Formulating Indicators of Creativity Among Gifted Learners in the Philippine Context

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Abstract

This study aimed to explore indicators that define creativity in the Philippine context. A qualitative textual study was employed which sought the data from varied participants chosen for their ethnic identity, cultural background, type of school, and academic level. The transcribed in-depth interviews were then thoroughly examined through textual analysis. Findings revealed that Filipino creative children (1) process creativity through their cognitive strengths, problem-solving and divergent skills, originality, elaboration, rich imagination and curiosity, (2) are naturally creative, highly motivated, passionate, diligent, hardworking, persistent, perfectionist, friendly, shy, generous, sympathetic, good leaders, respectful, obedient, oversensitive, flexible, resourceful, inventive, risk-takers, open-minded, humble, patient and dedicated to high standards of excellence; (3) create products that are novel, original, purposeful, employ recycling, 4) are influenced by nature, home, school, media, practice and competitions. This study concluded that Filipino creativity is an ability that is natural and God-given, greatly rooted to Filipino family traditions and cultural values. Filipino creative children are highly intellectual who excel in their academic endeavors. socio-civic and art competitions, expressive through their music, art, movement and literary outputs. It is recommended (1) to consider the creativity indicators defined in this study to identify learners' creative potentials and behaviour; (2) to consider the students' family, and specific ethnic culture in designing programs/activities for creative development; (3) for families and schools to support the creative children's needs; (4) for future research to explore studies on creativity from other regions; and (5) to consider adopting the creativity indicators in the development of a creativity tool.

Keywords: Intelligence, Gifted Education, Elementary, Creativity, Filipinos



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Introduction

Twenty-first century education demands the importance of developing creativity in this current climate on globalized, diverse, high technology and fast-paced society. With the unprecedented challenges we currently face in education due to the pandemic, we especially need our children to be taught with creativity for them to gain success in this rapidly changing times (Henriksen, Mishra, & Fisser, 2016). According to the report of *A Policy Brief on the Philippine Creative Industries* (2018), creativity is the third most important skill that companies will want from employees and recruits by 2020 from being the 10th important skill in 2015 (Mercado & Tolentino, 2018).

Perceptions on creativity vary from person to person and it is viewed through different theoretical assumptions. Many experts and reseach on creativity agree that creativity is a complex concept with more than 100 definitions, as reviewed by Treffinger (1996), and is difficult to define and measure due to its multidimensional nature (Said-Metawaly, Noortgate, & Kyndt, 2017). The need to develop numerous instruments assessing creativity was given attention due to the growing body of creativity research, especially internationally, since the late 1990s vet the big problem is, there is still no single definition of creativity that is agreed by everyone and has a universal acceptance (Resnick, 2017). In addition, according to Baer & McKool (2009) and Kaufman et al. (2007), these body of instruments developed for measuring creativity have limitations due to lacking adequate psychometric properties and it lacks in looking into the trivial aspects of creativity (Said-Metawaly, Noortgate, & Kyndt, 2017). Moreover, it is still challenged with educational systems because according to Molinero et. al. (2016), the common school admissions standards for children who are gifted are still typically based on intelligence and academic aptitude (Santrock, 2018), overlooking non-cognitive potential areas such as creativity, and many researchers still following the traditional cretivity research (Sloane, Endo, & Della-Piana, 2019).

In the global context, the Marland Report in 1972 is often described and is the widely accepted definition in the field of gifted education. Creativity has been emphasized in this report as one of the six areas of the potential ability of gifted and talented children (Jolly & Robins, 2016). The theory of Renzulli's "Three-Ring Model" on giftedness recognized the importance of creativity as a component of the three-part model that leads to creative-productive giftedness. As cited by Craft (2002), fostering creativity in education is important as it develops the creative skills, which is seen to be a good thing particularly at a social and economic level. This is evident in England where creativity is now named within the school curriculum and in the curriculum for 3-5 year-old children (Craft, 2010). Roger (1970) supported this and highlighted that creativity produces "freely creative and original thinkers" rather than "conformists" and "stereotypes" (Shaheen, 2010). Though this novel movement and advocacy on the emphasis of creativity in education is gaining popularity, however, many schools still adopt educational practices that repress this attribute.

