

Perspective Taking, Other-emotions Appraisal, and Emotion Regulation on Creativity

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Abstract

In the current organizations, employee creativity has been regarded as a key factor for sustaining competitive advantage of the firm. While previous research has recognized the importance of individual differences to facilitate creativity, the extent literature has not articulated how cognitive and affective aspects in individual differences interact to predict creativity of employees. Integrating the notion of perspective taking and emotional intelligence theory, this paper examines the interactive effects of employee perspective taking, other-emotions appraisal, and emotion regulation on creativity. The current study collected the data from 150 leader-member dyads who work in organizations and results supported all of our hypotheses. The current study aims to advance the literature of creativity, perspective taking, and emotional intelligence.

Key word : Perspective taking, Creativity, Emotion intelligence

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I . Introduction

In the face of increasing competition and uncertain economic environment, organizations need to facilitate employee creativity, the production of novel and useful ideas, for achieving competitive advantage (Amabile, 1988; Shalley, Zhou & Oldham, 2004). Scholars have examined various factors that increase employee creativity, such as individual characteristics, group context, and job characteristics (Hennessey & Amabile, 2010; George, 2007; Shalley et al., 2004; Zhou & Hoever, 2014; 2023).

Although a large number of these studies examining various methods of facilitating employee creativity focused on novelty, few have focused on usefulness facet of creativity. While novelty describes characteristics of creative ideas such as newness, originality, and uniqueness, usefulness captures to which extent the creative ideas are practicable and socially acceptable solutions so they have high effectiveness, appropriateness, applicability, relevance, and adaptiveness (McCarthy, Chen, & McNamee, 2018). In organizational context, employee creativity needs not only to be novel, but also to be useful so these ideas are appealed to other members at work, thus being implemented in reality (Miron-Spektor & Beenen, 2015). This implies a huge gap in the existing literature, given that creativity is defined by both novel and useful ideas. Researchers have only recently conducted studies focusing on the usefulness of creativity (Grant & Berry, 2011; Hoever, Van Knippenberg, Van Ginkel, & Barkema, 2012). While they emphasized an employee's perspective taking as a cognitive factor that facilitates the usefulness of creative ideas, it reveals another gap in the literature, such that these studies only focused on the cognitive side, not providing clear answers or guidelines on the implications of individual differences in affect and

emotions to predict creativity. In considering the substantial influences of emotions on creativity (Amabile, Barsade, Mueller, & Staw, 2005; Bledow, Rosing, & Frese, 2013), the current status of the literature is rather surprising.

To fill the gap in the current literature, I integrate the notion of perspective taking (Ku, Wang, & Galinsky, 2015) and emotional intelligence theory (Law, Wong, & Song, 2004; Salovey & Mayer, 1990) to examine the effects of cognitive and affective aspects of individual differences on creativity. First, drawing on the perspective taking theory (Grant & Berry, 2011; Hoever et al., 2012; Ku et al., 2015), I replicate the positive effect of perspective taking on creativity. Second, based on the notion of emotional intelligence (Law et al., 2004), I suggest the moderating role of emotion regulation and that of other-emotions appraisal. Unlike the emergence of creativity in other contexts (e.g., art), creativity in the organizational context requires employees to take extra steps in terms of communication and presentation (Zhou & George, 2001). Thus, they should express their ideas in front of coworkers and leaders in an appropriate manner to be adopted as action plans. In addition, even if an employee comes up with an idea with high novelty, the one is less likely to raise the idea when it lacks of usefulness so others may not accept the solution (Stasser & Titus, 1985). Accordingly, emotional aspects play a significant role, since employees who are good at managing their own and others' emotions have highly developed communication skills, thus contributing to the suggestion and acceptance of creative ideas (George, 2000). Specifically, I expect that emotion regulation facilitates the positive effect of perspective taking, while other-emotions appraisal mitigate the positive impact of perspective taking on creativity (Law et al., 2004; Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Wong & Law, 2002). Finally, I further examine the three-way interaction

effect of perspective taking, emotion regulation, and other-emotions appraisal in predicting creativity. By articulating the moderating effect of other-emotions appraisal and that of emotion regulation, I find emotional factors that either increase or reduce the flow of creative ideas.

