KOC UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

WHEN DYSTOPIA BECOMES REAL:

DO PEOPLE JUDGE, BLAME, AND PUNISH OTHERS BASED ON THEIR MORAL CONVICTIONS?

MEHMET REHA OZGURER

MASTER OF ARTS IN PSYCHOLOGY

MASTER THESIS

ISTANBUL - 2018

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Mehmet Reha Ozgurer

ABSTRACT

Moral judgment is the outcome of moral reasoning process in which individuals reach a conclusion about rightness or wrongness of a specific act or person. Previous research in this area focused on how people judge, blame, and punish based on an agent's mental states (i.e., intentions, desires, and beliefs), behaviors of the agent, and the consequences of those behaviors (for a review, see Guglielmo, 2015). However, one important yet neglected question in this field is how individuals reach a moral judgment, when they encounter an agent who holds a moral conviction that does not accord with those of the individuals. In a within-subject design, 120 participants were presented four different moral scenarios that pitted *conviction* against *action* and asked to judge the agent in those scenarios in terms of the following aspects: the agent's moral character, wrongness of the agent's behavior, culpability of the agent, and the punishment that the agent deserved. Supporting our hypotheses, the results showed that participants judged, blamed, and punished the agent with bad conviction significantly more harshly, even in the absence of any harmful behavior. Moreover, it was found that moral character judgment relied on both the agent's conviction and behavior, whereas wrongness, blame, and punishment judgments were heavily dependent on the agent's action. Theoretical and practical implications of these findings are discussed, and directions for further research are established.

Keywords: Moral judgment, moral conviction, blame, punishment, harm

ÖZET

Ahlaki yargılama bireylerin spesifik bir davranış veya bir kişinin doğruluğu ya da yanlışlığı hakkında bir sonuca vardıkları ahlaki muhakeme ürünüdür. Bu alandaki çalışmalar insanların bir kişiyi o kişinin zihinsel durumlarını (yani, niyetler, istekler ve kanaatler), davranışlarını ve o davranışların sonuçlarını baz alarak nasıl yargıladığı, suçladığı ve cezalandırdığı konusu üzerine yoğunlaşmıştır (detaylı inceleme için, bkz. Guglielmo, 2015). Fakat, insanların kendi ahlaki inançlarıyla uyuşmayan bir kişiyle karşılaştıklarında onla alakalı ahlaki yargıya nasıl vardıkları sorusu bu alanda mühim ama araştırılmamış bir sorudur. Denek içi tasarım kullanılarak 120 katılımcıya *inanç* ile *davranışı* karşı karşıya getiren dört farklı ahlaki senaryo sunuldu ve katılımcılara her bir senaryodaki ana kişiyi dört açıdan yargılamaları istendi: kişinin ahlaki karakteri, kişinin davranışının yanlışlığı, kişinin suçluluğu ve kişinin hak ettiği ceza. Bulgular zararlı bir davranışın yokluğunda dahi katılımcıların senaryodaki kötü inançlı kişileri daha sert yargıladığı, suçladığı ve cezalandırdığı sonucunu göstererek bu çalışmanın hipotezlerini destekledi. Dahası, ahlaki karakter yargılamasının yargılanan kişinin hem ahlaki inancına hem de davranışına bağlı olduğu, yanlışlık, suçluluk ve ceza yargılamasının ise daha çok kişinin davranışıyla alakalı olduğu bulundu. Kuramsal ve tatbiki çıkarımlar tartışılıp, ileri araştırma için istikamet belirlenmiştir.

Anahtar kelimeler: ahlaki yargılama, ahlaki inanış, suçlama, ceza, zarar verme

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INTRODUCTION

1.1.Overview

As of the last century, the world has witnessed many atrocities, including two world wars. Currently, these large-scale wars have been replaced with the terrorist attacks with suicide bombings and beheading videos. However, none of these brutalities have been performed without a so-called justified cause. As the Nazi soldiers in Germany had a moral conviction that the extermination of the Jews was a gift to the world, members of ISIS firmly believe that the eradication of non-Muslims is a moral obligation. On the other hand, 20th century is the same era in which one of the most crucial concepts for the advancement of humanity, namely democracy, has become a prominent form of government. The ideas of liberty, equality, and fraternity overthrew the long-standing Ancien Régime in France and paved the way for democracy. Nearly 170 years later, propelled by the notion of human rights, the worldwide civil rights movements have assured a better future for all types of disadvantaged communities. Despite many striking differences between the proponents of brutal acts like the extermination of a group of people and those advocating democracy and the equal rights, these two groups are comparable in one specific aspect—that is moral conviction. Both of them firmly believe that their ideas are moral and crucial for the betterment of the world.

One question regarding moral conviction is how individuals judge, blame, and punish an agent who holds a belief that is profoundly offensive and atrocious to them. For example, how do people morally judge a person who believes that abortion should be banned? More specifically, what is the contribution of an individual's moral conviction relative to other elements such as the behavior of the agent in reaching a moral judgment about that individual? Do people judge the moral character of an agent—or want him or her to be punished—based on his or her moral convictions? This study will try to find empirical answers to such questions.

1.2. The Facets of Moral Judgment

Moral judgment refers to the outcome of moral reasoning process (Kohlberg, 1969) by which individuals conclude the degree of goodness or badness of an event, person, or behavior. In other words, it is the judgment reached in a moral context. Highly alluring for moral psychologists, the topic of moral judgment revolves around how children and adults judge a moral agent's behaviors based on the agent's mental states (e.g., intentions, desires, and beliefs) that cause those behaviors and their consequences.

The classical view on moral judgment has adopted an experimental paradigm which juxtaposes the role of intentions with the role of outcomes when arriving at a moral judgment. Convergent finding on when individuals judged the moral character of an agent was that the judgment process was particularly sensitive to the agent's mental states (Tannenbaum, Uhlmann, & Diermeier, 2011; Uhlmann, Zhu, & Tannenbaum, 2013; Uhlmann, Zhu, & Diermeier, 2014; Chakroff & Young, 2015). Regarding blame and punishment judgments, empirical studies offer more contradictory results. Findings of developmental studies suggest that whereas 3- and 4-years-old children focus on the outcome when punishing the agent, older children and adults take into account both the agent's mental states and the outcome before assigning a punishment (Zelazo, Helwig, & Lau, 1996). This was explained by a more developed theory of mind reasoning in the older children and adult group (Killen, Mulvey, Richardson, Jampoli &Woodward, 2011). On the other hand, research on *moral luck*, which refers to the situation where an agent's behavior or the consequences of that behavior depend on factors beyond the agent's control, yet he or she is still subjected to moral judgment by others (Williams & Nagel, 1976), showed that individuals might blame and punish a moral agent more harshly when the outcome was undesirable and harmful, regardless of the agent's mental states (Gino, Moore & Bazerman, 2009), especially when the action was emotionally aversive (Greene et al. 2014; Haidt, 2001). However, other findings revealed that blame and punishment judgments depended not only on outcomes but also on agent's mental states (Young, Cushman, Hauser & Saxe, 2007; Cushman, 2008). Many studies employed this albeit simplistic design on the moral reasoning of adults (Cushman, Dreber, Wang & Costa, 2009; Young & Saxe, 2011), and children (Vaish, Carpenter & Tomasello, 2010).

The original 2x2 design which pitted *intention* against *consequence* was recently revised as it overlooked the influence of an agent's *actions* on the judgment process. Cushman (2015) claimed that a person firstly intends to do something, then acts on that intention, and finally causes an outcome. Therefore, there may be a dissociation between judging an agent's moral character and judging actions of the agent. Indeed, some studies found that individuals may deem an agent's action permissible, yet still judge the agent's character as immoral in the same situation (Tannenbaum et al., 2011; Uhlmann et al., 2013). Besides *action*, *belief* and *desire* were later included in moral judgment studies. While *belief* refers to whether one believes that one's action will cause a harmful outcome, *desire* refers to whether the same person wishes to harm another person. Separation of intention into the components of *belief* and *desire* can be traced back to philosophical works of Donald Davidson (1963), and although these components were empirically examined in many contexts such as children's theory of mind (Batsch & Wellman, 1989) and folk theory of intentionality (Malle & Knobe, 1997), Cushman (2008) investigated the independent contributions of *belief* and *desire* in moral judgments of wrongness and blame. He found that individuals judged the wrongness of an agent's action based heavily on the agent's *belief* rather than *desire* or *consequence*, whereas blame judgment was affected by both *consequence* and the agent's mental states (i.e., *belief* and *desire*). On the other hand, studies have found that *desire* was the component by which people made inferences about the moral character of others (Inbar, Pizarro & Cushman, 2012). Overall, these studies demonstrated that different information components contribute to the moral judgment process differently.

According to moral psychologists, all the components of the intentional action model (i.e., intentions with desires and beliefs, actions, and outcomes) impact decision making via different cognitive mechanisms. Four types of moral judgment implicate different components. Moral judgments concerning individual's *character* have been shown to be sensitive to the agent's intentions and desires. In one study, Chakroff and Young (2015) found that individuals made person-based attributions for impure acts, whereas they made situation-based attributions for harmful acts. In other words, since impure acts represented immoral intentions, the agent's character was perceived as wicked, even though those acts did not cause a harmful outcome. Another type of

moral judgment, moral *wrongness*, concerns the agent's actions, and the mental states that cause those actions (Cushman, 2015). Moral wrongness is sensitive to whether the agent believes that he may be causally responsible for the harmful outcome he caused, and that if he acts in that way a harmful outcome may occur (Young, Nichols & Saxe, 2010). For example, Cushman (2008) found that doing something while believing that it would produce a harmful outcome resulted in harsher wrongness judgments and blame, even though the agent had no desire to cause harm. These findings showed that the effect of belief on moral wrongness judgment was more significant than the desire and consequences combined.

Blame judgment is the third type of judgment. The Path Model of Blame introduced by Malle, Guglielmo, and Monroe (2014) distinguishes blame judgment from related concepts such as wrongness judgment, anger, and event evaluation. The model postulates that people blame others in varying degrees based on the causality between the actions and the agent, intentions, and justifications of the agent and on whether the agent has the obligation and the capacity to prevent the norm-violating outcome. Therefore, although both wrongness and blame judgments are mainly influenced by an agent's actions, the former targets the behavior, whereas the latter requires the evaluation of the the agent's mental states who displayed that behavior as well. For instance, one study demonstrated that participants blamed an agent who allocated resources unfairly in an economic game significantly harsher when the agent did so on purpose, yet blame was mitigated in the case of accidental unfair allocation (Cushman, Dreber, Wang, & Costa, 2009). Furthermore, although theory of blame emphasizes the necessity of agent causality, intentionality, and capacity (Malle, Guglielmo, & Monroe, 2014) for the occurrence of blame judgment, previous empirical findings showed that blame may be assigned even when the agent does not have the intention to do harm nor the capacity to prevent it (Woolfolk, Doris, & Darley, 2006), and there may be a causal disconnection between the agent's actions and the harmful consequence (Inbar, Pizarro, & Cushman, 2012). In both studies, what determined the assignment of blame was the agent's immoral desires.

Lastly, fourth type of judgment is *punishment*, which is influenced by outcomes more so than other information components (Cushman, 2008). Although an agent's intentions may enhance or mitigate the assignment of punishment (Zelazo et

al., 1996; Young et al., 2007), the widely repeated pattern is that people punish an agent to the extent that he or she is causally responsible for harmful outcome (Cushman et al., 2009), and the degree of punishment depends on the degree of the harm (Carlsmith, Darley & Robinson, 2002). In their study, Gino, Moore and Bazerman (2008) significantly showed this outcome bias in moral judgment process. During the experiment, the same behaviors produced bad and good outcomes, and the outcomes were entirely determined by chance. However, participants punished the behaviors that produced bad outcomes more harshly. The results were the same, even when the participants found the behaviors acceptable before they saw the consequences. This study was crucial, since it showed that when participants did not know the intentions of the agents, they tended to judge the ethicality of the agent's behavior and assign a punishment to him based solely on the outcome that he caused, without taking into account what desires or beliefs might underlie his behavior.

