



The Teacher's Creative Attitudes – An Influence Factor Of The Students' Creative Attitudes

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Abstract

One of the most common goals of the education systems throughout the world refers to the development of a creative personality that could easily adapt to the fast changes that the modern society undergoes to. As the creative attitudes lay the foundation for any creative personality, the interest in the study of pupils' creative attitudes and in the means to influence them should occupy a significant place within the contemporary research. In this educational context, this paper is centered on the investigation of the link between the high-school students' creative attitudes and their teachers' creative attitudes, attempting to stress that the latest might be a significant influence factor of the first and that the creative education in school should start with the teachers. The creative attitudes of both groups were measured using a creative attitude scale and the statistic procedure used to verify the hypothesis was the Pearson correlation. The results highlight the importance of the creative attitudes of the teachers in shaping the creative attitudes of the students, which in fact have to be exploited in order to achieve the educational goal, namely the creative personality.

1. Introduction

Due to technological progress and globalization, the modern society undergoes deep and rapid changes. This fact creates new problems that the individuals are confronted with and in order to deal with these problems one needs a well-developed capacity to adapt to new situations and to find new ways to do things. In this context, creativity proves to be a very important resource that might help individuals to deal in a better way with social and technological changes.

On the other hand, various researches conducted so far have shown that any man has a certain creative potential that can be developed in a proper educational environment. Abraham Maslow has introduced the concept of creativity as a self-actualization, referring to a specific type of creativity that is universal, that manifests on a mentally sane ground and in every field and that could be educated in school just like other skills.

This vision upon the individual and upon his role in the society has led to a new perspective on education. Vural Hoşgörür and Pinar Bilasa [4] raise the question of creativity education in an information society, in which individuals are expected to be active and visionary, able to express themselves effectively and to possess the creative skills necessary to enable them to use with maximum efficiency environmental facilities and modern technology. These expectations draw the necessity of understanding by the modern teachers the concept of creativity and the ways in which it can be fostered through education, thus innovations in the teachers' professional training programs are needed.

Biljana Stojanova [13] argues the need for creativity study and for investment in developing the individuals' creative potential, especially because we are living in a world in which scientific and technological progress can not be conceived without the great work of creative genius. Furthermore, she points out that the socio-economic crisis in which Europe lays in the last couple of years does nothing but emphasize the need for universal social progress based on private initiatives. In these circumstances, more than ever, education systems everywhere must focus on achieving an educational ideal which aims to shape and develop an independent individual, tolerant and highly creative, able not only to satisfy his own needs, but also those of society.

Perhaps because any man can reach a certain level of creativity and because people have realized that fostering creativity is a sine qua non element in order for an individual to be able to meet the



challenges of contemporary society and the ever changing conditions and demands of particular jobs and free labor market, the educational ideal of many education systems around the world promotes the education of individual creativity: Poland [10], Macedonia [13], Sweden [15]. It is also the case of the Romanian educational goal which, as described by Education Law no. 84/1995, "consists in the free, full and harmonious development of human individuality, in the formation of autonomous and creative personality" [9].

Although the development of individual creativity and the raise of the social creativity level is a target in several education systems, achieving this goal is more difficult than it seems and research is still needed in order to point out the factors that should be exploited by the education system to be able to foster an effective creative individual.

2. Researches Stressing The Impact Of The Teacher's Characteristics Upon The Students' Creativity

The study of creativity manifestations within the educational context represents a current worldwide preoccupation of the Education Sciences and Psychology researchers. Studies on this theme is carried on almost every continent: Poland, Portugal – Europe [5, 8], U.S.A. – North America [7], China – Asia [2]. What seems to be unanimously accepted by scientists worldwide is that creative behavior is not sufficiently facilitated in the formal education process and most of them focus on proposing ways to adjust this.

The results of the survey conducted by Maria Fatima Morais and Ivete Azevedo [8] on a sample of 576 teachers from Portugal indicate significant gaps in the social representations of creativity as an attribute of a student, a teacher, a curriculum or an educational institution, stressing an urgent need of training teachers on the concept of creativity.

