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## FORMATION OF STUDENTS' CREATIVE POTENTIAL AS A PRIORITY OF MODERN HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE CONTEXT OF TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGES

**Анотація.** У статті розглянуто теоретичні підходи до розуміння творчого потенціалу та креативності як важливих психологічних характеристик особистості в умовах сучасного соціокультурного середовища. Особлива увага приділена аналізу рівнів сформованості творчих здібностей у молоді, зокрема студентів — майбутніх фахівців, що перебувають на етапі активного професійного та особистісного становлення. Емпірична частина дослідження передбачала використання психодіагностичних методик, за допомогою яких було здійснено кількісну оцінку рівнів креативності в респондентів. У процесі аналізу результатів встановлено розподіл учасників за рівнями творчих здібностей, що дозволило виявити як загальні тенденції, так і диференційовані характеристики креативного мислення у досліджуваній вибірці. Отримані дані інтерпретовано у контексті актуальності розвитку творчого потенціалу у молодіжному середовищі та окреслено напрями можливої підтримки цього процесу в межах освітнього середовища.

**Ключові слова:** творчий потенціал, креативність, креативне мислення, психодіагностика, творчі здібності, молодь, майбутні фахівці, розвиток здібностей, індивідуальний підхід, студенти.

Formation of students' creative potential as a priority of modern higher education in the context of transformational changes

**Introduction:** In the context of rapid socio-cultural changes, technological progress and growing demands for innovation and flexibility of thinking, the development of young people's creative potential is of particular importance. The modern labour market requires professionals who can quickly adapt to new conditions, generate innovative solutions, think critically and act proactively. At the same time, education and training systems often focus on the reproduction of knowledge, which does not contribute to the development of creativity as a key competence of the 21st century.

Of particular concern is the trend towards a decline in creative activity in adolescence and youth due to the standardisation of educational approaches, lack of individual approach, lack of support for self-expression and psychological safety. In this context, a comprehensive study of the levels of formation of the creative potential of young people is relevant, which will allow not only to diagnose its state but also to predict the possibilities of development under favourable pedagogical conditions.

In addition, the need to understand the theoretical and methodological foundations of psychodiagnostics of creative abilities is actualised due to the need to adapt classical methods to the Ukrainian socio-cultural environment, in particular in the conditions of the war and post-war period. Thus, the study not only fills a scientific gap in the empirical study of youth creativity, but also serves as a practical basis for the introduction of innovative forms of psychological and educational support.

**Theoretical basis of the study:** The concepts of creativity and creativity are key in personality psychology, pedagogy, and cognitive science, as they are related to an individual's ability to generate new ideas, solve non-standard problems, adapt to change, and find effective ways to interact with the world. The theoretical basis for the study of creative abilities is formed on the basis of research by both foreign and Ukrainian scholars [3].

In the classical sense, creativity is seen as the process of creating a new product that is both original and socially significant. J. Guilford was one of the first to identify divergent thinking as an important characteristic of creativity, which contrasts with convergent (logical) thinking. Later, E. Torrance proposed his own tests of creativity, which included the measurement of such indicators as originality, flexibility, fluidity and elaboration of ideas.

Researchers pay special attention to the structure of creative abilities. Among the key components are usually identified: motivational (interest in novelty), cognitive (thinking, intellectual operations), emotional (emotional sensitivity, openness to experience) and behavioural (real willingness to act outside

the box) [4]. Such a multidimensional understanding of creativity allows us to talk about its development not only as an intellectual but also as a personal characteristic.

Modern approaches to the study of creativity also include neuropsychological theories that study the functioning of the brain during creative activity and psychodiagnostic models that allow quantifying the level of creativity and creative abilities [6].

In the context of the development of future professionals, the development of creative potential is of particular importance, as it is associated with self-realisation, professional choice, and the ability to adapt in the face of uncertainty. Modern research points to the need to individualise learning, develop critical thinking and create conditions for creative expression [2].

The issue of forming a creative personality is traditionally considered in the works of leading Ukrainian and foreign researchers, including N. Guziy, V. Zagvyazinsky, V. Kan-Kalik, N. Kichuk, S. Sysoeva. In their studies, creativity is understood as a key characteristic of professional competence that requires targeted development in the learning process [1].

