

THE CREATIVITY OF YOUNG ADULTS DIAGNOSED WITH SCHIZOPHRENIA

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Received date: 8 February 2022; Accepted date: 22 July 2022

Abstract: This study aims to assess the creativity level of eight institutionalized young adults diagnosed with schizophrenia. The creativity was measured in terms of fluency, originality and flexibility using the Torrance Test of Creative Thinking (TTCT) Verbal Form B developed by Paul Torrence. Findings revealed that the patient respondents' creative potentials in terms of fluency and originality lay in a wide spectrum of weak (25 per cent in both facets), below average (25 per cent in both facets), strong (12.5 per cent in both facets) and very strong (37.5 per cent in fluency and 12.5 per cent in originality). Whereas, in flexibility the creativity level was within the spectrum of weak (25 per cent), below average (25 per cent), average (12.5 per cent) and above average (37.5 per cent). Hence, most of the patient respondents have very strong fluency and above-average flexibility.

Keywords: Creative Potentials, Creativity, Fluency, Originality, Flexibility, Schizophrenia

INTRODUCTION

Vincent Willem Van Gogh, Louis Wain, Edvard Munch and Francisco de Goya were some of the artists known to have suffered from mental illness, but their creative works even contributed to modern art. There are claims that psychopathology is linked to creativity (Eysenck, 1995; Woody and Claridge, 1997; Porzio, 2003; and Kaplan, 2014) The link, however, is still controversial and literature created doubt neither disproving nor accommodating its link (Kaplan 2014; and Reddy et. al, 2018).

People having schizophrenia are characterized by emotional disturbance and distortion in thinking, perception withdrawal from reality, language, sense of self and behavior and commonly experience hallucinations and

delusions (Bustos, et. al., 1985; WHO, 2019; and APA, 2020). There is no cure for schizophrenia yet, but individuals who were diagnosed may undergo treatment and manage the illness with prescription drugs, self-help approaches, and helpful therapies (Harrow et. al, 2005). These interventions claim some recovery depending on severity, pharmacological and nonpharmacological treatment options, integration interventions, and patient's response to treatment (Frankenburg and Xiong, 2014) nevertheless, gaps in dealing with and finding a possible cure for schizophrenia still need more research (Patel et. al 2014; Lake and Turner, 2017; and Kohn et al., 2004).

On the other hand, creative individuals are characterized by intelligence, they have the capacity to solve problems, practice independence, have interest, can generate new ideas, and are complex (Simonton, 2000). Creativeness is a human mental process that seems furtive, and yet very significant to human progress. There are a high number of creativity researchers which explore the nature of creative thinking, the process underlying creative behavior, the traits or qualities attributed to the creative individual, and the means by which creativity can be effectively and accurately assessed.

This study aims to contribute information on the creative potentials of institutionalized young adults diagnosed with schizophrenia. Specifically, to identify the level of creativity in terms of fluency, originality, and flexibility. It is assumed that the pre-existing condition affects creativity. In this study, the preexisting condition is schizophrenia. It is hoped that this work would be able to contribute to the various research concerning the link between creativity and mental illness. Studies like these may foster awareness concerning creativity and mental illness being treated.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A descriptive quantitative research design was utilized to systematically describe the creativity of young adult Patients with Schizophrenia. The standardized test: Torrance Test of Creative Thinking (TTCT) Verbal Form B (Torrance, 2001) specifically Activity 1: Asking, Activity 4: Product Improvement and Activity 5: Unusual Uses, were used to identify and evaluate respondents' creative potential in three aspects including fluency, originality, and flexibility.

The researchers opted to use the verbal test of TTCT only and utilized test scores on fluency, flexibility, and originality. The figural test of TTCT was not included as to the achievement of the purpose of this study.

Eight (8) institutionalized young adult patients with schizophrenia participated in this study. Three (3) patient-respondents were diagnosed with disorganized schizophrenia; two (2) with catatonic schizophrenia; and three (3) with undifferentiated, paranoid, and residual type schizophrenia. The patient-respondents were admitted to the Panganlungan Halfwayhouse and Rehabilitation Center (PHRC) at Solo, Mabini, Batangas during the data-gathering phase.

