



SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT AND CREATIVITY DEVELOPMENT: A REVIEW OF LITERATURE

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Abstract

School is one of the institutions for students' creativity development. School only needs an extra effort that will enable it to build a conscious and creative generation that will keep pace with the rapid change and recent development in this era of globalization, economic transformation and information communication technology age as new discoveries emerge every day, hence, the role of school is needed in guiding students toward creativity to take advantage of modern development. Research has shown that creativity leads to intellectual development and brain growth, when creativity is nurtured well by concerned institutions. School and other social institutions play an active and influential role in developing students' creativity through their available resources and their specific planned goals. A creative school environment is one that exposes learners psychologically and socially to facilitate creativity in which learners are motivated to discover things by themselves, it promotes all necessary ways to creativity to help students develop the creative personality traits. Based on this, the purpose of this current paper is to identify the role of the school in creating an environment that will develop creativity among students through the review of literature.

Key Words: Environment, Development, Creativity.

INTRODUCTION

There is an interaction between individual person's behavior and his/her environment according to his/her genetic characteristics. This interaction is one's personality trait which distinguishes one from his/her peers. Similarly, creativity originally stems from genetic factors, but it cannot be successfully achieved and developed save via the creation of the suitable environment socially, educationally and psychologically which will help develop individual creativity positively to serve one's environment and society.

Creativity is a psychological construct which is partly of genetics that determines the growth and partly of environment which opens the human capability and allows it to flourish, therefore, there is a room for the school environment to improve and increase. Studies have shown the important roles played by the environmental factors in the development of creative ability (Domino, 1997; Irons, 1967; Smith, 1970; Richardson, 1988). Individual's environment plays a significant role in the development of one's creativity particularly if the environment is active. Similarly, school is considered as one of the most important environmental factors which helps develop creativity comprehensively and holistically. The school climate has the opportunity to develop creativity in learners due to the fact that, it is being supported socially, physically and cognitively which can positively distinguish creative personality. School is one of the institutions for students' creativity development. School only needs an extra effort that will enable it to build a conscious and creative generation that will keep pace with the rapid change and recent development in this era of globalization, economic transformation and information communication technology age as new discoveries emerge everyday, hence, the role of school is needed in guiding students toward creativity to take advantage of modern development. Research has shown that creativity leads to intellectual development and brain growth, when creativity is nurtured well by concerned institutions. School and other social institutions play an active and influential role in developing students' creativity through their available resources and their specific planned goals. A creative school environment is one that exposes learners psychologically and socially to facilitate creativity in which learners are motivated to discover things by themselves, it promotes all necessary ways to creativity to help students develop the creative personality traits. Based on this, the purpose of this

current paper is to identify the role of the school in creating an environment that will develop creativity among students through the review of literature.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Creative Thinking

Thinking is a series of mental activities carried out by brain when it is reinforced by one of the five senses. In a broad sense, thinking is a search for meaning in a given situation or experience. It starts when we know the tasks to be done precisely. Thinking is a form of most complex human behavior and it is one of the most important characteristics that distinguish human beings from other creatures. Thinking is an internal activity, it differs in terms of its quality and nature, it might be simply straightforward, or complex, therefore, individuals differ among themselves in ways of thinking and cognitive process. Thinking is hypothetical; it refers to the internal cognitive activity directed towards problem solving which can only be inferred from the thinking results. However, creativity is to do or make something in a new manner not previously known.

According to Torrance (1965), creative thinking is the process by which individual becomes sensitive to the problems, understands the gaps and deficiencies in the information then searches for solutions, poses the questions and hypotheses, tests and re-tests the validity of the assumptions for necessary modification and then presents the results that have been reached.

Creativity is also defined as the phenomenon of cognitive development everyone uses to treat problems in a unique unfamiliar way by which a person explains the precedent solutions in a new way. Creativity is not only mental activity it is controlled by many environmental factors. Creativity can be developed and taught, it depends according to its developmental conditions and it is not limited to a specific number of people.

Creative thinking is one of the different thinking, it is characterized as achieving something familiar in an unfamiliar way or transforming something familiar into something unfamiliar by searching for solutions in a way that is not previously known. It is characterized by inclusiveness and complexity because it involves overlapping cognitive and emotional elements which constitute a unique state of mind.

Based on the abovementioned, it can be said that creative thinking is a process resulting solutions, or ideas from one's cognitive framework either by the information a person is thinking of, or information prevailing in the environment for the emergence of new ideas.

Most researchers in the field of creative thinking believe that this type of thinking is a set of elements and skills as follows:

- 1 - Skill Fluency: This is the ability to produce ideas, images and expression in an appropriate unit of time as much as possible.
- 2 - Skill Flexibility: the ability to generate a variety of ideas is not the kind of ideas usually expected, and directing the course of thinking with change of reinforcement, or the requirements of the attitude.
- 3 - Skill Originality: the ability to produce ideas, or structures, or new distinct unique images, each new and appropriate method in fact produces authentic and creative behavior, the idea is new if it does not already exist. The originality can be measured by an individual's ability to produce ideas previously unfamiliar.

Whenever, the degree of an idea decreases, the degree of its originality increases. Creativity is of the necessities of life and for the building of one's future, it is a motivator which seeks to stimulate the mind, it is characterized by a number of components as follows:

- 1 - Creativity requires mental abilities to recognize the problems and the flexibility of how to focus towards the goal.
- 2 – Creativity is a process with multiple stages resulting in new thought.
- 3 –Creativity is not necessarily to be materially significant, it may be in the form of an idea or a vision or product.
- 4 - Creativity is not an individual phenomenon; it can be practiced at the level of the individual, the community and the organization.

