

# The Influence of Work Values on Job and Career Satisfaction, and Organizational Commitment among Korean Professional Level Employees

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The study contributes to the work values literature as well as to the knowledge base of meaning of working in Asian economies. It represents the results of an empirical study of Korean mid-level employees in diverse industries, investigating the effects of different understandings of work and non-work dimensions on job satisfaction, career satisfaction, and organizational commitment. With a sample size of some 420 responses from 16 different companies, age differences were found for overall meaning of work and also for the effects of importance of working for global organizational commitment. Non-work related dimensions appeared unrelated to work-related outcome variables. We conclude that to a limited degree, age related differentiation exist in relation to work meanings and separation of work and non-work domains for work-related effects. The implications for theory and practice of this research are also discussed.

Key words: meaning of work, Korea, work values

Working is one of the most common experiences of adult life; it is a necessity for procuring the necessities of life, an essential component of personal identity, and a major form of interacting with, shaping, and being shaped by the social world (Gini, 2001). Organizational work settings and processes, however, are undergoing rapid changes in response to changing societal norms, economic developments, generational shifts, and technological and

organizational practices around the world. In Japan, for example, the very high level of dedication of white collar workers to their companies, known as the salaryman phenomenon, is eroding as firms increasingly hire part-time and short-term staff who are not part of the corporate family (“Sayonara, salaryman”, 2008). In Germany, the federation of labor unions published a large-scale investigation on work in multiple industries and observed a declining sense of belonging and identification with work (Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund, 2007).

With increased attention to this important topic in the human resource development literature (i.e., Ardichvili, 2005; Chalofsky, 2003; Kuchinke, 2005) this paper presents the results of an empirical investigation into the meaning of working among professional level employees in Korea. The choice of Korea as a site for this study was driven by the rapid pace of development and modernization in the very

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## Theoretical Framework

recent past and the resultant likely effects on work meanings and motivation. Industrialization, urbanization, and westernization over the past thirty years have resulted in rapid social and economic transition that have challenged and partially replaced traditional values. Whereas work in the pre-industrial era was associated with manual labor and held little social esteem, its place during industrialization was greatly enhanced and became a core personal virtue. More recently, the value of work changed again after industrialization, and the emphasis on work seems to be rapidly losing its religious aura in favor of a new preference on leisure and enjoyment (Kim & Lee, 1977). Despite the emphasis on non-work as a major life pursuit, however, Korea has the longest work hours among OECD countries with the average worker working in excess of 2,300 hours (OECD, 2007). In 2003, the Korea government revised the Labor Standard Law and shortened the maximum number of work hours but the new standard is to be phased in gradually over the next five years (Korean Ministry of Labor, 2006).

According to research published in 1998 and again in 2002 (Korean Research Institute for Vocational Education and Training, 1998, 2002), opinions about working, loyalty to the organization, and work versus family commitment have shown distinctive generational differences. For example, the younger, post-war generation cited the goals of achieving recognition in society and self-realization as the most important reasons for working. The older, pre-war generation, in contrast, viewed work as a way of fulfilling their obligation as members of society or their families. Loyalty to employers also differed by generation, with over 20% of the younger generation indicating that they would switch to another their organization if the opportunity arose or that they were currently preparing to change jobs. Members of the older generation were far more reluctant to leave their present jobs. Even in the four-year time span between the two survey publications, there was a decrease in work centrality: more and younger people placed values on their family, community, and leisure. These generational differences appear to be indicative of different economic and social experiences and a shift between an ‘earn money’ and a ‘spend money’ generation, between a ‘prohibited to travel abroad’ and a ‘free to travel abroad’ generation.

The theoretical framework for this study was the work by England and colleagues (MOW International Research Team, 1987). According to this landmark study, working carries both instrumental and expressive meanings - work is necessary to procure the means to satisfy physical needs but is also directly linked to a person’s self-concept, identity, and social standing. In most empirical studies, working is defined as those activities carried out in formal organizational settings, for pay, and in employment relationships, excluding volunteer work; work in the family, church, or community; political work; self-employment; and non-vocational activities.

