



# THE VALUE OF CREATIVE ACTIVITIES IN THE RECREATIONAL FIELD: THE GROUNDED THEORY PERSPECTIVE

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**Abstract.** The current article employs a constructivist grounded theory approach to analyze the relationship between recreation and creativity. Researchers explore how engaging in imaginative recreational activities foster and sustain social connections, emphasizing the importance of social settings and interactions. In the context of recreation, creativity is highlighted as a crucial process enriched with educational and developmental elements, characterized by originality and usefulness. The value of creative activities is particularly stressed, noting their ability to transform emotions, replace negative feelings with positive ones, and enhance self-confidence among young people. This self-confidence serves as a medium for socialization and self-development. Additionally, the role of communication is emphasized, as creative activities provide youth with opportunities to communicate and build social ties.

**Keywords:** communication, creativity, grounded theory, recreation, young people with fewer opportunities.

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## 1. Introduction: relevance and the scientific problem of the article

Creative pursuits undertaken during leisure time offer a powerful avenue for personal development and improved well-being. When individuals engage in activities such as painting, writing, music-making, or crafting, they tap into a wellspring of benefits that extend far beyond the immediate joy of creation.

Firstly, engaging in creative activities fosters personal growth by challenging individuals to develop new skills, express themselves, and explore their potential. This process of learning and self-discovery can enhance self-esteem and confidence as individuals overcome obstacles and witness their own progress. Moreover, creativity often involves problem-solving and divergent thinking, which can lead to improved cognitive flexibility in other areas of life (Mareque et al., 2019). This is very important aspect for young people with fewer opportunities<sup>1</sup> who are one of the most vulnerable groups in society, and their involvement and integration in social activities is one of the most important.

<sup>1</sup> Young people who do not have the same conditions as their peers to develop their competencies and activities, because they live in unfavourable conditions or face social, economic, educational, cultural, geographical, disability, and/or health problems (E-seimas.lrs.lt, 2018).

Secondly, engaging in creative pursuits serves as an effective way to reduce stress. The act of creation often induces a state of flow, where individuals become fully immersed in the activity, losing track of time and temporarily setting aside their worries. This meditative state can lower cortisol levels, providing a much-needed break from the pressures of daily life. Additionally, the tactile nature of many creative activities, such as sculpting or gardening, can have a grounding effect, helping to alleviate anxiety and promote relaxation (Zarobe & Bungay, 2017).

Lastly, regular engagement in creative recreation contributes significantly to overall well-being. Creative activities often involve self-expression, allowing individuals to process emotions and experiences in a healthy manner. Additionally, many creative pursuits have a social component, whether through classes, clubs, or online communities, fostering connections and combating isolation (Bungay & Vella-Burrows, 2013).

By recognizing and promoting the value of creative pursuits in recreation, we can encourage individuals to cultivate habits that not only enrich their leisure time but also contribute to their long-term health and happiness.

Through recreational activities, young people with fewer opportunities are able to resolve their problems, which are often part of their personal quest, the healing of individual traumas, socialisation and the motivational search for integration.

Creativity in recreational activities is not only an opportunity for the youth worker to get in touch with the young person but also a way for a young person to fulfil themselves. One of the important issues facing today in world pedagogy and educational psychology is the formation of a person who is not only educated, but also endowed with creative thinking is one of the main issues of the way, methods and means (Ismailovich, 2021).

The socio-cultural paradigm of creativity (Sternberg, 2003) emphasizes how social context, cultural values, norms, and interactions shape creative expression. This view regards creativity as a collaborative and socially embedded process, influenced by one's environment, including relationships with peers, mentors, and cultural elements. It suggests that creativity is not merely the result of individual brilliance but is also shaped and fostered by the collective knowledge, practices, and social dynamics present within a particular society or culture.

Understanding the unique benefits of various creative activities enables young people to align their leisure pursuits with their personal needs and goals. For example, someone experiencing high levels of stress might choose meditative art forms such as mandala drawing or pottery, while an individual seeking to expand their social network may prefer group activities like community theater or collaborative art projects.

This informed approach to leisure can also help in developing a more balanced lifestyle. By recognizing the value of creative activities, individuals may be more inclined to carve out dedicated time for these pursuits, leading to better time management and a more diverse range of experiences in their daily lives.