Though each component of the intentional action model mainly relates to different moral judgment mechanisms (i.e., moral character judgment, moral wrongness judgment, assignment of punishment, and blame judgment), one cannot say that these are entirely dissociated components and judgments, since a dynamic interplay occurs between them. For example, Cushman (2008) found that belief had more effect on wrongness judgment, but desires and consequences influenced it to some extent as well. Moreover, the existence of any of the components is not a requirement for moral judgment. In the influential study conducted by Inbar, Pizarro, and Cushman (2012), empirical findings showed that one could reach moral judgment even in the absence of both intention and outcome brought about by the agent. They found that the perceived desires of a person could influence one's moral judgment, even if he did not intend to cause the harmful outcome. Participants were more likely to morally judge an agent who benefited from another's misfortune (e.g., earthquake) harshly, even when he had no control over that misfortune, and the reason for this adverse moral judgment was the perception of a wicked desire. In other words, actions which led the person to benefit from another's misfortune resulted in harsher moral judgments, since participants thought that those actions would engender a desire for harmful events in the moral agent. If there was no reason to wish for a harmful event, then benefiting from harm was not seen as blameworthy. This finding shows that when

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judging an agent's character, people may employ the agent's desire as a sufficient source of information.

The findings of Inbar, Pizarro, and Cushman (2012) allow us to extend the intentional action model. In daily life, people do not judge others based only on their intentions, but also on their convictions, especially as they relate to moral and political issues. This type of judgment may result from that moral conviction, like action, imply one's desires about how people and societies should be, which in turn, allows others to make inferences about their moral character. For instance, when one has a good moral conviction on gay marriage (i.e., "Gay marriage is morally right"), it may imply that he or she wants gay marriage to be legalized all around the world. This connection begs the question whether convictions might be another component of the intentional action model that causes people to judge others. Therefore, the following section will discuss the features and several aspects of moral convictions that may be considered as influential in the judgment process.

1.3. Moral Conviction

Moral conviction refers to a firm and subjectively undeniable belief that something is moral or immoral (Skitka, 2002; Skitka & Mullen, 2002). Skitka and colleagues (2005) found that participants with strong moral convictions were less tolerant to attitudinally dissimilar others and preferred to be more socially and physically distant from them. This effect is brought about by several distinguishing features of moral convictions, which were explained in detail in the integrated theory of moral conviction (ITMC, Skitka, Bauman & Mullen, 2008; Skitka, 2010). First is the universality feature, which refers to people's tendency to think that their moral convictions should be applied to everyone in every culture. For instance, one may think that abortion must be banned not only in their home country but also worldwide, as it is morally wrong under all circumstances. The second feature of moral convictions is that the intensity of emotions experienced increases when the issue at hand is deemed moral (Greene, Sommerville, Nystrom, Darley, & Cohen, 2001). In one study, Tetlock, Kristel, Elson, Green, and Lerner (2000) found that people reacted to taboo-tradeoffs (e.g., spending $1,000,000 for a hospital's needs rather than using

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it for a five-year-old who needs a liver transplant to live) with moral outrage, while there was no such effect in tragic-tradeoffs (e.g., saving the life of either a five-year-old boy who needs a liver transplant or an equally sick six-year-old boy who needs a liver transplant). Since the taboo-tradeoffs include a moral decision (while the tragic-tradeoffs do not), this finding suggests that decisions concerning moral issues induce intensified emotional reactions. Thirdly, moral convictions provide sufficient motivation and justification for further behavior. People join political parties or non-governmental organizations to make the world a place congruous with their moral convictions. Likewise, wars, terrorist attacks, and many inter-group conflicts occur with the motivation and justification induced by strong moral beliefs and attitudes. The last feature of moral convictions is that they are experienced by people "as if they were readily observable, objective properties of situations, or as facts about the world" (Skitka, 2010, p. 269). For example, Goodwin and Darley (2008) showed that participants deemed ethical statements (e.g., "anonymously donating a significant proportion of one's income to charity is a morally good action") significantly more objective than social conventions (e.g., "wearing pajamas and bathrobe to a seminar meeting is wrong behavior") and tastes (e.g., "Shakespeare was a better writer than is Dan Brown"). Likewise, in social-cognitive domain theory, Elliot Turiel (1978) asserted that moral issues are conceptually distinct from social conventions in such a way that the former is deemed non-negotiable and objective. Indeed, one study found that preschool children perceived transgression of school's social conventions as wrong only if a rule pertaining to the transgressor's act existed in the school, whereas they found the acts in moral domain to be immutable and independent from external authority (Nucci & Turiel, 1978). Besides, the perceived objectivity of moral convictions surfaces when people are asked to justify their convictions. For instance, in a seminal study, Haidt (2001) presented a scenario in which two siblings had sexual intercourse which did not cause any observable or subtle harm and asked his participants to rate the behavior's moral wrongness. Even though most participants found the action of the siblings morally wrong, they could not provide a reasonable explanation when they were asked to justify their moral stance towards incest.

When people make moral judgments, they know that once individuals hold a moral conviction on any issue, the aforementioned features of moral convictions lead

them to have specific intentions and desires, which, in turn, increase the tendency of acts pertaining to those intentions and desires. In one study, Skitka and Bauman (2008) found that participants who had stronger moral convictions were more likely to vote. More interestingly, even though the right-wing ideology is widely known as being motivated by strong moral and political convictions, results showed that the influence of moral convictions on the intention to vote was the same in people with left- and right-wing ideologies alike. Another study by Morgan, Skitka, and Wisneski (2010) showed the strong influence of moral convictions on intention by finding that moral convictions increased the intention of individuals to vote in the 2008 presidential election in the United States. Furthermore, the claim that moral convictions imply desires was shown empirically (Skitka & Mullen, 2002; Skitka & Bauman, 2008) and in philosophical tradition (Kramer, 2009). For instance, in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, a survey of 119 Jewish-Israelis found that strong moral convictions led participants to have a desire that Israeli government should implement more polarized policies. (Reifen et al., 2014). In their study, participants with a right-wing political ideology supported retribution against the Palestinian attack and accepted collateral damage to the Palestinians more, when their positions on the conflict were held with moral conviction. Likewise, the participants with a left-wing political ideology were more likely to support compromise if they perceived their stance on the conflict to be a moral issue.

These studies suggest that moral convictions are firm and intense beliefs that dramatically influence political behavior, inter-group relations, and moral judgments, which imply that moral convictions may be another information component in the intentional action model. The primary construct that enables people to judge the character of an agent is the perceived desires of the agent (Cushman, 2015), and moral character judgment is sensitive to the intentions of the agent, since the intentions are the most robust indicators of the agent's desires. Moreover, even in the absence of perceived intentions and outcomes, the action of the agent, too, can become a source for moral character judgment to the extent that the action implies the agent's desires (Inbar, Pizarro & Cushman, 2012). Because moral convictions are affect-laden and perceived as objective and universal, we believe that moral convictions and beliefs involve much stronger desires for specific outcomes to occur than do the intentions

and actions. Hence, we expect that an agent's conviction on a moral issue would significantly influence how the others would judge the moral character of the agent.

1.4. Present Study

A review of the psychological literature on moral convictions and moral judgment shows that there is a limited body of research investigating the influence of moral convictions on moral judgment and the psychological processes underlying conviction-based judgment. To shed light on this topic, this study proposed two interrelated hypotheses. Firstly, we predicted that moral convictions of the agent will be a sufficient source of information for people during the judgment process. More specifically, in the absence of any bad intentions, actions, and outcomes, people will judge the moral character and the behavior of an agent, and blame and punish the agent more harshly when the agent's conviction on a moral issue opposes those of the people. Previous studies showed that individuals perceived moral convictions to be motivational guides (Skitka, 2010), and people preferred to be physically and socially distant from and had less tolerance towards attitudinally dissimilar others (Skitka, Bauman & Sargis, 2005). It is because, as the integrated theory of moral conviction stated (Skitka, Bauman & Mullen, 2008), moral convictions are emotion-laden beliefs, and people deem those beliefs universal and objective. Moreover, Kant's retributive theory of punishment (1790/1952) claims that people punish others to restore the scales of justice unbalanced by the violations of societal rules (e.g., moral trespass), which was supported by empirical studies (Carlsmith, Darley & Robinson, 2002), whereas restorative theory of punishment by Jeremy Bentham (1843/1962) and John Stuart Mill (1871/1979) asserts that punishment is assigned to minimize the likelihood of potential future harm (Butterfield, Trevino & Ball, 1997). Consequently, moral convictions may lead people to perceive the conviction of an agent as a threatening cue which tells that the agent may be motivated to display a harmful behavior in the future parallel with his convictions, and thus, they may want to punish him based solely on his moral beliefs to prevent potential future harm. Alternatively, punishment may result from that individuals' thinking that an agent deserves the punishment because of holding a bad moral conviction.

The second hypothesis is that moral character judgment will be sensitive to moral conviction of an agent in the absence of any information on the agent's intention, whereas wrongness, blame, and punishment judgments will be more sensitive to the agent's actions. In other words, people will blame and punish the agent more harshly when the agent displays a harmful behavior regardless of his or her moral conviction, yet they will judge the character of the agent more harshly based mostly on his or her moral conviction more so than the behavior.

CHAPTER 2

METHOD

2.1. Pilot Study

We conducted a pilot research to select the moral topics that would be used in the vignettes of the main study. This selection was important because empirical studies showed that whether a concept was perceived as morally relevant depended on the subjective interpretation of the individuals (Skitka, 2010). Likewise, descriptive definition of morality states that it refers to specific rules and principles of conduct in a society, group, or institution (Gert & Gert, 2002). For instance, euthanasia which is a disputed concept in the West is unarguably wrong and prohibited in the Islamic countries. Therefore, if we presented a scenario on an issue that we deemed moral (e.g., nepotism), there would be a probability that the issue might not be perceived as moral by the participants, which in turn, could confound the results. Moreover, we wanted to select topics that were seen as the most offending and unacceptable by the participants to reveal the full effect of convictions on moral judgment.

2.1.1. Participants

40 adult participants ($M_{age} = 22.4$, $SD_{age} = 1.89$; 15 men, 25 women) who were native Turkish speakers were recruited via WhatsApp. Most of them were undergraduate and graduate students from different universities. No incentive was given to the participants. Other than the requirement of being a native Turkish speaker, there was no exclusion criteria. Informed consent was taken from each participant.

2.1.2. Measures

The study was conducted with the online survey software, Koç Qualtrics. There were 36 concepts. Some examples were incest, slavery, nepotism and same-sex

marriage. Based on the concepts, there were two questions: (1) *To what extent do you think the following concepts are related to morality?* (2) *How morally wrong do you find the following?* For the answers to the first question, we used a 6-point response scale fixed at 1 with "Not at all," and at 6 with "Very much." For the answers to the second question, we used a 6-point response scale fixed at 1 with "Not morally wrong under any circumstances" and at 6 with "Morally wrong under all circumstances." Higher rating scores on the first question meant that the concept was highly relevant to morality according to the participant, while higher rating scores in the second question meant that the participant saw the relevant concept as more immoral.

2.1.3. Procedure

At the beginning of the experiment, participants' demographic information like age and gender was taken. After that, they were presented with 36 concepts which were generally found either loathed or controversial in many societies. Then, they responded to two questions about the extent to which the concepts were moral issues for the participants and how morally wrong those concepts were. After filling out the 6-point response scale for all the concepts, the pre-test study ended.

2.1.4. Results

Findings of the pilot study showed that participants did not perceive the issues of suicide ($M = 2.37$), drug use ($M = 2.40$), euthanasia ($M = 2.64$), and same-sex marriage ($M = 3.00$) as morally relevant but deemed other 32 issues moral. Eighteen concepts were rated above 5.5 out of 6 by the participants according to their degree of immorality (see Figure 1). We used 5.5 as the cut-off value for the category of 'the most offensive and unacceptable moral issues'. Among them, we chose four concepts (i.e., honor killing, racism, domestic violence, and child marriage) to use in this study. Our selection criteria were based on two justifications. First, we thought that these concepts were more culturally relevant in Turkey so that Turkish participants would be able to imagine the situation in the scenarios better. Second, creating a realistic

scenario on those concepts was more feasible than making up stories about other high-rated concepts such as pedophilia, rape or torture.