The MOW project and most follow-up studies concentrated on five primary domains: work centrality, desired working conditions, work outcomes, work role identifications, and social norms about working. Within the MOW framework, work centrality is measured by (1) the absolute value of working as a life role, and (2) the relative importance of work compared to various other domains, such as family, leisure, religion, and community involvement (Harpaz & Fu, 2002). In addition, the importance of work can be indirectly assessed through the classic “lottery question,” focused on respondents’ willingness to work without the need for income (England & Harpaz, 1983). The second component of the work centrality domain is the importance of work relative to other life pursuits, namely family, religion, community, and leisure. The MOW research reported that work was ranked as the most dominant life concerns in the former Yugoslavia and in Japan, and the second most important factor, after family, in the other countries examined by the MOW project. Several follow-up studies have confirmed this ranking in various Western European countries, Israel, the US, and Japan (England, 1991, Harding & Hikspoors, 1995; Harpaz, 1999). However, no current information is available and data on Korean employees using the MOW framework and existing research emphasizes generational differences quite strongly. Therefore the first set of hypotheses is as follows:

- H1: Absolute work centrality among Korean employees is higher for older employees.
- H2: Younger Korean employees rank non-work life roles higher than working.

Work meaning is affected by the conditions under which work takes place, and thus a second dimension of the construct assesses the degree to which different aspects of the work process are viewed as important. These include work design aspects, such as physical working conditions, convenient working hours, job security, and good pay; opportunities for learning, contacts with interesting people, task variety, and interesting work tasks; and the psychosocial dimensions of work, such as good relationships with coworkers, autonomy, and the match between job requirements and one's abilities and expertise. In line with related research indicating both a general shift towards intrinsic and expressive dimensions of valued working conditions and a generational shift, this study investigated the following hypothesis:

H3: Valued working conditions differ based on age among Korean employees.

A third dimension of the meaning of working relates to the outcomes that individuals seek from working. Answers to these questions can inform the more fundamental question of why people work, why they extend more or less effort at work, why they intent to remain or consider leaving their place of work, and why they may or may not go beyond the 'call of duty' and display organizational citizenship behaviors. This information appears important particularly in light of an assessment of global employment trends by labor economists that suggests that the current assumption of work as full-time employment and long-term tenure with a single employer is changing rapidly (Kelly, 2000). This study was designed to investigate the following hypothesis:

H4: Valued work outcomes differ based on age among Korean employees.

The meaning of working is also related to individual and organizational outcomes yet little research has systematically investigated these relationships in the Korean context. This study was designed to test the relationship between meaning of working and job satisfaction, career satisfaction, and organizational commitment.

Job satisfaction is among the most intensely studied constructs in the organizational sciences. While meta-analyses have shown that the relationship between performance and job satisfaction at the individual level of

analysis is positive and small (George & Jones, 1997), analyses at the organizational level have shown that organizations with higher average levels of job satisfaction outperform others (Ostroff, 1992). Job satisfaction is generally defined as an employee's affective reaction to a job based on comparing actual and desired outcomes. It is considered a multifaceted construct that includes employee feelings about a variety of intrinsic and extrinsic job elements (Fields, 2002). The construct contains global and facet dimensions. The following hypothesis was tested in this study:

H5: Greater levels of absolute work centrality are related to greater levels of job satisfaction among Korean employees.

H6: Korean employees who rank non-work related dimensions higher than work also experience lower levels of job satisfaction.

Career satisfaction measures the affective response to perceived career success. It, too, contains global and facet dimensions and has been shown to correlate positively with individual wellbeing and with performance. Career satisfaction has been linked to a number of institutional antecedents, such salary level, number of promotions, job discretion, presence of internal labor markets, and personal-organizational value congruence (Fields, 2002).

H7: Greater levels of absolute work centrality are related to greater levels of career satisfaction among Korean employees.

H8: Korean employees who rank non-work related dimensions higher than work also experience lower levels of career satisfaction.

Organizational commitment has emerged as an important focus of organizational behavior research and is defined as an individual's orientation towards the organization. Mowday, Porter, and Steers (1982) defined the construct as the belief in the values and the goals of the organization that leads to the exertion of effort to realize those goals and a desire to stay with the organization. Important outcomes associated with this construct have been reduced turnover, extra effort, increased attendance, trust, and pride in belonging. Several dimensions have been associated with organizational commitment, including identification commitment, affiliation commitment, and

loyalty commitment (Balfour & Wechsler, 1996; Cook & Wall, 1980). No known studies, however, exist in the Korean context that might investigate the relationship between meaning of working and organizational commitment. Therefore, the final two hypotheses were formulated as follows:

H9: Greater levels of absolute work centrality are related to greater levels of overall organizational commitment among Korean employees.

