

CREATIVITY BLOCKING FACTORS IN PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

FACTORI DE BLOCAJ AI CREATIVITĂȚII LA PERSOANELE CU DIZABILITĂȚI

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Abstract. In this article, the author presents some of the results of an experimental research, which reflects the hierarchy of psychological barriers faced by people with special needs in creativity development. Fear of any deviation from the norm (convention, tradition) or social conformism leads to disappearance of originality, being one of the reasons of creativity development failure.

Rezumat. În articolul dat, autoarea prezintă unele rezultate ale cercetării experimentale, care reflectă ierarhia barierelor psihosociale cu care se confruntă persoanele cu dezabilități în direcția cultivării creativității. Teama față de orice deviere de la normă (convenție, tradiție) sau conformismul social are ca efect dispariția originalității, fiind una din pricinile eșuării dezvoltării creativității.

Keywords: people with special needs, emotional intelligence, creative performances, psychological and social barriers.

Cuvinte-cheie: persoane cu dezabilități, bariere psihosociale, inteligență emoțională, performanțe creative.

The majority of the developed states view creativity development as an important component in educational policies. With the aim of finding effective solutions for professional and social promotion, specialized committees of the *Council of Europe* (2000-2008) adopted a number of resolutions regarding education as a whole life process, which implies the development of some key competences for stimulating creativity and innovation exposure in all people, including those with special needs.

Students' creativity development, nowadays, is a major issue, which has gone beyond school framework, becoming an objective of primary importance in all the dimensions and levels. Moreover, this subject is a matter of great concern for psychologists, educators and teaching staff, being determined by modern peculiarities and problems that appear in all the fields, causing difficulties to the humanity.

In this context, present day students, tomorrow's active generation, should be prepared to face all the challenges and solve all the problems affecting well-being, security and progress of mankind.

The result of recent researches on creativity are quite encouraging for those who do not believe themselves endowed with this ability, as, apart from being an innate quality, it can be cultivated and exercised. Besides, some researchers in the field of psychology consider that creativity may be transformed into a habit [4, 7].

How can it be stimulated, what can hinder it, and what do the psychological studies show about creativity development?

According to the „*Bloom's taxonomy of learning*”, creativity appears at the level of a synthesis where you realize and have a command of things you learn, and are able to come up with new ideas. In order to obtain a competence and to develop it, it is necessary

to practice. “Perfect practice makes perfect”. The more you exercise the better you become [1].

Researches, carried out by the psychologist, *Robert Epstein*, have demonstrated that implementation of certain activities can lead to the appearance of creative ideas:

- Put down ideas which come to your mind during the day and come back to them when you are ready to develop them.
- Set yourself to solve the problems that seem to be irresolvable.
- Enlarge your scope with information from various areas, different from your professional or hobby interests. Reading and participating in courses/events that involve a diversity of topics, you will stimulate the connection between new information and that already memorized.
- Regular contacts with interesting people and extraordinary objects can also contribute to development of original ideas.

In this respect, *Epstein* published a study where he demonstrated that 74 employees of a company, who participated in the seminars that were carried out by him for exercising those activities, increased their ability to generate solutions and innovative ideas by 55 % [3].

Mihaela Roco, in her book titled “*Creativity and Emotional Intelligence*”, shows that the main motif of creativity is every person’s tendency to develop and realize his top potential. At the same time, she emphasizes that by means of education and exercise some components of the emotional intelligence, viewed as personal achievements, lead to an increase in creativity, i.e. to a higher performance. The latter, in its turn, should promote a new way of creative education with the accent on studies through research – discovery, personal efforts – independent or guided [5].

E. Raudsepp underlines that the absence of receptivity and creative performance is not as much caused by the lack of creative potential as by cognitive and emotional barriers, as well as those of inter-human relations and communication. He considers that factors that influence the creativity formation should be approached in a universal, homogeneous, interactive and dynamic way [6].

The study carried out by us among adolescents and adults with special needs signaled delineation of specific psycho-emotional and behavioral characteristics, singling out psychological barriers that hinder creativity development and generate a number of negative consequences in a personality formation.

In this regard, we applied the questionnaire “*Barriers Elimination*” by *E. Raudsepp* (in *Roco, M.*, 2004), aimed at determining existing types of psychological barriers in adolescents and adults with special needs and offering each participant his type of self-appreciation evolution, which would open psychological barriers that prevent

manifestation of creativity. The questionnaire contains different answer options. The interviewees chose those answers that characterized them in the best way.