Despite increasing interest in creativity and recreation as distinct fields of study, there remains a significant gap in comprehensive research explicitly connecting these two areas. While many studies have explored the benefits of leisure activities or the impact of creativity on various aspects of life, few have systematically examined creativity within the context of recreation. To address this gap, the paper poses a problem statement in the form of a

question: how is creativity fostered in the field of recreation? The article aims to underscore the value of creative activities in recreation for young people with fewer opportunities.

The current research employs scientific literature analysis, utilizing the research strategy of constructivist grounded theory. This approach led to the development of the socio-educational theory known as the invisible hand.

## 2. Literature review: the link between recreation and creativity

The concept of recreation is derived from the Latin word for *restoration*. English terminology interprets recreation in two ways: 1) recreation as recovery (*re-create* is interpreted using the word *recreate*); 2) recreation as rest and entertainment (*recreate* – *to rest, to recover, to entertain, to amuse*) (Norkaitienė et al., 2010). Thus, focusing not only on the concept but also on the notion, and referring to the words of social constructionists Berger and Luckmann (1999, p. 90), “[...] he retained experience is sedimented, *i.e.* it is frozen in memory as recognizable and unforgettable formations, and until this happens it has no meaning”, the aim is to reveal the importance, meaning, and place of the phenomenon of recreation in the social continuum.

Researchers studying creative processes agree in defining creativity as a complex action that occurs within a specific symbolic, social-institutional, and material context. It is shaped by both the situation and the domain through which it is expressed (Glaveanu et al., 2019; Elisondo et al., 2022). Beresnevičius (2022), for instance, discusses the classification of creativity concepts and definitions, shedding light on how these ideas are used and understood:

- Creativity as a creative process: in this category, creativity is understood as the process by which a person creates something new, whether in the artistic, scientific, or technological realm;
- Creativity as a result: here, creativity is evaluated based on the final product. This perspective views creativity through its outcomes, considering it a solution to a problem;
- Creativity as a confluence of different components: this concept sees creativity as the interaction of various factors such as personality traits, environment, learning, and experience. It is a complex, multidimensional phenomenon influenced by multiple components. One of the most recognized models of creativity is Rhodes' (1961) 4P model, which divides creativity into four related components: person, process, product, and press/environment. Models like this highlight creativity's key components, which are also distinct areas of scientific research;
- Creativity as a driver of progress: in this view, creativity is seen as a crucial factor driving progress in fields such as economics, science, technology, and culture. It suggests that creativity is not only a personal trait or process but also a fundamental driver of societal and civilizational advancement.

So, creativity can be defined as the ability of a creator to produce qualitatively new imaginary or material objects, encompassing the novelty of the process, the creator's activity, and the environment (Beresnevičius, 2022).

Numerous studies have established connections between creativity and leisure activities (Iwasaki, 2017; Hegarty & Plucker, 2012; Batey et al., 2009, 2010; Hegarty, 2009). These studies indicate that individuals who engage in structured leisure activities tend to achieve

higher scores on creativity measures. In the context of recreation, creativity is particularly significant as a process that involves elements of education and development. This process is characterized by originality and usefulness, necessitating measurable outcomes. In other words, creative work must generate some form of impact, whether on individuals, groups, or a particular discipline (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996, 2004).

The propulsion theory of creative contributions outlines various impacts, indicating that creative works either maintain or challenge existing paradigms. Paradigm-maintaining contributions include: (a) replication, which confirms that an organization is on the right track; (b) forward incrementation, which advances the field along its current trajectory; (c) redefinition, offering a new perspective on the field's current state; and (d) advance forward incrementation, which propels the field further in the same direction but beyond what others might anticipate. Paradigm-challenging contributions include: (a) redirection, which takes the field in a new direction; (b) reconstruction, which returns the field to a previous state; and (c) re-initiation, which establishes a new starting point (Sternberg, 1999; Theriault & Stone, 2023).

