Repeating the Follies of the Past: A Regulatory Focus Perspective

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy under the Executive Committee of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

2012
ABSTRACT

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Adopting a regulatory focus perspective, I study why people repeat a prior behavior that could be unpleasant, ineffective, or unethical. Driven by the concerns to avoid negative deviations from the status quo, the prevention aspect of self-regulation (i.e., prevention focus) is associated with the motivation to maintain the status quo (Higgins, 2005). Previous findings showing a prevention focus motivation to maintain the status quo suggest that sticking with a precedent is a safe choice that fits with prevention focus. Putting this motivation to a more challenging test, nine studies show that maintaining the status quo is a deep motivation for prevention focus that transcends hedonic, utilitarian, and ethical concerns. Specifically, being in a prevention focus, either measured as a chronic disposition or induced as a psychological state, increases the likelihood of 1) copying the managing behaviors of a role model, even when these behaviors are perceived as unpleasant or ineffective (Studies 1-5), and 2) repeating one’s own choices regarding ethical behavior, regardless of whether the initial choice was ethical or not (Studies 6-9). Implications of this research and future directions are discussed.
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I especially thank my advisor E. Tory Higgins and dissertation committee members Michael Morris, Joel Brockner, Xiao-Ping Chen, and Malia Mason for their constant encouragement, support, and guidance. The research presented in my dissertation has benefited from comments and help from Guoquan Chen, Dolly Chugh, Baruch Eitam, Abigail Scholer, Elke Weber, Liad Weiss, Batia Wiesenfeld, Andy Yap, Chaolin Zhang, Xi Zou, members of the Higgins Lab at Columbia University, members of the Morris Lab at Columbia Business School, and participants at Columbia Micro OB Lunch. Part of the data were published at *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, and I thank Garth Fletcher, the associate editor, and the two anonymous reviewers for their editorial feedback. All errors are my responsibility.
INTRODUCTION

Repeating the follies of the past is never a remote phenomenon in our daily life. Not only do we witness others stumbling onto the same fault on a frequent basis, but few of us could deny immunity from such experiences ourselves. Repeating behaviors is not restricted to reproducing our own past behaviors; it is often manifested in our willingness to copy, or imitate, the behaviors of others, such as a parent, graduate advisor, or work supervisor, when we take on the same roles. Although some repetitions are beneficial from a learning perspective, others may lead to detrimental consequences. For example, copying an ineffective behavior of a bad boss can perpetuate a vicious cycle of strained work relations; repeating a small ethical misstep can lead individuals and organizations down a slippery slope of ethical degradation.

At first blush, repeating a behavior that produces unpleasantness, ineffectiveness, or unethicality appears to result from bounded rationality (Simon, 1955), which attributes suboptimal decisions to resource constraints, such as limited information, time, or cognitive capacity. However, bounded rationality would still predict a motivation to strive for rationality by maximizing utility functions under these constraints, which would produce different behaviors than simply keeping an existing course of action. Therefore, the rational elements in choices are unlikely to explain why people would repeat a problematic behavior. In fact, given the essential role of non-rational factors in decision-making such as goals and motives (Kunda, 1990; Simon, 1993), understanding when and why repetition occurs requires a motivational analysis. This raises the question that drives the present research: what motivational concern increases people’s tendency to repeat past behaviors, especially when these behaviors are unpleasant, ineffective, or unethical?
Drawing on regulatory focus theory (Higgins, 1997, 1998), I attempt to unpack the self-regulatory mechanism underlying repetition of a prior behavior. Specifically, I propose that the prevention aspect of self-regulation (i.e., prevention focus) motivates such repetition. Committed by either others or oneself, a prior behavior can establish the status quo (i.e., a precedent) by setting the benchmark for one’s behavior in similar situations, and repeating a prior behavior can reflect a motivation to maintain the status quo. Thus, the general purpose of my research is to investigate the relation between prevention focus and the motivation to repeat behaviors, as well as to evaluate the relative predominance of this motivation over other concerns such as hedonic, utilitarian, or ethical concerns.

I begin by identifying two forms of repetition. One form focuses on repetition of a prior behavior by another person, even when that behavior is perceived as unpleasant or ineffective. Specifically, I am interested in one’s choice to copy the managing behaviors of a role model (e.g., school grader, work supervisor) after one experiences these behaviors as their recipient and later takes on the same managing role. The second form of repetition focuses on repeating one’s own prior behavior that involves ethical issues. Specifically, I study one’s ethical choices when one is provided with two consecutive opportunities to behave unethically. I focus on these two forms of repetition not because they are the only ways to maintain the status quo, but because they are typical and illustrative examples of the phenomenon of interest.

Further, I draw on regulatory focus theory (Higgins, 1997) to analyze the self-regulatory processes behind repetition of a prior behavior, and hypothesize that the prevention aspect of self-regulation (i.e., prevention focus) motivates both forms of repetition, regardless of whether the prior behavior is unpleasant, ineffective, or unethical. These predictions are tested in both experimental and field studies, where prevention focus is either measured as a chronic
disposition or induced as a psychological state. Finally, I discuss the theoretical and practical implications of the findings, address the limitations of the current studies, and propose future directions of this research.

**Repeating Others: Copying the Managing Behaviors of a Role Model**

Driven by their social nature, people often exhibit behaviors that are strongly influenced by those of others. An example of such influence is copying or imitating the behaviors of others, especially when people later hold the same role as those others in a similar relationship: they behave like their same-sex parent when they become a parent, like their graduate advisor when they become a student advisor, or like their former work superior when they take on a similar role as manager. Indeed, people often copy a managing behavior from their former superior—parent, graduate advisor, or business manager—even if their earlier experience with this behavior was negative. In these cases, people are copying a managing behavior from someone else, called a role model, after directly experiencing this behavior earlier as its recipient. To date, most research on copying has focused on the importance of outcome expectations, whereby imitation is expected to be followed by positive outcomes (Bandura, 1977; Manz & Sims, 1981; Weiss, 1977, 1978). What has received less attention is the possibility that other motivational mechanisms may underlie copying. Is there a kind of motivational concern which would increase the tendency to copy independent of the outcomes that were experienced as a recipient of the role model’s managing behavior?

I define copying as repetition of a role model’s managing behavior after one directly experiences this behavior as its recipient and later takes on the same managing role in a similar relationship (e.g., grader-student, superior-subordinate). Compared with vicarious learning, which views behavioral change as an individual action through observation or imagination of a
role model’s behavior and related outcomes (Baer, Peterson, & Sherman, 1967; Bandura, 1977; Sims & Manz, 1982), copying occurs in an interpersonal context where recipients of a role model’s managing behavior acquire this behavior through direct experience, which may have produced dissatisfaction with this behavior. For example, students dislike a harsh grader, but some of them may choose the harsh grading when they later become graders, expecting dislike from their own students. Rather than only addressing the instrumental concerns about reward and punishment associated with a managing behavior, copying can involve a deeper motivation that transcends hedonic experience.

By definition, copying resembles perpetuation of role-related behaviors across similar relationships. Characterized by distinct patterns of behaviors, roles convey normative expectations for the behaviors of those who occupy these roles (see Biddle, 1986, for a review). For those who are new to an interpersonal role, a role model’s behaviors are often understood and interpreted as normative, and copying a role model’s behaviors thus indicates conformity to an interpersonal norm. Furthermore, normativeness lies in the characteristic behaviors associated with an interpersonal role, instead of the specific individual who occupies the role. Therefore, copying role-related behaviors facilitates the transmission of interpersonal norms across relationships.

Much of the evidence on norm transmission has been found in group settings where a norm constructed in a group is perpetuated by successive generations of new members (e.g., Boyd & Richerson, 1985; Henrich & Boyd, 1998; Weick & Gilfillan, 1971; Whiten, Horner, & de Waal, 2005). The transmission of group norms through generations of members suggests the possibility that individuals will copy interpersonal norms across similar relationships, especially when they see themselves as representative of a social position and are willing to fulfill their
roles in a norm-consistent way (Bates & Harvey, 1975; Burt, 1976; Winship & Mandel, 1983). However, not everyone acts out their interpersonal roles. Some prefer personal attitudes and beliefs to guide their actions (Janis & Mann, 1977; Turner, 1976). For example, a third of the participants in the Milgram study did not obey the experimenter’s orders all the way (Milgram, 1963). Neither did a quarter of the participants in the Asch experiment succumb to the group pressure (Asch, 1956). Therefore, even under strong normative influence, individuals vary in their tendency to behave in a norm-consistent way. For this reason, the tendency to copy a role model’s managing behavior may vary across individuals, depending on their motivation to fulfill the norms associated with an interpersonal role. However, it is unclear from the literature what factors may drive such individual differences and what underlying mechanisms can explain these differences. Adopting a self-regulatory perspective, I argue that the ways in which people self-regulate their behaviors during goal pursuit play an important role in their responses to norms and consequently their choice to copy the managing behaviors of a role model.

**Repeating Oneself: Persisting in One’s Own Unethical Behavior**

Unlike copying that depicts repetition of the interpersonal behavior associated with a social role, persistence is defined here as an independent behavioral tendency to repeat a past behavior of oneself. People exhibit persistence when they continue to pursue a course of action initiated by themselves, even despite the problems with this course of action (Feather, 1962). According to this definition, persistence reflects maintaining the status quo created by oneself. Research on persistence dates back to the early stage of developments in social psychology (Lewin, 1935; McDougall, 1908; Tolman, 1932), and the concept of persistence has been studied in various forms such as goal pursuit (e.g., Förster, Higgins, & Idson, 1998; Wicklund & Gollwitzer, 1982), attitude change (e.g., Chaiken, 1980; Hegtvedt & Petty, 1992), and resource
depletion (Baumeister, Muraven, & Tice, 2000; Vohs & Heatherton, 2000; Webb & Sheeran, 2003). Because another goal of this section of the paper is to address the question of whether maintaining the status quo transcends ethical concerns, here I focus on persistence in self-made ethical choices.

Ethical decision-making has long been viewed as a logical and rational process. However, recent evidence shows that nonrational factors often play a critical role in ethical thoughts and behaviors, such as heuristics (Kahneman, 2003), intuition (Haidt, 2001), relationships (Cottone, 2001), and contexts (Gino, Ayal, & Ariely, 2009; see Rogerson, Gottlieb, Handelsman, Knapp, & Younggren, 2011, for a review). These nonrational influences render ethical decision-making a motivated reasoning process (Kunda, 1990), where goals and motives guide people’s judgment about what is ethical and subject their behavior to motivational biases. Faced with the decision to behave unethically, people often struggle between the desire for short-term benefits and the desire for positive moral self-regard (Mead, Baumeister, Gino, Schweitzer, & Ariely, 2009; Gino, Schweitzer, Mead, & Ariely, 2011; Mazar, Amir, & Ariely, 2008). When the former desire dominates the latter, their decision leans toward behaving unethically at the cost of a compromised moral self-image, which will set off various cognitive forms of motivated reasoning to restore the moral self-regard, such as moral disengagement (Bandura, 1999; Trevino, Detert, Schweitzer, & Gephart, 2008), distortion (Bersoff, 1999), neutralization (Minor, 1984; Robinson & Kraatz, 1998), and justification (Giacalone & Knouse, 1990; Schweitzer & Hsee, 2002; Tenbrunsel, 1995). It has been shown that these motivated cognitions serve as the means for rationalizing a previous misconduct.

What receives less attention is whether rationalization of a prior misconduct can manifest itself in a subsequent choice to be ethical or not, but there are some relevant findings. One such
finding is that one little step across the line can lead to more frequent and severe transgressions along a slippery slope (Ashforth & Anand, 2003; Tenbrunsel & Messick, 2004). A slippery slope originates from an innocuous lapse that is ambiguous in its appropriateness, such as a fault of negligible magnitude. Such a lapse provides tempting financial benefits yet poses little threat to people’s moral self-regard (Mazar et al., 2008), falling within an “elastic” range that can be easily rationalized as ethical (Hsee, 1995; Schweitzer & Hsee, 2002). Although the lapse may not impose consequential harm in itself, it lays the ground for more significant misconducts. In fact, the notion that a relatively minor lapse can trigger ethical degradation accords well with the human inclination to use past behaviors as a benchmark for evaluating new behaviors, such that if past behaviors are acceptable, similar or just slightly different behaviors will also be considered as acceptable (Gino & Bazerman, 2009).

In addition to the possibility that an initial lapse authorizes similar unethical behaviors, the motivated reasoning account predicts that people will feel obligated to retrospectively justify their previous lapse through rationalizing strategies such as repetition (Lerner & Tetlock, 1999). This is because aligning new behaviors with a past behavior enables people to claim the legitimacy of the past behavior. This mechanism resembles a “hardening” model of moral erosion (Hirschi, 1969; Minor, 1984), by which episodic delinquent acts occur as a result of the rationalizing beliefs to protect oneself from admitting the unethical foundations of an earlier act.

