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Olena DEMCHENKO

Creativity in the structure of social aptitude

Abstract

The article focuses on the problem of social aptitude, the development of which intensified in the modern psycho-pedagogical discourse. It has been found that social aptitude is a complex social phenomenon, whose status, nature and structure have not been approached unanimously. Having summarized the views of foreign and domestic scientists we have concluded that creativity, along with social motivation, social skills, social and emotional intelligence, organizational and managerial skills, is an important component in the structure of this scientific construct. Such creativity is specific due to the peculiarities of the socio-economic field where a socially apt person fulfills himself. The concept of “social creativity” with regard to social skills has been refined.

Key words: *aptitude, social aptitude, social intelligence, social skills, creativity, artistry, social creativity.*

Креативність у структурі соціальної обдарованості

У статті зосереджено увагу на проблемі соціальної обдарованості, розробка якої активізувалася в сучасному психолого-педагогічному дискурсі. Встановлено, що соціальна обдарованість є складним феноменом, щодо статусу, сутності та структури якої немає єдиного підходу. На основі узагальнення поглядів зарубіжних і вітчизняних учених зроблено висновок, що в структурі такого наукового конструкту поряд із соціальною мотивацією, соціальними здібностями, соціальним та емоційним інтелектом, організаторськими й лідерськими якостями важливим компонентом є креативність. Показано, що така креативність є специфічною, що обумовлено особливостями соціономічної сфери, в якій реалізується соціально обдарована особистість. Уточнено поняття «соціальна креативність» у контексті розробки проблеми соціальної обдарованості.

Key words: обдарованість, соціальна обдарованість, соціальний інтелект, соціальні здібності, креативність, творчість, соціальна креативність.

Елена Демченко

Креативность в структуре социальной одаренности

В статье сосредоточено внимание на проблеме социальной одаренности, разработка которой активизировалась в современном психолого-педагогическом дискурсе. Установлено, что социальная одаренность является сложным феноменом, о статусе, сущности и структуры которой нет единого подхода. На основе обобщения взглядов зарубежных и отечественных ученых сделан вывод, что в структуре такого научного конструкта наряду с социальной мотивацией, социальными способностями, социальным и эмоциональным интеллектом, организаторскими и лидерскими качествами важным компонентом является креативность. Показано, что такая креативность является специфической, что обусловлено особенностями социэкономической сферы, в которой реализуется социально одаренная личность. Уточнено понятие «социальная креативность» в контексте разработки проблемы социальной одаренности.

Key words: одаренность, социальная одаренность, социальный интеллект, социальные способности, креативность, творчество, социальная креативность

Introduction

In the modern psychological and socio-pedagogical discourse the idea is gaining momentum that having a high IQ score is not the only and absolute precondition for achieving success in life, self-fulfillment and entry into the elite group. Instead, important non-cognitive parameters come to the fore. These are a high level of social adaptation, predisposition to quick orientation and response to new social situations, much social activity, a developed capacity for effective interaction and communicative skills, well-formed leadership and managerial skills, moral and volitional qualities, social and emotional intelligence. A socially apt person integrates these quality indicators.

In the works of famous personologists we come across high appreciation of personality, whose character reveals traces of social aptitude such as: a certain social ideal, an ultimate goal of human development (E.Fromm); a mature person who is in a lifelong process of continual self-formation (self-fulfillment) (H.Olport); a “sociometric prince” (J.Moreno); national and political

elite (D.Dontsov, V.Lypynskiy); a person with a particular lifestyle and behavioral patterns (N.Leites); a special type of consciousness, capable of realizing its subjectivity and objectivity in social reality (K.Albukhanova); a “genius of communication” (V.Levi); a “master of communication” (V.Kunitsin) and others.

Scientific research into social aptitude as an independent social phenomenon started in the XX century in the foreign psychological-pedagogical discourse (K.Ebroms, B.Clark, V.Merlin, D.Smith, B.Teplov, C.Heller and others). The study of “social aptitude”, a basic category, showed that the psychological and pedagogical thesaurus contains some adjacent scientific concepts: “social intelligence” (J.Guilford, D.Ushakov, T.Hunt); “social competence” (L.Petrovska, O.Savenkov); “communicative competence” (O.Bodalov); “social self-fulfillment” (A.Koniaeva); “synthesized intelligence” (F.Dittman-Kohli, P.Baltes); “adaptive intelligence” (C.Burt, D.Watson) and others. Such phenomena are similar in nature and content, they overlap and are more or less manifested in the structure of social aptitude.

