Exploring the Meaning and Significance
of Creativity in Education:
A Narrative Inquiry of Saudi Female Graduate Students' Experiences in
a Canadian University

Reem J Almahmudi

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Dr. Ashwani Kumar
Thesis Supervisor
Department of Education

Committee Members:

Dr. Mary Jane Harkins
Thesis Reader
Department of Education

Ms. Charlotte Marble
Thesis Reader
Art Instructor

Abstract

This qualitative study aims to explore the concept of creativity through the narratives of Saudi female graduate students in the Faulty of Education at a university in Eastern Canada. The study focuses the students' perceptions regarding the factors that nurture and hinder creative development. The findings reveal that the experience of studying abroad, and observing different cultural contexts and various approaches to education, has offered the participants a unique opportunity to reflect on the interconnections of culture, pedagogy, creativity and learning. Through reflecting on their past and present experiences in Saudi and Canadian education systems, they have gained greater awareness of the significance of creativity in education. The study aims to contribute to the scholarship in the field of education that is developing a better understanding using pedagogy in the teaching and learning process that nurtures students' creativity.

Keywords: Saudi female students' experiences; creativity; motivations; narrative inquiry; autobiographical and biographical approaches.

Introduction

It is observed that, a great interest in "creativity" or "creative thinking" is growing and it is considered an important concept in different fields within the Canadian context. Most of the people encountered creativity and creative thinking in their children and, if they are teachers, in their students through the learning process. One come across the word creativity regularly within the literature by professors as well as throughout the discussions participating in with the colleagues in the graduate program at a university in Eastern Canada, and even in daily conversations with others outside of the university community. The concept of creativity was introduced not only as topic of discussion within the studies on theories of education but as a fundamental factor in the development of the activities that were available for students within the schools and within daily homework assignments.

I chose to make creativity the focus of my study because I believe that every student has creative potential, and I want to understand other educators' conceptualizations of creativity and its significance in their teaching and lives. Through my own firsthand experiences in Saudi Arabia, I observed that the notion of creativity was not something teachers were aware of or considered important. The concept of creativity was not a part of the discourses of education within Saudi Arabia. This contrasts sharply with my observations of education within the Canadian context. It was while studying education in Canada that I began to think about the significance of creativity and the concept grabbed my attention. I began to think about how the teacher plays an important role in supporting a student's creativity. For example, I observed that, while there are guidelines in Canada regarding subjects and learning outcomes, teachers have significant flexibility within their own classroom to use teaching strategies like collaborative work and interdisciplinary approaches so as to support the individual creativity of their students. I began to wonder how much the student's environment, at home and at school, influenced whether or not he or she becomes a creative person. Creativity enables the development of uncommon or novel ideas. Finally, I thought about how teaching methods in schools and the use of curriculum content can be either supportive of or restrictive to an individual's creativity.

This thesis, therefore, explores the following research questions:

How do Saudi female graduate students who are studying in Canada perceive the concept of creativity?

How do they understand the significance of creativity in relation to their learning?

What are the factors that they think facilitated or hindered the development of their creativity?

Ultimately, the objectives of this study gains through narrative inquiry a deeper

Understanding of the meaning of the creativity and the factors—personal, educational, and

Cultural—that either support or hinder its growth and development.

Literature Review

The concept of "giftedness" and the way in which this is different from an understanding of creativity as an innate sense of wonder or curiosity that can be nurtured and developed in ways similar to a skill is reviewed and examined. The role of culture and how it can either encourage or hinder the development of creativity is discussed.

The Nature of Complexity to the Word "Creativity".

Creativity has ambiguous meaning and it is variously used in multiple domains, and is not restricted to theories of artistic endeavor. Compton (2007) explains that the word creativity often used in English education and throughout other facets of society, but does not have a clear meaning (p. 109). Mahender (2005) states that the subtleties and nuances of meaning signified by the word creativity results in multiple and varied understandings, which are too complex to contain within one, succinct definition (p. 1). Limiting the definition of creativity to the field of fine arts, fails to recognize "cognitive Creativity", which is connected to human cognition and epistemology, and refers to curiosity and the development and furtherance of knowledge. The notion of cognitive creativity refers to those moments in life, when as we go about our daily activities, we adapt existing knowledge and rules so as to accommodate slight variations that arise, even during our normal routines. Contrary to this imposed limitation of the notion of

creativity to the field of fine arts, numerous researchers have shown that creativity is not restricted within specific fields, but can be present in different fields. As Lubart and Sternberg (1998) describe, creativity exists in everyday life and in many different domains, such as the visual, literary and performing arts, but also in the sciences, business, and education (p. 66). They argue that creativity refers to novel and appropriate work that solves a problem or fulfills a need.

