have been found to influence followers' ethics (Brown, Treviño & Harrison, 2005). Additionally, leadership can be seen as existing only when followers are influenced to act ethically and beneficially to organizations (Cunha et al., 2004). In this way, some researchers have been looking to understand the relationship between an unethical leader and the perceptions and behavior of followers facing this leadership (Bonner, Greenbaum & Mayer, 2016).

Moral disengagement (MD) concerns a phenomenon where the individual tends to show non-ethical behavioral without feeling guilt (Bonner et al., 2016). Bandura, through social cognition theory, admits that moral reasoning consists of self-regulation mechanisms that are based upon moral standards and self-sanctions (Bandura, 1986; 1991), i.e., individuals control their own thoughts and behaviors using self-regulatory processes (Bandura, 1986). In this way, MD occurs due to the deactivation of moral self-regulation through eight mechanisms: moral justification, euphemistic labeling, advantageous comparison, displacement of responsibility, distortion of consequences, dehumanization, and attribution of blame. Considering this, Bandura (1999) expanded the concept of MD through this theory (Detert, Sweitzer, & Treviño 2008).

Also, Ozcelik, Langton and Aldrich, (2008) state that there is a relationship between organizational climate and leadership. In this way, it is important to understand the role of context in the leader-follower relationship due to the shared interests and

perceptions that exist in organizations. Organizational climate due to the leadership action occurs whenever a group of individuals is subordinated to the same leader, in which the group intends to provide meaning to shared perceptions (Zohar & Luria, 2004). Specifying the types of climate, Hoel and Salin (2003) showed that organizations that have an ethical climate have a lower predisposition to abusive leadership as compared to those that have a non-ethical climate.

Having this into consideration, this study is intended to understand the contribution of ethical leadership to the development of an ethical climate which, in turn, lowers follower moral disengagement. That is, we pretend to understand the role that ethical climate plays as a mediator in the leader-follower relationship. Additionally, we also want to understand how tenure with supervision interferes in the relationship between ethical climate and moral disengagement. Thus, we assume the overall model corresponds to a moderated mediation. This can offer theoretical insight as well as leading to understanding organizational mechanisms that can prevent moral disengagement or at least mitigate it. Among the variables that may play a role, the ethical climate is reasonably a good candidate.

Besides this introduction, the thesis comprehends five chapters. The second chapter concerns reviewing literature about the variables under study, focusing on its concepts, the relationship between them, and characterizing the research in itself. The third chapter depicts the methods which comprehends the procedure, the sample, and the measures used in the empirical study. The fourth chapter shows the results followed by the fifth chapter that discuss them at the light of the theory reviewed adding to it the limitations and proposing new research. Finally, the sixth chapter concludes the thesis.

Chapter I – Literature Review

1.1. Leadership

Across the years, leadership emerged as a very interesting subject that enacts much discussion (DePree, 1990) given its impact on the success of both individuals and organizations (Bolden, 2004). Several authors have been searching for an exact definition that characterizes the concept of leadership (Northouse, 2018). However, it is difficult to define mainly due to two reasons (Bolden, 2004): a) subjectivity (as it results from crossing experience and learning, giving rise to several interpretations) and b) the differences in the way some researchers theorize leadership. Theoretical perspectives may take leadership as being a consequence of certain traits leaders have – abilities (intelligence, knowledge and verbal ability), socialization (popularity) and motivation (initiative and persistence) or see it as occurring through social processes, namely, group relations and from the social theory sustain that followers act according to what they observe in their leaders.

In this way, many definitions have emerged for leadership (Bolden, 2004). As an alternative to the trait theory, several authors have endeavored to understand what a leader really does. In this sense there are many leadership styles inherent both to the way influence is established (Bolden, 2004) as well as the situation in which they are (Fiedler, 1964; 1967).

Among the leadership Styles that have emerged in the last years, charismatic leadership is the most relevant with the fundamental role in solving organizational problems such as competition. A charismatic leader is an individual that creates a positive vision of the future as well as upholding a moral perspective (Bolden, 2004). Ensuing research showed that organizational leaders do have the ability to influence followers' perceptions at the ethical level and, in turn, their behaviors (Bonner et al., 2014). Thus, when facing ethical dilemmas, leaders' behavior has more weight and a bigger impact on the way workers act (Sims, 1992), which makes ethical leadership an interesting explanative variable.

1.1.1. Ethical leadership

After ethical corporate scandals witnessed several researchers have been endeavoring to understand the role leadership plays in the ethical behavior within organizations (Brown et al., 2005).

Initially, ethics was a concept associated with the charismatic and transformational leadership (Bass & Avolio, 2000) given the curiosity about understanding the ethical dimension in leaders. However, lately, Brown et al. (2005) empirically showed that other couple constructs were associated with it: honest leader and fair treatment. The researchers sustain that these two factors feature an ethical leader via the moral component they convey, such as being predisposed to be fair and trustable. Besides, an ethical leader is a person that manages morality by encouraging ethical behaviors instead of non-ethical ones (Brown et al., 2005).

To find a definition and explanation for ethical leadership Brown et al. (2005) approach it from the perspective of Bandura's (1986) social theory. Being leadership fundamentally an influence process (Yukl, 2002), social learning indicates that followers' behavior is influenced by what they observe in the leader's behavior. In this way, social learning is a strong basis to explain ethical leadership because rewards/punishment is used to reinforce ethical behaviors (Brown et al., 2005). Therefore, under these conditions, it is understandable that leaders will have more influence over the followers when they are attractive, credible, and legitimate (Brown et al., 2005). Therefore, these authors define ethical leadership as a demonstration of the normative behavior using personal and interpersonal relationship and the promotion of it by a two-way communication, reinforcement and decision making.

It is also important to understand the impact that leaders have upon their followers and the way these perceive their leaders. Actually, workers play a fundamental role since the leadership itself is not the only responsible neither for their performance nor for their sense of duty towards achieving organizational goals. The perceptions followers have about their leaders together with their own belief in their competencies are both critical factors. Alongside, the relationship established between leader and follower is equally influenced by the way workers describe it and the degree of support they believe they received from their leaders (McColl-Kennedy & Anderson, 2002).

1.1.2. Leader-follower relationship

The literature on ethical leadership has been studying and highlighted the relationship and the impact an ethical leader has as well as the possible outcomes from workers (Zhu, May, & Avolio, 2004). For example, when individuals perceive their leaders as authentic, i.e., when their intentions and behaviors are consistent, the feeling of trust increases (Zhu et al., 2004).

Moreover, because the leader's behavior is one of the main factors that influence followers' behaviors (Posner & Schmidt (1982; 1984), several studies have been targeting the leader-follower relationship within different contexts. Mayer, Aquino, Greenbaum and Kuenzi (2012) conducted a study intended to understand the relationship between an ethical leader and unethical behaviors of followers. Given the tendency to mimic behaviors observed in the leader via a modeling process (Bandura, 1986), ethical leadership is prone to provide positive feedback to those that practice, equally, morality and to punish those that go against rules and ethics (Treviño, Brown & Hartman, 2003). Therefore, social cognitive theory sustains that individuals practice goes beyond what they observed, they behave accordingly with what they know they are expected to do.

Accordingly, Gino and Galinsky (2012) showed that an individual that feels psychologically close to another one that shows a tendency to cheat tends to increase his or her own level of MD to be also able to cheat. This example indicates that MD occurs through a motivated cognitive process in which psychological closeness between people that behave unethically leads to higher MD thus highlighting the importance of social context and the extent it impacts workers' lives (Gino & Galinsky, 2012).

Additionally, Bonner et al. (2014) found that lowly morally disengaged workers have a lower probability of perceiving their morally disengaged leaders as being ethical leaders as compared with those that have high MD. Correspondingly, individuals with low MD show a higher probability of feeling bad when witnessing unethical behaviors (Bandura, 1999).

Considering all these findings we believe it is interesting to understand the effects leadership entails upon followers as regards unethical behaviors. In this research we intend to understand the impact that ethical leadership has on followers' MD having into consideration the instrumental ethical climate, the time of the relationship between

the individual and his/her respective leader (tenure with supervision), giving that the leader-follower relationship depends on a multitude of factors (Mayer et al., 2012).

