



The Relationship between Career Decision-Making Styles and Job Seeking Self-Efficacy of College Students in Korea

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ABSTRACT

The objectives of this study were to describe the differences in career decision-making styles and job seeking self-efficacy among college students, and to determine the relationship between their career decision-making styles and job seeking self-efficacy. A total of 300 students were selected randomly from a university in Seoul Metropolitan city but only 249 students were involved in this study. A total of 212 (70%) questionnaires were analyzed. The results of the study were as follows. First, college students have similar styles of career decision-making and they showed a little more rational or intuitive than those with dependent styles. Statistically significant differences on the career decision making styles of college students were found based on their personality and GPA. Second, the job seeking self-efficacy of college students showed no statistically significant difference based on gender. However, the results showed statistically significant differences across the grade, major, GPA, personality, and participation in career and employment programs. Third, the relationship between career decision-making styles and job seeking self-efficacy of college students showed a positive correlation among rational style of career decision-making and employment motivation and employment skills. However, the data showed a negative correlation between the dependent style of career decision-making and employment motivation and employment skills in the sub-scales of job seeking self-efficacy. Based on the findings, career counseling and programs for improving rational career decision making ability of college students are recommended.

Keywords: Career decision-making styles, job seeking self-efficacy, college students, personality, Korea

INTRODUCTION AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Choosing the best and optimal career path is crucial for an individual as they mature especially during the individual's college years. During the transition from a teenager to an adult, a career path decision made by an individual may determine the individual's lifestyle and values as well as one of the most important development tasks. In short, it won't be an exaggeration to state that based on the individual's decision on career path, the individual's lifestyle may be determined.

Therefore, an advisory approach is necessary to help the individual to be efficient in deciding the career path. There are two factors that are critical and should be considered when making a choice: One is job-seeking efficacy, and the other is career decision-making style. Although there are many sub-factors, such as personality, interest, aptitude, and sense of values, Bandura (1977) stated that self-efficacy plays the most important role in making a decision on a career path. Job seeking self-efficacy is the measurement of the individual's confidence in his or her employment activities

(Vinokur, Price & Caplan, 1991). Job seeking self-efficacy was derived from the concept of what Bandura (1977) defined as normal self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is defined as the individual's belief to successfully perform the required action in order to obtain preferred results. The applied concept of self-efficacy in the employment activities is called job seeking self-efficacy (Kanfer & Hulin, 1985). Therefore, job seeking self-efficacy can be an important psychological attribute that may affect one's career decision.

One of the decision-making moments that have a significant impact on one's life and requires a complex process is a career decision. And this moment has become more critical as the students who finished schooling and are making a preparation to advance into the society. In reality, however, many of these students hesitated to decide on their career paths, and in many cases, those students who made their decision have done it through irrational process (Cheon, 2005). Irrational decision can be interpreted as the individual's wrong choice, and this may lead to unhappiness and can be considered as social and economical losses in the individual's life. To successfully advance into the society, the college students are required to adopt rational decision-making skills. Therefore, research on college students' career decision-making styles – the foundation for those students who are struggling with making a career decision – needs to be investigated.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this study were:

1. To describe the differences in career decision-making styles and job seeking self-efficacy among college students, and
2. To determine the relationship between their career decision-making styles and job seeking self-efficacy.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study was designed to answer the following research questions:

1. What differences are there in career decision-making styles based on the students' gender, grade, major, GPA, personality, and participation in career and employment program?
2. How does job seeking self-efficacy vary based on the students' gender, grade, major, GPA, personality, and participation in career and employment program?
3. What is the relationship between career decision-making styles and job seeking self-efficacy of the college students?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The population for the study was all undergraduate students who attended a university located in Seoul, Korea. A total of 249 questionnaires were distributed, and only 212 of the questionnaires were analyzed. In terms of genders, the sample consisted of 83 male students (39.2%) and 129 female students (60.8%). In terms of grades, the sample consisted of 83 freshmen (39.2%), 61 sophomores (28.8%), 40 juniors (18.9%), and 28 seniors (13.2%).

