



Fundusze Europejskie
Wiedza Edukacja Rozwój



Unia Europejska
Europejski Fundusz Społeczny



University of Warsaw

Atefeh Sodeiri Javadi

**Moral licensing as a predictor of counterproductive work
behaviors in public administrations**

Doctoral Dissertation
In the field of Management and Quality Sciences

Dissertation written under the supervision of
Prof. dr hab. Przemysław Hensel
University of Warsaw, Faculty of Management
Prof. dr Fariborz Rahimnia
Ferdowsi University Of Mashhad

Warsaw, 2021

Oświadczenie kierującego pracą

Oświadczam, że niniejsza praca została przygotowana pod moim kierunkiem i stwierdzam, że spełnia ona warunki do przedstawienia jej w postępowaniu o nadanie stopnia doktora.

Data

20.10.2021

Podpis kierującego pracą

Statement of the Supervisor on Submission of the Dissertation

I hereby certify that the thesis submitted has been prepared under my supervision and I declare that it satisfies the requirements of submission in the proceedings for the award of a doctoral degree.

Date

20.10.2021

Signature of the Supervisor

Oświadczenie autora pracy

Świadom odpowiedzialności prawnej oświadczam, że niniejsza praca doktorska została napisana przeze mnie samodzielnie i nie zawiera treści uzyskanych w sposób niezgodny z obowiązującymi przepisami.

Oświadczam również, że przedstawiona praca nie była wcześniej przedmiotem procedur związanych z uzyskaniem tytułu zawodowego w wyższej uczelni.

Oświadczam ponadto, że niniejsza wersja pracy jest identyczna z załączoną wersją elektroniczną.

Data

20.10.2021

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Helena Sachin Jwaah'.

Podpis autora pracy

Statement of the Author on Submission of the Dissertation

Aware of legal liability I certify that the thesis submitted has been prepared by myself and does not include information gathered contrary to the law.

I also declare that the thesis submitted has not been the subject of proceeding in the award of a university degree.

Furthermore I certify that the submitted version of the thesis is identical with its attached electronic version.

Date

20.10.2021



Signature of the Author

Zgoda autora pracy

Wyrażam zgodę na udostępnianie mojej rozprawy doktorskiej dla celów naukowo-badawczych.

Data

20.10.2021




Podpis autora pracy

Author's consent dissertation

I agree to make my dissertation available for research purposes

Date

20.10.2021



Signature of the Author

Abstract

Voluntary deviation from self-control that is generally called moral licensing, is a phenomenon in which an individual, through depending on various factors especially previous appreciable behaviors and activities, vindicates his/her immoral and counterproductive behaviors without any concern about losing his prestige and esteem; on the other hand, by considering various factors, individual's immoral and counterproductive behaviors is also justifiable for spectators. The prevalence of moral license in the work environment can have destructive consequences for organizations and their employees, including the cessation and deviation from logical principles in judgment, the compromise of values, the spread of a culture of evasion of the law and justification of error and deviation, the suppression of employees' rights, and work injury. Considering the undesirable consequences of this phenomenon for individuals, organization and society, this study tries to find the reasons and factors that lead to the formation of moral licenses in the public administrations of North east of Iran (Mashhad city), in addition to the already known behaviors and activities of individuals. The studied population is managers and employees of public administrations in Mashhad. 17 people were selected as a purposive sample until theoretical saturation was reached. Semi-structured interview was used for data collection. Research strength was considered from two public (as a quantitative research) and special (research based on Glazer's grounded theory) dimensions. In public aspect, four measures validity, transferability, dependability, confirmability were used and in special aspect, four measures fit, relevance, work, and modifiability were confirmed. Results and data analysis with quantitative analysis software MAXQD and open, axial and selective coding processes, showed 119 codes, 63 concepts, 14 class and 6 categories that caused emergence of final research model around the main category entitled "moral licensing". The resulting model, refers to causes, correlation, mediator, contexts and results related to main category of the research. Overall, through explaining moral licensing theory, this research has provided necessary conditions for understanding this phenomenon and also solutions for preventing it in organization.

Key words

Moral licensing, counterproductive work behavior, public administrations, grounded theory, emergent approach

Licencjonowanie moralne jako predyktor nieproduktywnych zachowań zawodowych w administracji publicznej

Abstract in Polish

Dobrowolne odstępstwo od samokontroli, które ogólnie nazywa się licencjonowaniem moralnym, to zjawisko, w którym jednostka, poprzez uzależnienie od różnych czynników, zwłaszcza wcześniejszych dostrzegalnych zachowań i działań, usprawiedliwia swoje niemoralne i szkodliwe zachowania bez obawy o utratę prestiżu i szacunku ; z drugiej strony, biorąc pod uwagę różne czynniki, niemoralne i kontrproduktywne zachowania jednostki są również usprawiedliwione dla widzów. Rozpowszechnienie licencji moralnej w środowisku pracy może mieć destrukcyjne konsekwencje dla organizacji i ich pracowników, w tym zaprzestanie i odstępstwo od logicznych zasad w osądach, kompromis wartości, szerzenie kultury obchodzenia prawa i usprawiedliwiania błędów i dewiacja, pozbawienie praw pracowniczych i wypadki przy pracy. Biorąc pod uwagę niepożądane konsekwencje tego zjawiska dla jednostek, organizacji i społeczeństwa, w niniejszym opracowaniu, oprócz już znane zachowania i działania jednostek. Badana populacja to menedżerowie i pracownicy administracji publicznej w Meszhedzie. Do próby celowej wybrano 17 osób, aż do osiągnięcia teoretycznego nasycenia. Do zbierania danych wykorzystano wywiad częściowo ustrukturyzowany. Siłę badawczą uwzględniono w dwóch wymiarach publicznych (jako badania ilościowe) i specjalnym (badania oparte na ugruntowanej teorii Glazera). W aspekcie publicznym zastosowano cztery miary trafności, przenaszalności, niezawodności, potwierdzalności, aw szczególnym aspekcie potwierdzono cztery miary dopasowania, trafności, pracy i modyfikowalności. Wyniki i analiza danych za pomocą oprogramowania do analizy ilościowej MAXQD oraz procesów otwartego, osiowego i selektywnego kodowania wykazały 119 kodów, 63 koncepcje, 14 klas i 6 kategorii, które spowodowały powstanie ostatecznego modelu badawczego wokół głównej kategorii zatytułowanej „moralne licencjonowanie”. Powstały model odnosi się do przyczyn, korelacji, mediatora, kontekstów i wyników związanych z główną kategorią badań. Podsumowując, poprzez wyjaśnienie teorii licencjonowania moralnego, badania te dostarczyły niezbędnych warunków do zrozumienia tego zjawiska, a także rozwiązań zapobiegających mu w organizacji.

Key words in Polish

Licencjonowanie moralne, kontrproduktywne zachowanie w pracy, administracja publiczna, ugruntowana teoria, podejście emergentne

Table of Contents

1	Chapter One: Introduction.....	9
1.1	Problem statement.....	10
1.2.	Study objectives	15
1.3.	Research questions	15
1.4.	Research area	16
1.5.	Significance of the Study	16
2	Chapter Two: Literature Review.....	19
2.1.	Research overview	19
2.1.1.	Theoretical foundations of moral licensing.....	20
2.1.1.1.	The moral balance model	20
2.1.1.2.	Social exchange theory.....	21
2.1.1.3.	Ego depletion theory	21
2.1.1.4.	Cognitive dissonance theory	22
2.1.1.5.	Self-regulation theory.....	23
2.1.1.6.	Self-monitoring theory	23
2.1.2	Moral licensing.....	25
2.1.3.	Mechanisms underlying moral licensing.....	32
2.1.3.1.	Licensing via balance: The moral credits model.....	32
2.1.3.2.	The moral credentials model.....	33
2.1.3.3.	Moral licensing through credits and credentials.....	34
2.1.4.	Differences between moral licensing and similar concepts	38
2.1.4.1.	Standing as License	38
2.1.4.2.	Moral cleansing.....	39
2.1.4.3.	Impression Management	40
2.1.4.4.	Behavioral Entropy	42
2.2.	Typology of deviant and immoral behaviors in moral licenses	43
2.3.	Summary	49
3	Chapter three: Research Method.....	51
3.1.	The paradigm of the research.....	51
3.2.	Research approach	52
3.3.	Research strategy	53
3.4.	Research evaluation criteria	54
3.5.	The studied population.....	58
3.6.	Sampling method and sample size	58
3.7.	Method and tool of data collection and analysis	61
3.8.	Coding practice in emerging attitude	64
3.8.1.	First step: Open coding	66
3.8.1.1.	Core category of the research as a main social -psychological process	69
3.8.2.	Second step: selective coding.....	71
3.8.3.	Third step: theoretical coding.....	75
4	Chapter Four: Findings	78
4.1.	Categories and relationships	78

4.1.1.	Characteristics of moral licensing	78
4.1.2.	Causes	81
4.1.2.1.	Managerial factors.....	81
4.1.2.2.	Rules and regulations	85
4.1.2.3.	The special climate of the governmental system.....	89
4.1.2.4.	Human resources management system (HRMS).....	94
4.1.2.5.	Organizational relationships.....	98
4.1.3.	Covariance (Factors correlated with causes of the main process).....	101
4.1.3.1.	Acquired Characteristics	102
4.1.4.	Contingencies	104
4.1.4.1.	Organizational culture and workplace.....	104
4.1.4.2.	Personal Characteristics	107
4.1.5.	Context of study	110
4.1.6.	Mediating conditions.....	113
4.1.7.	Consequences.....	115
4.1.7.1.	Preliminary consequences	115
4.1.7.2.	Secondary consequences	117
4.2.	Findings.....	121
5	Chapter Five: Discussion and Conclusion	127
5.1.	Review of the research process	127
5.2.	Discussion	127
5.3.	Suggestions	141
5.3.1.	Implication for practice	141
5.3.2.	Future research	144
7	References	146
9	Appendix	153

List of tables

Table 2.1.	Empirical studies on Moral Licensing	29
Table 2.2.	Moral license credits and credentials	37
Table 2.3.	Social reactions and normative expectation	45
Table 3.1.	Characteristics of interviewees	61
Table 3.2.	The basis for choosing a word or statement for codes,	66
Table 3.3.	An example of processes of open, selective and theoretical coding	72
Table 4.1.	Codes and classes resulted from data analysis in selective coding	121

List of Figures

Figure 3.1.	The process of grounded theory with emerging approach.....	63
Figure 3.2.	The Glaser's notion-sign model in the emerging approach.....	643
Figure 3.3.	Six Cs family in Glaser's approach	765
Figure 4.1.	Final Conceptual Categories.....	1244

Chapter One: Introduction

Study, recognition and prediction of behavior, especially inappropriate and deviant behaviors in organizations has always been of great importance in management and organization because of the manifestations and reflection of these behaviors can be observed not only in the organization but also at various levels of society. Although rules and regulations, organizational values and norms, approving desired behaviors, or not approving undesirable and deviant behaviors by supervisors and coworkers are important regulatory factors in shaping the organization behavior, but the fact suggests that these regulatory factors are not functioning properly in all situations, so that it is easy to see examples of people who engage in deviant behaviors without receiving disapproval from their supervisors and colleagues.

Managers and also their employees face numerous ethical issues in performing their organizational tasks and decisions, but what is more important when creating an opportunity to engage in deviant and counterproductive behaviors is, what factors are leading managers and employees in such situations as falling into deviant behaviors?

Deviant behavior in the workplace refers to arbitrary behaviors that target the organization and its members, disrupt the legal interests of the organization and makes the organizational environment unfavorable (Hsi, E., 2017) which the most destructive consequence of such behaviors are deviations from morality and violation of important organizational rules and norms which pose a serious threat to organizations. If the causes of these behaviors are not identified and dealt with, it quickly spread to the organization and provides the groundwork for the destruction of the organization such as a cancerous tumor.

In several studies, various reasons for the formation of deviant behaviors including feeling stress and pressure, emotional exhaustion and feeling of injustice in the organization are considered (Golparvar & et al., 2014; Spector & Fox, 2005; De Clercq & et al., 2019). On the other hand, moral licensing, as one of the most important and hidden reasons for shaping deviant behaviors, is based on the principle that relying on various factors, one justifies one's immoral and deviant behavior (Moral self-licensing), without worrying about discrediting and losing its reputation, also, for observers, considering various factors, immoral and deviant behaviors of a person can be justified (moral license) (Sachdeva & et

al, 2009). Research in the field of moral licensing has begun with a view to the conditions under which individuals feel more comfortable to engage in deviant behaviors.

Moral licensing is considered a form of cognitive bias, a mental error which by distorting facts leads to the form of attitudes, values, trends, misconceptions and subsequent wrong decisions and judgments and it allows people to engage in deviant behaviors and unethical behaviors by relying on their past admirable actions and behaviors away from the destruction and threat of their moral character. Hence, moral licensing can be considered as one of the latent factors in the formation of deviant behaviors and with regard to the importance and consequences which moral license can cause for organizations, especially public sector administrations, unfortunately few studies have been addressed this issue. Therefore, the importance of studying the phenomenon of moral license in governmental organizations and the detection of channels by which employees receive moral license to engage in deviant behaviors, or with those factors justify the immoral behaviors they have committed, is no secret.

On this basis, the present study in five chapters will study moral licensing as a predictor factor for deviant behaviors in public administration. The first chapter, the problem and the subject statement and the expression of the necessity and importance, the goals and questions of the research and in the second chapter, theoretical foundations and research background and also theoretical foundations of moral licensing theory will be discussed. In the third chapter, topics related to the research method, society and the sample studied, data collection tools and analysis method have been proposed. In the fourth chapter, the findings of data analysis using data-basis method and Glaser's approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) have been elaborated and the results are presented as classified. In the fifth chapter, I have discussed the research findings and compared the results of this research with other research in this area and finally some practical suggestions for future research are presented.

1.1. Problem statement

In today's competitive and fast world, organization's managers face many challenges that have great implications on organization dynamics and performance more than ever, including globalization challenge, challenges related to human resource management,

empowerment, motivation and commitment of employees, change and evolution management challenge and deviant and immoral behavior challenges in the organization. Although properly dealing with all of these challenges is one of the most important concerns of managers, according to the importance of the issue of behavior in organization, deviant behaviors of employees in the workplace have always been the focus of managers and organizational researchers. Therefore, to survive and sustain the organization's competitive power, managers need to adopt appropriate strategies for identifying and confronting the effects and consequences of these challenges, especially by deviant behaviors in the workplace.

Counterproductive or deviant work behaviors have always been problematic in organizations, so that the results of research in this regard indicate the fact that counterproductive and deviation work behaviors not only create irreparable costs for organizations but also psychologically impose great expenses on employees (Hsi, 2017). Hence, the predictions of causes and factors that lead to the formation of deviant and counterproductive behaviors are of particular importance. Sometimes the causes and roots of deviant behaviors in the organization can be easily identifiable and can be placed in existing categories of deviant behaviors, but sometimes, factors that are even negatively related to deviant behaviors can lead to the formation of deviant work behaviors in the organization (Spector & Fox, 2002). There are even collection of factors such as the instrumental use of previous positive behaviors or social context which allow individuals legitimately act or tell something that otherwise would discredit them (Monin & Miller, 2001a), this phenomenon which has been called **moral licensing** can be considered as a hidden causes for deviant and counterproductive work behavior.

According to psychologists, maintaining a positive and moral identity is one of the strongest psychological impulses, and it is considered the law of human nature, so that being moral and behaving according to moral virtues forms the main part of people's identity, therefore, they are looking for evidence of their moral behavior and the good deeds they have done in the past, so that they can continue to establish and maintain a positive personal identity in the minds of others by relying on these factors (Effron, Miller & Monin, 2012).

When employees recall past admirable behaviors and actions, they feel more comfortable to engage in deviant or immoral behaviors. This phenomenon, called moral licensing, provides employees with the opportunity to engage in deviant and immoral behaviors that are contrary to group and organizational norms without fear of being discredited. However, it should be noted that obtaining different types of licenses is required to eliminate a variety of types of misconduct caused by deviant and immoral behaviors. Moral license can be considered as a process that removes deterrents to deviant behaviors and allows individuals to act more freely and in accordance with their inner feelings, preferences and desires, regardless of social and cultural norms and even the rules of behavior. Thus, according to the theory of moral license, if an individual, or in particular organizational staff, receives a moral license, they can potentially consider wrongdoing (Miller & Effron, 2010).

The moral license, in which allows oneself to engage in deviant or immoral behaviors after a moral practice or act appears to be a little bit surprising and contrary to many psychological theories that emphasize behavioral adaptation and continuity (Blanken, Van de Ven & Zeelenberg, 2015). Psychological theories attempting to explain the phenomenon include:

- *Self-perception theory*: based on this theory people perceive their attitude from observing their behaviors which ultimately affect their behavior (Bem, 1972). According to this theory, people who do good deeds consider themselves as a good and moral character, which leads to the next moral behavior.
- *In-the-door-effect theory*: according to this theory, when individuals consequence of an obeying with an initial request, notice their own behavior and realize that their behavior was moral, helpful, and cooperative to others, they decide continue to be helpful and to grant a second larger request (Goldman & et al., 1982; Freedman & Fraser, 1966). However this theory is often used in sales and marketing area but can be considered an explanation for continuing behavior.
- *Escalation of commitment or sunk cost effect theory*, refer to a human behavior form in which individuals choose to continue their actions, decisions and behaviors despite they face with negative outcomes because they believe that for those actions, decisions and behaviors, have invested a lot (Arkes & Blumer, 1985).

Therefore, all of these theories somehow emphasize continuity and stability as a motivating principle in human behavior.

On this basis, important social psychology theories predict that individuals tend to be good and moral (and tend to appear as such in the view of observers), especially if they have done good and moral acts recently, which leads to behavioral continuity. But reality shows the potential and undeniable capacity of human to engage in positive and negative behaviors in different environments, especially organizational environments, which can be formed simultaneously or independently at a particular point in time. On the other hand, the difference between people in what they do or the beliefs that they express does not always reflect the difference in their understanding, attitudes, preferences and motives. In spite of the attitudes, preferences and motivations of individuals, the incidence of behaviors so different from each other may indicate a moral license (Miller & Effron, 2010).

Moral license is used to understand and explain how ethical behaviors function and transform ethical behaviors into deviant and immoral behaviors, since the theory of moral licensing reflects the willingness of individuals to balance moral and immoral behaviors in order to achieve moral balance. For example, organizational citizenship behaviors that are morally admirable and beneficial to others and go beyond organizational norms and requirements, although they may be costly for the individual, but when the individual engages in such behaviors spontaneously and voluntarily, these behaviors may most likely pave the way for engaging in deviant and counterproductive behaviors, so that one's reputation is maintained at the same time.

In fact, when people are considering ethical dilemmas, so that they are not only inclined to act according to their attitudes and preferences, but also to maintain their reputation in the organization from the perspective of their colleagues and supervisors, relying on ethical factors and licenses provides the ground for feeling more free and comfortable and acting according to their attitudes and preferences (Miller & Prentice, 1994). Various behaviors like usage of organizational equipment for private purposes, use the benefits of the mission instead of take-off when leaving the organization for doing personal work, favoritism and etc; that we observe every day, in organizations are kind of counterproductive work behavior that not only are according to employee's attitudes and preferences but also they aren't judged by others, which can be imply moral licensing. Anyway, it is unjustifiable to

justify immoral and deviant behavior in any way, but such justifications that allow employees to evade responsibility are allowed to occur at all levels of society, and it has provided the ground for committing deviant and immoral behaviors, so that over time, these behaviors have become an organizational and instrumental norm by losing their ugliness, through which individuals and employees have the opportunity to achieve their despicable desires and goals. And find the possibility of action according to their selfish attitudes and desires.

Whereas most basic research in the field of moral license, past good practices and past ethical behaviors -and especially in organizations, organizational citizenship behaviors- have considered as the sole source and authority of moral license, studies, as well as the initial interviews conducted with some employees of government agencies, indicate the existence of numerous factors and sources along with organizational citizenship behaviors in order to obtain moral license, which requires more comprehensive studies to achieve a deeper understanding of moral licensing. According to the results from initial interviews, some of these results are: improper supervisory structures in Iranian government organizations, the lack of influence of adopted methods of inspection and supervisory organizations, ambiguity in approvals and rules, arbitrary interpretation possibility and circumventing the law, prioritize relationships over criteria. This phenomenon is more prevalent in government organizations, so that employees relying on licenses they obtain from these resources without worrying about discrediting and losing their reputation and prestige, engage in deviant behaviors that underlies the creation of an unhealthy climate in the workplace. All of these cause the emergence of political behavior, becoming unmotivated and discouraged honest and active employees and decreased organizational efficiency and performance.

On the other hand, a significant part of the studies conducted in the field of moral license is based on wrongdoer one who is involved in misconduct and deviant behavior and attentions to the third party and how observers tolerate and justify the misbehavior they observe in others, and what factors influence the observers' (third party) desire to grant moral license to the wrong behaviors of others have been less addressed, because according to studies, getting license from others is more important than getting license from oneself; all of this suggests that, to better understanding of the conditions which moral licensing to be grant in

organizational environments, will require further research and investigation, therefore the present study, with a moral licensing based approach, is seeking to discover references, reasons and factors that employees of government agencies get moral license by relying on those resources (factors) and may grant such licenses to others. In this research, I try to present a coherent and integrated model of moral license that has been neglected in previous researches, which simultaneously addresses the underlying factors, formative factors and authorities and the consequences of obtaining moral licensing.

1.2. Study objectives

According to the issues and requirements mentioned in relation to the study and understanding of the phenomenon of moral licensing in organizations, the main purpose of this study is developing the theory on moral licensing by deep and comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of moral licensing and the discovery of the causes, factors and consequences of moral license in public administrations. In this regard, by using qualitative data obtained from semi-structured interviews, was tried to recognize resources and underlying factors and also consequences of moral licensing and finally, solutions to deal with this phenomenon are presented.

1.3. Research questions

What are the constituent elements of the moral licensing phenomenon in public administration?

What are the precedents and underlying factors for moral licensing in public administration?

What are the consequences of obtaining a moral license in public administration?

First question help us to develop a more complete and comprehensive understanding of the moral licensing phenomenon, which provides better opportunity for answering other research questions. Furthermore with answering to the second and third questions, the theoretical gap that this study focuses on, will addressing by identifying other influential factors besides of previous good and virtues behavior to the formation of moral license and also discovering the consequences of moral license in public administrations.

1.4. Research area

Subject domain: The thematic domain of this study is deviant and immoral behaviors with an emphasis on the moral licensing phenomenon as well as cognitive error.

Locational domain: The locational domain of this study is the governmental organizations of the holy city of Mashhad.

Time domain: This study was conducted between 2018 and 2020. Interview data were also collected over a two-month period (January and February 2020).

1.5. Significance of the Study

Today, unfortunately by increasing deviant behavior in organizations, such as being indisciplined in the workplace, frequent absences, counterproductive/ organizational behaviors (Litzky & et al., 2016), avoidance of work and organizational duties, scrimption in work effort (Petros & Georgios, 2016), the need for managers and researchers to pay attention to this issue and to investigate and find the root of these behaviors to create and maintain an environment free of deviant behaviors, has increased.

Therefore, the need for an in-depth study of moral license as one of the hidden causes of the formation of deviant work behaviors in the organization, from several dimensions is important: first, differences among people in the actions they take or the opinions they express do not always reflect differences in underlying attitudes, preferences or motivations, rather moral license help people to feel free to express morally questionable attitudes and some ones who don't have such permissions or license, despite the same attitudes, preference and motivations with people who have moral license, refuse to express their opinions, because the lack of moral license will damage their reputations and authenticity. Accordingly, the importance of pay attention to the adverse consequences of the lack of coordination of attitudes and employee's behaviors is obvious to all. Because lack of coordination of attitudes and employee's behaviors not only makes prediction of behavior difficult but also form immoral, discriminatory and secret behaviors.

Second, studies in the field of moral license are too limited and prior research only considered the previous good and virtues behavior such as organizational citizenship behavior, participation in social responsibility and innovation as the sole source of moral license and as the only factor which take the perspective of the wrongdoer or even third

party to identify why they license to problematic behaviors and much less research have been considered other factors that cause to license misdeeds by wrongdoer and observers. In this regard and with the initiative of Polman & et al. (2013), the effect of social status for moral license - which is indeed a social acceptance for violation of ethical and social norms – have been addressed that led to a new orientation in the former literature. However, the number of theoretical and qualitative research in this field is very insignificant and makes it necessary for the present study to take steps in this area with emerging literature and contribute to its development. Therefore, this study by identifying other influential factors to the formation of moral license and also detecting the consequences of moral license in public administrations try to fill the existence gap in moral licensing research.

Third, various factors play an important role in shaping the behavior of people in society. This principle also applies to organizations. Factors such as moral and behavioral codes, organizational and group norms, approval and non-acceptance of social, etc., give orientation to employee behavior. In general, behaviors that conform to ethical and behavioral codes and organizational and group norms face social acceptance and approval, and immoral and destructive behaviors certainly face social rejection and disapproval. But it seems that these factors - moral and behavioral codes, organizational and group norms, social approval and acceptance or non- acceptance, do not work for everyone and everywhere, because there is evidence that people without exposure to disapproval and social punishments simply involve deviant and immoral behaviors that are counter to norms. For example, Polman & et al. (2013) state that politicians who have a respectable position in the view of the people, in the case of misconduct or wrong decisions, rarely face the disapproval of their supporters and the general public. Identify the factors that eliminate the deterrent forces to engage in deviant behaviors and grant moral license to the individuals and even in some cases they consider themselves entitle to engage in deviant and immoral behavior. It is important to recognize how employees justify themselves for deviant and unethical behaviors in the organization and provides a holistic insights about employee's motivations and behaviors.

Finally, the negative behaviors that form follow a moral license, impose psychological and economic costs to organizations and their employees. The pervasive problem of bias in the workplace and its negative consequences can be obtained from the statistical reports

published annually, as Murphy (1993) argued in his study that the deviant behavior of employees annually imposes about 6 to 200 million \$ losses to the organization, also, US companies lose 15.1 billion annually due to internal burglaries. In Australia, fraud committed by members of the organization costs an average of 2.1 million for organizations per every fraud case (Muafi, 2011).

In general, deviant behaviors in addition to economic costs, may adversely affect the brand and identity of the organization and lead to the loss of organizational reputation, loss of customers, and endangering organizational survival. Although there is no accurate statistics about the costs of deviant behaviors in government organizations in Iran, it seems that in general, social and psychological costs of deviant behaviors which form followed by moral licenses may be higher than its economic fees, because in some cases, moral licenses give a person a special right -beyond legal rights- which provides the ground for creating an unhealthy work environment and it may go so far that nothing and no one is in place anymore, immorality becomes pervasive and mistrust governs on relationships.

In general, based on the abovementioned, the insufficient number of scientific studies in this field, as well as the economic, social and psychological costs that are imposed on public sector organizations due to deviant behaviors that arises following the acquisition or issuance of a moral license, the importance and necessity of research in relation to a deep and comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of moral licensing and the discovery of the causes, factors and consequences of moral licensing for organizations, especially government organizations, is clearly highlighted.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

For continuous comparison (events with events, events with concepts or Concepts with concepts) in the main field of research, therefore, I first try to fully explain the concept of moral licensing and the processes that lead to the formation of this phenomenon, and its relationship and impact on the formation of subsequent deviant behaviors. Then, the theories directing the research will be discussed and then a review of the relevant research will be done, and finally an attempt will be done to summarize the theoretical basis and research background.

2.1. Research overview

Moral licensing theory states that people who have behaved morally in the past may subsequently engage in immoral behavior without fear of being discredited, and the first study on moral licensing was published in 2001 by Monin and Miller. And since then numerous studies have been conducted in this field (Blanken, Van de Ven & Zeelenberg, 2015). Moral licensing theory posits that people who initially behave in a moral way can later display behaviors that are immoral, unethical, or otherwise problematic (e.g., Merritt, Effron, & Monin, 2010); One of the most important reasons for this study is that in most studies in the field of moral licensing, relying only on this principle, good and admirable past behaviors as the only source of acquisition (in moral self-licensing) or even the issuance of moral licensing have been considered; which has prompted the researcher to identify other source that provide a basis for moral licensing in public administrations. Another important reason is that the moral licensing theory contradicts one of the most insightful findings of psychology on the tendency of individuals to continue and adapt and coordinate their past and present behaviors, which adds to the attractiveness of the subject and confirms the complexity of behavioral issues. Moral licensing is not a phenomenon that can only be seen in one area, but in different areas, such as individual behavior as well as social behavior such that this phenomenon is related to daily behaviors such as well-being, vague racial attitudes, consumer behavior, etc. By mentioning these preliminaries in this section, first has been provide a predictive theoretical basis of moral licensing, then briefly explain the concept and mechanisms of moral licensing and its effect on the formation of

deviant behaviors, and finally previous research in the field of moral licensing has been offered.

2.1.1. Theoretical foundations of moral licensing

In this part, various theories are discussed as justifying theories for moral license theory that each of these theories has been pointed out to the aspects and causes of moral license.

2.1.1.1. The moral balance model

The theory of moral balance that was first propounded by Nissan in 1991, is based on observations in which a person faces with some moral dilemmas and his/her moral or right decisions lead to his/her involvement in behaviors that can interpret as immoral or wrong ones. From a western point of view, he presents that moral and acceptable behaviors cause tension and contrast between the person's desires and tendencies, those that give him/her satisfaction, and the others' desires and tendencies, respecting others' desires and considering what the best is for them. He also reasons that people generally allow themselves to deviate and violate their ideals because a moral view of themselves isn't dependent on action according to a particular decision but on their moral balance. Accordingly, the person simultaneously show a picture of his/her current moral behaviors and somehow, a moral balance of himself. The person's moral self-regard behaviors refer to perceived moral status of the person in every moment (Monin & Jordan, 2009), and moral balance is related to the level and threshold that the person can and desires to stay in that for a long time (Miller & Effron, 2010; Zhong, Liljenquist & Cain, 2009). Every good and moral action leads to increasing and decreasing fluctuations in the persons' current moral behaviors; on the contrary, moral balance remains constant. Because people are motivated to create and maintain a positive self-image, they try to keep their moral and immoral behaviors and actions balanced, to the extent that their current self-image be positive and close to the moral balance. The concept and meaning of moral license that is derived from this theory describes the opposite effect of this process. So that moral and acceptable behaviors and actions lead to a self-image beyond moral balance and in the case the person consider it ok to commit immortal behaviors and allows himself to get involved in immoral behaviors to return to balance (Klotz & Boline, 2013).

2.1.1.2. Social exchange theory

Social exchange theory is one of the most important theories in the field of understanding behavior in social environments, especially work and organizational environments. According to social exchange theory, organizations and their employees engage in both economic (e.g., salary and fringe benefits as rewards for work) and social exchanges (e.g., the employees respond to fair treatment from the organization by engaging in behaviors such as organizational citizenship behaviors) (Ilie, 2012). These social and economic exchanges lead to the creation of requirements and obligations between exchange partners (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Social exchanges between employees and their organizations are shaped by compensatory norms, so that if employees feel they are marginalized and their opinions are not used in organizational decisions, or feelings of emptiness and meaninglessness at work and in general have a sense of injustice in the organization, so these cases will have a negative impact on the social and organizational responsibility and extra-social behaviors of person and provide the ground for obtaining a moral license from their previous achievements in the organization that have not been compensated and subsequently will lead to deviant behaviors.

2.1.1.3. Ego depletion theory

Ego depletion theory provides an appropriate perspective for understanding the moral licensing phenomenon. According to the Ego depletion theory, individuals have limited resources to exercise control and self-monitoring. Over time, people may feel depletion by actions and activities that require high self-monitoring. Activities that require thought, focus, and attention, such as decision-making and solving complex problems, lead to depletion sense. In the workplace, for example, having a function that conforms to specific rules, norms, and procedures, and focusing and vigilant supervision to deal with potential problems leads to depletion feelings. A person who experience ego depletion has a greatly reduced capacity to exercise self-control in subsequent activities, thus greatly increasing the likelihood of being exposed to aggressive temptations and motivations. Ego depletion theory points to the principle that assimilation feeling caused by work pressures and self-control lead to a decrease in self-control in subsequent actions and behaviors. Empirical findings indicate that employees who feel depleted lack sufficient self-control to suppress abusive and unethical behaviors and to exhibit productive and prosaically behaviors (lin,

Ma & Johnson, 2016). Thus, it is thought that focusing on controlling behaviors or engaging in activities that go beyond one's capacity and power reduces one's ability to perform actions of the same quality (Maples -Keller, Berke, & Miller, 2016). According to moral licensing theory, engaging in morally laudable and socially desirable acts can “license” people to subsequently engage in questionable or unethical acts (Lin, Ma & Johnson, 2016). Ego depletion theory can provide an explanation for the reason for the shift from ethical behaviors to abusive behaviors in moral licensing, relying on the principle that individuals do not lose their legitimacy when engaging in immoral behaviors and can engage in immoral behaviors without fear of discrediting themselves or destroying their positive image.

2.1.1.4. Cognitive dissonance theory

All of us have experienced unpleasant feelings of duplicity during our lives because of frustration, unhappiness, dissatisfaction, and compulsion to do certain things; For example, although we complain about the corruption occurred in society, we ourselves are implementing an immoral decision or misbehavior, or even if we are in favor of organizational citizenship behaviors as behaviors that benefit the organization and even employees, then if we be forced to do such behaviors by supervisors that lead to negative consequences such as work-life conflict, job stress, tendency to be absent from work, it will eventually lead to deviant and immoral behaviors in the organization (Bolino & Klotz, 2015).

