The Relation between Career Aspiration and Positive Career Planning Attitudes: The Gender Differences Moderating role of Self-Concept Clarity

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The present study examined gender differences between career aspiration (CA) and positive career planning attitude by moderating effect of self-concept clarity (SCC), and search for the effective intervention to influence successful career planning.

CA, a level of career ambition, could be an important factor that has influence on positive career planning attitudes. Generally, the relation between CA and optimistic career planning attitude is strengthened by SCC. SCC reflects how one develops self-concept clearly, stably, and consistently (Stucke & Sporer, 2002), and it is the significant factor in career development as people want to get occupation that fit with their self-images (Gottfredson, 1981). According to the research, positive career planning attitudes would be developed by perceived social role such as gender role. Thus, it can be anticipated that there are different pathways to develop career planning attitude in different genders. Specifically, men tend to have relatively high career achievement expectations, and they have strong sense of responsibility as a head of household in Korea. On the other hand, Korean women are expected to have lower career achievement than Korean men, and tend to be interested in self-realization including an idealized individualism orientation (Busan univ. women's institute, 2001). Therefore, CA would directly affect the positive career planning attitudes for female, but not for male who have high and unrealistic aspirations.

As individuals who have low SCC respond to the environment sensitively (Campbell, 1990; Campbell et al., 1996), accepting the unrealistic career aspiration would be likely. Therefore, men who have low self-concept would not be certain about career choice made by them and hard to have optimistic view on their career future.

STUDY HYPOTHESIS

Self-concept clarity would moderate the relation between career aspiration and positive career planning attitudes for males, but not for females.

METHOD

Participants and procedure

A total of two-hundred and twenty-five undergraduates at Y* university in Seoul, Korea participated in the survey. The sample consisted of 91 males (average age= 20.92 years, $SD= 2.54$) and 134 females (average age= 20.64 years, $SD= 1.71$).

Measures

Career aspirations (O'Brien, 1995). The Korean version of the Career Aspiration Scale, translated and revised by Choi (2003). The consistency coefficient was .75 in the present study.

Career Future (Rottinghaus, et al., 2005). The Korean version of Career Future Inventory (CFI), translated by Choi & Kim(2006) was used to measure positive career planning attitudes

in this study. The Internal consistent coefficients are .86, .90 and .85, respectively.

Self-Concept Clarity (Campbell, 1990). Self-concept clarity was measured by the Korean version of Self-concept clarity, translated by Song (2009) in the present study. The internal consistency coefficient for Self-concept clarity was .83.

Figure1. Moderation effect of SCC on relation between CA and CF (right: male, left: female)

RESULT and DISCUSSION

The results of the correlation analysis demonstrated that only the relation between CA and Career future was significant for both gender groups ($p < .05$). Age and gender did not affect positive career planning attitudes for both gender groups. For males, the main effect of CA on career future was significant ($\beta = .27, p < .05$). Moreover, career future was explained 13.3 % by interaction term, $CA \times SCC$ ($\Delta R^2 = .04, p < .05$). Although there was main effect of CA on career future inventory for females ($\beta = .53, p < .01$), the interaction between CA and SCC was not statistically significant in the present study ($\Delta R^2 = .005, p = n.s.$).

This result shows that career identity was formed by gender differences since each gender was expected to have respective career expectation on one's career goal from society. Undergraduate students who are in identity accommodation stage have low internal state awareness. In this state, their public self-consciousness elevates (Sneed & Whitbourne, 2003). In particular, public consciousness which is negatively associated with SCC (Campbell, Trapnell, Heins, Kartz, Lavalley & Lehmann, 1996) tends to be emphasized among Eastern countries (Brewer & Gardner, 1996). Also, public consciousness of men is reflected well in career achievement expectation in Korea. If SCC is high, it is more adaptive in career decision making. However, the result of SCC was no significant effect for females as public consciousness of females is less associated with their career than males. The present findings suggest that increasing internal state awareness performs an important role in career decision making process for males, and this will help to realize the one's aspiration.