Creativity in the field of recreation provides young individuals with opportunities for self-fulfillment. Personal development can encompass a wide range of qualities, but through crafts, work, or creative activities, individuals cultivate willpower, patience, intellect, humility, dedication, responsibility, imagination, and collaboration skills (Petružytė, 2013). Additionally, creativity in recreational activities fosters the creation and maintenance of social relationships, highlighting the importance of social environments and connections.

However, research also points to the potential negative effects of creative activities. It is essential to recognize that risk-taking can lead to adverse consequences in the social sphere (Ben-Zur & Zeidner, 2009). Such consequences may include negative evaluations from others, which can result in social exclusion and sometimes severe repercussions (Bonetto et al., 2020). Given these significant risks, creative individuals may exhibit less fear of receiving negative judgments or facing rejection. This hypothesis supports the idea that social sanctions (such as negative judgments) can inhibit creative behaviours, suggesting that a reduced fear of sanctions may be crucial for creative production (Bonetto et al., 2020).

Engaging in recreation within the context of creativity helps young individuals remain inventive. This means that work or specific activities allow individuals to express their creativity. Various types of work in these aspects enable individuals to "[...] feel where they can realize themselves, where they can direct themselves, and discover their 'unique gift' and vocation" (Petružytė, 2013, p. 145). Leisure hours also provide opportunities for individuals to experience nature by observing and creatively transforming it, helping them break away from routine and reflect on essential questions about their daily lives.

Leisure time can facilitate self-discovery by encouraging contemplation of worldview questions and engaging in creativity, art, and music. For self-actualization, it is important to spend both work and leisure time meaningfully – engaging with culture and art, spending time in nature, interacting with others, and finding moments of spirituality, such as silence, pauses, or contemplation.

Thus, creativity and self-actualization are complementary elements. Creativity is viewed as a nurtured personal trait that significantly enhances the process of self-realization, which involves pursuing personal potential. It is crucial to emphasize that fostering creativity as a

personal component requires consistent engagement in creative activities to improve skills, socialization, and the building and maintenance of relationships.

However, when working with young individuals who have fewer opportunities, it is essential to acknowledge that creative activities during leisure time might not always be effective. Adverse and distressing experiences can dampen the desire to create and foster a fear of negative judgment.

### 3. Methodology

Constructivist grounded theory is a methodology of inductive and abductive strategy (Bryant, 2017, 2019) that consists of systematic and flexible guidelines for data collection and analysis in constructing a theory. The inductive and abductive strategies are combined, since all the studied data are theoretically verified and interpreted until the most reliable theoretical interpretation of the data is reached and a new underlying theory is constructed (Bryant & Charmaz, 2019; Hense & Skewes McFerran, 2016).

The ontological stance adopted here is grounded in an interpretivist constructivist ontology, which posits that no two individuals experience the same reality. Consequently, people have varying experiences, attitudes, and biases that shape their understanding of reality (O’Gorman & MacIntosh, 2014). Social phenomena and their meanings are constructed by social actors in relation to their experiences and the contexts in which they find themselves (Berger & Luckmann, 1999). Recreational activities serve as one means of engaging young people with fewer opportunities, but their impact is inherently individual, influenced by the social environment and the young person’s worldview, among other factors. This impact is not objectively assessed; rather, it is a subjective construction of reality.

Aligned with a subjectivist interpretive epistemological stance (O’Gorman & MacIntosh, 2014; Saunders et al., 2023), knowledge is constructed through human interaction. Social reality is understood through interpretation, and since reality is subjective, the researcher aims to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under study by viewing the social world through the perspectives of the research participants. This involves exploring what recreational activities offer to young people with fewer opportunities how these experiences influence them and how they contribute to constructing their knowledge.

Two types of epistemology are integrated in this research: subjective epistemology, which emphasizes that the world is perceived from a human perspective (Saunders et al., 2023) – in this case, from the viewpoint of young people with fewer opportunities – and interpretive epistemology, which focuses on meanings, approaches issues from various contexts, and utilizes an inductive data collection approach (O’Gorman & MacIntosh, 2014). The research focuses on recreational activities, examining their meanings for young people with fewer opportunities and evaluating them in relation to the social environment, personal experiences, and worldviews.

