

# The production of broad and strict senses in the discourse on musical creativity and their influences on the self-concept of musicians as creative

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## Abstract

This article presents an analysis of the construction of beliefs/values related to musical creativity. From the perspective of critical discourse analysis, we seek to comprehend how individuals constitute broad and strict senses of creativity and how these senses can influence their perceptions of themselves as creative. Open questionnaires were administered to students in the process of scholarly training and non-scholarly musicians. The results indicate that the presence of both senses of creativity in participants' discourse reflects a social order that qualitatively and quantitatively produces and reproduces those senses. The broad sense of creativity has a smaller incidence rate (about 31%) and tends to allow participants to form a positive self-concept. In contrast, the strict sense appears more frequently (about 69%) and may lead to a negative self-concept when subjects do not reach the assigned values.

## Keywords

*musical creativity, critical discourse analysis, self-concept, beliefs, values, broad sense of creativity, strict sense of creativity*

This article presents the results of an empirical investigation that aimed to comprehend how individuals' pre-existing beliefs/values<sup>1</sup> about musical creativity can influence their self-concepts as creatives. In the educational field, researchers have pointed out that beliefs/values are formed on the basis of individual behavior and thus that reflection on established value systems is fundamental to educative practice (e.g., Aranha, 1996; Fives & Buehl, 2008; Pajares, 1992). From the

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cognitive perspective, authors have maintained that different beliefs/values may lead to diverse perceptions of events and that these perceptions affect self-esteem either positively or negatively (e.g., Alford & Beck, 1997; Beck, 1979; Shavelson, Hubner, & Stanton, 1976). In the context of musical creativity, the scrutiny of beliefs/value systems may reveal the creativity facilitators or inhibitors that have been formed by individuals through their life experiences.

According to Fairclough (1995), beliefs/values are constructed ideologically as both the products of socio-cultural practices and, simultaneously, the producers of the social structures that support them. Hence, a strong interrelationship between the society/culture and the formation of beliefs, values, and individual behaviors has been evidenced (e.g., Asch, 1955; Bandura, 1999; Festinger, 1954; Lane, 1984; Milgram, 1963), establishing a recursive principle in which ideas, thoughts, values, and beliefs are coproduced (Morin, 1998).

In this study, which was conducted at two universities in 2019 with different groups of musicians, we analyzed the construction of beliefs/values related to the subjects' musical creativity as well as the subjects' private concepts of creativity. From the analysis of discourses, we identified the production of "broad" and "strict" senses of musical creativity and explored the structures that yield the ideological reproduction of these senses in socio-cultural practices.

### *The broad and strict senses of creativity*

As stated by Andrade (1997), creativity can be analyzed in its broad and strict senses. In its strict sense, creativity is related to the creation of a new external reality from an internal reality. In its broad sense, creativity is seen as a phenomenon that is transcendent to a human being, and it is generally associated with the adaptation process and the very origin of life. Both senses are present in the four Ps of creativity present in the literature: (1) person (focused on the individual's internal attributes, such as personality, intellect, and skills); (2) process (focus on cognitive mechanisms, such as thinking, learning, and perception); (3) product (focus on consensus on the creative artifact), and (4) press (focus on environmental and socio-cultural variables) (Rhodes, 1961). Researchers have approached the Ps of creativity together, considering the individual, the cognitive mechanisms and the product, but also paying attention to the socio-cultural context present. Within this perspective, creativity is seen as a systemic process that can involve variables, such as field, domain, and person (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988), in addition to factors associated with skill, cognition, and the social environment (Amabile, 2013; Simonton, 1984, 1991, 1999). In view of these different perspectives on the study of creativity, it is emphasized that the orientation toward the strict or broad sense of creativity present in these four Ps occurs according to the way in which the authors direct their approaches.