1.2. Moral Disengagement

The construct labeled as "Moral Disengagement" has its origins in Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory and highlights the moral behavior dimension of this theory (Moore, 2015). Social cognitive theory sustains a perspective on human behavior in which individuals use self-regulating processes to control their own thoughts (Bandura, 1986). These self-regulating processes need to be activated but may remain deactivated (Bandura 1999) which implies that individuals can regulate their own ethical behavior or simply fail to do so and open way to morally detachment as a way to protect themselves. In this way, individuals can behave unethically without a sense of guilt because they cognitively suppress their personal sanctions usually associated with destructive behavior (Bonner et al., 2014). If there is a predisposition to MD, individuals will amplify their unethical behaviors because the detached reasoning tends to inhibit the feeling of guilt and would, otherwise, block such behaviors (Detert et al., 2008).

Eight cognitive mechanisms allow the individual to act immorally, without remorse (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara & Pastorelli, 1996). Self-regulating processes are deactivated by: Moral Justification, Euphemistic Labeling, Advantageous Comparison (use to label in a positive way unethical behaviors), Displacement of responsibility, Diffusion of responsibility, Disregarding or Distorting the consequences, Dehumanization, and Attribution of blame.

Moral Justification occurs when individuals state their actions are serving a greater good, i.e., individuals tend to do a cognitive reconstruction of something unacceptable by turning it fair (Bandura, 1990). For such purpose, by morally justifying their actions, they make them acceptable both personally and socially. The argument that a violent individual may offer to justify such violence due to the need to preserve well-being is an example of such mechanism (Bandura, 1999).

Euphemistic labeling serves to smooth and relativize something unacceptable. This mechanism expresses itself by means of using wording as a means to modify the way people see actions and behavior, e.g., by resourcing to euphemism a harsh or

unacceptable reality is transformed into something acceptable and not harmful (Bandura, 1990).

Advantageous comparison occurs when an individual compares unacceptable behavior with other even worse ones. To mitigate a noxious behavior, one highlights another one that is more disturbing and thus, projects the impression that the first one is not so negative. For example, individuals that steal a pen from the office may tend to compare this action to another one where someone steals a computer. Although the first action is a theft, it tends to be taken more lightly because there are other more serious thefts (Bandura, 1990).

Displacement of responsibility occurs when individuals tend to blame their supervisors or colleagues for their responsibilities, stating that they are doing what was asked. In this sense, individuals do not feel guilty once they find the cause of their behaviors externally, by blaming someone else (Bandura, 1990).

Diffusion of responsibility is a similar mechanism where individuals tend to equally blame others but alleging that they are doing exactly what others do. Thus, they do not blame anyone specifically but still smooth their actions due to its common occurrence in the organization or society (Bandura, 1990).

Disregarding or distorting the consequences is used to minimize the outcomes of a certain action, giving it low importance or merely highlighting its positive readings.

Lastly, dehumanization and attribution of blame will be used to minimize the role of other people to avoid feeling guilty when actions are harmful to them. For example, naming colleagues with a detrimental label such as clown in der to ridicule their functions or actions. Ultimately, this translates into diminishing the rights of other people based on suggesting they are of lower status or unequal nature (Bandura, 1986).

In social cognitive theory, our internal controls only work when activated. These mechanisms all contribute to lower the effectiveness of these internal controls (Moore, 2015).

1.2.1. Predictors of Moral Disengagement

Because people show stable differences in the way they see others, themselves and events turn some individuals more prone to MD than others (Detert et al., 2008). For this reason, given that MD leads to unethical decision making, there is the need to

understand why some become morally disengaged while others do not (Detert et al., 2008).

Many researchers have been focusing their attention upon the antecedents of MD. Firstly, Detert et al. (2008) sustained that the predisposition to be morally disengaged may be due to three main individual differences: Empathy, Trait cynicism, and Moral identity. For these authors, such differences provide organizations with fundamental information that should be considered when choosing future members.

Two approaches can be taken when considering the individual trait of empathy. The first is the affective approach that focuses on how the observer feels the feelings of other people, while the second approach, cognitive, focus on recognizing and understanding those feelings (Detert et al., 2008). As such, paying attention to other individuals' feeling and needs lowers the predisposition to MD given that the concern they feel leverages their feeling of guilt when facing unethical situations (Detert et al., 2008). Conversely, cynicism trait has the opposite effect. Cynicism is associated with selfish individuals, as suspicious about others (Hochwarter, James, Johnson, & Ferris, 2004). Therefore, individuals high on this trait tend to suspect more of others and therefore to detach easily from them by deactivating control mechanisms (Detert et al., 2008). Finally, moral identity concerns how individuals think about themselves. A strong moral view of oneself will lower the chances of activating any of the mechanism, and therefore, being morally disengaged (Detert et al., 2008).

Another trait that has been linked to MD is Machiavellianism (Moore et al., 2012). Egan, Hughes and Palmer (2015) tested for predictors of MD joining personality trait agreeableness with the dark triad (Paulhus & Williams, 2002) traits: psychopathy (at the origin of lack of remorse), Machiavellianism (at the origin of intention to use others for own benefit), and narcissism (at the origin of using others to raise self-esteem). Findings showed that agreeableness deterred MD but when the dark triad was included in the regression, agreeableness no longer predicted MD which means all its variance was absorbed by it. More specifically, from the dark triad traits, only psychopathy and Machiavellianism were significantly associated with MD (as expected, increasing its likelihood). Corroborating these findings, in an extensive meta-analysis on the dark triad conducted by Muris, Merckelbach, Otgaar and Meijer (2017), both Machiavellianism and psychopathy were both found to have a meaningful effect size

with morality problems (a comprehensive category where authors included MD as a component) of .30 and .32 respectively.

Still falling within the dispositional domain, abilities have been found to play a role in MD (Moore, Deter, Trevino, Baker & Mayer, 2012). This domain implies that decision making involves a set of processes based upon the moral reasoning model starting with awareness, followed by deliberative judgment, passing through motivation/intention, and ending in action (Rest, 1986). In this way, moral reasoning predisposes to MD as it is inherently cognitive comprehending three constructs of moral cognitive development, relativism, and idealism (Moore et al., 2012). These underlie different model of ethical reasoning.

Overall, morally disengaged individuals tend to share some traits that make them more vulnerable to this process. These are psychopathy, Machiavellianism, and cynicism. Conversely, it is negatively associated with moral cognitive development, moral identity, moral idealism, empathy, sense of guilt, honesty, consciousness, and agreeability (Moore, 2015).

1.2.2. Moral Disengagement in organizations

As mentioned, MD as a concept was developed by Albert Bandura to express an amplification of social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986). The scale developed by Bandura et al. (1996) was originally addressed to evaluate MD in children. It was developed based on social cognitive theory with the purpose to cover the eight mechanisms to depict a possible degree of antisocial and socially harmful behavior. Later studies, using a sample of athletes, showed that MD increase when coaches were rigid. Conversely, when athletes deal with comprehensive coaches that offer support MD becomes lower (Hodge & Lonsdale, 2011). Across the years, MD has been measured in different settings and with varying samples (Moore et al., 2012).

Moore et al. (2012) endeavored to measure MD in organizational settings given organizations' proneness to using MD mechanisms. For example, the sheer existence of a hierarchical line, as well as teamwork, opens the way to displacement of responsibility. Hence, authors tested the concept both as a mediator and a moderator. When occurring as a mediator it operates as a process, i.e. an individual that is close to someone morally disengaged increases his or her own level of MD, thus indicating MD

as a cognitive process. On the other hand, it may be approached as a moderator when the concept is seen as a predisposition or trait.

Considering the exponential increase of unethical behaviors in organizations (Mayer, Kuenzi & Greenbaum, 2010) it is relevant to understand how an ethical leader impacts workers' MD. Within an organization, the existing MD can lead to certain negative outcomes. However, it is known that organizational leaders are capable of influencing followers' perceptions as regards ethical patterns and subsequent behaviors (Bonner et al., 2016). Because individuals predisposed to MD are known to behave unethically such as committing fraud (Moore et al., 2012), being aggressive at work (Fida et al., 2018), harassing sexually (Clayborn, 2011), but also having higher turnover (Christian & Ellis, 2014), it is critical for organizations to create all conditions that lowers chances of MD behavior, amongst which an ethical climate.