In order to draw a clear conclusion on the results of the above-mentioned questioning, we will make a profound analysis by means of which it will be possible to systemize and rank the identified psychological barriers.

The first rendering of the answers given by members of the group of adolescents with *intellectual deficiency* (10) can be presented as follows: reduced capacity of communication – 10 people (33,3%), slowed thinking – 9 (30,0%), fear of criticism – 8 (26,6%), lack of confidence in creative capacity – 7 (23,,3%), fear of failure – 6 (20,0%), incapacity to use all the abilities– 6 (20,0%), lack of curiosity – 5 (16,6%), lack of affection – 5 (16,6%), timidity – 4 (13,3%), laziness– 4 (13,3%), parents’ absence – 4 (13,3%), discouragement – 3 (10,0%), lack of support – 3 (10,0%).

In the group of participants with *hearing impairment* (20) the following aspects were identified: lack of confidence in creative capacity – 18 (90,0%), timidity – 16 (80,0%), reduced capacity of communication – 15 (75,0%), lack of motivation – 15 (75,0%), slowed thinking - 14 (70,0%), complex of inferiority - 13 (65,0%), laziness – 11 (55,0%), indifference – 10 (50,0%), discouragement – 10 (50,0%), fear of criticism – 9 (45,0%), fear of failure – 8 (40,0%), fear of being mocked – 8 (40,0%), lack of curiosity – 6 (30,0%), lack of interest and desire of creation – 5 (25,0%).

In the framework of the results shown by the whole group of adolescents, it is possible to rank the following barriers in the order of importance: lack of confidence in creative capacity – 25 (83,3%), lack of support– 23 (76,6%), slowed thinking – 23 (76,6%), timidity – 20 (66,6%), fear of criticism –17 (56,6%), laziness – 15 (50,0%), fear of failure – 14 (46,6%), discouragement – 13 (43,3%), lack of curiosity – 11 (36,6%). (Fig. 1).

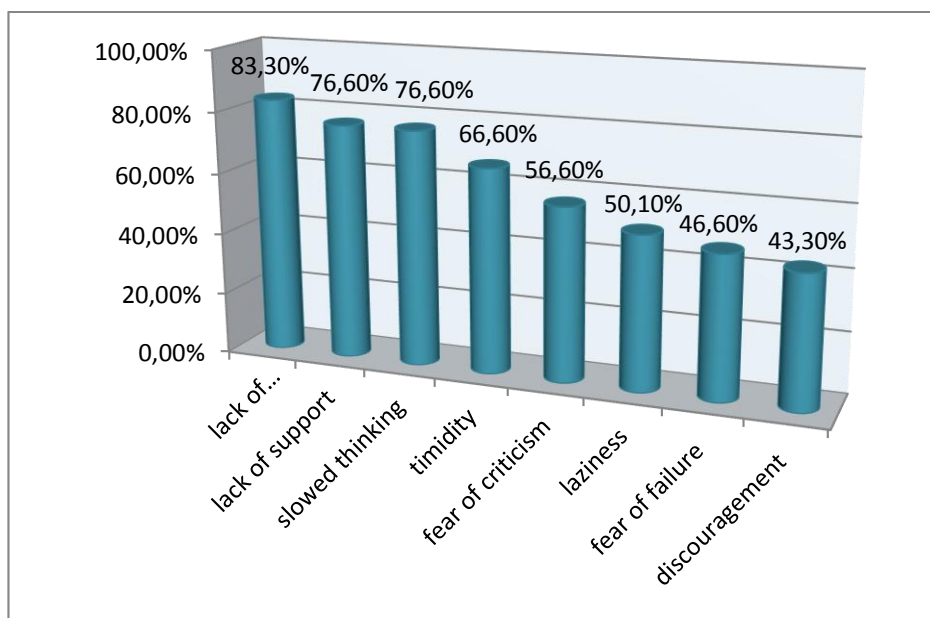


Figure 1.Types of Psychological Barriers Faced by Adolescents

Adult respondents' answers showed the following obstacles: complex of inferiority – 9 (90,0%), social inequality – 8 (80,0%), lack of professional knowledge – 8 (80,0%), reduced communication capacity – 7 (70,0%), lack of interest and desire of creation – 5 (50,0%), slowed thinking – 5 (50,0%), fear of being mocked – 5 (50,0%), lack of confidence in creative capacity – 4 (40,0%), fear of criticism – 4 (40,0%), lack of propensity to actual problems – 3 (30,0%). (Fig.2).