People throughout their lives are trying to create a positive moral image of themselves. By showing moral / immoral behaviors, people strengthen / threaten their moral image. Hence the degree to which a person is considered as moral person will be beyond / less than the moral basis. Thus, after acting in a moral manner, subsequent less moral or relatively immoral behaviors do not threaten or destroy the person's moral image as a whole, and thus lead to moral licensing. In contrast, the display of relatively social behaviors after relatively immoral actions leads to the correction and compensation of one's moral image, which was previously described as moral cleansing. As shown in previous research, maintaining one's self-image is one of the most important reasons for future compensatory behaviors. As a result, people try to maintain a positive image of themselves by balancing their relatively moral and relatively immoral actions. Any deviation from the balance level leads to

compensatory behaviors through moral or immoral actions and behaviors. These dynamics are well established in accordance with psychological theories such as the cognitive dissonance (Schlegelmilch & Simbrunner, 2019). In fact, cognitive dissonance as a cognitive process seeks to correct errors in one's belief system and values that use a biased process to achieve the desired result to resolve inconsistencies in one's belief system and values (Gawronski, 2012).

2.1.1.5. Self-regulation theory

Self-regulatory theory explains how to improve the adaptation of individuals in order to increase the likelihood of their access to resources in their environments (Mithaug, 1993). On the other hand, what factors play a major role in people's decisions about moral or immoral behaviors is that the possible answer to this question can be the moral self-regulatory theory that emphasizes the need for equality of good and bad actions and behaviors through behavioral balance. Moral self-regulatory and the need for equality of good and bad actions and behaviors are the main drivers of a wide range of moral / immoral practices and behaviors that may even lead to voluntary fraudulent behavior. Thus, self-regulatory can be considered as a basis for the formation of the moral license and moral cleansing phenomenon (Seçilmiş, 2017).

2.1.1.6. Self-monitoring theory

Self-monitoring should be considered as a potential moderating variable in the relationship between personality and behavior (Gangestad & Snyder, 2000). Self-monitoring refers to the tendency to be capable of regulating our behavior to meet the demands of social situations. According to Snyder (1974), there are important individual differences in terms of people's control over their overt and open behaviors and the expression of emotions and feelings. From this perspective, self-monitoring is classified into two groups: low self-monitoring and high self-monitoring. People who have high self-monitoring are flexible and change their behavior from one situation to another depending on each situation. In contrast, people with low self-monitoring rarely change. They have an internal orientation and are more focused on themselves than on the situation. With this approach, and according to Jawahar (2001), self-monitoring, as a potential variable of individual differences, refers to a person's willingness to act in line with his or her previous behaviors

(acting according to his or her behavioral character). According to Ajzen et al. (1982), people with low self-monitoring, greater coherence and compatibility, and direct communication in their conscious behaviors are more visible than people with high self-monitoring.

Generally, various theories such as moral balance theory, social exchange theory, ego depletion theory, cognitive dissonance, self-regulation theory and self-monitoring theory which are discussed, each of these theories has been pointed out to the aspects and causes of moral license. For instance, the moral balance theory -as the main theory for moral license and one of the most important theories in this area- emphasizes on the role of moral balance in moral license formation and people's decisions for doing moral behaviors or involving in deviant behaviors; So that everyone at every moment has a moral sense of himself and if the past behaviors upset his moral balance, the person subsequently and to return to moral balance, tends to commit deviant behaviors more. The social exchange theory, highlights the role of organizational citizenship behaviors and prosaically behaviors in moral license formation. The prosaically behaviors as a spontaneous behaviors and the ones beyond his duty create a special right for him and if they are ignored, it leads to achieve moral license and its subsequent deviate actions. The Ego depletion theory emphasizes on the people's capacity in self-control following a sense of ego depletion and also on moral license formation. The Ego depletion theory states that if the person feels depletion because of long-term activities in accordance with the norms, do's and don't's, and strict procedures, it's very likely to show aggressive actions and acts according to his preferences. The cognitive dissonance emphasizes on a set of moral and value principles in the formation of moral license, and because people generally like to show a positive self-image of themselves, try to arrange their behaviors to these moral and value principles to achieve this goal. So, according to moral license and cognitive dissonance theory, after behaving based on moral and value principles, performing relatively immoral actions, doesn't disturb the general and positive self-image of people. This theory, in fact, covers those dimension of moral license that emphasizes on maintaining prestige and validity despite of involving in deviant behaviors; self-regulation theory, as a basis for moral license formation, emphasize on equalize right and wrong actions, and maintaining the maximum advantage from the environment and finally, self-monitoring theory by

emphasizing the two-faced personality traits of some people such as chameleon, believes people who have high self-monitoring, for profit-seeking as well as maintaining their reputation, explains those dimension of moral license that, how can people engage in moral and deviant behaviors at the same time? As it may cause a basis to show reciprocal behaviors voluntarily without any damage to prestige and validity. Despite of numerous theories in moral license, knowledge in this area is very limited and needs the first hand information from those who experience it in the organizational environments. So, in this study we try to examine the aspects, reasons and consequences of moral license using data foundation approach, thoroughly. In the next section and with these preliminaries, briefly has been explained the concept and mechanisms of moral licensing and its effect on the formation of deviant behaviors.

2.1.2. Moral licensing

Differences among people in the actions they take or the opinions they express do not always reflect differences in underlying attitudes, preferences, or motivations. Sometimes people don't clearly act according to their attitudes and don't express their attitudes which is due to their concern for their reputation; concerns that their attitudes will discredit them. Wanting to do something is not sufficient to spur action; one must also feel licensed to do it. Feeling licensed can liberate people to express morally problematic attitudes that those who do not feel licensed are inhibited from expressing. Also lack feeling of license can inhibit people from expressing even morally no problematic attitudes that those who feel licensed are comfortable expressing. When people differ in the extent to which they are psychologically licensed (i.e., feel able to act without discrediting themselves), they will act differently despite having similar attitudes, preferences, and motivations.

People's reluctance to express their attitudes or act upon their preferences can have important consequences. One consequence is that the actual modal attitude of an individual or a group can be difficult to assess. Therefore, for example, at the individual level, those who do or do not express resentment, might differ in the amount of resentment they feel or not, but it might due to their difference in the amount of comfort feeling to express their dissatisfaction. Identifying when and why expressing the same attitude or taking the same

action can have different consequences for different people will explain the concept of moral licensing (Miller & Effron, 2010).

Moral licensing, as a form of cognitive bias, considers normative and moral actions and behaviors as an excuse for deviant and immoral actions and subsequent actions. In behavioral psychology, cognitive bias refers to a systematic pattern of deviation from norm or rationality in judgment. In fact, it is a mental and intellectual error that occurs when people are processing and interpreting information in the world around them and affects the decisions and judgments that people make. Cognitive bias can be caused by factors such as memory or attention (Haselton, Nettle & Andrews, 2005). In moral licensing, as a form of cognitive basis, memory plays a special role because the way in which some past events are associated and recalled may be so biased that it can subsequently lead to biased thinking and decision-making and behavior. Moral licensing subconsciously strengthens moral self-concept by weakening negative attitudes toward deviant and immoral behaviors, leading to increased motivation and preferences for engaging in immoral behaviors.

In fact, the psychological licensing or moral licensing theory shows that people are permitted to take an action or express a thought without fear of discrediting themselves. Obtaining a psychological license from various authorities, is the perception that one's behavioral history, social context, or category membership permit one to legitimately do or say something that otherwise would discredit the self. For example, a person might feel that having recently made a large donation to one charity licenses her to deny another charity's request for a donation.

The lack of a psychological license indicates that a person cannot do something without being discredited, which a person with a psychological license can do without being discredited. Sometimes, license is enshrined in law, as is the case with the act of Congress that licenses an American in the Armed Forces who is a family's sole surviving child to apply for transfer away from a position of imminent danger. Other times, people may have psychological license to act even without legal or institutional approval. For example, a soldier might feel that his years of loyal military service license him to violate regulations and go a law to avoid imminent danger. Note that being or feeling licensed does not mean that one is compelled to act in a certain way. Being a family's sole surviving child does not

mean that one must apply for removal from imminent danger, only that one may if one wishes.

The concept of licensing can help us better understand when people will and will not act upon their attitudes. Psychological license allows people to act without fearing that they will discredit themselves, but different kinds of license are required to diminish concerns about different types of discredit. As said, a common reason people do not act upon or even express their attitudes is that they fear that doing so will signal to themselves and others something morally discrediting about the self. But people's concern that a particular action will signal something discrediting about them does not depend only on the action itself; it also depends on their past behavior.

As said, a common reason people do not act upon or even express their attitudes is that they fear that doing so will signal to themselves and others something morally discrediting about the self. But people's concern that a particular action will signal something discrediting about them does not depend only on the action itself; it also depends on their past behavior. People will feel comfortable expressing even potentially discrediting attitudes to the extent that they can point to past behaviors that license such expressions. When people ask themselves, "Can I say or do this without signaling something morally discrediting about myself?" To the extent that their past behavior makes them confident that the answer is yes, they will feel licensed to act. More generally, when people can call to mind previous instances of their own socially desirable or morally laudable behaviors, they will feel more comfortable taking actions that could be seen as socially undesirable or morally questionable (Bicchieri, 2006; Kuran, 1997; Miller & Prentice, 1994). In the other words, moral licensing describes why and how a social and organizational reality occurs, and how individuals and employees, when engaging in behaviors that are morally and normatively unacceptable, provide evidence of moral virtues and behaviors and justify themselves and feel more comfortable in action. Moral licensing theory has three basic components: First, a sense of moral licensing requires an understanding that people are permitted to take an action or express a thought without fear of discrediting themselves (Miller & Effron, 2010). Second, ethics is broadly related to virtues and attainments, which in fact shows the difference between "how people want and tend to act or do something" and "how they should act" and, in fact, it is the contradiction between what one desires and loves, and

what one must do accordingly. Thus, a moral licensing allows one to act less on what one has to do by providing evidence of one's virtues, and in fact distances oneself from the dos and don'ts (Baumeister & Juola Exline, 1999; Tenbrunsel & et al., 2010). Third, there is a difference between moral licensing and moral self-licensing so that the effects of self-licensing occur when individuals themselves feel comfortable to engage in misbehavior, but justifying another person's mistakes involves the concept of moral licensing, which not includes the moral self-licensing, although in the literature these two concepts have been used interchangeably, but the reality indicates the difference between the two concepts (Effron & Conway, 2015).

As mentioned in the explanation of the concept of moral licensing, one's past behaviors, have an important impact on people's decision to act on their motives and preferences or to hide their motives and preferences. In other words, previous admirable behaviors play a significant role in the formation of moral licensing. This principle has been mentioned in several studies in the field of moral licensing and in relation to consumer behavior, vague racial attitudes, donating to charity and etc.

Table 2.1. Empirical studies on Moral Licensing

Author	Title	Research Method	Research Problem & Hypothesis	Main Result
Khan and Dar (2006)	Licensing effect in consumer choice	Survey Study 1: (n= 25) Study 2: (n= 93) Study 3: (n=80) Study 4: (n= 120) Study 5: (n=66)	If previous decisions and behaviors of individuals strengthen their self-concept, they are more likely to make more selfish decisions in the future	Participants who thought they had done volunteer work in the past or helped with charity chose luxury goods in their purchases. They also said that participants who thought they were doing an altruistic act considered themselves moral, which would reduce negative attitudes toward purchasing a luxury item.
Sachdeva & et al. (2009)	Sinning saints and saintly sinners: The paradox of moral self-regulation	Experimental research	The impact of moral licensing on altruism and donation was examined	They found that remembering positive actions and characteristics led to a reduction in the amount of charitable donations and also they found that participants who described themselves as positive and moral had the lowest levels of participation in environmental health projects.
Cornelissen & et al. (2013)	Rules or consequences? The role of ethical mindsets in moral dynamics	Survey Study 1: (n= 86) Study 2: (n= 107) Study 3: (n=135)	Individuals' ethical mindset (i.e., outcome-based vs. rule-based) moderates the impact of an initial ethical or unethical act on the likelihood of behaving ethically on a subsequent occasion	The result showed, if participants have outcome-based mindset, the probability of the formation of moral license is higher, but if participants have rule-based mindset, it is more likely that previous moral behaviors will continue.
Klotz & Bolino (2013)	Citizenship and counterproductive work behavior: A moral licensing view	Conceptual model	1. Admirable citizenship actions, lead to moral license. 2. Individual's identity and personality tendencies moderate the relationship between citizenship behaviors and moral license. 3. Individual's identity and personality tendencies moderate the relationship between	The results showed: 1. Despite the generally negative relationship between organizational citizenship behaviors and counterproductive work behaviors, employees often engage in both. 2. When people engage in morally praiseworthy behaviors, they often grant themselves a moral license to behave immorally.

			<p>moral license and deviant behavior</p> <p>4. Deviant behavior damage credit and population of individuals but the degree of damage to prestige will be less depending on the extent to which individuals have obtained moral license.</p>	<p>3. personality and identity tendencies moderate the relationship between organizational citizenship behaviors and moral license as well as the relationship between moral license and counterproductive work behavior</p> <p>4. moral license prevents the traducing of individuals</p>
Blanken, van de Ven and Zeelenberg (2015)	A meta-analytic review of moral licensing	Meta-analytic review (91 studies with a total of 7397 participants)	The moral licensing conditions in the control conditions was compared as well as moral license moderators and their impact.	<p>1. The generalized size of the moral licensing effect is Cohen's $d = 0.31$</p> <p>2. the moderator variables such as acquiring moral licenses from moral traits against moral actions and activities, obtaining a moral license from real behavior versus hypothetical behavior, obtaining a moral license from behaviors that are in the same range of immoral behaviors or different was of particular importance.</p>
Mueller & Skitka (2015)	Licensed to Lie: Evidence for Moral Licensing in Persuasive Communication Contexts	Survey Study 1 (n= 107) Study 2 (n=113)	<p>1. Whether approaches such as solid moral conviction for a political issue allowed people do immoral things for that cause?</p> <p>2. Whether people's robust moral conviction for a political issue would lead them to license a political figure who lied to serve that cause?</p>	<p>1. The findings of the first study showed that people who have already received a moral license are more likely to lie than people who do not have a moral license without regard to moral condemnation.</p> <p>2. The findings of the second study showed that persons who reinforced the target's attitude with strong (vs. weak) moral conviction licensed her lies for that cause.</p>
Lin, Ma and Johnson (2016)	When ethical leader behavior breaks bad: How ethical leader behavior can turn abusive via ego depletion and moral licensing	Multi wave designs	<p>1. The moral behavior of leaders has an indirect positive effect on the abusive behavior of leaders through increase in depletion</p> <p>2. The moral behavior of leaders has a direct positive effect on moral credit and moral credential.</p> <p>3. The moral behavior of leaders increase moral credit and moral credential which has an indirect positive effect on the abusive behavior of leaders.</p>	The results showed that leaders' ethical behaviors are paradoxically likely to turn into abusive behaviors toward their followers. Also, it was stated that destructive and abusive behaviors may be due to emotional fatigue and mental depletion, as well as the moral credentials that have been acquired by previous moral behaviors
Yam et al. (2017)	From good soldiers to	Survey Study 1:	Moral licensing and self-determination theories was utilized to enlighten the attitudinal and	When employees are forced to engage in citizenship behaviors, not voluntary, they subsequently find

	psychologically entitled: Examining when and why citizenship behavior leads to deviance	(n= 345) Study 2: (n= 180)	behavioral consequences of externally motivated OCBs	themselves psychologically entitled to go beyond their legal and in-role duties and act according to their attitudes and even engage in deviant behaviors (Interpersonal conflict, organizational, and non-work deviations) so that they do not discredit themselves by relying on citizenship behaviors
Simbrunner and Schlegelmich (2017)	Moral licensing: a culture-moderated meta-analysis	Meta-analytic review	How big moral licensing effects typically are in societies with various cultural context? Which factors systematically influence the size of this effect?	The results of this meta-analysis study showed that both the cultural background and the comparison of this phenomenon in different cultural backgrounds play a significant role in the effect and the size of moral licensing.
Lasarov and Hoffmann (2018)	Social Moral Licensing	Theoretical and conceptual framework	Focused on the effects of the social environment on moral licensing which has been considered in a few previous researches	Findings of this research through of this conceptual framework try to introduce the concept of social moral license, to illuminate the path of future researchers.
Dütschke & et.al (2018)	Moral licensing: Another source of rebound	laboratory and based on an integrated theoretical model	With emphasize on the compensatory effect theory, a conceptual and experimental view of moral license was presented that examined the effect of compensation with economic explanations	The result showed how psychological and economic motivations are affected by compensation and moral license. Economists emphasize on price, income, and substitution to explain the compensation effect, but psychologists have proposed a creative license in this regard, stating that the cognitive process by which individuals justify their immoral behaviors (e.g. Excessive use of personal cars) is their desirable and moral behavior in the past (for example, buying more efficient cars with a lower level of pollution, presumably buying electric cars).

It is worth mentioning that in these studies, just previous admirable behaviors have been considered as the only factor in the formation of moral licensing and neither of them have mentioned other factors influencing the formation of moral licensing

2.1.3. Mechanisms underlying moral licensing

In the complex world of social interactions, there are seldom circumstances that clearly and unambiguously indicate behavioral causes. Moral licensing occurs because one's behavioral history allows one to act in a way that might otherwise signal specific or general moral discredit. But how does one's behavioral history allow one to avoid discredit? In the literature related to the moral license, Miller and Effron (2010) have considered two basic mechanisms on which the theory of the ethical license is based: moral licensing through moral credits model and moral licensing through moral credential model. In fact, both moral credits and moral credential mechanisms through directing discriminatory judgments lead to the immunity of individuals from accusation or punishment, while conducting immoral acts or practices.

2.1.3.1. Licensing via balance: The moral credits model

The moral credits model is considered as behaviors and is considered as a bank account and postulates that individuals accumulate credits through positive and moral behaviors that can be used to pay the future immoral behaviors (Lasarov & Hoffmann, 2018). In this case, if individuals gain moral credit through moral behaviors, they may be able to compensate for their subsequent immoral behaviors through those behaviors (Blanken, van de Ven & Zeelenberg, 2015). According to this model, behavioral history can offset or balance out future wrongdoing. As an example, consider a group member who wishes to deviate from group norms without being perceived as a bad group member. According to Hollander (1958), the group member can do so if she has a history of conforming to group norms. . Hollander suggested that conformity to group norms allows group members to accumulate idiosyncrasy credits that can then be used to “purchase” the right to deviate. Moral credit is a metaphor of a bank account or balance sheet: conformity provides credits, whereas norm violations incur debits that will be tolerated so long as one has sufficient credits to balance them out. In other words, a history of conformity negates the discredit that norm violations would otherwise signal. (Stone & Cooper, 2009). Hollander restricted the scope of his theory to the domain of conformity and influence in groups, but more recently theorists with more general view have described it as a mechanism to create the moral licensing. In this view, moral behavior provides one with moral credits that serve to balance out subsequent immoral behaviors, conceptualized as moral debits. Immoral behavior will

be permitted, both by the self and by others, so long as it is sufficiently balanced by moral credits accrued from past good deeds.

There are two noteworthy features of the moral credits model. First, moral credits make bad deeds seem more permissible without changing their perceived meaning. In other words, someone with moral credits who commits a transgression will still be perceived (by himself and others) as transgressing, though this transgression will seem more permissible than it would have without credits. Second, the moral credits model posits a moral self-concept that fluctuates depending on one's history of good and bad deeds: good deeds boost the moral self-concept, whereas bad ones deflate it. The psychology described by the moral credits model is analogous to the practice of purchasing "carbon offsets" to minimize one's environmental impact. Money spent on carbon offsets contributes to projects that decrease the amount of CO₂ emitted, or already in the atmosphere. For instance, by funding the construction of a hydroelectric dam or the planting of trees. Literally, the purchase of a carbon offset can allow one to do something environmentally harmful, such as taking a transcontinental flight, which in turn will increase carbon dioxide levels. This means that compensating for the destructive effects of carbon dioxide through these projects will allow passengers to travel more, even on unnecessary trips. And this leads to more carbon dioxide emitted in the environment, but they according to the support of such useful and positive projects, are not worried about this issue. In fact, the principle of action (carbon dioxide production) is still condemned but is considered acceptable with the support of completed projects (Jordan, et al., 2010; Nissan, 1991; Sachdeva, et al 2009).

2.1.3.2. The moral credentials model

A second mechanism that could underlie licensing is what we have called moral credentials. Moral credential, by eliminating the minimum possible incentives for flattering and immoral behaviors, can alter these motivations in favor of the individual, or even show the most legitimate and credible behavioral motivation, . In other words, moral credentials provide license by making a behavior appear as if it were not a transgression at all (Monin and Miller, 2001a). The moral credentials model of licensing differs from the moral credits model on two key features. First, in the credentials model, one's behavioral history provides license by changing the way subsequent behavior is construed. For example, hiring a Black applicant in a police department licensed White participants to say on a

subsequent task that a police job was better suited for Whites than for Blacks. This is a bit difficult to interpret for two reasons: 1) it could have represented racist and prejudice, 2) it could have represented a more legitimate preference based on the way the job was described. (That is, given the job description states that this post is more suitable for whites, so the person can justify himself). Given the experts, hiring a Black applicant on the first task made participants feel that they had established their moral credentials as non-prejudiced, thus increasing their confidence that their preference for Whites in the second task would be construed as legitimate rather than prejudiced.

By contrast, a moral credits interpretation of the results would suggest that hiring a Black applicant made participants feel licensed to express a view that would be construed as prejudiced, secure in the knowledge that this misdeed would be balanced out by their prior act of nonracist (Zhong et al., 2009). More generally, moral credits provide license by offsetting the negative impact of a transgression on one's moral self-concept, whereas moral credentials provide license by making a behavior appear as if it were not a transgression at all. If moral credits function like currency that can be used to "purchase" a license to commit immoral behavior, moral credentials function like a character witness on which one can call to testify that subsequent behavior is not immoral. The moral credits model posits that good deeds and bad deeds make one's moral self-concept fluctuate around an equilibrium whereas in the moral credentials model, one's behavioral history makes morally questionable deeds seem as if they were not transgressions at all, then one can perform these deeds without "taking a hit" to one's moral self-concept. One implication of this difference is that it will diminish future positive action (Monin & Miller, 2001b).

2.1.3.3. Moral licensing through credits and credentials

According to the moral credit mechanism, or moral balance, observers create a general picture of the individual in the mind based on the average positive and negative behavioral characteristics of the person, while in moral credential mechanism, the way of interpreting previous information about a person by observers, forms a moral credential (Effron & Monin, 2010). Researchers investigating moral licensing have differed on whether they frame their findings in terms of moral credits or moral credentials. Sachdeva et al. (2009), for example, suggested that thinking about oneself in positive terms promotes the accrual of

moral currency that can purchase a license to engage in future questionable behavior (e.g., declining to donate). Similarly, Jordan et al. (2010) interpreted their licensing findings in the framework of a “moral equilibrium” model. By contrast, in line with Monin and Miller’s (2001a) description of moral credentials, Effron and Monin (2010) argued that endorsing Obama made participants confident that a subsequent, ambiguous preference would be construed as less racist.

Many of the findings reviewed above could be interpreted within either the credits or credentials mechanisms. For example, in the study by Sachdeva et al. 2009, writing about themselves using positive adjectives may have made participants feel sufficiently moral to offset the perceived selfishness of declining to donate (an interpretation consistent with the moral credits model), or it could have made them more confident that declining to donate would not appear selfish (e.g., stemming from a lack of disposable income rather than from misanthropy—an interpretation consistent with the moral credentials model).). Likewise, in the Bradley et al. (2010) study, writing about a positive interaction with a minority group member (Like religious or racial minorities) may have made participants feel that they had established themselves as no prejudiced (moral credentials), or it may have made them feel that doing something no prejudiced would offset doing something prejudiced (moral credits).

We should emphasize that it is not necessary to view credentials and credits as competing models; they can be viewed as two independent routes to licensing. In fact, we suspect that credits and credentials may often operate simultaneously to produce moral licensing. Situations will vary in their capacity to promote licensing via one mechanism or another. Two important variables that likely determine whether prior behavior licenses a target behavior via credentials or credits are (a) the ambiguity of the target behavior, and (b) whether or not it is in the same domain as the prior behavior.

We first consider the target behavior’s ambiguity. Some behaviors clearly represent transgressions. Contrary to obvious violations, there is room for a positive and favorable interpretation of ambiguous violations, so past moral behaviors can pave the way for the issuance of a moral license by changing the principals, terms and conditions, and this means issuing a moral license through the moral credibility mechanism. For example, failing to hire an applicant based on the premise that his race “makes him incapable of

working hard” would be a blatant example of racial discrimination. Other behaviors may generate suspicion, but ultimately remain ambiguous as to whether or not they represent transgressions. For example, in the police force task created by Monin and Miller (2001a), expressing a preference for hiring a White person could have represented racial prejudice, or it could have arisen from a reluctance to place Blacks in a work environment in which they would face others’ racism. Because moral credentials function by changing one’s construal of a target behavior, licensing is most likely to occur via moral credentials when the target behavior is ambiguous, and thus open to favorable construal. Thus, a track record of egalitarianism should make a racially ambiguous preference seem nonracist. By contrast, the licensing of blatant transgressions is most likely to occur via credits. These transgressions; because there are no conditions for a positive interpretation of them, so previous moral behaviors cannot provide a basis for a positive interpretation of these transgressions. Nevertheless, previous moral behaviors can reduce the severity of such transgressions, thus paving the way for the issuance of licenses through the moral credit mechanism. Thus, a morally admirable track record may make blatant acts of discrimination seem more permissible by offsetting their immorality without making them seem any less discriminatory.

A second variable that likely determines whether licensing occurs via credits or credentials is whether or not the target behavior is in the same domain as prior behavior. The research reviewed above suggests that questionable behaviors can be licensed by a prior action in either the same domain or a different domain. If a target behavior is morally ambiguous and can be reconstructed in a more favorable light, prior behavior in the same domain should seem more relevant for disambiguating it than prior behavior in a different domain. For example, whether or not one voted for Obama seems more relevant than whether or not one donated to the Humanitarian Aid Charity for determining whether an ambiguous hiring preference is racist. Thus, ambiguous behavior is more likely to be licensed via credentials when the relevant prior behavior is in the same domain and via credits when it is in a different domain. (Miller & Effron, 2010).

Whether, why behavioral observers in some cases are reluctant to issue moral licenses to transgressors’ immoral behaviors, or, in other words, when a person’s past moral actions will continue and when such behaviors will decrease, or even becomes immoral behaviors

is another important issue that Miller and Effron (2010) have responded to by considering probabilities: First, they state that a person's behavioral background when leads to the release of future behaviors that past behaviors show a progress toward a goal rather than commitment to the goal (Fishbach & Dhar, 2005). According to Fishbach and Dhar (2005), if actions are framed as progress toward the goal, the probability that inconsistent actions and pursuit of conflicting goals will increase is greater than when the person's actions are framed as commitment to the goal, and following such committed actions and activities there is more tend to achieve focal goals. Secondly, they believe that if one's past behavior reflects one's hypocrisy, prevent people from acting inconsistently with their previous behavior because hypocrisy is seen as a process that is contrary to the issuance of moral license. Obviously, moral behaviors, especially when they are trying to influence others, are no more than claims to one's personal values. Similarly, transgressions in different-domain than previous moral behaviors may also imply an implicit claim to individual values, because "the discrepancy between past and present behaviors in similar areas," as well as the "contradiction between action and speech," are prominent features of hypocrisy. The combination of these factors leads to hypocritical perceptions that make observers reluctant to issue a moral license. Such circumstances, not only make observers reluctant to issue licenses to the person moral behaviors, but make them also more determined to punish the person (Effron & Monin, 2010). Third, they by considering the individual differences, claiming that past moral actions lead to a moral license when one's actions are in domains that are insignificant in terms of one's individual and moral identity. The summary of the moral licensing is presented in Table 2-1 through the integration of moral credits and moral credentials.

Table 2.2. Moral license credits and credentials

	Explicit moral behaviors	Hidden moral behaviors
Moral and immoral behaviors in the same domain	Hypocrisy Failure to issue a moral license	Moral licensing through credentials
Moral and immoral behaviors on different domain	Moral licensing through credit	Moral licensing through credit

Source: (Effron, & Monin, 2010)

2.1.4. Differences between moral licensing and similar concepts

Determining the exact boundaries of similar concepts in the research literature helps to properly understand the studied phenomenon, so in this section it is necessary to distinguish between the moral license concept and similar concepts and explain the differences and similarities between moral licenses and these concepts.

2.1.4.1. Standing as License

The concept of standing in comparison with the moral license actually deviates from the effects of non-deterrence of the moral license and emphasizes the deterrent effects of standing and social status. People's worries about being morally discredited, as well as what is emphasized in the moral license, also change to their concern about taking action that they do not have the right to do it in term of standing. In fact, in the sense of standing, we will review how not having a psychological license can even be an obstacle to expressing attitudes that are not in themselves immoral, but nevertheless one may not consider oneself allowed to express those attitudes.

Sometimes, people are concerned that their future actions will signal something morally questionable about themselves, and therefore they require what we have described as a moral license, obtained from their past behavior, in order to act comfortably. Other times, however, people feel uncomfortable expressing or acting upon attitudes that are not themselves morally problematic. Even when people are not concerned that an attitude will call their morality into question (e.g., portray them as a racist, ingrate, or braggart), they may still feel that it would not be their place to act on or express the attitude. In other words, they may feel they are not entitled to express the attitude—that doing so would be illegitimate or inappropriate, and therefore discredit them. In order to feel comfortable speaking up or acting in such situations, people require a different kind of license than a moral license: They require what we describe as psychological standing, which refers to the subjective sense of legitimacy or entitlement to act (Miller et al., 2009).

Just as the courts are in the legal standing must for judicial review of cases, or social groups decide who does and does not have the standing to express a particular position or to take a particular action. For example, communities might agree, even if only tacitly, that only the parents of misbehaving children have the standing to discipline them, or that only those who voted in the last election have the standing to criticize an elected official, or that only

those whose homes were most damaged in a storm have the standing to ask for community assistance. In all mentioned above, reprimanding a child, criticizing an official, and asking for assistance are not themselves morally questionable behaviors, yet performing them without the appropriate psychological license can nonetheless be discrediting. Individuals who feel that they meet their group's criteria for who may act or speak up on a particular issue have psychological standing, and thus a license, to do so (Miller & Effron, 2010). To sum it up, according to the moral licensing, individuals can easily take immoral actions or express their questionable attitudes without fearing of discrediting but according to the standing, not only cannot easily take immoral actions or express their questionable attitudes but even also cannot allow themselves to express attitudes or do actions that are not immoral.

2.1.4.2. Moral cleansing

Recent research in the field of psychology provides evidence of moral cleansing, and describes how immoral practices can lead people to have moral behavior (Klotz, & Bolino, 2013). Moral cleansing occurs when an individual's overall moral self-perception has been endangered by displaying or recalling immoral behavior. Consequently, the likelihood of showing moral behavior subsequently increases in order to reestablish a moral image of one's self (Simbrunner & Schlegelmilch, 2017).

The moral action of individuals is not always based on their personality. Moral behaviors are usually more influenced by a person's social background and past behavioral background. People are motivated to maintain a moral self-image and to eliminate apparent gaps between their perceived self-image and their desired moral self. Most of moral decisions are based on constant efforts to maintain moral values against transgressions, errors, and carnal temptations. Research on moral cleansing seeks to understand the innumerable behaviors that occur in response to past transgressions.

The phenomenon of moral cleansing, such as the moral license, is part of the growing literature of moral self-regulation, which examines moral decisions and behaviors. Contrary to moral license, moral cleansing pays special attention to how people respond to and react to immoral behavior.

Moral cleansing, which is impaired in order to compensate for moral values and is formed in response to immoral behaviors, is examined in three over-arching categories. 1)

Restitution cleansing behaviors directly resolve past misdeeds. When transgressions of sacred values take place, individuals are aroused to recoup these values. In this regard, the most direct way to compensate for transgressions is simply to correct past mistakes and perversions. 2) Behavioral cleansing involves counter-balancing across multiple dimensions of the moral self whereby threats in one subdomain are alleviated by bolstering a separate subdomain. 3) Symbolic cleansing includes restitution behaviors that are only symbolically connected to the provoking moral threat. Peoples often use conceptual metaphors to understand social interactions. Conceptual metaphors may be helpful in dealing with abstract problems such as judgments and moral decisions. Accordingly, symbolic cleansing as a symbolic act can replace real efforts to correct past mistakes. In some religious rites, for example, "confession" may be considered a symbolic cleansing of past sins, which may potentially license subsequent transgressions (West & Zhong, 2015). According moral cleansing theory, immoral behaviors that cause negative emotions cause a person to compensate for past immoral behaviors with moral behaviors, while the good deeds of the past create a positive self-concept that allows for the issuance of moral license and leads people to break the rules (Brañas-Garza & et al., 2013). In summary, research in the two areas of moral cleansing and moral licensing shows the sequence of moral and immoral behaviors and actions and show that behaviors follow from a regular pattern.

