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Do no harm? Prosocial entrepreneurs and breaking the rules.

Jason W. Carlson

Durham University and EMLyon

## Abstract

Entrepreneurs are frequently defined as autonomous, risk-taking innovators that do not conform to norms and that often break rules. Academic research predominantly supports this idea, but are “prosocial” entrepreneurs different? Entrepreneurs that pursue societal good should do good and be good. Deontologically, being good requires following rules. How does a prosocial entrepreneur innovate, actually “be entrepreneurial,” without breaking rules? Entrepreneurial ethics is widely researched, but the phenomenon of rule-breaking has only recently been examined in more detail. Rule-breaking action by prosocial entrepreneurs, however, is distinctly lacking in the literature. This mixed-methods study examines rule-breaking attitudes and actions of entrepreneurs in the health and wellness industry where both financial, and societal outcomes such as patient and community well-being, are expected. First, a quantitative study of 1,109 survey participants, based upon the model and measurement tool of Constructive Rule Beliefs (CRB) developed by Zhang et al (2023a, 2023b), looks at the differences in cognitive drivers and decision-making within rule-breaking contexts between prosocial entrepreneurs and their standard and non-entrepreneur counterparts. This study provides confirmation, as well as additional insights and new questions, to the explanatory power of the CRB construct. In response to those questions, Study One is enriched by a qualitative study using in-depth, partially-guided interviews of prosocial entrepreneurs. Borrowing from the Hippocratic Oath’s sentiment of non nocere, or “do no harm,” emancipatory entrepreneurship (Rindoval et al, 2009), and employing partially-grounded theory, this research adds to the existing literature on entrepreneurial ethics and rule-breaking by proposing a novel model of emancipatory rule-breaking intent, describing rule-breaking as an emergent response to disharmony with the hegemonic system where the prosocial entrepreneur either negotiates the systemic strictures, shows dissent toward the limitations of the hegemonic structure, or attempts to transform the system with their rule-breaking actions.

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## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 Background**

Ethical and moral failures in business make strong headlines. Elizabeth Holmes and Theranos, Facebook and Cambridge Analytica, Enron and Arthur Andersen. People and firms that were caught in acts of dubious morality and ethics. Some, like Cambridge Analytica remain, but are punchlines of cynical jokes about the horrors of amoral actors playing with privacy, data, and its power to manipulate. Others, like Enron and Arthur Andersen were destroyed by their misdeeds. Holmes and Theranos are disgraced and punished, but their story is still being debated and played out in public with celebrity treatment. Although these are “based on true stories,” they are uncommon, exemplary cautionary tales in business and entrepreneurial ethics. It is the smaller stories that may or may not be more relevant to our lives, however.

Entrepreneurs are often simultaneously revered and maligned (Brenkert, 2009; Fisscher et al., 2005). They create value for their firms and society through innovation, but do it for selfish reasons and at the cost of others (Fisscher et al., 2005). In contrast to classic entrepreneurs, social entrepreneurs are motivated to tackle societal grievances (Adélie Ranville and Barros, 2021) with innovation, altruism and care (André and Pache, 2016; Tan et al., 2005), painting an admirable, and moral, portrait (Bacq et al., 2016). The truth of these depictions lies somewhere between. This study will look at the ethics and morality of entrepreneurs with prosocial missions and motivations as they innovate and improvise for social impact in areas like health care, wellness and cultural empowerment (Bruder, 2021; Haugh and Talwar, 2016).

Innovation is an important part of entrepreneurship and is one outcome of its tendency for “creative destruction” (Schumpeter, 1934). Entrepreneurs are frequently defined as autonomous, risk-taking innovators that do not conform to norms (Brenkert, 2009; Zhang and Arvey, 2009)

and that often break rules. Are social entrepreneurs different (Bacq et al., 2016; Zahra et al., 2009; Dey and Steyaert, 2016; Miller et al., 2012)? They are still innovators (Lisechi and Brancu, 2014) that participate in entrepreneurship's creative destruction (Zahra et al., 2009), but social entrepreneurship is commonly referred to as good entrepreneurship (Dey and Steyaert, 2016; Bruder, 2021), a value-laden moniker. Social, as a modifier to entrepreneurship, is also loaded with normative implications (Ranville and Barros, 2021; Bruder, 2021; Bull and Ridley-Duff, 2018). Subsequently, entrepreneurs that pursue societal good, should do good and be good (Miller et al., 2012; Vallaster et al., 2019). Deontologically, being good requires following rules (Brenkert, 2009; Bruder, 2021; Clarke and Holt, 2010; Reynolds, 2006), but how does a prosocial entrepreneur innovate, actually be entrepreneurial, without breaking rules? Maybe there is more going on.

Prosocial entrepreneurs can have many motivations, but at least two missions. The extant literature paints a varied picture of what a social entrepreneur's morality looks like (Chell et al., 2016; Reynolds, 2006; Tenbrunsel and Messick, 2004). Whether they lead certified social ventures, are small-business owners working for societal good (Bull and Ridley-Duff, 2018; York et al., 2016), or "enlightened" leaders doing intrapreneurial work within corporate or institutional environments (O'Toole, 2019; Badaracco, 2001), these individuals are often highly regarded for their superior moral portraits (Bacq et al., 2009). We believe their morality should be superior (Bacq and Janssen, 2011; Tan et al., 2005), and perhaps it usually is. However, these individuals are still entrepreneurial. They innovate. They create. When doing so, however, they go against society or institutions that prescribe the norms and ethic in which they exist (Schumpeter, 1934). In short, they "break the rules." Furthermore, a preponderance of the extant literature on social entrepreneurship ethics is measured at the organizational or firm level. By

focusing the study at the level of the entrepreneur, as well as on a single, important phenomenon (rule-breaking), the research hopes to add to the growing discussion of the ethical paradoxes (destruction/innovation and money/mission motives) inherent to prosocial entrepreneurship ethics.

This study aims to understand what is happening when prosocial entrepreneurs - the individuals trying to make the world better - break rules. Do entrepreneurs have an “additional resource” or paradoxical mindset that can help them in uncertain contexts or deal with dual and dueling logics (Gümüşay et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2023a)? Is their rule-breaking confined to innovative or creative contexts? Is it driven by the need to navigate uncertainty (Fisher et al., 2020) or a missional impetus? When is it “right” (Fisscher et al., 2005; Werhane, 1998)? When is it merely “permissible,” (Brenkert, 2009; Dey and Steyaert, 2016) and when does it become “wrong” (Vallaster et al., 2019)?

### **1.2 Epistemological/ontological Frame**

The epistemological/ontological foundation of this study is one of critical realism, as the methods of the study imply an external, objective reality (i.e. there are rules established that exist and are governed), that is experienced or perceived subjectively by the actors and observer (i.e. contextual experience and sense-making is individual). This does not mean that rules are static across time or even space. In contrast, our study will show that the “reality” of rules may change over time due to the interactions of the prosocial entrepreneurs as agents in the creation of new realities (Dey and Mason, 2018; Laine and Kibler, 2022).

### **1.3 Key term – prosocial vs. social entrepreneurship**

In the US, most medical/wellness technology and services companies are not categorized as social enterprises. However, they have definitive characteristics in common with firms

defined, formally, as social enterprises. In addition to normal capitalistic pursuits of returning value to shareholders, these medical/wellness firms have inherent social missions - increase levels of success in outcomes of care and patient/customer health or wellbeing. This success can manifest in several ways (i.e. the ability to treat/prevent conditions that were previously less/not treatable, or to deliver care/treatment at a cost or efficiency level that allows for expanded care that was previously unattainable, etc.), but there is still a prosocial mission. In this study, when terms involving “social” or “prosocial” entrepreneurship are discussed, the intent is to understand them as similar forms of “entrepreneurship.” (Dey and Mason, 2018; Rindova et al., 2009; Wainwright and Muñoz, 2020). The entrepreneurial missions to create value for both shareholder and society, at the very least, are congruous, and should allow for the terms to have a level of interchangeability in the study.

## **2. Literature Review**

The motivations for entrepreneurial action are heterogeneous. An entrepreneur could be motivated by innovation, financial, familial, environmental or social concerns. Irrespective of their motivations, entrepreneurs find themselves in “meaningful heterodoxies” (Pidduck and Tucker, 2022) by being rule-breakers within their personal and communal contexts. This becomes even more apparent when examining the heterodoxies inherent in prosocial entrepreneurship. The moral portrait of a prosocial entrepreneur is, generally, one of high-ideals and care for others (André and Pache, 2016; Bacq et al., 2016). Rule-breaking would be an action that runs counter to that image. There have been numerous studies that have looked at hyper-focused contexts in the case of rule-breaking behavior (Baron et al., 2018), as well as discussions on personality traits of rule-breakers (Brenkert, 2009). A review of the literature

revealed opportunities for further research in entrepreneurial ethics, most specifically, prosocial entrepreneurship and the phenomenon of rule-breaking.

The literature being analyzed is introduced thematically. Innovation, social innovation and the drivers of creative destruction that may or may not motivate prosocial entrepreneurs (Brenkert, 2009; Bruder, 2021; Lisetchi and Brancu, 2014; Phillips et al., 2019), but certainly pertain to any questions of rule-breaking, are examined first. Questions of morality and ethics in prosocial entrepreneurship, including its critiques, have been widely studied (Bacq et al., 2016; Chell et al., 2016; Harris et al., 2009; Vallaster et al., 2019) and are the focus of the second section. Ethical decision making, and the concepts of hybridity and identity of social entrepreneurs and social entrepreneurship are the subject of review next as they discuss the responses to the ethical questions of dual and “dueling” logics (Battilana et al., 2015; Bryant, 2009; York et al., 2016). Provocative theories of action and practice that may explain more of the social entrepreneur’s ethical, or unethical, behaviors merges with a discussion of the literature on social entrepreneurial improvisation and their “ideational” bricolage that may provide insight into the way social entrepreneurs view rule breaking as an emergent act of creative destruction (Baker et al., 2003; Baker and Nelson, 2005; Brenkert, 2009; Mair and Marti, 2009). The literature chosen includes studies that allow the combination of the research questions in discussion where possible.

### ***Social Innovation***

Social innovation is a relatively new and growing field of research (van der Have and Rubalcaba, 2016). Due to its relative nascence and novelty, definitions of social innovation are as wide-ranging as the definitions of social entrepreneurship (Chell et al., 2016; Ribeiro et al., 2021; van der Have and Rubalcaba, 2016; Zahra et al., 2009), but they are intrinsically connected

(Lisetchi and Brancu, 2014). As noted previously, innovation has been linked with activities that challenge, even upend institutions in order to create value (O'Toole, 2019; Schumpeter, 1934; Sundaramurthy et al., 2012). Social innovation, which “can cover social processes, like open source methods and techniques, or... may refer to innovations with a social purpose, like microcredit or distance learning, or both” (Lisetchi and Brancu, 2014, p. 89), is similar in its ability to be disruptive. However, because of its inherent normativity, even rhetorical normativity, the ethical dilemmas can be harder to overcome (Bruder, 2021; Bull and Ridley-Duff, 2019; Adélie Ranville and Barros, 2021).

Entrepreneurs are innovators (Brenkert, 2009; Ploeg et al., 2022; Shane, 2000). By logical extension, social entrepreneurs are social innovators. The extant literature describes social innovations, more commonly, as the outcomes of a “dynamic interplay of actors” bringing the social benefits to society (Phillips et al., 2015) rather than the work of an individual, or social entrepreneur. This disconnect could be a result of how social innovation is defined. The definition of social innovation is not agreed upon in the literature (Lisetchi and Brancu, 2014; Phillips et al., 2015). This difficulty has resulted in articles trying to define what social innovation is *not* (Solis-Navarrete et al., 2021). A definition of social innovation that is useful and consistent with our study of social entrepreneurs and their ethical decision making is provided by van der Have and Rubalcaba (2016). They describe it as “novel social technologies that create new social value” (pg. 1932). Social value, for van der Have and Rubalcaba also requires a level of adoption, otherwise an “innovation” should be construed as an “invention” only (2016). “Technologies” takes on a wide interpretation that could encompass services, programs, solutions, and products. This definition allows for a connection between social innovation and innovation scholarship (van der Have and Rubalcaba, 2016). This connection

reinforces our view of social entrepreneurs as innovators and reinforces the notion that they can, and may, be rule-breakers, but also that maybe they *should* be.

In their article, Phillips et al (2019) looked into the relational practices and processes of social innovation. Their premise was that because social enterprises are closely aligned with their communities, that those enterprises could develop stakeholder relations to help identify social needs that were either under-addressed or unmet by the market or public institutions. They found that these community-focused enterprises could *identify* the opportunities with their networks (Shane, 2000), but they were less successful in *implementing* the innovations using their network. Their findings suggested that a lack of capabilities, knowledge and expertise prevented them from increasing their social impact with the innovation. This finding aligns with the study by Bacq et al (2016) that found many social entrepreneurs viewed themselves less capable than classic entrepreneurs, which hindered their efficacy and curbed their commitment to the endeavor.

Communities, networks and the social environments of a social entrepreneur are, also, important to their decision-making (Miller et al., 2012; Ploeg et al., 2022; Schwartz, 2016; Shane, 2000; Zahra et al., 2009). These decisions include what, how and when to innovate (Ploeg et al., 2022; Shane, 2000). In Ploeg et al's paper (2022), the role of informal institutions, primarily the concept of communitarianism – a social structure where the strength of community bonds influences an individual's identity to a point where individuals elevate group goals above their individual goals and desires - is examined as a predictor of innovative behavior. Ploeg et al (2022) link communitarianism to the organizational concepts of conformity, informal insurance, and “pay-it-forward” behaviors. Social entrepreneurs are motivated by a variety of things (Bruder, 2021; Sundaramurthy et al., 2012; Zahra et al., 2009), which may include reputation and

status in their communities. However, in communitarian institutions, status and reputation are harmed when an individual does not conform (Ploeg et al., 2022). Organizational studies have shown that when there is high conformity, there is high “routine-performance,” but lower levels of experimentation and creativity, which are precursors to innovation (Ploeg et al., 2022). So how does an entrepreneur innovate in these environments? According to Ploeg et al there are two situations when innovation is more apt to occur. First, when there is low-performance feedback. When the community is lacking, improvisation, experimentation and other non-conforming behaviors are “tolerated” and innovation can happen, due to the informal insurance available to the individual if things do not work. The social entrepreneur can be disruptive with fewer consequences. The other situation takes advantage of a community in surplus. Innovation occurs in order to “pay-it-forward.” The community allows for the non-conformity, because its abundance provides opportunity to take risks to better the future (Ploeg et al., 2022). This study seems to affirm the simple risk-mitigation strategies that all firms employ when contemplating innovation. However, the authors found that the phenomena only occur in highly-embedded organizations. Multi-regional organizations or multi-nationals did not find the same level of feedback response to innovation. This could be instructive to how entrepreneurs look to innovate in their communities, or more importantly, outside of them. More importantly, it describes a context or environment where rule-breaking could occur.

Social innovations are often hampered with adoption issues (Fursov and Linton, 2022; Hölsgens, 2022). The costs of social innovation adoption are, often, the inverse of those exacted upon classic innovation adoption. Where classic innovation adoption accrues individual benefits at the expense of the collective, social innovation adoption costs can accrue against the individual (Hölsgens, 2022). This reflected in higher economic costs (e.g. fair trade coffee or

clothing) or in higher individual/community costs (i.e. institutional shame when supporting women businesses in patriarchal contexts) (Haugh and Talwar, 2016; Mair and Marti, 2009). Hölsgens (2022) posits that social innovation has more difficulty in its diffusion, because the innovators neglect the adopter perspectives. Fursov and Linton (2022) argue similarly in that producers are less likely to see adoption of their social innovation if the users are not involved. They describe a Producer-User Social Innovation model where an innovative product or service is introduced through enabling infrastructures by either the producer or user. The decision-making process of innovation “selling” and adoption can be complex (Alt and Craig, 2016; van der Have and Rubalcaba, 2016). Communities, as a group of adopters with the wherewithal to enact institutional changes, are important stakeholders for social entrepreneurs to persuade (Di Domenico et al., 2010; Sundaramurthy et al., 2012). In an ethical frame, the producer-user dynamic and adopter-sensitivity of the social entrepreneur calls on questions of moral imagination and identity (McVea, 2009; Werhane, 1998). Do prosocial entrepreneurs see how the communities and adopters are shaping the ethical landscape or system that could “allow” their innovation and rule-breaking to occur or be adopted? Are social entrepreneurs less able to appreciate the broader perspective? Is it a lack of experience or training? Social entrepreneurs are motivated by their cause, but perhaps this shows a lack of willingness by social entrepreneurs to break the rules inherent in the institutions in which they live to get their innovations adopted (Bacq et al., 2016).

When and where social innovations are adopted, there can be valuable, sustainable, social change (Haugh and Talwar, 2016; Mair and Marti, 2009; Wang, 2022; Wry and Haugh, 2018). The growing interest in social responsibility, community investment, empowerment, and ecological sustainability in our society makes understanding how social entrepreneurs can create

lasting social value increasingly important (Di Domenico et al., 2010; Wry and Haugh, 2018). A recent case study by Haugh and Talwar (2022) linked social entrepreneurship to social change through an enterprise that assisted in increasing women's empowerment. In order to create this social change, the entrepreneurs needed to discover and exploit (Alvarez and Barney, 2007; Delmar and Shane, 2004; Shane, 2000) solutions that went against the social order. They broke the rules and in the process created new ones (Brenkert, 2009). Mair and Marti's (2009) case study of an NGO in Bangladesh advanced theory on social and institutional entrepreneurship by focusing on how an institutional void – the inability of the extreme poor to access markets - creates opportunities for entrepreneurial action, even within resource-scarce environments. One of those actions involved using religious, mythological and cultural arguments to their ends. The authors claimed it to be the first empirical study of “ideational bricolage”, but why did the entrepreneurs believe it was morally acceptable to challenge or leverage the socio-cultural institutions in such a brazen way in the first place?

Many prosocial entrepreneurial endeavors may be impactful, but they are small impacts (Haugh and Talwar, 2016; Mair and Marti, 2009) when measured relative to the broader collective of macro-needs. Social entrepreneurs could choose to scale (André and Pache, 2016), but scaling a social enterprise to increase social impact has new ethical implications (André and Pache, 2016; Chaudhuri et al., 2021; Wry and Haugh, 2018). Chaudhuri et al (2021) studied two technology-enabled-healthcare social enterprises in India to try to ascertain “how do bottom-of-pyramid social enterprises scale up?” and similarly, Andre and Pache (2016) theorized about how care ethics could be scaled without dilution of the mission of care. Interestingly, both papers discuss how organizations need to systematize or institutionalize certain efforts to scale their impacts without dilution. Andre and Pache (2016) found that the ethics of care that motivates the

social entrepreneur founder is imprinted on the organization (York et al., 2016), but that the imprinting does not scale unless the ethics of care are embedded as organizational principles. Chaudhuri et al (2021) had similar findings in that the firms needed to develop operational routines and resource mobilization strategies to scale their social impact. The implications of these studies to research on social entrepreneurial ethics are that institutionally-legitimized processes and routines are important to scale (André and Pache, 2016; Baker and Nelson, 2005; Chaudhuri et al., 2021; Pache and Santos, 2013), which is in contrast to the "maverick," rule-breaking, innovative entrepreneur (Brenkert, 2009; Vallaster et al., 2019), thus adding depth and nuance to the questions of what is happening when social entrepreneurs break rules.

Lastly on literature and social innovation, Phillips et al (2015) reviewed scholarship on social innovation and social entrepreneurship in order to see where and how organizations with corporate social responsibility (CSR) policies could engage with social innovation and entrepreneurship in their CSR agendas to make them more effective or deliver more value. The connection between social entrepreneurship and CSR agendas allows for social "intrapreneurship" and the expansion of our discussion of ethics and rule-breaking into the corporate institutional context, as well (O'Toole, 2019; Badaracco, 2001).

The literature on social innovation describes how social entrepreneurship can deliver societal impact (Chaudhuri et al., 2021; Fursov and Linton, 2022; Wry and Haugh, 2018) and lasting social change (André and Pache, 2016). Consistent with the ethical paradoxes of entrepreneurship, innovation, and creative destruction (Brenkert, 2009; Morrison, 2006; Zahra et al., 2009), ethical quandaries are common when looking at social innovation and the social entrepreneur (Bull and Ridley-Duff, 2019; Miller et al., 2012; Zahra et al., 2009) as well. However, the discourse lacked a focus on the individual prosocial entrepreneur and how their

contexts, environments or individual motivations affected their decision making or ethic and it left room to investigate whether innovation contributes to the rule-breaking behaviors of social entrepreneurs.

### ***Morality and Ethics in Social Entrepreneurship Literature***

Social entrepreneurs are often described as motivated by a cause (Zahra et al., 2009; Tan et al., 2002) and possessing a highly moral portrait (Bacq et al., 2016; Tan et al., 2005) and they innovate for social good (van der Have and Rubalcaba, 2016). Clarke and Holt (2010) states, “Ethics is intimate to the entrepreneurial creation of value...” (pg. 329). However, entrepreneurs innovate by disrupting norms, breaking rules and participating in “creative destruction” (Brenkert, 2009; Schumpeter, 1934). Adding to this thought, Brenkert writes, “there is no reason why this notion might not apply to the law and morality as well” (2009). The implication is that entrepreneurs, classic or social, contribute to the “creative destruction” of morality. A provocative idea that is enhanced when considering that social entrepreneurs are supposed to be good. Are social entrepreneurs moral? Ethical? Are prosocial entrepreneurs as likely to break rules as other entrepreneurs?

### ***Entrepreneurial rule-breaking***

George G. Brenkert’s article (2009) is a critical evaluation of the predominant deontological and utilitarian theories of ethics and what constitutes ethical or moral business practices within the context of entrepreneurship. Specifically, he looks at the phenomena of “rule-breaking” (Zhang and Arvey, 2009) and the concept of creative destruction in entrepreneurship (Schumpeter, 1934). Brenkert’s primary claim is that entrepreneurs do have an ethic, but not, necessarily a rules-based ethic. Rather, their ethic is constructed by a virtue system the entrepreneur possesses - formed by institutional, cultural and historical factors that are further

shaped by potential “rule-breaking contexts” - a “competitive context,” a “permission and forgiveness context,” “Pygmalion effects,” the “dirty hands” context, and finally the concept of “tricksterism” where the cultural context has admiration for cunning and rule-breaking rogues (2009). This paper is important to the study of rule-breaking by social entrepreneurs, due to its close topical connection. However, as a conceptual paper rather than an empirical study, there is room for additional understanding to be gained on the subject. Furthermore, Brenkert is overtly positive about rule-breaking and entrepreneurship’s subsequent power as a change agent and does not address critical viewpoints convincingly (Bruton et al., 2021; Chell et al., 2016; Zahra et al., 2009).

Similarly, Badaracco (2001) describes “quiet leaders” as actors that eschew heroic ethical actions, effectively working within a pragmatic, contextualized morality where they “search for ways to bend the rules imaginatively,” but “own up to their deeper responsibilities” (pg. 125) when doing the “right thing.” In contrast, O’Toole (2019) introduces his readers to “enlightened” capitalists who strive to do what is best for all stakeholders, including the communities and world in which they operate. His optimism is tempered by history, experience and study, however, as he qualifies many of his claims about the likelihood of socially/ethically-minded entrepreneurs finding lasting success. Another hopeful article with some, potentially, cynical ramifications is Calic and Mosakowski’s (2016) study on social entrepreneurship and crowdfunding. Their findings suggest that an orientation of sustainability or social-consciousness (York et al., 2016) positively influences the success of a crowdfunding campaign. However, they found only a partial mediation for project legitimacy (third-party endorsements), which could distill “sustainability” to a mere marketing play, even illegitimate “pseudo-social” entrepreneurship (Bruder, 2021).

Perhaps in response to Brenkert's call for additional research (2009), several recent studies specifically looking into rule-breaking as a phenomenon in entrepreneurship have been added with varying perspectives and applications for theory in the literature. Liu and Zhao (2023) investigated whether or not employees who break rules for the benefit of the organization or its stakeholders - prosocial rule-breaking behavior (PSRB) – are more likely to become entrepreneurs. Using a theoretical framework that combines Brenkert's construct of a virtues-based rule-breaking ethic (2009) and expectancy framework (Vroom, 1964) the authors studied employees of Chinese firms. The study used online surveys in the first phase with a vignette-based measure, then to check the robustness of the first phase, a widely-used PSRB questionnaire was employed. Interestingly, the authors found that younger employees with high levels of self-efficacy was the only condition that was supported by their hypothesis that employees committing prosocial rule-breaking would have higher likelihood of entrepreneurial intentions. Although it looked at prosocial rule-breaking and its connection to entrepreneurial intentions, this article was looking at the phenomenon from an organizational perspective and did not seek to explain behavior of entrepreneurs themselves.

The phenomenon of rule-breaking can include both formal and informal rule contexts. Formal rules could include laws, regulations, or policies that are explicit and enforceable in some fashion. The next articles look at formal rule-breaking in various entrepreneurial contexts, some of which look at law-breaking as entrepreneurial action and the economic factors, contexts and cognitive factors involved. These articles establish some important foundational bases for the study. Baron et al (2018) examined bribery as an entrepreneurial action. More specifically, the authors looked at “underdog” entrepreneurs' perceptions that they must use bribery to have the same access to resources or opportunities that other entrepreneurs have. “Underdog”

entrepreneurs are defined as those with disadvantages that are not easily, or readily, changeable. These would include factors such as gender, race, experience, or age. The authors did extensive pre-testing of their sample population, then, surveyed, using direct interviews, 112 participants. The results showed that the perceptions of “underdog” entrepreneurs that resource access is becoming scarcer and that bribes were likely to be effective in procuring the needed resource access would “break rules” and offer bribes. However, if the entrepreneurs did not feel the bribery action would be effective, they were more likely to end, or close the venture. This study looked at a very specific formal rule-breaking activity as an entrepreneurial action that was not viewed as negative or immoral, due to the fact that the action was done in the context of disadvantaged-ness or “otherness” (Pidduck and Tucker, 2022).

Baron et al’s (2018) study glimpsed some of the decision-making and cognition of an entrepreneur in a rule-breaking context, but it was narrow in its subject matter. In their recent article, Lucas et al look broader and posit a “theory of regulatory governance and rule breaking entrepreneurial action” (2022) that tries to explain, through a process model, when and how, entrepreneurs will break formal rules, specifically, laws, as an entrepreneurial action. Their model includes a system of governance in which an entrepreneur exists. The system includes a legal environment that makes, regulates, adjudicates and often enforces the laws. The system also involves legal intermediaries, like industry collectives or certifying bodies, that provide interpretation, regulation and private enforcement through sanctions or other means. According to the authors, there are “black market” and “gray market” entrepreneurial actions. Black market actions are universally interpreted as illegal activity, such as bribes (Baron et al., 2018). Gray market entrepreneurial actions are those where interpretation is not universal, either by the legal environment or the legal intermediaries. Lastly, the enforcement of a law can be variable. In the

governance system, where imperfect interpretation or imperfect enforcement occur, rule-breaking entrepreneurial action can occur. This is where Lucas et al employ their process model. The entrepreneur goes through recognition and assessment stages prior to the action. The recognition stage includes both knowledge and motivation factors. Procedural knowledge which is related to the entrepreneur's prior experience with the rules, as well as their structural knowledge which is informed by their connections and understanding of the actors in the legal environment. When these are combined with the entrepreneur's motivation that a rule or law is illegitimate, the opportunity moves to the assessment stage. Prior to the rule-breaking action, the entrepreneur assesses the opportunity based upon his relational knowledge, which in this case is the knowledge of the public actors and legal intermediaries that have interpretive and/or enforcement power. Finally, the action can occur if the entrepreneur's values align with the opportunity presented by the governance system. The authors claim that rule-breaking is an emergent action, based upon an entrepreneur's knowledge and motivations is effective, but as a process model, it is explanatory of an action and does not speak to any ethical implications. It does tease out the possibility that concepts of ethical decision-making (Kohlberg, 1973; Schwartz, 2016), moral imagination (McVea, 2009; Reynolds, 2006; Werhane, 1998) or other cognitions (Reynolds, 2006) could be helpful in explaining the motivational factors in the model.

As many of the discussions on rule-breaking behavior or actions by entrepreneurs have been quick to "question the question" of whether these behaviors of entrepreneurs are ethical or not (Baron et al., 2018; Brenkert, 2009; Pidduck and Tucker, 2022; Zhang et al., 2023a), recent studies have begun to question the ethics of social entrepreneurship (Chell et al., 2016; Dey and Steyaert, 2012; Ranville and Barros, 2021; Bruder, 2021; Bull and Ridley-Duff, 2018; Bacq et al., 2016; Eikenberry and Kluver, 2004). There are varied arguments ranging from issues of

power (Dey and Steyaert, 2016; Shepherd et al., 2015) to politics (Mair and Marti, 2009), to entrepreneurial commitment (Bacq et al., 2016) and, ultimately, to questions of the normativity of social entrepreneurship (Ranville and Barros, 2021; Bruder, 2021; Bull and Ridley-Duff, 2018).

Zahra et al (2009) and Bacq et al (2016) both study the potential moral issues that social entrepreneurs face but with different goals. Bacq et al (2016) investigate the common moral portrait of social entrepreneurs using a quantitative study. They question the idealistic, “devoted” social entrepreneurial hero of the extant literature, and relay surprising findings that not only do social entrepreneurs encounter the moral dilemma of working within “a harmful marriage between opposing values” (Zahra et al, 2009), but that they lack the “commitment” required to generate the social impact for which they are being lauded (Bacq et al., 2016; Phillips et al., 2019). Zahra et al (2009) provide a broad, useful, utilitarian definition of social entrepreneurship that allows for a spectrum of firms’ dualistic missions (commercial and social), stating that “social entrepreneurship encompasses the activities and processes undertaken to discover, define, and exploit opportunities in order to enhance social wealth by creating new ventures or managing existing organizations in an innovative manner” (pg. 522). Built upon Hayek’s (1945) work, their typology includes the “social bricoleur,” who perceives and acts upon local, hyper-contextual needs of the community, the “social constructionist” that adds routinization and systems in order to increase the scale of their social impact (André and Pache, 2016; Wry and Haugh, 2018) and the “social engineer” whose primary focus is scale as a sweeping agent of change (Zahra et al, 2009). Included in the discussion of the typologies are corresponding moral pitfalls that await the social entrepreneur types.

Using a political frame to understand the normativity in social entrepreneurship can be useful due to the fact that moral philosophy is concerned with what an individual should or should not do, whilst political philosophy discusses the obligations that we have to each other in society (Ranville and Barros, 2021). Ranville and Barros (2021) argue that political philosophy is a better framework for evaluating the definitions, goals and impacts of social enterprises, because of the coherence it provides to the projects of social enterprises, which are inherently political. Using the political philosophy lens, they reviewed the 100 most-cited articles in social entrepreneurship. The philosophies of Libertarianism, Citizenship/democracy, Egalitarianism, Communitarianism, and Utilitarianism were the most represented in the SE literature. Ethics of care and multiculturalism were also evident, but less so. Ultimately, they found four concepts that created ambiguity and contradiction that confounded the normativity discussions in the literature: disadvantagedness, empowerment, profit, and efficiency. These concepts are confounding in that they are prevalent as normative assumptions of numerous political philosophies, though these political philosophies could be in conflict. This article is useful in the practicality of its political framing for entrepreneurial motivations, or in their decisions about how they want to help a societal grievance without contradictory philosophical positions, but its primary use is in organizational research discussions.

Another work that criticizes the ethical or normative positioning of social entrepreneurship is Bruder's article (2021). Bruder uses a deontological framework of integrated economic ethics based upon Kant's concepts of perfect and imperfect duties. He explains how social entrepreneurs that focus purely on their missions, which are imperfect duties derived from *beneficence*, ignore their perfect duties, because they are practicing maximization of the imperfect. The very motivations that drive a social entrepreneur's decisions for founding, their

missions themselves, are questioned by Bruder, because even if the social entrepreneurs are addressing a societal grievance or institutional gap within the context of their mission, if the entrepreneurs dismiss any legitimate claims that could be made by a social enterprise's mission-“unrelated” stakeholders, they may be leveraging *normative* implications of the word “social” unfoundedly. This, potentially, misguided, or misleading, ethical positioning of social entrepreneurship was addressed by Bruder using a two-dimensional typography of social enterprises. The additional dimension accounts for practices of the social enterprises along an “oughtness” scale from moral principles (legitimate practice of perfect duties extraneous to outcomes) to maximization principles (mission or economic) and introduces “pseudo-social” enterprises, somewhat derisively, into the social entrepreneurship lexicon as an “illegitimate” type of social enterprise that is social-minded and social-missioned in rhetoric only (Bruder, 2021; Bull and Ridley-Duff, 2019). Deontological theories of ethics are difficult to reconcile with theories of practice, because one has a universality (deontology) that contradicts the contextual emergence of the other (Brenkert, 2009) and Bruder's arguments are more definitional (typological) than personal and may not be instructive to the questions of individual social entrepreneurs and their morality and decision-making.

### ***Ethical Decision Making (EDM)***

Ethical or moral decision-making is a complex process (Chen-Bo Zhong, 2011; Clarke and Aram, 1997; Schwartz, 2016), such that researchers are still unable to agree on all the variables, inputs and factors involved (Chen-Bo Zhong, 2011; Schwartz, 2016). However, there is general agreement that a person's identity, more precisely, their moral identity, regardless of the contexts, environmental or social factors that may or may not contribute to that identity, is an important aspect of a person's ethical decision-making (McVea, 2009; Reynolds, 2006;

Schwartz, 2016; Werhane, 1998). One aspect of moral identity that has been studied in the entrepreneurial literature and seen to be important is moral imagination (Clarke and Holt, 2010; Clarke and Aram, 1997; McVea, 2009; Schwartz, 2016; Werhane, 1998). Moral imagination for the entrepreneur is “the ability to perceive that a web of competing economic relationships is, at the same time, a web of moral relationships” (Buchholz and Rosenthal, 2005, p. 312). Social entrepreneurs require imagination to innovate, both to recognize and act upon opportunities, but also ethically, to perceive the ramifications of their potential decisions (Bryant, 2009; Buchholz and Rosenthal, 2005; Schwartz, 2016; Shane, 2000). Literature on concepts of imagination, identity, context and “nature” are discussed in this section in order to provide basic understandings of the ethical decision-making field and how it can apply to a study on how or why social entrepreneurs break rules.

The most prominent descriptive theories of ethical decision making (EDM) are, predominantly, divergent in their logics (Schwartz, 2016). The rationalist, deliberative models of Kohlberg (1973), Rest (1986), Bandura (Bandura, 1997a) and others that require the entrepreneur to “reason” their way to a decision prior to action (Schwartz, 2016; Werhane, 1998) are in complete opposition to the intuitive, emotion-affected ideas of Haidt (2001) and others. Ethical decision making is the result of a complex combination of factors (Chen-Bo Zhong, 2011; Werhane, 1998). For some theorists, morality can be learned or is a result of “growth” (Bryant, 2009; Kohlberg, 1973), giving the individual deeper, more universal, ethical decision-making capabilities (McVea, 2009).

The rationalistic process is informed by many inputs, including the various contexts in which the entrepreneur finds themselves – past and present. Because the rationalist theories are processual, there are distinct components or activity stages of the decision-makers (Rest, 1986;

Reynolds, 2006; Schwartz, 2016). Rest's (1986) rationalistic theoretical model is one of the most prominent (Chen-Bo Zhong, 2011; Schwartz, 2016) and elucidates four process stages of EDM: 1) moral awareness, which could include concepts like "sensitivity" or "recognition," leads to 2) moral judgment, often referred to as "moral evaluation" or "moral reasoning" (Kohlberg, 1973) which establishes a 3) moral intent, or "decision," culminating in 4) the moral behavior or action.

In contrast, Zhong (2011) warns of the dangers present in trusting a theory of ethics based, solely, upon deliberation and rationality. Calling on Haidt (2001) and citing recent studies in psychology as well as the results of his own experiments, he describes how intuition and somatic inputs, or lack thereof, can affect our moral judgments and behaviors. One study used the well-known "trolley problem" presented in two different versions. Both scenarios had the subjects choose whether to save either one person or multiple persons to the detriment (death) of the other. However, to show how the rational decision of choosing to "kill" one person to save multiple persons can be affected by somatic inputs, one of the scenarios required the subject to push the single person onto the track, rather than "flip a switch." The emotional response of personally "pushing" the victim onto the track changed the choices made by the subjects.

An EDM theory requires consideration of a combination of cognitive processes, like reason or intuition, as well as affective processes like emotion (Schwartz, 2016) in order to be descriptive. Schwartz (2016) builds on prior descriptive EDM models in several ways, including combining the impacts of rational (reason) and non-rational (intuition-emotion) factors in the judgement phase. Schwartz's descriptive, integrative model for EDM is very complex (pg. 761). Schwartz admits that some scholars believe that EDM may be too complex – possessing too many variables – to develop a model that is comprehensive enough to be useful in describing or prescribing outcomes, let alone create a basis to inform a future normative EDM model for

business or entrepreneurship (Ranville and Barros 2021). Ethical decision-making models may be too complex, but there are foundational concepts that are helpful. Understanding that emotive, intuitionistic, and deliberate decision-making would all be part of social entrepreneurial rule-breaking behavior, is important. Following up on the process discussion, we start to look at individual characteristics of the entrepreneur.

It takes imagination to innovate. It takes imagination to see the potential impacts of new products, services or solutions. Buchholz and Rosenthal call this the “spirit of entrepreneurship” (2005) and they equate this spirit to an effective ethical decision-making framework. Like many business EDM scholars, including McVea (2009), they view moral imagination as an essential part of an individual’s ethical decision-making process (Harris et al., 2009; Schwartz, 2016). Furthermore, they suggest that the innate imagination of the entrepreneur, their spirit, makes the likelihood of their possession of a greater moral imagination higher as well. Most provocatively, Buchholz and Rosenthal (2005) suggest a unifying framework of ethical decision making and entrepreneurship. They connect the experiences and situations that entrepreneurs face, like dealing with uncertain and novel situations or the change that comes with innovation and creative destruction (Bacq et al., 2016; Brenkert, 2009; Lisetchi and Brancu, 2014; Miles et al., 2004), with the ethical quandaries managers face (Clarke and Aram, 1997). The innate abilities, tools and experiences of the entrepreneurial spirit that imagines and creates and experiments to find the solutions to business problems can use that same imaginative spirit to see the “web of moral relationships” and be able to “search out places where people are likely to be hurt” and be sensitive to the potential outcomes (Buchholz and Rosenthal, 2005, p. 312).

Two additional articles with interesting insights that build on Buchholz and Rosenthal’s discussion (2005) are from John McVea (2009) and Peter Bryant (2009). McVea compared the

moral reasoning of seasoned entrepreneurs in the biotechnology industry and MBA students in a field study. Focusing on the cognitive processes employed by the subjects, which were engaged in an industry fraught with uncertainty, situational ambiguity and extremely high levels of moral content, McVea (2009) found marked differences between the two groups. There were distinct differences in the moral identities adopted by the participants and their use of moral imagination (Werhane, 1998). The entrepreneurs identified as holistic, integrated human beings, whereas the MBA students identified as professional managers. Furthermore, the entrepreneurs examined the moral implications from a far broader perspective, including many more stakeholders. This difference in moral imagination was also significant. The outcomes may have been contextually influenced by the fact that MBA students are participating in the study at a time and place where they are identifying as students being trained to be professional managers, and although the design of the study was meant to curb possible biases like these (McVea, 2009, p. 493), the qualification should still be made.

The other study mentioned was conducted by Bryant (2009). His research maintained the same assumptions of entrepreneurs and their basic context as other researchers, including high uncertainty, resource scarcity, risk and competitive pressures (Bacq et al., 2016; Brenkert, 2009; Chell et al., 2016; Harris et al., 2009; Schwartz, 2016). However, unlike other business EDM studies, he did not look at the reasoning process or behaviors (Chell et al., 2016; Harris et al., 2009; Kohlberg, 1973; Miles et al., 2004; Schwartz, 2016). Bryant focused on the concept of moral awareness in entrepreneurs and their self-regulatory tendencies (2009). Moral awareness, as the term suggests, is related to the sensitivity or “awareness” (Rest, 1986) a person has that a situation “contains moral content” and that a moral lens would appropriate (Bryant, 2009, p. 507). Combining aspects of Bandura’s theories of self-regulation (1997) and Higgins’ work on

goal pursuits (2005), the author found that two aspects of self-regulation – self-efficacy and regulatory pride – were strong indicators of an entrepreneur’s moral awareness. Self-efficacy deals with the perception that one can accomplish their goals (Higgins, 2005). Whereas self-regulation is the individual’s persistent pursuit of either promotion or prevention (though some persons can have a blended self-regulatory proclivity) (Bandura, 1997a). Bryant’s results suggested that entrepreneurs with strong self-regulatory characteristics were more morally aware and connected that awareness to “maintaining personal integrity and building inter-personal trust” whereas those with weaker self-regulatory characteristics were less morally aware and focused on “moral issues relating to failure and loss” (Bryant, 2009, p. 506). This finding, especially, is in line with other literature criticizing the ethics of social entrepreneurs with low opinions of their capabilities (Bacq et al., 2016).

Social entrepreneurs are moral decision makers. They have varying levels of moral capacity (Chen-Bo Zhong, 2011; Schwartz, 2016), moral reasoning and moral imagination (Kohlberg, 1973; McVea, 2009). But social entrepreneurs have heterogenous contexts, some aspects of which are discussed next.

