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When Morals Collide: The Role of Moral Identity and Moral Licensing
Effects in Green Consumption

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Thesis

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at Austin

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Master of Arts

The University of Texas at Austin

May 2019

Abstract

When Morals Collide: The Role of Moral Identity and Moral Licensing Effects in Green Consumption

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Consumers buy green products not only because of price and quality preferences, but also norms and moral values. Drawing on theories of moral identity and moral licensing, the current study explores how moral identity (internalization vs. symbolization) predicts green consumption and the impact of moral identity and green consumption on individuals' subsequent behavior. Data from this study indicate that individuals with high moral identity internalization have an equal chance of choosing the green product whether it is consumed privately or publicly, and these individuals are likely to maintain consistency of their behavior after the green consumption. Whereas, individuals with high moral identity symbolization favor more of the publicly consumed green product, and they are likely to license their prosocial behavior after the green consumption. Findings are discussed in terms of theoretical and managerial implications.

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Chapter I: Introduction

In recent years, consumers have been increasingly concerned about social and ethical issues in areas such as energy consumption, global warming, and trade (Chen, 2001; Crane, 2001; Torjusen, Lieblein, Wandel, & Francis, 2001; Schuldt, Enns, & Cavaliere, 2017). This increased concern for social responsibility has led to remarkable attention to environmentally friendly products (Hunt & Dorfman, 2009). Consumers buy these products not only because of price and quality preferences (Monroe, 1976), but also norms, values, and beliefs associated with these products (Caruana, 2007; Irwin & Baron, 2001). This assumption has led to research focusing on identifying the characteristics of the “green consumer” (Schlegelmich, Bhlen, & Diamantopoulos, 1996; Shrum, McCarty, & Lowrey, 1995). However, what is underexamined is what leads to green consumption, and how green consumption impacts people’s perception of social responsibility and morality and therefore affects subsequent prosocial behaviors.

In the current study, it is proposed that individual differences impact people’s preferences on green consumption and their subsequent behaviors. Moral identity as an individual difference has been shown as a predictor of prosocial behavior (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Blasi, 1984) within many different contexts (Shao, Aquino, & Freeman, 2008). The present research examines how moral identity predicts green consumption, a form of prosocial behavior, and the impact of moral identity and green consumption on individuals’ subsequent behavior.

The current research extends past studies in three different ways. First, past studies have examined the concept of moral identity as a whole, whereas, in the current study, it is argued that the two dimensions of moral identity (internalization vs. symbolization) have diverse influences on people’s perceptions of prosocial behavior. Since the two dimensions

are associated with different primary sources of prosocial motivations, they will lead to different prosocial behavior.

A second way the current study extends previous research on green consumption, moral identity, and moral licensing is that it investigates the impact of moral identity (internalization vs. symbolization) on green product preferences, and also subsequent intentions on moral behaviors. Since motivations related to two dimensions are different, people with different moral identity orientations will behave differently after the green consumption.

A third way relates to the new method of priming moral identity within individuals working self-concepts. Research has shown that moral primes can successfully activate the moral self-concept within individuals' minds and thus stimulate prosocial intentions and behaviors. A handwriting task has been commonly used as a moral prime, in which individuals are asked to write personal stories with moral trait words (i.e., caring, useful, friendly, kind). It is a useful method; however, the current study indicates that there is a simpler process. Simply asking individuals statement questions with moral trait words can sufficiently prime moral identity within their working self-concepts. This method is more efficient and extends the literature on moral prime.

Organization of The Thesis

This thesis is organized into five chapters, the first chapter is an introduction. Chapter II presents a review of the theoretical and contextual framework within which the study is set. These theories include moral identity, accessibility of working self-concept, privately vs. publicly consumed green product, and moral identity and moral licensing effect. Chapter III describes the pilot study, procedure and findings. Chapter IV indicates the main study; the methodology used to investigate the hypotheses including operational definitions, procedures, data analysis, and presents the findings of the study. In Chapter V, the overall discussions, theoretical and practical implications suggested by the research findings are discussed. In addition, the concluding chapter indicates the limitations of the study and suggestions for future research.

Chapter II: Literature Review

Moral Identity and Prosocial Behavior

As human beings, we define our own identity and self. According to Erikson (1964), an identity is ingrained in the core of one's being; it is associated with one's understanding of reality and involves being true to oneself in behavior. People possess different facets of identities and this definition of identity as being true to oneself in action is consistent with Hart et al.'s (1998) definition of moral identity as "a commitment to one's sense of self to lines of action that promote or protect the welfare of others" (p. 515). Here the research focuses on moral identity, and in this area, two major perspectives capture the concept, the character perspective, and the social-cognitive perspective.

The Character Perspective is developed from Blasi's "Self-Model" (1983, 1984, 2005), which accounts for extraordinary moral behavior, such as when an individual consistently commits to act on his or her moral beliefs (Blasi, 1983, 1984). This model includes three components, judgment of responsibility, moral identity, and the human tendency to strive for self-consistency. Judgment of responsibility means an individual not only decides the "right" or "moral" way to act in a particular situation but also needs to assess whether he or she should be responsible for acting on their judgment (Blasi, 1984). Secondly, moral identity relates to individual differences in the degree to which being moral is a central characteristic of the sense of self (Blasi, 1995). Lastly, the tendency to be self-consistent provides the motivational impulse for moral actions, so that a person for whom being a moral person is central to their identity will feel obliged to engage in activities that are consistent with his or her moral self-construal (Blasi, 1984). Blasi (2005) further expands his original model by proposing that a moral identity should have three essential virtues: willpower, integrity, and moral desire. Willpower and integrity are

considered the motivational underpinnings of moral identity, and moral desire reflects the intensity with which one craves for first-order moral goals and ideals.

Blasi's explication of the character perspective not only can be applied to explain exemplary moral behaviors but also has four conceptual strengths. First, the character perspective emphasizes the central role of self in moral actions. Second, it explains how moral identity motivates moral actions. Third, it indicates that individual differences in moral desires, rather than moral capacities (e.g., moral reasoning ability), are responsible for differences in moral actions. Finally, the desire for self-consistency serves as the underlying force linking moral identity to moral action (Hardy & Carlo, 2005). Despite all the strengths, the character perspective has a few limitations. For example, it might not be able to explain "everyday morality" behaviors, which are automatic, less deliberate, and require less thoughtful considerations. According to Blasi (1983, 1993, 1999, 2004b, 2005), a moral behavior must be an expression of volition involving moral deliberations and desires, and thus the model might fail to account for "everyday morality." Second, the character perspective does not take the dynamic and multi-faced nature of personal identities (Markus & Kunda, 1986) into account. Therefore, it can only apply to individuals for whom being a moral person is central to their identity and cannot specify when and under what circumstances moral identity will be experienced as a sense of self (Aquino et al., 2008). Blasi's perception of moral identity ignores the influence of social situations on moral functioning, and the social-cognitive perspective for conceptualizing moral identity can be applied to address these limitations.

The Social-Cognitive Perspective conceptualizes moral identity as an organized cognitive representation stored in memory that consists of moral values, goals, traits, and behaviors. This perspective uses knowledge accessibility to explain the role of moral identity in moral functioning. It argues that as the accessibility of a given schema increases,

it should exert a stronger impact on behavior (Higgins, 1996). Thus, when the knowledge structure of a person's moral identity is accessible, it should have a powerful influence on moral actions (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Lapsley, 1996, 1998; Lapsley & Lasky, 2001; Lapsley & Narvaez, 2004, 2005). Contrarily, when moral identity is not accessible, it should have less impact on moral behavior (Aquino et al., 2008).