2.1.4.3. Impression Management

Impression management has been formed based on the self-representation and social influence theories, and refers to efforts to influence others in order to create perceptions in accordance with their own desires and preferences. In impression management the personal interests is given priority and the accepted standards for achieving personal interests are violated. In impression management, a person seeks to manage people's attitudes and impressions about themselves in order to gain a series of personal benefits, and it is not important what the individual has achieved for his organization in the past. Impression management is a conscious process in which people attempt to use strategies to achieve the goal of creating, maintaining, caring for, or changing how they are seen by others. As mentioned earlier in explaining the moral licensing theory, efforts and even moral behaviors that are specifically an attempt to influence others are not only a precondition for the issuance of a moral license, but also a ground for disclosure, punishment against the

individual (Effron & Monin, 2010). So, for example, hypocrisy which is one of the strategies for forming and impression management in others, can never be considered a factor in issuing a moral license.

In general, there is evidence of questionable behavior that has been modified by moral license influences as moral individuals. All studies performed on moral licensing suggest that this phenomenon is based on two types of behavior or events. Where good and desirable behavior (a) leads to less desirable behavior (b). There is no reason to always assume that the process of moral licensing is in fact that two behaviors occur sequentially. For example, people may not consciously feel that they are able to engage in undesirable behavior (b) after displaying good and desirable behavior (a). Perhaps people who have this problem and want to act on their attitudes are likely to find a good reason for undesirable behavior (b) after doing a good deed (a). In other words, moral licensing can be a strategy for justifying that people use to justify their immoral behaviors, so that a person will never intentionally engage in moral behaviors in order to justify their future immoral behaviors. Was. Also, instead of arguing that "I just did the right thing (a), so I can do the bad thing now (b)," this argument about moral licensing is the opposite of accepting that "because I have do a good deed (a). I have been tempted to do a bad deed (Blanken, vandeVen & Zeelenberg, 2015).

In moral license, a person sincerely believes that his/her previous sincere participation in the organization gives him/her a license and the opportunity to engage in less moral behaviors. For example, if a person has been selected as a top employee among his/her colleagues in the past year, he/she may have a special right in the organization in the future and grant himself/ herself permission to violate certain organizational norms and rules, e.g. be late for an important meeting, and in fact the moral license is considered as a justification for low-moral behaviors, and the person never consciously performs a good and desirable action in order to engage in deviant behaviors, but uses from his past desirable and good behaviors as justification for his immoral and deviant behavior. Moral licenses are in fact the occurrence of an unconscious psychological state - and not by conscious action or the use of a specific word - in individuals who may be involved in obtaining a moral license.

Therefore, people who attach great importance to the impression of others and the way others think about themselves, in addition to the many tactics and ways, they may use moral license to shape the impression of others, but the opposite is not possible, meaning that impression management tactics and strategies will not work to obtain a moral license.

2.1.4.4. Behavioral Entropy

Behavioral entropy refers to the gradual change in the constructive behaviors of employees to non-constructive behaviors, which leads to many behavioral problems in organizations (Gatling & et al., 2017). Despite the similarities between moral license and behavioral entropy in terms of the orientation of positive and desirable behaviors to less moral or even deviant behaviors, the two concepts are different. Behavioral entropy as one of the main challenges of today's organizations, has faced them with unusual and unexpected changes in employee behavior, so that over time, talented, committed, hard-working and disciplined and law-abiding employees, become unmotivated, undisciplined norm-breakers (Lin & et al., 2016). Research in the field of deviant behavior has emphasized on the voluntary nature of such behavior, while in behavioral entropy, with an emphasis on a set of factors that play a role in the occurrence of unusual behaviors, it is pointed out that such behaviors are involuntary. In several studies, researchers have tried to identify the cause of such unusual changes in employee behavior to deal with such behavioral changes. Among the most important reasons known in numerous studies for employee behavioral entropy are organizational factors such as bureaucratic structure, unfair rules, managerial errors, organizational injustice; personality factors such as lack of commitment and work conscience to the job, as well as environmental factors such as differences between organizations in terms of caring for their employees (Vveinhardt & Zygmantaite, 2015). And this is while one of the most important reasons why positive organizational and positive behaviors in a moral license lead to less moral or even deviant behaviors is organizational citizenship behaviors. Therefore, in terms of the causes that lead to the behavioral entropy and moral license, these two items are different. On the other hand, in a moral license, one's reputation is maintained from the perspective of others, and the person is never recognized by his colleagues or guardians as an offender.

Then, behavioral entropy as a major challenges for today's organizations, by turning positive behavior to negative behavior, individual's reputation and credibility is reduced

and managers usually look for solutions to encounter this challenge and retain their qualified employees but in moral license, immoral behavior following moral behavior do not weaken one's reputation and prestige and because of that destructive effects of moral licensing will be revealed in the long run.

2.2. Typology of deviant and immoral behaviors in moral licenses

Despite the fact that the phenomenon of moral licensing has recently been discussed in the literature on organizational behavior, according to studies conducted in this field, the effects of this phenomenon are widely documented and trusted. According to the moral balance theory, when people engage in desirable and moral behaviors, their self-concept increases and they allow themselves to engage in deviant, immoral behaviors that are contrary to organizational norms, without compromising their prestige, they are in fact obtaining such a license based on previous positive behaviors (Yam & et.al, 2017).

In the workplace and the organization, employees engage in a variety of activities ranging from in-role and extra-role tasks to deviant and counterproductive behaviors and activities (Dalal, 2005). In fact, employees generally try to play a positive role along with the goals of their organization; in such a way that not only do they perform their job duties in the best possible way, but sometimes they go beyond their in-role duties so that they are supposed to be involved in organizational citizenship behaviors and make creative and innovative ideas.

However, employees may simultaneously engage in behaviors that are clearly inconsistent with organizational goals and norms. Negative organizational behaviors in different studies have been discussed under different headings such as deviant behaviors, immoral behaviors, antisocial behaviors, or anti-productive behaviors, and refer to behaviors, attitudes, or situations that are generally not socially accepted and violates accepted behavioral standards or even seemingly accepted group's standards. Some researchers have defined deviant behaviors as a violation of the social norms of a social system, while others have considered deviant behaviors to be limited to adverse social norms that are enough important to provoke a reaction are important. In all the definitions presented, two major normative and reactive approaches are emphasized.

Definitions of deviant behaviors with a normative approach emphasize violation or non-compliance with normative expectations. The definitions of deviant behaviors with a

reactionary approach also emphasize the role of social audiences in determining deviance, in this approach, actions, behaviors or conditions are evaluated negatively by the social audience and a deviant label is attached to them. Although these definitions do not include the existence of admirable deviant behaviors, the question that arises is that if the collective reaction to the action or behavior that violates the expected norms is positive, are those behaviors still deviant? For example, during the revolutions that have taken place in the world, such as the American Revolution, the Gandhi Revolution in India, and the Iranian Revolution, revolutionaries have engaged in a variety of behaviors that violate normative standards such as theft, lying, murder, and so on. However, the revolutionaries are still considered national heroes. However, is not their action deviant? Therefore, explaining this issue as an important theoretical issue is why the violation of some norms is considered negative and the violation of some other norms is considered positive. In this regard, what is particularly important is which of the existing typologies of negative behaviors is followed by negative behaviors.

Therefore, in order to fully understand the trend of deviant behaviors, both normative expectations and social reactions must be considered. In addition, it is important to know the nature of the situation and the conditions in which the deviant behavior is formed. Defining and evaluating a behavior such as normative expectations varies in social groups or over time. Therefore, in the following, the typology of deviant behaviors will be explained based on normative expectations, reactions and collective evaluations, and the position of deviant behaviors following the moral license in this typology (table 2.3, based on Heckert & Heckert, 2002).

Negative deviance: refers to behaviors that involve under conformity or nonconformity to norms and negative evaluations. In deviant behaviors, norms, even if unfairly created, failure to comply with them will result in negative evaluations and penalties. In order to deal with such behaviors, legal procedures such as punishment, restitution to victims, etc. are used with the aim of limiting such behaviors.

Rate-busting: refers to behaviors or conditions that go beyond social norms and expectations, and also include negative evaluations of social groups. These behaviors are related to the extreme and irrational behaviors that some people are involved in, as they are

not socially accepted, and in fact, extreme adherence to norms is a sign of their stupidity, such as extremist religious figures or flunky individuals.

Deviance admiration: These are behaviors or conditions that, although inconsistent with or less consistent with normative expectations, are also positively assessed by a social group. Like national heroes in revolutions.

Appositive deviance: Refers to behaviors or conditions that are positively assessed by social groups despite their non-compliance with the organization's normative expectations and their adherence to these norms. For example, the actions of a very productive employee whose work efficiency exceeds the formal and agreed amount can be classified in this category of deviant behaviors. Although these behaviors are very beneficial to management and benefit the organization, managers expect the same from other employees, which causes dissatisfaction among employees and co-workers, who work according to what is described in the job description. In other words, norms can be considered at two levels, the ideal norms that most people believe in, but a small number of people can behave according to ideal norms, and the other level where the realistic norms are and most people have the ability to act according to these norms. People who engage in negative deviant behaviors defy both levels of norms. Normal people act on norms at a realistic level, but they cannot reach the ideal level of norms and in positives deviations, people reach the level of ideal norms. Such as organizational citizenship behaviors, participation in social responsibilities, the whistle-blower phenomenon in the organization or innovative behaviors (Heckert, & Heckert, 2002).

Table 2.3. Social reactions and normative expectation

		Normative expectations	
		Non-compliance (low compliance)	Over compliance
Social reactions and collective evaluations	negative assessment	Negative deviance	Rate-busting
	Positive assessment	Deviance admiration	appositive deviance

Source: (Heckert & Heckert, 2002)

Since the definition of the concept of moral license emphasizes the involvement in deviant behaviors without fear of being discredited, it refers in a way to deviant behaviors that are positively evaluated by the audience and social groups. Thus, deviant behaviors that may develop following the acquisition of a moral license will, according to Heckert and Heckert's typology (2002), be among the apposite deviance or deviance admiration behaviors.

Another typology developed by Robinson and Bennett (1995) distinguishes between deviant behavior and immoral behavior, as deviant behaviors are behaviors that violate organizational norms while immoral behaviors violates social rules and values. Thus, based on the fact that work-related deviant behaviors may include organizational deviant behaviors versus individual deviant behaviors, or based on the severity of deviant work behaviors that may include minor deviant behaviors versus major deviant behaviors, four types of deviant behaviors have been created. Property deviance, which include severe and related property deviant behaviors, include behaviors such as theft, sabotage, and false statements about working hours. Productive deviance behaviors that include partial and organizational-related deviant behaviors that include behaviors such as long rest periods and early withdrawal of the organization, loss of organizational resources, and deliberately slow work and loss of time. Personal aggression is serious and severe and person-related deviant behaviors that include behaviors such as bullying or sexual harassment, threatening colleagues, stealing from colleagues, and ultimately political deviance that involve minor deviation that targets a person and includes behaviors such as cheating, spreading rumors, blaming others, and destructive competition.

However, research in the field of moral licenses does not mention that moral licenses leads to the formation of what kind of deviant behavior; but since deviant behaviors are formed following positive and moral behaviors, this type of behavior can also be classified in the set of political behaviors. Political behavior refers to a set of behaviors that seek to influence others and protect one's own interests or collective interests by avoiding undesirable consequences (Moorhead & Griffen, 1995). Hence, in the moral license, individuals engage in deviant and immoral behaviors by resorting to moral license based on their past good behaviors, so that not only do they not lose their reputability, but also they

prevent from negative consequences of deviant behaviors, it can be considered as a kind of deviant political behavior.

Now that the place of deviant's subsequence of moral license has become somewhat clear in the literature on deviant behaviors, the key question is how, like what happens in moral license, a person can both accept and violate principle at the same time.

Spector & Fox (2002) argue that the positive and negative conditions of the work environment affect employees' emotional responses, thus positive emotions and feelings are related to extra-role behaviors and negative feelings and emotions are related to deviant and anti-production behaviors. Similarly, in another study, Spector and Fox (2005) suggest that employees may participate in organizational citizenship behaviors and deviant and anti-production behaviors as a way to deal with organizational injustice.

In summary, the research results show that both extra-role and deviant behaviors may occur simultaneously, which, according to psychological findings, the moral licensing theory is used to explain the positive relationship between extra-role behaviors and deviant and anti-productive behaviors. It is obvious that not all types of extra-role behaviors lead to deviant and anti-productive behaviors, but according to the moral license theory, people are able to obtain a moral license when those behaviors are morally admirable. Thus, extra-role behaviors, and in particular organizational citizenship behaviors, are considered admirable only if they are unpredictable, voluntary, and far from any expectation of compensation (Bar-Tal, Raviv & Leiser, 1980; Batson, 1987). In a study, Yam et al. (2017) showed that when employees feel outside force to engage in extra-role behaviors and organizational citizenship behaviors, it gives them a right to go beyond the role that psychologically have a greater sense of freedom and comfort to engage in deviant and anti-productive behaviors. Similarly, according to a study by Jack Welch and Suzy Welch (2008), employees who have go once voluntarily beyond their in-role responsibilities feel more comfortable with underemployment because they believe that going beyond in-role task in the past, keeps them in balance. Thus, it is obvious that employees who achieve more than their in-role achievements feel more comfortable with organizational breakdowns, such as being late for work, using personal organizational facilities, or incurring additional costs on cost report (Klotz & Bolino, 2013). Another study by Lin, Ma & Johnson (2016) found that although leaders' moral behaviors are highly desirable to their followers, they may pose a potential

challenge to their leaders and followers, according ego depletion theory when spiritual pressure increases and moral license through past behaviors increases, leaders may subsequently become involved in abusive behaviors toward their followers. Numerous studies have shown that moral decisions about consumer behavior, although the purchase of green and environmentally friendly products may have positive moral and social effects, but it also authorizes engagement in immoral and selfish behavior such as buying luxury product (Mazar & Zhong, 2010).

All results of these researches refer to the fact that people's behavior is not formed in a vacuum, but people decide and act according to their previous experiences or behaviors or their social and organizational status and position. This is true in a variety of areas, including extra-social behaviors, consumer behavior, and so on. All of this evidence suggests that individuals are trying to obtain a moral license as a way to maintain their credibility among others in a variety of ways, just to justify and absolve themselves of responsibility.

With these preliminaries in mind, predicting deviant behaviors through moral licenses will help to identify hidden motives for committing deviant behaviors that run counter to organizational norms that have been neglected by many managers and supervisors to date.

What is stated in the literature on moral license is as evidenced by research in this area, and based on the moral balance theory, people who have recently done good, desirable, and morally good deeds, or even decided to do good deeds, or the positive and moral work of the members of the group in which they are member, and even if there are conditions for committing deviant behaviors but they are not involved in those deviant behaviors, all of this causes a person to become less moral in future behaviors by relying on such behaviors and obtaining license from them (Effron & Conway, 2015). It should be noted that moral licensing includes three main and important components that is common denominator of all definitions of the moral licensing phenomenon: First, the sense of license requires an understanding this important issue that people are permitted to take an action or express a thought without fear of discrediting themselves. Second, morality in general depends on moral and human virtues, which relate to the challenges between "the way people tend to act" and "the way they should act." Accordingly, moral license makes people less likely to engage in moral behavior by providing evidence of their virtues. And in this regard, it

should be noted that any type of license cannot have the effects of a moral license. And third, the impact of moral license occurs when people feel comfortable doing something or expressing an attitude and have no guilt or apology (Effron & Conway, 2015). This study through examining the existing studies in this field and with an accurate and exploratory look seeks to fill the gap in this field and find the factors and resources that give the person a moral license to engage in deviant behaviors and also seeks to discover examples of behavioral deviations in the organization as the consequences of obtaining a moral license.

2.3. Summary

According to studies on the moral license phenomenon, it emphasizes the fact that this phenomenon occurs in the real world and is visible so that people are less inclined to do good deeds when they find evidence of their good deeds and virtues. Even when people need evidence of their virtues and good behaviors, they may gain such a license by planning and engaging in moral behaviors or misinterpreting their past behaviors. And moral license may even occur when people use their moral virtues to prove their immoral behavior. As noted in the research background, researchers have often identified past moral behaviors as the only reason for obtaining a moral license, while other factors, such as one's social and organizational position, being member of a specific groups can be considered as reasons for obtaining a moral license. On the other hand, researchers have stated the motivation and consequence of obtaining moral license are maintaining prestige and engaging in deviant behaviors, while it seems that the motives for obtaining moral license as well as negative consequences is much broader for organizations than it has been in previous research. In short, there are many ways in which a person can use it to justify immoral behavior and maintain his/her reputation in the organization. Identifying these factors and resources, as well as the consequences of this phenomenon in the organization, which is the main goal of this research, is of special importance for managers and experts in organizational behavior in the organization because By identifying the reasons for the formation of moral license as one of the hidden causes for anti-productive and deviant behaviors in the organization, can be helpful in finding solutions to deal with this phenomenon and its negative consequences.

Chapter three: Research Method

In this chapter the research methodology, research implementation steps, studied population, sampling method, tools and methods for data collection, validity and reliability, and data analysis and interpretation methods is first investigated. In doing scientific investigations, the researchers use different ways to answer the research questions and rejecting or accepting the hypothesis. The selection of which way is suitable for this particular research depends on the paradigm, orientation, and approach in which the research problem is shaped. So, first I handle the main framework of the research and then the research method is illustrated.

3.1. The paradigm of the research

Research paradigm is a set of beliefs, opinions and assumptions that lead to the creation and development of knowledge. Although this issue may seem a little bit hard and elusive, actually developing knowledge in a particular field is exactly what researchers do when conducting their research. When we talk about developing knowledge, we do not necessarily mean creating a new hypothesis or theory. In fact, answering a particular problem in a particular organization can be considered as a kind of developing knowledge. Hence, at each level of the investigation -whether the researcher is aware of this fact or not – some assumptions are made which may be related to the humanities and sciences, the facts that the researcher face with them in his research and the extent to which the values of the researcher affects his investigation. These assumptions inevitably show how the researcher has understood his / her research questions and how he / she forms the interpretation of his / her findings. A set of thoughtful and precise assumptions shapes the paradigm of the investigation.

According to the Sanders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016), there are four research paradigms including pragmatism, positivism, realism, and interpretivism. The paradigm governing this research is interpretivism, as the three elements of ontology, epistemology and methodology of this investigation are consistent with the paradigm of interpretivism.

Ontology answers the question of what is the nature of reality. Accordingly, this study seeks to discover the nature of social reality under the heading of moral licensing. Because in the qualitative method it is assumed that reality is subjective and multiple and is something that is perceived by the participants in the study and is made through (Creswell,

2002:30; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016), the nature of the moral license can provide evidence from different perspectives on the moral license from quotations, categories and themes consisting the words of participants, and also nature of the phenomenon of moral license can be discovered and described through close interaction and reciprocal discourse to reach semantic agreements between knowledgeable participants in the research.

The epistemological position in the interpretive paradigm which is more subjective, is the acceptance that knowledge is “always filtered through the lenses of language, gender, social class, race, and ethnicity” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 21), therefore tries to accept the world of others by understanding and sharing their experiences and opinions (Levers, 2013). In this way, knowledge related to moral licensing is obtained through the researcher's relationship with this phenomenon. The principle of theoretical saturation, coding, continuous adaptation, theoretical sampling, etc. are among the items that signify the dynamic interaction between the researcher and the issue (moral licensing). They also demonstrate that the researcher shapes the phenomenon and refines the notion while interacting with the theoretical background and the people (interviewees).

In methodology, the investigation process is completed based on the ontology and epistemology governing the research. The methodology governing this research has qualitative history. In the qualitative method, the researcher uses inductive logic and studies the situation in its context and also adopts an emerging plan. For this purpose, before generalizing, the researcher handle the details, characterizes the context of the study in detail, and constantly reviews and improves the study questions based on his experiences in the field of study. The methodological position of the interpretive paradigm in order to verify the validity of the illustration, it emphasizes that it is reasonable, meaning that the explanations seems correct in the opinion of those people who have been studied. Also, the respondents must be valid and there should be trustworthiness (Creswell, 2002). In this research, in order to verify the validity and its reasonable, tried to select trustworthy interviewees who have encountered and understood the moral license phenomenon in the context of social and organizational interactions.

3.2. Research approach

During history, different approaches have been used to shape knowledge. The most important of these approaches are the deductive, inductive and inductive-deductive

approach, which is a combination of the two. The question that comes to mind in this step is that why selecting the research approach is of a great importance. For answering this question, we can point to three reasons: (1) choosing the correct investigation approach assist the researcher make a more informed decision about his or her research design, which is more than just data collection techniques and data analysis processes. Generally speaking, the research plan demonstrates what, where and how the evidences should be gathered and interpreted in order to provide suitable answers to the research questions. (2) It also helps the researcher in selecting strategies for the investigation. (3) Finally, it enables the researcher to adjust his/her research plan with the existing limitations by considering diverse traditions in investigations (Sanders et al. 2016).

The approach of the present study is qualitative and inductive. Qualitative research is an attitude for exploring and perceiving the meanings that individuals or groups attribute to a social or human issue. The investigation process includes forming questions, collecting data usually in the normal situation of the participants in the study, analyzing data from specific to general issues and the researcher's interpretation of the meaning of the data. In research that follows the inductive approach, data collection and theory development are dealt with as the result of data analysis (Sanders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). Individuals act as social actors based on the meanings and interpretations they have of the world around them. Therefore, it is possible to perceive the phenomenon of moral license by examining how human beings make sense of the world around them, which is possible through qualitative research. Also, by collecting data from a few cases, general conclusions can be made about moral authorization in the study population, so this research has an inductive approach.

3.3. Research strategy

The main goal of selecting a research strategy is to accomplish the best research practices to deal with the research topic and answering the research questions. However, it is important to note that different strategies may need to be used for different research questions. Regarding research strategies, it is believed that there are various strategies for conducting a qualitative research. Some of these strategies are: grounded theory, narrative analysis, participatory observation and case study (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016). Grounded theory is the strategy that has been adopted for this study.

As Corbin and Strauss presented the outline of the Systematic plan in 1990 and in 1998 they worked on it. According to this plan, in order to analyze the collected qualitative data, it is necessary to go through three steps of "open, axial and selective coding" to finally provide a logical paradigm or an objective picture of the created theory. Nevertheless Glaser (2002) made an obvious criticism on the systematic plan and considered the emphasis on rules and procedures, as well as the use of a specific and predetermined framework as the weaknesses of this theory. He supposes that the theory should emerge from the data and not that the investigator has already examined the relationship between the categories in the form of axial coding, then search for categories that are consistent with this model (coding paradigm). Therefore, in the emerging plan, an initial diagram showing the relationships between the categories is not drawn.

As it mentioned, since it is believed that grounded theory transcends all descriptive methods because of its conceptualizations of social patterns (Glaser, 2002), and the phenomenon of moral license and its repercussions in the organization which is desirable for this investigation, the strategy of grounded theory is compatible with this study, furthermore it will benefit from the second approach (emerging approach) in order to reach its aims.

This is because that although this attitude is challenging, but the resulting modeling takes place in a very wide space, and this issue expands the researcher's perspective in order to analyze the data. This approach does not have any pre-determined assumptions in the grounded theory and it probes the main concerns of the participants and the ways to solve them in the field of study (Glaser & Holton, 2007). In this regard, Glaser (2002), in most of his writings, constantly refers to the term "main concern" of the participants, since grounded theory illustrates that how participants solve their main concern, while they may not be conceptually aware of it. As a result, in his view, in the grounded theory, inviting participants and examining the theory with them in order to check the validity of it is not correct.

3.4. Research evaluation criteria

Unlike quantitative investigations, qualitative researches do not have special test for checking the validity or reliability and in some cases, even the terms validity and reliability, which are common in quantitative research, are not used for qualitative researches,

therefore, to assess the quality in qualitative investigations, there are numerous possible strategies and criteria that can be used researches (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Marshall & Rossman, 1999).

The most famous and common way in this regard in qualitative research are the four criteria proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) entitled trustworthiness as an alternative to validity and reliability in qualitative research. Trustworthiness in qualitative investigations answers the question of whether the methods, approaches, and techniques used are related to each other and measure what you want to discover or not. These four trustworthiness criteria are as follows:

- **Credibility:** It means that what is mentioned in the findings and the outcomes of the research should be the same as what is in the responsive mind. To achieve this, Lincoln and Guba (1985), pointed too some issues such as long-term contact with the research environment, examining from diverse aspects, exchanging views with peers, adequacy of references, maintaining and swelling relationships with respondents to achieve what they really know and referring to the participants. In the present study, they referred to the participants again, on order to increase the credibility of the inquiry and some questions have been asked from the participants about the outcomes of the research. Attempts were also made to include people with different work backgrounds.

- **Transferability:** It means usability and the ability to generalize the results to other areas and fields. To obtain this, the investigator must characterize the conditions of the exploration, so after reading the outcomes of the research and given the illustrations provided by the researcher, the reader decides that the results of the study published in his community can also be used for him/her or not? For this purpose, the researcher must provide details and comprehensive descriptions of the context in which he or she studies the phenomenon. In the present study, in order to achieve the portability of the investigation, the researcher has given a detailed description of the research process from the sampling stage to the interpretation of information and has also provided a sample text of the interviews as examples in the research findings section.

- **Dependability:** It means the adequacy of the data analysis process and decision making practice. To achieve this goal, the researcher uses the guidance and supervision of expert professors throughout the data collection practice to verify the researcher's interpretations

as they emerge. In this exploration, in order to achieve reliability, the researcher has used the guidance and supervision of expert professors throughout the data collection process to confirm the researcher's interpretations.

- **Conformability:** Means the power of analysis and accuracy of data and the degree of their validation. Obtaining verifiability depends on assessing raw data, interpretations, recommendations and findings. In this regard, the investigator must try to not involve his/her pre assumptions in data collection and interpretation process as much as possible. In this filed, the researcher must demonstrates that his/her findings are based on data. In order to increase the verifiability of the research, the researcher tried to obtain verification through the detailed review and revision of the data, interpretations and findings of this study (Elliott & Lazenbatt, 2005).

According to Glaser, the source of trustworthiness in grounded theory is based on four criteria:

- **Fit:** This means that throughout the constant comparative process as concepts and patterns are created from the analysis of the data. Of course, in order to achieve fit, data should not be tensioned, so that the pre-existing and pre-intended categories become proportionate in line with an existing theory in the researcher's mind. The proportionality of the theory with the data must be with the real and non-imposed data, so the criterion of proportionality is observed only when direct categories are derived from the real data. Hence, in this inquiry, examples and evidences of interviews are presented in accordance with each category, which are described in detail in Chapter 4.

- **Relevance:** It is achieved when the investigator allows the emergence of core practices and issues. The researcher searches for the3 relevance in the data to explore the connection between them. As a result, the theory reflects what is really happening. Proportion and relevance allows the researcher to integrate the central category with other categories in line with a theory, so that the theory can illustrate most of the behavioral fluctuations in the reality. In order to meet the criteria of relevance and ensure the relevance of evidence and examples with coded data and emerging concepts and categories, using software, getting step-by-step feedback from each member of the research team and using quotations from the interviewees, all reflect the fact that the final emerged theory emulate the same things that had occurred in the data collecting practice and it has not been obtained by imitating

previous findings and patterns. Therefore, the realization of proportion and relevance made it possible for the categories, and especially the central category, to be well integrated with each other in line with the final theory, and the final theory could illustrate phenomenon of moral authorization as a deviant work behavior.

- **Work:** It means that the theory must be able to explain what had happened, predict what will take place and interpret what is occurring in reality or inquiry. Obtaining these current facts is achieved through systematic social research. In this exploration, an attempt has been made to be effective through different ways such as data collection and interviews after reaching theoretical saturation to ensure more richness of the obtained data, deep examination, of theoretical background and findings, frequent scrolls from code to concepts and categories and vice versa, and other actions performed and reported in this dissertation. These attempts were something to declare the effectiveness of the final theory and the model presented about the phenomenon and its related factors.

- **Modifiability:** The theory should be modifiable by more data or new signs. The importance of this criterion is that the theory, using continuous comparison, scrutinize anything that it can easily merge with. Therefore, all proportional signs are considered. The modifiability in this inquiry has been attained in two ways. On the other hand, during the practice of data analysis and substantive and theoretical coding (open, axial and selective) with continuous frequentations from the beginning of coding to the theoretical richness and the final emergence of theory and research model with novel data and signs, there has been the flexibility to continually refine the theory and its components. And on the other hand, although attempts have been made to make the final theory effective and relevant. According to the investigator, other notions and variables may emerge over time or the change of context and situation and internal and external factors and exhibit their effect on the studied phenomenon. Also, other subtle dimensions of the phenomenon may be studied and explored that can add something to the proposed model. While the previous theories and categories still have the power of explanation by making some (non-fundamental) corrections in the new model, so it can be said that the proposed model of this inquiry has the necessary flexibility in appropriate conditions to adjust and improve. Also, putting prejudices aside or preventing the intervention of the researcher's initial assumptions in data analysis and formulating the final theory is a criterion that the investigator should scrutinize

in all steps of the exploration. In this exploration, the researcher has tried to be far from any orientation. Generally speaking, in the present study, each of the aforementioned criteria were considered in order to obtain trust and validation in each stage of the research. Of course, the fulfillment of these criteria is largely hidden in the research process and by observing the research ethics and conscience of the researcher in order to try to emerge the theory from the data, instead of imposing it based on the previous desires, interests and mentality of each researcher, the mentioned criteria should be adhered as much as possible and the theory emerged from the data will be rise (Kerr, 2011).

3.5. The studied population

In order to determine the researched community, the scope of the research must first be determined. The scope of the present study has been selected from managers and employees of governmental organizations subdivision of ministries in Mashhad for two reasons: first that the phenomenon of moral license has not yet been examined in this field and second, due to the diverse and special conditions governing these organizations and the citizens' expectation from these organizations to obey the rules, regulations and ethics, any moral fall or violating from the laws and then justifying these matters by means of a moral license, can lead to a loss of public trust in these government and service organizations. Furthermore, selection of managers, according to their position and experience, they can better comment on the causes and consequences of the moral licensing phenomenon in their relevant organizations; also selection of employees, because of the close relationship with colleagues or even their own personal experiences in this field, it provided a better opportunity to discover the causes of the formation moral license phenomenon to access the goals of this research.

3.6. Sampling method and sample size

Due to the fact that the present study was conducted with a qualitative attitude, theoretical sampling was used to perform sampling. Theoretical sampling is the best way to create and develop a theory. In theoretical sampling, samples are chosen because of their ability to illuminate the aforementioned phenomenon. Theoretical sampling technique demonstrates that the researcher cannot determine the exact number of participants from the beginning, but at the end of the research, the number of participants is revealed. Theoretical sampling

is a kind of meaningful sampling that helps the researcher to create and probe theory or concepts whose theoretical connection with the developing theory has been verified. Regarding the theoretical sampling in the emerging attitude, Glaser (1978) confirms that the investigators must opt the individuals and groups themselves and perform sampling purposefully, as they are able to provide useful information in the field of their chosen subject (Glaser and Holton, 2007). Theoretical sampling continues until the categories reach theoretical saturation. Theoretical saturation is the stage at which new data on categories do not emerge. In meaningful sampling, the general criteria for selecting study participants are as follows:

Being pivotal: Do the identified individuals have the essential qualifications (knowledge, skills, experience, expertise, involvement in the subject matter) to participate in data collection?

Recognition by others: Recognition by others: Have these individuals been identified by others as having had significant experience and conflict with the phenomenon in recent years?

Theoretical perception of the subject: Do these people have a good understanding of some aspects of the emerging theory? For instance, have they played a greater role in shaping some of the code, notions, and categories produced?

Diversity: Do the selected individuals have diverse experiences and backgrounds, as well as necessary education, in order to be able to study the phenomenon from different aspects?

Consent to participate: do the selected participants have suitable motivation for participating in the study? (Flint, 1999).

In this study, an attempt was made to select the most expert people available in this field based on the above criteria as much as possible in selecting experts. Also, in accordance with the objectives of the research, the following criteria were considered in selecting the participating experts:

- Continuous experience of the studied phenomenon: Managers and employees were opted who had the experience of facing with the moral licensing phenomenon in such a way that they either committed it themselves or their colleagues engaged in behaviors beyond organizational principles and norms by resorting to the ethical licenses they achieved.

- Having at least a bachelor's degree
- Having at least 5 years of work experience and presence in the environment of governmental organizations (managers and employees who have more working experience, have a better perception of the ethical license phenomenon and its causes and during this time they are better acquainted with the different types of these behaviors in the respective organization. Secondly, these people are completely aware of the atmosphere of the organization as well as its culture, so they can better comment on the phenomenon compared to those who have lower experience).

By considering these criteria, sampling of the study population was done. The first three exploratory interviews were conducted just to familiarize the investigator with the attitude of questioning and gaining the essential feedback in order to design the questions in a suitable way. Then, for about two months, 17 more interviews continued until the categories reached theoretical saturation; although a total of 20 interviews were conducted, data from 17 interviews were used and it was a step that no other data related to the categories came in to view and the relationships between the categories were established and verified. It is noteworthy that regarding the community of this study, which is managers and the employees of public organizations in Mashhad, it has been tried to select people from diverse organizations. In this way, the obtained data will be thorough and comprehensive.

