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主 論 文 の 要 旨

論文題目

The Role of Moral Character in Blaming Failure to Help

(援助行動の失敗に対する非難における行為者の道徳的性質の役割)

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論 文 内 容 の 要 旨

In the present Ph.D. thesis, I explored the role of moral character in assigning blame for failure to help. In the general principal of law, blame is assigned to a crime based on its objective element, i.e., the action or inaction itself, and the subjective element, i.e., the mental state of the criminal. Moral psychological research sustains the relevance of these two criteria in the psychological processing of blame. However, recent research has also explored another important element in assigning blame: the moral character of the agent. Blame has been predominantly studied from the perspective of blameworthy wrongdoings. The present thesis aims to explore the roles of action-inaction and mental state information for assignment of blame in situations of failure to help, instead of wrongdoings, with the focus on the moral character explanation. In three sets of studies, I argue that the moral character of the agent is a determinant process through which individuals make judgments of blame for failure to help. In Study 1, I show evidence that choosing to omit help (vs. taking action to help) affects blame for failure to help in part due to underlying perceptions of moral character. In Study 2, I show that mental states such as intentions are informative of character, especially when the mental state is negative. In Study 3, I provide evidence that mental state information affects blame for failure to help due to inferences of moral character. Overall, the present thesis showed that moral character is an important explanation to the effect of both action-inaction and mental state information on blame for failure to help.