To summarize, this study intends to examine the interplaying role of cognitive emotional aspects of employees on the emergence of creativity. Specifically, this paper advances creativity literature by showing the joint effect of individual differences to predict creativity. While creativity research has acknowledged the importance of individual differences, the extant literature rather focused on examining the joint effects of individual differences and contextual factors to predict creativity (Zhou & Hoever, 2023). The present study, however, highlights that researchers need to take account for both cognitive and emotional aspects in individual differences, as they differentially affect to the usefulness of idea generation, thus resulting in different outcomes for the emergence of employee creativity. In addition, the current paper also aims to broaden the literature of perspective taking by confirming not only the moderating effect, but also the direct effect of perspective taking on creativity. In spite of the importance of perspective taking in the organizational context, the role of perspective taking has been extensively examined in the realm of interpersonal, pro-social behaviors rather than creativity (Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000; Ku et al., 2015; Todd & Galinsky, 2014). With examining the direct effect of perspective taking, this paper aims to extend implications of perspective taking at the workplace. Finally, by proposing the differential moderating effect of other-emotions appraisal and that of emotion regulation, this paper intends to advance the notion of emotional intelligence. While the existing literature on emotional intelligence has exclusively focused on the beneficial impact of emotional intelligence (Cote, 2014), I try to figure

out that some aspect of emotional intelligence may not be fruitful for facilitating positive work behavior.

II. Theoretical Backgrounds and Hypotheses

1. Perspective Taking and Creativity

Perspective taking refers to a cognitive process that adopts others' viewpoints to understand or consider their preferences, values, and needs (Grant & Berry, 2011; Hoever et al., 2012; Parker & Axtell, 2001). In virtue of its nature, it results in increased liking and psychological closeness for the perspective taking target, as well as increased cognitive complexity (Ku et al., 2015). Accordingly, perspective taking is likely to facilitate a variety of social functioning, such as children's educational development (Piaget, 1932), moral reasoning (Kohlberg, 1976), and interpersonal relationships (Davis, 1983; Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000). In the same vein, perspective taking is also an important factor in the organizational context, such as activating deep-level information processing, thus facilitating team effectiveness (Ku et al., 2015; Parker et al., 2001).

In applying the notion of perspective taking to elaborate the association between perspective taking and creativity, I further draw on the motivated information processing theory (Kunda, 1990; Nijstad & De Dreu, 2012). According to the notion of motivated information processing, people tend to pay more attention and selectively store outside information, depending on their motivations (Kunda, 1990). Given that, employees with high perspective taking would pay more attention to others, thereby deepening their own understanding to them (Ku et al., 2015). Therefore, these employees can adopt more diverse opinions by

facilitating social interaction (Grant & Berry, 2011). In addition, in the face of problematic situations that require a solution, employees with high perspective taking would provide more useful ideas as a result of their wider and deeper understanding. Empirical data also suggest that perspective taking reduces cognitive bias (Galinsky et al., 2000), enhances evaluation of research usefulness (Mohrman, Gibson, & Mohrman, 2001), and increases team creativity by enhancing information elaboration (Hoever et al., 2012). Thus, we propose the following:

Hypothesis 1. Employee perspective taking is positively associated to employee creativity.

2. Emotional Management to Express Creative Ideas

In organizational context, creativity involves taking risks, because the divergent thinking involved in creativity may harm the cohesiveness of the existing group state and challenge the status quo (Gong, Cheung, Wang, & Huang, 2012; Mueller, Melwani, & Goncalo, 2012; Zhou & George, 2001). Thus, suggesting a creative idea requires employees to effectively raise an issue. Therefore, effective communication skills can be an important factor in employee creativity (Zhou & George, 2001). In the same vein, employees' emotional management is also important because it enables them to build sufficient social support while sustaining positive interpersonal relationships (Batson, 1987; George, 2000). In the current study, drawing on the notion of emotional intelligence (Law et al., 2004; Salovey & Mayer, 1990), I specifically posit other-emotions appraisal and emotion regulation as moderating factors that change the effect of perspective taking on creativity.

Other-emotions appraisal refers to the ability to perceive and understand others' emotions (Wong & Law, 2002; Law et al., 2004).

People who are good at other-emotion appraisal are sensitive to the feelings of others (Wong & Law, 2002). Although other-emotion appraisal leads to effective interpersonal communication, it also negates the positive relationship between perspective taking and creativity. In general, like other dimensions of emotional intelligence, other-emotions appraisal can be helpful for the emergence of creativity, since an individual with high other-emotions appraisal is more likely to capture others' needs so the one is able to engage in adaptive functioning such as suggesting a solution for the others (Lassk & Shepherd, 2013). However, when it comes to the interactive effect of perspective taking and other-emotions appraisal, however, the beneficial impact of other-emotions appraisal would be substituted by that of perspective taking. As indicated above, employees with high perspective taking would pay more attention to others so they can create more useful ideas (Ku et al., 2015); accordingly, employees with high perspective taking already have the function that other-emotions appraisal take.

