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CREATIVITY IN PSYCHOTHERAPY: THE POSSIBILITIES OF ITS UTILIZATION

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Abstract

Although many studies on creativity have been conducted, issues related to utilizing creativity as a child's ability and therapeutic tool in different social contexts still remain. How can creativity be classified and utilized in various psychological studies in relation to children and what are the possibilities of creativity use in psychotherapy considering social factors? This paper is aimed at exploring creativity in terms of abilities which potentially may be used during treatment. Clinical psychologists and psychotherapists have been considering use of patient abilities to think independently, to create original and novel ideas or to solve problems in non-stereotypical ways. Creativity in psychotherapy encourages patients to use their imagination and skills to help express their problems, difficulties and beliefs in a natural way, after which it is possible to plan efficient treatment, find appropriate solutions and additionally to develop highly important personal, cognitive and other skills and capabilities. Next, child's play was developed in the frame of humanistic psychology as an efficient tool for the exploration of the child's life, culture, and problems in a natural and accepting atmosphere without judgment creating the possibility of rehearsing and mastering some skills or patterns. The active use of creativity in psychotherapy can be applied in treatment of adults, but is especially effective with children. The significance of creativity in therapy opens up wide possibilities for both therapists and patients to explore this problematic field more freely.

Keywords: Creativity, play, problem-solving, social context, therapy.

1. Introduction

Creativity has become a subject of interest among modern scientists. Many studies have identified significant points and aspects that define creativity, its causes, and its relationship with cognitive processes, emotions, intelligence, personality features, and the like. The results allow us to define creativity as a complex phenomenon, which correlates with many variables like task type, context, individual cognitive abilities, behaviour, and other variables. Other studies have attempted to examine whether creativity is an ability or a basic human trait that depends on cognitive, emotional, individual, behavioural, and contextual processes.

Creativity and abilities involved in it tend to be applied whenever an issue needs to be sorted, a question needs to be answered, a goal needs to be reached, an idea needs to find an expression, a task needs to be performed, or a person needs clarification on what or how to do (something), regardless of the field of studies (Kaplan, Tarvydas, & Gladding, 2014; Brinck, 1997). Additionally, the social environment, which sets up rules and principles according to which people and institutes function, can enhance creative development, facilitating the development of different capabilities and skills in more or less an advanced way.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Creativity in psychotherapy: Possibilities of its utilization

The field of psychology and psychotherapy is not an exception, and creativity may be applied from different perspectives. First, children are encouraged to use their imagination and skills to express their issues in the natural way, especially in communication. This approach allows us to form reliable background for future treatment and, additionally, set up unconventional and appropriate therapeutic approach tailored to each individual (Hoffmann, & Russ, 2012).

Innovative idea is to utilize child play as an efficient tool in psychotherapy since it allows gaining more information about child's life, culture, and problems in a safe and accepting climate without judgment. Therefore, therapy that utilizes child play provides appropriate environment for child's reflection to develop cognitive skills and improve behavioural patterns. This paper aims to define creativity in terms of mental disease treatment and to demonstrate the possibilities of its implementation in clinical practice.

2.2. Creativity: Definition, types and models

Creativity can be defined from two perspectives, as a product through analysing creativity from different criteria or as a process through exploring specific stages. Additionally, the types of creativity can be distinguished based on different kinds of intelligence, individual abilities, or the field of creativity. For a more efficient definition, it is also necessary to consider the relationship between creativity and intelligence, which is usually influenced by other individual and contextual factors.

In an attempt to describe creativity among children, story-telling and divergent thinking are usually considered in terms of their originality, fluency, novelty, and flexibility as its basic indicators. According to Sahlin's hypothesis, creativity as a phenomenon consists of both procedural and strategic elements and considers the physical and mental manipulation of equally important ideas. To understand Sahlin's hypothesis more precisely, it is important to discuss his idea of rule-based creativity, according to which creativity is defined as the subsequent replacement and violation of a norm or rule that emphasizes a given activity with a novel unconventional procedure or strategy. The questions regarding when, how, and where children will manifest creativity are conditional on the kind of rule or norm that is violated (Brinck, 2015).