Developing from previous research, Aquino & Reed (2002) define moral identity as a cognitive schema organized around a set of moral trait associations. These associations relate to different ways a moral person could think, feel and behave (Kihlstrom & Klein, 1994). In addition, drawing from Erikson (1964)'s proposal that identity is ingrained in the core of one's being and involves being true to oneself in behavior, Aquino and Reed (2002) conceptualize that moral identity has a private and a public aspect. They define the private aspect of moral identity *internalization* and the public aspect *symbolization*. There are some similarities between Aquino and Reed's (2002) conceptualization of moral identity and Blasi's character perspective. For example, these two perspectives both hold that people value the importance of moral identity within their overall self-definition differently (Blasi, 1983; Damon, 1984), and that the motivation to maintain self-consistency links moral identity to moral action. Despite the similarities, the social-cognitive model differs from character conceptualization in that it takes the situational cue into account. A situational prime might activate or deactivate the knowledge structure of moral self-concept, and thus affects the moral behavior accordingly. This advantage of the social-cognitive model not only can be applied to explain "everyday morality" but can also elucidate when and under what circumstances a particular identity will be activated within the self-concept. Considering the dynamic and multi-faceted nature of personal identities and the influence of situational factors on moral functioning, the current research focuses on the social-cognitive perspective of conceptualizing moral identity.

As mentioned, it is well-established that moral identity highly relates to prosocial behaviors; and past research has shown that lay people are likely to associate prosociality traits with a moral person. (Walker & Pitts, 1998). Specifically, Aquino and Reed (2002) identify nine traits that could be used to describe characteristics of a typical moral individual. These traits include being caring, compassionate, generous, fair, friendly, generous, helpful, hardworking, and kind. Thus, the willingness to be prosocial is contained in a certain degree in the knowledge structure of a typical moral person. For example, individuals for whom being a moral person is important to their self-concept have a higher possibility of reporting “volunteering at a local homeless shelter, organizing a food drive, mentoring troubled youth, or visiting patients at a nursing home” within past two years (study 5, p. 1433). In addition, moral identity theorists argue that people whose moral identity is highly self-relevant feel the most need to acutely show their concern to others (Blasi, 1984; Colby & Damon, 1992; Lapsley & Narvaez, 2004; Reed & Aquino, 2003). These people have a stronger self-reported moral obligation to help various outgroups and have the desire to exchange highly personal resources with them. They are also willing to donate actual money to the outgroup (Reed & Aquino’s, 2003). Reed and Aquino’s (2003) study shows that when forced to choose between donating money to assist either a deserving in-group (New York Police and Fire Widows and Children’s Benefit Fund) or a deserving out-group (Afghani women and children), participants with high moral identity internalization choose to give help to the more socially distant out-group. Furthermore, Damon and Hart (1992, p.455) point out that

there are both theoretical and empirical reasons to believe that the centrality of morality to self may be the single most powerful determiner of concordance between moral judgment and conduct...people whose self-concept is organized around their moral beliefs are highly likely to translate those beliefs into action consistently throughout their lives.

Therefore, it can be argued that moral identity is capable of predicting prosocial behaviors independently.

Moral Identity Internalization

Consistent with researchers who suggest there are both public and private aspects of the self (Erikson 1964; Fenigstein, Scheier, & Buss, 1975), Aquino and Reed (2002) believe that moral identity has two dimensions, internalization (a private, “having” side) and symbolization (a public, “doing” side). These two dimensions have different strengths and patterns of associations, which lead to diverse outcomes and theoretically-related constructs. Particularly, the internalization dimension directly relates to the self-importance of the moral characteristics. A person with high moral identity internalization has chronic accessibility to the relevant moral knowledge, both in quantity and speed, within the working self-concept (Aquino et al., 2009). For these people it is important for them to be moral. Previous research has demonstrated that higher internalization reliably forecasts prosocial sports behavior (Sage, Kavussanu, & Duda, 2006) and donation intentions to both in and out-groups (Winterich, Mittal, & Ross, 2009). Moral identity internalization is also linked to the reduced likelihood of engaging in anti-social behaviors. In Sage et al.’s (2006) study, the authors use United Kingdom adult male footballers as participants to investigate the impact of goal orientations and moral identity on behaviors exhibited while playing football. They find a negative relationship between moral identity and anti-social behaviors such as aiming to get a rival injured, playing tricks with the referee, and elbowing an opponent. Barriage et al. (2001) suggest a similar relationship between moral self-concept and antisocial behavior in a group of late adolescents. Although people with high moral identity internalization have consistent accesses to moral knowledge, it does not imply that people with low moral identity internalization lack any

association of moral traits within their working self-concepts, only that these connections do not come as quickly and in so great a number as for people with high moral identity internalization.

In addition, consistent with Erikson's (1964) definition of an identity as being true to oneself in action, people high in moral identity internalization have the desire to maintain moral consistency (Blasi 1984, Winterich, Mittal & Aquino, 2013); and they desire to take prosocial actions because doing so is consistent with their beliefs of being a moral person. If they choose not to do so, these people will experience cognitive conflict, as they will notice the discrepancy between the actual self and the ideal self. As Blasi's work (1984, 1993) proposed, identity consists of some levels of the ideal self and functions as the ideal principle of behavior. Furthermore, these people can experience self-consistency of their moral identity simply by behaving morally (e.g., donating to charity) regardless of whether the action is recognized or not (Winterich, Mittal & Aquino, 2013). In Winterich et al. (2013)'s study, the authors measure participants' willingness to donate when the behavior is recognized vs. not recognized. Results show that recognition only increases charitable behavior for consumers high in symbolization; whereas, for consumers who are high in internalization, recognition does not increase charitable behavior.

Moral Identity Symbolization

Different from the internalization dimension, the symbolization dimension originates from a symbolic perspective (Mead, 1934). It is associated with the apprehension of the self as a social object whose behaviors in the world can express that one has moral characteristics. Thus, the symbolization dimension relates to the recognition of others (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Goffman, 1959; James, 1890 & 1950; Schlenker, 1980). Hence, this dimension is more strongly associated with outcomes or measures that possess a self-

dimension or public dimension (Aquino & Reed 2002). For example, in Aquino & Reed's (2002) research, the symbolization dimension is highly correlated to the impression management measurement, which may indicate its potential proneness to self-presentational concerns. Besides, in the same paper, symbolization is more strongly related to religiosity, which may be considered as a symbolization illustration of one's underlying commitment to particular moral principles. Following the same logic, for people high in moral identity symbolization, their identity of being a moral person is obtained through the recognition of others; and these people are likely to engage in activities that can show others their commitments to moral values and beliefs, and they will do so when the action could be observed by others (Grant, 2012). In Winterich et al. (2013)'s study, the authors sample 293 participants to examine the joint effect of internalization and symbolization dimensions in predicting recognized volunteering. Results suggest that when participants assume their behaviors will be recognized, symbolization increases prosocial behavior for people who are low, but not high in internalization. In a follow up study investigating the joint effect of internalization and symbolization dimensions in predicting unrecognized volunteering, Winterich et al. (2013) indicate that when there is no recognition, symbolization does not significantly predict volunteering for those either low or high in internalization. Although people high in symbolization are motivated to take prosocial behaviors when the action will be recognized, people with low symbolization are less likely to engage in such a public display.