H10: Korean employees who rank non-work related dimensions higher than work also experience lower levels of overall organizational commitment.

### Method

The population for this study was defined broadly as professional level employees with a minimum of five years of work experience, and a minimum education level of a Bachelors degree, working in medium-size and large corporations in Korea. As with virtually all survey research projects, volunteer samples were used, limiting the generalizability of the findings. Using the researchers' professional networks, HR Directors of some 60 large and mid-size Korean companies were approached and 24 agreed to participate in the study. The HR Directors were asked to contact all professional level employees who fit the population description via internal e-mails and issue an invitation to participate in the study by completing, on company time, an online survey on a secure website hosted by the University of Illinois. The employing organizations had no knowledge of whether or not employees chose to participate and were given only summary survey feedback information about the responses from their company in a way that made it impossible to identify who had responded and how the survey questions had been answered by individual employees. Due to the research design, the number of employees in the sampling frame is not known. A total of 416 valid and useable responses were obtained from 24 organizations representing a variety of industries, departments, and job roles.

Survey items were taken from the Meaning of Working project (MOW, 1987). Five items measured work centrality (absolute and relative), nine items measured valued work conditions, and six items measured valued work outcomes.

Three items measured global job satisfaction (Rice, Gentile, & McFarlin, 1991), two items global career satisfaction (Greenhaus, Parasuram, & Wormley, 1990), and six items

Table 1  
*Demographic Information (N=416)*

Variable	Frequency		
Percentage			
<b>Gender (n=411)</b>			
Female	87		21
Male	324		79
<b>Education (n=415)</b>			
BA or equivalent	249		79
Masters	79		19
Doctorate	7		2
<b>Industry (n=402)</b>			
Finance	157		39
Service	131		33
Utilities	48		12
Manufacturing	31		8
Consumer Products	19		5
Other	16		4
<b>Department (n=395)</b>			
Sales	106		27
Operations	74		19
Finance	62		16
Human Resources	60		15
Marketing	39		10
Information Technology	20		5
Research and Development	12		3
Other	22		6
<b>Job Role (n=404)</b>			
Staff	168		42
Manager	118		29
Senior Manager	84		21
Director	17		4
Professional	17		4
<hr/>			
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max SD</i>
Age (n=410)	36.59	23	57 6.05
Years in present job (n=412)	3.80	1	20 3.03
Year with present organization (n=414)	9.49	1	31 6.44

measured organization commitment (Balfour & Wechsler, 1996). In addition, respondents were asked to answer the lottery question and standard demographic questions. All meaning of work, job and career satisfaction, and organizational commitment items were measured using a seven point Likert scale with anchors of 1 (not at all) to 7 (all the time). The Lottery question was in a simple dichotomous ('yes', 'no') format. The survey instrument was translated into Korean and then translated back again by two native speakers independently. The back translations were checked for accuracy by comparing them with the original English version. Pilot tests were conducted with 15 Korean doctoral students in human resource development who also had multiple years of employment experience in Korea prior to beginning their doctoral programs of study. The results were used to modify and finalize the instrument.

Exploratory data analysis revealed a small number of outliers among the meaning of work item responses. All outliers occurred at the high end of the distribution and were replaced with the next lower acceptable value as recommended by Tabachnik and Fidell (1996). In addition, data plots of all variables were inspected to detect deviations from normal distributions and equality of error variance. While most variables were positively skewed and heteroscedastic, these violations of assumptions for the

subsequent multiple regressions were considered slight and having little effect on significance tests (Berry & Feldman, 1985).

### Findings

An investigation of the initial bivariate correlation matrix showed that more than half of the correlation coefficients for the valued work condition items were greater than +/- .3, suggesting a smaller set of underlying factors. The same observation was made for the correlation coefficients related to the valued work outcome items. Therefore two separate exploratory factor analyses (EFAs) were conducted to reduce the number of constructs for subsequent analysis. Using a minimum Eigen value of 1.0 as criterion for extraction, EFA for the nine items measuring valued work conditions resulted in two clearly distinguishable factors accounting for 61 percent of variance. The factors were extracted using principal component analysis and orthogonal (varimax) rotation with Kaiser Normalization with three iterations. One item, task variety, was loaded on more than both factors with factor loadings of |.4| or higher and was removed. The remaining eight items clustered into two factors labeled Occupational

