International Journal of IT-based Social Welfare Promotion and Management
Vol. 5, No. 1 (2018), pp.31-36
http://dx.doi.org/10.21742/ijswpm.2018.5.1.06

The Effects of Core Self-Evaluation on Entrepreneurial Intention and Job Searching Stress: Focusing on the Mediating Effects of Creativity

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Abstract

Creativity is a fundamental feature of human intelligence that cannot be replaced by artificial intelligence (AI) even in the fourth industrial revolution era and is now considered to be one of the most important competencies in recruiting new employees. Despite the important role of creativity in employment and entrepreneurship, research on the relationship among creativity, employment, and entrepreneurship is still lacking in Korea. Therefore, in this study, we investigated the mediating effect of creativity on the influence of CSE on entrepreneurship and job stress.

The results of the study are as follows. First, CSE had a positive effect on creativity. Second, creativity had a positive effect on entrepreneurial intention(EI). Third, the relationship between CSE and EI was mediated by creativity. However, the mediating effect of creativity on the relationship between CSE and the job stress was not found.

Keywords: *Core-self-evaluation, Creativity, Job Searching Stress, Entrepreneurship*

1. Introduction

Adobe Systems Korea announced an interesting research at the 2014 'Education Leadership Forum.' Educators of elementary, middle, high school, as well as colleges, were surveyed from 13 countries of the Asia-Pacific region. For the question, 'Creative expressions are essential to students regardless of the course subject', 65 percent of the Korean region respondents replied yes, which was similar to the other Asia-Pacific regions' replies of 64 percent. However, there was a significant difference in agreement with the question on 'Students' understanding of concepts can be improved through the use of creative tools (Korea 45%, Asia-Pacific region 54%).'

This implies that although creativity is recognized as crucial to students, helping them develop creativity and providing an educational environment for it are falling behind in Korea, compared to other countries. What is more, 39 percent of the respondents agreed that 'the current education system fails to sufficiently focus on creative expressions'. Through this, it can be said that educators feel that education on creativity is still at a very low level.[1]

This research, which emphasizes on the importance of creativity, focuses on finding the relationship between (1) core-self-evaluation(CSE) and job searching stress(JSS), (2) CSE and entrepreneurial intention(EI), and (3) mediating effect of creativity on former two relationships.

Article history:
Received (October 22, 2017), Review Result (December 30, 2017), Accepted (February 2, 2018)

Print ISSN: 2205-8435, eISSN: 2207-5321 IJSWPM

CSE is a form of natural self-evaluation that believes 'I have a competitive edge [1].' Previous researches show that CSE can forecast one's behavior, such as contentment with the result of his job or a task, organizational commitment, job performances, etc [2]. Unique flexibility(UF), which is a kind of creativity, is an ability to produce extraordinary ideas in order to sustain everyday life using adjustable thought process [3]. These days, college students in Korea are highly stressed out under the pressure of career development, and creativity is an essential factor for a broad perspective with which people can find a variety of career paths. Since there are few domestic researches on JSS and EI in relation to CSE, except for [4] which showed that CSE moderates the relationship of self-efficacy and EI, this research is expected to enrich the sights on how CSE improves creativity(UF) and ultimately leads to career management.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1. Core self-evaluation and creativity

CSE is a basic evaluation of oneself and the reality [5]. Although core self-evaluation is an assessment of one's characteristics or future possibility, it can also be used as an analysis tool for one's attitude within an organization and personality that influences action [6].

[5] suggested four factors for core self-evaluation: self-esteem, locus of control, generalized self-efficacy, and neuroticism. However, [2] proved that some parts of the factors come together as a single factor through intersection. [7] also stated that there is no problem generalizing it into a theory, as the four characteristics are not separately measured; they are actually part of a single factor of higher level.

Meanwhile, creativity can be also sub-categorized into several dimensions. Unique flexibility is an ability to produce extraordinary ideas in order to sustain everyday life using adjustable [3]. It includes adaptiveness on the basis of environment analysis and the process of applying specific knowledges to other places.

This kind of unique flexibility is very much related to CSE. [8] asserted that those who have high CSE have the tendency to have positive thoughts more than negative ones. This, in turn, helps them have a higher chance of suggesting an idea that other people are not able to come up with and getting great results. To add, [9] stated that there is a very strong positive correlation between self-realization and creative personality. Since CSE includes self-realization aspects such as self-efficacy and self-respect, it can be forecasted that high CSE can positively affect high creativity.

Hypothesis 1: Core self-evaluation has a positive effect on creativity (unique flexibility).

2.2. Creativity and career management

Since creativity is generally defined as producing new ideas, new actions and new challenges, there is high feasibility that creative people are very likely to engage in opening up a new business. [10] also suggested that proactive persona trait can increase EI. Thus, the following hypothesis was built.

Hypothesis 2: Creativity (unique flexibility) has a positive effect on entrepreneurial intention.

Also, previous researches showed that creativity influences one's optimism. [11] asserted that people with a high sense of creativity have a more optimistic personality. People can only achieve to come up with a creative idea or result through repeating

multiple failures yet enduring the difficult process [12]. In other words, creative individuals must be brave and not fear failures even when the success is not guaranteed. Thus, it can be predicted that the positive psychological state from creativity which will reduce the amount of stress that comes from job searching.

Hypothesis 3: Creativity (unique flexibility) has a negative effect on job searching stress.