Perception of Immorality
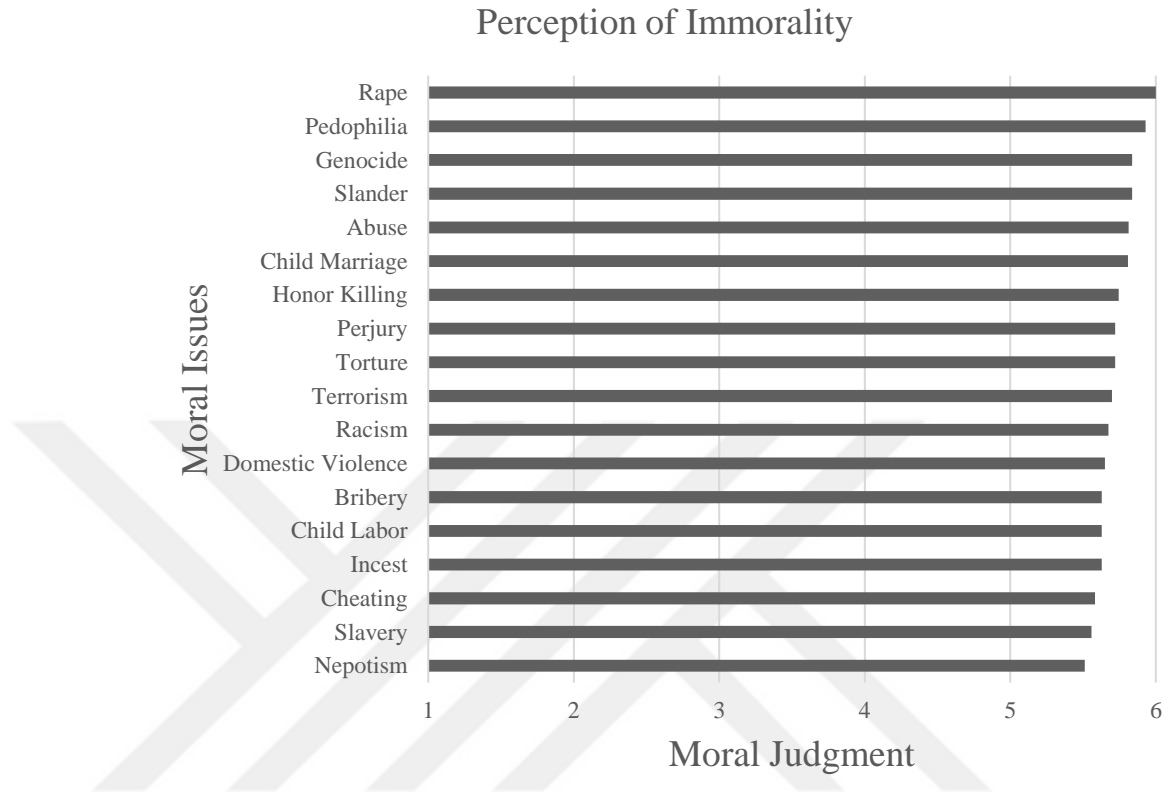
Figure 1. Mean judgment of morality for each moral issue.

2.2. Main Study

2.2.1. Participants

Based on GPower software program designed to calculate the desired sample size for an experiment, we recruited 120 adult participants (50% women, 33% men, 17% other) in the experiment via WhatsApp for a medium effect size ($f^2 = .15$). The age of the participants varied between 18 and 60 ($M = 24.9$, $SD = 5.5$) and most of them were undergraduate and graduate students from different universities. Other than the requirement of being a native Turkish speaker, there was no exclusion criteria. Informed consent was taken from each participant.

2.2.2. Measures

To measure moral judgment, participants were presented with four hypothetical moral situations. Each situation had different a moral theme chosen based on the results of the pilot study. We used a 2x2 design in which the vignettes included background information, the agent's moral conviction on a moral issue, and the behavior of the agent. All the scenarios under each component (i.e., moral conviction and action) included two opposing versions of each other. Therefore, there were 16 unique scenarios in total. Participants were randomly assigned to four scenarios from this set of 16 in a way that each subject viewed each of the four unique moral themes and each of the four unique combinations of factors only once. This design was employed and proved efficient in previous empirical studies (Cushman, 2008; Cushman, Young & Hauser, 2006).

An example of the vignettes with all the combinations is as follows:

Background Information

A.T. is an employee at a governmental office, and he has been married to N.T. for five years. One night, they have a fierce argument about an issue.

Conviction

A.T. believes that a man has the right to beat his wife if necessary, and thus, wife beating is MORALLY RIGHT.

A.T. believes that that a man by no means has the right to beat his wife, and thus, wife beating is MORALLY WRONG.

Action

A.T. rages during the argument and strikes his wife hard in the face and the body.

A.T. acts calmly during the argument and does not show any type of violent behavior toward his wife.

To maintain the flow of the vignette, we added contrast clauses such as *despite* and reason clauses such as *therefore.* An example of vignette with bad conviction and harmful action is as follows:

A.T. is an employee at a governmental office, and he has been married to N.T. for five years. One night, they have a fierce argument about an issue. A.T. believes that a man has the right to beat his wife, if necessary, and thus, wife beating is MORALLY RIGHT. Therefore, A.T. rages during the argument and struck his wife hard in the face and the body.

We described the agent's conviction as *morally right* or *morally wrong* rather than specifying it as merely *right* or *wrong* since the concepts of rightness and wrongness do not automatically imply moral values and may be understood in pragmatic or hedonic terms. For instance, Van Bavel, Packer, Haas and Cunningham (2012) found that the participants evaluated the actions construed as morally right or wrong more quickly than those construed as pragmatically or hedonically right or wrong.

There were six forced response questions regarding the moral agent in the scenario. The first question was: *How moral do you find the character of A.T.?* For the response, we used a 6-point scale fixed at 1 with "Extremely Immoral" and at 6 with "Extremely Moral." The second question was: "*How morally wrong do you find the behavior of A.T.?"* For the answer, we used a 6-point scale fixed at 1 with "Absolutely Wrong" and at 6 with "Absolutely Right." After that, they were asked, "*Do you think that A.T. is morally blameworthy for his behavior? If so, how morally blameworthy do you find A.T.?"* The participants answered the question on a 6-point scale fixed at 1 with "Absolutely Blameless" and at 6 with "Absolutely Blameworthy." Fourthly, we asked the participants, "*Do you think that A.T. deserves punishment? If he deserves, what should be the severity of the punishment?*" The participants answered the question on a 6-point scale fixed at 1 with "No Punishment" and at 6 with "Most Severe Punishment." The fifth question was: "*Do you think that A.T.'s wife gets harmed at the end?*" This question had two options, (1) "Yes, she gets harmed," and (2) "No, she does not get harmed*".* This was asked to see whether participants automatically expected an occurrence of bad outcome after a harmful

action, since expectation of a bad outcome could present some implications which would be discussed in detail. Last question was as follows: "*What is the probability do you think that A.T. will harm somebody in the future*?". With this question we wanted the participants to provide a possible justification in the case of the presence of conviction-based blame and punishment. For the answer, we used a 6-point scale fixed at 1 with "No Chance" and at 6 with "A Hundred Percent". To avoid order effects, all the scenario themes and the combinations (e.g., good conviction-harmful action) were counterbalanced. The questions about blame and punishment were reverse coded to prevent potential confusion during analysis and interpretation.

Vignettes, questionnaires, and instructions were presented to the participants in Turkish (for the English translations of the vignettes as well as the original versions in Turkish, see Appendix A).

2.2.3. Procedure

The online link to the experiment automatically formed by Koç Qualtrics was used to recruit the sample. On personal computers participants in each group clicked the link and started the experiment.

At the beginning of the experiment, informed consent and demographic information (i.e., age, gender, and educational status) were taken, and instructions about the experiment were given to the participants. After that, they were presented with four hypothetical scenarios in which they saw the agent's moral conviction on an issue and his behavior. Besides, the participants read the background information on the agent, yet this was held constant across the scenarios, thus had no impact on the results. Then, they answered five questions on a 6-point response scale and one multiple choice question. After they answered these questions, the experiment ended.

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

2x2 repeated measures ANOVA was employed to see the main effects of and the interactions between the factors of *action* and *conviction* on character, wrongness, blame and punishment judgments, respectively.

3.1. Effect of Conviction and Action on Character Judgment

The results showed that there was a significant main effect of *conviction* and *action* on character judgment process. The participants judged the agent with good conviction as having significantly higher moral character ($M = 3.83$, $SE = .06$) than the agent with bad conviction ($M = 2.29$, $SE = .09$, $F(1, 119) = 231.88$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta2 = .66$). Also, they judged the agent with harmless action as having significantly higher moral character ($M = 4.19$, $SE = .08$) than the agent with harmful action ($M = 1.93$, $SE = .08$, $F(1, 119) = 459.79$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta2 = .79$).

Furthermore, there was a significant interaction between *action* and *conviction* on character judgment, ($F(1, 119) = 76.39$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta2 = .391$) (Figure 2a). Pairwise comparison analysis revealed that when the agent's action was harmless, his character was judged as significantly more immoral if his conviction was bad ($M = 2.98$, $SE = .13$) compared to when his conviction was good ($M = 5.4$, $SE = .08$, $p < .001$). On the other hand, when the agent's action was harmful, his character was judged as significantly more moral if his conviction was good ($M = 2.29$, $SE = .11$) compared to when his conviction was bad ($M = 1.6$, $SE = .09$, $p < .001$). Moreover, when the agent's conviction was good, his character was judged as significantly more immoral if his action was harmful ($M = 2.26$, $SE = .11$) compared to when his action was harmless ($M = 5.4$, $SE = .08$, $p < .001$), and when the agent's conviction was bad, his character was judged as significantly more moral when his action was good ($M = 2.98$, $SE = .13$) compared to when his action was bad ($M = 1.6$, $SE = .09$, $p < .001$).

Figure 2a. Mean character judgment scores for each factor combination.

3.2. Effect of Conviction and Action on Wrongness Judgment

Regarding the wrongness judgment, there was a significant main effect of *action* and *conviction* on the judgment process. The participants judged the agent with bad conviction as acting significantly more wrong ($M = 2.87$, $SE = .09$) than the agent with good conviction ($M = 3.46$, $SE = .04$, $F(1, 119) = 39,80$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta2 = .251$). Also, they judged the agent with harmful action as acting significantly more wrong ($M = 1.2$, $SE = .04$) than the agent with harmless action ($M = 5.13$, $SE = .09$, $F(1, 119) = 1402.74$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta2 = .92$).

