Social Relationships and Creative Thinking in Early Childhood Practice

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Abstract
This paper presents a conceptual analysis of young children’s creative thinking, with special reference made to their social relationships. Cultural contexts are also inextricably tied to creative thinking, although it has received less attention in creativity research. This paper seeks to fill this gap by discussing the link between social relationships and creative thinking, and some of the challenges facing creativity in Asia. It draws on the distinction Glăveanu (2010a) makes between: social relationships as external factors that create the conditions for individuals’ creative expression, and social relationships as internal factors that are part of one’s creative thinking. It also discusses the implications of his work on early childhood practice. The paper concludes that children’s creative thinking is a relational phenomenon, and its diverse nature, and the multiple ways in which it is being fostered in various early childhood practice, warrant further attention from early childhood and creativity research.

Keywords: social relationships, creative thinking, early childhood practice, culture

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Social relationships and creative thinking are two important psychological phenomena that make early childhood practice possible. The promotion of creative thinking is central to early childhood pedagogy, and teachers (i.e. early childhood practitioners) cannot practice successfully without forming positive relationships with children and their parents (i.e. primary caregivers). Siraj-Blatchford (2007) demonstrates this by illustrating young children’s creativity in relation to ‘sustained-shared thinking’ between teachers and children, which has been considered as an effective strategy in early childhood pedagogy, based on the Effective Pre-school and Primary Education Project (see Siraj-Blatchford, 2010). Social relationships and creative thinking are hugely promoted in the East and the West (e.g. Chien & Hui, 2010; NAEYC, 2009; DCSF, 2008), and it is now widely known that social relationships can greatly influence children’s motivation to engage in activities that are crucial for developing their creativity (Hennesey, 2003; Amabile, 1996).

Cultural contexts are also a significant part of children’s social relationships and creative thinking, as these contexts give meanings to children’s interactions with others (Kağıthane, 2007). Tobin, Hsueh and Karasawa’s (2009) observations of early childhood practice in China, Japan and the United States show the ways in which social relationships and creative thinking are ingrained in cultural contexts of early childhood practice. Their study illustrates that, these psychological phenomena may be resistant to change, as they describe the ways in which early childhood practice in these countries has been somewhat unyielding to outside influences, despite the globalization of the early childhood field. At the same time, though, each setting in their study has also developed new practices by integrating innovative approaches from the outside into traditional cultural practice. It seems to be that their work demonstrates the fluidity of cultural contexts that, in turn, mediate teacher-child relationships, and the ways in which teachers create an environment that foster children’s creative thinking.

However, the link between social relationships and creative thinking is complex, as they mutually influence one another in various ways. Glăveanu (2010a) clarifies this link by making a distinction between social relationships as external factors that promote or inhibit individuals’ creativity, and social relationships as internal factors that influence one’s creativity more deeply. This indicates that, parents and teachers, for example, are not
individuals who simply create conditions for children’s creative expressions, but they also play an important part in shaping children’s creative development through their relationships with them. Glăveanu suggests that, in creativity research, there is a lack of emphasis on social relationships as internal factors, and argues that this can lead to seeing creativity as a skill which manifests itself only with the ‘right’ sort of encouragement and conditions, rather than as something that children already possess through their relationships with others.

There is a growing understanding of distinctiveness of the ways in which each culture promotes young children’s creative thinking, and the different ways in which the East and the West view creativity (Craft, 2008). Glăveanu’s notion, however, suggests that there is still a lack of emphasis on understanding the social and cultural nature of children’s creative expression, and the multiple ways of promoting it. In Asia, for instance, there remains a commonly held view of a need to ‘catch-up’ with the West when it comes to promoting children’s creativity, as creativity in the West is still regarded as something that the East often admires and envies (Kristof, 2011; Kim, 2005). Such views are not helpful in further understanding young children’s creativity, and in valuing practices that are based on one’s culture and beliefs, which Tobin (2011) describes as ‘national treasures’ (p.5).

This paper presents a conceptual analysis of young children’s creative thinking with special reference made to their social relationships. It draws on Glăveanu’s (2010a) work, as it seems to provide a much needed conceptual framework, that helps many of us who work in the field of early childhood understand the diversity of children’s creative thinking, and the ways in which it is intricately related to the cultural contexts of their development (Fumoto & Greenfield, 2012).

