

Facework in Responding to Unethical Communication

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Abstract

Unethical communication occurs fairly frequently in organizations, yet confronting someone about an ethical transgression is a politically sensitive interaction that challenges people's identities. This study integrates a social confrontation approach and politeness theory to identify politeness strategies people perceive as effective and socially appropriate for expressing disapproval of ethical transgressions. To examine the extent to which the selection of politeness strategy was related to the type of unethical communication and power in the relationship, participants evaluated hypothetical scenarios based on Redding's proto-typology of unethical communication. The type of unethical communication influenced perceptions of the appropriateness and effectiveness of three politeness strategies and the power relationship influenced perceptions of two politeness strategies.

Keywords

ethics, unethical communication, face, politeness theory, social confrontation

Unethical communication is a serious issue in organizations. According to the 2011 National Business Ethic Survey, 45% of the respondents reported observing ethical misconduct in the last year (Ethics Resource Center, 2011). Three of the six most frequently observed types of unethical behavior involved communication: 21% of the participants observed abusive behavior, 20% observed lying to employees, and 15% observed discrimination. Redding (1996) argues that unethical communication is ubiquitous in organizations. Pressures to conform, impersonal systems, hierarchy, and the complexities of organizational life create organizational climates that are

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conducive to unethical behavior (Johannesen, Valde, & Whedbee, 2008; Mattson & Buzzanell, 1999; Redding, 1996).

Employees are a crucial element in the process of identifying and dealing with wrongdoing in organizations (Kaptein, 2011). Kaptein asserts that organizations need to encourage employees to respond to wrongdoing. He proposes that people who observe or are the targets of unethical communication and/or behavior have several choices for responding: inaction, confrontation, reporting to management, calling an internal hotline, and external whistle-blowing. Although researchers have focused on factors influencing people's decisions to report wrongdoing (e.g., King & Hermodson, 2000; Trevino & Victor, 1992; Victor, Trevino, & Shapiro, 1993) and on whistle-blowing (e.g., Jensen, 1996; King, 1997; Miceli & Near, 1994; Near & Miceli, 1987), less attention has been given to the processes of confronting someone directly about his or her unethical behaviors (exceptions include Bisel, Kelley, Ploeger, & Messersmith, 2011, and Kaptein, 2011). Yet Kaptein argues that confronting and reporting to management are better methods of addressing unethical behavior because they are "more efficient, effective and ethical than internal and external whistleblowing" (p. 514).

Despite the potential benefits of reporting or confronting, people are reluctant to respond to unethical behavior. The 2011 National Business Ethics Survey found that 35% of the employees observing misconduct failed to report it (Ethics Resource Center, 2011). The 2007 National Business Ethics Survey showed that decisions not to report are motivated by concerns about retaliation, and the 2000 survey indicated people did not report ethical misconduct because they feared being viewed as troublemakers or snitches (Ethics Resource Center, 2000, 2007). Ethical issues are a sensitive conversational topic that people often avoid engaging. Discussions of ethical issues are avoided because they are politically sensitive topics (Jackall, 1988; Seeger, 2001, 2004) that potentially challenge the identities or face of individuals (Valde, 1998; Bisel et al., 2011).

Face is "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself [*sic*] by the line others assume he has taken during a particular interaction" (Goffman, 1967, p. 5). Face is the conception of self one presents and seeks to have supported during an interaction (Cupach & Metts, 1994). Brown and Levinson (1987) extend the concept of face to include two types: negative face and positive face. Negative face focuses on one's desire for autonomy or to "be unimpeded by others" (p. 62). Positive face deals with people's needs for social approval; it is "the want of every member that his [*sic*] wants be desirable to at least some other" (p. 62). Positive face is "the desire to be liked and respected by the significant people in our lives" (Cupach & Metts, 1994, p. 5).

Brown and Levinson (1987) argue that all adults have face wants and a desire to maintain face during interaction. Acts that potentially jeopardize someone's ability to maintain his or her face are called face threatening acts (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Face threatening acts (FTAs) can challenge the face of the speaker or the hearer as well as challenging negative and positive face (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Responding to someone's unethical communication is a potential FTA. Bisel et al. (2011) argue that denying an unethical request challenges both the positive and negative face of the hearer. Similarly, expressing disapproval of someone's unethical communication could challenge the hearer's positive and negative face. Expressing disapproval

interferes with the hearer's need for social approval (positive face) and challenges the hearer's ability to act autonomously (negative face). Thus, reluctance to respond to unethical communication may be related to concerns about challenging the face of the person performing the unethical act.

The purpose of this study is to extend research on responses to unethical organizational behavior. Specifically, it examines the ways in which people address face concerns in the process of confronting those who have engaged in unethical communication. Unethical communication in the workplace is an ethical transgression, and this study applies a social confrontation approach (Newell & Stutman, 1988) combined with politeness theory (Brown & Levinson, 1987) to identify communicative strategies that are effective and socially appropriate for expressing disapproval of another's ethical transgression.

Social Confrontation

A social confrontation framework provides a means for viewing the process and potential resulting problems of confronting someone about his or her unethical behavior (Roloff & Paulson, 2001). As a form of alignment talk or interaction aimed at aligning behavior with preferred behavior, the social confrontation framework provides one means for considering how people attempt to alter potentially destructive communicative behaviors (Morris, 1991). Although the social confrontation framework has been used predominantly to investigate the ways in which people confront someone for relational transgressions, Roloff and Paulson (2001) argue that this framework can be used to provide insight into people's responses to ethical transgressions.

Violations of explicit or implicit rules are called transgressions (Afifi, Falato, & Weiner, 2001). In discussing the importance of rule violations in relational transgressions, Metts (1994) defines rules as "the 'musts,' 'oughts,' and 'shoulds' that guide an individual's behavioral choices and that shape the interpretations of and attributions assigned to the behavior of others" (p. 219). People use rules to help determine when others have violated expectations. Drawing on Shimanoff (1980), Metts argues that rules are prescriptions for prohibited as well as obligated and preferred behaviors. Ethical transgressions occur when people violate formal or informal rules for ethical behavior.

Newell and Stutman (1988) define social confrontation as "a particular kind of communication episode initiated when one person communicates to another that his or her behavior has violated (or is violating) a rule or expectation for appropriate conduct within the relationship or situation" (p. 271). The social confrontation episode focuses on disagreements about behaviors, not ideas, and it encompasses the interaction process in which the parties negotiate the definition and resolution of the problem (Newell & Stutman, 1991). The social confrontation episode consists of three stages: initiation, development, and closure (Newell & Stutman, 1988, 1991).

Newell and Stutman (1988, 1991) propose that the social confrontation interaction sequence is a type of problematic interaction because confrontation disrupts the social order and threatens identities. Much of the research on problematic interactions has focused on how the person who is reproached will respond (Newell & Stutman, 1991). The current study focuses on the initiation stage of social confrontation and the degree

to which the confronter addresses the face issues of the transgressor when first expressing disapproval of the transgressor's unethical communication.

Initiating Social Confrontation and Politeness Theory

The initiation stage of social confrontation is important to consider because it sets the tone for the social confrontation episode (Newell & Stutman, 1991). A social confrontation episode is initiated when the confronter questions, reproaches, accuses, complains, or in some other way challenges the rule violation of the transgressor (Newell & Stutman, 1991). People who initiate social confrontations seek to accomplish multiple goals (i.e., influencing the behavior of the other person, venting frustration, maintaining the relationship with the other person, obtaining retribution, and gaining information and understanding; Stutman & Newell, 1990). These goals can be contradictory. For instance, attempts to vent frustration and obtain retribution may interfere with one's ability to maintain a strong relationship. Thus, one of the challenges of confrontation is to communicate the complaint in such a way that it enables the meeting of multiple goals. These attempts to accomplish multiple goals are reflected in the strategies people use to initiate a social confrontation episode.

Newell and Stutman (1991) suggest that initiation varies along two dimensions: focus and explicitness. The focus of an initiation may be on the behavior of the person confronted or on the confronter's emotions. Explicitness deals with the directness with which the confronter addresses the issue. Newell and Stutman identified five behaviors, varying in focus and explicitness that people use to initiate confrontation. First, hinting is an indirect speech act that has more than one interpretation. For instance, if a coworker heard a colleague lie to a superior about why he or she failed to meet a project deadline, the coworker might express disapproval by saying, "that was an interesting way to handle Terry's questions." Second, seeking confirmation is a more direct strategy in which the confronter uses a question to imply that there has been potentially problematic behavior. In "seeking confirmation," the coworker could confront his or her colleague by asking, "Do you think Terry believed that story?" Third, one can initiate a confrontation by blaming or accusing the other person of breaking a rule. For example, the coworker could say, "I can't believe you lied to Terry again. You know the project is not done because you don't have all the information." Fourth, emotional display is the nonverbal expression of emotion. The coworker might loudly sigh and sift through papers, hoping that his or her colleague will ask what is wrong. Fifth, an emotional statement provides a verbal mention of the confronter's emotions. For example, the coworker might say, "I am feeling very frustrated and disappointed now."

Embedded in the social confrontation episode (Newell & Stutman, 1988, 1991) is an assumption that social confrontation is an FTA. The hearer may experience challenges to both positive face (i.e., loss of social approval with the speaker and others) and negative face (i.e., loss of autonomy to speak and act as desired). Expressions of disapproval, complaints, and reprimands threaten positive face (Brown & Levinson, 1987). In addition, reprimands and reproaches threaten negative face (Carson & Cupach, 2000).

