

The cultural contribution on the expression of creativity



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For a product to be novel it must be original, meaning it is completely different from other products created before. The next aspect a product must have to be creative is appropriateness. The product must be relevant to the task presented and accomplish attempted goals. Creativity is more than an expression of art and utility, creativity is an expression of culture. Creativity is an outlet for cultures to stand out amongst other nations. Through creativity, culture's can express their value system, what is considered right and wrong in and socially acceptable.

Creativity is also a preview to the potential of certain societies and cultures. This means, that the products that are being produced by certain societies are clues to even greater innovations in the future. The expression of creativity also plays into the world economy, fueling competition between eastern and western cultures. Which side of the world can be the most innovative, fastest, who can appeal to the masses, cross culturally and who can be the most futuristic as well as sustain the upper hand in the eyes and pockets of consumers.

Although eastern and western economies [China and America], have fused together slightly, making the desire for capital a collective one, there are still differences in the types of products being produced by the different societies. The expression of creativity as well as the reception of creative products gives insight into the collective mindset of the culture. The traits for a creative person, being individualistic, tolerant of ambiguity, risk taker, innovative, and unconventional, appear to some degree in a person regardless of the culture they are living in.

What is not the same cross culturally are golden principles of that society. Eastern cultures tend to be more collectivist. Eastern cultures prioritize the goals of the group over that of the individual.

Being a part of a collectivist society, there is a high priority on interdependence. Meaning everyone in that society is mutually reliant on fellow countrymen. For Western cultures, the focus is centered upon the philosophy of individualism. In an individualist society, the individual is at the center and a high value is placed on independence and self-reliance.

The goals and desires of the individual are placed over the goals of the social group.

It is these philosophies unconsciously guide people in one creative direction or the other. They also dictate what is actually considered creative, by that particular societies value system. Eastern cultures put a high value on usefulness whereas Western cultures consider relationally and novelty to usefulness. "From the Lens of culture, the universality of creativity is distinct but the manifestation of creativity is diverse" (Craft, 2008; Simonton & Sighing; Sighing, 2010).

This paper will explore the about the origins of creativity will be discussed, where did creativity originate in Eastern and Western societies, and what effect did its origins have on the social norms and values of that society. Also the cultural difference will be looked at and how those differences play a role in an individual's creative production.

A brief encounter with emotions and creativity will also be addressed, specifically the Confucian goal of East Asian societies. Lastly, the function of creativity and its role within societies will be explored.

To get holistic idea of creativity in a cultural context, both implicit and explicit theories of creativity must be explored. To some creativity is still a sort of mystical trait of human beings. A trait that should be explored. And a trait that should be nurtured for individual benefits as well as infinite to society as a whole.

Sire defines a worldview as “ an internalized framework of fundamental beliefs through which we view the world, giving direction and meaning to life” (Sire, 18). A concrete worldview is based a set oftenest, principles or beliefs held to be true.

In the Western societies, there are two major beliefs about the concept of creativity. The first is the belief in God’s creation. The idea that God is the creator of everything and from Him, we have the ability to be creative. The other is the Greek articulation, “ the inspiration of the Muses, [the embodiment of the arts]” (Nun and Sternberg, 2002, p.

269). China’s concept of creativity stems from the idea of constant production and renewal of nature. This idea was shared by the Greek culture. They differed however Greeks favoring novelty in contrast Chinese cultures favoring social values.

One may assume that both eastern and westerners have similar or the same worldview or idea about the concept of creativity and the creative person but that is not the case.

Runic and Balled (1986) illustrate this idea through a survey of undergraduate students. They were asked to give characteristics of three types of creativity, artistic, scientific, and everyday. Characteristics such as imaginative, independent, having intrinsic motivations were shown to be similar between laypersons and psychologists, in regard to explicit theories.

This study suggests that ideas about creativity seem to be domain specific, meaning that creative people share similar characteristics as an individual but differ when it comes to the domain in which they are exploring their creative potential.

When exploring Chinese people's implicit theories on creativity, studies have shown that words such as, imagination, innovative ideas, and high energy were used to conceptualize creativity. Two other characteristics were also mentioned in the Chinese sample, Inspirational and contributing to the greater good of the society.