Culture, and more specifically, religion and spirituality within the cultural context has significant influence on individuals and their lives (Brenkert, 2009; Vitell et al., 2016; Zahra et al., 2009). Vitell et al (2016) studied the effects of spirituality and religion on individual moral identity, moral beliefs, and behaviors. Looking at moral identity, which comprises two dimensions of self-importance - the private (internalized) and public (symbolized), they found that those that had higher levels of self-importance related to moral identity (they viewed their morality as important), and those that had more empathy toward others (they were sensitive to how their morality affected others) were less likely to participate in unethical behavior without

feelings of guilt of self-censure. Their spirituality and moral identity were important factors in whether a person would behave unethically. This study was conducted with consumers, and thus may or may not translate to “producers,” like social entrepreneurs. However, the extant literature says that moral identity is important to the ethical decision-making of entrepreneurs, (Chell et al., 2016; Harris et al., 2009; McVea, 2009; Vallaster et al., 2019), so perhaps the importance of religion and spirituality to the social entrepreneur could be significant as well.

Personal strain is another possible contributor to a social entrepreneur’s ethical decision making. Existing literature speaks to varied issues that social entrepreneurs face, including penurious resource environments (Baker et al., 2003; Di Domenico et al., 2010; Sundaramurthy et al., 2012; Zahra et al., 2009), institutional voids, inverted power dynamics (Dey and Steyaert, 2016; Mair and Marti, 2009) and conflicting institutional logics (Battilana et al., 2015; Pache and Santos, 2013). However, it was the *strain* that these myriad issues can cause on the ethical decision making of an entrepreneur that de Clercq and Dakhli (2009) studied. Like many others, the authors discuss Kohlberg’s (1973) theory of moral development, but find its inability to account for strain during the moral development stages to be an inadequate framework. Adding the elements of strain theory, a sociological concept that posits that people who are unable to attain their goals experience frustration or strain and may pursue illegitimate means to reach them, de Clercq and Dakhli (2009) examined the relationship that strain had on entrepreneurs at various “levels” of moral development. Counterintuitively, the findings showed that entrepreneurs with higher levels of education, which would imply a higher moral development (Kohlberg, 1973), had lower ethical standards under strain. As social entrepreneurs are consistently under pressures (Di Domenico et al., 2010; Zahra et al., 2009), how do they maintain ethical standards? How do they manage personal goals to prevent strain?

Thus far, the literature discussion has focused on the socio-cultural and contextual affects on the ethics and morality of the social entrepreneur – the “nurture.” Ryan (2017) investigates how “nature,” more specifically, whether the entrepreneur is male or female, affects issues and even understandings, of morality, justice and trust. Citing recent neuroscience and neuroeconomic studies, she describes how brain structures and hormones – primarily oxytocin and testosterone – incline males and females to perceive and act differently in ethical situations. As a greater number of social entrepreneurs are women, incorporating findings like this in our understanding of moral identity and decision-making could be useful, but the political and cultural issues of saying “sex differences matter” could be problematic (Ryan, 2017, p. 780).

Building on theories in cognitive and moral psychology, Zhang et al (2023) develop a conceptual model of rule-breaking in the entrepreneurial context that centers around a new psychological cognitive construct they developed called constructive rule beliefs. In their article, Zhang et al argue that entrepreneurs, especially effective entrepreneurs, with high levels of constructive rule beliefs (CRB) will be more open to rule-breaking actions than others. Constructive rule beliefs is “a cognitive construct differentiating between low constructive beliefs at one end (i.e. conventional beliefs that rules are affixed and should be followed) and high constructive rule beliefs at the other (i.e. the tendency to view rules as contextual, flexible, and imperfect)” (Zhang et al., 2023a, p. 3). In their discussion, the authors argue that entrepreneurs with high levels of CRB have a “unique behavioral resource” that allows them to be effective in attainment of goals. The concept of CRB is useful, even as it shares many attributes found in other theories on decision-making ethics (Bandura, 1997a; Haidt, 2001; Kohlberg, 1973). The usefulness comes from a study done by Zhang et al (2023b) whereby the authors developed and tested a measurement tool for constructive rule beliefs. Their test of the

construct included a corroboration of their hypothesis that high levels of CRB were positively related to rule-breaking amongst their 291 respondents. Unfortunately, the authors did not perform an additional, confirming test. In their discussion and conclusion, they called for additional studies to help confirm the effectiveness of the CRB measurement tool to predict rule-breaking behavior. They also proposed that studying professionals, those in highly-regulated roles, such as law and medicine, would be interesting subjects. Prosocial entrepreneurs, especially those in regulated industries like medicine, could add a new dynamic of formalized hybridity to a study as well.

### ***Hybridity***

Another important area of research in social entrepreneurship and their ethical implications examines the difficulty of prosocial organizations to reconcile the conflicting logics within their businesses (Battilana et al., 2015; Gümüşay et al., 2020; Jay, 2013). This phenomenon has been defined as hybridity (Battilana et al., 2015; Jay, 2013; Pache and Santos, 2013). The extant literature has spent a great deal of time measuring and discussing the subject of hybridity at the organizational level of social entrepreneurship (Battilana et al., 2015; Pache and Santos, 2013), but not at the individual, entrepreneur level (York et al., 2016). Two important focuses of the hybridity literature are on the logic-reconciliation mechanisms, like coupling, decoupling and compromise (Battilana et al., 2015; Pache and Santos, 2013; York et al., 2016) and the ethical quandaries of pursuing divergent missions (Bull and Ridley-Duff, 2019; Chell et al., 2016; Zahra et al., 2009). Some scholars discuss not just how, but even if, firms should pursue divergent goals (Miles et al., 2004). However, there is growing sentiment against the idea of “maximizing” logics, whether they are profit-focused or mission-focused (Bruder, 2021), and moving towards a more inclusive, stakeholder focus that is mindful of societal issues and

repercussions of the enterprise (Bull and Ridley-Duff, 2019; Chell et al., 2016; Clarke and Aram, 1997; Harris et al., 2009; Miller et al., 2012). In many respects, there is a growing normative discussion about entrepreneurship and the need for an ethic that reflects the shifting paradigm (Brenkert, 2009; Bull and Ridley-Duff, 2019; Ranville and Barros, 2021). In short, should all entrepreneurs be social entrepreneurs, and how can that be done ethically? We see this discourse prevalent in the hybridity literature.

Prosocial entrepreneurs are motivated by more than just personal economic benefits (Chell et al., 2016; Zahra et al., 2009) The organizations that they found are often imprinted with their motives and character and vision (André and Pache, 2016; Gümüşay et al., 2020). Yet, these enterprises have inherent tensions between the institutional logics of economic maximization and missional impact maximization (Battilana et al., 2015, 2015; Bruder, 2021; Pache and Santos, 2013). When there are multiple logics, the organization is considered hybrid. Organizational literature has spoken at length on the subject of hybridity (Battilana and Dorado, 2010; Jay, 2013), however, the article by York et al (2016) is unique in its focus on the hybridity of the individual environmental (social) entrepreneur. Could the concept of hybridity at the individual identity level provide insight into the potential for social entrepreneurs to make rule-breaking decisions?

York et al (2016) explore the factors in why and how individuals engage in social entrepreneurship, namely, creating for-profit organizations that help reduce environmental degradation. Their grounded study interviewed twenty-five environmental entrepreneurs and stakeholders of their firms. Building on the concepts of identity theory established by Stryker and Burke (2000), York et al (2016) established a framework to explain more about why and how environmental entrepreneurs address the inherent tensions of their hybrid organizations. They

established a typology consisting of three environmental entrepreneurial founder identities falling on a spectrum based upon the coupling strengths between pro-ecological and pro-economic logics. All the founders had hybrid identities, but some were more dominant in ecological identity than economic (ecological-dominant) and some more dominant in economic identity than ecological (commercial-dominant). The founders that identified equally between the ecological and commercial were called blended. The founders whose identities were blended, tended to be more effective in mobilizing stakeholder action, even to the extent that stakeholders would self-select rather than requiring certain incentivizing actions. The persuasive abilities of entrepreneurs with blended hybrid identities may be broader and allow for inclusivity of more and varied stakeholders (DiDomenico 2016, York et al 2016), which is important to entrepreneurial success (Delmar and Shane, 2004; Ribeiro et al., 2021; Sarasvathy, 2001). York et al's study (2016) was focused on environmental entrepreneurs, but there is possibility that it can be further generalized, because most, if not all entrepreneurs, are motivated by multiple factors (André and Pache, 2016; Miles et al., 2004; Miller et al., 2012; Zahra et al., 2009), thus possessing multiple, hybrid, identities (Fauchart and Gruber, 2011; York et al., 2016). There may be insights in what is happening when social entrepreneurs break rules when the concept of hybrid identity is coupled with theories of identity and practice in ethics (Clarke and Holt, 2010; Dey and Steyaert, 2016; Waddock and Steckler, 2016).

Bull and Ridley-Duff (2019) argue that the existing research in hybridity needs to be reframed in order for a proper “appreciation” of ethics to be achieved in social enterprises. They challenge the validity of the mission versus market dichotomy (Battilana et al., 2015; Bruder, 2021; Pache and Santos, 2013; Zahra et al., 2009) as a way to assess the ethical basis of a social enterprise. Germane to our inquiries, they posit social enterprise ethics as a “rule system” that

emerges from the choices a social entrepreneur makes. These choices, when framed differently from the “rhetorical front” that “speak” only to the social good or market efficiency spectrum of the enterprise, take into consideration the motivations and rationalities of the entrepreneur that impact their political foundations (Bull and Ridley-Duff, 2019). The social entrepreneur’s intentions manifest in the legal organizations they found (Bull, 2018). A union founder has individualistic intentions, but their activities are, essentially, redistributive in their politics. A socially-responsible business entrepreneur has the intentions of benefitting others, but their activities are market-based in their politics (Bull and Ridley-Duff, 2019; Ranville and Barros, 2021). This reframing allows for substance of what Bull and Ridley-Duff (2019) call the “deep back” – the organizational and political expressions of the social entrepreneurs’ intentions. This new framing of hybridity is useful when we look at the actions of social entrepreneurs as outcomes in their rule-breaking decisions.

Waddock and Steckler (2016) did in-depth interviews with 23 social entrepreneurs to understand their different paths to vision. Their findings suggested that there were two pathways to vision for social entrepreneurs – deliberate “vision” that provide the pathway toward action, and the emergent, “wayfinding” that allowed for vision to happen as the social entrepreneur took actions. These dual pathways are very consistent with other theories of entrepreneurial action discourse, like causation versus effectuation or bricolage (Baker et al., 2003; Baker and Nelson, 2005; Fisher, 2012; Sarasvathy, 2001) and the opportunity recognition debate (Alvarez and Barney, 2007; Shane, 2000). Consistent with much of the literature on social entrepreneurship, over 60% of the entrepreneurs in the study used an emergent, vision/bricoleur path (Di Domenico et al., 2010; Mair and Marti, 2009; Sundaramurthy et al., 2012; Zahra et al., 2009). The authors also found that whether the subjects were primarily in the “visionary” or the

“wayfinder” category, there was an iterative process to their vision/action pathways. This would imply that the subjects were selective in their vision method longitudinally, thus alternating from one to the other depending upon the situation or feedback. Again, this is consistent with the literature on successful social entrepreneurs, where the use of selective bricolage or coupling actions produced growth and successful outcomes (Baker and Nelson, 2005; Battilana et al., 2015; Mair and Marti, 2009; Pache and Santos, 2013). We do not see answers to whether one vision pathway helps an entrepreneur with ethical decisions, but it does suggest that it could be part of the process or heuristic (Shepherd et al., 2015) in that improvisation as well as institutionalized cognitive exercises are used.

The next sections look at how morality and ethics can be viewed as a theory of practice and how emergent, action-oriented theories of social entrepreneurship, like bricolage, could explain the “behavioral” actions of rule-breaking.

### ***Prosocial entrepreneurs and theories of practice, freedom and improvisation***

Ethics is a practice according to Dey and Steyaert (2016). They make a compelling argument on how ethics are “exercised through a critical and creative dealing with the limits imposed by power” (pg. 1). Using Foucault’s (1997) concept of “practices of freedom,” the authors describe how social entrepreneurs act and work to create “conditions of freedom” for themselves and others, rather than being forced into situations where their actions are dictated by institutional power(s). Challengingly, Dey and Steyvaert’s (2016) description of the “powers” that social entrepreneurs are acting against, and within, include neoliberal governmental policies and cultural institutions. Albeit touching critical theory’s discussions of power dynamics (Foucault et al., 1997) and inherent disdain of capitalistic ideologies, the consistent narrative of the independent, maverick entrepreneurial spirit (Brenkert, 2009; Miles et al., 2004; Phillips et

al., 2019) remains an important character in the article. The descriptions of skepticism and resistance of social entrepreneurs to institutional power allows for a connection to rule-breaking as a part of what constitutes a prosocial entrepreneurial ethic. Furthermore, the idea that ethics are a practice or something that is shaped and emergent at every moment corresponds well with the extant literature on prosocial entrepreneurship's tendency for action, "wayfinding," effectuation, and bricolage (Brenkert, 2009; Di Domenico et al., 2010; Pache and Santos, 2013; Sarasvathy, 2001; Shane, 2000; Waddock and Steckler, 2016).

The literature connects the concepts of selective coupling in hybrid organizations and bricolage activities (Di Domenico et al., 2010; Pache and Santos, 2013; Sundaramurthy et al., 2012), and research suggests that social entrepreneurs that participate in selective bricolage experience more growth and success (Baker et al., 2003; Baker and Nelson, 2005; Sundaramurthy et al., 2012). Additionally, this discussion has linked ethical theories of practice and the emergent qualities of wayfinding vision creation to action-related theories of entrepreneurship as well. A short discussion of the bricolage literature, a common theory in social entrepreneurship could be useful.

Baker et al (2003) studied improvisation, which occurs "when design and execution of novel activities converge," (pg. 255) in the founding process. More specific to this review, they introduce the concept of bricolage to the entrepreneurial vocabulary. Every time a founder engages in improvisation, they engage in bricolage by creating something from whatever is available at that moment. This could even include informational fabrications - lies. Building on Penrose (1959) and Baker et al's work discussed earlier (2003), Baker and Nelson's (2005) influential paper developed a process model of bricolage and firm growth induced from field studies of twenty- nine firms over two years. Their process model, which defines two types of

entrepreneurial bricoleur, selective and parallel, describes how entrepreneurs with severe resource constraints were able to grow by creating “something from nothing” by exploiting resources that were often overlooked or rejected by other firms. Greg Fisher (2012) used the “alternate templates research approach” to compare the ability of three different theories of entrepreneurship - causation, effectuation and bricolage - to explain the activities of a small group of technology firms. Amongst other things, he suggests that community, and engaging with it, is a catalyst for entrepreneurship. Community-engagement and improvement is an important motivator for many social entrepreneurs. In a cross-sectional study of hospitality and travel firms in China, Fu et al (2020) found that bricolage activities positively affected new venture growth. Their results also suggested that firms with ambidexterity structures – the ability to explore opportunities and exploit them simultaneously – mediated for bricolage and venture growth. Most importantly to our discussion, Di Domenico et al (2010) applied the concept of bricolage to social entrepreneurship by building on the key identified concepts of “making do,” “refusing limitations,” and “improvisation” (Baker et al 2003, Baker and Nelson 2005). By adding the constructs of “social value creation,” “stakeholder participation,” and “persuasion,” they posited a theoretical framework of “social” bricolage. Sunduramurthy et al (2016) extended Di Domenico et al’s framework (2016) by examining how successful social enterprises incorporated systematic operational processes - invoking the bricoleur’s opposing figure of the “ingenieur” of Levi-Strauss’ (1967) work. Finally, Mair and Marti (2009) study of an NGO in Bangladesh and how, with scarce resources, certain institutional voids could be filled by entrepreneurial actors utilizing bricolage. They also claim the first empirical study of the engagement of “ideational bricolage” - the use of local beliefs and mythologies - in the literature on organizations.

Entrepreneurial hustle is a construct developed by Fisher et al (2020) that helps organize the type of actions that entrepreneurs take whilst navigating the uncertainties they face. Like others, the authors do not take ethical issue with the unorthodox actions that entrepreneurs take in context of uncertainty (Badaracco, 2001; Brenkert, 2009; Zhang et al., 2023b). Rather, they find resourcefulness and ingenuity, even when the actions are deontologically questionable in their ethic.

In the study, Fisher et al (2020) did extensive interviews with entrepreneurs to find out what actions they took to work within uncertain contexts. The authors reviewed 48 reflective interviews conducted for a National Public Radio podcast called How I Built This. The interviewees were asked questions about the entrepreneurial journeys, and the answers included many vignettes about the uncertainty they confronted in their times of innovation and creation.

The analysis of the interviews yielded a construct with five distinct purposes that the Fisher et al dubbed entrepreneurial hustle due to the dualistic aspects of the term “hustle.” The word is both positively (i.e. moving quickly to accomplish something) as well as negatively (i.e. hustle is a synonym for “con” or “fraud”) connotated. The five purposes for “hustling” according to the analysis were: hustling for opportunity, hustling for resources, hustling for learning, hustling for legitimacy, and hustling for connections.

In the study, the authors investigated how entrepreneurial hustle helps an entrepreneur garner the attention of, and enroll, stakeholders. However, the construct can be used to explain more than signaling. It can, partly, be used to describe entrepreneurial rule-breaking as an emergent, context-dependent activity, that can help in the sense-making process amidst uncertainty. Do prosocial entrepreneurs “hustle?” And, when does it become more than that (Pidduck and Tucker, 2022)?

What does the literature say about what is happening when prosocial entrepreneurs break the rules (Brenkert, 2009; Zhang and Arvey, 2009)? What does it say about when it is acceptable (Bacq et al., 2016; Zahra et al., 2009)? What does it say about when it is merely permissible (Harris et al., 2009)? Or when it is wrong (Bruder, 2021)? Beginning with a review of literature on social innovation (Phillips et al., 2019; van der Have and Rubalcaba, 2016), we found that community and user/adopter engagement was important to both development and diffusion of social innovations (Haugh, 2007). These findings are interesting when viewed through the lens of entrepreneurial rule-breaking, in that they suggest social entrepreneurs are “allowed” to innovate by the community (Fursov and Linton, 2022; Hölsgens, 2022), or they understand the community or context to an extent that cognition or an emergent, moral awareness towards breaking the rules may occur (McVea, 2009; Werhane, 1998; Zhang et al., 2023b). There is room for further study, including whether rule-breaking may be an opportunity recognition process phenomenon, or a motivation-driven, emergent moral practice.

The literature on social entrepreneurial ethics, decision-making, and morality is diverse (Chell et al., 2016; Shepherd et al., 2015; Vallaster et al., 2019). The area of study is no longer nascent, but the literature has wide-ranging debates in several areas (Bryant, 2009; Bull and Ridley-Duff, 2019; Schwartz, 2016). Definitional questions remain (Bacq and Janssen, 2011; Solis-Navarrete et al., 2021). Additionally, though researchers admit the growing public interest in enterprises with prosocial or pro-environmental agendas is a welcome phenomenon, the debate on whether social entrepreneurship can be done in a moral/ethical fashion continues (Bacq et al., 2016). The debates allow for additional study on topics that fill gaps in understanding of moral action and decision-making. Understanding more about the phenomenon

of rule-breaking by entrepreneurs that are supposed to be morally “superior” (André and Pache, 2016; Tan et al., 2005) would add to scholarship in this area.

Finally, the literature review led to an interesting area of social entrepreneurship study. The combination of moral “identity” and cognition scholarship (Schwartz, 2016; Werhane, 1998; Zhang et al., 2023b), motivational identity (Stryker and Burke, 2000; York et al., 2016), hybridity (Battilana et al., 2015; Gümüşay et al., 2020; Pache and Santos, 2013), and theories of practice (Bourdieu, 2010; Dey and Steyaert, 2016) suggested that social entrepreneurs may be practicing their morality in emergent, improvisational ways (Di Domenico et al., 2010; Fisher et al., 2020; Sundaramurthy et al., 2012; Waddock and Steckler, 2016). A study of social entrepreneurs encountering contexts that may or may not elicit a rule-breaking practice could further the literature in these areas. This study could help in furthering the discussion of motivational, moral, or hybrid identity scholarship as well.

The literature examined in the review encompassed a wide range of scholarship areas that could help explain the phenomenon of rule-breaking by prosocial entrepreneurs. Ultimately, however, there was little found that could help elucidate the contexts, drivers, or other factors for “why” or “when” prosocial entrepreneurs participate in rule-breaking. This study tests specific drivers, asks questions about motivations, and tries to see if, or what, differences there may be in prosocial entrepreneurs and their moral decision making, specifically, their choices to participate in breaking the rules.

### **3. Methodological Review**

This research used mixed methods for data acquisition. Study One, an initial, quantitative study was employed through the use of a survey of over a thousand respondents (1,109),

followed by Study Two, a qualitative phase of the study, using interviews with a sample population of prosocial entrepreneurs (28) to add richer data for analysis, insight and theory development.

Mixed methods research, an increasingly prevalent methodological approach, combines qualitative and quantitative techniques to leverage the complementary strengths of each method (Almalki, 2016; Creswell and Clark, 2017; Johnson et al., 2007). Given the inherent complexity and multidimensional nature of the phenomena studied – specifically, rule-breaking, and generally, ethical decision-making processes among prosocial entrepreneurs - a mixed methods approach is especially pertinent and valuable (Almalki, 2016; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2010).

Quantitative methods, primarily survey-based, provide a robust mechanism for testing theoretical constructs such as ethical orientation, rule relativity, and perceptions of risk associated with rule-breaking behavior. However, quantitative data alone could miss some multi-layered insights into entrepreneurs' subjective interpretations and experiential contexts. Conversely, qualitative methods, employing interviews and thematic analyses, allow researchers to capture these heterogenous dynamics, offering rich, detailed narratives to explain underlying motivations and justifications (Almalki, 2016; Lisetchi and Brancu, 2014).

Recognizing these strengths, this study employed a sequential explanatory design (Creswell and Clark, 2017). Initially, a quantitative survey was developed and conducted. The new concept put forward by Zhang et al (2023b) called constructive rule beliefs (CRB), which posits a framework of cognitive drivers of rule-breaking behavior, was the basis for the survey (see Appendix 1). The concept of CRB is useful for this study as it focuses on an individual's beliefs about the purpose and nature of rules and their inherent properties, generally, rather than the context-specific perceptions and attitudes of prosocial rule-breaking behaviors found in

organizations (Liu and Zhao, 2023). Furthermore, the survey was conducted using a 6-point Likert scale, eliminating the neutral midpoint to encourage participants to take definitive stances (Johnson et al., 2007; Kankaraš and Capecchi, 2024). This scale was deliberately selected to mitigate central tendency bias and ensure clearer differentiation among respondents' attitudes toward ethical rules (Chyung et al., 2017; Kankaraš and Capecchi, 2024).

Following quantitative analysis, semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected participants, identified through purposive sampling, to deepen understanding of the statistical results and generate a more grounded theory of prosocial entrepreneurs' rule-breaking behavior (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2010). These interviews offered participants opportunities to contextualize their responses, allowing them to elaborate on why certain rules might be deemed acceptable to break and under which conditions ethical dilemmas are navigated. Such qualitative explorations facilitated capturing the dynamic interplay among the entrepreneurs' personal ethical frameworks and how it emerges in varied contexts (Dey and Mason, 2018; Garud et al., 2014; Ploeg et al., 2022).

Synthesizing findings across both methodological approaches, enhances the validity and reliability of the research conclusions (Johnson et al., 2007). By aligning quantitative and qualitative findings, a more comprehensive understanding of prosocial entrepreneurs' ethical decision-making processes - particularly in environments characterized by both rule-bound norms and multi-missional pressures (Lucas et al., 2022; Ploeg et al., 2022; Sunduramrthy, n.d.; Zhang et al., 2023a).

Ultimately, employing mixed methods in this study proved essential for addressing the multifaceted and inherently heterodoxical phenomenon of ethical decision-making within prosocial entrepreneurial contexts. It allowed for some elucidation, not only the generalizable

trends across larger populations of entrepreneurs, but also the subtle, intricate details that quantitative methods alone could overlook. An explanation of the specific methods utilized in each study are included in the beginning of their respective sections.

#### **4. Study One**

It has been established that entrepreneurs are rule-breakers (Brenkert, 2009; Lucas et al., 2022) and that prosocial entrepreneurs are viewed to have high moral character (Bacq et al., 2016; Zahra et al., 2009). Do these highly ethical individuals, prosocial entrepreneurs, also break rules? Is there something different about them? Are they “wired” differently? What contexts, or “reasons,” might compel them to participate in an unethical practice like rule-breaking? Do they, actually, view it as unethical (Brenkert, 2009; Liu and Zhao, 2023)? Study One looks at the cognitive drivers that may influence rule-breaking behavior utilizing a survey that measures personal attitudes about rules, as well as the potential contextual apprehensions, or “reasons,” that would motivate or influence a rule breaking decision by a prosocial entrepreneur.

Zhang et al developed a measurement tool that provides a two-dimensional factor construct called Constructive Rules Beliefs (CRB) (2023a). The two factors that Zhang et al found were Rule Relativity Beliefs (RRB) and Rule Purpose Beliefs (RPB). As their names imply, the two constructs measure the cognition of the respondents’ belief in how rules fit within their “reality.” RRB measures how a person views rules relative to themselves and their context. Higher levels of RRB would equate to a perception of rules, or the context in which a person finds themselves, as less applicable to their instance. Lower RRB levels, conversely, would mean the individual views rules as more universal in their application and, subsequently, adherence. RPB deals with the broader, more abstracted concept of the purpose for rules, as well as how they should be crafted and changed. In their study and development of the tool, these two factors

were uncorrelated, which the authors found surprising, but useful in that the findings suggest that the construct is a formative one, rather than reflexive. This study attempts to both test and extend the previous study by Zhang et al (2023b). This study provides new insight about the efficacy of CRB as a measurement tool in three ways. First, this study will either confirm or contradict the findings of Zhang et al of a positive relationship between higher levels of Constructive Rule Beliefs and willingness to break formal rules. Second, by answering the request from the authors to apply CRB to a population of professionals in highly-governed roles, such as lawyers or medical workers. Lastly, it also extends the prior study by adding a prosocial, hybridity context to the respondents.

The first part of the Study One attempts to answer the following:

Research Question 1: Do people with higher levels of CRB show greater willingness to break formal rules? This question is important in testing the predictive nature of the CRB scale.

Research Question 2a: Do entrepreneurs have higher or lower levels of CRB than non-entrepreneurs? This question is important in that it focuses on the cognitive aspects inherent in entrepreneurs. Do they view rules differently, in general, than non-entrepreneurs?

Research Question 2b: Do entrepreneurs show greater willingness to break formal rules than non-entrepreneurs? It has been posited that entrepreneurs are rule-breakers (Brenkert, 2009). This research attempts to find test this proposition.

Research Question 3: Do persons working in contexts with higher governance and more formalized hybridity where both prosocial and financial missional outcomes are sought - like health and wellness – have higher or lower levels of CRB than those working in context with lower governance and less, if any, formal hybridity.

In the first part of Study One, the objective was to ascertain the efficacy of the constructive rule beliefs (CRB) measurement tool and the ability of the CRB construct to predict formal rule-breaking behavior by individuals with high-levels of CRB in prosocial and formalized hybridity contexts as well as less-governed and normal contexts. Furthermore, it tested whether or not individuals, including entrepreneurs, working in highly-governed and formalized hybridity contexts – prosocial contexts – possessed differing levels of CRB and willingness to break formal rules. A second part of Study One introduces “entrepreneurial hustle” as a construct explaining urgent and unorthodox entrepreneurial actions which may, or may not, include rule-breaking actions. Fisher et al (2020) defined the construct of entrepreneurial hustle as this:

“Entrepreneurial hustle is an entrepreneur’s urgent, unorthodox actions that are intended to be useful in addressing immediate challenges and opportunities under conditions of uncertainty.” (pg. 1013)

The term “hustle” is useful in this study, in that it contains paradoxical definitions. First, “hustle” is a word describing affective, busy activity. In Fisher et al’s article, this affective activity was used to signal to potential investors of the entrepreneurs’ efficacy and venture legitimacy (Fisher et al., 2020). Hustling entrepreneurs are resourceful and urgent in their actions, thus providing investors with confidence and, subsequently, higher perceptions of the entrepreneurs and their “ability-based trustworthiness” (2020). The word “trustworthiness” in the study’s thesis is provocative in a meaningfully heterodoxical way (Pidduck and Tucker, 2022) because “hustle” can also be defined as “obtaining something in an illicit way”, and is synonymous with the word “cheating.” Rule-breaking includes elements of both definitions, thus making it a helpful construct for this study.

According to the authors, there are five purposes for an entrepreneur to hustle – Hustle for Opportunity, Hustle for Resources, Hustle for Learning, Hustle for Legitimacy, and Hustle for Connections (Fisher et al, 2020). This section of Study One will help our understanding of whether rule-breaking is a context-dependent, even emergent ethical action, or if an underlying belief system has more importance in its occurrence. Respondents from the first survey who selected the rule-breaking action in one specific scenario vignette were asked to rank their reasoning for the rule-breaking action with phrases that describe the different purposes of entrepreneurial hustle (Figure 2) that correspond with the context defined in the vignette. This second section of Study One will help answer the following questions:

Research Question 4a: Is there a relationship between levels of CRB and certain of the five purposes of entrepreneurial hustle?

Research Question 4b: Is there a relationship between persons working in prosocial contexts – those with both financial and social-focused missions – and choice of the five purposes of entrepreneurial hustle?

Research Question 4c: Is there a relationship between entrepreneurs and/or prosocial entrepreneurs and any of the five purposes of entrepreneurial hustle?

## **4.1 Study One - Methodology**

### ***4.1.1 Survey Design***

The survey (Appendix 1) was designed with three distinct sections. The first section included an informed consent statement, followed by general demographic questions such as age, gender, and educational attainment. In addition, participants were asked to identify themselves as entrepreneurs or business owners, as well as, whether they worked in the health and wellness

industry. These final two questions were used for supplementary categorization in the subsequent analysis. This self-identification was helpful to the study, as it was independent of any controls used during survey population recruitment.

The second part of the survey comprised twenty questions, divided between two ten-question sections based on the concept of Constructive Rule Beliefs (CRB) introduced by Zhang et al (2023a), as well as a tool developed for its measurement (Zhang et al., 2023b). CRB looks at the potential cognitive drivers of rule-breaking behavior. CRB is a two-dimensional framework that includes Rule Relativity Beliefs (RRB) and Rule Purpose Beliefs (RPB). The first ten questions aimed to assess RRB in the respondents, while the next ten focused on RPB. As the study is looking at the phenomenon of rule-breaking, and the normative implication that a participant should have a “belief” about rules and their purpose, a six-point Likert scale was utilized to prevent neutral responses, thus compelling participants to “pick a side” indicating their agreement or disagreement. An attention check was placed between the two subsections to ensure validity of the responses.

The final section presented two rule-breaking scenarios (Table 0). The first scenario asked the respondents to consider the situation as if they were health and wellness tech startup entrepreneurs. It was deliberately framed with a formal tone, including the use of technical language, actual certification standards, and discussion of legal documentation to simulate regulatory pressures. The scenario was designed to evoke stress and uncertainty, implying that selecting the rule-breaking option would constitute an act of fraud. The second scenario adopted a more informal tone. The participants were advised to take the role of an entrepreneur attending a conference which hosted a seminar that could help them launch a new product. Unfortunately, the entrepreneur is not allowed to attend the seminar according to the rules of the conference.

This scenario and the rule-breaking action aligns with the concept of "entrepreneurial hustle" as described by Fisher et al. (2020). Entrepreneurial hustle refers to the "urgent and unorthodox actions" undertaken by entrepreneurs to overcome challenges or seize opportunities in uncertain conditions. If respondents opted for the rule-breaking action in Scenario2, they were prompted with a follow-up question asking them to rank their motivations, corresponding to the five recognized drivers of entrepreneurial hustle:

- I want to start growing my revenue as soon as I can. (Resources)
- I want to meet people that could help me realize the potential of my new therapy.  
(Connections)
- I want to understand more about how my innovation can be employed effectively and compliantly. (Learning)
- I want to find potential new users or customers. (Opportunity)
- I want people to understand how exciting and innovative my therapy is. (Legitimacy)

## Table 0

## Scenario 1

You are a wellness technology start up that sells platform solutions to yoga and pilates studios to enhance the experiences and outcomes for its members. Your solution incorporates image-recognition software, wearable technologies, and artificial intelligence. You are working on a deal that will generate exponential growth for your company. A leading international brand is deciding between your platform and one from your competitor (the largest in the industry) for a pilot program in 110 of their studios around the world. You have been awarded the project due to your cutting-edge technology. However, due to the nature of the solution, which includes collecting and handling personal information, images, and other privacy-sensitive documentation, the award is conditional upon your warranty that your company, systems, and infrastructure are tested and certified according to best-in-class operational standards. You are in the final stages of your firm's AICPA SOC2 Type 2 attestation, which is one of the two accepted standards for the award. You have been told by the auditors, informally, that you will have your certification, but you have not received your documentation, which will be available in 7 days. Due to numerous resource requirements and scheduling constraints for this initiative, your potential customer has stated that you need to sign the service agreement (including the warranty) in three days, or it will be rescinded. When the award is rescinded, the project may be awarded to your competitor, or the brand may, or may not, pursue the pilot initiative in the next fiscal year (dependent upon budgeting). Do you sign the agreement and warranty?

## Scenario 2

You have developed a new therapy for your practice. This offering opens up new markets, is expected to add 25% more revenue to your business and should increase beneficial outcomes for your patient/client community. However, because of its novelty, you are not comfortable with your knowledge of the provisional costs, or if the offering is compliant with current regulations or best practices. You are attending an industry conference on a guest pass from one of your suppliers. As you walk around, you notice that one of the seminars about to begin has the information and people to provide you with answers and connections that you need. Unfortunately, the seminar is closed and you are not on the list of attendees. Furthermore, your guest pass does not allow you to attend seminars. You notice there is no one checking people in anymore. You can go through the doors, take a seat, and, possibly, meet people, find partnerships, and get the answers you require to launch 6 months before you would be able to without attending. Do you attend the seminar?

#### *4.1.2 Survey Participants*

Survey respondents were recruited through Prolific, an online participant recruitment platform widely used for academic research. Prolific is designed to connect researchers with high-quality, diverse, and pre-screened respondents, ensuring reliable data collection. The platform allows researchers to apply custom filters based on demographic and behavioral criteria, facilitating targeted recruitment that aligns with study objectives. Prolific maintains a pool of verified participants who undergo regular quality checks, reducing issues related to fraudulent responses and ensuring engagement from genuine participants.

Prolific operates by allowing researchers to create studies and specify eligibility criteria for participants. These criteria can include age, gender, country of residence, employment status, and more specialized attributes such as industry experience or personality traits. Once a study is published, eligible participants are notified and can choose to participate. The platform ensures high data integrity by employing attention checks, monitoring response consistency, and implementing stringent participant vetting procedures.

For this study, two distinct respondent groups were recruited using Prolific's filtering capabilities. The first group, which included 100 participants in a pilot study and an additional 500 respondents in the main study, was selected using the following filters:

- USA residents
- "Hobbies" include Health and Fitness
- Work - Entrepreneurship: "Does not apply"

This first group represented a non-entrepreneurial sample population which may have an affinity for health and fitness, but not necessarily working in the industry. The pilot study helped

refine the survey instrument before full-scale deployment. After positive feedback, the same filters were used to recruit additional participants for the primary data collection phase.

The second group consisted of 500 participants. It was recruited with different selection criteria to capture the perspectives of health and wellness professionals, including entrepreneurs.

The applied filters were:

- USA residents
- Work - Entrepreneurship: "I have in the past," "I am currently doing this," or "I intend to in the future."
- Work - Industry: "Healthcare and Social Assistance" or "Medical/Healthcare."

This cohort was designed to reflect individuals working in health and wellness industries, including those engaged in entrepreneurship. The inclusion of participants who "intend to in the future" pursue entrepreneurship enabled comparative analysis between respondents who participated in entrepreneurship and those who were aspiring to it.

The final dataset comprised 1,109 respondents, representing a well-distributed sample across the specified categories. The use of Prolific ensured access to a broad, diverse, and high-quality participant pool for the research study.

#### ***4.1.3 Ethical Considerations***

The study was conducted in accordance with ethical guidelines for research involving human subjects. Participants provided informed consent before proceeding with the survey, and data confidentiality was maintained throughout the study. Prolific's built-in participant screening and quality control measures further ensured ethical standards were upheld. No personally identifiable information was collected during the surveys, and respondents retained the right to withdraw from the study at any point.

## 4.2 Study One – Survey Results

The responses to the survey were collected via Microsoft Forms and the results were processed using both Microsoft Excel, a well-known spreadsheet software application, and Jamovi, an open-source statistical software application designed for social science research. Microsoft Excel was used for transformation of text-related responses into numerical responses and for scale calculations. Questions with text responses in the survey format, including demographic questions about age and gender, were transformed from “Male”, “Female”, “Non-binary”, and “Prefer not to say” to numerical values of 1, 2, 3, and 4 for the analysis. In addition to this transformation processing, the second and third sections of the survey required further processing. In the second section, which aimed to collect responses regarding the CRB measurement tool, some of the questions were designed with phrasing that was inverted in order for the respondent to show consistency in their answers about rule beliefs. For example, a participant is asked to what degree they agree or disagree with the following questions: “People should always follow formal rules” and “It is justifiable to break some formal rules.” For persons that have consistent answers to their rule beliefs, a reasonable expectation would show a negative correlation between these answers from a single respondent. This was the conclusion from Zhang et al (2023b) when developing the measurement tools. A correlation analysis of the responses to these questions does suggest an inverse relationship (Table 5a) adding further corroboration to their conclusion. A transformation was made to the inverted responses before calculation of the RRB, RPB and CRB were completed.

After the transformation of the data was completed in Microsoft Excel, preliminary analytical tests of the sample were performed to guide any additional processing required prior to the deeper analysis done with Jamovi, which integrates advanced statistical procedures,

including binomial, linear and polynomial regressions, mediation models, and confirmatory factor analysis, which were all employed in this study.

The results are reported in sections, with the corresponding tables described in turn. Descriptive statistics, followed by the confirmatory factor analysis of the CRB measurement tool responses, then the correlations, regressions, mediation and moderating models examined for the study.

#### ***4.2.1 Full Sample – Descriptive Statistics***

In total, there were 1,109 survey respondents. Table 1 reports mean scores, standard deviations, and distribution characteristics across four gender categories for three primary variables: Entrepreneurship Actual/Aspire, Reported Entrepreneur, and Health & Wellness (H/W) Reported. The sample sizes were 398 (male), 697 (female), 13 (non-binary/other), and 1 (prefer not to say).

Results indicated that females had a slightly higher proportion of respondents who aspired toward entrepreneurial activities ( $M = 0.689$ ) compared to males ( $M = 0.663$ ), though the t-test did not support this difference as significant. Males self-reported as entrepreneurs more frequently ( $M = 0.314$ ) than females ( $M = 0.303$ ), suggesting a possible discrepancy between entrepreneurial aspiration and self-identification as an entrepreneur across genders, though, again, the results were not significant. The non-binary/other category reported the highest level of entrepreneurial aspiration ( $M = 0.385$ ), although this is based on a small sample ( $N = 13$ ) and limits any inference from the data.

Regarding Health & Wellness (H/W) reporting, females again reported higher values approaching significance ( $M = 0.575$ ) compared to males ( $M = 0.523$ ) (T-test:  $P(\text{two-tail}) =$

0.0799), which may indicate greater health and wellness interest among female participants to work in the industry. The small sample size for categories 3 and 4 limits interpretability.

Table 1 - Descriptives – Entrepreneurship and Health and Wellness Sample Population by Gender

	Gender	N	Missing	Mean	Median	Sum	SD	Min	Max
Reported Entrepreneur	0	398	0	0.314	0.00	125	0.465	0	1
	1	697	0	0.303	0	211	0.460	0	1
	2	13	0	0.385	0	5	0.506	0	1
	3	1	0	0.000	0	0	NaN	0	0
Work in the health and wellness industry	0	398	0	0.523	1.00	208	0.500	0	1
	1	697	0	0.575	1	401	0.495	0	1
	2	13	0	0.462	0	6	0.519	0	1
	3	1	0	1.000	1	1	NaN	1	1
Entrepreneurship Actual/Aspire	0	398	0	0.663	0.00	264	0.804	0	2
	1	697	0	0.689	0	480	0.832	0	2
	2	13	0	0.923	1	12	0.954	0	2
	3	1	0	1.000	1	1	NaN	1	1

The next table (Table 2) provides education levels across six age categories. The population sample of survey participants skewed slightly younger with over seventy percent of the respondents in the first three age groups (71.7%). The mean education level hovered around 3.0 (on a 1–4 scale) across nearly all of the groups, indicating that most participants had at least some college education. Age group 2 (second youngest group, aged between 25-34) had the highest average education level ( $M = 3.13$ ), while the youngest group of respondents (aged 18-24) had a considerably lower average of educational attainment ( $M=2.44$ ), but a median (Median = 3) consistent with the other groups.

