

Emotional Intelligence, Self-Efficacy, and Creativity Among Employees of Advertising Agencies

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The present study attempted to investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, and creativity among employees of advertising agencies. It was also intended to explore the role of demographic variables including job designation and job experience in relation to variables of the study. The sample comprised of 205 employees of advertising agencies from Rawalpindi and Islamabad including both men ($n = 155$) and women ($n = 50$) with ages ranging from 20-65 years. Self-report Measure of Emotional Intelligence (Khan, 2008), Generalized Self-efficacy Scale (Jerusalem & Schwarzer, 1995), and Self-report Measure of Employee Creativity (Zhou & George, 2003) were used in the present study to measure emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, and employee creativity, respectively. The results showed that emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, and creativity were positively related with each other among employees of advertising agencies. Moreover, emotional intelligence and self-efficacy were found to be significant predictors of creativity. Mediation analysis showed partial mediating role of self-efficacy in explaining the relationship between emotional intelligence and creativity. Significant group differences with respect to job designation and job experience were found in the present sample. Findings showed that creative directors and art directors showed significantly higher creativity than other job holders. Moreover, employees with extended job experience expressed greater emotional intelligence, higher self-efficacy, and elevated levels of creativity as compared to their counterparts.

Keywords. Emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, creativity, advertising agencies, employees

A wide array of practical fields in the modern world values the trait of creativity. Supervisors are continually hit by the realization

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that to keep up with the fast growing, ever changing occupational world, they have to encourage creative ideas by their employees and reinforce them in a way that perpetuates the flow of original ideas regarding services, products, marketing approaches, and strategies. Moreover, organizational level creativity has been found to be connected with its survival and competitive advantage (Shalley, Zhou, & Oldham, 2004). There has existed a long, rich, and textured relationship between creativity and advertising (Akinboye, 2003; McManus, 2005).

According to Gino and Ariely (2012), most definitions of creativity have a consensus that creativity is the development of an idea or product that is new, original, and that has practical worth, usefulness or appropriateness. It involves two basic mechanisms, divergent thinking and cognitive flexibility. *Divergent thinking* means the ability of individuals to develop unique ideas and to foresee various solutions to a given problem and thinking out of the box. *Cognitive flexibility* is the skill of individuals to re-organise knowledge in many different ways depending on varying situational demands (Sternberg & Kaufman, 2010).

An important and critical role is played by employee's creativity in increasing the competitive advantage of organizations (e.g., Shalley et al., 2004). Considering its critical role, creativity has been widely explored and means to enhance it have been looked into (Oldham, 2002). Exhibition of creativity by employees at work includes production of new and useful ideas relevant to workplace's processes and services (Hirst, Knippenberg, & Zhou, 2009; Shalley & Gilson, 2004; Shalley et al., 2004; Zhou & George, 2001). Creativity has been explained as the ability to produce new ideas, new concepts, new designs, unusual ways of doing things, and updating old ideas to new and unique ones (Akinboye, 2002). Studies (e.g., Hirst et al., 2009; Shalley & Gilson, 2004) have revealed that several desired organizational and personal outcomes such as innovative work behaviour, survival, and effectiveness are related to creativity; creativity can be manifested in many ways in an organization, for example, the presentation of unique ideas, practical strategies, and new ways to carry out work are all manifestation of employees' creativity (Shalley & Gilson, 2004).

A mediating role of leader-member exchange has been observed in relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and creativity in organizational settings (Lee, Scandura, Kim, Joshi, & Lee, 2012). Significant variance in creativity among employees is explained by leader's EI. Teams with highly emotionally intelligent leaders are stimulated in ways that enhances employees' creative skills (Rego,

Sousa, Pina-e-Cunha, Correia, & Saur-Amaral, 2007). Forms of cognitive intelligence, as those put forth by Guilford's structure of intellect model (as cited in Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2001), such as creativity are found to be related with EI (Mayer, Salovey, Caruso, & Sitarenios, 2001). Several studies have found positive relationship between EI and creativity (e.g., Akinboye, 2003; Guastello, Guastello, & Hanson, 2004; Olatoye, Akintunde, & Yakasai, 2010). It was postulated by Goleman (2011) that highly emotionally intelligent people can quickly clear their minds for working out creative solutions to problems.