With this kind of reasoning, retrospective rationalization of a previous misconduct bears similarity to the root cause of escalation of commitment, a well-studied phenomenon that portrays a counterintuitive persistence in a failing course of action chosen by oneself (Brockner, 1992; Schoorman, 1988; Staw, 1976). Mostly studied as a fallacy in economic decision-making, escalation of commitment has shed new light on business ethics. For example, Ashforth and
Anand (2003) proposed escalation of commitment as a primary path to organizational corruptions, where small, relatively harmless acts that are each meant to solve a pressing issue end up producing cognitive dissonance that invokes rationalizing strategies. Moore, Tetlock, Tanlu, and Bazerman (2006) also discussed how escalation of commitment facilitates moral seduction by leading auditors to gradually compromise their independence in covering up prior violations. It is clear from these examples that retrospective rationalization not only explains the choice to keep allocating economic resources in a failing activity (Brockner, 1992; Staw & Ross, 1989), but it also identifies one possible mechanism underlying the tendency to slide down a slippery slope (Tenbrunsel, 1995; Tenbrunsel & Messick, 2004).

As an innocuous departure from ethical principles, the initial lapse may be an inadvertent act that is not construed as an unethical commission. Under such circumstance, will it still have binding effects on a subsequent ethical choice? It is possible that the motivation to rationalize a past lapse, whether it is intentional or not, will remain a driving force of additional unethical behaviors. This is because one’s initial decision to allow occurrence of the lapse signifies a personal choice, which forms an immediate link between the lapse and one’s moral self-evaluation and holds one responsible for the initial decision. The responsibility then creates a psychological commitment to the decision, as withdrawal or reversal from this decision constitutes an admission that it is a questionable act (Staw, 1976; 1981). Supporting this argument, the slippery slope of ethical degradation often contains a tipping point where an unconscious misconduct escalates into a deliberate transgression: by the time people realize the unethicality of their initial behavior, they are already partly down the slippery slope—a “strong situation” that is very difficult to extricate themselves from (Ashforth & Anand, 2003; Darley, 1992; Moore et al., 2006).
With the implicit assumption that unethical behaviors are the product of strong situations that override individual differences (Ashforth & Anand, 2003), most earlier research on ethics and moral psychology kept individual differences in motivation that could consistently predict unethical behaviors out of its analysis (Monin & Jordan, 2009; Street & Street, 2006). More recently, however, the field has witnessed an increasing interest in self-regulatory mechanisms underlying unethical behaviors, such as moral identity (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Shao, Aquino, & Freeman, 2008), self-regulatory resources (Mead et al., 2009; Gino et al., 2011), and chronic dispositions of moral self-regulation (McFerran, Aquino, & Duffy, 2010; Moore, Detert, Treveno, Baker, & Mayer, 2012). Still, the role of self-regulation in repeated unethical behaviors remains an open question: does people’s propensity to repeat their past misconduct depend on how they regulate their behaviors during goal pursuit? In addressing this question, I apply regulatory focus theory (Higgins, 1997, 1998) to identify the key motivational processes underlying the choice to repeat versus reverse the ethical stance of one’s past misconduct.

A Regulatory Focus View of Maintaining the Status Quo

Regulatory focus theory distinguishes between two self-regulatory orientations: the promotion focus and the prevention focus, which are oriented, respectively, towards approaching matches to desired outcomes and avoiding mismatches to desired outcomes (Higgins, 1997, 1998). Concerned with gain/nongain information, promotion focus is sensitive to positive deviations from the status quo (the difference between “0” and “+1”), and this sensitivity results in the eagerness to ensure hits and avoid failures in advancement (errors of omission). Thus, when at the status quo, promotion-focused individuals generally have a strategic preference for risky tactics (Crowe & Higgins, 1997; Friedman & Förster, 2001). In contrast, prevention focus is the aspect of self-regulation concerned with nonloss/loss information, and it is marked by a
sensitivity to negative deviations from the status quo (the difference between “0” and “-1”). Such sensitivity generates the vigilance to ensure correct rejections and guard against unnecessary and costly actions (errors of commission). Hence, when at the status quo, prevention-focused individuals generally have a strategic preference for conservative tactics (Crowe & Higgins, 1997; Friedman & Förster, 2001).

The regulatory focus differences in self-regulatory concerns and strategic preferences reflect an essential distinction between promotion and prevention foci with regard to the status quo. Geared towards positive deviations from the status quo, promotion focus motivates individuals to seek out new states with potential growth instead of staying at the status quo. In contrast, guarded against negative deviations from the status quo, prevention focus motivates individuals to maintain the status quo instead of trying out new alternatives. Indeed, previous research shows that individuals with a prevention focus prefer stability in carrying out an activity, such that they choose to resume an interrupted task or keep currently possessed objects instead of switching to alternatives, regardless of whether the original task or object was chosen by themselves or assigned by others (Liberman, Idson, Camacho, & Higgins, 1999).

**Prevention Focus and Copying the Managing Behaviors of a Role Model**

I argue that copying represents a behavioral tactic that fits with the prevention concerns about avoiding negative deviations from the status quo. As discussed early, a role model’s managing behaviors indicate the normative ways of managing the other person, and copying these behaviors serves as a conservative strategy that ensures against behaviors that deviate from the norms. Note that the term “norms” used here refers to what a role model actually does instead of what he/she should do to manage the other person. This is because as direct recipients of a role model’s managing behaviors, people will perceive these behaviors as a descriptive norm
rather than an injunctive norm (Cialdini, Reno, & Kallgren, 1990). Providing information about what are typical or normal behaviors associated with a managing role, a descriptive norm constitutes the status quo for the behavior of those occupying the managing role. Given the association between prevention focus and the tendency to maintain the status quo, it is likely that being in a prevention focus motivates copy the managing behaviors of a role model.

In support of this proposal, there is burgeoning evidence that regulatory focus (Higgins, 1997) offers a useful approach to understanding individual differences in responsiveness to normative influence (Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007; Van-Dijk & Kluger, 2004). Research shows that individuals in a strong prevention focus react strongly to violation of reciprocity norms (Keller, Hurst, & Uskul, 2008). There is also evidence that thinking about death, which triggers a prevention-focused mindset, increases people’s adherence to social norms (Gailliot, Stillman, Schmeichel, Maner, & Plant, 2008). Moreover, as a prevention concern stemming from the fear of exploitation and mistreatment in relationships (Lynch, Eisenberger, & Armeli, 1999), wariness predicts a sensitivity to the normative level of supportive behaviors, such that wary individuals adjust the amount of support they provide to others based on how much support they have received from others.

Therefore, I hypothesize that individuals in a prevention focus tend to copy a role model’s managing behavior after experiencing this behavior as its recipient and later taking on the same managing role. Further, according to regulatory fit theory (Higgins, 2005), when people experience fit with the means to carrying out an activity, they derive value from this means and feel right about it, independent of the effectiveness or hedonic quality of this means. This suggests that for individuals in a prevention focus, copying a role model’s normative
managing behavior provides a fit experience that transcends other concerns, such as whether the managing behavior is pleasant or effective. Therefore, I propose the following hypothesis:

**Hypothesis 1.** Prevention focus predicts the tendency to copy the normative managing behaviors of a role model, independent of one’s hedonic experience or effectiveness concerns with these behaviors.

**Prevention Focus and Persisting in the Unethical Behavior of Oneself**

Setting a low benchmark for what are considered acceptable behaviors (Gino & Bazerman, 2009), a previous misconduct constitutes an unethical status quo that sanctions further transgressions. Given that individuals with a prevention focus are ultimately driven to maintain the status quo independent of other concerns, they are expected to follow the precedent by committing additional misconduct. For these individuals, carrying out a similar act to what they have done fulfills a felt necessity to protect their moral self-image, which would otherwise be tainted by the admission that their previous behavior is problematic. Moreover, when the previous misconduct is too innocuous to thwart their moral self-regard, repeating a previous misconduct represents a rationalizing strategy to preserve an intact moral self-regard. This argument is congruent with Moore et al.’s (2006) analysis of auditors’ endorsement of their clients’ accounting that clearly violates GAAP (Generally Accepted Accounting Principles), an unethical practice resulting from the motivation to avoid admitting their early failure to demand the clients to change accounting methods that skirted the edge of GAAP.

Previous research reveals a positive relation between prevention focus and persistence in an existing course of activity (Liberman et al., 1999), such that individuals in a prevention focus prefer resuming an interrupted task over starting a substitute task, and that they are more reluctant to exchange previously owned objects with new ones. However, these findings are
based on the assumption that the originally course of action is satisfactory and therefore represents a safe choice, which does not necessarily explain why people are committed to unethical behaviors. My research aims to extend these findings by putting the prevention effects to a more challenging test, where persistence requires one to forgo morally better alternatives.

Repeating an unethical behavior may seem contrastive with the prevention focus on avoiding negative states, as most unethical behaviors are accompanied by negative feelings such as shame and guilt (Keltner & Buswell, 1996; Tangney, Stuewig, & Mashek, 2007). It also appears to clash with the prevention preference for conservative tactics, in that repeat offenders are often subject to higher levels of penalty than first-time offenders (Braithwaite, 1984; Simpson, 2002). However, when people with a prevention focus are faced with an irrevocable unethical choice they made early, what constitutes a greater concern for them is to rationalize this choice through justifying strategies such as repetition, even if doing so may expose them to the risk of deeper entrapments. Consistent with this argument, research finds that prevention focus motivates risk-seeking behaviors when the risky option offers the sole possibility to return to the status quo (Scholer, Zou, Fujita, Stroessner, & Higgins, 2010). These arguments thus lead to the following hypothesis:

**Hypothesis 2.** Prevention focus predicts the tendency to engage in additional unethical behavior following an unethical action than an ethical action.

**THE PRESENT RESEARCH**

The first set of studies (Studies 1-5) tested the role of prevention focus in copying the managing behaviors of a role model (**Hypothesis 1**). The experimental studies adopted a testing-grading paradigm (Studies 1-4), where participants took a test, received one of two grading methods (harsh vs. lenient), and chose between two grading methods (harsh vs. lenient) to grade
the similar tests of others. Regulatory focus was both measured as a chronic disposition toward prevention- or promotion-focused goals (Studies 1, 3, 4; Higgins, Friedman, Harlow, Idson, Ayduk, & Taylor, 2001) and induced as a psychological state (Study 2; Friedman & Förster, 2001; Idson, Liberman, & Higgins, 2000; Oyserman, Uskul, Yoder, Nesse, & Williams, 2007). I also examined the normative determination of copying (Study 3), and tested the independence of copying from hedonic experience (Studies 1-4) and effectiveness concerns (Study 4). Then, using an organizational sample of superior-subordinate dyads (Study 5), I examined generalizability of the prevention-copying relation from the experimental setting to the field.

The second set of studies (Studies 6-9) employed experimental design to explore the relation between prevention focus and persistence in one’s own unethical behavior (Hypothesis 2). Two types of unethical behaviors were evaluated: 1) overstatement of performance for potential monetary gain in an independent decision-making context (Studies 6-8), and 2) failure to disclose information to a negotiation opponent in a social-interactive context (Study 9). In each study, participants were tempted to make two consecutive unethical decisions. Reflecting a slippery slope pattern, the first decision involved a relatively minor breach of ethical principles and the second decision involved a more significant violation. I evaluated whether participants decided to behave unethically repeatedly. As the first set of the studies on copying, I also assessed whether their repeated unethical decisions were affected by prevention focus, which was either measured as a chronic disposition (Studies 6 & 7) or situationally induced as a psychological state (Studies 8 & 9).

**Study 1**

*Methods*
Participants and design. Fifty-one college students from a Northeastern university participated in the experiment, receiving $5 in return. They were randomly assigned to two method conditions: half of them received a harsh grading method in the testing task and the other half received a lenient grading method. The data of two participants who failed to follow the instructions properly were discarded.

Experimental tasks and procedures. Participants were recruited for a study allegedly on “learning on standard tests”. Upon arrival, they were seated in adjacent cubicles containing a table, a chair, and a computer in front of them. Participants performed the tasks on computer, which was programmed to provide instructions for two consecutive tasks. They first completed the regulatory focus questionnaire (Higgins et al., 2001), which measured their prevention and promotion foci as two separate dimensions. An example item of the prevention focus scale is “Not being careful enough has gotten me into trouble at times [reversed score] (1 = never or seldom, 5 = very often).” An example item of the promotion focus scale is “Do you often do well at different things that you try (1 = never, 5 = always)?”

The first task was a 10-minute standard test, which included a set of GMAT-style multiple choice questions presented in two sections, with three questions in each section. The total score was five points for a section and ten points for the whole test. Once participants completed and submitted the test, they read their score for each section and for the whole test, which was calculated by either a harsh or a lenient grading method. Participants in the harsh condition must answer all three questions correctly to get five points for a section. Otherwise, they would get no point even though they answered one or two questions correctly. In contrast, participants in the lenient condition would get five points for a section if they answered at least one question correctly and no point only if they missed all three questions.
Participants also read information about the received grading method, as well as an alternative method used to grade the tests of some other participants in the same experiment. In addition, a rationale was given for why they received a certain method. Specifically, participants in the harsh condition read,

*Compared with the alternative method (i.e., lenient grading method), the method you received has shown to be more effective in improving one’s learning on standard tests. Because this test emphasizes precision and thoroughness of thinking, which allows no mistakes, it is pretty consistent with the high standard reflected in this method.*

Participants in the lenient condition read,

*Compared with the alternative method (i.e., harsh grading method), the method you received has shown to be more effective in improving one’s learning on standard tests. Because this test emphasizes precision and thoroughness of thinking, which makes it difficult to get everything correct, students should be fully rewarded for their partial success by this method.*

After reading this information, participants responded to four items assessing their satisfaction with the received method (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*). A sample item was “All in all, I am satisfied with the calculation.” Participants also responded to four items measuring their perceived strictness of the method (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*). A sample item was “The calculation is more strict than I would normally expect.” Both scales had adequate reliabilities (satisfaction: Cronbach’s $\alpha = .92$; strictness: Cronbach’s $\alpha = .74$) and their average scores were used in the analysis.