- 5 - Everyone has the creative ability embedded in his/her behavior and everyone has specific way of thinking.
- 6 - Creativity is a general human behavior and not specific to a particular group of people but it is a potential construct shared by all people in a varying degree.
- 7 – Creativity can be managed, improved and developed.

Innovative school environment

Innovative school can be defined as the school that which is able to improve and support its student to develop creativity in order to face the challenges of all time. Innovative environment that nurtures an innovative thinking is the one that gives both social and psychological freedom and security to the students, it punishment free, it develops positive relationships between students and teachers and pays special attention to extra-curricular activities that can lead to innovation by allowing students to use their abilities and allow freedom of error, expression of ideas, experiences, development of imagination, and promotes curiosity among the learners (Angeloska, 1996).

Furthermore, innovative school environment is the one that encourages students to diversify paths of their thinking, create a climate that will help them entertain as many ideas as possible at the same time even if the ideas generated are contradictory in nature in the process of developing creative thinking in order to create tolerance and acceptance among the students, encourage diverse ideas, stimulate students' minds with the importance of creative thinking and make them familiar with it (Israel, 1995). Cromwell (1993) is of the view that, the open system is the most important features of the innovative school environment which contains flexibility and repletes of process of discovery, this system is not restricted by laws to help develop self-regulation skills in order to create links. Qualitative research findings show that innovative school environment develops students' capacities to become creative, open to new discoveries, make them imaginative, courageous to see from different perspective while the lack of creativity leads to students' inability to cope with challenges. According to Shaughaessy (1991) innovative school environment is to help students ask strange questions and create positive aspects in all the questions and ideas presented and encourage and reward students' creativity and to regularly urge students continuously to provide, give their creative solutions, and give reward to their creativity in order to improve their innovative behaviors.

Literature shows that there are two primary motivation factors for innovative work namely quality and originality (Maadi, 1965) and it is observed that environments are the underlying factors that contribute to people's creativity and its development (Pluckier et al., 1994). Innovation does not inherently exist, it is rather located on the varying degrees in which environment plays a significant role in its development. Innovation is a behavior that can be learnt which makes school environments more than other factors in developing this kind of thinking on the basis that school environments do adopt programs that will develop innovative thinking in addition to the development of the students' creative abilities (Maker, 1982).

The school environments exercises that develop creativity are to educate the school teamwork, and make the students familiar with the importance of creativity, creative activities, discover anti-creativity factors, enhance their productive personality, link education with life in the content, methods, lead thinking to a concrete result, transform traditional teaching to participatory teaching, give special attention to problem solving, provide a minimum level of challenge that does not contradict with the Islamic belief and the modern requirements, provide the constructive criticism, provide a deep understanding of the subject matters and ability of the school to develop the fundamental elements in reality.

There are a number of practices that improve the school environment to achieve the development of innovation among the students namely; group discussions in the classroom, self-learning in the educational process, specific scientific laboratories, teacher should be allowed to be free in the classroom, encouraging the students to ask questions and providing them the opportunity to exercise the constructive criticism, rewarding responses and new products that add to the content of courses, give attention to essay questions, or at least achieve a balance between the objective and essay questions.

From the above said, for the development of creativity and excellence at the school level there should be the following components:



1 - Student and innovative behavior: By studying student's creativity factors, it can be inferred that, there is a relationship between creativity and hereditary and the relationship between creativity and intelligence which determine student's development of attributes and skills capable of innovation.

2 – Innovative teacher: There is no doubt that the teacher is one of the most important elements of the educational process. A teacher should make sure that information and ideas imparted to students are true and original so that they can think better than the teacher him/herself, so teacher needs to be provided new information and acquire new skills in order to be able to perform teaching process, teachers are expected to be higher achievers and innovators.

3 –Programs and Curriculum: programs and curriculum are essential in developing student's creativity and deepening students' awareness in line with modern time we live in.

4 - School management: School administration should be effective and able to deal with the new knowledge globally and locally based on enlightened thinking and democratic method and giving others opportunity and freedom to encourage innovation and reward innovation.

5 – School building: the school rich in terms of learning, modern facilities, laboratories, information communication technology, workshops, theaters rooms, sports is the school that is able to provide a positive environment creatively to prepare students an excellent level of performance.

Factors leading to the development of creative school environment most notably are:

- School climate that accepts new ideas.
- Giving every student opportunity to prove himself/herself.
- Encouraging and motivating student to find an excellent climate for creativity.
- Giving students opportunity of trial and error in order to see recurrence of new ideas.
- Strengthening delegation of authority among the students.
- Accepting collective thinking among students.
- Committing students to scientific thinking methodology.
- Familiarizing students to imagination and the ability to observe.

Some of the suggested obstacles that might face the innovative school:

1 - Mental obstacles such as observing issues superficially with an absence of freedom of thought and unthoughtful judgment.

2 - Internal constraints related to the family and the school such as lack of positive guidance from the family and the absence of dialogue, misunderstanding, lack of paying attention to the words of the student, lack of encouragement and motivation by the teacher.

3 – External constraints such as opposing new ideas, criticizing people specifically, lack of reward and motivations for the students who perform distinctly and division of labor in a routine manner.

4 - Psychological barriers such as loss of self-esteem, isolation and lack of openness to others and feeling helpless about changing of reality.

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