1.3. Ethical climate

The literature on ethical leadership has highlighted its impact on the ethical behavior of workers. Among the set of variables that influence the relationship between leader and followers, the organizational context has received special attention (Mayer et al., 2010). Namely, studies such as those conducted by Dickson, Smith, Grojean and Ehrhart (2001) have been trying to show the critical role an ethical leader has in creating an ethical climate.

Organizational climate is something that one cannot either observe nor touch but that is understood through the satisfaction of workers that experience it (Almeida, Ramos, Monteiro, & Sousa, 2013). Schneider, Ehrhart and Macey (2013: 362) define climate as "the shared perceptions of and the meaning attached to the policies, practices, and procedures employees experience and the behaviors they observe getting rewarded and that are supported and expected". Therefore, organizational climate implies some sense of share and a process that builds this shared perception using continuous observation of activities and consequences. One must also acknowledge that this is fundamentally an individual-based cognitive process and that before an organizational climate truly exists there are individual perceptions of this climate that was originally labeled "psychological climate" (Jones & James, 1979) and has been deserving long-lasting research (e.g. Glick, 1985; James et al., 2008; Parker et al., 2003; Petersen & Youssef-Morgan, 2018).

Organizational climate has long been linked to Kurt Lewin's gestalt theory that proposes the all is more than the sum of the parts. Therefore, doing the analogy with climate, the all achieved by the individual perceptions of workers is more than the simple sum of its elements (Ferreira & Martinez, 2008). In this way, climate evidences itself by means of experiences and specific behaviors of individuals that live in it (Schneider & Reichers, 1983), as well as what these individuals share in a group (Jones & James, 1979). Therefore, there is an interaction between the individual and the organization (Schneider & Reichers, 1983). Climate has been studied in connection with individual behavior (e.g. Bronkhorst et al., 2015; Marinova, Cao & Park, 2019; Schneider et al., 2017; Wimbush & Shepard, 1994) reflecting its given status of an important predictor (Turnipseed, 1988). In fact, Zohar et al. (2005) showed that an organizational climate gathers the conditions so that social norms, organizational rules, and procedures that employees believe in, become the core of their behavior.

Additionally, organizations are found to hold the main responsibility for workers' ethics due to the impact organizational climate has (Victor & Cullen, 1988). Schneider's (1975) original proposal, then largely supported (Schneider, Ehrhart & Macey, 2013) that organizational climate is not a singular entity (i.e. that it can be characterized in different ways), lead Victor and Cullen (1987, 1988) to define and conceive ethical climate. Ethical climate is therefore taken as a shared perception about what is ethical and unethical behavior (Victor & Cullen (1987).

We see ethical climate as a central variable in explaining ethical behavior in organizations. However, considering that the ethical decision making is foremost an individual process (i.e., the individual has the freedom to determine his or her behavior independently of the circumstances in line with Frankl, 1985) we reason that the psychological climate is also relevant, or perhaps, even more relevant. In line with this several studies showed the influence effect that ethical psychological climate has on workers' ethical behaviors (Peterson, 2002). More specifically, by trying to fill the gap in the relationship between unethical leadership and unethical behaviors, Mayer et al. (2010) tested the potential mediator role of ethical psychological climate. They found a significant indirect effect that corresponded to a total mediation (given the absence of the direct effect).

The possibility of an ethical climate being not only associated with ethical behavior, but also counterproductive behaviors was also researched (Wimbush &

Shepard, 1994). It has been questioned whether ethical climate has a single or multiple dimensional nature that is diversely associated to (un)ethical behavior and, if indeed it is multidimensional, if and how these dimensions are associated to such behaviors (Schwartz, 2004).

Kohlberg's (1981) theory suggests individuals use different kinds of ethical criteria. Their choice is built on three standards: to maximize individual gains; to maximize group gains; and to adhere to universal principles. Alongside these principles, there are three kinds of ethics: "self-interest", "caring" and "principle" (Kohlberg's, 1981). These three standards reflect the three classes that comprehend ethical theory (selfishness, utilitarianism, and deontology) that, in its turn, characterize ethical climate into instrumental, benevolent, and independent. Instrumental ethical climate refers to organizations that have norms and make decisions based on a selfish logic, highlighting the interest of the individual instead of those of the group (Vitor & Cullen, 1987).

Victor and Cullen (1987) showed empirically that certain ethical climates can be associated with certain behaviors. By studying the impact of distinct ethical climates on counterproductive behaviors, Peterson (2002) found that such behaviors increase in climates where self-interest prevails and decrease in caring climates. Additionally, other researchers identified a positive relationship between unethical behaviors and selfish-based climates (Mayer, Kuenzi & Greenbaum, 2009).

1.3.1. Ethical climate as a mediator

Ozcelick et al. (2008) reported an increasingly significant relationship between leadership and organizational climate. They state it is impossible to refer to ethical climate without mentioning the word "leadership". In fact, the way leaders approach problems in organizations has an impact on workers' experience (Ozcelick et al. 2008). This configures a possible mediating role of ethical climate between leaders and followers. There is also the communication between leaders and followers that exerts an effect on behavioral change (Wimbush & Shepard, 1994).

Organizational ethical climate may reduce the use of psychological tactics that favor corruption in certain workers (Anand, Ashforth & Joshi 2005; Tenbrunsel & Messick, 2004) or that favor counterproductive behaviors (Peterson, 2002). A structured and strong ethical climate lowers MD (Martin, Kish-Gephart & Detert, 2014). Likewise,

the context may interfere with the individual's proneness to be morally disengaged (Moore, 2015).

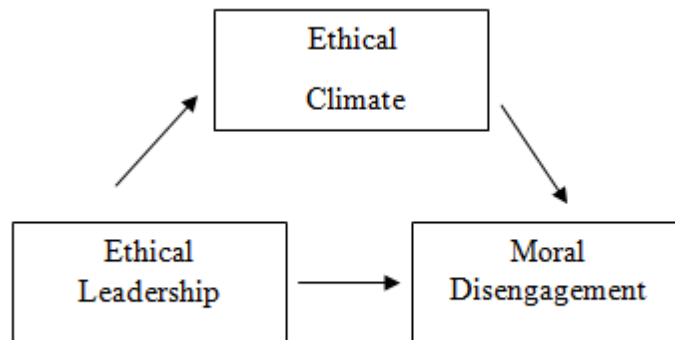
Overall, ethical climate seems to be both a deterrent of moral disengagement and a product of ethical leadership, bridging both. Having this into consideration, we hypothesize that:

H1: Ethical climate mediates the negative relationship between ethical leadership and moral disengagement

H_{1a}: Instrumental ethical climate mediates the negative relationship between ethical leadership and moral disengagement

H_{1b}: Caring ethical climate mediates the negative relationship between ethical leadership and moral disengagement.

Figure 1.1. Effect of mediation of ethical climate in the relationship between ethical leadership and worker moral disengagement



1.4. Tenure with supervisor

Considering the impact leaders have upon their followers it is equally important to understand in which extent certain control variables influence the relationship, such as tenure with supervisor. Leadership is a process made of expectations and mutual trust, which become stronger across the years (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Therefore, the tenure with a leader is seen as an important factor in the leader-follower relationship (Bhala, Ansarib & Aafaqi, 2007).

Although it has been far less researched than organizational tenure, and usually used as a control variable, it is occasionally confounded with organizational tenure (e.g. Kim, Liu & Dienfendorff, 2015) as researchers tend to assume that they are similar, which is not true as leaders can change while workers remain in the same organization. However, research on the topic showed that relational tenure mostly influences the feelings of followers, i.e., across time follower's affective dimension towards the leader changes (Bhala, Ansarib & Aafaqi, 2007). However, these authors found also that tenure does not have an effect per se, it may condition the relationship but not when acting alone (Bhala, Ansarib & Aafaqi, 2007).