Then participants were asked whether they would grade a set of paper tests similar to the test they just took. They were told that the paper tests were taken by college students preparing
for a GMAT exam. The grading took two minutes, and their task was to help researchers find the better way to improve students’ learning on standard tests. In doing so, they needed to choose a grading method and use it to grade the tests.

Upon their agreement to help, participants were presented with the two methods (harsh and lenient) that they read about in the testing task. After making their choice, participants started grading the tests using the chosen method. When finished, participants completed demographics questions. Then they were paid, thanked, and dismissed.

Results and Discussion

Manipulation check. Participants in the harsh condition rated the received method as more strict ($M = 3.51, SD = 0.93$) than participants in the lenient condition ($M = 3.02, SD = 0.69$), $t(47) = 2.10, p < .05$. In addition, participants in the harsh condition received lower test scores ($M = 1.60, SD = 2.78$) than participants in the lenient condition ($M = 6.88, SD = 3.23$), $t(47) = -6.13, p < .001$. Therefore, the manipulation of method conditions was successful.

Further, participants in the harsh condition expressed less satisfaction with the received method ($M = 2.52, SD = 0.92$) than participants in the lenient condition ($M = 3.05, SD = 1.08$), $t(47) = -1.86, p = .07$.

Copying. To test Hypothesis 1 that prevention focus predicts copying, I conducted a logistic regression analysis, using the method chosen for grading as the dependent variable. This yielded a main effect of the received method, $\beta = 1.86, z = 2.70, p < .01$, suggesting a general tendency of copying, that is, participants would choose the received method for later grading. Neither promotion nor prevention focus had a main effect, $ps > .20$. However, the hypothesized interaction between prevention focus and the received method emerged, $\beta = 3.08, z = 2.18, p < .05$. As Figure 1 shows, as the level of chronic prevention focus increases, the tendency to
choose the received method also increases, regardless of which method participants received earlier. Further, simple slope tests\textsuperscript{2} performed at one standard deviation above and below the mean of prevention focus indicated a tendency to choose the received method among participants with a strong prevention focus, \( t(40) = 2.77, p < .01 \), but not among participants with a weak prevention focus, \( t(40) = -0.62, ns \), suggesting that copying only occurred among individuals in a strong prevention focus. These results thus lend support to the hypothesized relation between prevention focus and copying.

In contrast, there was no significant interaction effect between promotion focus and the received method, \( \beta = -1.68, z = -1.69, p = .09 \), supporting the notion that promotion focus was not associated with copying. Indeed, if anything, the direction of the promotion effect was opposite to the prevention effects. Taken together, the main effect of the received method on copying was driven by the copying tendency of individuals in a strong prevention focus. Hence, Study 1 supports Hypothesis 1 that having a strong prevention focus, but not a strong promotions focus, predicts the tendency to copy a role model’s managing behavior after directly experiencing this behaviors as its recipient.

To test whether the relation between prevention focus and copying held independent of one’s hedonic experience, I controlled participants’ satisfaction with the received method in the regression analysis, as well as its interaction with the received method. With the two control variables entered in the analysis, the interaction between prevention focus and the received method remained significant, \( \beta = 3.02, z = 2.12, p < .05 \), supporting the regulatory fit argument that copying results from the fit between prevention focus and a role model’s managing behavior independent of one’s hedonic experience.
Study 1 provided the first evidence for Hypothesis 1 about the relation between prevention focus and a tendency to copy a role model’s managing behavior. Not only did individuals in a strong prevention focus choose the received method for later grading, but they did so regardless of how they felt about the method earlier as its recipients. Because regulatory focus was measured as a chronic disposition here, Study 2 aimed to replicate these results by situationally inducing a temporary promotion or prevention focus. Moreover, the experimental manipulation of regulatory focus in Study 2 would allow the assessment of the causal relation between regulatory focus and copying.

Study 2

Methods

Participants and design. One hundred and three college students from a Northeastern university participated in the experiment, receiving $5 in return. The design was a 2 (regulatory focus: prevention vs. promotion) × 2 (method received: harsh vs. lenient) between-subjects factorial. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the four conditions. The data of five participants who failed to follow the instructions were discarded.

Experimental tasks and procedures. The experimental tasks and procedures were the same as Study 1, except that regulatory focus was situationally induced as a temporary state rather than measured as a chronic disposition. Half of the participants were assigned to the prevention focus condition and the other half to the promotion focus condition. Manipulation of regulatory focus was achieved through two tasks. The first task used an in-context goal priming paradigm (Galinsky, Leonardelli, Okhuysen, & Mussweiler, 2005), which was introduced before the testing task. Participants in the prevention focus condition read,
Please take a couple of minutes to briefly describe the behaviors and outcomes you seek to avoid during this test. Think about how you could prevent these behaviors and outcomes and write it down in the box below.

Participants in the promotion focus condition read,

Please take a couple of minutes to briefly describe the behaviors and outcomes you seek to achieve during this test. Think about how you could promote these behaviors and outcomes and write it down in the box below.

Then participants started the standard test. After submitting the test but before seeing their score, participants completed the second manipulation task while waiting for their tests being graded. This manipulation used a general goal priming task, where participants listed their current promotion or prevention goals in life (Freitas & Higgins, 2002; Idson et al., 2000). Participants in the promotion condition were told: “Please think about something you ideally would like to do. In other words, think about a hope or aspiration that you currently have. Please list the hope or aspiration below.” Participants in the prevention condition were told: “Please think about something you think you ought to do. In other words, think about a duty or obligation that you currently have. Please list the duty or obligation below.” When finished, participants received their score calculated by either a harsh or a lenient method, read information about the grading methods, and proceeded to the rest of the study as in Study 1. At the end of the study, participants responded to an 8-point question: “In the computer test you took at the beginning, did you focus more on avoiding negative behaviors and outcomes (1) or did you focus more on approaching positive behaviors and outcomes (8)?”

Results and Discussion
**Manipulation check.** Responses to the last question showed that participants in the prevention focus condition focused more on avoiding negative behaviors and outcomes and less on approaching positive behaviors and outcomes in the testing task \( M = 4.69, SD = 2.37 \) than participants in the promotion focus condition \( M = 5.76, SD = 2.14 \), \( t(96) = 2.33, p < .05 \), suggesting that the manipulation of regulatory focus was successful. Manipulation of the method conditions was also successful, in that participants in the harsh condition rated the received method as more strict \( M = 3.91, SD = 0.71 \) than participants in the lenient condition \( M = 2.70, SD = 0.89 \), \( t(96) = 7.44, p < .001 \). In addition, participants in the harsh condition received lower test scores \( M = 2.04, SD = 2.87 \) than participants in the lenient condition \( M = 8.37, SD = 2.58 \), \( t(96) = -11.47, p < .001 \).

Moreover, participants in the harsh condition expressed less satisfaction with the received method \( M = 2.45, SD = 0.92 \) than participants in the lenient condition \( M = 2.99, SD = 0.84 \), \( t(96) = -3.05, p < .01 \). However, participants in the promotion condition \( M = 2.69, SD = 0.83 \) did not differ in satisfaction from their counterparts in the prevention condition, \( M = 2.76, SD = 0.99 \), \( t(96) = -0.33, ns \).

**Copying.** As in Study 1, the choice of method was entered as the dependent variable in a logistic regression analysis. Replicating the results from Study 1, there was a main effect of the received method, \( \beta = 1.12, z = 2.45, p = .01 \), indicating a general tendency of copying, and there was no main effect of regulatory focus as a situationally induced state, \( p = .53 \). More importantly, the analysis yielded a significant interaction between the received method and manipulated regulatory focus, \( \beta = 1.81, z = 1.97, p < .05 \), which remained significant after controlling for satisfaction with the received method as well as its interaction with the received method, \( \beta = 3.19, z = 2.62, p < .01 \). The received method × regulatory focus interaction is
depicted in Figure 2, where participants with an induced prevention focus state tended to choose the received method, whereas participants with an induced promotion focus state did not demonstrate such a tendency. Supporting this observation, the simple slope test showed a strong tendency to copy only among participants with an induced prevention focus, \( t(91) = 2.97, p < .01 \), but not among participants with an induced promotion focus, \( t(91) = 0.54, ns \). Therefore, these findings provide further support to Hypothesis 1 that copying is a phenomenon related to prevention focus but not to promotion focus.

In line with Study 1 findings, the results of Study 2 indicated a clear relation between prevention focus and copying, independent of hedonic experience. Moreover, Study 2 supported the predicted causal direction of this relation; that is, an experimentally induced prevention focus increased the tendency to copy a role model’s managing behavior.

What remains unclear is the precise mechanism underlying the prevention effects on copying. In other words, what is about copying that fits prevention concerns? To answer this question, Study 3 investigated the normative determination of copying. Because copying was posited to result from the fit between prevention focus and normative concerns, prevention focus was not expected to predict copying when a role model’s managing behavior was non-normative. Hence, by removing the normative component of a managing behavior, I predicted that individuals in a strong prevention focus would not demonstrate the tendency to copy this behavior. Study 3 was designed to test this prediction in the form of a three-way interaction between prevention focus, a role model’s managing behavior, and the normative status of this behavior. To support Hypothesis 1, I expected that individuals in a stronger prevention focus would copy a managing behavior more when it was normative (a replication of Study 1 and
Study 2 findings), but they would *not* show such a copying tendency when the managing behavior was *non*-normative.

**Study 3**

**Methods**

**Participants and design.** Ninety-five college students from a Northeastern university participated in the experiment, receiving $5 in return. The study had a 2 (received method: harsh, lenient) × 2 (normative status: normative, non-normative) factorial design, and participants were randomly assigned to one of the four conditions. The data of three participants who failed to follow the instructions were discarded.

**Experimental tasks and procedures.** For the two normative conditions the experimental tasks and procedures were the same as in Study 1. For the two non-normative conditions the rationale for the effectiveness of the received method was removed; instead, the received method was said to be a *random* choice between two methods (i.e., between the harsh and lenient methods). In this way, the received method was dissociated from the managing role, which no longer reflected an interpersonal norm. After reading their test score, as well as the information about the grading methods, all participants responded to four items measuring their perception of the normativeness of the received method (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*). The items included statements such as “Compared to the alternative way of calculating scores, the one used to calculate my test score is more appropriate/justifiable/legitimate/fair.” A score averaging across the four items (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .90$) was used in the analyses.

**Results and Discussion**

**Manipulation check.** A t-test on the normative perception of the received method showed that participants perceived the received method as less normative when it was said to be
a random choice ($M = 2.43$, $SD = 0.84$) than when it was justified as normative ($M = 2.81$, $SD = 0.77$), $t(90) = 2.27$, $p < .05$. As before, participants in the harsh condition rated the received method as more strict ($M = 3.77$, $SD = 0.76$) than participants in the lenient condition ($M = 2.72$, $SD = 0.98$), $t(90) = 5.77$, $p < .001$, and participants in the harsh condition received lower test scores ($M = 1.67$, $SD = 2.38$) than participants in the lenient condition ($M = 8.18$, $SD = 2.66$), $t(90) = -12.39$, $p < .001$. Therefore, these manipulations were successful.

In addition, participants in the harsh condition expressed less satisfaction with the received method ($M = 2.40$, $SD = 0.77$) than participants in the lenient condition ($M = 2.80$, $SD = 0.83$), $t(90) = -2.36$, $p < .05$. However, there was no difference in satisfaction between participants in the normative condition ($M = 2.66$, $SD = 0.82$) and their counterparts in the non-normative condition ($M = 2.50$, $SD = 0.82$), $t(90) = 0.94$, ns.

**Copying.** Logistic regressions were conducted to test the hypothesized three-way interaction between prevention focus, the received method, and its normative status on the choice of method. The analyses yielded no main effect of the received method, $\beta = 0.27$, $z = 0.62$, ns, or of its normative status, $\beta = 0.10$, $z = 0.23$, ns. Neither promotion nor prevention focus had a main effect, $\beta s < 0.22$, $z < 1$, ns. More importantly, a three-way interaction between prevention focus, the received method, and its normative status emerged, $\beta = -3.28$, $z = -2.47$, $p = .01$. Further, this three-way interaction still held after controlling for satisfaction and its two- and three-way interactions with the received method and its normative status, $\beta = -3.45$, $z = -2.50$, $p = .01$. The pattern of the three-way prevention focus $\times$ received method $\times$ normative status interaction is plotted in Figure 3.

