Research of creative activity among students of Tyumen’s universities

Investigación de la actividad creativa entre los estudiantes de las universidades de Tyumen

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ABSTRACT:
Modern labor market is placing new demands on the training of future professionals. Mobile market situation dictates more complex tasks to higher education system. Currently, it is not enough for graduates of universities to orient freely in theoretical questions regarding to future professional work and to have a certain range of practical skills. Young persons must be able to adapt quickly to all innovations in art, technology, accelerate exchange of information that characterizes modern production. This, in turn, requires the development of one’s creativity, ability to think creatively and implement creative ideas for life. Preparation of experts corresponds needs of a modern employer requires a reorientation of higher education system from traditional teaching methods, based on teaching finished professional knowledge and skills, also on methods of contributing to the development of creative potential of students. This article presents the results of a survey of students in Tyumen universities, which results accomplished a comparison of motivation indicators, values and self-esteem of creative qualities of students’ personalities with indicators of their

RESUMEN:
El mercado de trabajo moderno está imponiendo nuevas exigencias a la formación de futuros profesionales. La situación del mercado móvil impone tareas más complejas al sistema de educación superior. En la actualidad, no basta con que los graduados de las universidades se orienten libremente en las cuestiones teóricas relativas al trabajo profesional futuro y que tengan un cierto rango de habilidades prácticas. Los jóvenes deben ser capaces de adaptarse rápidamente a todas las innovaciones en el arte, la tecnología, acelerar el intercambio de información que caracteriza a la producción moderna. Esto, a su vez, requiere el desarrollo de la creatividad, la capacidad de pensar creativamente e implementar ideas creativas para la vida. La preparación de los expertos corresponde a las necesidades de un empleador moderno requiere una reorientación del sistema de educación superior de los métodos de enseñanza tradicionales, basados en la enseñanza de conocimientos profesionales terminados y habilidades, también sobre los métodos de contribuir al desarrollo del potencial creativo de los estudiantes. Este artículo presenta los resultados de una encuesta
1. Introduction

The problem of creation and creative realization of a personality is one of the fundamental problems of human sciences. It penetrates a wide range of sciences (sociology, management, philosophy, history, psychology, pedagogy, genetics, physiology, economics and ergonomics), so, based on the specifics of a particular branch of science, the concept of “creativity”, “creative potential”, “creative activity” acquire a different meaning.

Revealing nature and essence of creativity, it is necessary to refer to the mythology that allows a person to organize knowledge and ideas about the world and helps them to navigate. Mythological stories about creation of the world, origin of humans and animals, about life and activities of sacred characters and gods, etc. demonstrates the manifestation of creative human imagination.

Ancient philosophers (such as Heraclitus, Democritus) considered the concepts of “creative gift”, “genius”, “madness” as equal. Genius, or the presence of outstanding creativity of a person, was perceived as Gods-given opportunity to be a bearer of creative power and create wonderful and great things. Creativity was associated with the scope of final, changeable being; contemplation of eternal life was placed above any activity, including creative activity. Creative person was represented like an empty vessel that pervades impulses of a divine being. Then a person suggested inspired ideas, turning them into “everyday results” (Afanasyeva, 1999).

Attempts to solve creative problems have been taken by western philosophers, who determined the identity as autonomous and independent from the influence of society, and therefore searched for sources of creativity itself. Kant put forward the idea of productive capacity of imagination and brought a fundamentally new type of creative activity – activity of knowing and acting subject. Subject of creative process becomes a man himself, thus illusion of a passive, contemplative nature is rejected by the human mind. However, mechanisms of creative act for Kant are unconscious (Kant, 1964).

Philosophy of I. Kant, I.G. Fichte explores the internal laws of intelligence activities, trying to uncover mechanisms of productive imagination. Theory of creativity by I.G. Fichte was presented as a theory of activity, but internal causes of active subject’s activity remains unclear (Fichte, 1916).

Following I.G. Fichte, Schelling creates an idealistic model of history of creative activity of the subject, which creates the world around us. According to Schelling, the creative ability of imagination is the unity of conscious and unconscious activities, so the one who is most gifted works in the state of influx. Creative process is revealed as a unity of productive activities aimed at the creation of new and reproductive activities, aimed at the preservation (Schelling, 1897).