When creativity is associated with individual talent, knowledge, and specialized technical capability, basing the merit of the creative individual/product on the acceptance and acquiescence of social groups or authorities in the field (society/culture), the strict sense of the term is in evidence. In this sense, we find that creative actions are linked to the generation of new, high-quality ideas that are capable of changing an entire domain (e.g., the traditional concept of creativity, cf. Elliott, 1971; creativity with a capital C, cf. Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; high creativity, cf. Craft, 2001; historical creativity, cf. Boden, 2004). The strict sense is also present when creative potential is correlated with personality or cognitive style traits or with individual skills; this association does not necessarily originate creative productions capable of changing a domain but instead indicates the idiosyncrasies of people who are considered to be creative (e.g., Amabile, 1982; Sternberg, O'Hara, & Lubart, 1997 "Little c Creativity," cf. Craft, 2001).

In its broad sense, creativity is perceived as a fundamental psychological element of human development, self-preservation, and self-realization (Andrade, 1997; Maslow, 1968; Piaget,

1975; Rogers, 1954; Winnicott, 1990). Therefore, creativity occurs not just in the great deeds of humanity or in individual talents but wherever human beings imagine, generate ideas, and solve problems (e.g., the new concept of creativity, cf. Elliott, 1971; personal creativity, cf. Runco, 1996, 2004; psychological creativity, cf. Boden, 2004; Vygotsky, 2004; everyday creativity, cf. Richards, 2007; mini-c creativity, cf. Beghetto & Kaufman, 2007).

The defining factor that differentiates the strict from the broad sense is the presence of a value judgment. The strict sense quantifies and qualifies those subjects or products that are considered to be more or less creative. It is linked to the domain of knowledge, technical capability, or individual traits. In contrast, the broad sense depicts creativity as a general human potential, indeed one that is subjective and non-measurable and that can be developed in an appropriate environment. Both senses are frequently interrelated and merged in the literature. For instance, some researchers comprehend creativity in its broad sense, representing it as a natural human capability (Guilford, 1954; Torrance, 1972), while at the same time seeking to quantify and/or qualify the creative performance of individuals (Guilford, 1975; Torrance, 1974).

### *The broad and strict senses in music*

The aforementioned senses are also apparent in the noosphere of musical practices. In the area of music education, examples in the literature have endorsed the broad sense through the notion that all students can be creative with any level of musical knowledge. Hence, it is important to provide appropriate conditions for creativity (Gebbie, 1984; Koizumi, 1994; Koutsoupidou & Hargreaves, 2009; Oehrle, 1986; Paynter, 1989; Stavrou, 2012). Nevertheless, conceptions of creativity and musical ability vary among educators, substantially affecting their educational practices (Shouldice, 2014, 2018). Practices in music education are orientated toward the strict sense when they associate creative potential and the knowledge of a musical language with the technical expertise of students (e.g., Tanggaard, 1987). Therefore, research in this sense has aimed to measure creativity in students through batteries of tests and/or assessments performed by *experts* in the field who judge musical domain-specific skills. Some of this research has pointed to differences in creative performances among individuals and/or groups (Kokotsaki & Newton, 2015; Priest, 2001; Sovansky, Wieth, Francis, & McLlhabga, 2016) including differences concerning gender (Kiehn, 2003; Schmidt & Sinor, 1986). Music educators have also been concerned with providing tools that allow for the quantitative and qualitative assessment of creative thought in students in diverse age ranges (e.g., Gorder, 1980; Webster, 1990).

Within the scope of music performance teaching at schools, conservatoires, and universities, the strict sense also seems to be highlighted through the emphasis of specific skills. Musical and creative potential is often seen as an inherent talent present in an elite, ostracizing those who do not attain the required standards of expertise (Burnard, 2012a, 2012b; Hill, 2009, 2018; Humphreys, 2006; Jaffurs, 2004). In some traditions of popular music, the strict sense is present through the association of creativity with the knowledge of codes, rules of style, and improvisational skills that give some individuals respectability in the eyes of the group, excluding musicians who do not yet have the required knowledge (e.g., “paying dues” practices in jam sessions, see Berliner, 1994; duels and tests performed in *rodas de choro* in Brasilia, Brazil, see Filho, Silva, & Freire, 2011). Differently, ethnomusicological research evidences non-Western cultures that perceive musicality and creativity as a universal human capability (broad sense). The members of these cultures are encompassed in an enculturation process, becoming effective participants in their musical culture (e.g., Blacking, 1973; Mapana, 2011).