The data collection was conducted in coordination with the attending psychiatrist of the patient-respondents. Ethical protocols like supervision of experts, informed consent and confidentiality were observed in the personal administration of TTCT.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This attempt to describe the creative potentials of patients with schizophrenia explores the three aspects of creativity: fluency, originality, and flexibility.

Fluency. **Figure 1** presents the creative potentials of patients with schizophrenia in terms of fluency. Fluency is measured by the number of relevant ideas to the picture.

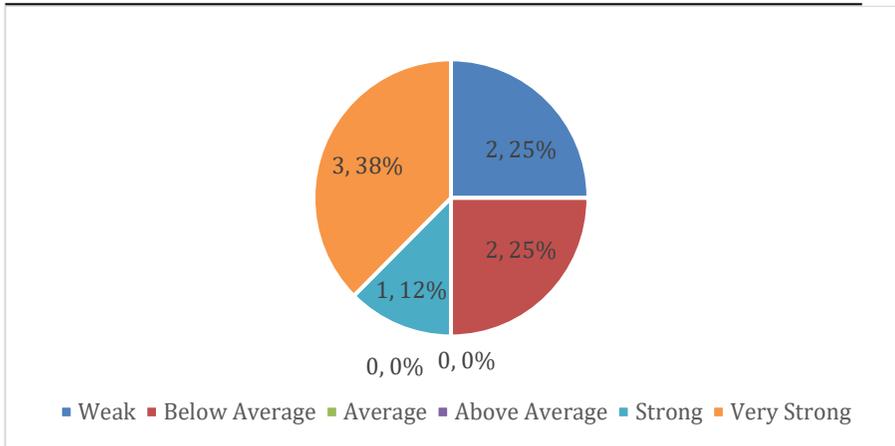


Figure 1 Patient-Respondents' Creative Potentials in terms of Fluency

The findings show that patient respondents can generate ideas although not necessarily diverse. They have “many things in mind” but have difficulty conveying messages and filtering out irrelevant stimuli. Most of the patient respondents scored higher in this aspect of creativity (fluency) which indicates a creative capacity.

The score reflects the subject’s ability to produce several ideas in words. Each of the verbal tasks attempted to tap a somewhat different kind of ability or mental process, and further clues concerning the patient’s mental functioning were obtained by looking at each of the patient’s responses. The responses of the patient which contained two or more distinct ideas are treated as two or more responses. Patients’ responses who elaborated on a single idea are not considered.

These findings support the findings of Ryabova, T.V. & Mendelevich, Vladimir. (2002) where Schizophrenic patients show better achievement on verbal tests on fluency, while it contrasts findings of Acar, S., Chen, X., & Cayirdag, N. (2018) where performance on verbal measures of creativity was significantly lower than the nonverbal measures

Originality. It can be gleaned in **Figure 2** the creative potentials of the patients with schizophrenia in terms of originality. Originality is measured by the unusualness of the ideas.