	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Job</i>	<i>Years of work experience</i>
1	Male	Masters	Office of the head and public relations	26
2	Male	Masters	Director of Administrative Development and Transformation	25
3	Male	Bachelor	Deputy human resource development and management	27
4	Male	Masters	Head of human resource development group	23
5	Male	Masters	National planning expert	15
6	Male	Ph.D.	Head of contractors and consultants group	18
7	Male	Bachelor	Deputy program and budget coordinator	32
8	Male	Masters	Management of education and research, development and foresight	28
9	Male	Bachelor	Head of research and foresight group	25
10	Male	Bachelor	Head of education and empowerment	26

Table			group		3.1.
	11	Male	Masters	Head office renovation and performance management	18
	12	Male	Masters	Head of strategic planning and productivity	19
	13	Male	Ph.D.	The head office of the organization and improving methods	15
	14	Male	Masters	Head of the department of public service and technical monitoring	21
	15	Female	Masters	Head of Jobs Engineering Department	13
	16	Female	Masters	Head of recruitment office	17
	17	Female	Bachelor	Program and budget integration expert	10
			Characteristics of interviewees		

3.7. Method and tool of data collection and analysis

Undoubtedly, one of the qualitative methods that is widely used in organizational research is interviewing. The interview is an attitude that its goals is to assemble descriptions about the real world of the interviewee about the interpretation of the meaning of the phenomenon. In this study, data collection was performed using semi-structured interviews because in grounded theory method, interviews are the most desirable type of data (Glaser & Holton, 2007). Hence, semi-structured face-to-face interviews are used because the

purpose of this type of interview is to achieve in-depth information from the interviewee about the subject. On the other hand, since the goal of this study is to achieve a grounded theory, in other words, it is a search for the theory that is in the text of the interview notes, not a predetermined theory, hence, recognizing codes, understanding notions and preparing theory are intertwined parts of the analysis process and are extracted from the data almost without the use of literature and through open, selective or axial encryption. The researcher tried to reveal the messages hidden in the written text of the interview as much as possible. In order to achieve this goal, the text of the interview must be written completely and in detail. The main questions asked, the reminders, the excavations that the interviewer did and the supplementary questions must be mentioned in order to gain a full perception of what the interviewees have declared (Gillham, 2000).

Therefore, for the interpretive analysis of the texts, the following steps have been taken:

1. First, the interviews were recorded with the consent of the interviewees.
2. Then, all the recordings were transcribed. On average, each interview lasted about 60 to 80 minutes and the total number of page resulting from transcribed was about 27 pages.
3. In each text, basic statements were highlighted. Repetitive sayings, obiter dictum and other irrelevant data were also disregarded.
4. Some similar statements that seemed to raise a new point were identified.
5. When all the texts were reviewed, I went back to the text and examined them in order to make sure that I did not ignore to highlight the important points. I also asked another person to mark the collection of the texts separately. Then I compared what he had marked with my highlights and changed the necessary items.
6. I went back to the initial text and by examining the highlighted points, tried to extract a set of categories from the answers given to each question and attribute simple titles to them. A large number of categories were extracted from the first texts, but the number of extracted codes gradually diminished from later texts; since people pointed to similar items.
7. In this stage, the list of the codes was checked. Some of the items were combined, and some of the notes were eliminated because they were not appropriate or necessary. In this stage, two PhD students were asked to review the categorization system for more certainty.
8. After determining the final categorization system, the texts were analyzed again and each basic statement identified was compared with the list of codes. A question mark was put in

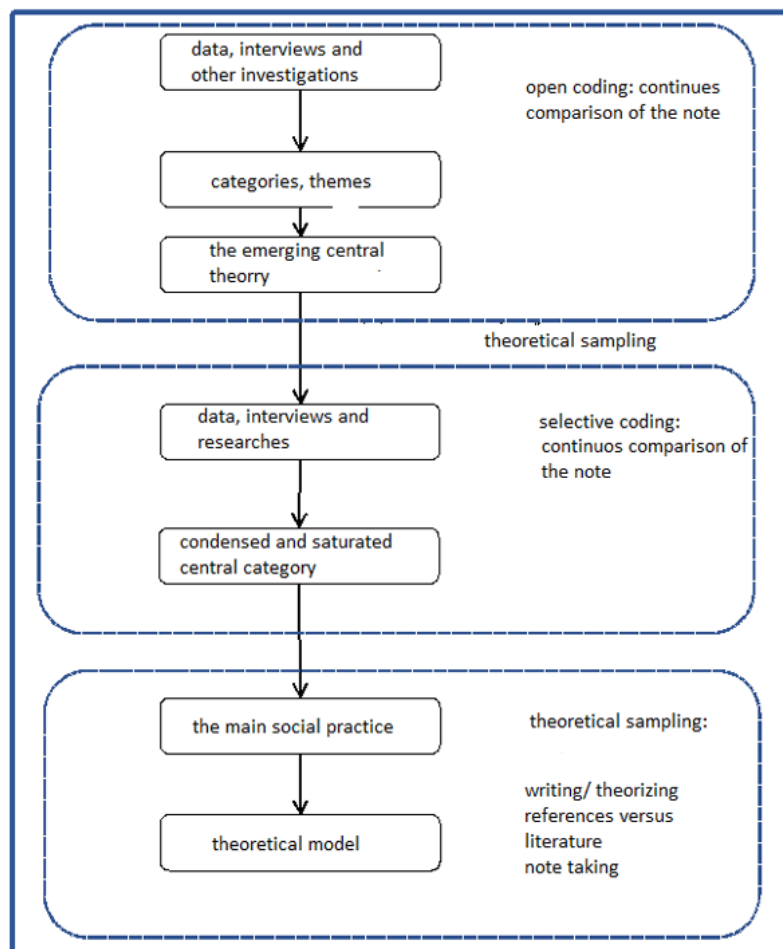
front of the statements that could not be easily related to any category. In some cases, the names have been altered in the titles of the categories or new categories have been added to fit better with the statements and can consist of statements that there is no doubt about them or they are not considered as original answers.

9. The categories were entered into the analysis table.

Beside data analysis manually, MAXQDA software was used for coding and data analysis. MAXQDA software is used in various approaches to qualitative research, including grounded theory. The use of software to encode qualitative data allows researchers to simultaneously access codes, coded parts, and interviews. Therefore, it reduces the errors of the manual method considerably.

In the following, interviews which were coded using the MAXQDA software and based on the emerging approach, were analyzed in the grounded theory. In this data analysis approach, 3 main coding steps are done. Figure 3.1 summarizes these three main steps, which are described in detail below and during the research process. Although, the details of the following steps are followed in practice in the fourth chapter to gain a better perception of this practice.

Figure 3.1. The process of grounded theory with emerging approach



Source: (Glaser & Holton, 2007)

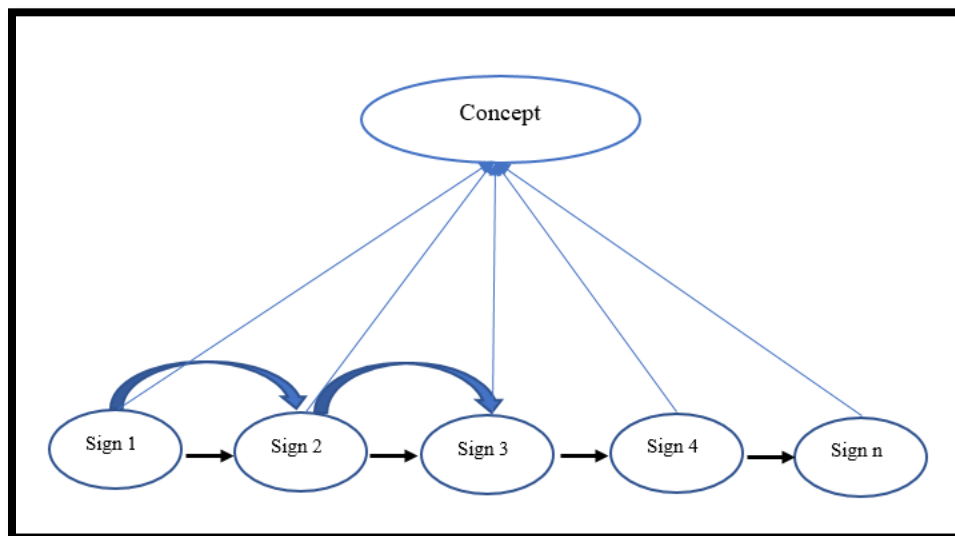
3.8. Coding practice in emerging attitude

The main relationship between data and theory is a conceptual code. Coding, by breaking data, moves the researcher from the experimental level so that he or she arranges data in groups as codes that will become theory. Coding for conceptual ideas is a safe and confident way that releases the investigator from the empirical bond of data and takes him/her beyond the empirical nature of them (Glaser, 1978). Breaking data helps the researcher to (1) come back, (2) review the not accumulated elements and (3) Conceptualize these elements in a way that transcends them from a particular situation or interview in which they are spotted (Locke, 2001). From the Glaser and Strauss point of view (1967), basically there are two codes: 1) real codes, 2) theoretical codes.

Real codes conceive the true essence of the research space, while theoretical codes conceptualize how possible communication between codes can be integrated into a solitary theory. Coding in grounded theory depends on the notion-sign model. In such a way that this model establishes the necessary link between the data and the concept (Glaser, 1978).

Figure 2.3 demonstrates this model:

Figure 3.2. The Glaser's notion-sign model in the emerging approach



Source: (Glaser, 1978)

The notion-sign model in the emerging attitude is based on the continuous comparison method. In the emerging approach, the continuous comparison method deals with 3 kinds of comparison: 1. Signs are compared to signs to match the signs and their changing circumstances. These things are created by notions.

2. Then the signs are compared with more signs to produce new theoretical features of the concept as well as more assumptions.

3. Finally, notions compare with concepts.

Glaser (1978), in connection with the practice of coding and generating notions, explicitly declares that the focus of grounded theory is determining concepts, not defining notions. He believes that we define a concept by creating a notion which is applied to the signs. In fact, we are not looking for defining a concept, but we define a concept with the characteristics that the signs remind us of. In other words, when we conduct coding and naming practice, we should not try to define that concept, rather the characteristics of the signs which are applied to this concept, affirm and illustrate this concept to us. Hence, by changing the characteristics which exist in signs, we can easily characterize a notion, but we cannot alter its definition. In fact, in notion-sign model, when we come to a concept from several signs, we do not try to define a concept, but we describe a notion by paying attention to the characteristics in the signs. So, the signs are interchangeable. As the coding process in the data goes on, notions become more abstract and the categories emerge. Glaser urges researchers who are developing categories to provide names that are imaginative (Locke, 2001). Therefore, according to the emerging theory, when we encode data and allocate a name to them, we should not try to define that word or phrase codes, concepts and categories, since we are not looking for defining concepts, but for determining notions through its signs. Generally, table 3-2 demonstrates that when naming codes, categories and notions, we should not seek to define our chosen name or proposition; rather, the subset symbols of each code will define that concept for us.

Table 3.2. The basis for choosing a word or statement for codes, notions and categories in the emerging method

The basis for choosing a statement for coding		The Glaser's approach
Defining concept	The researcher's attempt to define a word or statement that is assigned to a code, concept or category.	disagree
Determining concept	The investigator's reference to the signs that are attributed in the data to the chosen word or proposition	agree

Source: (Locke, 2001)

In the following, Glaser characterizes the two main coding processes as: (1) real coding (which includes open coding and selective coding), (2) theoretical coding. Generally, the Glaserian or emergent approach with three main coding steps under the headings of open coding, selective coding, and theoretical coding directs the researcher to present a data-based theory and since in this exploration, by using the guidelines of the emerging approach, the researcher has taken coding steps to achieve the grounded theory, consequently, each of these steps will be described in detail in the following:

3.8.1. First step: Open coding

In open coding, the goal of analysts is to create an emerging set of concepts and categories. In this practice, they code the data in any way possible. In other words, data are handled in an open method. The emerging attitude designates diverse rules for open coding method which includes:

1. The first rule is to ask a set of questions about data. For open coding, Glaser presents neutral, generative questions that facilitate the interpretation process during continuous comparisons (Locke, 2001). These questions are: (1) what is the subject of this data? (2) What category does this event represent? Of course, this is the short form of this question. The more comprehensive form is as follows: Which category, what feature of it or which part of the emerging theory does this event represent? (3) What is actually occurring in

data? In his opinion, these three categories of questions maintain the theoretical sensitivity and transcendence of the investigator when analyzing, collecting and coding data.

2. The second rule is to analyze the data line by line. Although this issue can be somewhat tedious, it becomes faster and easier as the code appears and becomes saturated. This is necessary in order to achieve a complete theoretical coverage that is completely fundamental. He considers data analysis with a general and overview method, as something false and argues that this approach interprets beyond the details and creates the feeling that many things have been ignored. This is while the line-by-line approach minimizes the possibility of missing important categories, hence creates a rich and dense theory and giving the investigator a feeling that there is nothing left (Glaser, 1978). Line by line data examination helps the researcher engages with his/her data and begins the naming activity by writing temporary names for each piece of data in the margins of their data documentation (Locke, 2001). Assigning meanings to the line-by-line basis guarantees that the data has been evaluated in great detail. This issue also prevents the assignment of meanings in general.

3. The researcher should conduct his/her coding based on the third rule. Meanwhile, the researcher's preoccupation and intellectual traffic tempt him to hire a coder. This issue is not effective for grounded theory for several reasons.

4. The forth critical rule is to stop coding for writing ideas.

5. The fifth rule is directly related to the theoretical sampling. In the initial coding as well as in the sampling and in the next step in creating the key variables and their characteristics, the researcher must remain within the realm of real space and field of study.

6. Finally given to the sixth rule, the investigator should not suppose the analytical relationship between any hidden variable until the emergence of the relationship between them. These variables are like: age, gender, race, social class, complexion, etc. They will not necessarily be a feature of the study process until they will be explored. In other words, the researcher should not perceive a relationship between these variables until the relationship between them emerges from the heart of the data. In fact, in most of the studies that their outcomes are determined before, these characteristics are taken into account regardless of the data. Glaser declares that these variables are of a less importance and they are not related to the process studies (Glaser, 1978).

According to the emerging approach, the open coding continues until the effects of the emergence of the core category are plotted, so, in the next step, i.e. the selected coding stage, the coding will be guided based on the central category. As the creation of a theory, occurs around a central category. A central category is a notion that illustrates how participants address their core concerns about the issues raised by the investigator.

Therefore, in this phase and according to the description provided, once a text of interview is implemented, it is codified line by line using open coding. Line by line investigation of data enables researchers to organize their data so as to be able to investigate them line by line, to match concepts to the observed data and phenomenon and to write down provisional names in the margin of each text (Locke, 2001).

In this way, not only can the researchers make sure that all data are investigated in details but also they can avoid vague allocation of meaning. Accordingly, I first attempted to elicit the main sentences from the texts of the interviews and then I highlighted the basic concepts in each text. In other words, I coded the material sentence-by-sentence. For instance from this verbal sign *“Sometimes there are rules and regulations which influence on the views of people so moral licensing which has roots in views shapes and acts based on them. Even orientation towards rules as a part of culture can lead to shaping of such licenses but it does not mean they are issued by law. No! But since in some cases no legal prohibition is considered or due to the silence or ambiguity of the law, they will emerge”* [interviewee 6] two primary codes, the *“possibility of various understandings of the rules”* and the *“absence of defined rules in some cases”*, were obtained.

Also from this verbal sign *“sorrowfully, in our organizations, the rules are not established expertly and the reasons behind their shaping are weak and contradictory, for example, if you listen to speeches during public meetings of the parliament you soon come to this conclusion that the rules are being laid down and approved on an improper base. The result is that there are many various contradictory and vague rules in our organizations and every one can interpret them according to their own tastes. I as a worker can find advantages from a rule in such a messy condition and if a rule is not in my favor I automatically replace it with another rule in my favor. This case is especially true about the rules related to the budget”* [interviewee 12] three primary codes such as *“improper*

rules”, “diversity of the rules and regulation” and “contradictory rules in some cases” were elicited (c.f. table 3-3).

Another verbal sign was: “sometimes some rules and acts are approved but there is no possibility to bring them into action. In such a situation we have no tendency to observe them. On the other hand, if this problem is not going to be solved we are forced to find a way to circumvent the approved rules. Soon such a way will turn into a culture or a value in the organization which, in turn, will lead to corruption and deviations” [interviewee 9], three primary codes “improper context to execute the rules”, “cursory rules” as well as “Inefficiency of the rules” were elicited (c.f. table 3-3). Open coding phase finishes with the formation of core category (Glaser, Holton, 2007).

3.8.1.1. Core category of the research as a main social -psychological process

As it was said before, core category is formed in the process of open coding. In fact, core category shows the real opinion of interviewees on a research problem. In the present study, judgments and analysis of the participants on the core category is shaped according to as below criteria:

- Core category should be central: core category has an important and effective role in changing behavioral patterns.
- It should be observed persistently and frequently in the data.
- Core category should have an easy and a significant relationship with other categories. There should be no compulsion in building such a relationship.
- It should have a transparent and noticeable reasons for the main theory.
- Core category must have clear and significant reasons for the main theory.
- It should lead to a noticeable end, that is, it should help researchers through its power of clarification come to final conclusion from analysis of those processes on which they have worked instead putting them in a dead-end.
- It should change easily in line with other variables.
- It is a part of a problem while helping researchers solve that problem (Glaser, 1978).

In this regard, in our study, given above criteria and emergent approach, the effects of the core category after coding of the forth interview were emerged so that the researcher named the core category as **Voluntary deviation from self-control**. Glaser (1978) emphasized strongly that naming core category in other phases of coding may change since a researcher

may understand core category completely but he may not be able to conceptualize it properly. In this step, a researcher should not be concerned but it is better to choose a label even a weak one so as to proceed research till he finds a better label. Core category which in fact shows main axis and the main concern of participants is considered as the central axis for a research and a tool for data gathering in next steps so that it describes this important point that how participants can solve their main concern.

As we said above, the point of importance in emergent approach and in the grounded theory is changing name of a core category while coding with the aim of making more appropriateness among categories and this research is no exception to this principle.

Voluntary deviation from self-control investigates conditions under which individuals feel more comfort to show deviant behaviors and voluntarily engage to deviant behavior. Considering consequences of deviant behaviors, this category is of great importance in organizations.

One more point is that if the core category of the research is going to be process-based, it will be a basic social process. By process I mean a phenomenon that occurs during time and makes changes. Such changes during time create a breaking point and show a kind of time sequence in them. Thus, a core category is considered as a process when it can make changes during time and time dimension of it should be understandable (Glaser, 1978).

The core category in the present research is considered as basic social process because indicates a time sequence because there is breaking between the basic category and other categories in terms of time consequences.

According to Glaser, there are two basic social processes:

1. Basic social psychological process
2. Basic social structural process.

Basic social psychological process is related to psychological domain like character and basic social structural process is related to structural domains such as bureaucratizing, DE concentrating and etc. (Glaser, 1978). Moreover, according to classification by Hernandez (2010), grounded theory has been classified in two groups: static grounded theory and process grounded theory. If the core category obtained from data analysis is a process it is called the process grounded theory. According to these classifications the core category of the present research is a basic social psychological process.

3.8.2. Second step: selective coding

The process of selective coding is also similar as the open coding process and the investigator takes out notions and the categories of the inquiry according to the six aforementioned rules and by using the continuous comparison. The only difference at this stage is that the coding is devised around the central category and based on it. It means that the researcher conducts coding around the central category and directs the coding process based on it.

In this phase, selective coding starts with the core category obtained from the previous phase. In my study, after both open and selective coding, a total number of 119 codes were elicited which are presented briefly in table 3-3. Once the codes were elicited, some codes were integrated due to similarities between them. Finally, 63 secondary codes were elicited (c.f. table 4-1). The secondary codes which indicated a common and shared concept were put together and built classes. In this phase, I tried to choose an appropriate name for the formed classes in a way that it could represent all secondary codes in one class. Finally, 63 codes in the form of 14 classes were classified in (table 4-1) which in chapter 4 has been presented. For example, as it can be seen from table 3-3, primary codes like “*possibility of various understandings of the rules*” and “*absence of defined rules in some cases*” were classified in sets of secondary codes like “*ambiguity of the law*” and “*silence of the law in some cases*”. These secondary codes alongside other codes such as “*inflation of the rules*”, “*contradiction of the rules in some cases*” as well as “*improper context to execute the rules*” made a class called “*inefficiency of the rules*”.

Table 3.3. An example of processes of open, selective and theoretical coding (organizational factors)

Theoretical coding	Open and Selective Coding			
Category	Class	Secondary code	Primary code	Some Illustrative examples
Causes	Rules and regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ambiguity of the rules - Silence of the law in some cases - Inflation of the rules - Contradiction in rules in some cases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Various understandings of the rules - The absence of defined rules 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sometimes there are rules and regulations which influence on the views of people so moral licensing which has roots in views shapes and acts based on them. Even orientation towards rules as a part of culture can lead to shaping of such licenses but it does not mean they are issued by law. No! But since in some cases no legal prohibition is considered or due to the silence of the rules or ambiguity of the rules, they will emerge.
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improper rules - Diversity of the rules and regulations - Contradictory rules in some cases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sorrowfully, in our organizations, the rules are not established expertly and the reasons behind their shaping are weak and contradictory, for example, if you listen to speeches during public meetings of the parliament you soon come to this conclusion that the rules are being laid down and approved on an improper base. The result is that there are many various contradictory and vague rules in our organizations and every one can interpret them according to their own tastes. I as a worker can find advantages from a rule in such a messy condition and if a rule is not in my favor I automatically replace it with another rule in my favor. This case is especially true about the rules related to the budget
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - lack of appropriate conditions to execute the rules 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improper context to execute the rules - Cursory rules - Inefficiency of the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sometimes some rules are approved but there is no possibility to bring them into action. In such a situation we cannot enforce the law. On the other hand, if this problem is not going to be solved we are forced to find a way to circumvent the approved rules. Soon such a way will turn into a culture or a value in the

		and the regulations	rules	organization which, in turn, will lead to corruption and deviations - On the other hands, sometimes our laws are decorative and we cannot act according to the laws and rules, therefore is acted on the same process that is embedded in the organization.
--	--	---------------------	-------	--

Continues Table 3.3. An example of processes of open, selective and theoretical coding (culture and workplace)

Theoretical coding	Open and selective coding			
Category	Class	Secondary code	Primary code	Some Illustrative examples
Requirements	Organismal culture and workplace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To be nonchalant about corruption or obscene behavior - Organizational silence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To ignore corruption of coworkers which spreads obscene behavior over time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Repetition of a behavior over and over, overpasses obscenity of a behavior like when we are suggested not to spread depravity but we ignore and we have no sensitivity about it and after a while we become part of the corrupts and this is what transformation is all about, gradually a small movement like the movement of the earth that moves all day long, and we do not understand why it happens because it is constantly constant and uniform but great by amount! We forget some behaviors are bad little by little. like a bicycle, when you go downhill getting kicked makes you realize that you are riding a bicycle, but if you do not pedal, you will forget that you are riding a bicycle and you will fall asleep. The same is true in organizations, some forget why and for what purpose they entered the organization.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To be nonchalant about faults - To be silent on fault 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dominant organizational culture is very effective in this case. For instance when dominant culture is silent on negligence, other show no care and are nonchalant about behaviors of their coworkers because such behaviors have no harm against them, they suffice to their own rights and have no attention to other's rights, all of such instances can influence on moral licensing
		- Changing values to anti-values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To accord value to faults and negligence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nowadays, the situation in government organizations has become such that if someone does his job and does not make a less effort, he is considered a loser because he sees his colleague shirks his work, eats breakfast before starting the work and etc. but he gets the same amount of salary, advantages, benefits
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To accord value to anti-value behaviors - Priority of organization unwritten principles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication is so extensive and effective that if an employee cannot reach his goal through my help, he will do his job through another communication channel. In this situation, I, as Mr. ..., will be known as a serious and arrogant person who is not able to serve others. But legally, I should be appreciated for my fair behavior. Sorrowfully, (since legal and correct behaviors sometimes are considered as anti-value because of the dominant atmosphere on the organization) my behavior is considered as an anti-value and my colleges may keep themselves aloof from me. But if I did the wrong behavior and took the wrong decision I would be appreciated: when in rom do as romans do. If I want to continue my activities in this organization I must behave according to those unwritten principles that have become values over time.

In the next phase and after substantive (open and selective) coding, theoretical coding is performed. As we said above, it is possible to investigate relationship between substantive codes in theoretical coding so as to integrate them as a given hypothesis.

3.8.3. Third step: theoretical coding

This step of coding makes reference to the integration of categories by a communication pattern. In fact, this stage of coding assist the researcher to approach thinking about categories that may lead to a wide range of mental possibilities and to think analytically about possible connections between categories (Locke, 2001). Hence, theoretical codes are abstract codes that incorporate the resulting categories into one theory (Glaser & Holton, 2005). They take out like real codes (derived from an open, selective coding process) and are spontaneous, examining and connecting fragmented stories. So real codes would be empty abstractions without theoretical codes. Theoretical coding in creating a new link that connects ideas is what the "new" and "original" theory is about (Glaser, 1978). Glaser and Holton declares that: Theoretical codes present a comprehensive realm, broad images and a new perspective. These codes allow the researcher to keep up a conceptual level when writing concepts and the relationship between them.

In this regard, in the Glaser's emerging approach, he refers to the coding families, in order to help the practice of combining and organizing categories in the theoretical coding stage. In fact, in a book he published in 1978, he introduced 18 examples of "coding families", in other words, 18 families of theoretical codes were introduced as models for combining real codes. He declares that these 18 families are not unique to each other, but they overlap significantly. One family can also strengthen another family and create another one. Some of them are several ways to utter one thing. But it is noteworthy that in each of the coding families, Glaser refers only to a set of words without providing a clear schematic pattern; each of which can guide the integration of real code. In other words, he refers to each of the "coding families" without setting out how the words are connected, leaving the investigator free to integrate the codes himself. For instance, 4 example of coding families are:

1. A family of 6 Cs: A collection of words related to causes, consequences, conditions, contexts, circumstances and other related factors.
2. Grade family: A group of words related to the first degree of an adjective or a quality: such as rank, level, spectrum, etc.

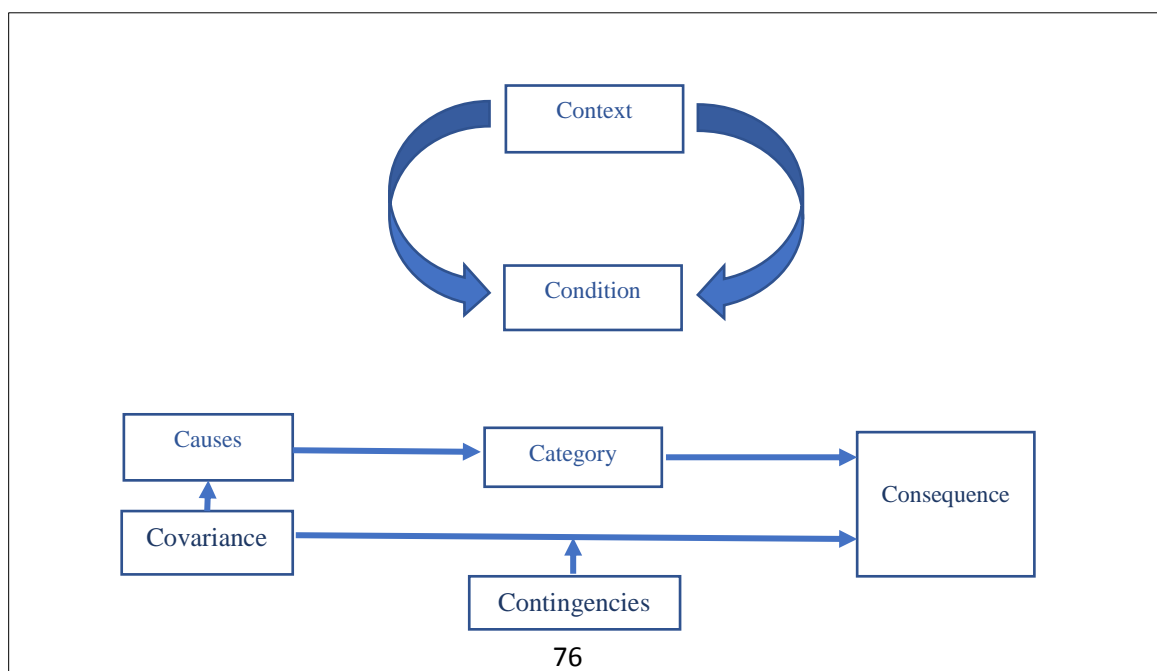
3. Process family: a set of words that refer to processes; Such as stages, phases, chains, sequences, and so on.

4. Cultural family: This family includes a set of words that refer to cultural phenomena; for example: social norms, social values, social beliefs, etc.

Of course, Glaser does not limit himself to these 18 theoretical codes in his later studies, but in his later writings, he refers to other examples of theoretical codes, each of which opens new windows in the mind of the investigator. This issue allows him to combine his categories with a more developed perspective in the third step of the research to devise a data-based theory.

Therefore, the last phase of the process of coding following core coding is theoretical coding. Theoretical codes, in order to integrate a theory by data-driven theorizing method, try to create conceptualization and possible relations between real codes. Theoretical coding means that the researcher applies a theoretical model to the data. As I mentioned and according to Glaser's approach with emergent approach, there are different ways to show the relationship between concepts and categories based on core category. In this study, six Cs family was used due to its ability to integrate concepts and categories in the best possible way. In this case, the codes obtained from the phase of substantive coding were integrated based on six Cs family. Figure 3.3 shows elements of six Cs family in Glaser's approach.

Figure 3.3. Six Cs family in Glaser's approach



Source: (Glaser, 1978)

- 1) The first C is causes which refers to causes or reasons. In fact, it is a description for causes of occurrence of core category in the study.
- 2) The second C is covariance. It refers to the set of factors which have correlation with causes of the basic process of grounded theory so that it can influence on the basic causes in a way that those causes may change.
- 3) The third C is contingencies which refers to factors mediating the relationship among categories.
- 4) The forth C is condition which introduces mediator variables between the main factors and consequences and conveys the effects of the core category to consequences.
- 5) The fifth C is consequences which refers to the consequences of core category.
- 6) The sixth C is context which refers to the context of an environment in which the study is done (Kan & Parry, 2004).

In Glaser's approach with emergent approach, a great emphasis has been put on this point that data integration should be done with attention to conceptual taste. Thus, in this research, categories obtained from previous phases were integrated regarding core category and six Cs family. Therefore, 14 concepts identified were classified in 6 main categories and one main core category which formed the final model of the present research. In the example mentioned here, "*inefficiency of the rules*" was considered as "*causes correlated with the basic process*". Other categories were classified in other 5 remaining Cs.

In this section, I briefly report the process of data collection, summarization, classification, coding process and analysis of data obtained from interviews. All these process allow me to discover meaning, conceptualization as well as categorization of the understudied subject (here moral licensing) which is considered as a strategy of Grounded theory. In the next chapter, each category and in totally, findings have been explained in detail.

Chapter Four: Findings

In this chapter, open, selective and theoretical coding processes, which were discussed in detail in the previous chapter, were used to present the research findings. Undoubtedly all these steps, allows me to discover meaning, conceptualization as well as categorization of the understudied subject (here moral licensing) which is considered as a strategy of Grounded theory. Thus, in this chapter, I will clarify and investigate the concept of moral licensing according to responses of the participants, evidences and examples provided by them. In addition, I will try to present the visual pattern of the survey.

4.1. Categories and relationships

In the following I will explain each element (category) from the selective phase which help to the better understanding of selective extracted codes. Therefore, more details and verbal signs of the interviews will be presented.

4.1.1. Characteristics of moral licensing

Initially, it was necessary to examine the characteristics of the phenomenon of moral licensing, so in this section, an attempt was made to extract and present the characteristics that have been discussed from the perspective of the interviewees in relation to moral licensing.

- Cognitive bias (Logical fallacy) and deviation from right judgment

The first and the most important characteristic of moral licensing is tendency of individuals to think in a way by which they make irrational judgment. Various factors influence on such a tendency, as an example: limitations of mind. But in moral licensing some factors such as motivations, individual preferences, emotions as well as social pressures can be effective since an individual has such biased tendencies consciously. In this regard, one of the interviewees [5] in our study said: *“certain rules and regulations have been considered in organizational recruitment and all of qualified applicants are equal but the fact shows that some people without enough qualification to fill the vacancies are recruited for several reasons like being introduced by authorities. I as a human resources officer allow myself to recruit them alongside those qualifies ones. For this aim I should pretend that all of them had been qualified. In this condition, I will not lose my face as a person who has used patronage for recruitment of new forces. In addition, organization will not be looked as one*

which had no fair in recruitment”. Another interviewee [9] said that *“There are many factors that keep us from making true judgments, especially when it comes to personal benefits and preferences. A small example that I can give you as an example, when I do remote work and I have to do my responsibility with personal equipment and/or cost, then, according to the justifications that I fully know are illogical, if I do less, it is acceptable for me completely and also because somehow the false consensus effect forms in my mind, it makes me think that others in particular agree with my mental justification”.*

Another interviewee [2] believed: *“there are many factors that dispossess us of a correct judgment especially when personal profit and benefit have been raised. I can tell you about a small instance. While during teleworking I do firm's tasks by my personal equipment and in fact my personal expense, beside accounts that I know it has a complete utilitarian aspect and no logic is behind it, if I don't do my best and put less attention on work, it will be accountable for me”.*

These evidences clearly indicate influential factors like motivations and individual preferences and emotions and or social pressures to direct logical sophism and voluntary deviance from self-control.

- Justifications of faults and deviations

Another characteristics of moral licensing is justification of deviant behaviors. It can be told that justification, here, means to show a wrong behavior or action as a right or reasonable one. In this case, an individual may try to justify his wrong and deviant behaviors and actions as right ones using irrelevant analogy because it is in his favor to do so.