Simple slope tests on this three-way interactive effect showed that when the received method was justified as normative (the two solid lines in Figure 3), participants with a strong
prevention focus tended to copy the received method, $t(77) = 1.68, p < .10$, whereas participants with a weak prevention focus did not show such tendency, $t(77) = -1.74, p < .10$. In contrast, when the received method was non-normative (the two dotted lines in Figure 3), there was no longer a tendency to copy either among those with a strong prevention focus, $t(77) = -0.58, ns$, or among those with a weak prevention focus, $t(77) = 1.47, ns$. These findings support Hypothesis 1 about the normative determination of copying, such that those with a strong prevention focus copy only the normative managing behaviors of a role model. There was no three-way interaction between promotion focus, the received method, and its normative status, $\beta = 0.44, z = 0.38, ns$.

Given that prevention focus no longer predicts copying when a managing behavior becomes non-normative, is it possible that hedonic experience may instead play a role in motivating copying? Indeed, supporting this conjecture, the analysis showed a marginally significant interaction between the received method and satisfaction on the choice of method in the non-normative condition, $\beta = 1.67, z = 1.79, p = .07$, and this interaction was not significant in the normative condition, $\beta = 0.24, z = 0.31, ns$. Furthermore, simple slope tests for the non-normative condition indicated a marginal tendency to copy among participants who were satisfied with the received method, $t(34) = 1.72, p = .09$, and no such tendency among participants who were dissatisfied with the received method, $t(34) = -0.90, ns$. Hence, when a role model’s managing behavior becomes non-normative, one’s satisfaction with this behavior, instead of one’s prevention focus, now tends to predict copying.

In line with Studies 1 and 2, Study 3 replicated the finding that individuals in a stronger prevention focus are more likely to copy a role model’s managing behavior. Supporting Hypothesis 1 about the normative determination of copying, Study 3 revealed that copying
occurred only when the managing behavior was normative. That is, those with a strong prevention focus would not copy a non-normative managing behavior. Instead, regardless of their self-regulatory orientation, how individuals earlier felt hedonically about a non-normative managing behavior now seemed to predict copying, such that their tendency to copy increased as they felt more satisfied with the managing behavior.

A question still remains regarding the mechanism of copying. To remove the normativeness of a managing behavior, Study 3 not only dissociated this behavior from a managing role by claiming it as a random choice, but it also removed the original rationale for its effectiveness. Therefore, an alternative explanation for the absence of copying here is that the received method was not considered an effective way to manage the other person. To rule out this possibility, Study 4 restored the normative association between the received method and the managing role, but removed the effectiveness of the method by introducing an incongruent rationale against its effectiveness. If copying results from the concerns about the effectiveness of a managing behavior, then prevention focus should not predict copying. But if it is the normativeness and not the effectiveness of a managing behavior that matters, then those with a strong prevention focus should copy the behavior despite its ineffectiveness.

**Study 4**

*Methods*

**Participants and design.** Forty-seven college students from a Northeastern university participated in the experiment, receiving $5 in return. They were randomly assigned to either a harsh or a lenient method condition. The data of one participant who failed to follow the instructions were discarded.
Experimental tasks and procedures. The experimental tasks and procedures were the same as Study 1, except for the rationale presented at the end of the testing task. Instead of advocating the effectiveness of the received method as in Studies 1 and 2, the rationale here stated that the alternative method was more effective in improving students’ learning on standard tests. Specifically, participants in the harsh condition read,

*Compared with the method you received, the alternative method (i.e., lenient grading method) has shown to be more effective in improving one’s learning on standard tests. Because this test emphasizes precision and thoroughness of thinking, which makes it difficult to get everything correct, students should be fully rewarded for their partial success by this method.*

Participants in the lenient condition read,

*Compared with the method you received, the alternative method (i.e., harsh grading method) has shown to be more effective in improving one’s learning on standard tests. Because this test emphasizes precision and thoroughness of thinking, which allows no mistakes, it is pretty consistent with the high standard reflected in this method.*

After reading the above information, participants responded to three items assessing the perceived effectiveness of the received method. A sample item was “The grading method is effective in helping me learn on the test.” The average score of the three items was used in the analysis (Cronbach’s α = .74).

Results and Discussion

Manipulation check. I conducted a t-test on perceived effectiveness of the received method across the present study and Study 1, which used the same design but provided a justification for the effectiveness of the received method. As expected, regardless of which
method they received, participants in Study 1 judged the received method to be more effective \((M = 2.87, SD = 0.79)\) than participants in the present study \((M = 2.46, SD = 0.84)\), \(t(93) = 2.44, p < .05\). In addition, participants in the harsh condition rated the received method as more strict \((M = 3.52, SD = 1.00)\) than participants in the lenient condition \((M = 2.93, SD = 0.88)\), \(t(44) = 2.12, p < .05\), and they also received lower test scores \((M = 1.96, SD = 2.92)\) than those in the lenient condition \((M = 8.91, SD = 2.11)\), \(t(44) = -9.27, p < .001\). Therefore, the manipulation of method conditions was successful. Further, in line with previous studies, participants in the harsh condition expressed less satisfaction with the received method \((M = 2.12, SD = 0.89)\) than participants in the lenient condition \((M = 2.83, SD = 0.84)\), \(t(44) = -2.76, p < .01\).

**Copying.** The logistic regressions yielded no main effect of the received method on the choice of method, \(\beta = -0.30, z = -0.47, ns\), suggesting no general tendency of participants to copy. Compared to Studies 1 and 2 where a general tendency to copy was found, the absence of copying here was likely due to the introduction of an incongruent rationale against the effectiveness of the received method. Neither promotion nor prevention focus had a main effect, \(ps > .60\). Supporting Hypothesis 1 that prevention focus predicts copying independent of ineffectiveness concerns, the interaction between prevention focus and the received method was significant, \(\beta = 2.22, z = 2.35, p < .05\), which remained significant after controlling for satisfaction and its interaction with the received method, \(\beta = 2.20, z = 2.33, p < .05\). As Figure 4 shows, regardless of which method they received, participants’ tendency to choose the received method increased with the strength of their prevention focus. Simple slope tests consistently indicated a tendency to copy among participants with a strong prevention focus, \(t(37) = 1.52, p = .14\), and a significant, opposite tendency among participants with a weak prevention focus, \(t(37) = -2.11, p < .05\). The reduced tendency to copy among participants with a strong prevention
focus, together with the absent main effect of the received method reported above, might have resulted from a shift of preference for the alternative method due to the introduced rationale for its effectiveness relative to the received method. This speculation was supported by the simple slope results that participants with a weak prevention focus now exhibited a tendency to choose the alternative method over the received method. As always, the interaction between promotion focus and the received method was nonsignificant, $\beta = -1.24$, $z = -1.55$, $ns$, supporting the notion that promotion focus was not associated with copying, and, if anything, the direction was opposite.

Taken together, although the general tendency to copy a role model’s managing behavior was weakened by the introduction of an incongruent rationale against the effectiveness of this behavior (compared with Study 1), prevention focus remained a significant predictor of copying; that is, participants’ tendency to choose the received method increased with the strength of their prevention focus. Thus, for those with a stronger prevention focus, copying is motivated more by their normative concerns about the characteristic behaviors associated with a managing role than by their effectiveness concerns.

Study 4 provided further support for the normative determination of copying among individuals in a strong prevention focus. Despite an incongruent rationale against the effectiveness of a role model’s managing behavior, prevention focus continued to predict the tendency to copy this behavior. This rules out the alternative explanation that the effectiveness concerns motivate copying. In fact, copying in its general sense does not necessarily serve the goal of effectiveness, as perpetuation of norms through conformity can lead to the spread of maladaptive behaviors (Feldman & Laland, 1996; Richerson & Boyd, 2005).
Studies 1-4 yield consistent findings regarding the tendency to copy a normative managing behavior for individuals in a prevention focus. A drawback of the experimental design of these studies is their more limited external validity. For example, only one managing behavior (performance evaluation) and one interpersonal context (grader-student relationship) were examined in these studies, leaving open the question whether the findings would generalize to diverse managing behaviors in “real world” interpersonal contexts. To address these issues, I conducted a field study to investigate multiple managing behaviors that are common in the workplace. The sample consists of superior-subordinate dyads from various organizations, and my goal was to determine whether managers’ prevention focus predicts their tendency to copy the managing behaviors of their former superiors. Because of the status and power held by superiors, they often serve as role models for subordinates, and as a result superiors’ behaviors represent the normative ways to manage (Decker, 1982; Sims & Manz, 1982; Manz & Sims, 1981; Latham & Saari, 1979; Weiss, 1977, 1978). In this line of reasoning, I hypothesized that managers’ prevention focus, but not their promotion focus, would predict their tendency to copy the managing behaviors of their former superiors, independent of their hedonic experience or effectiveness concerns with these behaviors.

**Study 5**

**Methods**

**Participants.** The sample consisted of 135 superior-subordinate dyads from organizations across a wide range of industries, such as financial service, transportation, media, energy, research, and government. The superior subsample included 58 participants, who were Executive MBAs holding high-level positions in their organizations, such as being a Chairman or Managing Director. Forty-nine (85%) were men and 9 (15%) were women. The mean age and
tenure were 40.63 years ($SD = 5.30$) and 18.79 years ($SD = 6.99$), respectively. The subordinate subsample included 135 participants, who were direct subordinates of the participants in the subsample of superiors. Most of them held middle-level positions in their organizations, such as being a Vice-President or Division Manager. Eighty-eight (65%) of the subordinates were men and 47 (35%) were women. The mean age and tenure were 35.22 years ($SD = 6.56$) and 12.37 years ($SD = 7.45$), respectively. Responses of 7 superior participants were discarded because of no response from their subordinates, leaving 51 participants in the superior subsample. This resulted in a valid superior-subordinate ratio of 1: 2.65, with one to three subordinates per superior.

**Procedures.** Surveys were distributed to the superior subsample during one of their class sessions. First, participants recalled one of their former superiors and rated the methods used by this superior to manage them. The exact wording was, “Please recall from your past working experience one of your former superiors, who now may or may not be your superior, and to rate the extent to which this superior managed you in the following ways.” By not instructing participants to think about any type of superiors at this stage, I hoped to elicit the most accessible superior in their mind, with whom the participants might feel satisfied or dissatisfied. Then, participants rated the extent to which this superior had used several methods to manage them, including work facilitation, directive leadership, use of legitimate power, monitoring, use of coercive power, and negative feedback, evaluated the effectiveness of each method, and reported their satisfaction and perceived closeness with their superiors. Regulatory focus was assessed as a chronic disposition using the same questionnaire as in Studies 1, 3, and 4. Finally, participants provided the names and emails of three direct subordinates at work, on the basis of which the subordinate subsample was created.
The subordinate subsample was invited via email to participate in an online survey. The email listed the name of the superior who provided their contacts, and the confidentiality of the completed surveys was guaranteed to all participants. The return of 135 valid surveys yielded a response rate of 77 percent. Similar to the survey administered to the superior subsample, the online survey asked the subordinate subsample to think about their current superiors (if they had more than one superior, they needed to think about the one listed in the email), and rate the extent to which their superiors had used each method to manage them, as well as their perceived closeness with their superiors.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics, correlations, and reliabilities of the key variables. To obtain an objective measure of the managing behaviors of the superior participants, I aggregated their subordinates’ ratings on each method they used ($r_w g's > .70, ICC[1]'s > .05$). In addition, I aggregated subordinates’ closeness ratings for each superior ($r_{wg} = .74, ICC[1] = .11$).

Copying. Two types of copying were examined in the data analysis. One is direct copying, or same-method copying, which refers to one’s adoption of the same managing behavior from a former superior (e.g., using coercive power). The other is indirect copying, or cross-method copying, whereby one’s adoption of a managing behavior (e.g., providing negative feedback) is evoked by a different managing behavior of the former superior (e.g., using coercive power). Unlike direct copying that perpetuates the same managing behavior across similar relationships, indirect copying refers to a spillover from one managing behavior of a role model to another managing behavior of the recipient. Both types of copying were considered here given that social learning is a more complex process than simple imitation. For example,
research on leadership training found that watching videotapes of leadership behaviors induced both direct and indirect behavior changes in the trainees (Manz & Sims, 1986).

I performed the OLS regressions to test Hypothesis 1 that superiors’ prevention focus, but not their promotion focus, predicts their tendency to copy the managing behaviors of their former superiors. The dependent variables were subordinate ratings (aggregated) of the extent to which superiors used each of the six managing methods. The independent variables were superiors’ prevention focus, promotion focus, and their ratings of the extent to which their former superiors had used each method to manage them. Control variables were superiors’ gender, age, tenure, their perceived closeness with their former superiors, and their subordinates’ perceived closeness with them.