Are children naturally creative or do they have to develop those abilities during their first years of life or during school years? The discussions on creativity among children appear to be polarized. Some theories base their assumptions on the view that creativity is a cultural and social phenomenon that involves art, imagination, and play, the activities that start to develop in preschool years (Willson, 2015; Saracho, 2012; Garaigordobil & Berrueco, 2011). This approach requires an educational system and pedagogic staff to think of creativity first as a cognitive phenomenon, which belongs to the individual and develops during school years, requiring training of logical reasoning and divergent thinking (Russ & Fiorelli, 2010). The next approach is related to the previous one but considers creativity as a gift to talented individuals. Those approaches have been developed in the psychology of personality, and they are not going to be considered in this paper.

Glăveanu (2011) discussed two approaches, considering creativity as a cognitive phenomenon that needs to be developed. One approach considers children as naturally active and interactive while the second approach considers them as more receptive and passive. A combination of both approaches will enhance the understanding of creativity and its development in a more complex way without searching for contradiction between cognition and imagination. However, the most complex approach perceives creativity as a result of interaction between a biological function of the brain, similar to other mental processes, like attention, perception, and memory, and sociocultural factors, all of which benefit scientific theory and practice.

Creativity can be defined as an open-ended process or strategy, applicable when ordinary or algorithmic methods or procedures are not appropriate, and possible options are unclear. The situation is complex and usually characterized by a lack of information and direct instructions, leading to great difficulties in predicting the results. Consequently, a creative attitude or approach is not conventional and does not guarantee a proper solution; instead, it uses guesses and heuristics that are often implicit.

2.3. Creativity is procedural and strategic

Mottweiler and Taylor (2014) explored the relation between creativity and divergent thinking among preschool children. The researchers questioned the use of the narrative method as a criterion of creativity measurement because of its relation to age. Specifically, the younger the children are, the less reliable their story telling will be in terms of creativity, because young children have not gained appropriate verbal proficiency to express their ideas and solutions correctly in a reliable and consistent

way. Furthermore, only some forms of creativity depend on verbal abilities; thus, creativity measurement that relies on a verbal scale only may overlook other creative individuals (Brinck, 2015).

Additionally, some particular types of creativity are difficult to analyse and express in a verbal way, for example, ability-based creativity that relies on bodily experience or knowledge with interactive, situational, and embodied character (Brinck, 2007). Procedural creativity enables the use of contextual information to develop cognitive schemes. On the contrary, strategic creativity is conceptual and context-independent; therefore, it can release the subject from states that hinder free association and fluency. Höffding (2014) observed that individuals with high coping skills, such as chess players, musicians, and athletes, tend to apply a phenomenological approach and combine both absorption and reflection.

Perceptual information and visual and spatial reasoning provoke evaluative judgments directly (Weller, Villejoubert, & Vallée-Tourangeau, 2011). The information that moves the creative processes in one direction, as opposed to another, may not reach conscious awareness. Except for the perception and sensory-motor information, affect plays a central role in procedural creativity. Rietvald (2008) explains the unreflective skilful action of expert artisans in terms of the notion of situated normativity and argues that a particular type of affective behaviour is essential for evaluation without reflection, described as a reaction of appreciation in action.

It is difficult to deny that imaginative play with social role taking depends on the understanding that people can take different perspectives and that their thoughts and experiences may differ (Singer & Singer, 2005). Perhaps both creativity and play depend on some other, more general function that supports flexibility. Moreover, it is not clear whether all forms of pretence involve role-play, and pretence does not always concern living creatures.

Any physical or social play depends also on imagination and on foreseeing alternative, sometimes quite complicated scenarios. For example, software designers, architects, developers of computer games, and fashion designers are just a few examples of professionals who organize the creative process around the manipulation of objects and ideas in space and time, physically or virtually, guided by sensor and motor processes rather than conceptually (Brinck, 2007).

