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[Editorial Review]

## Based on Proven Practices in Violation of Research Ethics for the KODISA Journals

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### Abstract

**Purpose** – The purpose of this research is to suggest researchers to know the standards of research ethics violation and eliminate the researchers' anxiety for the possible cases in violation of research ethics through the notification on the web site with online paper submission system for over the last year.

We have made an effort and achieved the most exemplary and leading position in the academic journals, however, not satisfied with this, we will endeavor to strengthen it.

**Research design, data and methodology** – Plagiarism and overlapping publications are the most serious problems in research ethics. Therefore, it is necessary to verify the submitted articles making use of paper similarity test programs such as copy killer, KCI test, etc. Editorial board and reviewers should present clear evidences and notify contributors on research ethics violation after close review the contributors' article content.

**Results** – This research focused on the submitted articles which were verified as research ethics violation, and categorized them into 7 cases.

**Conclusions** – With analyzing the verified 7 cases from KODISA journals, this research will examine closely the verification system and regulations in the current academic research ethics. Afterwards, this research will seek for solution to the problems and make an effort to get improvement for them.

**Keywords:** Research Ethics, Plagiarism, Overlapping Publications, Prohibition of Publication, Paper Similarity Test.

**JEL Classifications:** E00, G00, H00, M00.

### 1. Introduction

The purpose of this research is to let the researchers know the standards of research ethics violation and eliminate the researchers' anxiety for the possible cases in research ethics violation by notification on the web site with online paper submission system for over the last year. We have made an effort to stand as the most exemplary and leading position in the academic journals, and it became a reality to ensure the phase. But, not satisfied with this, we will endeavor to strengthen it. In this regard, it is necessary for us to discuss on the issues steadily.

That is, the discussions and researches for the issue have been progressed annually by KODISA (Hwang et al., 2014; Hwang et al., 2015), and this research is also one of the discussions for research ethics establishment and stabilization. Furthermore, with homepage reorganization in 2015, we have placed more emphasis on the verification for plagiarism and overlapped article publication considered as the most problematic issue in research ethics. The editorial board and reviewers have given notice to the authors about the inadequacy of their articles by utilizing plagiarism detection programs such as 'Academic journal copy killer' and 'KCI Similarity test' in the center of the right in KODISA homepage.

Furthermore, in section 4, the verification on the violation of research ethics will be described by categorized 7 cases. By analyzing the verified cases from KODISA journals, this research will review closely the verification system and regulations in the current academic research and research ethics. Afterwards, this research will seek for the solution to the problems, and make an effort to get improvement for them. In this regards, four KODISA journals in published in 2015 were analysed as in <Table 1>.

First, according to Journal of Distribution Science(JDS), 219 papers in total were published in 2015. Mao, Liu, & Chen (2015) and other 22 papers were published in January, Kim (2015) and 22 papers were in February, Youn et al. (2015) and 18 papers were in March, and Han & Lee (2015) and other 19 papers were published in April. Koo & Woo (2015) and 19 papers were in May, Ryu (2015) and 14 were published in June, Avila & Ryu (2015) and other 16 papers were in July, and Lee

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(2015) and 20 papers were in August. Min & Bae (2015) and 26 papers were published in September, Kim & Kim (2015) and 12 were in October, and Cho, Kang, & Bonn (2015) and other 11 papers were published in November. In December, Ahn & Lee (2015) and other 14 papers were published.

Secondly, through *International Journal of Industrial Distribution and Business (IJIDB)*, 25 papers were published in total. Kim et al. (2015) and other 5 papers were published in March, Baygi & Javadi (2015) and other 6 papers were in June, Mohammadi (2015) and 6 other papers were published in September, and Ahmadinia et al. (2015) and 4 other papers were in December.

Third, 36 papers were published by *East Asian Journal of Business Management (EAJBM)*. Halim et al. (2015) and other 7 papers were in January, Prashar et al. (2015) and 6 were in July, and Ryu & Bringhurst (2015) and other 13 papers were published in October.

Fourth, totally 67 papers were published by *Journal of Asian Finance, Economics and Business (JAFEB)*. Park and other 12 papers were published in February, Ortiz et al. (2015) and 15 were in May. Prashar et al. (2015) and other 19 papers were in August, Tan (2015) and 17 papers were published in November. With these, the total number of the 4 journals papers is 347.

**<Table 1>** The current state of papers submission and their application scope.

Date of publication	JDS	IJIDB	EAJBM	JAFEB	Total
January 30	17		8		25
February 28	23			13	36
March 30	19	6			25
April 30	20		7		27
May 30	20			16	36
June 30	15	7			22
July 30	17		7		24
August 30	21			20	41
September 30	27	7			34
October 30	13		14		27
November 30	12			18	30
December 30	15	5			20
Total	219	25	36	67	347

note: There is discrepancy in those figures due to some papers are carried over to the next month.