It should be noted that the valuing of the social and cultural nature of creativity does not mean to indicate cultural relativism, in which all behaviours, thoughts and feelings have meanings that are unique to a specific cultural context (Kağıtçıbaşı, 2007). Nor does it undermine a wealth of knowledge in creativity research on the kind of environments that seem to promote children’s creative thinking. For example, the oft-cited social contexts that are likely to facilitate children’s creative thinking are of those that are non-judgmental and, of those that provide stimulation and challenge, in a social climate that promotes emotional security (e.g. Duffy, 2009). Such social contexts are important for children wherever they are, and respecting and ensuring their well-being is imperative whatever the cultural contexts
might be.

Rather, the rationale of this paper is to contribute to the debate in the ways in which creative thinking is being understood in early childhood practice. In particular, the notion of culture in understanding children’s creative thinking has been left relatively unexamined (Craft, 2008), and this paper seeks to fill this gap by discussing the link between social relationships and creative thinking, and some of the challenges facing creativity in Asia.

Creativity Research in Early Childhood

Over the years, a number of psychological theories have developed to explain creativity (see Hargreaves, 2012), and various authors have built a wealth of knowledge regarding this topic (e.g. Robinson, 2009; Craft, Gardner & Claxton, 2008; Sternberg, 1999; Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). To review their work is beyond the scope of this paper, but, it will consider the ways in which creativity research has shifted from seeing creativity as an ability that is possessed by exceptional individuals, to something that is expressed in our everyday lives. This is particularly relevant to the present discussion, because it reflects the ways in which the understanding of children’s development has progressed from a developmental-constructivist tradition to incorporating cultural-historical or socio-cultural perspectives (Fleer & Robbins, 2007). It is also important for early childhood practice because, the ways in which teachers talk about creative thinking can have significant implications on the ways in which they interact with children (Robson & Hargreaves, 2005).

Whether in Europe or in Asia, intuitively, those in the early childhood profession, and indeed, parents have always known the uniqueness of each child, and children’s abilities to imagine, to explore, to ask questions, to become engaged in activities, and to interact with their social and physical environments. They see many children overcome some challenging situations with resilience, and resourcefulness. Many children demonstrate their abilities to persist in order to meet challenges with effort, thoughtfulness, and often with a sense of humour: all of which are indications of children’s creative thinking, and their developing creativity. Craft (2003) discusses these expressions as ‘little c creativity’, as opposed to creativity applied to children with exceptional talents in a certain field, such as in music or in art. She refers to it as involving aspects such as children’s resourcefulness, their ability to
actively interact and engage with their environments, and their determination to overcome obstacles.

This extended view of creativity echoes the ways in which other authors explain young children’s creative thinking. For instance, Robson (2012) discusses the relevance of Sternberg’s definition of creative thinking in understanding young children’s creativity. Sternberg defines creative thinking as ‘thinking that is novel and that produces ideas that are of value’ (2003, pp.325-6). Robson highlights that Sternberg’s usage of ‘novelty’, and not ‘originality’, which is often associated with creativity, is important, and cites that: ‘to count as creative, someone’s idea does not have to embody thinking that has never been done before by anyone. Rather, creative thinking is thinking which is new for that individual, not necessarily for society as a whole’ (Robson, 2012). That is, creative thinking, in her view, inherently resides in all children.

Kudryavtsev (2011) goes further and discusses the ways in which children’s expressions of creativity form the basis of their development. He notes the differences between ‘creative work as discovery for others and as discovery for oneself’, and refers to the latter as ‘subjective novelty’ (p.46). He suggests the importance of children’s discovery for themselves as a precursor to discovering something that is new for others, and states that: ‘[c]hildhood is almost the only part of a person’s life where creative work is a universal and natural way of existence’ (Kudryavtsev, 2011, p.46). By referring to Vygotsky’s work, Kudryavtsev (2011) further explains that, for a child to discover something new does not mean that it leads to a creation of new things or ideas, but it refers to ‘a change in a child’. In other words, creative thinking, in his view, is a change that happens to a child when he/she learns new ways of engaging in an activity based on his/her new knowledge, skills, and emotional maturity.