Table 2

Summary of Items and Factor Loadings for Principal Component Orthogonal Two-Factor Solution for Valued Working Conditions (N=416)

Item	Factor Loading		Communality
	1	2	
<i>Factor 1: Occupational Fulfillment</i>			
21. Convenient work hours	.71	.24	.56
23. Interesting work that you really like	.66	.36	.56
26. Good match between job requirements and abilities And experience	.66	.28	.51
27. Good physical working conditions	.78	.12	.63
28. A lot of autonomy	.84	.09	.72
<i>Factor 2: Career Advancement</i>			
18. A lot of opportunity to learn new things	.29	.71	.58
19. Good interpersonal relationships with super- Visors and co-workers	.15	.82	.69
20. Good opportunities for advancement and promotion	.16	.79	.65

Table 3  
 Summary of Items and Factor Loadings for Principal Component Orthogonal Two-Factor Solution for Valued Working Outcomes (N=416)

Item	Factor Loading		Communality
	1	2	
<i>Factor 1: Intrinsic Outcomes</i>			
29. Status and prestige	.49	.20	.29
33. Personal interest and satisfaction	.71	.21	.55
34. Service to society	.86	-.03	.74
<i>Factor 2: Material Outcomes</i>			
24. Job security	.18	.84	.73
25. Good pay	.15	.41	.68

Fulfillment and Career Advancement. Table 2 shows the EFA results.

The six items related to valued work outcomes were also subjected to EFA. Two factors resulted from a principal component analysis and orthogonal rotation with Kaiser Normalization after 3 iterations. The factors accounted for 62 percent of variance and were labeled Extrinsic and Intrinsic Outcomes. One item, “connections with interesting people” as valued work outcomes, loaded higher than |.4| on both factors and was removed.

Table 4 shows the means, standard deviations, reliability indices, and zero-order correlations for all constructs and variables in this study. Zero-order correlations were predominantly small ( $r \leq |.29|$  (Cohen, 1988)). Medium-size correlations ( $|.30| < r < |.50|$ ), were found between several work and non-work importance items and working conditions and work outcomes. Large and positive correlations ( $r > |.49|$ ) were found between working conditions and work outcomes ( $r = .71$ ), between job and career satisfaction, and between job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Four of the Chronbach alpha scale reliability indices exceeded the commonly set criterion of  $\alpha = .7$  while work outcomes was slightly below the cut-off but was still included in the further analysis (Nunally, 1987). Intrinsic work outcomes, despite the clear EFA results, showed poor internal reliability ( $\alpha = .58$ ). In subsequent analyses, the three items were used individually, but none emerged as a significant predictor.

As the table shows, the overall importance of work ranked second after the importance of family but was ranked

higher than leisure. Respondents rated the importance of community and religion compared to work as far lower. Career advancement and material outcomes were rated higher than occupational fulfillment and intrinsic work outcomes, and the overall level of job and career satisfaction as well as organizational commitment were towards the higher middle of the scale. The zero-order correlations between demographic variables and meaning of work, job and career satisfaction, and organizational commitment were very small with the exception of a medium-size positive correlation ( $r = .37$ ) between the number of years in the current organization and the level of organizational commitment.

Only about 16 percent of the respondents ( $n = 55$ ) responded to the lottery question that they would stop work if the economic necessity to do so was removed, while seventy-three percent ( $n = 278$ ) indicated that they would prefer to continue working for their current employer but a majority of these ( $n = 235$ ) indicated a preference to continue working under changed conditions.

Analyses of variance with demographic characteristics as criterion variables showed differences by age, gender, and organizational tenure. Younger employees were significantly more likely to indicate that they would stop working if they had won the lottery and could afford to live comfortably for the rest of their lives without working for pay ( $F(1,345) = 3.97, p < .05$ ). A majority of employees indicated that they would prefer to continue working in their current jobs, even if they had won the lottery. Older employees, female employees, and those with longer tenure

Table 4  
Means, Standard Deviations, Reliability Indices, and Zero-Order Correlations (N=416)