Brown and Levinson (1987) argue that people will try to minimize the threat when delivering face-threatening messages. They propose five super-strategies used to redress face threats: don't do the FTA, off-record, negative politeness, positive politeness, and bald on record. The strategies vary in the degree of redress from such concern for face that one avoids doing the face threat to no attention to face (bald on record). In cases in which the potential threat is too high, one might decide to not express disapproval (don't do the FTA). Off-record strategies involve expressing disapproval in a way that has more than one plausible interpretation, which makes it difficult to attribute a single intent to the speaker. Newell and Stutman's (1991) strategies of hinting and display of emotion are essentially off-record strategies. Negative politeness uses statements that enable the hearer to partially satisfy his or her need for autonomy. For example, in the instance of the coworker hearing a colleague lie to a supervisor, the colleague might say, "I am not sure you understand the situation and how serious the circumstances might be if Terry checks out the story you told her." Positive politeness strategies show social approval for the hearer by emphasizing shared group membership and/or equality in terms of rights and expectations. In using positive politeness, the coworker could say, "I know we both find the bureaucracy of this place frustrating, and I am a bit surprised that you lied to Terry just now." Bald on record involves delivering the reproach or complaint directly with no attention to face. Saying "It was wrong of you to lie to Terry about why you missed the deadline" is an example of a bald on record statement. Newell and Stutman's strategies of blaming or accusing and expression of emotion are bald on record strategies.

Brown and Levinson (1987) suggest that people select mitigation strategies based on the seriousness of the FTA. The seriousness of a face threat results from the closeness of the relationship, the power relationship, and the degree to which a particular face threat is an imposition. In workplace situations in which someone seeks to confront another person for an ethical violation, the confronter's selection of mitigation strategies should depend on the nature of the ethical transgression and on the nature of the relationship between the confronter and transgressor.

Ethical Transgressions and Politeness Strategies

A social confrontation episode arises because one party perceives that the other has violated a norm, rule, or expectation. Thus, the crux of social confrontation is the negotiation of rules, norms, and expectations following a transgression (Newell & Stutman, 1988). Transgressions may be violations of explicit or implicit rules (Afifi et al., 2001).

Although many organizations have adopted formal codes of ethics, it is important to recognize that social expectations of right and wrong also apply to organizational life. Social expectations for ethical behavior in the workplace may derive from relational rules and general social standards. Planalp and Fitness (2011) argue that there are five basic rules for relationships, and breaking these rules can have ethical implications. One rule of relationships is that everyone has a basic need to be connected to others; socially excluding people breaks this rule. A second rule emerges from people's basic need for respect and dignity. It is wrong to humiliate people, to treat people

with contempt or as invisible, or to disrespect people. A third rule of relationships emerges from our interdependence: People should look out for each other and protect each other from harm. When people neglect or manipulate others, or hint at using violence, they break this rule. The fourth rule is that we have an expectation for fairness in our relationships. Finally, we have an expectation in our relationships that we can maintain a certain amount of autonomy and a certain amount of privacy. These relational rules guide people's expectations for behavior in relationships and set "informal" expectations for acceptable and unacceptable behavior. While Planalp and Fitness suggest that these are rules for personal relationships, these rules likely affect workplace relationships as well. Bridge and Baxter (1992) argue that some workplace relationships function with both work role and personal relationship components.

In addition to informal rules deriving from relational expectations, there are also informal rules that emerge from social traditions. Seeger and Kuhn (2011) argue that over time organizations have developed ethical standards for what counts as good or desirable behavior. These standards emerge from philosophical traditions. As examples they assert that in organizations there are long-standing expectations for honesty and truthfulness. Seeger and Kuhn also propose that there are newer standards for "diversity of opinion and perspective" (p. 168).

Society also has expectations for ethical communication in organizations. Redding (1996) proposes a proto-typology of unethical communication. He suggests people perceive the behaviors in the categories of the proto-typology as common violations of ethical standards. Redding acknowledges that the list does not encompass all unethical communication and that the categories are not mutually exclusive. However, Redding asserts that these are common behaviors that people frequently view as unethical. This study seeks to further the research on Redding's proto-typology by using it as a means for conceptualizing some of the common ethical transgressions that occur in the workplace.

Redding's (1996) proto-typology consists of six types of unethical communication that commonly occur in organizations: coercive, destructive, deceptive, intrusive, secretive, and manipulative-exploitive. *Coercive communication* acts include behaviors such as intimidation or threats in which the speaker abuses his or her power or authority and attempts to limit the hearer's autonomy. Redding argues that coercive communication limits dissent, stifles discussion, and restricts freedom of speech. Redding defines *destructive communication* as communicative acts that attack a hearer's self-esteem, reputation, or feelings by showing disregard or disdain for the hearer's values. Destructive communication includes "insults, derogatory innuendoes, epithets, jokes (especially those based on gender, race, sex, religion, or ethnicity); put-downs; back stabbing; character assassination and so on" (p. 28). *Deceptive communication* includes acts aimed at cheating, misleading or defrauding the hearer. Lies, slanting the truth, fudging details, and fabricating truths are all forms of deceptive communication. Redding suggests that subordinates are particularly likely to engage in deceptive communication when discussing their own performance or observations, but he also notes that organizations themselves use euphemisms to hide product defects, embarrassing details, and unpleasant facts. The *intrusive communication* category focuses on communicative acts that violate the privacy rights of the hearer.

Although Redding concentrated on surveillance tactics used to monitor employee behaviors, he also included questioning tactics that focus on topics such as religion, marital status, and political affiliation in this category. *Secretive communication* includes acts that hoard or hide information that would expose an individual's incompetence or ineptness. Redding includes silence and unresponsiveness in this category. *Manipulative-exploitative communication* involves attempts to gain compliance by preying on people's fears, prejudices, and ignorance.

In general, transgressions vary in severity. Relational researchers such as Metts (1994) have found that people perceive some relational transgressions to be more serious than others. Although there are differences between relational transgressions and ethical transgressions, it is likely that organizational members will see some ethical violations as more serious than others. Indeed, Robinson and Bennett (1995) found that sexual harassment, verbal abuse, stealing from coworkers, and endangering coworkers were more serious transgressions than showing favoritism, gossiping about coworkers, blaming coworkers, and competing nonbeneficially. Metts argues the severity of the transgression influences the directness of responses. Following Brown and Levinson (1987), there is a larger FTA associated with confronting someone about a serious transgression than about a minor transgression. Thus, a response to a severe transgression should use more politeness (e.g., an off-record strategy or negative politeness) than a minor ethical transgression. However, Redding's (1996) discussion of the unethical communication behaviors does not suggest that any one category is a more serious violation than the others. Thus, it is hard to predict which type of unethical behavior will evoke particular politeness strategies to mitigate the FTA. Therefore, the following research question is posed:

Research Question 1 (RQ1): Is there an association between politeness strategies and the type of unethical behavior?

Power Relationships and Politeness

Research examining facework and complaints or reproaches in the workplace typically focuses on superiors communicating complaints or reproaches to subordinates (e.g., Carson & Cupach, 2000; Fairhurst, Green, & Snavely, 1984; Wagoner & Waldron, 1999). However, not all ethical transgressions are enacted by subordinates. Indeed, Roloff and Paulson (2001) note that coworkers, superiors, and subordinates can all engage in behaviors that violate ethical expectations. Because Brown and Levinson (1987) suggest that the power relationship between the speaker and hearer can influence the selection of mitigating strategy, it is important to consider how disapproval of ethical violations is communicated across different levels of power (e.g., superior to subordinate, coworker to coworker, and subordinate to superior).

The organizational hierarchy or the command structure establishes relationships among organizational members in terms of who has authority and can give directives (Bisel et al., 2011; Bisel, Messersmith, & Kelley, 2012). Thus, the command structure provides a context for interactions in the workplace. Organizational members use the

command structure to make communicative choices and to make sense of their interactions (Bisel et al., 2011; Bisel et al., 2012).

The person engaging in confrontation will likely have the goal of being as direct as possible in expressing disapproval to the transgressor (Newell & Stutman, 1991) as well as the goal of maintaining self and other's face (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Thus, the confronter is likely to try to be effective and socially appropriate. In this case, a socially appropriate manner would recognize the relational context resulting from the command structure, resulting in an expression of disapproval that fits within the norms for workplaces in the United States.¹ Indeed, research on the hierarchical mum effect (Bisel et al., 2011; Bisel et al., 2012; Ploeger, Kelley, & Bisel, 2011) proposes that the degree to which someone uses directness and seeks to protect the image of another is influenced by his or her position in the command structure.

Don't Do the FTA. People tend to weigh the consequences of confrontation before confronting someone (Cloven & Roloff, 1991; Newell & Stutman, 1988). Newell and Stutman (1991) identified seven factors that facilitate or constrain people's decisions to confront: (a) the degree to which there is an urgency to respond to the problem, (b) the relationship between confronter and transgressor, (c) the degree to which one has the responsibility to confront the other, (d) the confronter's anticipation of how the other will respond, (e) the confronter's personal resources, (f) "the appropriateness of the time and place" (p. 383), and (g) the potential costs and rewards resulting from confrontation. Solomon, Knobloch, and Fitzpatrick (2004) suggest that power relationships figure into decisions of whether or not to express a complaint; people tend to withhold complaints from more powerful people in order to avoid negative personal and relational consequences. Similarly, the 2003 National Business Ethics Survey found that 41% of employees withheld reports of misconduct because they feared retaliation from supervisors (Ethics Resource Center, 2003). Research on the hierarchical mum effect demonstrates that subordinates refrain from expressing disagreement to supervisors in order to avoid being perceived negatively and to prevent damaging the relationship (Bisel et al., 2012; Ploeger et al., 2011). Thus, concerns regarding how a supervisor might respond to expression of disapproval may lead subordinates to select the don't do the FTA strategy when a supervisor engages in unethical behavior. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 1 (H1): The "don't do the FTA" strategy will be perceived as most appropriate and effective when the unethical behavior is performed by a superior rather than a subordinate or a coworker.

