



ISSN: 2733-7146
 JRPE Website: <https://accesson.kr/jrpe>
 doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15722/jrpe.5.1.202403.13>

The Effect of Consciousness of Research Ethics on Job Commitment - Focusing on the Mediating Effect of Ethical Efficacy and Self-efficacy

Min-Jung KANG¹, Hee-Joong HWANG²

Received: January 15, 2024. Revised: March 02, 2024. Accepted: March 05, 2024.

Abstract

Purpose: Since 2006, social, ethical, and institutional options have been attempted in Korea to establish research ethics; however, the effectiveness of these attempts has not been thoroughly examined. Studies have been conducted abroad to determine the timeliness of social, ethical and institutional alternatives, such as the adoption of laws governing research ethics, the improvement of research ethics education, the bolstering of systems, the introduction of incentive programs, and the creation of social environments that support research ethics. **Research design, data, and methodology:** Specific facets of research misconduct or research ethics must be investigated and verified. Aspects of moral growth at the person level must be investigated via research ethics and research ethics education. **Results:** There is an increasing need for the general public to define and uphold research ethics as the impact of research findings on society grows. Researchers can boost their confidence in their ethical judgments and actions by being aware of research ethics. This may lead to confidence in their capacity to make morally sound decisions. **Conclusion:** By doing this study, the researcher confirmed that ethically correct behavior can lead to and realize self-growth. Researchers may be more interested in and dedicated to their work when they feel that their research might help them mature and develop ethically.

Keywords: Consciousness of Research Ethics, Job Commitment, Ethical Efficacy, Self-Efficacy.

JEL Classification Code I20, I23, I29, I21, I23.

1. Introduction

Research ethics education has been a topic of discussion since the mid-to-late 2000s, and researchers have gradually received training in this area. Research accomplishments have become a key factor in career growth, and higher education institutions have stressed to their faculty the research role of their studies, which is a

significant component of societal development. Due to the rising competitiveness among academic scholars, there is a greater risk to scientific integrity (Drolet et al., 2022).

Research institutes have shown a growing interest in academic ethics and integrity since issues like scientific fraud by researchers have surfaced to acquire research findings. As such, it is imperative to investigate how academic academics understand ethics, as well as the

1 First Author. Professor, Department of Business and Management, Mokpo National University, Korea. Email: 7minjeong@hanmail.net

2 Corresponding Author. Professor, Department of International Trade, Korea National Open University, Seoul, Korea. Email: ygodson@knou.ac.kr

© Copyright: The Author(s)

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>) which permits unrestricted noncommercial use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

variables that shape and are influenced by these variables. There have been prior studies on the level of research ethics knowledge among professionals in the field, such as professors and graduate students, but there aren't many on the significance of research ethics and the efficacy of research ethical awareness. Furthermore, a study was conducted on the connection between research ethics and morality as well as the psychological component of this relationship, specifically moral judgment capacity. However, no study was conducted on the association between research ethics and work commitment. Thus, the purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between researchers' work devotion and research ethics.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Consciousness of Research Ethics

The moral standards and guidelines that must be followed during research operations are referred to as research ethics. The readiness or attitude to perform research activities in an ethically sound manner is referred to as research ethics. This entails that researchers respect the rights and safety of study subjects as well as other researchers and adhere to ethical norms when choosing research topics, gathering, analyzing, and reporting research results. Researchers who adhere to research ethics have the ability to fulfill their societal responsibilities and make valuable contributions towards improving the reliability and transparency of research. The significance of research ethics lies in its capacity to promote socially and ethically acceptable conduct throughout the research process, while also safeguarding the reliability and validity of the research. Research ethics encompasses a set of standards that researchers should comply to at every stage, ranging from the selection of research topics to the collection, analysis, and disclosure of data and findings. The majority of these standards are established based on the research ethics guidelines set forth by research institutions, academic associations, and governmental organizations. Fundamental values of research ethics encompass authenticity, integrity, regard, impartiality, openness, safeguarding, and acceptance. These values hold significant significance in enhancing the caliber of research and upholding societal confidence. The realm of research ethics encompasses the diverse stages of research, ranging from its conception, execution, and dissemination of findings, and encompasses them within the domain of research ethics. Shamoo and Resnik (2003) focus on various aspects of research conducted in laboratories, including data collection, research

performance, intellectual property rights, animal testing, and the ethical responsibilities that researchers must possess. They also discuss the importance of collaboration between academia and industry. On the other hand, Steneck (2004) addresses research ethics within laboratory activities, covering topics such as guidelines for responsible research conduct, handling research irregularities, ensuring the welfare of experimental animals, managing data, and appropriately attributing authorship.