Chu-ying Chien and Anna N.N. Hui [2] investigated the perceptions upon the factors that play a significant role in the young children's creativity development from environmental perspective, in teachers coming from three different Chinese societies – Shanghai, Hong Kong and Taiwan. Although no significant differences were found between teachers from the three cultural areas studied, they proved that creative teaching is closely related to creative learning and creative skills and attitudes of teachers have an important catalytic role upon young children's creativity level, a positive correlation existing between the two variables.

Matthew C. Makel [7] argues the need for reconciliation between the practice of creativity stimulation within the classroom and the research focused on facilitating the manifestation of the creative potential. He thus proposes a better training for the teachers in order to be able to educate the pupils' creativity and active involvement of researchers in supporting educational policies that promote creativity among learners.

Maciej Karwowski, Jacek Gralewski, Izabela Lebuda and Ewa Wiśniewska [5] offer as a possible solution to a better education of creativity in the Polish educational system the formal professional training of teachers in the field of psycho-pedagogy of creativity. This idea has already been implemented by the Special Education Academy in Warsaw, Poland, where such a program is operating since 1997. The purpose of this long-term training program is to prepare in a formal manner, creativity teachers, able to identify and develop the creative potential of the learners they work with, but also to solve various educational problems which occur in the educational process practice. Lebuda [6] aims to determine whether graduates of the training program in the field of creativity pedagogy are exploiting their potential and their knowledge. The study leads to the conclusion that creativity teachers are more likely to have creative behaviors in daily life, seeking new challenges, in comparison with teachers with other specialties. Also, the creativity teachers manage to maintain more effectively the balance between work and family.

Both practical experience and research have shown that along with the creative skills, the attitudinal factor is equally important on cultivating and developing creativity. However, the study of creative attitudes appears to be relatively neglected in the landscape of creativity research. The references on creative attitudes within the international databases appear sporadically: Australia [14], Japan [1], Greece [16], but they all stress the idea that creative attitudes lay the foundation for the creative behavior.

In Romania, researches on creative attitudes have been conducted by Mihaela Roco [11, 12] in the mid 1990s, but Verginia Crețu notes the fact that "the implications of the changes in the last fourteen years on the young people's attitudes and on the emotional factors supporting the upgrade of the



creative potential have not been studied through research. The democratic framework and the free labor market must have changed the specific attitudes of students." [3, p. 140].

3. Objective and hypothesis

Because it appears that the scientific research upon creative attitudes offers enough fertile ground on which to focus the exploration in order to broaden the knowledge on creativity and because teachers are important role models for students and may have a great influence upon their personality development, we have made the assumption that the teachers' creative have a significant influence upon the pupils' creative attitudes. Thus, the objective of the research was to test whether there is a positive correlation between the teachers' creative attitudes and the students' creative attitudes.

4. Method

The research was conducted on a number of 274 subjects, from which 62 teachers and 212 high-school students from all four forms of high-school (with ages ranging from 14 to 19 years old) and coming from 4 different high-schools.

The creative attitudes of both groups – students and teachers – were measured using a creative attitude scale, developed by the Romanian psychologist Paul Popescu-Neveanu and adapted by the Romanian researcher Mihaela Roco from University of Bucharest in cooperation with the Belgian researcher J. M. Jaspard from University of Louvain-La Neuve [12]. The scale contains 50 items consisting in statements that the subjects have to appreciate on a scale from 1 to 5 according to the extent to which they fit the description of their own personality. There are 15 different creative attitudes measured, each one having 3 items that correspond to it, plus a validity scale containing 5 items.

5. Results

The statistic procedure used to verify the hypothesis was the Pearson correlation. The correlation coefficients can be found in Table 1.

Table 1. Significant Pearson correlation coefficients between teachers' creative attitudes and students' creative attitudes.