Given that, on the other hand, different aspects of other-emotions appraisal rather suppress the positive effect of perspective taking to predict creativity. First, employees who are proficient at other-emotions appraisal would avoid uncomfortable situations by confronting others. In addition, when an employee with high-level of other-emotions appraisal also possesses a high-level of perspective taking, the one is less likely to present creative ideas while concerning others' emotions. As a result, paradoxically, the employee would fail to express their ideas because the one is too aware of others' emotional reactions. By contrast, if low other-emotion appraisal is accompanied by high perspective taking, the employee would suggest a relatively higher number of creative ideas based on their deep understanding on others. These ideas then receive a favorable evaluation from others by virtue of their robust grounding. In

a similar vein, previous research has shown the negative association between agreeableness and creativity (King, Walker, & Broyles, 1996). Thus, I posit the following:

Hypothesis 2. Employee other-emotions appraisal weakens the positive relationship between perspective taking and creativity.

On the other hand, emotion regulation is defined as “the process by which individuals influence which emotions they have, when they have them, and how they experience and express these emotions” (Gross, 1998). Since employees with high emotion regulation recover rapidly from psychological distress (Law et al., 2004), prior studies have postulated the functionalities of emotion regulation based on three dimensions: direction, form, and focus (Gross, 1999; Kanfer & Kantrowitz, 2002). From this view-point, self-oriented strategies modify felt emotion or response tendencies by altering internal variables or processes. By contrast, situational-oriented strategies reduce emotional response tendencies (Kanfer et al., 2002).

Based on this reasoning, I suggest that emotion regulation facilitates the positive effect of perspective taking to predict creativity. When employees have high emotion regulation, on the one hand, they would make effective use of their ability to present ideas in the course of communication processes (George, 2000). Combined with high perspective taking, high emotion regulation facilitates the emergence of creativity. On the other hand, however, employees who are good at perspective taking but lack emotion regulation do not receive good evaluations in creativity, because they fail to present new ideas in appropriate manner. Thus, low emotion regulation negates the positive effects of perspective taking on creativity. Based on the above reasoning,

I propose the following:

Hypothesis 3. Employee emotion regulation facilitates the positive relationship between perspective taking and creativity.

Finally, I further expect that employee perspective taking, other-emotions appraisal, and emotion regulation would have three-way interaction effects on creativity. As stated above, in the relationship between perspective taking and creativity, other-emotion appraisal would work as an inhibitor, whereas emotion regulation would work as a facilitator (Law et al., 2004). Based on these effects, first, I expect that the positive relationship between perspective taking and creativity when employees have both high (or low) other-emotions appraisal and emotion regulation. Due to the moderating effect of these two emotional intelligence components in the opposite direction, they would cancel out each other thus remaining pure main effect of perspective taking to predict creativity. In contrast, I expect that perspective taking would negatively affect creativity for employees with high other-emotions appraisal and low emotion regulation, as they jointly turn the impact of perspective taking from beneficial to detrimental one on the emergence of employee creativity. Finally, in case of low other-emotions appraisal and high emotion regulation, there would be a positive association between perspective taking and creativity, in virtue of the same directionality of two emotional intelligence dimensions. Thus, I suggest the following:

Hypothesis 4. There is a three-way interaction effect between employee perspective taking, other-emotion appraisal, and emotion regulation on employee creativity.

Ⅲ. Methods

1. Participants and Procedures

To examine the current research model, I collected the cross-sectional data using questionnaires from leader-follower dyads who work in 17 organizations in South Korea. Initially, the author distributed 170 sets of surveys, and received 153 sets (response rate of 90%). After excluding a number of careless and incomplete responses, I finally got usable responses from 150 leader-member dyads.

2. Measurements

Employee perspective taking, other-emotion appraisal, and emotion regulation were rated by the focal employee. Employee creativity was evaluated by one's supervisor. The subjects were asked to respond to the questionnaires using a seven-point Likert scales.