Later, Bergson asks: "... life, like conscious activity, is an invention and is it also creativity?" and responds positively (Bergson, 1988). He sees art as a continuous birth of new, which is the essence of life. Bergson opposes subjective creative process to technical activities of design, combining old and tries to uncover metaphysical essence of creativity.

Discussed approaches to creative problem had one common thing – they don’t give a clear answer to the key question: what is the force that generates the creative process.

By the XX century, this question is raised by not only philosophers, but also psychologists.
According to Freud, this is a driving force of human activity. Accumulated since childhood unconscious behavior control humans and transform into various products of human activity. Creativity is born as a result of tensions between perceived reality and unconscious impulses, so the work of writers and artists is a reflection of unconscious desires, expressed in socially acceptable form. These unconscious desires may relate to power, wealth, fame, honor and love (Freud, 1990). Maslow believed that original source of creative motivation for personal growth and one of the main human needs is the need for realization of their potential in life and self-actualization (Maslow, 1982, Shelling, 1987).

The fifties of the XX century are characterized by a large number of scientific researches in the nature of scientific creativity. During these years the US was actively engaged in identification and selection of potential scientists and development of creative abilities of pupils. Dozens of prominent American psychologists, sociologists and educators were involved in comprehensive theoretical and experimental study of the features of scientific work, its nature and specificity, as well as ways of its recognition.

For example, J. Guilford, considering the nature of scientific work, has developed a three-dimensional model of structure of intelligence, later expanding it till fourth dimension using its sensory sources (Model structure of Guilford intellect: the structure without a foundation, 1997). John Guilford contrasts divergent thinking to convergent thinking, aimed at finding a single answer. Divergent thinking is the creative ability of intelligence, aimed at search in various directions when it is necessary to reject the old solutions and look for something new. Divergent thinking is manifested at that stage when the problem has yet to be determined and disclosed, and when there are no pre-prescribed, definite ways of its solution. It is often identified with creativity, the ability of an individual to create a new concept and build new skills, which is one of the conditions for creative achievements of the person (L.B. Ermolaeva-Tomina, J.A. Ponomarev, etc.).

It should be noted that in the domestic literature it is noticed that there are two diametrically opposed views on the problem of creativity. The essence of the first concept is that creativity is understood in overall development and human activity as a form of matter activity. Man is regarded as a product of “the highest creativity material”. This is the opinion, for example, of J.A. Ponomarev (Ponomarev, 1976).

G.S. Batishchev, P.I. Dyshlevy, L.V. Yatsenko and others follow another concept. They characterize creativity as a complex multilevel process where person acts as a creator. According to this position, creativity appears as a purely human characteristic (Batishchev, 1984; Dyshlevy, Yatsenko, 1989). Creativity is regarded as a true way to live and survive in society (K.N. Wentzel, S.L. Rubinstein), and a condition that helps a person to overcome alienation through acquisition of inner spiritual freedom (N.A. Berdyaev), through communication and dialogue (M.M. Bakhtin).

After the sixties of the XX century, researchers are beginning to rapidly develop a synthetic approach to study creativity in which it is seen as a holistic phenomenon, including intellectual, personal and social factors (D.B. Epiphany, L.B. Ermolaeva-Tomina, N. Leites, A.N. Luk, etc.). D.B. Bogoyavlenskaya understands creativity as “the ability to see something new in things that others do not see” (Bogoyavlenskaya, 1981). In this research D.B. Bogoyavlenskaya offers intellectual activity, as precisely it reflects the cognitive and motivational characteristics of creative personality. Intellectual initiative is qualitative characteristics of intellectual activity and its measure, which is understood as a “continuation of mental activity beyond the situational tasks, doesn’t cause any practical needs, either external or negative subjective evaluation of work” (Bogoyavlenskaya, 1981; Davydova, 1982).

Analyzing different views on essence and nature of work, authors point out three main features which were allocated by scientists: novelty, individual uniqueness, social significance. In addition, it should be noted that psychological approach to the analysis of problems of creativity in such criteria as public importance is not suitable as socially significant and creative do not
always coincide. However, from a sociological position, on the contrary, the social importance is a factor of prime importance.