In this regard, one of the interviewees [16] told: *“for example when I have a deviant behavior in organization I find a reason for it in my mind. However, my behavior is not proper but since it is popular I justify it. Justification of deviant behaviors will, in turn, lead to formation of wrong cultures in society, including: getting money from the rich (extortion) by force and giving it to the poor may become a value or a part of beliefs and may be popular over time. In some other organizations, it can be seen that at first, such deviant behaviors are accepted due to the same concept (justification) but in reality, wrong*

is wrong however you justify it! Anyway, due to prevalence or perceived examples, individuals may accept that wrong behavior while they know it is wrong in nature”.

Another interviewee [3] said that: *“I point at a small instance that might happen to all of us. We stopped behind red light. Suddenly, all cars start to move and we also move while light is still red. When we are asked why? We say others went and I also went. In organizations are the same, all of these are because, we don't like to accept our mistakes and to be condemned, thus we seek to account our mistakes by citing various factors such as other's behavior that these accounts are with direction and sophism”.*

So, individuals in moral license (voluntary deviance from self-control) usually try to mask and account their mistakes through various factors.

- Maintenance of reliability of individuals

In moral licensing, one who has acquired reliability and advantages at present or in future has superiority over those who have not. In these conditions, deviant behavior of him is acceptable while his reliability will not be ruined.

In this case, one of the interviewees [1] told: *“in fact, what happens in moral licensing can be considered as an advantage. Employees in organizations may use organizational citizenship as a tool to add to their reliability. The level punishment and reward may make the situation worse. Regretfully some professions give this chance to employees to add to their reliability. Among them are relationship with authorities or managerial professions so that manager may misuse their advantages on the pretext of attempting to achieve organizational goals. In this condition, with attention to advantages one has acquired, other may overlook his wrong behaviors. In fact, his advantages make him different from others so that he can show deviant behaviors while his reliability is not going to be threatened. License, reliability and credential (a qualification, achievement, quality, or aspect of a person's background, especially when used to indicate their suitability for something. Even you may use it to lie so as to obtain organizational advantage) are hierarchy of moral licensing so that a manager may has this advantage to be late to work. Over time, it may change into a license and this license, in turn, may appear as a legal right of the manager”.*

According to another interviewee [13]: *“when a mistake happens, we try to whitewash and mask the mistake so that our credit and prestige won't be endangered through any pretext – that to some extent is accountable – and what pretext is better than appealing to actions that previously caused our credit with our colleagues”*.

These instances indicate that need to social acceptability, absorption and taking individuals' admit and acceptance surrounding us that is known as motivation of social approval, are the most important and strong mental needs of everybody that cause individuals to keep their credit and prestige through appealing to various factors in dealing with their mistakes.

4.1.2. Causes

In coding with the method of six Cs family, causes of the core category show that some factors can influence on moral licensing, including: managerial factors, rules and regulations, Special climate of the governmental system, human resources management system (HRMS) and organizational relationships. We will discuss each of them in details.

4.1.2.1. Managerial factors

Managerial factors in emergence of moral licensing is mostly related to managerial style of managers and their view towards work and organizational issues.

- Irresponsibility of managers

One of the managerial factors to which most of interviewees pointed in their interviews was performance of a manager. In fact, management is at the top of the organization and the type of a manager's performance gives direction to all issues. Responsibility comes from important decision on main organizational domains and irresponsibility means losing the right way and going toward the false one. In this regard if a manager shows irresponsibility in his behavior or performance, employees may behave the same and take the opportunity to obtain moral licensing so as to realize their personal goals.

As one of the interviewees [17] remarked: *“when my boss uses vehicles which belong to the organization I do the same or I want my employees to do my works. For example, I may order them to go and bring back my child from preschool. He thinks if he does not obey me he will face bad consequences. The same trend happens in lower sequences”*.

Another interviewee [7] told: *“employees usually try to justify their laziness find excuses for this aim. For example, when you ask them why they work less than normal they say they*

are working as much as the manager or supervisor. This is not a right reasoning but it has been institutionalized so that employees let themselves follow it”.

These instances are established while subalterns, see their supervisors as supporter of themselves and their organization, and not only consider special rights for such behaviors from them and not condemn such behaviors but such behaviors become like a pattern for them and even they contribute in such behaviors themselves.

- Indecisiveness of manager in dealing wrong behaviors

Decisiveness of manager refers to the positive and constructive relationship of a manager with employees so that he can discuss with them about different issues without tainting their dignity. A manager should be decisive against deviant and wrong behaviors of employees. If he is not able to cope with such behaviors decisively, employees find this chance to use moral licensing to continue them.

In this regard, one of the interviewees [15] told: *“managers sometimes take everything easy. I may observe organizational norms but when I see manager or supervisor is easygoing about deviant behaviors so I behave as I want. One example is using cell phones at work. Especially in private sector this is an important issue that during business hours, employees should concentrate on organizational task and there is more managerial rigidity in this case but in governmental organization, such rigidities are less and employees may use cellphone or other equipment like computer for some hours. For example, today many employees go on exchange during their business hours”.*

The other interviewees [10] expressed his opinion on decisiveness of manager against deviant behaviors: *“some deviant behaviors in organization like personal usage of organizational costs and equipment is due to this fact that manager or supervisor believes: cost is allocated to organization by government not by me. This amount of cost is inevitable allocated annually. I am too busy to involve myself in such things. That is why he prefer not to waste his time on deviant or wrong behaviors of employees especially when they have no significant damage to organization”.*

These instances and ignoring mistakes of employees especially when manager or supervisor is satisfied with his/her employees, is more apparent.

- Style of management

Importance of leadership and managers' management method on employees' performance and behavior is not hidden from anyone. When style of leadership is dictatorial and imperative and footstep of narcissism characteristic features is seen so that there's no right of expressing viewpoint and even courage of asking manager for a demand and there's no constructive interaction among managers and their employees, conditions will be prepared for emergence of moral license in organization. Tolerating such circumstances in long-term is difficult and cause employees to permit themselves morally keep out from manager and do anything to prevent tension occurrence and jar of management in organization.

In this regard, one of the interviewees [2] said: *"many times it has been seen that managers and leaders with specific management style and features, without any convincing reason attend to some of their employees more than others and also humiliate and oppress some other employees. This, can provide conditions for deviance from organizational norms and obligations for individuals who are in the center of such managers' attendance"*.

Another interviewee [17] said in this way: *"some managers are so dictator and opinionated and narcissist that think any decision that make in the organization is home revelation and believe them so much that cannot see reality anymore, and unfortunately some individuals are obsequious that understand this feeling better than others and approve and enforce this opinion that their (managers') actions are the best. All these, can strongly provide requirements of deviance and following personal purposes in managers and even their employees (those obsequious individuals)"*.

According to one of the interviewees [11]: *"for example, I have a good relationship with my manager. Today I told him a problem arose because of the enactment of the funding council so that we could not achieve desirable balance in our computations. Then I asked him to offer a solution. He did. If I was afraid of my manager so that I did not share with him the problem I might be forced to change the report in order not to be blame by him. Since most manager are busy they will not find any change. Thus, when I as an employee hide the truth due to fear other may do the same. Nobody tells the truth and manager pays no attention to this problem. Then all of us learn how to deceive each other. The result is: organization will collapse. When there is no constructive interaction this case will happen"*.

All these instances, indicate influence of management and leadership style in shaping moral license in organization.

- **Infirmity of pressure levers available to managers**

Although today's managers no longer use pressure levers to realize organizational goals, in some situations, especially when dealing with deviant behaviors, they can be an effective solution. Infirmity of pressure levers in hands of managers to deal with deviant behaviors can pave the way for moral licensing and showing deviant behaviors.

One of the interviewees [2] reported: *"to me we as managers have no enough capability to deal with deviant behaviors. As it has been told over and over, in organization, encouragement should be on time, real and motivating. The same trend should be applied in dealing with deviations with no attention to the background of a person who shows deviant behaviors. Sorrowfully, managers do not deal with deviant behaviors in decisive manner. By passing the time, the issue will be forgotten while a person who has shown deviant behavior will benefit and achieve his personal goals. I am going to say that pressure levers in our hands are not so effective so that it dawns on violated person that I did it before but nobody punished me. Thus he may repeat it over and over or even he may show worse behaviors with this knowledge that nothing bad is going to happen"*.

According to another interviewee [6]: *"punishment or fear of punishment always prevent involving in diversionary behaviors and I as an employee when ensure that my behaviors and actions don't have bad consequences for me although they are a kind of norm breaking and following personal goals, I involve in such behaviors more easily, especially when I know I cannot reach my will from legal and correct way"*.

So, as punitive policies can be preventive in relation to diversionary work actions, weakness of pressure levers can prepare conditions for granting license to involve in diversionary behaviors.

- **Rely on power of position**

Power is inseparable part of the roles of managers in taking actions and making decisions. This power, mostly, initiates from a manager's position in an organization. It is clear that managers have special power and authorities in organizations due to their position or their access to relational networks. Sometimes it has been seen that such authorities which have

root in managerial positions give the opportunity of moral licensing to them so that they may deviate from legal routes and prefer personal goals over organizational goals.

According to one of the interviewees [10]: *“regretfully, some posts or positions provide conditions for legal licensing. Among them are managerial posts. Sometimes, managers use such licenses on the pretext of attempting to realize organizational goals. For example, a project is going to be auctioned, everybody is able to participate in it and one who has the best condition will win it. Manager can use his power of statute as moral licensing to change the results”*. According to another interviewee [1]: *“In this field I can say, credits allocated to loan which should be affirmed by manager which are not always given to those who deserve it. The reason is not obvious. Sometimes, a borrower may suggest he will give some amount of the loan to manager if he affirms it. Many factors play roles in such issues (or better to say violations) in organizations: personality, supervisions, rules and etc... but one of the most effective of all is authority of a manager and his power to get moral licensing”*.

Therefore, power resulting from position and rank are influential in forming moral license in organization that by relying on it, offenders can show their behaviors in a way that as if they weren't violation.

4.1.2.2. Rules and regulations

The second class of identified causes which prepares the conditions for moral licensing in governmental organizations is related to rules and regulations, including the below.

- **Ambiguity of rules and regulations**

Of factors to which interviewees pointed was ambiguity of rules and regulations. Ambiguity of rules can be seen especially in codes and enactments. By ambiguity we mean the quality of being open to more than one interpretation (Solum, 1987).

According to one of the interviewees [9]: *“sorrowfully the rules related to various cases from recruitment, appraisal of performance and promotion to allocation of credits and budget are ambiguous to a degree that they can be interpreted in different ways. It makes the conditions prepare for moral licensing. Managers and employees can use this opportunity to achieve their personal goals. The fact is not all rules are comprehensive and*

responsive to needs. To use the rules in this way will continue till those people can get a benefit from it”.

In this regard, another interviewee [5] says that: *"organizational rules or regulations and resolutions corresponding to organizational needs are sometimes regulated so quickly that there's no opportunity to consider subject dimensions and this causes these regulations and laws be very ambiguous and equivocal, and become background of personal perceptions and consequently directing behavioral deviances in organization".*

Everybody knows about negative consequences of ambiguity in rules because not only can such ambiguity add to unnecessary managerial and administrative costs but also lead to inequality, unfairness, increase of corruption as well as moral licensing. It can even make it impossible to persecution of violations.

- Silence of the law

When we say law is silence it means the relevant sources of law do not address a particular point. Silence is sometimes intentional, that is, the lawmaker choose silence on purpose. He, instead, has assigned some authorities so that decision can be taken based on the conditions at present. Sometimes, silence is unintentionally.

For example, one of them [17] told: *“the law related to annual budget has declared that if current year credits are not spent they will be removed in the next year because the budget is allocated to an organization on an annual basis. Organization try not to lose the budget in the next year so they make some superficial changes. It is obvious that since the law has not considered any clear rules in this case and has become silent it automatically has given the opportunity of moral licensing. So individual find a way to obtain such credits for their organizations”.*

From the viewpoint of another interviewee [2]: *"the absence of laws or legal procedures in many work, job and professional areas, prepares requirements of acting based on tastes. For example, in relation to tenders in the law, in some cases we saw silence of law which causes a lot of unjust attitude in tenders".*

Therefore and according to interviewees, the latter can lead to moral licensing.

- **Inflation of rules and contradiction in rules and acts**

Inflation (here we mean enormous variety) and contradictions of rules is one of the effective factors on moral licensing.

According to one of the interviewees [12]: *“All you have to do is to listen to the open sessions of the parliament. It reflects the situation in which our laws and regulations are drafted and of course one of the signs and examples of those changes is that a law was passed three months ago. They have had to amend it for three to four months. The issue has not solved yet so they are forced to amend the rule again. All this show that the rules have been false from the ground up and they are extremely contradictory. Some bills and laws are legislated by intent and personal opinions of representatives not experts opinions of experts. Thus, when they come to action they create countless administrative problems, so rules are legislated to solve a problem but personal benefits have priority”*.

As another of the interviewees [11] told *“One of the most important reasons for the abuse in our country is the same contradictory, weak, ambiguous and multiple laws that the executor can change it as he wishes so I as an employee or benefit seeker abuse this law whenever it is in my favor and when it is not in my favor, I use another law, especially the budget laws, Such cases are enormous”*.

Another interviewees [8] believe that: *“The worse is that if we do not circumvent the laws we cannot fulfill our task. If we want to obey the law, we must think about the work. In short, the rules themselves are not expert. The logic behind the rules is weak, the laws are extremely contradictory, all of which allow those who are looking for an opportunity to circumvent the rules. Conditions can be justified”*.

Thus, rules can play their roles in directing organizational activities appropriately when they are of stability. Unfortunately, legislating various and contradictory rules with different supplements leads to facing with a diversity of rules and instructions which neither are of efficiency nor consistency. This, again, paves the way for Opportunists to get moral licensing.

- **Improper context to execute the rules**

In this regard, one of the employees [9] stated: *“unfortunately, some rules have been enacted but there is no context for them to be executed. In these circumstances, we cannot*

enforce the law and we have no chance to fulfill our task. For every action we have to find a way to circumvent the law legally! So it has become a value or a culture in the organization. This, in turn, causes corruption and many other deviant behaviors. I as a simple employee have no tendency to circumvent the law even I did I would learn it from superiors. They sometimes tell us do this if you deal with that. Such illegal suggestions have not been written because it may put them in trouble since I have taught how to circumvent the law!"

According to another interviewee [4]: *"unfortunately, there are many challenges in the way of implementing rules. Fortunately, we are good regulators but we have acted weakly in providing conditions and facilities of implementation. So, after a while rules cannot be forced and become extinct with no efficiency. Therefore, to solve this problem, each director and individual acts by himself/herself and provides solution, and in these disturbed conditions, deviances will be shaped"*.

Therefore, various rules and regulations in various fields such as tax laws, information transparency, etc., have been passed for years but they have not been executed. It indicates the lack of a suitable context for their implementation. This is one of the effective factors on the acquisition of moral licensing especially for lawbreakers.

- Unwritten rules and principles

In all workplaces, including government organizations, there is a big set of rules that are not registered anywhere but are enforced exactly.

In this regard, one of the interviewees [6] believed: *"for example, the law says that more than 3 and a half hours of leave a day shall be considered as one full day leave but there is an unwritten law that we follow. There are no written rules either, that is, for example, we reject the mission for 1 hour because this is not prohibited by law. This is a very simple and common example. Unfortunately, many organizations, in the absence of a real law, consider a set of unwritten rules for their employees that lead to unfair payments or special facilities"*.

Another interviewee [8] believed that: *"unwritten rules inside organization is reason of providing enormous facilities and in absence of real rule, a series of unwritten regulations are considered that causes irregular payments"*.

Awareness and observance of these unwritten rules is one of the most important sources of moral licensing in order to pursue personal goals and even to excel over others because it makes the possibility of circumventing the law in the most legal way possible.

4.1.2.3. The special climate of the governmental system

The special climate of the governmental system can influence on moral licensing which has been discussed in below.

- Trust in skillful opinion of experts and specialist

In organizations, authorized signatories are those who's been given the right to sign documents and bonds on behalf of the authorizing organization. According to management literature, professional proficiency can change into a source of power but a person who has this right may use it as tool to achieve his personal goals.

As one of the interviewees [17] told: *“In many cases, the trust placed in experts and the voluntary delegation that is exercised in this field and sometimes the signature rights that are granted to specialists and experts provide the grounds for obtaining such licenses for some people. When an incident occurs after a short while everybody forgets it. Nobody think what the reason was. What does give this right to an expert to misuse my position? Well, perhaps one of the most important reasons is that he is an expert and he knows how to justify a problem so that he be safe”*.

According to another interviewee [6]: *“if an expert rejects a wrong project, there are other colleagues and experts who accept it because the experience has proven that if something is to be done - by powerful institutions, of course - it must be done. It is why he gives permission to accept it, especially when I need its money”*.

These instances indicate this important case that giving authorizations and trust to employees and experts should be with commitment, their responsibility and liability, otherwise, can be provided background of license for involving in deviances.

- Absence of precise criteria and standards for performance

In jobs that output is not clear it is difficult to evaluate performance of employees. When there is no such possibility, the chance of moral licensing is high to arise.

One of the interviewees told [14]: *“at present, in our country and in different provinces, there are about seventy or a little more executive bodies and each of them has defined duties to do. Some of them have job output. The result is clear. They are strongly responsible but some other organizations do less than they should do. Their duties have not been defined according to precise criteria and standards for performance such as prisons, forensics, and universities. All members of such organizations are getting salary from government. For example, if an energy supplier is not doing its duties well light may not be distributed properly. But every year universities have high graduation rate. Many students graduate and get degrees but they are not able to find a job. No organization offer them a job while there are many vacancies to fill. Or if they are going to be recruited, no organization asks them: what is the level of your knowledge? When the output is unclear is difficult to use a well-established standard for their recruitment. All of it can pave the way for moral licensing in the upcoming years. When output of an organization is clear they have certain commitments about which everybody knows. They know what is going to happen. Everybody is aware of their needs and demands. But when the output is vague everybody tries to get benefit from the situation”*.

Another interviewee [8] in education and development part of Management and Planning Organization told: *“every educational institution as a party to our contract must have a series of criteria and standards for training the employees of a specific organization or body, such as educational facilities, educational space, etc., and we will act exactly in accordance with the regulations and sections. So whenever there is no precise standard for performance and the outcome of the work is not clear, there will definitely be the possibility of misuse. In this situation I take the opportunity and give a project to institution which is in my favor”*.

Another interviewee [14]: *“when the result of the work is not very clear, monitoring and inspection becomes difficult because there is no specific criterion for evaluation or inspection. then it is possible to get moral licensing but organizations with clear outputs are of a series of specific commitments that make it clear to everyone what is expected of them, therefore everyone knows their duties and they are aware of this fact that they will be monitored and evaluated”*.

Hence, according to these instances, what makes it possible to meet good performance and achieve organization purposes is determining exact and logical measures and standards that guarantees organizational productivity so that at least makes it possible assessing external data and outputs of organization in each stage with preferably few criteria and indications, otherwise, conditions of taking license for prosecuting personal expedencies and bribery like economic bribery (discriminatory payments) and or scientific bribery (granting work position based on relations and ignoring competency criteria in selecting individuals for specialized tasks) and other work deviances.

- **lack of meritocratic for advancement**

In management literature, meritocracy refers to a method of management in which managers and employees are assigned to various positions according to their ability and competence and in line with individual, organizational and social goals. A healthy competitive environment prevailing in organization and institutionalized meritocracy makes the conditions prepare for avoiding the perspective of mechanical management and attracting and retaining the best human capital.

In this relation, one of the interviewees [12] suggested: *“In my opinion, in our organization, there is no system but people. If somebody claims that there is a kind of system in our organization, he is kidding. In fact, taste, experiences as well as personal moods of people influence on conditions in organizations. Everybody knows that in choosing forces or giving them promotion, taste of manager but not meritocracy has priority. If you find out what is important for your manager, what his taste is or what he is emphasizing on so you try to adapt yourself to the same thing. Our workplace is neither competitive nor meritocratic. None of the words suggested in books are being followed in governmental organizations. The only thing that matters is you should adapt yourself with the superiors. If you observe this principle you can promote your position. Your disagreement with the superiors will change into a weak point for you. However, you may be right but workplace in organizations are so that if you find fault with your manager you are putting yourself in a big trouble and you should wait for its bad consequences”*.

In this regard, other interviewees [16] stated: *“I think the biggest factors for emergence of moral licensing is nepotism instead of meritocracy. In fact, it is an obstacle to those who*

with various merits... having a glance to those with higher political and administrative positions. This fact in our country shows that how they have been recruited without any scientific or expert merits and only through their relationship with people with authority or influence over organizations. They give each other opportunity of moral licensing because of kinship. Thus, we face with such an ill structure”.

If a proper career path for the promotion of employees based on meritocracy is not considered employees may go for moral licensing to use it as an illegal tools or for personal and non-constructive relationship and unwritten rules common in organizations for promotion. In other words, lack of meritocracy system cases weakening morale of endeavor among employees because this issue questions logical relation of person's endeavor and performance and through creating tendencies toward degree and not-attending technical competences, skill and efficiency of employees in taking job positions, causes individuals' endeavor for taking university degree with any expense and or appealing patronage (nepotocracy) as license for achieving their real position in organization.

- Possibility power seeking in organization

Organizational power and its distribution has always been one of the interesting and of course controversial debates. In this regard, if managers want to success in their organization, they should convey a part of their power to employees. If power is not distributed correctly and employees are given authority and power more than their capacity, they may find out it as a way to use moral licensing. Finally, such a trend can lead to failure of organization than success. According to one of the interviewees [2]: *“if in organization an employee is being valued more than their capabilities, they may start to seek power. If you let seeking power take place, moral licensing will emerge soon”.*

According to another interviewee [1]: *“power is like a tow-edge sword, while is very useful if it isn't in the hands of appropriate individuals, can cause following personal ambitions and intentions”.*

Therefore, since power of control source and influence and impact on others is for achieving results considered by power owners, so, if power distribution and dominance issue in organization isn't attended, it can provide conditions of taking moral license for its consequent deviances.

- Corruption in organization

In all periods of time, there have been some kind of corruption in political structures by those people who have used policy and economy of their own countries in benefit of their personal goals. Releasing news such as favoritism, bribery, embezzlement and etc. is indicator of presence of corruption in political structure and governmental systems. By corruption or even mafia structures we mean a wrong trend which has been formed systematically, that is, in administrative structure, existence of wrong rules to which we pointed above and centrism in governmental institutions give this permission to people in charge, politicians and authorities to involve in corruptive financial issues through moral licensing.

In this case, one of the interviewees [4] described: *“there is a flow in our governmental system. If you follow this flow and let other do the same you get a lot of benefits. Others respect you and consider you as a good employee but if you do not follow it and do not let others to use it, influential people in organization stop you. It is just explainable by one who has been manager but now he is not or once he has had the right to sign but now he does not”*.

One of the other interviewees [13] illustrated that: *“once I have been governor of Nahbandan. I had the right to sign and budget in my hand. A person came to me and requested a loan for 120 billion. He told me: if you agree with it I will give you 10 percent (bribery) of it to you. I was not down and I did not sign the request letter but he got his loan due to his relationship with one of the top politicians and when I was present in one of the meetings they called me and announced me: you are dismissed! It is the whole caboodle! Have a glance to the book titled “scammers of history” you can see a picture of some people who put their hands in each other’s pockets. In fact, it can be told that mafia issues permission beyond the approved rules and regulations. If you adapt yourself to them, you can get a fish from this sea!”*.

What is important in this relation, is differentiating between two concepts of systematic decay and system decay (that means system and government is unhealthy), actually, systematic decay or network decay means a series of concerted actions in some directors of official and bureaucratic part of country that sometimes influences in domain of decision-making and regulating laws and executive regulations and acts in line with illegal profits

and will be important; existence of such streams provide conditions of shaping moral license for individuals involving in these decay bands and networks.

4.1.2.4. Human resources management system (HRMS)

Human resource management is related to strategies, practices and policies that influence on the way employees think and act. Weaknesses in human resource management strategies and policies can somehow give employees moral licensing to engage in organizational deviations and pursuing personal goals and tendencies each of which will be described below.

- **Recruitment policies in public administrations**

Permanent recruitment on one hand can bring job security to employees but on the other hand can cause problems for organizations in terms of dealing with employees. Nowadays, due to the expansion of protection of employees' rights, more emphasis is placed on correcting behavior issues in employees than layoff.

According to one of the interviewees [5]: *“dismissing previous employees and hiring new forces even contractual forces whose contract is extended on annual basis is not an easy process. Nobody thinks they are going to be dismissed because they think they are considered as permanent members of organization. The worst thing they predict for themselves is elimination of some of their advantages, for example, their extra work hours may be reduced. In formal recruitments, employees are sure that organization is not able to fire them in any way. For example, if he commits an offense, the Board of Inquiry will investigate it and present it to the relevant authorities. It will be somewhat time consuming and in practice will not have much effect. They may in the worst case reduce his advantages but they will not fire him”*.

Another interviewee [8]: *“however personality and conscience are two inhibitors but thing which give me the opportunity of moral licensing when I know that I have done my best in organization I think to myself one offence has no bad consequences for me so I commit it”*.

Having high level of job security, long-term workplace violence prevention, mismatch between punishment and violence as well as feeling of compassion can lead to moral licensing so that employees follow their personal goals in organization.

- **Weakness of monitoring and evaluation system**

An efficient monitoring and evaluation system means a thorough and systematic review of the strengths and weaknesses of employees, managers and even the organization. As one of the interviewees [6] about weakness of monitoring and moral licensing stated: *“the reason we give each other such licenses is that we easily fall short of our ideals. In organizations, monitoring and evaluation are very weak. Unfortunately, we adhere to a series of unwritten principles. We have gained experience. For example, the law says that the speed limit is 80 mph, but when I drive 90 mph and see that I do not get pulled over, I repeat it again and even tell other nothing bad is going to happen if they drive with the same speed”*.

One other interviewees [9] thought: *“The evaluation system should be transparent, feedback on employee performance should be clearly reflected to them, and wrong behaviors of employees should be corrected and so on. Now, in governmental organization, the condition is so that if an employee is concentrating on his own duties he is considered as a loser because when an employee sees some of his co-workers who are not performing or they are wasting their time with eating breakfast or doing personal activities are getting the same amount of salary and advantages as him he loses his motivation to handle his duties as assigned and even to follow the rules”*.

In the monitoring and evaluation process, determining evaluation criteria to estimate the competence and quality of employee performance is one of the major challenges in monitoring and evaluation systems because in some cases it cannot show an acceptable level of efficiency and effectiveness. When such evaluations have no positive or negative feedbacks they pave the way for moral licensing so that employees can use their positive measures as tool to obtain personal benefits or to engage in behaviors that are contrary to organizational norms.

- **Lack of feedback mechanism**

System for delivering suggestions is one of the main ways of participatory management so that it is essential for continual improvement, achievement of great successes as well as emergence of creative activities. At present, such is system has been presented in many organizations. In cases where such systems are operating properly, they bring about noticeable achievements for organizations. Unfortunately, such a system in some

organizations are inefficient and they are superficially working but in fact, they accord no value to opinions of employees.

As one of the interviews [10] believed: *“perhaps one of the reasons why employees use moral licensing is that they cannot legally claim their rights so they apply even illegal shortcuts to like Robin Hood. SpongeBob (Cartoon’s character) is teaching children if the crab pays no salary to you the octopus and SpongeBob object to him. It is also a teaching that if someone waists your right, do not quit your job. Instead object. In my opinion, one of the reasons for using moral licensing is that there is no legal way for realization of rights.*

According to another interviewee [9]: *“when there is no chance for an employee to object or to make his requests, he will be deprived of their rights so they use every possible way to achieve their rights. Other employees with the same conditions understand for example, he can use company's properties in his own benefits or try to waste his time”.*

When there is no legal way by which employees can express their suggestions and opinions they use moral licensing to realize their damaged rights.

- Good work not appreciated

Although in workplace, supervisors emphasize on honest and sincere service and responsibility of employees, this issue is reciprocal and employees demand public respect, including being valued and seen by superior, especially when they are of excellent performance or when they show their merits.

The opinion of one of the interviewees [15] in this regard was as follows: *“In 2005, I started temporary cooperation with a large research center. At that time, no important project had been approved in our group yet. I and another colleague who was hired at the same time were able to finalize and approve three big national projects next year but at the end of 2005 we were told that we do not need you! I do not think there is a place in the world where such behavior will be accepted. In such circumstances, I did my best to compensate the rights trampled by the center (whether material or moral). I stole all the information needed to complete the project from the organization and hacked their computer systems and programs. Those colleagues who remained in the center are admiring my reaction and tell me that it was the best way to compensate”.*

According to another interviewee [12]: *"taking effective, positive and regular feedback and receiving encouragement from management shows that management and generally organization, care about innovations and decisions of its employees and recognizes difference between employees effective for organization and typical employees; if this important issue isn't attended in organization, not only employees' motivation will disappear but also because of all my constructive and positive actions that have never been seen, I will take license for being indifference toward organization and its success, and don't do my best anymore and cut corners of my work"*.

Organizational examples and experiences indicate that paying no attention to acquired respect leads to moral licensing to reduce the quality of performance by employees because in such an environment, whether employees exhibit a high-quality performance or not they are seen equally by the superiors.

- Weakness of Service compensation

Designing a merit-based compensation system has always been one of the most important challenges human resource management is facing with. Today, merit-based compensation is a tool for attracting and retaining employees and, most importantly, motivating them. The merit-based compensation system should fit with the competencies, social dignity, current and future needs of employees and environmental fluctuations (economic, social, and cultural).

The opinion of one of the interviewees [12] in this regard was: *"when the payment system is fair enough to meet the needs of the staff and fully meet the financial needs of them, it is impossible employees let themselves take a bribe unless they suffer personality problem which is another topic. but when an employee sees that he is out of money in the middle of month while organization has not paid his delayed payment or a client willingly pays some amount to get his job done, all those issues and problems come in the human mind in an instant, and finally he convinces himself and allows himself to accept the offered bribe"*.

The opinion of another interviewees [7]: *"We can see obviously in the organization that those who do not deserve their position at all and they have entered the organization through favoritism while in a short period of time they get more benefits and facilities than we do after 20 years of service, all these discriminations, Injustices and inequalities in the*

service compensation system can give people licenses to achieve personal goals and push employees to use moral licensing and I think, it is justifiable” .

The lack of such a system may not only lead to turnover but also may give employees moral licensing for compensating.

- Over qualification

Employees in an organization feel fairness when they are given positions which fit with their specific knowledge, skills, expertise, and competencies, and there is a balance between what they do and payment they receive. In other words, there should be a balance between job requirements, personality traits and individual abilities. Research has shown that employees are prone to failure, and deviant behavior due to over -qualification (Mumtaz & et.al, 2015).

In this regard, one of the interviewees [8] believed: *“when our administrative system is suffering from fundamental problems and I can say with certainty that no one has a position in accord with their abilities and everything is based on a relationship and not on rules and regulations, when I am educated Doctor but I have a job which does not fit my face but it fits a person with at least a bachelor's degree but I cannot quit it due to financial problems I give this right to myself to fight for my trampled right as much as possible. So I may use moral licensing while in my opinion it is completely moral and justified, because I think organization is wasting my talents, capabilities and motivations. Sometimes employees like me may feel depression”*

There is no doubt that when an employee feels he is over-qualified for his position he may use moral licensing to overcome negative emotions or to realize his violated right due to injustice.

4.1.2.5. Organizational relationships

The importance of organizational communication in the field of organization and management is obvious. Therefore, and according to what the interviewees acknowledged in their interview, the style and context of organizational communication was considered as another important reason for using moral licensing.

- Priority of personal relationship over regulations

Nepotism means abusing influence and relying on unequal and unreasonable criteria to realize personal goals and it is considered one of the manifestations of administrative corruption. According to one of interviewee [4]: *“Relationships are so expanding that if one is not able to meet your demands another person will. For example, a person from one of the subordinate departments came to visit me. According to the text of the statute I told him: you are not included in this rule. I told him the fact. He was a very distinguished person but he told: Mr.... Do you think the law has written for us?! No the laws are for others. He insisted but I declined. He blamed me: you wasted the rights of my family! He was disappointed with me but some days later it dawned on me he got his job done through one of my coworkers. Nobody appreciated me because I followed the rules but instead they labeled me as a starchy person. Therefore, it is these relationships that give people moral licensing to easily make an illegal request so it is natural a person whose job had been done intends to compensate”*.

And according to another one [9]: *“The reality of our organizations at present is that when you should go to an organization with any reason the first thing that comes to your mind is that you should begin to find one with whom you have acquaintance, one who can meet your requests because communication is so ingrained in our organizations that it can be said that almost every impossible and every impossible will be possible and possible without questioning the face of individuals”*.

Criticism of nepotism and emphasis on rules instead of it is one of the common issues but the fact is, regrettably, nepotism can be seen overtly in government organizations and it is an effective factor on emergence of moral licensing so that individuals can follow their personal goals without any damage to their reputation.

- Interference between job and friendship

Formation of informal groups and group communication is an important factor in predicting organizational behavior. In this case, successful organizations are those where employees take work seriously and workplace is happy and friendly.

According to one of the interviewees [5]: *“a friendly workplace makes it possible to deal with arisen problems in a better way because we work together as coworkers in an organization, but over time, the relationship becomes deeper. So that it may continue even*

out of the organization or we may have fun together or even start to have family relationships all of which contribute to decrease in power gap that exists among different positions. It is not always suitable. Sometimes, when someone gets involved in a wrong behavior, he may tell himself: supervisor is one of my best friends. He will ignore it at least because of his own situation. In addition, it is a mutual issue. I will compensate his kindness in the soon future. This trend will continue. In fact, friendly workplace in this example and interference between job and friendship can cause such problems”.