Table 2 - Descriptives – Education Level by Age Group

	Age	N	Missing	Mean	Median	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Education	18-24	126	0	2.44	3.00	0.711	1	4
	25-34	373	0	3.13	3	0.780	1	4
	35-44	296	0	2.98	3.00	0.896	1	4
	45-54	180	0	3.04	3.00	0.868	1	4
	55-64	105	0	2.87	3	0.910	1	4
	65+	29	0	3.00	3	1.035	1	4

Table 3a compares scores for Rule Relativity Beliefs, Rule Purpose Beliefs, and Combined CRB between those who reported that they were (Reported Entrepreneur = 1) or were not (Reported Entrepreneur = 0) entrepreneurs. Table 3b compares scores for RRB, RPB, and CRB between those who reported whether they did (H/W = 1) or did not (H/W = 0) work in the Health & Wellness industry.

Individuals who did not report that they were in Health and Wellness careers (N = 493) had a statistically significant higher positive mean score for Rule Relativity Beliefs (non-Health and Wellness M = -0.288) than those who did report that they were in the Health and Wellness industry (Health and Wellness M = -2.20). The outcome indicates that those engaged in Health and Wellness industry careers may hold more conservative or rule-aligned beliefs. The difference in means between the respondents' entrepreneurial status (Entrepreneur Reported M = -1.49 and Non-reported Entrepreneur M = -1.29) (table 3a) did not show a significant relationship. Rule Purpose Beliefs, however, remained relatively stable between groups, but the results were not significant (tables 3a and 3b), while Combined CRB scores, as they are a combination of RRB and RPB, were slightly higher in non-H/W reporters (M = 20.953) compared to H/W reporters (M = 19.27), and neared significance (p = 0.066) (table 3b). The lack of significant results comparing the RRB, RPB and CRB scores of entrepreneurs and non-entrepreneurs would call

into question Zhang et al’s (2023) conclusions regarding an entrepreneur’s cognitive drivers as a sole contributor to entrepreneurial rule-breaking. In contrast, these findings suggest subtle differences in belief structures related to rule adherence based on engagement in health and wellness industry occupations, possibly reflecting differing psychological or lifestyle orientations. Further analysis may help clarify.

Table 3a Descriptives and Comparison T-Test – RRB, RPB, CRB Entrepreneur Reported

	<b>Statistic</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>p</b>
Rule Relativity Beliefs	0.245	1107	0.807
Rule Purpose Beliefs	-0.137	1107	0.891
Constructive Rule Beliefs	0.132 <sup>a</sup>	1107	0.895

Note.  $H_a \mu_0 \neq \mu_1$

<sup>a</sup> Levene's test is significant ( $p < .05$ ), suggesting a violation of the assumption of equal variances

Entrepreneur Reported Group Descriptives

	<b>Group</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>SE</b>
Rule Relativity Beliefs	0	768	-1.29	0.0	12.19	0.440
	1	341	-1.49	0.0	12.88	0.698
Rule Purpose Beliefs	0	768	21.35	22.0	7.27	0.262
	1	341	21.41	23.0	8.04	0.436
Constructive Rule Beliefs	0	768	20.06	21.0	14.91	0.538
	1	341	19.93	20.0	15.84	0.858

Table 3b - Descriptives and Comparison T-Test – RRB, RPB, CRB  
Health and Wellness

	Statistic	df	p
Rule Relativity Beliefs	2.558	1107	0.011
Rule Purpose Beliefs	-0.498	1107	0.618
Constructive Rule Beliefs	1.838	1107	0.066

Note.  $H_a \mu_0 \neq \mu_1$

## Health and Wellness Group Descriptives

	Group	N	Mean	Median	SD	SE
Rule Relativity Beliefs	0	493	-0.288	1.00	12.15	0.547
	1	616	-2.20	-1.00	12.54	0.505
Rule Purpose Beliefs	0	493	21.241	23.00	7.34	0.331
	1	616	21.47	23.00	7.65	0.308
Constructive Rule Beliefs	0	493	20.953	22.00	15.21	0.685
	1	616	19.27	19.00	15.15	0.610

Scenario-level descriptives in Table 4 reveal a clear distinction in participant reactions to the two rule-breaking scenarios in the survey. For Scenario 1, 689 out of the 1,109 participants chose to break the rule, with mean support of 0.621 (SD = 0.485), whereas for Scenario 2, it increased to 0.692 (SD = 0.462) and 767 of the 1,109 respondents choosing the rule-breaking behavior. The Combined measure, aggregating both scenarios, yielded a mean of 1.313 out of 2, indicating a general openness to rule-breaking behaviors under the specific conditions described in the scenarios.

These results also imply that the context of the rule-breaking scenario influences participants' decisions. Scenario 2, with its less formal implications, could possibly be perceived as more justified or acceptable than the formal, "higher-stakes" context of Scenario 1. Additional analysis may provide further support for the validity of this assertion.

Table 4 - Descriptives - Scenarios

	<b>N</b>	<b>Missing</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>Sum</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>
Scenario 1	1109	0	0.621	1	689	0.485	0	1
Scenario 2	1109	0	0.692	1	767	0.462	0	1
Combined	1109	0	1.313	1	1456	0.719	0	2

### *Confirmatory Factor Analyses*

In order to substantiate the claims of Zhang et al (2023) that the CRB measurement tool consisted of two distinct constructs – RRB and RPB, confirmatory factor analyses were performed and compared. A unidimensional model with all the measurement tool questions and responses loaded as a single factor and a bidimensional model where indicators were loaded as two factors were analyzed. The results show a superior model fit for a two-factor structure over a unidimensional construction (CLI = 0.816 vs. CLI = 0.489 ) (tables 32 and 33).

Table 32 – Confirmatory Factor Analysis Unidimensional Factor Loadings

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Estimate</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>Z</b>	<b>p</b>
Factor 1	Some rules should be broken.	1.27229	0.0440	28.911	<.001
	People should always follow formal rules	-1.10437	0.0413	-26.738	<.001
	It is justifiable to break some formal rules.	1.30627	0.0414	31.561	<.001
	Formal rules should be followed regardless of the context.	-1.39033	0.0432	-32.176	<.001
	Formal rules should be followed 0 matter what.	-1.48641	0.0441	-33.720	<.001
	Sometimes it is okay to ignore formal rules.	1.33098	0.0417	31.936	<.001
	The best answer to the question "Should rules be followed?" is "It depends".	1.19734	0.0490	24.460	<.001

Table 32 – Confirmatory Factor Analysis Unidimensional Factor Loadings

Factor	Indicator	Estimate	SE	Z	p
	Rules are so important to society that people should even follow rules they disagree with.	-1.08378	0.0471	-23.013	<.001
	People should generally do whatever a formal rule requires of them.	-0.96707	0.0429	-22.543	<.001
	Formal rules should generally be followed.	-0.69631	0.0356	-19.559	<.001
	Formal rules should be updated regularly to stay relevant	0.04431	0.0289	1.532	0.126
	When making a rule, the views of all parties affected by the rule should be considered	0.06766	0.0312	2.169	0.030
	Everyone who is or will be affected by the formal rules should have a say in how rules are formed.	0.09076	0.0397	2.288	0.022
	Formal rules should serve a purpose.	0.00899	0.0251	0.358	0.720
	It is important to question rules where necessary.	0.37443	0.0339	11.048	<.001
	When making a new rule, authorities should provide a clear justification for the purpose of the rule.	0.06394	0.0280	2.287	0.022
	Everyone affected by formal rules should have the opportunity to partake in the making of them.	0.17068	0.0432	3.955	<.001
	For formal rules to serve the purpose they were designed for, they need to be open to change.	0.16540	0.0317	5.220	<.001
	I am more likely to follow a rule when I believe the rule serves an important purpose.	0.13828	0.0309	4.479	<.001
	The best rules are those that are fluid and responsive to what is happening in the environment.	0.16051	0.0372	4.311	<.001

Factor Estimates  
Factor Covariances

		Estimate	SE	Z	p
Factor 1	Factor 1	1.00 <sup>a</sup>			

<sup>a</sup> fixed parameter

### Model Fit

## Test for Exact Fit

$\chi^2$	df	p
6576	170	<.001

## Fit Measures

CFI	TLI	RMSEA	RMSEA 90% CI	
			Lower	Upper
0.489	0.429	0.184	0.181	0.188

Table 33 – Confirmatory Factor Analysis Bidimensional

## Factor Loadings

Factor	Indicator	Estimate	SE	Z	p
Factor 1	Some rules should be broken.	1.267	0.0441	28.7	<.001
	People should always follow formal rules	-1.117	0.0411	-27.2	<.001
	It is justifiable to break some formal rules.	1.302	0.0415	31.4	<.001
	Formal rules should be followed regardless of the context.	-1.396	0.0431	-32.4	<.001
	Formal rules should be followed no matter what.	-1.490	0.0440	-33.9	<.001
	Sometimes it is okay to ignore formal rules.	1.328	0.0418	31.8	<.001
	The best answer to the question "Should rules be followed?" is "It depends".	1.187	0.0491	24.2	<.001
	Rules are so important to society that people should even follow rules they disagree with.	-1.089	0.0470	-23.1	<.001
	People should generally do whatever a formal rule requires of them.	-0.978	0.0428	-22.9	<.001
	Formal rules should generally be followed.	-0.708	0.0355	-19.9	<.001
Factor 2	Formal rules should be updated regularly to stay relevant	0.635	0.0254	25.0	<.001
	When making a rule, the views of all parties affected by the rule should be considered	0.731	0.0267	27.4	<.001
	Everyone who is or will be affected by the formal rules should have a say in how rules are formed.	0.828	0.0356	23.3	<.001
	Formal rules should serve a purpose.	0.549	0.0221	24.9	<.001
	It is important to question rules where necessary.	0.711	0.0313	22.7	<.001

Table 33 – Confirmatory Factor Analysis Bidimensional

## Factor Loadings

Factor	Indicator	Estimate	SE	Z	p
	When making a new rule, authorities should provide a clear justification for the purpose of the rule.	0.597	0.0248	24.1	<.001
	Everyone affected by formal rules should have the opportunity to partake in the making of them.	0.862	0.0394	21.9	<.001
	For formal rules to serve the purpose they were designed for, they need to be open to change.	0.768	0.0269	28.5	<.001
	I am more likely to follow a rule when I believe the rule serves an important purpose.	0.578	0.0285	20.3	<.001
	The best rules are those that are fluid and responsive to what is happening in the environment.	0.805	0.0329	24.4	<.001

## Factor Estimates

## Factor Covariances

		Estimate	SE	Z	p
Factor 1	Factor 1	1.000 <sup>a</sup>			
	Factor 2	0.112	0.0327	3.43	<.001
Factor 2	Factor 2	1.000 <sup>a</sup>			

<sup>a</sup> fixed parameter

**Model Fit**

## Test for Exact Fit

$\chi^2$	df	p
2470	169	<.001

## Fit Measures

CFI	TLI	RMSEA	RMSEA 90% CI	
			Lower	Upper
0.816	0.794	0.111	0.107	0.115

#### ***4.2.2 Full Sample – Results Correlation Analysis***

The correlation matrix presented below (Table 5b) offers insights into relationships among key constructs, demographic variables, and scenario outcomes. Utilizing Pearson's correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) to measure the strength and direction of these relationships, this analysis unpacks significant correlations and highlights implications of entrepreneurial decision-making and rule-breaking behaviors in the study.

Constructive Rule Beliefs, conceptualized as comprising two dimensions of Rule Relativity Beliefs (RRB) and Rule Purpose Beliefs (RPB), demonstrate a moderate positive correlation with each other ( $r = 0.111$ ,  $p < .001$ ). This suggests an interconnected, yet distinct nature of these two dimensions within the theoretical framework proposed by Zhang et al. (2023a, 2023b). Combined CRB, a summative measure of these dimensions, naturally displays robust positive correlations with both RRB ( $r = 0.871$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and RPB ( $r = 0.585$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

Several demographic variables exhibit statistically significant correlations with Constructive Rule Beliefs. Age emerges as notably inversely related to all three CRB measures, with RRB ( $r = -0.147$ ,  $p < .001$ ), RPB ( $r = -0.113$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and Combined CRB ( $r = -0.176$ ,  $p < .001$ ) all indicating a decrease in openness or flexibility toward rule interpretations with advancing age. This aligns with existing literature suggesting that older individuals might develop more rigid normative structures and reduced openness to rule reinterpretation (Chyung et al., 2017).

Education shows positive, albeit modest correlations with RRB ( $r = 0.084$ ,  $p = .005$ ) and Combined CRB ( $r = 0.077$ ,  $p = .010$ ), suggesting that higher educational attainment might contribute to a greater appreciation for rule flexibility or relativity, potentially due to increased

exposure to critical thinking and diverse perspectives (Phillips et al., 2019). However, there was no correlation found between RPB and education level.

Neither actual nor aspiring entrepreneurial status of the participants ("Reported Entrepreneur" and "Entrepreneurship Actual/Aspire") shows significant correlation with CRB dimensions, implying that simply identifying as an entrepreneur or expressing entrepreneurial aspiration might not be predictive of one's cognitive orientation toward rule-breaking – a finding that is important to several research questions.

The scenarios designed to simulate entrepreneurial dilemmas offer key insights into factors associated with rule-breaking decisions. Scenario 1, characterized by formal regulatory pressure, shows a modest but statistically significant positive correlation with Rule Relativity Beliefs (RRB;  $r = 0.101$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and Combined CRB ( $r = 0.082$ ,  $p = .006$ ), yet notably lacks correlation with Rule Purpose Beliefs. This suggests that decisions under explicit legal and regulatory pressures may be more heavily influenced by the respondent's beliefs in their relative view of rules, rather than their perceived purpose or development. Elements of risk and sanction may loom larger in the respondents' moral imaginations (Lucas et al., 2022; McVea, 2009; Werhane, 1998).

Scenario 2, in contrast, which has a more casual context, demonstrates stronger positive correlations with both RRB ( $r = 0.247$ ,  $p < .001$ ), RPB ( $r = 0.116$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and Combined CRB ( $r = 0.259$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Thus, indicating that scenarios involving informal entrepreneurial pressures resonate more strongly with individuals holding flexible beliefs about rules, their purposes, and associated values. The significant correlation of education with Scenario 2 outcomes ( $r = 0.097$ ,  $p = .001$ ) further supports the idea that educational attainment potentially contributes to broader understandings and subsequent ethical flexibility in entrepreneurial contexts.

Gender shows a modest negative correlation with Scenario 1 ( $r = -0.103$ ,  $p < .001$ ), implying potential differences in ethical decision-making or perceived stress in formal regulatory dilemmas between genders. This observation may warrant further exploration in future research.

When looking at the relationships between the Combination of Scenario 1 and Scenario 2, some additional insights are illuminated. By combining the scores of Scenario 1 and 2, the study reveals the level of willingness for the participants to engage in rule-breaking behaviors irrespective of the context. Reported entrepreneurs, even though they do not illustrate higher levels of relativity to rule beliefs, which would suggest no correlation to a willingness for rule-breaking, do have a positive correlation with choosing to break at least one of the rule scenarios (“Combined”:  $r = 0.082$ ,  $p = 0.006$ ). Entrepreneurs also showed a willingness to break the rules in Scenarios 1 and 2 separately. Scenario 2 had meaningful support ( $r = 0.068$ ,  $p = 0.023$ ), but Scenario 1 had a statistical significance that was not fully supported by the results ( $r = 0.057$ ,  $p = 0.058$ ). The findings of this correlation analysis underscore the complexity inherent in entrepreneurial rule-breaking behaviors, reinforcing the significance of cognitive frameworks such as CRB in understanding entrepreneurial decisions, but also its limits in explanatory power. The distinct differences observed between the formal regulatory scenario (Scenario 1) and the informal scenario (Scenario 2) suggest varying contexts shape the ethical calculus of entrepreneurs as well.



Table 5b

## Correlation Matrix

Correlation Matrix

		Rule Relativity Beliefs	Rule Purpose Beliefs	Constructive Rule Beliefs	Reported Entrepreneur	Gender	Age	Education	Work in the health and wellness industry	Scenario 1 Response	Scenario 2 Response	Scenario Responses Combined
Rule Relativity Beliefs	Pearson's r	—										
	df	—										
	p-value	—										
Rule Purpose Beliefs	Pearson's r	0.111	—									
	df	1107	—									
	p-value	<.001	—									
Constructive Rule Beliefs	Pearson's r	0.871	0.585	—								
	df	1107	1107	—								
	p-value	<.001	<.001	—								
Reported Entrepreneur	Pearson's r	-0.007	0.004	-0.004	—							
	df	1107	1107	1107	—							
	p-value	0.807	0.891	0.895	—							
Gender	Pearson's r	0.012	0.074	0.046	-0.009	—						
	df	1107	1107	1107	1107	—						
	p-value	0.694	0.013	0.122	0.774	—						
Age	Pearson's r	-0.147	-0.113	-0.176	0.104	-0.019	—					
	df	1107	1107	1107	1107	1107	—					
	p-value	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	0.531	—					
Education	Pearson's r	0.084	0.018	0.077	0.105	-0.015	0.055	—				
	df	1107	1107	1107	1107	1107	1107	—				
	p-value	0.005	0.549	0.010	<.001	0.610	0.066	—				
Work in the health and wellness industry	Pearson's r	-0.077	0.015	-0.055	0.368	0.046	-0.039	0.203	—			
	df	1107	1107	1107	1107	1107	1107	1107	—			
	p-value	0.011	0.618	0.066	<.001	0.128	0.194	<.001	—			
Scenario 1 Response	Pearson's r	0.101	0.000	0.082	0.057	-0.103	-0.025	0.033	-0.006	—		
	df	1107	1107	1107	1107	1107	1107	1107	1107	—		
	p-value	<.001	0.999	0.006	0.058	<.001	0.397	0.266	0.832	—		
Scenario 2 Response	Pearson's r	0.247	0.116	0.259	0.068	-0.008	-0.054	0.097	-0.004	0.151	—	
	df	1107	1107	1107	1107	1107	1107	1107	1107	1107	—	
	p-value	<.001	<.001	<.001	0.023	0.786	0.070	0.001	0.892	<.001	—	
Scenario Responses Combined	Pearson's r	0.227	0.075	0.222	0.082	-0.075	-0.052	0.085	-0.007	0.772	0.745	—
	df	1107	1107	1107	1107	1107	1107	1107	1107	1107	1107	—
	p-value	<.001	0.013	<.001	0.006	0.013	0.083	0.005	0.818	<.001	<.001	—

## Correlation Matrix

The correlation of certain variables allowed for further investigation into possible linear or multinomial relationships between various attributes. Using the Jamovi software, multiple regression analyses were performed in order to examine certain of these relationships closer.

#### ***4.2.3 Full Sample - Linear Model Relationships***

##### *Rule-breaking Scenarios*

The first two regressions looked at how the participants' responses across the survey affect the decisions to break the rules in Scenario 1 (Table 6) and Scenario 2 (Table 7), respectively. As the outcomes of the model were Boolean ("no" = 0 and "yes" = 1), a binomial logistic regression analysis was utilized in each case. When looking at the full breadth of coefficients, the model fit was relatively low for Scenarios 1 and 2, though it was much higher for Scenario 2 ( $R^2 = 0.0194$  vs  $R^2 = 0.0666$ ). However, there are several variables with statistically significant relationships for both Scenarios.

Rule Relativity Beliefs (RRB) had a significant positive association with both of the dependent variables of Scenario 1 and 2 (Estimate = 0.01614,  $p = 0.002$  and Estimate = 0.0419,  $p < 0.001$ , respectively), indicating that higher levels of RRB were associated with greater acceptance of rule-breaking in Scenario 1 and Scenario 2. Contrastingly, Rule Purpose Beliefs (RPB) was only a predictor of rule-breaking behavior in Scenario 2 responses (Estimate = 0.0279,  $p = 0.002$ ).

Commensurate with research question 2b which asks whether or not entrepreneurs are more inclined to break rules than their non-entrepreneurial cohorts, the regression analyses show that entrepreneurs had a higher likelihood of choosing the rule-breaking option in both scenario 1 and scenario 2. In scenario 1, their odds were thirty-five percent higher (Estimate = 0.30230,  $p = 0.043$ ) than non-entrepreneurs to elect to break the rule. At nearly fifty percent (estimate =

0.4021,  $p = 0.014$ ), entrepreneurs possessed even higher odds to choose breaking the rule in the less formal context of Scenario 2 than the non-entrepreneurial cohort.

The only other variable with significant predictive power in Scenario 1 was gender, which had strong inverse relationship (estimate = -0.43047,  $p < 0.001$ ) reporting that non-male respondents were much less likely to choose to break the rule in the high-stakes formality of that context. Unlike in Scenario 1, gender was not significant to the model, but education contributed to its predictability of the rule-breaking choice in Scenario 2, suggesting that the exposure of broader experiences and learning may contribute to a more relativistic view of rules.

Table 6 – Binomial Logistic Regression for Scenario 1

Model Fit Measures

Model	Deviance	AIC	$R^2_{McF}$
1	1443	1459	0.0194

*Note.* Models estimated using sample size of  $N=1109$

Model Coefficients - Scenario 1 Response

Predictor	Estimate	SE	Z	p
Intercept	0.75573	0.33526	2.254	0.024
Rule Purpose Beliefs	-0.00166	0.00851	-0.195	0.846
Rule Relativity Beliefs	0.01614	0.00519	3.109	0.002
Education	0.05520	0.07462	0.740	0.459
Age	-0.03851	0.05161	-0.746	0.456
Work in the health and wellness industry:				
1 – 0	-0.09891	0.13925	-0.710	0.478
Reported Entrepreneur:				
1 – 0	0.30230	0.14915	2.027	0.043
Gender	-0.43047	0.12667	-3.398	<.001

*Note.* Estimates represent the log odds of "Scenario 1 Response = 1" vs. "Scenario 1 Response = 0"

Table 7 – Binomial Logistic Regression for Scenario 2

## Model Fit Measures

<b>Model</b>	<b>Deviance</b>	<b>AIC</b>	<b>R<sup>2</sup><sub>McF</sub></b>
1	1279	1295	0.0666

*Note.* Models estimated using sample size of N=1109

## Model Coefficients - Scenario 2 Response

<b>Predictor</b>	<b>Estimate</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>Z</b>	<b>p</b>
Intercept	-0.1271	0.35326	-0.360	0.719
Rule Purpose Beliefs	0.0279	0.00891	3.127	0.002
Rule Relativity Beliefs	0.0419	0.00576	7.284	<.001
Education	0.1931	0.07987	2.417	0.016
Age	-0.0393	0.05562	-0.706	0.480
Work in the health and wellness industry:				
1 – 0	-0.1473	0.15065	-0.978	0.328
Reported Entrepreneur:				
1 – 0	0.4021	0.16299	2.467	0.014
Gender	-0.0503	0.13623	-0.369	0.712

*Note.* Estimates represent the log odds of "Scenario 2 Response = 1" vs. "Scenario 2 Response = 0"

### *Combined Score of Scenario 1 and 2*

The “Combined” variable, which is the sum of the two scenario response outcomes, showed a significant correlation between several of the other variables (Table 5). As this measurement is meant to show the number/level of rule-breaking action(s) that a respondent may be willing to choose (e.g. no action, at least one action, or up to two), there is benefit in additional regression analyses to find out if any of the relationships may have a linear and/or

multinomial association. Table 8 shows the significant linear relationships between RRB (estimate = 0.01286,  $p < 0.001$ ) and self-reported entrepreneurs (estimate = 0.13055,  $p = 0.004$ ) and the respondents' willingness to break the scenario rules. RPB demonstrates a positive association, but it is not statistically significant ( $p = 0.091$ ).

When examining the relationships contributing to the Combined variable using categorization – “non-rule breakers” = zero (0) rule-breaking actions selected between both scenario 1 and scenario 2, “moderate rule breakers” = one (1) rule-breaking action selected between the two scenarios, and “heavy rule breakers” = two (2) rule-breaking actions selected in the two scenarios – a multinomial regression analysis yields interesting results. Table 9 reveals that only Rule Relativity Beliefs have a significant, albeit small, association between non-rule breaking respondents and their moderate rule breaking counterparts (Estimate = 0.0360,  $p < 0.001$ ). Rule Purpose beliefs, like the results in the linear regression analysis, showed a positive relationship, but with a p-value that is just shy of significance (Estimate = 0.0221,  $p = 0.062$ ). Reported Entrepreneurship had nearly no relationship ( $p = 0.912$ ) between the two lower rule-breaking categories. However, when comparing non-rule breakers and heavy rule breakers, the relationship is very strong. Entrepreneurs had nearly 65% higher odds to be heavy rule breakers than non-rule breakers (Estimate = 0.4991,  $P = 0.024$ ). Furthermore, both RPB and RRB had strong positive associations with respondents who chose both rule-breaking actions over none (Estimate = 0.0260,  $p = 0.028$  and Estimate = 0.0541,  $p < 0.001$ , respectively). These results suggest that entrepreneurs, as a group, may be willing to break rules, even though they may not have commensurately higher levels of RRB, RPB, or CRB (Tables 6, 11 or 12). These outcomes continue to imply a complex dynamic of ethical decision-making in the entrepreneurial context. Further study would be helpful in finding additional drivers outside of the cognitive.

Table 8 – Linear Regression Scenario Responses Combined

## Model Fit Measures

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>
1	0.247	0.0609

Note. Models estimated using sample size of N=1109

## Model Coefficients - Scenario Responses Combined

Predictor	Estimate	SE	t	p
Intercept <sup>a</sup>	1.18877	0.06526	18.22	<.001
Reported Entrepreneur:				
1 – 0	0.13055	0.04539	2.88	0.004
Rule Relativity Beliefs	0.01286	0.00170	7.56	<.001
Rule Purpose Beliefs	0.00474	0.00281	1.69	0.091

<sup>a</sup> Represents reference level

Table 9 – Multinomial Logistic Regression Scenario Responses Combined

## Model Fit Measures

Model	Deviance	AIC	R <sup>2</sup> <sub>McF</sub>
1	2144	2176	0.0420

Note. Models estimated using sample size of N=1109

## Model Coefficients - Scenario Responses Combined

Scenario Responses Combined	Predictor	Estimate	SE	Z	p
1 - 0	Intercept	0.5300	0.47408	1.1180	0.264

## Model Coefficients - Scenario Responses Combined

Scenario Responses Combined	Predictor	Estimate	SE	Z	p
2 - 0	Rule Relativity Beliefs	0.0360	0.00776	4.6404	<.001
	Rule Purpose Beliefs	0.0221	0.01185	1.8652	0.062
	Gender	0.1130	0.19006	0.5945	0.552
	Age	-0.0695	0.07558	-0.9195	0.358
	Education	0.0870	0.10744	0.8102	0.418
	Work in the health and wellness industry:				
	1 - 0	-0.0185	0.20565	-0.0901	0.928
	Reported Entrepreneur:				
	1 - 0	0.0247	0.22443	0.1100	0.912
	Intercept	0.5505	0.47386	1.1618	0.245
	Rule Relativity Beliefs	0.0541	0.00783	6.9159	<.001
	Rule Purpose Beliefs	0.0260	0.01182	2.2017	0.028
	Gender	-0.3109	0.18720	-1.6608	0.097
	Age	-0.0816	0.07547	-1.0809	0.280
Education	0.2015	0.10806	1.8644	0.062	
Work in the health and wellness industry:					
1 - 0	-0.1858	0.20599	-0.9019	0.367	
Reported Entrepreneur:					
1 - 0	0.4991	0.22045	2.2638	0.024	

*RRB, RPB, CRB*

The three variables of CRB, RRB and RPB, the latter of which constitute the framework for Constructive Rule Beliefs (CRB), were examined to find linear relationships with the other response variables (Table 10, 11 and 12). Consistent with the correlation analyses, entrepreneurship did not exhibit a significant association with any of the cognitive attributes in the study. The relationships in the RRB model that exhibited significant predictive ability were Age, Education, “Work in the health and wellness industry”, as well as RPB responses. Like the Scenario 1 and 2 models, Age was inversely related (estimate = -1.507,  $p < 0.001$ ). Additionally,

and pertinent to the research questions, the “Work in health and wellness industry” response exhibited a strong inverse effect in the model (estimate = -3.047,  $p < 0.001$ ). This indicates that people that work in the Health and Wellness industry, and subsequently, those in a prosocial vocation, may have a less relative view of rules.

Rule Purpose Beliefs (RPB) had limited statistically significant relationships. Unlike RRB, there was no relationship with Health and Wellness workers, but there was a significant relationship with Gender (estimate = 1.0601,  $p = 0.017$ ). Like RRB, however, RPB did have a significant negative relationship with Age (estimate = -0.5989,  $p = 0.001$ ).

The combination of RRB and RPB into Zhang et al’s CRB framework score (Zhang et al., 2023b) shows a “blending” of the two separate components, as expected. The model explains a modest portion of the variance ( $R^2 = 0.049$ ), with most of the same variables exhibiting significance in their associations. Reported Entrepreneur continues to show no relationship with the scores. As noted earlier, health and wellness workers had a strong negative relationship with CRB (Estimate = -3.11,  $p = 0.002$ ), suggesting that people in prosocial environments view rules with less relativity and more conservative purposes. Education exhibited a significantly positive association in contrast to Age, which was strongly negative in its model coefficients (estimate = 1.84,  $p = 0.001$ , estimate = -2.30,  $p < 0.001$ , respectively). Continuing the narrative of RRB that education, or those that participate in greater educational attainment, may perceive the world with a broader, more relativistic lens, but that age, with its life experiences, may provide a more conservative view of rules in varied contexts.

Table 10 – Linear Regression Model - RRB  
Model Fit Measures

Model	R	$R^2$
1	0.226	0.0510

Table 10 – Linear Regression Model - RRB  
Model Fit Measures

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>
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Note. Models estimated using sample size of N=1109

Model Coefficients - Rule Relativity Beliefs

Predictor	Estimate	SE	t	p
Intercept <sup>a</sup>	-3.851	1.9322	-1.993	0.047
Rule Purpose Beliefs	0.153	0.0489	3.131	0.002
Reported Entrepreneur:				
1 – 0	1.114	0.8553	1.303	0.193
Work in the health and wellness industry:				
1 – 0	-3.047	0.8046	-3.787	<.001
Education	1.596	0.4322	3.694	<.001
Age	-1.507	0.2973	-5.067	<.001
Gender	0.239	0.7235	0.330	0.742

<sup>a</sup> Represents reference level

Table 11 – Linear Regression Model - RPB  
Model Fit Measures

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>
1	0.166	0.0275

Note. Models estimated using sample size of N=1109

Model Coefficients - Rule Purpose Beliefs

Predictor	Estimate	SE	t	p
Intercept <sup>a</sup>	21.9866	0.9849	22.323	<.001
Rule Relativity Beliefs	0.0576	0.0184	3.131	0.002
Reported Entrepreneur:				
1 – 0	0.1851	0.5248	0.353	0.724
Work in the health and wellness industry:				
1 – 0	0.1229	0.4965	0.248	0.805

Model Coefficients - Rule Purpose Beliefs

Predictor	Estimate	SE	t	p
Education	0.1198	0.2666	0.449	0.653
Age	-0.5989	0.1835	-3.263	0.001
Gender	1.0601	0.4425	2.396	0.017

<sup>a</sup> Represents reference level

Table 12 – Linear Regression Model - CRB  
Model Fit Measures

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>
1	0.221	0.0490

Note. Models estimated using sample size of N=1109

Model Coefficients - Constructive Rule Beliefs

Predictor	Estimate	SE	t	p
Intercept <sup>a</sup>	21.47	1.969	10.90	<.001
Reported Entrepreneur:				
1 – 0	1.40	1.048	1.34	0.181
Work in the health and wellness industry:				
1 – 0	-3.11	0.986	-3.15	0.002
Education	1.84	0.530	3.48	<.001
Age	-2.30	0.362	-6.36	<.001
Gender	1.49	0.885	1.68	0.093

<sup>a</sup> Represents reference level

### *Curvilinear test*

The strength of the linear association between choosing the rule-breaking actions and RRB, RPB and CRB allowed for additional considerations of model testing. Does a higher level of CRB continue to predict a direct, linear outcome of higher odds of choosing to break the rules

of the scenarios? Does the relationship taper off? A test for curvilinear model fit was performed on the variables of RRB, RPB and CRB predicting the outcomes of combined scenario responses, the sum of the two choices made by the respondents in rule-breaking scenarios 1 and 2, using a polynomial regression analysis. The results show evidence that a non-linear relationship may exist between both RRB and CRB and the Combined Scenario responses. Following on the positive results of these tests, additional polynomial regressions were performed isolating both scenario 1 and scenario 2 as the dependent variables using RRB and CRB as the independent variables (Tables 13 through 18). When tested, RPB did not show a relationship past the linear model (e.g. quadratic, cubic or quartic) that has already been established as significant (Table 18). Tables 13 and 14 show the output of models testing the outcomes of combined scenario responses as the dependent variable and Constructive Rule Beliefs as the independent variable. The tables describe the results and show a curvilinear graph illustrating a tapering/moderating of the likelihood of rule-breaking choices and levels of CRB at the highest levels. Considering the insignificance of the results testing RPB alone and significance of CRB, the results of the log likelihood tests for RRB were, unsurprisingly, significant for a curvilinear relationship (Tables 15, 16, 17). RRB has been, consistently, the more important element of the CRB construct in predicting rule-breaking actions in the study.

These results showing a logarithmic relationship suggest that an individual's CRB and RRB has significant power in the earlier, lower, "window" of the scale to predict that they will choose a rule breaking activity, incrementally. The likelihood of choosing a rule-breaking scenario tapers off however, describing a situation where decisions to choose rule-breaking may be influenced by more than cognitive drivers, especially once the population reaches certain levels of RRB and CRB. Irrespective of the significance of the logarithmic relationship, which

allows for further study, the strength of confidence in a linear relationship allows for the analysis and discussion to focus there.

Table 13 - Log likelihood ratio analysis Support

Model Comparisons	S	Param	R <sup>2</sup>	AIC	df	p
H <sub>0</sub> vs Linear	-27.484	2, 3	0.0492	2364	1, 1107	<.001
Quadratic vs Linear	3.477	3, 4	0.0560	2358	1, 1104	0.005
Cubic vs Lower Orders	-0.342	4, 5	0.0563	2360	1, 1104	0.575
Quartic vs Lower Orders	-0.447	5, 6	0.0564	2361	1, 1104	0.744

Note. S uses Occam's Bonus correction for parameters (Param). S is calculated hierarchically from all remaining SSq, while p values are calculated using residual MSq from the highest polynomial model.

Model Coefficients - Scenario Responses Combined

Predictor	Estimate	SE	S	S-2 Likelihood Interval		p
				Lower	Upper	
Intercept	1.0652	0.04030	-271.8379	0.9847	1.1457	<.001
Linear	0.0187	0.00422	-9.7604	0.0103	0.0271	<.001
Quadratic	-1.38e-4	1.50e-4	-0.4260	-4.38e-4	1.61e-4	0.357
Cubic	-2.86e-6	5.09e-6	-0.1585	-1.30e-5	7.30e-6	0.574
Quartic	2.71e-8	8.30e-8	-0.0534	-1.39e-7	1.93e-7	0.744

Scatterplot with Model fits

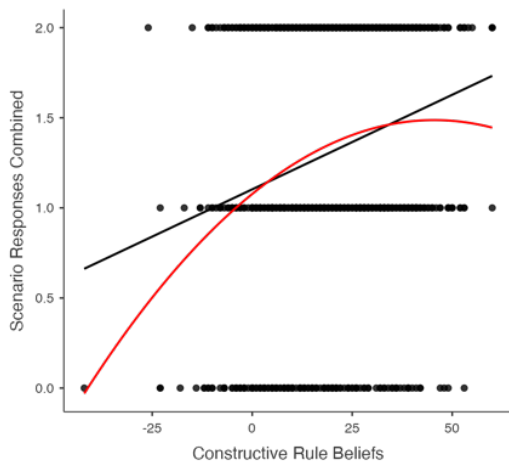


Table 14 - Log likelihood ratio analysis  
Support

Model Comparisons	S	Param	R <sup>2</sup>	AIC	df	p
H <sub>0</sub> vs Linear	-37.945	2, 3	0.0670	1363	1, 1107	<.001
Quadratic vs Linear	3.345	3, 4	0.0734	1357	1, 1104	0.006
Cubic vs Lower Orders	1.080	4, 5	0.0761	1356	1, 1104	0.076
Quartic vs Lower Orders	-0.376	5, 6	0.0763	1358	1, 1104	0.619

Note. S uses Occam's Bonus correction for parameters (Param). S is calculated hierarchically from all remaining SSq, while p values are calculated using residual MSq from the highest polynomial model.

Model Coefficients - Scenario 2 Response

Predictor	Estimate	SE	S	S-2 Likelihood Interval		p
				Lower	Upper	
Intercept	0.5035	0.02563	-166.2011	0.45232	0.5547	<.001
Linear	0.0111	0.00268	-8.4640	0.00570	0.0164	<.001
Quadratic	3.11e-5	9.54e-5	-0.0534	-1.59e-4	2.22e-4	0.744
Cubic	-1.46e-6	3.23e-6	-0.1023	-7.92e-6	5.00e-6	0.652
Quartic	-2.63e-8	5.28e-8	-0.1242	-1.32e-7	7.92e-8	0.619

Scatterplot with Model fits

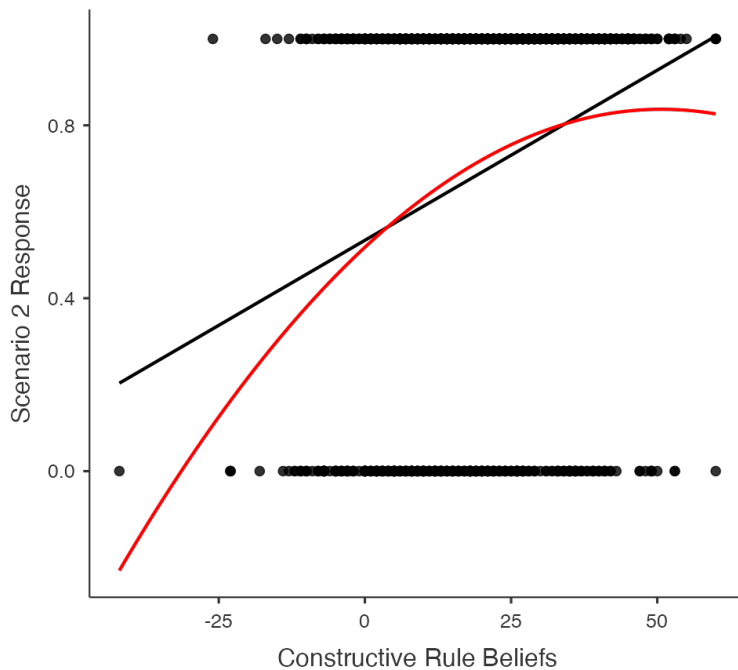


Table 15 - Log likelihood ratio analysis

Support

Model Comparisons	S	Param	R <sup>2</sup>	AIC	df	p
H <sub>0</sub> vs Linear	-28.752	2, 3	0.0514	2361	1, 1107	<.001
Quadratic vs Linear	2.095	3, 4	0.0558	2358	1, 1104	0.023
Cubic vs Lower Orders	-0.146	4, 5	0.0564	2359	1, 1104	0.401
Quartic vs Lower Orders	0.445	5, 6	0.0580	2359	1, 1104	0.170

Note. S uses Occam's Bonus correction for parameters (Param). S is calculated hierarchically from all remaining SSq, while p values are calculated using residual MSq from the highest polynomial model.

Model Coefficients - Scenario Responses Combined

Predictor	Estimate	SE	S	S-2 Likelihood Interval		p
				Lower	Upper	
Intercept	1.3924	0.03154	-564.1171	1.32945	1.4554	<.001
Linear	0.0128	0.00316	-8.1297	0.00645	0.0191	<.001
Quadratic	-6.53e-4	2.94e-4	-2.4764	-0.00124	-6.63e-5	0.026
Cubic	-2.38e-6	6.81e-6	-0.0615	-1.60e-5	1.12e-5	0.727
Quartic	5.45e-7	3.97e-7	-0.9445	-2.49e-7	1.34e-6	0.170

Scatterplot with Model fits

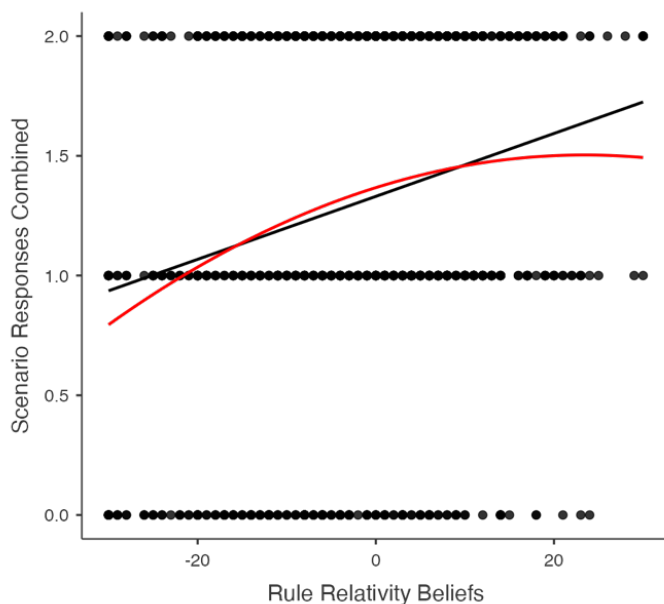


Table 16 - Log likelihood ratio analysis

Support

Model Comparisons	S	Param	R <sup>2</sup>	AIC	df	p
H <sub>0</sub> vs Linear	-5.147	2, 3	0.0101	1537	1, 1107	<.001
Quadratic vs Linear	0.211	3, 4	0.0114	1538	1, 1104	0.233
Cubic vs Lower Orders	-0.500	4, 5	0.0114	1540	1, 1104	0.998
Quartic vs Lower Orders	1.218	5, 6	0.0145	1538	1, 1104	0.064

Note. S uses Occam's Bonus correction for parameters (Param). S is calculated hierarchically from all remaining SSq, while p values are calculated using residual MSq from the highest polynomial model.