Misunderstanding the significance of Creativity.

Because of the variation in how creativity is understood from field to field, misunderstanding the significance of creativity can occur. Consequently, this can lead to misrecognition of creative expression and difficulties in evaluating it. **'Creativity'** is understood, in different ways in different fields. For example, in education creativity is called 'innovation', in business it is 'entrepreneurship', in Mathematics it is often equate with 'problem solving', in music, it is 'performance 'composition' etc. Robinson (2009) states that all people have a capacity for creativity, and education and policies need to enhance this capacity for all students. Osho (1999) agrees that all people, from an early age, have the capacity for creativity. Children are born with the ability to be creative, but, over time, this creativity can be diminished or destroyed. Both Osho and Robinson, therefore claim that every individual has creative potential, which they describe as the individual's unique attributes and perspectives, and how she or he selects one's own path that is different from others.

It is easy to see why it is difficult to define creativity, but it is important to recognize the concept of creativity is significant within the field of education. The educational policies in Europe reflect that, the reason behind the misunderstanding of creativity is the lack of a clear definition. Without a clear definition, it is confusing for the teachers as to how to define creativity in the classroom. With an insufficient and inadequate knowledge of the educators, about creativity and alternative pedagogies , the students lose their sense of being a creator at early ages because they are not supported enough to flourish in their creativity.

The meaning of creativity in relation to education includes two very important streams of thought. (1)the assumption that creativity is either a quality a person is born with as in 'giftedness', or a quality that can be developed through education as akin to a skill (2) the role of

culture in defining creativity and either encouraging or hindering the development of creativity.

A review of the literature reveals that while theorist does indicate that there is a wide range of definition, one predominant theme does arise. Creativity refers to the development of an unusual idea and the bringing of that idea into existence. When creativity is defined in this way, teachers encourage multiple skills in the classroom, even those skills that may not appear to be directly related to the expected learning outcomes. This means allowing the curriculum to be flexible introducing new materials that are relevant to the student's interests.

Creativity As Giftedness or As Developed Curiosity.

Creativity and giftedness can be considered as two different concepts, yet they are co-related. The term 'giftedness' can imply certain innate abilities, it can refer to high intelligence and to special characteristics that some people are born with and others are not. By comparison, creativity seems to imply an inherent ability that all human beings are born with, such as wonder or curiosity that can be developed or encouraged. Often, the two terms are conflated or are only subtly distinguished.

The theorists come up with different opinion regarding 'creativity'. Some equates 'creativity' to 'giftedness' or considers creativity as habits. Another theorist differentiated creativity and talent. Accordingly, one can improve their talents, but cannot develop creativity. **Csikszentmihalyi explains the relationship between creativity and genius. He states that "genius is not as an intra-psychic phenomenon, but is a historical process which takes place in a social and culture context… Although not all geniuses produce creative works, and not all creative achievement involve genius, the overlap between these two concepts is large enough to treat them as closely related" (p. 100).** The notion of creativity, which refers to two crucial processes, namely "knowledge" and "skill" is pointed out. The level of creativity is different for everyone. This suggests that all people have creative ability but that some are more creative than others. The three attributes 'ability', 'commitment, and 'creativity' must be present in order for someone to be considered 'gifted'. The consequence of this is that, while an individual may be creative, without a commitment to their pursuits that individual will not be considered "gifted".

There is a strong relationship between creativity and intelligence because both generate new ideas after brain storming. Intelligent people develop a new idea by building up prior knowledge or information, while creative people bring about unusual and new ideas that have never arisen or happened before.

According to the Council of European Union, creativity is seen as a process of generating ideas, expressions and forms, which can, in essence, amplify knowledge and lead to new ways of using the knowledge. Creativity is considered as a problem solving ability. Runco, Illies and Eisenman(2005) explained that originality is very strongly related to creativity. Creative behaviour, creative person, and creative products each display originality. "**It may be complete novelty, or just some degree of unusualness, but without originality, there is no creativity" (p. 137-138**). The theorists consider creativity as a process that consist both "originality" and "fit". "Originality" can be described as introducing something novel, like a new idea, into the social domain, this idea will be new but it will have value and social usefulness, meaning it must "fit" within its social context.

Creativity leads to innovative and extraordinary ways of doing things. It is defined here as the qualities of curiosity and the potential to bringing of new things into existence, so as to discover and develop extraordinary ways of doing things. (Robinson, 2009; Osho, 1999).