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
1. Age	36.59	6.05																	
2. Education*	1.21	.41	.03																
3. Gender**	1.79	.41	.40	.23															
4. Years in current organization.	9.49	6.44	.70	-.27	.23														
5. Years in current job	3.80	3.03	-.07	-.17	-.01	.33													
6. Importance of work	5.86	.86	-.12	-.14	-.02	.31	.16												
7. Importance of Leisure	5.42	.98	-.05	.00	-.01	-.01	.04	.25											
8. Importance of Community	4.19	1.32	-.05	-.06	.05	.14	.16	.24	.37										
9. Importance of Religion	3.15	1.77	-.03	.08	.03	.01	.06	.08	.13	.41									
10. Importance of Family	6.61	.66	.02	-.04	-.05	.14	.05	.25	.32	.12	-.04								
11. Occupational Fulfillment	5.43	.71	.01	-.07	-.10	.01	.06	.22	.37	.16	.07	.26	.83						
12. Career Advancement	5.77	.70	-.04	-.07	-.02	.17	.01	.45	.26	.19	.07	.35	.51	.74					
13. Intrinsic Work Outcomes	5.09	.87	.02	-.02	-.03	-.06	.03	.02	.21	.31	.36	.25	.17	.57	.57				
14. Material Work Outcomes	5.93	.86	-.00	-.11	-.09	.07	.12	.30	.15	.18	.08	.30	.52	.49	.34	.68			
15. Job Satisfaction	4.76	1.17	-.05	-.06	.08	.14	-.07	.21	.06	.00	.03	.09	.18	.24	.16	.10	.84		
16. Career Satisfaction	4.67	1.17	-.05	-.04	.10	.23	-.03	.19	.09	.14	.11	.10	.21	.24	.25	.18	.57	.83	
17. Org. Commitment	4.99	.76	-.07	-.17	.11	.37	.08	.37	.04	.11	.09	.12	.23	.38	-.02	.18	.54	.49	.78

Note. \* Education: 1 = Bachelors degree, 2 = Master's or Doctorate; \*\* Gender: 1 = Female, 2 = Male  
Correlations > +/- .15 significant at the 0.01 level, Correlation > +/- .11 significant at the 0.05 level

in their organization tended to more willing to do so than younger employees ( $F(1,374) = 8.53, p < .01$ ), male employees ( $F(1,377) = 19.76, p < .001$ ), and those with fewer years working for their organization ( $F(1,376) = 6.04, p < .05$ ). When asked if they preferred to continue working under changed conditions if they had won the lottery, a slightly different pattern emerged. Younger employees, female employees, and those with fewer years of tenure tended to indicate that they would prefer different work conditions as compared to older employees, males, and those with longer tenure ( $F(1,354) = 5.76, p < .05$ ;  $F(1,356) = 10.76, p < .001$ ; and  $F(1,357) = 9.99, p < .01$ ,

respectively. Table 5 shows the means and percentage distribution related to answers the lottery question.

A hierarchical regression analysis was used to test the first hypothesis. As the respondents came from organizations in different industries, organizational membership was entered in the first model and emerged as a significant predictor, accounting for about five percent of variance in overall work importance. In the second model, demographic characteristics were entered, and here organizational tenure was a significant predictor, adding another five percent of variance explained. Gender did not emerge as significant predictor in model 3. After controlling for these variables,

Table 5  
Lottery Question (N=416)

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Prefer to stop working (n=351)		
Yes	55	16
No	296	84
Continue working in current job (n=380)		
Yes	278	73
No	102	27
Continue working under different condition (n=360)		
Yes	234	65
No	126	35

Table 6  
Demographic Characteristics as Predictors of Overall Importance of Working (N=416)

Predictors	Model 1 $\beta$	Model 2 $\beta$	Model 3 $\beta$	Model 4 $\beta$
Organization	-.22**	-.09	-.09	-.12
Education		-.01	.00	-.02
Tenure in current job		-.01	.03	.00
Tenure with current organization		.24**	.26**	.13
Gender			-.09	-.14*
Age				.21**
R2	.05	.10	.11	.12
$\Delta R2$		.05	.01	.01
F	20.21	10.61	9.15	9.09

Note. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$

age, finally remained significant ( $\beta = .21$ ) but accounting for only one percent of additional variance explained. When further exploring age differences by dividing the age distribution into quartiles, two clearly distinct subgroups emerged ( $F(3,402) = 13.95, p < .001$ ) with employees aged 37 and under rated the overall importance of working lower than those aged 38 and above, lending support for the first hypothesis.