Importantly, Craft (2008) notes that not all creative acts are ‘good’, or have value for individuals, or for the collective well-being of societies, and suggests the significance of ethics in one’s creative activity. She notes that creating something new, and making changes through someone’s creative acts, may not always be desirable, if they do not meet the needs of one’s cultural contexts. In practice, she emphasizes that there is a need for those engaged in education to support children to express their creativity wisely and in ethically sound manners, and to help them think about the implications their creative actions may have on others. That is, teachers need to support children to think about the consequences of their actions no matter
how creative the actions might seem (e.g. cutting someone’s hair without permission is not a good idea, even if a child is exploring how scissors work!).

Given its abstract nature, though, it is not surprising that many authors have long debated the concept of creativity, and the existence of this in young children. For instance, Feldman argues that children’s spontaneous expression should not be considered as creativity, and should be distinguished from a creative act that consists of a more coherent effort, based on hard work, and systematic analysis of ideas and knowledge (e.g. Feldman in Sawyer et al., 2003, pp.219-220: see Fumoto et al., 2012). Such contrasting view to the ones presented earlier (e.g. Kudryavtsev, 2011) demonstrate the ways in which the concept of creativity is still under much debate. However, in the field of early childhood, there seems to be some consensus suggesting that children’s creative thinking can be seen as part of their development. This way of thinking about creativity seems particularly important for parents and teachers who support the ways in which children engage with their environment. The ways in which they perceive children, and the kind of social environments that they create as a result, are important for the promotion of young children’s creativity.

Alongside these developments in creativity research, there are also challenges. For instance, research that explores the influence of social and cultural contexts on creative development is still scarce (Craft, 2008), despite the fact that some authors have been examining children’s thinking from socio-cultural perspective (e.g. Robbins, 2005). Chan and Choy (2010) call for further dialogue between cultures that would promote unity amongst the field of early childhood, which is vital for making progress in enhancing the quality of children’s experiences in early childhood settings. Currently, the dialogue between cultures in creativity research is somewhat skewed as, in general, more seems to be known about how the West promotes creativity in young children than about how the East does this. Although there has been an increasing understanding towards the ways in which different countries understand and foster creativity (e.g. Kaufman & Sternberg, 2010; Vong, 2008), there still seems to be a lack of insight into the ways in which children, especially in the East, express their creative thinking.

One of the reasons here might be because English is the main language of communication, for instance, in academic journals and international conferences where ideas and concepts are promoted. Creativity research and those writing about creativity in the early childhood field in
English literature have been dominated by authors from Europe and North America, leading to the wide dissemination of the Western notion of creativity. Lee and Tseng (2008) also discuss the ways in which a Western perspective of child-centred practice, and its promotion in the field of early childhood, may have undermined the cultural contexts of such practice. Child-centred practice is often seen as vital for children’s creativity, and the embracing of a Western perspective of this may have also inadvertently reinforced the views that the promotion of creativity is something that the East needs to learn from the West.

Furthermore, the social and cultural contexts in Asia are often stereotyped as being in conflict with the promotion of creativity. Kim (2005) discusses the implications that Confucianism has had on the ways in which many Asian societies have promoted ‘rote learning, extreme competition, a work-play dichotomy, and a devaluation of play’ (p.341). Although education is highly valued in Asia, these elements are known to suppress the development of creativity (Kim, 2005).

In addition, the kind of social relationships that is promoted in some Asian countries may be in contradiction to the relationships that are seen to promote creativity in young children. For instance, research on Japanese and American mother-child relationships by Rothbaum et al. (2000) suggest that ‘symbiotic harmony’, which emphasizes the importance of accommodation (i.e. adapting oneself to others) based on the nurturance of ‘empathy, compliance and propriety’, is more likely to be observed in Japanese than in American mother-child relationships. American mothers, on the other hand, are more likely to reinforce children’s ‘autonomy, expressiveness and exploration’ (ibid., p.1122), which are the factors that are closely associated with the development of children’s creative thinking (Fumoto & Greenfield, 2012).

Does this suggest that the social and cultural contexts of Asia are less conducive to promoting children’s creative thinking than the West? Or, as Nisbett (2003) indicates, are these contexts fostering different ways of thinking creatively in the East and the West? Bearing in mind that any distinction made between cultures is never straightforward, and that there is criticism of the ways in which Nisbett makes this distinction (Chan & Yan, 2007), the foregoing discussion points to the view that there may indeed be some important differences between the East and the West in the ways in which children’s creativity is being fostered. Further research is needed to understand the ways in which social and cultural contexts affect
children’s creativity, and the ways in which they influence early childhood practice.