**The purpose of the article** is to provide a theoretical and empirical substantiation of the levels of creativity of future specialists based on the results of an empirical study, as well as to analyse the peculiarities of their creativity.

O. Moliako makes a significant contribution to the theoretical substantiation of educational and creative activity, emphasising the importance of involving students in an interactive educational environment [5].

Adolescence, as an important stage of personality development, is accompanied by an intensive search for the meaning of life, personal identity and professional self-determination. During this period, there is a transition from an idealised worldview to a critical understanding of reality, which is often accompanied by an appeal to creative forms of self-expression [7].

Practice shows that youth is a sensitive period for the development of creative thinking. Young people strive to understand complex existential contradictions and seek harmony between the inner world and the external environment. This process is often accompanied by growth crises, which at the same time open the way to deep reflection and creative activity [7].

From a historical and cultural point of view, the youth period has repeatedly demonstrated its productivity in the field of art, science and invention [2]. At the same time, the development of creative potential is determined by the interaction of genetic predispositions and the educational and social context, which either promotes or inhibits the disclosure of abilities [3].

Youth is also characterised by a tendency to experiment with creative roles, active imagination and openness to new ideas [4]. It is during this period that the experience of self-observation is accumulated, which forms the basis for conscious self-development.

The complex dynamics of personality formation in adolescence encompasses not only the cognitive, but also the socio-emotional and physical spheres. The growth of intellectual potential is ensured by the development of analytical, critical and systemic thinking [8], and emotional maturity is formed through the awareness and regulation of one's own experiences.

At the same time, physical growth stimulates interest in healthy lifestyles, sports and physical activity, which forms long-term habits and supports psycho-emotional well-being [9]. The close interaction of all components of personal potential forms the basis for self-realisation in the social and professional environment.

The educational process should include not only the acquisition of knowledge, but also the development of the ability to think creatively, flexibility in decision-making and an innovative approach to professional situations [10]. The ability to go beyond traditional algorithms, generate new ideas and apply them in the unstable conditions of the modern labour market is a crucial factor in professional adaptation [6].

However, in practice, the higher education system often remains focused on the academic style of teaching, which does not always contribute to the development of creative thinking. Therefore, there is a need to create a creatively oriented educational environment [11] that will promote students' initiative and self-realisation.

The creative potential of an individual can be considered as an integral characteristic that includes worldview, value, intellectual and volitional qualities. Together they form the basis for the formation of creativity as a key professional competence of a psychologist [5].

Effective disclosure of creative potential in the educational environment is possible due to:

Interactive forms of work - trainings, business games, case methods;

Integration of disciplines - an interdisciplinary approach that stimulates complex thinking;

Development of self-regulatory mechanisms - the ability to organise one's own activities in difficult conditions [6].

Scientific research outlines the stages of the creative process, which include: preparation (formulation of the problem), frustration (encountering difficulties), incubation (unconscious processing), insight (insight) and implementation (implementation of the solution) [12].

Involvement of students in scientific and practical activities - participation in conferences, development of author's projects, writing qualification papers - creates conditions for the development of initiative, responsibility and reflective thinking [2].

Thus, developing students' creative potential is a strategically important goal of modern higher education. This contributes not only to professional training but also to the comprehensive development of a personality capable of innovative thinking, adaptation and self-realisation in the context of constant socio-cultural change [6].

Three methods were used in the study. The first of them, the Diagnostics of Creative Potential and Creativity methodology, is focused on determining the general level of an individual's creative readiness for creative activity. The structure of this methodology includes eighteen tasks that identify key personality characteristics that contribute to creativity, including intellectual curiosity, ability to concentrate, self-confidence, perseverance and ability to abstract. The obtained results allow for a quantitative assessment of creative potential, which is classified into three levels - high, medium and low. This approach provides an opportunity for a differentiated analysis of students' individual characteristics and the degree of their readiness for self-realisation in creative activity.