The nineties of the XX century are characterized by active, personality-oriented and synergetic approach to the process of education and the process of development of creativity, also this processes included work with students within the educational institution.

At this time, the concept of “creativity” use actively in the scientific literature. This concept isn’t specified in dictionaries and encyclopedias, except in the Encyclopedia of vocational education where the creative potential of the individual is defined as “a holistic set of activities and abilities of other personal qualities necessary for active and competent participation in activities which include social experience” (Encyclopedia of vocational education, 1999). Key elements of creativity are also outlined:

1. Worldview determines the direction of the mind, will and emotions to find new approaches and solutions;
2. High level of competence in business;
3. Ability to use heuristic potential of scientific knowledge, taking into account specific circumstances of the problem situation.

Characteristics are becoming popular, such as novelty and social significance of its products become relevant (Gaisina, Mikhaylovskaya, Khairullina, Ustinova, Shakirova, 2015; Ignatova, 2013; Barbakov, Belonozhko, Siteva, 2015). For example, considering the creative personality as a social phenomenon, O.V. Afanasyeva understands by creative potential of a specialist’s possibilities for the creation of socially relevant innovations that significantly improve the efficiency level developed in knowledge and technology. It is possible to objectively evaluate the creative potential of a specialist through "profitability" for society created by the individual innovations (Afanasyeva, 1999).

S.Y. Gatsuk, considering the creative potential of personality at the intersection of a number of disciplines, defines it as “integrative social and natural forces of human strength, providing its subjective need for creative self-realization and self-development” (Gatsuk, 1999).

Working on the problem of creative potential of university students, T.A. Salamatova sees it with three positions: in contingency with creative human potential, when life and personal mastery and individual essence of human is defined as a field of creation; in the context of age-related challenges faced by students when the youth is the time, that imply acquisition of a unique personality; and in terms of originality of pedagogical knowledge when creative potential of student works in touch with the knowledge of a person oneself in different ages, different activities in different human communities based on their life experiences (Salamatova, 1999).

Effective way of implementation and development of creative potential of students, according to T.I. Torgashina, is a scientific research that promotes student’s incorporation in creative activities with the purpose of knowing new facts subjectively or objectively, using the theory of scientific research (Torgashina, 1999).

Under the creative potential of personality T.I. Torgashina understands integrative quality of the person, reflecting the way of realization of its creative potential, its structure being the unity and interdependence of motivational and personal, intellectual and substantive and procedural components of activity. The leading elements of these components are the motives of the research activities, research knowledge, research skills, independence and efficiency of research activities (Torgashina, 1999).

Summarizing the analysis of the definitions of creativity and its derivative conceptual categories (creative potential, creative activity, creative abilities, creative personality, etc.), it may be noted that most researchers treat it as:

1) complex multi-level process, where person acts as the creator, aimed at the transformation of society, of the world and the person as a force acting in society of the subject;
2) a true way to live and survive in society, and also a condition, providing a person to
overcome alienation through communication and dialogue;
3) activities of the individual to establish new material and spiritual values that have social and personal significance;
4) highest form of individual activity aimed at transforming not only social environment, but also inner world of a man, one’s self-development and self-realization.
5) process which main characteristics are innovation, individual uniqueness and social relevance of its products.

Thus, creativity is a complex multi-level process where person acts as the creator, who aimed at the transformation of society, of the world and the person as acting subject of the society; whose main characteristics are innovation, individual uniqueness and social relevance (Frolov, Belonozhko, 2015; Khairullina, 2014; Ustinova, Garabazhy, 2010).

At the same time, social importance of creativity should not be seen from the perspective of importance that particular final product is the result of people’s creative activity, particularly students (as most of the previously analyzed authors did it), and from the perspective of the importance of their participation in creative activities for self-discovery, achievements in educational process, development of creative thinking and generally improvement of organizational and cultural environment of university (Garabazhy, Ustinova, 2013; Belonozhko, Shaforost, 2015).