Another unique element that was not shown in the Western sample was the moral component of creativity. This is made apparent by their collectivist values and in favor of the group versus the individual. It is also highlighted by the Confucian goal, with the intent being to produce meritorious contribution through works of goodness, those are the works considered creative. Another Eastern culture that was sampled was Indian people.

In a study conducted by Kaput, Submarines, and Shah (1997) they interviewed 20 Indian scientists targeting their ideas of creativity, what traits make up a creative person.

India stands out from Western societies, specifically American society as well as Chinese society in that they are known for their contributions to science but that India is not a part of the global power competition. When you think of nations that mind. But because India is known for its scientists and the sometimes genius contributions to the field, they are worth the comparison. What the study revealed was that when defining creativity, Indian scientist listed two specific abilities; “ First, to be contribute something new, the second, having the ability to synthesize and integrate” (Nun and Sternberg, 274).

Having these to two elements distinguish the productive individuals from the creative.

When asked to give traits for a creative person, Indian scientists used words such as, self-motivation, open-mindedness, broad interests and aesthetic tastes, these characteristics are more in line with Western values. Another interesting finding for the Indian scientist was despite the act their ideas for who is considered creative are more inline with Western values, their own cultural values played a significant role in the way they perceived their own creative ability.

Indian scientists considered themselves less creative than their Western counterparts due to the cultural emphasis on obedience, religion. Also there is a high value place on social etiquette needed for hierarchal status, as well <https://assignbuster.com/the-cultural-contribution-on-the-expression-of-creativity/>

as a desire for emotional connection to each other, leaving little room for individual development. The purpose of studying explicit ideas on creativity is to seek out differences on creative production across cultures.

To do so, one must first address the two main assumptions concerning explicit theories.

The first postulate is that there is a universal idea of creativity and it can be measured by standardized tests. The second postulate was that creativity is both culture and domain specific and any type of measurement should take into account both cultural factors and elements of the domain. Divergent thinking tasks have long been used to test and measure peoples ability to be creative.

Divergent thinking is a thought process used to engender creative ideas by exploring as many solutions to problem as possible.

Divergent thinking tasks are used to cross-culturally compare individuals on creative performance. The results are varied. Results tend to favor Americans, some theorist suggest that levels of modernization have an effect on creative production.

Based on the assumption of modernization, a comparison of Arabic and American youths was conducted. Americans out performed their Arabic peers, Mar" (1983) suggest that religious backgrounds and the geographic areas in which they lived also had an effect on creative performance.

American youths even out performed their East Asian counterparts, specifically Japanese. This is significant because Japan is a highly modernized
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country. What this suggests is that regardless of the level of modernization, implicit social norms play a crucial role in the expression of creativity.

The collectivist nature of Asian societies facilitates conformity and obedience, which limits the growth of creativity, versus the individualistic culture of the west. Results favoring Americans illustrate the effect of worldview on ones creative potential. However there were results favoring Asians.

For example, Japanese students did better in areas of flexibility and originality. Eastern Asian youths exposure to graphical characters of the Chinese language may contribute to their performance of divergent thinking tasks requiring the use of knowledge of mathematics and physics (Eurydice et al. 1995).

Another way to test the creative performance is by using the Dual Pathway to Creativity Model. By using this model, researchers move from a focus on the creative product to a focus on the cultural differences in the deconstructs creativity into creative outputs and creative processes.

This model assumes creative outputs are a function of flexible processing of information. This flexibility pathway is illustrated through divergent thinking.

It also assumes that creative outputs are a function of cognitive persistence, meaning that creative insights must be focused and structured when exploring cognitive perspectives, known as the persistence pathway. In regards to the DEEP and its role in the cultural analysis of creativity, one must address the three discoveries of the cultural impact on creativity.

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The first insight is that, cultural values and norms that influence and individual may predispose that person to use flexible processing, allowing one to take risks without fear of judgment. Western cultural norms where the focus is on independence and the individual drives one to use the flexibility pathway.

On the opposite end, the effects of the collectivist Eastern society, where the focus is on interdependence, move individuals to use the persistence pathway. The second insight is that time and task are important. Cultural differences have an effect on the way individuals approach a given task.

