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A Study on College Students' Demands for Creativity and Personality Education as Part of the General Education Curriculum

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the *status quo* of college students' perception of college creativity and personality education, and to pinpoint students' demands in relation to those classes as part of the general higher education curriculum. The core findings of this study are as follows. First, 108 students (24.8%) perceived creativity and personality education to be carried out satisfactorily at their school, while 155 students (35.6%) thought otherwise. The latter group of students found the main reasons for the failure of these classes to lie in a heavily result-oriented focus and alack of understanding of creativity and personality education. Second, students believed that film and music were the most appropriate instructional media to be used in creativity and personality classes. Third, students favored classes with hands-on experiences, such as field trips or site visits. Fourth, future-oriented ness was the most valued basic construct for creativity and personality education. Fifth, there were high demands for dispositional factors in creativity education and interpersonal relationships in personality education. Based on these findings, this study seeks to propose a new strategy for integrating creativity and personality education in colleges' general education curricula.

Keywords: Creativity, College General Education Curriculum, College Students, Education, Personality

1. Introduction

According to a recent survey of the most valued employee attributes among the top 100 sales ranking firms, a challenge-taking mindset overhauled professionalism and ranked first, while creativity ranked fourth, and attributes related to personality – the sense of self-ownership and morality - ranked second and fifth, respectively[2]. This ranking reflected a shift in the attributes most valued and needed in human resources in future society, moving from an imitative to a creative human capital, with creativity and personality regarded as chief virtues. In 2007, the United States launched the "Five for the Future" program, which laid out plans to maximize the utilization of highly-innovative and skilled talents in industrial policy-making in order to bolster the country's global competitiveness. The United Kingdom has also been highlighting creativity as one of the core objectives of the national education curriculum since 2000; to that end, the National Science Learning Centre (NSLC) houses a department dedicated to research on creative teaching-learning methods. On the other hand, Korean society has failed to reach a consensus on the concepts of creativity and personality education. In particular, despite the acknowledgement of the need for separate curricula to nurture college students' creativity and personality in higher education institutions, actual efforts to develop these curricula, or at least specific

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guidelines, still remain at an inchoate stage. The pan-global trend of emphasizing creativity and personality as significant abilities and futuristic values has prompted heated discussions about the potential synergic effects of integrating creativity and personality development educations. These discussions have revealed the need to redefine the scope of creativity and personality development education in order to make it suitable for the global creative age. That is, whereas in the past, creativity and personality used to be promoted independently under the catch-up paradigm, Korea's transition into a global creative society calls for integrative and comprehensive definitions of creativity and personality.

Taking into consideration the 21st-century emphasis on creative and moral individuals, this study begins by demonstrating the need for Korean society to systematically extend the creativity and personality educations that are currently only implemented in pre-school and primary school to the higher education system - i.e., to college education. College education prepares young students for a smooth transition into society, which calls for creativity and personality education programs.

Studies of the ways creativity and personality educations are being merged have been scarce. As a matter of fact, the few studies that have analyzed the integration of these two aspects have leaned towards examining personality education; some of these studies have included "The effects of personality education"[4], "A pedagogic approach to college personality education"[5], "The perception and status of personality education for students in administrative assistant/executive secretary departments"[6]. Hence, the present study took the form of a questionnaire survey of college students taking general creativity and personality education classes in an attempt to analyze the *status quo* of creativity and personality education as well as students' demands. More specifically, we categorized the student demands for creativity and personality classes into a) the support demanded for creativity and personality education, b) the appropriate instructional media demanded to improve classes, c) the appropriate evaluation methods demanded to improve classes, d) the demands for basic constructs, and e) the components demanded for classes.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Subjects

This study surveyed the current *status quo* and the demands for creativity and personality education in 4 three- and four-year colleges in Busan. The study's subjects were first- to fourth-year students studying information protection, media engineering, broadcasting and visual media technology, and early childhood education. The general characteristics of the subjects are presented in Table 1.