The second hypothesis addressed the effect of age related to the relative importance of work compared to other life domains. To test this hypothesis, a multiple analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted with commitments to work, family, leisure, community, and religion as dependent variables, age as independent variable, and education, gender, years in present job, and years with the current company as covariates. MANOVA depends on assumptions of random sampling, independence of observations, normality of distributions, and homogeneity of variance (Bray & Maxwell, 1985). The first two assumptions were fulfilled by the research design. The equality of covariance matrices was established by Box's M for all five variables ( $M=355.53, F(270, 27,252) = 1.15, p < .05$ ). The Levene test showed normal distributions for three of the five variables (Work, Religion, and Family importance). Seldom, however, are all assumptions for MANOVA precisely met, particularly with larger sample sizes, and MANOVA is robust with respect to violations of assumptions of normality (Bray and Maxwell 1985). Multivariate tests, however, showed only one single significant effect of age, namely related to the importance of leisure as compared to work ( $F(29,352) = 1.52, p < .05, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .11$ ). None of the covariates emerged as significant. Thus, H2 was supported only with respect to the importance of leisure, which was higher for younger employees in the first quartile (31 years of age and below) than for those in the second quartile - that is those between the ages of 32 and 36.

The third hypothesis tested for differences in work conditions among Korean employees of different age groups. Factor analysis results indicated two factors, labeled Occupational Fulfillment and Career Advancement. A multivariate analysis of variance was conducted with the two factors as dependent and age as independent variable, controlling for company, gender, education, and years in the current job and in the present organization. Confirming that the assumptions for MANCOVA procedures were fulfilled,

the analysis did not show significant differences for employees of different age groups with respect to either factor. A small effect ( $\eta^2 = .01$ ) was found for gender, with female employees ranking Occupational Fulfillment higher in value than males but this effect disappeared when the analysis was repeated with equal cell sizes, and thus appeared to be an artifact of the unequal gender distribution in the sample.

H4 tested for age effects in the preference for intrinsic outcomes of working. Factor analysis of this construct showed, again, two factors, labeled Intrinsic and Material Outcomes but the first factor had shown poor internal consistency. Testing for predictor effects of Material Outcomes and three items that had loaded on the second factor, and using the same procedure as for the third hypothesis, no statistical support was found for this hypothesis.

The fifth and sixth hypotheses tested for relationships between work values and job satisfaction. Using univariate analysis of co-variance (ANCOVA) with Job Satisfaction as dependent, Overall Importance of Working as independent, Company affiliation as random, and Age, Gender, Education and Year in the present Job and Current Company as control variables, no significant effects emerged. The only effect was obtained for Length of Employment in the Present Job ( $F(1,368) = 7.00, p < .01$ ) predicting about nine percent of variance. Visual inspection of the scatter plot suggested a linear relationship with higher levels of job satisfaction associated with longer tenure in the present position. Using the same procedure to test the relationships between job satisfaction and the non-work domains of life, two significant results emerged. Korean employees who valued involvement with their community and with religion compared to working, also reported higher levels of job satisfaction ( $F(6,385) = 2.29, p < .05, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .05$ ;  $F(6,385) = 2.26, p < .01, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .06$ , respectively). H5, therefore, was not supported, and H6 was partially supported.

The seventh and eighth hypothesis suggested relationships between meaning of working and career satisfaction. Using the same set of control and random variables as was done previously, ANCOVA results showed support for H7 with a strong effect for the overall importance of working on career satisfaction ( $F(3,366) = 3.18, p < .05, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .34$ ) as well as significant

Table 7  
 Work and Non Work Values as Predictors of Organizational Commitment (N=416)

Predictors	Model 1 $\beta$	Model 2 $\beta$	Model 3 $\beta$	Model 4 $\beta$
Organization	-.25**	-.12*	-.13*	-.09
Tenure in current job		-.06	.07	-.08
Tenure with current organization		.33**	.26**	.22**
Gender			-.00	.04
Age			.10	.04
Education			-.05	.05
Importance of Work				.29**
Relative Importance of				
Leisure				-.06
Community				-.02
Religion				.07
Family				.04
$R^2$	.07	.15	.15	.23
$\Delta R^2$		.08	.00	.08
$F$	25.05	20.78	10.83	9.66

Note. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$

relationships between age and number of years on the present job, albeit with very small effect sizes (partial eta squared = .01 and .03 respectively). When testing the effects of the relative importance of non-work domains of life on career satisfaction, no main effects were found.