The use of time limits has the ability to enhance creative potential by endorsing flexible thinking or limit creative production in individuals whose background encourages more persistent processing. The last insight given by the DEEP is that different cultures can reach the same level of creativity by using different methods; with the use of either flexible or persistent processing, both pathways must be engaged.

The DEEP is most useful because it illustrates the mental processes used by different cultures to achieve creativity or to produce something creative.

This model has the potential when combined with other methods of measurement such as divergent thinking tasks to get a more holistic view of how a person reaches a creative breakthrough. In regard to East Asian thought on creativity, the Four-Seven debate was described by Tu (Bibb) as “one of the most important intellectual events in Korean Confucian thought” (p. 261). The Four-Seven debate addresses the relation between the four

beginnings of human nature (compassion, shame/disgust, modesty, and <https://assignbuster.com/the-cultural-contribution-on-the-expression-of-creativity/>

discernment) and the seven emotions that correspond Ooh, anger, sadness, fear, love, dislike, and desire).

This traditional philosophy conceptualized the four beginnings and seven emotions as feelings.

The four beginnings characterize human nature in its original state and the seven emotions are the emotions awakened during course of the day. To put it more simply, “ the goal is expand the influence of the four beginnings and to regulate the expression of the seven emotions, achieving both personal and social well- being” (Overall, Chon, and Hahn, 2001). The purpose of the Four-Seven debate was to highlight the pathway to Jean. Jean is characterized as goodness, humanity, and virtue.

Some researchers would suggest that Jean is related to authenticity. Jean in western standards mirrors self-actualization, implying the ability to be creative in both intellectual and emotional domains.

A person experiencing Jean is proficient in ritual and social norms versus and is expected to conform to the social standards of that culture. A self-actualities person who tends to follow internal desires that surpass social custom. One can see how creativity is affected at socio-emotional level and how the social norms and values play into the emotional desires of the individual creator.

Overall (2004) summed it up best, “ emotional creativity is being able to genuine” (Kaufman, p. 108).

In modern society, Eastern and Western ideas on creative products have fused together, meaning that in today's world, the most retrieve product is a useful product outside of products that appeal to aesthetic taste specifically, such as art or music. It is obvious that Western and Eastern worlds have been and will remain in competition with one another as far as who is the most progressive, who is making the biggest contribution globally.

The economic competition has in turn fueled a creativity competition. Consumers want products that are both novel and original, created by individuals for individuals but also a product that is appropriate to modern lifestyle, while contributing to the progress of ones own society, the global society, as well as the human race. But can this be done despite the influences of cultural values? It has been stated that creativity is culture specific, meaning that the things people produce creatively depend on the culture in which they live.

In modern society, creators must be aware of the global market.

Appeal to the global society as well as becoming integrated into global society. One creation that has been successful in standing out as both novel and appropriate as well as appealing and sustaining a place in the global society is the company IBM and its founder Louis R. Mobile. He questioned creativity and the creator in relation to economic success. He wanted to know if creativity could be taught, could altering ways of thinking about creativity and building upon a persons innate abilities foster success.

After founding the IBM Executive School he found that yes, it is possible to teach a person to become more creative. By making creativity a major
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element in ones general thought process, the ability to think creatively becomes ingrained in the individual. Mobile became aware that the success of his company IBM was dependent on creativity versus the financial and economic reports. The IBM Executive school was founded to mold executive and aspiring executives to be more retrieve. He based his company off of six ideals that would produce creative success within the individual.

The first, that traditional ways of teaching, are pointless to the stimulation of creativity. What should be done is posing questions in a non-linear way, to think outside the box to find the solution. Secondly, to be creative is an unlearning process. Instead of adding to current assumption to find a creative spark to produce something creative one must defy the assumptions. To have an a-ha moment is considered “ the birth pang of creativity’ (Turk, 2). The third discovery as that Mobile came to the realization that instead of learning to be creative, one must become creative.

