

A Preliminary Study on the Islamic Creativity Practices

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Abstract

Creativity is the natural ability to generate new ideas and/or possibilities in solving problems. It is an important skill that should be practiced by students in higher education and can be nurtured by the use of various learning methods and techniques. This preliminary study conducted aims to measure the level of creativity practices among 30 volunteers of first-years student in Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia. The test instrument administered based on the Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking to the selected respondents to measure the level of creativity, creativity practices and creativity from the Islamic perspective. Data then analysed using descriptive through mean analysis and inferential statistical methods. The results showed that although there is no significant difference in the level and creativity practices among gender, but in terms of Islamic creativity elements, significant difference is observed. This indicates that the respondents are more creative upon exposure to materials on creativity during the period of the study. Thus, relevant efforts must be concentrated to produce more creative students who also have a proper understanding of creativity from the Islamic perspective.

Keywords: Creativity Practices; Islamic Perspectives; Creative Students; Creative Thinking; Creativity Level

1. Introduction

Creativity is defined as something that associated with original ideas and new things that are useful to solve the problem (Runco, Nemiro, & Walberg, 1998; Sri Sumarwati & Jailani Md Yunos, 2013). While Green (2010) defined creativity as a thought process that helps an individual in generating new idea. Referring to the Ensiklopedia Malaysiana(1996)creativity is the ability to create or produce something. However, in Islamic perspective, creativity is regulated by the concept of *bid'ah* that induced *Ijtihad*, which set the limit and boundary of religious belief (Muhammad Mustaqim, Mohd Azmir, Anita, & Adibah, 2013). It signifies that a human mind does have a limit beyond the Creator, which this paper does not intent to discuss further. According to McInerney & McInerney (1998), there are definitions that emphasize creativity personality traits, some of which focus on the thinking process and there is also emphasizing its results as a criterion of creativity.

Creativity enhancement, which is a logical creative activities, developing imagination and able to provide ideas

and views is the focus of twenty-first century curriculum content besides the acquisition of knowledge and basic skills (Noor Azmi Ibrahim, 1998). According to Morris & Kuratko (2002) creativity is a potential that exists in every individuals despite differences of the level of creativity itself (Muradriarini, Widiastuti, Lianawati, & Nisfianoor, 2006). In fact, each and every individual have their own creativity (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1975). E. Paul Torrance (1981) outline the characteristics of creative individuals as to someone who have a great curiosity on something, higher determination in learning something that new, able to handle risk from decision made, self-confidence, self-reliance in carrying out everything and have divergent thinking . Divergent thinking includes a common scanning operation, which allows an individual to be able to produce a variety of possible solutions (Steffin, 1983). Guilford (1986) describes the creative individuals tend to have more of divergent thinking from the way of thinking converge (convergent thinking). In addition, creative individuals will receive intuition as a legitimate aspect of their personality and they are not afraid to express their feelings and thoughts, because they want to be myself (Wycoff, 1991). Creative individuals are also able to create order out of disarray so that they will find regular patterns and explanations that did not exist before (Rimm, 2008). Therefore, creative individuals will think outside the box to find the unique view of the new norm.

Creativity also has been regard as the key competencies and crucial skills that facilitate an individual to have the ability to create something new, a new methods or a better ideas (Adibah et al., 2015; DeGraff & Lawrence, 2002). Thus, by having creativity values, it helps the students to produce something that new, superior, quality, and functional (Ismail & Atan, 2011). In this context, creativity is something that is important in education as it create an opportunity to a student to finding a solution to problems of various challenges (Satiadarma, 2004). Although various studies has been conducted locally or internationally (See Gan Wan Yeat, 1998; Lim & Plucker, 2000; Runco et al., 1998; Yong & Biraimah, 1996) but none existence of the study that examine creativity practices from the Islamic perspectives.

