

## Relationship between Sense of Coherence, Communication Competence, Self-leadership of College Students

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### Abstract

*This study aims to investigate the relationship between sense of coherence communication competence, and self-leadership of college students. The research results show that sense of coherence and communication competence ( $r=.536$ ,  $p<.01$ ), self-leadership and sense of coherence ( $r=.598$ ,  $p<.01$ ), communication competence and self-leadership ( $r=.649$ ,  $p<.01$ ) all have statistically significant positive correlations. The results from a regression analysis show that sense of coherence ( $\beta=.352$ ,  $p<.001$ ) and communication competence ( $\beta=.461$ ,  $p<.001$ ) are factors that affect self-leadership, with 50.8% explanatory power of the model. Accordingly, in order to increase self-leadership of college students, sense of coherence and communication competence needs to be improved*

**Keywords:** *Self-leadership, Sense of coherence, Communication competence, College student, College life*

### 1. Introduction

The research on the self-leadership of college students conducted by colleges is continuing in diverse and various ways. The results of research on self-leadership suggest there is a close relationship between self-leadership and academic achievement, and studies report as levels of self-leadership increase, academic stress decreases with higher satisfaction in college life [1]. In addition, there are studies that report a positive correlation between interpersonal relationships and communication with self-leadership in college students [2]. Also, self-leadership has been shown to significantly influence career commitment, goal commitment, job commitment, and learning commitment [3]. Self-leadership is also meaningful in lowering or overcoming stress [4][5], and it also improves performance by self-nurturing and developing natural growth potential [6].

Given how important self-leadership is for a successful college life, we need to consider how college students can improve their self-leadership. It is necessary to consider sense of coherence of as one of the methods; individuals with a strong sense of coherence are not tense in the face of a stimuli, and if they are triggered, the stimuli is not regarded as a danger or a threat and the individual is able to face and solve the problem independently [7]. In a previous study on sense of coherence, it was associated with a decrease in stress-related factors [8], and had a positive effect in improving the quality of life and health-related behaviors [9]. In other respects, one can consider communication competence that has a significant impact on

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#### Article history:

Received (January 24, 2017), Review Result (March 21, 2017), Accepted (April 11, 2017)

coping with stress and academic and career exploration. Communication competence forms the basis of interpersonal relationships to appropriately express oneself, to identify oneself, to understand others, to promote a sense of closeness, and shown to improve adaptability to college life [10].

Therefore, this study aims to clarify the relationship between sense of coherence and communication competence in order to improve the self-leadership of college students. In other words, the objective of this study is to provide the educational direction necessary for student guidance and career planning by discovering how sense of coherence and communication competence affect self-leadership, by exploring the relationship between sense of coherence, communication competence and self-leadership.

## **2. Research subjects and method**

### **2.1. Research subjects**

The research subjects of this study were 900 students enrolled at N university in Cheonan. The study was conducted through online questionnaires from September 29th to October 29th, 2016. Of the 900 respondents, 141 were excluded due to undependable responses, and a total of 759 questionnaires were used for analysis.

#### **2.2.1. Sense of coherence**

The sense of coherence measurement tool used in this study was the 29 questions developed by Antonovsky (1987) then modified and adapted by Imsun Seo's study (2002). In Imsun Seo's research (2002), a 7-point Likert scale was used, but in this study, it was modified to a 5-point Likert scale. The scale was comprised of a total of 29 questions consisting of 11 items on understanding, 10 items on management skills, and 8 items on meaning making. In Imsun Seo's study (2002), Cronbach's  $\alpha = .86$  and for this study, the Cronbach's  $\alpha = .93$ .

#### **2.2.2. Communication competence**

In order to measure the communication competence, the GICC (Global Interpersonal Communication Competence) tool developed by Gyeong-Ho Hur (2003) and then modified and adapted by Ju-Young Bae (2009) was utilized. This tool was comprised of 15 items on a 5-point Likert scale from 'Not at all' to 'Always, with a higher score indicating higher communication competence. In the study by Ju-Young Bae (2009), Cronbach's  $\alpha$  was .85 whereas Cronbach's  $\alpha$  in this study was .89.

#### **2.2.3. Self-leadership**

For self-leadership, the scale from Sun-Ju Hwang's study (2013) was used. Self-leadership consisted of the following 6 sub factors; self-expectation, rehearsal, goal-setting, self-compensation, self-criticism, and constructive thinking. Each sub factor had 3 items respectively, totaling 18 questions overall. Each question had a 5-point Likert scale, and a higher score meant higher self-leadership. In Sun-Ju Hwang's study (2013), Cronbach's  $\alpha = .88$ , and in this study Cronbach's  $\alpha = .88$ .

### 2.3. Data analysis

Pearson's correlation coefficients were used in the analysis to confirm the correlation between sense of coherence, communication competence, and self-leadership, and a multiple regression analysis was conducted to investigate the effect sense of coherence and communication competence had on self-leadership. The statistical analysis was based on the total score of each variable, and was conducted using SPSS Win 23.0.