Perspective taking A four-item scale developed by Grant and Berry (2011) was used to obtain employee's perspective taking. A sample item stated, "When facing difficult tasks, I am certain that I will accomplish them." Cronbach's alpha for the scale was .87.

Other-emotions appraisal Using seven-point Likert Scales, employees responded to a four-item measure of other-emotions appraisal (Wong & Law, 2002). A sample item includes "I have good understanding of the emotions of people around me". Cronbach's alpha was .97.

Emotion regulation Using seven-point Likert Scales, employees responded to a four-item measure of emotion regulation (Wong and Law, 2002). A sample item includes "I am able to control my temper and handle difficulties rationally". Cronbach's alpha was .92.

Creativity The focal employee's supervisor was asked to rate employee creativity, using thirteen-item developed by Zhou and George (2001). An example of items includes "The focal employee comes up with new and practical ideas to improve performance." Cronbach's alpha was .94.

Control variables Demographic variables measured from employees to control their salient demographic differences that are associated to creativity (Shalley et al., 2004). Accordingly, age, gender, and education level were controlled. In addition, the factors related to the hierarchical status such as tenure and rank were also controlled (Zhou & Shalley, 2003). Finally, task interdependence was measured to control job characteristics effects on creativity (Oldham & Fried, 2016; Shalley et al., 2004).

3. Analytic Procedures

To test our hypotheses, the current study used hierarchical regression analysis. Step 1 included the control variables. Step 2 included the main variables. Step 3 included the main effect of the moderator and product term of the main variable and moderator was included. Finally, in Step 4, I included a three-way interaction term. Before generating the product terms, all variables were mean-centered to prevent potential multi-collinearity problems (Aiken & West, 1991).

IV. Results

[Table 1] shows the means, reliability, standard deviations of the variables included in this study, and the inter-correlations among them.

[Table 1] Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations

Variable	Mean	S. D.	1	2	3	4
1. Creativity	4.69	0.92	(.94)			
2. Perspective taking	5.05	0.95	.22**	(.87)		
3. Other-emotions appraisal	4.92	1.08	.13	.34**	(.97)	
4. Emotion regulation	4.84	1.07	.22**	.29**	.49**	(.92)

note) N = 150, **p < .01, *p < .05 (two-tailed)

Hypothesis 1, which posits the positive relationship between employee perspective taking and creativity, was supported. As stated in model 2 in [Table 2], perspective taking was positively and significantly related with creativity ($\beta = 0.24$, $p < 0.01$).

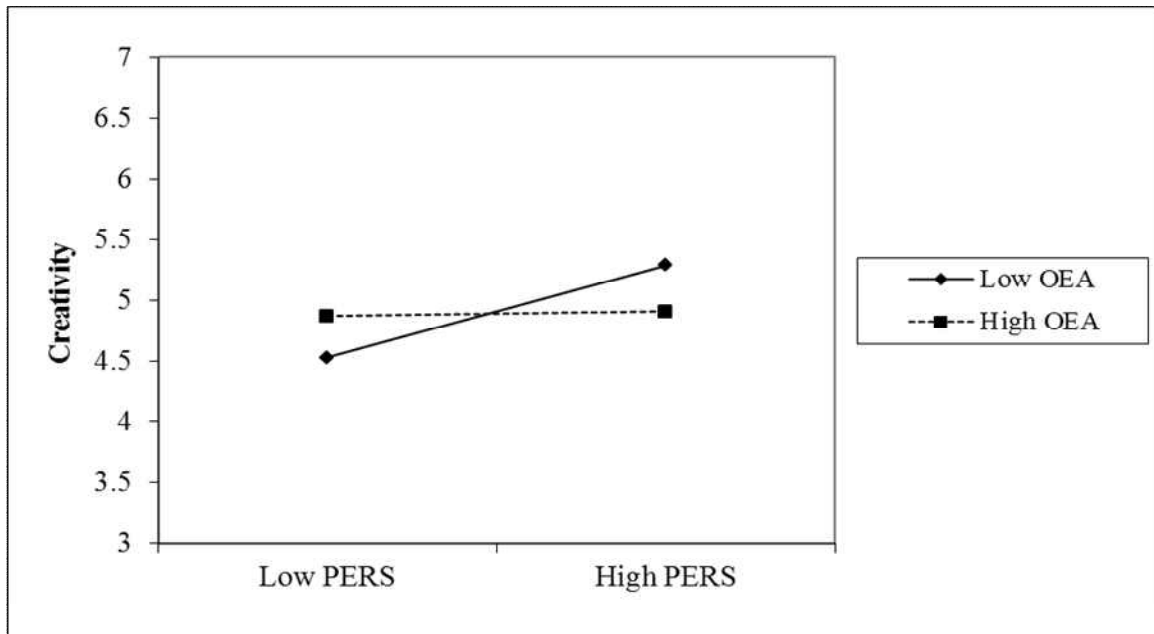
On the other hand, model 3 in [Table 2] suggested the moderating role of other-emotions appraisal and that of emotion regulation on relationship between perspective taking and creativity. As predicted, interaction effects of perspective taking and other-emotion appraisal on creativity were significant ($\beta = -0.18$, $p < 0.05$), supporting Hypothesis 2. Hypothesis 3, which posited the moderation effects of emotion regulation, was also marginally supported ($\beta = 0.17$, $p < 0.10$). Finally, supporting for Hypothesis 4, I found the significant three-way interaction effect in predicting creativity ($\beta = 0.13$, $p < 0.05$). From Figure 1 to 3 described the nature of interaction effects.