Perhaps the real challenge facing creativity research may be to explore children’s creativity, not only to highlight the different ways in which it is being promoted in various countries, but also to explore ‘how and why’ the differences occur. Kağıtçibaşı (2007) notes that, such exploration seems to be crucial for understanding human lives and development. Glăveanu’s (2010a) analysis of the link between social relationships and creativity may help clarify the relational phenomenon that underlies children’s creative thinking, and supports the exploration of its diversity.

**The Social and Cultural Nature of Children’s Creative Thinking**

Glăveanu (2010a) makes an important distinction between ‘the social roots, social dynamics and social functions of creativity’, and ‘the social [relationships] as an external environment’ that promotes or inhibits children’s creative thinking (p.83). In his view, socio-cultural contexts not only serve to influence the individuals’ creative thinking from ‘outside’, but also involve ‘the social and cultural working from within the creative person and process’ (2010a, p.84).

In discussing Amabile’s (1996) work, Glăveanu (2010a) suggests that the focus on aspects such as ‘choice and constraints, reward, competition, modelling, stimulation, evaluation, peer pressure, surveillance, etc.’ (p.83) that are known to influence creativity, limit the social contexts to an environment that can promote or inhibit one’s creative expression. Glăveanu argues that this is not enough to understand the ways in which social relationships influence the development of creativity. For him, creativity is ‘a socio-cultural-psychological process’, which indicates that children’s creative expression consists of ‘an individual, social and cultural act’ (Glăveanu, 2010b, p.50). In other words, social relationships that children experience do not just influence their emotional states that provide the condition for creative expression, but they are part of children’s creative development: that is, they influence children from within, and they are part of cultural contexts that give meanings to children’s activities.

He further explains that, to consider social and cultural contexts as ‘external factors’ are more in tune with the ‘social psychology of creativity’, whereas to consider the social and
cultural nature of creativity is in the domain of ‘cultural psychology of creativity’. Whilst there are overlaps between social and cultural psychology, the latter indicates the ways in which social and cultural contexts are part of creativity, rather than something that influence an individual’s creativity from ‘outside’ (Glăveanu, 2010a).

Naturally, there is interdependence between children and their contexts of development. For instance, the developmental systems theory (Ford & Lerner, 1992), and Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) ecological model of human development suggest that, individuals influence their contexts of development through their ‘self-organising and self-constructing’ nature (Lerner, 2002, p.184). Children are not simply ‘shaped’ by their social and cultural contexts, but they, in turn, shape these contexts by interpreting what is going on around them. As Glăveanu (2010a) notes, creativity involves a process of making meanings of the environment, which implies that it originates from the social and cultural contexts of the individuals.

In addition, Glăveanu does not consider the ‘external’ and the ‘internal’ nature of social and cultural contexts in a simple binary way. By discussing Vygotsky’s (1978) work, he implies that children internalize ‘what is out there’ through cultural mediation (e.g. languages and artifacts). That is, children internalize, for instance, the ways in which parents and teachers respect and value their thoughts and ideas through their interactions with them. Undoubtedly, this is not a straightforward process. Yet the distinction that Glăveanu makes between the ‘external’ and the ‘internal’ nature of social relationships is important, as it signifies the ways in which children internalize the social and cultural contexts of their development, hence the ways in which they develop their creative thinking.

There are two further aspects of Glăveanu’s work that explain the link between social relationships and young children’s creative thinking. The first is his reference to Winnicott’s (1971) work on social relationships. According to Glăveanu (2010a), Winnicott focused on the importance of creativity on children’s well-being, as he examined children’s spontaneous expressions of their thoughts and feelings. Evidently, social relationships play a critical part in this, but for Winnicott, the importance also lies on ‘a relational space’ that exists between a child and his/her environment. This is a space in which children experience the world around them by becoming aware of their own feelings and thoughts. This process is, in turn associated with their developing intersubjectivity (Glăveanu, 2010a, p.85). In essence, Winnicott’s notion of creativity is strongly based on social contexts ‘as it emerges primarily
in a relationship’, especially a relationship between the child and the mother (i.e. primary caregivers) (ibid., p.85).