## Research questions

The references studied to support the research show how the broad and strict senses of creativity manifest ideological-discursive formations in culture. Focusing on testimonies from students in the process of scholarly training and non-scholarly musicians, we sought to answer the following questions:

*RQ1.* Is there a reproduction of broad and strict senses of creativity in the respondents' discourse? How are these senses depicted?

*RQ2.* Is there any relationship between these senses and the way in which musicians perceive themselves as creative individuals? How is this relationship constructed?

## Methodology

### Research design

This is qualitative research, and it was carried out in two steps:

*Step 1.* This step was performed with students following the music course at the University of Pelotas and consisted of the application of an open questionnaire to answer the research questions. The questionnaire had previously been submitted to and approved by the research ethics committee of the University of Pelotas (no. 68451717.2.3001.5317), and all the students who participated in the study were adults and gave the necessary permission, signing the Free and Informed Consent Form.

*Step 2.* Step 2 was held at the University of Rio Grande through a university extension course open to non-regular students called the *Musical Creation Lab*. The questionnaire applied in the previous step was also approved at this university (no. 68451717.2.0000.5324) and was administered on the first day of the course. The completion of the course enabled the presence of adult volunteers with non-scholarly training in music, who participated in nine activity meetings focused on free and idiomatic musical improvisation, resulting in a total of 20 hr 16 min of audio and video recordings. During the course, it was also possible to understand how much beliefs/values related to creativity remain the same or change when a creative environment is provided for all the participants.

The testimonies of both steps were subsequently compared to verify the degree of consistency and variability among the data. The entire analytical process was carried out and discussed collectively among the researchers. The completion of both steps made it possible to triangulate the data through the application of this study in two universities located in different municipalities, located about 60 km apart. In addition, the data analysis was performed by different researchers (investigator triangulation), which made it possible to reduce the risk of misinterpretation or personal bias, providing a clearer picture of the studied phenomenon.

### Participants

In the first step, 37 music students from the University of Pelotas participated. In step 2, we obtained the participation of eight volunteer musicians. In total, there were 45 participants.

### Analytic perspective

The analysis of the data obtained in this investigation was based on the critical discourse analysis (CDA) proposed by Norman Fairclough (1995). For the author, more than a method, CDA is a theoretical perspective on language, which seeks to emphasize a social problem that has a semiotic aspect, that is, that involves all forms of construction of meanings (Fairclough, 2001). The objective of CDA is to denaturalize ideologies, showing how social structures determine the properties of discourse and how discourses, in turn, determine social structures. Fairclough (2003) states that

Social structures are very abstract entities. One can think of a social structure (such as an economic structure, a social class or kinship system, or a language) as defining a potential, a set of possibilities. However, the relationship between what is structurally possible and what actually happens, between structures and events, is a very complex one. Events are not in any simple or direct way the effects of abstract social structures. Their relationship is mediated—there are intermediate organizational entities between structures and events. Let us call these “social practices.” Examples would be practices of teaching and practices of management in educational institutions. (p. 23)

Defining discourse as a way of signifying experience from a particular perspective, Fairclough (1995) proposed that a discourse analyst seeks to understand how participants signify a particular domain of social practice, in this case, musical creativity. For the author, each discursive event (example of the language in use) occurs in three dimensions: in the spoken or written language, in its discursive practice (production and textual interpretation), and in its social practice. Fairclough (1995) proposed to map, analyze, and interrelate these dimensions, allowing him to obtain different perspectives, three complementary ways of reading a complex social event. According to the author, the discourses are interrelated, forming an order of discourses that organizes the relations between the discursive agents and determines the production of the senses. This means that a hierarchy is always established that makes some discourses more capable of generating social meaning than others. Although this relationship of dominance between discourses is clear, the order of discourses is an open system that is always challenged by the relationships that are built on the materiality of life (Fairclough, 2001). The beliefs/values of individuals and their worldviews cannot be understood only as a product of previous knowledge. They must also correspond to the social structures that form the actions and are formed by the actions of the subjects. Such structures are manifested in the discourse as normative knowledge about the world, people, situations, or linguistic codes. Under the effect of ideology, these social structures are naturalized, that is, displaced from their social character and from the interests that generated them, passing to the common sense status (Fairclough, 1995).