As shown in Table 1, 165 of the subjects (37.9%) were first-year students, followed by 111 third-year students (25.5%), 108 second-year students (24.8%), and 51 fourth-year students (11.7%). There were more female students (260, 59.77%) than male students (175, 40.23%). Meanwhile, 106 students (24.4%) indicated that they had taken a "gifted education for young children" class; 102 students (23.6%) had taken a "creativity education for young children" class; 66(15.2%) students had taken a "film and creativity" class; 65(14.9%) students had taken a "fostering creativity" class; 54(12.4%) students had taken a "logical thinking" class; 48(11%) students had taken a "creative thinking technique" class; 27(6.2%) students had taken a "creativity and personality" class, and 16(3.7%) students had taken a "cognition and creativity" class.

2.2 Research Tools

As a research tool, this study used the "*status quo* and demands for creativity and personality education for college students" questionnaire developed on the basis of preceding studies by Kwak, Kim, Kim, & Yoon[1] and Moon & Choi[3]. More specifically, the basic constructs for creativity and personality education were set as diversity, comprehensiveness, future-oriented ness, and simultaneity, as suggested by Kwak, Kim, Kim, &Yoon[1]; the components of creativity and personality education were based on those suggested by Moon & Choi[3]. The questionnaire comprised 4 categories for the subjects' general background information and 7 categories on the *status quo* and demands for creativity and personality education. The latter categories were further broken down into 4 items measuring the basic constructs of creativity and personality education, 17 items measuring the components of creativity education (Cognitive factor, Dispositional factor, Motivational factor), and 10 items

measuring the components of personality education (Interpersonal relationship, Personality judgment), for a total of 31 items.

2.3 Research Procedure

A pilot study was conducted to examine the appropriateness, methodology, required time, and potential problems involved in the questionnaire developed to probe the *status quo* and demands for creativity and personality education. A total of 40 students, including 10 second- and third-year students from the departments of information protection, media engineering, broadcasting and visual media, and early childhood education, participated in the preliminary study, which was conducted between September 4, 2014 and September 5, 2014.

The researchers explained the purposes of the pilot study and the questionnaire items to the subjects before they were asked to complete the survey. It was ensured that there was no confusion about the questionnaire items: any confusing wording or question was fully explained to the students before they answered them.

The questionnaire was modified and supplemented according to the collected data. Contents relating to the questionnaire structure and detailed explanations of the various terms and constructs of creativity and personality education for college students were added. The modified version of the questionnaire was finalized following verification of its contents by three college professors who were experts in the field of creativity and personality education. After selecting four three- and four-year universities in Busan, the questionnaire was distributed to around 500 first- to fourth-year students studying information protection, media engineering, broadcasting and visual media, and early childhood education between September 15, 2014 and September 30, 2014. A total of 450(90%) questionnaires were collected. Among these, 15 were excluded on account of incomplete or insincere responses. A total of 435(96.67%) questionnaires were therefore used in the analysis.

2.4 Data Analysis

The subjects' general background characteristics were identified through calculations of frequencies and percentages. Likewise, the *status quo* and demands for creativity and personality education for college students were also examined through frequencies and percentages calculated with a frequency analysis. SPSS 18.0 was used for the statistical analyses.

3. Results

3.1 *Status quo* of Creativity and Personality Education as Perceived by College Students

Most of the students (172, 39.5%) responded that creativity and personality education classes were "being carried out moderately," followed by 140 students (32.2%) answering that they were "not really being carried out well," 102 students(23.4%) answering that they were "being carried out some what", and 15 students (3.4%) answering that they were "not being carried out at all."

Excluding the 108 respondents who had answered that creativity and personality education classes were being carried out very well, we asked the remaining 327 students to indicate why these classes were not being carried out well. 110 students (33.64%) stated that this was due to a "tendency to focus only on the results; a lack of awareness about creativity and personality education," 86 students (26.30%) cited the "lack of time due to insufficient class hours and class work overload," 65 students (19.88%) cited the "insufficient number of creativity and personality education classes and programs for college students," 31 students (9.48%) mentioned the "inadequate educational environment; insufficient utilizable equipment and instructional media," 18 students(5.50%) cited the "insufficient number of creativity and personality lecturers," 17 students(5.20%) answered "other". Finally, 13 students (3.98%) mentioned the "insufficient publicity by the local office of education of the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology" as the reason behind the inefficient implementation of these classes.