Off-record. Newell and Stutman (1991) suggest that people often use indirect strategies that imply a complaint about a rule violation to initiate social confrontation. Indirect strategies relying on implication fit in Brown and Levinson's (1987) off-record category. Thus, it seems that off-record strategies might frequently be used to initiate social confrontation situations. However, Brown and Levinson argue that the off-record strategy will be used only in certain circumstances. They suggest using the

off-record strategy in unwarranted situations can result in people presuming the FTA is greater than it is. Power is one factor that influences the selection and perception of strategy, and Brown and Levinson suggest that more politeness is needed with people of power. Therefore, people would be more likely to use off-record strategies when communicating with superiors rather than subordinates. Indeed, Bisel et al. (2012) propose that subordinates will use equivocation (using ambiguity or indirectness) as means of conveying disagreement to a superior. Hence, the following hypothesis is advanced:

Hypothesis 2 (H2): The “off-record” strategy will be most appropriate and effective when the unethical behavior is performed by a superior rather than a subordinate or a coworker.

Negative Politeness. Negative politeness redresses the FTA by recognizing the hearer’s need for autonomy (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Fairhurst et al. (1984) found that managers tend not to use negative politeness when trying to address a subordinate’s unacceptable behavior. They proposed that negative politeness was used infrequently with subordinates because there was too much risk in giving subordinates autonomy to address problems: subordinates might not resolve the situation in an appropriate manner or the subordinate might misuse any freedom that is given. Furthermore, organizational hierarchy coupled with employment agreements may result in a relational context in which it is understood that the subordinate has given up some autonomy in exchange for employment and there is an expectation that the superior will use directives (Bisel et al., 2011; Bisel et al., 2012). Bisel and colleagues argue that the expectation for the use of directives may reduce the need for superiors to use negative politeness. In terms of redressing the face threat in communicating disapproval for ethical transgressions, it is expected that negative politeness will be seen as more appropriate and effective when used with superiors or coworkers rather than with subordinates. Thus, the following hypothesis is put forward:

Hypothesis 3 (H3): The “negative politeness” strategy will be perceived as more appropriate and effective when a superior and coworker rather than a subordinate performs the unethical behavior.

Positive Politeness. Positive politeness redresses the face threat involved in confrontation by recognizing the hearer’s desire to be approved of by others. In using positive politeness, a speaker assumes a level of social membership similar to the hearer’s (Brown & Levinson, 1987). In organizations, superiors and subordinates frequently do not belong to the same groups in terms of organizational wants and desires. Thus, the use of positive politeness between superiors and subordinates would likely be viewed as unwarranted. A subordinate using positive politeness with a superior might overstep his or her bounds and be perceived as assuming that he or she belongs to the same relevant group of people as the superior. A superior could be perceived as insincere or condescending if he or she tried to use positive politeness with a subordinate. In terms

of understanding group members and being able to utilize positive politeness in a legitimate manner, it seems that this strategy would be most appropriate and effective when used among coworkers. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 4 (H4): The “positive politeness” strategy will be perceived as more appropriate and effective when the person who performed an unethical behavior is a coworker rather than a superior or subordinate.

Bald on Record. Fairhurst et al. (1984) found that when managers try to control subordinates’ ineffective performance, managers tend to begin a control sequence with direct disapproval (e.g., bald on record). Brown and Levinson (1987) suggest that the more power a speaker has over a hearer, the less politeness the speaker will need to use to mitigate an FTA. Thus, superiors would be expected to use less politeness than subordinates. Indeed, it is perceived as more legitimate for superiors, because of their organizational authority, to ignore subordinates’ face wants (Carson & Cupach, 2000; Lim, 1994). So it may not be perceived as impolite for a superior to use a bald on record strategy, as it would be for a subordinate or a coworker. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is offered:

Hypothesis 5 (H5): The “bald on record” strategy will be perceived as more appropriate and effective when the person who performed the unethical act is a subordinate rather than a superior or coworker.

Method

Participants

A total of 355 people (138 men, 216 women, and 1 nonreport) participated in the study. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 68 ($M = 30.25$, $SD = 12.03$).² Although the majority of the participants were Caucasian (76.6%), a range of ethnic groups were included in the sample: African American (11.8%), Hispanic (2.8%), Asian (2.5%), Middle Eastern (0.8%), Native American (0.8%), and other or not reported (4%). Approximately half the sample (50.1%) was employed full-time, 39.4% worked half-time, 3.4% were unemployed, 1.1% were retired, and 5.9% did not report employment. Participants represented a range of job classifications: office support (16.3%), service industry (16.1%), sales (14.1%), education and library (9.3%), professionals (8.7%), managers (6.5%), health care (4.2%), community services (3.9%), entertainment and sports (2.8%), skilled trade (2.8%), government (2.3%), manufacturing (2.0%), agriculture (0.6%), military (0.6%), other (5.9%), and unreported (3.9%).

Participants were recruited two ways. First, students in communication courses at a midwestern university were given a small amount of extra credit for voluntarily completing the questionnaire. Approximately, 138 (38.9%) of the participants were recruited this way. Second, we employed a logrolling technique to ensure our sample included people with work experience. Students in communication courses at the same midwestern

university were given extra credit for recruiting someone with a minimum of 2 years of full-time work experience to complete the questionnaire. A random 30% of participants recruited in this manner were called and queried about their participation in this study to ensure the legitimacy of the data. Approximately 180 (50.7%) of the participants were recruited through student logrolling. An additional logrolling sample of approximately 37 participants (10.4% of all participants) were recruited from various organizations through the research team members' social networks. Research team members asked relatives, friends, and friends of relatives to complete the questionnaire.

Procedures

Students who participated completed the paper-and-pencil survey in a laboratory setting, and participants who were recruited through logrolling were given a paper-and-pencil survey that they completed at home and returned to the researchers. Because of the number of cells in the design, a paper-and-pencil survey was more appropriate than an online survey. All participants were asked to read and sign an informed consent form. The student participants returned the consent form and received a questionnaire packet; the participants from the logrolling sample had the consent form and questionnaires provided in a manila envelope. Each participant filled out a questionnaire containing one of the experimental scenarios and the measured variables. Participants were randomly assigned to one cell in the design and cell counts were approximately equal. In other words, each participant read one scenario that induced the type of unethical behavior and one set of instructions that induced the power relationship and then evaluated the scenario on all dependent measures. After reading the scenario, participants completed the politeness measures. The politeness measures were developed based on Brown and Levinson's (1987) discussions of each politeness strategy. For each item participants were asked to evaluate, based on their understanding of the situation and the power relationships, the extent to which the statement was a socially appropriate way and the extent to which the statement was an effective way for the confronter to express disapproval to the transgressor. Participants also completed manipulation checks measures that assessed the perceived nature of the unethical behavior and power relationship in the scenario and demographic questions. Student participants' questions regarding the study were answered following completion of the questionnaire.

Design and Measurement

Independent Variables. The experiment was a 6 (type of unethical scenario: coercive, destructive, deceptive, intrusive, secretive, or manipulative-exploitive) \times 3 (power of the confronter: superior, coworker, or subordinate) independent groups design. Because the goal of the study was to determine if responses to unethical transgressions vary based on the type of transgression and the power relationship between the confronter and the actor, scenarios were created to induce the first independent variable. In addition, the second independent variable was induced within the introductory description of the scenarios. Specifically, the unethical transgressions in the scenarios

Table 1. Manipulation Check Scale Alpha Reliabilities, Grand Means, Standard Deviations, and Sample Items.

Manipulation check scale	α	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Sample item
Coercive scenario	.89	2.45	0.95	Cory tried to coerce Jamie.
Destructive scenario	.89	2.94	1.02	Cory made destructive comments.
Deceptive scenario	.89	2.64	0.99	Cory lied to Jamie.
Intrusive scenario	.90	2.68	1.00	Cory made an intrusive comment.
Secretive scenario	.67	2.75	0.90	Cory was being secretive.
Manipulative-exploitive scenario	.84	2.76	0.92	Cory tried to manipulate Jamie

were written to parallel Redding's (1996) proto-typology. The scenarios described the interaction between two (i.e., Jamie and Cory) or three (i.e., Jamie, Cory, and Terry) members of an organization depending on the type of situation being depicted. Cory was always described as the person performing the unethical act. Jamie was always described as the confronter. A complete list of scenarios is provided in Appendix A.

The power relationship between the person acting unethically and the person confronting the unethical behavior were induced in introductions before the scenarios. The introduction to each of the scenarios defined the power relationship between Cory and Jamie. Jamie was defined as Cory's superior, coworker, or subordinate in the introductory description of the scenario. The inductions of the power of the responder for two-party (i.e., Jamie and Cory) and three-party (i.e., Jamie, Cory, and Terry) scenarios are provided in Appendix B.

Measured Variables. Three sets of variables were measured in the study: manipulation checks, dependent variables, and demographic information. All variables in the study were coded such that higher values reflect greater amounts of the variable. Seven scales were constructed to evaluate the induction of the independent variables (i.e., coercive, destructive, deceptive, intrusive, secretive, or manipulative-exploitive, power of the responder). All manipulation check scales were constructed using 5-point Likert-type items. Scale reliabilities, grand means, standard deviations, and sample items are provided in Table 1. As a set, the manipulation check scales were reliable.

The dependent variable scales were constructed based on Brown and Levinson's discussions of each politeness strategy. Following the technique utilized by Baxter (1984),³ the first author independently developed 6 items for each politeness super-strategy (for a total of 30 items). The second author then read the items to assess the extent to which they fit Brown and Levinson's conceptual definitions of the super-strategies. The authors discussed all items appearing to fit more than one super-strategy category and made appropriate revisions. The politeness strategy items are provided in Table 2.

All dependent variable scales were constructed using 5-point Likert-type items. Participants evaluated possible responses to the unethical act, representing the five super-strategies, as the stem of a pair of questions. For each stem representing a possible response, participants evaluated the appropriateness of the stem (i.e., This

Table 2. Scale Items for Politeness Strategies.