Therefore, the objective of this study is to identify creativity from Islamic persepectives regardless of their gender differences; and to identify the differences of levels, practices and Islamic creativity perspectives. An inventive and productive creativity is very much needed to develop or readjust the program and curriculum efficiently and effectively (Rejskind, 1999). This preliminary study is designed to examine creativity among students in Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM). The instrument used a set of questionnaires to measure the creativity criteria including the level of creativity, creativity practices and creativity undersanding from an Islamic perspective.

2. Literature Review

There are various definitions of creativity proposed by scholars and experts. According to Haefele (1962), creativity is the ability to create new relationships that bear social or public significance. However, it is also commonly defined as the ability to generate new idea or anything new or something that is different (Barron, 1969; Levitt, 1974). It also means the ability to think of something new and/or unique way to generate problem-solving (Santrcock, 2001). Meanwhile, Moustakas (1977) defined creativity as an experience in describing the individual self identity, peoples and nature. It is also defined as activities that generate ideas that are new, unique, unusual and useful to solve problems or take advantage of an opportunity (Nieuwenhuizen & Rossouw, 2008). Despite the differences of its functions and focus, all of these definitions agree that creativity is the ability, experience or activity to create something new and useful. In explaining this further, Campbell (1977) explicates "new" as something fresh, innovative, interesting, unique, amazing and with no prior existence, while "useful" signifies the meaning to facilitate, encourage, enhance, educate, solve problems, reduce barriers, and overcome the difficulties that would result in a better or richer outcomes.

On the other hand, Torrance (1998) has defined creativity as the process of becoming aware of the problem, identifying it and finding solutions by making assumptions or hypotheses; testing, retesting and modifying the hypotheses, as well as presenting the results or findings. Thus, the result or end product of the creative thinking process is in the form of ideas that have an important role in assisting the individual in decision making, solving a problem or even generate abstract and/or concrete ideas (Yee, Jailani, Tee, & Widad, 2011). A creative mind always associates activities with imagination, where it has the potential to interpret things in an amazing and novel way (Noraini Idris, 2006).

According to Torrance & Myers (1970), there are a few factors that could hamper an individual's thinking ability such as age, experience, and disease. Therefore, an established circumstance which is able to support an individual in facing such constraints is a must. Creative works are sometimes more difficult to envisage or may not materialize due to things that happened by coincidence (Runco, 2010), although some researchers believed otherwise (Ruggiero, 2009). Munandar (1999) has identified two sets of factors; internal and external, that could influence creativity and the creative process. Internal factors are factors that are inherent in the individual self such as the ability to imagine, create new concepts, connect between various ideas, and others. On the other hand, external factors originate from the outside of the individual self, and these include peaceful environment, psychological freedom, existing facilities and

infrastructures, supporting atmosphere to explore and make attempts to produce new things and appreciate works that are new, unique and creative.

Several empirical studies have been done to examine the contextual and operational definition of creativity from an Islamic perspectives or even from the life of Prophet Muhammad (Adibah et al., 2015; Al-Karasneh & Saleh, 2010; Al-Mazeidy, 1993; Mohd Azmir, Muhammad Mustaqim, Paimah, & Hisham, 2013; Muhammad Mustaqim et al., 2013). Such a creativity can be regarded as the ability to produce something new and appropriate, beneficial to humans and in line with the Islamic principles and Shari'ah (Md. Ashram Ahmad, 2010; Yousif, 1999). Creativity is a process to understand, implement and explain the principles and ideas of Islam on the specific time and place to confront the challenges that arise in all aspects of life (Yousif, 1999). In other words, the process of creating something new and is in line with Islamic principles aimed at addressing the challenges and problems for the purpose of having convenience in the worldly life journey. This process is essential in order to ensure that a product, a service or a procedure that is categorized as creative does not transgress the limitation set by religion (Muhammad Mustaqim et al., 2013).