Watson (2007) defines creativity based on three aspects, namely flexibility, originality and fluency. This definition is supported by Shively (2011). Watson goes on to explain that "fluency" refers to the generation of free flowing ideas that stimulates the creative process, whereas "flexibility" refers to the ability to understand a topic or problem from multiple vantage points; "originality," he explains, is the capacity to come up with innovative ideas or products that are completely new, and "elaboration" refers to the process of addressing gaps or embellishing upon an idea or completing it (p. 12-13).

Based on the above literature review, in spite of the intellectual differences over the meaning of the word creativity, it is possible to argue that creativity has certain attributes and features including originality, appropriateness, fluency, flexibility, and elaboration. It is possible to see that, while there are subtle differences between the various definitions, there are important similarities and there is an assumption of a flexible process of development. The plasticity of the human brain enables it to change and develop through nurturing and training, and thus increasing knowledge and creative ability. Creativity is a skill that everyone can develop by following their

own unique, personal path so as to express their passion in life. Creativity is an idea, feeling and situation. By dealing with different situations and taking risks to solve problems and by feeling that there is no one except you to solve the problem, creativity can manifest both mentally or physically. It is possible to define creativity in words: it is the practice of individual skills so as to find answers through wonder and curiosity.

Creativity is original, valuable and unique ideas that emerge through the practice of personal skills that bring new things into existence or that change a traditional path. Every human being is capable of being creative because we are here to question, to ponder, and to seek answers. Creativity is an adventure and risk taking that support human beings to express their personal message.

How is Creative Potential Helped or Hindered?

Creativity has been clearly defined by some researchers as an aspect of individual personality and a process of self-discovery. It can be nurtured and developed, and this is possible because of the flexible nature of the human individual. As Lubart and Sternberg (1998) state that creativity consists of reimagining what is assumed to be fixed and true about the world; it is a process of self-discovery in which the act is more important than the outcome (p. 66).

Culture and Social Environment

Culture has been considered a core element in the development of creativity in people. Several studies have revealed that cultural differences and conceptions as key elements for either enhancing creativity or hindering it (Zhou, Shen and Wang, 2013; Csikszentmihalyi, 1997). Csikszentmihalyi (1997) states that "creativity results from the interaction of a system consisting of culture that contains symbolic rules; person who bring novelty into the symbolic domain and a field of experts who recognize and validate the innovation" (p. 6). When a culture encourages people to appreciate creativity in individuals, and thus provide people with the space to practice their creativity and to do what they love, and appreciate the results, other factors such as personal traits, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, curriculum and learning pedagogy can be considered as secondary factors in developing the level of creativity in that person. Culture and creativity are primary factors that determine how **"to achieve the kind of world we consider human"**

(Csikszentmihalyi, 1997, p. 317). He further explains that in order for us to improve on what we have, in order to progress, creativity is necessary. Improvement and progress require breaking away from the pressures of social conformity, generating and recording new ideas, and teaching others how to implement a new way of doing things that differs from tradition. Individuals who are capable of shifting conventions are creative and, according to Csikszentmihalyi, **"culture is their creation" "[The] future is in our hands; the culture we create will determine our fate"** (p. 317-318). Value, belief, behavior and knowledge all these arise from and influence our culture, which is at the core of making us creative. Lubart and Sternberg (1998) also argue that creative endeavor is strongly impacted by cultural barriers. They state that cultural factors such as economic, political and social elements can have a significant effect on the levels of creative potential, and on how creativity is evaluated. When the supportive factors support the individual's confidence and skills, the individual can assume responsibility for making a change and solving a problem by taking risks and applying different strategies. A lack of support often leads people to look to others to solve problems or to accept conditions as they are without attempting to make changes; a lack of support discourages creative thinking and prohibits solving problems in innovative ways.

"The place, or setting for creative activity, can be described through a set of interrelated context, which include the physical setting, the family, the school or workplace, the field of endeavor, and the culture"(Lubart &Sternberg, 1998, p. 66). The reduction of opportunity to practice different activities destroys an individual's creative sense. Limiting individuals' activities in school or at home destroys this sense of wonder and creativity at the age when brain is developing by learning and practicing new activities. Watson (2007), for example, argues that creativity is the cognitive processes of individuals' minds and it is impacted by their environment (p. 436). Lubart and Sternberg (1998) also argue, **"[c]ulture is shown to influence the definition and expression of creativity, channeling creativity into certain task domains or social group. The quantity of creative activity can be further affected by cultural features such as the value placed on conformity"** (p. 59).