Torrance's Thinking Creatively in Action and Movement (TCAM) test acknowledges that creativity can be processed and expressed through bodily actions and movement. The test is designed to measure fluency, originality, and imagination, and it conceives of creativity as a form of divergent thinking that involves perspective taking and perspective change**.**

2.4. Creativity and play

To understand children's creativity, it is necessary to study their activity involving imagination, originality and novelty in a natural way. Pretend or imaginative play in childhood has a great effect on creativity in adulthood (Russ & Wallace, 2013). Children who are continually involved in everyday creativity, also in situations that do not involve play, such as when finding a faster way to get home or completing other everyday life activities in a different way, are likely to become more creative (Dudek, 2012; Saracho, 2012; Russ & Fiorelli, 2010). Play significantly affects creativity development, because it

involves creating cognitive content (beliefs or attitudes) and encourages exploring plenty of possible scenarios related to both known and completely new events. In other words, any novel experience, way of analysis, method, attitude or idea is essential to creativity.

Some studies have shown a correlation between play and creativity. Longitudinal studies demonstrated that pretend play significantly increases the cognitive flexibility of individuals from a long-term perspective (Play and the Art of Psychotherapy, 2014; Russ, 2004). Russ, Robins, and Christiano (1999) discovered that the quality of imagination and fantasy in early pretend play could predict creativity defined as divergent thinking over time independent of IQ. Another study conducted by Singer and Lythcott (2004) found that encouraging children to pretend games during play time or as a part of the curriculum resulted in enhanced imaginativeness and enhanced creativity indirectly. Additionally, some other studies found that the experience of unstructured play has a positive influence on originality in similar or related activity but less on flexibility or fluency, as measured by the Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking (Beretta & Privette, 1990).

According to the research conducted by Mottweiler and Taylor (2014), elaborated role-play can be perceived as an early creativity indicator, although the correlation between it and performance on creative tasks in preschool years has not been proven. Consequently, Mottweiler and Taylor developed a creativity measurement, which includes 2 scales, storytelling, in which 4-5-year-old children needed to complete a story, and a drawing, in which the children were drawing an imaginary person. The results indicated that the children who were involved in an elaborated role-play had higher creativity scores on both scales.

Glăveanu (2011) stressed that children can develop creativity more successfully through the interaction with adults and experimentation or through any kind of play that involves also cultural norms and symbols. He also emphasized that creativity develops over time and that its expression depends proportionally on the surrounding sociocultural and family environment of the particular child.

It is necessary to remember the complex approach in creativity development, where educational, sociocultural, and individual factors have to be considered, as they have basic influence on possibilities and opportunities to enhance imagination, originality, specific abilities, or flexibility. It has to be considered that creativity is defined in terms of not only originality, novelty, flexibility, and divergent thinking, but also productivity and applicability. That is why the measurement of creativity has to be complex and evaluated from different perspectives.

2.5. Creativity and problem solving

Problem solving as a specific task is strictly related to creativity. Researcher Sahlin (2001) provided plenty of real life examples, which demonstrate the complex character of creativity and indicate that creativity occurs in different spheres or situations. The first example involves Admiral George Rodney who defeated the French in the battle of Les Saintes in 1782 by creating a successful strategy based on his life experience that he formed in childhood while playing as a boy with toy boats in the garden pond.

The next example concerns Theresa Berkley who became famous for the invention of the "Berkley Horse", a triangular frame to which a person can be tied in any desirable angle for flogging. Sahlin (2001) described Berkley's abilities to change her expectations and break the values of her time as typical of creative people. Those examples demonstrate that creativity is purposive and deliberate and that it requires possessing extensive knowledge or skills in the appropriate field. In all three examples, a problem had to be solved or a question had to be answered; specific questions were, "How can the French be defeated? How can I improve the competitiveness of my business by meeting the demands of the buyers?"

Consequently, when analyzing creativity, it is possible to relate it in a wide context to problem solving, which is approximate rather than exact and fixed, because it is unclear how it would be possible to solve the problem and what kind of solution is the most acceptable. This way of conceiving creativity minimizes the risk of making subjective, arbitrary, or premature assumptions about its nature.

Many models of the creative process include four phases: preparation or identifying the problem and gathering information, incubation or association and restructuring of ideas, illumination or experiencing insight while creating a solution, and verification or checking, ensuring the capability of a chosen idea implementation (Aldous, 2007).

According to observation and general logic, divergent thinking needs to be used at the beginning of the creative process to produce as many ideas as possible and then continue with convergent thinking to select the most applicable and beneficial ideas. The creative problem solving approach was developed as a systematic approach to creative thinking, and it includes six stages (6-diamonds model) (Courger, 1995 in Vidal, 2004), where the upper part of each diamond demonstrates the divergent sub-processes and lower convergent ones.