Similar to character judgment, there was a significant interaction between *action* and *conviction* on wrongness judgment, ($F(1, 119) = 33.6$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta2 = .258$) (Figure 2b). Pairwise comparison analysis demonstrated that when the agent's action was harmless, his action was judged as significantly more wrong if his conviction was bad ($M = 4.57$, $SE = .17$) compared to when his conviction was good ($M = 5.68$, $SE = .06$, $p < .001$). On the other hand, when the agent's action was harmful, his action was judged as more wrong if his conviction was bad ($M = 1.18$, $SE = .05$) compared to when his conviction was good ($M = 1.23$, $SE = .06$). However,

this difference was not significant, $p = .338$. Furthermore, as expected, when the agent's conviction was good, his action was judged as significantly more wrong if his action was harmful ($M = 1.23$, $SE = .04$) compared to when his action was harmless ($M = 5.68$, $SE = .06$, $p < .001$), and when the agent's conviction was bad, his behavior was judged as significantly more moral when his action was good ($M = 4.57$, $SE = .17$) compared to when his action was bad ($M = 1.18$, $SE = .05$, $p < .001$).
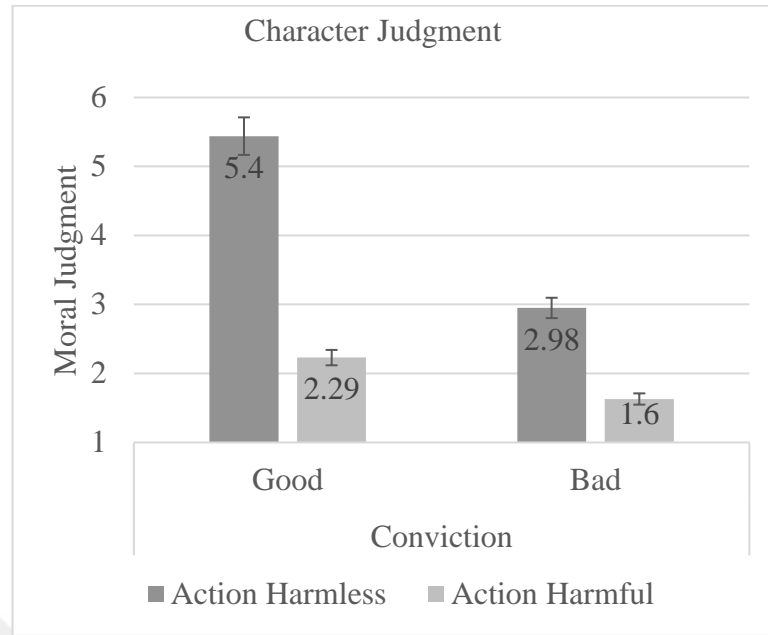

Figure 2b. Mean wrongness judgment scores for each factor combination.

3.3. Effect of Conviction and Action on Blame Judgment

Another significant main effect of *conviction* and *action* was found for the blame judgment process. The participants judged the agent with bad conviction as significantly more blameworthy ($M = 3.07$, $SE = .09$) than the agent with good conviction ($M = 3.86$, $SE = .06$, $F(1, 119) = 56,09$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta2 = .32$). Also, they judged the agent with harmful action as significantly more blameworthy ($M = 1.85$, $SE = .1$) than the agent with harmless action ($M = 5.08$, $SE = .08$, $F(1, 119) = 582.30$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta2 = .83$).

Furthermore, there was a significant interaction between *action* and c*onviction* on blame judgment, ($F(1, 119) = 28.52$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta2 = .15$) (Figure 2c).

Pairwise comparison analysis revealed interesting results. The first finding was that when the agent's action was harmless, he was judged as significantly more blameworthy if his conviction was bad ($M = 4.43$, $SE = .15$) compared to when his conviction was good ($M = 5.72$, $SE = .06$, $p < .001$). Secondly, when the agent's action was harmful, he was judged as significantly more blameworthy if his conviction was bad ($M = 1.7$, $SE = .12$) compared to when his conviction was good ($M = 2.01$, $SE = .12$, $p < .05$). Lastly, as expected, when the agent's conviction was good, he was judged as significantly more blameworthy if his action was harmful ($M = 2.01$, $SE = .12$) compared to when his action was harmless ($M = 5.72$, $SE = .06$, $p < .001$), and when the agent's conviction was bad, he was blamed significantly less harshly when his action was good ($M = 4.43$, $SE = .13$) compared to when his action was bad ($M = 1.7$, $SE = .09$, $p < .001$).

Figure 2c. Mean blame judgment scores for each factor combination.

3.4. Effect of Conviction and Action on Punishment Judgment

Finally, the statistical analysis on punishment judgment yielded a significant main effect of *action* and *conviction* on the judgment process. The participants punished the agent with bad conviction significantly more harshly ($M = 3.64$, $SE =$

.08) than the agent with good conviction ($M = 4.23$, $SE = .06$, $F(1, 119) = 38.26$, $p <$ .001, partial $\eta2 = .243$). Also, they punished the agent with harmful action significantly more harshly ($M = 2.26$, $SE = .09$) than the agent with harmless action ($M = 5.61$, $SE = .06$, $F(1, 119) = 987.41$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta2 = .892$). There was not any significant interaction between action and conviction on punishment judgment, ($F(1, 119) = .752$, $p = .357$, partial $\eta2 = .007$) (Figure 2d). Pairwise comparison analysis demonstrated that when the agent's action was harmless, he was punished more harshly, if his conviction was bad ($M = 5.28$, $SE = .11$) compared to when his conviction was good ($M = 5.94$, $SE = .02$, $p < .001$). Secondly, when the agent's action was harmful, he was punished more harshly, if his conviction was bad ($M = 2.01$, $SE = .11$) compared to when his conviction was good ($M = 2.52$, $SE = .11$, $p < .001$). Lastly, as expected, when the agent's conviction was good, he was punished more harshly, if his action was harmful ($M = 2.52$, $SE = .11$) compared to when his action was harmless ($M = 5.94$, $SE = .02$, $p < .001$), and when the agent's conviction was bad, he was punished less harshly when his action was good ($M = 5.28$, $SE = .11$) compared to when his action was bad ($M = 2.01$, $SE = .11$, $p < .001$).
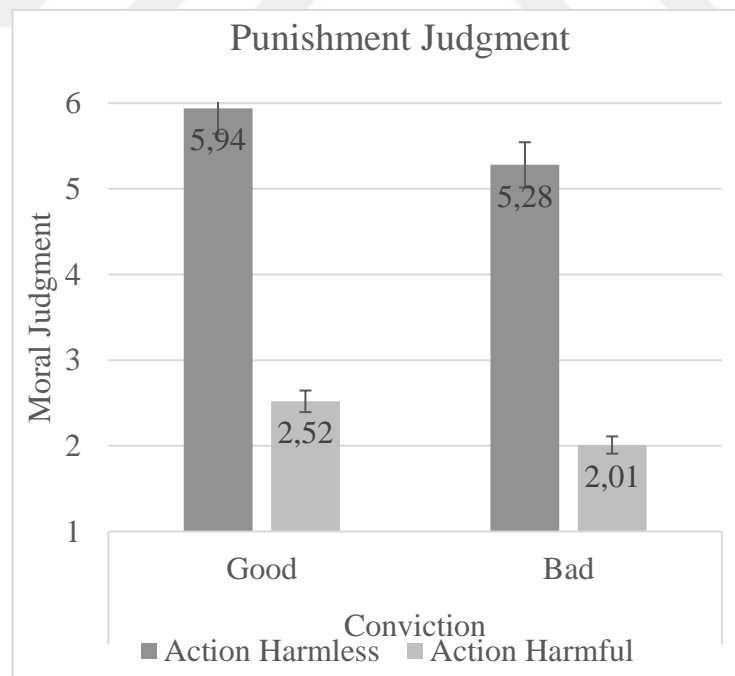

Figure 2d. Mean punishment judgment scores for each factor combination.

3.5. Relative Contribution of Conviction and Action in Average Moral Judgments of Different Scenarios

In addition to calculating the F statistic, *p*-value and, effect size as partial $\eta2$ for each main effect and interaction, the sum of squares for each within-context main effect and interaction was computed as a proportion of the total variability. In other words, it was asked, "What is the relative contribution of conviction and action in forming the average moral judgments of different scenarios? What proportion of the total variability within a context does each factor account for?" (Cushman, 2008).

Results showed that for judgments of character, the *action* factor accounted for 43% of the variability, while the *conviction* factor accounted for 20% of the variability and 37% of the variability was accounted for by the interaction and the error (see Appendix D). Secondly, for judgments of wrongness, the *action* factor accounted for 80% of the variability, while the *conviction* factor accounted for 2% of the variability, and 18% of the variability was accounted for by the interaction and the error (See Appendix E). Thirdly, for judgments of blame, the *action* factor accounted for 65% of the variability, while the *conviction* factor accounted for 4% of the variability, and 31% of the variability was accounted for by the interaction and the error (see Appendix F). Lastly, for judgments of punishment, the *action* factor accounted for 76% of the variability, while the *conviction* factor accounted for 2% of the variability, and 22% of the variability was accounted for by the error (see Appendix G).

3.6. Differences Between Conviction and Action Regarding to Their Sensitivities to the Judgment Types

The character, wrongness, blame, and punishment judgments were compared by combining data sets and including judgment type as an additional within-context factor (see Figure 3) in order to see the difference between *conviction* and *action* regarding to their sensitivities to the judgment types. This analysis was employed in previous research, and proved to be useful (Cushman, 2008). 2x2x4 analysis of variance revealed a significant condition-by-factor interaction for conviction, ($F(3, 357) = 33.23$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta2 = .218$), and action, ($F(3, 357) = 58.75$, $p < .001$,

partial $\eta2 = .331$). These interactions demonstrated that participants used information about convictions and actions differently when evaluating character, wrongness, blame, and punishment. In the absence of action, the agent's character was exposed to the significantly harshest judgment ($M = 2.29$, $SE = .09$) among all conditions, if the agent had a bad conviction. On the other hand, in the absence of conviction, the wrongness judgment had the harshest score ($M = 1.2$, $SE = .04$) among all conditions, if the agent displayed a harmful behavior. Moreover, there was a significant main effect of condition, ($F(3, 357) = 78,18$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta2 = .396$). In general, punishment judgment was significantly more lenient ($M = 3.94$, $SE = .05$) than character ($M = 3.06$, $SE = .06$), wrongness ($M = 3.17$, $SE = .05$), and blame ($M = 3.47$, $SE = .06$) judgments. Same pattern was observed in the condition-by-conviction and condition-by-action interactions. Punishment judgment had the highest score in the no-action/bad-conviction ($M = 3.64$, $SE = .08$) and no-conviction/harmful-action ($M = 2.26$, $SE = .09$) combinations.

Furthermore, the results showed a three-way interaction between conviction, action, and condition, ($F(3, 357) = 17,35$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta2 = .127$). Character judgment ($M = 2.98$, $SE = .13$) was significantly harsher than wrongness ($M = 4.57$, $SE = .17$), blame ($M = 4.43$, $SE = .15$), and punishment ($M = 5.28$, $SE = .11$) judgments for the agent who displayed a harmless behavior but adopted a bad conviction. On the other hand, when the agent adopted a good conviction but displayed a harmful behavior, wrongness judgment ($M = 1.23$, $SE = .04$) was significantly harsher than character ($M = 2.26$, $SE = .11$), blame ($M = 2.01$, $SE = .12$), and punishment ($M = 2.52$, $SE = .12$) judgments. However, character judgment did not significantly differ from blame and punishment judgments in the same combination, whereas there was a significant difference between blame and punishment judgments.
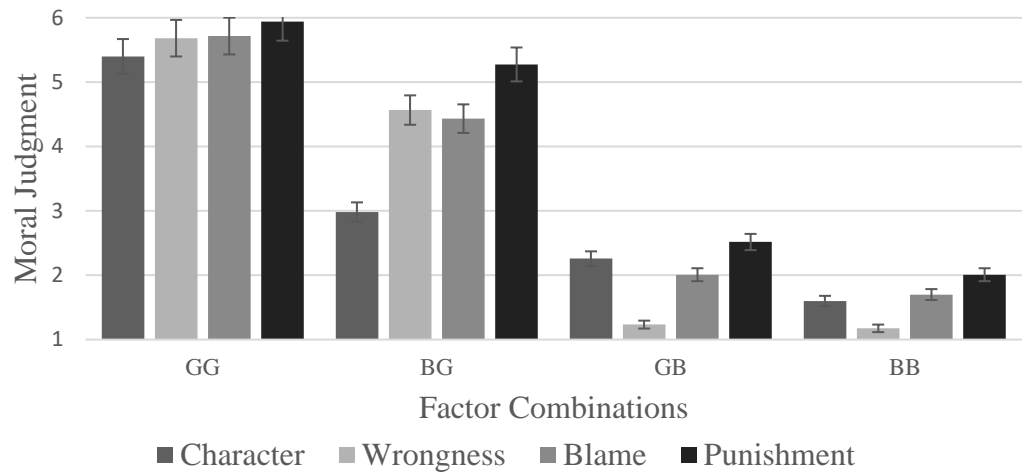
Figure 3. Direct comparison of mean moral judgment for each scenario context grouped by combination of conviction and action.

