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who exhibit moral disengagement mechanisms tend to engage more readily in various forms of aggressive behaviors. Additionally, moral disengagement and bullying behaviours in various forms of aggression have been found to exist from at least mid-childhood onward. Conversely, moral disengagement has been found to have a negative relationship with prosocial behaviours. Multiple studies have shown that bullying and pro-bullying behaviours (assisting and reinforcing the bully) are more commonly observed in students with higher levels of moral disengagement [3-5].

in Table 1. According to the results of this table, in the Ethical Breach Questionnaire, among the 7 investigated components, the mean of the Transfer of Responsibility component (10.72) is higher than the other components. In the Bullying Questionnaire, the highest mean is related to the Relational Bullying component (4.71). Also, in the Ethical Identity Questionnaire, the mean of the internalization component (30.74) is higher than the means of the other components, with a significant difference (Table 1).

Before conducting the regression analysis, the assumptions of linearity, correlation between variables, and normality of their distribution were assessed, and all assumptions were met (Table 2).

If observed in Table 2, the adjusted coefficient of determination (ADJ.R2) indicates that the sub-scales of moral disengagement predict 28 percent of the variance in bullying. Furthermore, considering the beta values for each of the subscales, it can be stated that with an increase of one standard deviation in the score of moral justification, labeling without guilt, comparison of benefits, shifting responsibility, diffusion of responsibility, and victim attribution, the bullying score will increase by 0.13, 0.36, 0.19, 0.21, 0.28, 0.02, and 0.10 standard deviations, respectively. Therefore, by considering the values of P-Value, F and T, it can be concluded that except for the sub-scale of victim attribution, the other subscales are at a desirable level of significance, and thus the first hypothesis of the study is generally confirmed while the null hypothesis is rejected (P-Value < 0.05). Hence, it can be said that the sub-scales of moral disengagement (except for victim attribution) can be suitable predictors for bullying. In other words, with an increase in moral disengagement, the level of bullying also increases (Table 3).

Table 3 shows that the adjusted coefficient of determination (ADJ.R2) for the two sub-scales of Internalization and Symbolization predicts 20% of the variance in bullying. Also, considering the beta values for each of the sub-scales, it can be stated that with an increase of one standard deviation in the score of Internalization, the bullying score will increase by 0.36 standard deviations. Similarly, with an increase of one standard deviation in the score of Symbolization, the bullying score will increase by 0.13 standard deviations. Therefore, considering the values of P-Value, F, and T, it can be concluded that the second hypothesis of the research is confirmed, and the null hypothesis is rejected (P-Value < 0.05). Hence, it can be said that the sub-scales of ethical identity can also predict the level of bullying. That is, as ethical identity increases, the level of bullying decreases.

the concept of ethics was also chosen as a predictive variable, focusing on two dimensions: ethical breach and ethical identity. To better understand the concept of bullying in the realm of ethics, Bandura's cognitive-social theory was chosen as an appropriate conceptual framework, in which the ethical dimensions of bullying are also described. This theory, which clearly emphasizes the role of moral processes in negative behaviours within the cognitive-social framework, is Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory of Moral Agency. Bandura introduced the concept of moral disengagement for social and cognitive processes in which individuals can justify their unethical behavior without feeling guilty.

As mentioned at the beginning of this study, the concept of moral disengagement in the context of bullying has received significant attention. Recent research has shown that individuals who use mechanisms of moral disengagement are more likely to engage in bullying behavior. In fact, moral disengagement is positively associated with aggressive and antisocial behaviours and negatively correlated with prosocial behaviours. Another variable of interest is moral identity.

The formation of moral identity leads to increased ethical consistency in individuals and shapes their particular perspective on themselves. Researchers believe that what facilitates adherence to ethical behavior is the formation of moral identity, making ethical values an intrinsic part of an individual's personality. Some argue that moral identity is solidified during adolescence and is closely related to the self. In fact, moral identity is also an important source of motivation for ethical action, leading to greater alignment between personal ethical principles and ethical behavior.

In the first hypothesis of the study, it was suggested that the sub-scales of moral disengagement are suitable predictors of bullying in students. Since the obtained statistic value ( $F=24.718$ ) falls within the confidence level ( $p\text{-value} < 0.05$ ), the null hypothesis is rejected, and the research hypothesis is confirmed. Thus, it is evident that there is a relationship between moral disengagement and bullying, and the sub-scales of moral disengagement can be predictors of the phenomenon of bullying. However, it should be noted that out of the 7 sub-scales of moral disengagement, one of them - namely, lack of awareness of the consequences - did not show a significant relationship, which warrants further investigation.

In support of the results of this hypothesis, numerous studies were found, with the most significant ones being cited here: Kokkinos and Kipritsi demonstrated in their study that moral disengagement was associated with high levels of bullying. They also showed that an increase in moral disengagement led to an increase in bullying behavior among students. Hornberg, Pozzoli, Gini, and Jungert who examined the effects of moral disengagement on bullying in students, stated in their results that moral disengagement was positively related to bullying, confirming the positive relationship between moral disengagement and bullying in the present study.

Furthermore, Nansel and colleagues found that students who scored low on moral disengagement did not show a tendency toward bullying compared to other students; however, when moral disengagement scores were high, bullying behavior increased. Wang, Yang, Gao, and Zhao also examined the variables of this hypothesis in their study. The results indicated that moral disengagement affects bullying behavior. Specifically, bullying behavior is more commonly

morality itself. Therefore, focusing on the concept of self and strategies to strengthen moral self can lead individuals to more easily set aside mechanisms of moral disengagement and, with the help of their ethical identity, decide to refrain from unethical behaviours such as bullying. A limitation of this study was the low cooperation of school administrators and teachers in implementing the questionnaires. Due to the perceived importance of the research topic, it was feared that its results might indicate a low level of morality among their students. It is recommended that in a broader study, the role of culture and race in ethical identity and inclination toward bullying should be investigated, preferably with samples including diverse cultural backgrounds.

### References

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