The Unexpected Financial Benefit of Unethical Work Behavior

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Abstract

Unethical work behavior is common and poses a global problem that has been largely overlooked in the context of consumer behavior. In this paper, we ask: Does the way in which consumers earn money affect what they decide to do with it? Contrary to lay beliefs that those engaging in unethical work behavior save less, we show across a series of seven studies that those engaging in unethical (vs. ethical) work behavior want to save more due to an increased desire for a fresh start. This effect generalizes across different types of unethical work behaviors, highlighting the importance of considering the systemic forces that affect consumers' financial decision-making.

Track: Consumer Behaviour