

## CREATIVITY AND PRESCHOOL EDUCATION – IMPERATIVES TO AN HARMONIOUS DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHILD

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### ABSTRACT

*The investment in pre-school education is due to the importance of this period in terms of acquiring knowledge, training skills and behavioral, affective, intellectual, social, etc. The variable of creativity, in the preschool period, has influences on the development of the personality of the child. Recent studies show that there are significant links between creativity and happiness, motor development, self-image formation. The implications of creativity on the development of the personality of the child have been followed over time by the researchers interested in finding explanations regarding the manifestation and stimulation of the creative process, still early. Creativity, seen as an action aimed at innovation, novelty can be seen as a way of adaptation. The present study aims to address the subject of creativity and its manifestation in the preschool period, highlighting important aspects regarding the process of developing the child's personality.*

**Keywords:** *creativity; preschool education; personality development;*

### 1. CREATIVITY - PERSONALITY VARIABLE

#### 1.1. Conceptual delimitations

Over time, certain definitions of creativity have been delineated. An explanation of creativity was formulated by Rogers (1961) who considered that man adapts naturally through his creativity.

For the first time, the term was used by G. W. Allport, who referred to creativity as a personality formation that included both skills, attitudes, and behavioral traits. (Roco, 2004)

The human personality is complex and has certain defining features as a result of which man develops and adapts to the requirements of the environment and society to which he belongs. Creativity, in terms of personality, refers to man's ability to create something new, ingenious, unseen, as well as man's ability to solve problems through new, inventive methods. In Erika Landau's (1979) vision, originality and the way the world is perceived are the main premises of creativity.

In every field of activity there are people who have the ability to think in order to improve and that is why creativity intervenes as a necessity and as a response to the need for innovation. (De Bono, 1992). De Bono also believes that the variable of creativity is correlated with thinking, which initially becomes lateral thinking and then turns into creative thinking. (Bucur, 2016) Thus, the variable of creativity becomes a necessary tool for the harmonious development of the individual, and stimulation from an early age has effects on the child.

Certain definitions given by researchers over time about creativity have been identified by Mihaela Roco (2004). Creativity was correlated with giftedness and genius. In W. Duff's view, the three faculties of the creative mind, namely imagination, judgment, and taste, can be considered the main components of genius. (W. Duff, quoted by Roco, 2004). He concluded that certain features of creativity, such as spontaneity, associativity, curiosity are specific to children and creative adults, noting that the variable of creativity manifests itself differently, depending on the level and stage of development.

E. P. Torrance's significant contributions in terms of creativity have led to a better understanding of the creative phenomenon which, in his view, involves a process that proposes new solutions, correlates old information with new ones in order to solve problems, check, in order to finally communicate the final results of this process. (Torrance, 1978, quoted by M. Dincă, 2002) Thus, the variable of creativity implies a reorganization of the old elements, seen from new perspectives and new combinations.

Guilford's vision of creativity considers thinking as problem solving, and creativity as an integral part of the area of thinking. (Zlate, 2000) Creativity is correlated with thinking, so it becomes a mental state in which intelligence, in all its forms, is activated. (Fisher & Williams, 2004, quoted by Bucur, 2016)

Another researcher of the creative phenomenon, L. Vygotsky (2004), attributed the creativity of the brain activity, more precisely to the combinatorics of the imagination through the variety of associations and operations it performs. Ken Robinson (Fisher & Williams, 2004) defines creativity as a process of imagination that produces new, original and valuable results.

## 1.2. The characteristics of creativity

Creativity, seen as a personality variable, has certain characteristics that define it. Mihaela Roco (2004) delimits creativity as being characterized by productivity, utility, efficiency, the value of the products of creative activity, ingenuity, novelty and originality.

Productivity refers to the large number of products of creativity, namely ideas, works, etc. Utility aims at the results of the action that must have a use, to contribute to the smooth running of the activity. Efficiency refers to what creativity produces by using its results (Roco, 2004) Value refers to the recognition of the theoretical or practical significance of the products of creative activity. Ingenuity involves the innovative use of solving methods. The novelty concerns the distance in time of the creative products. However, there may be situations in which recently developed things have a low level of originality, which refers to uniqueness, rarity, something special that has never been done before.