Last but not least, Aquino and Reed's (2002) model implies that the level of a person's symbolization does not necessarily relate to his/her level of internalization. Therefore, in the current study, the terms *high* and *low* are not being used across dimensions, but within each dimension.

In summary, if the above arguments are correct, then it is predicted that people high in moral identity symbolization should be more likely to take prosocial actions if their behaviors can be observed by other people. However, for people high in moral identity internalization, who have consistent accessibility of moral schemas within the working memory, their prosocial behaviors will maintain consistency whether it is under the public or private situation.

Accessibility of Working Self-Concept

As individuals, we interchange between different roles, which are associated with different facets of identities. From the social-cognitive perspective, people balance multiple identities, and only a subset, which are called working self-concept, can be salient in consciousness at any given time (Carver & Scheier, 1998; Markus & Kunda, 1986; Minsky, 1988; Skitka, 2003). Consequently, the influence of any single identity on a particular behavior depends on the accessibility of that facet of identity in a given situation. As such, “defining oneself as a moral person will only produce moral motivation when moral identity is currently accessible (i.e., active) within the working self-concept (Skitka, 2003).” In other words, when the moral self-concept is activated within an individual’s working self-concept, it has a higher possibility to impact subsequent moral behaviors.

Situation factors (i.e., moral prime, financial activities) may activate or deactivate a person’s moral identity, thus increasing or decreasing the accessibility of the moral self-schema within the working self-concept (Aquino et al., 2009). Research by Reed et al., (2007) shows that situation factors like moral primes, which activate the moral self-concept, can stimulate prosocial intentions and behaviors by increasing the current accessibility of moral identity within the working self-concept. In Reed et al., (2007)’s research, the accessibility of participants’ moral self-concept is manipulated by asking participants to do

a handwriting task. In the moral identity priming condition, participants were asked to write out each of the nine trait adjectives (e.g., caring, generous, kind, honest) that are developed by Aquino and Reed (2002) to measure an individual's moral self-identity. They were then asked to write a story about themselves using these nine words. In the control condition, participants were asked to write a story using nine words that avoid moral content (e.g., book, car, chair and computer). After finishing the writing (priming) task, participants were notified that they also needed to complete an unrelated task that asked for their willingness to donate time or money. Results showed that participants who completed the moral identity priming task had significantly higher intention to donate time to the charity than participants who completed the control task. These findings suggest that temporarily increasing the accessibility of moral identity within individuals' working self-concepts can increase their willingness to engage in moral activities.

A handwriting task has been commonly used in the literature to prime individuals with moral identity (Reed, Aquino & Levy, 2007). This method is useful, but there might be a simpler way. It is proposed that simply asking individuals moral identity dimension questions would sufficiently prime them with the corresponding dimension. Asking individuals questions with moral trait words, such as kind, fair, caring, and compassionate, would stimulate relevant moral identity dimensions within their working self-concepts, and thus increase the tendency of subsequent moral behaviors.

In sum, it is clear that moral identity is highly associated with prosocial behaviors. Stimulating moral identity within the working self-concept of individuals will increase moral engagement, and different dimensions of moral identity (internalization vs. symbolization) influence prosocial behaviors differently. Past research has shown that individuals with high moral identity internalization tend to donate money to charity whether under public or private circumstances (Winterich et al., 2013; Shao, Aquino, &

Freeman, 2008); whereas, people with high moral identity symbolization only do so when their behaviors will be observed by others. It is beneficial to focus on the influence of moral identity in the organizational context, since these findings could give organizations a better idea of how to approach donors with different moral foundations for charity purpose. However, it is also worthwhile to examine if the similar pattern will occur for other forms of prosocial behavior, such as sustainable consumption, which has gained remarkable attention recently as the increased concern on social and ethical issues. (Chen, 2001; Crane, 2001; Torjusen, Lieblein, Wandel, & Francis, 2001; Schuldt, Enns & Cavaliere, 2017). Investigating the influence of moral identity on green consumption will not only expand the literature on relevant areas but will also give marketers a better way to promote green products to customers with different moral orientations, which will benefit both environment and human beings.

Privately vs. Publicly Consumed Green Product

Sustainable consumption, “a conscious decision to buy or avoid products and services based on ethical, environmental, and/or political reasons (Atkinson, 2018)”, is considered to be a prosocial behavior. Since the current study aims to investigate how the two dimensions of moral identity (internalization vs. symbolization) impact consumers’ preferences on green consumption, and green consumption is an ideal form of prosocial behavior, it would be the focus of the study. Bourne (1957) identifies a product in terms of its conspicuous, and he argues that there are two elements of product conspicuous. First, luxuries, different from necessities, are not possessed by every individual, and thus they are relatively more conspicuous. The second element of conspicuousness considers the circumstance of consumption or the level to which the product is consumed publicly or privately. In general, publicly consumed products are more conspicuous than privately

consumed products; they are seen by others and can be used for identity communication (Childers & Rao, 1992). Whereas privately consumed products are not observed by others during the consumption process and thus they are not good communicators for one's identity. Since the second element of conspicuousness aligns better with the current study, the following sections would focus on the circumstance of a particular consumption (privately vs. publicly).

As illustrated above, moral identity is an essential independent predictor of prosocial behaviors. There are two dimensions of moral identity (internalization vs. symbolization), and individuals with different moral foundations behave differently. Specifically, people with high moral identity internalization are likely to maintain consistency of their behavior whether it is under the private or the public situation; while individuals with high moral identity symbolization are likely to take the prosocial action only when it could be recognized by other people. As showed in Winterich et al.'s (2013) research, when moral identity internalization is low, high moral identity symbolization motivates recognized volunteering behavior because doing so allows oneself to present moral characteristics to others. While, when moral identity internalization is high, volunteering behavior is motivated irrespective of the level of symbolization and recognition. Since volunteering to a non-profit organization and buying green products are both considered as prosocial behaviors, which are beneficial to other people and the society as a whole, it is reasonable to predict that moral identity will influence consumers' green product preferences in a similar way. Specifically, it is proposed that people with high moral identity internalization will maintain consistency of their behavior whether the green product is consumed privately or publicly; therefore, no significant differences are expected for these individuals. However, people with high moral identity symbolization will be more attracted to purchase publicly consumed products. These products are more

conspicuous and can present a consumer's moral characteristics to others, which will fulfill high symbolization people's intention of expressing their moral self to the public. Whereas, privately consumed green products such as pajamas are normally worn when individuals are in private situations (i.e., at home), these products are less recognized and could not provide the person an opportunity to communicate their moral self-concept to others. Therefore, it is hypothesized that,

H₁: People high in moral identity symbolization are more likely to purchase publicly consumed green products than privately consumed green products.

Furthermore, since the motivational driver between moral identity and prosocial behavior depends on the likelihood that an individual views certain moral trait as being central to his or her self-concept (Aquino & Reed, 2002), and individuals with different moral foundations (internalization vs. symbolization) view centrality differently, they will have different motivations. These motivations impact prosocial behaviors differently and also influence subsequent prosocial behaviors after green consumption.

Moral Identity Internalization and Moral Consistency

Moral identity not only impacts an individual's current prosocial behavior but also influences his/her subsequent behaviors. While many researches have shown that a moral person is likely to behave in a moral way and previous moral behavior impacts subsequent prosocial behavior, these studies investigate the concept of moral identity as a whole. However, to better understand the influence of moral identity on subsequent prosocial behavior, it is necessary to look at the two dimensions (internalization vs. symbolization)

of moral identity separately due to the fact that motivations behind these two dimensions are different.