The second methodology used was the diagnostic system developed by O. Tunik, which allows to study personal creative abilities with regard to the motivational and emotional component. This tool consists of fifty questions grouped into blocks covering such characteristics as developed imagination, curiosity, openness to new experiences, risk-taking and the ability to overcome obstacles. An important advantage of this methodology is its ability to identify not only the presence of creative traits, but also the depth of their manifestation in different contexts. It allows us to trace the extent to which a student is able to act in conditions of uncertainty, how he or she treats non-standard situations, and to what extent he or she is ready to generate new ideas. Thus, the results of this stage of diagnostics allowed us to establish the level of personal creative activity and its connection with the general creative orientation of the respondent.

The third methodology used was M. Yantsur's methodology 'Determination of General Creative Abilities of a Person', which is focused on identifying the general level of creativity development without reference to a particular type of activity. It involves assessing attitudes towards the creative process by analysing responses to twenty statements relating to personal reactions, thinking, emotional perception and general openness to new experiences. This approach allows us to quantify the degree of development of creative abilities and trace their connection with psychological qualities that ensure effective self-realisation in creative activity. The obtained indicators provided the basis for a comprehensive analysis of students' creativity in the modern educational space.

Thus, the use of three diverse methods made it possible to cover both general manifestations of creative potential and personal characteristics that facilitate or, conversely, inhibit its realisation. This approach is methodologically sound and ensures the reliability of the results obtained, which later became the basis for analysing the dynamics and peculiarities of the formation of creative thinking in adolescence.

As part of an empirical study of creative potential as a component of the professional competence of future specialists, a comprehensive psychodiagnosis was conducted among students aged 16 to 22. The total sample was **60 people**.

Researching the level of creative potential of young people is an important component in studying the impact of socio-psychological factors on the formation of creative thinking in adolescence. The use of the methodology 'Diagnostics of Creative Potential and Creativity' allowed us to obtain substantiated empirical information on the individual characteristics of the development of creative abilities in student youth. With the help of this psychodiagnostic tool, it became possible not only to record the existing level of creativity among respondents, but also to outline characteristic trends and identify barriers that may hinder the active development of creative potential. Based on the collected data, the peculiarities of the realisation of creative opportunities in the context of the social environment and personal characteristics of students were analysed.

The results show that 30 % of respondents, which corresponds to 18 people, showed a high level of creative potential. This group is characterised by a clear desire for novelty, ease in forming non-standard

ideas, and the ability to quickly adapt to unusual situations. These participants are usually characterised by a high level of self-expression, a tendency to think innovatively, and confidence in their own abilities. Probably, the development of their creative potential was positively influenced by a favourable microsocial environment, support from family and teaching staff, as well as internal motivation for self-realisation. Within this group, there is openness to new experiences, readiness for creative experimentation and the ability to overcome difficulties arising in the course of their work.

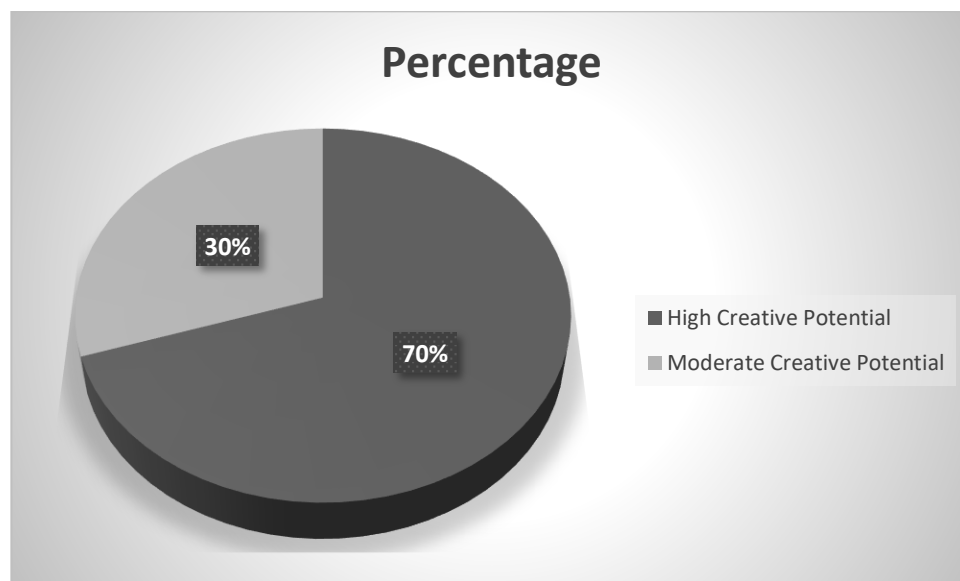


Fig. 1. Distribution of participants by level of creative potential (Diagnostics of Creative Potential and Creativity)