The analyses yielded no main effect of superiors’ prevention focus on their managing behaviors, all \( p > .30 \). Promotion focus only had a main effect on work facilitation, \( \beta = -0.12, t(43) = -2.27, p < .05 \), but not on the other five managing behaviors, \( p > .10 \). I did not find any main effect of former superiors’ managing behaviors, \( p > .10 \). However, of the thirty-six possible interactive effects between superiors’ prevention focus and their former superiors’ managing behaviors on their own managing behaviors, four were significant. The significant interactive effects supported Hypothesis 1 by highlighting the fact that superiors with a stronger prevention focus were more likely to copy the managing methods from their former superiors. In particular, two of the four significant interactions reflected direct copying, and the other two reflected indirect copying. In contrast, none of the interactions between promotion focus and former superiors’ managing behaviors was significant, all \( p > .10 \).

Monitoring was the first managing behavior that was directly copied by superiors with a strong prevention focus. Superiors’ prevention focus and their former superiors’ monitoring had
an interaction effect on their own monitoring, $\beta = 0.24$, $t(40) = 2.84$, $p < .01$, which remained significant after controlling for satisfaction with the former superior and its interaction with the former superior’s monitoring, $\beta = 0.25$, $t(38) = 2.79$, $p < .01$. As Figure 5a shows, superiors with a strong prevention focus were more likely to use monitoring if their former superiors had used a lot of monitoring, $t(40) = 2.41$, $p < .05$, whereas superiors with a weak prevention focus did not show such tendency. Instead, they even showed a reverse tendency, $t(40) = -1.76$, $p = .09$.

Use of coercive power was another managing behavior that was directly copied by superiors with a strong prevention focus. Superiors’ prevention focus and their former superiors’ use of coercive power had an interaction effect on their own use of coercive power, $\beta = 0.24$, $t(40) = 2.44$, $p < .05$, which remained significant after controlling for satisfaction with the former superior and its interaction with the former superior’s use of coercive power, $\beta = 0.26$, $t(38) = 2.53$, $p < .05$. As Figure 5b shows, superiors with a strong prevention focus were more likely to use coercive power if their former superiors had used a lot of coercive power, $t(40) = 1.71$, $p = .10$, whereas superiors with a weak prevention focus showed a reversed tendency, $t(40) = -1.89$, $p = .07$.

Besides direct copying, superiors with a strong prevention focus also engaged in indirect copying, which represents a “spillover” from one managing behavior to another. The first indirect copying was the spillover from the use of coercive power to the use of negative feedback. Specifically, superiors’ prevention focus and their former superiors’ use of coercive power had an interaction effect on their own use of negative feedback, $\beta = 0.21$, $t(40) = 2.29$, $p < .05$, which remained significant after controlling for satisfaction with the former superior and its interaction with the former superior’s use of coercive power, $\beta = 0.20$, $t(38) = 2.06$, $p < .05$. As Figure 5c shows, superiors with a strong prevention focus were more likely to use negative
feedback if their former superiors had used a lot of coercive power, \( t(40) = 2.22, p < .05 \), where superiors with a weak prevention focus did not show such tendency, \( t(40) = -0.72, \text{ns} \).

Another indirect copying was the spillover from the use of negative feedback to monitoring. Superiors’ prevention focus and their former superiors’ use of negative feedback had an interaction effect on their own monitoring, \( \beta = 0.25, t(40) = 2.47, p < .05 \), which remained significant after controlling for satisfaction with the former superior and its interaction with the former superior’s use of negative feedback, \( \beta = 0.26, t(38) = 2.52, p < .05 \). As Figure 5d shows, superiors with a strong prevention focus were more likely to monitor their subordinates if their former superiors had used a lot of negative feedback, \( t(40) = 2.74, p < .01 \), where superiors with a weak prevention focus did not show this tendency, \( t(40) = -0.99, \text{ns} \).

**Perceived effectiveness.** I also tested whether superiors’ perceived effectiveness of a managing behavior predicted their tendency to copy this behavior. No evidence was found to support this possibility. The only main effect was that superiors’ perceived effectiveness of their former superiors’ monitoring was negatively related to their own use of monitoring, \( \beta = -0.11, t(28) = -2.32, p < .05 \), suggesting, if anything, a tendency against monitoring when it was perceived as an effective method. Overall, perceived effectiveness did not predict direct or indirect copying, all \( ps > .10 \). Hence, these findings indicate that the perceived effectiveness of a managing method did not predict copying, which is consistent with the findings of Study 4.

Extending the experimental findings to the field, Study 5 provided consistent support for Hypothesis 1 that prevention focus predicts the tendency to copy the managing behaviors of a role model. Despite their dissatisfaction with former superiors who used monitoring, coercive power, or negative feedback, superiors with a stronger prevention focus still demonstrated a stronger tendency to copy these behaviors, in both direct and indirect ways. These results lend
additional support to the proposal that copying derives from the fit between prevention focus and normative influence, independent of one’s hedonic experience and effectiveness concerns.

In Study 5, the three “harsh” methods copied by prevention-focused superiors (monitoring, coercive power, negative feedback) were all negatively related to satisfaction ($\beta < -.40$, $t(49)s < -2.0$, all $p < .05$). In contrast, none of the more “lenient” methods (work facilitation, legitimate power, directive leadership) that were positively related to satisfaction ($\beta > .60$, $t(49)s > 4.0$, all $p < .001$) was copied by these superiors. This is different than the experimental studies (Studies 1–4) where prevention focus predicts copying both harsh and lenient methods. What might account for this difference? Because positive events are more common and expected in everyday life, they tend to be perceived as the default (Hamilton & Huffman, 1971). For example, superiors are usually advised to behave in ways that improve subordinate satisfaction. As a result, adopting satisfying managing methods may not depend on individual factors. In contrast, due to their infrequent occurrence and potential threat, negative events tend to be salient (Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Finkenauer, & Vohs, 2001; Rozin & Royzman, 2001) and thus copying them depends more on individual factors. Given this, the dissatisfying managing behaviors may be more likely to be registered and copied by prevention-focused recipients.

This does not mean that superiors did not engage in the managing behaviors that improved subordinate satisfaction. In fact, the superior subsample performed more satisfying managing behaviors, such as work facilitation ($M = 3.40$, $SD = 0.82$), directive leadership ($M = 3.37$, $SD = 0.88$), and use of legitimate power ($M = 3.86$, $SD = 0.92$) than dissatisfying managing behaviors, such as use of negative feedback ($M = 2.16$, $SD = 0.65$), monitoring ($M = 2.49$, $SD = 0.71$), and use of coercive power ($M = 1.74$, $SD = 0.82$), $t(50)s > 5$, $p < .001$. In addition, except
for a main effect of promotion focus on work facilitation, there were no other main effects of prevention focus, promotion focus, or prior experiences with former superiors on any of the superiors’ managing behaviors. Taken together, these results suggested that all superiors employed more managing behaviors that enhanced subordinate satisfaction, regardless of their prevention or promotion focus, and they did so not because they were copying these behaviors from former superiors, but because these behaviors were deemed as the default ways to manage. Where I expected to see differences in copying was on the non-default, dissatisfying behaviors, and I did find that prevention-focused superiors were more likely to copy these behaviors, independent of their hedonic experience or effectiveness concerns.

The reason that the experimental studies (Studies 1-4) did not exhibit this negativity bias may be that both the harsh and lenient methods used in these studies were relatively uncommon, that is, they were not the default method. Neither the harsh nor the lenient method was a standard method compared to a normal method that awards partial credit for a single question, and therefore both methods should be salient and register in one’s mind and the choice to copy them depends more on individual factors. In fact, participants in one of the pilot studies were given the choice of a normal method (i.e., students get partial score for a single question) in addition to the harsh and lenient methods, and most participants chose the normal method, regardless of their regulatory focus or the method they received earlier. For this reason, if the normal method were included as a choice in the experimental studies, it should function in the same way as the satisfying managing behaviors in Study 5 (e.g. work facilitation, legitimate power, directive leadership). In this sense, what I found in the field study was consistent with what I would find in the experimental studies if the latter had included a normal method choice.
Studies 1-5 explored the role of prevention focus in copying the behaviors of others, or in a more general sense, following the precedent behavior demonstrated by someone else. The studies to follow were conducted to extend these findings by examining the tendency to follow the precedent behavior engaged in by oneself. In other words, does prevention focus also predict one’s tendency to repeat their own behavior in the past, even when this behavior may involve ethical issues (Hypothesis 2)?

**Study 6**

In Study 6, participants completed two consecutive tasks that each presented an opportunity to cheat for potential monetary gain. Reflecting a slippery slope pattern, cheating on the first task was framed as a default option and limited to a trivial amount, whereas cheating on the second task required intentional action and was not limited in extent. I predicted that participants with a strong prevention focus would exhibit repeated cheating behaviors, in a way that they would be more likely to cheat on the second task after cheating on the first task.

**Methods**

**Participants.** Sixty-three individuals (44 males) recruited from Amazon Mechanical Turk participated in an online study. In addition to receiving $0.90 for completing the study, participants could win a lottery of additional $100. Mean age was 30.27 years old ($SD = 8.38$). Thirty-two percent identified themselves as “White”, 57% as “Asian/Pacific Islander”, 6% as “American Indian/Alaska Native”, 2% as “Hispanic”, and 3% as “Other”. Half of them spoke English as native language, and the other half reported an average English proficiency score of 5.66 on a 7-point Likert scale (1 “very poor”, 7 “native speaker”; $SD = 0.60$). Gender did not have an effect in any of the analyses.$^5$
**Experimental tasks and procedures.** The online study ostensibly investigated the relation between general knowledge and creativity. The study included two consecutive tasks: 1) a general knowledge quiz, and 2) an anagram task that allegedly assessed creativity. Participants were informed that they could win a lottery of additional $50 on each task if their performance ranked in the top half of all participants. The lottery provided an incentive for cheating, as participants had a chance to inflate their task performance when they were asked to double check their test scores that were said to be calculated by a new data collection system (Weiss & Johar, 2011).

The general knowledge quiz included two sections that totaled 100 points; each section contained 10 questions (e.g., “How far can a kangaroo jump?” “Which is the longest river in the world?”). The questions were chosen from a pilot set to be difficult enough to prevent participants’ suspicion about the predetermined feedback that they received later. Participants were told that the average quiz score of previous participants was around 70 points. After completing the first section, all participants read the same feedback information that they had answered correctly 6 out of 10 questions that summed up to a total of 12 of 20 possible points (each question worth 2 points). They then read the following message:

*The following number of points will be added to your record toward the lottery:*

12

Participants indicated whether the above score was consistent with the feedback information by accepting or rejecting the score. If they rejected the score, they would be prompted to enter the correct score. All participants were expected to accept the above score, which was consistent with the feedback information. Having participants judge a consistent score in the first section served two goals: 1) to provide practice on the quiz before they reached
the second section that detected initial cheating behavior; 2) to mask the true purpose of the study in case participants doubted why they could edit the scores.

Then participants completed the second section of the quiz, and they received the same feedback information that they had answered correctly 7 out of 10 questions that summed up to a total of 56 of 80 possible points (each worth 8 points). Then they read the following message:

_The following number of points will be added to your record toward the lottery:_

65

Once again participants were asked to accept or reject the above score, which presented a slight inflation compared with the feedback information. Participants would exhibit cheating behaviors by accepting this score or entering an inflated score after rejecting this score.

The next task included 15 anagram puzzles that allegedly assessed creativity. Participants were asked to try their best to solve as many anagrams as they could. Before submitting their answers, participants viewed the key to each anagram and were instructed to report their performance after comparing their answers with the key. Doing so offered participants a chance to edit their original answers and report inflated performance. Finally, participants responded to questions that measured their promotion and prevention foci using the same regulatory focus questionnaire as Study 1, as well as demographics questions.

_Results and Discussion_

_Initial cheating._ Initial cheating was measured by a binary variable (0 _no cheating_, 1 _cheating_). Rejecting the inflated score of 65 on the second section of the general knowledge quiz and entering the consistent score of 56 were coded as 0. Accepting the inflated score of 65 or entering another inflated score (e.g., 60) after rejecting the inflated score of 65 was coded as 1.
Of all 63 participants, 43 (68%) cheated on the general knowledge quiz. The finding that a majority of the participants cheated was consistent with data on similar designs (Weiss & Johar, 2011) and confirmed the non-threatening nature of this cheating. A logistic regression showed that initial cheating was not affected by self-regulatory orientations, as neither promotion focus ($B = -0.41, p = .16$) nor prevention focus ($B = -0.24, p = .40$) had a main effect.

Subsequent cheating. Consistent with previous research that measures cheating through self-report performance (e.g., Gino & Galinsky, 2012; Mazar & Ariely, 2006; Mazar et al., 2008), subsequent cheating was probed by self-report performance on the anagram task. Participants’ submitted answer to each of the 15 anagrams was coded as a self-report indicator (1: correct; 0: incorrect), resulting in a multilevel data structure with 15 anagram levels nested within each participant level.

The percentages of participants claiming to have solved 0 to 15 anagrams follow a bimodal distribution, with more than 40% of participants claiming 2 anagrams or less and 30% claiming 13 anagrams or more (Figure 6a). Mean self-report performance was 6.68 anagrams ($SD = 5.80$), and participants who did not cheat in the general knowledge quiz reported a slightly higher performance ($M = 7.25, SD = 5.72$) than participants who cheated in the quiz ($M = 6.42, SD = 5.89$).