Specifically, people with high moral identity internalization have a strong desire to maintain moral consistency (Blasi 1984). They possess the willpower, which is the capacity for self-control, and such willpower allows them to avoid temptations and consistently guides them to achieve moral aims. Besides, they value the integrity, which is defined as the degree to which an individual concerns about the unity of his or her sense of self, and such integrity directs individuals to the behaviors that are consistent with his or her moral identity. In addition, these people have a strong moral desire, and such desire motivates them to care about moral outcomes and to act in accordance with their moral self (Blasi, 2005). Since individuals for whom being a moral person is important to their self-identity have these three virtues, they are driven to behave prosocially because doing so is consistent with their beliefs of what it means to be a moral person. More importantly, since these individuals have chronic accessibility to moral traits and values, being a moral person should be a highly salient goal for them, and they should feel compelled to act in a way that is consistent with his or her moral self-construal (Blasi, 1984), even though when they have taken socially desirable actions first. Such as Mahatma Gandhi, Mother Teresa, and many other people who have fully committed themselves to moral causes even when doing so might lead to great personal costs sometimes (Shao, Aquino & Freeman, 2008). Taken together, it is proposed that people with high moral identity are motivated to behave prosocially even after good practices. If such an argument is correct, it is hypothesized that:

H₂: People high in moral identity internalization are more likely to maintain moral consistency of their behavior after buying the green product, i.e., donate more money to the nonprofit organization.

Moral Identity Symbolization and Moral Licensing

Different from people with high moral identity internalization, individuals with high moral identity symbolization participate in activities and behaviors that could signal their moral self-construal to others. These individuals gain their moral identity through the recognition of others. In other words, they may engage in moral behaviors because of a self-interested desire to obtain a positive self-image as well as manage others' impressions of them (Bolino, 1999; Goffan, 1959; Winterich, Aquino, Mittal, & Swartz, 2012). Alternatively, people with high moral identity symbolization are motivated to engage in moral actions because they want to highlight themselves as a moral person or instead to mislead people about the value they place on morality. Since these people's motivation of involving in prosocial behavior is not internally, rather depends on recognition or external rewards, they are more likely to license themselves after conducting socially desirable behavior.

In psychology, licensing refers to believing that one can behave in a potentially socially unacceptable way while does not fear about discrediting his or her self-image (Miller & Effron, 2010). An individual's past behavior will determine whether he or she feels licensed or not (Monin & Miller, 2001). For example, having been a healthy eater and maintaining a healthy lifestyle for a couple of months, a person may feel licensed to have junk food. In such a case, one can still feel he or she is a healthy person because the months of healthy eating and regular exercise boost one's self-image and thus, diminishes the risk of concerning him or herself as an unhealthy person.

The concept of licensing in moral domains can have an impact on one's subsequent prosocial behaviors. Moral licensing is a psychological process that allows people to conduct morally questionable behavior after engaging in a socially desirable behavior. According to research in moral licensing, people, in general, have the desire to maintain a

positive moral image to other people as well as to themselves (Mazar, Amir, & Ariely, 2008; Monin & Jordan, 2009; Monin & Miller, 2001). Therefore, people will refrain from situations that are morally disturbing, or that can signal to others and themselves that they are immoral (Monin & Miller, 2001). Similar to the case in psychological licensing, people refer to their past behaviors to determine if the current action is morally discrediting or not. If people perceive that their previous behaviors are socially desirable or morally laudable, they will feel more comfortable to conduct behaviors that might be seen as socially undesirable or morally questionable (Miller & Effron, 2010).

Many studies have shown that moral behavior leads to morally questionable behavior in the same domain. For example, Monin and Miller (2001) find that male participants who are given the opportunity to disagree with sexist statements first are significantly more likely to make a recruit decision for a manufacturing job that favoring male candidates. Although a large quantity of research has indicated that moral licensing could be domain-specific, recent research has demonstrated that non-domain specific moral licensing can happen such that being moral in one domain licensing the person to be less moral in another domain. Mazar and Zhong (2010) indicate that previous moral behavior (i.e., protect the environment) can lead to morally questionable behaviors (i.e., donating less to charity) as well as immoral behaviors (i.e., lying to receive a great pay-out). These research findings can apply to the current study because they show that moral licensing can happen when prior moral behaviors lead to subsequent immoral behaviors, and it can be either domain or nondomain specific.

In addition, such licensing effect can be explained by established moral credentials. Moral credentials happen when good deeds do not license one to transgress per se, but instead they license morally dubious behavior by making it not look like a transgression at all (Efron & Monin, 2010). In Monin and Miller (2001)'s study, they give male

participants the chance to disagree with sexist statements first, and then these participants feel more licensed to describe a stereotypically male job as better suited for men than for women. The authors believe that disagreeing with the sexist statements give participants moral credentials as nonsexist, which then increases their confidence that favoring a man for the job would not make them appear sexist. In the credential model, licensed individuals disambiguate the behavior in a non-threatening way. Such behavior would not hurt their moral self-image, and they could commit as many subsequent actions as they like as long as they can be disambiguated by the credential (Merritt, Effron, & Monin, 2010).

Although previous research has yet examined the impact of moral licensing on subsequent immoral behaviors, it is worthwhile to investigate how individual differences influence the licensing effect. Since individuals with different moral foundations have different motivations for prosocial behavior, such a difference would lead to dissimilar subsequent behaviors after green consumption. Specifically, it is proposed that people with high moral identity symbolization have a higher possibility of engaging in moral licensing than people with high moral identity internalization due to the fact that their identity of being a moral person is obtained through the recognition of others and they will only behave prosocially when others are around. Their motivation of being a moral person is not as strong and consistent as people with high moral identity internalization, and once they believe that they have gained enough moral credentials by purchasing green products, they would feel licensed to do something undesirable, even morally questionable.

Based on the above arguments, it is hypothesized that:

H3: People high in moral identity symbolization are more likely to license their behavior after buying the green product, i.e., donate less money to the nonprofit organization.

Chapter III: Pilot Study

To be sure moral identity is active within the working self-concept of participants, it is necessary to prime individuals with moral identity dimensions (internalization vs. symbolization). Through multiple approaches, the current study demonstrated that simply asking individuals corresponding moral identity dimension questions would successfully prime that dimension within their working self-concepts. This approach is different from what has been commonly applied in the literature (writing task) and it provides a more efficient method to prime moral identity.

Similar to past studies (Winterich et al., 2013; Aquino et al., 2009), participants' moral orientations were measured using the Self-Importance of Moral Identity Scale (1=strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree) developed by Aquino and Reed (2002). There were five items to measure each dimension (see Appendix), and consistent with prior research (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Skarlicki et al., 2008), the internalization and symbolization items were averaged to form two subscales. However, results showed that there were no significant differences between these two dimensions by simply measuring them. Further investigation indicated that an individual could potentially possess multiple facets of identities, and only a subset can be salient at consciousness level at a given time (Carver & Scheier, 1998; Markus & Kunda, 1986; Minsky, 1988; Skitka, 2003). Therefore, to make sure that moral identify dimensions (internalization vs. symbolization) are currently accessible within the working self-concept of the participant, the simple measurement would not be sufficient, rather moral primes would be needed. As research (Aquino et al., 2009) show that moral primes could successfully activate the moral self-concept by increasing the current accessibility of moral identity within an individual's working self-concept.