As for the measuring tools, career decision-making style scales and job seeking self-efficacy scales were used. For career decision-making style scales, Koh's (1993) modified version of Assessment of Career Decision Making instrument, which was created by Harren (1984) was used. The modified version was adapted to suit the Korean culture. There are three sub-factors in the career decision-making style scales: Rational type, Intuitive type, and Dependent type. For each sub-factor, there are 10 questions. For each question, Likert 4-point scale was used to measure the level of agreement. For this study, Cronbach' α of the career decision-making scale was 0.794.

For job seeking self-efficacy scale, a version of Job-Seeking Efficiency Test (JET) was used in the questionnaire; this version was modified by Bae (2008) to fit to the new job seekers. The job seeking self-efficacy scale consisted of a total of 41 questions, 24 of which were about job motivation,

and the rest, 17 questions, were about job skills. For each question, Likert 5-point scale was used to measure the level of agreement. For this study, Cronbach’ α of the job seeking self-efficacy scale was 0.931. Independent-samples t-test and one-way ANOVA were selected for the statistical analyses. Scheffe’ post hoc test was used to post-validate the data while the correlation analysis was performed using Pearson’s product-moment correlation.

RESULTS

First, while there was no statistically significant difference in college students’ career decision-making styles based on gender, grade, major, and participation in career and employment program, there was a statistically significant difference based on personality and GPA as shown in Table 1. The rational introvert type ($M = 26.98$) showed the highest score compared to the other personality types. When it comes to GPA, GPA-A group ($M = 29.20$) showed the most statistically significant difference in the rational type ($F = 6.733, p < .001$) compared to those in GPA-B group ($M = 26.65$) and GPA-C group ($M = 24.78$).

Table 1: The differences among career decision-making styles based on the personality and GPA

			N	M	SD	t/F(post hoc test)
Personality	Rational	Extrovert	101	26.37	5.47	-.871
		Introvert	111	26.98	4.76	
	Intuitive	Extrovert	101	24.34	5.44	1.904
		Introvert	111	23.05	4.35	
	Dependent	Extrovert	101	19.35	6.18	-2.610*
		Introvert	111	21.41	5.27	
GPA	Rational	GPA-A	30	29.20	5.35	6.733*** (1>3)
		GPA-B	141	26.65	4.95	
		GPA-C	41	24.78	4.97	
	Intuitive	GPA-A	30	24.70	6.29	.807
		GPA-B	141	23.44	4.66	
		GPA-C	41	23.68	4.75	
	Dependent	GPA-A	30	18.83	5.23	1.557
		GPA-B	141	20.47	5.79	
		GPA-C	41	21.27	6.28	

* $p < .05$, *** $p < .001$

Second, although there was no statistically significant difference in job seeking self-efficacy based on gender, there was significant differences in job seeking self-efficacy based on the grades, major, GPA, personality, and participation in career and employment program as shown in Table 2 and Table 3. Based on the grades, senior-year students ($M = 23.43$) showed the highest score in employment information management. Based on majors, biblical studies majors showed the highest scores in self-evaluation ($M = 22.90$) and in employment information management ($M = 23.85$). Based on the GPA, GPA-A group showed the highest scores ($M = 23.27$ and $M = 27.20$) in self-evaluation and in career securitization, respectively.

Based on personality, there was a statistically significant difference in employment motivation and employment skill for job seeking self-efficacy. Extrovert group showed the highest score in self-respect ($t = 4.999, p < .01$), self-evaluation ($t = 4.008, p < .01$), self-regulation ($t = 2.952, p < .01$) under employment motivation and in career securitization ($t = 4.638, p < .01$) and employment information management ($t = 3.664, p < .01$) under employment skill. For those who participated in career and employment program, they showed a relatively high score in self-respect ($t = 2.511, p < .05$) and self-evaluation ($t = 2.163, p < .05$) under employment motivation and in career securitization ($t = 2.784, p < .01$) under employment skill.