In the Philippines, there is limited research on creativity. It has been ranked 73rd (out of 126 countries) in the acquisition and application of higher-valued creative skills as reported in the 2018 Global Innovation Index report from the WIPO (World Economic Property Organization) in spite of the innate creativity of Filipinos. This gap between the innate ability of being *pagkamalikhain* and the competence in high value creative skills which is evident on innovative and creative products and services could be addressed through quantity and quality of creative education programs (Mercado & Tolentino, 2018). Gifted education is still a growing field in developing countries like the Philippines. Davis, Rimm, and Siegle (2011)

reviewed Pawilen's (2014) identification on the general attributes of Filipino gifted individuals and classified them into three: (1) high intellectual ability, (2) exceptional talents, and (3) outstanding leadership skills. The concept of creativity is more of a link only as talents in music and arts develop (Pawilen & Manuel, 2018). The Department of Education and some private schools for the gifted have a few implemented programs, which promote creativity yet the context of creativity was not thoroughly defined. Although there is a growth of interest in measuring creativity and it gave rise to the development of creativity instruments, with different approaches to represent the main categories of creativity definitions because a lot of researchers admit that measuring it is a big challenge due to the fact that there was no consensus on the definition of creativity. These main categories are process; product, person and press (Said-Metawaly, Noortgate, & Kyndt, 2017). In this literature review, 18 instruments were found yet none of these are Filipino localized creativity instruments or tools. The Philippines' education system has adapted to the K-12 program since it was enacted into law as RA 10533 in 2013 and the Senior High School Curriculum was completed in 2015 (Estacio, 2015). The SHS Curriculum includes the Arts and Designs track alongside with the Academic, Sports and Technical-Vocational Livelihood Tracks (Department of Education). Some schools in the Philippines also regard the importance of creativity in the curriculum as early as primary education such as the Philippine High School for the Arts (PHSA) and the Central Visayan Institute Foundation (Pawilen & Manuel, 2018).

Theories on Creativity

This study is anchored on three related developmentalist theories on creativity. First is David Henry Feldman's development of creativity giftedness as cited by Lin (2011). This theory comprises different dimensions that interact to establish its development and realization. It focused on factors that support the development of creativity and these include cognitive processes, social/emotional processes, family aspects (i.e., birth order and gender within the family), education and preparation (informal and formal), characteristics of the domain and field, social/cultural contextual aspects, historical forces, events and trends (Kaufman J. C., Kaufman, Beghetto, Burgess, & Persson, 2009).

Joseph Renzulli's Three-Ring Model is also associated to this study because it involves the creative-productive giftedness as one of the 3 factors that develop gifted behavior. According to this theory, one of the qualities a gifted child must have is creative-productive (Smiley, Richards, & Taylor, 2019).

Another contemporary theory that is linked to this research is Robert Gagné's Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent (DMGT), which identifies creativity as one of the key gifted aptitudes and differentiates it from talent (or achievement). This model emphasizes the developmental process of talent through the transformation of the following abilities: Natural Abilities (intellectual abilities (reasoning, memory, metacognition, etc.); Creative abilities such as imagination, originality, fluency, and so on); Socio Affective abilities like perceptiveness, communication, empathy; and sensorimotor abilities such as strength, endurance, coordination (Kaufman J. C., Kaufman, Beghetto, Burgess, & Persson, 2009).

Conceptual Framework

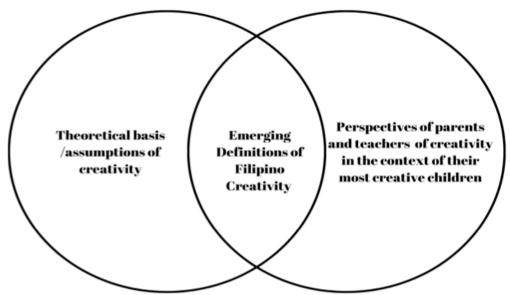


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

The figure above shows this study's conceptual framework. Emerging definitions of creativity in the Philippine context is studied through the 2 variables or factors that contribute to its concept. The theoretical basis and assumptions of creativity gathered in the literature and the perspectives of Filipino parents and teachers of creativity in the context of their most creative learners have a bearing on the emerging definition of Filipino creativity.