Authority and power in some cultures restrict the expression of individual creativity. The institutions of a culture, such as its schools, workplaces, sports and entertainment centers, and community organizations can have rules and regulations that reward and punish certain types

of behaviours and activities. In his book, *Curriculum as Meditate Inquiry*, Kumar (2013) discusses contemporary education and how it is influenced by a fear of authority. "Contemporary educational institutions, "Kumar argues, "contribute to making students as well as teachers fearful of the authority of nation-states, the market, society, and exams" (p. 59). They reinforce the ideologies and practices of the dominant culture, and thus participate in shaping and molding, even "distorting" the perceptions of the students (p. 59).

Like teachers within the school, parents within the home can be figures of authority that either engages their children in ways that reinforce the mind-set of the existing system or can view their children as "self-actualizers and creators" and encourage them with support and guidance to question and discover their own answers, and to realize their own creative potential.

Dai et al. (2012) categorize creativity into two types: (a) divergent thinking and (b) personal traits (p. 192). Divergent thinking and creativity are often considered to be synonymous (Hong & Kang, 2010, p. 823). Personal traits are motivational factors that enhance personal characteristics (Dai et al., p. 192). According to this theory, creativity depends on an individual's personality that leads one to engage, to learn and discover. This idea is supported by Sternberg (2000) who argue that creativity is a personal choice or decision.

These researchers articulate a notion of creativity as an individual skill and do not consider the influence by culture as a factor that can affect the independence of the individual's decision-making ability or the level of the self-esteem. However, being in an environment that restricts and ignores personal decisions can strongly influence the creativity level in the individual. In other words, while Dai et al. (2012) and Sternberg (2000) articulate a theory of creativity that emphasizes personal characteristics over environment, these theorists also consider how culture and environment interact with personal characteristics and affect the development of creativity.

Even if the individual is considered as capable of bringing about change within their culture through self-discovery and creative activity, the culture and surrounding environment are still important factors that can hinder and discourage the creative sense. Csikszentmihalyi goes on to explain that, "**most of us deep down believe that a person who is creative will prevail**

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regardless of the environment. *Even* **the greatest genius will not accomplish anything without the support of the society and culture**" (p. 330).

Intrinsic and Extrinsic Factors, To Develop Creativity.

There is a link between intrinsic and extrinsic factors that help to develop individual creativity, and some researchers believe that personal creative potential is influenced mostly by environmental factor. In the study about creativity among Chinese students, Niu (2007) points out that the "intrinsic elements" of an individual refer to intelligence, personality, motivation, thinking styles and knowledge, and the "extrinsic motivation" relates to environmental factors, such as family, school and society. Niu argues that the social component is the only factor that predicts the variance in creativity. Based on the cross-cultural study involving China, Germany and Japan regarding the conceptualization of creativity and how the culture beliefs about creativity increase or decrease the individual's ability to be more creative, Zhou, Shen, Wang, Neber, and Johji (2013) explain that "for teachers from the three countries, creativity was a plastic ability that mainly depends on divergent thinking and has relevance to academic performance" (p. 244).

This study shows that while the teachers in all three countries agree that, when defining creativity, novelty is more important than appropriateness, they differ in their evaluation of the significance of plasticity (rated low in Japan), divergent thinking (rated high in China), and academic performance (rated low in Germany) (p. 244). Zhou et al. conclude, therefore, that "cultural differences have several implications for creativity cultivation" (p. 239).

Extrinsic motivation considered the fundamental supportive factor that emerges in advancing the intrinsic characteristic behaviors of creativity. Amabile (1998) explains the importance of socialization, work techniques, and working environment as extrinsic elements that should be oriented to foster creativity.

Implications for Education

Many countries recognize the importance of creativity, specifically in education, but the degree of importance given the notion of creativity differs from one country to another. Because education is central for supporting students' creativity, it is an important domain that potentially leads the individual toward developing their personal curiosity and finding their passion in a particular field of interest.

In a study by Zhou et al. (2013), which involved three different countries (China, Germany and Japan) and examines teachers' conceptualizations of creativity, it was shown that differences in creativity can be explained by a variation in school policies and educational curriculums, whereby creativity is enhanced in some countries more than others. These researchers have claimed that intellectual freedom, as well as teaching pedagogy, arouses curiosity and imagination. Diversity in educational resources and training stimulates the developmental traits of creativity among students. With freedom and resources, individuals are more capable of expressing creativity in various ways, as compared with members from a society where intellectual freedom is discouraged. The conditions that make creativity possible. Csikszentmihalyi (1997) explains, it is not that creativity is strictly determined by an individual's environment; rather, an individual's potential to achieve their creative aspirations are greatly hindered or even prohibited if their environment is not supportive (p. 330). The conditions that make creativity possible, Csikszentmihalyi continues, arise out of a social milieu that has "seven major elements": "training, expectations, resources, recognition, hope, opportunity, and reward" (p. 330). If these elements are provided within a society, creativity will ensue (p.330). Learning opportunities provided by parents and teachers, are essential to infant brain development, and a lack of stimuli can inhibit brain development, a condition from which the infant may never recover (p. 431).