Those steps are problem finding (identifying and choosing one most critical and general problem; generating ideas about possible problematic situations), fact finding (detailing observation during gathering facts and experiences), problem finding (going through the problem and thinking about possibilities), idea finding (searching for various options, alternatives, approaches, methods etc.), solution finding (analysing of ideas from different points of view along with consequences, reactions, implications; selecting ideas and solutions), and acceptance finding (developing a plan for implementation; making solutions more effective, attractive and strong). At each of those steps, some creative sub-processes needed to appear, specifically problem finding: fluency, originality, flexibility, judgment and evaluation; fact finding: analysis and evaluation; problem finding: synthesis; idea finding: fluency, analysis, flexibility, originality and judgment; solution finding: synthesis, elaboration and evaluation; and acceptance finding: synthesis, originality, flexibility, evaluation (Vidal, 2004).

Depending on the problem or situation, its size, or complexity, all of the abovementioned creativity tools can be applied in relation to being proactive, more involved in activity, and simplifying a person's life. Considering life problems or situations as a cause for potential psychological problems, creativity development among the young generation seems to be essential for preventing social or mental diseases from spreading.

2.6. Social context and creativity enhancement

Creativity in the broadest definition means the general ability of a person to produce a new or novel idea or solution. Creativity is among the significant values that compete in the production of modern needs or expectations, which is why it may be considered a main value; a result of the entire structure of other values both at the individual and social level (Hill, 2012). Furthermore, creativity is as important as any other human quality in changing and reforming our world history.

Every type of society has some set of norms or rules regulating people's behaviour. Social conditions are decisive for creativity enhancement; however, they are not always conducive to the development and expression of originality and individuality. Sociological studies have analysed so-called open and closed societies, demonstrating a significant difference between them in terms of creativity. In closed societies, the level of originality and non-stereotypical performance of the community is lower in comparison with open societies. Closed societies are characterized by a strict system of rules, norms, and taboo, where all aspects of life dominate through resistance to change, making the development of originality and creativity impossible.

On the contrary, open societies do not support the absolute authority. They do not function according to a system of norms or traditions; instead, they actively promote freedom and humanism, which is why its individuals can think critically about any indicators, rules, and taboos, and thus make decisions based on their experience, intelligence, personal attitude and values, and the like. As a result, the so-called open society creates a background for change, development, improvement, and knowledge. Accordingly, creativity and innovation become its vital tools. Consequently, the modern and actual need for innovation encourages and improves the independence and creativity of each individual (Danescu, 2009).

The theory of cultural patterns, which considers several important values, such as structure, individualization, and change, suggests that social factors play a significant role in the development of creativity. According to this theory, societies valuing entrepreneurship and innovations are characterized by a higher level of creativity, which tends to increase with increased giftedness. On the other hand, growing and living in a society with a high capacity for change predicts possessing abilities to adjust or adapt, which are strictly related to creativity.

Raising and educating children and making them creative in a social context (in family and at school) enable their creative performance at work later. Therefore, it is extremely important for parents and teachers to be aware of the relation of pedagogic methods and tools with the creative adaptation of children in future life, and the relation between the ways of engagement and children's creativity or success as individuals.

According to earlier theories, creativity was considered mainly as a hereditary gift occurring among minorities, and as a result, the educational system is not obliged to be particularly involved in creativity development. Some studies discovered and proved the complex character of creativity, underlining the social context as a significant predisposition for its development and improvement. Research on task types and teaching style has shown that monotonous and stereotypical activity needs to

be substituted with more advanced tasks requiring exploration, analysis, and production of unusual innovative ideas and solutions of renewal. In this matter, it is important to cultivate innovative and critical thinking, imagination, and fantasy, which has become a major task in the educational system.

This demands change in the mentality of teachers, their style, methods, and tools. The relationship between students and teachers need to be more reluctant, democratic. Next, teaching must be directed towards active interaction and participation in activities during the teaching process. Finally, imagination capabilities and abilities, along with knowledge, reasoning, critical analysis, and other important abilities, should be properly measured.