Don't do FTA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Jamie says nothing *Jamie ignores the comment/action. *Jamie acts as though Cory has not done or said anything wrong. Jamie does not express approval. *Jamie says nothing that indicates disapproval of Cory's comment/action. *Jamie interacts with Cory as though nothing is wrong.
Off-record	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Jamie drops hints about not approving of what Cory said/did. *Jamie makes an ironic statement that understates Jamie's disapproval. *Jamie mentions that Jamie agrees and disagrees with what Cory said/did. *Jamie says, "It's hard to know the right thing to do/say." *Jamie says that it seems some people don't know when to not do or say anything. *Jamie drops clues that Jamie disapproves of Cory's comment/action.
Negative politeness	<p>Jamie expresses disapproval by speculating about the degree to which Cory understands the seriousness of Cory's actions/comments.</p> <p>Jamie qualifies the expression of disapproval by saying "I think."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Jamie tries to minimize the expression of disapproval by saying, "I have a small disagreement with what you did/said." *Jamie accompanies the expression of disapproval with an apology for making things more difficult for Cory. *Jamie tells Cory that some people would approve of what Jamie said/did. <p>Jamie tells Cory that members of this organization do not say/do things like this.</p>
Positive politeness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Jamie talks about goals and values that Jamie and Cory share then mentions disapproval. *Jamie mentions "safe topics" such as their dislike of bureaucracy before mentioning disapproval. *Jamie uses slang and organizational jargon to show their shared associations at work, and then Jamie expresses disapproval. *Jamie uses "sort of" and "kind of" to express some understanding of Cory's action before indicating that Jamie disapproves of the action. *Jamie compliments Cory before expressing disapproval. <p>Jamie mentions admiring Cory's work talents, and then expresses disapproval for the comment/action.</p>
Bald on record	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Jamie forcefully voices disapproval of Cory's comment/action. *Jamie asserts without offering any explanation that Jamie disapproves of what Cory said/did. *Jamie states disapproval without giving any reasons. <p>Jamie expresses explicit lack of approval.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Jamie states outright Jamie's lack of approval for Cory's comment/action. <p>Jamie states disapproval directly to Cory.</p>

Note. FTA = face threatening act. Asterisks denote items that remained in the scale after the confirmatory factor analysis was completed. For each prompt, the participant was asked to evaluate if the response was a socially appropriate response and if the response was an effective response to the situation.

statement is a socially appropriate way for Jamie to respond in this situation) and the effectiveness of the stem (i.e., This statement is an effective way for Jamie to respond in this situation).⁴ Each response to a stem was counted as an item.

After the data were collected, factor analysis was performed according to the method outlined by Hunter and Gerbing (1982). Each of the scales was evaluated for internal and external consistency. Items were removed from the measurement model if they failed to fit the factor analytic criteria. The resulting scales were unidimensional, reliable, and valid. The items that remained in the scales after the factor analysis are indicated by an asterisk in Table 2.

The first of the politeness strategies, don't do the FTA, was reliably measured, $\alpha = .86$, $M = 2.22$, $SD = 0.77$, by 10 items. The second strategy, off-record, was reliably measured, $\alpha = .77$, $M = 2.67$, $SD = 0.58$, by 12 items. The third strategy, negative politeness, was less reliable but adequately represented, $\alpha = .69$, $M = 2.89$, $SD = 0.70$, by 6 items. The fourth strategy, positive politeness, was reliably measured, $\alpha = .75$, $M = 3.02$, $SD = 0.60$, by 10 items. The final strategy, bald on record, was reliably measured, $\alpha = .82$, $M = 2.52$, $SD = 0.75$, by 8 items. Overall, the measures of politeness strategies were reliable.

The final portion of the questionnaire contained background information about the participants. Demographic questions included sex, age, ethnicity, educational background, and information about the work background of participants (e.g., years of work experience, job classification).

Results

For all analyses, the alpha level was set at $p = .05$. Prior to conducting the manipulation checks, the tests of research questions, and the tests of hypotheses, preliminary analyses were performed on the politeness strategies. The sex of the participant, the age of the participant, and the number of years of work experience that the participant possessed all shared very little variance with the politeness strategies. As such, these variables were not included in the reported analyses.

As a portion of the sample were undergraduate students and a portion were recruited through logrolling, preliminary analyses were also conducted on the participants' work experience and their perceptions of the seriousness of the unethical behaviors, the appropriateness of the scenarios, and the use of each of the five politeness message super-strategies. Full-time employees and half-time employees were more similar than different in their impression of the scenarios and message strategies. In particular, full-time employees did not differ in their impression of the seriousness, $t(136) = -0.83$, $p > .10$, appropriateness, $t(134) = -0.88$, $p > .10$, bald on record, $t(139) = 0.03$, $p > .10$, negative politeness, $t(138) = -0.93$, $p > .10$, positive politeness, $t(138) = -1.03$, $p > .10$, and don't do the FTA, $t(137) = 1.51$, $p > .10$, comparisons. Only the off-record strategy was endorsed differentially, $t(134) = -2.39$, $p = .01$, point biserial $r = .13$. Full-time employees, $M = 2.59$, $SD = 0.57$, were less likely than half-time employees, $M = 2.75$, $SD = 0.57$, to endorse confronting unethical behavior through hints. It is important to note, however, that the effect size for this comparison is quite small (i.e.,

less than 2% of the variance). The questionnaires were not coded for student or logrolling sampling technique. Should there be differences in the sampling method, however, those differences should emerge as either effects of age or effects of the status of employment. The student sample and the logrolling sample perceived the scenarios similarly and perceived the general use of the politeness strategies in similar ways. Age had no effect on perception of the scenarios. These results, together, add credence to the use of the data set as a whole.

Manipulation Checks and Scenario Evaluation

To ensure that the scenarios validly represented the six categories, two scenarios were written per category of unethical behavior. Preliminary analyses were performed to ensure that the scenarios were evaluated similarly before collapsing across the scenarios in the tests of hypotheses and answers of research questions. For each of these analyses, the version of the scenario was used as the independent variable and the manipulation check measure for the type of scenario was used as the dependent variable in an independent samples t test. These analyses demonstrated that it was appropriate to use the evaluations of the scenarios together because five of the six scenarios were not judged differently on the manipulation check measure for the scenario type. Specifically, the versions of the coercive scenarios were perceived as similarly coercive, $t(45) = 0.25, p > .10$. The versions of the destructive scenarios did not produce a statistically significant difference in the evaluations of destructiveness, $t(43) = 0.25, p = .07$. The versions of the intrusive scenarios were perceived to contain a similar level of intrusiveness, $t(67) = 0.71, p > .10$. The versions of the secretive scenarios were judged as equally secretive, $t(63) = 0.84, p > .10$. Finally, the evaluations of the versions of the manipulative-exploitive were similar, $t(61) = 1.13, p > .10$.

Only the versions of the deceptive scenarios were different, $t(58) = 2.63, p = .01$. In particular, the job opening deceptive scenario, $M = 4.18, SD = 0.62$, was evaluated as more deceptive than the retail discount deceptive scenario, $M = 3.66, SD = 0.87$. Additional analyses, however, demonstrated that the scenarios were not different in their seriousness, $t(57) = 0.66, p > .10$. It is the seriousness of the behavior that should affect the politeness of the response (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Due to the fact that five of the six scenario types failed to produce statistically significant differences on the associated manipulation check measures and due to the fact that the seriousness of the final scenario versions was not different, the decision was made to collapse across the versions of the scenarios. The result is that a more parsimonious design is presented throughout the method and results sections of the article.

Scenario Types. To test the effectiveness of the type of unethical scenario induction, manipulation checks were conducted using the type of scenario and power of the responder as the independent variables and each of the manipulation check measures as the dependent variable in an ANOVA. The manipulation check for the coercive scenarios was successful, $F(5, 331) = 57.20, p < .001, \eta^2 = .46$. Participants evaluated the coercive scenarios as more coercive, $M = 4.07, SD = 0.58$, than the destructive,

$M = 2.09$, $SD = 0.67$, deceptive, $M = 2.23$, $SD = 0.68$, intrusive, $M = 2.22$, $SD = 0.79$, secretive, $M = 2.14$, $SD = 0.73$, or manipulative-exploitive scenarios, $M = 2.30$, $SD = 0.72$. In addition, neither the power of the responder, $F(2, 331) = 1.38$, $p > .10$, $\eta^2 < .01$, nor the interaction of the type of scenario and the power of the responder, $F(10, 331) = 1.62$, $p = .10$, $\eta^2 = .05$, produced a statistically significant effect on evaluations of the coerciveness of the scenarios.

The manipulation check for the destructive scenarios was successful, $F(5, 333) = 41.19$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .38$. Participants judged the destructive scenarios as more destructive, $M = 4.02$, $SD = 0.72$, than the coercive, $M = 3.72$, $SD = 0.65$, deceptive, $M = 2.76$, $SD = 1.02$, intrusive, $M = 2.39$, $SD = 0.88$, secretive, $M = 2.27$, $SD = 0.71$, or the manipulative-exploitive scenarios, $M = 3.02$, $SD = 0.76$. The effects for the power of the responder, $F(2, 333) = 1.11$, $p > .10$, $\eta^2 < .01$, and the interaction effect, $F(10, 333) = 0.97$, $p > .10$, $\eta^2 < .01$, were not statistically significant.

The manipulation check for the deceptive scenarios was successful, $F(5, 335) = 46.49$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .41$. The deceptive scenarios were perceived as more deceptive, $M = 3.90$, $SD = 0.81$, than the coercive, $M = 2.94$, $SD = 0.76$, destructive, $M = 2.20$, $SD = 0.68$, intrusive, $M = 2.11$, $SD = 0.78$, secretive, $M = 2.48$, $SD = 0.88$, or the manipulative-exploitive scenarios, $M = 2.31$, $SD = 0.66$. The evaluations of the deceptiveness of the scenarios was not affected by the power of the responder, $F(2, 335) = 2.56$, $p = .08$, $\eta^2 = .02$, or the interaction, $F(10, 335) = 1.64$, $p = .09$, $\eta^2 = .05$.