The scope of research ethics encompasses various aspects, as highlighted by Macrina (2005). These include author labeling and peer review, responsible research practices, considerations for human and animal utilization in experiments, and efficient data management. All these activities within the laboratory setting are considered integral to maintaining ethical standards in research.

Hyttinen and Löfström (2017) provided a definition of 'research ethics' as the adherence to ethical theory in order to maintain a standard of moral behavior. They emphasized the importance of professional researchers possessing the skills and knowledge required for the creation and dissemination of systematic and generalized knowledge. Furthermore, Tammeleht et al. (2022) defined 'research ethics' as the implementation of fundamental ethical principles and guidelines during the development of research projects.

2.2. Moral Efficacy

The foundation of ethical effectiveness traces back to the notion of self-efficacy, a concept that psychology suggests can be attained through intentional efforts. Bandura (1997) characterized self-efficacy as "an individual's assurance in their capacity to combine cognitive abilities and motivation required to effectively carry out a particular task in a specific setting." Similarly, self-efficacy can be described as an individual's conviction in their capability to inspire themselves, follow a set of actions essential for the successful completion of a particular task under specific circumstances, and trust in their capacity to harness cognitive resources to achieve a defined objective (Luthans et al., 2004).

Individuals who possess self-efficacy, defined as a strong belief in their ability to accomplish tasks, often opt for challenging endeavors and work diligently to attain their objectives. Moreover, they proactively tackle obstacles that may arise along the way. Ethical efficacy, within the realm of ethics, involves cultivating this self-assurance to effectively address and resolve ethical dilemmas encountered in a professional setting.

Ethical education is crucial in fostering ethical efficacy, which in turn influences ethical behavior within

the workplace. Ethical efficacy involves an individual's belief system that guides their actions and decisions in ethical dilemmas, ultimately leading to ethical conduct.

By instilling ethical reasons to address ethical challenges, ethical efficacy plays a significant role in upholding ethical standards and promoting ethical behavior. This component, along with ethical courage, contributes to enhancing the motivation to act ethically, a process that can be cultivated through education and training. Studies have shown that ethical efficacy not only impacts individual behavior but also influences leaders' ethical efficacy, which in turn affects the ethical behavior of organizational members. Authentic leadership has been identified as a key factor in this relationship, highlighting the importance of ethical efficacy in organizational settings. Ethical efficacy is closely linked to positive organizational scholarship (POS) from a structural organizational perspective, as it enhances the overall work processes and outcomes within an organization. Therefore, ethical efficacy is essential in supporting ethical behavior at both individual and organizational levels.

2.3. Moral Meaningfulness

"Sense of meaning" describes the significance or meaning attached to a certain thing, occasion, circumstance, etc. It is arbitrary and might vary from person to person or from group to group. While some people find significance in small, insignificant things, others find meaning in significant occasions or accomplishments. This is contingent upon personal ideals, life experiences, cultural upbringings, etc. One idea that is employed in the study of organizational behavior and job design is the meaning of the word meaning. The reason that people place such a high value on having a "sense of meaning" for their experiences is that everyone wants to feel like they have a purpose in life. Simply put, people have a future or a purpose in life.

We would like to give one purpose in life meaning in order to make it more worthwhile. Employee job satisfaction and empathy are positively correlated with their level of organizational belonging, and these factors have an impact on the organization's overall performance (Baumeister, 2002). An ethical value in the workplace, ethical meaning is an expansion of the ethical idea from the meaning of organizational conduct. It speaks to the degree of significance, or meaning, one must possess in order to act ethically. Together with ethical awareness and ethical identity, this feeling of ethical meaning drives ethical conduct and acts as a powerful motivator for ethical activity. It's a cycle that promotes moral bravery as well.