3.7. Correlation Between Anticipation of Future Harm and Punishment Judgment

A Pearson's product-moment correlation was run to see whether one's anticipation of future harm based on the agent's bad conviction predicted punishment assigned to the agent. Results showed that there was a low, positive correlation between anticipation of future harm and punishment in bad conviction and good action condition ($r = .319$, $N = 120$, $p < .001$). We did not conduct the same test for other conditions, since the correlations in those conditions were not relevant to our prediction that people might punish others based on their bad convictions to prevent potential future harm.

3.8. Differences Between Scenarios Regarding to Judgment Scores

To see whether there was a significant difference in judgment scores between scenarios, analysis of variance (and Welch's analysis of variance for the conditions that violated homogeneity of variance assumption) was conducted. Results showed that there was a significant difference between scenarios in the following conditions:

character judgment of good conviction/bad action (GB) ($F(3, 116) = 8,14$, $p < .001$), bad conviction/bad action (BB), ($F(3, 116) = 5,59$, $p < .001$), and good conviction/good action (GG) ($F(3, 116) = 5,75$, $p < .001$), wrongness judgment of bad conviction/good action (BG) ($F(3, 116) = 3,91$, $p < .005$), wrongness judgment of GG, ($F(3, 116) = 11,82$, $p < .001$), blame judgment of BG, ($F(3, 116) = 3,01$, $p < .05$), punishment judgment of BB, ($F(3, 116) = 5,13$, $p < .005$), and punishment judgment of GB ($F(3, 116) = 5,01$, $p < .005$). Multiple comparison results showed the scenarios that significantly differed from each other in terms of judgment scores (see Appendix H for multiple comparisons table).

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

4.1. General Conclusions

This study investigates the influence of an agent's moral convictions on the psychological mechanisms underlying judgments of character, blame, and punishment. Findings provide clear evidence for our hypotheses. Firstly, it was predicted that even in the absence of any harmful behavior people would perceive an agent's character as significantly more immoral, and the agent's behavior as significantly more wrong, when the agent's conviction is bad. Indeed, with regard to character judgment, results show that an agent who displays a harmless behavior is judged as having more immoral character, when the agent adopts a bad conviction compared to when he or she has a good conviction. In other words, an agent's strong moral beliefs become a cue when judging the agent's moral character, even in the absence of any harmful action. Moreover, having good convictions significantly mitigate harshness of character judgment towards the agent, when he or she acted harmfully. The underlying reason for this finding may be that moral convictions imply an agent's desires, which dramatically influences character and personality judgment (Funder, 2004; Chakroff & Young, 2015; Inbar, Pizarro & Cushman, 2012). For instance, when one has a conviction that child marriage is moral, it implies that one may have a desire for the legalization of child marriage. Both philosophical accounts and empirical results support this line of thinking. In his book, *Moral Realism as a Moral Doctrine,* Kramer (2009) claims that moral convictions are beliefs which are "quasi-conceptually connected to moral desires" (p. 282). Likewise, one's strong moral convictions may enhance one's desire for vengeance in terrorist attacks (Skitka & Mullen, 2002), and motivate individuals for political engagement in order to get their favorite political parties elected to power (Skitka & Bauman, 2008). Therefore, one's moral convictions can influence how others judge one's moral character, since convictions inevitably contain desires, an effective information

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component for judging an agent's character. However, findings also indicate that the mitigating effect of good action in the presence of bad conviction is substantially higher than the mitigating effect of good conviction in the presence of bad action. It shows the greater impact of action on character judgment compared to influence of conviction.

A crucial finding which supports one of the main predictions of this study is that people judge the behavior of an agent as more wrong when the agent has a bad conviction but display harmless behavior. How could a harmless act be judged as wrong just because the agent of that act has a bad conviction? In fact, other research studies provide support for this finding. Although wrongness judgment is directed onto an agent's action, the agent's mental states (i.e., intentions, desires, and beliefs) which lead to that action plays a role as well (Cushman, Sheketoff, Wharton & Carey, 2013; Cushman, 2008). Since moral convictions are essentially mental states and implicate intentions and desires, harmless behavior of an agent who holds a bad conviction might be perceived as an insincere act displayed unwillingly or with a hidden and malevolent motive. In turn, that kind of reasoning may lead people to judge seemingly good behaviors to be wrong. On the other hand, conviction seems to have no significant influence on wrongness judgment, when action is bad, and good action significantly mitigates the harshness of wrongness judgment, even when the agent adopts bad conviction. These findings may point out that although conviction affects wrongness judgment to some extent, action is still a more influential information component in shaping this type of judgment.

Furthermore, the results supported our second prediction that blame and punishment would be significantly enhanced for an individual holding a bad conviction, even when the individual does not display any harmful behavior (or displays a harmless behavior). Indeed, participants judged the agent who held a bad conviction as significantly more blameworthy, even when the agent showed a harmless act, and punished the agent with bad conviction significantly more harshly than the agent with good conviction in the absence of behavior. Moreover, blame significantly decreased when the agent who acted harmfully adopted a good conviction compared to when the same agent had a bad conviction. These findings are consistent with the previous empirical works which have studied blame and

punishment judgments in the context of information components such as intentions, actions, and outcomes (Mazzocco, Alicke, & Davis, 2004; Gino, Moore, & Bazerman, 2008; Carlsmith, Darley, & Robinson, 2002). With regard to blame judgment, theory of blame posits that blame targets both an agent's action and mental states (e.g., intentionality) which cause that action (Malle, Guglielmo, & Monroe, 2014). Supporting this theoretical position, empirical studies found that blame may be assigned even in the absence of causality between an agent's action and the bad outcome of that action, relying solely on the agent's offensive desires (Inbar, Pizarro, & Cushman, 2012). Alternatively, blame may be assigned based on the agent's action as well (Cushman, 2008). Therefore, people can blame an agent with bad conviction by inferring that the agent has malevolent intentions and desires, and predicting that the agent may act harmfully in the future, since one's moral convictions can be a predictor of one's behaviors (Krosnick & Petty, 1995), desires (Skitka & Mullen, 2002), and intentions (Morgan, Skitka & Wisneski, 2005). On the other hand, the difference between the mitigating effect of good conviction (when the action is bad), and that of good action (when the conviction is bad) is substantially large in favor of good action. It means that action is a more crucial information component than conviction when blaming an agent, even though conviction still influences blame judgment. Regarding punishment, previous studies suggest that people may punish an agent in order to prevent potential future harms (Butterfield, Trevino & Ball, 1996), which is known as utilitarian theory of punishment (Bentham, 1843/1962; Mill, 1871/1998). Therefore, individuals may punish others based on their convictions to discourage them from doing harm in the future because bad convictions may predict potential future harms (Krosnick & Petty, 2005). To exemplify, an individual may blame a father who holds the conviction that honor killing is moral with the rationale that this conviction implies a desire and motivation for killing the women who 'dishonored' their families. Then, the individual may punish the father for his conviction to prevent his potential terrible acts in the future.

Alternatively, conviction-based blame and punishment may result from affective processes rather than the cognitive ones which emphasize information components and utilitarian motives. To be more specific, individuals may blame and punish an agent based on the agent's offensive and unacceptable moral convictions

because encountering those convictions induce strong negative emotions such as moral outrage, which may indirectly increase the punitiveness of individuals. Indeed, several empirical findings showed that moral outrage could be an important determinant of punishment (Fiske & Tetlock, 1997; Tetlock, Peterson, & Lerner, 1996). Likewise, moral judgments are accompanied by intense emotions as well (Skitka, Bauman, & Sargis, 2005). For instance, Haidt (2003) found that unjust situations produce anger in the individuals judging the situation, which in turn, increases the harshness of moral judgment. Also, desire for retribution leads the individuals to assign severe punishment to an agent simply because they think that the agent deserves that punishment, which is known as 'just desert' (Carlsmith, Darley, & Robinson, 2002). Furthermore, neuroscientific evidence reveals that patients with focal lesions to the ventromedial prefrontal cortex (VMPC), which is responsible for social-emotional processing, made more lenient judgments of harm, as compared to a healthy control group (Young et al., 2010). Hence, people may blame and punish an agent based on the agent's convictions because of the strong emotions induced by those convictions. To illustrate, when a person, who has a strong moral conviction that abortion is immoral, encounters an agent having the opposite moral conviction that abortion is morally acceptable, the person will feel intense negative emotions which will then trigger a harsher blame judgment, and he or she will want to punish the agent in order to give the agent what he deserves for that 'horrible' moral belief. Since our findings revealed a significant albeit a low correlation between the intensity of the punishment for the agents with bad conviction and anticipation of future harm for the same agents, just desert account of punishment may be a more reasonable reason for significant conviction-based punishment in this study than the utilitarian explanation of punishment (i.e., punishing a perpetrator to prevent potential future harms), especially when one considers the affect-laden nature of the scenarios in the experiment.

Furthermore, this study provides evidence for the last hypothesis that character judgment would be sensitive to the information about the agent's convictions, whereas wrongness, blame, and punishment judgments would be heavily influenced by the agent's actions. Indeed, participants judged the agent's behavior, and blamed and punished the agent based mostly on his or her action. On the other hand, they

employed the information about both conviction and action of the agent when judging his or her moral character. In addition, character judgments made by our participants were found to be considerably harsher than other judgments, when the agent did no harm but adopted a bad conviction. However, findings reveal an overwhelming influence of action on the judgment process. Action factor explained 79% of the variability for character judgment, 92% for wrongness judgment, 83% for blame judgment, and 83% for punishment judgment. Additionally, mitigating effect of good action in the presence of bad conviction was significantly higher than that of good conviction in the presence of bad action for character, wrongness, and blame judgments. Previous studies suggest that it is not the action itself, but rather the agent's mental states which cause the action and the consequences of that action are the main factors determining the course of judgment process. Even in situations where people have information only on an agent's action, they search for a reasonable explanation about what the agent's intentions or desires might be (Inbar, Pizarro & Cushman, 2012). Then, how can we interpret the huge impact of action in this study? We believe that the reason for this influence may be that the agents' actions in our chosen scenarios inevitably imply both the agent's mental states and possible outcomes of those actions. In order to see the full effect of convictions, we have chosen concepts (i.e., child marriage, honor killing, domestic violence, and racism) that are perceived as the most morally repulsive by individual. These concepts were not conducive of scenarios in which bad actions could occur unintentionally (i.e., with good intention) or they accidentally could have good outcomes. For instance, no individual believes that letting a man and a child to get married occurs unintentionally or accidentally results good outcomes. Indeed, results of the fifth question (e.g.., "*Do you think that A.T.'s wife gets harmed as a result of A.T.'s action?)* revealed that 100% of the participants believed that the bad actions in the scenarios would result in a bad outcome. Therefore, it is reasonable that perceived mental states and consequences of the agents' actions might contribute to the influence of action on the judgment process. Further research may look into the relative contribution of moral convictions to the different types of judgment in the explicit presence of information about mental states, actions and consequences separately.

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4.2. Limitations

Before discussing the implications of these findings, it is important to note some of the strengths and weaknesses of this research. A potential limitation in this study results from the presentation of hypothetical scenarios and the use of surveys which may inevitably threaten ecological validity of the study. Indeed, FeldmanHall et al., (2012) found that hypothetical scenarios which are decontextualized from the actual world may fail to accurately reflect people's moral decisions in real life. Nevertheless, we think that there would not be a substantial discrepancy between moral judgment in this study and in real life. That is because, the moral concepts included in the scenarios were found repulsive, intense, and particularly culturally relevant, and as revealed by the self-reports participants had no difficulty in vividly imagining the scenarios.

Secondly, participants responded to their online surveys in uncontrolled environments, which may raise the question of whether they carefully deliberated their responses. Though we cannot eliminate all the potential confounds inherent to this method of collection, we can at least say that none of the participants completed the surveys in an unreasonably hastily manner. All of them exceeded the completion time of 3 minutes and 45 seconds which was shown by the pilot study to be the approximate minimum time for completing the survey.