The manipulation check for the intrusive scenarios was successful, $F(5, 333) = 40.27$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .38$. Participants perceived more intrusiveness in the intrusive scenarios, $M = 3.65$, $SD = 0.96$, than in the coercive, $M = 3.23$, $SD = 0.89$, destructive, $M = 2.75$, $SD = 0.87$, deceptive, $M = 2.09$, $SD = 0.68$, secretive, $M = 2.07$, $SD = 0.70$, or manipulative-exploitive scenarios, $M = 2.35$, $SD = 0.64$. The main effect for the power of the responder, $F(2, 333) = 2.16$, $p > .10$, $\eta^2 = .01$, and the interaction effect, $F(10, 333) = 1.63$, $p = .10$, $\eta^2 = .05$, were not statistically significant.

The manipulation check for the secretive scenarios was primarily successful, $F(5, 336) = 27.58$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .29$. The connotative meanings of deception and secretive, however, produced results that provide only qualified support for the induction. Specifically, the secretive scenarios, $M = 3.17$, $SD = 0.81$, and the deceptive scenarios, $M = 3.59$, $SD = 0.80$, were rated as more secretive than the coercive, $M = 2.48$, $SD = 0.72$, destructive, $M = 2.56$, $SD = 0.82$, intrusive, $M = 2.35$, $SD = 0.741$, and the manipulative-exploitive scenarios, $M = 2.31$, $SD = 0.72$. The main effect for the power of the responder, $F(2, 336) = 0.96$, $p > .10$, $\eta^2 = .01$, and the interaction effect, $F(10, 336) = 0.86$, $p = .10$, $\eta^2 = .03$, did not affect perceptions of the secretiveness of the scenario. Although the results for the manipulation check for the secretive scenarios fail to provide complete support, a logical interpretation of the meaning of the labels deceptive and secretive indicate that perceptual overlap between these two categories is likely.

Although statistically significant, the manipulation check for the manipulative-exploitive scenarios was not successful, $F(5, 334) = 38.04$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .36$. The test was not successful because the pattern of means indicates that the coercive scenarios, $M = 4.13$, $SD = 0.56$, were perceived as more manipulative and exploitative than the destructive, $M = 2.54$, $SD = 0.67$, deceptive, $M = 2.80$, $SD = 0.82$, intrusive, $M = 2.47$,

$SD = 0.86$, secretive, $M = 2.41$, $SD = 0.75$, or the manipulative-exploitive scenarios, $M = 2.54$, $SD = 0.69$. The power of the responder, $F(2, 334) = 0.58$, $p > .10$, $\eta^2 < .01$, and the interaction effect, $F(10, 334) = 1.09$, $p > .10$, $\eta^2 = .03$, did not influence ratings of the level of manipulation and exploitation of the scenarios.

Overall, the set of manipulation checks for the type of scenarios indicate a successful induction. Most of the manipulation checks were successful, none of the manipulation check measures was influenced by the power of the responder, and the interaction of scenario type and power of the responder did not affect the scenario evaluations. The manipulation checks do demonstrate that greater attention is required to categorize unethical behavior. The perceptions of the participants, for the secretive and manipulative-exploitive scenarios, did not seem to parallel the conceptual definitions. The results generally indicate, however, that the induction was successful.

Power of the Responder. To test the second induction, a manipulation check was performed using the type of scenario and the power of the responder as independent variables and the power of the responder scale as the dependent variable. The power of the responder manipulation was successful, $F(2, 328) = 351.82$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .68$. Participants were more likely to agree that Jamie was Cory's boss in the superior conditions, $M = 4.13$, $SD = 0.95$, than in the coworker, $M = 1.81$, $SD = 0.78$, or the subordinate conditions, $M = 1.61$, $SD = 0.64$. The type of scenario, $F(5, 328) = 0.79$, $p > .10$, $\eta^2 = .01$, and the interaction effect, $F(10, 328) = 1.04$, $p > .10$, $\eta^2 = .03$, failed to affect perceptions of the power of the responder. Based on these results, the induction was successful.

Tests of the Research Questions and Hypotheses

RQ1 asks if there was an association between the types of unethical behavior in Redding's (1996) proto-typology and the politeness strategy used as a response. The hypotheses provide predictions about the power relationship between the ethical transgressor and the confronter and the use of politeness strategies. The tests of the research question and hypotheses are presented by politeness strategy. Table 3 contains a correlation matrix for the dependent variables.

Don't Do the FTA. RQ1 asks if there is a relationship between the type of unethical behavior and the don't do the FTA strategy. H1 predicts that power will influence the don't do the FTA politeness strategy. Specifically, the hypothesis asserts that the don't do strategy will be most appropriate and effective when the unethical behavior is performed by a superior rather than a subordinate or a coworker. Both the type of scenario, $F(5, 329) = 2.95$, $p = .01$, $\eta^2 = .04$, and the power of the responder, $F(2, 329) = 8.11$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .05$, influenced the perceptions of the don't do the FTA strategy. The interaction effect, $F(10, 327) = 0.84$, $p > .10$, $\eta^2 = .03$, was not statistically significant.

Addressing the research question, the type of unethical behavior in the scenarios did influence the extent to which participants reported that the don't do strategy was appropriate and effective. Participants evaluated the don't do strategy as less appropriate and effective in the coercive, $M = 1.98$, $SD = 0.87$, deceptive, $M = 2.23$, $SD = 0.85$,

Table 3. Pearson Correlation Coefficients for the Politeness Strategies.

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Don't do the FTA	.86				
2. Off-record	.39**	.77			
3. Negative politeness	.27**	.54**	.69		
4. Positive politeness	.15*	.49**	.50**	.75	
5. Bald on record	-.10	.11*	-.02	-.02	.82

Note. FTA = face threatening act. Scale reliabilities are presented on the diagonal.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

secretive, $M = 2.09$, $SD = 0.59$, and manipulative-exploitive scenarios, $M = 2.19$, $SD = 0.85$. Participants reported that the don't do strategy was more appropriate and effective in response to the destructive, $M = 2.44$, $SD = 0.85$, and the intrusive scenarios, $M = 2.39$, $SD = 0.55$. To investigate the relationship between the don't do strategy and the type of scenario further, post hoc analyses were performed using LSD (Least Significant Difference) comparisons. The LSD comparison is a post hoc multiple comparison test that is used to assess the difference among cell means after discovering a statistically significant omnibus effect. Multiple comparison tests describe which individual cell means differ from the other cell means in the design. The analyses indicated the response of the don't do strategy was significantly less appropriate and effective for the coercive scenarios compared to the destructive and intrusive scenarios. In addition, the analyses revealed the difference between the secretive scenarios and destructive and intrusive scenarios was statistically significant. Participants reported that it was more appropriate and effective to use the don't do strategy in the destructive and intrusive scenarios than in the secretive scenarios. Finally, the analyses showed that there was not a statistically significant difference for the use of the don't do strategy between the manipulative-exploitive and deceptive scenarios.

In addition, the results support H1. The participants reported that it was less appropriate and effective to use the don't do strategy when the person performing the unethical behavior was a subordinate, $M = 2.01$, $SD = 0.68$, compared to a superior, $M = 2.40$, $SD = 0.76$, or a coworker, $M = 2.27$, $SD = 0.85$. These results are consistent with the hypothesized perceptions of the appropriateness and effectiveness of the don't do the FTA strategy. Post hoc LSD tests demonstrated that the differences were statistically significant. In other words, participants reported that it was less appropriate and effective to use the don't do strategy to confront a subordinate performing the unethical behavior than for a superior or coworker performing the unethical behavior.

Off-Record. The research question asks if there is a relationship between the type of unethical behavior and the off-record politeness strategy. H2 predicts that power will influence the off-record politeness strategy. Specifically, the hypothesis asserts that the off-record strategy will be most appropriate and effective when a superior rather than

a subordinate or a coworker performs the unethical behavior. With respect to the research question, there was no relationship between the off-record strategy and the type of scenario, $F(5, 325) = 0.79, p > .10, \eta^2 = .01$. Furthermore, H2 was not supported, $F(2, 325) = 2.04, p > .10, \eta^2 = .01$. The interaction effect, $F(10, 325) = 0.97, p > .10, \eta^2 = .03$, was also not statistically significant. The type of unethical behavior and the power of the responder did not influence perceptions of the appropriateness and effectiveness of the off-record politeness strategy.

Negative Politeness. With respect to negative politeness, RQ1 asks if there is a relationship between the type of unethical scenario and the use of the negative politeness strategy. H3 predicts that negative politeness will be perceived as more appropriate and effective when the person who performed an unethical behavior is a superior or a coworker rather than a subordinate. The results indicate that both the type of unethical scenario, $F(5, 333) = 3.42, p = .005, \eta^2 = .05$, and the power relationship, $F(2, 333) = 8.40, p < .001, \eta^2 = .05$, influence the use of the negative politeness strategy. The interaction effect, $F(10, 333) = 0.64, p > .10, \eta^2 = .01$, was not statistically significant. Both the type of behavior and the power between the unethical actor and the confronter affected the judgment of the effectiveness and the appropriateness of the negative politeness strategy.

Addressing RQ1, the participants evaluated the negative politeness strategy as less appropriate and effective in the coercive, $M = 2.59, SD = 0.81$, scenarios compared to deceptive, $M = 2.88, SD = 0.69$, secretive, $M = 2.93, SD = 0.59$, manipulative-exploitative scenarios, $M = 2.89, SD = 0.62$, destructive, $M = 2.81, SD = 0.70$, and intrusive scenarios, $M = 3.11, SD = 0.66$. To further investigate the relationship between the negative politeness strategy and the type of scenario, post hoc analyses were performed using LSD comparisons. The mean difference between the coercive scenario and the intrusive, secretive, manipulative-exploitative, and deceptive scenarios was statistically significant. In addition, negative politeness was evaluated as more effective and appropriate in response to the intrusive scenarios than the destructive or deceptive scenarios. The analyses, then, demonstrate that the negative politeness strategy varies based on the type of unethical act that was performed.