3.2 College Students' Demands for Creativity and Personality Education

3.2.1 College Students' General Demands for Creativity and Personality Education

First, 146 students (33.6%) demanded the "development and incorporation of creativity and personality

education curricula and programs for college students"; 79 students(18.2%) demanded an "improvement in the perception of creativity and personality education in the school curriculum"; 76 students(17.5%) demanded the "improvement of the educational environment, including the provision of utilizable equipment and instructional media"; 75 students(17.2%) demanded the "incorporation of creativity and personality education into the learning materials and assignments of major curricula"; 40 students demanded the "training of more creativity and personality instructors"; 11 students (2.5%) demanded "aggressive publicity by the local education offices of the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology," and 8 students (1.8%) had other demands.

Second, Most students (274, 63%) saw films as appropriate instructional media for the development of creativity and personality education classes. 224 students (51.5%) considered music (concerts, musicals, and operas) to be an appropriate vehicle, 168 students (51.5%) found theatre to be appropriate, 151 students saw design (fashion and visual) as appropriate, and 122 students (28%) perceived advertisements as appropriate media to be used in those classes.

Third, 152 students (34.9%) perceived "lectures combined with practical, hands-on experiences, such as fieldtrips and site visits" as the most appropriate instructional method for the enhancement of creativity and personality education classes. 105 students (24.1%) found "lectures centered on small group discussions and debates" to represent the most appropriate method, followed by "the production of art projects through cooperative learning" (72 students, 16.6%), and "other"(4 students, 0.9%).

Fourth, 133(30.6%) students asked for "portfolio evaluation of projects based on cooperative learning," 98 students (22.5%) demanded "essay-based evaluation (expressing students' ideas)," 92 students (21.1%) demanded the "concurrent implementation of online and offline evaluation," 74 students (17%) asked for "peer evaluation through cooperation and discussion/debate," and 3 students (0.7%) answered "other."

3.2.2 Components Demanded for Creativity and Personality Education

Table 2 shows the basic constructs of creativity and personality education demanded by college students.

As shown in Table 2, most of the students (269 students, 61.8%) perceived "future-oriented ness" as the most important component of creativity and personality education, followed by "comprehensiveness" (74 students, 17%), "simultaneity" (70 students, 16.1%), and "diversity" (22 students, 5.1%).

Table 3 illustrates the components of creativity and personality education demanded by college students.

As shown in Table 3, most students (174 students, 40%) perceived dispositional factors as the most necessary components of creativity education, followed by motivational factors (155 students, 35.6%), and cognitive factors (106 students, 24.4%). On the other hand, most of the students (256 students, 58.9%) saw interpersonal relationships as the key component of personality education, while 179 students (41.1%) considered personality judgment capability to be essential. More specifically, the components of creativity education demanded by college students are shown in Table 4.

As shown in Table 4, most of the students (220, 50.6%) saw problem-solving as the most important cognitive factor required in creative education; 175 students (40.2%) considered "expansion of thinking" as the most important cognitive factor, while 40 students (9.2%) saw "convergence of thinking" as the most essential factor. More specifically, students found the "expansion of thinking" factor to encompass imagination/visualization capability (216 students, 49.7%), expansional thinking (164 students, 37.7%) and inferential/metaphorical thinking (55 students, 12.6%). Likewise, "convergence of thinking" referred to logical-analytical thinking (276 students, 63.4%) and critical thinking (159 students, 36.6%). The problem-solving capacity comprised solving problems (253 students, 58.2%) and identifying problems (182 students, 41.8%). Regarding the dispositional factors, most of the students agreed that openness involved diversity (212 students, 48.7%), while few of them found openness to encompass a complex personality (53 students, 12.2%). 158 students (36.3%) answered that independence involved courage, while 135 students (31.0%) found independence to mean originality. Moreover, most of the students perceived curiosity/interest (223, 51.3%) as motivational factors, while 88 students (20.2%) saw motivation itself as a motivational factor.

xpanding on this, Table 5 outlines the components of personality education demanded by college students.