Two methods were developed for moral primes. For method one, participants were asked to answer some statements (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree) based on the nine words that could be used to describe traits associated with a moral person (Aquino & Reed, 2002). These words were “caring,” “compassionate,” “fair,” “friendly,” “generous,” “helpful,” “hardworking,” “honest”, and “kind.” Participants in the moral identity internalization group answered statements that are related to internalization dimension (such as “being some who has these characteristics is an important part of who I am”) ($M = 0.79$, $SD = 0.97$). While participants in the moral identity symbolization group answered statements that are related to symbolization dimension (such as “the kinds of books and magazines that I read identify me as having these characteristics”) ($M = 0.33$, $SD = 0.94$).

For method two, participants not only needed to answer statements either for internalization or symbolization condition, but they were also required to write a story corresponding to each dimension. They were given a 9*5 matrix that contained nine words listed in each row in the first column. Again, these were the same words that could describe the traits related to a moral person. Participants were asked to write down the nine words across the remaining four columns so that each participant wrote down a particular word four separate times. On the next page, participants were told to write a story using these words. For internalization condition, the question was “Please take a few moments to think about each of these words and write a brief story about yourself in one or two paragraphs using EACH of these words AT LEAST ONCE. Write about YOURSELF and how you see yourself in terms of these words.” ($M = 1.01$, $SD = 0.70$). Whereas, for symbolization condition, the question was “Please take a few moments to think about each of these words and write a brief story about how do you think others would describe you using EACH of these words AT LEAST ONCE. Write about how OTHERS would see you in terms of these words.” ($M = 1.06$, $SD = 0.86$).

These two methods could indicate whether simply asking participants to answer statements related to each dimension would sufficiently stimulate the corresponding dimension, or they had to write a story in order to prime the condition successfully. The latter has been commonly used in research (i.e., Reed, Aquino, & Levy, 2007).

Method

Sample and Procedure

The sample consisted of 88 participants (U.S. adults). Among them 46% were female, and the average age was 35 years old ($SD = 10.97$). Participants were mainly Caucasian (67%), followed by African American (10%), Hispanic (10%), Asian (8%), Native American (3%), and Other and biracial (4%).

An online survey designed with Qualtrics was posted on the “Human Intelligence Task (HIT)” website on Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk). Respondents had the ability to preview the survey before participating, which included the description of the study and the estimated length of time to complete the survey. Participants were compensated with 50 cents upon completion.

Experimental Manipulations

Participants were randomly assigned to 4 conditions. Condition 1, moral identity internalization question only condition; Condition 2, moral identity symbolization question only condition; Condition 3, moral identity internalization question and story condition; and Condition 4, moral identity symbolization question and story condition (see pilot study data for details).

Measures

Current accessibility of moral identity dimensions (internalization vs. symbolization) within working self-concept. Based on Aquino and Reed's (2002) Self-Importance of Moral Identity Scale (1=strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree), participants were asked to answer statement questions that aimed to measure the current accessibility of moral identity within their working self-concepts. Participants indicated their agreement with each item on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" (score = 1) to "strongly agree" (score = 7). For internalization condition measurement, the statement could be "I strongly desire to have these characteristics." ($M = 5.89$, $SD = 1.08$, $\alpha = 0.84$). For symbolization condition measurement, the statement could be "It is important to me that other people can associate these characteristics with me." ($M = 5.13$, $SD = 1.41$, $\alpha = 0.78$).

Analysis

The pilot study was designed to test which moral prime methods (moral identity question only method vs. moral identity question + story method) could successfully prime moral identity dimensions (internalization vs. symbolization) within the working self-concept of the participant. Specifically, the priming manipulation was treated as an independent variable, and the current accessibility of moral identity was treated as the dependent variable. The average score of internalization (1) and symbolization (2) condition were calculated for each participant, then 2 was subtracted from 1. If a participant scored above 0, meaning he/she had high moral identity internalization, otherwise, if the score was below 0, meaning he/she had high moral identity symbolization. A Oneway ANOVA, with the prime manipulation as the independent variable and the differences between I score and S score as the dependent variable, was run. To further test which

method would work better, a Oneway ANOVA with only question conditions and a Oneway ANOVA with only question + story conditions were run.

Results

Data indicated that moral identity primes (internalization vs. symbolization) successfully primed participants with the corresponding dimension, $F = 2.83$, $p < .05$. Furthermore, a Oneway ANOVA with question conditions only generated a 1-tail p-value of .045, indicating that the moral identity internalization (MII) questions ($M = 0.79$) successfully prime participants with MII and moral identity symbolization (MIS) questions ($M = 0.32$) successfully prime participants with MIS. However, a Oneway ANOVA with question + story conditions showed that these primes could not stimulate the corresponding dimension ($p > .05$). To further examine the reliability of the statement questions, reliability tests were conducted. The reliability test among internalization dimension question items was conducted first. The Cronbach's Alpha was 0.84, which indicated a high level of internal consistency among these items. The Item-Table Statistics also showed that each of these statement questions reliably measured the moral identity internalization; therefore, none of them should be removed. Then the reliability test among symbolization dimension question items was conducted. The Cronbach's Alpha was 0.78, which indicated a high level of internal consistency among these items. However, the Item-Table Statistics showed that two of the items did not measure the dimension reliably, while the other two did. These results showed that the majority of the statements were clear factors, whereas a few were not; modifications based on the results were completed, which would be further discussed below.

Discussions

This pilot study showed that different from what has been commonly utilized in previous studies, i.e., asking participants to write a story using words that describe moral traits, simply asking participants statement questions would successfully prime the corresponding (internalization vs. symbolization) dimension within their working self-concepts. This method is more efficient and expands current literature on moral prime.

As individuals hold multiple identities and only a subset of them are accessible within consciousness level at a given time, moral identity will link to moral actions only when it is available within one's mind. Therefore, simple measurement would not sufficiently stimulate the moral schema and moral primes should be applied. The findings demonstrated the necessity of utilizing moral primes to incite moral identity and supported the assumption that moral identity is manipulatable.

Additionally, the current study provides a more precise and simple way to prime moral identity (internalization vs. symbolization) within individuals' working self-concepts. Previous studies (Reed et al., 2007) have used handwriting task to prime moral identity vs. non-moral identity within participants' mind; whereas, the present study offers the method to prime the two dimensions (internalization vs. symbolization) of moral identity within people's mind. Such method denotes the differences between the two dimensions, shows the importance of examining the concept of moral identity from the two dimensions, and provides a more efficient process to prime moral identity (internalization vs. symbolization).

Chapter IV: Main Study

According to the model proposed in the current study, moral identity is highly associated with prosocial behavior, and there are two dimensions of the concept, internalization, and symbolization. These two dimensions relate to different motivations, and consequently, impact individuals' behaviors differently. Specifically, individuals with high moral identity internalization have chronic accessibility to moral knowledge and being a moral person is important to their self-identity. These individuals are also motivated to maintain moral consistency between the actual self and the ideal self, and they can experience self-consistency of moral identity by behaving morally regardless of whether the behavior is recognized or not (Winterich et al., 2013). Therefore, it is projected that individuals high in moral identity internalization are likely to behave consistently on green consumption, a form of prosocial behavior (Atkinson, 2018), whether the consumption is publicly or privately. Whereas, individuals with high moral identity symbolization have the desire to express their moral self through the recognition of others; therefore, they are motivated to participate in activities that can show their moral values. Different from privately consumed green products, publicly consumed products are more conspicuous and can be used for identity communication (Childers & Rao, 1992). Therefore, it is hypothesized that individuals high in moral identity symbolization are more likely to purchase the publicly consumed green product than the privately consumed green product.