EI refers to "a set of acquired skills and competencies that predict positive outcomes at home with one's family, at work, and in the society" (Akinboye, 2003, p. 34). Warmth, earnestness, sincerity, and persistence are characteristics of the people who have high level of EI (Mayer et al., 2001). It has been pointed out that the strongest indicator of human success is EI (Goleman, 2011). The framework of EI formed by Goleman's (2001) model reflects how being competent in these domains of self-appraisal, self-management, self-awareness, and emotional management result in success in the workplace. It is important to establish here that emotion as used in all the studies of EI can mean a complete range of emotions. These emotional experiences can range from mood states to intense prevailing affective states. Cognitive processes and overt behaviors can be affected by emotions that are intense and temporary (George, 2000). In organizational settings, manager's EI not only facilitates them in effective emotion usage, but also in management of emotions, so that they do not hinder effective information processing (Sy, Tram, & O'Hara, 2006).

In organizational settings, EI, self-efficacy, and creativity have been extensively investigated in combination with many other variables. For instance, self-efficacy, in relation to workplace can be defined as "one's conviction about his or her abilities to mobilize the motivation, cognitive resources, and courses of action needed to successfully execute a specific task within a given context" (Luthans, 2002, p. 58). It should be understood that self-efficacy does not mean actual skills possessed by a person, rather it implies that one believes that one can accomplish something (Bandura, 2001). Efficacy uses inventiveness and resourcefulness to impact performance, which makes efficacy a generative capability (Bandura, 2000). It was found out by Amabile, Barsage, Mueller, and Staw (2005) that higher self-efficacy level relate to enhanced creative performance. Past studies also indicate that a person's creativity, in general, is influenced by one's self-efficacy (Tierney & Farmer, 2002). It can be deduced that the mechanisms of interactions between self-efficacy and creativity

are related to motivational impacts of self-efficacy upon creativity to a great extent (Bandura, 2001; Luthans, 2002). It can be argued that creativity is a risk involving activity, because often individuals find themselves in a situation where they can't come up with new and useful ideas (Carmeli & Schaubroeck, 2007). Highly self-efficacious persons are more likely to take up challenging goals and creativity, being challenging and risky qualifies as one of them (Bandura, 2000). It has been mentioned in preceding sections that self-efficacy effects a person's choices regarding behaviors and activities (Schwarzer & Schmitz, 2005). Therefore, efficacious individuals take joy in approaching mastery goals (Bandura, 2001). During this process, motivation is increased and side by side, a more creative approach in problem solving is triggered due to high self-efficacy (Phelan & Young, 2003).

According to Bandura (2001), self-efficacy refers to a people's judgment of their capabilities to organize and execute a course of action required to attain designated type of performance. Strong self-efficacy belief results in enhancement of human achievements, psychological well-being, and conflict management (Adeyemo, 2008). It has been found that a strong sense of personal efficacy is related to better health; higher achievement and creativity; and better social integration (Bandura, 2001). The construct of self-efficacy represents one core aspect of Bandura's social cognitive theory (Bandura, 2000, 2001). In a unifying theory of behaviour change, Bandura hypothesizes that expectations of self-efficacy determine whether instrumental action will be initiated; how much efforts will be expended; and how long it will be sustained in the face of obstacles and failures (as cited in Schwarzer & Schmitz, 2005). According to theory and research, self-efficacy makes a difference in how people think, feel, and act (Bandura, 2001). In terms of feeling, low self-efficacy is associated with depression, anxiety, and helplessness. Persons with low self-efficacy also have low self-esteem and they harbour pessimistic thoughts about their accomplishments and personal development (Schwarzer & Schmitz, 2005).