The main characteristics of creativity are fluidity, plasticity and originality. (Cosmovici, Andrei, 2008)

## 1.3. Creativity as a process or as a product

Creativity can be seen from a procedural perspective (as a process) or from a product perspective.

Creativity as a process involves solving problems by correlating old experiences with new ones. (Landau, 1979)

From the procedural perspective of creativity, the phases of the creative process are preparation, incubation, lighting or inspiration and verification. (Sălăvăstru, 2004)

Regarding creativity as a product, it aims at the new meanings that the individual attributes to the world through his creative act. (Ghiselin, 1957, quoted by Landau, 1979)

I. Taylor's idea, according to which creative behavior, from the product perspective, is distinguished in the form of several plans, includes: the expressive plan, where the basis of creativity is found, the productive plan that involves acquiring skills, abilities, techniques, knowledge, inventive plan or operative of creativity, the inventive, innovative and supreme or emergent plan. (Tomşa, 2004)

#### 1.4. Factors of the emergence of creativity

The factors that determine the emergence of creativity are intellectual, character and social. Cosmovici Andrei (2008) realizes a typology of factors that determine and influence the appearance of the creative phenomenon. Thus, the factors that determine the appearance of creativity are of an intellectual, character or social nature.

##### *Factors of an intellectual nature*

A first factor of an intellectual nature is the *imagination* which involves a process of a psychic nature through which new reactions and cognitive, affective or motor phenomena are obtained. Imagination, as a determining intellectual factor of creativity, involves two fundamental processes, namely analysis and synthesis. The analysis refers to a decomposition of the representations that, by synthesis, are reorganized and used using the information previously held. (Cosmovici, Andrei, 2006)

*Memory* influences creativity. *The volume of acquired knowledge*, their *variety*, but also the *exercise of memory* determine the appearance and stimulation of creativity.

*The level of thinking and intelligence* are factors that influence the emergence of creativity.

About creativity, referring to convergent and divergent thinking, Guilford recalls in his research. (Guilford, 1957) He calls divergent thinking as the one that produces more solutions, and convergent thinking the one that finds the solution, the only correct answer. Creativity, seen through the prism of convergent and divergent thinking, gives rise to theories about the creative potential that is characteristic, according to Guilford, of those who have divergent thinking and are able to produce a large number of solutions, ideas.

He considers that the cognitive trait materialized by divergent thinking is essential to the creative process. The vision of Isaksen, Dorval and Treffinger (2010) stated that creative people alternate divergent thinking with convergent thinking. Divergent thinking, in their opinion, represents the thought processes involved in finding a greater number of solutions, options, and convergent thinking, the processes involved in integrating different options in finding the right solution. Both types of thinking are interdependent in the case of creative people.

##### *Characteristic factors*

Creativity can be influenced by a person's *predispositions*, *intellectual abilities*, and *will*.

##### *Social factors*

A person's *motivation* differs from case to case. Also, *the requirements of society* are different from one historical moment to another, so *the motivation* to achieve things differs in this respect. *The stage of development of the discipline* is another factor of a social nature that influences the emergence of creativity.

### 1.5. The specificity of creativity at preschool age

The child's imagination process was researched by T. Berry Brazelton and Stanley I. Greenspan (2013). They believe that since children have the ability to generate new ideas, they can use fantasy, imagination to be able to discern the world in which they live and of which they are a part. In other words, during childhood, the imagination has a special development that manifests itself through fantasy. The child makes contact with the world around him and begins to make connections, new ideas, which he recombines. The presence of fantasy is a projection of the child's imagination that helps him to understand and explain his reality. Through fantasy, the child knows and understands the complex world, imagines new things that can be possible, regardless of impediments. Therefore, stimulating the production of fantasy among children is a way in which it actually stimulates their creativity. From the presence of imaginary friends, to the imaginary role play through which the child "pretends" to play, all these actions aim to stimulate the child's imagination and thereby, to stimulate creativity from an early age.