The results indicate that H3 was partially supported. In particular, when a superior, $M = 3.04, SD = 0.55$, or a coworker, $M = 2.94, SD = 0.69$, performed the unethical act, negative politeness was more effective and appropriate than when a subordinate, $M = 2.70, SD = 0.76$, transgressed. Post hoc LSD comparisons were performed to evaluate the relationship between the use of the negative politeness strategy and the power of the confronter. The mean differences for the subordinate confronter compared to both the coworker and supervisor were statistically significant. The difference between the supervisor and the coworker confronter was not statistically significant. Based on the pattern of means, there was some support for H3.

Positive Politeness. Related to positive politeness, RQ1 asks if there is a relationship between the type of unethical scenario and the use of the positive politeness strategy. H4 predicts that positive politeness will be perceived as more appropriate and

effective when the person who performed the unethical behavior is a coworker rather than a superior or subordinate. To address RQ1, the results show that positive politeness was related to the type of unethical act, $F(5, 327) = 3.29, p = .006, \eta^2 = .05$. Participants reported that positive politeness was most appropriate and effective in response to the deceptive, $M = 3.08, SD = 0.61$, secretive, $M = 3.09, SD = 0.52$, and manipulative-exploitive scenarios, $M = 3.19, SD = 0.56$. Participants reported that positive politeness was less appropriate and effective in response to coercive, $M = 2.76, SD = 0.59$, destructive, $M = 2.90, SD = 0.66$, and intrusive scenarios, $M = 3.01, SD = 0.62$. The type of unethical behavior, therefore, did affect the evaluation of the positive politeness strategy. To further investigate the relationship between the type of scenario and the use of the positive politeness response strategy, LSD comparisons were conducted. The results demonstrated that positive politeness strategy was perceived as significantly less appropriate and effective in response to coercive scenarios compared to the manipulative-exploitive, secretive, intrusive, and deceptive scenarios. On the other hand, the use of positive politeness was considered significantly more appropriate and effective in response to the manipulative-exploitive scenario than the coercive and destructive scenarios.

H4, however, was not supported, $F(2, 327) = 0.02, p > .10, \eta^2 < .01$. The power of the responder did not influence the evaluation of the positive politeness strategy. In addition, the interaction effect, $F(10, 327) = 1.03, p > .10, \eta^2 = .03$, was not statistically significant.

Bald on Record. For the bald on record strategy, the research question asks if there is a relationship between the type of unethical scenario and the use of the bald on record politeness strategy. H5 predicts that the bald on record response strategy will be perceived as more appropriate and effective when the person who performed an unethical behavior is a subordinate rather than a superior or a coworker. With respect to the research question, the results indicate that the type of unethical behavior does influence the effectiveness and appropriateness of the bald on record strategy, $F(5, 332) = 2.36, p = .04, \eta^2 = .03$. Participants reported that the bald on record strategy was more appropriate and effective in response to coercive scenarios, $M = 2.87, SD = 0.79$, as opposed to all of the other types of unethical scenarios: destructive, $M = 2.43, SD = 0.74$, deceptive, $M = 2.42, SD = 0.81$, intrusive, $M = 2.55, SD = 0.72$, secretive, $M = 2.43, SD = 0.66$, or manipulative-exploitive, $M = 2.48, SD = 0.74$. Post hoc LSD tests show that this relationship is statistically significant. Specifically, the bald on record strategy was reported to be significantly more appropriate and effective for the coercive scenarios than for the destructive, intrusive, secretive, manipulative-exploitive, and deceptive scenarios.

The results do not support H5, $F(2, 332) = 1.49, p > .10, \eta^2 = .01$. The interaction effect also is not statistically significant, $F(10, 332) = 0.76, p > .10, \eta^2 = .02$.

Summary

Overall, the results that relate to the research question show that the type of unethical behavior influenced perceptions of responses. The type of unethical behavior

influenced the perceptions of the appropriateness and effectiveness of the don't do the FTA, negative politeness, positive politeness, and bald on record strategies. With respect to the role of power in affecting the use of politeness strategies, only two of five hypotheses were supported. Specifically, the hypotheses for don't do the FTA and negative politeness strategies were supported. These results indicate that there is evidence that both the type of transgression and power relationships influenced the evaluation of politeness strategies.

Discussion

The goal of the study was to evaluate responses to unethical behavior in the workplace. Social confrontation and politeness theory framed the investigation of the extent to which the selection of a response strategy was related to the type of unethical behavior and the location of the transgressor in the command structure. The results, explored in the following sections, indicate some degree of support for the arguments proposed in this study.

Type of Unethical Communication and Politeness Strategies

One of the goals of the investigation was to explore the connection between the types of unethical behaviors outlined by Redding (1996) and the possible confrontation responses that would be appropriate for use by a member of the same organization. The results suggest that the scenarios did influence the extent to which participants perceived four (i.e., don't do the FTA, negative politeness, positive politeness, and bald on record) of the five strategies to be effective and appropriate. Participants reported the don't do the FTA strategy was more appropriate and effective in response to the destructive and the intrusive scenarios. Participants viewed don't do the FTA as less appropriate and effective in the coercive, deceptive, secretive, and manipulative-exploitive scenarios. Participants reported that the negative politeness strategy was less effective and appropriate in response to coercive and destructive scenarios compared to deceptive, intrusive, secretive, or manipulative-exploitive scenarios. Participants perceived positive politeness as most appropriate and effective in response to the deceptive, secretive, and manipulative-exploitive scenarios, and as less appropriate and effective in response to coercive, destructive, and intrusive scenarios. Participants evaluated the bald on record strategy as more appropriate and effective in response to coercive scenarios as opposed to all of the other types of unethical scenarios: destructive, deceptive, intrusive, secretive, or manipulative-exploitive.

Two factors may explain participants' perceptions of the social appropriateness and effectiveness of the don't do the FTA strategy with regard to destructiveness and intrusiveness. First, participants might view avoiding a confrontation as socially appropriate and effective if they consider the unethical behavior to be a minor infraction. Goffman (1967) suggested that an offended person might ignore an offense that causes little harm to the person's face. If participants viewed the destructive or intrusive communication as minor offenses, they might have seen avoidance as an appropriate and effective means for handling the situation. A second reason that participants may have

viewed don't do the FTA as socially appropriate and effective relates to the potential responses a confronter might receive. Makoul and Roloff (1998) indicated a relationship between the withholding of complaints and expectations of aggression in response to complaints. Because expressions of disapproval may be met with additional destructive or intrusive comments, people may avoid expressing their disapproval. Research on bullying, a form of destructive communication, suggests there is some validity to this concern. Often after a target confronts a bully, the bullying behavior escalates (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2006; Lutgen-Sandvik, Namie, & Namie, 2009).

Participants perceived a limited level of politeness as socially appropriate and effective when addressing secretive, deceptive, and manipulative-exploitive behaviors. Kowalski, Walker, Wilkinson, Queen, and Sharpe (2003) suggested people react differently to aversive behaviors depending on the extent to which they perceive the behaviors as directed at the victim/observer, the degree to which they indicate relational devaluation, and the degree to which they are perceived as intentionally malicious. Their findings indicated that lying and arrogance are seen as very hurtful and as damaging to the relationship. In part these behaviors are damaging to relationships because they violate basic rules of relationships such as the imperative to be truthful and the expectation of treating others with respect and dignity (Planalp & Fitness, 2011). Because the behaviors violate relational expectations, it may be that people view positive politeness as an appropriate and effective response to deceptive, secretive, and manipulative-exploitive communication because it emphasizes the importance of the relationship. Positive politeness might counter the relational devaluation present in the unethical behaviors.

With respect to the coercive scenarios, the data suggest the existence of a threshold of unethical behavior after which the responder is no longer concerned about additional threats. Specifically, the responses to the coercive scenarios demonstrate that the confronter has already been threatened to such a degree (e.g., concerns about poor performance evaluations or the loss of a job) that the confronter is not concerned about additional threat. It seems that people believe that the way to deal with extreme threats is to directly tell the person performing the behavior that it is wrong. Essentially, the responder perceives greater risk from a more polite response being misinterpreted, basically allowing the threat to go unchallenged, than in using a bald on record strategy. Because coercion often involves abuses of power, it is also possible that the perception that bald on record is effective and socially appropriate in response to coercion may be because people view this as a way to rebalance power. Fitness (2001) argued that when victims of transgressions view the transgressions as creating a power imbalance, they will respond in ways that attempt to balance the power. Expressing disapproval bald on record might be perceived as addressing the abuse of power that occurred with the coercive act.

Power Relationship and Politeness Strategies

The results supported two of the five hypotheses that related power of the responder and the politeness of the response to unethical behavior. In terms of H1, participants

reported that it was less appropriate and effective to use the don't do the FTA strategy when the person performing the unethical behavior was a subordinate, compared to a superior or a coworker. The results also supported H3. Participants perceived that negative politeness response strategies were more appropriate and effective when addressing a superior, or a coworker's unethical behavior, compared to a subordinate's unethical behavior. Thus, the power relationship does appear to influence people's perceptions of which strategies are effective and socially appropriate for communicating disapproval of unethical behavior.

In part, the findings are consistent with Brown and Levinson's (1987) claims about the relationship between the selection of super-strategies and power relationships between the speaker and hearer. However, the findings did not support the predictions for the use of off-record, positive politeness, and bald on record. Newell and Stutman (1991) suggested that people frequently use hinting (an off-record strategy) to initiate complaint episodes, and in this study it was expected that off-record would be seen as more effective and socially appropriate when superiors committed the ethical transgression. However, the results did not support this prediction. The nature of hints may provide a rationale for the result. Hints can be so indirect that hearers may not interpret them as expressions of disapproval (Newell & Stutman, 1991; Roloff & Paulson, 2001). Perhaps once a subordinate "works up the nerve" to confront a superior, the subordinate may not want to risk the potential misinterpretation of a hint and as a result does not view off-record strategies as effective and socially appropriate. Furthermore, some research on superior-subordinate communication indicates that in some situations, such as communicating bad news, there is an expectation that subordinates' communication will be direct, confident, and reflecting of their expertise (Rogers & Lee-Wong, 2003; Sriussandaporn-Charoenngam & Jablin, 1999). Indeed, there is some suggestion in the previous research that the evaluation of subordinates' competence is based on their ability to be direct. Thus, the finding in this study that off-record was not seen as more effective and socially appropriate when subordinates were confronting superiors may reflect this expectation for confidence and directness.

