

THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT AND MARKETING

Departmental Research Seminar



Which Way the Wind Blows: Differing Effects of Emotional Ambivalence on Morality By

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Date : 3 Mar 2021 (WED)

Time : 9 am – 10:30 am

Venue : Online via Zoom

Abstract

Applying the classic person by situation paradigm to understanding morality in organizations, we investigate two factors implicated in the extant literature as influential in moral outcomes: emotions and situational cues. We theorize that emotional ambivalence, the simultaneous experience of positive and negative emotions, likely plays an important role in the influence of situational cues. This emotional state is thought to be pervasive in organizations and also functional as those who are emotionally ambivalent are more likely to attend to social cues and engage in flexible thinking. Here we propose that emotional ambivalence will engender moral flexibility such that it will make people more receptive to situational cues, both those that are features of a decision and those that are introduced by organizations to promote their values. We predict and find evidence that in situations where morality is less salient, emotional ambivalence will decrease moral outcomes (Studies 1 and 2). However, in situations in which morality is more salient, emotional ambivalence will increase moral outcomes (Studies 3a and 3b). In situations where there are both economic and moral cues, we find that emotional ambivalence leads people to frame decisions as ethical decisions and to, therefore, make more moral choices (Study 4).

Dr Kristin Smith-Crowe is an Associate Professor of Organizational Behavior at the Questrom School of Business at Boston University. She has a Ph.D. in industrial-organizational psychology from Tulane University. Her research focuses on behavioral ethics, emotions, and interrater agreement. It has been published in journals such as the *Academy of Management Annals*, the *Academy of Management Review*, the *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *Organization Science*, *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, *Organizational Research Methods*, *Personnel Psychology*, and *Research in Organizational Behavior*. It has been featured in media outlets such as *The New York Times* and *Time*. I serve on the editorial boards of the *Academy of Management Review*, *Organization Science*, and *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*.

All interested are welcome.



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