This approach involves more important, in the opinion of authors, spheres of public life, namely education of a new generation of a qualitatively different level. In particular, it is safe to assume that the creative development of young professionals will give better results of work and will make alternative decisions in difficult professional situations, will be able to manage the process of organizing their stamina activity.

Delineating the concept of study into individual elements, creativity should be regarded as a social category, which includes:
- individual activities aimed at the development of personal creativity and creative abilities (i.e., definition which was given below as creativity);
- individual activities aimed at implementation of creative activity of other members of the social environment (for example, teachers work with students to develop students’ creative potential);
- final product of creativity (for example, highly artistic drawing, sketches, made by students, performance, staged by students within the university theater studio, etc.).

2. Method

Diagnosis of creative activity of students was conducted by questionnaire among students of three universities of Tyumen: Tyumen State University (TSU), Tyumen State Oil and Gas University (TSOGU) and Tyumen State University of Civil Engineering (TSUCE) (Table 1). According to the survey it was executed a comparison of motivation indicators, values and self-esteem of creative qualities of students’ personalities with indicators of their creative activity which has allowed identifying three social types of students with different levels of creative activity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. Indicators of calculating of total sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of students, thousands of people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TSOGU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TSU</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Results of the research

The survey showed that among value orientations of Tyumen students the highest rating had the value of “family welfare” (4.56 points). The second place was taken by value of “interesting and varied work” scoring 4.52 points (Table 2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Values</th>
<th>Average score</th>
<th>Rank by importance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family welfare</td>
<td>4.56</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interesting and various work</td>
<td>4.52</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom in making decisions</td>
<td>4.27</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life without conflicts, in harmony with oneself and people around</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal safety</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Much money</td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To be a leader everywhere</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stability and respect of traditions</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life and work full of risks</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fame and popularity</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not difficult job</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Health is in the third place (score 4.4). The fourth place belongs to freedom in making decisions, which is an indicator of creative potential of a personality. Such values as “love”, “life without conflicts, in harmony with oneself and people around”, “much money” are on average position compared to all other values (respectively the 5th, 6th and 7th places).

It should be noted that the position “creativity” was on the 9th place of the importance. Its average score is 3.52 and only 0.01 points ahead the value “to be a leader everywhere”. However, it is surprising that two essentially similar values “to be a leader everywhere” (score 3.51) and “creativity” (score 3.52) take ninth and tenth place respectively, being 0.01 point ahead each other.
3.51) and “fame and popularity” (score 3.07) have a 2-position gap. There has been some contradiction in assessment of students, as it is obvious that a focus on leadership in any activities (educational, professional, etc.) can guide to significant results and, consequently, to the possibility to be famous. This fact shows that students don’t feel interconnection between values.

Among students, only 26.5% take part in cultural events organized by universities, most do not do it regularly. Approximately the same number of students (26%) takes part in periodic scientific activity of the university (participation in training sessions, conferences, research projects). Currently only 13.2% of respondents regularly attend universities clubs, optional classes on scientific and artistic creativity of students as well as sports. It should be noted that creative activity of students in universities is slightly higher as 17.6% of students regularly visit clubs. Obtained data comes the conclusion of extremely low creative activity of students in Tyumen universities (Table 3).

Table 3. Indicators of creative activity of students in universities in Tyumen

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>The distribution of students' answers among universities, %</th>
<th>Total, %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>TSOGU</td>
<td>TSU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Take part in cultural activities of university</td>
<td>Regularly</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Periodically</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Don’t participate</td>
<td>22.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Take part in a student independent activity</td>
<td>Regularly</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Periodically</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Don’t participate</td>
<td>26.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Take part in scientific research work of university</td>
<td>Regularly</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Periodically</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Don’t participate</td>
<td>24.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Regularly attend clubs, sections, workshops, electives within university</td>
<td>Regularly</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Periodically</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Don’t participate</td>
<td>18.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Regularly attend clubs, sections, workshops, electives outside university</td>
<td>Regularly</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Periodically</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TSOGU takes a leading position in manifestation of creative activity of students. The second and third places belong to TSU and TSUCE. According to the authors, this is due to a more developed organizational culture of the university.