Mobile, used riddles, games, and other stimulations to shock participants into alternate ways of thinking. The fourth and most obvious discovery was that to be creative, one must be surrounded by creative people. The IBM school had an unstructured environment, which facilitated peer interaction to enhance creativity. Mobiles fifth discovery was that self-knowledge is crucial to creativity.

One must over come biases, allowing a person to gain new perspectives is key to creativity expression and production.

Lastly, Mobile allowed his students to be wrong, being wrong was just a stepping-stone for an even brighter more creative idea. Mobile and the IBM
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Executive school did not teach creativity but they nurture ones creative potential so that it flourishes and contributes to greater success, individually as well as to the success of ones own society. Why create? Why do some actual purpose for a creative trait in people and if so does it extend into culture? It is questions like these that take creativity past the individual and even past culture but applies to all the evolutions of humans. As mentioned, all people do not achieve big-

C creativity, meaning a person has made a lasting contribution to a particular domain as well as to the artifacts of historical record and merit. But the people that do achieve big-C creativity helped to progress their society to the next level as well as elevate the human race.

There is potential for creativity in everyone. But for that potential to flourish it must be nurtured. However despite attempts to nourish creative potential, some find it hard to be comfortable expressing their ideas and thoughts for innovation for fear of criticism and Judgment. To be creative means you stand out, making one feel like target.

Fear that a product is not artistic enough or does not make a large enough contribution will have people remain stagnant and follow the boring mindset of the majority. This is one of the costs of creative expression and the rewards of ones work are often uncertain.

However, there are those who desire to produce something new and creative, whether it is for individual benefit or for the greater good, some people go against the grain and stand out. Without new ideas and new

innovations, society would never progress. One may consider the invention of the wheel as the beginning of the creativity competition.

He set in motion the desire to create something beneficial for himself but for his society. His discovery may have been accidental, or true to western values, the inventor may have only had individual motivation to be creative, but the wheel was helpful to all other prehistoric people.

The wheel served the greater good of prehistoric peoples, it benefited not one but all, which is in line with Eastern ideals. With this being said, one can see how creativity and the ability to produce both artistic as well as meritorious products serve a purpose of survival. "Creativity is both costly and beneficial" (De Dreg, 2010).

He makes three implications for the costs and benefits of creativity. The first, humans have an innate ability to be creative, going beyond geographical and cultural limits. Humans chance at survival was enhanced by the ability to be creative.

This ability became ingrained through a psychological process into human beings. It is suggested that psychological elements of creativity may be culturally invariant. The second implication is that being creative comes at a price but there are rewards as well. This means that the benefits must outweigh the costs before engaging in a creative endeavor.

Humans act on their inherent propensity for being creative" (De Dreg, 2010).

However, the rewards for a persons work may or may not pay off as one

intended, but that is the luck of the draw. The decision to produce something
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new or innovative is driven by the culture, such as the organizational construction of ones own society. These same cultural pressure that drive a person to be creative and have the desire to share his or her work with the rest of the world, are the same pressures that discourage a person from exploring creative outlets.

The fear of Judgment and criticism from the public can be crushing o a person's self-esteem and could have negative effects on a person's self-efficacy. In a nutshell, Ones desire to truly express creative potential depends on the individual while being influenced by cultural perspectives of ones society to encourage creative production. In conclusion, creativity is culture specific.

Eastern on the well being of the group. This is in stark contrast to Western individualistic cultures, where the focus is on the independence and the individual.

The type of culture one is immersed in will no doubt have an effect on the creative production of the individual. The component of morality separates the Eastern ideals from the West.

This means that products that are deemed creative by eastern cultures tend to make a contribution to the good of society as a whole. The purpose of the creative products differs between cultures as well. Western cultures tailor to the individual. Products that are novel and aesthetically unique are highly valued and encouraged. It is these ideals, the value of appropriateness and the value of novelty that set opposing cultures apart creatively.

However in modern day, one must consider the global community.

In this new age of economic competition, products must be both unique as well as appropriate. Combining those two feature elements enhances the likelihood of a product becoming and remaining integrated into the global society. There is still much research to be done in regards to the field of creativity and especially in relation to culture; however, current research gives a substantial framework for understanding the creative potential of the individual and his or her place within society. Lastly, cultures serves a purpose bigger than expression.