

Abstract

This research examined the relationship of two disengagement mechanisms, namely detachment/unconcern and externalization of blame with moral emotions (i.e., shame and guilt). Moral emotions were further differentiated into emotional and behavioral responses examining their relationship with detachment/unconcern and externalization of blame (e.g., shame-proneness into negative self-evaluation (NSE) and withdrawal responses following public transgression; guilt-proneness into negative behavior-evaluation (NBE) and repair responses following private transgression). 211 undergraduates completed the Test of Self-Conscious Affect (TOSCA-3) and the Guilt and Shame Proneness Scale (GASP). Detachment/unconcern was related to lower level of NSE, NBE and repair tendency, while externalization of blame was associated with higher tendency of withdrawal responses following transgression. Results demonstrated the differentiable emotional and behavioral characteristics of detachment/unconcern and externalization of blame.

Introduction

In these few decades, the study of moral disengagement has grasped massive attention. Although, in general, people do things that are rewarding and align with their internalized standards while refraining from things that are violating the moral standards, moral disengagement mechanisms can easily decouple moral standards from moral conduct (Bandura et al., 1996). In the past, research seldom discussed the characteristics and phenomenological difference between each disengagement mechanisms. In this article, I am going to address the relationship between several disengagement mechanisms and moral emotions.