Instead, the majority of respondents, namely 70%, demonstrated a moderate level of creative potential. This indicator indicates the presence of certain inclinations towards creative activity, but their implementation is complicated by a number of barriers. Young people with a moderate level of creativity generally show interest in creative processes, but often do not actively implement their ideas. One of the most common factors hindering the development of creativity is the fear of failure. It can have both internal origins - associated with low self-esteem and self-doubt - and external origins, caused by social influence or fear of being judged by peers or significant adults. Such fear blocks the basic cognitive and emotional mechanisms that ensure the emergence of creative ideas, reduces motivation to implement them and the ability to express oneself productively.

The impact of fear of failure is particularly noticeable in the initial stages of the creative process, when ideas are being formulated or new approaches to problem solving are being sought. In such cases, uncertainty can reduce the intensity of creative thinking or completely inhibit the initiative. In the implementation phase, fear of criticism often leads to avoidance of public presentation of ideas or refusal to participate in creative initiatives. In a social context, this may be accompanied by feelings of isolation, misunderstanding or anxiety, which further exacerbates the blockage of creativity.

Young people with moderate levels of creativity are characterised by an internal conflict: on the one hand, they strive to fulfil themselves through creativity, and on the other hand, they face psychological limitations that reduce their belief in their own abilities. Each new idea often passes through stages of doubt, critical analysis and uncertainty in their minds, which often ends in a refusal to take further action. In such circumstances, the social environment is of particular importance, as it either supports or hinders the development of the initiative.

The general conclusions drawn from the data indicate that the development of youth creativity is a derivative not only of the existing potential, but also of the influence of the social environment, emotional climate and personal readiness for creative activity. A high level of creativity demonstrates the importance of support from an environment that encourages self-expression and innovation. At the same time, the moderate level of creativity among most respondents signals the need to create conditions that will help overcome existing barriers and stimulate creative activity.

In order to increase the level of creativity among the younger generation, it is advisable to focus on reducing the fear of failure and fostering a positive attitude towards experimentation and self-expression.

Creating an educational environment that supports individuality, tolerates mistakes as a necessary part of creative search, and provides tools for building confidence in one's own abilities is a priority in the context of realising the potential of young people. The introduction of innovative forms and methods of work, including art therapy practices, can contribute to a significant increase in the level of creativity and reduce the impact of adverse social and psychological factors.

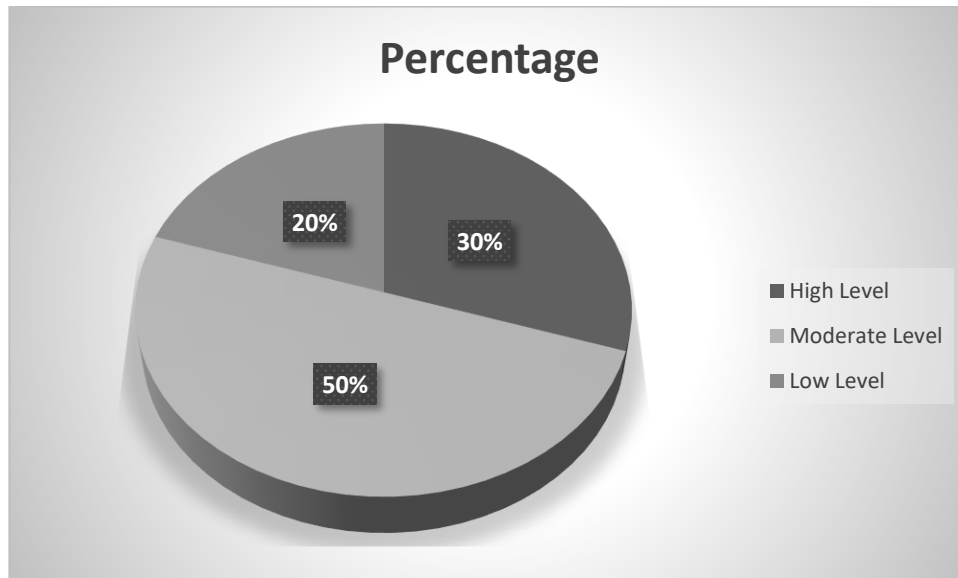


Fig. 2. Distribution of participants by level of creativity (Diagnostics of Personal Creative Abilities by O. Tunik)