The measure of subsequent cheating, namely, the self-report indicator on each anagram, was submitted to Hierarchical Linear Modeling (HLM) for binary outcomes, with anagram levels (level 1) nested within participant levels (level 2). Initial cheating and prevention focus were entered as level-2 predictors, with promotion focus entered as a level-2 covariate. There was no effect of prevention focus, $B = 0.01, t(58) = 0.07, p = .95$, or promotion focus, $B = 0.06, t(58) = 0.35, p = .73$, on subsequent cheating. Initial cheating did not have an effect either, $B = -0.14,$
However, a significant interaction emerged between initial cheating and prevention focus, $B = 1.06$, $t(56) = 2.96$, $p = .005$. As Figure 6b shows, participants with a stronger prevention focus reported higher anagram performance after cheating on the general knowledge quiz. Interestingly, Figure 6b also shows a tendency for these participants to repeat honest behaviors. Confirming these observations, a simple slope test performed at one standard deviation above the mean of prevention focus (strong prevention focus) indicated a positive relation between initial and subsequent cheating, $t(56) = 1.76$, $p = .04$. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 was supported. Participants with a weaker prevention focus exhibited an opposite pattern, in that they reported lower anagram performance after cheating on the quiz (moral cleansing) or higher performance after acting honestly on the quiz (moral licensing). Indeed, a simple slope test performed at one standard deviation below the mean of prevention focus (weak prevention focus) revealed a negative relation between initial cheating and subsequent cheating, $t(56) = -2.23$, $p = .01$. The interaction between initial cheating and promotion focus did not have a significant effect on subsequent cheating, $B = 0.14$, $t(56) = 0.39$, $p = .70$.

Study 6 revealed the important role of prevention focus in predicting repeated unethical behaviors. Using self-report performance as an indicator of cheating, I found a tendency to repeat unethical behaviors only among individuals with a strong prevention focus, who were more likely to inflate performance for potential monetary gain after cheating on a previous task. Moreover, the fact that stronger prevention focus did not directly affect initial or subsequent cheating confirmed the notion that this self-regulatory motive functions to maintain the ethical stance of one’s initial behavior regardless of its ethical value.
Although self-report provides a reliable indicator of performance inflation, it is limited in pinpointing the cheating behavior of a specific individual. This issue was addressed in Study 7, which obtained measures of both self-report and true performance in a laboratory setting. By comparing the two measures, I could determine the exact ethical behavior of each participant.

**Methods**

**Participants.** Eighty-seven college students (30 males) from a Northeastern university participated in an experiment ostensibly on general knowledge and creativity, receiving a show-up payment of $5. Participants were also told that they could be entered in a lottery to win an additional $200. Mean age was 22.72 years old ($SD = 4.71$). Twenty-nine percent identified themselves as “White”, 7% as “African American”, 53% as “Asian/Pacific Islander”, 1% as “American Indian/Alaska Native”, 7% as “Hispanic”, and 3% as “Other”. Sixty percent spoke English as native language, and the rest reported an average English proficiency score of 5.77 on a 7-point Likert scale (1 “very poor”, 7 “native speaker”; $SD = 0.84$).

**Experimental tasks and procedures.** The tasks and procedures were identical to Study 6 except for three differences: 1) participants completed the study on computer in a laboratory setting instead of online; 2) prevention and promotion foci were measured as chronic dispositions at the beginning instead of at the end of the study; 3) subsequent cheating was measured using the Carbonless Anagram Method instead of self-report performance, as the former detects intentional unethical acts at the individual level in an inconspicuous manner (Ruedy & Schweitzer, 2011). After participants completed the general knowledge quiz by accepting or rejecting the inflated score, they each received a sealed manila folder containing three paper sheets. The top sheet was a white regular paper that printed 15 anagram questions on the front and two filler questions on the back (“How difficult was this task?” and “How
enjoyable was this task?"; 1 not at all, 7 very much). The middle sheet was a white carbonless paper with a chemical coating on the back, and on the front printed another task that would mask any mark recorded on the bottom sheet. The bottom sheet was a carbonless paper with a chemical coating on the front, where pressure (e.g., a pen mark) on the top sheet would leave an identical mark.

Participants wrote down their answer to each anagram puzzle on the front of the top sheet. When finished, they were instructed to remove the top sheet from the folder to answer the two filler questions on the back. Meanwhile, the experimenter collected the folder containing the bottom sheet that recorded participants’ true performance, telling participants that they no longer needed the folder as there was not enough time left for the other task in the folder. Left with only the top sheet that recorded their original answers, participants were presented with the anagram key. They were asked to transfer their answers from the top sheet to the computer by entering each answer into the computer, and to report the number of anagrams they correctly solved. Participants were also told that the experimenter would not collect the top sheet and they should recycle it outside the lab after the study. Finally, participants completed the demographics questions, were paid and dismissed.

**Results and Discussion**

**Initial cheating.** Initial cheating was measured in the same way as in Study 6 (0 no cheating, 1 cheating). Of all 87 participants, 50 (57%) cheated on the general knowledge quiz. Fewer participants cheated here than in Study 6, probably due to less privacy in the laboratory than an online setting. Still a majority of the participants cheated, lending additional evidence to the non-threatening nature of initial cheating. Consistent with Study 6 findings, neither
prevention focus ($B = -0.29, p = .20$) nor promotion focus ($B = -0.36, p = .12$) affected initial cheating.

**Subsequent cheating.** Subsequent cheating was measured by a binary variable (0 *no cheating*, 1 *cheating*). For each participant, reporting true anagram performance was coded as 0, and reporting inflated anagram performance was coded as 1. The unfilled bars of Figure 7a show the percentages of participants claiming to solve 0 to 15 anagrams, which follow a positively skewed distribution. This contrasts with the bimodal distribution in Study 6 (Figure 6a), particularly in the markedly reduced percentage of participants who reported having solved over 10 anagrams. Again, this drop might be due to the feelings of less privacy in a controlled laboratory environment. The filled bars of Figure 7a show the percentages of participants inflating 0 to 9 anagrams. Out of all 87 participants, 27 (31%) inflated their anagram performance. More specifically, among the 50 participants who cheated on the initial quiz, 18 cheated on the anagram task; among the other 37 participants who did not cheat on the quiz, 9 cheated later. Compared with the initial cheating rate (57%), the subsequent cheating rate was much lower, which was expected because initial cheating involved passive acceptance of an inflated score, whereas subsequent cheating required intentional and deliberate action.

Logistic regressions were performed on the binary measure of subsequent cheating (0 *no cheating*, 1 *cheating*). Prevention focus and initial cheating were entered as predictors, and promotion focus was entered as covariate. As in Study 6, there was no main effect of prevention focus ($B = 0.13, p = .58$), promotion focus ($B = 0.02, p = .94$), or initial cheating ($B = 0.60, p = .22$). Hypothesis 2 was supported again, as the analyses yielded a significant interaction between prevention focus and initial cheating, $B = 1.18, z = 2.17, p = .03$. As Figure 7b shows, participants with a stronger prevention focus were more likely to repeat on the anagram task.
what they had previously done on the quiz (i.e., either repeating cheating or repeating non-cheating), $t(81) = 2.27, p = .03$. In contrast, for participants with a weaker prevention focus, their initial and subsequent choices were unrelated, $t(81) = -0.85, p = .40$. Like Study 1, the interaction between promotion focus and initial cheating did not predict subsequent cheating, $B = 0.25, z = 0.51, p = .61$.

Using a behavioral measure to pinpoint subsequent cheating at the individual level, Study 7 provided additional evidence for Hypothesis 2. Despite the different settings (online vs. experimental) and samples (MTurkers vs. college students) for Studies 6 and 7, stronger prevention focus remained predictive of persistence in unethical behaviors. Individuals in a weak prevention focus also exhibited a similar trend to Study 6 by showing a moral cleansing or licensing effect, although this effect did not reach significance in Study 7.

**Study 8**

Regulatory focus was measured as chronic dispositions in Studies 6 and 7. Study 8 aimed to replicate these results when a prevention focus or a promotion focus was situationally induced. More importantly, the experimental induction of regulatory focus allowed a test of the causal relation between prevention focus and persistence in own unethical behavior.

**Methods**

**Participants and design.** Eighty college students (28 males) from a Northeastern university participated in the experiment. As in Study 7, they received $5 for participation and an opportunity to win an additional $200. Mean age was 23.20 years old ($SD = 3.61$). A third of participants identified themselves as “White”, 6% as “African American”, 48% as “Asian/Pacific Islander”, 1% as “American Indian/Alaska Native”, 6% as “Hispanic”, and 6% as “Other”. Fifty-eight percent spoke English as native language, and the rest reported an average English
proficiency score of 5.45 on a 7-point Likert scale (1 “very poor”, 7 “native speaker”; SD = 0.95). Participants were randomly assigned to two conditions to have an induced prevention or promotion focus. The experimental tasks and procedures were identical to Study 7 except that we used both incidental manipulation and framing to consistently induce a prevention or promotion focus.

**Experimental tasks and procedures.** Upon arrival in the laboratory, participants were asked to pilot an allegedly unrelated task. The task showed a cartoon mouse trapped inside a maze, and participants were asked to draw the pathway for the mouse to escape the maze. In the prevention focus condition, an owl was hovering above the maze, ready to swoop down and snatch the mouse. In the promotion focus condition, instead of the owl, a piece of Swiss cheese was lying outside the maze. Previous research shows that the owl and cheese serve as incidental cues that activate prevention and promotion foci, respectively (e.g., Friedman & Förster, 2001; Sassenberg, Jonas, Shah, & Brazy, 2007).

For both the general knowledge quiz and the anagram task, the incentive messages were framed in a prevention- or promotion-focus manner to induce the same orientation as the cartoon cues. Following the standard procedures of regulatory focus framing (Higgins, Shah, & Friedman, 1997; Lee & Aaker, 2004; Shah, Higgins, & Friedman, 1998), the prevention-focus messages emphasized relative losses (in the negative domain) and nonlosses (in the positive domain). Specifically, participants were told that they had been entered in a $100 lottery for each task but would be removed from the lottery if their performance ranked in the bottom half of all participants (i.e., poor performance). In contrast, the promotion-focus messages emphasized relative gains (in the positive domain) or nongains (in the negative domain).
Specifically, participants were told that they could be entered in a $100 lottery if their performance ranked in the top half of all participants (i.e., good performance).

**Results and Discussion**

**Initial cheating.** Comparable to Study 7, 40 out of 80 (50%) participants cheated on the general knowledge quiz. Once again, initial cheating was not affected by induced regulatory focus, $\hat{B} = -0.50, p = .26$.

**Subsequent cheating.** Also comparable to Study 7, 24 out of 80 (30%) participants inflated their anagram performance. As Figure 8a shows, the percentages of participants claiming to solve 0 to 15 anagrams follow a positively skewed distribution (unfilled bars). So do the percentages of participants inflating 0 to 9 anagrams (filled bars). Specifically, among the 40 participants who previously cheated on the quiz, 13 cheated on the anagram task later; among the other 40 participants who did not cheat on the quiz, 11 cheated later.

Logistic regressions were conducted on the binary measure of subsequent cheating (0 no cheating, 1 cheating). Consistent with previous results, Hypothesis 2 was supported, in that neither regulatory focus induction ($\hat{B} = 0.35, p = .48$) nor initial cheating ($\hat{B} = 0.28, p = .57$) had a main effect, but their interaction was significant, $\hat{B} = -2.45, z = 2.18, p = .03$. As Figure 8b shows, participants with an induced prevention focus were more likely to repeat on the anagram task what they had done on the initial quiz (either repeating cheating or repeating non-cheating), $\chi^2(1, N = 41) = 4.04, p = .04$. Although participants with an induced promotion focus exhibited a similar trend to weak prevention participants in Studies 6 and 7, such that their initial cheating tended to deter subsequent cheating and initial non-cheating tended to license subsequent cheating, this trend was nonsignificant, $\chi^2(1, N = 39) = 1.30, p = .25$. 
By experimentally inducing prevention focus, Study 8 supported the hypothesized causal direction of strong prevention individuals repeating unethical behaviors. One limitation of Studies 6-8 was their focus on one type of unethical behavior—performance inflation—in an independent decision-making context, raising the question of whether the findings would generalize to other unethical behaviors and to different contexts. Study 8 was conducted to address this question in a two-party negotiation context, where one party could mislead the other party by not disclosing information that might alter the outcome of a negotiation (Tenbrunsel, 1998).

**Study 9**

Study 9 tested the hypothesized relation between strong prevention focus and repeated unethical behaviors in a socially interactive context—two-party negotiations, where unethical behaviors were reflected in one party’s failure to disclose relevant information to the other party (Kern & Chugh, 2009). In this study, participants were paired up to conduct two rounds of negotiation over the sale of a property, and those playing the buyer role (buyers) could reach a deal or lower the purchase price by not disclosing their intended use of the property to those playing the seller role (sellers). By tracking how buyers conveyed their intentions to sellers across the two rounds of negotiation, the role of prevention focus in buyers’ tendency to repeatedly not disclose information could be determined.