The theoretical perspective of this study is rooted in a social-constructivist approach, which emphasizes the examination of social interactions and processes to encapsulate meanings within the fabric of everyday reality (Berger & Luckmann, 1999). In the context of social interactions, particularly during face-to-face encounters, individuals may recognize the

subjectivity of others while simultaneously directing attention toward themselves (Berger & Luckmann, 1999).

It is posited that marginalized, vulnerable, or disadvantaged youth come to understand others through interactions with recreational activity organizers, such as youth workers, social workers, or recreational professionals, as well as through engagement with peers in recreational activities, which often involve confrontational scenarios. This dynamic fosters a shift in attitudes toward both others and oneself. Furthermore, interaction facilitates the exchange of experiences and knowledge among young people facing fewer opportunities, contributing to the resolution of their social and educational challenges.

### 3.1. Sample and sampling

The study's primary selection criteria were established through a review of scientific literature and the researcher's observations:

- Participants: the participants are young people aged 16 to 18 years;
- Target group: the selection focuses on young people with fewer opportunities who frequent open youth centers and are engaged by mobile youth workers. This emphasis is crucial for demonstrating the impact of recreational activities;
- Accessibility: participation in recreational activities is often less accessible to these young people, making it essential to understand their experiences within this context. As the study aims to explore participants' experiences and the meanings they derive from recreational activities, engagement in these activities is both an integral and mandatory criterion;
- Local focus: young people with fewer opportunities living in the region were selected to expedite the identification of socio-educational trends. Conducting qualitative research in smaller groups facilitates the collection of comprehensive data, providing deeper insights into the phenomenon under investigation (Adler et al., 2019).

### 3.2. Theoretical sampling

Theoretical sampling, aligned with the constructivist approach (Charmaz, 2014), guided the identification of participants. In this context, the quality of the data takes precedence over quantity:

- Participant selection: following the initial interviews with young people facing limited opportunities in the region, it was decided to extend the age range of participants to include individuals up to 20 years old. This adjustment was made because their experiences in participating in recreational activities tend to be more substantial, providing greater meaning in their life choices;
- Refinement of categories: as the sub-categories of "Experiences of participation in recreational activities" and "Perceptions of participation in recreational activities" emerged, the participant sample was refined to allow for a more in-depth analysis of these categories. Consequently, youth workers were included in the study.

The survey comprised eleven young individuals facing limited opportunities in rural settings and seven professionals working with youth. Selection occurred through word of mouth, engaging with young people at the rural open youth centers, in Aukštaitija, Žemaitija, and Dzūkija ethnographic regions of Lithuania. To develop an inductively based theory in

accordance with the constructivist approach, the selection aimed for both homogeneity and diversity among cases. Commonalities, such as gender and status, were considered, along with differences in experience, responsibilities, and work locations in rural areas. Interviews were conducted with four youth workers, two youth coordinators, and one director of the rural open youth centers, thereby fulfilling the general criteria for the study sample.

### 3.3. Data collection

Building upon sensitizing concepts, the researchers outlined the primary themes for the research inquiries concerning young people facing limited opportunities. These themes included their preferred activities and potential impacts, particularly in relation to self-esteem, self-confidence, creativity, and environmental influences.

Interviews were arranged at convenient times for participants and were conducted via a virtual platform. Before the interviews, participants were briefed on the study's subject and objectives, and they were informed about the confidentiality of their responses and their rights as participants. Each interview was audio-recorded using a voice recorder. Based on theoretical sampling, the interview questions were refined to reflect emerging concepts. Thus, the analysis of the first and second interviews generated new questions for subsequent interviews. The final interview placed greater emphasis on the main concepts and ideas relevant to theory building. Each interview was followed by a memo, providing the researcher's reflections, insights about the participant, and observations regarding the interview process.

The interview questions were divided into three main themes:

1. Access and barriers to creative activities: this theme explores the challenges and opportunities young people with fewer resources face when engaging in creative pursuits;
2. Personal development and self-expression through creativity: this theme examines how creative activities contribute to personal growth and self-expression for these young people;
3. Social connections and community impact: this theme investigates how creative activities in recreational settings facilitate social connections and community engagement for young people with fewer opportunities.