Several studies have indicated that self-efficacy positively effects creativity of individuals (e.g., Phelan & Young, 2003; Tierney & Farmer, 2002). Similarly, EI at workplace plays an important role in enhancing self-efficacy of employees (e.g., Fabio & Palazzeschi, 2008; Jamshidi, Pool, & Khoshkorodi, 2012). It has also been found that EI and creativity are directly and significantly related to each other (e.g., Mayer et al., 2001; Rego et al., 2007; Zhou & George, 2003). Literature has explored mediating effects of leader-member exchange in relationship between EI on the fact that there might exist

possible mediating role of employee self-efficacy in explaining the relationship between EI and creativity of employee, which has been explored in present study.

Positive and significant impact of EI on employees' self-efficacy has been found in many studies (e.g., Jamshidi et al., 2012). Also five dimensions of EI including self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, sympathy, and social skills have a positive and significant impact on employees' and teachers' self-efficacy (Chan, 2004). EI and its dimensions play an important role in employees' self-efficacy and influence of training EI components and the data related to EI at the workplace could have a considerable impact on improvement of employees' self-efficacy beliefs (Jamshidi, Pool, & Khoshkorodi, 2012). Many other studies have also studied these variable together and positive relationship between them has been found (e.g., Fabio & Palazzeschi, 2008).

Various researches (e.g., Akinboye, 2003; Fabio & Palazzeschi, 2008; Guastello et al., 2004, Jamshidi et al., 2012) in the past have explored EI, employees' creativity, and employees' self-efficacy in organizational settings in combination with other variables, but research focusing on the interplay of all of these variables is scarce. Moreover, a scarcity of research exists for the specific sample of advertising agency employees. However, the relevance of these entire variables in the specific sample of employees of advertising agencies cannot be denied. Creativity is a treasured trait and is a key factor for competitiveness of organizations in the current global economy (Amabile et. al., 2005; Oldham, 2002). If personal, psychological, and contextual antecedents of creativity are better understood, it would lead to meeting the challenge of competition, survival, and change. Hence, this area is attractive for investigators. Employees' creativity, EI, and self-efficacy are important factors in work setting, specially in advertising sector, emphasizing individual differences in workers which can affect productivity. Given important insights about these variables, workers' psychological health and work productivity can be improved significantly.

Positive correlation was indicated in relation to variables of EI, spiritual intelligence, self-efficacy, and creativity skills among transport workers in the South-Western Nigeria. Recommendations were made that members of the union nationwide must be subjected to training in EI and creativity skills. These efforts could lead to decrease in the rate of conflicts among members of the union (Animasahun, 2008).

With reference to Pakistani perspective, advertising services are emerging as a promising sector. In context of enhanced consumer

behavior, marketers are focusing on capturing the prospective audience; thereby, highlighting the dire need for advertising agencies to expand their business by offering innovative and creative productivity. Likewise, marketing and advertising settings require innovative ideas and new packages need to be introduced to the customers. Hence, creativity is an important issue to explore in marketing settings. Moreover, advertising sector employees have to interact with various types of clientele; hence, their relationships and communication need to be sound; their beliefs about being able to carry out projects in specific time limits are also important; therefore, making EI and self-efficacy important and relevant issues to explore.

Hence, creativity is relevant to effectiveness of advertising agencies, as it is related to desired outcomes such as productivity, less turnover, and burnout. Exploring these variables together would be assistive to look deeper into several important organizational outcomes such as stress, productivity, and turnover intentions. The sample included creative team of advertising agencies, which develops and implements the creative strategy. Moreover, the sample also contained employees of media, production, and client services department of advertising agencies. Exploring creativity and individual factors contributing to it (such as employees' self-efficacy and EI), would definitely make important contributions in deciphering the key to success for advertising sector in specific, and all organizations in general.

The broader objectives of the present study were to explore the relationship between EI, self-efficacy and creativity among employees of advertising agencies. It was also aimed to investigate the role of various demographics (job experience and job designations) in relation to EI, self-efficacy, and creativity among employees of advertising agencies.

Hypotheses

Keeping in view the previous literature and theories, following hypotheses were phrased for the present study.

