



Creativity and ADHD (Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) children

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Abstract

ADHD is a behavioral disorder characterized by difficulty focusing, impulsive behaviors, and hyperactivity. It is one of the most common childhood disorders and can continue through adulthood. It usually appears early in life, often between the ages of 3 and 6. The symptoms vary from person to person. They are considered by some as 'good for nothing'. But various researches have helped in finding the relationship between their impulsiveness and creativeness. Though not true for every ADHD child, it establishes a notion that they do show certain aspects of acceptable behavior.

Keywords: Creativity, ADHD

Introduction

The creative aspect of every individual varies. It is one of the most powerful and valuable of all human capacities. For something to be considered creative, it must have two essential elements; originality and usefulness. In our daily life, we show some kind of creativity in doing our tasks; and it is also true that certain individuals are more creative than others. Creativity can be acquired and polished at any age. Similarly, people with ADHD are also said to be high in inquisitiveness and novel ideas which leads to creativity.

ADHD

ADHD also known as ADD is the acronym for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. It is also known as the hyperkinetic disorder in the ICD-10. Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a chronic disorder that is considered to be a neuro-psychiatric disorder or a disorder of nervous system. It is the most common disorder among school children. The disorder is characterized by developmentally inappropriate functioning in the domains of inattention, hyperactivity and impulsivity. In simple terms, the child's functioning is not matching with that of his/her peers.

The primary characteristic of ADHD is a pattern of inattention and hyperactivity-impulsivity, or a combination of the two. In the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-V) symptoms must be present before the age of 12. To meet for each of these ADHD specifiers, a person must exhibit at least 6 symptoms from the appropriate categories below.

A) Symptoms of Inattention

- Often fails to give close attention to details or makes careless mistakes in schoolwork, work, or other activities.
- Often has difficulty sustaining attention in tasks or play activities,
- Often does not seem to listen when spoken to directly.
- Often does not follow through on instructions and fails to finish schoolwork, chores, or duties in the workplace (not due to oppositional behavior or failure to understand instructions)
- Often has difficulty organizing tasks and activities
- Often avoids, dislikes, or is reluctant to engage in tasks that require sustained mental effort (such as schoolwork or homework)
- Often loses things necessary for tasks or activities (e.g., toys, school assignments, pencils, books, or tools)
- Is often easily distracted by extraneous stimuli.
- Is often forgetful in daily activities—even those the person performs regularly
- (e.g., a routine appointment)

B) Symptoms of Hyperactivity/Impulsivity

- Often fidgets with hands or feet or squirms in seat.
- Often leaves seat in classroom or in other situations in which remaining seated is expected.
- Often runs about or climbs excessively in situations in which it is inappropriate (in adolescents or adults, may be limited to subjective feelings of restlessness)
- Often has difficulty playing or engaging in leisure activities quietly

- Is often “on the go” or often acts as if “driven by a motor”
- Often talks excessively

Impulsivity

- Often blurts out answers before questions have been completed
- Often has difficulty awaiting turn
- Often interrupts or intrudes on others (e.g., butts into conversations or games)

Symptoms must have persisted for at least 6 months. Some of these symptoms need to have been present as a child, at 12 years old or younger. The symptoms also must exist in at least two separate settings (for example, at school and at home). The symptoms should be creating significant impairment in social, academic or occupational functioning or relationships.

Creativity

Creativity is the act of turning new and imaginative ideas into reality. Creativity is characterized by the ability to perceive the world in new ways, to find hidden patterns, to make connections between seemingly unrelated phenomena, and to generate solutions. Creativity involves two processes: thinking, then producing i.e. putting it into practice. Thus, it is said, ‘If you have ideas but don’t act on them, you are imaginative but not creative.’

Definition of Creativity

Dr. E. Paul Torrence described creativity as “ a process of becoming sensitive to problems, deficiencies, gaps in knowledge, missing elements, disharmonies, and so on; identifying the difficulty; searching for solutions, making guesses, or formulating hypotheses about the deficiencies: testing and retesting these hypotheses and possibly modifying and retesting them; and finally communicating the results.”

Characteristics of Creative Children

The following list is not meant to be all-inclusive, but many of the listed indicators appear with some regularity in literature describing characteristics and differences in creative personalities.

Highly creative students may

1. Have the ability to make unusual associations or connections between seemingly unrelated or remote ideas.
2. Have the ability to rearrange elements of thought to create new ideas or products.
3. Have a large number of ideas or solutions to problems.
4. Display intellectual playfulness, fantasize, imagine, and daydream.
5. Are often concerned with adapting, improving, or modifying existing ideas, thoughts or products or the ideas or products of others.
6. Have a keen or unusual sense of humor and see humor others do not see.
7. Do not fear being different, but may still be emotionally hurt by non-acceptance. Often the importance of an idea outweighs that of peer acceptance.
8. Ask many questions at an early age – this trend generally continues past early childhood into adulthood. These are

the kids that surprise others with their wonderings.

9. Frequently challenge teachers, textbook authors, and those in authority or “experts”.
10. Sometimes come up with unexpected, futuristic, bizarre, even “silly” answers or solutions.
11. Are sometimes resented by peers because of crazy or unusual ideas and their forcefulness and passion in presenting them or for pushing their ideas on others.
12. When completing special or unusual projects or assignments, often show a rare capacity for originality, intense concentration, commitment to completion, and persistence.
13. Become obsessed with completing varied projects, or exhibit unusual persistence in completing tasks. It is this obsessive need to complete a task that is so important in differentiating folks with good ideas from those who are truly creative.

Creativity and ADHD

Creative thinking is the ability by which one perceives something new and original which other persons miss. The extremely creative individual means that he/she has the capability to take clear and recognizable part of information and link them in entirely new ways. Impulsivity, one of the main symptoms of ADHD, lead people to have more original ideas. It is found that ADHD child perceives things in different manner which are generally ignored by other people. They generate unusual ideas due to their different knowledge bases which is acquired by them through their less focused interactions with their environment. Researchers suggest that individuals with ADHD are exceptionally good at divergent thinking tasks. Creativity skill is the most essential requirement in the present scenario.

It is assumed that ADHD and creativity go hand-in-hand. Creativity has been associated with right brain activity. The right brain of ADHD individual is active and controls left brain. The left brain is the thinking side, while the right brain is the doing side. Due to right brain excess, the unusual pattern of behavior is displayed by ADHD children and due to left brain immaturity, lack of learning is found in ADHD children.

Creativity among ADHD children have been studied in different perspectives. Shaw (1992) reported that ADHD children exhibited greater crossed eye-hand dominance and left laterality than a group of normal children matched by age, sex, and IQ. Cramond (1994) concluded that ADHD group had higher figural creativity and more use of imagery in problem solving. Very scanty studies are found pertaining to four factors of verbal and nonverbal creative thinking viz. fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration among ADHD and non ADHD children. Abraham, *et al.* (2006) found that ADHD group was lower on originality factor of nonverbal creative task than control group.

It was assumed that ADHD and creativity seems to be the two sides of one coin, but the research to support this claim was never cited and its existence was unclear, thus its status as fact or myth is yet to be ascertained. Therefore understanding and determining the concept of creative thinking from an ADHD perspective is very important.

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