[Table 2] Hierarchical regression analytical results for creativity

Variables	Creativity			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Step 1: Control Variables				
Employee age	-.13	-.08	-.08	.00
Employee gender	-.08	-.03	-.03	-.02
Employee education	.08	.00	-.04	-.05
Employee rank	.13	.14	.12	.07
Employee tenure	.16	.16	.14	.02
Task interdependence	-.06	-.10	-.12	-.09
Step 2: Main Variables				
Perspective taking (PERS)		.24**	.20*	.15
Step 3: Two-way interactions				
Other-emotions appraisal (OEA)			-.01	-.03
Emotion regulation (ER)			.15	.09
PERS * OEA			-.18*	-.18*
PERS * ER			.17†	.19*
Step 4: Three-way interactions				
OEA * ER				-.01
PERS * OEA * ER				.13*
R2	.052	.099	.153	.174
R2 Change		.047	.054	.021

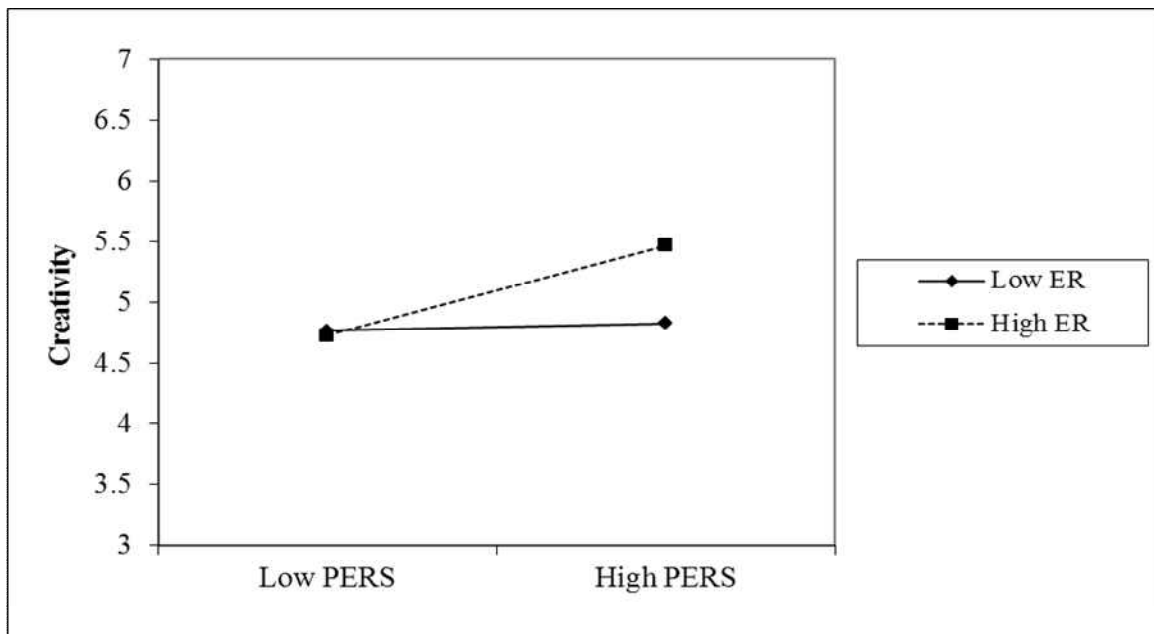
note) N = 150, **p < .01, *p < .05, †p < .10 (two-tailed)