The author, in *Critical Discourse Analysis* (1995), reasons, for example, the way in which public British universities suffer the effects of the marketization tendency of public discourse, in a process that he calls *conversationalization* of discourse. It is a transition that gradually adapts public discourse to the molds of private discourse, erasing institutional linguistic marks of rigidity, demand, impersonality, and replacing them with others of a market, democratic and individualistic character, in an attempt to erase an imbalance in terms of power. Fairclough (1995) understands that this movement works to contribute, precisely, to the ideological naturalization of the power relationship.

In this article, we intend to explain how the conceptions and discourses about creativity are ideologically determined, influencing both the subjects' conceptions of creativity and their self-concepts. The set of beliefs/values was critically analyzed as ideologically determined, constructed from ideological-discursive formations materializing in socialization institutions.

**Table 1.** Approaches and places of participants' initial learning experiences and their self-concept as creative.

Approaches	Places	Consider themselves to be creative	Quantity	Do not consider themselves to be creative	Quantity
Formal	Music school/ conservatoire/ university	R2, R14, R16, R27, R39.	5	R1, R19.	2
Non-formal	Church/ school bands/ private classes	R3, R4, R6, R9, R15, R22, R30, R34, R42, R44, R45.	11	R20, R37, R38, R43.	4
Informal	Family/ friends/ Internet	R5, R8, R10, R11, R13, R21, R23, R24, R31, R32, R40, R41.	12	R12, R25, R26, R33.	4
Undefined <sup>a</sup>	Undefined	R7, R17, R18, R28, R29, R35, R36.	7		–
		Total (no.)	35		10
		% (approximate)	78		22

<sup>a</sup>Some testimonies did not make clear the space and approach to learning that participants had throughout their lives; in these cases, we used the classification "undefined."

Thus, we sought to understand the social structures that enable and sustain the reproduction of the broad and strict senses of creativity, scrutinizing how individuals reproduce these senses, influencing their personal self-concepts.

## Results

In their testimonies, the participants reported different musical learning experiences, such as formal learning (conservatoire, music school, and university), non-formal learning (school band, church, and private classes), and informal learning (the Internet, friends, and family).<sup>2</sup> Table 1 presents a list that classifies the approaches through which and the places where respondents' initial musical learning took place as well as their self-concept as creative. We have replaced personal names with R1 – Respondent 1, R2 – Respondent 2, and so on to maintain the anonymity of the participants. R1 to R37 correspond to the participants from step 1; R38 to R45 refer to the participants from step 2.

Table 1 shows that about 22% of the investigated subjects did not consider themselves to be creative. We observed that the approach through which and/or the places where participants' initial musical learning took place cannot be considered as a conditioning factor for the construction of their self-concept as creative. Individuals who experienced similar approaches and places of learning reported distinct self-concepts. Some interlocutors had diversified approaches to learning and studied in different institutions, making it difficult to infer the possible influences of their learning experiences on their individual self-concepts. However, their testimonies indicate that the act of considering oneself to be creative or not is closely related to the personal understanding of what creativity is, this understanding being linked to the broad or strict sense of this term determined by the individuals.

To illustrate this inference, Table 2 indicates the presence of broad and strict senses of creativity in the participants' testimonies, exemplifying them through textual excerpts according to