All leisure activities were analyzed, including those not related to creativity, such as sports or hiking. However, significant attention was focused on creative leisure activities (as suggested by Trnka et al., 2016), which were perceived as writing, painting, music composition, drama performances, and crafts.

### 3.4. Data analysis

Data analysis began on the first day of data collection and involved transcription, memo writing, coding, and constant comparison. Following the analytical framework outlined by Charmaz (2014), the process included initial coding, focused coding, theoretical coding, and theory development. Each phase produced specific outcomes that illuminated the interconnections within the constructivist grounded theory process.

In the initial coding stage, connections were established between the researcher and the data as well as between the researcher and the participants. A detailed examination of data

elements, such as words, phrases, lines, and events, was conducted to analyze and break down the information (Charmaz, 2006). Coding was performed incident by incident using gerunds, as recommended by Charmaz (2006), resulting in simple, accurate, and concise codes that served as anchors for key data points. Simultaneously, memos were written to pose reflective questions, such as *What is happening here?* (Charmaz, 2008).

Focused coding targeted the most significant codes derived from a substantial amount of data. Codes were grouped, combined, and generalized to create concepts or subcategories. This stage was crucial as it sustained the chosen theoretical thread in data analysis throughout subsequent steps, allowing the researcher to identify which codes were most appropriate for further analysis (Charmaz, 2006).

Theoretical coding, a higher-level analysis, utilized the term *category* to summarize data and assign symbolic names. This phase defined relationships between categories, assembling analytical units into a coherent whole and distinguishing a central category (Charmaz, 2006).

Memos play a vital role in the research process, reflecting the researcher's engagement with the study and assisting in internal management. Two distinct types of memos are typically used: free memos, drafted at the study's outset, and analytical memos, developed during data analysis, often alongside graphical visualizations. Throughout the analysis phase, memos serve as integral elements in theory construction, facilitating the development of theoretical categories and the grouping of data.

Theoretical saturation is another crucial element of grounded theory. It extends beyond the mere emergence of repetitive data; rather, it involves the conceptualization of comparisons among data until new aspects of the process under analysis begin to surface. Theoretical saturation reflects the context of the situation being studied. The researcher must feel that they have thoroughly explored the various avenues and cases that could contribute to the research, ultimately gaining the confidence to conclude, "This is sufficient for now, but I can revisit this in a few years" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 114).

Ethical consideration: research ethics encompasses the collective agreements and guidelines governing research practices (Hopf, 2005). In essence, it outlines the regulations governing the interaction between the researcher and study participants throughout the research process and the dissemination of its findings. The qualitative research adhered to the following ethical principles:

- Ensuring the participants' voluntary involvement;
- Upholding the respect and dignity of participants;
- Fostering a trust-based relationship;
- Safeguarding the confidentiality and anonymity of the provided information.

The analysis of the survey data was presented to and discussed with the participants.

### **3.5. Findings: creative activities as an aspect of young people's self-realization element**

In the process of recreation, significant emphasis is placed on the spiritually fulfilling aspects of personal growth. This is evident through genuine communication and active participation in various activities. The attitudes of young people are closely linked to their expectations and needs regarding recreational activities. Those who feel a lack of such activities tend to be