In conclusion, each domestic academic journals has all different criteria and concept, although all of the journals emphasize the importance of 'research ethics'.

Therefore, it is necessary to establish the exact concept on research ethics in KODISA, business administration and economics field, so as to be free from the vague anxiety and distrust in researchers' mind and academic society situation.

First, Research ethics means "ethical principles or patterns of behavior that researchers should follow in order to perform a responsible research in an honest, accurate, and sincere attitude.

Though research ethics is a norm which can be applied into overall field of research, a major standard in judging the degree of research ethics eventually comes from the output of a research article. We cannot avoid the fact that the verification process is based on research papers. Researchers are usually conscious of complying with research ethics in writing their research articles, nonetheless, they tend to submit the articles with not recognizing or ignoring the matter of research ethics violation.

From academic society stance, it is necessary to notify plagiarism criteria and suggest research ethics guidelines in order to solve the problems for researchers' anxiety toward research ethics violation. Through this process, this research aims to lead evolutive and creative research atmosphere in the field of social science academic field. Furthermore, by suggesting clear definition and regulation for research ethics and plagiarism example cases, we intend to inspire researchers' strict sense of obligation without any arguments in occurring the related problems. Through examining current research ethics systems and searching for related problems, this research will contribute to seek for the improvement and get solutions.

## 2. Criteria on research ethics violation-research misconducts

It is difficult to deal with these issues by extensive scope for research misconducts. If an academic society cannot give appropriate and persuasive explanations toward the suspected researchers' plea on the matter of research ethics violation, there is no effective way to judge the research misconducts. It is necessary to propose clear and specific criteria for the purpose of protecting the honor of researchers' and academic society. Without concrete criteria for research misconducts, the investigation can be just a cause for discredit to researchers and academic society.

It is essential to focus on clear and specific definitions for research misconducts because it is a mandatory to judge and restrict research misconducts strictly. Because each university and academic society has a distinction in the range of research ethics regulations, clear statements on criteria, punishment, and disciplinary action are required to deal with the related issues.

According to KODISA research ethics regulation article 2, there are specific range and regulations on research misconducts as in <Table 2> below.

Among the articles noted above, the ambiguous concept for plagiarism deserves a special attention. It is reasonable to include plagiarism as research misconducts, but there exist unclear criteria cases for judgement such as overlapping publications, that is, a kind of self-plagiarism. Thus, plagiarism is considered as the focus on the controversy in research misconducts.

&lt;Table 2&gt; Article 2 of the regulation

**Article 2.(The definition of research misconducts)**

1. Research misconducts mean counterfeit, falsification, plagiarism, and the author's improper expression in research proposition, performance, report, and presentation, etc. These are as follows.
- 1) "Counterfeit" means the false research actions by the non-exist data or research result.
- 2) "Falsification" means distortion research contents or results with artificial articulation for a research material, equipment, and process, or data transformation and deletion arbitrarily.
- 3) "Plagiarism" means the pirated actions that make use of others' ideas, research contents, and results without justifiable approval or quotation.
- 4) "Unjust author's indication" means granting persons for authors by way of appreciation or respectful treatment, even though they do not contribute to academical or technical development. This applies also to the opposite situation such as not granting real researchers for authors even though they contribute to.
- 5) The actions interrupting the investigation on research misconducts purposely, or doing an informant harm.
- 6) The actions proposing, forcing, and threatening others to perform the above mentioned.
- 7) The serious deviant actions from the general range in the academic community.

### 3. Use of paper similarity test programs

The matter is the role of academic society for research ethics violation. It is not focusing on the strict punishment but preventing disgraceful things beforehand. Therefore, KODISA has already prepared research detailed guidelines, and encouraged them to be widely known. The ethics criteria in academic society exist on the condition that researchers also get the opportunity to be reviewers, and it encourages researchers to obtain fair review qualification as well as write creative research papers.

The careful effort to research ethics has showed great accomplishment in 2015. We could seal off the articles violating research ethics with emphasizing the importance in ethics violations, encouraging researchers to utilize 'paper similarity test programs', and reviewing research articles by the test result basis.

Most researchers have positive views on the use of 'paper similarity test programs' in terms of efficiency for reducing research ethics violation(Hayes & Introna, 2005; Abasi & Graves, 2008; Batane, 2010). Batane(2010) says, the use of those programs may offer assistance to distinguish articles with research ethics violation or to find the plagiarized places in the text. But it has limitation in preventing research ethics from violation fundamentally.