**Table 2.** Strict and broad senses of musical creativity.

What participants consider necessary for musicians to express themselves creatively in music				
Broad sense	R.	Quantity	Strict sense	R. Quantity
"Concentration, willingness, and love"	R2	1	"It is necessary to acquire knowledge in musical writing patterns, different styles . . . with a degree of complexity"	R1 1
"Self-knowledge"	R3	1	"Creativity based on specific knowledge sounds better for the listener"	R4 1
"Freedom of expression and willingness to transmute your wishes"	R5	1	"We must have knowledge of the field we study"	R6 1
"To be in search of knowing, understanding, and forgiving ourselves"	R13	1	"Technical mastery of the instrument"	R7 1
"To express our subjective possibilities"	R14	1	"To interpret what the composer wished to transmit through his or her music. To be aware of each style of sound we perform [at the piano]"	R8 1
"Desire for transformation"	R15	1	"Focus, talent, and knowledge"	R9 1
"To wish and to feel"	R16	1	"To imagine the music and then try to put your music into practice using theoretical methods"	R10 1
"Detachment from expectations and the elimination of the ego"	R17	1	"Hours of studies and sound discoveries"	R11 1
"We all have our creativity"	R21	1	"To develop your own style and transmit it on to your works"	R12 1
"The feeling"	R24	1	"To research about cultures and styles. To listen to music with a certain depth by analysing the set of instruments, not just the lyrics"	R18 1
"You just need a thinking head and a working brain"	R28	1	"To be able to create music, both composing and playing"	R19 1
"Allow yourself to have fun . . . creativity comes just from playing and trying"	R39	1	"A lot of practice and theoretical understanding/knowledge"	R20 1
"To perform what goes through your head"	R40	1	"It is necessary for the person to acquire a wide knowledge in the field and to be bold in his or her songs"	R22 1
"Willingness to express oneself and initiative to do that with music"	R45	1	"Seeking the learning and the maturity, taking into account that it is a long process"	R23 1
		–	"In-depth study in theories, to know the fundamentals of music"	R25 1
		–	"Study, because without knowing the instrument and using only intuitive and practical knowledge, the musician limits oneself"	R26 1
		–	"It is necessary to acquire accumulated experience, which for me is what generates inspiration, and also a little bit of technical knowledge"	R27 1

(Continued)

Table 2. (Continued)

What participants consider necessary for musicians to express themselves creatively in music				
Broad sense	R.	Quantity	Strict sense	R. Quantity
		–	"Just studying and trying hard, because with study the person learns what is necessary, and with the effort one can obtain good results"	R29 1
		–	"Influences and vocabulary. Have your roots and tastes well consolidated"	R30 1
		–	"To have an updated technique in your instrument, to have the ability to understand the environment where you are and what you can create"	R31 1
		–	"It is necessary to have the minimum of knowledge in music theory (time signature, counterpoint, chord formation, among others), because without it there is no way to create a simple melody"	R32 1
		–	"To have facility at learning subjects such as musical improvisation and composition . . . to know how to comply with the requested requirements"	R33 1
		–	"Active listening . . . coupled with the study of an instrument and notions of theory"	R34 1
		–	"You need to have musical knowledge"	R35 1
		–	"To sum up all our experiences acquired throughout life, both aurally and as a performer, because this is the only way to improvise and compose in several different styles and rhythms"	R36 1
		–	"We need, first of all, to practice"	R37 1
		–	"It is necessary to create original things, or to make major changes to songs that already exist"	R38 1
		–	"To dedicate time to learn the instrument, so the more time you dedicate, the more creative you will become"	R41 1
		–	"To master the instrument and like it"	R42 1
		–	"Theoretical knowledge and practical application"	R43 1
		–	"Musical practice and study"	R44 1
	Total (no.)	14		31
	% (approximate)	31		69



the perspectives adopted in this study. The broad sense is present in testimonies that associate musical creativity with a general human capability, in which creative action is linked not to technical expertise in the arena but to human characteristics/needs (subjectivity, expressiveness, sensitivity, feeling, fun, etc.) capable of being manifested at any level of technical–musical knowledge. The strict sense is highlighted in testimonies that relate creative action to acquired domain knowledge and/or personal skills and talent in music, therefore being a private and non-existent ability in all individuals.