In recent decades the study of social aptitude as a separate psychological construct has been intensified in the Russian (A.Galiakhmetova, T.Guschina, H.Zvyereva, I.Ivenskikh, T.Kiseleva, N.Kolodiy, D.Lyusina, M.Rozhkov, D.Ushakov, T.Khrustaleva, etc.) and Belarusian (Ya.Kolomynskiy, Ye.Panko, etc.) scientific discourses. Numerous studies to establish the status and disclose the nature of social aptitude, trace the evolution of its components at different age stages, develop effective methods of diagnosis of children with signs of social aptitude have been conducted.

An increased interest of contemporary psychologists and teachers in the problem of social aptitude is currently observed in Ukraine. There has been conducted a fundamental study of social aptitude as a top-level expression of social abilities (O.Vlasova), extensive research into various aspects of this phenomenon has been initiated (N.Matsiuk, O.Naumenko, M.Yankovchuk, etc.).

The status and characteristics of social aptitude

Despite the fact that modern foreign and domestic scholars represent new knowledge about social aptitude, its status remains controversial and ultimately uncertain. Intellectual and social aptitudes are defined as separate types of general aptitude (O.Vlasova, T.Kiseleva, etc.); social

apptitude is defined as one of the types of special aptitude (O.Antonova, D.Bohoyavlenska, N.Levitov, V.Shadrikov, etc.).

We share O. Vlasova's scientific position suggesting separation of the two leading types of general human aptitude according to main areas of formation and fulfillment of the human psyche. To begin with, there is intellectual aptitude, which belongs to the area of "man – objective world" dominated by the subject-object relationship. The second type is social aptitude, which belongs to the field of "man – social world" ruled by subject-subject relations and patterns of relationships. The researcher notes that both types of aptitude are based on general abilities (Vlasova, 2006).

According to B.Teplov, aptitude is a peculiar set of skills, which determines the success of certain activities. This is also a reason to assess social aptitude as a form of general aptitude. In the modern classification an ability to communicate, which dominates in the structure of social aptitude, is of complex and general nature.

It is worth noting that some scientists (H.Burmenska, N.Leites, V.Slutskiy, etc.) completely identify social aptitude with managerial, communicative, organizational, attractive aptitudes, whereas a number of Russian scientists (D.Zabelina, T.Kiselova, D.Ushakov, T.Khrustaleva, etc.) differentiate between them as individual and peculiar manifestations of social aptitude, i.e., managerial aptitude is one of the manifestations of social aptitude (T.Kiselova); social aptitude is a general category, which depending on the particular nature of its manifestations and a fulfilled goal combines communicative, analytical, predictive and organizational types (M.Rozhkov); managerial ability is a "key element" of social aptitude and a broader concept (D.Ushakov); communicative aptitude is part of managerial aptitude, which in turn is part of social aptitude (V.Bolshakov, A.Mitlosh, O.Yakovleva); social aptitude is an integral phenomenon encompassing activity, environmental and personal leadership components (D.Zabelina).

The analysis of scientific works has revealed several approaches to the explication of the category of "social aptitude". It is interpreted as a manifestation of "special talent" (N.Levitov); managerial and social interaction aptitude (D.Ushakov); systematic and dynamic personal formation that develops throughout life and determines the ability to achieve better results in socially oriented activities (T.Kiselova); preconditions for the development of management skills, potential success in the area of "man-man" (I.Ivenskyh); a complex and multicomponent system

of interconnected psychological characteristics in their unique combination and dynamics, ensuring the success of interpersonal relationships with adults and peers (H.Zvereva).

The structure of social aptitude as a scientific construct

Social aptitude is a complex psychological phenomenon which lacks a universal approach to its structural components. For instance, D.Ushakov believes that characteristics of social aptitude expressed through leadership and social interaction can be divided into two groups: cognitive (general academic intelligence, practical intelligence, social intelligence); non-cognitive (temperament, personality characteristics – empathy, optimism, high activity, extraversion, justice, an ability to take decisions under uncertainty, independence combined with reliance on group values, a strong will) (Ushakov, 2004, p.16).

T.Kiseleva also suggests a two-component structure of social aptitude that includes motivational and instrumental components whose integration allows a person to go beyond the requirements of the activity, open new techniques and patterns, form a peculiar individual style of activity (Kiseleva 2014).

N.Leites' study presents such structural elements of social aptitude as social perception, prosocial behavior, moral judgment, organizational skills, etc. (Leites 1996). The five major components (social intelligence, creativity, social motivation, communicative and organizational skills and management properties of the individual) are identified in the structure of social aptitude by T.Khrustaleva (Khrustaleva 2003, p. 54).