1. EI and self-efficacy is positively related with creativity among employees of advertising agencies.
2. Self-efficacy mediates the relationship between EI and creativity.
3. Employees with extended job experience are more likely to exhibit greater EI, self-efficacy, and creativity as compared to employees with lesser experience.

4. Art directors and creative directors will reflect more EI, self-efficacy, and creativity as compared to copywriters and client services officers.

Method

Sample

Purposive sample comprised of employees working in advertising agencies ($N = 205$) including 155 (75.60%) men and 50 (24.40%) women. Age range of the respondents varied from 20-65 years ($M = 33.96$, $SD = 8.50$). Educational level of the respondents included 73 (36%) graduates, 119 (48%) postgraduates, and 10 (16%) having education above post-graduation. The respondents were acquired from different advertising agencies of Islamabad and Rawalpindi including Orient Advertising (Pvt.) Limited = 56 (28%); Interflow Communications (Pvt.) Limited = 44 (22%); Channel 7 Communications (Pvt.) Limited = 50 (24%); Midas Communications (Pvt.) Limited = 18 (9%); M-communications (Pvt.) Limited = 9 (4%); Interlink Advertising (Pvt.) Limited = 19 (9%); and Ideas Workshop (Pvt.) Limited = 9 (4%). Job experience of the respondents ranged from 1-15 years ($M = 10.81$, $SD = 7.31$). Job designation of the respondents included 26 (13%) copywriters, 64 (31%) client services officers/client strategists, 45 (22%) web designers / graphic designers, 31 (15%) marketing managers / advertising campaign managers, and 39 (19%) creative directors/art directors.

Measures

Self-Report Measure of Emotional Intelligence. Developed by Khan (2008), it consisted of 60 items to measure employees' EI. The response options were (1) *strongly disagree*, (2) *disagree*, (3) *neutral*, (4) *agree*, and (5) *strongly agree*. It had three subscales: Emotional Self-Regulation (27 items; $\alpha = .94$), Emotional Self-Awareness (21 items; $\alpha = .87$), and Interpersonal Skills (12 items; $\alpha = .74$) as reported by Khan (2008). In the present study, α of .91 was achieved for total Measure and .84, .76, and .80 were achieved for subscales Emotional Self-Regulation, Emotional Self-Awareness, and Interpersonal Skills, respectively.

Generalized Self-efficacy Scale. It was having 10 items used to measure employee's self-efficacy (Jerusalem & Schwarzer, 1995). There were no negatively phrased items. Possible responses ranged

from *not at all true* (1), *hardly true* (2), *moderately true* (3), to *exactly true* (4), yielding a total score between 10 and 40. High reliability, stability, and construct validity of the scale were confirmed in earlier studies (Leganger, Kraft, & Røysamb, 2000). Alpha coefficients of .84 (Malik, 2012) and .78 (Aftab, 2010) have been obtained in earlier studies, whereas, alpha coefficient of .85 was acquired for the current sample.

Self-Report Measure of Employee Creativity. It was used to measure employees' creativity. It can be used both for supervisor ratings of employees' creativity and as self-reported creativity (Zhou & George, 2001). It had 13 items and was rated on a 5-point scale. The response options ranged from (1) *not at all characteristic* to (5) *very characteristic* with possible score range of 13-65. There were no negatively phrased items. The alpha reliability of this scale has been established across a number of studies. Zhou and George reported alpha coefficients of .96 and Shin and Zhou (2003) as .95, while alpha coefficient of .83 was acquired for the current sample.

Procedure

Participants were approached from the relevant advertising agency and appointments were taken from managers beforehand. Formal permissions from the managers of particular departments were acquired to administer the research questionnaires. Participants were briefed about the rationale of the study, ensured of confidentiality, and were told that the information provided by them would be solely used for research purposes. Participants signed informed consent forms and questionnaires were administered on them on one-to-one basis. There was no time restriction for filling the questionnaires. Participants were thanked and appreciated for their time.

Results

Pearson Product Moment correlation was used to test relationship between the variables. Hierarchical regression analysis was performed to determine the role of self-efficacy as a mediator in the relationship between EI and creativity; whereas to assess group differences across job experience and job designation, ANOVA was employed.

