Problem-Solving Style of People with High Self-Directedness Traits

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Self-directedness is an integration of inheriting influences and environmental processes that matures with life experience (Laidlaw, Dwivedi, Naito & Gruzelier, 2005). Self-directedness has characteristics of well-functioning attitudes in terms of adaptive information-processing, which are involved in mature, responsible, reliable and integrated people with plentiful internal organizational principles.

Christensen (2004) suggested a model of self-directedness as a basis for approaching higher cognition from a situated cognition perspective. According to this model, increase in sensorimotor complexity create pressure for integrative higher order control and learning processes for acquiring information about the context in which action occurs.

Researchers reported that low Self-directedness is related with many psychopathology such as personality disorders, depression, and schizotypy (Richter & Eisemann, 2002). It is reported that low Self-directedness tends to be associated with an inability to accept responsibility for actions or decisions and a tendency to ascribe blame onto others. Also, low scorers described their life as goalless and they are less skillful in problem solving and lack confidence in their own efficacy. And they are unrealistic about their capabilities and, with their low self-esteem, tend to strive for impractical goals and wish to be best at everything and always.

The aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between Self-directedness and problem-solving style including thinking and social adaptation, and comparison between high and low scorers in Self-directedness.

**METHOD**

**Participants and Procedure.** A total of 320 undergraduate students (male 143, female 177) were participated in this study for course credit. They completed the scales for Self-directedness, thinking style, problem-solving and social adaptation.

**Materials.** Total four scales were used in this study.

Self-directedness was measured by Self-directedness subscale of Temperament and Character Inventory (Cloninger, Svrakic, & Przybeck, 1993: TCI), Korean version. Self-directedness scale consists of 4 subscales: S1- Responsibility vs. Blaming; S2 - Purposefulness vs. Lack of goal-direction; S3- Resourcefulness; S4- Self-acceptance vs. Self-striving; S5-Enlightened second nature.

To measure various aspects of problem-solving, thinking style type, problem-solving and social adaptation were measured. First, Type subscale of Thinking Style Inventory (Sternberg & Wagner, 1991) was used. It contains Monarchy, Hierarchy, Oligarchy and Anarchy as subscales. Second, Problem-Solving Inventory (Hepner & Peterson, 1982: PSI) was measured. It contains Confidence, Approach-Avoidance and Personal Control as subscales. Social problem-solving was measured by Social Adaptation Self-evaluation Scale (Bosc, Dubini & Polin, 1997: SASS). It measures job interest and enjoyment, family and extra family relations, intelligent interest, role satisfaction and resources and economic ability.

**RESULTS and DISCUSSION**

The correlation analysis result showed that Self-directedness is positively related to hierarchical goal approach ($r=.447$, $p=.000$), while it is negatively related to oligarchic approach ($r=-.127$, $p=.023$). Self-directedness is positively related to all of problem solving subscales. It is significantly positive correlation with Confidence ($r=.644$, $p=.000$), Approach-Avoidance ($r=.428$, $p=.000$) and Personal Control ($r=.611$, $p=.000$). Also, Self-directedness is significantly positive correlation with all of the Social Adaptation subscales. The highest correlation among subscales was Self-directedness and Job Interest ($r=.428$, $p=.000$).

When the Self-directedness score of the participants was divided into two group by score mean ($M=22.537$, $SD= 5.398$), high Self-directedness group showed significantly higher hierarchical approach ($t=6.501$, $p=.000$) and lower oligarchic approach ($t=-2.270$, $p=.024$) than low SD group. They also showed significantly higher score than low SD group in all of the problem-solving subscales (Confidence $t=9.991$, $p=.000$; Approach-avoidance $t=6.927$, $p=.000$; and Personal Control $t=10.929$, $p=.000$). Finally, high SD group showed significantly higher scores than low SD group in social adaptation subscales. The highest group difference was shown in Job Interest ($t=6.600$, $p=.000$), Social Activity ($t=4.775$, $p=.000$) and Family Relation ($t=4.153$, $p=.000$).

The result of this study showed that Self-directedness is strongly related to cognitive and social problem-solving. This result is consistent with previous studies of this subject. Because low Self-directedness tends to be goalless, less skillful in problem solving and lack confidence in their own efficacy and it can cause various psychopathologies, it is important to focus on goal-directive behavior and learning of problem-solving skills under heavy stress.

For further research, development of Self-directedness promotion program is needed for normal people for prevention and people with mental illness for symptom reduction.

**REFERENCES**