Table 2: The differences in the job seeking self-efficacy based on the grade, major, and GPA

				N	M	SD	F	post hoc test		
Grade	Employment skill	Employment information management		Grade 1	83	20.73	4.50	2.809*	1,2,3<4	
				Grade 2	60	20.79	4.65			
				Grade 3	41	20.23	5.69			
				Grade 4	28	23.43	4.95			
Major	Employment motivation	Self-respect	Self-evaluation	Biblical studies	20	22.90	4.08	2.487*	1>4	
				Business administration	69	21.04	3.79			
				Social welfare	51	21.25	4.11			
				Foreign languages	37	19.73	3.40			
	Employment skill	Employment information management	Self-respect	Self-evaluation	Child welfare	35	21.46	3.26	2.888*	1>2,5,6
					Biblical studies	20	23.85	5.07		
					Business administration	69	20.39	4.78		
					Social welfare	51	21.82	5.69		
GPA	Employment motivation	Self-respect	Self-evaluation	Foreign languages	37	20.46	3.93	6.818***	1>2,3	
				Child welfare	35	20.00	4.18			
				GPA-A	30	23.27	3.73			
	Employment skill	Career securitization	Self-respect	Self-evaluation	GPA-	141	20.95	3.57	5.308**	1>2,3
					GPA-C	41	20.07	4.13		
					GPA-A	30	27.20	5.24		
Employment skill	Career securitization	Self-respect	Self-evaluation	GPA-B	141	24.16	5.19	5.308**	1>2,3	
				GPA-C	41	23.39	5.07			

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Table 3. The differences in the job seeking self-efficacy based on the personality and participation in career and employment program.

				N	M	SD	t	
Personality	Employment motivation	Self-esteem	Self-respect	Extravert	101	24.57	4.43	4.999**
			Self-respect	Introvert	111	21.35	4.96	
		Self-efficacy	Self-evaluation	Extravert	101	22.18	4.01	4.008**
			Self-evaluation	Introvert	111	20.14	3.34	
		Self-efficacy	Confidence	Extravert	101	21.65	3.63	1.526
				Introvert	111	20.91	3.45	
			Self-regulation	Extravert	101	21.19	4.30	2.952**
	Employment skill	Career securitization	Introvert	111	19.55	3.73		
			Extravert	101	26.11	5.50	4.638**	
		Employment information management	Introvert	111	22.86	4.59		
			Extravert	101	22.27	4.77	3.664**	
		Interpersonal relationship	Introvert	111	19.86	4.76		
			Extravert	101	9.69	2.67	2.745**	
			Introvert	111	8.75	2.30		

				N	M	SD	t	
Participation in the programs	Employment motivation	Self-esteem	Self-respect	Yes	100	23.78	4.75	2.511*
			None	112	22.09	5.05		
		Self-evaluation	Yes	100	21.70	3.67	2.163*	
			None	112	20.58	3.87		
	Employment skill	Self-efficacy	Self-regulation	Yes	100	21.81	3.36	2.145*
				None	112	20.78	3.66	
		Employment information management	Yes	100	25.46	5.03	2.784**	
			None	112	23.47	5.36		

*p<.05, **p<.01

Third, as for the relationship between career decision-making styles and job seeking self-efficacy shown in the Table 4, rational type showed positive correlations in employment motivation ($r=.348$, $p<.01$) and employment skill ($r=.391$, $p<.01$) under job seeking self-efficacy while dependent type showed negative correlations in employment motivation ($r=-.382$, $p<.01$) and employment skill ($r=-.219$, $p<.01$) under career decision-making styles.

Table 4: Analysis of the relationship between styles of career decision-making styles and job seeking self-efficacy

		Career decision-making styles					Job seeking self-efficacy	
		M	D	Rational	Intuitive	Dependent	Employment motivation	Employment skill
Career decision-making styles	Rational	2.67	51	1				
	Intuitive	2.37	49	-.032	1			
	Dependent	2.04	58	.025	.162*	1		
Job seeking self-efficacy	Employment motivation	3.57	55	.348**	.052	-.382**	1	
	Employment skill	3.21	61	.391**	.034	-.219**	.688**	1

*p<.05, **p<.01

As for the relationships among the sub-factors of career decision-making styles and job seeking self-efficacy shown in the Table 5, the rational types showed positive correlations in self-respect ($r=.170$, $p<.01$), self-evaluation ($r=.458$, $p<.01$), confidence ($r=.272$, $p<.01$), self-regulation ($r=0.385$, $p<.01$), career securitization ($r=.429$, $p<.01$), employment information management ($r=.335$, $p<.01$) while the intuitive types showed negative correlations in interpersonal relationship ($r=-.188$, $p<.01$). The dependent types showed negative correlations in every criterion.

