

POSTGRADUATE SEMINAR SERIES

Research Findings Seminar

Topic Title : **Integrating Personality, Situation Ethical Cues and Proactive Ethical Behaviors: Implications for Work Performance and Well-Being**

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Abstract : Organizations and society can receive multiple benefits from employees' ethical conduct. Business ethics is primarily studied from a reactive perspective, such as considering how people react to situational cues about ethics through engaging in ethical or unethical behaviors. Previous theoretical and empirical evidence suggested the importance of exploring the role of personality on work behavior and performance. Based on theories of personality psychology, this study takes an active, forward-looking approach by examining how individuals' proactive personality and conscientiousness relate to a set of proactive ethical behaviors, and how those in turn affect individuals' performance and well-being. Integrating with the trait activation theory, this study also examines the moderation effect of four situational ethical cues at task, social, and organizational levels—moral dirtiness of the work, leader's moral identity and bottom-line mentality, and perceived organizational support on strengthening or attenuating the relationship between individuals' proactive personality and conscientiousness and proactive ethical behaviors.

To achieve these research objectives, two studies were conducted. Study 1 developed and validated two specific proactive ethical behaviors, namely ethical innovation (EI) and ethical climate shaping (ECS) through multiple phases, such as item generation and reduction, content validity test, exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses, and convergent and discriminant validity tests using separate samples. Together, these tests provided evidence of the psychometric soundness of two scales for assessing employees' proactive ethical behaviors. Study 2 tested the hypothesized model using multi-wave and multi-source data. The results revealed that individuals with high proactive personality and conscientiousness tend to proactively engage in more ethical behaviors that go beyond their formal job requirements, such as ethical innovation and ethical climate shaping, which in turn predicted their subsequent work performance and well-being. Regarding the moderation effects, leader's moral identity and perceived organizational support positively enhance the possibilities of employees' engagement in ethical behaviors, while the results didn't support the moderation effects of moral dirtiness of work and the leader's bottom-line mentality.

Overall, the findings contribute to the literature on business ethics and personality psychology by highlighting the importance of both personality traits and situational ethical cues in predicting proactive ethical behaviors and their consequences. This study also has practical implications for organizations that seek to promote ethical conduct among their employees by recognizing the individual and situational factors that influence it.

Date : **28 April 2023, Friday**
Time : **14:00 – 15:00**
Venue : **SEK108, 1/F, Simon & Eleanor Kwok Building**
Language : **English**



***** All are Welcome *****