Besides, this study also aims to examine how individuals' previous good practices influence their subsequent prosocial behavior. Since motivations relate to internalization and symbolization are different, they will lead to diverse outcomes. People with high moral identity internalization have the willpower to avoid temptations, concern about the

unity of the sense of self and have a strong desire to maintain moral consistency (Blasi, 1984). These individuals feel compelled to act consistently with his or her moral self-construal; therefore, they have a higher possibility of maintaining moral consistency after the green consumption. Whereas, people with high moral identity symbolization engage in prosocial behaviors to obtain a moral self-image. Since they are motivated by external rewards, once gaining enough moral credentials through previous green consumption, they feel more comfortable to license subsequent behaviors.

The main study was designed to test if individuals with different moral identity dimensions (internalization vs. symbolization) are likely to have different perceptions on buying green products, and how the green purchasing behavior and moral identity impact their subsequent prosocial behaviors. According to the proposed model, individuals with high moral identity symbolization have a higher possibility of buying publicly consumed green products than privately consumed green products. These people are also more likely to license their following behavior after green consumption. Whereas individuals with high moral identity internalization have an equal chance of buying the green product no matter it is consumed publicly or privately, and their subsequent prosocial behavior is more likely to be consistent with the moral self-concept.

Method

Sample and Procedure

The sample consisted of 125 participants (U.S. adults). Among them 33.6% were female, and the average age was 34 years old ($SD = 8.92$). Majority of participants were white (76%), followed by African American (9%), Asian (7%), Hispanic (6%), and Native American (2%). There was a wide range of household income among participants: less

than \$30,000 (26.4%), \$30-\$60,000 (44%), \$60-\$90,000 (18.4%), \$90-\$120,000 (6.4%), \$120-\$150,000 (1.6%), and greater than \$150,000 (3.2%).

An online survey designed with Qualtrics was posted on the “Human Intelligence Task (HIT)” website on Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk). Respondents had the ability to preview the survey before participating, which included the description of the study, risks, and benefits associated with participation, the estimated length of time to complete the survey, and the contact information of researchers. The “HIT” remained posted for a total of 7 days and participants were compensated with 50 cents upon completion. IRB was approved by The University of Texas at Austin Office of Research Support prior to the launch of the questionnaire.

Experimental Manipulations

Participants were first randomly assigned to moral identity symbolization or internalization condition, again these priming statements were developed from Aquino and Reed’s (2002) Moral Identity scale (See Appendix). All priming statements were measured on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from “Strongly Disagree (score = 1)” to “Strongly Agree (score = 7).” Followed by the filler task (i.e., list three reasons for a favorite movie), participants answered manipulation check questions that measured the current accessibility of corresponding moral identity dimension within their working self-concepts. Afterwards participants indicated their preferences (purchase intentions and word-of-mouth recommendation) toward both publicly consumed (an outwear that they will wear when going out) and privately consumed (a pajama that they will wear at home) green products (See Appendix). After a few more filler tasks, including, environmental orientations questions, demographic questions (gender, age, race, and household income), and political

ideology questions, participants specified their willingness to donate money (0-15 dollars) to an environmental non-profit organization.

Measures

Current accessibility of moral identity dimensions (internalization vs. symbolization) within working self-concept. Participants completed manipulation check questions (developed from Aquino and Reed's (2002) Moral Identity scale) that aimed to measure the current accessibility of the corresponding dimension. There were five items for each dimension (see Appendix), and each statement was measured on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree (score = 1)" to "Strongly Agree (score = 7)." Consistent with prior studies (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Skarlicki et al., 2008), the internalization ($M = 5.69$, $SD = 1.33$, $\alpha = 0.91$) and symbolization items ($M = 4.78$, $SD = 1.67$, $\alpha = 0.88$) were averaged to form two subscales.

Green product preference (publicly consumed vs. privately consumed). Product purchase intention was measured using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from "Never buy it" (score = 1) to "Definitely buy it" (score = 7). Participants were asked to indicate their buying preference toward publicly consumed green product (a sustainable and stylish outwear) ($M = 5.02$, $SD = 1.56$, $\alpha = 0.95$) and privately consumed product (a sustainable pajama set) ($M = 4.57$, $SD = 1.71$, $\alpha = 0.96$). They were also required to specify the likelihood they would recommend outwear ($M = 4.06$, $SD = 1.27$) and pajama set ($M = 3.6$, $SD = 1.39$) to their friends or close others. Each item was scored by a 7-point Likert scale anchored by "Never" (score = 1) and "Absolutely" (score = 7). The average score of buying each product was calculated to form two subscales.

Volunteering behavior. At the end of the main study, participants were notified that when checking out the product they chose, the cashier or the online agent would ask them

to donate money to an environmental non-profit organization that aims to protect the planet and ultimately human beings. Participants were asked how much money they would likely to donate. Donating money was chosen to measure the volunteering behavior as Winterich et al. (2013) suggested that donating money to a charity might be a better form of prosocial behavior to examine the influence of symbolization on individuals' prosocial behavior than giving time. Participants' volunteer decision ($M = 3.19$, $SD = 4.04$) was coded as follows: 0 = no donation at all, 1 = \$1, 2 = \$2, 3 = \$3, 4 = \$4, 5 = \$5, 6 = \$6, 7 = \$7, 8 = \$8, 9 = \$9, 10 = \$10, 11 = \$11, 12 = \$12, 13 = \$13, 14 = \$14, and 15 = \$15.

Analysis

The main study was designed to examine whether participants with different moral foundations (internalization vs. symbolization) tend to have divergent preferences on green products (publicly consumed vs. privately consumed), and how green purchasing behavior and moral identity impact their subsequent prosocial behavior. Specifically, the priming manipulation was treated as an independent variable and green product preferences and donating behavior were treated as dependent variables. To test if participants with high moral identity symbolization were more favored of the publicly consumed green product (the outwear), a paired t-test was run with priming conditions as independent variables and the average value of buying each product as the dependent variable. Since the dependent data (likelihood of buying each product) were made on the same individual and to test if these two values were significantly different, a paired t-test was run. Furthermore, to examine if participants with high moral identity symbolization were more likely to license their subsequent prosocial behavior after green consumption; and if participants with high moral identity internalization were more likely to maintain consistency of their prosocial behavior following green consumption, a correlation test was run.

Results

A series of analysis supported the hypotheses. A paired T-test with $t = -3.37$, $p < .01$ indicated that participants with high moral identity symbolization were significantly more likely to choose the publicly consumed green product ($M = 5.22$) than the privately consumed green product ($M = 4.48$). However, for participants high in moral identity internalization, their tendency of purchasing privately vs. publicly consumed products was not significantly different and they had an equal possibility of buying each product ($M_o = 4.78$, $M_p = 4.67$).