The social basis of creativity is also in line with Hobson’s (2002) view on the ways in which ‘thinking’ emerges. He suggests that thinking fundamentally arises out of our relationships with others, especially from those between infant and mother. He describes how an infant’s emotional engagement with the mother enables him/her to become aware of ‘other people’s engagement with the world’ (p.142), and suggests that children come to develop their thinking through a realization that other people have minds that are different to their own. As creative ‘thinking’ underpins certain types of behaviour that is seen as creative (Hargreaves, 2012), children’s creative thinking is indeed a relational phenomenon, that is intricately related to their social and cultural contexts (see Fumoto & Greenfield, 2012).

Secondly, both Glăveanu and Hobson emphasize the significance of ‘someone else’s emotional presence’ that can influence an individual’s capacity to think (Hobson, 2002, p.22). Glăveanu (2010a) refers to this as a ‘social-dialogical process’, and discusses the ways in which individuals engage in ‘dialogue with internalised “parties”’ (p.86) when they are thinking. For instance, when children are expressing their creative thinking through play in an early childhood setting, they may still feel the emotional presence of their parents, which in turn, may provide security and direct their activities. Storr (1988) highlights that the social relationships that provide emotional security can also build one’s ‘capacity to be alone’ (p.16), which in turn, plays an important role in children’s creative development. One needs to be alone at times, to be immersed in one’s thoughts and ideas, in order to create something new. Storr notes that, to be able to be alone is an ability that needs to be fostered in children through ensuring secure relationships with others.

**Implications for Early Childhood Practice**

So what might be the implications of Glăveanu’s (2010a) notion of creativity on early childhood practice?

*Multiple ways of understanding and promoting children’s creative thinking.* This refers to the importance of aspects of practice that may not be observable at a glance, and of moving
away from searching for the ‘right’ environment that promotes children’s creative thinking. Although enquiries on ‘what works’ are hugely important, they also have a drawback, as they imply that there is a ‘right’ environment that ‘works’. The corollary to this is that there are ‘wrong’ environments for creativity to flourish. However, the judgments that are made about such environments can be culturally-specific, and the search for a ‘right’ environment can undermine children’s resilience and resourcefulness to be creative. Craft (2008) also highlights the need to take a ‘plural perspective on creativity’ (p.27), and move away from the view that there may be universally accepted ways of expressing and promoting creativity.

For instance, an early childhood setting situated in a shopping mall in Singapore where ‘outdoor’ play area is actually inside the mall may not, at a glance, seem to be the ‘right’ environment to promote children’s creativity. What about a setting that is in a built-up area in Tokyo where the outdoor area is laid out in concrete with scarcity of trees and plants? These settings in Singapore and Tokyo may appear to be the ‘wrong’ environments, when the quality of outdoor spaces in early childhood settings is seen as an important element of promoting children’s creative thinking (Craft, 2003). But, teachers and children are often making the most of their local conditions, by building on their strengths rather than on their weaknesses. This is not by any means to say that the observable environment is not important. On the contrary, it can influence the ways in which children engage in activities, and the ways in which they interact with one another. Then again, it seems equally important to focus on what lies underneath each practice: that is, to focus on the kind of social and cultural contexts that teachers and children create under certain circumstances, and the ways in which they engage with these contexts.

**Promoting teachers’ skills to listen to children’s thoughts, ideas and feelings.**

Glăveanu’s (2010a) notion of the ‘social-dialogical process’ noted earlier, suggests the need for teachers to continue to develop their skills to listen to children’s thoughts and ideas. In early childhood settings, teachers develop relationships with children, which are underpinned by the ‘emotional connectedness’ between them (Hobson, 2002). This kind of relationships involves teachers’ sensitivity in listening to children’s thoughts, ideas and feelings (Fumoto, 2011), and according to the foregoing discussion, these relationships can be internalized by the children, serving as an important part of their developing creativity.
However, while the notion of listening to children has been hugely promoted in early childhood practice (e.g. NAEYC, 2009; DCSF, 2008), to truly listen to other people’s thoughts and feelings is not always easy (Rogers, 1980; Fromm, 1994). Teachers also need to be supported both emotionally and professionally, in order to maintain a psychological space to listen to children (Fumoto, 2012).

**Questioning one’s assumptions about what creativity ‘looks like’**. The issue of promoting children’s creative thinking can be an emotional topic, and it is inextricably related to one’s views and values about childrearing and early childhood pedagogy (Fumoto et al., in press). All early childhood professionals, parents and researchers bring their own understanding and expectation about how they want to develop children’s creativity. The forgoing discussion points to the importance of being open-minded about the ways in which one observes children’s creativity, and the ways in which it is to be promoted in various early childhood settings.