Educating and raising children needs to be achieved using the problem-solving method, adapting to obstacles, enhancing continuous search, encouraging multiple options, and teaching coordination. As a result, we can talk about individual progress and adaptation to the environment (Danescu, 2009). ..

3. Problem Statement

Creativity has become a subject of theoretical and empirical interest among modern scholars and practitioners, who have directed their attention towards relationships between creativity, on the one hand and cognitive processes, emotions, intelligence, and personality features, on the other. Despite the great interest, some questions remain unsolved. One of the significant questions is related to discrimination between creativity as a cognitive ability and creativity as a personality trait. Additionally it is necessary to analyse the influence of cognitive, emotional, individual and contextual processes on creativity development and improvement.

Although many studies on creativity were analysed in this paper to establish the background for making conclusions, there still remains an actual issue relating to the utilization of creativity in terms of both a child's innate ability as well as a therapeutic tool in a range of social contexts.

This paper aims to explore creativity in terms of abilities which potentially may be used during children's therapeutic treatment.

4. Research Questions

To achieve the main goals of this study, research was undertaken in order to seek the answers for the following research questions:

- How can creativity be classified and utilized in various psychological studies?
- What are the possibilities to apply a creative approach in children's treatment?
- What are the possibilities of creativity use in psychotherapy?
- How is the social factor involved in enhancing creativity?

5. Purpose of the Study

This paper is aimed at exploring the interconnection between creativity and psychological practice in terms of abilities provided by creativity, which potentially may be used during children's treatment. It

is significant to combine a new interpretation of the identified topic with an old one, and (determine?) what defines the range of years of publishing of analysed sources.

6. Research Methods

The method used in this study is a literature review, allowing the survey of scholarly articles and books investigating the area of creativity in psychology. As result, the role of creativity in psychotherapy is investigated considering different perspectives and various interpretations.

The present paper is considered as an integrative review, which reviews, critiques, and synthesizes the representative literature on creativity and psychological treatment in an integrated way such that new frameworks and interpretations on the topic are generated. The body of the literature review includes all basic studies that address related research problems. This paper summarizes primary studies on the role of creativity in modern psychotherapy and provides an overview and synthesis of pertinent explored sources.

7. Findings

A detailed analysis of 38 sources examining creativity by itself, as well as its relation to psychological practice allowed for some important discoveries in the ways treatment can utilize creativity.

Children use art, imagination, and creativity in a natural way in every sphere of their life and especially in communication and symbolic expression. The most significant part of children's therapy is using creativity as a natural background based on which they can develop their abilities as well as the unconventional and original approach of the psychotherapist (Bergese, 2013). With the support of an appropriate social environment and children's creative potential and initiatives, the treatment of mental disease has become much more efficient. In this case, children can be considered as their own agents of change, since they courageously access their own possibilities. Therapist and patient together are able to modify the potential of the basic space in a way that allowed avoiding any risk. Using narration in mental disease treatment makes it possible to include symbolic expression to communicate their story, emotions, problems, and beliefs more poignantly than can be imagined. It is important to be able to construct a therapeutic relationship using art materials and children's inspired creations, which would increase the probability for broader involvement and freedom in an undeniably personal and genuine way (Lawrence, Foster, & Carol, 2015).

For example, one young man began linking magic markers to create a magic wand with which he used to change his therapist into someone else (Ryan, 2011). Such a creative style of treatment involves a patient's new experience of relating symbolic and personal content without risking the patient's primary beliefs.

With the psychotherapist's encouragement to use imagination, skills, objects, and space, the patient is asked to explore, construct, stay involved, reconstruct, and question what gives the experience a range of strong emotions. In this approach, the therapist needs to regulate affect and act as a strong supporter and coordinator. In the next step, after creating the plan for further therapeutic work, the

psychotherapist needs to motivate the patient to use the created objects to work out conflict or problems while coordinating and being involved in the patient's created world, making the patient feel comfortable and safe and providing him/her an opportunity for growth (Play and the Art of Psychotherapy, 2014; Ryan, 2011).