**Methods**

**Participants and design.** Eighty-six college students (30 males) from a Northeastern university participated in a study ostensibly on negotiation strategies. They received $8 for participation and an opportunity to win an additional $200. Mean age was 22.47 years old ($SD = 4.31$). Forty-two percent identified themselves as “White”, 12% as “African American”, 29% as
“Asian/Pacific Islander”, 10% as “American Indian/Alaska Native”, 7% as “Hispanic”. Given the communicative nature of negotiations, the study recruited individuals highly proficient in English proficiency. Seventy-four percent were native speakers, and the rest reported an average proficiency score of 6.18 on a 7-point Likert scale (1 “very poor”, 7 “native speaker”; SD = 0.59). Participants were paired into 43 dyads and randomly assigned to the buyer or seller role. Buyers were further randomly assigned to two conditions to have an induced prevention or promotion focus.

**Experimental tasks and procedures.** First, all participants read three negotiation strategies individually: 1) making aggressive first offers; 2) asking the other party’s intentions; and 3) determining the “walk-away” position (see Appendix for details). Then they conducted two rounds of negotiation. For each round, they completed a pre-negotiation questionnaire to specify how they would apply the three strategies to the negotiation. When finished with negotiating, participants completed a post-negotiation questionnaire that contained our dependent measures.

The first negotiation was over the sale of a used car. The seller was willing to settle at a reasonable price ($500), knowing that the car might be valuable as a classic ($10,000) with an expensive fix-up. The buyer was looking for parts to restore another car as a classic ($8,000) and found all the parts needed in the seller’s car. Thus, the buyer had the incentive to not disclose the intended use of the car to the seller as it might raise the seller’s asking price. Given that the buyer’s intention represented superior information relevant to the transaction that was not accessible to the seller and could affect the outcome of the negotiation once revealed to the seller, failure to disclose this information to the seller was potentially fraudulent (Shell, 1991). Participants then played the same roles in the second negotiation, which was over the sale of a
real estate property (adapted from the Bullard Houses case; Karp, Gold, & Tan, 1998). Sellers represented the owner of the property who had a strong desire to sell it for residential use. Buyers were instructed by their client to not disclose the commercial use planned for the property. Thus, buyers again had the incentive to not disclose the intended use of the property to sellers. Because sellers’ decision to reach a deal depended on the vital information on how buyers intended to use the property, buyers had the duty to disclose this information and failing to do so was considered as fraudulent (Shell, 1991). The buyers’ data were of focal interest.

For both negotiations, performance incentives were presented as part of the role information. Like Study 8, the incentives for buyers were framed to induce a prevention or promotion focus. Specifically, buyers in the prevention focus condition were told that they were currently entered in a lottery to win an additional $100 but would be removed from this lottery if their purchase price was above the average of all buyers (i.e., a poor price). If no deal was reached, there would be a 50% chance of them being removed from the lottery. Buyers in the promotion focus condition were told that they would be entered in a lottery to win an additional $100 if their purchase price was below the average of all buyers (i.e., a good price). If no deal was reached, there would be a 50% chance of them being entered in the lottery. All sellers read the same incentives that they would/would not be in the lottery to win an additional $100 if their sale price was above/below the average of all sellers. If no deal was reached, there would be a 50% chance of them being in the lottery.

Results and Discussion

Initial failure to disclose. Two measures were obtained from the first negotiation to measure initial failure to disclose: a behavioral and a self-report measure. The behavioral measure captured buyers’ conveyed intention for the used car by considering both buyers’ and
sellers’ reports of what buyers said about their intentions for the car (e.g., driving, restoring another car using its part, etc.). Two research assistants independently coded these reports into a binary variable (0: disclosure of the intended use, 1: failure to disclose the intended use). Their codings converged for 39 out of 43 dyads (91%), and the remaining discrepancies were thoroughly discussed before a final consensus was reached. The self-report measure was developed from buyers’ responses to whether they had disclosed the consequences of their position to the opponent (0: yes, 1: no; Robinson, Lewicki, & Donahue, 2000).

The behavioral measure showed that 25 out of 43 (58%) buyers did not disclose their intentions in the first negotiation. Similarly, the self-report measure showed that 26 out of 43 (60%) buyers did not disclose. Consistent with previous findings, regulatory focus induction did not affect the behavioral measure, $\chi^2(1, N = 43) = 0.02, p = .90$, or the self-report measure, $\chi^2(1, N = 43) = 1.12, p = .29$, of initial failure to disclose.

**Subsequent failure to disclose.** Behavioral and self-report measures of subsequent failure to disclose were created in the same way as those of initial failure to disclose, based on both buyers’ and sellers’ responses pertaining to buyers’ intentions in the second negotiation. The behavioral measure showed that 36 out of 43 (84%) buyers did not disclose their intentions in the second negotiation. Consistently, the self-report measure indicated that 35 out of 43 (81%) buyers did not disclose. Compared with the first negotiation, the marked increase in the rate of failure to disclose here was likely due to the role instruction that explicitly asked buyers not to reveal the intended use of the property under any circumstances. As in Studies 6-8, regulatory focus did not affect the behavioral measure, $\chi^2(1, N = 43) = 1.37, p = .24$, or the self-report measure, $\chi^2(1, N = 43) = 0.01, p = .94$, of subsequent failure to disclose.
Unlike previous studies, initial and subsequent failures to disclose were positively related when they were both assessed by behavioral measures, $\chi^2(1, N = 43) = 6.61, p = .01$, or by self-report measures, $\chi^2(1, N = 43) = 5.17, p = .02$. Specifically, more of the participants who had not disclosed their intentions in the first negotiation chose to do so in the second negotiation (24 out of 25 for behavioral measures; 24 out of 26 for self-report measures) than those who had previously disclosed their intentions (12 out of 18 for behavioral measures; 11 out of 17 for self-report measures). Further analyses showed that this relation was driven by an interaction between regulatory focus induction and initial failure to disclose, which was revealed by both behavioral measures, $\chi^2(1, N = 43) = 13.27, p < .001$, and self-report measures, $\chi^2(1, N = 43) = 6.50, p = .01$.

As Figure 9a (behavioral measure) and Figure 9b (self-report measure) show, buyers with an induced prevention focus tended to repeat their previous decision on whether to disclose their intentions, $\chi^2(1, N = 22) = 9.35, p < .01$ (behavioral measures), $\chi^2(1, N = 22) = 4.20, p = .04$ (self-report measures), whereas buyers with an induced promotion focus did not show this tendency, $\chi^2(1, N = 21) = 0.05, p = .83$ (behavioral measures), $\chi^2(1, N = 21) = 1.49, p = .22$ (self-report measures). These findings thus supported Hypothesis 2.

In sum, Study 9 provides further support for Hypothesis 2 regarding the role of a strong prevention focus in repeating behaviors with potential unethical connotations: being in an induced prevention focus motivated individuals to continuously withhold relevant information from their negotiation opponent. Bringing additional value to the previous studies, this study generalizes the central finding to a social-interactive setting, and broadens the scope of unethical behaviors to include failure to disclose during a negotiation. As a long-standing issue, failure to disclose information to stakeholders not only attracts attention and debate in the corporate world (Pfarrer, 2008; Shell, 1991), but also characterizes ethical issues prevalent in many domains.
including medical, legal, and environmental services (e.g., Cormier, Gordon, & Magnan, 2004; Finkelstein, Wu, Holtzman, & Smith, 1997; Newberg, 2004). Although failure to disclose was measured here as a negotiation-specific behavior, our findings may speak to a wide range of misconducts from legitimate nondisclosure to fraudulent misstatement.

**GENERAL DISCUSSION**

Why would people repeat the follies of the past? The present research explores the self-regulatory processes that motivate repetition of a prior behavior that could be unpleasant, ineffective, and even unethical. Depending on whether the prior behavior is committed by others or by oneself, I examined two forms of repetition: 1) copying the managing behaviors of a role model (Studies 1-5), and 2) persisting in one’s own unethical behavior (Studies 6-9). Applying regulatory focus theory (Higgins, 1997, 1998) to the analysis of each form of repetition, I argue that the prevention aspect of self-regulation (i.e., prevention focus) motivates both copying others and persisting in oneself. Concerned about avoiding negative deviations from the status quo, prevention focus is associated with the tendency to maintain the status quo, which is a fit experience that transcends concerns about the hedonic, utilitarian, and ethical value of the status quo.

The first set of studies, comprised of four experiments and a field study, offered converging support for the role of prevention focus in repeating the managing behaviors of a role model. Across two different types of relationships (grader–student, superior–subordinate) and multiple managing behaviors (performance evaluation, monitoring, and use of power), I found consistent evidence for the hypothesis that being in a prevention focus, either measured as a chronic disposition (Studies 1, 3, 4, 5) or induced as a psychological state (Study 2), motivated the tendency to copy the managing behaviors of a role model. The findings also supported the
normative determination of copying (Study 3) and transcendence of copying as a fit experience over hedonic (Studies 1-5) and effective concerns (Studies 4 & 5). Finally, the experimental findings were generalized to an organizational setting (Study 5), where superiors in a prevention focus tended to copy the managing behaviors from their former superiors.

The second set of studies including four experiments revealed that a relatively minor misconduct resulted in more significant ethical violation, a slippery slope effect observed only among individuals in a prevention focus. This effect was first manifested in two rounds of independent decision-making, and participants in a chronic prevention focus (Studies 6 & 7) or an induced prevention focus (Study 8) tended to intentionally overstate performance after previously accepting an overstated performance score. It was replicated in a two-party negotiation context (Study 9): for participants in an induced prevention focus, their initial choice to not disclose relatively trivial information to the opponent increased the likelihood of not disclosing more critical information later. This thus attests to the notion that repeating a prior behavior represents a deeper prevention motivation that operates beyond ethical concerns.

**Theoretical Contributions**

The present research makes at least three contributions to the literature. First, although previous studies suggest an association between prevention focus and a preference for the status quo (Crowe & Higgins, 1997; Liberman et al., 1999), they make the assumption that the option representing the status quo is good, satisfactory, and problem-free, which offers a safe choice that fits with the prevention concerns to avoid negative outcomes. As a result, the status quo preference is aligned with other concerns (e.g., hedonic, utilitarian, ethical concerns), making it difficult to pinpoint the primary motivation behind repetition. The current research pits the prevention preference for the status quo against other concerns, presenting a more inclusive
picture of the status quo that does not necessarily reflect what is pleasant, effective, or ethical. For this reason, the current research not only extends previous findings by clarifying the underlying mechanism, but it also alerts us to the downsides of maintaining the status quo.

Second, the studies on copying revealed the usefulness of a regulatory focus perspective in understanding the prevalence and perpetuation of unpleasant and ineffective behaviors in the workplace against people’s better judgment (Bennett & Robinson, 2003; Kidwell & Martin, 2004). It has been shown that our judgment about what is right and wrong is highly susceptible to external influence, which highlights the importance of leadership, peer behavior, norms, and culture in shaping the behavior of individuals (Trevino, Weaver, & Reynolds, 2006). The findings presented in the five studies on copying suggest that individuals in a prevention focus are particularly susceptible to the external influence of one’s social environment, who are more concerned about following normative behaviors established by a role model than acting upon their hedonic or utilitarian considerations.

Third, the studies on persisting in one’s own unethical behavior answer the call for processual models of ethical violations (Ashforth, Gioia, Robinson, & Trevino, 2008). Although a few process models have been proposed to account for the incremental development of unethical behaviors, such as routinization (Tenbrunsel & Messick, 2004), moral seduction (Moore et al., 2006), and gradual erosion (Gino & Bazerman, 2009; Minor, 1984), there is a lack of empirical work to directly test these models and relevant findings are far from conclusive. Instead of viewing unethical acts as isolated and static states, the current studies provide evidence for the process model by revealing an incremental degradation from an innocuous lapse to a more significant violation. A process view is useful to capture the complexities and dynamics of unethical practices (Ashforth et al., 2008). For instance, treating ethical behaviors
as unrelated static states in the current studies would have rendered prevention focus an irrelevant factor because of its null effect on a single ethical behavior; only when a process view is adopted does prevention focus show a robust effect on perpetuation of unethical behaviors.

**Practical Implications**

An important implication of this research for management practice is that the regulatory focus perspective sheds new light on the understanding and prevention of negative organizational behaviors. First, having a prevention focus predicts repeated unethical behaviors not only when strong prevention is a chronic disposition (Studies 1 & 3-7), but also when it is a characteristic of the social environments that activate prevention concerns (Studies 2, 8, 9). Indeed, regulatory focus orientations define the collective culture of many organizations (Brockner & Higgins, 2001; Kark & Van Dijk, 2007). For example, a prevention-focused culture exists in accounting (Moore et al., 2006), financial service (Van-Dijk & Kluger, 2004; Zou, 2009), and public utility firms (Brockner & Higgins, 2001), and the list could be extended to include more organizations that stress prevention-focused goals (e.g., safety, security), such as pharmaceutical companies, health care/insurance providers, hospitals, and the military. Such cultures institutionalize a prevention orientation that may predispose employees to repeat unethical practices if they begin to happen. More generally, the fact that regulatory focus can be situationally induced as a motivational state is especially important given that there are many real-world, long-lasting inductions of prevention focus, such as the concerns with terrorism following the September 11 attack and job insecurity during recent economic recessions. Such inductions could trigger severe problems if organizations were exposed to questionable practices that set the precedent for a problematic status quo.
Another implication of the present findings concerns the potential downside of negative reward systems that penalize transgressor individuals or organizations through official punishment (e.g., court fines, firings/delistings) or unofficial punishment (e.g., public shaming, retaliation; Pfarrer et al., 2008). Although anticipating punishment can function as a deterrent, it does not address the problem of corrupt individuals and organizations that have a history of transgression (Moore et al., 2006). Even worse, because punishment induces a strong prevention focus (Higgins, 1996), it may backfire by encouraging repeated transgressions once they have begun, especially when the initial transgression is inadvertent or innocuous enough to pass ethical judgment. Given that for individuals with a strong prevention focus maintaining the status quo is a deeper motivation than hedonic concerns per se (Higgins, 2005, 2012), punishment could increase the motivation to repeat a transgression rather than inducing the intended hedonic concern about punishment. Paradoxically then, punishment could end up driving former transgressors further down the slippery slope.