The investment in preschool education is due to the importance of this period in terms of acquiring knowledge, developing skills and abilities in behavioral, emotional, intellectual, social, etc. The program Early Education Matters (2000) proposed by Judith L. Evans, Robert G. Myers and Ellen M. Ilfeld discusses the importance of early education for the development of the child's personality. Children as young as eight can learn more easily by manipulating their objects more easily through exploration and experimentation, learning by mistake and trying.

Fromm (Schultz, 1976) considers that each individual is characterized by the process of individualization. This process aims at gaining autonomy and independence, freedom of development and the use of all the skills he is capable of. He believed that during childhood, the child develops a lot. Also, the influence of the family on the child, from his point of view, is important for the harmonious development of the child, even if it does not play a decisive role in this process. He stated that the child's development is influenced by the family, but not entirely because the pressures of society, the social environment, heredity, all affect the development equally. The relationship between the child and the family is important, and involvement in the child's development has influences on the later adult. Also, the importance of creativity on the child's development, in Fromm's view, is very high because each variable has an influence on personality modeling.

It was found that the success of the child's learning during school is correlated with the memorization skills that he develops since preschool. A study by Elena Bateneva (2016) managed to conclude that memory can be stimulated through educational games. They have progressive tasks and support the child in the memorization process. Stimulating memory also stimulates creativity. Thus, the child manages to form a positive self-image, has confidence in his own strengths, completes work tasks, stimulates memory, and implicitly, creativity. The importance of practicing memory from an early age, according to Elena Bateneva, has positive influences on the child's learning process. It is important that the tasks are oriented towards the process of developing the child's personality, and implicitly, creativity. In the preschool period, the child is familiar with the concept of learning that is achieved through the game that fulfills formative and informative functions. The child learns through play and play, and the creativity variable has an influence on the whole process of developing his personality.

In the preschool period, the child manifests his figurative and verbal creativity. Verbal creativity is manifested through the variety of words and their symbolism. Thus, the child verbalizes his actions, imagines and explains, communicates creatively with those around him. Through fantasy, the child manifests verbal creativity, communicating his thoughts and feelings. Manifestations of verbal creativity target his communication and imagination skills. Through role play, the preschooler is put in a position to imagine different poses and roles, thus developing his figurative creativity.

The influence of society on the child's development leads to the idea that education has the role of stimulating the formation of his personality according to current and future requirements of society. Therefore, investing in education from an early age produces positive effects on the child. Stimulating the creativity variable has the ability to influence personality development. By providing the child with the necessary experiences for a harmonious development, he manages to adapt and form skills, sets of knowledge, skills.

At first the lines are indefinite, unclear, the drawing being ambiguous. However, the child notices that his drawing has a meaning, he sees something completely different from the adult in his creations. Therefore, it is very important not to restrict children's creativity, to encourage them in the creative process and to praise the results of their work. Being stimulated, children gain confidence in their own strengths and are motivated to create. Encouragement in the process of creativity leads to the formation of a positive image and self-esteem, which supports the child in the process of formation.

### **1.6. Methods and techniques used to stimulate the emergence and development of creativity in preschool**

- Brainstorming: the child is encouraged to formulate as many ideas as possible, in the shortest possible time. This method stimulates thinking, forming new connections based on the old ones, the child being encouraged to offer as many solutions to the problem.

- Role play: the child is encouraged to create unique scenarios. This method develops children's thinking, ease, free communication and verbal creativity.

- Retelling: the child must retell the story read by the educator. It cultivates children's attention, memory and free communication.

- Build the story !: the child must build a story based on images or from his imagination. This method is often used in preschool because it develops children's imagination and verbal creativity.

- Artistic-plastic activities: through these activities, the child is encouraged to develop his figurative creativity. Through modeling, free drawing, the use of various painting techniques, the child discovers and stimulates his figurative creativity.