7.1. Child-centred play therapy

Children's play is an effective tool that psychologists can use in their practice (Play and the Art of Psychotherapy, 2014; APT, 2008) as a creative approach, which increases professional skills and provides additional information related to the clinical case. Play helps the child express and address his/her needs and problems with the help of natural materials and tools, which can be extremely useful for children with behavioral and emotional disorders (Willson, 2015). That is why treatment that incorporates play is considered a valuable method of investigating all aspects of a child's life, including social, cultural, and personal. Additionally such therapy guaranties a friendly, safe, and accepting environment that encourages the child to express, and therapist to explore, his/her world, problems, issues, or difficulties in a familiar way and without judgment (Ray, Stulmaker, & Lee, 2013). Therefore, therapy that utilizes child's play allows therapists to gather more information about their patients, cultures, problems, and issues as well as search for potential solutions in relation to personal characteristics, like gender, age, and others (Landreth, 2012; Ray, Lee, Meany-Walen, Carlson, Carnes-Holt, & Ware, 2013).

Child-centered play therapy (CCPT) was developed using Rogerian client-centered therapy under the assumption that children have an innate ability to develop in a positive way in order to discover their own potential in growth-promoting conditions. Clinical psychologists have to provide an appropriate atmosphere in which children can freely express and explore their own thoughts, feelings, experiences, and behaviors and at the same time monitor children's abilities during this process of exploration. The most known techniques that can be applied in CCPT are tracking or narrating the play, reflective listening and setting boundaries (Landreth, 2012).

Following humanistic psychology principles creates an atmosphere of freedom, permissiveness, and deep respect that allows the child to feel free to express his/her own thoughts and feelings completely without taking responsibility for making changes. Consequently, child play is viewed as an efficient way for children to express their own world while the therapist is responsible for following the scenario, recognizing the feelings the child is expressing, and reflecting those feelings back in a manner that the child can internalize (Landreth, 2012).

In summary, CCPT is extremely useful in clinical practice, providing opportunities for children to explore thoughts, feelings, experiences, and cultural identity and develop decision-making, control, and copying skills. This is achieved with non-judgmental acceptance of all aspects of the child's life, which allows him/her to discover, practice, and master potential solutions that can be adapted to life strategies (APT, 2008). Consequently, the therapist needs to possess a wide range of materials because through interaction with them, children can improve their cognitive and behavioural skills and capabilities, such as self-control, coping, reflection, and inner resolution. As a result, children will be more effective in adjusting to and improving more challenging areas of their life, such as learning and social interactions (Ray, Armstrong, Warren, & Balkin, 2005; Davis & Pereira, 2014). Finally, CCPT offers a sufficient

opportunity for children to organize their real life experiences, which are usually abstract for them, without relying on verbal approaches to communication, counselling, and treatment (Rouse1, Armstrong & McLeod, 2015; Ray, Stulmaker, & Lee, 2013). In the broadest conclusion, CCPT creates a therapeutic climate that combines diverse, valuable aspects to help the child understand his/her own issues and develop skills and abilities that may help him/her adapt to everyday life situations and manage life difficulties.

8. Conclusion

Creativity has a significant place among modern subjects of scientific research, as a result of valuable information gathered by scientists and practitioners from different fields, showing the complex character of creativity and its relationship with cognitive processes, emotions, behaviour, intelligence, and personality, among others. Other studies discovered correlations of creativity with task type, context, individual cognitive abilities, behaviour, and other characteristics.

Clinical psychologists and psychotherapists, who on the one hand suggest using patient abilities to think independently, create original and novel ideas, or solve problems in a non-stereotypical way and on the other hand envisage using creativity during the treatment process, share the same great interest in creativity. Creativity in psychotherapy encourages using one's own imagination and skills to express his/her own problems, difficulties, and beliefs in a natural way, followed by an efficient treatment aimed at finding appropriate solutions and facilitating the development of highly important personal, cognitive, and other skills and capabilities.

Child's play was developed based on the framework of humanistic psychology as an efficient tool for the exploration of a child's life, culture, and problems in a natural and accepting atmosphere without judgment or the possibility to rehearse and master some skills or patterns. Active use of creativity in psychotherapy can be applied in the treatment of adults, but it is especially effective with children. Creativity is a significant part of therapy, as it offers wide possibilities for both the therapist and patient to explore unresolved issues more freely

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