It is a crucial medium that serves as a driving force and enables the ethical mentality to be manifested through

ethical action. The urge to resolve moral conundrums comes from ethical meaning.

"Ethical sense of meaning" refers to the significance or meaning of a morally righteous decision or course of conduct. When a person or organization follows moral guidelines and behaves morally, this is how they genuinely feel. Individuals who have an ethical meaning believe that by acting in a way that upholds their beliefs, advances societal or communal goals, and does not damage others, their activities can have a larger meaning. This is a significant element that can support both social and personal development.

From the perspective of the researcher, ethical meaning refers to the significance or meaning of moral decisions and behaviors made throughout the course of study. This is to uphold the validity and openness of research findings, honor the rights and safety of people involved in the process, and carry out their societal obligations. Through their research, scientists who uphold ethical standards advance knowledge while pursuing societal goals and showing respect and regard for both research subjects and research environments. This raises the value of research and gives its findings a wider context and impact, which supports the role and accountability of researchers.

2.4. Job Meaningfulness

The significance or value that a person derives from carrying out his or her job is referred to as job sense. This is experienced by giving someone a chance to showcase their skills and abilities or by helping to make social values a reality. Work sense and self-realization are linked, and you feel satisfied when you carry out activities that align with your personal ideals. Work sense can boost individual performance and contribution within the organization as well as motivation for work and responsibility for job performance.

A general reference to the level of significance found in one's work is "meaningful work" (Rosso et al., 2010). According to Steger (2012), there are three components that make up the meaning of work. Initially, it was observed that their subjective perception of the significance of their labor was 'positive sense in work'. The second aspect is to how individuals perceive what they learn, comprehend, and develop as "the meaning of making through work." 'Motivation to the public good' is the final dimension, which highlights the importance of making a positive impact on others and society. Like the purpose of life, the meaning of labor can be understood as an altruistic and self-transcendent drive. The significance of work meaning stems from the fact that, in the contemporary era, it is linked to both individual and

organizational goals (Steger et al., 2012).

2.5. Job Commitment

A person who exhibits a high interest in and commitment to their work is said to be in a state of job commitment. Work commitment entails putting in a lot of effort, concentrating, and developing a sense of accountability for one's work while at work. This makes it easier for people to concentrate on their work and to feel proud and satisfied when they complete it.

Within an organization, job dedication has a significant impact on employee creativity, productivity, and performance. Employees that put in a lot of effort at work also show a lot of loyalty to the company and can help foster teamwork. A balanced approach to job commitment is crucial, though, as overindulgence in one area can lead to stress at work. Honesty, transparency, fairness, and contribution are ethical leadership factors that impact job commitment and corporate management performance, according to a study by Victor and Cullen (1987). Additionally, research by Brown and Treviño (2006) suggested a significant relationship between members of the organization's active attitude and ethical leadership.

Members of an organization that possess self-efficacy are able to sustain and use their positive attitudes as well as their demanding and inventive activities (Bradley & Roberts, 2004). Furthermore, self-efficacy is an evaluation of oneself.

It can have an impact on job satisfaction and is a sub-factor of the feeling of (self-evaluation). The 'core-evaluation' hypothesis states that the individual components of job satisfaction are determined by self-efficacy, control position, self-respect, and emotional stability (Judge et al., 1997).

3. Operational Definition of Each Variable

3.1. Perceptions of Research Ethics

The perception of research ethics consisted of five representative questions.

Fairness, honesty, respect, accountability, and openness are the five categories into which we divided the awareness of research ethics (Shamoo & Resnik, 2003). Each area's description is displayed in <Table 1>.

The following are the typical research questions for each field. "I acknowledge that all researchers have equal opportunities to participate in research and use research resources." "I do not use inaccurate data produced by errors in research performance." "I identify the source of

any accomplishment I use from the findings of other researchers." "I abide by the regulations (guidelines) pertaining to research ethics." "When I discover a mistake in my research, I take appropriate follow-up measures."

