

REEXAMINATION OF THE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN ANONYMITY AND SELF-INTERESTED UNETHICAL BEHAVIOR IN ADULTS

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The well-established notion that the frequency of self-interested unethical behavior increases among anonymous people was reexamined employing a more strict definition of anonymity, voluntary unethical behavior, and adult individuals. Anonymity was defined as nonassociability of the participant's traits with respect to unethical behavior. The participant's identity and a monetary reward were manipulated as the independent variables, while cheating behavior was observed as the dependent variable. A sample of 143 undergraduate students were randomly assigned to 1 of 4 conditions (nonidentifiable-reward, identifiable-reward, nonidentifiable-nonreward, or identifiable-nonreward condition) to flip a coin twice in the experimental assignment. Results indicated that participants behaved differently depending on anonymity status and reward status. Implications for unethical behavior among anonymous individuals are discussed.