The role of educators' understanding of the distinction between the notion of "giftedness" and a concept of creativity that is akin to a sense of wonder that can be nurtured and developed is important to recognize, as this distinction can affect whether or not creativity is encouraged in their students and, thereby, encouraged more generally within the large society. Furthermore, educators in different countries have different ideas and methods for how to motivate creative people (Zhou et al., 2013; Lubart & Sternberg, 1998). Appreciating individual ideas at an early

age is the most important factor that leads people to be creative and express their ideas without fear of failure. It is important not to ignore young child when his or her curiosity leads them to ask questions. It is the parents' and/or educators' responsibility to be patient and find an age-appropriate way to explain and answer the child's questions. Communicating positively with young children, by attending to their contributions to a conversation or activity, helps children to develop self- confidence and leads to increased curiosity. The support offered to young people enables them to take risks in their lives, which helps in developing their creative side. Risk-taking is experimenting and practicing without fear, which encourages divergent thinking because it helps build self-esteem and leads to trying different activities. According to the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (NESTA) (2010), schools can offer the perfect environment for encouraging creativity, risk-taking, and "a positive attitude towards exploration and experimentation," all of which are important to enterprise (p. 3, 9)

The future will be built upon previous knowledge and experience; therefore, if an individual does not have their self-esteem supported from an early age, it will be challenging for them to be a creative person. Creativity, as it has been represented in the research that defines it as a developing skill, can be encouraged or destroyed by various elements: culture, environment, and teaching methods.

Culture and education are the central factors for either supporting or rewarding creative ideas or not. Without support, individuals will face difficulty in breaking away from the cultural norms and rules, so as to bring about new ideas and inventions. Environments, such as the home and school, have a significant impact on personal thinking. Parents and schools can affect children at early ages in their development and influence their productivity either positively or negatively. Educational approaches can prepare people beyond immediate goals and have an impact on what kind of person they want to be in the future. An environment that supports freedom and esteems personal decision-making can be a positive place and supportive of creative potential. If personal creativity is supported by outside factors, this will help in developing an individual and lead them to better understand their sense of self and go beyond what is expected to what is of interest to them.

Research Methodology: Narrative Inquiry.

Narrative inquiry, which is a qualitative methodology, is used to collect, organize, and analyze the personal stories of participants so as to gain a better understanding of a topic based on lived experiences. Narrative inquiry in my study is informed by Clandinin and Connelly (2000) who explain that narrative occurs within a "three- dimensional narrative inquiry space" that allows the inquiry to move from "inward, outward, backward, forward, and situated within the replace" (p. 49) The narrative inquiry is the appropriate way of understanding the topic of creativity, through the lived experience of education within the two very different settings. Through their stories, it is possible to gain insight into their understanding of what creativity means and the factors that they think facilitated and or hindered the development of their own creativity. The four steps applicable to this method like regressive, progressive, analytical and synthetical gives the narrative inquiry reveals new meaning and creates opportunities for change and transformation.

The narrative inquiry helps us to understand ourselves and understand the world around us and assists in engaging in living, telling, retelling, and reliving our lives within particular social and cultural context. It helps in revealing social and cultural issues or problems that are undermining students' education. It can play a significant role in addressing problems within the field of education by broadening our understanding of what 'education" means and by listening to individual personal stories of those who are involved in and are affected by what happens within and also outside of classroom. The narrative inquiry approach assists in engaging students and their families in a process of re-telling experiences from the past and present, so as to illuminate possibilities for improvement in the future. By integrating in-depth personal stories, we learn from our past and present experiences and understand ourselves more by expressing what we know to others.

Narrative inquiry considers dynamic educational pedagogy that reflects everyday experience, which helps educators to learn from their stories. This method helped to gain insight into how this conceptualization has affected, and perhaps continues to affect, our learning and our teaching practices. This method is being used because it is important methodology in education, especially for professional educational development. The narrative inquiry becomes a

form of "critical storytelling", wherein the voices of student and teachers find public support through narrative. An analysis of the autobiographical and biographical aspects of the participants help to reveal more about how the environments within which students study either contribute it or deter from the development of their creativity. The insights gained through this study offer further information about the notion of creativity within the field of education. This means an analysis of the participants' biographical experiences help contribute to a better understanding of how their perspective is shaped by family ,school, community, and culture, and assist in expanding the discussion on the significance of creativity within education.