Despite the limitations, the notification implying the existence of such similarity test programs has a great effect on a field of writing research articles. That is, the main focus in those tests are not on the exposure and punishment but on the increase to researchers' awareness that the academic society reviewers will examine their articles closely through the test programs.

It is evident that these paper similarity test programs make the field of academy advanced by compared to the past, because the test programs perform important functions such as alerting researchers to research ethics and emphasizing fair

management in academic society.

Furthermore, the function of the paper similarity tests does not have just a meaning as a plagiarism test for prosecution. That is, the paper similarity test system will contribute to the advancement in academic creativity and fidelity through researchers examine their research articles for themselves. Nonetheless, there is a danger in the matter of utter dependence on the test programs because it is impossible to avoid any limitation in the system. For instance, the test's data contrasting each article or deciding the result of plagiarism make use of only domestic written sources in the registered or candidate journals by National Research Foundation of Korea(NRF). Thus, in case of research articles written in English or contained in other country's data, the similarity test cannot decide those articles appropriately. That is, there are exceptional areas in the similarity test criteria. For this reason, the paper similarity test programs cannot be an perfect tool to judge the research ethics violation when the published articles are translated into Korean, or Korean candidate register articles are converted into English.

For the purpose of maintaining appropriate research ethics, it may require much troublesome for reviewers'. Even though, reviewers should check the related subjects one by one whether there are plagiarism or not. That means reviewers have to check keywords, hypothesis, research model, and reference one by one whether there are similar researches or not. In addition, the reviewers should cope with tricky research ethics violation with high relevant major capabilities and experiences.

### 4. The exposed cases of research ethics violation

Since KODISA has adopted JAMS system, the total number of prohibited publication articles is 47 from the submitted in the

past year. Most of them result from the subject discordance or inadequate quality level in criteria, but 11 cases of them were decided plagiarism and overlapping publication etc. Each author of them was notified clearly by the result of prohibition publication with the reasons of research ethics. The 4 cases of them are exposed after careful consideration from the academic society, and the others 7 are exposed by reviewers and examiners. In this paper, each of the 7 cases will be explained as specific examples.

#### 4.1. Case example 1

Although the research article was regarded as an satisfactory one in a quality level, it turned out that there is the similarity between your current article and your prior articles through some examiner's paper similarity test. Consequently, the editorial board gave notice the contributor that "Your research article is replicated with your own previous research. Thus, it is possible to publish your article only after revising it overall due to the issue of research ethics violation. We recommend you to submit your revised article in English." Nonetheless, the contributor refused to submit revised article, even though offered enough time to revise after the result of revision and re-examination. Eventually, the editorial board gave a decision on the article as prohibition of publication.

#### 4.2. Case example 2

There were several examination opinions such as "Though your research subject is appropriate to the field of OOO, there is rather insufficiency in research creativity due to the use of the existing methodology as it is. Furthermore, there are fatal errors in the method of research model analysis. That is, there is the potential for readers' misunderstanding because you proposed only summery tables as well as partial results in conceptual relationships, validity, reliability, and regression analysis. We recognizes your dedicated effort to write your article, nonetheless, it is advisable for you to revise and re-submit the research article in reference to the details that we requested. Besides, it is necessary to suggest the clear operational definition in the antecedent variables and result of validity for the reason of the uncertainty of research contents. These can be the causes for degradation of research articles and damage the image of KODISA." The article was, after all, decided as prohibition of publication.

#### 4.3. Case example 3

KODISA gave action of prohibition of publication judgement on another research article with reviewers' opinions. "It is impossible to publish this research article because this copied not only the same paragraphs but also process and result of empirical analysis from both OOO in 2012 and  $\triangle\triangle\triangle$  in 2014 papers. In particular, KODISA held an editorial board meeting and agreed on the observation on the author's behavior because the author

seemed to have intention to violate research ethics purposely.

#### 4.4. Case example 4

The main reason to judge prohibition of publication is concerned with doubt on unethical test process such as suggesting Insufficient data and process in the actual proof analysis in research article. "It is mandatory to describe the exact date and process of data gathering, but your article includes only the total data and analysis program used in research analysis. Furthermore, it is impossible to understand your article description method because you seem to not have an idea for thesis organization."

#### 4.5. Case example 5

All the results after <Table 6> is judged by the researcher's own data. It is inappropriate situation to propose a table's source by inserting the word 'own' in that reliability in research article. There should be a clear description supported by a method of data base composition. KODISA decided it as prohibition of publication with the reviewers' opinion that it is necessary to notify data source and processing method in the text. That is, the source of statistic data may be open to doubt, therefore, the article could not be published.