Teachers \ Students	Energy	Concentration	Orientation towards novelty	Ideas' arguing	Independence	Nonconformity	Self-confidence	Moral values	Far-future orientation	Finalizing orientation	Risk orientation	Attraction for difficult problems	Interest diversity	Spiritual values	Practical values
Energy	.231 *					.319 **			.318 **	.329 **					
Concentration	.242 *	.299 **	.272 **									.251 **		.353 **	.193 *
Orientation towards novelty			.200 *	.283 *	.248 **			.258 **					.218 *	.253 **	.351 **
Ideas' arguing		.248 **		.230 *				.276 **				.219 *	.232 *	.245 **	.325 **
Independence	.380 **		.356 **	.319 *	.316 **	.306 **	.262 **	.279 **					.198 *		
Nonconformity	.294 **		.354 **		.498 **		.214 *				.195 *	.316 **			
Self-confidence	.187 *		.217 *		.275 **	.357 **	.447 **				.270 **	.230 *	.271 **		
Moral values							.221 *	.245 *		.207 *				.299 *	
Far-future orientation			.242 *	.193 *	.221 *		.270 **		-.222 *			.227 *			
Finalizing	.348	.305		.351		.260		.259							



orientation	**	**		**		**		**							
Risk orientation							.188 *	.300 **		- .254 **	.209 *				
Attraction for difficult problems					.271 **		.222 *				.249 **				
Interest diversity			.232 *					.217 *		- .209 *		.263 **			
Spiritual values				.213 *		.200 *	.217 *	.206 *						.215 *	
Practical values					.192 *						.262 **				.286 **

* significant at $p < .05$

** significant at $p < .01$

6. Discussion

The results show that many of the creative attitudes of the teachers are positively correlating with the creative attitudes of the pupils. In Table 1, there is a highlighted diagonal that stresses the fact that a certain creative attitude of the teacher generates a similar creative attitude of the students he or she works with, with very few exceptions. For instance, if a teacher acts with self-confidence in the classroom, his or her students are more likely to demonstrate the same attitude than the students that are interacting with teachers who lack self-confidence.

Also the results have revealed significant cross-correlations between each of the creative attitudes of the teacher and several creative attitudes of the students. This means that the teachers' creative attitude will not only contribute to the development of the same features in a group of students, but could also trigger other creative attitudes. For example, a teacher displaying an independent attitude towards his environment in front of his or her students will facilitate the students to assume an entire set of creative attitudes, like orientation towards novelty, nonconformity, self-confidence, far-future orientation, attraction for difficult problems and practical values.

As the Australian researchers Ronald Taft and Margaret B. Gilchrist [14] have proved, there is a very strong link between creative attitudes and creative productivity, thus shaping students' creative attitudes is a very important aspect of the education process in order to achieve the educational ideal of fostering a creative and independent individual. And because teachers are role models with a very strong impact upon their pupils' personalities, their creative attitudes play a very significant part in shaping the creative attitudes of the students. In this context, the first step to take in order to stimulate creativity in the classroom is to structure the creative attitudes of the teachers.

Many scientists have studied the positive impact of training upon creativity skills, but not only skills improve following the training, but attitudes too. Min Basadur, Mitsuru Wakabayashi and Jiro Takai [1] investigated in an experimental design, the effectiveness of training sessions on creative problem solving attitude for Japanese managers. Measurements showed significant variations between the pre-test results and post-test results, arguing the fact the attitudes can be changed through training. More to it, the experience from the Special Education Academy in Warsaw is evidence for the fact that the longer the training period, the more extensive is the attitude change [5, 6].

7. Conclusions

The results of the study highlight the importance of the creative attitudes of the teachers in shaping the creative attitudes of the students, which in fact have to be exploited in order to achieve the educational goal, namely the creative personality.

The results of the present study are emphasizing the words of Mahatma Gandhi, who once said "You must be the change you want to see in the world!", pointing out the fact that teachers are a key-element in the education process, despite the transformations the human society went through and they can contribute up to a great extent to fostering and shaping a creative and independent individual that not only would be able to adapt to various environmental changes, but could also be able to find solutions to social problems.



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