Relationship of Emotional Intelligence, Self-efficacy, and Creativity

Pearson Product Moment correlation was computed to measure the direction and degree of the relationship between creativity, self-efficacy, and EI. The results show that EI holds significant positive relationship with self-efficacy ($r = .36, p < .01$) and creativity ($r = .43, p < .01$), while creativity has significant positive correlation with self-efficacy ($r = .54, p < .01$). This supports the first proposed hypothesis for the sample i.e., EI and self-efficacy are positively related to creativity.

Significant correlation was found between EI, self-efficacy, and creativity of employees. Therefore, hierarchical regression was done to determine the mediating role of self-efficacy in explaining the relationship between EI and creativity (see Table 1).

Table 1

Self-efficacy as Mediator between Emotional Intelligence and Creativity (N = 205)

Variables	B	β	R^2	F	ΔR^2	ΔF	df
Model 1							
Constant	20.70						
EI	.13	.38**	.14	31.27**	.14	31.27	1
Model 2							
Constant	9.68						
EI	.05	.14*	.33	46.53**	.19	53.16	2
Self-efficacy	.88	.49**					

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Table 1 illustrates that EI predicts creativity in Model 1 and explains 14% variance in creativity. This relationship is partially mediated by self-efficacy. Self-efficacy explains 19% additional variance in creativity. Sobel t -value = 5.19 ($p < .01$) confirms the partial mediating role of self-efficacy in the relationship between EI and creativity.

Group Differences

ANOVA was used to determine mean differences between groups along job experience and job designations.

Differences across job experience. To investigate differences between different groups along job experience for all study variables, one way ANOVA was conducted and Tukey's post-hoc was further used to study group differences.

Table 2 illustrates that significant group differences are found with respect to job experience along all the study variables. Results show that employees with extended job experience express elevated levels of EI, self-efficacy, and creativity; thereby supporting the hypothesis.

Table 2

Group Differences on Job Experience across Study Variables (N = 205)

Variables	Group1 (n = 88)	Group 2 (n = 63)	Group 3 (n = 54)	<i>F</i> (2, 203)	<i>i-j</i>
	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)		
EI	198.51(14.4)	204.35(13.11)	209.1(12.35)	6.94**	3 > 1, 2 2 > 1
Self-efficacy	31.30(5.50)	36.38(6.71)	42.22(5.26)	8.31**	3 > 1, 2 2 > 1
Creativity	46.13(9.24)	49.72(10.35)	53.5(9.95)	4.39*	3 > 1, 2 2 > 1

Note. Group 1 = 1-5 years; Group 2 = 5.1 – 10 years; Group 3 = 10.1 – 15 years.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Group differences across job designations. One way ANOVA was employed to determine the group differences across different job designations in relation to EI, self-efficacy, and creativity. Findings reveal significant differences on creativity; and Tukey's post hoc shows that creative directors and art directors ($M = 53.24$, $SD = 8.42$) have highest levels of creativity ($F = 5.52$, 203, $p < .01$) as compared to the other groups including copy writers ($M = 43.94$, $SD = 8.23$), client services officers ($M = 46.83$, $SD = 8.09$), graphic designers ($M = 47.05$, $SD = 10.79$), and advertising campaign managers ($M = 47.48$, $SD = 10.87$). However, nonsignificant differences were observed on EI ($F = 1.75$, $p > .05$) and self-efficacy ($F = 2.27$, $p > .05$).

Discussion

The present research was aimed to explore the creativity, self-efficacy, and EI of employees working in media, production, creative, and client services departments of advertising agencies.

Findings of the study showed that EI, self-efficacy, and creativity were significantly positively associated with each other, thereby

supporting the first hypothesis. Earlier evidence has shown similar patterns of relationships across these constructs. For example, it has been observed that strong positive relationship existed between self-efficacy and creativity (e.g., Chan, 2004; Fabio & Palazzeschi, 2008). Bandura (2001) cites high self-efficacy necessary for creative productivity and the discovery of new knowledge. It is due to the fact that self-efficacy influences the motivation and ability to engage in specific behavior, as well as the quest of certain tasks (Bandura, 2001).