#### 4.6. Case example 6

We decided prohibition of publication in case 6 for the reasons of the below issues: "You submitted almost the same content article compared with your presentation written on the first page of the information. You submitted your manuscript to the conference written by 4 authors, but it has changed into 2 authors with 2 authors omission. We call for the review on the matters of copyright protection or ethical issues. It is impossible to publish your manuscript unless you send KODISA editorial board the valid grounds. Please check the result 10% from paper similarity test. In particular, because you made use of the same data to write yours, there are same parts in Prof.  $\square\square\square$ 's manuscript text. You had better add the point on the overlapped part specifically as marking recitation. Like this, the submitted article with the change of authors was the same article submitted into conference. Editorial board required to revise the issue related with authors, but the authors did not accept and re-submitted the article.

#### 4.7. Case example 7

This is about the example for describing the same result in hypothesis and statistical analysis. "As you may know to see the result of plagiarism checker, there are some proofs such as repetitions your preceding articles or plagiarism here and there. Please submit yours again with meeting research ethics criteria. We cannot find distinctive points or contents compared with your preceding research article. Research model and hypothesis

also seem to be the same as your previous one. Plagiarism checker shows that your article has the same positive analysis result with the ▲▲▲'s research article published in O, 2014. It is impossible to understand the same statistical data in different research articles."

## 5. Conclusions

It is necessary to define the publication ethics violation clearly in regulations in academic journal publication with urging contributors to have academic conscience and right values. First of all, researchers should distinguish the cases with overlapped publication or not. Moreover, they should take by Plagiarism checker by themselves before their articles submission to academic journals.

That is, researchers should bear in mind those kinds of things such as be careful not to step on other's right for the purpose of protecting one's own intellectual property right. There's no need to avoid quoting others' sources because utilization of preceding research results can show distinctive contributiveness as well as save time and cost.

The real problem in just here is a matter of overlapped publication, that is, some parts or similar contents in the whole context are submitted to various journals overlapped. Sometimes, in the case of continuing research by the pursuit of an interest, there may be happen such cases with repeated similar contents and subject in the text. Nonetheless, the researcher should report his or her preceding portfolio, quotation, and sources, and make inquires to editorial board if there could be a violation in publication ethics or not. If the researcher report his sources appropriately by reporting in thesis reference or footnotes, it does not applied to violate publication ethics in making use of one's own thesis and publishing summary of the content. If the researcher tests based on the preceding research or develop the research through new tests and logic, it does not go for overlapped publication.

That is, in the case of publication from research statements in domestic or foreign conference, follow-up research articles marked with appropriate sources are presented repeatedly. However, there are many forms in announcing research articles in conference. On the one side, we request researchers to present their research article, after accepting a registration form and review, but in other cases, it is possible to present their article at the conference if only apply for presentation.

Nonetheless, it is necessary for authors to revise, compensate the defect, and notify the presentation at conference when they want to submit and publish their research articles. It needs to pay attention to use tables, figures, and statistics data in text with authors' approval or specific source. In case of research reports except conference statements and master's or doctoral thesis, there is no problem with publication ethics if the related sources are indicated appropriately.

Moreover, it is possible to publish like unofficial contributions from the press or the reports of public institutions if the authors

indicate the sources exactly or can get approval from related institutions. However, these regulations and policies for publication ethics are just applied to KODISA academic society, therefore, there will be different regulations, policies, and real application cases according to each academic society. Although the published article in journals is author's own, it does not applied to the matter of overlapped publication if the author proposes a new interpretation or include further developed contents with data and information.

Considering the intrinsic aspects in academic research field, researcher produces new literary works with steady the researcher's preceding works and intensive development in identical research subject. If it is regarded as a matter of overlapped publication, there may be dangerous to hinder a desirable academic research activities. The possibility for overlapped publication can be reduced by researchers' exact understanding and application to the above mentioned cases.

It is important to make clear regulations on overlapped publication in order to avoid the case with researchers' insufficient understanding unintentionally. Researcher should submit with reference to these regulations personally before submitting articles.

For that, KODISA needs to propose more specific regulation on the matter of overlapped publication indicated in current research ethics regulations Article 3 No. 4.

Although researchers make an effort to follow the research ethics, there are occasionally research ethics violation articles with researchers' insufficient understanding for plagiarism. It is a task of great significance to notify clearly the plagiarism examples, research ethics guidelines, and monitoring them for the purpose of preventing in advance. From now on, it will be more significant for academic societies to provide researchers guidelines and academic atmosphere encouraging new and inventive research.

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