One way to alleviate this potential downside of punishment is to ensure that individuals and organizations start with a desirable practice, which not only removes the origin of a slippery slope but also establishes an ethical status quo. As the current findings suggest, the benefits of an initial ethical behavior are not restricted to the appropriateness of the behavior itself; it may also launch a self-sustaining cycle of ethical commitment, especially in organizations with a prevention culture. For this reason, organizations should employ a preventive approach that precludes possible misconducts and rewards positive behaviors, rather than a corrective approach that relies solely on reactive punishments. In situations where an initial misconduct already occurred, managers should be aware of its reverberations on subsequent behaviors of the transgressor. Instead of resorting to punishments as the only solution to stop its reoccurrence,
intervention programs could be introduced to “reset” the status quo by supporting the 
transgressor in taking new and ethical actions, through which the transgressor can safely reverse 
the previous misconduct and reestablish a new status quo of ethical actions. Moreover, to 
motivate repeating the new ethical behaviors, managers can create or reinforce prevention 
concerns by setting aside positive incentives, such as extra salary and vacation days, that are 
maintained (non-loss) as long as employees persist the new ethical behaviors (Brodscholl, 
Kober, & Higgins, 2007).

Limitations and Future Research

The use of experimental design allows the current research to determine the causality of 
hypothesized relationships and rule out alternative explanations. However, experimental design 
can have limitations regarding its external validity. Although this issue was addressed in Study 5 
that showed generalizability of the prevention-copying relation from laboratory to organizational 
settings, the second set of studies on persisting in own unethical behavior were all conducted 
experimentally. Therefore, future research should examine whether their findings extend to the 
representative real-world settings, where individuals or organizations make questionable calls 
that turn out to affect later decisions. Another limitation of the present research is that only two 
domains of unethical behavior were examined—performance overstatement and failure to 
disclose. Although both behaviors are common examples of ethically questionable practices 
(e.g., Gino & Pierce, 2009; Robinson et al., 2000; Shell, 1991), they are not the only ways in 
which individuals and organizations may breach ethical principles. Future research needs to 
investigate a broader range of unethical behaviors, not only generalized forms of dishonesty such 
as lying, cheating, or stealing (Trevino, Weaver, & Reynolds, 2006), but also more context-
specific behaviors such as workplace deviance (e.g., absenteeism, embezzlement, sabotage;
Robinson & Bennett, 1995). Another meaningful extension of this research is to test the role of prevention focus in sustaining ethical behaviors that meet or exceed moral standards to benefit organizations or societies at large, such as organizational citizenship behaviors, whistle-blowing, and corporate volunteerism. Moreover, in resolving the seeming discrepancy in the findings between the experimental studies (Studies 1-4) and the field study (Study 5), which was that prevention focus predicted copying both harsh and lenient methods in the experiments whereas it predicted copying only “bad” management methods in the field study, I provided the speculation that prevention focus did not predict copying “good” management methods in the field study because these behaviors represent a default way to manage and therefore all managers, irrespective of their regulatory focus, are encouraged to and thus more likely to engage in these behaviors. Future research should test this speculation by factoring the variable of whether a behavior is viewed as the default way to manage subordinates.

As an orientation against negative deviations from the status quo, prevention focus is associated with the motivation to both copy the interpersonal behaviors of others and persist in the personal decisions of oneself. A question thus arises: how would prevention-focused individuals react if the two motivations are pitted against each other? For example, when people make a judgment about an issue and later find out that their own judgment contrasts with their group’s judgment on the same issue, will their self-regulatory orientation predict an adjustment towards the group’s judgment or a persistence in their personal judgment? Although the present research is limited in directly addressing this question as it studied the two motivations separately, it does suggest that prevention-focused individuals may base their choice on which motivation provides better justification. As one of the pilot studies on copying shows, when a normal grading method was made available (in addition to the harsh and lenient methods), it
attracted most votes from participants including those in a prevention focus, probably because the choice of the normal method was the easiest to justify. It is only when people are faced with only the two uncommon methods (i.e., harsh and lenient methods) that were equally difficult to justify, being in a prevention focus would direct them to go along with a role model so they could use descriptive norms as the basis for their choice. Future research should take into account the justifiability of self- versus other-made choices as a possible moderator in predicting people’s choice between copying others and repeating themselves.

Last but not least, future research should try to identify the boundary conditions of the relation between a strong prevention focus and repeating a past misconduct. In the present research, the innocuous origin of a slippery slope is relatively easy to rationalize and accept as the benchmark for future behaviors. Such a pattern may be less likely if the initial lapse poses a notable threat to people’s moral self-evaluations, as it will be too difficult to rationalize. Thus, instead of yielding additional misconducts, a conspicuous lapse may lead individuals to feel morally debased and consequently motivate ethical actions to “cleanse” themselves (Sachdeva, Iliev, & Medin, 2009; Zhong & Liljenquist, 2006), especially if they are strong prevention individuals who don’t want to make a clear mistake or sin of commission (Camacho, Higgins, & Luger, 2003). Future research should examine this possibility by assessing the effect of the extremity of the initial lapse on prevention-focused individuals’ likelihood of repeating the lapse. Another boundary condition worth exploring is the similarity between the initial and subsequent choices. In the present studies, the two choices were very similar. It is possible that they could be quite different (i.e., a “spillover” effect), such as an initial transgression of inflating sales spilling over to a different transgression like backdating or falsifying accounts. How different the initial
and subsequent choices can be while still showing the prevention effect on repetition is an important question, theoretically and practically.

**Conclusion**

This research is the first to examine how differences in regulatory focus influence the tendency to copy an interpersonal behavior from others and to persist in one’s own unethical behavior. The key finding was that being in a prevention focus predicts the tendency to repeat a prior behavior that is either perceived as normative or committed as a personal choice—独立 of hedonic, utilitarian, and ethical concerns about the behavior itself. Taken together, the current research reveals an important role of prevention focus in perpetuating interpersonal behaviors across similar relationships and independent ethical choices over time. Given that the motivation to perpetuate a behavior may result in bliss or woe for individuals and organizations, I hope that extending this work in future studies will uncover ways to harvest the benefits and minimize the costs of this motivation.
FOOTNOTES

1. In Study 2, 3, and 4, the reliabilities of the two scales were all above .80.

2. Because logistic regression is a non-linear model (so is it in Study 2, 3, 4, 6, 7), simple slope tests were conducted on \( \logit(p_i) \), which is calculated by the following linear model:

\[
\logit(p_i) = \ln\left(\frac{p_i}{1-p_i}\right) = f(X) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_i, + ... + \beta_k x_{ki}
\]

\[
y = \frac{1}{1 + e^{-f(X)}}, \text{ where } X = (x_1, x_2, ..., x_k)
\]

3. In an independent study with different participants recruited from the same university campus \((N = 46)\), the same design and procedures were used as Study 3 but only the two non-normative conditions were examined. This study yielded the same results as the two non-normative conditions of Study 3, such that prevention focus did not predict copying when a role model’s managing behavior was non-normative, \( \beta = -1.38, z = -1.67, ns \), thus supporting the hypothesis about the normative determination of copying for prevention-focused individuals.

4. In the independent study including the two same non-normative conditions as Study 3 (see footnote 3), the results also showed an interaction effect between the received method and satisfaction with this method, \( \beta = 2.53, z = 2.06, p < .05 \), replicating the findings of Study 3 that satisfaction with a non-normative managing behavior, instead of the strength of prevention focus, predicts the tendency to copy this behavior.

5. There was no gender effect on Studies 7-9 either.

6. Given that the results revealed a trend of promotion focus predicting “anti-copying”, which reached marginal significance in Study 1 \((p = .09)\) and in the normative condition of Study 3 \((p = .08)\), I performed meta-analyses of the promotion effects in studies that measured regulatory focus as a chronic trait (Study 1, the normative condition of Study 3, and Study 4). The meta-analyses revealed no main effect of promotion focus, \( \chi^2(6) = 4.06, p = .67 \), but a significant interactive effect between promotion focus and the received method emerged, \( \chi^2(6) = 14.04, p = .03 \). Further analyses showed that the interactive effect was driven by individuals with a weak promotion focus, \( \chi^2(6) = 15.25, p = .02 \), who demonstrated the tendency to copy, but not by individuals with a strong promotion focus, whose later choice of grading method was not affected by the method they received early, \( \chi^2(6) = 8.45, p = .21 \).
REFERENCES


FIGURE 1. Probability of Method Chosen as a Function of Prevention Focus in Harsh and Lenient Conditions (Study 1)
Figure 2. Proportion of Method Chosen as a Function of Received Method and Induced Regulatory Focus States (Study 2)

- **: Significant
- ns: Not significant
FIGURE 3. Probability of Method Chosen as a Function of Prevention Focus, Received Method, and the Normative Status of the Received Method (Study 3)
FIGURE 4. Probability of Method Chosen as a Function of Prevention Focus in Harsh and Lenient Conditions (Study 4)
FIGURE 5a. Managers’ Use of Monitoring as a Function of Their Former Superiors’ Use of Monitoring for Managers with a Strong and Weak Prevention Focus (Study 5)
FIGURE 5b. Managers’ Use of Coercive Power as a Function of Their Former Superiors’ Use of Coercive Power for Managers with a Strong and Weak Prevention Focus (Study 5)
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FIGURE 6a. Percentage of Participants with Self-Report Performance of 0 to 15 Anagrams (Study 6)
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FIGURE 9a. Percentage of Participants Failing to Disclose Intentions in the Second Negotiation as a Function of Induced Prevention Focus and Failure to Disclose in the First Negotiation (Behavioral Measure; Study 9)
FIGURE 9b. Percentage of Participants Failing to Disclose Intentions in the Second Negotiation as a Function of Induced Prevention Focus and Failure to Disclose in the First Negotiation (Self-Report Measure; Study 9)

[Bar chart showing percentage of buyers failing to disclose intended use of the real estate in car negotiations under promotion and prevention focus conditions. The chart includes a note indicating a significant difference (*), and a note indicating no significant difference (ns).]
TABLE 1. Descriptive Statistics, Reliabilities, and Correlations<sup>a</sup> (Study 5)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Prevention focus</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Promotion focus</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Work facilitation</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>(.75/.75)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Directive leadership</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.75**</td>
<td>(.73/.76)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Use of legitimate power</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.61*</td>
<td>.53**</td>
<td>(.92/.75)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Monitoring</td>
<td>2.49</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>-12</td>
<td>-12</td>
<td>-24</td>
<td>-23</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>(.64/.70)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Use of coercive power</td>
<td>1.74</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>-11</td>
<td>-17</td>
<td>-14</td>
<td>-.29*</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>(.84/.75)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Use of negative feedback</td>
<td>2.16</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>-.15</td>
<td>-.30*</td>
<td>-.40**</td>
<td>-.20</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>.33*</td>
<td>(.63/.78)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Satisfaction with former superior</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.79**</td>
<td>.69**</td>
<td>.50**</td>
<td>-.32*</td>
<td>-.35*</td>
<td>-.44**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup> The first and second values in parentheses are alpha reliabilities for the superior and subordinate subsamples, respectively.

* *p < .05. ** *p < .01
A list of three negotiation tips (Study 9):

STRATEGY 1: ANCHORING

First offers have a vigorous anchoring impact in negotiations. Negotiations research has repeatedly shown that final prices are positively correlated with first offers – the less a buyer offers, the lower the final price; the more a seller asks for, the higher the final price. Negotiators are advised to make aggressive first offers, i.e. low for buyers and high for sellers.

STRATEGY 2: FOCUSING ON “WHY”

When two people take opposing sides during a negotiation, they both often refuse to budge from their divergent viewpoints. The crucial question that neither party has asked the other, is to explain the reason and motivation behind their position. Negotiators are advised to ask questions about the intentions of the other party. Find out why they want it.

STRATEGY 3: KNOWING WHEN TO WALK AWAY

Decide on your “walk-away” position before starting a negotiation, and never reevaluate your “walk-away” position while sitting at the table. Clearly express your position and reasons and let the other party know that you mean what you say. Negotiators are advised to walk away if the deal cannot be obtained without violating your prior walk-away decision.