The interlocutors who associated creativity with its broad sense considered themselves to be creative (compare Table 1 and Table 2). The broad sense allowed an understanding of creativity as a more intrinsic human capability. Participants who identified a strict sense sometimes considered themselves to be creative and sometimes did not. In these cases, their self-concepts were associated with how much they were able or not to comply with their assigned values. Individuals who associated creativity exclusively with knowledge of the domain and technical–musical expertise were likely to consider themselves to be creative if they could fulfill this assignment; otherwise, they may not have perceived themselves to be creative:

R32 [considers him/herself to be creative]

I can come up with musical ideas, write them down or record them, and play them later on the instrument (guitar) or on the computer (excerpt from the written questionnaire)

R1 [does not consider him/herself to be creative]

I would have to have more knowledge in the field to be able then to explore my creativity (excerpt from the written questionnaire)

The empirical data also indicate that such senses, once established, tend not to change. Although the creative performances held in step 2 of this investigation highlighted significant positive changes in the thoughts of the participants who reported a negative self-concept, the strict meaning of creativity understood by them (and their respective values) remained fundamentally the same. Some participants expressed the action of their teachers in the process of constructing values (“the teacher told me . . .,” “my teachers have always showed me that . . .”), revealing the external influence in the (re)production of both senses of creativity. Some reports collected in this study clearly showed some of these social practices and their associations with the attributed broad or strict sense of creativity:

R2 [considers him/herself to be creative]

[piano student] “Although I don’t know much yet, because I started studying this year, I consider myself creative. I always try to give my personal sound to everything I practice musically. Note: the teacher also always makes it clear the importance of this for my growth” (excerpt from the written questionnaire)

R37 [does not consider him/herself creative]

[piano student] “I once had a conversation with my piano teacher and we were talking about it [about being creative], and he said: we need to study, practice, dissect music first, and when we’re playing for someone, we should ‘forget’ all of this, because we leave aside the mechanical part and accentuate the feeling that must be passed on, doing what we call art. That’s it” (excerpt from the written questionnaire)

Although both technical and interpretive issues are involved in the musical performance process, respondent 2's testimony emphasizes expressiveness during the creative process (broad sense), while respondent 37, in turn, highlights technicality (strict sense). Although in both testimonies a possible teaching influence is perceived, when it comes to discursive events, socio-cultural influences are not always directly in evidence. Fairclough (1995) argues that the learning or introjection of meanings and senses often occurs through an ideologically naturalized power relationship, that is, not consciously perceived by the subjects. As previously mentioned, the author states that events (texts) do not present themselves directly as an effect of abstract social structures, being the analyst's work to disclose the social practices that mediate the relationship between social structures and discursive events.

## Discussion

What leads individuals to build broad and strict understandings of creativity? Why was the strict sense of creativity prominent in the various testimonies collected in this study? Undoubtedly, the private worldviews and experiences of each come into play in the construction of their beliefs/values. However, despite their particularities, the conceptions of creativity present in the respondents' testimonies are interrelated. They form an order of discourse in which both the broad and the strict sense of creativity are present. The (re)production of such senses is inserted into a network of practices (social order) that allows its semiosis and naturalization. In parallel, this social order (which produces hegemonic discourses) is related to historical and socio-cultural legitimation (Fairclough, 1995; Foucault, 2014). Such testimonies, for example, would be practically unthinkable during the Middle Ages or in earlier periods in the West, when creative innovations were seen as being inspired by God or gods (Dacey, 1999).

The different positions presented here follow the noosphere in the socio-historical-cultural structure of which the participants in this study are part. The percentage proportion between the broad and the strict sense of creativity identified in the statements reflects the discursiveness present in the literature, in academic writings, and in the most diverse media and institutional spheres. In an analysis of the *Encyclopedia on Creativity* (volumes 1 and 2),<sup>3</sup> we identified, among the 100 articles present in volume 1, the incidence of 66 articles reporting the strict sense of creativity, 21 articles referring to the broad sense, and 13 articles with an indeterminate sense (in which it was not possible to identify the predominant sense). Volume 2 presents, among its 89 articles, 59 articles that refer to the strict sense, 20 articles that refer to the broad sense, and 10 articles with an indeterminate sense. As percentages, the values correspond to about 66% (strict) and 21% (broad) in volume 1 and 66% (strict) and 22% (broad) in volume 2. Adding the two volumes together, we have about 66% (strict) and 21% (broad). We perceive a proximity to the testimonies collected in this empirical research: about 69% strict and 31% broad. We have established here only a comparative board, without the intention of suggesting that the statements collected in this study were influenced by the academic discourse appearing specifically in these encyclopedias. We only sought to highlight the confluence between the network of practices and the interdiscursivity present both in the testimonies collected and in the scholarly texts published in both encyclopedias. The two types of discourses, although configured as distinct textual genres, are related to each other.