Lastly, main study did not ask participants whether they perceived the concepts in each scenario as morally relevant and more importantly, morally abhorrent, which might be a problem, if some of them did not perceive those concepts in that way. However, we assume that participants in the main study would still perceive the concepts as morally disagreeable, since we asked 40 people in the pilot study how much morally wrong they saw 36 concepts presented, and chose the four concepts used in the main study among the ones which were rated above 5.5 out of 6 in the pilot study. Although the sample in each study consisted of different individuals, they were from similar age group and educational background.

4.3. Implications

Our findings are important for three main reasons. Firstly, moral psychologists studying moral judgment mostly examine it in the context of intentions, actions, and outcomes. The model of intentional action asserts that mental states (i.e., intentions, beliefs, and desires) are the starting point for moral judgment. Although there are some studies that revealed the impact of one's moral conviction on his or her intention to act in a certain way (Morgan, Skitka & Wisneski, 2010), in the vast moral psychology literature, there is virtually no study on how individuals morally judge a person based on the moral beliefs or convictions he or she has. However, people are being judged and even punished merely based on their beliefs and convictions, especially in the societies where democratic values are not particularly developed. Therefore, findings of our study shed light on this neglected area in moral psychology literature.

Secondly, this study provides evidence against attribution theory (Shaver, 1985; Weiner, 1995; Schlenker, Britt, Pennington, Murphy, & Doherty, 1994) and theory of blame (Malle, Guglielmo, & Monroe, 2014). Whereas the former suggests that judgments of blame and punishment by no means occur in the absence of harmful consequence (Darley & Shultz, 1990), the latter posits that causality between an agent's behavior and a bad event is necessary for blame judgment. However, people do not need the presence of a harmful outcome or to establish a causal connection between an agent and a bad event when forming moral judgment, since our results showed that participants judged, blamed, and punished the agents in the absence of any harmful action by relying solely on their convictions. In other words, one's unacceptable and offensive conviction is sufficient when judging, blaming, and punishing him or her.

Lastly, these results have practical implications regarding several social and political issues in many countries. Freedom of thought and expression is one of the pillars of democracy. However, there are severe problems regarding expression of ideas, especially in the developing countries. For instance, 93 years of Turkish history include numerous examples of moral condemnation and punishment that people were exposed to merely because of their ideas and beliefs. On the surface, one may consider authoritarian governments or intrusive societies to be the source of this problem.

However, we should examine the problem at the individual level, as the political or social structures are the reflections of individuals. Thus, the findings may help us remove the constraints on the freedom of expression by revealing the psychological mechanisms underlying conviction-based moral judgment.

4.4. Future Directions

There are several avenues open for further research. First of all, an important question is whether conviction is an entirely separate information component, and a new theory -and model- of conviction-based judgment is required. Previous empirical theories and models about moral judgments are about how people judge, blame, and punish others' behaviors (Shaver, 1985; Weiner, 1995; Schlenker et al., 1994; Cushman, 2008; Alicke, 2000; Pettit & Knobe, 2009; Haidt, 2001; Greene, 2013; Malle, Guglielmo, & Monroe, 2014). Even character judgment has been studied as it relates to the actions of an agent, and it is claimed that detection of a negative event is required for moral judgment (for a review, see Guglielmo, 2015). However, whereas intentions, actions, and consequences are firmly connected to each other, moral conviction appears to stand apart because findings of this study indicate that people judge, blame, and punish others based on their convictions, even in the absence of any harmful behavior. On the other hand, many empirical findings revealed that convictions are connected to the other information components as well. For instance, they can contain desires (Skitka & Mullen, 2002), create intentions in the individuals (Morgan, Skitka, & Wisneski, 2010), or motivate them to act in a specific way (Skitka & Bauman, 2008). Given these findings, should convictions be considered as another information component belonging to the classical theories and models on moral judgment? Further research should investigate how to position the concept of conviction in the whole judgment process.

Results about the causality between moral convictions and punishment is of utmost importance in this study because of their political, social, and legal implications. Among all the judgment types, punishment affects individuals' lives the most especially if it is assigned unjustly. Therefore, future studies should focus on the potential reasons of conviction-based punishment. Do people punish convictions,

beliefs, and even ideas with purely utilitarian motives (Bentham, 1843/1962; Mill, 1871/1998) or does retribution and the idea of 'just desert' play a greater role in this type of punishment (Kant, 1790/1952)? Aside from centuries-old philosophical perspectives, a recent empirical theory proposes value protection model (Skitka & Mullen, 2015), which can explain why people punish others. This model suggests that people may punish others to reaffirm their sense of self as a moral person. If an individual believing that racial discrimination is morally acceptable thinks that he is an authentically moral person, then he may punish an agent having an opposing conviction on racial discrimination to protect his sense of moral identity. This account of conviction-based punishment is compelling, when we take into account the empirical findings which demonstrated the importance of moral identity on motivating moral action (Damon & Hart, 1992; Hart, Atkins, & Ford, 1998). Further research should investigate which one of those perspectives is more successful in providing scientific evidence for conviction-based punishment.

An unexpected finding in this study is considerable variance across four moral concepts in terms of their perceived "moral abhorrence". In almost all types of good and bad combinations, the agent who murdered his daughter to cleanse his honor was blamed, judged, and punished significantly more harshly than the agents in other scenarios (see Appendix D). This substantial difference may result from the fact that murder has higher magnitude of harm than actions in other scenarios, which would be consistent with the findings that severity of punishment increases with the degree of harm (Carlsmith, Darley, & Robinson, 2002). Alternatively, it could be that honor killing is perceived as a culturally more sensitive issue than others. However, these are only speculations, and thus, further studies may examine sources of variance in the perceived "moral abhorrence" of different moral convictions.

An additional topic for future research is the cognitive and affective dimensions of conviction-based judgments, which have rarely been examined separately in moral conviction literature (Cole Wright, Cullum, & Schwab, 2008). Is conviction-based judgment "caused by quick moral intuitions and followed (when needed) by slow, ex post facto moral reasoning" (Haidt, 2001, p. 817)? Does it result from reason-based developmental models (Piaget, 1932/1965; Kohlberg, 1969; Turiel, 1983)? Or do both intuitive/affective and conscious reasoning processes play

a role in conviction-based judgment (Greene, 2013)? Future studies should address these questions to find out the psychological source of why people judge, blame, and punish others based on their moral convictions.

4.5. Concluding Remarks

Do people judge, blame, and punish others based on their moral convictions? Although this question has vital practical implications, it has never been a topic of interest in moral psychology literature. The present study aims to fill this gap by providing empirical answers. Our findings suggest that conviction is an information component that affects the judgment process. Specifically, the results demonstrate that people judge, blame, and punish a moral agent by using the information about the agent's convictions, and this effect remains even in the absence of any harmful behavior. Moreover, our findings revealed that character judgment is sensitive to an agent's conviction, whereas wrongness, blame, and punishment judgments are heavily affected by the agent's behavior. We believe that since this study is the first example of scientific research on the effect of convictions on judgment process, it opens new avenues for further research.

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Appendix A: Vignettes

Please note that vignettes, questionnaires, and all instructions were presented in Turkish in the experiment. Here we include the vignettes' English translations as well as the original versions in Turkish on account of the readers.

Vignettes that Include Factor Combinations of Honor Killing Scenario

Good Conviction and Harmless Action

M.T. is a bank security guard. One day, M.T.'s daughter falls into love with a man. This romantic relationship between them continues for several years unbeknownst to her father, and they engage in premarital sexual intercourse during the relationship. Eventually, M.T. hears about this situation. M.T. believes that one can by no means murder another to cleanse one's honor, and thus, honor killings are MORALLY WRONG. Therefore, M.T. does not engage in any behavior that may harm his daughter in this situation.

Original version in Turkish

M.T. bir bankanın güvenlik görevlisi olarak çalışmaktadır. M.T.'nin kızı bir gün birine âşık olur. Birkaç yıl babasından habersiz sevgili olarak ilişkilerine devam ederler ve bu süre içerisinde evlilik dışı cinsel ilişkiye girerler. Bu ilişkiden M.T.'nin haberi olur. M.T.'nin düşüncesine göre namusu temizlemek için kesinlikle cinayet işlenemez ve bu yüzden de namus cinayetleri AHLAKEN YANLIŞTIR. Bundan dolayı, M.T. bu olayda kızına zarar verecek herhangi bir söz veya davranışta bulunmaz.

Bad Conviction and Harmless Action

M.T. is a bank security guard. One day, M.T.'s daughter falls into love with a man. This romantic relationship between them continues for several years unbeknownst to her father, and they engage in premarital sexual intercourse during the relationship. Eventually, M.T. hears about this situation. M.T. believes that one can absolutely

murder another to cleanse one's honor, and thus, honor killings are MORALLY RIGHT. Despite his conviction, M.T. does not engage in any behavior that may harm his daughter in this situation.

Original version in Turkish

M.T. bir bankanın güvenlik görevlisi olarak çalışmaktadır. M.T.'nin kızı bir gün birine âşık olur. Birkaç yıl babasından habersiz sevgili olarak ilişkilerine devam ederler ve bu süre içerisinde evlilik dışı cinsel ilişkiye girerler. Bu ilişkiden M.T.'nin haberi olur. M.T.'nin düşüncesine göre namusu temizlemek için kesinlikle cinayet işlenebilir ve bu yüzden de namus cinayetleri AHLAKEN DOĞRUDUR. Böyle düşünmesine rağmen M.T. bu olayda kızına zarar verecek herhangi bir söz veya davranışta bulunmaz.

Good Conviction and Harmful Action

M.T. is a bank security guard. One day, M.T.'s daughter falls into love with a man. This romantic relationship between them continues for several years unbeknownst to her father, and they engage in premarital sexual intercourse during the relationship. Eventually, M.T. hears about this situation. M.T. believes that one can by no means murder another to cleanse one's honor, and thus, honor killings are MORALLY WRONG. Despite his conviction, M.T. considers the situation as a matter of honor, and shots her daughter with a weapon.

Original version in Turkish

M.T. bir bankanın güvenlik görevlisi olarak çalışmaktadır. M.T.'nin kızı bir gün birine âşık olur. Birkaç yıl babasından habersiz sevgili olarak ilişkilerine devam ederler ve bu süre içerisinde evlilik dışı cinsel ilişkiye girerler. Bu ilişkiden M.T.'nin haberi olur. M.T.'nin düşüncesine göre namusu temizlemek için kesinlikle cinayet işlenemez ve bu yüzden de namus cinayetleri AHLAKEN YANLIŞTIR. Böyle düşünmesine rağmen M.T. bunu bir namus meselesi olarak görür ve eline aldığı bir silahla kızını vurur.

Bad Conviction and Harmful Action

M.T. is a bank security guard. One day, M.T.'s daughter falls into love with a man. This romantic relationship between them continues for several years unbeknownst to her father, and they engage in premarital sexual intercourse during the relationship. Eventually, M.T. hears about this situation. M.T. believes that one can absolutely murder another to cleanse one's honor, and thus, honor killings are MORALLY RIGHT. Therefore, M.T. considers the situation as a matter of honor, and shots his daughter with a weapon.

Original version in Turkish

M.T. bir bankanın güvenlik görevlisi olarak çalışmaktadır. M.T.'nin kızı bir gün birine âşık olur. Birkaç yıl babasından habersiz sevgili olarak ilişkilerine devam ederler ve bu süre içerisinde evlilik dışı cinsel ilişkiye girerler. Bu ilişkiden M.T.'nin haberi olur. M.T.'nin düşüncesine göre namusu temizlemek için kesinlikle cinayet işlenebilir ve bu yüzden de namus cinayetleri AHLAKEN DOĞRUDUR. Bundan dolayı M.T. bunu bir namus meselesi olarak görür ve eline aldığı bir silahla kızını vurur.