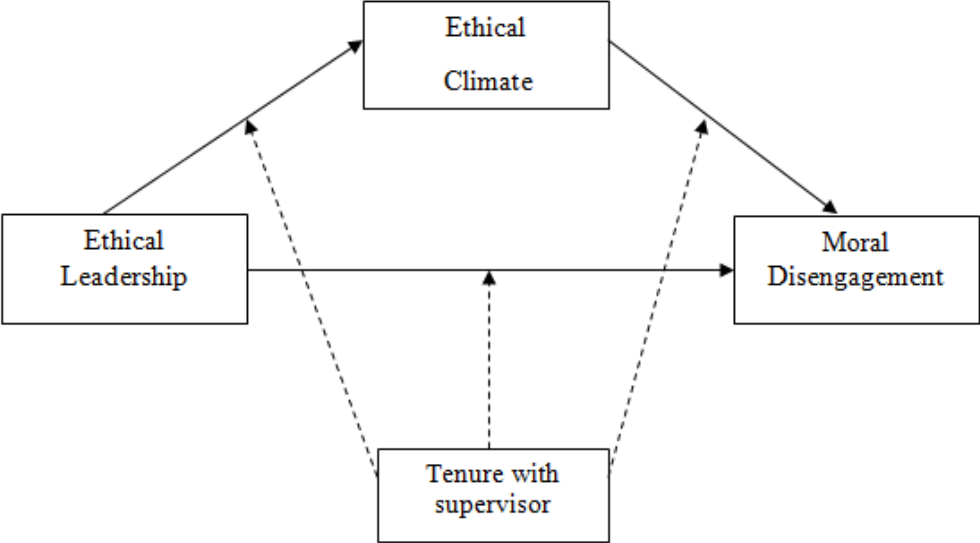
In this way, we found interesting to assess the role tenure may play as a moderator in the mediation of ethical climate between ethical leadership and moral disengagement of followers. Considering the reviewed literature, we expect that the ethical climate (caring or instrumental) influence MD of followers and that it increases with the relational tenure with their respective leaders. Thus, we project a moderated mediation as hypothesized:

H2: Leader-member tenure moderates the mediated negative relationship between ethical leadership and moral disengagement via ethical climate in such a way that the higher the leader-member tenure the stronger the relationship among variables.

H2a: Leader-member tenure moderates the mediated negative relationship between ethical leadership and moral disengagement via instrumental ethical climate in such a way that the higher the leader-member tenure the stronger the relationship among variables.

H2b: Leader-member tenure moderates the mediated negative relationship between ethical leadership and moral disengagement via caring ethical climate in such a way that the higher the leader-member tenure the stronger the relationship among variables.

Figure 1.2. Research Model



Chapter II - Method

2.1. Procedure

To gather the required information, we designed an online questionnaire, with Qualtrics platform – Online Survey Software & Insight Platform, which was deployed by the end of January 2019 and closed in mid-March 2019. We used a snowball sampling procedure as the questionnaire link was sent via internet and shared in chain. The questionnaire initially comprehended the informed consent followed by a set of sociodemographic questions as well as three measures pertaining to the variables under study. The fill-in time was expected to be 10 minutes. By the end of the questionnaire, there were also some professional questions such as tenure with supervisor. The data analysis was made with the use of IBM SPSS 25 and Hayes (2018) PROCESS Macro, which was used to conduct the main analyses.

2.2. Sample

Taken into consideration the research objective, we collected a sample of 358 questionnaires from individuals employed. The sample comprises 228 females (63.7%) and 129 males (36.3%) averaging 39.78 years old, ranging from 19 to 56 years old. More than half the sample (53.7%) reported working in the current employer for more than 6 years. Slightly less than a quarter sample (22.9%) holds some sort of supervisory role.

2.3. Data analysis strategy

Data analysis will start by testing the psychometric quality of the measures which implies testing for validity and reliability. Construct validity is tested with confirmatory factor analysis that should attain minimum thresholds to be taken as good. We will adopt Hair et al. (2010) recommendations and therefore we expect valid models to show a χ^2/DF below 3 with a non-significant p-value (although this index can be waived due to sample size biases). Additionally, we will be expecting a minimum threshold of .95 for both Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI). Also, a Root Mean Squared Error of Approximation (RMSEA) below .07. As in all cases, composite indices imply that the overall picture has to be considered and when a

single one falls short (but in the proximity) of a given threshold, it does not invalidate the entire model (Hu & Bentler, 1999). If the model fails to meet thresholds, we conducted Lagrange multiplier analysis and, depending on the theoretic interpretation, remove items that may be hampering the psychometric quality of the constructs. Additionally, constructs are required to have convergent and, when multifactorial, also divergent validity. For that purpose, we used Average Variance Extracted (AVE) from Fornell and Larcker (1981) that should attain .500. Divergent validity occurs when the squared root AVE of each construct is higher than the respective interfactor standardized correlation. According to Fornell and Larcker (1981) in those cases where constructs fail to achieve AVE threshold one should consider Composite reliability (.700) as an alternative indication for acceptability. Lastly, constructs should be reliable which is judged both on Composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha (same threshold, .700).

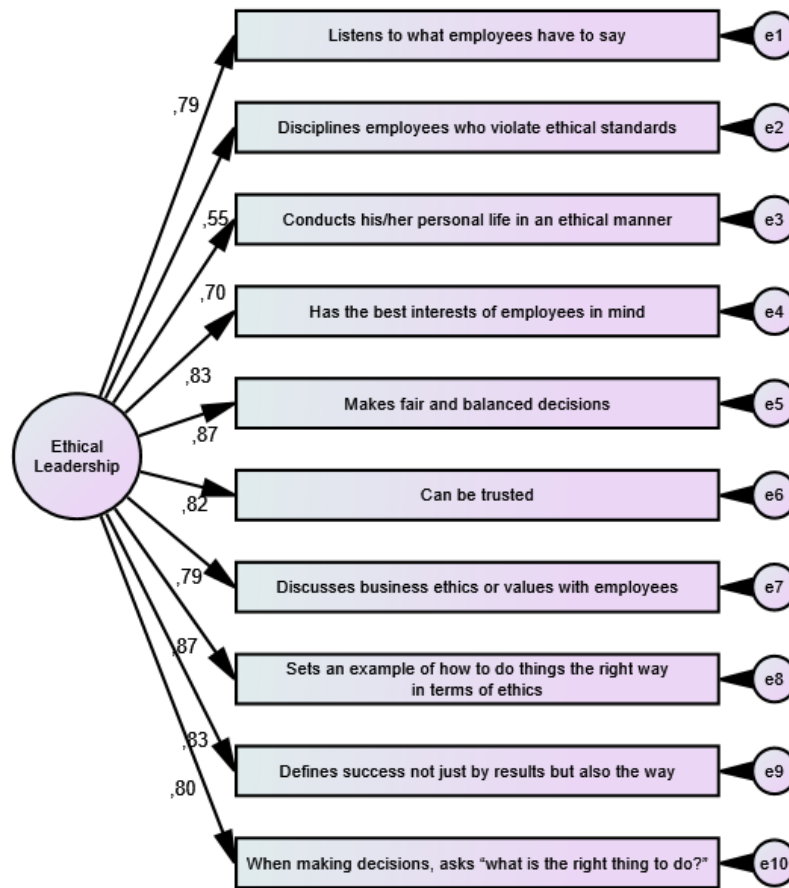
2.4. Measures

To design the questionnaire three sets of measures were gathered: Moral Disengagement, Ethical leadership, and Ethical climate. To assess items, we used 5 points Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

2.4.1. Ethical Leadership Scale

Ethical leadership was measured with Brown, Treviño and Harrison (2005) ethical leadership scale that comprehends 10 items (e.g. "Listens to what employees have to say", "makes fair and balanced decisions", "Discusses business ethics or values with employees"). The CFA for the single factor solution showed acceptable fit indices ($\chi^2/DF=2.422$, $p<.001$; CFI=.981; TLI=.976; RMSEA=.063). The scale has also convergent validity (AVE=.625) and good reliability (CR=.943; Cronbach alpha=.942).