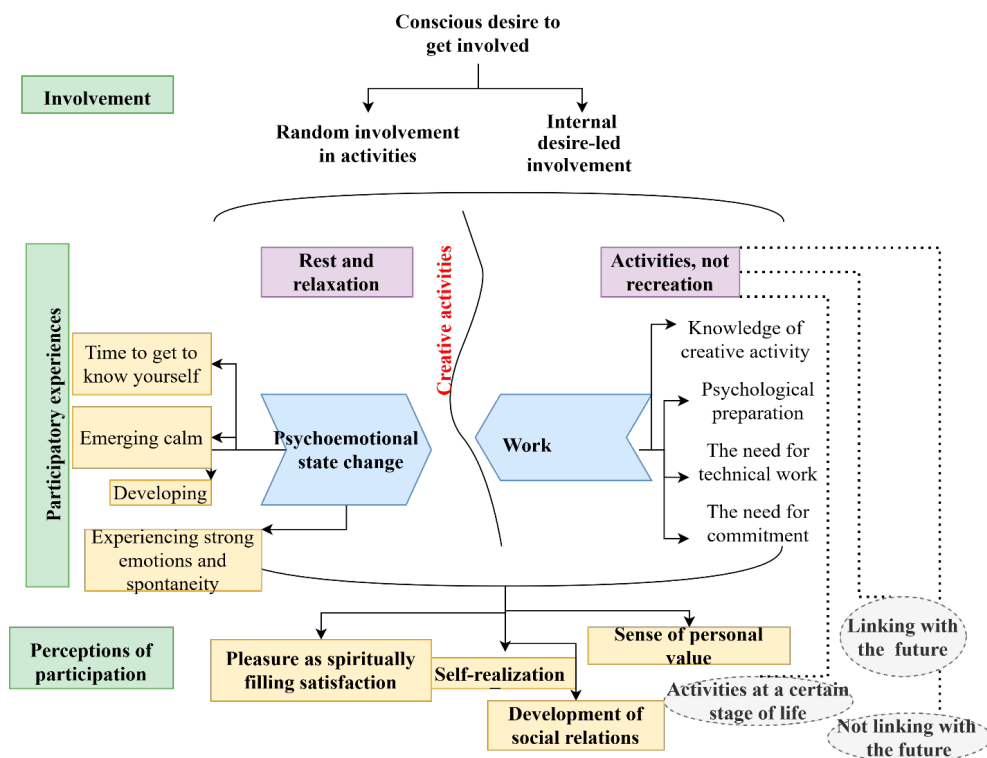
more unpretentious and sincere in their interactions, displaying greater openness to change and a stronger willingness to engage in activities.

To contextualize recreational activities, it is essential to recognize that the primary aim for young participants is to experience pleasure. However, this pleasure must be perceived as spiritually fulfilling and meaningful within the recreational process.

The study showed that creative activities are perceived by young people in two ways: as work and as a change in psycho-emotional state element (Figure 1).

The two prevailing attitudes of the young people with fewer opportunities who took part in the study are that creative activities are recreational and associated with relaxation: “As a matter of fact, when I played instruments, it helped me relax” (R2). And that they are not recreational, but activities that require full personal commitment, hard work, psychological preparation, and knowledge: “It would be hard to draw something now. This is something that needs a lot of training. Anyone can do something for a joke, but if it’s something serious, you have to make an effort” (R4).

From the interviews with the young participants, it is evident that they possess a conscious desire to engage in activities, almost like a dream. However, they often become involved by chance – typically when someone, such as a teacher, suggests it to them – or spontaneously, without giving it much thought: “I didn’t want anything until one day this principal told



**Figure 1.** The value of creative activities in the recreation field (source: created by authors)

me, come to the assembly hall after school, try it out, maybe you'll like it, maybe you'll do something [...]" (R2).

Participation in creative activities is a kind of juxtaposition: on the one hand (thinking about rest and relaxation) it is like a change of psycho-emotional state, where the person starts the activity in one state and feeling (anxious, nervous, sad, happy) and ends it in another (in a better mood, energised or physically tired): "When I start drawing, I'm usually kind of nervous or something, but when I'm done, I seem to calm down somehow" (R5); "For me somehow not, it depends on the mood, because there are some depressing clouds and I've made songs out of them and then I started to hate them because I don't want to go back to that mood" (R12).

It is from the change in psycho-emotional state that the following experiences of participation can be distinguished, which emerged during the interviews with the participants: time for self-knowledge, emerging calmness in the activity, experiencing strong emotions – spontaneity, education.

However, creative activities are also seen as activities where the work aspect is revealed: professionalism, psychological preparation, dedication: "Your hearing has to be good, you have to know when to hit, if you accidentally jump to the side" (R2). The interviews highlighted that taking part in creative activities helped them to realise themselves, to feel their worth and as a way of showing themselves to others: "In my opinion, yes, because anyway, if you really like it and if you are committed enough to it, you can do it just by drawing. You completely detach yourself from everything else and you just stay with yourself" (R5). They also identified creative activities as a way to develop social networks: "I take part in drawing competitions so that someone else likes it, so that someone else sees that I can do something too, so that I don't sit in hiding, so that I take part" (R5). Another important aspect is that the young people perceive that the pleasure they get from engaging in creative activities benefits them: "Physically, I feel tired after dancing, but I'm happy to be able to go dancing. And I really feel that the dancing has worked out for the better" (R9); "That's also something I can say about the music, that I'm very happy that we're performing our own songs and not someone else's and the same creative process" (R12).

