

Summary of the doctoral dissertation

Title of work: “*Compulsion to create* in the artists’ narratives. The psycho-pedagogical perspective”

Author: mgr Agnieszka Janiszewska

Supervisor: prof. dr hab. Krzysztof Szmidt

Assistant Supervisor: dr Magdalena Sasin

The central subject of the dissertation entitled “*Compulsion to create* in the artists’ narratives. The psycho-pedagogical perspective” is a characteristic of a strong need to create – defined as the *compulsion to create* – and its importance for self-actualization of artists experiencing it. The aim of the research was to explore the characteristics of the *compulsion to create* and its significance for the process of artists’ (a group of individuals who were invited for research) self-actualization.

My research was exploratory and qualitatively oriented and consisted of the following stages: *thematizing, designing, interviewing, transcribing, analyzing, verifying, reporting* (Kvale, 2012, p. 77). The technique used was a free-form interview with elements of narrative (Urbaniak-Zajac, 2016). The research group consisted of 24 artists aged 28 to 83, practicing very diverse artistic professions (painting, drawing, graphics, literature, poetry, photography, composition, singing and directing). It is worth adding that I withdrew from anonymization of the research participants – all my interviewees agreed to reveal their basic personal data, i.e. name and surname (as well as age).

The theoretical and research assumptions were as follows:

1. Artists regularly feel a strong need for creative expression, called the *compulsion to create*.
2. As a result of feeling the *compulsion to create*, artists regularly and with commitment devote themselves to creative work.
3. The *compulsion to create* is largely autotelic in nature.
4. The gratification of the *compulsion to create* generates positive emotions (including *flow* states) and is a factor of artists' self-actualization.

5. Deprivation of the *compulsion to create* generates negative emotions (feelings of frustration, mental tension) and leads to inhibition of the process of self-actualization.

6. The *compulsion to create* generates conflicts with other life needs of an individual, and its regular gratification has a destructive impact on other areas of interviewees' lives, apart from creativity (family relationships, personal relationships, financial stability).

Based on the research results, I defined the *compulsion to create* as an intensely felt need for artistic expression, motivating individuals to regularly engage in the creative process, which often generates highly positive emotional states, especially the *flow* state (Csíkszentmihályi, 2008). The most important properties of this category include: the autotelic nature of the need to create related to the feeling of highly positive emotional states (especially *flow*) during the creative process, the high intensity of feeling the need to create and its intense gratification (regular involvement in creative work), as well as discomfort / psychological suffering as a result of deprivation of the need to create. In the context of the second part of the research goal, an important conclusion is that the gratification of the *compulsion to create* is also the gratification of the need for self-actualisation (so, in line with the analogous assumption of Abraham Maslow [2006], the need to create and self-actualisation might be – to some extent – considered synonymous). This means that the gratification of the *compulsion to create* is important for the increase in the sense of life satisfaction, the feeling of "being oneself" and (most often) the sense of meaning in life (which I took as indicators of self-actualization).

The result of the analysis is the dissertation, which consists of an introduction, nine chapters and a summary.

Chapters 1. – 6. provide a theoretical analysis of the work, which is the result of the extensive literature review on the subject. In *Chapter 1.*, I present the inspirations for the research topic and main theoretical and research contexts. In *Chapter 2.* I try to compare the *compulsion to create* with other specific concepts from the field of creatology, which include: *passion* (Kunat, 2015; Vallerand and Houlfort, 2003), *flow* state (Csíkszentmihályi, 2008), *grit* (Duckworth, 2016), *dynamic internal directionality* (Korniłowicz, 1976; see Szmidt, 2013), *creative impulse* (Dąbrowski, 1979), *creative life orientations* (Cudowska, 2017) and *creative orienting* (Pufal-Struzik, 2006) The goal I set for myself in *Chapter 3.* was to relate the *compulsion to create* phenomenon to the *4Ps Creativity Model* common in creativity studies (Rhodes, 1961). Based on the assumptions of this model, I analyse the possible relation of the

compulsion to create to the four aspects of creativity, i.e. product, process, person and press (stimulators and inhibitors of creativity). *Chapter 4.* was devoted to the characteristics of the need to create within the framework of theories of needs and self-actualization well-established in the literature on the subject. In this part, I mentioned selected trends in research on creativity and self-actualization from a humanistic perspective. I described the concept of self-actualization as well as the assumptions of positive pedagogy. In *Chapter 5.*, on the other hand, I focus on the analysis of the need to create from a psychoanalytic perspective – especially in the theories of creativity of Carl Gustav Jung (1971a, 1971b) and Otto Rank (1989). *Chapter 6.* contains a description of autotelicity as a property that, according to many sources, is associated with artistic creativity. In this chapter, the constructed *Model of the relationship between the need to create and lower-level human needs and self-actualization* is presented. The model was supportive in the initial development of the characteristics of the compulsion to create and understanding its importance for self-actualization.

Chapter 7. of the dissertation opens the part dedicated to the analysis of my own research and is a presentation of the methodological procedure applied. Here I also mention specific external conditions that influenced the way the research was conducted – i.e. the *COVID-19* pandemic – and, in accordance with the adopted assumptions of a contemplative social research approach (Konecki, 2018; 2019; 2022), I also share my personal self-reflections on the research process. *Chapter 8.* takes the form of a report on the process of my own research, in which I present the results of the analysis of empirical data. The analysis of the empirical material was organized according to thematic threads that are most important for the adopted research objectives. The final *Chapter 9.* contains theoretical generalizations and conclusions from the analysis of empirical data along with recommendations for educational practice. The culmination of the analytical work is a summary and suggestions for directions of further research on the compulsion to create, which I included in the *Conclusion*.

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