The final two hypotheses tested for the relationship between work and non-work domains of Korean employees and organizational commitment. A hierarchical regression was used to review the incremental contribution to organizational commitment. As Table 7 shows, organizational membership (Model 1) and the length of employment in the current organization (Model 2) accounted for about 15 percent of variance. Gender, age, and education did not emerge as predictors while the overall importance individuals assign to working contributed eight percent. None of the non-work domains appeared related.

### Conclusion

Work meanings and identities are not simply determined by a work organization but rather defined and

enacted by individuals in complex series of interactive processes that Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) labeled ‘job crafting’. In organizational settings, professional and personal aspects of identity intersect (Carden & Callahan, 2007), and much attention has been paid in the literature to the boundaries of work and non-work related dimensions of life. Much of the literature, however, is at the conceptual level, postulating broad shifts in work attitudes due to modernization, globalization, and demographic changes in the composition of the work force.

Korea has a long and distinguished history of work meanings dating back to Buddhism and Confucianism as national religions and philosophies. In the recent past, the meaning of work has played itself out against the backdrop of radical and aggressive economic reform, resulting in the transformation of the country from a war-torn, poor, and agrarian society in middle of last century to one of the most modern, industrialized, urbanized, and technologically sophisticated successful economies in the world. Alongside this development, the experience of work and the meaning that is associated with work have undergone dramatic changes.

In this paper, the results of a study of some 400 professional level employees in four large companies in diverse industries were reported. Key results focused on the nature and structure of meaning of work and its outcomes at the individual and organizational levels of analysis. As reported by Kim (1998) and Woo (1995) a decade earlier, work centrality among this sample of Korean professional employees remained high but ranked second after the importance of family relative to working. Compared to leisure, community, and religious commitments, working remained a central pursuit in the lives of the respondents in this study, and this is in line with previous research (Kim, 1998; Woo, 1995). The results of the lottery question indicated a strong preference to continue working even if the material necessity was removed but desired changed working conditions. Age, gender, and tenure with the organization affected the responses to this variable, indicating a generational and gender related shift in work centrality, with employees aged 37 and younger showing clear differences to those 38 years of age and older. Age effects were also shown for the value of leisure compared to working, indicating that, indeed, the alternative to work involvement for younger Korean employees is leisure rather than family, community, or religious involvements. Despite the age-related differences in the value of working, the two factors representing work conditions and those representing valued work outcomes were uniformly rated by participants in this study. Material outcomes and Career Advancement were rated higher than occupational fulfillment and intrinsic work outcomes, and this runs counter to previous research indicating a shift towards self-fulfillment at work (Kim, 1998). Job satisfaction appeared to be determined primarily by length of employment lending support for Schneider's theory that employees adjust to their place of employment or seek different work elsewhere (Schneider, Smith, Taylor, & Fleenor, 1988); two non-work related domains - community and religious involvement - explained a small amount of variance in job satisfaction. Stronger results were found for career satisfaction and organizational commitment: Individuals who ranked work as a very important component in their lives also reported higher levels of satisfaction with their careers and with their level of commitment to their organization.

The results of this study indicated that there exists a continued, yet slow rate of change in work values among

Korean employees. Working conditions and desired work outcomes were fairly homogeneous and indicated a preference for material and extrinsic factors. Given the strong role portrayed in many human resource management and work force education texts on the value of intrinsic factors, practicing managers and workforce educators should be aware that these orientations may not fit the preferences of all Korean employees. In addition, the motivating role of job design and other organizational development interventions, predicated on the premise that greater levels of intrinsic factors are welcomed by employees, should be taken with some caution given the findings of this study.

Among the many questions for future studies is what role did the professional affiliation of participants have in shaping the obtained results. There is a need to explore the meaning of working indices across larger samples and different industry and professional groupings in Korea. In addition, the influence of demographic factors, in particular age, gender, and education should be investigated further. Many economies around the world experience strong trends towards greater levels of diversity and as these trends continue, more dramatic changes in the meaning of working should be expected.

Clearly, the study of work meanings around the world is an important contribution to the knowledge base of human resource development. In the present study, certain findings and trends became evident but follow-up studies are required to move this important line of research forward.

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Received March 1, 2008

Revision received July, 2008

Accepted July 9, 2008