For an in-depth study of the level of creativity development among students, the methodology 'Diagnostics of Personal Creative Abilities' developed by O. Tunik was used. This tool allowed for a comprehensive assessment of the internal creative potential of respondents, as well as to explore the psychological mechanisms underlying the formation and implementation of creative thinking. The questionnaire consisted of 50 questions aimed at identifying key indicators of a person's creative activity. In particular, it covered such characteristics as the ability to present new ideas, flexibility of thinking, the desire for self-expression, risk-taking, and intrinsic motivation to overcome difficult situations. The results allowed us to divide the respondents into three main groups depending on the level of their creativity: high, medium and low.

The use of this methodology was an important step in determining not only the current state of creative abilities among young people, but also potential barriers that could hinder or, conversely, enhance the development of creative potential. This approach made it possible to analyse the impact of socio-psychological factors, the educational environment and personal attitudes on young people's ability to express themselves creatively. Based on the survey results, a graphical representation of the distribution of creativity levels among the respondents was constructed.

The data shows that 30 per cent of the participants, i.e. 18 people, have reached a high level of personal creativity. Representatives of this group showed a distinct ability to generate new ideas, flexibility in thinking, ease in solving non-standard tasks and a tendency to take an innovative approach to their work. Young people with this level of creativity are usually able to adapt quickly to change, solve complex problems effectively, and demonstrate a high level of independence in decision-making. Indicators of this level may indicate the positive influence of the environment - family, academic or professional - as well as the formed internal motivation for self-realisation. This result confirms the presence of a significant percentage of students who are ready for productive creative activity even within traditional educational settings.

The largest proportion of respondents - 50%, or 30 people - demonstrated an average level of creative activity. Participants in this category have basic creative thinking abilities, but need additional stimulation to fully realise them. Although there is a certain inclination towards original thinking, its manifestations remain limited due to a number of factors, including a lack of support from significant others, insufficient motivation or lack of self-confidence. Young people with an average level of creativity often avoid taking risks, holding back their ideas and striving for innovation for fear of making mistakes or

being criticised. That is why this group is potentially promising for the implementation of educational activities aimed at developing creative thinking. In this context, it is effective to create a learning environment that supports experimentation, promotes tolerance for failure, and encourages independent decision-making.

Another 20 per cent of respondents (12 people) were classified as having a low level of personal creativity. Representatives of this category face difficulties in the process of implementing creative ideas, and sometimes in the very formation of new concepts or approaches. The reasons for this level can be both individual and psychological (e.g., anxiety, low self-esteem, lack of self-confidence) and external social (e.g., a restrictive environment, lack of support, stigmatisation of innovative approaches). The identification of such a group indicates the need for an individual approach in the process of developing their potential, which may include art therapy practices, interactive forms of learning, as well as methods aimed at reducing psychological stress and forming a positive attitude towards creativity.

The analysis of the results shows that most students are within the average level of creativity, which opens up wide opportunities for further pedagogical and psychological work to stimulate their creative abilities. At the same time, the presence of a significant percentage of participants with a high level of creativity indicates the potential of modern youth for innovative thinking and openness to change. This indicates the expediency of systematic implementation of creativity development programmes in the educational process, which will not only increase youth participation in creative forms of activity, but also contribute to the comprehensive development of the individual, increase adaptive potential and readiness for professional implementation in a modern dynamic society.