The concept of 'voice' is central to narrative inquiry. The voices of the researcher and the participants are considered important in narrative inquiry research because they express the truth about phenomena based on reality as it is experienced by the participant narrative inquiry is a qualitative method that provides an opportunity to explore in-depth, the stories about the teaching and learning experiences. It is also a form of collaboration between researcher and participants. "Purposive sampling strategy" is opted as it focus on particular characteristics of a population that are of interest, which will best enable one to answer the research questions. This study is best served by interviewing participants who have expertise in the areas of teaching and studying in the contexts of Saudi Arabia and Canada. This study focuses on women in order to offer an in-depth examination of women's experiences, especially their experiences of home, educational and professional environments to determine how these institutions have promoted or hindered their creative expression.

Method

In this study, several tools were applied, specifically, field texts consisting of an autobiographical journal, biographical interview notes and recordings, and field notes as these tools are more effective in collecting data for a narrative inquiry. Field texts are the various recorded stories and reflections of the participants and the researcher. For this narrative study, two primary methods were used for gathering data. The first primary method, for the autobiographical portion of the study, is a personal journal, in which the researcher recorded the autobiographical writings and the own self reflections and observations of the meaning and

significance of creativity. In this, the researcher's past experiences in the classroom in Saudi Arabia and the current experiences in Canadian university is documented. To gather further data, individual interviews were conducted and the personal /professional narratives of the participants were recorded. These interviews were an hour in duration and are guided by a series of questions that are designed to encourage, without interruption, the telling stories of personal history related to topic of creativity in education. A second set of interviews were conducted one week after the first in order to have an opportunity to gain further insights that may have developed as a response to the first set of interviews.

The interviews were conversational in style and the participants and the researcher felt more comfortable in the interview sessions. The interview conversations is based on open-ended questions intended to make the participants feel at ease with the interview process and to inspire reflection on the meaning and significance of creativity. The interviews were recorded in audio-files and notes that are password protected, so as to help the researcher to transcribe and analyse the conversations later.

Language

Language is considered an important part in telling a personal story. To help the participants feel comfortable and confident while they express their life experiences, they were free to select the language of their choice, since the participants of this study are fluent in Arabic and proficient in English. With the help of a language specialist the interviews were translated from Arabic to English for the purposes of analysis and writing.

Data Analysis

The 'narrative inquiry' approach is chosen for conducting the data collection and analysis that resonates with the needs of this study.

Discussion

Discussions were conducted with Participant B and Participant N, and participant R, so as

to provide a sound footing for the definition and meaning of the word 'creativity'. Participants variously described their understandings of creativity as a personal characteristic. This included a notion of creativity related to an individual's *smartness, acceptance, imagination* and their *produce.*

The discussions with the participants revealed that creativity needs a basic talent and an interest in the activity. Creativity needs a companion between intelligence and giftedness to lead to creativity because creativity is more than just being intelligent; it is paying attention to personal goal and interest. Talent, giftedness and intelligence are steps in the creative process were a category that developed during the interview with my participants. Another category that arose as a theme in our discussions was creativity as a gifted behavior. Based on the discussions and interviews with the participants, the following results and findings were made.

Research Findings & Results

Four significant themes like(1) the definition of creativity, (2) giftedness verses creativity,(3) the role of culture and (4) the individual's social /familial environment ,including approaches to teaching and learning in education, were identified from the perspectives ,of the participants, using the 'narrative inquiry' method.

1. The Definition of Creativity

The definition of creativity was the first theme that emerged during the interview with the participants. The reflections of the participants can be organized under four key categories: creativity is a personal characteristic, creativity is comprehension and a broad concept, creativity is knowledge, and creativity is multidisciplinary.

Table 1

Summary of the key findings regarding the definition of creativity

Category	Findings
Creativity is a personal characteristic	Personal view; optimism and accept the change; divergent thinking
Creativity is comprehension and a broad concept	Unlimited, multiple meaning, ordinary, unusual,

	new idea.
Creativity is knowledge	Interaction; relationship between old information; combination with existing idea.
Creativity is multidisciplinary	Multiple modes of expression; every discipline, teacher-student

2. Creativity Verses Giftedness

The participants' narratives revealed that creativity can be distinguished from giftedness in a few different ways. These differences can be categorized under three main headings: creativity is a synonymous with giftedness, talents and giftedness are steps in the creative process, and creativity is talented behavior.