Figure 2.1. CFA for ethical leadership



2.4.2. Moral Disengagement

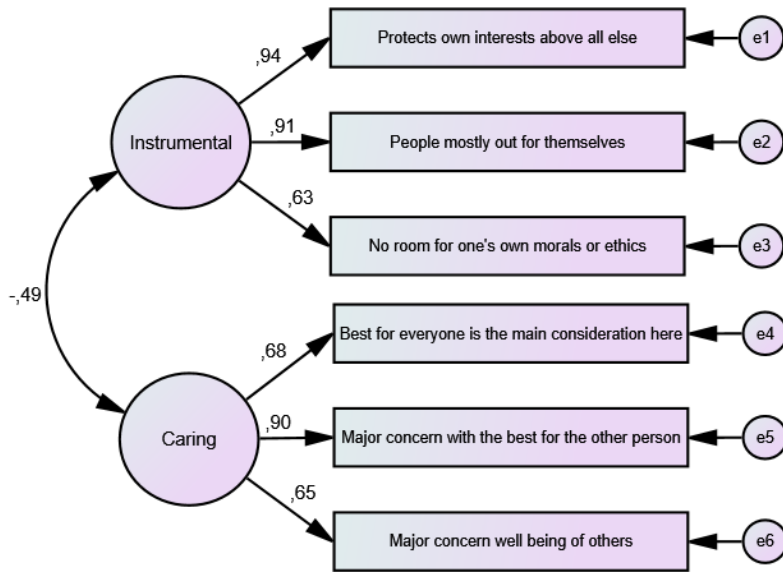
Moral disengagement was measured with a focus on displacement of responsibility which matches Bandura's et al. (1996) 4-item homonymous subscale. An example of one item is "If people are not properly supervised, they should not be blamed for misbehaving". Because this study aims to test whether external attribution of responsibility can be promoted by an interaction between ethical leadership and climate, we deemed displacement of responsibility is the core concept. This measure was found to be negatively associated with unethical leadership (Hinrichs, Wang, Hinrichs and Romero, 2012). Although previous studies found a good psychometric quality, the CFA of this scale failed to achieve thresholds for acceptance. It was mainly due to the first item ("If people are working under bad conditions, they cannot be blamed for behaving

aggressively") which we removed. The revised 3-item CFA is just-identified (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004) and so, we tested for individual loading significance for all the items (Ribeiro, Bender, Selby, Hames and Joiner, 2011) which were all significantly related with the latent factor indicating they operationally load into a single factor. AVE is not good enough but CR (.711) is acceptable and therefore we will use this measure to operationally define displacement of responsibility. Because it can be complemented by either CR or Cronbach alpha, and we did find a value of .702 for the last one, we will use this measure as a valid one. Finally, due to skewness, we used a natural log transformation in ensuing analysis involving this measure.

2.4.3. Ethical Climate

Ethical climate was measured with Victor and Cullen (1988) scale targeting two types of climate: instrumental (3 items, e.g. "In this organization people protect their own interest above else") and caring (3 items, e.g. "what is best for everyone in the organization is the major consideration here"). The CFA for the two-factor solution showed acceptable fit indices ($\chi^2/DF=2.232$, $p=.022$; CFI=.99; TLI=.982; RMSEA=.059). The scale has convergent validity (AVEinstrumental=.703, AVEcaring=.565) and reliability (CRinstrumental=.873, Cronbach alphacaring=.860; CRinstrumental=.792; Cronbach alphacaring=.777) as well as divergent validity ($\sqrt{AVEinstrumental}=.83 > r=.49 < \sqrt{AVEcaring}=.75$).

Figure 2.2. CFA Ethical Climate



2.4.4. Control variables

Some variables destined to profile the sample as well as being used as potentially control variables were included in the questionnaire. Namely, Respondent's Gender (1=male, 2=female), Respondent's Age, Leader's Gender (1=male, 2=female), Respondent's Supervision Role (1=Yes, 2=No) and organizational tenure (1= <1 year; 2= 1 to 3 years; 3= 4 to 6; 4= >6 years).

Chapter III- Results

We will show findings pertaining descriptive statistics such as means, standard deviation and scale range, as well as bivariate associations between variables (both control and those included in the research model) and complete it with findings concerning hypotheses tests.

3.1. Descriptive and bivariate analysis

At an initial stage, to gain an understanding of how variables behave, we conducted descriptive statistics and bivariate analysis. Table 5.1 shows such findings.

Among the variables under study, it is ethical leadership that has the highest mean ($m=3.55$, $s.d.=.89$) followed by caring ethical climate that is on the midpoint of the scale ($m=3.02$, $s.d.=.89$). As expectable, the socially undesirable constructs (moral disengagement and instrumental ethical climate) are the ones with the lowest means and significantly far from the midpoint ($t_{\text{moral_diseng}}(357) = -20.014$, $p<.01$; $CI95 [-.9029, -.7414]$ and $t_{\text{instrumental_EC}}(357) = -2.386$, $p<.05$; $CI95 [-.2208, -.0213]$).

Among the socio-demographic variables, used both for description and control purposes, almost no significant correlations with variables included in the mediational model were found. Supervision's role (that measures if the respondent performs or not a supervisory role in the organization) is the only that shows negative association with both ethical leadership ($r=-.125$, $p<.05$) and caring ethical climate ($r=-.121$, $p<.05$) showing that those performing supervisory roles tend to report higher levels of perceived ethical leadership of their respective leaders as well as higher caring ethical climate. Furthermore, those in supervisory positions tend to report a lower level of instrumental ethical climate ($r=.222$, $p<.01$). Overall, this suggests that those that do not perform supervisory roles, tend to take a more negative stance towards ethical issues within the organization.

As regards the moderator variable (leader-member tenure) there are two strong significant correlations with sociodemographic variables (i.e. respondent's age, and organizational tenure) which is expectable as age-related variables tend to highly inter-

correlate. However, this advises the inclusion of such as control variables in the research model.

The correlations found between variables included in the research model encourage the designed mediational model as ethical leadership is correlated with both instrumental ethical climate ($r=-.472$, $p<.01$) and caring ethical climate ($r=.497$, $p<.01$) and at least one of these (instrumental ethical climate) correlates with moral disengagement ($r=.157$, $p<.05$). Surprisingly, caring ethical climate does not correlate with moral disengagement but still, these are only correlations.

Table 3.1 – Descriptive and bivariate statistics

	Mean	SD	Min-max	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1.Respondent's gender	-	-	1-2	1								
2.Respondent's age	39.78	12.55	19-65	-.153**	1							
3. Organizational tenure	2.88	1.31	1-4	-.175**	.702**	1						
4. Supervision role	-	-	1-2	.163**	-.264**	-.140*	1					
5.Leader's gender	-	-	1-2	.415**	-.157**	-.177**	.086	1				
6.Tenure with supervisor	6.77	8.32	0-40	-.058	.494**	.550**	-.150**	-.068	1			
7.Ethical leadership	3.55	.89	1-5	.070	-.042	-.124*	-.125*	.026	-.027	1		
8.Instrum. Ethical Climate	2.87	.95	1-5	.010	-.007	.076	.222**	-.025	-.006	-.472**	1	
9.Caring Ethical Climate	3.02	.89	1-5	.079	.006	-.057	-.121*	.040	.140*	.497**	-.455**	1
10. Moral disengagement	2.17	.77	1-5	-.037	-.094	-.101	.017	-.035	.064	-.055	.157**	.079

*p>.05; **p<.01; Gender (1=male, 2=female); supervision role (1=Yes, 2=No), Organizational tenure (1=<1 year, 2= 1-3, 3= 4-6, 4=>6 years)

3.2. Hypothesis Testing

As the model establishes a moderated mediation and taking into consideration the advantages of testing relationship simultaneous, we conducted analyses by using Process Macro (Hayes, 2018) model 59. This model establishes a simple mediation design with three possible interaction effects between the moderator (leader-member tenure) and each of the paths connecting the core constructs under analysis, namely, ethical leadership, ethical climate, and moral disengagement.

This model was chosen due to the unspecific theory direction of the theory concerning which step could interact with the tenure of the relationship between the leader and the respondent. Thus, to cover all possibilities, in an exploratory fashion, we opted for Model 59 (Hayes, 2018).