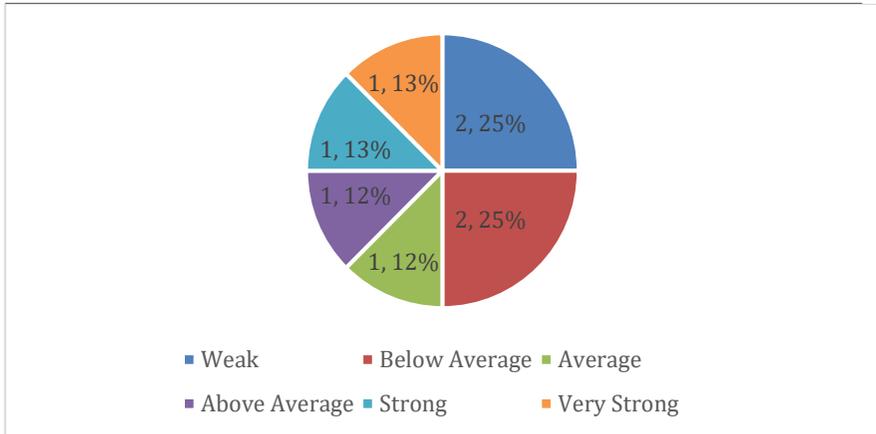


Figure 2 Patient-Respondents' Creative Potentials in terms of Originality

In the creativity aspect of originality, most of the patient-respondents' scores ranged from weak to below average (25 per cent). This signifies that they can think individualistically and imaginatively. Higher scores in TTCT showed that the patient-respondents have the capacity to be novel or create unusual responses. They have the potential to create a novel and original idea, which is an apex of creativity. Originality is one aspect of creativity which is obviously dominant among patients with schizophrenia since schizophrenia is characterized by a severe disconnect from reality, including a tendency to experience thoughts that are divergent, disorganized, and delusional. (Kaufman and Elliot, 2014). More likely the thoughts of patients with schizophrenia are unique or original. Hence, schizophrenia positions to satisfy one requirement for creative thought: namely originality.

The Originality score represents the patients' ability to produce ideas that are away from the obvious, commonplace, banal or established. A high score usually indicates a non-conforming person with much intellectual energy. Such a person can make mental leaps in obtaining solutions but is not necessarily erratic or impulsive. In this study, patients were weak in this aspect.

These findings support Kaufman, S.B. and P.S. Elliot (2014) claims that a person with schizophrenia experiences all or some disconnection from reality, which include an inclination to have thoughts that are divergent,

disorganized, and delusional; their thoughts is more likely to be unique. This satisfies an aspect of creativity which is originality; however, originality is not enough for creativity. The study Khant (2001) also claimed that there is “original nonsense” in the case of schizophrenia thought. A thought or idea that is new but not valuable or useful.

Flexibility. Figure 3 reveals the creative potentials of patients with schizophrenia in terms of flexibility. Flexibility is measured by the variety of different types of ideas.

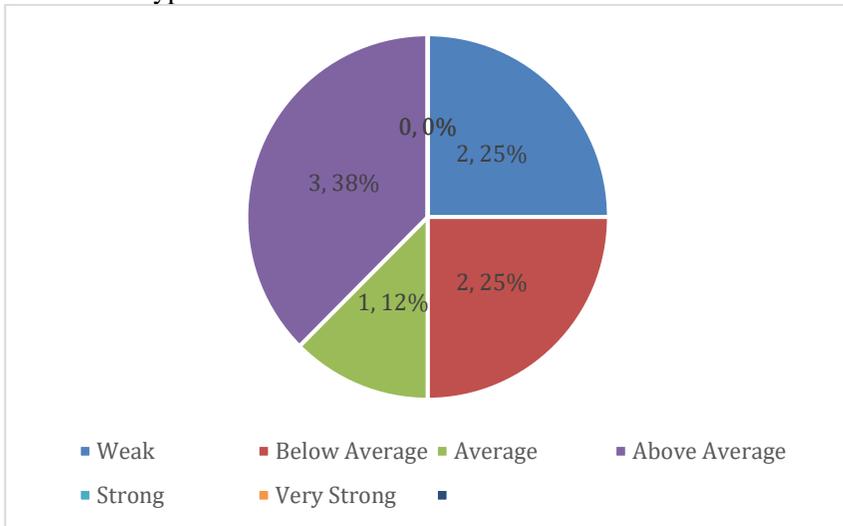


Figure 2 Patient-Respondents' Creative Potentials in terms of Flexibility

Most of the patient respondents have above-average levels of creativity in terms of flexibility however most of the patient respondents' flexibility ranges from weak to below average. Hence, flexibility or the ability to gain different approaches used in ideas and the number of shifts in thinking seemed difficult among patient respondents. In scoring, one point is given for each category used and there is no credit if the category is repeated. Most schizophrenic respondents repeated the same concepts or ideas in answering the creativity test. The schizophrenic respondents have lower flexibility due to perseveration or persistent repetition of words and ideas that come to mind.

The flexibility score represents the patients' ability to produce a variety of kinds of ideas, to shift from one approach to another or to use a variety of strategies. The patients' score indicates a wide range of responses, a result of adaptive thinking habits, satisfactory knowledge or experience would be hypothesized.

Based on these findings, patient respondents' creative potentials are evident in fluency and flexibility and least in originality. The creative potentials of patients with schizophrenia can be an advantage point for the facilitation of intervention or therapeutic activities capitalizing on creating among the patients.

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