Vignettes that Include Factor Combinations of Racism Scenario

Good Conviction and Harmless Action

Z.D. is a faculty member at a university, and she opens a course for the new term. Since the number of enrolled students is quite high, she decides to divide the class into two different sections. Z.D. believes that one's race does not make him or her superior or inferior to others, and thus, racial discrimination is MORALLY WRONG. Therefore, Z.D. does not consider the students' races when dividing the class. She randomly assigns them to two sections by using a computerized system and gives same-quality of education to both sections.

Original version in Turkish

Z.D. bir üniversitede öğretim görevlisidir ve dönem başında yeni bir ders açacaktır. Dersine kayıt olan öğrenci sayısı fazla olduğu için sınıfı ikiye bölme kararı alır. Z.D.'nin düşüncesine göre insanları üstün veya aşağı yapan şey ırkları değildir ve bundan dolayı da ırk temelli ayrımcılık yapmak AHLAKEN YANLIŞTIR. Bundan

dolayı Z.D. sınıfı ikiye bölerken öğrencilerin ırklarını göz önünde bulundurmaz ve öğrencileri bir bilgisayar sistemi yoluyla rastgele iki sınıftan birine atayıp her iki sınıfa da aynı kalitede eğitim verir.

Bad Conviction and Harmless Action

Z.D. is a faculty member at a university, and she opens a course for the new term. Since the number of enrolled students is quite high, she decides to divide the class into two different sections. Z.D. believes that one's race determines his or her superiority or inferiority to others, and thus, racial discrimination is MORALLY RIGHT. Despite her conviction, Z.D. does not consider the students' races when dividing the class. She randomly assigns them to two sections by using a computerized system and gives same-quality of education to both groups.

Original version in Turkish

Z.D. bir üniversitede öğretim görevlisidir ve dönem başında yeni bir ders açacaktır. Dersine kayıt olan öğrenci sayısı fazla olduğu için sınıfı ikiye bölme kararı alır. Z.D.'nin düşüncesine göre insanların üstün veya aşağı oluşlarını ırkları belirler ve bundan dolayı da ırk temelli ayrımcılık yapmak AHLAKEN DOĞRUDUR. Fakat Z.D. sınıfı ikiye bölerken öğrencilerin ırklarını göz önünde bulundurmaz ve öğrencileri bir bilgisayar sistemi yoluyla rastgele iki sınıftan birine atayıp her iki sınıfa da aynı kalitede eğitim verir.

Good Conviction and Harmful Action

Z.D. is a faculty member at a university, and she opens a course for the new term. Since the number of enrolled students is quite high, she decides to divide the class into two different sections. Z.D. believes that one's race does not make him or her superior or inferior to others, and thus, racial discrimination is MORALLY WRONG. Despite her conviction, Z.D. considers the students' races when dividing the class. She gives a high-quality education to the first class where she placed the students that she thinks as belonging to a superior race, while the second class where she placed the students that she thinks as belonging to an inferior race is given low-quality education.

Original version in Turkish

Z.D. bir üniversitede öğretim görevlisidir ve dönem başında yeni bir ders açacaktır. Dersine kayıt olan öğrenci sayısı fazla olduğu için sınıfı ikiye bölme kararı alır. Z.D.'nin düşüncesine göre insanları üstün veya aşağı yapan şey ırkları değildir ve bundan dolayı da ırk temelli ayrımcılık yapmak AHLAKEN YANLIŞTIR. Buna rağmen Z.D. sınıfı ikiye bölerken öğrencilerin ırklarını göz önünde bulundurur ve üstün gördüğü ırkları ilk sınıfa koyup kaliteli bir eğitim verirken, aşağı gördüğü ırkları ikinci sınıfa koyup kötü bir eğitim verir.

Bad Conviction and Harmful Action

Z.D. is a faculty member at a university, and she opens a course for the new term. Since the number of enrolled students is quite high, she decides to divide the class into two different sections. Z.D. believes that one's race determines his or her superiority or inferiority to others, and thus, racial discrimination is MORALLY RIGHT. Therefore, Z.D. considers the students' races when dividing the class. She gives a high-quality education to the first class where she placed the students that she thinks as belonging to a superior race, while the second class where she placed the students that she thinks as belonging to an inferior race is given low-quality education.

Original version in Turkish

Z.D. bir üniversitede öğretim görevlisidir ve dönem başında yeni bir ders açacaktır. Dersine kayıt olan öğrenci sayısı fazla olduğu için sınıfı ikiye bölme kararı alır. Z.D.'nin düşüncesine göre insanların üstün veya aşağı oluşlarını ırkları belirler ve bundan dolayı da ırk temelli ayrımcılık yapmak AHLAKEN DOĞRUDUR. Bu nedenle Z.D. sınıfı ikiye bölerken öğrencilerin ırklarını göz önünde bulundurur ve üstün gördüğü ırkları ilk sınıfa koyup kaliteli bir eğitim verirken, aşağı gördüğü ırkları ikinci sınıfa koyup kötü bir eğitim verir.

Vignettes that Include Factor Combinations of Domestic Violence Scenario

Good Conviction and Harmless Action

A.T. is an employee at a governmental office, and he has been married to N.T. for five years. One night, they have a fierce argument about an issue. A.T. believes that a man

by no means has the right to beat his wife, and thus, wife beating is MORALLY WRONG. Therefore, A.T. acts calmly during the argument, and does not show any type of violence toward his wife.

Original version in Turkish

A.T. bir devlet kurumunda çalışmaktadır. Eşi N.T. ile 5 yıllık bir evlilik sürdürmektedir. Bir akşam bir konuda eşiyle şiddetli bir tartışma yaşar. A.T.'nin düşüncesine göre bir erkek hiçbir şekilde karısını dövme hakkına sahip değildir ve bu yüzden de erkeğin, eşini dövmesi AHLAKEN YANLIŞTIR. Bundan dolayı tartışma esnasında A.T. sakin bir şekilde davranır ve eşine hiçbir şekilde şiddet uygulamaz.

Bad Conviction and Harmless Action

A.T. is an employee at a governmental office, and he has been married to N.T. for five years. One night, they have a fierce argument about an issue. A.T. believes that a man has the right to beat his wife, if necessary, and thus, wife beating is MORALLY RIGHT. Despite his conviction, A.T. acts calmly during the argument, and does not show any type of violence toward his wife.

Original version in Turkish

A.T. bir devlet kurumunda çalışmaktadır. Bir akşam bir konuda eşiyle şiddetli bir tartışma yaşar. A.T.'nin düşüncesine göre bir erkek gerektiğinde karısını dövme hakkına sahiptir ve bu yüzden de erkeğin, eşini dövmesi AHLAKEN DOĞRUDUR. Böyle düşünmesine rağmen tartışma esnasında A.T. sakin bir şekilde davranır ve eşine hiçbir şekilde şiddet uygulamaz.

Good Conviction and Harmful Action

A.T. is an employee at a governmental office, and he has been married to N.T. for five years. One night, they have a fierce argument about an issue. A.T. believes that a man by no means has the right to beat his wife, and thus, wife beating is MORALLY WRONG. Despite his conviction, A.T. rages during the argument and struck his wife hard in the face and the body.

Original version in Turkish

A.T. bir devlet kurumunda çalışmaktadır. Eşi N.T. ile 5 yıllık bir evlilik sürdürmektedir. Bir akşam bir konuda eşiyle şiddetli bir tartışma yaşar. A.T.'nin düşüncesine göre bir erkek hiçbir şekilde karısını dövme hakkına sahip değildir ve bu yüzden de erkeğin, eşini dövmesi AHLAKEN YANLIŞTIR. Böyle düşünmesine rağmen tartışma esnasında A.T. çok öfkelenir ve karısının suratına ve vücuduna birkaç kez ağır darbelerle vurur.

Bad Conviction and Harmful Action

A.T. is an employee at a governmental office, and he has been married to N.T. for five years. One night, they have a fierce argument about an issue. A.T. believes that a man has the right to beat his wife, if necessary, and thus, wife beating is MORALLY RIGHT. Therefore, A.T. rages during the argument and struck his wife hard in the face and the body.

Original version in Turkish

A.T. bir devlet kurumunda çalışmaktadır. Eşi N.T. ile 5 yıllık bir evlilik sürdürmektedir. Bir akşam bir konuda eşiyle şiddetli bir tartışma yaşar. A.T.'nin düşüncesine göre bir erkek gerektiğinde karısını dövme hakkına sahiptir ve bu yüzden de erkeğin, eşini dövmesi AHLAKEN DOĞRUDUR. Bundan dolayı tartışma esnasında A.T. çok öfkelenir ve karısının suratına ve vücuduna birkaç kez ağır darbelerle vurur.

Vignettes that Include Factor Combinations of Child Marriage Scenario

Good Conviction and Harmless Action

C.M is an officiant in a marriage office. A 45-year-old man and a 13-year-old girl are brought to the office for marriage. The girl's age was raised to the age of eligibility with fraud. C.M. believes that people should be married only after the age of eligibility, and thus, it is MORALLY WRONG that a child is married or forced to marriage. Therefore, C.M. does not let the man and the girl get married and reports the fraud to the officials.

Original version in Turkish

C.M. bir ilçedeki evlendirme dairesinde nikah memurudur. 45 yaşında bir erkek ve 13 yaşında bir kız kendi çalıştığı evlendirme dairesine getirilir. Kızın yaşı adamla evlenebilmesi için nüfus cüzdanında hile ile büyütülmüştür. C.M.'nin düşüncesine göre evlilikte 18 yaşını tamamlamış olma şartı çok yerinde bir düzenlemedir ve kişiler ancak belli bir olgunluğa erdikten sonra evlendirilmelidir, bu bakımdan çocuk yaşta bir kişinin evlenmesi veya evlendirilmesi AHLAKEN YANLIŞTIR. Bu yüzden C.M. evlenmek için getirilen adam ve kızın nikahını kesinlikle kıymaz ve kızın ailesini yetkili makamlara şikâyet eder.

<div align="center">

Bad Conviction and Harmless Action

</div>

C.M is an officiant in a marriage office. A 45-year-old man and a 13-year-old girl are brought to the office for marriage. The girl's age was raised to the age of eligibility with fraud. C.M. believes that the age limit for marriage should be removed and people should be married as early as possible, and thus, it is MORALLY RIGHT that a child is married or forced to marriage. Despite his conviction, C.M. does not let the man and the girl get married and reports the fraud to the officials

Original version in Turkish

C.M. bir ilçedeki evlendirme dairesinde nikah memurudur. 45 yaşında bir erkek ve 13 yaşında bir kız kendi çalıştığı evlendirme dairesine getirilir. Kızın yaşı adamla evlenebilmesi için nüfus cüzdanında hile ile büyütülmüştür. C.M.'nin düşüncesine göre evlilikte 18 yaşını tamamlamış olma şartı kaldırılmalı ve kişiler olabildiğince erken evlendirilmelidir, bu bakımdan çocuk yaşta bir kişinin evlenmesi veya evlendirilmesi AHLAKEN DOĞRUDUR. Böyle düşünmesine rağmen C.M. evlenmek için getirilen adam ve kızın nikahını kıymaz ve kızın ailesini yetkili makamlara şikâyet eder.

<div align="center">

Good Conviction and Harmful Action

</div>

C.M is an officiant in a marriage office. A 45-year-old man and a 13-year-old girl are brought to the office for marriage. The girl's age was raised to the age of eligibility with fraud. C.M. believes that people should be married only after the age of eligibility, and thus, it is MORALLY WRONG that a child is married or forced to marriage.

Despite his conviction, though C.M. notices the fraud, he ignores it and officially pronounces them as husband and wife.

Original version in Turkish

C.M. bir ilçedeki evlendirme dairesinde nikah memurudur. 45 yaşında bir erkek ve 13 yaşında bir kız kendi çalıştığı evlendirme dairesine getirilir. Kızın yaşı adamla evlenebilmesi için nüfus cüzdanında hile ile büyütülmüştür. C.M.'nin düşüncesine göre evlilikte 18 yaşını tamamlamış olma şartı çok yerinde bir düzenlemedir ve kişiler ancak belli bir olgunluğa erdikten sonra evlendirilmelidir, bu bakımdan çocuk yaşta bir kişinin evlenmesi veya evlendirilmesi AHLAKEN YANLIŞTIR. Böyle düşünmesine rağmen C.M. kızın yaşının küçük olduğunu anlasa da adamla evlendirilmesine göz yumar ve ikisini evlendirir.