To test the mediation, we analyze the statistical significance of the indirect and direct effects between ethical leadership, ethical climate (both instrumental and caring, separately) and moral disengagement. The bootstrapped bias corrected interval for a confidence interval of 95% is used to judge on its meaningfulness. If the interval comprehended within the lower and upper bounds includes the value "zero", then we cannot accept the relationship as meaningful, i.e. it must not be taken as significant for a 95% CI. Otherwise, it is. The model controls for the effect of respondent's gender and organizational tenure.

H1: Ethical climate mediates the negative relationship between ethical leadership and moral disengagement

H1a: Instrumental ethical climate mediates the negative relationship between ethical leadership and moral disengagement

H1b: Caring ethical climate mediates the negative relationship between ethical leadership and moral disengagement

H2: Leader-member tenure moderates the mediated negative relationship between ethical leadership and moral disengagement via ethical climate in such a way that the higher the leader-member tenure the stronger the relationship among variables.

H2a: Leader-member tenure moderates the mediated negative relationship between ethical leadership and moral disengagement via instrumental ethical

climate in such a way that the higher the leader-member tenure the stronger the relationship among variables.

H2b: Leader-member tenure moderates the mediated negative relationship between ethical leadership and moral disengagement via caring ethical climate in such a way that the higher the leader-member tenure the stronger the relationship among variables.

The first hypothesis (H1a) established a mediation effect where the direct relationship between ethical leadership and instrumental ethical climate is expected to be negative, the direct relationship between instrumental ethical climate and moral disengagement is expected to be positive, and the direct relationship between ethical leadership and moral disengagement is expected to be negative. Thus, an indirect negative effect is expected for the mediation model, with the possibility of being either a total or a partial mediation.

Results show a meaningful negative coefficient (-.522) between ethical leadership and instrumental ethical climate with CI95 [-.6288; -.4169], a meaningful positive coefficient (.1675) between instrumental ethical climate and moral disengagement with CI95 [.0610; .2739], and no meaningful relationship (.0255) between ethical leadership and moral disengagement with CI95 [-.0873; .1383]. The indirect effect is meaningful CI95 [-.1463; -.0218] with a coefficient of -.0876. As found, no direct effect operates in the model, which correspond to a full mediation. Hence, findings support Hypothesis 1a for the case of instrumental climate.

Results show a meaningful positive coefficient (.5030) between ethical leadership and caring ethical climate with CI95 [.4034; .6026], a non-meaningful coefficient (.0973) between caring ethical climate and moral disengagement with CI95 [-.2276; .0042], and no meaningful relationship (-.1117) between ethical leadership and moral disengagement with CI95 [-.2276; .0042]. The indirect effect is not meaningful CI95 [-.0145; .1258] with a coefficient of .0489. As found, neither a direct nor an indirect effect is operating, thus excluding any possible mediation. Hence, findings do not support Hypothesis 1b.

Hypothesis 2 adds to the previous models, the leader-member interaction effect. Hypothesis 2a established a moderation effect of ethical leadership. The relationship of interest lies in the interaction terms between ethical leadership and ethical climate (Path

a), between ethical climate and moral disengagement (Path b), and between ethical leadership and moral disengagement (Path c).

Taking instrumental ethical climate as the mediator, findings show a non-meaningful interaction effect for path a (-.0019) to CI95 [-.0145; .0108], a meaningful interaction effect for path b (.0149) CI95 [.0023; .0275], and a meaningful one for path c (.0148) to CI95 [.0015; .0282].

Exploring the conditional effects for path b, results from the Johnson-Neyman conditional values analysis (Tables 4.2 and 4.3) show that the relationship between instrumental ethical climate and moral disengagement occurs only when leader-member tenure achieves 2.89 years. Thus, the direct effect between instrumental ethical climate and moral disengagement is contingent upon the length of the relationship between the respondents and his/her respective leader.

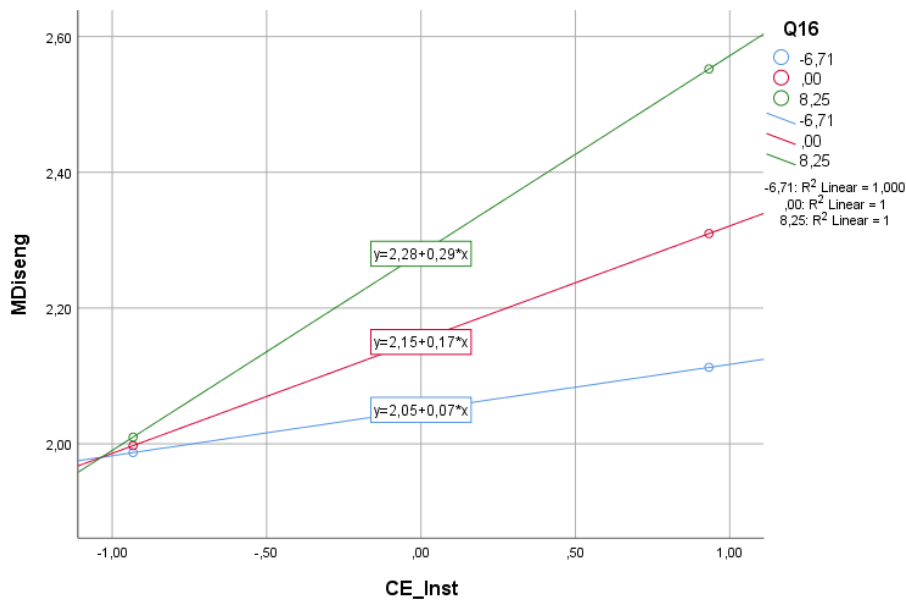
Table 3.2. Conditional effects of the instrumental ethical climate at values of the moderator(s) by ISD

Tenure with supervisor	Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
-6,7076	,0673	,0709	,9486	,3436	-,0723	,2068
,0000	,1675	,0541	3,0953	,0022	,0610	,2739
8,2503	,2907	,0735	3,9566	,0001	,1461	,4300

Table 3.3 – Johnson-Neyman output

Tenure with supervisor	Effect	Se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
-6.7076	.0673	.0709	.9486	.3436	-.0723	.2068
-4.7076	.0971	.0634	1.5329	.1264	-.0276	.2219
-3.3861	.1169	.0594	1.9681	.0500	.0000	.2338
-2.7076	.1270	.0577	2.2006	.0285	.0134	.2406
-.7076	.1569	.0545	2.8766	.0043	.0495	.2642
1.2924	.1868	.0543	3.4411	.0007	.0799	.2936
3.2924	.2167	.0570	3.8034	.0002	.1045	.3288
5.2924	.2465	.0622	3.9622	.0001	.1241	.3690
7.2924	.2764	.0695	3.9790	.0001	.1397	.4131
9.2924	.3063	.0782	3.9191	.0001	.1525	.4601
11.2924	.3362	.0878	3.8266	.0002	.1633	.5091
13.2924	.3660	.0983	3.7253	.0002	.1727	.5594
15.2924	.3959	.1092	3.6263	.0003	.1810	.6108
17.2924	.4258	.1205	3.5345	.0005	.1887	.6629
19.2924	.4557	.1320	3.4511	.0006	.1958	.7155
21.2924	.4856	.1438	3.3763	.0008	.2025	.7686
23.2924	.5154	.1557	3.3093	.0011	.2089	.8220
25.2924	.5453	.1678	3.2495	.0013	.2150	.8756
27.2924	.5752	.1800	3.1958	.0015	.2210	.9294
29.2924	.6051	.1922	3.1476	.0018	.2267	.9834
31.2924	.6349	.2045	3.1041	.0021	.2324	1.0375
33.2924	.6648	.2169	3.0648	.0024	.2379	1.0917