4. Discussion

Comparison of the results of a poll allowed allocating three social types of students with different levels of creative activity:

- students with high level of creative activity (20.5% of respondents);
- students with average level of creative activity (24.4% of respondents);
- students with low level of creative activity (55.1% of respondents).

The first group includes students regularly and long engaged in at least one form of creative activity (without separation into research, art and others).

Studies of professional motivation in this group of students led to the conclusion that realization of creative potential of these motives contributes to the choice of their future professional activity (in descending order of popularity among this group of students):

- interest to profession (average score is 4.68 in the group, total sample 4.47);
- desire to improve themselves (average score is 4.42, total sample 4.33);
- creative content of profession (average score is 4.14, total sample 3.45).

Analysis of the motives of choice of profession among students, who carry an active creative life at the university, allows selecting two leading motives: higher professional (academic) interest and desire for self-realization.

Among the valuable orientations of students of this group dominates:

- striving for superiority in all areas;
- family well-being;
- desire to have an interesting and diverse job.

The desire of students for creativity takes only 7th place (in the total group of respondents takes 8th place) in the ranking, reflecting pragmatic approach of modern students for creative activity as not creativity for creativity, but creativity as a way of realization of career and personal development plans.

Analyzing compliance of self-assessment of students to the desired level of a creative person's identity, it can be concluded that this group of students shows high self-esteem.

In the second group (students with an average level of creative activity (24.4%)) authors referred students engaged in creative work irregularly, or participating in one-time, non-recurrent events (festivals, contests, competitions, intellectual games, etc.).

Comparing the responses of this group of students, which characterize the degree of professional motivation, authors identified following reasons for students’ activities (in descending order):

- interest to the profession (average score is 4.53 in the group, total sample 4.47);
- desire to get higher education (average score is 4.23 in the group, total sample 3.88);
- desire to improve themselves (4.21, total sample 4.33).

Comparing detected ranking motives with motives of the previous group of students shows that students are engaged in creative work periodically, not systematically, they don’t care about self-improvement and creative work. They are focused on the prestige of education rather than on career.
Analysis of value orientations inside the group confirms this conclusion and ratings (the first three places in descending order) are distributed as follows:
- interesting job (average score is 4.59, total sample 4.52);
- health (average score is 4.52, total sample 4.40);
- family well-being (average score is 4.42, total sample 4.56).

As can be seen from the data, this group of respondents puts in the first place their careers, they also prefer their work to be interesting but not leadership, fame and prestige.

Describing the third group, which includes students who don’t participate in creative life of university (55.1%), it is possible to note the following things.

Significant disproportions in academic performance of this student group was not revealed.

Evaluation of motives for choosing the profession showed that they don’t differ much from the average sample rates. Ranking of the three most popular motives is shown below:
- interest to the profession (average score is 4.42 total sample 4.47);
- having ability to profession (average score is 4.36, total sample 4.23);
- desire to realize themselves as a person (average score is 4.26, total sample 4.20).

At the same time, desire and target of this group is more focused on family well-being, health and welfare in the family, compared to the average sample. This clearly describes three most popular responses (distributed by level of decreasing popularity):

- family well-being (average in group 4.68 compared to total sample 4.56);
- health (4.58 compared to total sample 4.40);
- interesting job (4.32 compared to total sample 4.52).

It was found that in this group relatively high places were taken by such value orientations as stable job (the 8th place instead of the 13th in overall ranking), personal safety (4th place instead of the 6th in overall ranking), stability and respect for traditions (7th place instead of the 10th in overall ranking).

Thus, a group of students, characterized by their low creativity, burdened with personal, family problems, reducing creative activity of students.

5. Conclusion

It should be noted that the results of the study revealed generally low level of creative activity of students. Only one out of five students is regularly engaged in various types of creative activity (including scientific research work, extracurricular activities outside the university and other types of creative activities). More than half of students are not engaged in creative activities either inside universities or outside them which makes necessary to assess organizational culture of universities and search directions of development of creativity of students.

Actions, directed to activate students' creativity, can be grouped into the following three parts: measures to improve moral and psychological climate as among teachers’, as well among students’ groups; measures to improve qualifications of teaching staff; measures to implement unified strategy of the university, to ensure the development of creativity and creative activity of students.

References