Al-Karasneh and Saleh (2010) maintained that creativity in Islam is confined to the quality as follows: [1] inspirational revelation - an encouragement resulted from some verses of the Quran that contextually encourage people to use a different way of thinking [2] comprehensive that incorporated physical, mental, spiritual and religious elements [3] the caliph must possess the characteristics of being responsible, accountable, pious, modest and grateful [4] ability to manage core problem and concrete issues instead of secondary issues effectively [5] knowing human limitations - sense of the fact that men are imperfect and Allah is the most Knowing and [6.] Understanding that material and spiritual rewards as a source of motivation to excel in worldly life.

In the field of Islamic jurisprudence, *ijtihad* is defined as a conscious effort by a jurist to make decisions in relation to Shari'ah and it is contrary to *taqlid*, which refers to the act of imitating and blind following (Bensaid and Machouche, 2013). In doing so, *ibda'* is required, which adhere to creative thinking as it involves making new decision in relation to current issues with strictly bound to al-Quran and al-Sunnah. Creative thinking involves an act of "observing, noticing, scrutinizing, analyzing, adapting, and synthesizing systematically, taking lessons, and then making inferences and conclusions which can be additional input to the available knowledge" (Othman, 1994).

The early history of Islamic civilization witnessed the creativity of Muhammad SAW in managing political, military, social, educational, economic, and religious affairs (Mohd Azmir et al., 2013). In fact, his creative and critical mind can be seen from the pre-Islamic times when he resolved disputes between Arab tribes in relation to the placement of the black stones (Hajarul Aswad). His creative thought and creativity are also apparently reflected in leading the nation, making strategy and decisions, establishing relations with various tribes and preaching religious messages to others (Mohd Azmir et al., 2013). This is in line with the various styles of thinking in different Qur'anic verses that become a proof that Islam encourages people to think creatively, to be creative and innovative. Creativity in Islam, as emphasized by Muhammad Iqbal, is not deemed a creative progress unless it is directed to a specific goal and bound with the concept of Tawhid (Fazlur Rahman, 1963).

3. Research Methodology

This study is exploratory in nature and a quantitative design was employed using a survey method with a questionnaire set.

Thus, this preliminary study set two hypotheses to be tested as follows:

1. Creativity from the Islamic perspective among Students across Gender

H₀1a: There is no significant difference in creativity from an Islamic perspective between male and female students for the pre-test.

H₀1b: There is no significant difference in creativity from an Islamic perspective between male and female students for the post-test.

2. Level of Creativity, Creativity Practice and Creativity from an Islamic Perspective

H₀2a: There is no significant difference in the level of creativity of students in the pre-test and post-test.

H₀2b: There is no significant difference in students' creativity practice in the pre-test and post-test.

H₀2c: There is no significant difference in students' creativity from an Islamic perspective in the pre-test and post-test.

3.1 Participants

Using simple random multistage clustered sampling technique, the sample populations for this preliminary study consists of 30 respondents, 16 of which are males and 14 are females from various faculties in Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia.

3.2 Instrument

A modified version of Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking (TTCT), including questions featuring the Islamic perspective, is used. The questionnaire is divided into four parts, comprising demographic information, creativity values, and creativity practices and understanding creativity from the Islamic perspective. In terms of validity and reliability, all spectrums of questions have been tested with Cronbach Alpha value of more than 0.752. A pre-test and post-test procedure is followed.

4. Findings and Discussion

Descriptively, using t test analysis for creativity practices among respondents, regardless of their gender, the research found that there are significant differences between male and female respondents on their creative practices from an Islamic perspective from both pre test and post test. The graph below summarises the finding.