Much promise is held by the concept of self-efficacy for understanding creative action in organizational settings. In fact Schwarzer and Schmitz (2005) described self-efficacy as a key motivational factor for creativity of individuals in the model of individual creative action. Despite its potential link to creativity, there has been less attention towards self-efficacy in a creativity context. High self-efficacy also provides people with the motivation to search for challenging tasks and to create them if these are not available in the environment (Schwarzer & Schmitz, 2005). Chan found that many components of EI significantly predict self-efficacy (as cited in Penrose, Perry, & Ball, 2007). Moreover, a positive relationship between EI and creativity has also been found in many studies (e.g., Guastello et al., 2004).

Earlier evidence has also shown that higher self-efficacy and EI are predictors of greater creativity in employees. It has been observed that being confident in oneself that one can overcome hindrances, to take steps to initiate, to start new businesses (Baum & Locke, 2004), and many other similar activities is a critical predictor of employee creativity and improved performance (McManus, 2005). Self-efficacy helps the individuals to keep up their efforts for accomplishing their goals as well as making conscious decisions to pursue a certain course of action (Bandura as cited in Lucas & Cooper, 2005). It has been found that along with individual creativity, self-efficacy helps in eventually boosting organizational level creativity (Csikszentmihayi, 2003). Self-efficacy and EI can be regarded as the personal factors which effect employee creativity. The literature highlights many personal and contextual factors that can predict creativity in organizations (e.g., Shalley et al., 2004; Simonton, 2000). The relationship between EI, components of EI and self-efficacy have also been found to be significant across many studies (e.g., Chan, 2004; Guastello et al., 2004; Penrose et al., 2007).

One of the hypotheses of this study was to investigate mediating role of self-efficacy in relationship between EI and creativity. Findings support the second hypothesis regarding mediating role of

self-efficacy in relationship between EI and creativity. Literature has explored mediating effects of leader-member exchange in relationship between EI and creativity (Lee et al., 2012). Highly emotionally intelligent people possess internal locus of control and intrinsic motivation (Bellamy, Gore, & Sturgis, 2005; Deniz, Tras, & Aydogan, 2009; Kulshrestha & Sen, 2006). Intrinsically motivated people are more likely to have personal strengths such as self-confidence, high self-esteem, and well-formed self-concepts (Gagne' & Deci, 2005). Hence, personal confidence in abilities is enhanced giving rise to high self-efficacy. Emotionally intelligent people are likely to have more mastery experiences and social persuasion as well which is likely to boost their self-efficacy. This self-efficacy, in turn, accelerates the person's creativity potential. This is so because creativity is a high-risk activity, chances of failure are manifold, therefore, highly self-efficacious people are more likely to exhibit creativity in their work (Bandura, 2001; Chan, 2004; Fabio & Palazzeschi, 2008).

Results of the present study also support the third hypothesis and showed significant differences among employees of varying levels of job experience. It has been observed that employees with extended job experience reflected greater EI, higher self-efficacy, and creativity as compared to employees with relatively lesser job experience. These findings have substantial support from the earlier literature. For instance, many studies (Brackett & Mayer, 2003; Ciarrochi, Chan, & Caputi, 2000; Day & Carroll, 2004) concluded that emotional and self-regulation is better among the senior supervisors as compared to those with lesser work experience. Similarly, Petrides and Furnham (2000) observed that managers with more years of job responsibilities exhibit higher levels of EI and interpersonal skills.

Previous literature also provides evidence of elevated self-efficacy among employees with extended job experience. For instance, studies found that employees with more work experience became more self-efficacious and were more likely to exhibit creativity in their work (Bandura, 2001; Chan, 2004; Fabio & Palazzeschi, 2008). Likewise, extensive work experience influences the motivation and ability to engage in specific behavior, and self-confidence to pursue the quest of certain tasks (Bandura, 2001). Research suggests that creative productivity is very common in experienced employees.

