NRCP RESEARCH JOURNAL

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# A Sequential Explanatory Analysis of the Ethical Decision-Making of the Military Cadets in the Philippines: The Case of the Philippine Military Academy

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Ethical decision-making emerges from the interplay between individual cognitive structures and the dynamics of social interaction. This study explored the ethical decision-making of military cadets of the Philippine Military Academy using a sequential explanatory mixed method aimed at capturing the presence of risky-shift in the Cadet Corps, determining the factors affecting the individual and group ethical decision-making of the military cadets, and exploring the organizational implications of group polarization among the cadets. The method of Isenberg (1986) with modification of his Choice Dilemmas Questionnaire was utilized to examine the social cognitive processes involved in one's exercise of choice. Based on the survey, results revealed that risky-shift is present in the Cadet Corps. The qualitative approach revealed that individual ethical decision-making involves 1) need to prudently discern, 2) strictly perform, 3) objectively decide, and 4) effectively communicate. On the other hand, group ethical decision-making involves the nature of disciplinary issues, offender, victim, and PMA context. Moreover, organizational implications are the need for data-driven decision-making and the aftermath of deliberation that affects the cadet's life. Hence, this study suggests that group pressure can lead cadets to prioritize group norms over ethical principles. Recommendations focused on environment scanning, documentation of best practices, and exploration of ethical organizational culture.

**Keywords;** group polarization, explanatory sequential mixed methods, ethical decision-making, military cadets, Philippines

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https://doi.org/10.63225/nrcp.rj.2024.0009
Received 2 January 2024; Received in revised form 19 February 2024; Accepted 19 February 2024; Available online 1 April 2024
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