Bad Conviction and Harmful Action

C.M is an officiant in a marriage office. A 45-year-old man and a 13-year-old girl are brought to the office for marriage. The girl's age was raised to the age of eligibility with fraud. C.M. believes that the age limit for marriage should be removed and people should be married as early as possible, and thus, it is MORALLY RIGHT that a child is married or forced to marriage. Therefore, though C.M. notices the fraud, he ignores it and officially pronounces them as husband and wife.

Original version in Turkish

C.M. bir ilçedeki evlendirme dairesinde nikah memurudur. 45 yaşında bir erkek ve 13 yaşında bir kız kendi çalıştığı evlendirme dairesine getirilir. Kızın yaşı adamla evlenebilmesi için nüfus cüzdanında hile ile büyütülmüştür. C.M.'nin düşüncesine göre evlilikte 18 yaşını tamamlamış olma şartı kaldırılmalı ve kişiler olabildiğince erken evlendirilmelidir, bu bakımdan çocuk yaşta bir kişinin evlenmesi veya evlendirilmesi AHLAKEN DOĞRUDUR. Bundan dolayı C.M. kızın yaşının küçük olduğunu anlasa da adamla evlendirilmesinde bir sorun görmez ve ikisini evlendirir.

Appendix B: Demographic Questions

Please fill in the demographic information below. You may leave the sections blank if you do not want to provide personal information.

What is your age?

What is your gender?

Man (   )

Woman (   )

Other (   )

Not prefer to say (   )

What is your educational background?

Elementary School (   )

High School (   )

Undergraduate (   )

Master (   )

Doctorate (   )

**Appendix C: Important Instructions**

In this study you will be presented four vignettes which you have to read and think about. Each vignette includes situations that you may encounter in your daily lives, and six questions will be asked after each of them. You may not be able to see the next section without answering the questions of the current one. For the scientific accuracy of this study, please read the vignettes and the questions with utmost care, and answer the questions based on your own ideas, not based on how the answers should be ideally.
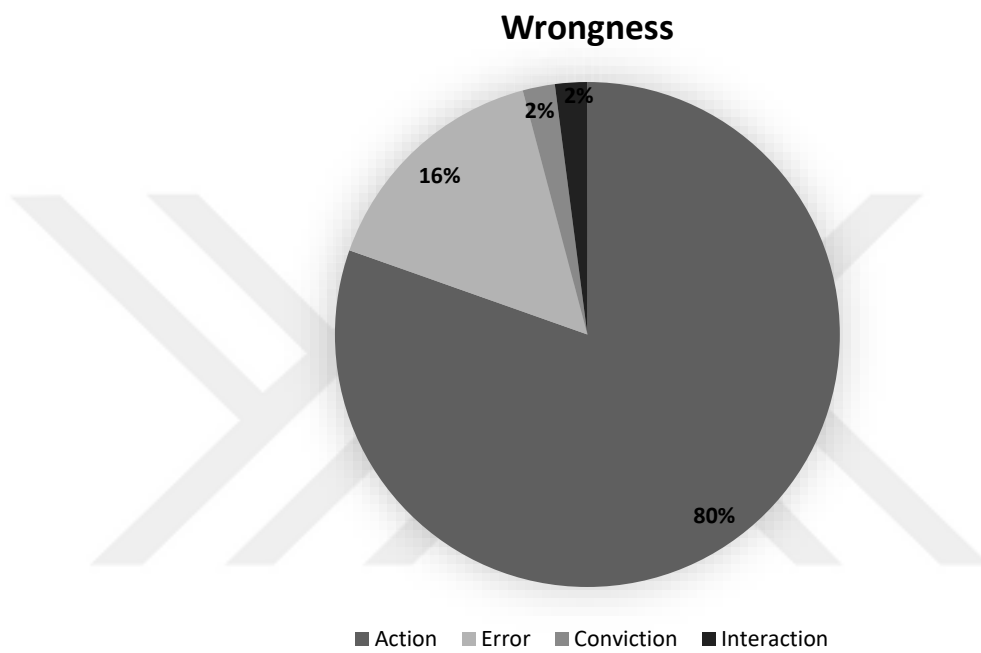
Figure 4a

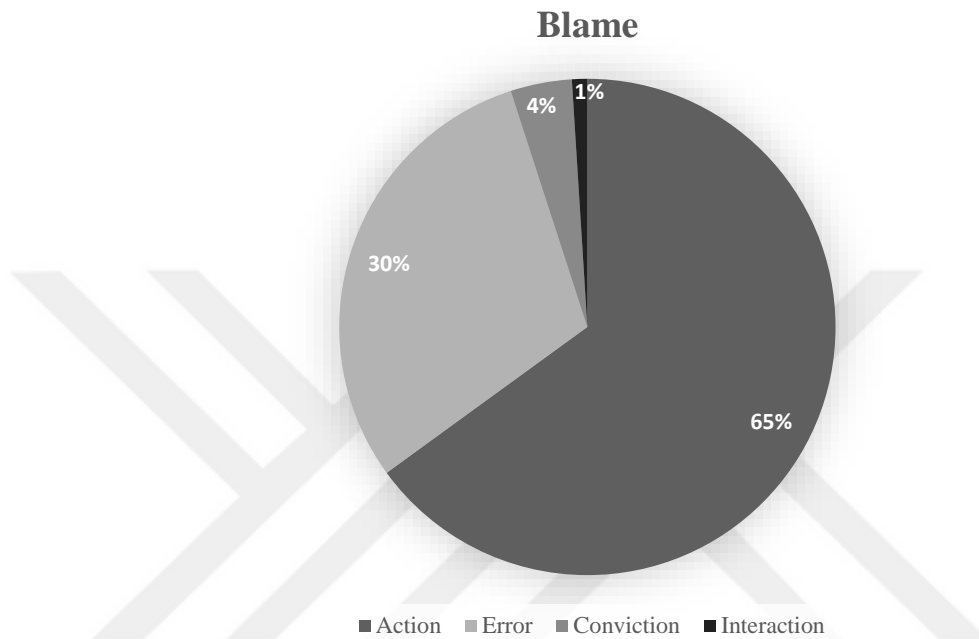*Proportion of within-context variability explained by each factor for the character condition*
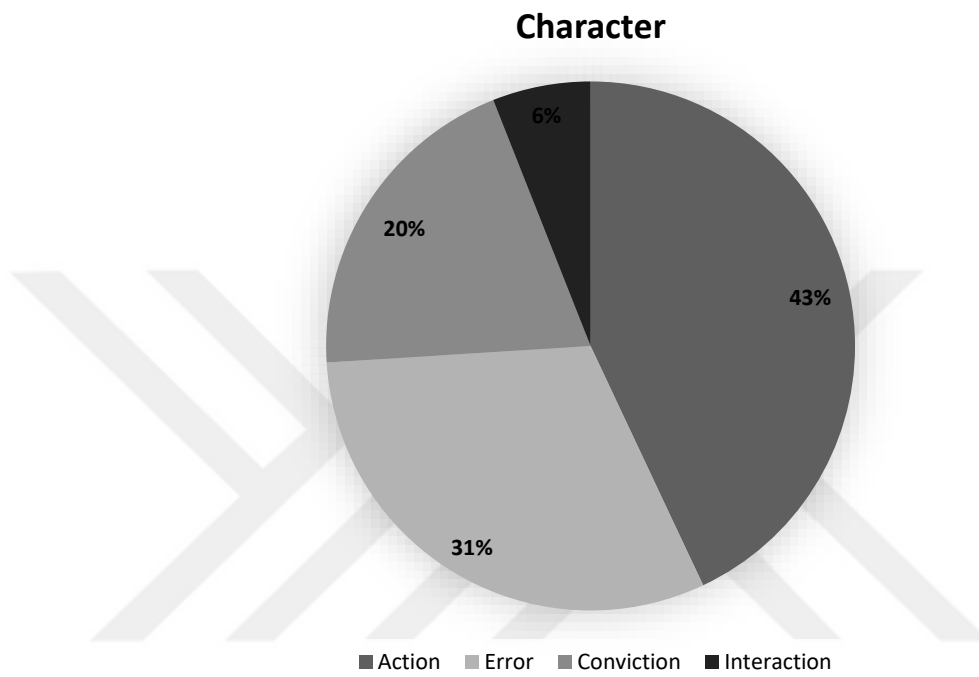
Figure 4b

Proportion of within-context variability explained by each factor for the wrongness condition

Wrongness

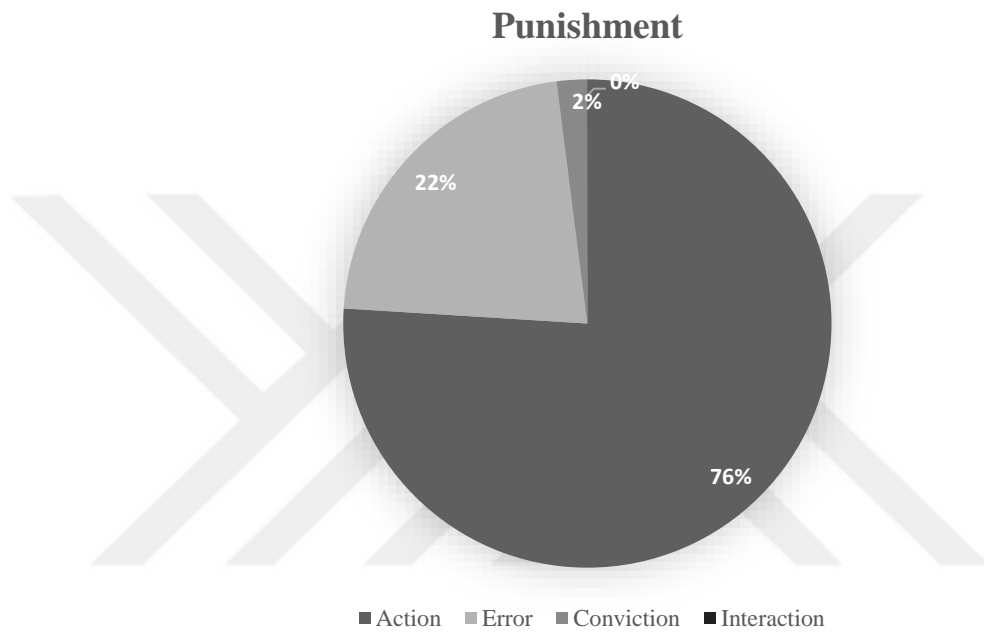■ Action ■ Error ■ Conviction ■ Interaction

Figure 4c

Proportion of within-context variability explained by each factor for the blame condition

Blame

■Action ■Error ■Conviction ■Interaction

Figure 4d

Proportion of within-context variability explained by each factor for the punishment condition

Appendix H

Table 1

Multiple Comparisons of Scenarios in Each Factor Combination and Judgment Type Context

Dependent Var.	(I) group	(J) group	$M(I) - M(J)$	Std. Error	Sig.
GG_character	racism	honor killing	.77	.22	.008
GB_character	domestic Violence	racism	1.43	.29	.000
GB_character	domestic Violence	child marriage	.93	.29	.01
BB_character	honor killing	child marriage	.93	.29	.013
BG_wrongness	racism	honor killing	1.27	.45	.029
BG_wrongness	child marriage	honor killing	1.3	.45	.024
GG_wrongness	child marriage	honor killing	.73	.19	.004
GG_wrongness	racism	honor killing	.7	.2	.006
GG_wrongness	domestic violence	honor killing	.77	.19	.002
GG_blame	racism	honor killing	.53	.18	.038
BG_blame	domestic violence	racism	-1.1	.4	.036
BB_punishment	racism	honor killing	1.17	.28	.001
GB_punishment	racism	honor killing	.8	.27	.027
GB_punishment	domestic violence	honor killing	1.13	.26	.000

Note. Only the scenario comparisons below .05 significance value were shown.