For instance, in many Asian countries, children often do their daily exercises or dances *all together* with movements led by the teachers. This may not necessarily fit the ‘image’ of fostering creativity. It may not seem to cultivate ‘originality’ in children, and the freedom to express themselves, when movements are predefined by the teachers. However, what seem more important are the experiences of the children, and the social contexts in which these activities take place.

Children learn in various ways by engaging with the ‘cultural resources’ around them (e.g. various activities in early childhood settings) (Glăveanu, 2010b; Kağıtçıbaşi, 2007; Rogoff, 2003). In discussing the ways in which the Western conception of creativity often involves the importance of ‘being original at all cost’, Glăveanu (2010b) suggests that modeling and imitating activities and others’ behaviours through observations and communication are also important aspects of creative development. Such activities also produce gradual changes to one’s culture over time, as new ideas and ways of doing things can emerge through modeling and imitation. When considering creativity from a socio-cultural perspective, it becomes clear that each culture has different ways of engaging with its cultural resources, indicating the diverse nature of creative development. The implication of this is that, children’s creative thinking needs to be understood in relation to the social contexts of their development.
**Working with parents.** The ability to understand parents who are from diverse backgrounds is an important quality of teachers (Vandenbroek, 2012). The ways in which teachers work with parents become even more important, when creativity is seen as ‘a fundamentally relational, intersubjective phenomenon’ (Glăveanu, 2010a, p.80). As discussed, parent-child relationships are a critical part of children’s creative thinking, and it seems vital that teachers understand the parents’ perspectives on parenting, in order to promote children’s creativity and their well-being (Greenfield, 2012b). Kağıtçıbaşı (2007) also indicates that the family environment is not just an ‘external factor’ that influences children. It is also embedded in their development as children internalize the family’s values and attitudes, which, in turn, is influenced by children’s own interpretation of their environment (Fumoto & Greenfield, 2012). Working with parents can be complex, but if teachers and researchers are serious about understanding children’s creative thinking, involving parents, not only in early childhood practice but also in research is essential (Greenfield, 2012a, b).

**Conclusion**

Glăveanu’s (2010a) notion of creativity suggests the embeddedness of social relationships in children’s creative thinking. It emphasizes that, children’s relationships with their parents and teachers, for instance, not only provide the social contexts of children’s creative expression, but they are also a part of children’s creative development. It seems to be that teachers and parents have important roles to play in channeling children’s creative energy to a positive use (Fumoto et al., 2012). It should be noted that, it was beyond the remit of this paper to discuss children’s relationships with their siblings, peers, grandparents, extended families and others, who may equally have vital roles to play in children’s creative development. This omission should not be an indication that their influence on children’s creative thinking is less than that of parents and teachers. They all have important bearing on children’s well-being, and merit further exploration into the ways in which they affect children’s creative development.

The present discussion suggests that the differences (and the commonality) of the social and cultural contexts of the East and the West present an important way of understanding
children’s creative thinking, as they help to elucidate the contexts of children’s development. As Kağıtçıbaşı (2007) notes, the point here is to focus on ‘how and why’ there may be differences in children’s creative thinking, and the ways in which creativity is being fostered in each culture, rather than just simply highlighting the differences. For the field of early childhood, the challenge may be to make explicit the ‘implicit cultural practices’ (Tobin, 2011) that teachers adopt in their everyday interactions with children and families.

Tobin, Hsueh and Karasawa (2009) explain the complexity of early childhood pedagogy in Japan, for instance, and the difficulty of communicating this to those who are not familiar with the Japanese culture. Whilst many authors have written about Japanese early childhood pedagogy (e.g. Lewis, 1995), there is a further need to document, and explore the ‘implicit cultural practices’ adopted in Japan, in order to understand the ways in which children express their creative thinking, and the ways in which it is being promoted there.

The need to clarify one’s cultural practice applies to all countries in Asia, and elsewhere, and this may be one of the important ways forward to further understand the social and cultural nature of children’s creative thinking. Creativity research that takes into consideration the social and cultural contexts of early childhood practice should shed further light on the ways in which children in various parts of the world express and develop their creative thinking. This paper suggests that such research should start by considering creative thinking as a relational phenomenon, as this will help explore children’s creative development from the premise that all children are inherently creative.

References

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