2.3. Core self-evaluation, creativity and career management

CSE has been shown to affect one's view of job-related environment such as action, job characteristics, fairness in a positive way [13]. Also, CSE has a positive influence on one's belief of his ability and capability; people with positive CSE set goals voluntarily, act on them and assess them, through intrinsic motivation [2]. These researches show that those who have positive CSE will have a creative personality and that this can lead to an aspect of having high EI.

Hypothesis 4: Creativity (unique flexibility) mediates the relationship between core self-evaluation and entrepreneurial intention.

Moreover, as previously explained, creativity reinforces one's optimism, we can assume that creative people are less likely face stresses or at least better at dealing with them. Since CSE seems to influence one's creativity, and creativity is an antecedent factor of reducing stress, the following hypotheses were deduced.

Hypothesis 5: Creativity (unique flexibility) mediates the relationship between core self-evaluation and job searching stress.

3. Methods

3.1. Operational definition

First, six questions of the CSE Scale by [14] were used to measure CSE. The questions include: 'I am confident that I can succeed in life,' 'One can succeed by working hard.'

Second, creativity questionnaire by [3] was used to measure creativity (unique flexibility). Examples of the questions are 'I try to look for new methods of using a certain object that is different from its original purpose,' 'I think of various imaginations by looking at a certain incident or object.'

Third, EI is comprised of 5 questions created by [15]. Questions include: 'I have a tendency to become an entrepreneur,' 'I have a keen interest toward starting a business and attentively search for related information.'

Lastly, JSS was measured using the 8-question questionnaire that had been modified from Cornell Medical Index. Some examples are: 'I have failed to find a job in the past and am afraid that the same situation will repeat itself,' 'I have to find a job no matter what but am constantly losing confidence.'

3.2. Data Collection

Four-year university students in Korea were selected as the sample. To have a representativeness of the population, universities with over 10,000 students were selected at random. Of the selected schools, students with majors that are more related to career management such as college of commerce and economics or school of business were selected. Questionnaires were returned in envelopes to ensure anonymity. Total 349 respondents replied to the questionnaires, 20 were ruled out as they were undependable. Therefore, 329 replies were used for empirical analysis.

4. Conclusion

4.1. Reliability and Validity Test

SPSS 22.0 was used for the statistical analysis of this research, and explanatory factor analysis was performed for validity verification. There was no item with less than 0.5 in factor loads; as a result, four factors were chosen, CSE, UF, EI and JSS. KMO metric designed for sphericity test was 0.962, and chi-square statistic for the sphericity test was 4474.296. The p-value was 0.000, and the result was statistically significant. Thus, it can be said that that sample number and metrics are valid. Cronbach's α was used for reliability test, this, and Cronbach's α for all the components had a higher value than 0.8.

4.2. Hypothesis Analysis

Multiple regression analysis was used to test the hypothesis, and the results are shown in Table 1. In sum, hypothesis 1, 2, 4 were accepted, while hypothesis 3 and 5 were rejected.

The regression result of Hypothesis 1, which suggests a positive relationship between CSE and creativity (unique flexibility) is shown in Model 1. The results revealed that CSE had a positive influence on unique flexibility, supporting Hypothesis 1 (β=.290, p<.01). Model 2 shows that Hypothesis 2 is accepted, which means creativity (unique flexibility) positively affect EI (β=.328, p<.001). Model 3 showed that the relationship between creativity and JSS was not significant and Hypothesis 3 was rejected (β=-.037).

The mediating effect analysis suggested by Baron and Kenny (1986) was used to look into the mediating effect of creativity. It is important to note that there is a statistically significant relationship between CSE and creativity in step 1. Thus, we continued testing mediation effect in following steps. In step 2, the relationships between creativity and dependent variables were tested with CSE being controlled. Model 4 showed that creativity positively affect EI (β=.136, p<.05) which let us go further for testing Hypothesis 4. Not only the ß coefficients of CSE in Model 4 was weaker than that of Model 1, but also Sobel test showed significant mediation effect (z=3.28, p<.001). The results showed that Hypothesis 4 was accepted. However, creativity had no significant effect on JSS and Hypothesis 5 was rejected.

Table 1. Hypothesis analysis

		Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
DV		Unique flexibility(ß)	Entrepreneurial intention(ß)	Job searching stress(ß)	Entrepreneurial intention(ß)	Job searching stress(ß)
CV	gender	-.151**	-.148**	.034	-.136**	.001
	age	-.010	.042	-.043	.038	-.033
	grade	.008	-.052	.277***	-.058	.293***
	major	-.048	-.080	.081	-.074	.063
	location	.062	.108	.036	.124*	-.006
	work experiences	.020	.141**	.050	.137**	.060
IV	CSE	.290**			.136*	-.378***

MV	Unique flexibility		.328***	-.037	.288***	.072
F-value		6.457***	10.948***	4.543***	10.561***	10.951***
R^2		.123	.193	.090	.209	.464
R^2 change					.209***	.215***

5. Conclusion

This research found that CSE had a positive effect on creativity and EI as well as a negative effect on job searching stress. The result shows that it is important to set up educational philosophy where teachers believe and have faith in students, let them believe what they can do.

Also, creativity positively mediates the relationship between CSE and EI. Educational institutions must be encouraged to promote new challenges and innovative behaviors which will not only motivates students to start a new business but creates a positive atmosphere that promotes start-up businesses national widely.

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