But unfortunately, in some cases, a friendly workplace may be a good setting for moral licensing. It, in turn, leads to the formation of behaviors such as not getting through the work, working less than determined hours as well as undermining values.

- Membership in particular or influential groups

Influential groups as one of the social institutions includes groups or organizations which do not seek power but try to influence on public opinion. They are of this capability to put pressure on governmental authorities in order to gain benefits. Influence over government with such a high degree give moral licensing to them to follow their personal and group goals.

In this regard, one of the interviewees [4] believed: *“whether we like it or not, there are small groups in organizations. Members of such groups are those with common interests or fellow citizens and they have a strong commonality that connects them. Over time they find their place in the organization and somehow they gain power and influence. All of these encourage them to have each other’s back, give their members opportunity of moral licensing and follow their own goal by each other’s supports”.*

Another interviewees [2] believed: *“membership in some groups give us the opportunity to justify our behaviors. For example, if a person is active member of some influential groups, regardless of his position, he can use moral licensing to make requests but if he were not one of the members of the group, he would not have this chance. For example, in medical sciences, students should serve in deprived region for a certain period of time. But I know some people who have been exempted from this only because of membership in such groups. Or in another case, one with BA in soil science has become the manager of a major hospital because of the same membership”.*

Therefore, pyramidal structure of organizations in Iranian society, the governance of the relationship over the norms, informal information systems, ethnic-oriented tendencies as an accepted and partly institutionalized principle give moral licensing to employees so that they can follow their personal goals in organizations without being worried about losing their face.

- Relationship with power Sources

As it was partly told before, power may be get from various resources like having technical skills, knowledge, having legal privileges and to access to those connected with such resources. Relation with power centers like achieving power can be a factor for emergence of political behavior and sometimes a diversionary work without any fear for losing credit. In this regard, viewpoint of an interviewee [11] is this: *"there's no possibility of involving in a series of deviances like bribery for all groups and categories of society, and possibility of using special advantages is just provided through influence and relation with power owners, and it is in this way that individuals can achieve their grim interests without any fear and concern about losing credit"*.

In this regard, another of the interviewees [3] thought: *"many of managers and employees are selected because they have history of self-sacrifice. It should be ameliorated. Of course there is no doubt about their good intention and they have enough commitment to management but in many cases they have no enough skills thus they render no help to improvement of organization and even they ruin many opportunities for development due to filling vacancies which need skill and specialty but their connection to the power bases prevents recruitment of expert forces"*.

In these conditions, if one can go through the process of power he gets a privilege which changes him into special employees who can use moral licensing so that he will be able to follow his personal motivations.

4.1.3. Covariance (Factors correlated with causes of the main process)

As it was declared, correlated factors or covariance refer to factors which are correlated with the main causes of grounded theory and the causes of the main process will change with them. In this study, acquisitive traits of an individuals are considered as factors correlated with the causes of the main process. The reason is the role and the importance of

such traits which one obtains during his professional backgrounds. This, according to moral balance theory, can lead to incremental fluctuations of moral behaviors and its imbalance. In these conditions, individuals may stop their balanced moral behaviors so as to rebuild their moral balance. They even may abuse occurred situations. Thus, they use moral licensing to the extent that their moral balance is not damaged and they do not lose their faces.

4.1.3.1. Acquired Characteristics

- **Exclusive job skills**

Today, employees' skills and expertise or earning national honors by them are considered as a valuable asset and a competitive advantage for them and for their organizations. Knowledge, skills and expertise bring about power which, in turn, leads to influence over team members and the organization and trust building. On the other hand, it can give an individual moral licensing to go beyond the norms and regulations of an organization.

In this regard, one of the interviewees [13] believed: *“In some organizations, there are specialists and experts do not abide by organizational norms, rules and regulations at all. Not always it is necessary for employees to have a sort of specialty related to their positions. For example, one of our employees is international referee of judo with many medals and honors for the country. He sometimes goes to sport camps for a long time. He is of all privileges. Even two colleagues have joined the organization through him. I think one of the reasons for using moral licensing and consequently, for behaving against is skills or expertise. Now sometimes the organization really needs this expertise in line with organizational goals, but sometimes individuals with skills or expertise unrelated to their position have been recruited only for adding to organizational prestige”*.

Another interviewee [14] believes that: *"there were a lot of cases that we tried to hold training courses with presence of master professors who have specific claims after contract and told if their claims weren't paid, they wouldn't hold the course. All these show capability and power of knowledge and expertise that if isn't with commitment can provide the conditions of claims out of custom and humanity"*.

In today's world, as we progress, technology will be more and more advanced and accordingly jobs become more specialized, and these specializations are counted as an important source of power for their owners that provides possibility of sanction, bargaining and putting pressure on persons who need their specialization for following their ambitious intentions.

- **Combatant past**

Although no country wants war, there are few countries which have not experienced it. Fighting a war to protect safety and public benefits is a valuable defense. Thus, honoring altruists who were herald of a better season in life of young generations is of great cultural importance. Therefore, protecting and honoring altruists and their respectable family is a national value in all societies. In our society, altruism and martyrdom are two great values.

According to one of the interviewees [7]: *"nobody dislikes honoring altruists. It is duty of each of us not to forget what they did because we owe peace and safety to them but I believe if one of the criteria for recruitment is merit everybody should equally be able to show their merits. Thus, performances of sacrifice quotas in recruitments in Iran is against the culture of altruism and martyrdom. Martyrs died for the sake of God to return safety to our country so that the country would be rebuilt but allocating quotas to their families cause moral licensing and its damaging consequences"*.

Another interviewee [4] believed that: *"establishing share and applying it in taking job and education opportunities, questions justice and fair distribution of job and education opportunities and provides conditions of abusing these advantages for some opportunists"*

Therefore, protecting and honoring in improper manner can pave the way for emergence of moral licensing.

- **Voluntary actions**

Voluntary action is a person's voluntary commitment within an organization or company that is not part of his or her contractual tasks. This behavior which is not always rewarded is directly or indirectly is of benefit to organizations and brings about a positive face for a person who shows it however some responsibilities and rights will follow such behavior. It leads to be useful and positive sense only if organization allocate some privileges for a person who shows it. Only in this case, the person will feel his responsibility.

As one of the interviewees [15] stated: *“when I help my coworker with a project in which I have no benefit, or when I need to take a leave or vacation but I give this chance to my coworker, or when I got a loan but I give it to my coworker because I know he has many problems, or when I work overtime because the work is necessary and etc. all of them are examples of voluntary behaviors everybody can see at workplace but such behaviors create reciprocal rights so that my coworkers should compensate my kindness for example if I need home loan they should give me priority”*.

Another interviewee [3] believed that: *"reality is that today according to political and economic conditions, work condition also become hard. For example, because of economic conditions, organization has a lot of debt and arrears that haven't been paid yet, but I as an employee, adapt myself with these conditions and not only do my duties but also if somewhere there's need to my help, I don't withhold, although it creates a series of expectations but not directly"*.

To put in a nutshell, such a behavior in some cases may give this opportunity to them to follow their personal goals using moral licensing.

4.1.4. Contingencies

As it was mentioned before, requirements are mediating factors which influence on the relationship between the core category and the results (Kan & Parry, 2004).

4.1.4.1. Organizational culture and workplace

Organizational culture and workplace can be in such a way that provide the conditions for emergence of moral licensing and its level in an organization.

- Ignoring misbehavior

Organizational silence refers to a collective-level phenomenon of saying or doing very little in response to significant problems that face an organization. Numerous factors can lead to organizational silence like feelings of injustice, inability to control the situation, the existence of a centralized organizational structure as well as employee's non-participation in organizational decision-making.

In this regard, one of the interviewees [3] believed: *“The dominant organizational in an organization is a very effective factor on moral licensing. For example, when the dominant culture is silence against mistakes (being nonchalant), no one cares or does not warn*

(silence against deviations), employees are indifferent to each other's behavior and the only thing which is important for them is realizing their own goals and benefits. All of such reactions which are part of the organizational culture can lead to emergence of moral licensing”.

On the other hand, keeping employees motivated, especially those who are mainly responsible for performing repetitive tasks on a daily basis, is very important and sensitive. employee motivation due to incorrect structures such as inappropriate processes in recruitments, lifelong hiring, inefficiency of performance appraisal systems, poor targeting and lack of attention to training, especially training in systems thinking and conscience lead to the creation of a workplace that shows indifference and insensitivity to deviations and violations in the organization. Such conditions can cause problems like moral licensing.

One of the interviewees [10] said: *“due to the special features of the administrative system, the motivation of employees is low. I can say with experience that in less than a year, there is no trace of the initial motivation that employees had at the beginning of entering the organization because in 90% of cases, the system can only meet the basic needs of an employees and ignores many other important things that can motivate them. In this situation, motivation and responsibility decrease and finally employees are no longer sensitive to each other's behaviors and to what happens in the organization. In this way, employees use moral licensing to follow their personal desires in the organization”.*

The nonchalant attitudes of apathetic employees at workplace for any reason can cause deviant behaviors and can be used as a tool for getting moral licensing to continue the process of deviations in the organization.

- Islamic kindness as an excuse

The Islamic kindness to punishments indicates that the aim of punishment is mending the behavior of a violator so if he shows some traces of remorse in his actions and behavior, his punishment can be reduced. Of course, this should be based on special rules and conditions. In this regard, one of the interviewees [11] told: *“since we are emotional creatures and with attention to Islamic kindness on which the lawmakers have emphasized we may ignore some deviant or wrong behaviors. It has no consequence in short-time but in the soon future some problems will arise due to it especially when the violator is one in whom we*

had trusted. For example, one of the employees whom I know was of a good background. He was very circumspect and exact person, one in whom you could trust easily. Sorrowfully, since he was under some pressures he had done a wrong behavior, intentionally or unintentionally. He had stolen some money from the organization. When it was demonstrated the manager tried to deal him kindly and consider a light punishment so that the employee finds out his behavior has been wrong. The punishment was giving some extra and difficult duties instead firing him”.

According to another interviewee[2]: *"in some countries, any diversionary is encountered strongly, and they are serious in executing law without considering person's background, relationships, position, benevolence and humanism feeling; like China, if such decisive culture wasn't dominant for encountering decay in country, it was impossible to traverse stairs of development and expansion so quickly".*

Accordingly, paying no attention to such rules and conditions can pave the way for emergence of moral licensing and the violators take the opportunity to add to their wrong behaviors.

- Slippery Slope of misbehavior

Many events occur in life eventually. The same can be said about organization. All relationships, events, changes, violations and deviant behaviors occur in organization eventually. Thus, if we do not deal with them with consciously, their negative consequences will appear in the soon future.

According to one of the interviewees [17]: *“when you repeat a wrong behavior it will change into a normal thing. In Islam it has been advised that do not promote depravity because soon it becomes a usual behavior to which we show no reaction or sensitivity and we become a part of it. By transformation, we mean change like circulation of the earth which is little by little but it leads many changes. We forget that behavior was wrong like riding a bicycle. When you pedal you know you are riding bicycle but when you stop pedaling you may fall on a slope. The same is true in organizations. Some people forget why they have been recruited”.*

If a violation is repeats over and over, it will no longer be obnoxious so that even those who were against it give themselves moral licensing to do that like a frog in a bucket of water. When you gradually heat up the bucket the frog shows no reaction.

- **Changing anti-values into values**

In society, values and anti-values generally emerge in the form of moral principles or laws that people, during the process of sociability should try to abide by, but in this regard, the opinion of one of the interviewees [7] was: *“When rules are circumvented in different ways with no consequences, they become pervasive over time and become values. For example, the organization is considered a training class for us as a part of our working time. We are paid for participating in that class. My colleague asks me to mark down he is present. If I accept his request, he will consider me a good co-worker but in other situations, I will expect him to compensate my kindness and in the same way, a wave starts that nobody can resist against it. If you resist, you will be considered a norm-breaker!!!”*.

According to another interviewee [1]: *“Unfortunately, culturally, we are moving in the direction that escaping and not following the law is considered a kind of cleverness Just like tax evasion which has become a value so that one who pays the tax may be labeled as a naïve person, etc. Today the situation in government organizations has become such that if someone wants to do his job perfectly and correctly he is a kind of loser because he sees other who do their duties less than him get as much as him”*.

Social values that are often determined by rulers or influential groups and accepted by members of society are unstable because they are rooted in the tastes of individuals and derive their legitimacy from public acceptance. In fact, they may lose their durability by passing of time since tastes and tendencies change. The instability of values is by itself a moral licensing for individuals to follow their own wishes and desires.

4.1.4.2. Personal Characteristics

As it was told earlier, an employee who gets moral licensing is potentially a violator and moral licensing can always cause formation of deviant unproductive behavior. Of the mediating factors (requirements) which influences on such behaviors are personal qualities, including the below:

- **Jealousy and emulation**

One of the personal qualities that impacts on emergence of moral licensing is jealousy and emulation.

In this regard, one of the interviewees [4] stated: *“jealousy can encourage people to involve in deviant behaviors. Take I say to myself that I am the head of the office ... I have a Pride (low model car) while I have lifetime of honest service in my background but my colleague, who has a lower job position, has a long-wheelbase car (high model car). Thus when he in such a challenging situation has the right to sign, he rarely can endure not using moral licensing. Comparisons and jealousy justify moral licensing. That is all”*.

Jealousy as the root and cause of many social anomalies and as a personal imperfection leads to the domination of the mood of unhealthy competition in the organization so that an employee while maintaining his reputation and position and relying on his brilliant background and moral licensing tries to pursue his goals and desires.

- Lack of commitment and working with a conscience

Working with conscience is a kind of internal commitment that obliges an employee to follow the work obligations so that one with work conscience performs his duties not because of legal rules or rewards and punishments, but because of value system and his own commitment to it. In this regard, one of the interviewees [3] acknowledged: *“in my opinion, the commitment and conscience of individuals is also a determining factor in moral licensing. For example, in many organizations, there are terms like performance reward, productivity reward, job status rewards and etc. which are somewhat similar and related to a type of financial payment other than salaries. In most organizations, this amount is given to senior managers while in some others, it has been attempted to find a formula for it. However not all managers agree with this method. In this formula, the amount of normal working hours, overtime, the rate of increase in productivity of each staff, work experience, gender, education, etc. are included. At the University of Medical Sciences, physicians receive a great amount of performance reward. For example, once a physician has told: I do not go into operating room unless you pay my performance reward (well, this can be a deviant behavior and against Hippocratic Oath and commitment). Therefore, if expertise is not accompanied with commitment, the conditions for deviations and abuse of moral licensing is easily provided”*.

Thus, lack of commitment and working with a conscience has unpleasant social consequences such as disrespect for the law and discipline, irresponsibility and punctuality, etc. On the other hand, such a lack leads to the use of moral licensing and the pursuit of personal goals.

- **Weakness of moral identity**

Moral identity is a tool that individuals use to define themselves. In addition, the moral dimensions effectively predict a variety of moral behaviors. According to the theory of moral identity, people who accord great value to morality, more than others, maintain their moral consistency and originality more than other. Naturally, weakness of moral identity causes moral licensing.

In this regard, one of the interviewees [13] acknowledged: *“Unfortunately, the decrease of moral values in society has caused moral crises in many occupations, especially sacred occupations such as medicine. Although the generation of physicians such as Dr. Gharib and Dr. Sheikh is still seen in our medical community, not all physicians and medical staff are so. I think the cause of all these deviations and problems is a weakness in morality and a moral identity that allows a person to use the moral licensing in his own favor”*.

Origin of behavior in relation to moral license or its better to say behavioral dichotomies, is both environment and personal characteristics. But, we should consider that personal characteristics and moral identity of person, have a very high importance. When a person does something wrong, first, that mistake will be considered as a weakness of personality and moral identity of that person, and second, cultural reasons and factors and the environment in which he/she grew up are propounded. Hence, personality characteristics are very influential in using license which have been achieved by person until now.

- **Affectation of religious**

The importance of mental health of stats as a basic element of revolution is more felt than before in nowadays full challenges situations. So nowadays, managers and supervisors pay more and special attention to the importance of spirituality in their organization. Because they believe that religion not only leads to pleasure and jubilation and satisfaction of life

but in social level it can be leads to reduce behavior deviations and it can increase friendship behavior. And this can be one of factors of obtaining moral license and deviation from the basic religion and detection hypocritically behavior and religious person can do deviation and betrayal behavior and different abuse in their positions by religion special reliability about religious people in society. In this topic one of the interviewers [16] believe that: *“religious even in different films and series, this topic is mentioned about religious that how people can use religious as a tool and abuse it for delusion people and making corruption in society”*.

Another interviewers mentioned [15] that: *“I was deceived from one of the religious persons myself and I do not have any religious belief and it is more surprised that they try to make a suitable appearance to their job for legitimizing their mistakes”*.

Hence, pharisaic behaviors and pretending religiousness can be a pretext for achieving purposes and desires and keeping social position of individuals.

4.1.5. Context of study

Context of study in six Cs family in Glaser’s approach refers to the context of the macro environments of understudied society.

- Cultural and social conditions

Social and cultural conditions are among the important factors that can influence on moral licensing and, subsequently, formation of deviant and immoral behaviors and its spread in society. Previously, this concept in the form of various codes such as indifference and ignoring behavioral deviations, conversion of values into anti-values and vice versa, discrimination in the enjoyment of benefits and facilities, the weakness of the monitoring and evaluation system (absence of serious and constructive dealing with deviations), the frog principle (the phenomenon of evaporation) was presented by the interviewees.

In this regard, one of the interviewees [15] admitted: *“unhealthy conditions and injustices have made the situation so that everyone cares about themselves. Unfortunately, the public is no longer sensitive to violations. Nobody cares about a violation if it causes no damage for them. They are not aware of this fact that we all live in a ship called society. If one only pierces his place on the ship, he harms the whole community”*.

Another interviewee [5] believed: *“unfortunately, due to the lack of institutionalization of observance of law, we need to invest in our culture. We should not wait for legal authorities to deal with violations and deviations. Instead, the conditions of the society and the culture of dealing with a violator should be in such a way that the violator regrets what he has done. When others show no negative reaction to a violation instead they see it as astuteness they give moral licensing to such behaviors”*.

Another interviewee [2] stated: *“A clear example of this lawlessness can be seen in the employment conditions of organizations because, unfortunately, our country is moving in a direction that there is no need to people with expertise and skills but to obedient and amenable ones to use them as a tool for their own benefits. An example of this is items of recruitment interview. No item is about the level of education or skills. Instead, all items are related to the rules of Islam, the history of the revolution and other similar subtleties like doubt in prayer and impurity. This, in turn, gives people moral licensing to lie or flatter in order to get a job position (manifestation of deviant behaviors in the organization) because most of the respondents may neither praying nor be religious but they easily lie to be recruited”*.

Unfortunately, in society has been afflicted with a kind of socialized anomie due to various reasons, including social inequality, injustice, as well as the prevalence of a culture of lawlessness which has been manifested in formal recruitment (favoritism, corruption, nonstandard and inefficient criteria for recruitment and etc.) or in executing of rules and regulations (not everyone is equal before the law). This condition, can give moral licensing to individuals to deal with inequalities and to realize their rights according to their own tastes.

- Economic conditions

The high unemployment rate among people in the community, especially university graduates, jobs unrelated to college majors and the inadequacy of salaries and wages for living expenses provide the conditions for emergence of moral licensing and its consequences. In this regard, one of the interviewees [10] stated: *“The administrative system destroys the motivation for useful work. When I see my colleague who has not performed any project in three consecutive years, wasting time on various pretexts, gets*

more salary than me because he has more work experience and a higher degree of promotion I have no motivation to do my duties. The fact is that our system is sick and makes people sick. Although salary is not the only factor for getting motivated or doing useful work, it is really necessary and important, especially in today's economic conditions ... At the same time, there is no job security at all. Despite the fact that we are employed in government organizations but we have filled positions on contractual hiring basis. Each moment, our contract may be terminated”.

Another interviewee [4] admitted in this regard: *“One of the factors that may change the behavior of employees after employment and years of honest service so that they give themselves moral licensing is the impact of economic conditions. I used to manage my life with highest quality but now with 7 million salaries per month it is difficult to do so. Each employee takes to compensate his trampled rights like bribery. As an expert, I have the right to sign so I may use this chance... For example, we can see that the security apparatus make employees do not violate the boundaries specially when they deal with moral dilemmas but when I see my salary does not suffice for my life and I have the right to sign I may use moral licensing. The consequences are no longer important for me. In fact, money is the only thing that matters”.*

Poor economic conditions, inflation, unemployment, job insecurity, improper expense to sales ratio, keeping aloof from minimalism, promoting luxury culture, raising expectations especially when people feel their rights have been trampled by political and economic systems, all of them lead to moral licensing and finding a way or taking a step in order to realize the trampled rights - albeit illegally.

- Political conditions

In the political and administrative structure, there have always been concerns about misuse of position, privileges and authorities delegated to government officials and agents.

In this regard, one of the interviewees [14] acknowledged: *“Sometimes even talking to the monitoring and negotiation agencies can remove many of obstacles and problems made by law because they may be convinced and suggest a key. For example, our organization, “North-East Cartographic Center of Iran”, has been merged with the "Management and Planning" organization and now we are in fact a part of it but not completely. Why?*

Because according to the decision taken by general manager of economic and financial affairs of the province, sale and transfer of surplus government property is one of the requirements of the budget law. This year's budget emphasizes the sale of surplus property due to economic problems and we do not want to lose this building because we may need it in the future, so upon the advice of one of the experts of tax organization, we did not evacuate the organization completely so that it would not be subject to this law”.

one of the other interviewees [13] expressed his opinion about problems of judicial system, especially inequality between punishment and crime: *“in our country, punishment assigned for a crime is so light that it cannot stop a crime but in other countries, for example for a crime in the United States, life imprisonment may be considered which is a big punishment but in our country, the maximum sentence for the same crime may be 6 years of imprisonment. When laws lose their effectiveness people move towards violation”.*

Corruption in the judiciary, lack of judicial independence, influence of the executive branch over the supervision and inspection systems, pressure of influential groups inside and outside the organization, disproportionate punishments, Propaganda and ochlocracy, lack of attention to the necessity of punishment of managers with deviant behaviors, inefficient administrative organization, complexity of laws, unnecessary regulatory burdens, ineffective managers, lack of meritocracy and the existence of discrimination in recruitment and promotion, failure in encouragement and punishment systems and in monitoring and evaluation systems , etc. which have already been discussed in detail under separate codes have created a turbulent political, legal and governmental environment in which individuals misuse available conditions by means of moral licensing so as to compensate their trampled rights. In addition, the complex and multi-layered processes of administrative affairs encourage clients to offer bribes to employees so that they do their work as fast as possible. On the other hand, low salaries of social service workers are the reason for the gradual decrease in their resistance to accepting bribery. Therefore, political and governmental conditions are among the most important underlying factors effective on using moral licensing and directing social and economic conditions.

4.1.6. Mediating conditions

In Glaser’s approach and in six Cs family, conditions refer to the mediating variables formed before emergence of the results obtained from the core category. In this study, the

consolidation of the social and organizational reputation of the individual is a category that has been considered as a mediating factor.

- **Consolidation of personal, social and organizational reputation and credit**

When it comes to prestige and social prestige, it is necessary to distinguish between these two relatively similar concepts, prestige or reputation or charisma, shows the view and respect of others to the person according to the personality and past behaviors of the person. Although it is an acquired concept as social validity, it is formed during the development of personality along with individual and social identities. But social prestige, outside the scope of personal efforts of individuals to achieve success and professional and material positions in various jobs and professions, is focused on prestige and respect that by voluntarily participating in social activities without any material or immaterial expectations, they provide their time, expertise and knowledge to the public.

In this study, the consolidation of reputation and social and organizational reputation of the individual is considered as a mediator in relation to moral licensing and deviant work behaviors. The cases mentioned are taken from conversations that have been expressed in various ways in the opinions of the interviewees.

According to one [8] of them: *“In my opinion, and according to your explanations on the subject of moral licenses, when a person receives a moral license, it means that he has gained such prestige and credibility due to his brilliant deeds and background that not only no one believes that such a person does something wrong and deviant that no one considers his act of deviation and violation as a violation and deviation, that is, he does not really want to admit that the action of such a person is wrong (cognitive bias). For example, in the corruption case of one of the country's banks, a trace of a cleric in this case was reported with a general investigation. As you know, the clergy, as representatives of religion and morality and advocates of justice in society, are highly regarded and trusted by the people, although corruption and perversion may have existed in any dress and position. And another important issue is that a person does not become a criminal, corrupt and criminal overnight, and this person in our example certainly had other deviant actions, which may have been approved by his prestigious position in society. But in this case, the tolerable threshold has probably been exceeded”*.

Another interviewee [9] believed: *“Or like the presence of some ministers or people's representatives and trustees in corruption cases, which we often hear in the news and press, all these people are trusted by the people and the people have trusted them and voted for them, so in my opinion until There is no reason for this level of progress in violations and deviations except the moral licenses that they have gained and the credit that has been given to them by the people and the trust that the people have given them”*.

Another interviewee [4] said: *“Many of us when we want to do something, before doing that, we think about the consequences of it, especially in our culture, where these concerns are even greater because in a way it is not just the individual and his actions that are judged. And in doing many things that we want to do, in addition to personal reputation, we also consider family, ethnic, national, group reputation, etc. Now, if such conditions are provided, in my opinion, and considering the events that we see in the community or in organizations, the number of people who have moral authority and are sure that their prestige, reputation, and position are the same as before are very few, but they do not act according to their own desires and goals”*.

In fact, it can be said that the first result obtained from a moral license is the individual assurance of one's maintaining reputation, prestige, personality and social and organizational popularity, maintaining one's social and organizational status. If this result is final for the person, the next results will be created following this.

4.1.7. Consequences

The results usually refer to the consequences that the phenomenon of moral authorization may have for the organization and the individual. In this study, the consequences of moral authorization are divided into two categories of primary consequences and secondary consequences, which will be discussed below.

4.1.7.1. Preliminary consequences

Moral authorization increases people's sense of entitlement deviant behavior. Psychological entitlement is a pervasive emotion that reflects a person's worthiness worth more than others (Campbell & et al., 2004). According to research, psychological competence not only reflects a personality trait but can also manifest itself as a temporary state (Snow, Kern & Curlette, 2001; Zitek & et al., 2010). In moral license, too, individuals, by citing past

positive and admirable deeds or by having unique or special qualities, deprive themselves of such psychological merit, temporarily and to the extent that moral licenses allow them, to engage in Deviant behaviors are known.

- **Deviant work behaviors**

Deviant work behaviors, as the first consequence of moral licensing, refer to deviations and deviations from organizational norms and do's and don'ts and practices that are not only in the eyes of the individual but also in the eyes of others is considered permissible and does not damage credibility and reputation of employees in the organization. Formation of deviant work behaviors with different goals such as constructive deviant behaviors such as breaking the law with the aim of performing organizational tasks more efficiently and effectively or with the aim of helping colleagues to perform their respective tasks optimally or to provide better services to the client, or destructive deviant behaviors such as stealing or personal use of state property to realize the lost rights of oneself and even colleagues, or immoral and unprofessional behavior which is considered permissible to a certain extent and does not damage the reputation of the person. If this result (formation of deviant work behaviors) is achieved, it creates the ground for secondary consequences. These codes are taken from the opinions of the interviewees who have referred to it in various ways in their interviews.

For example, one interviewee [12] said: *“When the word 'permissible' or 'moral authority' comes up, other perversions lose their negative and perverted meaning, just like someone sitting in the back of an ambulance doing a rule while performing a mission can be excluded from law enforcement for a series of violations such as crossing a red light, overtaking from the right, etc... Moral permissions and the deviant behaviors that follow are similar”*.

Another interviewee [13] said: *“In any case, there are many examples of such behaviors in our organizations, and when a person sees himself in the permissible conditions, especially with the current economic conditions and the conditions that affect our organizations in terms of payment, high workload and injustice, he believes that he deserves much more than he receives, so he may take actions and behaviors to compensate for what he deserved and did not receive which does not comply with the do's and don'ts, norms and*

organizational values, Suppose he does little or nothing, overthrowing or negligence, and constantly postponing the client's work or indulging in illness and taking sick leave and despite these permissions, there will never be negative perceptions of such behavior”.

Another interviewee [14] states: *“Moral licenses and perversions are a very important and thought-provoking issue, and depending on the source of these licenses and to what extent, they can be a much worse result of theft and personal use of government property and breaking the law and abusing colleagues, especially newcomers to the organization - because they are not yet very familiar with the atmosphere of the organization - to bring corruption and embezzlement on a large scale for organizations”.*

Based on the results and based on the central theme of this research, it can be said that the first result that is obtained from the phenomenon of moral license is the occurrence of deviant work behaviors, and although these licenses lead to maintaining prestige and credibility, but as a result of some normal violations and deviations are shown and the fact that people have a special right to this phenomenon, has led to the creation of a misconception in society and organizations, which has various secondary consequences, which are referred to below.

4.1.7.2. Secondary consequences

- Attitude consequences

One of the important secondary consequences of moral authorization is attitude consequences. Cognitive biases, which in fact refer to deviations from the norms and principles of judgments, lead to wrong understanding and decision making. Wrong individual biases such as steadfastness in beliefs and backwardness and social biases such as authority bias the tendency to attribute greater accuracy to the opinion of an authority figure as one of the characteristics of moral licensing cause individuals and employees to lose the ability to analyze and distinguish right from wrong so that they accept no criticism. In this regard, one of the interviewees [11] believed: *“like a child who has always made a hero in mind from his own father and now that he has grown up he does not want to believe that his father is addicted or a criminal, we may misunderstand the characters of figures such as politicians, clergymen or reference figures in the organization such as our managers and supervisors. Even if we know they are wrong, we oblige ourselves to their*

obedience and do not allow ourselves to disobey. It causes deviations and mistakes to take root like a cancerous gland and lead to the destruction of the organization. The experience of South Korea in the country's airlines is one example. In the years between 1997 and 2000, South Korean airlines had the most plane crash deaths so that the planes of this country were banned from flying over Europe. According to the investigations, the cause of none of these accidents was technical defect of the plane because at that time, Korea, as an industrial country, had good relationships with the world and had the best planes. Rather, it was due to the culture of respect for the high-ranking officials in this country which is a dominant culture in other countries in East Asia. In fact, as it was identified through investigation of conversation between pilots and co-pilots, the most common reason of the crashes that coworker was aware of the pilot's mistake but since questioning and criticizing the pilot was considered rude, he avoided to say a word and such a behavior led to irreparable accidents. Organizations are not exception”.

Another cognitive consequence of moral licensing is the loss of employee motivation. Achieving a position and promotion based on merits are among the motivational factors that everyone in organizations seeks to achieve. But when some managers or high-rank employees with moral licensing promote those with no enough merits and capabilities or they themselves are promoted while they are not qualified, employees inevitably lose their motivation.

One of the interviewees [5] stated: *“When it is observed in the organization that one of the colleagues is given this right to replace his child with himself after he is retired because he has served in the front while his child has diploma but we are not promoted after 12 years, we automatically lose our motivation. Thank God, such rules have been amended for several years but until recently, it was a common practice in organizations and was implemented”.*

Moreover, the other cognitive consequence of moral licensing is the reduction or even loss of trust among employees. Trust is defined as an employee's feeling of confidence that the organization will perform actions that are beneficial. When one builds trust at workplace by taking actions such as organizational citizenship behaviors and so on but misuses it and goes against norms he will damage the built trust although he tries to justify his actions.

In this regard, one of the interviewees [1] told: *“Actions that lead to the acquisition of moral licensing build a degree of trust which will be faded by wrong or deviant behaviors. Such behaviors are no longer justifiable because first they should come to halt second, to rebuild a trust after damaging is impossible to occur”*.

Another cognitive consequence of moral licensing is the loss of values and beliefs of individuals.

In this regard, one of the interviewees [13] believed: *“In my opinion, moral licensing paves the way for justification of mistakes, deviation and violations. In other words, it ruins conscience which is often accompanied by religious values. In this way, employees can easily use government property, which is the treasury because they think they have right to do so and it is not wrong”*.

Attitude consequences actually refer to the results and consequences that affect people's attitudes and mindsets about work, organization, and colleagues. Attitude consequences are derived from codes such as cognitive bias, loss of motivation of employees for sincere services, distrust of employees to each other, loss of values and beliefs and deviation from primary that over time due to spread of moral licensing can cause deviant behaviors. Such behaviors may cause no damage to the reputation and the reliability of individuals and they may consider it as a tool to regain their trampled rights.

- Systemic consequences

Unfortunately, moral licensing reduces the sensitivity of managers, employees and control systems to inconsistency between operational outcomes and high level organizational goals. At the inception, each organization sets high organizational goals and visions as a roadmap, benchmark, and guide for determining realistic and achievable futures but moral licensing encourages employees to turn away from the goals and ideals through changing the criteria, especially in long term.

As one of the interviewees [2] told: *“This is a natural thing. When I violated the organizational rules because of moral licensing, the conditions for deviation from organizational goal will be provided. The consequences do not emerge in short-term but in long-term”*.

It has already been discussed in detail how legal ambiguities and contradictions give individuals and employees moral licensing to circumvent the rules but the fact is that if the very first aim of circumventing and breaking the rules is to solve the problems related to execution of such ambiguous and contradictory rules, breaking a rule will no longer be obnoxious and it changes into a tool for realizing of personal goals.