Table 1. General background of the subjects (n=435)

Category		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Grade level	First year	165	37.9
	Second year	108	24.8
	Third year	111	25.5
	Fourth year	51	11.7
	Total	435	100.0
Gender	Male	175	40.23
	Female	260	59.77
	Total	435	100.0
Major	Information protection	80	18.4
	Media engineering	59	13.6
	Broadcasting & visual media	135	31.0
	Early childhood education	161	37.0
	Total	435	100.0

Table 2. Basic constructs demanded for creativity and personality education (N=453)

Category	*N*	%
Diversity	22	5.1
Comprehensiveness	74	17.0
Future-orientedness	269	61.8
Simultaneity	70	16.1
Total	435	100.0

Table 3. Components demanded for creativity and personality education (N=453)

Category		*N*	%
Creative education	Cognitive factors	106	24.4
	Dispositional factors	174	40.0
	Motivational factors	155	35.6
	Total	435	100.0
Personality education	Interpersonal relationships	256	58.9
	Personality judgment capability	179	41.1
	Total	435	100.0

As shown in Table 5, 114 students (26.2%) saw solicitude (respect) as the most important virtue in interpersonal relationships, while only 33 students (7.6%) considered self-ownership (self-restraint) as a key virtue in interpersonal relationships. Regarding the personality judgment component, 154 students (35.4%)highlighted executive power as the most important factor, while 57 students (13.1%) perceived moral sensitivity as essential.

Table 4. Components demanded for creativity education (N=435)

Category	Sub-category		*N*	%
Cognitive factors	Expansion of thinking		175	40.2
	Convergence of thinking		40	9.2
	Problem-solving capacity		220	50.6
	Total		435	100.0
Dispositional factors	Openness	Diversity	212	48.7
		Complex personality	53	12.2
		Tolerance for ambiguity	69	15.9
		Sensitivity	101	23.2
		Total	435	100.0
	Independence	Courage	158	36.3
		Autonomy	142	32.6
		Originality	135	31.0
		Total	435	100.0
Motivational factors	Curiosity/interest		223	51.3
	Immersion		124	28.5
	Motivation		88	20.2
	Total		435	100.0

Table 5. Components demanded for personality education (N = 435)

Category		*N*	%
Virtues in interpersonal relationships	Integrity	60	13.8
	Solicitude (respect)	114	26.2
	Promise (trust)	85	19.5
	Ownership (self-restraint)	33	7.6
	Forgivingness	53	12.2
	Responsibility	90	20.7
	Total	435	100.0
Personality judgment	Moral sensitivity	57	13.1
	Moral judgment	88	20.2
	Decision-making power	136	31.3
	Executive power	154	35.4
	Total	435	100.0

4. Summary and Conclusion

This study took the form of a preliminary study surveying college students in an attempt to develop educational contents fostering creativity and personality. To this end, we examined the current *status quo* of creativity and personality education as perceived by college students, and probed the students' specific demands regarding these education programs. The study's findings are summarized below, with a primary focus on answering the research questions.

First, the students were asked whether creativity education and personality education were being carried out well in their respective schools. Most of the respondents felt that creativity and personality education programs were not being carried out well. This calls for changes in the creativity and personality education curricula and instructional methods. Meanwhile, we sought to identify the causes of the inefficient operation of creativity and personality education in colleges by asking the opinions of the 327 students who perceived creativity and personality education not to be carried out well (i.e., excluding the 108 students who felt that it was satisfactory). Interestingly, students identified a result-oriented focus that tended to undermine the process of creativity and personality education, as well as the lack of awareness about creativity and personality education, as the main reasons (33.64%), followed by a lack of time due to insufficient class hours and class work overload (26.30%). That is to say, students identified structural causes - including the inadequate awareness of the constructs of creativity and personality education from the operators of these curricula, the lack of programs per se, and the lack of time for these programs - as the largest barriers to the satisfactory implementation of creativity and personality education. These findings suggest that various forms of structural and administrative support should be provided in order to expand creativity and personality education. In other words, qualitative as well as quantitative improvements in creativity and personality education must be preceded by the development of various creativity and personality education workshops designed to enhance instructors' knowledge and awareness of the subject, and by the implementation of institutional support to ensure the structural incorporation of creativity and personality education into existing curricula, either by including these components in each subject or by establishing them as a separate subject or an extracurricular activity. Second, we identified the types of support towards creativity and personality education demanded by college students. The development and incorporation of creativity and personality education curricula and programs aimed at college students received the highest number of votes, at 33.6% (146 students). The demands for an education boosting the perception of creativity and personality education followed next, receiving 18.2% of the votes. This evidences the need for educational programs suitable for college students. Moreover, instructors and students need to be instructed of the definition and concept of creativity and personality education for a qualitative improvement of these education classes. To this end, all stakeholders - including education researchers, instructors, education administrators, and parents - should vigorously discuss the directionality and constructs of creativity and personality education. It is suggested that these discussions should be turned into a guide book and distributed to instructors and students, in order to allow both instructors and students to grasp the concepts of creativity and personality education. Moreover, further research should be conducted to determine the most effective method for the incorporation of creativity and personality education into major curricular assignments and contents, and to develop lectures and programs maximizing the educational effects.