Table 1: Five areas of research ethics level measurement

Area	Description
Impartiality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No monopolies or prejudice in the allocation of research funding and financial successes - The impartial assessment of peer review and the identification of acceptable author qualifications - Any delays or connections to the school, etc. shall not bind the examiner or evaluator
Honesty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No fabrications or falsifications in the process of data collection, analysis, interpretation, results, etc. - Cite specific sources for your study findings and provide evidence of them. - Prevent mistakes in research materials and truthfully reporting experimental outcomes
Respect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Researchers do not discriminate based on race or social class when they have access to open data sources - Respect for fellow researchers who helped with the research - Respect for other researchers who assisted with the study (animals including humans)
Responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Report of inappropriate research activities - Understanding and adhering to research ethics guidelines, systems, etc. - Recognize social and participants responsibility for research outcomes
Transparency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have the willingness, attitude, inclination, etc. to adhere to research ethics - Monitor and correct inaccuracies in research findings - Resolve issues by reducing conflicts during the research process - Declaring interests and taking other precautions to avoid conflicts of interest in research

3.2. Moral Efficacy

A 14-question survey was used by May et al. (2003) to gauge moral efficacy. On a Likert 5-point Likert scale, the following responses were recorded: "1 = not at all confident," "2 = not confident," "3 = normal," "4 = confident," and "5 = very confident."

The following are the contents of the questions used to gauge ethical efficacy. The exam comprised four parts: "I formulate a new process for resolving research ethics issues," "I give information on ethical issues to peer groups," "I analyze to find a solution to research ethics," and "I express my position on research ethics."

3.3. Moral Meaningfulness

Measurement items created by May et al. (2003) were used to assess ethical importance. "Maintaining high ethics is meaningful in my research," is one of the questions. "I think doing the 'right thing' in research is personally meaningful to me," "Acting ethically is one of the objectives of my research," as well as "It is quite important to me to act ethically and consistently."

3.4. Self-efficacy

This study amended and supplemented the self-efficacy measure by referencing earlier research conducted by Chen et al. (2001). The following is what the question asks. "I think I can succeed in anything," "I can make the effort I set in mind," "I can accomplish most of the goals I set for myself," and "I am confident that when I face a challenge, I can overcome it."

3.5. Job Meaningfulness

The argument of Spreitzer (1995) was cited on the sense of job. "The work I am currently doing is very important to me," "This work is meaningful to me while performing my work," and "the work I am currently in charge of is precious to me" were the questions' contents.

3.6. Job Commitment

A feeling of unification with the current task that one is responsible for might be characterized as job commitment (Kanungo, 1982). Based on these theoretical justifications, Kanungo (1982) is active in this investigation.

Three of the ten queries that were posed that were deemed appropriate were active. "My job occupies a very large part of my life," "I am personally immersed in my job a lot," and "I want to devote most of my time to my job" are examples of representative questions.

4. Conclusion

Researchers were able to learn the importance of research ethics as well as the steps involved in increasing a researcher's job dedication thanks to this study. Researchers can boost their confidence in their ethical decisions and behaviors by being informed of research ethics. This may inspire trust in their capacity to make morally sound decisions. Furthermore, researchers who become conscious of research ethics and grasp ethical

ideas lay the groundwork for their capacity to act morally. Researchers' self-efficacy and confidence in their ability to make morally sound decisions can both rise when they successfully choose and apply ethical behavior.

Understanding and upholding research ethics is typically a reflection of a person's dedication to honesty, accountability, and integrity in their job. Prioritizing ethical behavior helps researchers feel more fulfilled both personally and professionally, which can increase their dedication to their work. Researchers are better able to implement ethical principles in their work when they are aware of and understand research ethics. This comprehension improves their capacity to make wise decisions, negotiate difficult ethical conundrums, and carry out research in a way that respects moral principles. They feel more competent and capable of carrying out ethical and responsible research as a result.

Researchers that are aware of research ethics have a framework for comprehending the moral ramifications of their work. They understand how important it is to carry out research in a way that protects participants' rights and welfare, encourages integrity and openness, and prevents damage. Because they see their study as upholding ethical standards and making a good contribution to society, this understanding gives their work an ethical significance.

Because of the ethical importance of research, scientists and social scientists often feel that their work is making a positive impact on society or science. Having a purpose at work contributes to higher levels of engagement. Researchers' interest and dedication to their work may rise if they think their work will yield morally sound and significant findings.