## 3. Research results

### 3.1. Descriptive statistics of each variable

The descriptive statistics of each variable are presented in [Table 1]. On the 5-point scale, sense of coherence was 3.40, communication competence was 3.71, and self-leadership was 3.42, with communication competence being the highest of the three variables. Specifically, within sense of coherence, management skills was the highest at 3.57, and within self-leadership, self-expectations was highest at 3.67.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics by research variable (N=759)

Variable	Sub factor	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Based on 5-Point Scale	
				<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Sense of Coherence	Understanding	35.39	6.44	3.21	.58
	Management Skills	35.79	5.94	3.57	.59
	Meaning-Making	27.49	5.85	3.43	.73
	Total	98.67	16.45	3.40	.56
Communication Competence	Communication	55.70	8.35	3.71	.55
Self-Leadership	Self-Expectation	11.03	2.44	3.67	.81
	Rehearsal	10.96	2.35	3.65	.78
	Goal Setting	10.88	2.53	3.62	.84
	Self-Compensation	11.43	2.20	3.30	.84
	Self-Criticism	7.85	2.63	3.26	.89
	Constructive Thinking	10.04	2.34	3.03	1.02
	Total	62.20	9.40	3.42	.65

### 3.2. Correlation between the three variables

The correlation between the variables used in this study is presented in [Table 2]. Sense of coherence showed a positive correlation with communication competence ( $r=.536$ ,  $p<.01$ ), and the higher sense of coherence showed higher communication competence. Sense of coherence also showed a positive correlation with self-leadership ( $r=.598$ ,  $p<.01$ ), and the higher the sense of coherence, the higher self-leadership appeared. Communication competence and self-leadership showed a positive correlation ( $r=.649$ ,  $p<.01$ ) and the higher the communication competence, the higher self-leadership appeared.

Table 2. Sense of coherence, communication competence, self-Leadership correlation analysis

	Sense of Coherence	Communication Competence	Self-Leadership
Sense of Coherence	1		
Communication Competence	.536**	1	
Self-Leadership	.598**	.649**	1
<i>M</i>	98.67	55.70	62.20
<i>SD</i>	16.45	8.35	9.40

\*\* $p < .01$

### 3.3. Influencing relationship between the three variables

#### 3.3.1. Effect of sense of coherence on self-leadership

The results of the multiple regression analysis, conducted to explore the sub factors of sense of coherence that influence self-leadership, are presented in [Table 3]. Of the sub factors of sense of coherence, management skills ( $t=4.953$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and meaning making ( $t=11.212$ ,  $p < .001$ ) have a statistically significant positive impact on self-leadership, with a total explanatory power of 40.5%. In other words, of the sub factors of sense of coherence, management skills and meaning making were shown to have the effect of improving self-leadership.

Table 3. Effect of sense of coherence on self-leadership

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	B	SE	$\beta$	<i>t</i>
Self-Leadership	Constant	29.886	1.646		18.156
	Understanding	-.069	.066	-.047	-1.053
	Management Skills	.389	.079	.246	4.953***
	Meaning Making	.757	.068	.472	11.212***
$R = .638$ , $R^2 = .408$ , modified $R^2 = .405$ , $F = 173.210$ , $p = .000$ , Durbin-Watson = 1.999					

\*\*\* $p < .001$

#### 3.3.2. Effect of communication competence on self-leadership

The results of the multiple regression analysis conducted to investigate the impact of communication competence self-leadership are presented in [Table 4]. Communication competence ( $t = 23.472$ ,  $p < .001$ ) showed a statistically significant positive effect on self-leadership with a total explanatory power of 42.0%. In other words, communication competence has the effect of enhancing self-leadership.

Table 4. Effect of communication competence on self-leadership

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	B	SE	$\beta$	t
Self-Leadership	(Constant)	21.521	1.752		12.281
	Communication Competence	.730	.031	.649	23.472***
$R=.649, R^2=.421, \text{modified } R^2=.420, F=550.953, p=.000, \text{Durbin-Watson}=2.023$					

\*\*\* $p < .001$

### 3.3.3. Effect of sense of coherence and communication competence on self-leadership

The results of the multiple regression analysis performed to examine the effects of sense of coherence and communication competence on self-leadership are presented in [Table 5]. Sense of coherence ( $t=11.653, p<.001$ ) and communication competence ( $t=15.274, p<.001$ ) showed a statistically significant positive effect on self-leadership with a total explanatory power of 50.8%. In other words, sense of coherence and communication competence has the effect of increasing self-leadership.

Table 5. Effect of sense of coherence and communication competence on self-leadership

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	B	SE	$\beta$	t
Self-Leadership	Constant	13.495	1.755		7.689
	Sense of Coherence	.201	.017	.352	11.653***
	Communication Competence	.518	.034	.461	15.274***
$R=.714, R^2=.509, \text{modified } R^2=.508, F=392.425, p=.000, \text{Durbin-Watson}=2.108$					

\*\*\* $p < .001$

## 4. Conclusion

The objective of this study was to clarify the effect of sense of coherence and communication competence on self-leadership by investigating the relationship between sense of coherence, communication competence, and self-leadership in college students. The results of examining of the relationship between sense of coherence, communication competence, and self-leadership show they are significantly correlated.

The results of examining the effect of sense of coherence and communication competence on self-leadership show both sense of coherence and communication competence have a positive effect on self-leadership, with communication competence in particular having a significant effect, showing similar results with previous studies research [11].

Considering these results comprehensively, it can be confirmed that sense of coherence and communication competence of college students are the main variables affecting self-leadership, and as there are differences in the degree of effect of the three variables according to individual background, it is necessary to plan for differentiated counseling and education to be possible.

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