The theories linked to this study have become a foundational basis on the existing understanding of the Filipinos' theoretical assumptions toward creativity. Feldman's theory on the development of creativity, which comprises different dimensions such as cognitive, social/emotional processes, family aspects, education and preparation, characteristics, social/cultural aspects and history have greatly affected how creativity is defined. The theory of Joseph Renzulli's Three-ring model of creativity is important in this study because Filipinos' emerging definitions of creativity rely greatly on the quality behaviors exhibited by a gifted individual. One of the 3 rings that affect one's giftedness is the creative-productive abilities and this basis is significant for participants and informants because of the innate or natural abilities of creativity of Filipinos. Robert Gagne's DMGT is also linked to this study because of the belief that giftedness and talent are progressive and can be transformed based on the development of different abilities, which includes creativite abilities. These abilities reflect the Filipino informants' perspectives about a creative person and have become influential factors on how they view creativity as a whole.

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to explore indicators that define creativity in the Philippine context. It sought the views of Filipino parents and teachers on what creativity is in the context of their most creative learners. Specifically, it aims to answer the following questions:

- 1. How do parents and teachers view creativity in the context of their most creative children?
- 2. What are the underlying dimensions of creativity as viewed by their parents and teachers in the context of their most creative children?

Method

This research used the Textual Analysis Research Design, particularly, the qualitative methods in a single study. Textual analysis is described as a methodology that involves understanding language, symbols, and/or pictures present in texts to gain information regarding how people make sense of and communicate life and life experiences (Allen, 2017). Interview transcripts and the images of the sample works of the participants are the main sources of the data. Through the textual analysis research design, the researcher was able to analyze and understand the data through forming coomon themes from understanding the language, text, symbols and pictures provided.

Participants

The main participants of this study are the identified "most creative" learners from the five various selected middle schools in Northern Mindanao, Philippines, particularly students in Grade 5-8 and their parents and teachers. The researcher gave an endorsement letter to the school principals to choose and decide as a school who they think is the most creative. They had top 2 choices for each school. A creativity assessment tool that assess the 4 Personal Creativity Characteristics described in the *Assessing Creativity: A Guide for Educators* published in the *National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented Journal*, developed by a group of researchers from universities in the U.S in search of creativity characteristics (Treffinger, Young, Selby, & Shepardson, 2002), was used as reference for selecting the participants. After they were handpicked by their school head and faculty who know them, their parents were contacted by the school principal to get permission if they could participate in the study. The primary participants selected to be subjects of the study are coded with the names Child A, Child B, Child C, Child D and Child E.

Sampling Design

This study used non-probability purposive sampling design was used to handpick the 5 different schools that best represent the groups of people in the region for this study. According to Patton (1987), the interviewer asks questions orally to the interviewee in a flexible and continuous manner considering the three basic approaches to qualitative in-depth interviewing, informal conversational interview, general interview guide approach and standardised open-ended interview (Showkat, 2017).

Research Instruments

Inclusion criteria/checklist adapted from the *Assessing Creativity: A Guide for Educators* published in the *National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented Journal*, developed by a group of researchers from universities in the U.S (Treffinger, Young, Selby, & Shepardson, 2002) were used as basis in the research instruments for this study. This tool was employed for the study because it is a good screening tool, especially for parents and teachers who have seen the learners' performance in a "real-life" setting for a long time (Treffinger, Young, Selby, & Shepardson, 2002).

The following 4 Categories of Personal Creativity Characteristics are (1) *Generating Ideas* - cognitive characteristics: divergent thinking or creative thinking abilities and metaphorical thinking. (2) *Digging deeper into ideas*- cognitive characteristics: convergent thinking or critical thinking. (3) *Openness and courage to explore ideas*- personality traits: interests,

experiences, attitudes, and self-confidence. (4) *Listening to one's "inner voice"*- traits: personal understanding of who you are, a vision of where you want to go, and a commitment to do whatever it takes to get there.