[Figure 1] Interaction effect of perspective taking and other-emotions appraisal on creativity



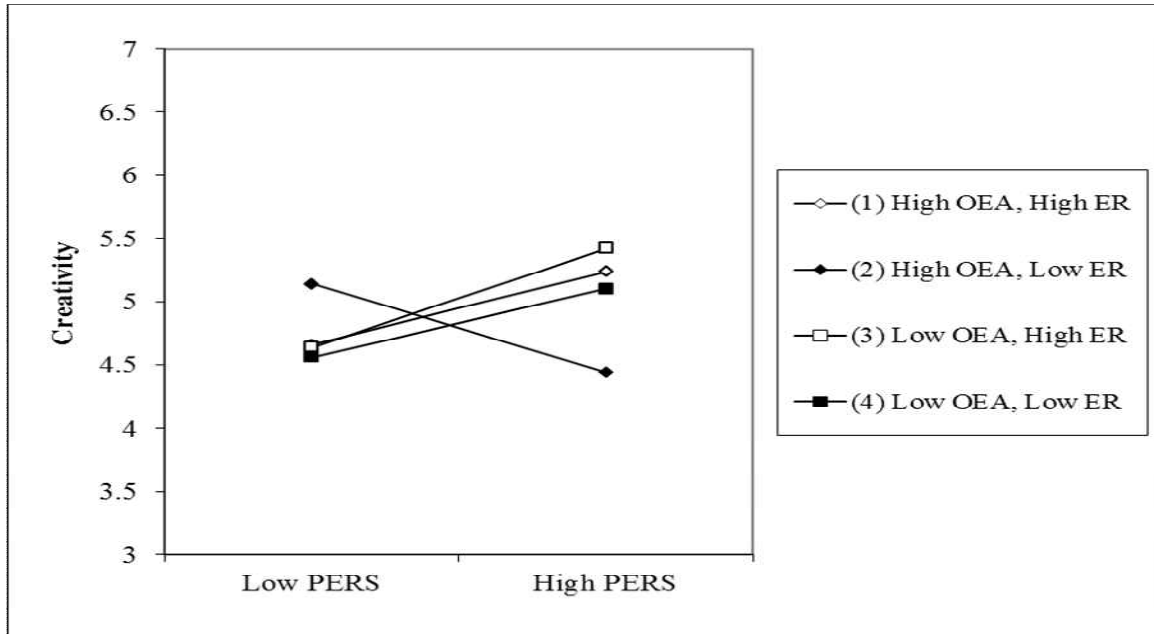
Note) PERS = Perspective taking; OEA = Other-emotions appraisal

[Figure 2] Interaction effect of perspective taking and emotion regulation on creativity



Note) PERS = Perspective taking; ER = Emotion regulation

[Figure 3] Three-way interaction effects on creativity



Note) PERS = Perspective taking; OEA = Other-emotions appraisal; ER = Emotion regulation

V. Discussion

Integrating the notion of perspective taking and emotional intelligence theory, the current study examined the effect of perspective taking on creativity, as well as the moderating role of other-emotions appraisal and that of emotion regulation. By doing so, I articulated how cognitive and affective aspects of individual differences affect the emergence of individual creativity at work. In line with the expectation, the results generally supported our hypotheses.

The present study aimed to shed light on a neglected aspect of existing literature on creativity: the usefulness of creative ideas and social aspects of creative idea communication processes. First, by replicating the positive relationship between perspective taking and creativity, this paper provided additional supports for the importance of usefulness in

creativity. Second, by showing the moderating role of emotion-related individual differences, this study indicates that creative idea suggestion requires not only generation of ideas, but also appropriate communication of ideas. I specifically found that perspective taking and other-emotions appraisal to have negative interaction effects on employee creativity. As these two variables are considered positive factors for employees (Galinsky et al., 2000; George, 2000), the results of the current study are worth noting. In fact, even though existing studies paid much attention to the role of affect in creativity research (George, 2007), most of them considered only affective aspects instead of both cognitive and affective aspects. Accordingly, our results suggest the necessity for future research to consider both aspects simultaneously.

