

## The Mediating Role of Positive Psychological Capital in the Relationship between Self-Leadership and Career Maturity among Korean University Students

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**Abstract :** Background: Children and teens in Korea experience extreme levels of academic stress. To perform better on the college entrance exam and gain admission to Korea's most prestigious universities, they devote a significant portion of their early lives to studying. Because of their excessive preparation for entrance exams, students have become accustomed to passive and involuntary engagement. Any student starting university, however, faces new challenges that require more active involvement and self-regulated practice. As a way to tackle this issue, the study focuses on investigating the mediating effects of positive psychological capital on the relationship between self-leadership and career maturity among Korean university students. Objectives and Hypotheses: The long term goal of this study is to offer insights that promote the use of positive psychological interventions in the development and adaptation of career maturity. The current objective is to assess the role of positive psychological capital as a mediator between self-leadership and career maturity among Korean university students. Based on previous research, the hypotheses are: (a) self-leadership will be positively associated with indices of career maturity, and (b) positive psychological capital will partially or fully mediate the relationship between self-leadership and career maturity. Sample Characteristics and Sample Size: Participants in the current study consisted of undergraduate students enrolled in various courses at 5 large universities in Korea. A total of 181 students participated in the study. Methodology: A quantitative research design was adopted to test the hypotheses proposed in the current study. By using a cross-sectional approach to research, a self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data on indices of positive psychological capital, self-leadership, and career maturity. The data were analyzed by means of Cronbach's alpha, Pierson correlation test, multiple regression, path analysis, and SPSS for Windows version 22.0 using descriptive statistics. Results: Findings showed that positive psychological capital fully mediated the relationship between self-leadership and career maturity. Self-leadership significantly impacted positive psychological capital and career maturity, respectively. Scientific Contribution: The results of the current study provided useful insights into the role of psychological strengths such as positive psychological capital in improving self-leadership and career maturity. Institutions can assist in increasing positive psychological capital through the creation of positive experiences for undergraduate students, such as opportunities for coaching and mentoring.

**Keywords :** career maturity, mediating role, positive psychological capital, self-leadership

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