Model Coefficients - Scenario 1 Response

Predictor	Estimate	SE	S	S-2 Likelihood Interval		p
				Lower	Upper	
Intercept	0.66141	0.02178	-336.723	0.61791	0.70491	<.001
Linear	0.00250	0.00218	-0.660	-0.00186	0.00686	0.252
Quadratic	-4.35e-4	2.03e-4	-2.298	-8.40e-4	-2.92e-5	0.032
Cubic	2.81e-6	4.70e-6	-0.179	-6.58e-6	1.22e-5	0.550
Quartic	5.08e-7	2.74e-7	-1.718	-4.01e-8	1.06e-6	0.064

Scatterplot with Model fits

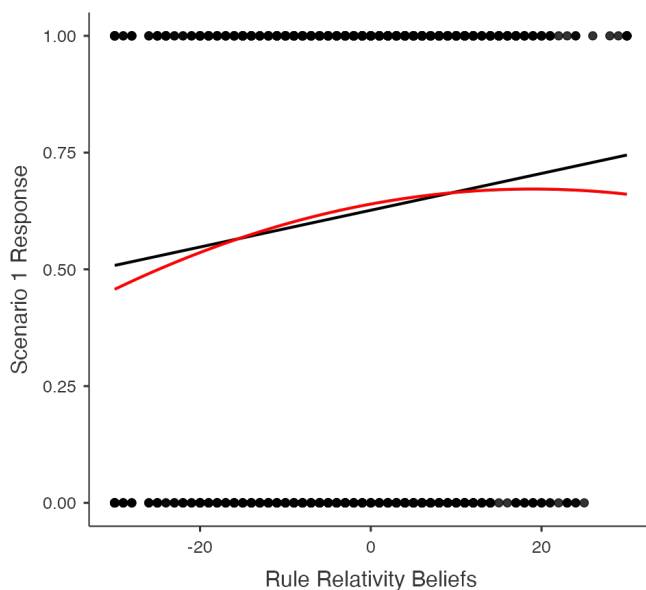


Table 17 - Log likelihood ratio analysis

Support

Model Comparisons	S	Param	R <sup>2</sup>	AIC	df	p
H <sub>0</sub> vs Linear	-34.384	2, 3	0.0610	1370	1, 1107	<.001
Quadratic vs Linear	2.087	3, 4	0.0653	1367	1, 1104	0.023
Cubic vs Lower Orders	0.361	4, 5	0.0668	1367	1, 1104	0.191
Quartic vs Lower Orders	-0.489	5, 6	0.0668	1369	1, 1104	0.884

Note. S uses Occam's Bonus correction for parameters (Param). S is calculated hierarchically from all remaining SSq, while p values are calculated using residual MSq from the highest polynomial model.

[4] [5]

Model Coefficients - Scenario 2 Response

Predictor	Estimate	SE	S	S-2 Likelihood Interval		p
				Lower	Upper	
Intercept	0.7310	0.02018	-434.4103	0.69073	0.7713	<.001
Linear	0.0103	0.00202	-12.7802	0.00622	0.0143	<.001
Quadratic	-2.19e-4	1.88e-4	-0.6790	-5.94e-4	1.57e-4	0.245
Cubic	-5.19e-6	4.35e-6	-0.7126	-1.39e-5	3.51e-6	0.234
Quartic	3.72e-8	2.54e-7	-0.0107	-4.71e-7	5.45e-7	0.884

Scatterplot with Model fits

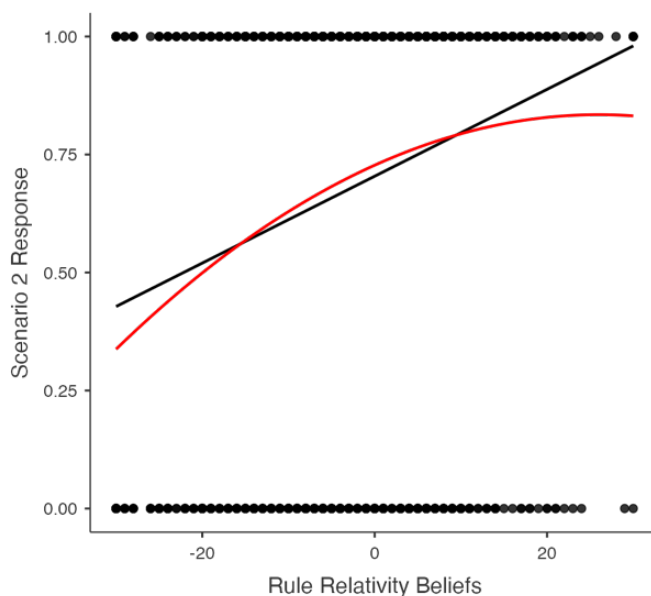


Table 18 - Log likelihood ratio analysis

Support

Model Comparisons	S	Param	R <sup>2</sup>	AIC	df	p
H <sub>0</sub> vs Linear	-2.5869	2, 3	0.00555	2414	1, 1107	0.013
Quadratic vs Linear	-0.0967	3, 4	0.00627	2415	1, 1104	0.370
Cubic vs Lower Orders	-0.4104	4, 5	0.00643	2417	1, 1104	0.673
Quartic vs Lower Orders	-0.3877	5, 6	0.00664	2418	1, 1104	0.636

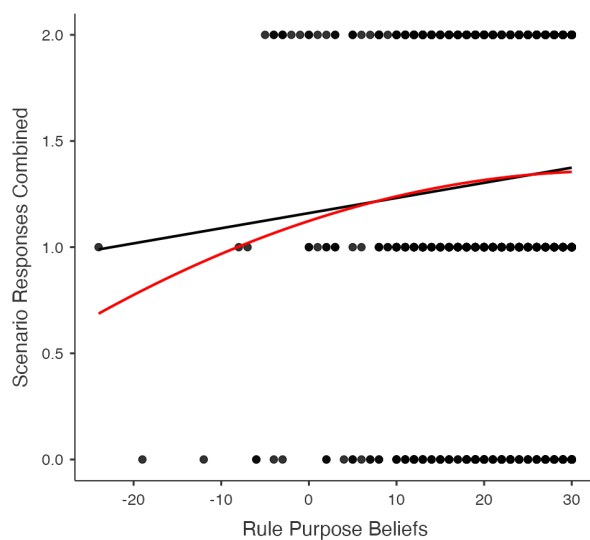
Note. S uses Occam's Bonus correction for parameters (Param). S is calculated hierarchically from all remaining SSq, while p values are calculated using residual MSq from the highest polynomial model.

[4] [5]

Model Coefficients - Scenario Responses Combined

Predictor	Estimate	SE	S	S-2 Likelihood Interval		p
				Lower	Upper	
Intercept	1.16552	0.1023	-61.633	0.96119	1.3699	<.001
Linear	0.00830	0.0137	-0.183	-0.01914	0.0357	0.546
Quadratic	-2.81e-4	5.57e-4	-0.128	-0.00139	8.32e-4	0.614
Cubic	2.08e-5	3.46e-5	-0.182	-4.82e-5	8.99e-5	0.547
Quartic	-4.57e-7	9.66e-7	-0.112	-2.39e-6	1.47e-6	0.636

Scatterplot with Model fits



#### 4.2.4 Health and Wellness Sample – Survey Results

Respondents that reported that they worked in the health and wellness industry showed lower RRB and CRB scores as a population sample than those who did not report working in the same. As this sample population may have some additional differences, several analyses were done looking at the health and wellness group by itself. The descriptive statistics (Table 19) show a reasonable breakdown in sample population categories for a useful analysis (Kenny, 1987) (Sample Population n = 616, Reported Entrepreneurs n = 283, Male (0) n = 208).

Table 19 - Descriptives

	Gender	Reported Entrepreneur	N	Missing	Mean	Median	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Age	3	0	1	0	2.00	2	NaN	2	2
		1	0	0	NaN	NaN	NaN	NaN	NaN
	2	0	3	0	1.67	1	1.155	1	3
		1	3	0	1.33	1	0.577	1	2
	1	0	224	0	2.64	2.00	1.152	1	6
		1	177	0	3.12	3	1.291	1	6
	0	0	105	0	2.73	3	1.068	1	6
		1	103	0	2.88	3	1.060	1	6
Education	3	0	1	0	3.00	3	NaN	3	3
		1	0	0	NaN	NaN	NaN	NaN	NaN
	2	0	3	0	2.67	3	0.577	2	3
		1	3	0	2.67	3	0.577	2	3
	1	0	224	0	3.04	3.00	0.836	1	4
		1	177	0	3.15	3	0.726	1	4
	0	0	105	0	3.21	3	0.793	1	4
		1	103	0	3.22	3	0.791	1	4
Scenario Responses Combined	3	0	1	0	1.00	1	NaN	1	1
		1	0	0	NaN	NaN	NaN	NaN	NaN
	2	0	3	0	1.33	2	1.155	0	2
		1	3	0	1.00	1	1.000	0	2
	1	0	224	0	1.22	1.00	0.711	0	2
		1	177	0	1.38	2	0.699	0	2
	0	0	105	0	1.26	1	0.747	0	2
		1	103	0	1.43	2	0.722	0	2

The results of the correlation (Table 20) and various regression analyses (Tables 21 through 24) reported similar outcomes to the analysis of the overall sample, thus reinforcing the findings that individuals with increased levels of RRB and CRB chose to break the rules of the two scenarios more often than those with lower levels. Additionally, consistent with the overall sample population, health and wellness workers who reported that they were entrepreneurs were also more likely to choose rule-breaking actions than the non-entrepreneur group.

Findings within the sample sub-population of health and wellness practitioners, which the data shows have lower RRB and CRB scales, and subsequently, may have attitudes or attributes that differ significantly from the full sample population, still support the result of the broader sample population from the survey, thus strengthening the suggestions for further investigation into the reasons for prosocial entrepreneurial rule-breaking.

Table 20 Correlation Matrix

		Rule Relativity Beliefs	Rule Purpose Beliefs	Constructive Rule Beliefs	Reported Entrepreneur	Gender	Age	Education	Scenario 1 Response	Scenario 2 Response	Scenario Responses Combined
Rule Relativity Beliefs	Pearson's r	—									
	df	—									
	p-value	—									
Rule Purpose Beliefs	Pearson's r	0.072	—								
	df	614	—								
	p-value	0.073	—								
Constructive Rule Beliefs	Pearson's r	0.864	0.565	—							
	df	614	614	—							
	p-value	<.001	<.001	—							
Reported Entrepreneur	Pearson's r	0.029	-0.024	0.012	—						
	df	614	614	614	—						
	p-value	0.469	0.545	0.769	—						
Gender	Pearson's r	-.020	0.085	0.026	-0.053	—					
	df	614	614	614	614	—					
	p-value	0.620	0.036	0.517	0.189	—					
Age	Pearson's r	-.144	-0.089	-0.164	0.152	0.018	—				
	df	614	614	614	614	614	—				
	p-value	<.001	0.027	<.001	<.001	0.663	—				
Education	Pearson's r	0.103	0.003	0.086	0.054	0.089	0.071	—			
	df	614	614	614	614	614	614	—			
	p-value	0.011	0.949	0.032	0.178	0.027	0.079	—			
Scenario 1 Response	Pearson's r	0.065	0.018	0.063	0.087	0.056	0.036	0.092	—		
	df	614	614	614	614	614	614	614	—		
	p-value	0.105	0.650	0.116	0.031	0.168	0.378	0.022	—		
Scenario 2 Response	Pearson's r	0.223	0.132	0.251	0.083	0.000	0.038	0.099	0.153	—	
	df	614	614	614	614	614	614	614	614	—	
	p-value	<.001	<.001	<.001	0.040	0.998	0.347	0.014	<.001	—	
Scenario Responses Combined	Pearson's r	0.187	0.097	0.204	0.112	0.038	0.048	0.125	0.773	0.745	—
	df	614	614	614	614	614	614	614	614	614	—
	p-value	<.001	0.016	<.001	0.005	0.352	0.231	0.002	<.001	<.001	—

Table 21 – Binomial Regression Scenario 1

Model Fit Measures

<b>Model</b>	<b>Deviance</b>	<b>AIC</b>	<b>R<sup>2</sup><sub>MCF</sub></b>
1	804	822	0.0189

*Note.* Models estimated using sample size of N=616

Model Coefficients - Scenario 1 Response

<b>Predictor</b>	<b>Estimate</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>Z</b>	<b>p</b>
Intercept	-0.07329	0.47696	-0.1537	0.878
Reported Entrepreneur:				
1 – 0	0.35642	0.17187	2.0738	0.038
Gender:				
3 – 0	-14.13482	535.41120	-0.0264	0.979
2 – 0	-0.01947	0.89597	-0.0217	0.983
1 – 0	-0.17295	0.18065	-0.9574	0.338
Age	-0.08150	0.07304	-1.1159	0.264
Education	0.21599	0.10685	2.0215	0.043
Rule Relativity Beliefs	0.00762	0.00683	1.1152	0.265
Rule Purpose Beliefs	0.00428	0.01111	0.3855	0.700

*Note.* Estimates represent the log odds of "Scenario 1 Response = 1" vs. "Scenario 1 Response = 0"

Table 22 – Binomial Regression Scenario 2

Model Fit Measures

<b>Model</b>	<b>Deviance</b>	<b>AIC</b>	<b>R<sup>2</sup><sub>MCF</sub></b>
1	712	730	0.0666

*Note.* Models estimated using sample size of N=616

Model Coefficients - Scenario 2 Response

Predictor	Estimate	SE	Z	p
Intercept	-0.5875	0.51218	-1.1470	0.251
Reported Entrepreneur:				
1 – 0	0.3882	0.18654	2.0809	0.037
Gender:				
3 – 0	12.4386	535.41121	0.0232	0.981
2 – 0	-1.3628	0.89389	-1.5246	0.127
1 – 0	0.0950	0.19397	0.4900	0.624
Age	-0.0351	0.07920	-0.4438	0.657
Education	0.1988	0.11443	1.7372	0.082
Rule Relativity Beliefs	0.0382	0.00759	5.0362	<.001
Rule Purpose Beliefs	0.0369	0.01178	3.1321	0.002

Note. Estimates represent the log odds of "Scenario 2 Response = 1" vs. "Scenario 2 Response = 0"

Table 23 – Multinomial Regression Scenario Responses Combined

Model Fit Measures

Model	Deviance	AIC	R <sup>2</sup> <sub>McF</sub>
1	1193	1229	0.0423

Note. Models estimated using sample size of N=616

Model Coefficients - Scenario Responses Combined

Scenario Responses Combined	Predictor	Estimate	SE	Z	p
2 - 0	Intercept	-0.56830	0.67876	-0.837	0.402
	Reported Entrepreneur:				
	1 – 0	0.56269	0.25304	2.224	0.026
	Gender:				
	3 – 0	-6.34706	9.94e-10	-6.39e-9	<.001
	2 – 0	-1.29510	1.02367	-1.265	0.206
	1 – 0	0.05542	0.26095	0.212	0.832

## Model Coefficients - Scenario Responses Combined

Scenario Responses Combined	Predictor	Estimate	SE	Z	p
1 - 0	Age	-0.09350	0.10723	-0.872	0.383
	Education	0.35481	0.15359	2.310	0.021
	Rule Relativity Beliefs	0.01751	0.00838	2.091	0.037
	Rule Purpose Beliefs	0.00873	0.01085	0.804	0.421
	Constructive Rule Beliefs	0.02624	0.00636	4.126	<.001
	Intercept	0.16989	0.66181	0.257	0.797
	Reported Entrepreneur:				
	1 - 0	0.08339	0.25628	0.325	0.745
	Gender:				
	3 - 0	11.05929	8.08e-7	1.37e+7	<.001
	2 - 0	-1.78543	1.28225	-1.392	0.164
	1 - 0	0.33016	0.26588	1.242	0.214
	Age	-0.01688	0.10698	-0.158	0.875
	Education	0.14321	0.15098	0.948	0.343
	Rule Relativity Beliefs	0.01791	0.00832	2.152	0.031
	Rule Purpose Beliefs	-0.00147	0.01058	-0.139	0.890
Constructive Rule Beliefs	0.01644	0.00625	2.633	0.008	

Table 24 - Log likelihood ratio analysis Support

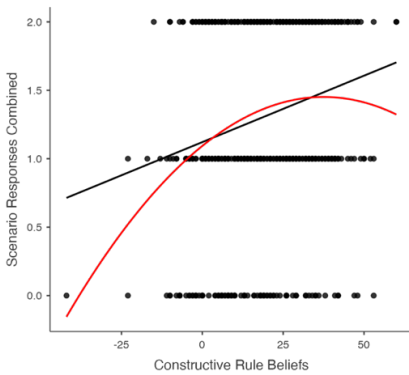
Model Comparisons	S	Param	R <sup>2</sup>	AIC	df	p
H <sub>0</sub> vs Linear	-12.597	2, 3	0.0416	1323	1, 614	<.001
Quadratic vs Linear	3.105	3, 4	0.0528	1318	1, 611	0.008
Cubic vs Lower Orders	-0.444	4, 5	0.0530	1320	1, 611	0.739
Quartic vs Lower Orders	-0.408	5, 6	0.0532	1322	1, 611	0.669

Note. S uses Occam's Bonus correction for parameters (Param). S is calculated hierarchically from all remaining SSq, while p values are calculated using residual MSq from the highest polynomial model.

Model Coefficients - Scenario Responses Combined

Predictor	Estimate	SE	S	S-2 Likelihood Interval		p
				Lower	Upper	
Intercept	1.0820	0.05257	-162.2303	0.97713	1.1869	<.001
Linear	0.0209	0.00583	-6.3954	0.00924	0.0325	<.001
Quadratic	-2.46e-4	1.94e-4	-0.8112	-6.33e-4	1.41e-4	0.205
Cubic	-3.12e-6	5.78e-6	-0.1472	-1.46e-5	8.40e-6	0.589
Quartic	4.56e-8	1.07e-7	-0.0922	-1.67e-7	2.58e-7	0.669

Scatterplot with Model fits



#### 4.2.5 Entrepreneurial Hustle – Survey Results

The second part of Study One introduces “entrepreneurial hustle” as a construct explaining urgent and unorthodox entrepreneurial actions (Fisher et al., 2020). Although it is not limited to rule-breaking actions, entrepreneurs that break rules are “hustling,” as the action is counter to orthodoxy and is usually accompanied with a sense of urgency (Brenkert, 2009; Dey and Steyaert, 2016; Lucas et al., 2022).

Within the concept of entrepreneurial hustle, there are five purposes – Hustle for Opportunity, Hustle for Resources, Hustle for Learning, Hustle for Legitimacy, and Hustle for Connections (Fisher et al, 2020). This section of Study One expands upon the first part as it investigates how rule-breaking could be interpreted as a context-dependent, even emergent

ethical action like entrepreneurial hustle, or if an underlying belief system like CRB has more importance in its occurrence. In addition, it examines potential relationships between the respondents' innate proclivities (e.g. CRB) and the contextual driven action of entrepreneurial hustle. Respondents from the first survey who selected the rule-breaking action for the Scenario 2 vignette, with its less formal and "lower stakes" context, were asked to rank their reasoning for the rule-breaking action with phrases that describe the different purposes of entrepreneurial hustle that correspond with the context defined in the vignette. People, including entrepreneurs, break rules for multiple reasons (Brenkert, 2009; Liu and Zhao, 2023), though some reasons have more importance to the person than others, internally or externally influenced (Lucas et al., 2022). This section attempts to capture this measure of importance through having the respondent rank their reasons for hustling rather than simply choosing a single reason. The results of the analysis follow.

#### *Correlation Analysis*

There were 1,109 participants in the survey. Of those respondents, 767 chose the rule breaking option in Scenario 2 (Table 31). During the survey, if the participant chose to break the Scenario 2 rule, they were asked to rank their reasons for their decision. The reasons corresponded with the five reasons why entrepreneurs "hustle;" for resources, for knowledge, for networking, for opportunity, and for legitimacy. The correlation matrix (Table 25) provides interesting insights into the relationships between the reasons for Entrepreneurial Hustle (Fisher et al., 2020) and several demographic characteristics, entrepreneurial identity variables, and the cognitive drivers of Constructive Rule Beliefs (Zhang et al., 2023a, 2023b). As a subset of the survey sample population, and as a group that has made a specific action, some correlations are less relevant even if they show a significant relationship. Also, the nature of the responses –

ranking – may cause the interrelated associations, especially negative relationships, between the hustle-related rule-breaking reasons less useful. Several meaningful associations emerged, regardless, providing some additional clarity on the interconnectedness of these constructs in the entrepreneurial context, as well as leading to additional questions.

Employment within the health and wellness industry, those in prosocial environments, demonstrated a negative correlation with the motivation for learning and knowledge ( $r = -.141$ ,  $p < .001$ ) but positively correlated with connections and networking ( $r = .077$ ,  $p = .033$ ) and perceived opportunities ( $r = .081$ ,  $p = .025$ ), underscoring a varied, and counterintuitive motivational landscape, considering hustling for learning and knowledge was the most often highest-cited reason for choosing to break the rules in Scenario 2.

Entrepreneurial self-identification ("Are you a business owner or entrepreneur?") exhibited significant negative correlation with motivation related to learning and knowledge ( $r = -.094$ ,  $p = .009$ ), indicating entrepreneurs might prioritize actions that have more immediate financial or missional benefit than the longer term building that education requires. Conversely, this entrepreneurial identity positively correlated with perceived opportunities ( $r = .092$ ,  $p = .011$ ), reinforcing the idea that entrepreneurs actively seek and recognize opportunities.

As with the overall sample population, Age was negatively correlated with Rule Relativity Beliefs (RRB;  $r = -.101$ ,  $p = .005$ ), Rule Purpose Beliefs (RPB;  $r = -.123$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and Combined Rule Beliefs (CRB;  $r = -.143$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Age also positively correlated with entrepreneurship actual/aspirational status ( $r = .139$ ,  $p < .001$ ), reflecting perhaps greater entrepreneurial experience in the older participants who chose to break the rule in scenario 2.

Education level correlated positively with both entrepreneurship actual/aspirational status ( $r = .109$ ,  $p = .003$ ) and entrepreneurial self-identification ( $r = .143$ ,  $p < .001$ ). This supports the

prior research findings in this study indicating education's role in fostering entrepreneurial identity and intent. Additionally, education level positively correlated with employment in the health and wellness industry ( $r = .203, p < .001$ ), highlighting educational attainment as a potential gate into this prosocial context.

Like the earlier findings in this study, gender exhibited significant but modest correlations, negatively associated with entrepreneurial self-identification ( $r = -.071, p = .048$ ) and with choosing the rule-breaking action of Scenario 1 responses ( $r = -.138, p < .001$ ), suggesting differences in entrepreneurial perceptions and rule-breaking appetites. Of note was the negative relationship with the Opportunities reason ( $r = -.078, p = 0.031$ ), which coincides with the lower association of reported entrepreneurship and its commensurate positive relationship with the Opportunities hustle reasoning.

Motivational dimensions also exhibited meaningful interrelations. Learning and knowledge motivation negatively correlated with connections and networking ( $r = -.083, p = .022$ ), resources ( $r = -.348, p < .001$ ), opportunities ( $r = -.451, p < .001$ ), and Scenario 1 ( $r = -.078, p = .030$ ). Connections and networking showed negative relationships with resources ( $r = -.442, p < .001$ ), legitimacy ( $r = -.229, p < .001$ ), and opportunities ( $r = -.155, p < .001$ ), suggesting distinct motivational pathways or trade-offs within entrepreneurial activities.

Collectively, these findings provide a nuanced view of how demographic factors, entrepreneurial identities, and motivations interplay, offering some insights into entrepreneurial processes and dynamics within the health and wellness sector. The significance and directionality of these correlations suggest additional analysis should prove beneficial.

Table 25

		Rule Relativity Beliefs	Rule Purpose Beliefs	Constructive Rule Beliefs	Reported Entrepreneur	Gender	Age	Education	Scenario 1 Response	Scenario 2 Response	Scenario Responses Combined
Rule Relativity Beliefs	Pearson's r	—									
	df	—									
	p-value	—									
Rule Purpose Beliefs	Pearson's r	0.072	—								
	df	614	—								
	p-value	0.073	—								
Constructive Rule Beliefs	Pearson's r	0.864	0.565	—							
	df	614	614	—							
	p-value	<.001	<.001	—							
Reported Entrepreneur	Pearson's r	0.029	-0.024	0.012	—						
	df	614	614	614	—						
	p-value	0.469	0.545	0.769	—						
Gender	Pearson's r	-0.020	0.085	0.026	-0.053	—					
	df	614	614	614	614	—					
	p-value	0.620	0.036	0.517	0.189	—					
Age	Pearson's r	-0.144	-0.089	-0.164	0.152	-0.018	—				
	df	614	614	614	614	614	—				
	p-value	<.001	0.027	<.001	<.001	0.663	—				
Education	Pearson's r	0.103	0.003	0.086	0.054	-0.089	0.071	—			
	df	614	614	614	614	614	614	—			
	p-value	0.011	0.949	0.032	0.178	0.027	0.079	—			
Scenario 1 Response	Pearson's r	0.065	0.018	0.063	0.087	-0.056	-0.036	0.092	—		
	df	614	614	614	614	614	614	614	—		
	p-value	0.105	0.650	0.116	0.031	0.168	0.378	0.022	—		
Scenario 2 Response	Pearson's r	0.223	0.132	0.251	0.083	-0.000	-0.038	0.099	0.153	—	
	df	614	614	614	614	614	614	614	614	—	
	p-value	<.001	<.001	<.001	0.040	0.998	0.347	0.014	<.001	—	
Scenario Responses Combined	Pearson's r	0.187	0.097	0.204	0.112	-0.038	-0.048	0.125	0.773	0.745	—
	df	614	614	614	614	614	614	614	614	614	—
	p-value	<.001	0.016	<.001	0.005	0.352	0.231	0.002	<.001	<.001	—

*Regression Analysis*

The regression analyses provide insights into how various demographic and attitudinal predictors influence entrepreneurial motivations related to the reasons for entrepreneurial hustle - learning and knowledge, connections and networking, resources, legitimacy, and opportunities. Each of the models was estimated using a robust sample of 767 respondents.

In examining the motivation of Learning and Knowledge (Table 26), the regression model was statistically significant, but explained a modest amount of variance ( $R^2 = .070$ ). Results indicated significant negative relationships between employment within the health and wellness industry (estimate = -0.288,  $p = 0.003$ ) and Learning and Knowledge motivation, as well as a positive association with Rule Purpose Beliefs (estimate = 0.016,  $p = 0.003$ ). Education level showed a slight positive association (estimate = 0.093,  $p = 0.047$ ), suggesting higher educational attainment corresponds modestly with increased motivation driven by learning. Other demographic factors and entrepreneurial status indicators were not significant predictors.

In assessing Connections and Networking (Table 27), the explanatory power of the regression model was limited ( $R^2 = .021$ ). However, Rule Purpose Beliefs again emerged as significantly positively related (estimate = 0.013,  $p = 0.026$ ), suggesting that Rule Purpose Beliefs, an individual's views of why rules exist, how they are created or persevere, may provide some additional insight into the contextual perceptions in the rule-breaking action. No other predictors reached conventional thresholds of significance, highlighting the nuanced and potentially context-specific nature of networking motivations.

Regarding Resources (Table 28), the model accounted for approximately 4% of variance ( $R^2 = 0.043$ ). Here, Rule Purpose Beliefs demonstrated a notably significant negative relationship (estimate = -0.029,  $p < 0.001$ ) providing more evidence of a contextual apprehension in the

emergence of the ethically-charged rule-breaking action choices of the respondents. Age approached significance as a negative predictor (estimate = -0.075,  $p = 0.054$ ), indicating younger entrepreneurs might slightly prioritize resource-driven motivations more highly than their older counterparts. The other predictors showed negligible and non-significant associations.

The regression model for Legitimacy (Table 29) motivations exhibited limited predictive strength ( $R^2 = 0.021$ ). Nonetheless, Rule Purpose Beliefs significantly and positively predicted legitimacy-based motivations (estimate = 0.015,  $p = 0.014$ ), while employment within the health and wellness industry also positively predicted legitimacy motivations (estimate = .217,  $p = .039$ ). Other predictors, including demographic characteristics, entrepreneurial identity, and scenario exposure, did not display significant associations.

Finally, “hustling” for Opportunities (Table 30) was modestly predicted by the regression model ( $R^2 = .038$ ) where Rule Purpose Beliefs emerged as significantly negatively associated (estimate = -0.014,  $p = .009$ ). Additionally, actual or aspirational entrepreneurship status positively predicted opportunity-driven motivations (estimate = 0.229,  $p = 0.042$ ), suggesting individuals who identify more strongly as entrepreneurs are also motivated by perceived opportunities than their aspirational cohorts. Remaining predictors, including demographic and industry factors, did not significantly contribute to the model.

These findings collectively underscore Rule Purpose Beliefs as a salient cognitive factor across the entrepreneurial Hustle motivational domains, while demographic and industry-related factors showed varying degrees of influence dependent upon specific Hustle “reason-contexts.”

Table 26  
Model Fit Measures

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>
1	0.264	0.0698

Note. Models estimated using sample size of N=767

Model Coefficients - Learning and Knowledge

Predictor	Estimate	SE	t	p
Intercept <sup>a</sup>	4.57319	1.06948	4.276	<.001
Entrepreneurship Actual/Aspire:				
1 – 0	-0.12939	0.11179	-1.157	0.247
2 – 0	0.04660	0.11457	0.407	0.684
Do you work in the health and wellness industry?:				
1 – 0	-0.28789	0.09553	-3.014	0.003
Are you a business owner or entrepreneur?:				
1 – 0	-0.18445	0.10515	-1.754	0.080
RPB	0.01622	0.00544	2.980	0.003
RRB	0.00346	0.00333	1.039	0.299
Gender:				
2 – 3	-0.54575	1.12282	-0.486	0.627
1 – 3	-0.61339	1.05126	-0.583	0.560
0 – 3	-0.86504	1.05275	-0.822	0.412
Education Level	0.09325	0.04692	1.988	0.047
Age	0.06085	0.03188	1.909	0.057
Scenario 1:				
1 – 0	-0.13813	0.08175	-1.690	0.092

<sup>a</sup> Represents reference level

Table 27  
Model Fit Measures

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>
1	0.143	0.0205

Note. Models estimated using sample size of N=767

## Model Coefficients - Connections and Networking

Predictor	Estimate	SE	t	p
Intercept <sup>a</sup>	3.52249	1.11132	3.1696	0.002
RRB	0.00246	0.00346	0.7111	0.477
RPB	0.01262	0.00566	2.2311	0.026
Entrepreneurship Actual/Aspire:				
1 – 0	0.20697	0.11616	1.7817	0.075
2 – 0	0.06374	0.11905	0.5354	0.593
Do you work in the health and wellness industry?:				
1 – 0	0.12128	0.09926	1.2218	0.222
Are you a business owner or entrepreneur?:				
1 – 0	-0.05160	0.10926	-0.4722	0.637
Gender:				
2 – 3	-0.42841	1.16674	-0.3672	0.714
1 – 3	-0.47104	1.09238	-0.4312	0.666
0 – 3	-0.48843	1.09393	-0.4465	0.655
Age	-7.89e-4	0.03312	-0.0238	0.981
Education Level	-0.06404	0.04875	-1.3136	0.189
Scenario 1:				
1 – 0	-0.00730	0.08495	-0.0860	0.932

<sup>a</sup> Represents reference level

Table 28  
Model Fit Measures

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>
1	0.207	0.0428

Note. Models estimated using sample size of N=767

## Model Coefficients - Resources

Predictor	Estimate	SE	t	p
Intercept <sup>a</sup>	2.9573	1.30459	2.2668	0.024
RPB	-0.0293	0.00664	-4.4175	<.001
RRB	-8.21e-4	0.00407	-0.2019	0.840

Model Coefficients - Resources

Predictor	Estimate	SE	t	p
Entrepreneurship Actual/Aspire:				
1 – 0	-0.1124	0.13637	-0.8244	0.410
2 – 0	-0.0242	0.13975	-0.1728	0.863
Do you work in the health and wellness industry?:				
1 – 0	-0.0891	0.11653	-0.7642	0.445
Are you a business owner or entrepreneur?:				
1 – 0	0.0469	0.12826	0.3656	0.715
Gender:				
2 – 3	0.0924	1.36965	0.0675	0.946
1 – 3	0.8057	1.28236	0.6283	0.530
0 – 3	0.8919	1.28418	0.6945	0.488
Age	-0.0749	0.03888	-1.9274	0.054
Education Level	0.0539	0.05723	0.9426	0.346
Scenario 1:				
1 – 0	0.1627	0.09973	1.6314	0.103

<sup>a</sup> Represents reference level

Table 29  
Model Fit Measures

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>
1	0.145	0.0210

Note. Models estimated using sample size of N=767

Model Coefficients - Legitimacy

Predictor	Estimate	SE	t	p
Intercept <sup>a</sup>	0.7235	1.17238	0.617	0.537
RRB	-5.70e-4	0.00366	-0.156	0.876
RPB	0.0148	0.00597	2.474	0.014
Entrepreneurship Actual/Aspire:				
1 – 0	-0.1939	0.12255	-1.582	0.114
2 – 0	-0.2213	0.12559	-1.762	0.078
Do you work in the health and wellness industry?:				
1 – 0	0.2168	0.10472	2.070	0.039

## Model Coefficients - Legitimacy

Predictor	Estimate	SE	t	p
Are you a business owner or entrepreneur?:				
1 – 0	0.0216	0.11527	0.187	0.851
Age	0.0540	0.03494	1.546	0.123
Education Level	-0.0783	0.05143	-1.523	0.128
Scenario 1:				
1 – 0	-0.0476	0.08962	-0.531	0.596
Gender:				
2 – 3	1.4930	1.23085	1.213	0.226
1 – 3	1.0315	1.15241	0.895	0.371
0 – 3	1.0502	1.15404	0.910	0.363

<sup>a</sup> Represents reference level

Table 30  
Model Fit Measures

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>
1	0.196	0.0384

*Note.* Models estimated using sample size of N=767

## Model Coefficients - Opportunities

Predictor	Estimate	SE	t	p
Intercept <sup>a</sup>	3.22356	1.07417	3.001	0.003
RRB	-0.00454	0.00335	-1.355	0.176
RPB	-0.01427	0.00547	-2.610	0.009
Entrepreneurship Actual/Aspire:				
1 – 0	0.22869	0.11228	2.037	0.042
2 – 0	0.13512	0.11507	1.174	0.241
Do you work in the health and wellness industry?:				
1 – 0	0.03889	0.09595	0.405	0.685
Are you a business owner or entrepreneur?:				
1 – 0	0.16755	0.10561	1.587	0.113
Age	-0.03913	0.03202	-1.222	0.222
Education Level	-0.00485	0.04712	-0.103	0.918
Scenario 1:				

Model Coefficients - Opportunities

Predictor	Estimate	SE	t	p
1 – 0	0.03030	0.08211	0.369	0.712
Gender:				
2 – 3	-0.61124	1.12773	-0.542	0.588
1 – 3	-0.75276	1.05586	-0.713	0.476
0 – 3	-0.58861	1.05736	-0.557	0.578

<sup>a</sup> Represents reference level

Table 31 - Descriptives

	Gender	N	Missing	Mean	Median	Sum	SD	Min	Max
Age	3	1	0	2.000	2	2	NaN	2	2
	2	7	0	1.714	2	12	0.756	1	3
	1	483	0	2.834	3	1369	1.299	1	6
	0	276	0	2.830	3.00	781	1.110	1	6
Education Level	3	1	0	3.000	3	3	NaN	3	3
	2	7	0	2.571	3	18	0.787	1	3
	1	483	0	3.037	3	1467	0.816	1	4
	0	276	0	3.018	3.00	833	0.876	1	4
Entrepreneurship Actual/Aspire	3	1	0	1.000	1	1	NaN	1	1
	2	7	0	1.143	1	8	0.900	0	2
	1	483	0	0.685	0	331	0.833	0	2
	0	276	0	0.717	0.00	198	0.827	0	2
Do you work in the health and wellness industry?	3	1	0	1.000	1	1	NaN	1	1
	2	7	0	0.429	0	3	0.535	0	1
	1	483	0	0.576	1	278	0.495	0	1
	0	276	0	0.518	1.00	143	0.501	0	1
Are you a business owner or entrepreneur?	3	1	0	0.000	0	0	NaN	0	0
	2	7	0	0.143	0	1	0.378	0	1
	1	483	0	0.172	0	83	0.378	0	1
	0	276	0	0.228	0.00	63	0.420	0	1
Scenario 1	3	1	0	0.000	0	0	NaN	0	0
	2	7	0	0.857	1	6	0.378	0	1
	1	483	0	0.617	1	298	0.487	0	1
	0	276	0	0.761	1.00	210	0.427	0	1

Table 31 - Descriptives

	Gender	N	Missing	Mean	Median	Sum	SD	Min	Max
Learning and Knowledge	3	1	0	5.000	5	5	NaN	5	5
	2	7	0	4.571	5	32	1.134	2	5
	1	483	0	4.478	5	2163	0.996	1	5
	0	276	0	4.196	5.00	1158	1.184	1	5
Connections and Networking	3	1	0	4.000	4	4	NaN	4	4
	2	7	0	3.429	3	24	0.535	3	4
	1	483	0	3.251	4	1570	1.094	1	5
	0	276	0	3.221	3.00	889	1.095	1	5
Resources	3	1	0	2.000	2	2	NaN	2	2
	2	7	0	2.286	2	16	1.380	1	4
	1	483	0	3.093	3	1494	1.270	1	5
	0	276	0	3.225	3.00	890	1.327	1	5
Legitimacy	3	1	0	1.000	1	1	NaN	1	1
	2	7	0	2.429	2	17	1.272	1	4
	1	483	0	2.002	2	967	1.128	1	5
	0	276	0	1.989	2.00	549	1.186	1	5
Opportunities	3	1	0	3.000	3	3	NaN	3	3
	2	7	0	2.286	2	16	1.380	1	5
	1	483	0	2.176	2	1051	1.004	1	5
	0	276	0	2.370	2.00	654	1.145	1	5

## 5. Discussion – Study One

### 5.1 Research Questions 1-3: CRB, Entrepreneurial Rule-breaking

Ethical decision-making is complex (Chen-Bo Zhong, 2011; Schwartz, 2016). The diverse participation population sample yielded heterogeneous results for the survey. However, the results of this first part of Study One were useful in several ways.

First, in response to the Zhang et al's (2023) request for confirmation of the Constructive Rule Beliefs measurement tool, a confirmatory factor analysis showed that the dual-construct framework had similar, if slightly more reflexive, results than Zhang et al's (2023) original study

showed (Table 33). Thus, confirming that Rule Relativity Beliefs (RRB) and Rule Purpose Beliefs (RPB) are distinct parts to the model.

Testing the structure of the survey measurement tool is important, but the framework's predictive performance of the respondents' rule-breaking tendencies is an integral part of this study. A discussion of each of the initial research questions follows.

Research Question 1: Do people with higher levels of Constructive Rule Beliefs (CRB) show greater willingness to break formal rules? The results of the survey analysis indicate higher levels of CRB, and its component RRB, predict a higher propensity for respondents to choose a rule-breaking action (CRB: Estimate = 0.0466,  $p < 0.001$  between the non-rule breaking and heavy rule-breaking categories), thus confirming Zhang et al's thesis that higher levels of CRB are positively related to rule-breaking actions. The bases of the CRB construct, rule relativity beliefs (RRB) and rule purpose beliefs (RPB) show different contributory power as separate variables in explaining rule-breaking actions, however. RRB has a strong positive relationship with rule breaking actions in Scenario 1 and 2, and subsequently, when the Scenario actions are summed into the combined response variable (Results). RPB, in contrast, does not show a significant relationship with rule-breaking in Scenario 1, where the context possesses more formality and "higher stakes," including elements of legal/illegal implications. The associations with the Scenario 2 action and the Combined action score are significantly positive, but not as strongly as RRB and CRB. The implications for these results are that whilst the combined construct of CRB may have predictive power, it is a person's relative beliefs in how rules apply to them in their contexts that has more influence on rule-breaking behavior than their perception of a rule's *raison d'être*. RPB may be influential in other ways that will be explored during the

discussion of the second part of Study One on the role of Entrepreneurial Hustle in the respondents' rule-breaking actions.

The positive relationship exhibited between higher levels of CRB and breaking rules allows the second research question to build on the first. Entrepreneurs are widely considered to be convention-defiers and rule-breakers (Bacq et al., 2016; Brenkert, 2009; Lucas et al., 2022). Are there cognitive drivers inherent in entrepreneurs that would bias them toward rule-breaking behaviors? Research Question 2a asks: Do entrepreneurs have higher or lower levels of CRB than non-entrepreneurs? Do they view rules differently, in general, than non-entrepreneurs? Zhang et al found that entrepreneurs were more likely to have higher levels of CRB than non-entrepreneurs (2023b). The results of this study do not support this finding. There is no significant correlation between RRB, RPB or CRB and the Reported Entrepreneur variable. This result is similar when viewing the full sample population or the prosocial (Health and Wellness) sub-sample populations separately.

