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Constructing Creativity: Wisdom in Everyday Problem Solving

Audrey DeFrank  
*University of Nebraska at Omaha*, adefrank@unomaha.edu

Nicholas J. Arreola  
*University of Nebraska at Omaha*, narreola@unomaha.edu

Roni Reiter-Palmon  
*University of Nebraska at Omaha*, rreiter-palmon@unomaha.edu

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Constructing Creativity: Wisdom in Everyday Problem Solving
Audrey DeFrank, Nicholas J. Arreola, and Roni Reiter-Palmon

Abstract
Creativity is conceptualized as an idea or product that is both original and high in quality (Amabile, 1996). Researchers have sought to better understand the creative process by examining predictors of creative outcomes. Wisdom may play a predictive role in this process. According to Webster (2003), wisdom is the competency in, and application of, critical life experiences to optimize development of the self, as well as others. Research has suggested that wisdom supports creativity at an implicit level (Stenberg, 1985, 1999), and contributes to creative achievements (Helson & Srivastava, 2002).

Introduction
Research on the characteristics of creative people include personality traits and cognitive skills

Problem Construction / Solution Creativity
PC is a consistent predictor of creativity and has been examined as an ability and process

Method
Participants
167 undergraduate students
Mean Age = 24 (SD = 4.06)
113 females (67.7%), 52 males (31.1%), and 2 (2%) undisclosed

Procedure
Completed questionnaires on SONA, UNO’s online research tool
Extra credit in a psychology course for participation was awarded

Wisdom
Wisdom is predictor of creative task performance (Avey, Luthans, Hannah, Sweetman, & Peterson, 2012)
Personality traits tolerance for ambiguity and openness are antecedents to both wisdom and creativity (Helson & Srivastava, 2002)
Stenberg (2003) argues that thinking wisely must have an element of creativity, but creative thinking does not require wisdom

Hypothesis
PC mediates the relationship between wisdom and solution creativity

Analysis
Each rating was averaged to create single scores for quality and originality and then multiplied to create a single score of creativity (Harrington, Block, & Block, 1983)

Discussion
Findings supported PC creativity as a mechanism through which wisdom affects solution creativity
Previous research has shown that PC can be enhanced through targeted training (Hunter, Bedell, & Mumford, 2007), while acquiring wisdom may be a more holistic process. As a result, this study buttressed the notion that creativity is a trainable phenomenon
Due to the correlational nature of the methodology, we cannot draw causal conclusions
Sparse research and little agreement exists regarding the conceptual and operational definitions of wisdom, thus limiting generalization and warranting future research in this area

Model

Results
• In block 1, wisdom significantly predicted solution creativity (R² = .03, F(1, 157) = 5.07, p = .03, 105.80)
• When PC Creativity (β = .44, p = .00) was added to the model in block 2, the effect of wisdom disappeared (β = .01, p = .17) and significant incremental validity was observed (ΔR² = .17, F=34.08, p = .00)
• The Sobel test returned p = .03, confirming the mediation

Figure 1. Mediated Regression model indicating β for each variable. In the final step, the effect of wisdom, controlling for PC creativity, dropped to non-significance, βp = 01