Ultimately, ethical efficacy, ethical meaningfulness, job meaningfulness, and job devotion among researchers are all based on an understanding of research ethics. It gives students the ability to deal with moral dilemmas, see their job as professionally and ethically important, and stay committed to maintaining moral standards in their research activities.

References

- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-Efficacy: The Exercise of Control*. W.H. Freeman and Company, New York.
- Baumeister, R. F. (2002). Yielding to Temptation: Self-Control Failure, Impulsive Purchasing, and Consumer Behavior. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 28(4), 670–676. <https://doi.org/10.1086/338209>.
- Bradley D. E., & Roberts J. A. (2004). Self-employment and job satisfaction: investigating the role of self-efficacy, depression, and seniority. *Journal of Small Business Management*, 42, 37–58.
- Brown, M. E., & Treviño, L. K. (2006). Ethical leadership: A

- review and future directions. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 17(6), 595–616.
- Chen, G., Gully, S. M., & Eden, D. (2001). Validation of a New General Self-Efficacy Scale. *Organizational Research Methods*, 4(1), 62-83.
- Drolet, M., Rose-Derouin, E., Leblanc, J., Ruest, M., & Williams-Jones, B. (2022). Ethical issues in research: perceptions of researchers, research ethics board members and research ethics experts. *Journal of Academic Ethics*, 21(2), 269-292, doi: 10.1007/s10805-022-09455-3.
- Hyytinen, H., & Löfström, E. (2017). Reactively, Proactively, Implicitly, Explicitly? Academics' Pedagogical Conceptions of how to Promote Research Ethics and Integrity. *Journal of Academic Ethics*, 15, 23-41. 10.1007/s10805-016-9271-9.
- Judge, T. A., Locke, E. A., & Durham, C. C. (1997). The dispositional causes of job satisfaction: A core evaluations approach. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, 19, 151-188.
- Kanungo, R. N. (1982). Measurement of Job and Work Involvement. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 67, 341-349. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.67.3.341>
- Luthans, F., Luthans, K. W., & Luthans, B. C. (2004). Positive psychological capital: beyond human and social capital. *Business Horizons*, 47(1), 45-50.
- Macrina, F. L. (2005). *Scientific integrity: Text and cases in responsible conduct of research*. 3rd edition. ASM Press: Washington (D.C.). 428p. (paper) ISBN 1-55581-318-6.
- May, D., Chan, A., Hodges, T., & Avolio, B. (2003). Developing the Moral Component of Authentic Leadership. *Organizational Dynamics*, 32, 247-260. 10.1016/S0090-2616(03)00032-9.
- May, D. R., Luth, M., & Schwoerer, C. E. (2010). *The Effects of Moral Efficacy, Moral Courage, and Moral Meaningfulness on Moral Behaviors at Work*. In Paper presented at the 2010 Academy of Management meeting in Montreal, Canada.
- Rosso, B. D., Dekas, K. H., & Wrzesniewski, A. (2010). On the Meaning of Work: A Theoretical Integration and Review. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, 30, 91-127.
- Shamoo, A. E., & Resnik, B. R. (2003). *Responsible Conduct of Research*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Spreitzer, G. M. (1995). Psychological empowerment in the workplace: Dimensions, measurement, and validation. *Academy of Management Journal*, 38(5), 1442–1465. <https://doi.org/10.2307/256865>.
- Steger, M. F., Dik, B. J., & Duffy, R. D. (2012). Measuring Meaningful Work: The Work and Meaning Inventory (MWI). *Journal of Career Assessment*, 00, 1-16.
- Steneck, N. (2004). *Assessing the Integrity of Publicly Funded Research*.
- Tammeleht, A., Lofstrom, E., & Rodriguez-Triana, J. M. J. (2022). Facilitating development of research ethics and integrity leadership competencies. *International journal for educational integrity*, 18, Article 11. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40979-022-00102-3>.
- Victor, B., & Cullen, J. B. (1987). A Theory and Measure of Ethical Climate in Organizations. In: Frederick, W.C. and Preston, L., Eds., *Research in Corporate Social Performance and Policy*, JAL, London, 51-71.