In contrast to the non-confirming results of question 2a, the varied determinants characteristic of ethical decision-making in the entrepreneurial context still indicate that entrepreneurs tend to break the rules (Brenkert, 2009; Lucas et al., 2022). The outcomes of the study speak to the second part of research question 2. Research Question 2b asks, "Do entrepreneurs show greater willingness to break formal rules than non-entrepreneurs?" According to the results of this study, entrepreneurs, irrespective of whether they are prosocial – working in medical or wellness fields - or conventional, have markedly higher odds of choosing a rule-breaking action in either or, especially, both scenarios. Although there was no correlation between CRB and entrepreneurship, there is significant support to the idea that entrepreneurs are rule-breakers, even prosocial entrepreneurs with their high moral portraits (Bacq et al., 2016) and

less-relativistic views of rules – as the next question addresses. What else is driving an entrepreneur, and more germane to this study, prosocial entrepreneurs, to rule-breaking action?

It has been said that (pro)social entrepreneurs have higher moral standards and aim to make communities better (Bacq et al., 2016; Chell et al., 2016; Dey and Steyaert, 2016; Mair and Marti, 2009). As this study has confirmed, when using Zhang et al's measurement tool for Constructive Rule Beliefs (CRB) and, more significantly, the component of Rule Relativity Beliefs, higher levels of CRB and RRB are strongly associated with a higher likelihood of rule-breaking actions. If prosocial individuals, including prosocial entrepreneurs, perceive themselves as part of a community or greater narrative (Dey and Mason, 2018; Ploeg et al., 2022) that they influence and desire to maintain or better, then those people would not view rules in the same way as someone who is not community-minded. One way this perception could manifest is in the perception of rules in relation to themselves, or in the interpretation of the purpose for rules to exist. Prosocial persons and their entrepreneurial counterparts would be less relativistic and individually focused as well as more conservative, even dogmatic with rule purposes. Research question 3a and 3b were pertinent to this idea. In addition to exploring this relationship, this part of the study responds to the call of Zhang et al to apply their CRB framework and measurement tool in areas of formal rule adherence, like the legal or healthcare industries (Zhang et al., 2023a, 2023b).

Research Question 3a asks, “Do persons working in contexts with higher governance and more formalized hybridity where both prosocial and financial missional outcomes are sought - like health and wellness – have higher or lower levels of CRB than those working in contexts with lower governance and less, if any, formal hybridity.” The results of the study show that individuals working in health and wellness, those in prosocial environments, have lower RRB

and CRB scores than their conventional industry peers. The implication is that people who are working for more than their own benefit – possess a prosocial mission, or that participate in an environment that requires stricter adherence to rules for the societal good – have an ethic, or morality, that makes them less likely to be rule-breakers. A reluctance to break rules is counter to the impetus of innovation and the risk-taking, “creative destructionist” mindset it requires (Brenkert, 2009; Lucas et al., 2022; Schumpeter, 1934). The results of the study show that even though people who work in prosocial environments have lower levels of RRB and CRB, implying that they have cognitive drivers that would reduce their likelihood to break rules, there was no significant relationship between being in the prosocial health and wellness industry and choosing to break rules. Furthermore, prosocial entrepreneurs were still found to be rule-breakers with no significant difference, albeit slightly negative, between their levels of RRB, CRB, or rule-breaking action choices than the conventional entrepreneurs. This last finding answers Research Question 3b, “Is there a difference in willingness to break formal rules between prosocial entrepreneurs and conventional entrepreneurs?”

As a narrowly focused aspect of ethical decision-making, rule-breaking actions are still fraught with complexity. This study has shown that Zhang et al’s (2023) framework of Constructive Rule Beliefs does have some explanatory power for how cognitive drivers, especially a person’s belief in how rules are relative to their personal context and their personal perceptions within those contexts, contribute to rule-breaking action. It does not, however, explain the marked difference between the propensity for rule-breaking actions of entrepreneurs and non-entrepreneurs, whether they work in prosocial (health and wellness) environments or not. Study One continued to look for contextual markers, or reasons, for rule-breaking through

the concept of “entrepreneurial hustle” (Fisher et al., 2020). The next section discusses the findings of this section of the surveys.

## **5.2 Research Question 4 – Entrepreneurial Hustle**

Why do prosocial entrepreneurs break rules? The first part of Study One described how individuals with higher levels of RRB and CRB were more likely to choose rule-breaking activities than those with lower levels. But the entrepreneurs taking the survey were more likely to choose to break the rules, regardless of their RRB or CRB levels. Something else must be going on. The second part of Study One was looking at contextual reasons for rule-breaking activity using Fisher et al’s concept of Entrepreneurial Hustle as a framework (2020). Context-dependent theories of ethical, or specifically, rule-breaking behavior are not unique. Brenkert discussed various “competitive contexts” that could elicit a rule breaking action from the entrepreneurs (2009) and many of the EDM theories use some base of contextual-reliance (Chen-Bo Zhong, 2011; Schwartz, 2016). Entrepreneurial hustle as a construct, describes urgent and unorthodox entrepreneurial actions (Fisher et al., 2020). Furthermore, as the qualitative study data will support in the next section, entrepreneurs that break rules are “hustling,” because their actions are “against” the orthodoxy, and it is usually in situations of uncertainty and urgency (Brenkert, 2009; Dey and Steyaert, 2016; Lucas et al., 2022), thus making it a promising framework for attaching contextual-reasoning to the survey data.

Examining the results of the survey, there are answers, though limited, to the research questions for this second section of Study One.

Research Question 4a: Is there a relationship between levels of CRB and certain of the five purposes of entrepreneurial hustle?

Rule purpose beliefs (RPB) was found to be a significant variable in predicting prosocial entrepreneur's reasons for "hustling" in their rule-breaking choice for scenario 2. However, RRB did not have significant associations with any of the entrepreneurial hustle reasons. Two of the hustle categories that are attributable to stronger financial missional goals, Hustle for Resources and Hustle for Opportunities, were found to have statistically significant negative associations with both RPB and CRB – Hustling for Resources and Hustling for Opportunities (RPB: estimate = -0.0299,  $p < 0.001$ , estimate = -0.01399,  $p < 0.011$ , respectively). This result could appear to be counterintuitive, but the goals that can be achieved through rule-breaking in Scenario 2 are not confined to financial benefits. Risk-mitigation, industry and/or peer recognition, were all possible outcomes to consider in breaking the rule in Scenario 2, and the data suggests that the respondents considered more than just the financial benefits of breaking the scenario 2 rule. The other three reasons for hustling were significantly positive for RPB, though none of them have strong coefficient strength (see tables 30 through 34).

Research Question 4b: Is there a relationship between persons working in prosocial contexts – those with both financial and social-focused missions – and choice of the five purposes of entrepreneurial hustle?

Only two of the hustle reasons were significant with respect to health and wellness professional self-reporting. Hustling for learning and knowledge was significantly negative in its relationship (estimate = -0.28434,  $p < 0.003$ ). This is surprising, due to the fact that it was the most commonly chosen as the highest-ranking reason for breaking the rule by the survey respondents (Appendix 2). Legitimacy was strongly positive (estimate = 0.20741,  $p < 0.047$ ). Interestingly, Hustling for Legitimacy was the least selected for the highest-ranking reason for rule-breaking by the survey respondents. Results from the qualitative study show legitimacy as

an important influence on prosocial entrepreneurial rule-breaking, both as deterrent and encouragement. Though the findings in Study One are difficult to interpret without additional insight like those uncovered in Study 2.

Research Question 4c: Is there a relationship between entrepreneurs and/or prosocial entrepreneurs and any of the five purposes of entrepreneurial hustle?

The results of the study did not yield any significant relationships between entrepreneurs, whether they were prosocial or classic, and any of the five purposes of entrepreneurial hustle. The only interesting finding was a significant association between Hustling for Opportunities and “aspiring” entrepreneurs – those that selected “I am planning to in the future” answering their entrepreneurship status when joining the study from Prolific. This could mean that aspiring entrepreneurs, those that do not have experiences related to entrepreneurship, believe that opportunities are scarce, and thus, important reasons for entrepreneurial activity, including rule-breaking. This idea of rule-breaking as a necessity for opportunity is an interesting learning in the qualitative portion of the study as well. This finding may provide a preliminary hint.

Although it was not specified as a research question due to the fact that participants who answered were already “rule-breakers” according to the study, an additional analysis of “heavy” rule breakers was done to discover any significant links to the various hustle reasons and choosing to break the Scenario 1 rule. As the correlation analysis indicated, so too, did the regression analysis. There were no relationships between heavy rule-breakers and their ranking of hustle categories. The findings from the analysis of the data on the entrepreneurial hustle reasons for rule breaking in scenario 2 of the survey were interesting, if not helpful in explaining more about prosocial entrepreneurial rule-breaking. The results showed that RPB was a salient attribute to the “hustle” reasons for the rule-breaking choices, thus the data suggests that a

connection between the way people view the purpose of rules, and the “reasons” for breaking them may exist. The fact that RRB had no significant relationship suggests further efficacy of the CRB framework, and its formative construction, to have explanatory power for rule-breaking behavior, though further study would help develop it better. Unfortunately, this portion of Study One did not help drive conclusions to why prosocial entrepreneurs break rules.

### **5.3 Conclusions**

Study One helped explain some aspects of rule-breaking behavior through the validation of constructive rule beliefs and one of its two contributory factors – rule relativity beliefs – as predictors of the phenomenon for some groups and contexts (Zhang et al., 2023b). However, it fell short in explaining rule-breaking choices for prosocial, as well as, traditional entrepreneurs.

Study One contributed to the extant literature in that it confirmed the efficacy of RRB and CRB as explicative factors in the phenomenon of breaking rules. The study’s refutation of the CRB construct’s ability to explain the propensity for entrepreneurs, especially prosocial entrepreneurs and their “higher” moral principles (Bacq et al., 2016), to choose rule-breaking behaviors also adds quantitative evidence that entrepreneurial rule-breaking decisions are a complex phenomenon. The study further added to the literature in the intriguing findings of RPB, rule purpose beliefs, and its connection to contextual reasoning for rule-breaking decisions. When survey respondents believed that rules required purpose and that the establishment of those rules should be a collaborative, inclusive process, financial-first reasons/motivations were less important.

The findings of Study One also point to opportunities for additional research. Does either the rule-making process or the rule purpose have more effect on the reasons that people, including entrepreneurs, break the rules? Does the concept of Entrepreneurial Hustle and, or, any

of its “reasons” predict rule-breaking behavior in the future? Rather than looking at the Hustle reasons ex post of rule-breaking action, does a preliminary ranking, or consideration of the merits, of Hustle reasons by an individual predict whether they will have higher or lower odds to choose a rule-breaking scenario?

Ultimately, the results of Study One suggest that cognitive drivers, like CRB, are insufficient to explain prosocial entrepreneurial rule-breaking on their own. As part of the sequential explanatory design, a qualitative part of the mixed methods study will help bring more clarity.

## **6. Study Two**

Much of the extant literature on entrepreneurial rule-breaking examines the ethical decision-making through a classic “entrepreneurial action” lens (Alvarez and Barney, 2007; Lucas et al., 2022). Put simply, in this framework, an entrepreneur recognizes, evaluates, and then acts in a rule-breaking or rule-adhering way, based upon the information they have gleaned from the situation, the existing knowledge they possess, and some inherent moral or risk-tolerance proclivities they have accumulated through their socialization and experiences. The initial part of Study One looked at the cognitive drivers of rule-breaking behavior (CRB) and showed that people with certain beliefs about rules, namely, if they perceive them as more relative to themselves or their contexts, are more likely to break them. The results of the study would, to an extent, support an entrepreneurial action framework such as that put forward by Lucas et al (2022). Entrepreneurs, prosocial or otherwise, would act after reasoning through the process with a bias toward their relative perceptions of rules (Kohlberg, 1973; Rest, 1986). However, the study also found that prosocial entrepreneurs chose rule-breaking actions even when their relative beliefs about rules were less than their non-entrepreneur counterparts and not

within a context where a deliberative approach could be explained, specifically, the emergent, time-constrained context of the second scenario in the survey. One implication of this finding is that there is something more driving prosocial entrepreneurs to break rules than a deliberate, rational process (Chen-Bo Zhong, 2011). Subsequently, Study Two, the qualitative study using data from interviews with twenty-eight prosocial entrepreneurs, provided rich insights into this phenomenon and helped build a case for an integrative understanding of the rule-breaking process for prosocial entrepreneurs, where both emotional and deliberative, reasoned, aspects can be included in the explanation (Buchholz and Rosenthal, 2005; Schwartz, 2016).

### **6.1 Study Two: Methodology**

Study Two, the qualitative part of the study, focused on in-depth, guided interviews with twenty-eight prosocial entrepreneurs (Table 34). Social entrepreneurs are heterogeneous. Their environments, backgrounds, motivations, and contexts are all heterogeneous (Shepherd et al 2015), so it can be helpful to have a large, “representative” sample when possible, however, for this study subjects were chosen according to their roles as prosocial entrepreneurs, hence, their “appropriateness” (Glaser and Strauss, 2010) to the research topic. The entrepreneurs were recruited in two ways. An initial cohort of nineteen interviewees were collected through recruitment from the author’s network and their extended network of prosocial, health and wellness entrepreneurs. Nine additional entrepreneurs from the initial Prolific survey study sample population were also recruited as interviewees for their “appropriateness” – healthcare and wellness entrepreneurs. The Prolific platform allows researchers to contact and recruit from a sample population of their previous studies. A constricted filter was applied to the recruitment amongst the health and wellness entrepreneur survey respondents in order to limit the interviews to currently practicing health and wellness entrepreneurs.

The recruited Prolific responders and the author's network-affiliated interviewees signed up for an interview appointment time slot, opting in to be contacted and interviewed with the knowledge that their personal and professional information would remain confidential and secure. Each person provided explicit consent at the time of the interview for the recording and transcription of the interviews for the purpose of the research study.

Though these prosocial entrepreneurs lead primarily "for-profit" businesses, each of the organizations they lead has a minimum of two "missional goals," of which at least one pertains to the "well-being, happiness and prosperity of society" (Bacq et al 2016, pg. 708) in some way. Consistent with the varied industries, the firm sizes, whether measured by revenues, number of employees, or available resources, are also widely heterogenous.

Twenty-seven out of twenty-eight of the interview respondents work in healthcare and wellness industries (table 34), but all of them practice their professions within a context of high regulation and formal rules. In addition to the formal rules set by certifying and governing bodies (e.g. American Medical Association, U.S. Food and Drug Administration), there are "standards of care" established to assure that patients receive base levels of treatment for their health issues. These standards of care can be internalized as part of the prosocial entrepreneur's moral or ethical identity (André and Pache, 2016; Bryant, 2009; York et al., 2016), but because it is "regulated" by a legal intermediary (Lucas et al., 2022), there is a formalized hybridity of their context. This will be an interesting addition to the extant literature and extension of Zhang et al's study (2023a).

Table 34 - Interviews

Id	Date of Interview	Interview Length	Gender	Age	Education Level	Health and Wellness	Is your business/entrepreneurial pursuit your full-time/primary occupation?	How long have you been a business owner/entrepreneur?	Business Size (FTEs)	Non-financial Mission
1	10/3/24	1 hr	Female	45-54	Graduate diploma	Yes	Yes	More than 10 Years	1-5	Patient care
2	10/3/24	1 hr	Female	55-64	Graduate diploma	Yes	Yes	More than 10 Years	1-5	Patient care
3	10/9/24	1 hr	Male	25-34	Graduate diploma	Yes	Yes	1-5 Years	26-50	Patient care
4	10/9/24	1.5 hr	Male	35-44	College Diploma	Yes	Yes	More than 10 Years	50+	Patient care
5	10/10/24	1 hr	Female	55-64	Some college	Yes	Yes	1-5 Years	6-25	Patient care
6	10/15/24	1.25 hr	Male	35-44	College Diploma	Yes	Yes	5-10 Years	1-5	Patient care
7	10/21/24	1.5 hr	Male	35-44	Graduate diploma	Yes	Yes	1-5 Years	26-50	Patient care
8	10/22/24	1 hr	Male	35-44	Graduate diploma	Yes	No	1-5 Years	1-5	Patient care
9	10/28/24	1 hr	Female	45-54	Graduate diploma	Yes	Yes	More than 10 Years	26-50	Patient care
10	11/19/24	1.25 hr	Male	45-54	Some college	Yes	Yes	More than 10 Years	1-5	Patient care
11	12/20/24	1 hr	Male	35-44	High school or equivalent	Yes	Yes	1-5 Years	1-5	Patient care
12	1/3/25	1 hr	Male	45-54	Graduate diploma	Yes	Yes	1-5 Years	6-25	Patient care
13	2/5/25	1.25 hr	Male	35-44	College Diploma	Yes	Yes	1-5 Years	6-25	Patient care
14	2/5/25	1.5 hr	Male	45-54	College Diploma	No	Yes	1-5 Years	1-5	Corporate and Non-profit Diversity, Environmental, Inclusion (DEI) Education
15	2/6/25	1.5 hr	Male	55-64	College Diploma	No	Yes	More than 10 Years	26-50	Responsible Healthcare, Medtech Investment
16	2/6/25	1 hr	Female	35-44	Graduate diploma	Yes	Yes	More than 10 Years	6-25	Patient care
17	2/7/25	1 hr	Male	35-44	College Diploma	Yes	Yes	1-5 Years	1-5	Patient care
18	2/10/25	1.25 hr	Male	45-54	Graduate diploma	Yes	No	5-10 Years	6-25	Patient care
19	2/18/25	1.25 hr	Female	35-44	Graduate diploma	Yes	Yes	5-10 Years	6-25	Patient care
20	2/18/25	1 hr	Male	25-34	Graduate diploma	Yes	Yes	1-5 Years	1-5	Patient care
21	2/18/25	1 hr	Female	45-54	College Diploma	Yes	Yes	More than 10 Years	50+	Patient care
22	2/20/25	1.5 hr	Female	35-44	Graduate diploma	Yes	Yes	More than 10 Years	50+	Patient care
23	2/27/25	1 hr	Female	35-44	Graduate diploma	Yes	Yes	More than 10 Years	50+	Patient care
24	2/28/25	1 hr	Female	35-44	Some college	Yes	Yes	More than 10 Years	26-50	Patient care
25	2/28/25	1 hr	Female	45-54	Graduate diploma	Yes	Yes	More than 10 Years	50+	Patient care
26	3/4/25	1 hr	Female	35-44	Graduate diploma	Yes	Yes	1-5 Years	1-5	Patient care
27	3/12/25	1 hr	Male	45-54	Graduate diploma	Yes	No	1-5 Years	1-5	Patient care
28	6/13/24	2 hr	Male	65+	Graduate diploma	Yes	Yes	More than 10 Years	50+	Patient care

The entrepreneurs were asked to take the research survey prior to the interview. Those entrepreneurs that took the survey during the earlier study were asked to take the survey again, as their responses were anonymized at the time of the original survey and the Prolific user agreements do not allow for de-anonymizing or requesting a respondent's Prolific ID for any reason other than payment. The survey taken by the entrepreneurs included one additional set of five questions meant to assess their levels of "prosociality." As these are prosocial entrepreneurs, the expectation was that they would all have higher levels of prosociality. The scale was developed by Grant and Sumanth and is a widely used tool for assessing this attribute efficiently (2009). The prosocial entrepreneurs were to answer five questions with a standard, 5-point Likert scale (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly Agree). The questions were:

- I get energized by working tasks that have the potential to help others
- I like to work on tasks that have the potential to benefit others.
- I prefer to work on tasks that allow me to have a positive impact on others

- I do my best when I'm working on a task that contributes to the well-being of others
- It is important to me to have the opportunity to use my abilities to benefit others.

The responses confirmed that the interviewees possessed higher levels of prosociality. The range of prosociality scores from the group was 16-25, with a mean score of 22.07. No question received a response lower than "neutral" from the group, with average scores for each question ranging from 4.11 to 4.55. This confirmation of the prosociality of the interviewees provides additional support to the data collected from the interview informants as "prosocial entrepreneurs."

During the interview, the entrepreneurs were asked questions about their responses to the survey, their thought processes and feelings about how and why they answered in certain ways, with special attention paid to their discussions about their election to choose the rule-breaking actions in the vignettes section of the survey. In addition, they were asked about any rule-breaking or ethically-dubious situations they had experienced in their lives and more critically, during their entrepreneurial journeys. These interviews provided rich data for the study to synthesize with the quantitative data into a fuller picture of what could be driving actions of prosocial entrepreneurs in rule-breaking contexts.

The semi-guided interviews yielded 396 pages and 164,000 words of content after their transcription using a combination of Microsoft Teams AI transcription and Otter.ai transcription services.

An inductive approach to the analysis of the interview data was used in accordance with the principles of grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser and Strauss, 2010). Initial analysis included coding keywords, phrases and sentiments from the transcriptions. Coding initially yielded over sixty (60) code categories from the responses. Following a recursive strategy, which

included feedback from advisers trained in both qualitative and quantitative entrepreneurial research and significant review and recoding, the final first level codes revealed twenty-five (25) categories. These twenty-five categories yielded ten themes that contributed to the three drivers of harmony and disharmony between a prosocial entrepreneur's missional pursuits and the hegemonic system governing their actions. These drivers relate to three perceptions by the prosocial entrepreneur – *perception of the efficacy of self and the system*, *perception of the context and its inherent ambiguity*, and *the perception of the harm present and potential within a situation* (see Disharmony Driver Data Structure in Figure 1).

After initial model development and application of the emancipatory entrepreneurship concept, which is discussed in the next section (6.2), additional analysis of the interviews regarding the respondents' answers about their rule-breaking reasoning or broader behaviors, or responses, within the rule-breaking contexts yielded an additional data structure for the elements of rule-breaking intent (see Elements of Rule-breaking Intent Data Structure in figure 2). This data structure helped elucidate the "intent" portion of the Emancipatory Rule-breaking model (see figure 3).

### ***Ethical Considerations***

The qualitative part of the study gathered information through interviews. The data received, including videos, voice recordings and transcripts, all of which may be very personal, were acquired from individuals. Explicit consent was strictly observed and required for both the gathering, analysis, and retention of the data collected from the individuals.

At present, the authors are not customers, service providers, investors, or strategic partners with any of the participants in the study. Should that status change, the authors will bring the information to the proper authority at the universities for adjudication and remediation.

## **6.2 Study Two: Extending Emancipatory Entrepreneurship**

During the interviews with the prosocial entrepreneurs, the complexity of ethical decision-making and the entrepreneurs' belief in contextual importance was pervasive. Additionally, during the review of the transcripts and coding process, several other themes were prevalent in the narratives. Themes of harm, either being inflicted upon the entrepreneurs, or if their actions would cause it, were important. Like traditional entrepreneurs, prosocial entrepreneurs felt frustration with rules as obstacles in their missional pursuits (Baron et al., 2018; Brenkert, 2009; Sundaramurthy et al., 2012). Their internal discourse about their own agency and personal integrity, which was an extremely important part of their ethical and moral decision-making, was also an important theme. As prosocial entrepreneurs, or "good" entrepreneurs, this sentiment is not surprising, but their willingness to break rules, not just in a classic hybrid "uncoupling" during episodes of financial opportunities (Battilana et al., 2015; Battilana and Dorado, 2010; Pache and Santos, 2013), yet also their willingness to break rules in pursuit of societal missions, makes a simple framework of entrepreneurial action extremely complex and less useful in describing the phenomenon of prosocial entrepreneurial rule-breaking. When viewed with an alternative theoretical lens, however, the rule-breaking actions of prosocial entrepreneurs has increased clarity - emancipatory entrepreneurship (Chandra, 2017; Dey and Mason, 2018; Rindova et al., 2009).

The concept of emancipatory entrepreneurship, as articulated by Rindova et al. (2009), highlights entrepreneurship as a practice that actively breaks free from prevailing social, institutional, or economic constraints. Within this theoretical frame, rule-breaking emerges not

merely as a deviant behavior but as an essential practice of freedom—central to the innovative potential and transformative impact of entrepreneurial activity.

In their seminal paper, Rindova et al.'s (2009) framework offered a reconceptualization of entrepreneurship through the lens of emancipation, thus challenging traditional economic definitions centered on opportunity recognition, evaluation and exploitation. The theory proposes that entrepreneurship is not only about creating economic value, but also about breaking free from perceived constraints. Those constraints could be material, institutional, or even, ideological. This conceptual shift positions entrepreneurs as agents of change who act to alter their own circumstances and those of others by pursuing new ventures. When evaluated using this rubric, rule-breaking, in essence, is the ultimate emancipatory action. It is a deliberate discarding of the constraints placed upon the choices and actions of an entrepreneur by a system or hegemony.

Prosocial entrepreneurs engage in rule-breaking not simply to circumvent existing norms but to redefine them, challenging institutional barriers and societal stigmas. As Ruebottom and Toubiana (2020) illustrate, entrepreneurial emancipation frequently involves navigating stigmatized spaces and breaking down established norms through entrepreneurial agency. Such acts of rule-breaking reflect the intrinsic tension identified by Garud, Schildt, and Lant (2014), who demonstrate that entrepreneurial storytelling often paradoxically requires legitimacy-seeking through intentional boundary pushing. Here, rule-breaking emerges not as indiscretion but as a deliberate response aligned with the prosocial entrepreneur's broader narrative and emancipatory objectives.

*"I 100% believe that some rules are meant to be bent. Some rules are meant to be broken. Some rules are baked into too much convention, and they're not relevant to the world we live in today. So to me, rules are ever progressing,*

*and they should be...we should always be looking at them. We should always be asking, are they achieving the outcomes we are trying to achieve? Are they making us live better? And by that, you know, are we living healthier? Are we living more communally? Are we thinking about each other a little bit more, or are rules creating divisiveness? Are they creating hardship?” – Health and Wellness entrepreneur from the study.*

This sentiment is common amongst the prosocial entrepreneurs that were interviewed, though it is amongst the most fervent and poignant in its expression. The expression covers the three core elements of emancipatory entrepreneurship as defined by Rindova, Barry, and Ketchen (2009). The elements include seeking autonomy, where an entrepreneur acts to liberate themselves from the hierarchical or structural constraints of the hegemony, authoring new ventures, in which the entrepreneur uses the ventures they create to enact their own values, visions or identities, and lastly, declaring change, when the entrepreneur communicates and asserts new ways of organizing, being and doing through their new ventures. When the prosocial entrepreneur interviewee asks if the hegemonic rules “are..achieving the outcomes we are trying to achieve,” they are expressing a desire for the rules to align with their desired outcomes. If this is not happening, rule-breaking may be a way to pursue those outcomes. They “seek the autonomy” of their own actions in the face of the system and its guidelines. The respondent is “authoring” when they prescribe what outcomes they are pursuing (in this case, “living healthier...more communally”). The prosocial entrepreneur communicates how things should be - “declares change” – stating, “to me, rules are ever progressing, and they should be...we should always be looking at them. We should always be asking, are they achieving the outcomes we are trying to achieve?”

Interestingly, the interviewee did not pursue entrepreneurship as his full-time employment, nor did this entrepreneur choose the rule-breaking action in both scenarios (“heavy

rule-breaker”) of the survey. They chose the rule-breaking action in the less-formalized context of “sneaking into” the conference seminar. Even someone as strident in their beliefs about how rule-making and breaking must co-exist and coordinate does not always choose a rule-breaking action. Prosocial entrepreneurs are a diverse group – just as their traditional entrepreneurial cohorts (Bacq and Janssen, 2011; Pidduck and Tucker, 2022).

### **6.3 Study Two: Data Structures and Model Introduction**

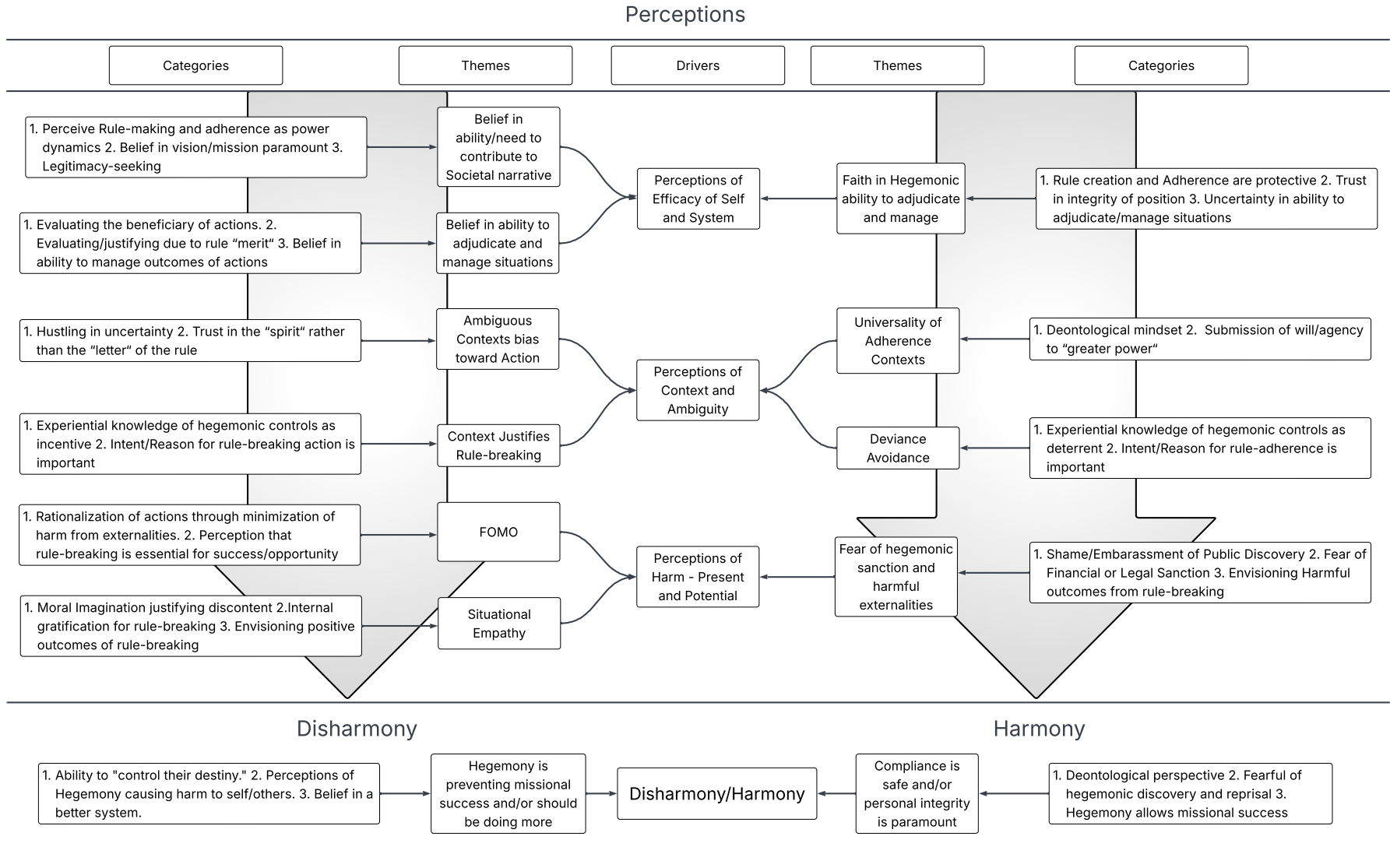
Prosocial entrepreneurs’ backgrounds, experiences and perspectives are heterogenous. The prosocial entrepreneurs interviewed each took the CRB survey prior to the interview as part of the discussion. Their RRB, RPB and CRB scores, as well as their choices for rule-breaking actions were across the spectrum. Though their mean CRB scores were lower than the standard, non-health and wellness respondents in the initial Study One, the results were not statistically significant. Neither was there a significant relationship between the interviewees’ CRB scores and their willingness to choose the rule-breaking actions. The small sample size was, likely, a contributor to the lack of significant, consistent, results with the broader survey. However, the interviews offered the insights, especially when viewed through the lens of emancipatory practice, that helped further explain why, and when, prosocial entrepreneurs break rules. The interviews suggested that disharmony between the missional pursuits of the prosocial entrepreneur and the requirements, control and governance of the hegemonic system elicits rule-breaking emancipatory action from the entrepreneur. Furthermore, it suggested a “why,” or better defined as an “intent,” for the rule-breaking actions (see figure 2).

When a prosocial entrepreneur reaches a certain level of disharmony with the hegemony within a rule-breaking context, they may “respond” and choose to break that rule at that time. If

they have not met their threshold, they are likely to respond by choosing rule-adherence over rule-breaking during the same scenario. This disharmony is analogous to the situation where some entrepreneurs are willing to act unethically when under strain (De Clercq and Dakhli, 2009). Sometimes, a specific rule-breaking situation will always illicit a rule-breaking response due to the divergence of the hegemonic expectations from the entrepreneur's missional aims, and vice versa – certain scenarios will always illicit a rule-adherent response (see figure 3).

Figure 1

## Prosocial Entrepreneur/Hegemonic Missional Harmony Drivers



### ***6.3.1 Harmony/Disharmony Factors***

The data's first level categories revealed the heterogenous and often heterodox views that prosocial entrepreneurs have when confronted with rule-breaking contexts. Their morality and ethical decision-making response is, in essence, a result of their perceptions and belief in the adequacy of the hegemony to provide what they need to pursue their missions, whether it is causing harm to self or others, and their internal beliefs in whether they would be better suited to pursue their missions on their own terms.

The second level codes reveal themes that interpret the prosocial entrepreneurs' level of harmony or disharmony with the hegemonic system. If there is trust in the hegemonic system, or trust in the individuals' compliant positional integrity, then the prosocial entrepreneur is unlikely to choose a rule-breaking action due to disharmony. They would rather adhere to the rules in that context, because there is either harmony with their missional goals and compliance provides the outcomes desired, or, their belief that their personal integrity will be satisfied. In contrast, if the prosocial entrepreneur perceives the hegemony as preventing his/her missional success, or more acutely, harming society, their level of disharmony may reach a level that drives them to a rule-breaking action (see Figures 1 and 3).

The third level codes describe the drivers of harmony and disharmony between prosocial entrepreneurial missions and the hegemony. These drivers are the prosocial entrepreneurs' perceptions of the efficacy of themselves and the system, their perceptions of the context and its ambiguity, and their perceptions of present and/or potential harm, which would include themselves, their mission, or "others."

A primary caveat to rule-breaking for each of the interviewees, however, was whether or not the rule-breaking response caused harm to others. When imagining potential harm in the

various rule-breaking contexts, the entrepreneurs would look at the externalities as well as the internal harm that the hegemonic system was eliciting. Even when the entrepreneur was perceiving harm to themselves, they would refrain from the action if it was likely to cause harm to someone or something, else.

As posited earlier, prosocial entrepreneurs experience disharmony with the hegemonic system across a spectrum. The level of disharmony between their missional quests and the ability for the hegemony to “provide what they need” to pursue them dictates whether the prosocial entrepreneur chooses a rule-breaking action during discrete situations. There is no specific level at which an entrepreneur’s disharmony triggers an emancipatory response action. Often, their perceptions of the situation can be different from day to day. One entrepreneur, who works with women in the area of fertility care, gives an example of this when discussing her response to one of the rule-breaking scenarios in the survey:

*“[Breaking the rule] ...depends on the factors of anonymity and how imposter I feel at the conference already. But, if I feel like...these people all know what they're doing. I ain't going near that session at all, right? 'Cause I already question my value and purpose of like being at the conference at all. And I think that that would depend on so many other...factors, how I feel that day. What's going on in my life? What my vibe and relationship has been to people at the conference so far. So, there's a lot... I think it depends there that would make things like getting kicked out feel either like terrifying or just like no big deal...”*

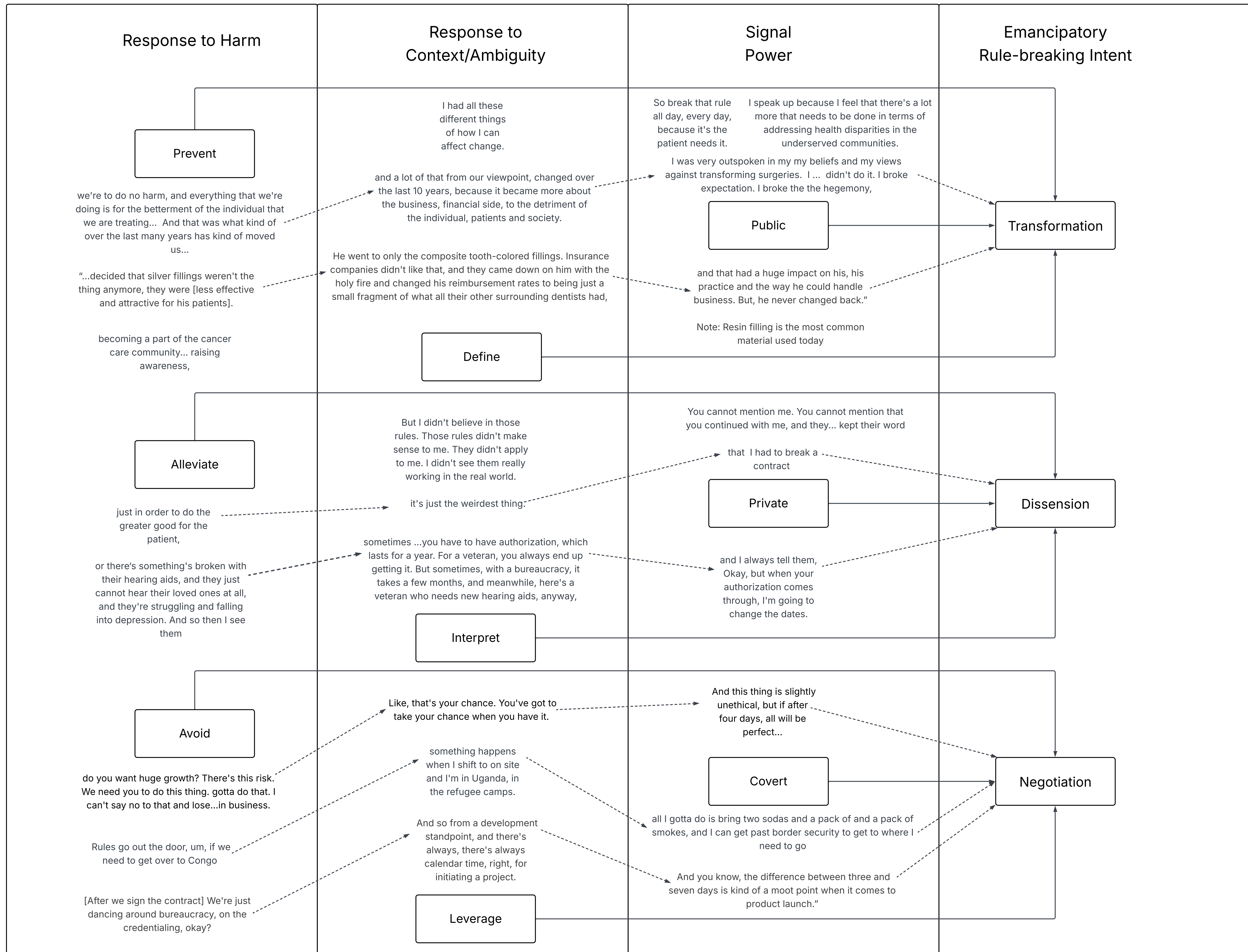
Here the entrepreneur is telling us that her perceptions of the situation within her present, broader, context can drive her response from rule-adherence to rule-breaking. She is describing an “inherent sensitivity” that can include numerous variables, including the prosocial entrepreneur’s Constructive Rule Beliefs or their temporal “mood” as the respondent intimates in

the quote above, “would depend on so many other...factors....” This inherent sensitivity loosens or tightens the “coil” of an entrepreneur’s disharmony scale. Those with higher CRB may have “pre-tightened” coils, allowing for the rule-breaking response to a context more likely. The inherent sensitivity in the model could also be caused by strains the prosocial entrepreneur is under at the time (De Clercq and Dakhli, 2009).

We also see the three drivers within the harmony/disharmony scale in her response. Her perception of her self-efficacy is illustrated in her comments about “how imposter I feel...’Cause I already question my value...” The context and the inherent ambiguity of the situation driver is exemplified in her sentiments speaking about questioning her “purpose” for being at the conference and whether or not there is anonymity in the session, or if she has established a “vibe and relationship” with people at the conference. Finally, she imagines potential harm in the outcomes and the level it may or may not inflict upon her – “terrifying or no big deal.” Each of these drivers dictates the disharmony that she has with the hegemonic system, driving her response toward one of emancipatory rule-breaking action, or the acquiescence of rule-adherence.

Figure 2

### Elements of Emancipatory Rule-breaking Intent



Structure and Reprtentative Quotes

### ***6.3.2 Rule-breaking Intent***

Additionally, as the review of the data and coding iterations progressed, an additional aspect of the informants' narratives was recognized in relation to the concepts of emancipatory entrepreneurship and other provocative theories of practice found in the adjacent literature (Dey and Mason, 2018; Dey and Steyaert, 2016; Karlsson, 2025). Dey and Mason's (2018) exploration of "activist entrepreneuring," takes the form of disruptive truth-telling. Arguing that this practice enables the creation of alternative "possible worlds," thus aligning with the emancipatory objective of overcoming entrenched social and cognitive constraints, which in this study manifests as rule-breaking. Creating narratives at the individual, relational, and societal level was an essential part of Laine and Kibler's (2022) discourse on emancipatory entrepreneurship and the "social imaginary." They described how three different stories exemplify three ideal types of the "social imaginary of emancipatory practice." The authors see emancipatory practices that "strengthen, undermine, and shape" the social imaginary.