The current investigation also emphasizes the unique nature of creativity in the organizational context. Unlike in art or educational context and in small group experiments, raising creative ideas require employees to take risks (Gong et al., 2012). In addition, as mentioned above, employees are require to equip well-developed communication skills to express their suggestions, because it is a kind of expression of voice (Zhou et al., 2001). Therefore, practitioners should be careful to design group climates that facilitate open-minded discussion and contribution of ideas. This conclusion implies that future research should consider the moderating role of group climate variables such as psychological safety, incivility, or peer pressure.

When it comes to managerial implication, this study implies an additional challenge for practitioners: while facilitating open-minded creative idea generation, they should also be aware of the usefulness of new ideas. Although traditional idea generation techniques encourage the generation of new ideas, relatively little attention is paid to the usefulness of such idea generation. Instead, many ideas are invented

and contested, and most are thrown out. Over the course of these processes, many employees spend their time and resources in vain. To prevent these situations, practitioners need to devise tools and mechanisms that enhance employees' perspective taking. Such changes will lead to much more efficient group idea generation.

This research has several limitations. First, on research design, the current study depends on self-reported measures for perspective taking, other-emotion appraisal, and emotion regulation. This cannot rule out the possibility of social desirability bias. However, the standard deviations of these variables are substantial (perspective taking = 0.95; other emotion appraisal = 1.08; emotion regulation = 1.07), implying that the participants did not overestimate their own scores unconditionally. In future research, however, scholars need to test the construct validity of the current measure more rigorously. Using an ability measure of emotional intelligence can be another way of improving the objectivity of the study results.

Second, the cross-sectional nature of the present study's data does not allow causal inferences. Future research could be more fruitful to adopt a more rigorous research design that allows causal inferences such as quasi-experimental design (Grant & Wall, 2009). Finally, this study used supervisor rating to measure employee creativity, which can cause biases stemming from interpersonal relationship quality other than pure quality of ideas. Despite these limitations, however, this study demonstrates the importance of usefulness in creativity and social aspect of creative idea communication. Also, by showing the significant interaction patterns of cognitive and affective aspects of individual differences to predict creativity, this study calls for future research to adopt a more comprehensive approach.

VI. Conclusion

1. Summary of the Current Research

This paper constituted a model of employee creativity to articulate how cognitive (i.e., perspective taking) and affective aspect (i.e., emotional intelligence) in individual differences interact to predict individual creativity at the workplace. Results showed that perspective taking is positively associated to creativity, especially when the focal actor has a high-level of emotion regulation or a low-level of other emotions appraisal. While emotional intelligence has been considered as a beneficial factor in general, the current findings suggest that some aspect of emotional intelligence rather cancels out the positive impact of perspective taking on employee creativity, thus revealing a more nuanced nature of emotional intelligence. Based on the findings, we encourage practitioners to take a more sophisticated approach to facilitate creativity in the organizational context.

2. Implications for the Future Society

In the current society, the emergence of creative idea is a crucial driver that leads to a better society. To achieve this, the findings of this paper suggest to consider a more variety of cognitive and affective factors of an individual. Based on the findings, we are able to avoid the adoption of maladaptive practices and to deploy potential of employees more effective way.

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조망수용과 창의성에 관한 연구 - 정서지능의 조절효과 -

최동원*

요약

현대 기업에서 근로자의 창의성은 기업 경쟁력 재고를 위해 중요한 요소로 간주되어 왔다. 창의성에 관한 기존 연구에서는 창의성의 창발을 위해 근로자 개인의 특성을 고찰하는 것이 중요함을 인지하고 관련된 연구 결과를 축적시켜 왔지만, 근로자의 인지적, 정서적 측면의 개인차가 어떠한 상호작용을 통해 이들의 창의성 창발에 영향을 미치는지에 대한 해답을 제시하진 못하였다. 본 연구에서는 기존 문헌의 한계를 극복하고자, 조망수용 이론과 정서지능 이론을 통합하여, 근로자의 조망수용, 타인 감정 평가, 자기 감정 조절의 상호작용이 근로자 창의성에 미치는 영향을 고찰하였다. 한국 기업에서 근무하는 150 리더-부하 쌍에게 설문조사를 실시하여 연구 가설들을 검증하였으며, 모든 가설이 지지되었다. 본 연구 조사를 통해 저자들은 창의성, 조망수용 및 정서지능 연구 발전에 공헌코자 하였으며, 창의성에 미치는 개인 특성 고찰이 보다 포괄적, 복합적이어야 함을 시사코자 하였다.

Key word : 조망수용, 창의성, 정서지능

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