From the perspective of creative activities as an activity, it emerged that some young people want to associate their future with creative activities: "I'd like to have a future in music" (R2), others do not want to: "I used to want to connect my life with it, but then I noticed that [...]. Well, maybe it wouldn't give me a very good future as I would like or I don't know" (R1), and others talk about it as a phase of their former life: "And I don't want to do it anymore [...] or maybe it's because so much has changed [...] maybe everything is gone [...]. I've found myself and it's all gone" (R4). The important thing is that those young people who want to connect their future with creative activities see a lot of meaning in it and want other young people to have the opportunity to know themselves. Those who do not have a future are less and less likely to engage in creative activities and have very little motivation to continue.

The process of change in psychoemotional state reflected in the analysis depends on the decision made by the participant to engage in recreational activities or not. This is an important point of departure for the young person's socio-education in an informal (leisure) setting.

Analysing and discussing the experiences and perceptions of participation in recreational activities, it is clear that young people gain positive experiences from participating in activities, which influence their future behaviour in their daily lives. Self-control, self-fulfillment, development of communication and communication skills, etc. are socio-educational factors that emerged from the analysis of the data and which change the behavioural strategies of individuals.

The results also revealed a negative impact of creative activities, with young people facing fewer opportunities expressing reluctance to showcase their creative skills in public. This supports the notion that creative activities are closely linked to a fear of negative judgment. According to some authors (Bonetto et al., 2020), creativity is positively associated with social risk-taking, suggesting the need to explore potential connections between creativity and fear of negative evaluation. Creativity necessitates an understanding of individuals' sensitivity to, or apprehension about, negative feedback from others. Factors such as low self-esteem and negative social experiences – including bullying, parental bereavement, and parental violence – can hinder creativity and the desire to create due to the fear of being overlooked or judged unfavorably. This was clearly demonstrated in the research findings, where some participants identified creative activities as their primary means of coping with personal challenges. However, they were hesitant to publicize these activities or link them to future aspirations.

Creative activities provide an outlet for young people with fewer opportunities to escape their problems, discover solutions, and achieve self-fulfillment. However, for those with low self-esteem and a lack of self-confidence, the fear of negative evaluation or being unrecognized poses a significant barrier. Thus, while creative activities in recreational contexts can be beneficial, they may also stifle creativity and further isolate the individual.

#### 4. Conclusions

Recreation within a creative context is crucial as it encompasses elements of education and personal development. Leisure activities offer young people with fewer opportunities a means to escape their worries and find relief. However, emphasizing purposeful leisure activities can actively guide these individuals toward personal growth and self-realization, while also providing opportunities to cultivate and enhance their creative abilities.

Creativity in the field of recreation serves as an expression of deep emotions and perspectives. It reflects one's cultural environment, becoming an integral part of it. Additionally, it can function as a therapeutic outlet, enabling individuals to express their feelings and opinions authentically, thereby fostering connections with others that might not occur otherwise. Creative activities not only transform negative emotions into positive ones but also empower young people to strengthen their self-confidence, serving as a catalyst for socialization and self-development.

The study highlighted various perceptions of creative activities among young people, portraying them as both recreational and demanding. Engaging in creative endeavors requires commitment, hard work, psychological preparation, and specific knowledge. While some participants view creative activities as a form of relaxation, others see them as avenues for self-realization, professionalism, and networking. The analysis also indicated that these

activities facilitate communication among young people. Interpersonal and broader communication provides necessary feedback, compliments, or constructive criticism, thus opening doors for collaboration.

However, research on creativity and the fear of negative judgment requires further exploration. In this sensitive domain, young people with fewer opportunities often hesitate to engage in creative activities, stifling their creative development due to apprehension and fear of negative evaluation.

## Note

The responses analysed in detail include only those of youth aged 16 to 18 whose parents provided consent for their participation in the study, and those aged 18 to 20 who provided their own consent.

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