In this regard, one of the interviewees [9] stated: *“a habit is easy to repeat. The same is true about circumvention. The first time, a rule is circumvented on the pretext of organizational benefits. The second time, it is done on the pretext of going through a work in benefit of the clients. Then gradually, they learn how to circumvent a rule without any damage to reputation”*.

According to the moral licensing theory, those who have moral licenses can act much more easily according to their desires and preferences than those who do not and it leads to the trampling of employees rights and reducing job satisfaction. It is not possible for them to obtain a moral licensing.

In this regard, one of the interviewees [3] admitted: *“in the organization, when you see ones as members of special groups such as ... and ... with unrelated education in the position of management (one of the hospital wards) are filling important vacancies like the specialist physician while others with a long experience with dealing with patients and working in hospital ward are deprived of such chances you can conclude that rights of deserved employees are trampled and the job satisfaction is reducing”*.

Moral licensing, due to cognitive distortion causes this damage that people make mistakes in the analysis and interpretation of events, judgments and decisions, which, in turn, in the organizational environment may lead to incorrect recruitments or the removal of efficient, elite and expert people.

One of the interviewees [15] commented: *“I think religion is one of the channels that gives people moral licensing, I do not mean some religions are superior but someone who is more committed to religious principles is more justified and trustworthy in the eyes of the public. This unfortunately or fortunately has become an almost basic criterion in employment in our organizations. Of course, although religious beliefs may be important, they do not guarantee performance in the organization. In our organization, two employees have been recruited, one with BIT from one of the top universities of Swiss and*

other who in terms of expertise was not a patch on his colleague and was a religion person. The first was removed from the system less than 4 months after his recruitment. The question is why?? Because, unfortunately, all the behaviors, movements, and even suggestions that he presented in his field of expertise were mistakenly considered as a kind of westernization”.

All cases show that moral licensing can rise chaos in organization so that as interviewees told, we are forced to work in a chaotic work environment due to moral licensing we give to ourselves and others. Unfortunately, nothing is in the right place and deviation from the initial goals. Increase the culture of circumventing, justification mistakes and deviations, trampling on employee rights, reducing job satisfaction, incorrect appointments in organizational positions, removing of efficient employees and etc. were codes obtained from the interviews.

4.2. Findings

As it was said earlier, 119 primary codes were identified in the phase of open coding. In selective phase, the codes obtained from open coding were changed into 63 secondary codes and this set was classified into 14 classes. In table 4-1, are seen the codes and the concepts obtained from this phase. Moreover, it should be noted that each code was elicited from verbal signs of the interviewees which in previous sector were presented.

Table 4.1. Codes and classes resulted from data analysis in selective coding

Class	number	Secondary code
Managerial factors	1	Irresponsibility of managers
	2	Indecisiveness of manager in dealing wrong behaviors
	3	Style of management
	4	Infirmity of pressure levers available to managers
	5	Rely on power of position
Rules and regulations	6	Ambiguity of rules and regulations
	7	Silence of the law
	8	Inflation of rules and contradiction in rules and acts
	9	Improper context to execute of the rules
	10	Unwritten rules and principles

The special climate of the governmental system	11	Trust in skillful opinion of experts and specialist
	12	Absence of precise criteria and standards for performance
	13	lack of meritocratic for advancement
	14	Possibility of power seeking in organization
	15	Corruption in organization
Human resources management system(HRMS)	16	Recruitment policies in public administrations
	17	Weakness of monitoring and evaluation system
	18	Lack of feedback mechanism
	19	Good work not appreciated
	20	Weakness of Service compensation
	21	Over -qualification
Organizational relationship	22	Priority of the personal relationship over regulations
	23	Interference between job and friendship
	24	Membership in particular or influential groups
	25	Relationship with power source
Acquired characteristics	26	Exclusive job skills
	27	Combatant past
	28	Voluntary actions
Organizational culture and workplace	29	Ignoring misbehavior
	30	Islamic kindness as an excuse
	31	Slippery slope of misbehavior
	32	Changing anti-values into values
Personal Characteristics	33	Jealousy and emulation
	34	Lack of commitment and working with a conscience
	35	Weakness of moral identity
	36	Affectation of religious
Cultural and social conditions	37	Social inequality and injustice
	38	Absence of institutionalization respecting rules
Economic conditions	39	Unhealthy economy(sanctions, inflation)
	40	Unemployment
	41	Lack of job security
	42	Income and expenditure inequality

Political conditions	43	Chaotic legal environment and systems of government
	44	Corruption in jurisdiction
	45	Inequality between punishment and crime
Consolidation personal, social and organizational reputation and credit	46	Maintenance of reputation, prestige, personality and social and organizational popularity
	47	Maintenance of social and organizational status
deviant workplace behavior (DWB)	48	Positive deviant work behaviors
	49	Negative deviant work behaviors
	50	Nonprofessional behaviors
Attitude consequences	51	Cognitive biases
	52	Loss of motivation of employees for sincere services
	53	Distrust of employees to each other
	54	Loss of values and beliefs
Systemic consequences	55	Deviation from primary goals
	56	Spread of circumvention of the rules
	57	Trampled rights of employees
	58	Decrease in job satisfaction
	59	Unlawful appointment in organization positions
	60	Removal of efficient , expert and elite employees
Characteristics of moral licensing	61	Cognitive bias (Logical Fallacy) and deviation from correct judgment
	62	Justification of faults and deviations
	63	Maintenance of reliability of individuals

In the next phase and after substantive (open and selective) coding, theoretical coding is performed. As we said above, it is possible to investigate relationship between substantive codes in theoretical coding so as to integrate them as a given hypothesis. In this case, the codes obtained from the phase of substantive (open and selective) coding were integrated based on six Cs family. In total, theoretical coding in next phase leads to the formation of a model which is replaceable in six Cs family of Glaser's approach. The final shape of this model is shown in figure 4.1.

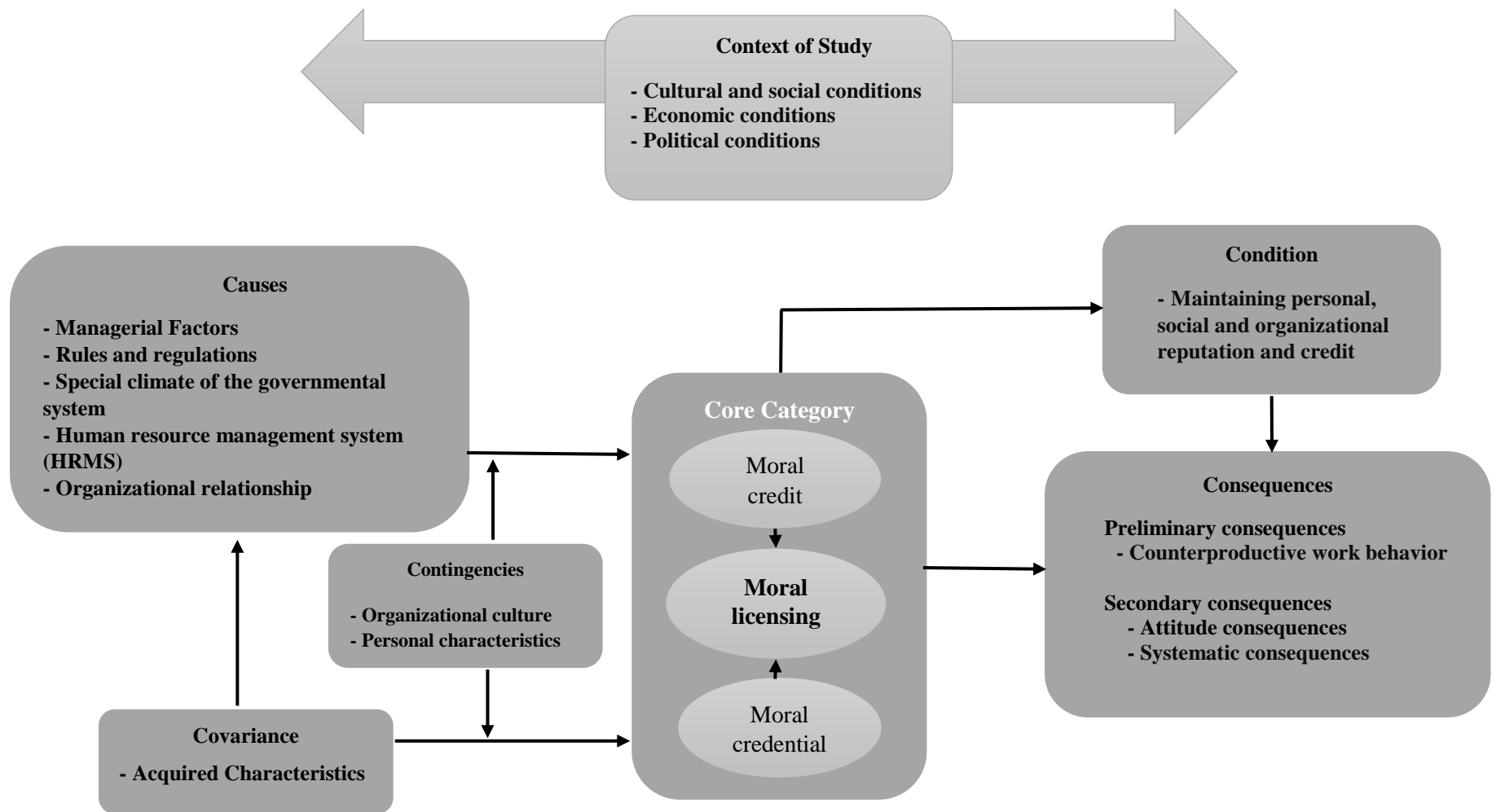


Figure 4.1. Final Conceptual Categories

The elements present in the model of the study, are 6 categories and one core category put in six Cs family. Coding in six Cs family is as follows:

- 1) The first C is causes which refers to causes or reasons. In fact, it is a description for causes of occurrence of core category in the study (Kan & Parry, 2004). In this study, the main causes which lead to the formation of core category of the study, that is moral licensing, were: managerial factors, rules and regulations, special climate of the governmental system, human resources management system (HRMS) as well as organizational relationships. In fact, the results from data analysis indicates this basic principle that due to above causes, a condition emerges where individuals obtain moral licensing and show more voluntary deviant behaviors.
- 2) The second C is covariance. It refers to the set of factors which have correlation with causes of the basic process of grounded theory so that it can influence on the basic causes in a way that those causes may change (Kan & Parry, 2004). In the present survey, acquired characteristics of an individual are considered as the only factor correlated with core category because a person is not able to get a moral licensing unless he has a positive behavioral and professional background.
- 3) The third C is contingencies which refers to factors mediating the relationship among categories (Kan & Parry, 2004). In the present survey, contingencies include: organizational culture and personal characteristics, which mediate the relationship between core category and the results obtained.
- 4) The forth C is condition which introduces mediator variables between the main factors and consequences and conveys the effects of the core category to consequences (Kan & Parry, 2004). In this survey, mediating variables are those that form before emerging of consequences of core category. Mediating variable in this study was at first maintaining personal, social and organizational reputation and credit.
- 5) The fifth C is consequences which refers to the consequences of core category (Kan & Parry, 2004). In this study, consequences of core category are divided in to two categories; preliminary and secondary consequences. Preliminary consequences were counterproductive work behaviors and secondary consequences were attitude consequences and systematic consequences.

6) The sixth C is context which refers to the context of an environment in which the study is done (Kan& Parry, 2004). Context here shows three main characteristics: cultural and social conditions, economic conditions as well as political conditions.

As can be seen, in this study, a model for moral licensing as a predictor of counterproductive work behavior in public administrations was presented which in comprehensive view is depicted causes, covariance, contingencies, condition, consequences and context. This conceptual model not only helps to the depth understanding of moral licensing phenomenon but also facilitates the provision of solutions to deal with this phenomenon.

Chapter Five: Discussion and Conclusion

In this chapter, first, a summary of the actions and processes performed in this research is presented, and to provide a comprehensive and coherent picture of the present study, the findings of the research are discussed and concluded and also compared with previous studies. Finally, an attempt has been made to present the innovation and the role of the findings of this study in advancing knowledge as well as its applications in organizational societies, and finally, practical suggestions for future research and the limitations of title research have been presented.

5.1. Review of the research process

The purpose of this study was to gain a deep understanding of the phenomenon of moral licensing and to discover the causes and consequences of moral licensing in public sector organizations by using data theory and the Glaserian approach (appearing). In this regard, in the first chapter, the issue of research, the necessity, and importance of research, and research questions were discussed in detail. In the second chapter of this study, by reviewing the theoretical background and related research in this field, an attempt was made to improve the researcher's level of theoretical sensitivity while modeling to properly organize and compile research processes and questions, and also to enable the researcher to find bias. Minimize previous studies to adopt a qualitative approach and data theory strategy.

In the next step, interview questions were compiled and data were collected. To collect data, semi-structured in-depth interview tools were used and after each interview and writing the recorded interviews, the data were first coded manually and then using MAXQDA software. Therefore, the process of open and axial coding began with the analysis of each phrase and sentence.

In the same way, coding process continued until the central category final categories and concepts was identified until the final theoretical model of research emerged to explain the phenomenon of moral license.

5.2. Discussion

The present study, through a qualitative approach and by identifying the causes of formation and consequences of ethical licensing in public sector organizations to develop

the theory of ethical licensing, has achieved significant results that can provide a broader understanding of this concept in provide the literature of organization and management and eliminate the gaps and ambiguities associated with it to a large extent.

In this way and as mentioned before, in most early research in the field of moral licensing, good past practices and past ethical behaviors - especially in organizations, the emergence of organizational citizenship behaviors are considered as the only source and reference for obtaining moral licenses. While the causes and factors that lead to the formation of deviant behaviors in the organization without compromising the reputation, credibility, and reputation of the person and the person is not considered wrong from the point of view of others (moral license), is much broader than previously thought. In other words, according to Robin Hood's logic, the causes and factors that make obvious immoral behavior justifiable and acceptable and turn a sense of morality into a mirage for both offenders and observers are more than is what has been imagined so far. Therefore and as innovation of this study, with a comprehensive look at this phenomenon, the variety causes and factors affecting the formation of moral licensing have been identified. Furthermore, most studies in the field of moral licensing have considered the consequences of the moral licensing phenomenon in general and assumed deviant behaviors, while this study uses a qualitative approach and the strategy of data theory to identify the consequences of this phenomenon in the organization. To sum up, the present study, which is also part of the basic research, with the aim of comprehensive understanding of moral licensing phenomenon, has to some extent contributed to the development of theoretical foundations of research in the field of ethical licensing.

However, I should mention, this study, like other researches in the field of ethics and deviant behaviors, has faced several limitations, which can impose weaknesses and shortcomings on its findings and results. Therefore, it is important to point out these limitations, which are listed separately below.

- As mentioned before, the model of this study is dependent and based on the field of study, so it limits the possibility of its application and generalization to other contexts and communities, and, this issue, the ability to generalize and reduces its vulnerability.
- Another limitation of this study is related to some biased or conservative orientations that could have prevented the interviewees from providing completely honest

information. It is therefore assumed that some of the interviewees sometimes provided unrealistic data out of intent and caution and conservatism.

In this study, both from the perspective of the offender (cause of tolerance of deviant behaviors of offenders to others) and from the perspective of third parties (the reason for the desire of observers to issue moral authorization of deviant behaviors of others), as well as the impact of social environment on moral licensing, which was also mentioned by Lazaro and Hoffman (2018) in their study, tried to develop the theory of moral licensing, which seems that the results and findings of this study can be considered from several aspects:

In response to the first question of this study on the constituent elements of moral licensing, it is noted that moral licensing through two mechanisms of moral credits (such as bank account, individual with storage and savings of good and moral behaviors, this is possible for him to use this account to engage in deviant and counterproductive behaviors) and moral credentials (background and behavior history of the individual has led to a change in the interpretation of future behaviors as if these behaviors have never been abusive or immoral), provides the ground for expressing selfish preferences and behaviors, as well as the possibility of voluntary deviation from self-control.

In the moral license, the mental processes that take place in the minds of the wrongdoer as well as the observers can be identified in three stages: cognitive bias and deviation from correct judgment, justification of mistakes and deviations, preservation of prestige and reputation, which provides the formation of deviant behaviors in the organization without damaging the reputation. The set of well-known features together form a moral license that distinguishes it from other similar concepts. For example, the moral license emphasizes the preservation of the dignity, credibility, and reputation of individuals, which in this respect distinguishes the moral license from the situational license mentioned by Miller and Effron (2010). Reasons for people to worry about being morally discredited and losing their reputation, even in cases where their attitudes and preferences are not in themselves immoral, they refuse to express.

Another feature of moral license is the formation of cognitive bias (logical fallacy) in the mental processes of the offender and observers, leading to deviation from correct judgment, which in this respect is different from moral cultivation because, unlike moral permission,

individuals are subject to cognitive bias. In moral cultivation, individuals under the influence of cognitive cleansing display an inverse sequence of behaviors and actions that occur in the moral license to revive the moral image (Simbrunner & Schlegelmilch, 2017). Moral licensing as the manifestation of an unconscious psychological state is considered as a justification for less moral behaviors and the person never consciously performs a good and desirable action to engage in deviant behaviors but as a justification for his past desirable behaviors. Uses immoral and deviant behaviors that differ from perception management in that the individual deliberately and consciously tries to create or change his or her image in the eyes of observers to achieve his or her personal goals (Blanken, van de Ven & Zeelenberg, 2015). Also, people who care a lot about other people's perceptions and the way they think about themselves may have many justifications for mistakes, along with the various tactics and ways they use to shape other people's perceptions and the deviations they have committed can also be used to shape the perceptions of others, but the reverse is not possible, meaning that the tactics and strategies of perception management will not work to gain moral licensing. Because efforts and even moral behaviors that are specifically aimed at influencing others, not only do not pave the way for moral authorization but, if exposed, provide the basis for punishment and punishment against the individual (Effron & Monin, 2010).

Behavioral entropy has similarities with the concept of moral licensing in that involuntarily and unknowingly, desirable and moral behaviors tend to immoral and deviant behaviors (Gatling & et al., 2017). Which lead to the formation of entropy of behavior and moral authorization, as well as the preservation of prestige and credibility, the two are different because in moral authorization the prestige and prestige of the individual are maintained from the perspective of others and the individual is never by colleagues or supervisors. Self is not recognized as an offender, but the entropy of behavior as a major challenge for organizations by changing positive behaviors to negative and abnormal organizational behaviors, the person's reputation is reduced to the same extent, and managers usually look for solutions to deal with These are challenges and retain your deserving employees.

In addition to the proposed characteristics, the formation of moral authority is based on the previous desirable, worthy, moral, and positive actions on this basis, and concerning the findings of this study, the characteristics and acquired honors. The employees that are

acquired during their service period and have in their work experience is one of the effective and inseparable factors in the formation of the phenomenon of moral licensing in organizations because according to theories such as moral balance. (Monin & Jordan, 2009), self-deprivation (Lin & et al., 2016), self-regulation (Mithaug, 1993) and cognitive inconsistency (Bolino & Klotz, 2015), as frameworks for explaining the phenomenon of moral authorization, these ethical traits and acquired honors of individuals, leading to feelings of exhaustion or increasing fluctuations in moral behaviors, as well as deviations from the level of balance and cognitive inconsistencies, cause the person to return to moral capacity and balance. Initially, it is permissible to reduce or stop previous moral behaviors and even to take advantage of situations and deviations that follow, and these violations and abuses are acceptable to the point of moral balance will be accepted.

Therefore, according to the moral license, deviant behaviors are allowed only up to the limit of moral balance and prevent the person from being discredited. Therefore, the acquired characteristics and honors of individuals have a significant role and importance in the formation of the phenomenon of moral authorization in government organizations and are among the inseparable causes in the formation of the phenomenon of moral authorization.

As mentioned earlier, according to moral licensing theory, if an individual or in particular organizational employees receive ethical licensing, they can potentially be considered a wrongdoer (Miller & Effron, 2010). However, what are the preconditions and factors that underlie the emergence of moral authorization in public sector organizations and cause the offender to be out of the potential state and engage in deviant behaviors, are the results that are shown in response to the second question of this study; which explains moral authority in a broader context than has ever been identified.

The first of the identified categories in the category of causes.

Although the category of causes can be classified into a general category called managerial factors, but due to the importance of each of the identified factors, they are classified into more specific and separate categories. Concerning ethical licenses and organizational violations, it should be noted that just as organizational violations can be divided into multiple categories, from temporal and functional violations to anti-citizenship violations,

the response to such organizational violations maybe by factors other than the past moral and desirable behaviors of the wrongdoer should be cleared (filtered).

Specifically, according to the results of this study, the reactions of observers to violations and deviations may be (filtered) by several factors, including management factors, rules and regulations, the special climate of the governmental system, human resource management system and organizational communications, which depends on the desire of observers, giving credit to wrongdoers can be effective.

Managerial factors in the occurrence of the moral licensing phenomenon, mainly related to the role of managers in the formation of the moral licensing phenomenon, which based on the findings of this study, including managers' irresponsibility, manager's indecision towards wrong behaviors, management style, and infirmity of pressure levers available to managers and rely on the strength of the management position. The known cases in this category of overlaps with some of the known factors in previous research that have played a role in the occurrence of the phenomenon of moral authorization have overlaps that can be compared in this area. For example, Polman et al. (2013) in their study examined the impact of social status and status to obtain moral licensing, which is a social acceptance for violating moral and social norms. They found that offenders with high social status, such as politicians and managers (through the ethical credentials mechanism), as well as offenders with low social status (through the credit mechanism, pity, and compassion), as a justification for their deviant behaviors, we're able to the acquisition of the moral license, which in this study also overlaps with the factor of "reliance on the power of management position", which is identified in the category of managerial factors affecting the formation of moral license.

Although the role of other managerial factors in the occurrence of deviant behaviors has been studied in several studies (Yen & et.al, 2013; Bibi & et al, 2013), but rarely the impact of these factors in the formation of moral license and subsequent it deals with the formation of deviant behaviors. For example, the management style of managers and the type of performance of managers at the top of the organization as a determining and directing factor in all organizational affairs, if it indicates irresponsibility and behavioral and functional deviations, certainly in proportion, the context of employee avoidance. It also provides other organizational levels and moral licenses to achieve personal goals. The

inefficiency of punishment programs and levers of pressure in the hands of managers, as well as the manager's indecision in dealing with wrong behaviors, is a sign of a kind of moral license from the highest organizational position that paves the way for the continuation and even development of deviant behaviors without destroying reputation and destruction of employee credit.

The second category of identified causes for the formation of moral authority are laws and regulations. Cornellisen & et al. (2013) found in their study that the moral mentality of individuals, depending on whether it is outcome-oriented or law-oriented, moderates the effects of an ethical act or an immoral act on the formation of moral or immoral behaviors. Accordingly, if the moral mentality of individuals is result-oriented, it is more likely to form a moral license, but if the moral mentality of individuals is law-oriented, it is more likely to continue the previous moral behaviors. By generalizing the results of this study to the level of the organization, it is assumed that, if the goals and organizational processes are also law-oriented as opposed to result-oriented the possibility of forming a moral license will be reduced.

Of course, it should be noted that laws and regulations can perform their important task to guide organizational activities that are expertly and accurately set and have stability, but unfortunately the ambiguity in the laws, the silence of the law in some cases, inflation of laws, the lack of a proper platform for law enforcement and the existence of unwritten laws in the organization can provide the basis for the formation of moral licensing.

With regard to rules and regulations, although in various studies (Solum, 1987; Edwards, 2006) have been addressed to the ambiguous or unfair rules in the formation of deviant behaviors which in this study are considered as the consequences of moral authorization, but there has never been any talk of how these factors pave the way for moral licensing.

Ambiguity in laws due to creating grounds for inferring two or more meanings and results from laws, or inadvertent silence of law in some cases, as well as excessive inflation and sometimes contradiction of laws with each other, lack of proper platform for law enforcement and the existence of laws by creating bias and deviation from correct judgment, the unwritten in the organization, provides the possibility of justifying mistakes and escaping from the law for violators and law-breakers without destroying their reputation.

The third category of identified causes that lead to the formation of moral licensing is the specific climate of the government system. The factors identified in this category, such as delegating authority and trust in the opinion of experts and the appointment of incompetent people in organizational positions or in other words, lack of meritocratic, explain a new approach using the moral licensing mechanism in previous findings. On the one hand, according to theories of power and position (Magee & Galinsky, 2008; Fragale & et.al., 2011), people with high social status or power due to expertise, the possibility of receiving approvals, social and attribution to positive traits, and consequently increase the likelihood that their deviations and violations will be ignored (Fiske & et al., 2002; Fragale & et.al., 2011).

Uncertainty about the exact output of employees' duties causes employees to use ambiguities and express ignorance to obtain ethical permission, which in this regard, Miller and Effron (2010) found in their study, Statement of ignorance, the ground for a positive interpretation and optimal behaviors and sometimes ambiguous violations are provided. Also, Polman et al. (2013) found in their study that observers observed deviant behaviors of violators with lower status such as employees by expressing sympathy to them, moral credit, in other words, moral licenses.

Corruption and mafia structures are other special conditions of the government system that provide the basis for the formation of moral licensing, which indicates the flawed processes that are organized in the sense that in the administrative structure due to the existence of defective laws - as discussed earlier - and centralism in government institutions allow statesmen, politicians, and those in power to engage in corrupt rents and financial relationships, sometimes legally and with moral justification.

The fourth category of identified causes that lead to the formation of ethical licenses is the mode of operation and policies governing the human resource management system. In the field of human resource management, in several studies, the impact of factors such as the weakness of the service compensation system (Gläser & et al, 2017), the incompatibility of working skills with job requirements (Mumtaz & et.al, 2015), the impact of monitoring and evaluation system (Tuzun & Kalemci, 2018) on the occurrence of deviant behaviors in the organization, but how these factors and other factors identified in this study, such as formal employment, lack of an effective system to follow the criticism and suggestions leading to

the formation of ethical licenses and maintenance reputation and credibility when engaging in deviant behaviors are not mentioned.

The disregard for honest service of employees (good work not appreciated), including the codes identified in the field of human resource management, as one of the factors in the formation of moral licenses overlaps with the findings of Skyvington (2014) because he found in his study,

employees deviate despite the anticipated sanctions and punishments, and to explain this relationship, he states that the positive and constructive actions and services of employees, the negative voluntary and deviant behaviors of employees that form follow the abusive behaviors of supervisors - such as underestimation of services honest staff – adjust.

Also in relation to the weakness of the service compensation system and the incompatibility of working skills with job requirements, which in some way refers to injustices and inequalities and waste of employees' rights in the organization, with the findings of Spector and Fox (2005) based on that employees may engage in organizational citizenship behaviors and deviant and counterproductive behaviors as a way to address organizational injustice.

The last category of identified causes that lead to the formation of moral licenses is organizational communication. These causes include the primacy of the relationship over discipline, the interference between job and friendship, membership in specific and influential groups, and contact with power bases, which lead to obtaining ethical licenses in the organization. Bradley et al. (2010), in their study found that having a positive interaction with a member of a minority group (such as a religious or racial minority) led to a moral justification for future prejudice against such groups (minority groups). It becomes ethical through the accreditation mechanism, and thus, these researchers have emphasized the importance of the role of communication in shaping ethical authorization.

The second known category is the category of covariance, which in this study includes acquired characteristics. In general, several studies have pointed to the role of acquired characteristics and honors under different headings on the formation of moral licensing. This requires that these characteristics, actions, and behaviors be in the realm of ethics and that they be evaluated as good and positive in themselves so that even reminding them can lead to the misuse of licenses. In this regard, Blanken et al. (2015) in their study by meta-

analysis, by examining several independent variables that lead to skillful guidance of licenses, also identified the dependent variables or their consequences. For example, recalling good traits leads to employees' tendency to pretend to be ill at work in a hypothetical scenario of not attending a meeting (Blanken, Van de Ven & Zeelenberg, 2012) or thinking about things they have done voluntarily.

They have shown to what extent individuals have exceeded what is set in the general budget (Clot & et al., 2013b) as well as individuals who have a high degree of creativity and creative behaviors in their behavior, have received lower scores in assessing personality traits such as honesty and humility (Vincent & Polman, 2016).

These and several other studies (91 studies) conducted by Blanken et al. (2015) in their research, compare the factors that lead to the formation of moral licenses in control conditions, as well as the modulators of the license. Ethics and the extent of their impact are mentioned. They found that recalling moral actions and behaviors could have greater moral authorization effects while recalling moral traits leads to the continuation of previous moral behaviors.

They argued that recalling a moral act or behavior indicates progress and moving toward a moral goal and that in one's future choices between doing the right thing and morally versus acting and behaving following personal interests, it is moral. Being a goal becomes less important for a person, because a person who has already tried to achieve a moral goal, so in the next stage, his interests and interests are given priority. They also found that the effect of moral authority varies depending on whether moral behavior and actions are objective or hypothetical. For example, the effect of a moral license when a person has donated money to charity is different from when a person intends to donate such money.

Possessing exclusive skills and expertise, having a history of self-sacrifice (combatant past) are other characteristics and acquired honors known in this study, although in the studies reviewed in the field of moral licensing, these factors are less specifically mentioned; but voluntary actions is another known factor in the category of acquired characteristics and honors, which of course with organizational citizenship behavior in the findings of several studies such as (Skyvington, 2014; Bolino & Klotz, 2015; Yam & et. Al, 2017, Klotz & Bolino, 2013), corresponds.

The third known category concerns the moderating factors in the relationship between causes and the central category (contingencies), which includes factors such as organizational culture and personal characteristics.

Previous research has placed great emphasis on the role of intercultural differences in shaping moral licensing. According to the theory of moral self-regulation, the intensity of the effects of moral license is rooted in one's moral self-concept. This self-concept, in turn, is based on an understanding of ethics derived from one's cultural background. Ethical standards are primarily acquired through socialization processes and therefore depend on the cultural environment in which one grows and interacts throughout one's life (Simbrunner, & Schlegelmilch, 2017). Therefore, the cultural background can be considered as an important and influential factor in issuing moral licenses. Organizations are no exception to this principle, and different cultures governing different organizations and how and with whom employees go through the process of organizational socialization upon entering the organization can be an important and influential factor that be considered in the formation of moral license. For example, to what extent the culture of organizational silence prevails in the organization and employees ignore problems and deviations, how to deal with violations and deviant behaviors, and the possibility of the phenomenon of deprivation (frog principle or bicycle effect) in an organization, ignoring mistakes due to belief in Islamic kindness or out of compassion and forgiveness, hesitation and instability of values and the tendency to turn values into anti-values, which are all considered as a kind of cultural dimension of an organization. All of them can influence the formation of moral license.

Personality traits are another moderating factor influencing the formation of moral licenses and the abuse of acquired licenses so that a person who is potentially a wrongdoer by obtaining a moral license deprives him of the potential state turns out and becomes the wrong person. The presence of personality traits such as jealousy and emulation, lack of commitment and conscientiousness, weak moral identity, and pretense of religiosity increase the likelihood of abuse of acquired licenses and subsequent deviant behaviors. In previous studies, moral identity and the possible role of individual differences have been mentioned as a modifying factor about moral licensing, and if the individual's actions are in areas that are insignificant in terms of moral identity, it causes past moral behaviors to

authorize the individual to take contradictory actions. On the other hand, Aquino and Reed (2002) developed a self-assessment criterion of moral identity that determines the morality of a person's identity. According to them, moral identity is the basis that people use to define themselves. Besides, the dimensions of moral identity effectively predict a variety of moral behaviors. According to the theory of moral identity, people who attach great value and importance to morality, more than others, maintain their moral consistency and originality over time. Regarding the pretense of religiosity in the previous studies of Simberoner and Ashlglamish (2017), they believe that considering oneself as a believer and a religious person is one of the factors that give people moral permission. Stangel (2020) also stated that religious people may interpret their beliefs and beliefs as an achievement. Therefore, believing in the correctness of religious beliefs is the basis of its extreme self-belief and subconsciously lead to self-justification and belief bias and reduce their trans-social behaviors.

The fourth known category is the bedrock and contextual factors that refer to the macro-level factors influencing the formation of moral authority. This category includes factors such as social and cultural conditions, economic conditions, and political conditions. Although most studies in the field of moral licensing focus on the "individual" and focus less on contextual factors.

However, Simberoner and Ashlglamish (2017) elaborate on the moderating role of culture to form a moral license. According to their findings, considering the cultural background, different cultures in different parts of the world have different views on moral issues. For example, very few Europeans value the role of religion in life as a determining factor, while in other parts of the world, such as North America or Southeast Asia, the role of religion in life is of particular importance. Similarly, around the world, the importance of altruism and forgiveness as a value in child-rearing varies. For example, while 44.3% of Thais and 32.7% of Americans surveyed believed that altruism and forgiveness are important behavioral traits that should be taught to children, only 5.9% of Germans Participants agreed (Ward, 2014). Regarding moral licensing, research has shown that the impact of moral licensing is stronger in North America than in Western Europe. In addition, the effect of moral authorization in the opposite direction (moral cultivation) occurs in Southeast Asia. Although common historical roots and cultural, political, and economic ties have

given rise to many fundamental values in common between North America and Western Europe. They are nevertheless in some respects related to ethics, especially their perceptions of what constitutes moral or immoral behavior differ. According to these results, the effects of moral licensing in different regions with different cultural backgrounds can be different. Also, Lazaro and Hoffman (2018), in their study, have examined the impact of the social environment on moral licensing.