The prosocial entrepreneurs in this study all have at least two missions. One of which is focused on increasing social outcomes. Most of them were in the health and wellness fields, which meant bettering the quality of their patients', customers' lives through care outcomes or ongoing treatment, or community engagement. All of them discussed their desires to do their best for their patients or customers, but often they were confounded by rules that stopped them from pursuing those missions. Reviewing the interview data and borrowing from the concepts of "disruptive truth-telling" and the "social imaginary" yielded a novel interpretation of prosocial entrepreneurial rule-breaking *intent*, their reasons "why."

As this part of the investigation did not require analysis of rule-adherence, the informants' narratives that discussed reasoning for, and actions of, rule-breaking were reviewed

again. Three rule-breaking intents, each with three elements, emerged from the data. Two of the elements were responses to two drivers of disharmony. They were *responses to harm* and *responses to the ambiguity of the context*. The final element of the rule-breaking intent was the *signal power* of the rule-breaking action. Representative quotations and notes for the nine elements are in their corresponding discussion sections and Figure 2.

The entrepreneur's rule-breaking rationale, their emancipatory intent, falls into three categories - *negotiation, dissension, and transformation*. These categories have three elements to them. The prosocial entrepreneur responds to their perception of harm in three ways – *avoidance, alleviation, and prevention*. They respond to the ambiguity inherent in the situational context by *leveraging it, interpreting it, or defining it*, depending upon the intent of the rule-breaking action. The signal power of the rule-breaking action can be *covert*, where no one but the entrepreneur is aware of the rule-breaking action. It can be *private*, when a prosocial entrepreneur is breaking a rule, but those involved in the action, like a patient or team, are also aware of the activity and are, often, the recipients of the benefits. This signal often “leaks” to others, including the authorities, but their awareness was not the end-goal of the rule-breaking action. *Public* signal power is where the entrepreneur's rule-breaking action is obvious to many, even the hegemony or governing bodies. The combination of these elements define the emancipatory rule-breaking intent of the prosocial entrepreneur (Figure 2).

## **7. Discussion Study Two**

### **7.1 Harmony/Disharmony Data**

This section describes the harmony and disharmony drivers, themes and categories found in the data in further detail.

The twenty-five categories and ten themes that came from the interview coding are each important to the discussion of the harmony/disharmony drivers and are expanded upon in the next sections. Prosocial entrepreneurs have admirable moral portraits (Bacq et al., 2016; Kohlberg, 1973) and this study has already shown that members of prosocial populations view rules in a stricter sense than their counterparts, so the first section looks at how the harmony/disharmony drivers are influenced toward “harmony.” As this study’s focus is on the phenomenon of rule-breaking, a majority of the discussion will focus on the categories and themes that are part of the drivers of disharmony in the subsequent sections, and will conclude with the findings on emancipatory rule-breaking intent.

#### **7.1.1 Harmony Themes**

Many of the categories found in the harmony driver data are adjacent to the traits of “upstanding” morals and behavior. Belief in the system, or a “higher power” that understands the greater, societal, good, or integrity and truthfulness regardless of context, are considered admirable parts of a person’s character. As stated earlier, an entrepreneur’s harmony with the system is advantageous in numerous ways (Lucas et al., 2022; Wennberg et al., 2016). Most of these advantages are risk-mitigating, but can extend to relational efficiencies in situations where informal controls are easier to establish if the parties understand they are working with people of integrity and truthfulness (Gil and Zanarone, 2017; Jensen and Meckling, 1976). When entrepreneurs understand the context in which they are working is conducive toward their own

missional goals, there is harmony with the hegemony and rule-breaking is counter-productive. There is no need to “break free” when there is a lack of perceived constraints.

The data in this study also suggests that even in situations where there is harm or the prospect of harm to the entrepreneur, their moral position, their integrity and code of conduct has a hegemony-harmonizing effect, keeping their responses to certain contexts rule-adherent, rather than rule-breaking. The constraints they feel are self-imposed, self-regulating (Bandura, 1997b; Bryant, 2009) and, subsequently, they do not require emancipatory rule-breaking actions. This section discusses the categories and themes found in the data that contribute to drivers of harmony in prosocial entrepreneurs. The themes include faith in the hegemonic ability to adjudicate and manage situations, universality of rule-adherence contexts, deviance avoidance, and fear of hegemonic sanction and harmful externalities (see Figure 1). Representative quotes are included in the discussion sections as well as in corresponding tables.

#### ***7.1.1.a Theme: Faith in Hegemonic ability to adjudicate and manage outcomes***

The interviews provide data showing how the prosocial entrepreneurs had faith in the systems, communities and ideologies in which they operate. This “faith” in the hegemony provides a harmonizing effect and lowers the likelihood of an emancipatory rule-breaking response from the entrepreneur.

Prosocial entrepreneurs that chose compliance in the rule-breaking scenarios often cited the benefits of rules. Their belief in rules as protective. This aligns with classic ideas that entrepreneurship prefers well-defined, consistently-governed and enforced rules for doing business (Lucas et al., 2022; Wennberg et al., 2016). Prosocial entrepreneurs also see it in more general terms. Rules protect everyone, especially, from harm. One of the informants, a consultant

that practices in the area of multicultural engagement, primarily in health and social service organizations used two thoughtful analogies describing his view.

*“A child who is three, **does not have the faculty to understand the benefit or cost** of ice cream at 9pm or ice cream multiple times a day, and so, because they do not have what it takes to be able to form a rule about ice cream consumption, they should not be allowed to write the definitive law or rule about ice cream. Then who should...? [It] **should be someone like a guardian who has that child's very best interest in mind**....yeah, there are people who should not be making laws, right? If, if you love eating your neighbor's apples without permission, you should not be writing [laws]. And if you have done it, if you have done it repeatedly and caused harm, ...the right to make apple eating rules should probably be restricted in some calculated way, with some kind of redemptive plan for you.”*

The analogies may focus on food consumption, but the sentiment is that “rules are important” and “exist for a reason,” as several entrepreneurs interviewed stated. A further implication is that people who defy the rules may not be in a position – or have the ability - to make judgements about whether a rule has merit, or applies to them, including the prosocial entrepreneur.

Another category that came from the data was the trust the prosocial entrepreneur had in their positional integrity. They believed that by being truthful, or acting within the constraints of rule-adherence, the system would be able to provide a way for them to succeed in their missional goals. Breaking the rule is not necessary.

*“I feel like..**there are many ways** to skin the cat, like I would probably text the vendor and say, ‘Hey, can you get me in this panel? Can you call the powers that be? Can you, you know, get me a ticket.’ Or maybe, if you really feel like you could scale your business significantly, go up to the registration desk and*

*say, 'Hey, can I buy a ticket to this breakout session?' I feel like there may be, it may not just be either A or B, but **there could be creative ways to still get the information**...a lot of conferences [provide a way] you can purchase the digital copy afterwards of all the sessions, all the breakouts."*

Beyond protection, rule adherence can be affirming and reinforcing of trust in the hegemony. Using their moral imagination, where an individual envisions webs of moral content within the varying contexts they experience (Kohlberg, 1973; McVea, 2009; Reynolds, 2006), a wellness studio owner explains one reason for not choosing the rule-breaking action in the survey's scenario 1 is this affirmation of "doing it the right way":

*"let's say you did end up getting a job after being honest, you still got the job. You negotiated. You worked hard at saying, look, we're really close. This is the value that we bring. And I know it's like, you know, we're just a couple days before we complete our SOC... And, let's say you end up getting [the contract], **you're going to feel even that much better, right?**"*

In contrast to this, we will see in later sections how affirming the act of rule-breaking, due to disharmony between the hegemonic system and the entrepreneur's mission, can be to the entrepreneur, creating the intent for further rule-breaking responses within similar contexts.

Another prosocial entrepreneur explains how trusting in their integrity, resisting the urge to break the rule in a high-risk situation, like scenario 1 in the survey, can be rewarded as well.

*"[I] think the big, the big one for me on this is, you know, like, documentation, right? This could probably be followed back, if somebody want to look at the records and kind of dig into it, they could see that my contract with that company was signed before I got the, you know, the accreditation or the approval from the organization. And I think that would kind of create more issues than it would solve, **especially when you know opportunities always, you know, I do believe that opportunity, more opportunities, always come up***

*right in you know, while you may not, you know, you may lose out on this one, right there's a chance to get it again in the future, especially when you have that accreditation.”*

The data showed how prosocial entrepreneurs often perceived the efficacy of the hegemonic system as adequate, even conducive, to provide for their missional pursuits and successful outcomes. Within this framework, we see how this promotes harmony between the hegemony and prosocial entrepreneurs' missions, reducing the likelihood of rule-breaking, emancipatory responses.

The next two sections elaborate on the two themes that contribute the harmony driver of perception of the context and ambiguity inherent in situations. They involve the universality of adherence contexts and deviance avoidance.

#### ***7.1.1.b Theme: Universality of adherence context***

Study One showed that prosocial practitioners had lower levels of constructive rule beliefs (Zhang et al., 2023b). In particular, health and wellness workers possessed a lower rule relativity belief score (Zhang et al., 2023b), meaning, they were less likely to view rules in a relative way. The study also found evidence that these lower scores led to lower instances of rule-breaking activity. The qualitative study supports Study One in several sections. This theme, notably, lends credence, as the data shows how many of the prosocial entrepreneurs held views that rule adherence transcended context. Interpretation was universal, not relative.

*“...because I value transparency, full transparency, and by making, by signing, I am intrinsically communicating a non-truth. I'm misrepresenting my reality. And so number one for my personal self, level of self-respect, the way I want to carry myself and my accountability to myself. I don't want to do that. I don't want to represent that I am, or have, what I am not, or don't have.”*

This deontological position was common amongst many of the prosocial entrepreneurs. The interview respondent quoted above was describing one aspect of an overall integrity in position from which he claimed he would not waver, “[I] tend to be in all things that I do...try to think of the moral way of doing it.” Though it was not uncommon for the informants to describe their perceptions of the context with language of morality and ethics, some were much more succinct – “a rule is a rule. Like if a company sets a rule, you gotta follow the rule!” In addition to a deontological position, belief that the entrepreneurs were subject to a “higher” power, also influenced the entrepreneurs’ perception of the context and its ambiguity. Religious or spiritual beliefs were important bases, rubrics, for context interpretation and adherence.

*“My brother and I both come from a Judeo-Christian background, from a moral and ethical standpoint that does have significant, you know, impact on the way that we view [morally sensitive situations].”*

*“That’s a bad karma in my opinion...Yeah. ‘cause...that’s something that really could get you caught up... I’m pretty much, I’m on the straight and narrow as far as a lot of that goes, ‘cause I don’t...I don’t want to have it come back on me.”*

#### **7.1.1.c Theme: Deviance avoidance**

A belief in universality of rule-adherence contexts was not the only element contributing how the prosocial entrepreneurs perceived their contexts and its ambiguity. The data described how some of the entrepreneurs simply avoided deviance. Their experiential knowledge, or the reasons/intent with which they adhere to rules were important to their perception of their context. It allowed them to have greater harmony with the system, because they simply do not wish to engage with the context in a deviant way. A dental practice owner, discusses this lack of willingness to engage in interpretation of the rule-breaking/rule-adherence contexts, preferring to

stay in harmony with the authorities “complacently” even when there are rules that are “stupid.”

He explains:

*“Like I said, I'm kind of a complacent rule follower when it comes to those things. But there's, there's certain procedures, things like that, that my auxiliaries have 100% skill to perform. Almost every state allows them, except for the state of Minnesota doesn't, and it's those times where it's just like, well, nobody will know if we just move it forward this way and help the efficiency of the office, but I still kind of cave and follow rules the way they're supposed to be. Some of those examples are like the digital scans that we take in people's mouths, and an auxiliary can take any scan, except for a final impression. So, the very last couple seconds of like a crown preparation, things like that, it has to be me that holds the camera, that shows the final preparation. My wand waving skills are no better than anybody else in my office, and the input that a computer gets is no better or different when I do it versus somebody else. **But the rules are there, and we're kind of stuck following them.**”*

The dental entrepreneur explained that this rule-adherence “complacency” was not, necessarily, rooted in a fear of sanction, which is a theme discussed later. It was simply “easier to just do it” – meaning, avoid the deviance.

An audiologist’s experiential knowledge provides him with perspectives of various contexts where deviance should be avoided, but not for the potential sanctions or shame that could come from discovery. For him, it is something else:

*“[Its] experience, you know, you touch the fire and it's hot, you learn not to touch it again. I've been in this. I've been in situations where people have... asked me to push things, and I've said, well, we don't have [what you are promising the customer] and like, well, [they say] ‘we should be okay.’ I've been on both sides of that coin, where it's worked out fine and where it's not*

*worked out fine. And where it's not worked out fine, it's not so much the moral aspect of it for me, as much as the amount of work it creates for everybody involved."*

This entrepreneur avoids deviance, because his experience informs him of the potential for additional work if rule-breaking is not successful. There is an additional driver intimidated by his story, a perception of harm present, or potential, in the situation. For him, that harm is added work for him and his team. This final section reviewing the categories and themes that drive harmony between the prosocial entrepreneurial mission and the hegemony examines how fear of hegemonic sanctions or harmful outcomes or externalities contribute to perceptions of harm.

#### ***7.1.1.d Theme: Fear of hegemonic sanction and harmful externalities***

Traditional entrepreneurs are boundary-pushers, risk-takers, rule-breakers (Arend, 2016; Brenkert, 2009; Schumpeter, 1934). Study One suggest that prosocial entrepreneurs are no different. However, the data from the interviews reveals some themes where their perception of harm drives them to harmony within systems and responses of rule-adherence, rather than the emancipation from constraints through rule-breaking. Community shame/embarrassment at being discovered in conjunction with a fear of financial or legal sanction are the internally-focused deterrent themes. Whereas, the data shows how a prosocial entrepreneur's vision of potential harmful outcomes, especially to others, from a rule-breaking response, describes the external deterrents.

Prosocial entrepreneurs have at least two missions. In addition to the financial missions, there is a prosocial mission, a mission to improve the lives of others, their society, their communities (Bacq et al., 2016; Battilana and Dorado, 2010; Chandra, 2017; Haugh, 2007; Ploeg et al., 2022). Because of this, prosocial entrepreneurs are, often, mindful of their social standing

and social capital (Amin et al., 2002; Bacq et al., 2016). Their standards of care and community outcomes are legitimizing and reinforce their ability to marshal resources and continue to pursue their missional aims (Delmar and Shane, 2004; Garud et al., 2014). Subsequently, a strong “harmonizing” theme is the social entrepreneur’s fear of the shame or embarrassment of public discovery of being unethical, or contrary to their moral portrait. When discussing why he would not choose to break the rule in the survey scenario 2, a medical technology device entrepreneur said,

*“Probably pride more than anything else, because... my fear of being called out. If they did a roll call or something, and, you know, I should not have been in there ... it would, **it would probably knock me back a couple steps as far as my progression** in my mind about what I need to do [for my firm’s success]”*

More interviewees mentioned similar fears of embarrassment when explaining their reticence to choose the rule-breaking action in the second scenario of the survey, making statements like “I don’t want to embarrass myself. I don’t want to put myself in the spotlight for being dishonest...” or, “the embarrassment of...disrupting everybody else...I’m not a wedding crasher.” The most poignant explanation of how perception of others, like the community, is important to some prosocial entrepreneurs, came from a plastic surgeon who had recently launched his medical spa.

*“I think somebody would see my past, **and I just never want myself to be viewed as someone unethical, too, because I would want them to know that I’m going to do what I say...what I set out to do, and that, like, ethics is very important to me. And so, I wouldn’t want somebody that did pay for the conference, or was on the list, and then see that my guest pass wasn’t like somebody who wasn’t supposed to be there, and then they somehow think that that says something about my character...**”*

The embarrassment, or shame, felt by the informants could be the result of public actions by the authorities, communities, or governing bodies through various channels (Lucas et al., 2022; Piazza et al., 2023). This could include rating sites, community forums on platforms like Reddit, or a more formal “shaming” through notice to the Better Business Bureau, amongst others. As important as their reputation is, the most obvious action the hegemonic governance can levy against rule-defying entrepreneurs is financial and legal sanction. For the prosocial entrepreneur interview participants, fear of these sanctions were the most effective harmonizing elements amongst the perception of harm drivers.

The study’s research survey included two rule-breaking scenarios. The first scenario was meant to test high-formality contexts. There is legal documentation, technical wording, and a very high-risk and high-reward for the health and wellness entrepreneurs who choose the rule-breaking action. Where social deterrents like public embarrassment were important to scenario 2, fear of hegemonic sanction was important in scenario 1. As entrepreneurs that work in highly formal environments, with licensing and laws that define a large portion of how they are supposed to act and work, their fear is understandable. The data tells us that these entrepreneurs perceived the harm that could be done by the hegemony as existential. Elucidated by quotes such as these:

*“if you're going to break a rule, you better not have, like, a smoking gun. And this, to me, the circumstances of that scenario where, like, there is a smoking gun out there, and it could come back to bite you. And, so no matter how good the contract is, the risk didn't seem to warrant making that step.”*

*“if there was something that came back and it was found out that you lied on these [documents], it would just have a much bigger impact, ultimately, on the business and possibly for yourself. So, its just that. That was the part of*

*the stress, if I had to make a decision like that for my business, it would seem like too great a cost.”*

Or, when perceiving the potential harm of breaking rules in their practices, many of them could not consider even small rule-breaking responses for their perceived potential harm.

An important ethical consideration for US healthcare entrepreneurs is coding procedures clearly for medical insurance reimbursement. For this informant, a clinical psychologist practice owner, the difference between two session lengths is considerable remuneration from the insurance company. When sessions end at incongruous times, however, she needs to decide how to report it – as a long session or a short one.

*“It’s been tricky, because there are times that I’ve done both, so where I’ve been like, ‘Nope, I’m just going to do it for the shorter time.’ And then, there’s times where I’ve said, ‘I’m going to do it for the longer one, because this is the time that was booked’. And I think one of the things that has run through my mind, because I know... does the insurance company really care? I’m really small potatoes, so if I were doing anything that was wrong, would they get very much from me at all? That’s one side of my thought in my head. Then the other thing is, like, at any time they could audit, they can just do random audits. And I would never want to be in a position where, where then it came out, like I could lose my business for it. And they do want to see that there’s a diversity of codes that we end up using, even though almost all of my people truly come in for a full hour...”*

Her perception of potential harm usually “harmonizes” her mission with the hegemony. Note where she says that most of her patients come in for an hour, but because the insurance company can audit her, and they prefer to see a variance in codes, she codes “conservatively” when there is an incongruous time in the session.

Finally, the data from the interviews illustrated how prosocial entrepreneurs perceived potential harm by envisioning harmful outcomes or externalities from rule-breaking responses, thus tempering any disharmony that may arise from the initial context that could have led to rule-breaking response moves back toward harmony level conducive to a rule-adherence response. These following quotes describe situations where these entrepreneurs experience situations where they could be experiencing disharmony with the system. Both of these entrepreneurs are in health/medical technology markets. They have opportunities that can move their companies forward, but are constrained by rules. The first quotation describes how the entrepreneur could have sold user information to advertisers, providing valuable growth to his company, but envisioning how the deal could hurt his customers, his disharmony ebbs.

*“It felt like betrayal, and also a breach of policy and standard even though we could strike the deal without the users knowing of it. Generally, **rule breaking should not be harmful**, that's in my opinion.”*

*“No, **I don't believe in breaking a rule where you're stealing**. I don't believe in breaking a rule **where you're misleading**. You know, ... as a company... we have to be very careful about the claims we make based on FDA approval, and things like that, and I get asked, I get asked to push the boundary of our language. Sometimes I'm willing to push those boundaries so far as we don't mislead or share any incorrect information. If we want to use a word that's a little more theatrical than a different word, but it's not over promising, I'm okay with that. But the minute it starts to set an unrealistic expectation? That I'm not okay with. Why? **Because that hurts [people]!**”*

Unlike selling customer data, perceptions of harm can include less direct activity. They can include misleading or unfounded information, like the interviewee above describes.

Ultimately, in these situations, these prosocial entrepreneurs do not feel disharmony with the hegemony to a level that would precipitate a rule-breaking response. Harming others, is a “harmonizing” thought for them. The paradoxical concept that is reconcilable in the data.

The prosocial entrepreneurs interviewed in this study strive to deliver on their multi-missional pursuits. Often, one or more of these missions can be at odds with the rules set by the authorities, but this section of the study looked at how this dynamic, the harmony between the missional pursuits of the entrepreneur and the hegemony, converges rather than diverges. The next section examines how the data explains the drivers of disharmony.

### **7.1.2 Disharmony Drivers and Themes**

The previous section discussed the categories, themes, and drivers that influence the prosocial entrepreneur toward a harmony with the hegemonic system and a response of rule-adherence. The data from the interviews supported previous insights that prosocial entrepreneurs possess high moral character, but this study has shown that these entrepreneurs are still innovators and rule-breakers. The interviewees provided numerable responses that help support the theory that they practice their desire for freedom in pursuit of their missional goals through rule-breaking (see Figure 1) as a response to the disharmony they experience.

#### **7.1.2.1 Driver: Perception of the Efficacy of Self and the System**

Liu and Zhao (2023) investigated prosocial rule-breaking behavior (PSRB) inside a sample of Chinese organizations. Their aim was to understand if employees that broke rules for the benefit of the organization are more likely to become entrepreneurs. Combining Brenkert’s (2009) construct of a virtues-based rule-breaking ethic with expectancy framework (Vroom, 1964) the authors found that younger employees, with high levels of self-efficacy, were the only

conditions that supported their hypothesis that employees committing prosocial rule-breaking would have higher likelihood of entrepreneurial intentions. Their findings that self-efficacy was important to entrepreneurial intent supports the data in this study, as well. The employees believed in their ability to achieve their goals. Entrepreneurship was perceived as an avenue in their goal pursuits. Prosocial rule-breaking behavior is not, necessarily, part of the entrepreneurial make-up, but perceptions of self-efficacy do appear to be important. This is not just in rule-breaking situations, but in their moral awareness – their ability to know when moral issues are present (Bryant, 2009; McVea, 2009; Reynolds, 2006). We see in the interview data how this affects the prosocial entrepreneurs' disharmony and desire for rule-breaking emancipation. The pursuit of their goals and belief in their ability to achieve them, even in opposition to the system.

The themes found in the disharmony drivers include the prosocial entrepreneur's *belief in their ability and need to contribute to the societal narrative*. This touches on the idea of authoring and declaring in the emancipatory entrepreneurship framework, yet the concept is slightly "higher" than that. There is a belief, by the entrepreneur, that they can, and should, help "write the rules" not just for themselves, but for others. In the second theme for this disharmony driver, *belief in ability to adjudicate and manage situations*, the perception is more confined to their personal interactions and contexts. The prosocial entrepreneur believes that they have the right and freedom to evaluate the people that benefit from their actions, or whether a rule has merit. Furthermore, they believe that they can "walk the talk." They believe in their ability to manage outcomes from their actions. These sentiments are present in the data as the next section discusses.

**7.1.2.1.a Theme: Belief in ability/need to contribute to societal narrative**

*“Because I wanted it to be done the way I thought it could be done. Okay? You know, if I feel I have an idea, and it's not like I can't listen to other people, but if I have an idea, I want to flush that idea out. I don't want to be discouraged by something because someone else might say, Oh, well, maybe you shouldn't do this...”*

Entrepreneurs do not like being told that they “can’t,” “shouldn’t,” or “won’t” be allowed to pursue their missions (Baker and Nelson, 2005; Brenkert, 2009; Sundaramurthy et al., 2012). It is a defining part of their makeup (Brenkert, 2009; Sarasvathy, 2001; Schumpeter, 1934). Prosocial entrepreneurs are no different. Throughout the interviews, the entrepreneurs expressed their willingness to overcome obstacles and question authority when it was causing them frustration. When the prosocial entrepreneurs perceive their self-efficacy to provide for their missions is better than the hegemonic system, their disharmony levels can increase, contributing to their likelihood of taking a rule-breaking action when the situation arises. One of the themes contributing to the drivers of self-efficacy is whether a prosocial entrepreneur believes that they can make a contribution to the societal narrative, as well as if they need to. The concept of self-efficacy is widely understood as the perception of one’s ability to achieve their goals (Bandura, 1997a; Bryant, 2009; McVea, 2009). However, there is more than the ability, there is the perception of the need. The entrepreneur in the quote above owns and operates several audiology clinics. He has a history of innovative practices – employing new technologies for care and business processes that were frowned upon by many of his peers. His success, both financially and in the enhancement of his clinics’ ability to provide care, has allowed him to contribute to the societal narrative as other practices begin to implement some of his strategies. The categories that contribute to the self-efficacy theme include two that are inherent in the entrepreneur’s

quotation. When he states, “when I have an idea, I want to flush it out. I don’t want to be discouraged...,” he is placing his mission objectives as paramount. His ideas need to be realized or debunked, but by his own volition. The prosocial entrepreneur is seeking legitimacy in his actions when he states that he does not want to accept someone telling him, “maybe you shouldn’t do this,” in response to his goals or methods of pursuit.

Some of the entrepreneurs perceived rule-making, rule-breaking or adherence in terms of power dynamics. This echoes the Foucaultian ideas expressed by Dey and Steyvaert (2016) in their discussion of how social entrepreneurs work to create conditions of freedom from the institutional powers dictating their actions. When the prosocial entrepreneurs expressed this view, they were quick to describe their displeasure – their disharmony – with the system. For instance, one respondent said “I... question and really try to understand authority...and realized, you know, authority is frequently wrong.” Whilst another expressed it similarly:

*“[the people making the rules]...is it just a bunch of people who want to feel like they've got power and [say] ‘you can't be here, shut up.’ Like, who are you?... You're not anybody to tell me I can't sit in this seat. So yeah, that's, I think for me, it's, yeah, I'm not big on authority.”*

Other interviewees described how they expected to be heard by the power and authorities. They believed in the ability of their voices, their self-efficacy in speaking to power, to be heard and heeded.

*“I'm just wired that way. I question authority a lot. And it's not to say that ... there's not a place for authority, but I also feel that in authority, we should be able to have dialog, we should be able to talk, we should be able to have an exchange.”*

The article by DeDomenico et al added the concept of “persuasion” to a defining aspect of “social” bricolage (2010) The driver of self-efficacy, especially as it pertains to this theme - speaking into, and with, authority, to contribute to the social narrative - has a tangential application. The prosocial entrepreneur believes they are “persuasive,” and with respect to their self-efficacy in relation to the hegemony’s efficacy, there is more than just belief in the prosocial entrepreneur’s ability, and need, to contribute to the societal narrative. This is a more abstract concept. There is the more intimate, personal belief in their right and ability to adjudicate and manage the situations and people they encounter. For DeDomenico et al (2010), successful social entrepreneurs are able to persuade people, their communities, authorities to accept their vision and contribute to the the mission. This persuasiveness is part of the next theme discussed.

***7.1.2.1.b Theme: Belief in ability to adjudicate and manage situations***

*“I saw that **he was a good and honest person** and was just trying to succeed in life, he didn't ask me for food, but for a job, **he wants to work** and is hardworking, **so he deserves good things.**”*

The second theme in the self-efficacy driver for disharmony is the prosocial entrepreneurs’ belief that they have the ability to judge or assess a situation and manage the outcomes themselves. Parallels with the first theme are seen in how the entrepreneur is seeking autonomy and authoring, or defining, what is important to their missional pursuits (Chandra, 2017; Rindova et al., 2009)

The entrepreneur in the first quotation runs a healthcare employment service. Recalling a time when she broke a law regarding the employment of an undocumented worker, we see her overruling the hegemonic governance and adjudicating for herself whether this man, a potential beneficiary to her rule-breaking activity, was worthy of the action.

*“I felt we had done the work to deserve the credential we were going to be getting it in a few days, and even if something happened and we didn't get it in a few days, I almost thought like, I'd be able to get that because [I can prove] we had done that work.”*

In the second quote, we see the prosocial entrepreneur judging the rule, and its enforcement, itself when he claims, “...we had done the work to *deserve* the credential...” The rule, as it is written, is not appropriate according him. Furthermore, the entrepreneur makes a claim that they could manage the situation, even if there were complications, “even if something happened...I'd be able to get that...”

There are aspects of the experience and knowledge that contribute to the prosocial entrepreneur's belief in their ability to assess and manage situations, but this attribute is less about defining the context, which is part of the next section. It is more about the belief in the entrepreneur's “right” to make judgements, and their willingness to do so, outside of what is demanded by the hegemony – another way in which they search for autonomy (Goss et al., 2011; Rindova et al., 2009; Ruebottom and Toubiana, 2021). When it is denied by the constraints (Baker et al., 2003; Sarasvathy, 2001) of the system or the rules, their levels of disharmony rise and desire to find freedom through divergence from the normative action becomes a more likely response.

#### **7.1.2.2 Driver: Perceptions of Context and Ambiguity**

The next two sections discuss the themes within the disharmony driver involving context and the ambiguity inherent in the situation that the prosocial entrepreneur is encountering. One of the most common phrases throughout the interviews was “it depends.” These two words were used together ninety-seven times during the interactions. Numerous studies show that context is

essential to decision-making, be it ethical or otherwise (Buchholz and Rosenthal, 2005; McMullen and Shepherd, 2006; Schwartz, 2016; Zhang et al., 2023a). Ambiguity, whether it is part of the context or not, creates uncertainty. Uncertainty is part of the entrepreneurial journey, with numerous theories explaining how entrepreneurs handle uncertain situations, including bricolage and effectuation, which celebrate the entrepreneurial improvisation that navigates their risk-filled contexts (Baker et al., 2003; Fisher, 2012; Sarasvathy, 2001). These improvisational, unorthodox responses to uncertainty and contextual ambiguity are, often, more than unconventional. They are rule-breaking. Fisher et al discussed “hustling” as action by entrepreneurs to navigate uncertainty and their constraint-filled contexts. The authors explain how entrepreneurs use it to gain favor or legitimacy in the eyes of investors. The data in this study sees hustle as a sense-making activity as well. Activity that creates meaning.

#### ***7.1.2.2.a Theme: Ambiguous contexts bias toward action***

*“As an entrepreneur, like a business, you're hustling, and you're like, always, like, trying to make things happen, and that, if you've been told by an authority figure that it's coming, and it's like, a slow, bureaucratic, like, paper pushing thing that, like, that would be good enough, was kind of my thinking on it...”*

*“I had been given a verbal affirmation that this was coming, I would receive it, and so I would have felt justified to some extent of being able to then tell someone else that, yes, I have this. In the second scenario, I had not been given even a verbal approval.”*

Throughout this study, it has been postulated that entrepreneurial ethics are emergent or context-specific. When a prosocial entrepreneur meets a situation, their perception of the context can be easily interpreted, or there is ambiguity. As discussed earlier, some prosocial

entrepreneurs interviewed had strict, universality to rule-breaking contexts. Much like Kant, they did not necessarily believe in “it depends...” (Clarke and Holt, 2010; Clarke and Aram, 1997). There was little that they perceived as ambiguous. Many of the entrepreneur informants, however, found contexts that were fraught with ambiguity. One of the themes that came from the data was that the entrepreneurs believed action was a good response to ambiguous situations, either as a way to author or declare a definition, or to engage in a response for the hegemony that would create clarity. The entrepreneurs quoted above are responding to the request to elaborate on their reasoning for choosing a rule-breaking action in the survey. Both of these entrepreneurs chose the rule-breaking action on the high-formality, high-stress legal scenario. The ambiguity of this scenario can be interpreted as very high, or very low, depending upon the perspective of the entrepreneur. Fourteen of the interview informants did not choose the rule breaking action in this high-stakes scenario. Many of them citing the reasoning discussed earlier in the section on the harmony theme drivers. Fear of sanction and moral integrity were often espoused. Those entrepreneurs did not find the context ambiguous. The respondents in the representative quotes above found it very ambiguous, and chose an action that would allow them to define that ambiguity.

The first respondent speaks of “hustling.” Like the entrepreneurs in Fisher et al, this audiologist sees hustling as a way to navigate these uncertain situations (Fisher et al., 2020). They acted, “hustled,” “to make things happen.” In this case it was to “make” a definition happen through action. They were authoring and declaring what the definition of “being certified” was (Laine and Kibler, 2022; Rindova et al., 2009). In the second quote, we see how this prosocial entrepreneur, a clinical psychologist with a private practice, viewed the requirements of the certification in the “spirit” of the rule, rather than the “letter” of it. In the

scenario, the respondents are told that they have received the certification verbally, but that they do not have any paperwork in their hands to make the legal attestation. In acting with the perspective that she is following the rule, she is addressing the ambiguity inherent in her perceived context.

This bias toward action in ambiguous contexts pushes prosocial entrepreneurs further up the disharmony spectrum. In many situations, it is strong enough to elicit a rule-breaking response, as exhibited by the aforementioned informants' rule-breaking decisions in the survey. Note, however, the evidence for the two other disharmony drivers in their responses. Both show their perception of self-efficacy in comparison to the governing rule itself when they say in response to being verbally informed of the certification, "that would be good enough" or "I would have felt justified." In addition, the perception of present or potential harm is implied in the fact that they will miss out on a huge contract for their business, if they do not choose the rule-breaking action. They are responding to their disharmony with the hegemonic system through a practice of freedom, creating spaces for their freedom (Dey and Mason, 2018; Dey and Steyaert, 2016), in breaking this rule.

***7.1.2.2.b Theme: Context justifies deviance***

*"That's, again, where, like, I think the consequence is pretty negligible for entering there..."*

Lucas et al (2022) explain the entrepreneurial rule-breaking process as an entrepreneurial action. In their study, they incorporate the classic discussion of recognition and evaluation with the added elements of governance intermediaries and categories of white, gray, or black scenarios or contexts. The entrepreneur's knowledge of the various contexts, and their understanding of the governance - be it through intermediaries or direct governmental

enforcement - is key to triggering an entrepreneur to break a rule after the evaluation stage (Alvarez and Barney, 2007; McMullen and Shepherd, 2006). This theme to the disharmony driver of perceptions of context and ambiguity has several similarities, but some significant interpretive differences.

The knowledge that a prosocial entrepreneur possesses about how the hegemony controls, enforces or sanctions is important to their sensitivity to changes in their levels of disharmony and rule-breaking response. When an entrepreneur perceives the “consequence is pretty negligible” in a situation where they are being constrained from the pursuit of their mission, the level of their disharmony may not need to be as high to respond with a rule-breaking action as one with higher risk or imagined sanction. It is still an emancipatory response to the controls of the rule. The entrepreneur is still practicing their freedom or struggle against power (Dey and Steyaert, 2016; Goss et al., 2011; Haugh and Talwar, 2016) by choosing an act against the prevailing system’s norms.

*“If I was to break a rule with the purpose of, you know, earning more money... that I think I would have a little bit more pause. It wouldn't make me feel good to be doing it for that reason. Because, you know, **your reason for breaking the rule could be colored by that other desire**, whereas, I guess doing it for something like knowledge, I think, is a little bit more clean on the conscience.”*

The second quotation reminds us that we are part of the context. In essence, our intentions affect the context and, subsequently, how it is interpreted, especially by ourselves. In this case, the entrepreneur is implying that his perception of the context would be different depending on what his intention was when he encountered the situation. If he was seeking knowledge and not monetary gain, his disharmony with being unable to officially attend the

seminar could be such that a rule-breaking response was within his imagination. It would be, “a little bit more clean on the conscience.” This is the counter to the deviance avoidance theme on the harmony drivers, where this quote could be used as an example as well. The intent of the entrepreneur affects the context and can change their perception of the context.

Consistent with Brenkert’s discourse on rule-breaking as essential to a virtuous society, the intent of the entrepreneur when encountering ambiguous and/or rule-breaking contexts is incredibly important (Brenkert, 2009; Lucas et al., 2022). Malicious or harmful intent runs contrary to both the prosocial entrepreneur’s missional goals, as well as those of a virtuous society. Often, they both require freedom of expression, and finding novel, exciting solutions (Baker and Nelson, 2005; Garud et al., 2014), even if they run counter to the hegemony. Creative destruction is never malicious (Brenkert, 2009; Schumpeter, 1934) but it can be ruthless in its “efficient virtue.”

As important as intent is as an aspect of a prosocial entrepreneur’s perception of context, the data shows that their perception of harm – who it affects, how it is being experienced, and why it is occurring may be their most important driver of disharmony toward a response of rule-breaking emancipatory action.

### **7.1.2.3 Driver: Perceptions of Harm – Present and Potential**

One hundred-eleven. This is the number of times the interviewed entrepreneurs used the terms harm, hurt, pain or victim. Entrepreneurs are acknowledged to be morally aware (Bryant, 2009; Buchholz and Rosenthal, 2005; McVea, 2009). They understand when issues possess moral content (Bryant, 2009; McVea, 2009). The data from this study shows that prosocial entrepreneurs are highly aware of situations, of contexts, where harm is both present or has the potential to occur, through action or non-action on their part. The harm perceived is both to

themselves and others. Earlier sections showed how the data supported the prosocial entrepreneurs' moral portraits (Alt and Craig, 2016; Bacq et al., 2016; Calic and Mosakowski, 2016). Included in that discussion were how the perceptions of harm drove prosocial entrepreneurs toward harmony with the hegemonic system. Concerns about community shame in being discovered lying or acting deviant, or fear of sanction from the authorities were important. However, the data also showed the informants' concern about the external harm their actions could cause if they were to respond in a non-adherent way. In contrast, this section discusses how the data reveals how the perception of harm affects the entrepreneurs' missional goals' disharmony with the constraints of the hegemony.

The categories and themes found in the data include how some of the interview respondents believed the rule-breaking was essential to success or accessing opportunities, or minimizing the potential harm in externalities as a justification of their fears of missing out, or experiencing their own harms. These individualistic themes that drove disharmony, are countered by more mindful, empathetic categories that contribute to disharmony that drives prosocial, emancipatory rule-breaking intents.

#### ***7.1.2.3.a Theme: FOMO***

“Fear of missing out,” or FOMO as it is referred to in popular slang, is a pithy, provocative name for one of the themes that contribute to the perception of harm driver of disharmony between prosocial entrepreneurial missions and the hegemonic system. FOMO, in this study, represents the feelings that the prosocial entrepreneur has when they are being blocked from pursuing their missions by the hegemony or the norms and conventions of rule-adherence. As these feelings of being frustrated by the hegemonic constraints grow, and the

entrepreneur continues to perceive the harm it is doing in preventing missional success, a rule-breaking response becomes more likely.

*“It's like you're asking...hey, do you want huge growth? There's this risk. We need you to do this thing. And this thing is slightly unethical, but if after four days, all will be perfect... gotta do that. I can't say no to that and lose... in business. Like, that's your chance. You've got to take your chance when you have it.”*

This prosocial entrepreneur, a yoga and alternative medicine practice owner, speaks frankly about how this scenario would create feelings of FOMO for him. The disharmony created by being blocked by a rule in this situation would elicit an obvious emancipatory rule-breaking response. Other informants viewed rule-breaking as an essential part of success or access to opportunity, in general, saying, “I need to break the rule to have the chance to grow more professionally, to have new opportunities...” or, “I would sign the contract because it is a risk that we must take to have a chance of success. If I didn't sign, everything could already be lost...” The language that the interviewees use includes classic economic words like “risk” and “chance” and “opportunities.” It is the sentiment behind them that is moving the entrepreneur toward a position of disharmony, however, not the simple risk-reward calculation. They are afraid they are going to miss out – effectively, be harmed - if they refrain from action.

Interestingly, it is not just the entrepreneurs who would choose the rule-breaking scenarios that concede rule-breaking could be necessary for success. A technology entrepreneur, whose firm provides technology and services to health and wellness businesses, said this:

*“I feel like most of my life as an entrepreneur, I've made the decisions **to not put myself in a position to, like break rules**, and I think looking back, that **probably hurt me**, if that makes sense, where, where **other people that have no***

*problem breaking a rule, and a rule could be even just as simple as, like, how to communicate with somebody...you know, be less of an asshole. Whereas the person that's being an asshole may get a little bit further on because they're being an asshole..."*

This prosocial entrepreneur did not choose the rule-breaking action in either of the survey scenarios. His responses during the interview reflected the moral portrait that many social/prosocial entrepreneurs are purported to possess, but like Bacq et al (2016) reported, he also doubted his efficacy. This is not a discussion of successful versus unsuccessful prosocial entrepreneurs. It is merely looking at how the fear of missing out pushes prosocial entrepreneurs up the disharmony scale. Another category found in the data that corresponded with FOMO is how some entrepreneurs minimized the potential for harmful externalities of a rule-breaking response due to their FOMO. One informant rationalized:

*"there's not really a competition, you know, it's, it's gaining information, getting some networking, or connecting with other people, being able to develop some relational pieces. That doesn't feel like it's taking away from anyone else."*

For some the rationalization is significant. Their fear of missing out is such that their disharmony could even blind them to the external harms they could be causing, even to themselves and their organization. In discussing their reasoning for choosing to break the rule in the high-formality, law-bound context of scenario 1 in the survey, one of the informants explained:

*"the consequence of breaking it is basically non-existent, because the certification exists, and it's just delayed by some number of days due to some red tape or something. So, when there's no possible outcome that is negative*

*or risky from breaking a rule, like in that scenario, it seems like all the benefits are there to do [it].”*

The context of rule-breaking scenario 1 in the survey implies that an entrepreneur is committing fraud, in a legal sense, by choosing to break the rule. By stating that the consequences are “basically non-existent” and that “there’s no possible outcome that is negative or risky” is grossly underappreciating the context. It is possible that this wellness studio owner is interpreting the ambiguous context with the “spirit of the rule” as we discussed in earlier sections, but the intensity of his language regarding consequences – “it seems like all the benefits are there to do [it]” - is more indicative of dismissal of those outcomes or trivializing the context. FOMO can be very affecting.