Figure 3.1. Interaction effect with instrumental ethical climate

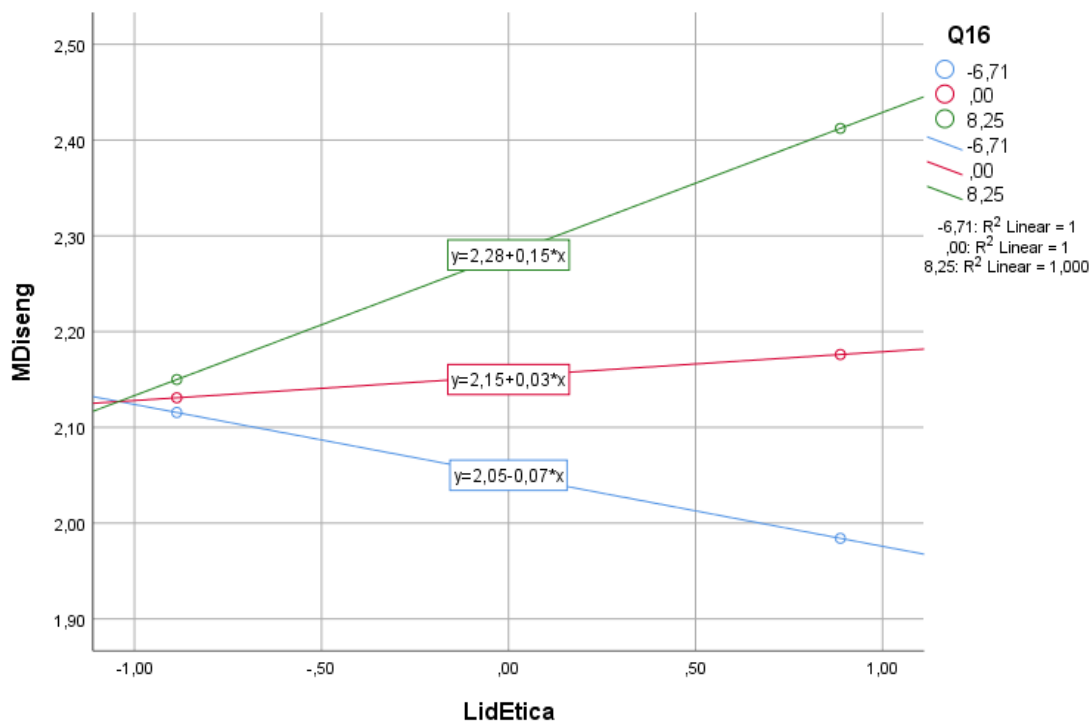


Exploring the conditional effects for path C, results from the Johnson-Neyman conditional values analysis (Table 4.3) show that the relationship between ethical leadership and moral disengagement is inexistent when leader-member tenure is lower than 16 years but is becomes significant after this tenure. Thus, the direct effect is contingent upon the length of the relationship between the respondents and his/her respective leader.

Table 3.4 – Conditional effect of ethical leadership at values of tenure with supervisor

Tenure with supervisor	Effect	Se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
-6.7076	-.0741	.0751	-.9865	.3247	-.2218	.0737
-4.7076	-.0444	.0671	-.6617	.5087	-.1764	.0876
-3.3861	-.0147	.0611	-.2408	.8099	-.1350	.1055
-2.7076	.0150	.0578	.2590	.7958	-.0987	.1286
-.7076	.0446	.0575	.7758	.4385	-.0686	.1579
1.2924	.0743	.0604	1.2295	.2199	-.0446	.1932
3.2924	.1040	.0661	1.5739	.1166	-.0260	.2340
5.2924	.1337	.0738	1.8109	.0712	-.0116	.2789
7.2924	.1633	.0831	1.9663	.0502	-.0001	.3268
9.2924	.1638	.0832	1.9681	.0500	.0000	.3275
11.2924	.1930	.0934	2.0667	.0396	.0092	.3768
13.2924	.2227	.1045	2.1316	.0339	.0171	.4283
15.2924	.2523	.1161	2.1739	.0305	.0239	.4808
17.2924	.2820	.1281	2.2019	.0285	.0299	.5341
19.2924	.3117	.1404	2.2204	.0272	.0354	.5880
21.2924	.3414	.1529	2.2327	.0263	.0405	.6423
23.2924	.3710	.1656	2.2408	.0258	.0452	.6969
25.2924	.4007	.1784	2.2461	.0254	.0496	.7518
27.2924	.4304	.1913	2.2494	.0252	.0538	.8070
29.2924	.4601	.2043	2.2514	.0251	.0579	.8622
31.2924	.4897	.2174	2.2524	.0250	.0618	.9177
33.2924	.5194	.2306	2.2526	.0250	.0656	.9732

Figure 3.2 Interaction effect with instrumental ethical leadership



Overall, the moderated mediated model is supported. Hence findings support H2a.

As regards **caring ethical climate**, a similar moderated mediation analysis was conducted. Findings show no interactions in the relationship between ethical leadership and caring ethical climate ($B=-0.0093$, $p=.1174$, $CI95 [-0.0210; 0.0024]$), between caring ethical climate and moral disengagement ($B=.0066$, $p=.3631$, $CI95 [-0.0077; 0.0208]$) and between ethical leadership and moral disengagement ($B=.0036$, $p=.5853$, $CI95 [-0.0094; 0.0167]$). Hence, H2b is not supported.

Chapter IV- Discussion

Research has been showing the relationship between ethical leadership and followers' ethical behavior. More specifically, findings evidenced a negative relationship between ethical leadership and follower counterproductive behaviors such as anti-social behaviors (Treviño & Brown, 2004). Considering the increase in fraud and unethical behaviors in organizations (Mayer et al., 2010), such as MD (Bandura, 1986), ethical leadership has been taken as a good deterrent (Mayer et al. 2012). More, ethical climate favors ethics in organizations and their workers (Mayer et al., 2010). Therefore, this study was intended to understand the role ethical leadership plays in diminishing MD via ethical climate. Likewise, this study intends to test the moderator role tenure with supervisor plays in this mediation as it is expected to reinforce the relationship between the variables (Kim, Liu & Dienfendorff, 2015). Knowing that ethical climate can assume a form of instrumental ethical climate and caring ethical climate (Peterson, 2002) this study is designed to understand their role in this moderated mediated model.

Firstly, findings showed a negative relationship between ethical leadership and instrumental ethical leadership which was positively associated with followers' MD. These are findings in line with reviewed literature that, generally, identify ethical climate as a fundamental mechanism linking ethical leadership and unethical behaviors (Mayer et al., 2010). The first association supports the theory that advocates the influence leadership has upon climate (Flynn 2008). The negative valence found between ethical leadership and instrumental ethical climate suggests this. The second association also supports previous findings (e.g. Wimbush, Shepard and Markham, 1997) that highlight the reinforcing role of instrumental ethical climate for workers' morally disengagement. Its contribution to corrupt behaviors was also found by Peterson (2002). Likewise, one individual that feels psychologically close to another one that tends to cheat is also more prone to increase his or her MD (Gino & Galinsky, 2012) highlighting the importance of social context. Therefore, these study findings are similar to those reported reinforcing the idea that followers that are immersed in an unethical climate will tend to be equally unethical.

On the other hand, caring ethical climate failed to operate as a mediator between ethical leadership and moral disengagement. The rejection of hypothesis 2b that sustained this mediation effect goes against previous findings. Wimbush et al. (1997) found that caring ethical climate lowered the occurrence of deviant behaviors in organizations. Also, previous theory sustained that workers in one organization with an ethical leader and caring climate are expected to experience low moral disengagement (Mayer et al., 2010). It is true that in our findings, ethical leadership does have a positive association with caring ethical climate but the other possible relationship (EL-MD and CEC-MD) were not statistically supported. A possible explanation might lie in workers being more prone to feel satisfied with their job within an organization that nurtures a caring ethical climate (Brown et al., 2005). High levels of job satisfaction may suppress the need to morally disengage from organizational experiences. An alternative explanation can lie in trust, i.e., leaders' influence on ethical climate that is mistrusted by workers will not be effective in changing workers' behavior via that climate (Matela, 2016)

As stated, besides testing the mediation of ethical climate in the leader-follower relationship this study intended to understand the moderator role tenure with supervisor played on the three paths, given its importance (Bhala et al., 2007). Hypothesis 2a that states that leader-member tenure moderates the mediated negative relationship between ethical leadership and moral disengagement via instrumental ethical climate in such a way that the higher the leader-member tenure the stronger the relationship among variable, was supported. Findings were very interesting in the sense that the relationship between instrumental ethical climate and follower MD only occurs after 2.89 years of relationship between leader and follower. It is known that trust increases with the length of the relationship (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). We, therefore, believe that there is a motive to sustain that ethical climate exerts a cumulative effect upon workers that become effective after three years of contact with the leader. Before that time, there is effectively no mediation effect. Also, the moderation of tenure with supervisor on the relationship between ethical leadership and follower MD was observed only after 16 years. This may stem from the same mechanism that Bhala et al. (2007) found concerning affective changes in the leader-follower relationship throughout the years of contact. However, unlike their conclusion, this empirical finding suggests that the leader's ethical action and example may exert a direct effect upon follower's MD

without the need to consider the instrumental ethical climate as a channel, i.e. it can become a sufficient condition as tenure strengthens its action.