- Outdoor explorations: through excursions, outdoor explorations, activities carried out in a non-formal setting, the child explores the surrounding world, forms perceptions and representations, knows, becomes curious, and thus develops his creativity.

## **2. CASE STUDY ON THE MANIFESTATION OF CREATIVITY IN THE PRESCHOOL PERIOD**

### *Case study hypothesis*

In the educational activity carried out in the preschool institution it was found that there are differences, sometimes significant, in terms of the manifestation of figurative



creativity. The choice of this case was due to the observation of more special skills in terms of expressing the figural creativity of the preschool period.

The working hypothesis regarding the case study is that according to the subject "S. J." has a high score of figurative creativity compared to other children in the group to which it belongs, based on observations during educational activities in kindergarten.

*Identifying and revealing the importance of the case*

The importance of the identified case derives from the need to explain the phenomenon of figurative creativity in the preschool period and to find ways to stimulate the creative phenomenon.

*The objectives of the case study* were to reveal the characteristics related to the manifestation of figurative creativity in the preschool period, as well as the ways to stimulate figurative creativity in the preschool period.

*The purpose of the case study* is to identify effective ways to stimulate, from an early age, children's figurative creativity.

*Analysis of the socio-economic and cultural environment*

The subject „S. J ”comes from a family with high socio-economic status, the parents having good economic potential and higher education. The family is also involved in the child's education and provides him with all the circumstances for a harmonious development and a proper education. The child's personality is closely correlated with the genetic material he receives at birth, but also with the effects of education and the environment on development and adaptation. The influence of the family on the development of the child's personality is special. A study conducted by Lucia Gonzalez et al in 2018 in Spain concluded that the influence of the mother on the child's personality is greater than that of the father. Also, the mother's level of education and the father's social status are the factors that contribute to the child's cognitive development.

*Subject's characteristics*

The subject „S. J ”is 6 years old. Physically, it is a properly developed child, height and weight correspond to chronological age. Regarding the body scheme, it recognizes the body organization and details of one's own body and that of others, it recognizes the right / left segments of one's own body.

From an intellectual point of view, the subject has an above average intelligence compared to his colleagues, with special abilities. Regarding the spatial orientation, it operates with the notions: up / down, next to, below, inside, closed / open, distinguishes the size of large / small objects, it is oriented graphically. Has time orientation and recognizes parts of the day, lists the days of the week, lists the seasons.

Attention is stable, has a good ability to concentrate for long periods of time and is resistant to disturbing factors. He also has a rich imagination, tells stories with great ease, detailing when necessary and has a very good memory. Select, group, compare, sort objects, name the category of grouped objects, compose an integer of component parts, easily count in the center 1-10, associate the number with the set of corresponding elements, carrying the number to the quantity.

Vocabulary is very well developed. He trains in games either alone or with partners, collaborates in the game, respects the rules of the game.

Emotionally, she is a child who needs affection, is sometimes difficult, presents arguments when she does not want to achieve something, is pretentious and needs attention. He is interested in activities, he works carefully, he is neat, he has initiative.

### *Description of the test applied*

Following the application of Torrance tests for the detection of figurative creativity, form A, we could find that the subject “S. J ”has distinct features from his colleagues. Torrance tests to detect the level of creativity are specially designed to determine the appearance of a certain type of motivation. (Torrance, 2019)

The Torrance test for figurative creativity, form A, involves three types of activities. The first activity concerns the construction of images. The second activity involves completing images, by adding lines of incomplete drawings so as to make interesting objects and drawings, and the last refers to making new images by using the given lines. All activities also involve awarding titles to the works, titles that are scored to detect the level of figurative creativity, form A.

### **3. GENERAL CONCLUSIONS**

Through his research, Ashton (2013) launched the idea that children's personality is influenced by the environment in which they live and certain similarities can be observed between children living in the same home. Also, the group of friends can influence children's behavior, even if the family has different personality traits.

For a harmonious development of the child, all components of personality are important. Creativity, seen as a personality variable, stimulated from an early age, leads to the formation of a personality according to the current and future requirements of society, so that the child can adapt and develop.

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