Table 1. t-test Results Comparing Moral Identity Internalization and Symbolization on green product preferences^a

Purchase Intention	n	Mean	SD	T	Df	p-value
Pajama	67	4.4836	1.7698	-3.365	66	.001
Outwear	67	5.2209	1.3065			

a. Priving_IV = Symbolization

Furthermore, a correlation test between the ratio of purchase intention of privately consumed product and publicly consumed product and the willingness of donating money indicated that people with high moral identity symbolization were more likely to license their behavior (less likely to donate money to the charity) after buying the green product ($p < .05$); whereas people with high moral identity internalization were more likely to maintain consistency of their behavior (more likely to donate money to the charity) after the green consumption ($p > 0.5$).

Table 2. Correlation Results between the ratio of purchase intention of privately consumed product and publicly consumed product and the willingness of donating money

Correlations^a			
		BP_BO_ratio	DonateMoney
Buying pajama_Buying outwear_ratio	Pearson Correlation	1	.28
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.02
	N	67	67
DonateMoney	Pearson Correlation	.28	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.02	
	N	67	67

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

a. Priming_IV = Symbolization

Discussions

Main study results supported hypotheses. Findings showed that when the moral prime activated an individual's moral self-schema, the likelihood that he or she intended to take prosocial behaviors increase. However, the influence of moral identity is not uniform across different people. Specifically, individuals high in moral identity symbolization favored more of the green product that can communicate their moral values; whereas, individuals high in moral identity internalization had a higher possibility of maintaining consistency of their behaviors, i.e., no matter the green product was consumed privately or publicly, their actions were consistent. Furthermore, an individual's previous good practices also impacted their subsequent prosocial behaviors, and their moral foundations played a role in such circumstances. Particularly, people with high moral identity symbolization were intended to license their following behavior, and they were less likely to donate money to the non-profit organization; whereas, people for whom being a moral person is central to their self-identity were intended to maintain consistency of their behavior, and they were more likely to donate money to the non-profit organization.

Chapter V: Discussion & Conclusions

The studies show that moral identity internalization vs. symbolization have different impacts on an individual's perceptions of prosocial behavior, and also influence their subsequent behaviors. These findings provide new insights into moral identity and moral licensing effects.

Theoretical Contributions

This research extends the moral identity literature. Past research has paid more attention to the internalization dimension (Aquino et al. 2009), or the concept of moral identity as a whole. There are sound theoretical reasons for doing so as the internalization dimension may have a stronger effect on individuals' prosocial behavior. However, the current study empirically demonstrates that the two dimensions of moral identity (internalization vs. symbolization) have different effects on people's judgment and decision making. Thus, looking at moral identity as a whole concept might not be precise enough. Specifically, people for whom being a moral person is central to their self-identity have the desire to maintain consistency between their actual self and ideal self, and they have the intention to avoid situations that could raise the conflict of self-concept. Therefore, their behavior is consistent whether it is observed by other people or not. Whereas, for people who gain moral identity through the recognition of others, they engage in prosocial behaviors for self-expression purpose. Thus, they are likely to take the prosocial action when it is observed by others. These hypotheses were supported by the main study, which showed that people high in moral identity internalization had an equal possibility of buying privately vs. publicly consumed green products; whereas, people high in moral identity symbolization were more favored of publicly consumed green products.

This research also provides insights regarding the current accessibility of moral identity within working self-concept. According to the social-cognitive perspective, human beings possess different facets of identity, and only a subset of them are at a conscious level at a given time. Thus, the accessibility of moral identity within the working self-concept should determine the degree to which it influences moral outcomes. Therefore, different from previous research, the current study uses manipulations to prime participants with the specific moral identity dimension instead of simple measurement. Results in the pilot study show that moral primes successfully prime the internalization vs. symbolization dimension within the participant's working self-concept. Unlike previous studies (Reed et al., 2007), in which participants are asked to write stories with keywords to stimulate the corresponding dimension, results in the current study indicate that simply asking participants questions would sufficiently prime the particular dimension within their working self-concepts. This is one of the major contributions of the current research, as it provides a more concise way to prime moral identity and expands the literature.

A third contribution of this research relates to the influence of moral identity in different domains. While previous research focuses on the influence of moral identity (internalization vs. symbolization) in an organizational context (Winterich et al., 2013; Shao, Aquino, & Freeman, 2008), the current research extends to other domains. It investigates the influence of moral identity on green consumption, an area that has gained significant attention recently, and shows that moral identity does have an impact in this domain. Individuals with different moral foundations have different perceptions for green products: people with high moral identity internalization have an equal possibility of buying privately vs. publicly consumed green products, while people with high moral identity symbolization have a higher possibility of buying publicly consumed green products.

In addition, the current research extends the literature on moral consistency and moral licensing. This research examines how individual differences, particularly moral identity, impact people's perception of social responsibility and morality, and therefore influence their subsequent prosocial behaviors. It is argued that since people for whom being a moral person is central to their self-identity have a strong desire to maintain moral consistency, they are likely to engage in prosocial behaviors, even after good practices. While people high in moral identity symbolization, since they have the desire to express their moral values through recognized prosocial behaviors, they have a higher chance to license their subsequent behaviors once they have gained moral credentials through previous green consumption. The results in the main study support this hypothesis and indicate different tendencies toward donating behaviors among individuals with different moral identity dimensions. These results suggest that when investigating the influence of individuals' previous moral behaviors on their subsequent prosocial behaviors, researchers should take their individual differences – moral identity foundations into account. People with different moral orientations value moral behaviors differently, and thus will take diverse approaches to their behaviors.

Practical Contributions

There are also important managerial implications for marketers and organizations. These insights could offer marketers new ideas on how to target consumers with different moral orientations. First, since individuals high in moral identity symbolization favor green products that can communicate their moral identity to others, it seems justifiable for marketers to continue using recognition to increase sales on these products. However, since individuals high in moral identity internalization have an equal possibility of buying either publicly or privately consumed green products, marketers do not necessarily need to use

recognition as a motivation tool for these consumers. Besides, being morally consistent is a continues goal for this group of people, and thus the use of recognition as a way to motivate their prosocial behavior might be superfluous.

Finally, the results indicate that individuals' previous green consumption might lead to subsequent morally questionable behavior among individuals with high moral identity symbolization; whereas, individuals with high moral identity internalization are likely to maintain consistency of their behavior following good causes. Policy makers and organizations should be cautious about such effects and apply different strategies when approach to individuals with different moral foundations.

Limitations

Despite theoretical and practical contributions, there are limitations. First, although the pilot study results indicated that the newly designed items successfully primed participants with moral identity, there were several aspects that could be improved. Overall, there should be more differentiations on keywords that related to internalization and symbolization dimension. For example, for moral identity internalization condition, it should be said that those nine keywords were used to describe the characteristics of a person like "you." Whereas, for symbolization condition, it should be indicated that those words are used to describe "someone else." Besides, the measurement questions were on one page; however, to be certain that each dimension were measured accurately, those questions should be on two separate pages. In addition, since the reliability test demonstrated that some measurement questions that aimed to measure the symbolization dimension failed to work, new items need to be created to better capture the concept. These modifications were made in the main study.

Second, although the newly modified moral primes successfully stimulate participants with the corresponding moral identity dimension, these primes might lack practical utility. It might be challenging to apply these primes in real life; therefore, other types of moral prime might be worth examining. For example, witnessing the morally exemplary actions of others (cf. Freeman, Aquino, & McFerran, 2009) has been showed to be useful in developing moral behaviors, the examination of this form of moral prime may advance the understandings of moral foundations.