For this study, evaluation on the supporting documents that prove the creativity of the participants are based on their performance data as referred in the matrix for the systematic assessment of creativity based from the *Assessing Creativity: A Guide for Educators* published in the *National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented Journal* of page 51. The creative outputs used as supporting documents include: portfolios and real-life activities, structured performance tasks, evidence of awards and/or recognitions in contests, competitions or special programs, product evaluation scales or ratings by judges. The researcher collected photographs and videos of the said supporting documents with the permission of the parent and teacher key informants. These supporting documents strengthen the validity of the study through a triangulation approach.

This research also used the key informant interview questionnaire developed by the researcher for the teachers and parents of the identified creative students. Socratic or openended questions were used to identify the definitions of creativity and characteristics of these identified students. Interview questionnaire was validated by 3 experienced university professors from the College of Education of the University of Southeastern Philippines. This descriptive study used the key informant interviews as a novel approach to uncover key pieces of information. This is a type of qualitative in-depth interview that will focus on the dynamic flow of conversation between researcher and participant(s) in their native environment. The data-gathering procedure of this study has 3 phases. The first phase is selecting student participants, interview as the 2nd phase and the third third phase is document analysis.

Data Gathering Procedure and Data Analysis

The researcher first transcribed the recorded audio interviews after conducting the key informant in-depth interviews. Then, the researcher started analyzing the data by creating themes from the recorded and transcribed interviews. Analyses was based on the clustered data to create themes. Thematic analysis was chosen as a type of qualitative analysis that was used for the study. According to Allen (2017), messages in textual analysis, may it be visual, written, or spoken messages provide cues to ways through which communication may be understood. Thematic analysis allowed the researcher to closely examine the data to identify common themes which are topics, ideas and patterns of meaning that come up repeatedly. The researcher transcribed the interview recordings manually. After the interviews were fully transcribed and proofread, this study used the NVivo as the qualitative data analysis software technology that helped in making more robust research results in less time. Using the NVivo tool as an electronic technique of data coding helped in obtaining rigor in dealing with the data. Using this computer software package produced by QSR International has many advantages and "ensures that the user is working more methodically, more thoroughly, more attentively" (Hilal & Alabri, 2013). Moreover, to ensure the objectivity of this study, the researcher asked a third person who listened and took down notes of the answers of the informants while the researcher is conducting the face-to-face in-depth interview. The researcher also sought another set of data for triangulation to validate the outcome of this research through the outputs, documentation and internet links of sample works of the creative students.

Ethical Consideration

The researcher ensured quality and integrity of the research by seeking permission and meeting ethical considerations set by the Department of Education in the Philippines. Ethical guidelines set by the university were followed and the researcher secured the standard informed consent forms for the informants. The consent from the participants had the following content: information about the study, description of research purpose, procedures including research duration, benefits and risks to participants, voluntary participation, right to privacy and assurance that there is no cost or compensation for participation. The confidentiality and anonymity of the research participants was respected by ensuring that names and pictures will be hidden and only the researcher involved in the study has access to the informants' information. The participants were kept completely anonymous in the research and were fully aware of the observation records from this study will remain confidential and was informed of the interview flow and protocol. The informants were also informed through the consent letter that they signed that their participation in this research was completely voluntary which meant that they had the right to discontinue their participation if they felt like they were not able to continue the study.

Conclusion

Emerging definitions of creativity in the Philippine context were described and analyzed based from the theoretical basis/assumptions of creativity and the perspectives of parents and teachers of creativity in the context of their most creative children. There were 6 main approaches to studying creativity that emerged in defining it through textual analysis and these are creativity as (a) Process, (b) Person, (c) Product, (d) Press (environment), (e) Multidimensional domain, and (f) Socio-cultural aspects.