The study used the methodology 'Determination of General Human Creative Abilities' by M. Yantsur, which allowed to assess the level of creative potential among the sample participants. The respondents had to answer 20 statements, indicating the degree of agreement with them, which made it possible to obtain quantitative data for further analysis

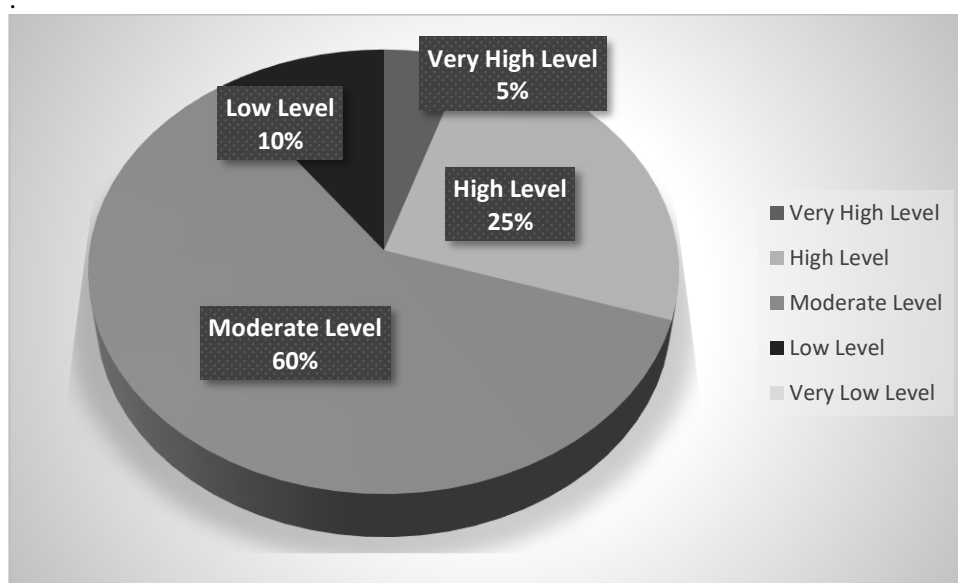


Fig. 3. Distribution of participants by level of general creative abilities (Method by M. Yantsur)

The analysis of the results showed that only 5% of respondents (three people) demonstrated a very high level of creativity. This indicates that they have a pronounced ability to think innovatively, generate non-standard ideas and implement creative approaches. These participants are distinguished by their creative activity, original vision of problems and a tendency to intellectual experimentation. Their thinking style is characterised by flexibility, self-confidence and a desire to find unique solutions.

A high level of creativity was found in 25% of respondents (15 people). This category also has significant creative potential, although it is less stable. Their ability to generate ideas and adapt to new conditions is evident, but requires external stimulation or support to be fully developed. They demonstrate openness to new experiences and interest in search, although they are more likely to prefer safe options, avoiding risky decisions.

The average level of creativity inherent in 60% of the respondents (36 people) indicates the presence of a basic creative potential that can be developed under conditions of targeted pedagogical

influence. These respondents have the opportunity to participate in creative processes, but their activity in this area often remains hidden or underutilised. Their thinking can be guided by habitual patterns, which requires the development of skills of alternative vision, the formation of internal motivation for creativity and the creation of a favourable educational environment.

A low level of creativity was recorded in 10% of respondents (6 people). These participants demonstrate restrained creative activity, tend to be structured and methodical, preferring proven models of action. Their approach to solving problems is rational and cautious, which limits spontaneity and risk-taking in their thinking. However, with individual support and a supportive environment, it is possible to gradually unlock their hidden potential.

It is worth noting that a very low level of creativity was not found in this sample. This indicates the presence of at least a minimum level of creativity in each of the respondents, which opens up prospects for further development of individual characteristics of creative thinking.

A comparative analysis of different levels of creativity showed that participants with a low level of creativity, despite their limited imagination, have a high level of discipline, focus and ability to complete tasks consistently. Their work style is focused on clear instructions, predictability and risk avoidance. Whereas respondents with high and very high levels of creativity demonstrate a tendency to experiment, critically rethink established norms, easily switch to new strategies and a desire for self-expression.

**Conclusions and prospects for further research.** The results of the study revealed a significant variation in the levels of creativity among young people. The majority of respondents have an average level of creativity, which indicates the presence of a basic potential that can be activated under favourable conditions. A small proportion of participants demonstrate a high and very high level of creativity, which is a positive indicator for further support and development of innovative thinking. The findings emphasise the need for individualised approaches to the development of creative abilities and the implementation of appropriate educational and psycho-pedagogical programmes. Prospects for further research include studying the dynamics of creative potential depending on social, educational and psychological factors, as well as developing effective interventions to stimulate creativity in the youth environment.

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