The findings of this study counter Brown and Levinson's (1987) claim that those who have more power can use less politeness. Participants reported that it was effective and appropriate for superiors to use some form of face redress when communicating disapproval of unethical communication. Wagoner and Waldron (1999) also found that superiors use politeness strategies. Although their results differ from the findings of the current study, their claim that organizational power does not excuse speakers from using politeness may still be relevant.

Morris, Gaveras, Baker, and Coursey (1990) found that supervisors tend to not use direct confrontation as their initial response to problematic behaviors by subordinates. Instead, they found that supervisors tend to engage in various behaviors prior to confrontation:

[T]hey might pass over problems, conduct alignment testing to determine if problems are severe enough to warrant follow-up actions, evade the problem by referring it to another manager, or casually mention what office gossips are saying about an employee to that

employee in order to notify the employee that a fault has been identified, without explicitly accusing the person. (p. 322)

Essentially, Morris et al. found that managers have a range of behaviors they can use to respond to problematic behaviors, and that some of them enable supervisors to address the problem without engaging in direct confrontation. Furthermore, having a range of response may be beneficial to maintaining the relationships and organizational climate. Bisel et al. (2011) proposed that supervisors might not directly label a request as unethical because of the potential damage to the working relationship with the subordinate and the potential damage to the organizational climate. As a result, superiors may not perceive bald on record as effective and socially appropriate because there are alternative responses that are less confrontational and less damaging to relationships and organizational climate.

Another reason exists for the results related to the bald on record response strategy. Specifically, the results might relate to the social norms for opening conversations and how the opening will influence the way in which the other person responds. Research suggests that the type of reproach influences how the recipient will respond to the reproach. Aggravating or severe reproaches tend to invoke aggravating response strategies (e.g., anger and complaints; Braaten, Cody, & DeTienne, 1993; McLaughlin, Cody, & O'Hair, 1983). Research on complaints supports the argument that those that are seen as fair and legitimate are more likely to be met with acceptance and negotiation than complaints that are seen as unfair or hostile, which tend to be met with anger, denial, and counterattacks (Cupach & Carson, 2002). Expressions of disapproval are similar to reproaches and complaints (telling someone that he or she has violated a rule); thus, the way in which one expresses disapproval will likely influence the way in which the recipient responds. People may avoid bald on record responses and give more attention to face in order to try to avoid making the other person defensive, angry, or likely to counterattack.

Practical Implications

As other researchers have argued, it is important to recognize that expressions of disagreement occur with differing levels of directness (Ploeger et al., 2011). The findings of this study do suggest that attention to face is an essential component in expressing disapproval of unethical communication behaviors. Both the type of unethical behavior and the power relationship between the actor and the responder have some influence on the politeness strategies that are evaluated as effective and socially appropriate for expressing disapproval. The findings have some important implications.

First, as Redding (1996) suggested when proposing his proto-typology, not all forms of unethical communication are equal. Participants indicated that different levels of politeness are effective and socially appropriate for responding to different types of unethical communication. If employees are an important resource for reducing and eliminating unethical behavior (Kaptein, 2011), then organizations need to help employees learn which types of responses might be more effective and appropriate with different

types of behavior. For instance, confrontation might work with secretive, deceptive, manipulative exploitative and coercive communication, but not with destructive communication. As suggested by the bullying literature (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2006; Lutgen-Sandvik et al., 2009), in instances of destructive communication reporting the behavior to a superior or human resources or calling an internal hotline might be better choices.

Second, these findings reinforce the idea that the command structure influences the directness of expressions of disapproval (Bisel et al., 2012; Ploeger et al., 2011). Ploeger et al. (2011) suggested that organizations need to teach leaders to listen for indirectness. They essentially asserted that by learning to pay attention to the indirect ways in which people express disagreement, leaders could potentially prevent bigger problems in the future. We argue that this idea needs to be extended to all organizational members. Regardless of where people are positioned in the command structure, it is useful for them to understand that disagreement can be expressed in different ways and that an indirect expression of disapproval can be as serious and as important as a direct expression. Training all employees to listen for varying levels of directness is particularly important when considering the diversity of the workplace. One's ethnicity might influence the degree of face threat one perceives in confronting someone's unethical behavior. Kim et al. (2009) examined cultural differences in perceptions of face threat using the concept of self-construal. Self-construal is the way that self is framed in light of one's culture. Based on the literature on self-construal, Kim et al. investigated two cultural frames for self: independent and interdependent. They found that people with an interdependent self-construal perceived more face threat in seeking compliance than those with an independent self-construal. Because the amount of perceived face threat influences the selection of a mitigation strategy (Brown & Levinson, 1978), it is likely that people who have an interdependent self-construal would use more politeness when expressing disapproval. Thus, without training that helps people understand varying levels of directness, it is possible that people's attempts to express disapproval of unethical communication will be overlooked.

Limitations and Future Research

Some limitations and areas for future research apply to this study. First, participants were responding to hypothetical scenarios; thus, their responses were hypothetical in nature. The findings of the study may reflect social bias in terms of what people view as socially appropriate and effective when selecting politeness strategies to respond to unethical communication. There are likely differences between how people actually respond to unethical communication and what they view as socially appropriate and effective responses. This study does, however, provide insights to how people think they *should* respond to unethical communication in the workplace. Future research should focus more on people's actual response; however, careful attention will need to be given to how those data will be collected.

Unethical communication is a sensitive topic, which makes the collection of data complicated on two fronts. Research participant confidentiality is one issue that would have to be addressed. If participants do not have some assurance that their identities

would be protected, why would they allow researchers to be present for conversations in which unethical communication occurs? Second, in organizations, conversations about ethical concerns occur infrequently (Seeger, 2004). The infrequency of such conversation may make it difficult for researchers to record instances in which confrontation of unethical communication occurs.

Second, although the use of hypothetical scenarios to induce the unethical behavior variable mostly worked, there were some problems. The secretive and the deceptive scenarios were seen as more secretive than the other scenarios, and the coercive scenarios were viewed as more manipulative-exploitive than the manipulative-exploitive scenarios. Participants' perceptions of the secretive and manipulative-exploitive scenarios did not match the conceptual definitions of these categories. While the scenarios would have ideally produced differing perceptions of all unethical behavior, it is not surprising that there was overlap in participants' perceptions of the types of unethical communication. Redding (1996) indicated that the categories are not mutually exclusive, and Mattson and Buzzanell (1999) found in their ethical analysis of a job loss case that the manipulative-exploitive category was included in the deceptive category. Future research will need to better tease apart the conceptual differences between these categories of unethical communication.

Third, this study has argued that expressing disapproval of unethical communication behaviors is a type of social confrontation. However, the focus of this study was limited to the very beginning portion of the initiation stage. Future research should extend beyond looking at the opening of the initiation stage and incorporate the whole of the social confrontation episode: the interactional moves of the initiation stage, the ways in which the parties work through substantive and relational issues, and the means by which they attempt to bring closure to the confrontation episode (Newell & Stutman, 1991). The extant literature does give indications of what will occur in the development stage: expressions of disapproval will likely be met with accounts (e.g., Braaten et al., 1993; McLaughlin et al., 1983; Newell & Stuntman, 1988; Roloff & Paulson, 2001). However, to better understand how people engage in an organizational discourse about unethical behavior, researchers need to study the specifics of each stage of the social confrontation episode. Additional research in this area is essential for understanding how people use alignment talk (Morris, 1991) to handle ethical transgressions in the workplace.

Fourth, social confrontation is a potentially complex interaction in which the confronter needs to address multiple face wants (of both speaker and hearer). In emphasizing the communication of disapproval, this study took a limited view of face threats. Brown and Levinson (1987) assume that FTAs challenge either positive or negative face. However, previous research (i.e., Craig, Tracy, & Spisak, 1986; Lim & Bowers, 1991; Wilson, Aleman, & Leatham, 1998) has demonstrated that some communicative acts can challenge both positive and negative face. Bisel et al. (2011) suggested that denying an unethical request challenges both the positive and negative face of the hearer. Thus, a potential limitation of this study is that it does not consider the possibility that the confronter might use combinations of negative and positive politeness when initiating a confrontation. Previous researchers (Craig et al., 1986; Lim & Bowers, 1991) argued that complex communicative interactions often require

speakers to use a combination of politeness strategies. Future research should examine the extent to which confronting a transgressor for ethical violations challenges both positive and negative face, and the extent to which confronters use negative and positive politeness strategies in combination when initiating the confrontation.

Finally, the current study focused on the command structure as a contextual variable that influences social confrontation. Future research should consider additional contextual variables that might influence this process. One such variable might be organizational culture. The 2007 National Business Ethics Survey found that companies that took a broad approach to developing an ethical culture had a lower incidence of ethical misconduct (Ethics Resource Center, 2007). The report indicates four components of a strong ethical culture: ethical leadership at the top of the organization, immediate supervisors acting as ethical role models to subordinates, peers supporting the ethical actions of colleagues, and informal ethical values supporting formal organizational values advanced through informal communication channels. Kaptein (2011) found that clarity, supportability, and sanctionability are culture elements that influence the likelihood of employees confronting ethical misconduct. Kassing (2000) found that when employees perceive that free speech is valued in their organizations, they are more likely to engage in articulated dissent (dissent within the organization). Thus, future research should explore the extent to which the ethical culture of an organization supports or discourages confrontation and investigate the ways in which organizational culture might affect the directness of the expression of disapproval.