Table 5: Analysis of the relationship among the sub-factors of career decision-making styles and job seeking self-efficacy

Career decision-making styles	Job seeking self-efficacy						
	Employment motivation				Employment skill		
	Self-respect	Self-evaluation	Confidence	Self-regulation	Career securitization	Employment information management	Interpersonal relationship
Rational	.170**	.458**	.272**	.385**	.429**	.335**	.056
Intuitive	.024	.101	.024	.077	.059	.106	-.188**
Dependent	-.325**	-.304**	-.341**	-.373**	-.291**	-.052	-.187**

*p<.05, **p<.01

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

First, although career decision-making types do not vary based on gender, grade, and participation in career and employment program, they do show differences depending on GPA and personality. Based on their GPA, most of the students with high GPA are the rational type when deciding their career path. When it comes to personality, students with introvert personality tend to use dependent type of career decision-making styles. And lastly when it comes to career decision-making styles, the study has identified the differences based on genders, Koh (1993), Kang (2003) and Lee (2010) stated that in general the female students tended to be more dependent type than the male students. Whereas the samples for those students are mostly in middle and high school, the present for this research was that college students who tend to be less dependent than when they were younger. As for the career decision-making types based on the personality, students with introvert and extrovert personalities showed the most statistically significant difference. This means that the more introverted the students are, the more dependent type of making a career decision they will use.

Second, although there was no statistically significant difference in job seeking self-efficacy based on gender, there were significant differences based on grades, major, GPA, personality, and participation in career and employment program. Based on the grade, the senior-year students, who are soon to graduate, showed high efficacy in employment skills, especially in career securitization, under job seeking self-efficacy. This is because the senior-year students tend to have more interest in a variety of information related to employment and more focused to collect the employment-related information than any other grades. Based on major, biblical studies majors showed the highest scores in the self-evaluation under the employment motivation and showed relatively high scores in the employment motivation and the employment skills. This is mainly due to the fact that the biblical studies majors are most likely to become pastors after graduation, and therefore, and have less to worry about their career paths. As the students participated actively in the career and employment program the students have, higher their employment motivation and employment skill scores. Chung (2004), Chang (2007), Kim (2007), and Park (2012) also concluded that job seeking self-efficacy is strengthened by the increased number of participation in career and employment program. Therefore, in order to strengthen and enhance the job seeking self-efficacy, it is recommended that the career counseling program and/or employment program for the future college students be put in place.

Third, the students who used rational type of making a career decision gained higher scores in their job seeking self-efficacy. Among the types of making a career decision, the rational type showed positive correlations with the sub-factors – self-respect, self-evaluation, confidence, and self-regulation efficacy. Thus, it can be seen that the rational type gained higher scores in the employment

motivation. According to Harren (1979), the people who use the rational type of making a career decision recognize that the successive decisions made under limited time are related to one another. They collect the exact information needed for their situations, and they are the type to realistically evaluate their situations. Therefore, students who utilize the rational type of making a career decision show a high job seeking self-efficacy. They have strong employment motivations by having realistic perspectives of their own ability and employment status. This result is similar to the results found in the past research (Kim, 2009; Kim *et al.*, 2009). Therefore, the rational type directly affects the career preparation behaviors.

Dependent type of making a career decision showed a negative correlation with job seeking self-efficacy. This means that the students who used the dependent type have relatively low employment motivation and low employment skill. Such is similar to the results of existing research (Kang, 2003; Oh, 2003; Kim, 1996). The students with the dependent type tend to have a slow career maturity rate and a low level of employment activities. According to the study by Harren (1979), the students with the dependent type are easily influenced by other people around them; have a strong desire to be accepted by the society, and tend to easily lose their sense of fulfillment and/or personal satisfaction. As such, it can be said that the dependent type has the negative correlation with the job seeking self-efficacy. Having a relatively low self-esteem and low self-assessment directly affects the level of employment activities.

In sum, the rational type of career decision-making can result in high job seeking self-efficacy while the dependent type can result in low job seeking self-efficacy. Also, students who participated in the career and employment program tend to be the rational type. The enhancement of rational career decision-making and the improvement of job seeking self-efficacy are the main factors that could lead to a successful employment. Thus, colleges in Korea should develop and refine career and employment programs that can help the students to make a rational career decision and to strengthen their job seeking self-efficacy.

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