

Joonha JEON

Educational Background

PhD candidate at CWTS (Center for Science and Technology Studies)	Leiden University, Netherlands	2025 ~ (Ongoing)
M.S., Science and Technology Policy (<i>Cum Laude</i>)	KAIST, Daejeon, South Korea	2018
B.S., Material Science and Engineering (<i>Cum Laude</i>)	KAIST, Daejeon, South Korea	2016
Minor in Science and Technology Policy		

Professional Career

Product manager	Naver Cloud	Sep 2023 – Oct 2025
Research Fellow	Naver	Aug 2021 - Aug 2023
Research Engineer (SW)	TmaxData	Jan 2020 - Aug 2021
Data Scientist; Project Manager	Neofect	May 2018 - Dec 2019
Intern (Asan Young Fellowship)	AAAS	Jan 2016 – Jun 2016

Personal Statement

My research interests reside at the intersection of science and technology studies (STS) and valuation studies, particularly examining research integrity in regard of scholarly communication. I have previously done research on topics within the research system from the personnel to the institutional level, such as academic harassment, performance-based funding, and questionable research practices. Notably, my focus on systematic manipulation in academic publishing is grounded in hands-on experience, having previously contributed to the media exposés on research misconducts in South Korea.

Holding a Master's degree from the R&D Policy Lab at KAIST's Graduate School of Science and Technology Policy (STP), my effectiveness as a boundary spanner stems from my balanced expertise in qualitative and quantitative research. Before joining CWTS, I worked in Korean IT industry, focusing on data analytics and AI product management. This industry background developed my collaborative capabilities and also provided practical insights into recent AI developments, which is also relatable to my current research on "paper mill(s)." Throughout the trajectory, I have consistently strived for 'doing STS,' actively bridging academic research and public discourse through writing, knowledge dissemination, and policy engagement on topics ranging from research culture to AI ethics.

1. From Investigation to Impact: Exposing Paper Mills and Driving Social Discourse

I contributed to groundbreaking media coverage that exposed systematic fraud in Korean academia, providing critical evidence from my own investigation about paper mills operated by professors [1-1]. This revelation became a catalyst for public discourse on research integrity, prompting me to engage in a discussion of the cultural and systematic factors that enable academic manipulation. I specifically examined how scholars' self-identity is reshaped to be "quantified" through research evaluation metrics, creating perverse incentives that drive academic misconduct [1-2, 1-3]. My enthusiasm and expertise in this field led me to disseminate relevant research through launching and writing a newsletter dedicated to Research on Research [1-4], and to contribute to a collaborative book examining and proposing structural reforms for Korean academia [1-5].

List of relevant works

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- [1-1] Kim, Y. (2018, Sep 11). The Secret of 'Fake Science' Factory. *Newstapa*. <https://news.kcij.org/67>; Kim, J. (2018, Nov 6). "Current Professor Runs 'Multi-level Marketing business of Academic conference' using Shell Company". *Newstapa*. <https://www.newstapa.org/article/juJqQ>
- [1-2] Jeon, J. (2019). Trapped in the Iron Cage: The One-Dimensional Researcher. *Behind Sciences*, 7, 6-11. <https://behindsciences.kaist.ac.kr/2019/12/23/철창-속-일차원적-연구자/> (Original in Korean, Translated version in Writing Sample #1)
- [1-3] Jeon, J. (2018). Academia Exposed: Reflections on the WASET Scandal. *The Science & Technology*. 592, 112-113. <http://ebook.kofst.or.kr/book/201809/#page=114> (in Korean)
- [1-4] Somehow Researcher Newsletter. (2021). <https://page.stibee.com/archives/75558> (in Korean)
- [1-5] Kang, S., Kim, B., You, H., Lee, S., Cho, S., Jeon, J., Hyun, S., & Lee, W. (2022). Doing Ph.D in Korea. *Three Chairs*. (in Korean)
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2. Understanding Research System with STS Perspectives

My representative works include empirical studies examining how university evaluation and funding policies shape their knowledge production and exchange practices. Through analysis of institutional-level panel data, I revealed methodological problems in inequality estimation and critically assessed the claim whether performance-based funding systems accelerate the Matthew Effect among universities [2-1]. In a separate study analyzing the funding scheme dedicated to university-industry cooperation, I tracked how stakeholders co-produce and implement the evaluation of the scheme, discovering that selected universities has been transformed into quasi-government agencies serving industry rather than fostering reciprocal collaboration [2-2]. Additionally, I have consistently applied STS perspectives to develop theoretical frameworks for policy reports. For example, I conceptualized a graduate student as a "maintainer" and an advisor-professor as an "obligatory passage point" in the Korean research system, providing new explanatory power for understanding the dynamics of academic bullying [2-3, 2-4].

List of relevant works

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- [2-1] Jeon, J., & Kim, S. Y. (2018). Is the gap widening among universities? On research output inequality and its measurement in the Korean higher education system. *Quality & Quantity*, 52(2), 589-606. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-017-0652-y> (Writing Sample #2)
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- [2-2] Jeon, J. (2018). Cooperation by Coercion: Institutionalizing the “Third Mission” of Universities in the South Korean Higher Education System. <https://doi.org/10.31235/osf.io/p42ve> (*Writing Sample #3*)
- [2-3] Jeon, J. (2018). Questioning the Norms of Graduate School: Behind the Study on Graduate Student Rights. *Behind Sciences*, 5, 93-99. <https://behindsciences.kaist.ac.kr/2018/10/07/대학원에-상식을-묻다/> (*in Korean*)
- [2-4] Jeon, J. (2024). Graduate school as a space for researchers. *University: Discourses and Issues*, 13, 10-21. (*in Korean*)
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3. Integrating Qualitative and Quantitative Skills for Methodological Innovation