Table 1a: Creativity From Islamic Perspective Based on Gender (Pre Test)

Gender	Mean	Std Dv	t	df	Sig.
Male	4.4132	0.28830	-0.267	28	0.042
Female	4.4484	0.42893			

Based on Table 1a, the value of $p = 0.042$. It is confirmed that there are significant differences in mean between the creativity from the Islamic perspective in gender accordingly for pre test. Comparatively, a score of value $p = 0.012$ for a post test shows a slight difference of mean between both genders. This finding is parallel with several studies, such as Baer & Kaufman (2006); Caparrós, Barrantes-Vidal, Viñas, & Obiols, (2008); DeMoss, Millich, & DeMers (1993); Kaufman (2006); and Matud, Rodriguez, & Grande (2007) that confirmed there was no significant difference in the level of creativity between male and female. However, on the other hands, various study shows otherwise (Eysenck, 1994; Maccoby, 1990; Norfauzi & Mohammad Yusof, 2002; Reiss, 2000; Stoltzfus, Nibbelink, Vredenburg, & Hyrum, 2011). Reiss (2000) stated that there are various factors that affect the level of creativity, such as the individual choices, social environment and cultural setting contributes to the creativity level. Based on non conclusive account on the effect of gender toward the level of creativity, it is therefore summarized that creativity level may be differ from one to another when other factors are contributed simultaneously.

Table 1b: Creativity From Islamic Perspective Based on Gender (Post Test)

Gender	Mean	Std Dv	t	df	Sig.
Male	4.4618	0.30001	-0.752	28	0.012
Female	4.5635	0.43574			

On analyzing the differences between the level of creativity, creativity practices and Islamic creativity perspective, a t-test analysis is used for both pre test and post test. Table 2a, 2b and 2c are shown as below.

Table 2a: Level of Creativity of Pre and Post Test

Study	Mean	Std Dv	t	df	Sig.
Creativity Level	-0.35667	0.75507	-2.587	29	0.015

Based on the available schedule $p = 0.015$. Given the value $p = 0.015$ is smaller than the value of $\alpha = 0.05$, the hypothesis is rejected. This means that there is a significant difference between the level of creativity among respondents on both pre test and posttest. It is thus confirmed that if given any specific treatment, creativity level may be increase. Therefore, in order to enhanced students creativity, a specific curricular and specific educational instruction must took place and in orderly so that the result may be witnessed.

Table 3b: Creativity Practices based on Pre Test and Post Test

Study	Mean	Std Dv	t	df	Sig.
Creativity Level	-0.22308	0.63748	-1.917	29	0.065

Based on the available schedule $p = 0.065$. Given the value of $p = 0.065$ is greater than the value of $\alpha = 0.05$, the hypothesis is accepted. This means that there is no significant difference between the practices of creativity among respondents for both pre test and post test score. Therefore, it can conclude that there were no differences of both pre test and posttest score, which means in terms of creativity practices, there are no changes throughout the times of study, has been conducted. However, if, a specific educational instruction that tailored to the objectives, a significant difference may be observed.

Table 3c: Creativity from Islamic Perspectives based on Pre Test and Post Test

Study	Mean	Std Dv	t	df	Sig.
Creativity Level	-0.07693	0.54368	-0.802	29	0.429

Based on the available schedule $p = 0.429$. Given the value $p = 0.429$ is greater than the value of $\alpha = 0.05$, the hypothesis is accepted. This means that there is no significant difference in mean for the Islamic creativity perspective among respondents.

5. Conclusion

This study compares the level of creativity regardless of gender differences towards the level of creativity, creativity practices and Islamic creativity perspective. The study affirmed that there is no significant difference between the level and practices of creativity among respondents across gender. However, there are significant differences on the aspects of creativity from the Islamic perspective. This study also showed that there is a significant difference between pre test and posttest score for the level of creativity. It shows students receive input after a certain exposure during the period of study. On the other hand, significant changes are not appearing in the practices and creativity from the perspective of Islam aspects. Therefore, this preliminary study present that after receiving treatment, there are changes in the level of creativity of respondents, but continuous efforts have to be made from various quarters as a lecturer and the university in promoting the students' ability to think creatively and innovatively. Further study also indeed is in need to investigate on the creativity practices. The Islamic perspective of creativity also offers an interesting body of knowledge for future studies.

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