#### ***7.1.2.3.b Theme: Situational Empathy***

As powerful as fear may be, both of missing out and reprisal, prosocial entrepreneurs overcome fear with mindfulness and moral imagination (McVea, 2009; Reynolds, 2006; Werhane, 1998). The next theme inherent in (dis)harmonic perceptions of harm is situational empathy. Many prosocial entrepreneurs have vivid moral imaginations and the ability to envision how their actions can help or harm others. Situational empathy is, as the phrase suggests, the prosocial entrepreneur’s ability to imagine/share the feelings and experiences of others affected by a certain situation. In this case, it is how the situational empathy contributes to the driver of disharmony of perceptions of harm. The ability to see how economic relationships are, also, moral relationships, and any interactions will have moral content, relates to a prosocial entrepreneur’s moral imagination (Dey and Mason, 2018; Werhane, 1998), an important element of the situational empathy theme.

*“[A good example of a bad rule is]... doing tympanograms is like a simple little hearing test you do in an audiology practice. **Hearing aid dispensers technically can't do it, but there's zero risk to the patient. And sometimes you really need that information and the doctor wants it. So, break that rule all day, every day, because... the patient needs it. Okay? There's no, no victim, no victim.**”*

The audiology practice owner is describing the frustration of a rule they find ill-advised. Their moral imagination is seeing how the patient and the doctor are being harmed by the rule, as well as a lack of externalities in choosing to break it. His situational empathy is contributing to his disharmony through perceptions of harm. Subsequent sections will address rule breaking intent, but it is evident here when he says, “break that rule all day, every day, because the patient needs it.”

Another prosocial entrepreneur discusses the complexity inherent in their hybrid missional contexts. Their desire for the best care for their patients, their desire to adhere to their contractual obligations (positional integrity) and better financial outcomes for their firm. This quote describes how the rule-breaking activity is an emergent response. There are episodes when the entrepreneur would choose to adhere to the rules of the contract, but sometimes, they would choose the rule-breaking activity. This suggests that the spectrum of disharmony is a useful framework.

*I am pretty by the book...But one thing we do run into is there's like **a contract that we have with one of our they're like a third party, but they're a private third party, so they don't work with any specific any specific insurance, but they send us the referral for free, and sometimes our pricing is better, and sometimes we will say we're just, 'we want you to return these hearing aids and go directly through us. And I'm going to tell you why. I'm going to give***

*you this, and this like service wise, and I'm gonna give you better hearing aids. I'm gonna give you **better stuff that they can't give you** through this. If you go through this company, you will get one year service for me, and then I'm gonna charge you every time you come in after that. But if you go this route, it's a little more expensive, but you're gonna get me for three years, unlimited services.' Roll out the red carpet, **but we're up against a contract.** And my providers do this too, but and I used to do it like I've done it with one or two people, because here's the thing is, **you have to tell the patient to lie to them** and say, I just didn't want these hearing aids, because they could turn around and say, 'Well, the audiologist told me she can give me a better deal. So I just decided to go with her,' and then we get in trouble because we signed a contract saying we would use their program and we get a professional fee for using the program that's substantially less than what our profit margin would be as they study with us.*

Finally, the following quote explains how situational empathy can affect the entrepreneurs' perceptions of harm in situations.

***"I think the insurance area is a really good example of when the rules need to be bent or examined based on needs of a patient, because, you know, the provider and the patient understand the situation much better than the insurance company does, and a lot of times when they don't pay, it's because of some obscure reason... I don't take insurance, but some people, sometimes people want to submit a super-bill to their insurance company, and I have to put in a diagnosis code. And sometimes people are coming in for anxiety, and I know that their insurance company won't pay for anxiety, but I know their insurance company will pay for neck pain, and a lot of the acupuncture points you use for neck pain are very similar to the points you use for anxiety. So, I will code neck pain rather than anxiety, even though their primary complaint may be anxiety. I'll be like, well, do you get neck pain? Do you get headaches? Yes, okay, we can code it as this. You just have to make sure that if you're going to do that, that your documentation reports that and that I ask something about***

*their neck pain at every visit. How's your neck pain doing? It's still okay. All right."*

This quote includes rich data in support of the study's full model (Figure 3). It includes all the drivers of disharmony, as well as the rule-breaking response and the intent behind it. We see the "when" and the "why" she is breaking this rule. In this discussion we see the situational empathy of the prosocial entrepreneur, an acupuncture practice owner, as she describes an episode of an ethical dilemma she has faced in the past. First off, we see that she understands that some of her patients have trouble paying for her services, or need their insurance provider to pay for it. Without her care, they could continue to have anxiety. She sees the harm they are in, presently, both their suffering from anxiety and their financial struggles to receive the care they need. She can also imagine that they may continue in their harmful state without ongoing, rule-breaking actions on her part, thus moving her levels of disharmony to a point where the freedom to provide care to her patient through a rule-breaking action is possible, even likely. In this case, she explains how she breaks the rule with *dissension* intent – through *interpreting* the context autonomously, and *alleviating* harm *privately* - between herself and her patient (see Figure 2).

Along with the breakdown and discussions of specific quotes in this section, Table 35 provides more evidence of the various drivers, themes, and categories of disharmony in the interview data with additional representative quotations.

## **7.2 Rule-breaking Intent**

Thus far, the discussion has focused on how the data from the interviews describes the prosocial entrepreneurs' *perceptions* of rule-breaking situations and how that drove their levels of harmony or disharmony between the hegemonic control and their missional pursuits (Figure 1). This next section looks at the data from the interviews and examines the *responses* that the interviewees made in those situations. More specifically, it examines the rule-breaking responses

of the interviewees with the goal to understand more about their *intents* – providing answers to why prosocial entrepreneurs may break the rules (Figures 2 and 3).

Unlike in the first section, the coding for this part of the study did not follow an inductive approach. Rather, as the initial inductive coding process revealed elements that drove harmony or disharmony, thus allowing for a strong application of emancipatory entrepreneurship as the framework for “when” a prosocial entrepreneur will practice their freedom and pursue a rule-breaking action, this secondary analysis employed an abductive coding process - borrowing concepts from the emancipatory entrepreneurship literature as a revelatory lens as to “why.”

In Laine and Kibler’s (2022) article, the emancipatory action of “entrepreneurship” developed three categories of interacting or influencing the social imaginary (2022) that were exemplified in three works of fiction. The three categories are *strengthening*, *undermining*, and *shaping*. When an entrepreneur uses their emancipatory actions to better themselves within the broader social imaginary, they are strengthening it, according to the authors. When they choose to do something in protest of authority, showing its immoral basis, the practice is undermining the social imaginary. And finally, when an entrepreneur’s emancipatory actions are meant to reinterpret and remake the social imaginary, they are shaping it.

As an important aspect of the emancipatory entrepreneurship, practices of change - of affecting the social imaginary, or even as illuminating social practices in themselves - are seen in the wide-ranging acts of rule-breaking. Using these ideas, further review of the rule-breaking response data presented various elements for a novel theory of emancipatory rule-breaking intents. First, the data describes particular *responses to the harm* perceived by the prosocial entrepreneur in the rule-breaking situation. Second, the *way the entrepreneurs engaged with the ambiguity inherent in the context* was another finding, and third, *the signal power of their rule-*

*breaking* action(s) were the final elements. The following sections provide support found in the data and a discussion of each of these elements (see figures 2 and 3).

### **7.2.1 Intent element: Responses to harm**

This study has proposed, and the data has shown, that prosocial entrepreneurs work hard to “do no harm.” The interviewees consistently included recognition and consideration of harm within the contexts and the potential responses they could choose. For this discussion, the data revealed three responses to harm within a prosocial entrepreneur’s rule-breaking intent – avoid, alleviate, and prevent. An interview informant describes how they viewed the rule-breaking response to harm:

*“the very first thought I had was, ‘who could be harmed by me going in?’ and it was like no one. I’m literally just taking up space and breathing the same air as people. My first thought was, there’s no potential harm. Like, that’s why it was so easy”*

It “was so easy” for the prosocial entrepreneur to respond to their disharmony with rule-breaking in this situation, because they could easily *avoid* any harm. They are not being denied the information and networking that they could use to launch their treatment, and no one is being hurt by the rule-breaking action itself. As the data has revealed, this perception of limited external harm is not universal, but it was common. Another entrepreneur put it even more bluntly when they said, “If there’s not a clear victim, in my perspective, then the ethical issue kind of evaporates.” “A victimless crime” means the harm was avoided by the rule-breaking (Figure 2).

In some of the rule-breaking responses, the data depicts an image of the prosocial entrepreneur *alleviating* harm. This alleviation of harm is predominantly received by an

individual or group other than the entrepreneur herself, as a prosocial action. Though it can be for the entrepreneur's benefit as well, it is less common. The undermentioned story from an audiology entrepreneur explains how a response to harm affects both the patient and the entrepreneur, but their levels are slightly different.

*“it came down to, and this happens a lot with this company [I work with], is they're not telling the patient the real price, and it ends up being, like, \$2,000 more than they thought. And, the one specific scenario, because I've only done it twice, (the rest of the time, I was like, you know, 'I feel really guilty about doing this,' and I do have a contract with these people and a good relationship with this company), but one of them was their pricing was, like \$2,000 more than mine. And I was like, 'Oh my gosh, let me [see]!' And, there was... **whatever hearing aid they had recommended was not appropriate for that patient. And I said, 'Listen, I want to get you what's appropriate for your hearing loss. What the consultant on the line that talked to you is not an audiologist. I am supposed to go through them and go with their recommendation, but that doesn't make sense to me because of the hearing test we just performed. So here's what we're going to do. I'm gonna have you come direct with me.'** And then they ask, 'well, what's in it for me?' And I tell them that...and I go... **your pricing is...going to get substantially less. But what you're gonna have to do for me is tell them you just decided to return the hearing aids and not move forward. You cannot mention me. You cannot mention that you continued with me, and they said... the funniest thing... were the two patients that I did it with kept their word. And they were like, yep, you were right [the original company] called me and I told him I just didn't want hearing aids at the time. And I'm like, 'Oh my gosh, I'm having these people lie so that they can get better service.'** Like, I don't understand. What? And **they did it, and I didn't get fined. And it's just the weirdest thing, that just in order to do the greater good for the patient, I had to break a contract. But it worked out.**”*

The audiology owner is breaking the rule with dissension intent in this narrative (see Figure 3). When the focus of analysis stays on the response to harm, the quote shows how the entrepreneur “avoids” the harm of getting fined, which would imply a negotiation intent. However, the prosocial response of “alleviating” the harm to the patient, by increasing their care level through better pricing and more appropriate hearing aids, suggests that the rule-breaking includes at least one element of a dissension intent, since the inclusion of a higher level response to harm succeeds in the model.

A *preventative* response to harm, as an element of transformation intent is markedly less common in the interview data. One respondent talked about how she was gaining social capital in her industry and community, which gave her the gravitas to speak to the hegemony for social change. She was regularly breaking rules with dissension, but now she could break them with a “voice” that would be heard writ large.

*“I started getting more attractive because of [the fact that] I speak up in a lot of meetings, in a lot of the research community, I speak up because I feel that there's a lot more that needs to be done in terms of addressing health disparities in the underserved communities. So, therefore my voice is a part of the discussion.”*

Having a voice that can be included in “the discussion” allows this medical research consultant’s response to harm to move from alleviate to prevent, because the actions reflecting her disharmony move the hegemony closer to harmony *with her*. She is using her persuasiveness, her authoring and declarative freedom, to move the system toward her vision of the normative (Chandra, 2017; Di Domenico et al., 2010; Jennings et al., 2016; Rindova et al., 2009).

An earlier quote from a respondent explaining the disharmony driver theme of situational empathy also supports the element of a rule breaking response that is intended to prevent harm (see page 152). When recalling a rule that prohibits hearing aid dispensers from providing tympanograms – a simple hearing test that is essential to providing hearing aid care – the entrepreneur stated that they would “break that rule all day, everyday” because it prevents a patient from being harmed through non-care. Their patients are denied care by the rule, but this rule is broken, repeatedly, to prevent the harm. It becomes part of the modus operandi of the practice. According to the audiology practice owner, the governing body, the hegemonic system, is tolerant of this rule-breaking activity because it provides increased standards of care. It does not, however, openly condone it, or plan to ratify it formally, which aligns with other studies regarding the adoption of organizational deviant actions or social innovations (Hölsgens, 2022; Piazza et al., 2023). Regardless of the hegemonic response, the entrepreneur is attempting to prevent harm through rule-breaking.

### **7.2.2 Intent element: Responses to Context and Ambiguity**

The data from the interviews has supported the extant literature that rule-breaking can be very reliant on the situational context that an entrepreneur encounters - as the respondents said, “it depends...” There is more that the data reveals about how the prosocial entrepreneurs engage with ambiguity and the uncertainty of their contexts. Earlier sections showed how ambiguity and context were drivers of (dis)harmony for prosocial entrepreneurs. This section discusses the way the data reveals an element of how the prosocial entrepreneurs respond to the context as part of their rule-breaking acts of freedom. These response elements include *leveraging* the context, *interpreting* the context, and *defining* the context.

When prosocial entrepreneurs leverage the context or ambiguity inherent in it, they are using the situation to their advantage. We see it in the data:

*“well, if nobody's checking at the door to see if you're on the guest list and there are some empty seats, it's kind of like sneaking into the movie theater.”*

*“We're just dancing around bureaucracy, on the credentialing, okay? And so from a development standpoint, and there's always, there's always calendar time, right, for initiating a project. And you know, the difference between three and seven days is kind of a moot point when it comes to product launch.”*

Here are examples of prosocial entrepreneurs providing some reasoning behind their decision to break the rules in the survey scenarios 2 and 1, respectively. The first respondent leverages the context - a lack of door security - by illicitly “sneaking into” the conference in the first scenario. Whereas the second entrepreneur, discussing the time gap between when he signs a legal warranty that his company has a SOC 2 Type 2 certification and when he definitively receives the certification, perceives the timing delta as “moot.” (see survey in appendix 1) He can leverage the “calendar time” that the context of a software project initiation requires to limit the customer’s likelihood to scrutinize his rule-breaking.

Unlike leveraging the context, where the prosocial entrepreneur is using the ambiguity to help them pursue their missional goals, interpreting the context often occurs when the prosocial entrepreneur is suffering disharmony due to a perception of the context itself, e.g. “ambiguous contexts bias action” (see Figure 2). Their response – the rule-breaking – requires them to interpret the context, but as they “freely” choose, not as the hegemony dictates. Emancipatory entrepreneurship’s concepts of seeking autonomy and authoring are evident in this higher-level

response (Chandra, 2017; Rindova et al., 2009). The data shows how the entrepreneurs interpret the context within their rule-breaking responses.

*“There's other scenarios where insurance is such a racket, they'll deny everything, or especially with the VA, sometimes they'll... you have to have authorization, which lasts for a year. For a veteran, you always end up getting it. But sometimes, with a bureaucracy, it takes a few months, and meanwhile, here's a veteran who needs new hearing aids, or... something's broken with their hearing aids, and they just cannot hear their loved ones at all. And, they're struggling and falling into depression. And so, then I see them anyway, and I always tell them, ‘Okay, but when your authorization comes through, I'm going to change the dates.’ You know, we know that the authorization is coming through, but because that was hurting them, I couldn't say no to that. And so that's another scenario where I have broken a rule.”*

Above, an audiology entrepreneur who works extensively with military veterans describes her frustration with health insurance providers – a common cause of hegemonic disharmony for the prosocial entrepreneurs interviewed - but also how she responds to this disharmony through rule breaking. She interprets the contexts around authorization of treatment independently, autonomously, of the written rules dictated by the insurance providers (Clarke and Holt, 2010; Grant and Berg, 2011; Ruebottom and Toubiana, 2021). Her experiential knowledge that veterans “always end up getting [authorization]” drives the rule-breaking response in these contexts.

### **7.2.3 Intent element: Signal Power**

Each of the elements of emancipatory rule-breaking intent are important to defining categories of intent. Signal power is the most important, however. A discussion in how the elements interact in order to help define each other will come later, but it is relevant to this

section to note that the only element that is not helped in its definition by the other elements is signal power. The reason for this is due to signaling being volitional and purposeful in “conveying information” about a situation, person, or organization to another entity, person, or, more abstractly, the market (Connelly et al., 2011; Spence, 1973).

Signal power, in the emancipatory rule-breaking intent model, explains who is the “intended” recipient of the signal. Most often, the entrepreneur attempts to signal their disharmony with the rule breaking intent *covertly*, which means no one but the entrepreneur is intended to receive the signal coming from the rule-breaking response. We see this in the data with the scenario 2 rule-breaking action. The entrepreneurs “sneak in.” No one but the entrepreneurs are intended to receive the rule-breaking response signal. The signal power could be *private*, which has been observed earlier as the rule-breaking response signal that is intended to be received by a limited number of participants. These participants are aware of the entrepreneur’s rule-breaking, because they are intended to know about it. Often, these participants are the recipients of the positive outcomes provided by the prosocial rule-breaking, aswell. Or, the team that works with the entrepreneur is intended to receive this information. The entrepreneur is providing them with information about how they see the constraints of the system and that they are willing to break rules to be free to pursue the team’s missional goals. When an entrepreneur intends for their rule-breaking signal to be widely received – especially by the authorities and governing bodies – they are making it *public*. This is the highest level signal power, as the intended recipients are broadly dispersed and the entrepreneur is providing information about their disharmony and how they are willing to break rules regularly, and “loudly,” as a signal for change to the system.

Covert signal power is the most common expression of this element. Prosocial entrepreneurs have superior moral portraits (Bacq et al., 2016; Bruder, 2021). Health and wellness workers, according to this study, also possess a stricter belief in rule-adherence. The quantitative part of this study suggests, though it does not confirm, that prosocial entrepreneurs also have lower rule-relative beliefs. Because of this, rule-breaking is not taken lightly by this group. The data also shows that prosocial entrepreneurs would be “embarrassed” or “ashamed” by being discovered breaking a rule (Figure 1 and Table 35). A covert rule-breaking signal helps the entrepreneur avoid those harms. They can just “slide in here to this thing [the conference seminar]” or just try “sneaking into” it - covertly breaking the rule. Another example in the data describes how a health and wellness technology entrepreneur acquired employees, in an ethically-dubious way, whilst keeping their activities “silent”:

*“...maybe, you know, start **farming some developers over to our side**, or, you know, you know, picking, **stealing these guys** to help build the app...he had worked with these guys and girls at some of his other companies...it wasn't like we were looking to, you know, get industry secrets or or take, you know, anything from the other companies that they were working for. We just knew they were good developers, they had a background in this, and they could put something together quickly...**We obviously didn't broadcast that to their employers,**”*

The entrepreneur was recruiting employees in a way that implies rule-breaking, even if that rule was informal. His use of the phrase “stealing these guys” belies any understanding that the action is one of integrity to a norm. And finally, his admission that they “didn’t broadcast...to [the coders’] employers” is evidence of covert signal power, as well.

As the prosocial entrepreneurs described their rule-breaking with more prosocial outcomes in the interviews, e.g. providing patients with care outside of the rules dictated by the system, private signals became more prevalent. In an earlier section, an acupuncture practice owner recalled how she coded some of her procedures in a way that benefited her patients and allowed them to receive reimbursement from their health insurance carrier. Every time she met with her patient, who was seeing her for anxiety, she made certain that she asked whether they were also having neck pain. She understood that her patient's insurance provider would not reimburse the patient for anxiety treatments, but that neck pain care would be reimbursed. The signal is not covert, as the patient is aware that the coding of the care treatment is not the same reason they are seeking care. This rule-breaking response signal is private. It is not public, either, as the acupuncturist is not intending the insurance company to receive the signal about her rule-breaking.

Prosocial rule-breaking is not the only situation when an entrepreneur may *privately* signal their rule-breaking intent. The data shows where this may occur when examining another interview quote. A medical spa entrepreneur explains how they opened their business prior to possessing official documentation of their malpractice insurance, which is a requirement for doing business as a medical practice:

*“I’ll give you an example from **opening up our business**... our med spa. We received a binder of insurance. **It wasn’t the official insurance coverage**, but it was a binder; an agreement from our insurance broker that says, yes..., you’re going to receive coverage on the date that you requested. But, **we hadn’t actually received the actual [documents]**, so it actually kind of played into a little bit similar to the situation here [survey scenario 1], where, technically, you know, **to open our doors as a business, we have to have medical malpractice insurance**. And so, we had received that binder that says you will*

*be receiving it, but I hadn't actually received the official documentation from the medical insurance company [before opening the doors].”*

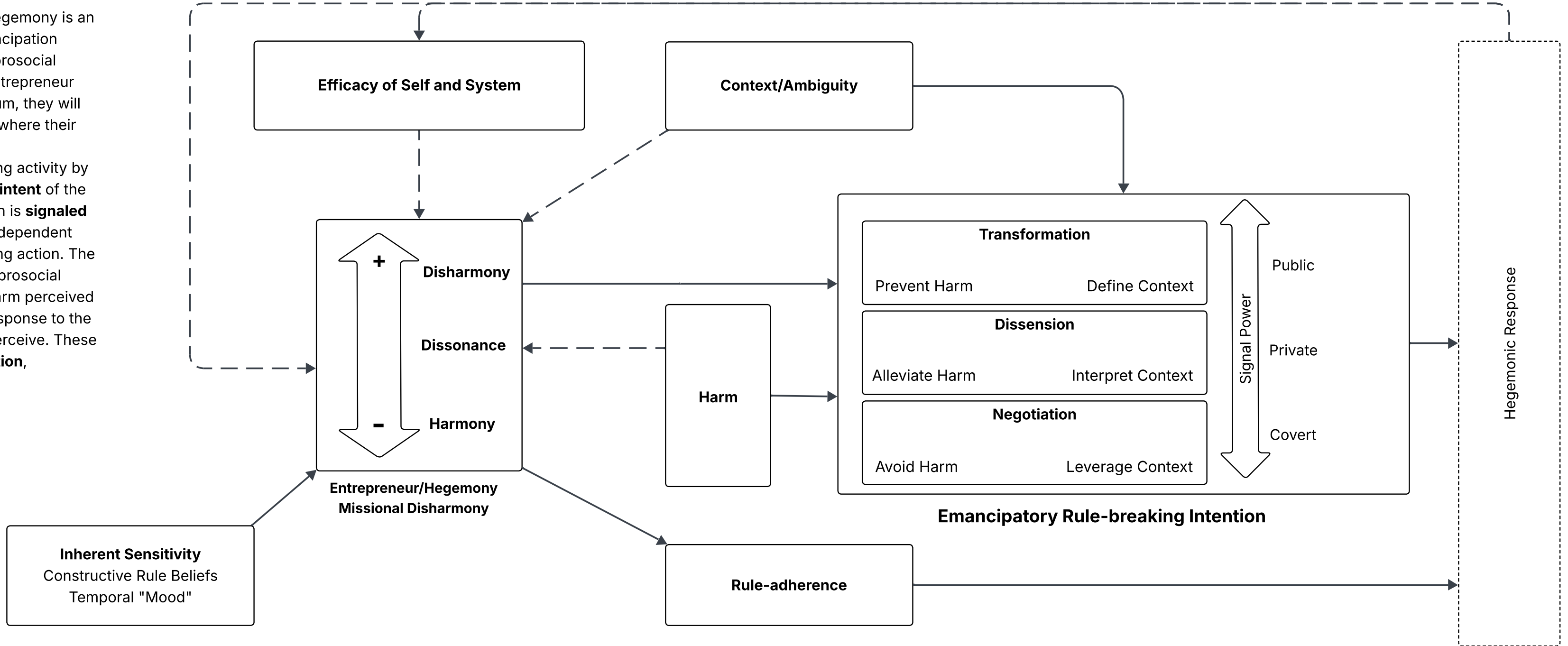
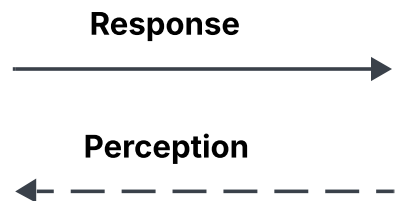
Certain stakeholders – other owner/partners, key employees – were aware of the fact that the entrepreneur was opening the medical spa with “only” the insurance binder in possession, but others, including the government or authorities, were not. When examining the data within this interview further, launching the med spa without the official insurance documentation was a “liberating” rule-breaking response to a long, frustrating founding process, where the med spa owner felt constrained, and even intruded upon, by the hegemonic system throughout. The decision to open, and subsequently break a formal rule, privately signaled the entrepreneur’s dissension with the system to his stakeholders, who may or may not have shared his disharmony, but were joining him in response.

*Public* signal power was much less evident in the data than the others, but there were still examples of it. The discussion on transformation rule-breaking intent provides detailed quotations showing public signal power evident in the rule-breaking intent of some of the prosocial entrepreneurs. When an entrepreneur states they would “break that rule all day, every day” or “100 out of 100” times, they are signaling publicly. The consistency in the rule-breaking response to their disharmony and desire for freedom to pursue their mission – to care for their patients as *they, not the hegemony*, deem proper in these cases – is declaring a new standard with their vision and actions (Jennings et al., 2016; Rindova et al., 2009; Waddock and Steckler, 2016). It is transforming the status of care for their practice, and if possible, the industry.

Figure 3

# Model of Emancipatory Rule-breaking Intent

Missional Disharmony with the Hegemony is an essential antecedent for the emancipation practice of rule-breaking for the prosocial entrepreneur. As the prosocial entrepreneur moves up the disharmony spectrum, they will reach a level in certain situations where their disharmony levels are such that a defiant/emancipatory rule-breaking activity by the entrepreneur is possible. The **intent** of the emancipatory rule-breaking action is **signaled covertly, privately or publically**, dependent upon the intent of the rule-breaking action. The elements of these intents are the prosocial entrepreneurs' response to the harm perceived in the situation along with their response to the context and the ambiguity they perceive. These intents are comprised of **Negotiation, Dissension, and Transformation**



## 8.1 Discussion – Model of Emancipatory Rule-breaking Intent

Study One and its analysis of CRB (Zhang et al., 2023) suggested that people may have inherent proclivities to break (or follow) rules, such as cognitive factors/beliefs about rules in relation to themselves (e.g. Rule Relativity Beliefs). The Study One results also showed that people that worked in prosocial environments were more likely to view rules in a more constrictive way. And finally, its results suggested that entrepreneurs, even prosocial entrepreneurs, choose to break rules, regardless of their inherent proclivities, like CRB. Study Two used interviews of prosocial entrepreneurs to get additional insights - to investigate when and why prosocial entrepreneurs break rules. From these studies, a theoretical model emerged from the data.

The theoretical model of emancipatory rule-breaking intent proposes that in response to the disharmony prosocial entrepreneurs experience/perceive between their freedom to pursue their missional goals and the ability of the hegemonic system to provide an environment for their pursuit, the prosocial entrepreneur may participate in emancipatory rule-breaking actions with three intents: Negotiation, Dissension, and Transformation (Figures 2 and 3). The prevalence of the different intents is unsurprising, as negotiation is the most common, with dissension much more common than transformational rule-breaking intent. A discussion of each of the intents follows and tables with representative quotations are included as well (Figure 2).

### 8.1.1 Negotiation

*Negotiation* is when the prosocial entrepreneur breaks a rule in response to the hegemonic system in order to *avoid* a restriction or potential harm that prevents the entrepreneur from pursuing their mission. In contexts with ambiguity or uncertainty, they *leverage* the lack of definition, be it in apprehensibility or sanctioning. The prosocial entrepreneurs take these rule-

breaking actions *covertly*, avoiding attention from everyone, not just authority. They are practicing their freedom from within the system - negotiating it, but not trying to signal or change the system.

*“I would never, like, sneak in somewhere. I shouldn't. So, like, if there was someone manning the door and they, were, turned their back for a minute or something, like, I wouldn't just go in. Like, personally, it's not how I would do it. **But in the event where there's open seats, you're not taking a spot from anybody else. There's no one to even ask if there's a way you can go in legitimately by upgrading your pass and giving them 100 bucks or whatever? When there's no other means to do it, and you're not damaging anybody else by taking that seat...** To me, it seemed like it'd be a reasonable thing to do, given the possible benefits on the other side.”*

Here is a perfect example of an entrepreneur breaking a rule with the negotiation intent. In this scenario, this audiology practice and technology platform entrepreneur is asked about their decision to break the rule in the informal, conference seminar vignette – scenario two in the survey. They are imagining a situation where they can meet people, gain knowledge and, possibly, speed the launch of a new therapy if they attend this conference they are not allowed to enter, based upon the rules. The disharmony drivers are obvious – FOMO is causing them to perceive harm, they are not imagining any harmful externalities from the rule breaking, “you’re not damaging anybody else by taking that seat,” and they contemplate the ambiguity of the context, and decide they have the right and the ability to pursue their missions by creating a “free” space for that pursuit within the system. They have felt disharmony and are breaking the rule. Their response to harm is one of avoidance. They will not suffer harm, since they are not missing out, and they are leveraging the context to their benefit by using the fact that they see “no one” at the door and “no way you can go in legitimately.” However, they are not letting

anyone know they are pursuing this action. They are doing it covertly. Negotiating spaces of freedom in the hegemonic system through small, covert acts of emancipatory rule-breaking intent.

Negotiation intent was the most prevalent in the narratives of the prosocial entrepreneurs when they were describing their decisions to break rules for both scenarios. In the high-stakes, legal scenario, where the entrepreneur needed to imagine whether they would attest, in writing, to having a certain certification in order to be awarded a huge contract, here is how another wellness technology business owner expressed the rule-breaking decision based upon his own experience.

*We're doing similar things with some of our solutions right now, where I'm confident in the team that we've built, right. In a scenario like this, **I would know that we're accomplishing the things that need to be done**, right? And we're right now, we're **just dancing around bureaucracy** on the credentialing, okay? And so, from a development standpoint, and there's always, **there's always calendar time**, right, for initiating a project. And you know, **the difference between three and seven days is kind of a moot point** when it comes to product launch.*

He is not going to miss out on a huge contract, thus avoiding the harm. He negotiates the system covertly through the signing of the warranty on the credentials, whilst leveraging the context of the project and development cycle to provide the “calendar time” to get the paperwork established. It was not just the scenarios that showed how these prosocial entrepreneurs broke rules with a negotiation intent. One massage practice entrepreneur, whose primary cases were medical, talked about how she built her practice with negotiation rule-breaking intent. All the

elements are present – avoid harm, leveraging the context and ambiguity of the situation with silent, covert signal power.

*“I would be more than happy to give them [customers] information to hit me up outside of [the massage company], because I wasn't getting paid enough and yeah, all I got was like 15 an hour at that stage, which is hardly nothing. Plus tips. And, so yeah. .There was some clients that...yeah, I would...end up getting as outside clients instead of inside clients. You know, that happened a lot, actually, at the places I worked. So it's like I'm not trying to steal their people, but you know, it just ends up being where it's like you have that money... sounds a lot better than 15 an hour.”*

There are numerous examples of negotiation emancipatory rule-breaking intent in the data (Figure 2). Many of the representative quotes include the disharmony drivers, as well, since some of the disharmony drivers, perceptions of harm and contextual ambiguity, are linked to the response.

### **8.1.2 Dissension**

*Dissension* emancipatory intent occurs as the prosocial entrepreneur is pursuing their mission, but the divergence between their missional goals and what the hegemonic system allows, or the harm being inflicted by it, are wide enough that the rule breaking action signals dissension to others in the system, though it is often *private* and the primary receivers of the signal are those benefiting from the rule-breaking activity – such as *alleviating harm* for their patient or team. The prosocial entrepreneur is not working covertly within the structures of the system, negotiating opportunities to practice freedom, however. Rather they are choosing to *interpret* their context as they wish and showing the inability of the system to provide the freedom the prosocial entrepreneur needs to achieve their missional goals within that situation/context.

The dissension intent is more common for “prosocial” rule-breaking actions made by the entrepreneur. Breaking a rule to benefit another person, community – for social betterment – would be prosocial rule-breaking. The extant literature has discussed this phenomenon broadly (Grant and Berg, 2011; Grant and Sumanth, 2009; Liu and Zhao, 2023; O’Toole, 2019). Examples of nurses helping patients with pain, or other simple procedures outside of the medical system rules, is a common theme. Society enjoys stories about rebels, but they love hearing about “rebels-with-a-heart.” (André and Pache, 2016; Brenkert, 2009; Garud et al., 2014), and though this prosocial rule-breaking behavior has been studied, and within the healthcare context (Chaudhuri et al., 2021; Irshad et al., 2022; Rühli et al., 2017), the literature has not examined entrepreneurs and their drivers in these contexts. The data from the interviews strongly suggests that prosocial entrepreneurs who participate in rule-breaking with dissension intent are considering more than just the welfare of the patient or customer. Their moral portraits and empathy for others is a driver – their “heart of gold” missional pursuit – but so is the viability of their business and its varied stakeholders. They understand the complexities inherent in the situations, thus their harmony levels with the hegemonic system and intents are inclusive of those sentiments. We see it in the data:

*“[A] company was selling, like, supplements, and kind of combining that with a book launch and a program, we both were like, ‘I don't think this is really going to help people. Like, I don't really think this is a good product to sell.’ It's not regulated by the FDA. You know, obviously people have to be informed consumers, but, you know, obviously people have got bills to pay, right? But we kind of were like, I don't know if this is really a good thing to be doing, because you can't say either way that it's going to hurt somebody or help somebody. Yeah, it probably will help you. Maybe it won't...”*

Although this was not, explicitly, a rule-breaking setting, the ethical decision-making of this prosocial entrepreneur, who did choose to sell the supplements, as they, “have got bills to pay,” and did not see specific harm in their representation, or if their clients took them, even if the benefits were dubious, is on display. They practiced freedom to create their ethic in that context. With deference to the prior example, the interview data shows that prosocial entrepreneurs *did* practice their emancipatory rule-breaking with dissension intent with regularity, however.

*I'm in Mexico right now. We have an office here, and there's certain rules here. So, I'm actually not recognized as an audiologist here, because you have to be an MD first. So here I'm recognized as a hearing aid dispenser, and I could still do everything that I normally do, except for specific diagnosing that you're not supposed to as a hearing aid dispenser. But again, if my patients need it, and I could help them, I will, knowing that I am an audiologist in the States, but technically that's not correct here*

This audiology entrepreneur exhibits all the elements of dissension intent. She is *alleviating* the harm of her patients by doing the testing that she is not allowed to do, so that she can provide them with the care that they need. She is *interpreting* the context of the situation in her own way. The Mexican law states that she is not an “audiologist” in Mexico and, subsequently, cannot perform diagnoses, but since she is an audiologist in “the States,” she is interpreting the context as favorable to the rule-breaking action and signaling, *privately*, to her patients and her team that this rule prevents her from pursuing her missional goals. Furthermore, they know that it is something that she will continue to do. Another example comes from a cancer treatment consultant relaying a story about how she provided access to a clinical trial for an uninsured man:

*“There was a man with prostate cancer, but didn't have insurance. And it seemed what they were saying is, if he wasn't a citizen, he had to fill out [special] forms, and he would have to guarantee his own financial [costs]. So therein lies the problem. Where I'm, like, ‘Well, I asked him if he was a citizen. He said he was, but he didn't seem confident in that answer.’ The problem was that I went along with what he said, even though I had a feeling that he may not have been forthcoming with me. But I still went with what he said...and they [the trial administrators] were upset, because that was a slot that could have been for someone else. And I tried to let them know that I wasn't aware! I was going by what he said to me. I didn't have the forms or anything like that. Didn't have anything with me to verify, but I went by his word.”*

Again, we see disharmony drivers in the narrative. She perceived the harm that was afflicting the prostate cancer patient, along with the financial harm it would cause for him to pay for the treatments himself. She perceived the inability of the system to provide and evaluated the rules, finding them lacking in her vision for what is right. She saw the ambiguity, both in the patient's story, as well as her ability to respond within that context. She responded with an authoring, declaring act of autonomy (Dey and Mason, 2018; Di Domenico et al., 2010; Rindova et al., 2009). She broke the rule with dissension rule-breaking intent. Though she never did get confirmation whether he was a citizen, he received the treatment without the personal financial burden. In her role, the interview respondent was providing an opportunity to receive care the man would never have been able to access without her response. She was *alleviating* harm, both with the access to care, as well as the cost-lifting. Her signal power was *private*, where only she and the patient were directly aware. The trial administrators were forced to accept the patient due to the informant's *interpreting* of the context in the patient's favor and using that interpretation for the patient's benefit. The response from the trial administrators (hegemony) may affect future

situations, however. They could increase control through more explicit guidelines about trial participants, or they may sanction the interviewee in some way, preventing her from setting up participants for their future trials. Irrespective of their response, it will be incorporated in a feedback loop to her perceived self-efficacy and her hegemonic/missional harmony scale to begin, anew, her emergent process for emancipatory rule-breaking responses (Figure 3).

### 8.1.3 Transformation

A *transformational* rule-breaking intent is even stronger than dissension intent in its aims as a change agent (Dey and Mason, 2018; Haugh and Talwar, 2016; Jay, 2013; Laine and Kibler, 2022). It is using rule-breaking to *publicly* signal a need for change or transformation in the hegemonic system, including the desire to *define contexts* for similar, future situations. This transformation intent can be achieved by the degree of rule-breaking, or persistence of rule-breaking, though the emancipatory intents of the rule-breaking activity could be included in a small act, as well. The extant literature portrays prosocial entrepreneurs with scaled, transformational rule-breaking intents as successful social engineers (Chaudhuri et al., 2021; Di Domenico et al., 2010). They are disrupting and changing the hegemony for the better (Brenkert, 2009; Piazza et al., 2023; Schumpeter, 1934). The emancipatory entrepreneurship research has a focus, intentional or otherwise, on the social-changing, normative-defining power that entrepreneurship can possess. The data from this study does not suggest this is a common aim of the prosocial entrepreneur. It does show evidence that prosocial entrepreneurs do participate in transformation rule-breaking intent, however.

We see one example in the data here, where a prosocial entrepreneur, a dentist and dental practice owner, is trying to innovate for the benefit of his patients, even to the detriment of his financial outcomes:

*“My dad decided that silver fillings weren't the thing anymore, they were [less effective and attractive for his patients]. He went to only the composite tooth-colored fillings. Insurance companies didn't like that, and they came down on him with the holy fire and changed his reimbursement rates to being just a small fragment of what all their other surrounding dentists had, and that had a huge impact on his, his practice and the way he could handle business. But, he never changed back.”*

This “maverick,” as the interview respondent called him (Arend, 2016; Brenkert, 2009), was the interviewee’s father. His father’s persistence in providing a product that he believed would benefit his patients, and his practice, in defiance of the hegemony of the insurance industry, typified transformation emancipatory rule-breaking intent. Today, the majority of dental fillings use tooth-colored composite resin (Worthington et al., 2021). In this story, the data supports the entire emancipatory rule-breaking model process (see Figure 2 and 3 for reference to steps below).

1. Belief in ability/need to contribute to the societal narrative (Mission is paramount) + Context Justifies Rule-breaking (reason/intent is important) + Situational Empathy (Envision positive outcomes and internal gratification) → Disharmony
2. Disharmony → Rule-breaking response + Public Signal Power + Defining Contexts + Preventing Harm → Transformation Intent

Transformation emancipatory rule-breaking intent includes practices of freedom by the prosocial entrepreneur that may not, ultimately, formally change the system, but become a standard of care more informally. Here the data from an interview informant explains such a situation:

*“When I was seeing patients, there was, there were times where, I mean, there's lots of regulations around interactions with patients and simple stuff. [For instance] Patient is at a doctor's office. They need that hearing test, but they didn't sign the release of records, and the patient's sitting there, and the ENT needs it. And you know, what are you going to do? You're going to hassle that patient tremendously. Even though [you need] to have them come back and sign this piece of paper, are you going to give the doctor the audiogram so they can all ... take care of the problem and [the patient] sitting in front of them... that's an area where I would break the rule 100 out of 100 times. So just because it's what's right for the patient.”*

This audiology entrepreneur is discussing how he “declares” this response as a standard of care, though it clearly violates the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), which is a law meant to preserve patient privacy. The disharmony with the constraints of the rules within this context is evident - “there’s lots of regulations... You’re going to hassle that patient tremendously...” The prosocial entrepreneur responds by breaking free, by breaking the rule. They are intending to transform the standard of care response for this situation through rule-breaking “100 out of 100 times.” If the (ENT) doctor cannot treat the patient without the information (the audiogram), but the patient has not permitted the release of the test documents, expeditious and efficient patient care supersedes patient privacy as the *transformed* practice standard.

A final discussion on the rule-breaking intents model is how the data reveals the interactivity of the intent elements as responses to the disharmony drivers to provide definition for each other. Though the informant himself does not view it as rule-breaking, the following quote describes how this interactivity of the intents helps define them as part of a rule-defying response.