Table 2

Summary of the key findings regarding creativity verses Giftedness:

Category	Findings
Creativity as synonymous with Giftedness	Gifted people have potential to be creative; Talented and creative people have similar Personalities
Talent, Giftedness and Intelligence are both steps in the Creative Process	Talent, intelligence, brain-storming creativity
Creativity is Gifted Behavior	Creative people think differently; Creativity and giftedness are genetic characteristics

3. The Role of Culture

Participants mentioned that their culture had an impact on their understanding of what it means to be creative and on the development and practice of their own creativity. They stated that the role of culture influenced them at home and at school, and restricted them from the freedom to express their personal opinions and explore their creativity.

Table 3

Summary of the key findings regarding the role of culture:

Category	Findings
The Role of Culture at Home	Space for practicing; parents' motivation; tools; meeting with peers
The Role of Culture at School	Lack of experience; lack of knowledge; limited freedom for the teacher; controlling students
Freedom to Express Personal Opinions	Lack of making personal discussion; difficulty with expressing personal opinion
Environment and Inspiration	Boring environment; lack of inspiration; unsupportive environment
Learning from Mistakes	no practice; discouragement; bad behavior; failure means unsuccessful
Gender Discrimination	Limited women opportunity: work, study and Activities

4. The Role of Education in Creativity

From the perspective of the participants in this study, the role of education, played in the development of a student's creativity was considered significant.

Table 4

Summary of the key findings regarding the role of Education in Creativity

Category	Findings
Socio-economic effects of family and Neighborhood	Encourage their child; support them to achieve; good home background; instill excitement for learning in their children; ignore their kid
Personal Goals and Confidence	Develop personal goal; self-esteem; build personal strength
Teacher's Behavior Toward Students	Ignore student; disrespect students; force

	students to study; control them in the class
Environment and Inspiration	No practice; discourage; bad behavior; failure is considered unsuccessful
School Activities	Ignore activities early age; lack of opportunities to play with peers; lack of time for joy
Education System	Old teaching and learning approaches; memorization

Summary of the Interviews & Discussions

The interviews with the participants opened with introductions and a description of the objectives of the study and began with a creative activity that established a comfortable, reflective tone and encouraged a focus on the significance and role of creativity in education. The result of the study stated that there were two basic factors that influenced the development of the participants' own creativity: culture and education. Culture had an impact on the participants' creativity, at home and at school, especially in terms of whether or not there were opportunities to express personal opinions and to learn from mistakes, in terms of differences in the way boys and girls are treated based on their gender. The participants described the effects of their family and schooling environments on the development of creativity, especially in terms of their parents' educational background, their self-confidence, and their teachers' attitudes, as well as the kinds of school activities they experienced and the education system in general. All of these factors had an impact on the development of their creativity.

Conclusions from the Research Findings

Participants' Conceptualizations of Creativity

The participants' personal perspectives on the meaning of the word "creativity" were a significant theme throughout their interviews. Their understandings of creativity from their personal point of view were expressed through the use of many synonyms that, for them, represent aspects of what they would identify as creative. They stated that creativity has multiple

meanings, such as creativity as personal characteristic, creativity as comprehensive and a broad concept, creativity as knowledge, and creativity as multidisciplinary, which means that creativity is not restricted to specific discipline, such as the Fine Arts or Drama, and is an important aspect of all subjects.

This understanding of the multiple meaning and broad applicability of creativity is supported by Andiliou and Murph (2010), who found that creativity contributes to many different skills such as "language acquisition, imaginative play, adaptation, innovation, problem solving, planning, and decision making. The participants described "creativity" as a characteristic that people have and that contributes to or hinders the development of their sense of creativity. The notion of "personal characteristic" was emphasized by the participants, because according to their understanding of creativity, personality plays an important role in determining the development of a person's creativity. The participants believed that creativity is an inherent characteristic, which means that all people are born equal, and that their natural creativity is nurtured (or not) by their parents, their cultural environment and the teachers in their schools.

The Significance of Creativity in Learning and the Effects of Culture

The participants discussed the importance of enhancing creativity in students and using various learning approach to helped encourage the students' creative endeavors and innovative thinking. They believed that the role of parents and educators was to encourage young people curious minds and guide children from an early age in their own discovery of knowledge so as to best prepare them for the future. Based on their own personal experience, the participants reported what they believed were the factors that supported them in developing their creativity and the factors that inhibited them. In their narratives, they explored the relationship between culture and these positive and negative factors in the development of their creativity. Moreover, education was considered by the participants to be a core factor that affected their creativity, because school is comparable to a second home for student, and a sense of belonging needs to be enhanced within the larger school community. If a student lacks the feeling of belonging to the place where they study, they cannot feel comfortable and the school is not providing the best environment for learning and achieving. In addition, as education factor influenced student ways

to creativity, inspired teacher behavior increase or reduce students' self-confidence to take the path to be a creative. Teachers' attitudes affect their behavior towards their students in the classroom and in the school, and depending upon a teacher's behavior, students can perform well or not. Teaching and learning style and activities in the class are integrated to encourage creativity .The participants reported that using activities in the teaching and learning process can be considered one of the most effective and useful learning methods.