In previous studies, the role and impact of underlying factors such as economic and political conditions in the field of moral licensing have been less mentioned, however, in the field of moral licensing, the role of these factors is prominent, which should be considered as unfavorable economic conditions, inflation, unemployment, job insecurity, disproportionate wages and benefits to the cost of living, and distancing oneself from the simplistic culture of promoting luxury culture and raising expectations, especially when people feel they are entitled to it through political systems and the economy is damaged, provides the ground for obtaining moral licensing.

Furthermore, political conditions such as corruption in the judiciary, lack of complete independence of the judiciary, the influence of the executive branch and on the supervisory and inspection apparatus, pressure from influential groups. Inside and outside the organization, disproportionate punishments, espionage, and rioting, advice to protect offending managers from punishment, inefficient administrative organization, the complexity of laws, regulations and the number of administrative directives and instructions, ineffective managers, lack of meritocracy and the existence of discrimination in the field of employment and promotion of people, inadequacies in the system of encouragement and punishment and the system of supervision and evaluation, etc., which have created a turbulent political, legal, and governmental environment that often gives individuals a moral license to exploit available resources to realize their violated rights.

The fifth and sixth categories in this study refer to the mediating factors and consequences of ethical authorization in government organizations. Based on these results and based on the central theme of this research, it can be said that the consolidation of the reputation and social and organizational credibility of the individual is considered as a mediating factor in relation to moral authorization and its consequences. So that when a person ensures the preservation of reputation, prestige, personality and social and organizational popularity,

maintaining his social and organizational status, subsequent consequences, classified as primary outcomes, or deviant work behaviors, and secondary outcomes, or attitudinal and systemic consequences, are represented.

Deviant work behaviors, as the first consequence of moral authority, cause individuals to invoke past positive and admirable works or to have special or rare specialties or attributes are considered a special right for themselves to act according to their own wills and preferences and to be involved in deviant behaviors.

In this study, the interviewees referred to various deviant behaviors –as primarily consequence- in a wide range of dimensions, including symbols of work, underemployment, theft, personal use of government property, circumvention of the law, abuse of colleagues, subordinates, particularly newcomers to the organization, embezzlement, etc. In previous studies, although deviant behaviors caused by moral authority have been mentioned, but rarely exactly the type of deviant behavior has been mentioned, such as Klotz and Bolino (2013) or Yam et al. (2017), who generally refer to deviant and immoral behaviors resulting from moral authorization. Among them, Lin, Ma & Johnson (2016) in their study referred to the abusive behaviors of leaders towards their followers due to emotional fatigue and mental analysis, as well as the moral licenses and credentials that they have gained through previous moral behaviors. Similarly, Harvey and Matinko (2009) in their study believed that when employees feel competent, they are more likely to get involved in interpersonal conflicts.

The combination of these factors has led to the creation of misconceptions in society and organizations, as a result of which violations and deviations appear to be normal and will have secondary consequences such as attitudinal and systemic consequences.

Attitude consequences identified in this study such as attitude bias, loss of trust among employees, loss of motivation of employees to serve honestly, and loss of values and beliefs. Also, the systemic consequences of obtaining and granting ethical licenses in the organization, deviation from lofty goals, promoting a culture of circumventing the law or justifying mistakes and deviations, violating employees' rights and reducing job satisfaction, incorrect appointments in organizational positions and jobs, elimination and the dismissal of efficient, elite, and professional individuals has led to the fact that the known consequences in this study are somewhat in line with some of the consequences that

researchers have identified in various studies of deviant behaviors. For example, Duffy et al. (2006) point to three behavioral outcomes, health and well-being, and the behavioral consequences of social wear, which are consistent with some of the consequences identified in this study.

On the other hand, some researchers such as Vardi and Weitz (2004), in addition to pointing to social costs, mental and physical injuries, isolationism, job dissatisfaction, financial costs, complaints and compensation as a consequence of deviant behaviors in the organization, It has also been pointed out that the reputation of individuals is tarnished, that this dimension is different from the consequences of moral authorization because, with the spread of the phenomenon of moral authorization, deviant behaviors become prevalent that not only endanger the reputation of individuals. It is considered as permissible and unjustly creates a special right for individuals. It should be noted that some of the consequences of identifying the phenomenon of ethical licenses, such as attitudes bias, loss of motivation of employees to perform honest service, injustice, and abuse of employees' rights, can themselves be the necessary basis for the formation of licensing phenomenon. Provide a moral and in some way it can be concluded that there is a kind of reciprocal relationship between some of the consequences and causes of moral authorization. Based on this argument, it can be said that the model presented in this study is somewhat dynamic in the sense that the model resulting from the analysis and interpretation of data is not interrupted by achieving results and consequences and opens to other categories of research. Hence, this model is dynamic in terms of rotation and is not static.

5.3. Suggestions

In this section, based on the results obtained in this study, an attempt has been made to provide practical suggestions for organizations, managers, as well as suggestions for future research.

5.3.1. Implication for practice

According to the results of this study, laws, and regulations are one of the reasons that provide the basis for issuing moral licenses in government organizations. Therefore, paying attention to this issue and enacting practical laws following the facts and organizational needs, enacting strong laws that reduce the possibility of interpretation to a minimum, also

in some cases deregulation is of particular importance and may it can be very instructive. On the other hand, unfortunately, the cost of committing violations in our country, and especially administrative violations in government organizations, is very low, which has reduced the deterrent power of punitive measures and fines, so measures should be taken to ensure that violations Punishments should be considered. In addition to these cases, what is of particular importance is the principle of equality of all before the law so that the famous proverb "If they are ordered to get drunk in the city, whatever they are" can fully illustrate this fact. Therefore, according to experts in this field, the executive guarantee of some laws and regulations is still incomplete, it is necessary to make arrangements for the effective implementation of laws and regulations to be taken for all.

Although the use of strong, fast, effective, and regulatory mechanisms for evaluating the evaluation system is of particular importance to many experts and pundits. However, due to the costly nature of regulatory methods, it highlights the need to pay attention to improving culture. Educating and strengthening the culture of self-control is one of the most basic measures to counter the formation of moral authority. In this regard, and based on the experience used in Malaysia, if employees report their violation in person, they will not only not be punished, but will be encouraged and rewarded; Because there is a belief that the mistake of a country expert will be subversive because based on the wrong expert opinion, important decisions are made that may have irreparable consequences. In this way, not only the culture of self-control but also in a way, expertise is imbued with commitment, and the organization will witness the activities of responsible and committed employees. Another important step is to correct the behavior of top managers and officials as a model for employees in the organization and individuals in the community, who sometimes abuse their power or access to communication channels, have allowed themselves to use the privileges that it has never been legally allowed to use it. Perhaps much of the culture-building and correction of such destructive behaviors should be done through the spread of a culture of critique and critique. In this case, the possibility of fair criticism is provided for the critics by stating the reasons and avoiding the destruction of character. In order to promote the culture of criticism and liquidity in the organization and based on the experiences of other countries, managers can prepare a complete report on issues, problems, and events that have occurred in their organization in recent years and ask their

employees. Take a critical look at the root of the problem and offer solutions so that they no longer witness such events in the organization.

Another important solution to prevent the formation of a moral license is transparency. Although the phenomenon of whistling and the growth of cyberspace and the media has greatly contributed to information transparency if the work procedures are precise and clear and the work is based on a logical system (electronic citizen) and transparent contracts. If there is a correct and understandable for the parties to the contract and there is the necessary knowledge about the rules and regulations and the do's and don'ts and duties, people will be deprived of the opportunity and permission to obtain a moral license.

The importance of leadership style and management of managers on the performance and behavior of employees and preventing the occurrence of ethical licenses is not hidden from anyone. When the leadership style is dictatorial and dictatorial and there is no right to express an opinion, opposition, or even dare to ask the manager, constructive interactions between managers and employees will certainly disappear and rarely signs of injustice and feelings of abuse. Salaries will emerge from employees and subsequent moral authorization. Therefore, it can be said with certainty that the era of authoritarian management is over and participatory and paternalistic management styles should be used by managers and supervisors because only in this case, organizational silence is left aside and people can be raised. They find their issues and when employees feel that they are being listened to for their issues, problems, and concerns, subconsciously use excuses and excuses to bypass managers or supervisors or even pay laws, will disappear. It will disappear if it is done correctly. Also, through awareness-raising to managers to recognize this phenomenon and how the phenomenon gives moral permission to mental prejudices and their deviation from the correct judgment to be mind-aware and aware of their actions and those of subordinates in line with the goals, it can greatly prevent the destructive effects of the ethical licensing phenomenon in the organization.

As mentioned earlier, shortness of breath refers to the principle that feelings of exhaustion due to work pressures and high self-control lead to a decrease in self-control in subsequent actions and behaviors so that the person is more likely to be exposed to temptations and Increases offensive motivation. Therefore, the presence of a psychological team in the

organization that can help employees and managers in difficult working conditions with heavy responsibilities can be very helpful.

Also, this important principle should not be overlooked that to have a healthy society and especially a healthy organization, it is necessary to have individuals and employees who are physically and mentally healthy, so according to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, if the basic needs are final. Justice will be provided, naturally, the needs of higher levels will be formed, and if people are still involved in the needs of lower levels, one can never expect morals and correct behavior from people, so fair compensation system and payment commensurate with the merits of individuals as well as economic conditions. It is of special importance.

The existence of precise and specific criteria for recruitment, evaluation of employees' performance as well as the promotion of employees are a set of factors that can lead to the formation of ethical licenses, therefore, such criteria should be specified accurately and expertly and at its discretion. And personal opinions are distanced, the possibility and possibility of acting based on personal motives and circumventing the rules and norms and organizational do's and don'ts will be reduced.

5.3.2. Future research

This study was conducted in the spatial territory of government organizations in Mashhad, and since the model of this study is based on the context and context of its study, to overcome this limitation and due to structural differences between the private sector and the sector government, it is suggested that this research be conducted in other sectors and areas, especially the private sector, as this can provide a broader understanding of this phenomenon and the possibility of a comparative comparison between this study and the studies conducted, to enable in different areas and sectors.

The present study has been done only in quality method, so it is suggested that the model presented in this study be tested quantitatively in public sector organizations and to examine the accuracy of the relationships between the various categories.

Future researchers are also suggested other concepts such as social filth and moral indifference as social psychological phenomena that both emphasize the concept of reducing the sense of responsibility for avoiding moral transgressions and deviations and

are very similar to the concept of moral authorization. Link and compare in a social context with the phenomenon of moral authorization.

To sum up, voluntary deviation from self-control that is generally called moral licensing, is a phenomenon in which an individual, through depending on various factors especially previous appreciable behaviors and activities, vindicates his/her immoral and counterproductive behaviors without any concern about losing his prestige and esteem; on the other hand, by considering various factors, individual's immoral and counterproductive behaviors is also justifiable for spectators. Prevalence of moral licensing in work environment can cause destructive consequences for organizations and their employees, including attitudinal orientations and deviation from logical principles in judgments, impairment of values, prevalence of a culture for circumventing the law and vindication of mistakes and deviations, employees' rights suppressing and occupational injury. According to undesirable consequences of this phenomenon for individual, organization and society, was tried to study this phenomenon comprehensively and beside of identifying the causes and factors affecting the formation of moral licensing, its consequences were identified and solutions to deal with them were presented.

References

- Ajzen, I., Timko, C., & White, J. B. (1982). Self-monitoring and the attitude–behavior relation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 42(3), 426.
- Aquino, K., & Reed, A. II. (2002). The self-importance of moral identity. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 83, 1423–1440.
- Arkes, H. R., & Blumer, C. (1985). The psychology of sunk costs. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 35, 124-140. Doi: 10.1016/0749-5978(85)90049-4
- Bar-Tal, D., Raviv, A., & Leiser, T. (1980). The development of altruistic behavior: Empirical evidence. *Developmental Psychology*, 16(5), 516.
- Batson, C. D. (1987). Prosocial motivation: Is it ever truly altruistic?. In *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 20, pp. 65-122). Academic Press.
- Baumeister, R. F., & Juola Exline, J. (1999). Virtue, personality, and social relations: Self- control as the moral muscle. *Journal of personality*, 67(6), 1165-1194.
- Bem, D. J. (1972). Self-perception theory. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 6, 1-62. Doi: 10.1016/S0065- 2601(08)60024-6
- Bibi Z., Karim J., ud Din S. (2013) "Workplace incivility and counterproductive work behavior: Moderating role of emotional intelligence", *Pakistan Journal of Psychological Research*, 28(2): 317-334.
- Bicchieri, C. (2006). *The grammar of society: The nature and dynamics of social norms*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Blanken, I., Van de Ven, N., & Zeelenberg, M. (2012). [A variety of studies on the self-licensing effect]. Unpublished raw data.
- Blanken, I., van de Ven, N., & Zeelenberg, M. (2015). A meta-analytic review of moral licensing. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 41(4), 540-558.

- Bolino, M. C., & Klotz, A. C. (2015). The paradox of the unethical organizational citizen: The link between organizational citizenship behavior and unethical behavior at work. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 6, 45-49.
- Bradley, J., King, E., Hebl, M. & Skorinko, J. (2010). Moral credentialing by association: The importance of choice and relationship closeness (manuscript submitted for publication).
- Brañas-Garza, P., Bucheli, M., Espinosa, M. P., & García-Muñoz, T. (2013). Moral cleansing and moral licenses: experimental evidence. *Economics & Philosophy*, 29(2), 199-212.
- Campbell, W. K., Bonacci, A. M., Shelton, J., Exline, J. J., & Bushman, B. J. (2004). Psychological entitlement: Interpersonal consequences and validation of a self-report measure. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 83, 29–45. http://dx.doi.org/10.1207/s15327752jpa8301_04
- Clot, S., Grolleau, G., & Ibanez, L. (2013b). Anti-social behavior and self-licensing: Experimental evidence from a gangster game. Presented at 30. Journées de Microéconomie Appliquée, Nice, FRA (2012-06-06- 2013-06-07). Retrieved from: <http://prodinra.inra.fr/record/264362>
- Corbin, J. M., & Strauss, A. (1990). Grounded theory research: Procedures, canons, and evaluative criteria. *Qualitative sociology*, 13(1), 3-21.
- Creswell, J. W. (2002). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative*. New Jersey: Upper Saddle River.
- Cornelissen, G., Bashshur, M. R., Rode, J., & Le Menestrel, M. (2013). Rules or consequences: The role of ethical mindsets in moral dynamics. *Psychological Science*, 24, 482-488. doi:10.1177/0956797612457376
- Cropanzano, R., Mitchell, M. S. (2005). Social Exchange Theory: An Interdisciplinary Review. *Journal Of Management*, 31(6). 874-900
- Dalal, R. S. (2005). A meta-analysis of the relationship between organizational citizenship behavior and counterproductive work behavior. *Journal of applied psychology*, 90(6), 1241.
- De Clercq, D., Haq, I. U., & Azeem, M. U. (2019). Time-related work stress and counterproductive work behavior. *Personnel Review*.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2005). Introduction: The discipline and practice of qualitative research. In N. Denzin, & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed., pp. 1-32). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Duffy, M. K., Ganster, D. C., Shaw, J. D., Johnson, J. L., & Pagon, M. (2006). The social context of undermining behavior at work. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 101(1), 105-126.
- Dütschke, E., Frondel, M., Schleich, J., & Vance, C. (2018). Moral licensing: Another source of rebound? (No. 747). *Ruhr Economic Papers*.
- Edwards, M. A. (2006). Law and the parameters of acceptable deviance. *J. Crim. L. & Criminology*, 97, 49.
- Effron, D. A., & Monin, B. (2010). Letting people off the hook: When do good deeds excuse Transgressions? (Manuscript submitted for publication).
- Effron, D. A., Miller, D. T., & Monin, B. (2012). Inventing racist roads not taken: The licensing effect of immoral counterfactual behaviors. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 103(6), 916.
- Effron, D. A., & Conway, P. (2015). When virtue leads to villainy: Advances in research on moral self-licensing. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 6, 32-35.

- Elliott, M., & Lazenbatt, A. (2005). How to recognize a 'quality' grounded theory research study. *Australian Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 22(3): 48-52.
- Fishbach, A., & Dhar, R. (2005). Goals as excuses or guides: The liberating effect of perceived goal progress on choice. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 32, 370-377.
- Fiske, S. E., Cuddy, A. C., Glick, P., & Xu, J. (2002). A model of (often mixed) stereotype content: Competence and warmth respectively follow from perceived status and competition. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 82, 878-902.
- Flint, D. J. (1999). Change in customers' desired value: A grounded theory study of its nature and processes based on business customers' lived experiences in the United States automobile industry.
- Fragale, A. R., Overbeck, J. R., & Neale, M. A. (2011). Resources versus respect: Social judgments based on targets' power and status positions. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 47, 767-775.
- Freedman, J. L., & Fraser, S. C. (1966). Compliance without pressure: The foot-in-the-door technique. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 4, 195-220. Doi: 10.1037/h0023552
- Gangestad, S. W., & Snyder, M. (2000). Self-monitoring: appraisal and reappraisal. *Psychological Bulletin*, 126(4), 530.
- Gatling, A., Shum, C., Book, L., & Bai, B. (2017). The influence of hospitality leaders' relational transparency on followers' trust and deviance behaviors: Mediating role of behavioral integrity. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 62, 11-20.
- Gawronski, B. (2012). Back to the Future of Dissonance Theory: Cognitive Consistency as a Core Motive. *Social Cognition*, 30(Special Issue: Threat Compensation in Social Psychology: Is There a Core Motivation?): 652-668
- Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1967). *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. Hawthorne, NY: Aldine De Gruyter.
- Glaser, B. G. (1978). *Theoretical sensitivity: Advances in the methodology of grounded theory*. Sociology Pr.
- Gillham, B. (2000). *Case study research methods*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Glaser, B. G. (2002). Conceptualization: On theory and theorizing using grounded theory. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 1(2), 23-38.
- Glaser, B. G., & Holton, J. (2005). Staying open: The use of theoretical codes in grounded theory. *The Grounded Theory Review*, 5(1), 1-20.
- Glaser, B. G., & Holton, J. (2007). Remodeling grounded theory. *Historical Social Research/Historische Sozialforschung*. Supplement 19(32), 47-68.
- Gläser, D., van Gils, S., & Van Quaquebeke, N. (2017). Pay-for-Performance and interpersonal deviance. *Journal of Personnel psychology*.
- Golparvar, M., Dehghan, S., & Mehdad, A. (2014). Relationship between emotional exhaustion and deviant behaviors: Moderating role of big five personality traits. *International Journal of Scientific Research in Knowledge*, 2(6), 285.
- Goldman, M., Seever, M., & Seever, M. (1982). Social labeling and the foot-in-the-door effect. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 117(1), 19-23.
- Guba, E. G., and Y. S. Lincoln (1989). *Fourth generation evaluation*, Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Harvey, P., & Martinko, M. J. (2009). An empirical examination of the role of attributions in psychological entitlement and its outcomes. *Journal of organizational behavior: the*

- international journal of industrial, Occupational and Organizational Psychology and Behavior, 30(4), 459-476.
- Haselton, M. G., Nettle, D., & Andrews, P. W. (2005). The handbook of evolutionary psychology. The evolution of cognitive bias, 724-746
- Heckert, A., & Heckert, D. M. (2002). A new typology of deviance: Integrating normative and reactivist definitions of deviance. *Deviant Behavior*, 23(5), 449-479.
- Hernandez, C. A. (2010). Getting grounded: Using Glaserian grounded theory to conduct nursing research. *Canadian Journal of Nursing Research Archive*, 150-164.
- Hollander, E. P. (1958). Conformity, status, and idiosyncrasy credit. *Psychological Review*, 65, 117-127.
- Hsi, E. (2017). An Examination of Predictors of Counterproductive Work Behaviors: Personality Traits and Transformational Leadership.
- Ilie, A. (2012). Unethical Pro-Organizational Behaviors: Antecedents and Boundary Conditions. Dissertation For The Degree Of Doctor Of Philosophy. College of Arts and Sciences University of South Florida.
- Jawahar, I. (2001). Attitudes, self-monitoring, and appraisal behaviors. *Journal of applied psychology*, 86(5), 875.
- Jordan, J., Mullen, E., & Murnighan, J. K. (2010). On the pendulum of moral action: The effects of own and others' past moral actions on future moral behavior (manuscript submitted for publication).
- Kan, M. M., & Parry, K. W. (2004). Identifying paradox: A grounded theory of leadership in overcoming resistance to change. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 15(4), 467-491.
- Kerr, N. M. (2011). Creating a protective picture: A grounded theory of how medical-surgical nurses decide to follow a "charting-by-exception" policy on a day-to-day, patient-by-patient basis. Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey-Newark.
- Khan U, Dhar R (2006) Licensing effect in consumer choice. *J Mark Res* 43(2):259-266
- Klotz, A. C., & Bolino, M. C. (2013). Citizenship and counterproductive work behavior: A moral licensing view. *Academy of Management Review*, 38(2), 292-306.
- Kuran, T. (1997). *Private truths, public lies*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Lasarov, W., & Hoffmann, S. (2018). Social Moral Licensing. *Journal of Business Ethics*. Doi: 10.1007/s10551-018-4083-z
- Levers, M. J. D. (2013). Philosophical paradigms, grounded theory, and perspectives on emergence. *Sage Open*, 3(4), 2158244013517243.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry* (Vol. 75). Sage.
- Lin, S. H. J., Ma, J., & Johnson, R. E. (2016). When ethical leader behavior breaks bad: How ethical leader behavior can turn abusive via ego depletion and moral licensing. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 101(6), 815.
- Litzky, B.E, Eddlestone, K. & Kider, D. (2016). "The good, The bad, and the misguided:How manager inadvertently encourage deviant bihaviors". *Academy Of Management Perspectives*, 149(5), 91 -103.
- Locke, K. (2001). *Grounded theory in management research*. Sage.
- Magee, J. C., & Galinsky, A. D. (2008). Social hierarchy: The self-reinforcing nature of power and status. *Academy of Management Annals*, 2, 351-398.

- Maples-Keller, J. L., Berke, D. S., & Miller, J. D. (2016). Ego depletion and conscientiousness as predictors of behavioral disinhibition: A laboratory examination. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 98, 6-10.
- Marshall, C, and Rossman, G. B. (1999), *Designing Qualitative Research*, Newbury Park, CA. Sage Publications Inc.
- Mazar, N., & Zhong, C. B. (2010). Do green products make us better people?. *Psychological Science*, 21: 494-498.
- Miller, D. T., & Effron, D. A. (2010). Psychological license: When it is needed and how it functions. In *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 43, pp. 115-155). Academic Press.
- Merritt, A. C., Effron, D. A., & Monin, B. (2010). Moral selflicensing: When being good frees us to be bad. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 4, 344-357. doi:10.1111/ j.1751-9004.2010.00263.x
- Miller, D. T., Effron, D. A., & Zak, S. V. (2009). From moral outrage to social protest: The role of psychological standing. In D. R. Bobocel, A. C. Kay, M. P. Zanna, & J. M. Olson (Eds.), *The psychology of justice and legitimacy: The Ontario symposium* (Vol. 11, pp. 103-123). New York: Psychological Press.
- Miller, D. T., & Prentice, D. A. (1994). Collective errors and errors about the collective. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 20, 541-550.
- Mithaug, D. E. (1993). *Self-regulation theory: How optimal adjustment maximizes gain*. Praeger Publishers/Greenwood Publishing Group.
- Monin, B., & Jordan, A. H. (2009). The dynamic moral self: A social psychological perspective. *Personality, identity, and character: Explorations in moral psychology*, 341-354..
- Monin, B., & Miller, D. T. (2001a). Moral credentials and the expression of prejudice. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 81, 33-43.
- Monin, B., & Miller, D. T. (2001b). Testing mediators of the moral credentials effect. Unpublished data.
- Moorhead, G., and Griffen R. W., (1995). *Organizational Behavior*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston.
- Moorhead, G & Griffin, R.W. 1996. *Organizational Behavior*. New Jersey: Princeton.
- Muafi, J. (2011). Causes and Consequences of deviant workplace behavior. *International Journal of Innovation, Management and Technology*, 2(2), 123-126.
- Mueller, A. B., & Skitka, L. J. (2015). Licensed to lie: Evidence for moral licensing in persuasive communication contexts. Unpublished raw data.
- Mumtaz, A. M., Rohani, S., & Mohamed, N. R. (2015). Linking person-job fit, person-organization fit, employee engagement and turnover intention: A three-step conceptual model. *Asian Social Science*, 11(2), 313-320
- Murphy, K. R. (1993). *Honesty in the workplace*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.
- Nisan, M. (1991). The moral balance model: Theory and research extending our understanding of moral choice and deviation. In W. M. Kurtines & J. L. Gewirtz (Eds.), *Handbook of moral behavior and development*, Vol. 1. Theory; Vol. 2. Research; Vol. 3. Application (pp. 213-249)

- Petros, S. & Georgios, Ch. (2016) "Modeling employees behavior in workplace dynamics" *Journal of Computational Science*, 5 (5), 821-833.
- Polman, E., Pettit, N. C., & Wiesenfeld, B. M. (2013). Effects of wrongdoer status on moral licensing. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 49(4), 614-623.
- Robinson, S. L., & Bennett, R. J. (1995). A typology of deviant workplace behaviors: A multidimensional scaling study. *Academy of management journal*, 38(2), 555-572.
- Sachdeva, S., Iliev, R., & Medin, D. L. (2009). Sinning saints and saintly sinners: The paradox of moral self-regulation. *Psychological Science*, 20, 523–528.
- Saunders, M., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2009). *Research methods for business students* (5th ed.). Prentice Hall, Financial Times: Pearson Education.
- Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2016). *Research Methods for Business Students* Edinburg.
- Schlegelmilch, B. B., & Simbrunner, P. (2019). Moral licensing and moral cleansing applied to company-NGO collaborations in an online context. *Journal of Business Research*, 95, 544-552.
- Seçilmiş, E. (2017). An experimental analysis of moral self-regulation. *Applied Economics Letters*, 25(12), 857–861. doi:10.1080/13504851.2017.1374530
- Simbrunner, P., & Schlegelmilch, B. B. (2017). Moral licensing: a culture-moderated meta-analysis. *Management Review Quarterly*, 67(4), 201-225.
- Skyvington, S. (2014). License to misbehave: Organizational citizenship behavior as a moral license for deviant reactions to abusive supervision (Master's thesis, University of Waterloo).
- Snow, J. N., Kern, R. M., & Curlette, W. L. (2001). Identifying personality traits associated with attrition in systematic training for effective parenting groups. *The Family Journal*, 9, 102–108. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1066480701092003>
- Snyder, M. (1974). Self-monitoring of expressive behavior. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 30(4), 526.
- Solum, L. B. (1987). On the indeterminacy crisis: Critiquing critical dogma. *The University of Chicago Law Review*, 54(2), 462-503.
- Spector, P. E., & Fox, S. (2002). An emotion-centered model of voluntary work behavior: Some parallels between counterproductive work behavior and organizational citizenship behavior. *Human resource management review*, 12(2), 269-292.
- Spector, P. E., & Fox, S. (2005). The Stressor-Emotion Model of Counterproductive Work Behavior. In S. Fox & P. E. Spector (Eds.), *Counterproductive work behavior: Investigations of actors and targets* (pp. 151-174). Washington, DC, US: American Psychological Association. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/10893-007>
- Stangl, W. (2020). Stichwort: 'Moral Licensing'. Online Lexikon für Psychologie und Pädagogik. WWW: <https://lexikon.stangl.eu/16141/moral-licensing/> (2020-05-01)
- Stone, T. H., & Cooper, W. H. (2009). Emerging credits. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 20, 785–798.
- Tenbrunsel, A. E., Diekmann, K. A., Wade-Benzoni, K. A., & Bazerman, M. H. (2010). The ethical mirage: A temporal explanation as to why we are not as ethical as we think we are. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, 30, 153-173.
- Tuzun, I. K., & Kalemci, R. A. (2018). Workplace deviance and human resource management relations: A case study of Turkish hotel employees. *Journal of Human Resources in Hospitality & Tourism*, 17(2), 137-153.

- Vardi, Y., & Weitz, E. (2004). *Misbehavior in organizations: Theory, research, and management*. Psychology Press.
- Vincent, L. C., & Polman, E. (2016). 10 When being creative frees us to be bad. Cheating, corruption, and concealment: The roots of dishonesty, 166.
- Vveinhardt, J., & Zygmantaite, R. (2015). Impact of social context on strategic philanthropy: theoretical insight. *Procedia-social and behavioral sciences*, 214, 1165-1173.
- Ward, M. (2014). Cognition, culture, and charity: Sociolinguistics and “donor dissonance”. in aBaptist denomination. *Voluntas* 26(2):574–603
- Welch, J., & Welch, S. (2008). When a star slacks off. *Business Week*, March 5: 88.
- West, C., & Zhong, C.-B. (2015). Moral cleansing. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 6, 221–225. doi:10.1016/j.copsyc.2015.09.022
- Yam, K. C., Klotz, A. C., He, W., & Reynolds, S. J. (2017). From good soldiers to psychologically entitled: Examining when and why citizenship behavior leads to deviance. *Academy of Management Journal*, 60(1), 373-396.
- Yen T. Q., Tian Y., Sankoh F. P. (2013) "The impact of prevalent destructive leadership behaviors on subordinate employees in a firm", *American Journal of Industrial and Business Management*, 3(7): 595-600.
- Zhong, C., Liljenquist, K., & Cain, D. M. (2009). Moral self-regulation: Licensing and compensation. In D. De Cremer (Ed.), *Psychological perspectives on ethical behavior and decision making*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.
- Zitek, E. M., Jordan, A. H., Monin, B., & Leach, F. R. (2010). Victim entitlement to behave selfishly. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 98, 245–255. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0017168>

Appendix

Questionnaire

Title: Moral licensing as a predictor of counterproductive work behaviors in public administrations

Interview time:

Date of interview:

Interview location:

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

First of all, I would like to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation for announcing your agreement to participate in this interview. The present study is on ethical licensing as a predictor of deviant behaviors in public sector organizations. Before starting the interview, let me know that this interview has the following features:

A) The time allotted for this interview is 60 minutes and the interviewer tries to finish the interview within the maximum predicted timeframe.

B) All names and information collected in this interview will be considered completely confidential and the interviewer will be responsible for maintaining it.

C) Due to the large volume in the interview session and the impossibility of taking notes of all the content by the interviewer, with the consent of the interviewee in the interview session, a voice recorder will be used. Using a tape recorder is for convenience of use only and it has no formal and binding aspect in any way, and the tape recorder will be turned off at any point in the interview you wish.

D) The text of the interviews, if desired, will be provided to His Excellency by e-mail after implementation for correction of possible points and final approval.

Summary of the plan:

When employees recall their past admirable behaviors and actions, they feel more comfortable engaging in deviant or immoral behaviors. This phenomenon, called ethical licensing, provides employees with the opportunity to commit deviant and immoral behaviors that are contrary to group and organizational norms without fear of being discredited. It should be noted, however, that obtaining different types of licenses is required to remove various types of invalidity resulting from deviant and immoral behaviors. Ethical authorization can be considered as a process that removes deterrents to deviant behaviors and allows individuals to act more freely in practice and in accordance with their inner feelings, preferences, and desires, without regard to social and cultural norms. Thus, according to the ethical license theory, if an individual or in particular organizational employees have received a moral license, they can potentially be considered as offenders. Identifying the factors that eliminate the deterrents to engaging in deviant behaviors and giving the individual ethical authorization, is crucial in identifying how employees justify themselves for deviant and immoral behaviors in the organization, and provides an overview in relationship with employees' motivations and behaviors. It is inappropriate to justify immoral and deviant behaviors by invoking in any way, but nevertheless, such justifications that provide the ground for employees to avoid responsibility have been allowed to emerge at all levels of society, on the other hand, it has provided the ground for committing deviant and immoral behaviors. Over time, these behaviors have lost their value and become an organizational norm and a tool through which individuals and employees have the opportunity to achieve their bad desires and goals and find the opportunity to act and act in accordance with their selfish attitudes and desires. So the question that arises here, based on the ethical licensing approach, is: What

factors (in addition to past admirable behaviors, in other words, OCB organizational citizenship behaviors) give ethical licenses to employees of government agencies to engage in deviant and immoral behaviors? What will be the effects of this work for the organization and the employees of the organization?

To achieve these goals, the researcher has conducted in-depth and semi-structured interviews with managers and employees of government and public organizations in the city to find their views and opinions as the main source of information.

Interview questions:

- 1) According to the explanations provided in the summary section of the plan, what is your perception and definition of ethical license?
- 2) Have the employees or people under your supervision ever engaged in deviant or unethical behaviors that you think are justifiable? Give an example.
- 3) What factor has caused you to ignore their deviant or wrong behavior? What makes their behavior in the organization positive or not?
- 4) In your opinion, what methods do people usually use to obtain moral authority, for example (base of power or certain behavior or performance)?
- 5) What conditions in the organization can provide the necessary context for obtaining ethical licenses by employees?
- 6) Why is it common in your organization to obtain a moral license? Does it happen?
- 7) What are the consequences of obtaining a moral license and subsequently engaging in deviant and immoral behaviors for the organization?
- 8) What conditions can prevent the emergence of moral licenses?
- 9) What strategies (both individual and organizational) do you propose to prevent obtaining ethical licensing?

While appreciating and thanking you again for your help, the researcher hopes that the findings and results of this study can be a positive step towards improving the working environments of our beloved country.