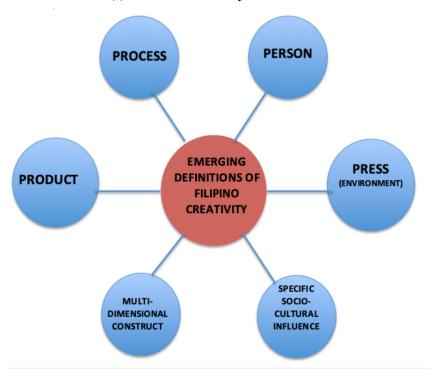


Figure 2: Summary of the Emerging Filipino Definitions of Creativity Framework

The figure above illustrates the combined data on the informants' views of creativity in the context of their most creative children. This sums up the researcher's analysis on the purpose

of this study that seeks the emerging definition and indicators of creativity among gifted learners in the Philippine context. This illustrates that creativity is defined into 6 main domains or approaches to defining creativity, which are creativity as a (a) Process, (b) Person, (c) Product, (d) Press (environment), (e) Multidimensional, and (f) Socio-cultural aspects.

Filipino creativity is an ability that is natural and God-given greatly rooted to Filipino family traditions and cultural values. Filipino creative children are highly intellectual who excel in their academic endeavors, socio-civic and art competitions, expressive through their music, art, movement and literary outputs. Their natural, home and school environments, media and competition exposures, and time devoted for practice developed this innate ability of Filipinos of being *malikhain*. The strong connection to the culture and value system of Filipinos that's deeply rooted to the importance of family, collaboration and *pakikisama* with social groups and community, religiosity and Filipino creative traits such as high cognitive skills, problem-solving, divergent thinking, originality, rich imagination, elaboration, curiosity, diligence, passion, hard work, persistence, respect, obedience, leadership, inventiveness, generosity, resourcefulness, sympathy, shyness, oversensitive, flexible, openmindedness, inventive, resourcefulness, risk-taking, humility, patience, and dedication to high standard of excellence. Specifically, the study sought to answer how creativity is defined in the Philippine context and the characteristics of Filipino creative learners.

The researcher chose the sample of the study purposefully and participants from Region X were picked. The study sought the data of varied participants considering their ethnic identity, cultural background, type of school and curriculum. Parents and teachers of the identified "most creative" children of the sample schools answered the qualitative research questions through a key-informant in-depth interview. The focus educational levels of this study are the middle school-aged students (Grade 5-8).

The 10 informants who knew the 5 chosen creative students very well have shared through in-depth interviews, the personality, behavior, work attitude, behavior and characteristics of Filipino creative children. They are described in different dimensions that could be indicators of creativity. They process creativity through they cognitive strengths, problem-solving skills, divergent skills, originality, elaboration, rich imagination and curiosity.

These creative learners were described according to their personality and abilities. They are naturally creative, highly motivated, passionate, diligent, hardworking, persistent, perfectionist, friendly, shy, generous, sympathetic, good leaders, respectful, obedient and oversensitive. They are also viewed as flexible, resourceful, inventive, risk-takers, openminded, humble, patient and dedicated to high standard of excellence. Filipino creative children are also described based on the products they create, which are novel, original, purposeful, and know how to recycle. Filipino creativity was defined under the influences of the environments on the children's creativity. The participants developed their creativity with the help of the natural environment, home and school environments, media influence, and encouragement of the support to practice and have healthy competitions.

Filipino creativity was also described in a general-domain and muti-dimensional construct. It was highlighted that creativity is viewed as something pertaining to the beauty and aesthetics of art, and consider the different specific aptitudes such as the abilities in language, mathematical/logical and practical living skills, visual and performing arts and the musical abilities.

The key informants of this study believe that their children are creatively gifted and viewed creativity in social-cultural perspectives. This study was focused on the specific understanding based on Filipino Mindanao perspectives, influenced by Filipino family values, traditional and religious practices, ethnicity, environmental influences such as social play, strong support system and collaboration with other cultural groups, which are indicators of the Specific Socio-Cultural Influence dimension.

This dimension on the socio-cultural aspect of creativity must be considered since 70% of the participants agree that having full moral support from the family and friends of the creative learners plays an important role in the development of creativity. The Philippines has a diverse culture and religions. Social play was also highlighted by informants which they strongly suggested to better their children's creativity. Also, it enhances a Filipino value or attitude of *pakikisalamuha* (interaction with) as part of Filipinos' attitude of "togetherness"/Filipinos' cultural backgrounds vary from one place to another and from one ethnic group to another. Hence, the importance of being able to socialize, collaborate and interact with other sets of groups and/or ethnic tribes is being supported by the Philippine Department of Education which shows the urgency of needing to widen cross-cultural understanding for social solidarity to be strengthened among the many ethno-linguistic groups.