In summary, we share A.Savenkov's position that like any complex natural phenomenon aptitude cannot be schematically if logically described; being an integrative personal property it appears differently in different situations; there will never be an exhaustive answer to the question of its indicators while the process of their refinement will never end (Savenkov 2002, p.124). A.Savenkov's conclusions can be well extrapolated on the interpretation of the social aptitude structure and components.

Creativity as a component of social aptitude

Building our own scientific position on the nature and structure of social aptitude as a complex psychological and pedagogical construct we agree that *its structure should include such an important component as creativity*. This view is supported by scientific maxims, which, put

forward by renowned researchers of general aptitude, continue to undergo experiments and form the basis for studying special kinds of aptitude, including social.

According to a psychological concept the leading component and quality index of any kind of aptitude, regardless of its specific manifestations (general or special), along with abilities is creativity. In particular, J.Renzulli described the phenomenon of aptitude in the form of rings as the interaction of three groups of qualities: intellectual capabilities above average, high enthusiasm for the task and a high level of creativity (Renzulli, 1997). E.Torrance's concept of creativity provides for the triad of creative abilities, skills, and motivation (Torrance 1979).

The combination of these components enables gifted individuals to achieve significant progress in comparison with other people who are in the same conditions, but have no creativity. It is thanks to the creative abilities, relevant knowledge, skills and motivation that new, original, unique products are created.

A creative person is seen by researchers "as such that possesses the highest level of development and preparedness for specific activities and life in general, changes of behavior, crisis solutions, constructive rational decisions in difficult and extreme conditions" (Molyako 2006, p.20).

There coexist two terms "artistry" and "creativity" which scholars cannot agree upon. We share the view that they should be separated. For example, E.Torrance defines creativity as the ability for artistry and a condition that facilitates and stimulates the creative process, assesses its efficiency (Torrance 1979.).

While separating these categories we are guided by subjective conditioning (to describe creativity) and procedural effective (to describe artistry) parameters. In view of this creativity is treated as the ability for artistry, the overall capability of the individual, which affects performance irrespective of the field of personal initiative; creativity is implemented through artistry. Creativity is often seen as a creative potential and abilities, which should realize themselves in the process of creative activity.

In addition, researchers associate creativity with the activity of an individual, consider it a creative initiative determinant. Accordingly, a person can be called creative if he has internal preconditions for creative activity: personal properties, specific cognition, neurophysiological potentialities that contribute to its creative initiative which is not stimulated by external search and transformative activity. A creative person can be called artistic if he develops additional

motives, personal properties and skills contributing to outstanding results in one or more kinds of creative activity due to the influence of external factors.

Thus, when it comes to social aptitude as a scientific phenomenon, its structure certainly includes a required component of creativity as the ability for innovative thinking and making constructive decisions in new situations.

It should be noted that current research focuses mostly on intellectual creativity, which, however, does not deny existence of other types. Modern scholars have identified scientific, technical, literary and art creativity. Taking into account other human activities B.Molyako expands the range of creativity with game, educational, military and management, home (“domestic”), situational (“life”), and communicative (Molyako 2006) types.

Specification of creativity is completely objective, because at present studying this phenomenon in general is already insufficient. One argument for this is the need to identify differences in the creative process, depending on the areas of public life or professional activities. In particular, the socio-economic environment sets specific requirements for a professional as a creative person since innovation and originality of professional duties fulfillment are manifested in the course of interpersonal and intergroup interaction, people management, solution of common challenges, cooperation and subordination, solution of non-standard communicative situations, etc. B.Lomov noticed that people need creativity not only for writing novels and painting, putting forth scientific hypotheses, but in order to survive. According to A.Lazurskiy, creative people are better at adaptation and seek to remake the environment according to their needs and interests.

Since social aptitude is realized in the socio-economic sphere, we rely on conclusions of psychologists (O.Etkind, M.Kahan, T.Kornilov, etc.) that communication is a priori a creative process. It is characterized by dialectics, unpredictability, complexity, inconsistency requiring individual readiness to act in a new social situation.

So, creativity being a psychological phenomenon undoubtedly has general laws, regardless of their manifestation. However, we agree that we should not automatically transfer the understanding of creativity from the scope of things into the world of human relations. It is specific to creativity, realized through creative activities of a socially apt person to be manifested in the socio-economic, communicative and management areas. Therefore, in the studied context it makes sense to consider not the category of “creativity” but of “social creativity” in its system,

which is a separate scientific concept and is more in line with characterological features of this type of aptitude.