A third limitation of this research relates to the design of product stimuli. To be certain that the publicly vs. privately consumed green product stimuli are equally designed except for the consumption situation, visual cues are not included in the current study. Some people may argue that a picture with descriptions of the product may help participants process the information better (Lazard & Atkinson, 2015), thus, future research can include image conditions in the stimuli to further test the validity of the results.

Another limitation associates with the need for self-consistency. As Blasi (1984) pointed out, people for whom being a moral person is central to their identity experience discomfort when they violate their own moral beliefs, and it is argued that this is the reason they would behave consistently. However, the current research does not address what would happen if these people behave in an inconsistent way (or in a selfish fashion). People with highly central moral identity might experience greater distress compared with those whose moral identity has lower centrality. Alternatively, these people might be able to elaborate forms of cognitive rationalization to avoid self-condemnation (Aquino et al., 2009). Future research should investigate this question to better understand the consequences of violating moral standards among individuals with high moral identity internalization, and further test how it will subsequently influence people's perceptions of morality and prosocial behaviors.

Future Research

The current study generates several opportunities for future research. It is argued that since motives associated with internalization versus symbolization are different, individuals high on either dimension will behave differently. Internalization may impact prosocial behaviors regardless of recognition due to desires for self-consistency, whereas symbolization may impact prosocial behaviors only when these behaviors can be recognized, and when individuals could gain benefits. Although the results support the hypotheses, mediation effects are not tested. Future research should measure or operationalize these mediators through manipulations to better understand the motives associated with each moral dimension. Besides, individuals with high moral identity symbolization would license their subsequent prosocial behaviors when they have obtained moral credentials through previous green consumption. Although the results indeed show that these people have a higher tendency to license their subsequent behavior, the effect of moral credentials are not examined. Future research should further inspect this effect and investigate its influence on prosocial behaviors among people with high moral identity symbolization.

Moreover, it is possible that self-concept plays a role among individuals with high moral identity symbolization. Research shows that a prior choice, which activates and boosts a positive self-concept, could subsequently license a more self-indulgent option (Khan & Dhar, 2006). In their research, Khan and Dhar indicate that the choice of a more hedonic option increases following a prior virtuous act. Specifically, they show that participants indicate less altruism and donate less money to charity in the licensing group. In this condition, participants were asked to imagine that a foreign student classmate had requested assistance for a lecture. They were asked to indicate their willingness to help the foreign student with the course material that would cost two hours of their time. All

participants in this condition chose to help the foreign student, and consequently, they were less likely to donate money to the charity. Results pointed out that these participants licensed their behavior due to boosted self-concept. Similar to this study, it is possible that participants in the symbolization condition in the current study experienced a boosted self-concept by purchasing a green product, and the increased positive self-image licensed their subsequent behavior. Future research should explore the effect of boosted positive self-concept among individuals with high moral identity symbolization and further examine its influence on licensing behaviors.

Furthermore, it is likely that pride, the self-conscious emotion, might play a role among individuals with high moral identity symbolization. Research shows that pride happens when individuals have achieved a set of internalized standards (Tracy & Robins, 2004). Since pride is generally achievement oriented, it can be linked to moral behaviors that exceed a set of internalized moral standards (Tangney et al., 2007). Given that past prosocial behaviors can activate the positive moral self-concept (Khan & Dhar, 2006; Kouchaki, 2011) and that the moral self-concept is evaluated during the accumulation of moral credits, it is justifiable to assume that previous prosocial behaviors can incite the self-conscious emotion of pride among individuals. This sense of pride might then allow individuals to license their subsequent moral behaviors (Newman & Brucks, 2017). Future research should test the influence of pride among individuals high on moral identity symbolization to advance the understanding of the underlying process of moral licensing.

Appendices

Appendix A

Aquino and Reed's (2002) Self-Importance of Moral Identity Scale and Instructions

Listed alphabetically below are some characteristics that might describe a person:

Caring, Compassionate, Fair, Friendly, Generous, Helpful, Hardworking, Honest, Kind

The person with these characteristics could be you or it could be someone else. For a moment, visualize in your mind the kind of person who has these characteristics. Imagine how that person would think, feel, and act. When you have a clear image of what this person would be like, answer the following questions using the scale below.

	Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
1. It would make me feel good to be a person who has these characteristics. (I)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. Being someone who has these characteristics is an important part of who I am. (I)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. I often wear clothes that identify me as having these characteristics. (S)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. I would be ashamed to be a person who had these characteristics. (I/R)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. The types of things I do in my spare time (e.g., hobbies) clearly identify me as having these characteristics. (S)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. The kinds of books and magazines that I read identify me as having these characteristics. (S)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. Having these characteristics is not really important to me. (I/R)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. The fact that I have these characteristics is communicated to others by my membership in certain organizations. (S)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. I am actively involved in activities that communicate to others that I have these characteristics. (S)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. I strongly desire to have these characteristics. (I)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Note. I = Internalization item; S = Symbolization item; R = reverse coded.

Appendix B

Product Stimuli

Privately consumed green product

Imagine that in the next few days, you are going to buy a pair of pajamas for yourself that you will wear **AT HOME**. It is made with environmentally friendly materials. By buying it, you are protecting our environment, and ultimately yourself and your family. Below is the description of the product. Please read carefully and take a few minutes to think about if you would like to buy it.

A sustainable pajama set

- Made with fabrics that are all organic and certified fair-trade
- Processed as minimally as possible
- No flame retardants or chemical finishers are allowed
- Supporting a sustainable environment and protecting the next generation

Publicly consumed green product

Imagine that in the next few days, you are going to buy some outerwear for yourself, like a jacket, that you will wear **WHEN YOU GO OUT**. It is made with environmentally friendly materials. By buying it, you are protecting our environment, and ultimately yourself and your family. Below is the description of the product. Please read carefully and take a few minutes to think about if you would like to buy it.

A sustainable and stylish outerwear

- Made by reclaimed fibers, organic cotton or recycled polyester whenever possible
- Ethically made in factories
- Ideal for outdoor activities, and cold weather
- Protecting the environment and the next generation

Appendix C

Current Accessibility of Working Self-Concept (Moral Identity Internalization Measure)

Listed alphabetically below are some characteristics that might describe a person:

Caring, Compassionate, Fair, Friendly, Generous, Helpful, Hardworking, Honest, Kind

The person with these characteristics could be you. **Again, continuing to visualize in your mind the person you previously visualized has these characteristics.** Imagine how that person would think, feel, and act.

When you have a clear image of what this person would be like, answer the following questions using the scale below.

	Strongly Disagree							Strongly Agree
1. I strongly desire to have these characteristics.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
2. These characteristics speak well about who I am.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
3. I can identify myself with these characteristics.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
4. Having these characteristics is essential to my self-identity.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
5. These characteristics are important to who I am.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

Appendix D

Current Accessibility of Working Self-Concept (Moral Identity Symbolization Measure)

Listed alphabetically below are some characteristics that might describe a person:

Caring, Compassionate, Fair, Friendly, Generous, Helpful, Hardworking, Honest, Kind

The person with these characteristics could be you. **Again, continuing to visualize in your mind the person you previously visualized has these characteristics.** Imagine how that person would think, feel, and act.

When you have a clear image of what this person would be like, answer the following questions using the scale below.

	Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree	
1. I am actively involved in activities that communicate to others that I have these characteristics.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
2. I often buy products that communicate the fact that I have these characteristics.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
3. I often engage in conversations that identify me as having these characteristics.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
4. It is important to me that other people can associate these characteristics with me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
5. I always make sure that these characteristics of me are well received by others.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

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