Participants' Perspective of the Future of Education

This study examines the participants' narratives about their experiences of studying and learning in different cultures, from when they were very young until they came to study at the graduate level. Participants in this study spoke about the valuable experience they gained from studying abroad and how they would be a positive good position to transfer their knowledge to other teachers in their country. The participants in this study aim to help improve teaching practices for the benefit of the teachers and the young generation of students. They are hopeful that they can contribute to increasing teachers' awareness about the need to apply a more active approach in the classroom, and to use multiple teaching and learning methods, so as to access various ways to teach the lesson. The participants want to heighten awareness about the significance of creativity in learning throughout all disciplines, and inform other teachers about the use teaching practices. That encourages the development of students' self-esteem and creativity. They believe that students are creative and in need of being supported through access to education, all disciplines, and opportunities to express their thoughts and opinions.

Limitation of the Study and Suggestions for the Future Research

The researcher chose a qualitative research approach in order to focus on how the complex and multifaceted subject of creativity is perceived by a very specific group of people. The limitations of this study relate, primarily, to the number of participants it included (three) and the proximity of the participants to each other. Admittedly, the small number of participants prevents a cross-checking analysis of the participants' personal stories, which would be necessary if it were to make more general claims regarding the experiences of women in Saudi Arabia based on the stories of a few.

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The most significant recommendation that can be made is based on the results of this study is that future research extend the scope of the participants and delve deeper into the study of educators and teachers' perspectives on their responsibility toward creating opportunities to develop students' creativity . This study could examine how teaching practices have changed and what challenges they encountered. Such studies would ask teachers whether or not they were willing or able to adapt their teaching practices to reflect a variety of pedagogical theories, such as active and student-centered learning. Such research would inform the design and implementation of professional development within all levels of the Saudi education system. In order to raise mindfulness of the meaning and significance of creativity in the learning process, a better teacher education and public awareness is necessary.

Conclusion

This study has presented Saudi female graduate students' perceptions of the meaning and significance of creativity in education, and it has considered their observations of the education system in both Saudi Arabia and Canada, so as to determine the factors that they identify as either supporting or inhibiting the development of their own creativity. This study reveals how culture has influenced the participants' learning, in terms of shaping their awareness about the significance of creativity and in terms of the development of their own creativity. Culture had an impact on their home environments and on their school environments, both of which are central to a child's development. It is recommended that new and multiple approaches to teaching and learning be implemented within every education system, so as to increase student engagement and involvement in their own learning, and encourage the development of their inherent creativity.

Schools should establish greater communication with parents and assist them in recognizing differences in children's learning styles. Encouraging cooperation between the teachers and parents will increase community involvement in the school, and create additional opportunities for learning, not only for the students but also for the parents and the teachers. Teachers and parents can collaborate in the discovery and discussion of the students' interests and discover a child's interest by sharing their observations of that child at home and school. These strategies for effecting change within the schools are some of the ideas that the participants have taken away from their involvement in this study. The intention is to apply these

strategies in the classrooms, and to create the kind of learning environment that enables their students to explore and learn about the world through activities that encourage, rather than hinder, their students' creative development.

In Arabic culture, there is a common quote. The quote is this: "the day that I did not bring or add anything to it, I am an addition to this world." This quote reminds us that we should bring good things to this world or make changes in good ways that last forever. It helps us to remember to leave a lasting impact on the world, a positive impact, and not to allow life to live and die as if we had not come into the world at all. Creativity is related to personal characteristic and all people have the capacity to be creative. Creativity is a human sense, and it can increase or disappear, depending upon the surrounding motivation and on the individual's personal characteristic. For instance, some people are motivated during challenging circumstances or prove themselves when they are experiencing hardship, while others get motivation from the positive aspects of life. Creativity is part of the process that enables innovation and change to arise, even under challenging circumstances, such as when there is a lack of tools or support for the person who is faced with a problem. Such circumstances can even be motivating, if the person is driven to search for alternatives and prove their ability to face the problem. Now it is concluded that every person can be a part of creating change and building a successful country, if we work hard and believe and encourage each other.

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