The focus of our attention is directed to modern psychological research into social creativity. The ability to be creative in a social context is also termed “communicative creativity” (A.Golovanova, N.Martyshkin, T.Osipova), “creativity in the field of communication” (S.Kan, U.Kala), “socio-psychological creativity” (N.Tiurmin, K.Romanov), “social artistry” (N.Beloborodov, Yu.Chyzheva), “artistry of communication” (O.Sydorkina), “creativity in the social sphere” (O.Vlasova).

A.Popel interprets social creativity as a person's ability to quickly find and effectively use innovative, original creative solutions to situations of interpersonal interaction. The author also proposed a structure of social creativity, which includes general capacity for self-fulfillment; social motivation, which accounts for constant need for social contacts and motivational guidelines to communicate with other people; communicative sensitivity (verbal and nonverbal); behavioral sensitivity, which manifests itself in the ability to adequately interpret the behavior of others and use different behavioral styles according to your partners and social situation; social imagination, to simulate the further development of the social situation on the basis of a feedback (Popel 2005, p.10-11).

We appeal to A.Baniukhova who views social creativity as a complex quality of personality that allows to understand and analyze the causes and dynamics of different social situations and to make effective, creative, non-standard solutions in situations of interpersonal interaction. According to the scholar, its structure includes the following parameters: motivational, intellectual, communicative, emotional, and existential (Baniukhova 2011, p.200).

We adhere to the interpretation of social creativity by E.Chichuk who believes it to be an integrative multidimensional property of the individual, providing creative transformation of the socio-economic subjective space. The researcher holds the opinion that social creativity is expressed in the creation of new ways to address socio-economic problems, new products of social reality. This phenomenon integrates creative personal performance as well as individual procedural characteristics that occur under specific social conditions, combines elements of behavioral, cognitive and motivational systems of personality, manifested in the creation of new forms of the socio-economic space existence (Chichuk 2006, p. 7).

Social creativity is based on a high level of self-actualization and the intensity of its features (values, support, synergy, cognitive needs, self-sensitivity, and spontaneity); it aims at personal growth, development and self-improvement, based on creative attitude to life and socioeconomic areas. It is supported by internal motivation, internal locus of control, independence of values and beliefs, heightened consciousness, reflection, a subjective position of the individual in relation to the social world. A person with a high level of social creativity features a predominance of values, a holistic perception of the social world and the people around them (Chichuk 2006, p.8).

Summarizing different scientific positions we define *social creativity in the structure of social aptitude* as its mandatory component which in conjunction with a high level of social motivation, social and emotional intelligence, developed social, organizational and management skills of the individual provide an opportunity for successful self-fulfillment in society, achievement of considerable success in socioeconomic fields and entry to the elite group.

The interdependence of these elements of social aptitude is confirmed by O.Vlasova. She states that creativity in the social sphere is a psychological component that relates to the structure of social abilities as heteronomous formation. It is this ability that forms social aptitude. Moreover, a number of works by I.Kyshtymov, N.Leites, A.Prutchenkov, V.Chudnovskiy and others prove a direct correlation between the level of social intelligence and creativity, state a significant increase in all parameters of social intelligence to go with the positive dynamics of creativity. A creative person is more capable of understanding and acceptance of others and, thus, of successful communication and adaptability to a social environment.

In this sense we view *social creativity* as the ability of a gifted person to abandon templates and stereotypes in the process of solving social, moral, communicative, professional and managerial issues, make changes and go beyond limits, create new socially significant situations of interaction, initiate co-creation and manage it, integrate creative abilities of others in the process of collective social creativity, build a genuine communication strategy, offer innovative variations of the communicative process, develop an original style of behavior.

Social creativity is realized in a creative communicative social activity of a gifted person through new ideas, semantic flexibility, fast decision-making and finding original constructive solutions, communicative skills, restructuring previous experience, the ability to improvise, verbal and non-verbal sensitivity. Social creativity involves an emotional aspect that is associated

with empathy and reflexivity. It is realized on the moral and ethical, altruistic and subject-subject basis.

Conclusion

Creativity is an important component of social aptitude which is associated with social and emotional intelligence and affects their positive dynamics. Specificity of the socio-economic activity, owing to which a socially apt person fulfills himself, procreates special social creativity incorporating general and peculiar manifestations. Activities of a socially apt person are based on communication and provide an endless chain of new communicative situations requiring a rapid solution and use of original ways of interaction.

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