This study defines Filipino creativity as an ability that is natural and God-given, which is greatly rooted to Filipino family practices and cultural values. It is defined in a multifaceted way because of the different dimensions it cover, This includes creativity being defined in a process, person, product, press, multidimensional and socio-cultural aspects. It is shaped by the diverse Filipino culture and tradition including their religion, customs, languages and dialects, traits and family practices and the challenges they endured. It is a skill that is developed by the support and encouragement of the home and school, hours spent on practicing and the various environments (nature, school environment and media) they are exposed to.

The results of the study tell us that Filipino creative children are highly intellectual who excel in their academic endeavors, socio-civic and art competitions, expressive through their music, art, movement and literary outputs. They are naturally creative, highly motivated, passionate, diligent, hardworking, persistent and perfectionist. They are also described as flexible, resourceful, inventive, risk-takers, open-minded, humble, patient and dedicated to high standards of excellence.

They are admirable children in their community who seek and create beautiful, original and novel products, help solve problems among their peers, perform in community celebrations and school events. They are keen to details, observe very well and are organized in making their outputs beautiful which are considered extraordinary and something that everyone can be proud of. They are usually quiet when they are not yet comfortable with the group and sometimes get sensitive or emotional when handling frustrations or unexpected circumstances.

On the other hand, Filipino creative children have great leadership skills that enable them to initiate activities among their peers and influence their peers in doing good deeds and creative works. It is boosted by the different social collaboration they had with other children through play and interactions with other people during celebrations and competitions and school events. They stand out in the group because of their work ethics, commendable attitude of

diligence, hard work, and persistence and are tagged as perfectionists who are committed to do their best in whatever tasks given to them.

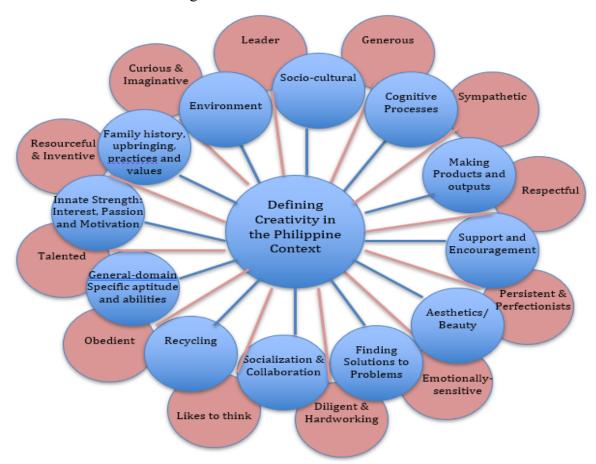


Figure 3: Summary of the Underlying Dimensions of Creativity in the Philippine Context

The figure above summarizes the underlying dimensions of Filipino creativity in the perspectives of the gifted learners' parents and teachers. This study formulated different domains and indicators of creativity that would be helpful in studying creativity in a more scientific way through a development/assessment tool. This framework may serve as indicators of measuring creativity in taking the first step in formulating a creative development tool.

Recommendations

In light of the findings and conclusions of this study, it is recommended for teachers, school administrators, curriculum makers and school heads may consider looking into creativity indicators/dimensions identified in this study to identify the creativity potentials and behavior of their learners. Also, they should consider the students' family, friends and specific ethnic culture when designing programs/activities that will lead to the creative development of the students

Parents and family members may show support to the creative children's needs at home and in school by preparing a conducive, peaceful and free environment for creating where resources are found and practice is encouraged. Future researchers may explore related studies on the definition of creativity from other regions and cities outside Region X or non-Mindanaoan ethnic groups that have different dialects, culture and ethnicity.

Future researchers may consider adopting the creativity indicators/dimensions as identified in this study in the development of a Filipino context-based Creativity Assessment tool, which may be studied further for validity.

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