According to the average results showed by both groups of people with special needs, the most important barriers for the adult participants were the following: *social inequality, complex of inferiority, lack of professional knowledge, reduced communication capacity*; whereas for the adolescent participants the range of barriers was as follows: *lack of confidence, timidity, parents' absence, lack of parental affection, slowed thinking*.

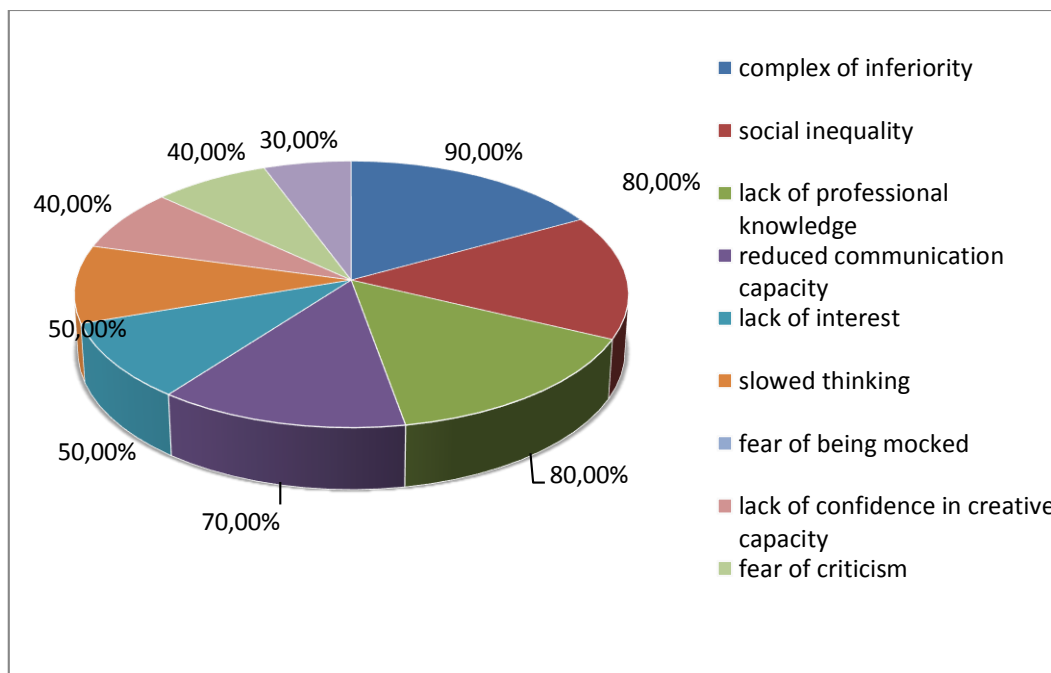


Figure 2. Types of Psychological Barriers Faced by Adults

Conclusion

Defining psychological barriers faced by adolescents and adults with special needs, as well as the factors that contribute to personal development, we can state the following: creative performances of those people are impossible without: formation and development of intellectual and non-intellectual factors of creativity; development of observation spirit up to the most complex thinking capacities and creative imagination; development of particular internal resources, which imply, first of all, imagination, second of all, motivation, and, third of all, will and perseverance.

Being a complex attitudinal phenomenon, creativity in people with special needs can be defined by: differentiated educability, depending on the nature of identified psycho-social barriers; gradual development of creative thinking; close cooperation with

people with special needs; development of practical and artistic/creative activities aimed at cultivation of a permanent desire to study.

Knowing phenomena and barriers which hinder the mechanism of creativity and human performance in people with special needs, in the light of the “education as a whole life process” concept, let us single out a number of ideas such as:

- “Any phenomenon, that interferes with or hinders someone’s abilities in creative approach to problems solution can be a psychological barrier”, a blockage;
- Any acquirement of psycho-cognitive, affective, motivational processes as well as particular temper and character traits, under some conditions, may become obstacles to creativity.

This research is based on a strong belief that people with special needs have resources for development of their own creativity as a complex personal phenomenon, generating something new, which, in favorable conditions, can manifest itself as being more constructive and substantial.

At the same time, on the other hand, this investigation offers specialists in the field an adequate and systemic understanding of the resources and psycho-social barriers, possibilities of creativity manifestation for people with special needs, giving them the ways of accessibility in a creative manner. According to *Teplov B., Rubinstein S.*, and other famous psychologists, the most important condition for creativity development and primary goal of any special education is the formation of a creative personality.

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