Amabile et al. (2005) articulated that longer the stay in a conducive environment for creativity and longer one's indulgence in creative work, the more enhanced will be the creativity. Similarly, certain psychological characteristics are favorable for creativity in experienced employees. These characteristics include maintenance of

sensitivity to problems and openness to the novelty; ability to gather new knowledge; readiness to work hard; commitment and keenness to work (Feist & Barron, 2003; Roskos-Ewoldsen, Black, & McCown, 2008). The life-span developmental approach to creativity argues that creativity can be a characteristic of both experienced and fresh employees; but creativity is more characteristic feature of experienced employees (Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2003).

One of the main hypotheses of this study was to investigate the potential difference in the EI, self-efficacy, and creativity of employees with different job designations working in advertising agencies. The results support the hypothesis and indicated that creative directors/art directors exhibited higher level of creativity as compared to other job holders. Empirical findings (Akinboye, 2002, 2003; Animasahun, 2008) also indicated that enhanced creativity is possessed by employees who have creativity relevant job designations. The requirement of creativity related job designations (e.g., employees of creative section) might create a push for employees to work in creative ways (Hirst et al., 2009). The very nature of work can expedite creativity in individuals and can give rise to greater expression of creativity for a worker (Csikszentmihalyi, 2003). This can work in the opposite way as well, i.e., the employees selected for creativity related job designations are inherently high in creativity (Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2003). However, nonsignificant differences were observed in relation to EI and self-efficacy among employees with various job designations. The present findings did get some support from the earlier evidences. For instance, it has been found that people working on different job positions do not reflect differences in their ability of social persuasion, interpersonal skills, and emotional regulation (Ciarrochi et al., 2000). Similarly, Judge and Bono (2001) also inferred nonsignificant differences between operation managers and production managers in relation to self-efficacy, intrinsic motivation, job satisfaction, locus of control, and self-regulation.

Limitations and Suggestions

The present study has some potential limitations. Firstly, the present study uses a cross-sectional design, limiting the ability to draw inference on further approximate causes of creativity in the study sample. Secondly, the instruments of self-efficacy, creativity, and EI are all self-report measures, thereby, increasing the element of social desirability. A qualitative approach on the phenomena of creativity and self-efficacy would provide a deep insight into these phenomena.

Thirdly, the study was limited to the sample from the twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi, hence limiting the generalization of results on a larger scale. Therefore, a larger sample with wider age range would increase the generalization potential of the results. Fourthly, only employees of advertising agencies were incorporated. In future endeavors, more organizational setups can be included, so that variability could be better explored. Finally, other related variables such as job complexity; relationship with supervisors and coworkers; rewards; and spatial configuration of work setting can assist in grasping the larger picture.

Implications

The results of the present study have some sound implications. The identification of predictive role of self-efficacy for creativity in employees implies that employees should be encouraged and should be given conducive environment to boost their self-efficacious beliefs. This in turn will advance their creativity in performing their tasks. Advertising sector relies highly on creativity of its employees, hence, greater creativity would result in higher desirable outcomes. Advertising agencies can contemplate on hiring an Industrial/Organizational (I/O) psychologist. The I/O psychologist, in collaboration with the human resource department can devise training modules for employees to uplift their soft skills development. Alongside the development of technical skills, soft skills development of employees of a service oriented industry is extremely important. Employees possessing sound social skills can attract larger clientele than those who solely focus on their technical skills. Therefore, training modules for enhancement of EI can be devised by the HR personnel. Turnover rates in advertising agencies and workplaces, in general, can be decreased by improving soft skills of managers and supervisors. Additionally, leadership and management practices should be improved so that a conducive environment is formed to enhance creativity, self-efficacy, and EI at the workplace.

Conclusion

The present study shows that EI, self-efficacy, and creativity are positively related to each other in employees of advertising agencies. Self-efficacy has a partial mediating role in relationship between EI and creativity. Moreover, differences due to job designations and job experience exist in creativity of the sample. Training modules can be

organized by HR department in collaboration with I/O psychologists to enhance soft skills and to boost creativity.

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