My research experience has equipped me a solid foundation in both quantitative and qualitative methodologies, providing a potential for developing innovative mixed-method approaches in PhD research. I have applied quantitative techniques such as panel data analysis to scrutinize publication patterns of Korean universities [2-1], and conducted network analysis on scientometric data from Korean flagship research institutes to map organizational structure and citation dynamics - a project recognized by a renowned fellowship [3-1]. For qualitative skills, I gained valuable experience through ethnographic fieldwork in a city built on the shipbuilding industry to uncover nuanced narratives during its recession, made possible by winning a competitive research grant [3-2]. My qualitative expertise was further enriched by combining in-depth interviews and document analysis to trace the construction of university-industry cooperation in Korea [2-2]. Building on this methodological versatility, I took a role of data scientist and research engineer for business intelligence software in industry, where I refined my analytical skills with more practical experiences.

List of relevant works

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- [3-1] Yun, K., Jeon, J., Lee, I., Sung, R., Lee, Y. (2018). Into the Troubled Waters: An Ethnographic Analysis of the Recession of Shipbuilding Industry and Its Impact on Industrialized Urban Life in South Korea. *KAIST High Risk High Return Project Report*. (*in Korean*)
- [3-2] Yang, S., & Jeon, J. (2018). Understanding the Organization of Team Science: A Case of the Institute for Basic Science in South Korea. *STEPI Fellowship*.
- [3-3] Yun, C., Jeon, J., & Achim, K. (2024). K-Datasets: The more the merrier?. In *ICLR 2024 Workshop: Global AI Cultures*. https://globalaicultures.github.io/pdf/7_k_datasets_the_more_the_merrie.pdf
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4. Impact-oriented Intervening and Practicing

On the one hand, I have actively contributed to improving research culture and environment through multiple roles within and beyond academic communities. As an executive member of KAIST Graduate Student Association, I supported an annual research environment survey that documents the challenges faced by graduate researchers to create an evidence base for informed policy reforms [4-1]. This experience led me an opportunity to co-author a comprehensive policy report on academic harassment toward graduate students [4-2], which directly resulted in national and institutional policy changes securing safer research environment. I also served as an external policy advisor for the Korean Graduate Employee Union, to advocate for graduate students' rights. On the other hand, my commitment to enhance public discourse on socio-technical system extended to founding editorial roles in two outlets: the student magazine Behind Sciences at KAIST STP [4-

3], and AI Ethics Newsletter Korea [4-4]. Through these platforms, I have challenged dominant narratives by highlighting overlooked dimensions of, for example, an extractivism of generative AI services [4-5]. I also occasionally deliver invited talks on research evaluation, AI ethics and policy, and career development [4-6].

List of relevant works

[4-1] See <https://infogram.com/kaistgsa> (in Korean)

[4-2] Kim, S. Y., et al. (2018). *A Study on Measures to Strengthen Graduate and University Student Rights*. Korea Ministry of Education. <https://www.prism.go.kr/homepage/asmt/popup/1342000-201900086> (in Korean)

[4-3] See <https://behindsciences.kaist.ac.kr/>, I served as an editorial board member for Vol.1 (Sep 2016) & Vol.2 (Mar 2017).

[4-4] See <https://ai-ethics.kr/author/somehow/>, especially for my contributions, since May 2022. (in Korean)

[4-5] AI Ethics Newsletter Korea, (2024). Automated Sexual Exploitation: Deepfake Sex Crimes and the Technological Ethics of Generative AI. *Epi the Science Magazine*, 30, 196-213. (in Korean)

[4-6] For the example with a record, see [2023 STP Career Talk Series](#)

Addition: Notes on my career transitions

Pursuing an industry career was my deliberate choice after completing Master's degree with a thesis on university-industry cooperation. I was curious to understand different organizational and institutional logics and how knowledge production extends beyond academic settings, particularly in fields like AI. Over 7 years, I have built a professional portfolio across multiple roles and domains (see below Table). These various responsibilities equipped me with transferable skills for addressing complex real-world problems and data. Throughout this journey, I have maintained my identity as a boundary spanner between academic and industry contexts, especially through my continued writings and engagements aimed at fostering a healthier socio-technical system. This multifaceted experience positions me uniquely to further study paper mills as pathological phenomena across different countries and disciplines, not only to deeply understand the issue but also to design and practice effective interventions. In particular, my current position as an AI product manager provides insights of up-to-date technological developments like RAG (retrieval-augmented generation) and AI agent, considering their relevance in both exploiting and safeguarding scholarly communication.

Table. Career trajectory in industry

Role	Employer	Time	Responsibilities
Product Manager	<i>Naver Cloud</i>	Sep 2023 - Present	Define strategy and prioritize features for the AI development platform service, delivering B2B solutions through collaboration with cross-functional teams
Research Fellow	<i>Naver</i>	Aug 2021 - Aug 2023	Established comprehensive AI ethics governance frameworks while contributing to AI policy communication initiatives via academic and public engagement
Research Engineer (SW)	<i>TmaxData</i>	Jan 2020 - Aug 2021	Designed, developed, and launched the Automated Exploratory Data Analysis & Statistical Analysis feature within Business Intelligence software
Project Manager; Data Scientist	<i>Neofect</i>	May 2018 - Dec 2019	Managed multiple R&D projects for digital rehabilitation device development; Contributed to multiple data analysis projects from algorithm development using sensory data to reporting for business decision-making