*“But I would say probably the closest we've been in a situation like that is, how do you present your financial situation in as positive a light as possible to get the funding you need for a startup? ...I will say nothing we put on our proformas, or anything like that, were factually incorrect. But in my case, I had on my proforma and financial documents, my current my prior year tax documents, which had some kind of one-time events on it that helped improve, and I didn't specifically bring it to their attention, even though I knew that going forward that would not be, the situation. Nor did I bring to their attention the fact that I was going to quit my corporate world job and go into private consulting, which would be a lot more questionable from a financial standpoint...”*

In this description, the entrepreneur's actions could be construed as deceitful. Numerous studies have looked at the representations made by founders in resource-marshaling contexts and found that informational omissions, exaggerations, even outright falsehoods are not uncommon (Baker et al., 2003; Baron et al., 2018; Brenkert, 2009; Fisher et al., 2020). Some researchers posit this ability, and willingness, of entrepreneurs to interpret contexts as a way to further their missions is a positive for society (Baker and Nelson, 2005; Brenkert, 2009; Schumpeter, 1934). This medical spa owner would agree. In some situations, this response to the context could be defined as *leveraging* in the model. The entrepreneur *is* using the context to pursue their missional goals. However, the additional data from the interview does not portray a prosocial entrepreneur that is merely “hustling” or omitting information in pursuit of resources as this section would suggest (Fisher, 2012; Fisher et al., 2020). The response intent is different than *negotiation*. It is evident as he continued to describe “frustration” with the system and his responses to it.

The emancipatory rule-breaking intents model examines these actions as a *response* to the disharmony the prosocial entrepreneur is experiencing. The language of disharmony used by this interviewee as a precursor to the quote above, and the classification of other elements of intent, provides data that supports defining this element as *interpretative* rather than *leveraging*, because the other elements are highly suggestive of a *dissension* emancipatory rule-breaking intent. He continued:

*“So for one thing, I was very frustrated, irritated with the whole process....Took us 18 months to go from when we decided to start this business to the point where we actually had approval from the bank on the loan, and then it was another six month process from there to finalize all the lease and the building and all the other things. So it was, it was a very frustrating time, and a lot of what went through my mind was, ‘if they don’t ask the question, I’m not offering up any extra information,’ they dug deep into a lot of things that I felt, honestly, was no business of theirs. And again, it’s me saying I don’t like the government, or the bankers, or people intruding upon my personal life. And so, you know, I was, I was very much in the mood of unless it is factually inaccurate. I’m not offering up any extra information.”*

The rule-breaking intents, often, work together in definitional ways. This continuation of the quote illustrates this dynamic. The level of disharmony the interviewee had with the hegemonic system is, undoubtedly, high. Phrases like “very frustrated, irritated” or “I don’t like...” offer evidence of this. As this study has posited that rule-breaking is an emergent, emancipatory response to disharmony between a prosocial entrepreneur’s missional goals and the hegemonic system’s ability to provide a platform for that pursuit, it would be arguable that when experiencing disharmony at higher levels, the response will tend to have a higher level as well. The entrepreneur wants to break free and act to change their present situation (Dey and Steyaert,

2016; Karlsson, 2025), but why? This prosocial entrepreneur is dissenting. They are not *avoiding* harm. They have been experiencing the harm from the hegemony throughout the founding process. The system of rules has been constraining, and prescribing, their actions as it prevents their pursuit of missional goals. He wants to *alleviate* that harm he is experiencing by practicing freedom to “create space” between his beliefs about information sharing and the hegemony’s “intruding upon my personal life.” (Dey and Steyaert, 2016; Goss et al., 2011). He is also alleviating the harm experienced by the other stakeholders in the process. The signal power he uses is private, not covert or public, which is another element of a dissension intent. His partners, accountants and team know he is withholding information as they move the process forward. They also hear him declare his disharmony with the bankers and capital-providers. Ultimately, when viewing the elements of the intent in this scenario together, it helps define the entrepreneur’s response to the context more effectively than if it were defined on its own. The entrepreneur *interprets* the context, *in their own way* - appropriate for their defiance - to *alleviate* the harm, *privately*, in response to a high level of personal disharmony. Subsequently, they are not “taking advantage” of the context, or its ambiguity, as *leveraging* does.

## 9. Conclusion

Prosocial entrepreneurs can have many missions, but at least one of those is society’s betterment. This missional goal makes us view their moral portraits with “rose-colored” glasses. We want to see, and believe, that they are good (Bacq et al., 2016; Zahra et al., 2009). In Study One, we examined constructive rule beliefs (CRB), as developed by Zhang et al (2023), and found that it is predictive of rule breaking behaviors. One of its two primary aspects - rule relativity beliefs (RRB) – was especially helpful in its ability to predict rule-breaking amongst

the survey respondents. It also showed us that people that worked in prosocial contexts did, indeed, have lower levels of CRB and RRB. Subsequently, they should be less inclined to participate in rule-breaking. There is an aspect of cognitive drivers predicting how we might respond to rule-breaking contexts, but this was not what the data pertaining to prosocial entrepreneurs suggested. Their entrepreneurial impetus is one of creative destruction (Brenkert, 2009; Schumpeter, 1934). Entrepreneurs, even those in prosocial endeavors and their higher likelihood for rule-adherence, break rules, including in this study.

The extant literature on ethical decision making and, more specifically, rule breaking by entrepreneurs, including prosocial entrepreneurs, has described complex processes that are very difficult to define. These phenomena take on extra complexity when the focus is on prosocial entrepreneurs, because the missional outcomes can move across a spectrum of financial and social betterment, which are, often, in opposition with one another (Gümüşay et al., 2020; Pache and Santos, 2013). The data from the first part of Study Two reveals a pathway to a simpler framework for understanding the motivations for prosocial entrepreneurial rule-breaking activity. The disharmony is experienced as the prosocial entrepreneur perceives three different factors - the efficacy of the system and themselves, the situational context and its ambiguity, and most importantly, the harm, present and potential, in a situation. As the prosocial entrepreneur experiences disharmony between their missional pursuits and the ability, or willingness, of the hegemony to provide an environment for those pursuits, a greater likelihood for rule-breaking arises, because the prosocial entrepreneur feels constrained, desiring freedom. Subsequently, CRB level was not enough to explain rule-breaking in prosocial entrepreneurial contexts.

Building on the results of Study One, where the cognitive driver of constructive rule beliefs (CRB) and its constituent parts - rule relativity beliefs (RRB) and rule purpose beliefs

(RPB) - were helpful in predicting rule-breaking behavior, more generally, the data from Study Two adds factors driving experiences of disharmony for prosocial entrepreneurs and in the emancipatory act of rule-breaking. Instead of being a primary factor for rule-breaking behavior of prosocial entrepreneurs, CRB levels act as an inherent sensitivity to disharmony between a prosocial entrepreneur and the hegemonic system. High levels of CRB would make the prosocial entrepreneur more sensitive and, subsequently, quicker to reach a level of disharmony. Other inherent sensitivities could include the “temporal mood” of the prosocial entrepreneur at the moment they encounter a context with rule-breaking potential (see Figure 3).

Further data collection through interviews with prosocial entrepreneurs yielded a novel model of rule-breaking actions built on the concept of emancipatory entrepreneuring (Rindoval et al, 2009) in Study Two. Emancipatory rule-breaking intent explains how prosocial entrepreneurs experience disharmony between their missional pursuits and the hegemonic systems in place to provide them a platform for their pursuits and why they respond with a rule-breaking action. As these entrepreneurs experience disharmony with the hegemony, they become more likely to respond with rule-breaking actions. Inherent sensitivities, like the entrepreneurs’ CRB, or their “mood” at certain points in time, make a rule-breaking action more, or less, likely.

The response to the disharmony is emergent. It is an emancipatory action. These prosocial entrepreneurs break rules as an act of freedom and as agents of change. They have intents for their rule-breaking activity, regardless of the temporality – reactionary or strategic. These entrepreneurs try, often, to *negotiate* their situations without alerting anyone to how they are breaking rules in their missional pursuits. Sometimes, these prosocial entrepreneurs intend to *dissent*. They speak to their disharmony with rule-breaking that is seen by more than just themselves - often, a beneficiary of the prosocial rule-breaking actions in which they participate.

If the entrepreneur can raise their voice to the hegemony, through incessant or “noisy” rule-breaking, they can change – *transform* – aspects of the hegemonic system itself.

This study adds to the ethics and prosocial rule-breaking literature by focusing on prosocial entrepreneurs and their unique contexts as the rule-breaking perpetrators. In addition, the use of a mixed-methods, sequential explanatory research design extends the extant literature in several fields of study. These include the investigation of prosocial entrepreneurship, ethics and decision-making, and emancipatory entrepreneurship. Furthermore, the research investigated how and why prosocial entrepreneurs break rules, which has not been a focus of study in the extant literature, even though ethics and the morality of social entrepreneurship is no longer a nascent subject.

This mixed methods study makes contributions to theory in several areas as well. By positing a framework for rule-breaking action as an emergent, emancipatory response to a systemic disharmony, the model incorporates concerns of EDM scholars by integrating both the deliberative and emotional aspects (Chen-Bo Zhong, 2011; Schwartz, 2016) inherent in contexts requiring moral awareness (Bryant, 2009; McVea, 2009). This contrasts with the high complexity of most ethical decision-making models, which could include the classic rational models of entrepreneurial action. Finally, as the resulting emancipatory rule-breaking framework is heavily indebted to the work of Rindova et al (2009), and others (Chandra, 2017; Goss et al., 2011; Laine and Kibler, 2022), this research expands upon theory in emancipatory entrepreneurship as well.

Future research in what elements could be included in the inherent sensitivities that contribute to disharmony would be helpful. Understanding what makes prosocial entrepreneurs more prone to respond to the disharmony with rule-breaking could help increase the efficacy, innovation, or profitability of their rule-breaking actions. Understanding the curvilinear

relationship of CRB to rule-breaking could also be helpful. Quantitative research, looking at variables that would appropriately represent the drivers of disharmony could help explain these logarithmic relationships better, and, subsequently, add to the efficacy of the CRB construct's predictive power.

There are both practical and policy applications from this research. Cognitive drivers are important to understanding an individual's proclivity for rule-breaking, and subsequently, their potential for innovative thought and action (e.g. new venture founding, innovative leadership, etc.). However, it can also help identify problematic actors or allow closer governance in riskier situations.

The research has also shown that prosocial entrepreneurs can be different from their conventional counterparts. They break rules, but this research suggests that they break rules as practices of freedom with varied intention because they have multiple missions. Understanding these different intentions, we can help prosocial entrepreneurs pursue their missions more effectively – especially those that are trying to TRANSFORM the system with a vision or innovation that makes society better. We can also find the opportunities for rule-breaking with intentions that provide returns for our missions – sustainability, healthcare, poverty-alleviation, etc. In short, policy and operational applications could be realized by emulating the character of Dr. Max Goodwin, a quintessential prosocial leader, in the TV series *New Amsterdam* by asking the simple, powerful question, “How can I help?” And, when the system is failing to let entrepreneurs provide answers, a rule-breaking response may provide it for the present and future states.

Ultimately, this study has shown that prosocial entrepreneurs believe in doing no harm. They avoid it, alleviate it, and in certain cases, try hard to prevent it...all in pursuit of their dual and, often, “dueling” missions.

## Disharmony Drivers, Themes, Categories Representative Quotations – Table 35

Driver: Perceptions of Efficacy of Self and System  
 Theme: Belief in Ability/Need to Contribute to Societal Narrative  
 Category: Perceiving Rule-making and Adherence as Power Dynamics

*Yeah, I was born that way. Though, I'm born to be like, I don't like to say defiant, but I'm born, **I think I'm born to be able to question things.** I'm just wired that way. **I question authority** a lot. And it's not to say that authority doesn't... there's not a place for authority, but I also feel that in authority, we **should be able to have dialog**, we should be able to talk, we should be able to have an exchange.”*

*“we're against anything big pharma says, I'll just put it that way. So we're very much Rule Breakers there. We like. **We would rather go opposite.** The government says it, we did. We don't believe it. Big Pharma says it, we don't believe it”.*

*“Yes, I do very, very frequently, particularly in the transgender agenda. So when I was always too.. **I was very outspoken** in my beliefs and my views against transforming surgeries. But I was never mandated to do it, and then didn't do it. That makes sense. So I didn't break a rule. **I broke expectation. I broke the the hegemony, like, just like the this tidal wave of affirmation,** affirmation and but like we in medicine, have what's called the conscientious of job objection rights. So if we had consciously conscientiously object against a procedure or medication or treatment, then we can abstain from that. So it's not necessarily approving sense of commission, but it is the ability of omission, **like if I don't believe that this will care for my patient, and I have legal backing to not have to perform”***

*[There was this] time period of which was **'stop asking questions and do what we're telling you to do.'** You know these vaccines. Stop asking questions. Don't don't question the vaccines. **Don't question any of the medical science stuff.** And as a I grew up in a family of doctors. My dad was a doctor. My brother's a doctor. My grandmother was a doctor. My uncle is a doctor. It is a family of doctors, doctors and lawyers.*

*“Why is integrity so important to me? Yeah, well, I think it also, you know, for me, it probably goes back to my childhood where, you know, **I was bullied and Unfairly** you know, **blamed** for, you know that, so not only was I **the victim, but then I was blamed for being bullied,** you know. And so it really forced me to question, you know, human behavior, you know, group think, mob mentalities, but also, you know, **to question and try to really understand authority.**”*

*And I think that's when I that, you know, that's probably **where I realized that,** you know, **authority is frequently wrong.***

Theme: Belief in Ability/Need to Contribute to Societal Narrative

Category: Legitimacy-seeking

*So part of the ethics of being a leader is like being willing to take that burden and and having like that, you know, have to [be] bold. You know, **Fortune favors the bold attitude.***

*“especially in the audiology industry... there's a lot, there's been a lot of rules of, like, how things have typically been done, right? And when there's too many rules, it's hard to create new processes and improvements, right? So, **I look at the rules less than I look at potential, right? And, so I'm looking I'm looking at the destination rather than the barriers.** And that's always been my, my outlook.*

*It's going to become even more of a niche market because people are going to have more options to choose from, and more affordable options to start their journey on. So I think what's going to happen is the average first time user age is going to get pushed back. And that doesn't bode well for the industry. They want it going the other direction. So **I kind of knew that five, six years ago, I got a lot of shit for it, because people were like, you're so negative, you're so pessimistic.** And I think this ties in nicely to what you're trying to find is there's a reason **I take risks and I'm willing to take entrepreneurial risks, and a lot of people in this industry aren't, because a lot of people are just status quo.** Aren't willing to take a risk, aren't willing to break the rules or bend the rules a little bit, and I've always been that way, and I started seeing the cracks in the industry about 5, 6, 7, years ago, and then when I got laid off, I was like, Well, if I think that's the future of this industry, I need to figure out what I'm going to do, because I plan on working for, you know, 20 years or 25 more years.*

Theme: Belief in Ability/Need to Contribute to Societal Narrative

Category: Pursuit of Vision/Mission Paramount

*“**Because I wanted to be done the way I thought it could be done.** Okay? You know, if I feel I have an idea, and it's not like I can't listen to other people, but **if I have an idea, I want to flush that idea out. I don't want to be discouraged** by something because someone else might say, Oh, well, maybe you shouldn't do this”*

*“**I wanted to create the job that I was looking for** so it wasn't there, so I decided to make it myself. And as I was doing that, **I realized along the way here that I could impact many more people by doing this and creating just organizations or companies and have a bigger impact on the health and wellness of, you know, our community...** not doing it in, you know, like finance, or, I don't know, astrology or something like that, because I feel like **this really would make more of a difference and more of an impact in in people's day to day.**”*

*“I found that I've **I'm always miserable when I work for other people, and I need a lot of creative control.** And like I always whenever I work for other*

*people, I always secretly thought I was either had the better idea or and if the leaders didn't want to do what I thought was the right thing to do, **it would just burn me up so much that I just realized I have to do my own thing***

*“So part of it was the financial freedom aspect of it, part of it was just the inherent creativity that I either withdrew to plastics or kind of brought out in plastic surgery. And then my mentor who got me interested in business school, going to business school, looking at the world differently, as far as asset building, **developing something that you can be proud of, that you can grow, you can scale, you can change, you can shape, you can alter.** That's something you cannot do in a w2 job. I think all of those, all of those played into it.*

*“there's no burden or cost to me doing something that breaks a rule. And **the outcome could have some significant benefits to everyone involved,** by the way, including the promoter, right? Because I might be the speaker next year, or I might be the person enabling others once I'm successful, and collaborating with them. And I can cite that story about how it was their event that I snuck into, and without it, I wouldn't be here today all of that, I think, had the if they knew the potential kind of payout that could they could get, they would be more than happy to have me sit in there for free?*

*I guess **I just believe in what we're doing.** And I would believe that, you know, I would, I would take that on faith, and I would deal with the company being frosted, maybe, you know, having to, you know, win back trust, if necessary. So that's what I was thinking.*

Theme: Belief in ability to adjudicate and manage situations

Category: Evaluating the beneficiary of actions

*“**he didn't even have money to buy food and he begged me for help, I felt the need to help him** and I managed to get him a cleaning job.”*

*I saw that he was a good and honest person and was just trying to succeed in life, he didn't ask me for food, but for a job, he wants to work and is hardworking, so **he deserves good things.***

*“**it was me against her at that point,** you know, and it's just a weird scenario to get people in period. You know what I mean? But did I chart that? No, you know what I mean. so things like that, **where it's like safety for me first.** But **no, I didn't injure her either.**”*

*“I've had other things. We have had to bend rules. Transportation wise, okay, you know, okay, leading transportation. **There was one person who needed a ride, and I think something to do with their Medicare, Medicaid.** It's something that, **so I kind of help them to,** kind of, like, figure out **how to get it without saying** that they had to go this particular distance.”*

*“ I was wondering, some of the questions, I, in my mind, I was answering them about **thinking about whether or not every person is a stakeholder, every stakeholder whether they need to have a say in something.** I thought about that and that **I found myself answering, you know, no** to those kind of things, even though I was like, Yeah, it's fine to break rules.*

Theme: Belief in ability to adjudicate and manage situations

Category: Justifying/Judging the merit of rule

*But I didn't believe in those rules. Those rules didn't make sense to me. They didn't apply to me. I didn't see them really working in the real world.*

*There's another way to validate in case a question does arise. But if I know that I got it, and I've done everything that I needed to to get it, and I just actually missing the actual birth certificate, but I've worked the baby, then I would say yes, because it's not hard. I can show a receipt. I can show a hospital if I ever got questioned about it. **There's other ways of validating it** until the real certificate comes in.*

*If that thing gets signed and the certification comes in three days later, versus if you have the certification in hand where you sign it, like, **there's no actual difference that happens as a result of that***

*I would never, like, sneak in somewhere I shouldn't. So, like, if there was someone manning the door and they were turned their back for a minute or something, like, I wouldn't just go in. Like, personally, it's not how I would do it. But in the event where there's open seats, you're not taking a spot from anybody else. **There's no one to even ask if there's a way you can go in legitimately by upgrading your pass and giving them 100 bucks or whatever, when there's no other means to do it,** and you're not damaging anybody else by taking that seat. To me, **it seemed like it'd be a reasonable thing to do,** given the possible benefits on the other side.*

*doing tele-counseling over state lines for some states is, you know... Oh, you have to be licensed in that other state to be able to cross state lines. Now, yeah, that's, **that's just something I would say that I've given myself some flexibility to adhere to...***

*“Who gets hurt? Nobody gets hurt. So you know, ...and **these conferences charge us so much money anyway. Gives a shit if I go in and sit for 45 minutes and listen to somebody.** And that's the kind of thing.... If somebody confronted me, I, you know, if somebody said, 'I'm sorry, sir; you can't be there,' I wouldn't fight with them. I'd be like, okay, but if no one called me out on it, **your [being there] doesn't change the world.** No one's dying, no one's hurt.”*

Theme: Belief in ability to adjudicate and manage situations

Category: Belief in ability to manage outcomes

*“one is I had already gone through the process of taking the efforts to get certified. So doing the work that sits behind gaining the certification. Secondly, the time gap between signing and receiving the documentation is small enough that the risk I think is low...So if it was 2 weeks, 3 weeks, it's like OK, ‘Well, hold on.’ ... I will likely need to produce that documentation much sooner, right? Proving the certification will only be a matter of a few days, right? But, the work has been done. And so in that way, like it felt like a safer call because essentially, I'm waiting for a paper to show up to my door. Right. But, all of the work has been done, and by the time that paper shows up right, **we're still going to be finalizing contracts and etcetera anyway, filing all the bits and bobs that comes with that. And so, it becomes a click and forward. And ‘here's that final piece of documentation you needed for the contract’....”***

*“if the room filled up and you were sitting down and there was no chairs, then **you should totally get up and either leave or stand in the back**, right, like, because then there's a victim.”*

*“I know that rules are supposed to be followed, but **sometimes I kind of have to break them because**, and not because. I'm like, ‘Yeah, I just want to do it because I'm bad or something.’ It's like, No, **‘I think I can get away with this.’”***

Driver: Perceptions of Context and Ambiguity in Situations

Theme: Ambiguous contexts bias toward action

Category: “Hustling in uncertainty”

*“we're just going to have to wait seven days. **I would have been able to finagle”***

*“[It's] almost guaranteed, but not [a] total guarantee, that we'd have it. My thoughts on that were, **I wouldn't let my business fail on something that is pretty much a sure thing**. Should the certification not be qualified? I could, you know, report back to the company saying, I don't know what happened. The certification didn't go through. I thought I had it whatever, you know, but I wouldn't if, if it didn't pass muster, if I needed to be recertified or whatever.”*

*“as an entrepreneur, like a business, **you're hustling**, and you're like, always, like, **trying to make things happen**. And that, if you've been told by an authority figure that it's coming, and it's like, a slow, bureaucratic, like, paper pushing thing that, like, **that would be good enough**, was kind of my thinking on it”*

*“I've been told that I'm very rigid, and so I'm very by the book. I'm a military brat. I am very self-disciplined. I do 100% of my [daily] work online... **But then something happens** when I shift to on site and I'm in Uganda, in the refugee camps. **Rules go out the door**, and, if we need to get over to Congo, **all***

*I gotta do is bring two sodas and a pack of smokes, and I can get past border security to get to where I need to go to...normally, I'm not like that, like, normally I'm like, by the book."*

*"there's so many red tapes, especially when you're dealing with, like, larger companies, you know, to get permission to do things. You know, how far does it have to go to the chain? How long does that push development of of your idea out? Like, how much thing changes while you're waiting for approval on something I'd rather just execute"*

Theme: Ambiguous contexts bias toward action

Category: Trust in the "spirit" rather than the "letter" of the rule

*"if, like an authority figure has said as much like that, you can kind of count on that, I guess, would be my justification for it, like you're not pulling it out of nowhere. You're literally being told by someone else with authority to grant it that it's coming.*

*"So this one is right on the edge of comfort level of breaking the rules on this one. It's like, so I. Also believe in ethics and telling the truth. Okay, so this one, this one was a bit on the edge for me, but what, what took me over the edge was that I had been again, verbally told that we would get the certification"*

*"I had been given a verbal affirmation that this was coming [and] I would receive it. And so, I would have felt justified to some extent of being able to then tell someone else that, yes, I have this. In the second scenario, I had not been given even a verbal approval..."*

*"I definitely like, am anti lying. So I don't know if that, like, it's part of this. Like, I really don't like lying. I'm bad at it. I think it's like one of the worst things you can do. I think it's like the biggest disrupter of trust in relationships. So like, I don't like lying, but also, like, if the tax code is written a certain way, and you can outsmart it, and like, then, like, I'm for that."*

Theme: Context justifies rule-breaking

Category: Experiential knowledge of hegemonic controls as incentive

*I'll give you an example from opening up our business in our Med Spa, we received a of insurance. It wasn't the official insurance coverage, but it was a binder an agreement from our insurance broker that says, Yes, you have received, you're going to receive coverage on the date that you requested. But we hadn't actually received the actual so it actually kind of played into a little bit similar to the situation here, where, technically, you know, to open our doors as a business, we have to have medical malpractice insurance, and so we had received that binder that says you will be receiving it, but I hadn't actually received the official documentation from the medical insurance company. But the binder was enough [for us to open]*

*my whole thought was I literally own a festival with those exact kind of rules. So it probably happened all the time...the stakes were much lower on the second scenario, that **the worst thing that could happen is someone said, Well, sir, you have to leave***

*That's, again, where, like, **I think the consequence is pretty negligible for entering there***

*“if the speed limit is 70, and I drive 70 across Wisconsin on Highway 12 or 52 whatever that is. **There are times when I'm actually going to be a nuisance to people because I'm going way too slow, and I could even endanger myself and my family. And sometimes I need to go way over the limit. So first of all, breaking the speed limit rule is a complete expectation at that point. There's even caveats in the law that say, if you at least from my driver education, 29 years ago in Cal. California that say, if you have to pick between keeping up with the troph flow of traffic and following the speed limit, you should keep up with the flow of traffic. That is the caveat to the rule. So the rule, it's, it's like a perforated rule. It's like meant to be broken. It's a rule that's pre snapped for you.**”*

Theme: Context justifies rule-breaking

Category: Intent/reason for rule-breaking action is important

*Now I guess, if it was a, if there was one of our competitors speaking or something, and I guess I'm trying to give a scenario where, like, **I was hearing something I shouldn't hear, like, for a different reason, other than the revenue that's being lost. Like, maybe, maybe that would be like, like, if I could somehow, like, hack into our competitors, Zoom line and listen in to their conversations in private. Like, obviously, that would be massive ethical issue on my perspective. So I don't want to make it sound like I'm willing to, like, go steal trade secrets or anything like that,***

*I could see that if the product that they were selling required effort to produce for each individual so, you know, for example, if I'm in the business of, you know, I don't know, making air pods, right? And if they were out on a table in a room instead of a talk going on, there were, you know, and **you come in and you take one and leave, okay, as opposed to taking in a discussion and leaving, you take a device and leave there was a cost to produce that that is incremental***

*if I was to **break a rule with the purpose of, you know, earning more money that I think I would like have a little bit more pause, it wouldn't make me feel good to be doing it for that reason. Because, you know, your reason for breaking the rule could be colored by that other desire, whereas, I guess doing it for something like knowledge, I think, is a little bit more clean on the conscience.***

*but I think that there's a difference between taking a risk and playing within the rules of the game versus breaking, like **breaking knowing it's wrong and doing the wrong thing**, like knowing that it's wrong and then doing the Wrong thing because it benefits you. **I'm against that.***

*if you had said, like, **I looked at the program and I figured I could sneak** in if I waited till five minutes after and I could that, yeah, **that is different**, because, like, there's a sponsoring organization with, you know, and you're taking advantage, **and you had intent to, like, steal** in a way, but this, I don't see that way. And if someone tapped you on the shoulder and was like, you're not supposed to be here, you owe us 89 bucks. You should pay like, you know*

*that could be an intention of other people that this rule is meant to control, but because **that's not my intention**, I [say] that part of the rule, I would say doesn't, **doesn't apply to me**, especially if they're not going to enforce, like, if I can get in there, I'm going to go in*

Theme: FOMO

Category: Rationalization of actions through minimization of harm from externalities

*"I don't know if it's stupidity. Oh no, there's something all right... I guess that depending on who you know, had had told me that it was coming. You know what I mean? It's just like. It's it was more, **I guess the faith-based** not, you know, "faith-based" but **that it was rolling in motion and things had been working out**...you know **everything's been going good**. And so I'm gonna take that risk of saying yeah, **because the other risk of just being like no**, I can't do it. **And then I end up getting the information** and then **I'm like, Dang**, you know..."*

*"**kind of sneaking into**, you know, a seminar where **maybe** I shouldn't have been right, **but I'm not really hurting anyone** with that"*

*"there's **not really a competition**, you know, it's, it's gaining information, **getting some networking**, or connecting with other people, being able to **develop some relational pieces that doesn't feel** like it's taking away from anyone else"*

*"And I was like, **the worst case is**, you know, **I might have to** go back and say, Hey, **we thought** we had it, **but** here's the situation, we don't have it at this point. So that was, that was how I went through that thought process"*

*"Who's the victim in walking in who's harmed by my presence in there? **I can't think of any obvious person or entity being harmed** by my presence in there other than I suppose the argument that the conference organizers"*

*"**you could go make it right** later, which would be the ideal thing to do, **but in that moment**, if you try to go do that, **you're going to miss the class.**"*

*“the four day gap of death, those would be four days of no no black swan can happen. **No black swan events can happen.** You know, doing everything you can to make sure that the deal still goes through, that nothing comes up. I just asked myself a very simple question. If I were, I think if you want to build a great company and you want to grow something you had, you have to take risks. And that risk, to me, it didn't seem it would have been four very scary days, but I would have, I was asking myself, what's the likelihood that it wouldn't go through?”*

*“I did feel that I would owe it to my like, the letdown that would happen for all the people working for me by not doing that deal, it would have been like watching a competitor take, you know, a huge step forward in growth. And then, like I thought, I did think about my like **the people working for me**, that was my first thought... literally imagined going to my team and saying, Guys, we can't do this. We can't take this risk, because if we're wrong, it could be this big legal thing. And then three days later, they see in the news, competitor company signs massive deal. Like I saw all that in my mind, and I just said to myself, that would just **demoralize, like, crush the team.**”*

Theme: FOMO

Category: Perception that rule-breaking is essential for success and/or opportunity

*“I think **breaking the rules is absolutely necessary** for innovation.”*

*“Because, **in order for me to help** other people, I have got to have that knowledge.”*

*“Rule breaking is **not that bad.** It all depends on the situation. **Going by the norm** can sometimes be **misleading and a disadvantage.**”*

*“the risk that was that this was not a change of, a change of a doctor's appointment, because I don't have this document. [You just say] “I'll come in next week.” This was essentially **your life career was at stake** in this. But, yeah, your career was at stake in this. **All your work was at stake, so this rule was threatening everything”***

*“In the first scenario, I would sign the contract because it is a risk that we **must take to have a chance of success.** If I didn't sign, **everything could already be lost.** By signing, I have a great chance due to the commitment.”*

*“and I need to **break the rule** to have the chance to **grow** more professionally, to have new opportunities”*

*“they have the skill of justifying that lie, and they get the job, and, you know, and they're and **they're super successful**, and that's, that's great again, I feel like looking back, **I probably am too extreme on the not breaking** any of these rules, and a rule like that as an example.”*

Theme: Situational empathy

Category: Moral imagination justifying discontent

*“again, this goes back to prior conversation where we talked about 10 years ago, I would have had a different answer before the COVID time we felt that the code that doctors operated under, and even the pharmaceutical companies and the government operated under, was, was, you know, the Hippocratic method of you know, we're to do no harm, and everything that we're doing is for the betterment of the individual that we are treating that we as you know, I'm not a doctor side. I'm using the universal we have doctors that we are to do no harm, and a lot of that from our viewpoint, changed over the last 10 years, because it became more about the business, financial side, to the detriment of the individual, patients and society. And that was what kind of over the last many years has kind of moved us into this, okay, you know, regulation, we are too regulated. Are there some rules that can be broken? Well, then it comes down to why was that rule created? You know, you. And that was when we also saw that the whole scientific process was being cast aside for financial perspectives and as a family that comes from a very much a scientific side, medical doctors for generations...”*

*“I think rules can be written and enacted, but they need to be able to be criticized at the same time, you know. So it's like, if something gets in and it's like, this is just making business impossible, there's got to be somewhere to go to say, Hey, listen this. This is too much”.*

*“[Women's care] let's lean towards that, not let's lean towards the financial capitalism dynamics that I think businesses tend to optimize for”*

*“I'm sensitive to what people might think that I'm implying. What if he is a citizen, right? Okay? What if he happened to just be like confused as to, why do I need to know that? You know, I try to think of all the reasons why he could, even though I felt he was, you know, I didn't want to insult him. I wanted him to feel like he had a safe space with me,”*

Theme: Situational empathy

Category: Internal gratification for rule-breaking

*“I guess I've, I've always had that kind of weird process where it's like, I'm more timid about breaking rules or whatever, when, when it's stepping on the toes of someone else. You know, it took me forever to get into certain procedures because I didn't want to get in the way of the specialists that perform them and things like that. And it's one of those things where sometimes it's a relief when you when you finally do break those rules and start start thinking more and more for yourself or your team or whatever.”*

*“I just believe in, you know, doing good and then doing what you can to help others, sometimes to the detriment of my my own and my team's financial*

*objectives. But it's a something that it's just strongly in my my core values, and I sleep better and feel better about myself when I'm having a positive impact on on those around me."*

*"I feel good about {breaking the rule} because it shows that I am committed to my goals."*

*"I guess I find a lot more courage [to break rules] when I see those uncomfortable steps being taken to move everything forward for the entire team"*

Theme: Situational empathy

Category: Envisioning positive outcomes and/or externalities of rule-breaking

*"[If it helps the patient] ...and if it's really, I guess **not causing** a life or death threat, you know, to the patient, I would break the rule. I would do that again [and again]."*

*"Like I'm there, the **information's there**. Why not? Is there? Is there any consequence to me going in ..., like ... if I get caught in this thing, am I going to get a penalty? Am I going to get fined? And **my view, I could probably add just as much value to the conversation as I can get out**"*

*And so I've done that kind of thing, **broken that rule in the interest of the patient** who is about to go see their doctor that wants to see those results"*

*"The **maximum benefit of a conference is human connection**. I've heard a lot of stories of kind of up and coming **business people** that, you know, they're **not allowed** to talk to this particular powerful speaker, CEO person, **but they hustle their way in** [and get to see them]. And, you see it all the time, these **crazy soccer fans [and the] stars...** they run on the field to get a selfie with their favorite player, and **the bodyguard is right there. But then when they get there, the soccer player says to them, 'that's okay, don't worry about it. Take a picture,'** and you're on your way."*

## Formal Rule Beliefs Survey and Scenario Response Follow-up

In this survey you will read "belief" statements about formal rules and will be asked to rate your level of agreement or disagreement with the statements. Formal rules are rules that have been codified as law or regulations and are reasonably enforceable by a relevant authority either through penalty or sanction. An authority could include governments, but it could also include certifying/licensing bodies (e.g. American Bar Association, American Medical Association, American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, or the YogaAlliance). Formal rules would not include social norms or traditions.

Lastly, you will be asked to read two scenarios and provide a response of yes or no.

When you submit this form, it will not automatically collect your details like name and email address unless you provide it yourself.

\* Required

### Demographic Info

1. Prolific ID - If you have a Prolific ID, please enter it here (type "NA" if you do not) \*

Enter your answer

## 2. Consent Form

Research Study:

### **Prosocial Entrepreneurs and Rule-breaking Beliefs**

Researcher from Durham University and emLyon Business School is undertaking a research study to examine the role of formal rule beliefs in rule-breaking actions of prosocial entrepreneurs and practitioners in the health and wellness fields. We are asking you to help with this study by providing your feedback in a survey and interview and letting us analyse the information about your responses.

### **How will my information be used?**

The information that you provide will be used to develop and test recommendations that are anticipated to improve the understanding of ethical decision-making and actions of entrepreneurs and practitioners in prosocial endeavours, including how it affects innovation. Information that you provide is anonymous to all but the researchers and will be recorded and stored securely. We understand that some information may be sensitive and we will keep your information confidential and use it only for this study. When the study is completed, the information will be deleted from the secure file storage. The only exception to this is if you tell us anything indicating that someone might be in danger; then we have a responsibility to act on that information but we would not do this without telling you and including you in the process. Data collected will be anonymous to all but the researchers and aggregated and reported accordingly. The primary purpose of the research study is to satisfy the requirements for the qualification of a doctorate in business administration. However, during the course of the study opportunities to publish research design, interim findings and the final recommendations, may arise. By agreeing to participate in the study you consent to the data being used for such publications.

### **Consent**

I have read the information above and have had an opportunity to ask questions about the study and how my information will be used. I understand the purpose of the study and what my participation involves.

I agree to take part in the study via a survey and for the information I provide to be shared in aggregate with the universities.

I understand that anonymised information I provide may be published in aggregate within the study, which may be published online and that published material from this study may be used and distributed for training and process design and development.

I know that my participation is voluntary and that I can choose to withdraw from the research at any point.

I know that if I choose NOT to provide consent that I will not be eligible for any compensation for my survey responses. \*

Yes - I Agree and provide consent

No - I do NOT provide consent

### 3. Gender \*

Male

Female

Non-binary

Prefer not to say

### 4. What is your age? \*

18-24

25-34

35-44

45-54

55-64

65+

5. What is your level of education? \*

High school or equivalent

Some college

College Diploma

Graduate diploma

6. Do you work in Health and Wellness? \*

Yes

No

7. Is your business/entrepreneurial pursuit your full-time/primary occupation? \*

Yes

No

8. How long have you been a business owner/entrepreneur? \*

Less than One (1) Year

1-5 Years

5-10 Years

More than 10 Years

9. What level do you agree with these statements? \*

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly agree

I get energized by working tasks that have the potential to help others

I like to work on tasks that have the potential to benefit others.

I prefer to work on tasks that allow me to have a positive impact on others

I do my best when I'm working on a task that contributes to the well-being of others

It is important to me to have the opportunity to use my abilities to benefit others.

# Formal Rule Beliefs Survey and Scenario Response Follow-up

\* Required

## Rule Beliefs Part 1

Please choose the level you agree with the following statements from "Totally Disagree" to "Totally Agree"

10. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about formal rules? \*

	Totally Disagree	Mostly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Mostly Agree	Totally Agree
Some rules should be broken.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
People should always follow formal rules	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

It is justifiable to break some formal rules.

Formal rules should be followed regardless of the context.

Formal rules should be followed no matter what.

Sometimes it is okay to ignore formal rules.

The best answer to the question "Should rules be followed?" is "It depends".

Rules are so important to society that people should even follow rules they disagree with.

People should generally do whatever a formal rule requires of them.

Formal rules should generally be followed.

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# Formal Rule Beliefs Survey and Scenario Response Follow-up

\* Required

## Attention Check

11. This is an attention check - please click "Option 2" \*

Option 1

Option 2

Option 3

Option 4

# Formal Rule Beliefs Survey and Scenario Response Follow-up

\* Required

## Rule Beliefs Part 2

12. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about rules? \*

	Totally Disagree	Mostly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Mostly Agree	Totally Agree
Formal rules should be updated regularly to stay relevant	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
When making a rule, the views of all parties affected by the rule should be considered	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

Everyone who is or will be affected by the formal rules should have a say in how rules are formed.

Formal rules should serve a purpose.

It is important to question rules where necessary.

When making a new rule, authorities should provide a clear justification for the purpose of the rule.

Everyone affected by formal rules should have the opportunity to partake in the making of them.

For formal rules to serve the purpose they were designed for, they need to be open to change.

I am more likely to follow a rule when I believe the rule serves an important purpose.

The best rules are those that are fluid and responsive to what is happening in the environment.

13. This is an attention check - please click "Option 4" \*

Option 1

Option 2

Option 3

Option 4

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# Formal Rule Beliefs Survey and Scenario Response Follow-up

\* Required

## Scenarios

Here you will read the following scenarios as if you were an entrepreneur. After reading the scenario, you will choose between two opposing actions.

14. You are a wellness technology start up that sells platform solutions to yoga and pilates studios to enhance the experiences and outcomes for its members. Your solution incorporates image-recognition software, wearable technologies, and artificial intelligence. You are working on a deal that will generate exponential growth for your company. A leading international brand is deciding between your platform and one from your competitor (the largest in the industry) for a pilot program in 110 of their studios around the world. You have been awarded the project due to your cutting-edge technology. However, due to the nature of the solution, which includes collecting and handling personal information, images, and other privacy-sensitive documentation, the award is conditional upon your warranty that your company, systems, and infrastructure are tested and certified according to best-in-class operational standards. You are in the final stages of your firm's AICPA SOC2 Type 2 attestation, which is one of the two accepted standards for the award. You have been told by the auditors, informally, that you will have your certification, but you have not received your documentation, which will be available in 7 days. Due to numerous resource requirements and scheduling constraints for this initiative, your potential customer has stated that you need to sign the service agreement (including the warranty) in three days, or it will be rescinded. When the award is rescinded, the project may be awarded to your competitor, or the brand may, or may not, pursue the pilot initiative in the next fiscal year (dependent upon budgeting). Do you sign the agreement and warranty? \*

Yes

No

15. You have developed a new therapy for your practice. This offering opens up new markets, is expected to add 25% more revenue to your business and should increase beneficial outcomes for your patient/client community. However, because of its novelty, you are not comfortable with your knowledge of the provisional costs, or if the offering is compliant with current regulations or best practices. You are attending an industry conference on a guest pass from one of your suppliers. As you walk around, you notice that one of the seminars about to begin has the information and people to provide you with answers and connections that you need. Unfortunately, the seminar is closed and you are not on the list of attendees. Furthermore, your guest pass does not allow you to attend seminars. You notice there is no one checking people in anymore. You can go through the doors, take a seat, and, possibly, meet people, find partnerships, and get the answers you require to launch 6 months before you would be able to without attending. Do you attend the seminar?

\*

Yes

No

16. If you chose to attend the seminar, why did you do it? Please rank the following reasons for your decision from most important to least important. \*

I want to start growing my revenue as soon as I can.

I want to meet people that could help me realize the potential of my new therapy.

I want to understand more about how my innovation can be employed effectively and compliantly.

I want to find new partnerships or customers.

I want people to understand how exciting and innovative my therapy is.

You can print a copy of your answer after you submit

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