Third, we identified the instructional media requested for the development of creativity and personality education-related classes. The results indicated that students preferred instructional media such as films (63%) and music (51.5%, including musicals and operas) over activity worksheets (10.8%) and handmade teaching aids (14.7%) - or perceived them to be more useful. This shows that students are generally intrigued by the type of audio-visual creativity and personality education that utilizes the storylines of films, musicals, or operas. Considering that students have yet to firmly grasp the concrete concept of creativity and personality education, it is imperative to develop education programs making use of these familiar and interest-arousing instructional media. By the same token, it would also be beneficial to develop "interactive" programs, in which the students themselves act in and direct films, musicals, or operas; this type of fun, interactive activities are ultimately conducive to stimulating and fostering students' creativity and personality. Fourth, we identified the teaching methods demanded for creativity and personality education. The students were found to favor hands-on classes with field trips and site visits (34.9%), small group discussions and debates (24.1%), project productions via cooperative learning (actual practice-oriented classes) (16.6%) over theory-intensive classes (3.9%). Furthermore, when asked about the most appropriate evaluation methods, students generally preferred project productions based on cooperative learning (30.6%) and essay-based evaluation (22.5%) over performance assessment (3.4%) and descriptive evaluation (4.6%). In essence, these results also indicate that creativity and personality education curricula and the evaluation systems for these programs should be built on class

environments promoting student-student interaction, such as experience-based and cooperation-based learning, as opposed to theory-based lectures.

Fifth, we determined the demands for the basic components of creativity and personality education. The students generally rated future-oriented ness (61.8%) higher than diversity (5.1%), comprehensiveness (17%), and simultaneity (16%). That is, the students expected creativity and personality education classes to be future-oriented (i.e., characterized by positive images such as enjoyment), rather than conventional (characterized by negative images); they desired these classes to be educational and enjoyable, not stifling and steeped in fierce competition.

Sixth, we also probed the demands for the basic components of creativity education. The respondents felt that creativity education should foster problem-solving skills (60.6%) and the expansion of one's thinking (40.2%) over convergence of thinking (9.2%). This shows that the respondents gave more weight to imagination and divergent thinking abilities (i.e., the expansion of thinking and problem-solving capacity) than to logical thinking and critical thinking (i.e., convergence of thinking). This reflects the fact that the focus of current school curricula is on fostering convergent thinking abilities. However, we can deduce that this educational focus is effective in converging students' thinking, but has a minimal effect on releasing their creative potential. Meanwhile, in terms of openness as a dispositional factor, the respondents showed a high demand for diversity (48.75%) and sensitivity (23.2%). These results also suggest that creativity education should grow out of the "one-size-fits-all," theory-based logical education, and adopt curricula promoting diversity and cultivating sensitivity to pique the interest of students. This is also supported by the finding that the curiosity/interest factor was the greatest motivational factor. Seventh, the respondents wanted personality education to include the following components: among interpersonal virtues, solicitude (respect) received the highest number of votes (26.2%), followed by responsibility (20.7%), promise (trust) (19.5%), and forgivingness (12.2%). Moreover, among personality judgment capacities, executive power received the highest number of votes (35.4%), followed by decision-making power (31.3%), and moral judgment (20.2%). These results were significant in that they represented the students' perceptions of the problems experienced by their peers. Therefore, personality education for the enhancement of interpersonal relationships should focus on developing values such as solicitude (respect), responsibility, and integrity, while that focusing on the development of personality judgment capabilities should seek to enhance efficacy (self-restraint) as a means to boost executive power and decision-making skills.

This explorative study was significant in that it comprehensively measured college students' demands for creativity and personality education as part of the general education curriculum. Nevertheless, it presents a few limitations. Most importantly, it could not suggest a more specific direction for creativity and personality education, as the various relationship effects for different creativity and personality education programs could not be identified. Furthermore, this study was not able to determine the specific demands for creativity and personality education according to each area of study, gender, and grade level. Follow-up studies should compensate for these limitations.

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