Mattson and Buzzanell's (1999) critique of Redding's (1996) proto-typology points to one area of organizational culture that warrants further research. Mattson and Buzzanell argue that Redding's proto-typology operates from a managerial perspective on outcomes in which effectiveness, profits, and organizational survival are emphasized. They suggest organizations operating within a managerial perspective may require employees to engage in unethical forms of communication in order to ensure organizational profits and survival. In such organizations, unethical communication can become the norm and employees who refuse to engage in required unethical forms of communication may be viewed as unethical because their refusal is potentially damaging to the organization. This critique of Redding's proto-typology has important implications for this study and for future research. First, there is the possibility if the unethical communication were confronted that it would be challenged within the managerial discourse. Thus, the challenge would have an operational rather than an ethical grounding (Bisel et al., 2011). For instance, people might point to the ways in which the communication could hurt the organization in terms of profit and survivability. Second, there is the possibility that people who work in organizations in which unethical communication is expected would doubt that they have witnessed a transgression. Such doubt could prevent people from engaging in confrontation. Third, those who do perceive that an ethical transgression has occurred might be inclined to use the don't do the FTA strategy or the off-record strategy for addressing the unethical behavior. People weigh the costs of confronting an ethical transgression (Newell & Stutman, 1991). In organizations in which unethical communication is expected, the confronter's expression of disapproval could be perceived as aimed at the organization

as well as at the transgressor. Thus, the confronter might have heightened concerns that he or she will be punished for confronting the transgression. Concerns about negative reactions from coworkers and about retaliation may lead the confronter to conclude the cost of confrontation is too high (Roloff & Paulson, 2001) and the confronter may choose to use the don't do the FTA strategy. Concerns about cost could also lead the confronter to choose the off-record strategy. The off-record strategy would present the confrontation in an ambiguous manner that would allow the confronter to potentially claim that he or she had been misunderstood if the transgressor or other organizational members sought to punish him or her for the confrontation (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Future research needs to further investigate both the prefrontation stage of social confrontation (Roloff & Paulson, 2001) and organizational culture. In doing so, researchers could give greater attention to organizational expectations for unethical communication and the ways in which those expectations influence the processes of sense making and action formation which occur during prefrontation (Roloff & Paulson, 2001). A closer examination of the prefrontation process may enable researchers to better understand the selection of politeness strategies when people are in organizations that require the use of unethical communication.

Another contextual factor that might influence the confrontation process is employee diversity. Today's workforce is diverse, and characteristics of employees such a cultural background and gender might influence the ways in which employees confront unethical behavior. Meares, Oetzel, Torres, Derkacs, and Ginossar (2004) studied mistreatment in the workplace. They found that some voices are muted when it comes to responding to mistreatment at work. In their interview study of one organization, they found that it was predominately the non-European employees and female employees whose voices were muted in attempts to address workplace mistreatment. Their findings suggest that those who feel muted in an organization would be more likely to use the don't to the FTA strategy or perhaps the off-record strategy. Also, as discussed above, differences in cultural background can influence perceptions of the degree of face threat. Future research needs to further explore the ways in which ethnicity and gender affect the social confrontation episode.

Conclusion

This study has important implications for understanding communication about unethical practices in the workplace. Research has given much attention to whistle-blowing and the reporting of wrongdoing, but less attention has been given to any interactions that may occur between an ethical transgressor and the victim or observer. This study has sought to fill that gap by focusing on the ways in which people confront others' unethical behavior. To this end, this study utilized Newell and Stutman's (1988, 1991) model of social confrontation and Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory to evaluate the extent to which unethical communication behaviors and power relationships influenced people's perceptions of the effectiveness and socially appropriateness of the politeness super-strategies. The findings of this study indicate that face issues are an important concern when people confront others about unethical communication.

Appendix A

Unethical Communication Scenarios

Coercive

1. Jamie and Cory have been working together on a departmental project at a technology company. Throughout the project, Cory has threatened Jamie into completing a larger share of the work. Yesterday, Cory said to Jamie, "If you do not finish the rest of the project for us, we will all give you bad reviews when we complete the HR project evaluation forms."
2. Cory discovers a romantic relationship between two colleagues, Terry and Jamie. The organization has strict policies prohibiting dating among coworkers. Cory tells Jamie that Cory will report the relationship to the head of human resources if Terry and Jamie do not write letters supporting Cory's application for promotion.

Destructive

1. Jamie just finished giving a presentation to the marketing department on a new product. After the presentation, Jamie overhears Cory say, "I'm so glad that presentation is finally over. If it had been any longer, I would have been asleep. Now, we all can get back to doing real work!"
2. While in the lunchroom, Jamie overhears Cory tell Terry, "Did you hear about Jamie? Jamie has been making racist comments during meetings. Jamie might be fired."

Intrusive

1. Jamie and Cory are talking about a job promotion Jamie has applied for. While discussing Jamie's chances of getting the promotion, Cory inquires, "Are you and your spouse planning to start a family? I know that the new position will require you to spend more time at the office."
2. Cory and Jamie work at an advertising agency. While discussing ideas for an ad campaign, Cory says to Jamie, "Do you and your spouse regularly attend church?"

Secretive

1. Cory and Jamie work for a small printing company. In the last few months, they have talked with each other about seeing colleagues pouring chemicals down the drain rather than disposing of them through the hazardous waste program the company has in place. Cory and Jamie have both expressed concern to each other about the effects the chemicals can have on the environment and people. One day, Terry approaches Cory and Jamie, saying, "I have noticed a decrease in the amount of hazardous waste we have had in the last few months. Do you know anything about that?" Cory shrugs and replies, "Yeah, I've noticed that too."
2. Jamie and Cory have been helping Terry develop a marketing plan for a new product. Terry asked the two of them to have people evaluate the marketing plan and give them feedback on it. In looking through the evaluations, Jamie and Cory notice that there are a lot of negative evaluations. When Terry asks Jamie and Cory for a summary of the comments, Cory only gives Terry the positive comments.

Manipulative-Exploitive

1. Cory and Jamie work for a consulting company that helps companies address organizational culture issues related to diversity and sexual harassment. During one of their presentations to a potential client, Jamie becomes concerned when Cory departs from the script of their presentation and says, "Other companies have been arrogant enough to believe they can fix their own problems by making new rules and having diversity days. I don't think your company is that arrogant. I think you can recognize the difference between having professionals address the problem and leaving the problem to well-meaning amateurs. It's the difference between success and a visit from the EEOC. And that's why you will wisely select our company to help you."
2. Jamie is an employee at a fast food restaurant. At the training session, while demonstrating various procedures, Cory made demeaning comments about the trainees' intelligence and abilities. During the deep fry training, Cory yelled, "Pay attention because the last group of idiots to come through here didn't listen and one of them nearly got third degree burns!"

Deceptive

1. Cory and Jamie work at a retail store in the mall. One day while talking about work, Jamie asks Cory, "I know that there is a policy that says employees can only use the discount for their own purchases, but I was wondering if anyone ever lets their friends and family use the discount?" Cory replies, "No that never happens." Two days later Jamie overhears Cory talking with other employees about giving friends the employee discount.
2. Jamie has heard that there might be an opening in another department and asks Cory, a member of the other department, about the potential opening. Cory says, "There aren't any openings in our department." Later that day, Jamie goes into the break room and overhears Cory talking with Terry. Cory says, "Did you know about the open position in our department? It would be a great opportunity for you. Plus we would see each other more often because we would be working on common projects. You have to apply."

Appendix B

Scenario Introductions

Introduction for Two-Person Scenarios

Superior acts unethically. The following scenario describes an interaction between members of an organization. Cory has worked at the company for 10 years and Jamie has worked there for 7 years. Cory has been Jamie's boss for 2 years.

Subordinate acts unethically. The following scenario describes an interaction between members of an organization. Jamie has worked at the company for 10 years and Cory has worked there for 7 years. Jamie has been Cory's boss for 2 years.

Coworker acts unethically. The following scenario describes an interaction between members of an organization. Jamie and Cory are coworkers who have worked together for 10 years. Their jobs are at the same level in the organizational hierarchy.

Introduction for Three-Person Scenarios

Superior acts unethically. The following scenario describes an interaction between members of an organization. Terry and Jamie's jobs are at the same level in the organizational hierarchy. Terry and Cory have worked at the company for 10 years, and Jamie has worked there for 7 years. Cory has been Jamie's boss for 2 years.

Subordinate acts unethically. The following scenario describes an interaction between members of an organization. Terry and Jamie's jobs are at the same level in the organizational hierarchy. Terry and Jamie have worked at the company for 10 years, and Cory has worked there for 7 years. Jamie has been Cory's boss for 2 years.

Coworker acts unethically. The following scenario describes an interaction between members of an organization. Terry, Jamie, and Cory are coworkers who have worked together for 10 years. All of their jobs are at the same level in the organizational hierarchy.

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Notes

1. Previous researchers (Craig, Tracy, & Spisak, 1986; Shimanoff, 1977) have noted that people find it difficult to separate judgments of politeness from judgments of appropriateness because they focus on the specifics of the situation in which a statement is made rather than evaluating the general politeness of the statement. Thus, we concluded that people would evaluate the politeness items based on the degree to which the statement was socially appropriate given their understanding of the situation.
2. The majority of our participants were beyond the traditional age of college students: 36.9% of participants were between 18 and 22 years of age, 27.9% of participants were between the ages of 23 and 29, and 35.2% of the participants were over the age of 30.

3. Baxter (1984) developed politeness items based on Brown and Levinson's (1978) discussions of the super-strategies and the tactics used to accomplish the super-strategies. Following Baxter's technique, the first author developed the politeness items for this study based on Brown and Levinson's discussions and examples of tactics used to accomplish the super-strategies.
4. The original goal of the format of the questions was to assess if social appropriateness and effectiveness were unique judgments about the strategies. In this data set, the judgments were indistinguishable from one another. Confirmatory factor analyses indicated that there was sufficient overlap in the responses to use the social appropriateness and the effectiveness responses within a single scale to represent the politeness strategies.

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