Finally, the lack of support for any moderation effect of tenure with supervisor when caring ethical climate is the mediator (hypothesis 2b) might be surprising but being a socially desirable phenomenon its mean is quite modest ($M=3.02$) with a relatively low standard deviation (.89) which may raise the possibility that it is not sufficiently felt to exert any effect.

4.1. Limitations and future studies

Some limitations characterize this study which can be addressed in future studies. Firstly, as the questionnaire was done online, the sample comprises individuals from different organizations. It would be beneficial to count on findings from within a single company or at least from companies identified in such a manner that one could control for organizational effects, especially because climate is at the group or organizational level and cannot be measured in this way here, but only as psychological climate or perceptions of organizational climate.

Also, by using scales that are parsimonious in an item number, such as the one that measured moral disengagement, ethical climate we gained in practicality but lost in measurement error and construct's representation. It might be advisable to use larger scales. Another option pertained the number of points on the scale. Having opted to use an even-numbered scale (6) precluded neutral answers. It is not imperative to grant such option via odd-numbered scales (e.g. 5 or 7) especially when ethical-related constructs are involved, because caution may lead respondents to opt for the central point, but it may change findings, and this could be also checked in future studies.

By researching aspects related with leadership and the perception workers have about their organizations we are always subjected to bias due to faking as, despite all given guarantees concerning research ethics, confidentiality, anonymity, some individuals may feel the need to show themselves at a more favorable light than reality, especially regarding their degree of moral disengagement. Research can develop by introducing trust in this model as it has been taken as being critical for leadership-follower relations.

Chapter V - Conclusion

Within business there has been emerging new variables that contribute to organizational success. With the purpose of deterring the climate of fraud and corruption that has been found to pervade many societies, we intended to understand how moral disengagement can be prevented. Moral disengagement is hazardous as it enables employees to behave unethically without feelings of guilt, being thus, a variable of interest for organizations (Bonner et al., 2014).

By reviewing extant literature it is understood now that ethical leadership may play a role as the main deterrent of counterproductive behaviors, with ethical climate emerging as a critical variable in explaining this relationship.

Findings from this thesis contribute, even if modestly, to understand the role ethical leadership has upon employee moral disengagement, mediated by ethical climate. We highlight the role instrumental ethical climate has as a mediating variable. Moreover, tenure with supervisor showed very interesting results as instrumental ethical climate influences employee behaviors after 2.89 years of contact while ethical leadership direct effect occurs only after 16 years of contact with the supervisor. These findings highlight the importance of interpersonal trust or role modeling in aligning behavior within teams.

As caring ethical climate followed a divergent pattern of results, we find it sufficiently intriguing to deserve further research. It is heuristically promising that opposing dimensions of the same construct do not enact opposing effects.

Overall, preventing moral disengagement is an achievement that is not guaranteed neither by ethical leadership per se nor by a low instrumental ethical climate. It takes time for these to exert its effects which can be gauged against the tenure with the respective supervisor. This shows that, a good management of ethical behaviors requires a long term perspective and action and that quick fixes may not truly change moral disengagement as a means to fight corruption.

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Appendices

Appendix A - Questionnaire



Car@ Professional,

No âmbito da dissertação de Mestrado em Psicologia Social e das Organizações, no ISCTE-IUL - Instituto Universitário de Lisboa, foi criada uma equipa de investigação com o objetivo de compreender a relação líder-liderado dentro das organizações. Deste modo, vimos pedir a sua colaboração, através do preenchimento de um pequeno questionário, que lhe toma, aproximadamente, 10 minutos.

O questionário é anónimo, com o fim de assegurar a confidencialidade e anonimato dos participantes e não lhe trará nenhuma despesa nem riscos. Não existem respostas certas, nem erradas pois é a sua opinião, verdadeira, sincera e espontânea que realmente importa. Realçamos que a sua participação é, totalmente, voluntária.

Para começar, ser-lhe-ão colocadas algumas questões de carácter demográfico. Informamos que estes dados apenas serão utilizados para fins estatísticos.

Sexo

Masculino	Feminino
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Idade

Há quanto tempo trabalha na atual organização?

< 1 ano	1 a 3 anos	3 a 6 anos	> 6 anos
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Em que medida cada uma das seguintes afirmações descreve a sua chefia?
 Utilize a seguinte escala de resposta, em que 1 = Discordo totalmente e 5 = Concordo totalmente.

A minha chefia direta...

	Discordo totalmente	Discordo	Não concordo nem discordo	Concordo	Concordo totalmente
Ouve o que os colaboradores têm para dizer.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Disciplina os colaboradores que violam princípios éticos.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Conduz a sua vida pessoal de uma forma ética.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mantém o interesse dos colaboradores sempre em mente.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Toma decisões justas e equilibradas.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
É uma pessoa de confiança.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Discute valores éticos com os colaboradores.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dá o exemplo de como fazer as coisas da forma mais ética.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Define o sucesso, não apenas pelos resultados em si, mas também pela forma como estes foram obtidos.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quando toma decisões, questiona sobre o que é mais correto fazer.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Utilizando a escala abaixo, diga em que medida concorda com as seguintes afirmações.

	Discordo totalmente	Discordo	Não concordo nem discordo	Concordo	Concordo totalmente
Se as pessoas estão a trabalhar em más condições, não podem ser culpadas por se comportarem de forma agressiva.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Uma pessoa que apenas sugere a outra que quebre uma regra, não deve ser responsabilizada se esta o fizer.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Se as pessoas não forem adequadamente supervisionadas, não podem ser culpadas por se comportarem indevidamente.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ninguém pode ser culpado por utilizar linguagem incorreta, se outros também o fizerem.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
As pessoas não podem ser culpabilizadas por terem comportamentos indevidos se tiverem sido pressionadas para fazê-lo.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Tendo em consideração o seu local de trabalho, responda às seguintes questões:

	Discordo totalmente	Discordo	Não concordo nem discordo	Concordo	Concordo totalmente
Nesta organização cada um protege, acima de tudo, os seus próprios interesses.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nesta organização cada um se preocupa, acima de tudo, com o que é melhor para si próprio.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nesta organização não há espaço para os valores morais nem para a ética pessoal.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Espera-se que as pessoas façam tudo pela organização sem olhar às consequências.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
O que for melhor para todos na organização é aquilo que mais pesa nas decisões.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A principal preocupação é o bem estar de todos os que trabalham nesta organização.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A nossa principal preocupação é sempre o que é melhor para a outra pessoa.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nesta organização espera-se que se faça sempre o que é correto para os clientes e público.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nesta organização espera-se que as pessoas sigam as suas próprias crenças pessoais e morais.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cada pessoa nesta organização decide por si própria o que está certo e errado.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A preocupação mais importante nesta organização é respeitar o sentido individual do que está certo e errado.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nesta organização as pessoas guiam-se pela sua ética pessoal.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>





Exerce um cargo de chefia/tem pessoas que trabalham a seu cargo?

Sim	Não
-----	-----

Há quanto tempo trabalha diretamente com a sua chefia? (Responda em anos completos)

A sua chefia é...

Homem	Mulher
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Carregando na seta abaixo termina o seu questionário. Muito obrigada pela sua preciosa colaboração!



Obrigado pelo seu tempo para responder a esta pesquisa.
A sua resposta foi registrada.