The discourse on musical creativity is also part of the same social order, and the scientific literature on this theme in the West has tended to highlight the strict sense of the term. Such a sense is also prominent in other academic discourses (lectures, speeches in classrooms, etc.), in the most varied literary narratives (biographies, novels, etc.), and in texts/images conveyed by the media (movies, documentaries, the Internet, etc.). Creativity, specifically in its strict sense,

is also present in the concepts and ideas expressed by public agencies, linking individual skills and talents to the potential for wealth creation (e.g., see the brochure *Investing Creativity* produced by UNESCO<sup>4</sup>). People who add economic value through their creativity form the creative class, and educational and governmental institutions are responsible for “producing” such a class (Oliveira, 2016). Studies have pointed out that the orientation of creativity toward the product, individuality and innovation is a strong characteristic of Western societies (Kaufman & Lan, 2012; Lubart, 1999).<sup>5</sup> In view of this social structure, it is perfectly understandable that a large number of the interlocutors internalized and reproduced such discourses with little perception of them as naturalized ideologies, determined in a specific socio-cultural context and historically dated.

## Final remarks

In this article, we performed an analysis and interpretation that passed through different perspectives, revealing a little of the complexity existing in a simple individual thought. This study presented evidence that the self-concept of individuals as creative is strongly associated with their personal understanding of this term. Although their previous learning experiences (approaches and teaching environment) can contribute to this construction, they are only one piece in the gear of an entire social order that ideologically sustains the emergence of both senses of creativity.

As seen, the emphasis on the strict sense of creativity allows negative self-concepts if the subjects are unable to comply with their assigned values. However, despite the individuals' self-concept being more positive when adopting a broad sense of this term, it was not the purpose of this investigation to state that the broad sense is presented as the most correct or advantageous. We sought only to provide evidence that the two senses coexist and are present in values/beliefs, and individual thoughts. The empirical data and the bibliographic review used here point out that both senses of creativity are constructed through social practices that occur in the most diverse socio-cultural environments. The testimonies collected here are predominantly oriented toward the strict sense of the term, and are not directly related to the musical training that the respondents had throughout their studies (e.g., formal, non-formal, or informal). This strict orientation of creativity could be understood by analyzing the order of discourse present in the social structure, which, in the West, tends to prioritize the strict meaning of the term.

From a pedagogical point of view, there are countless proposals that are willing to develop musical creativity through the most varied activities. From a more constructivist perspective, it is essential to comprehend what students understand by creativity and how they perceive themselves to be creative. The answer to the simple question “Do you consider yourself to be creative?” can reveal the prevalent sense of creativity in individual discourses and the positive or negative self-concepts of students associated with the assigned sense.

The scope of this investigation was limited to understanding the process of (re)producing the broad and strict senses of creativity and their influences on individual self-concepts. Future studies are necessary to understand how specific beliefs/values associated with such senses are individually and socially constructed and whether any negative self-concepts resulting from these beliefs/values would be capable of being modified through methodological work focused on this reconstruction process. However, we identified in this study that creative inhibitions might have their origin in the way in which individuals attribute meaning to creativity. Understanding the dynamics that construct and structure such semiosis is fundamental to changing and therefore should not be ignored.

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## Notes

1. Values are internalized social representations that guide our choices, based on our beliefs (Oyserman, 2015), that is, on the ideas we have about ourselves, others, and the world (Wright et al., 2008). Beliefs/values are strongly influenced by the social bonds we establish throughout life (Rodrigues et al., 2002). This opens up the possibility of working on the social aspect involved in these two concepts. It is because of these factors that we have chosen to use them together.
2. Informal education means the process by which individuals acquire knowledge throughout their lives; formal education refers to the systematic school education system with a chronological and gradual division of knowledge. Non-formal education refers to any systematic educational activities that take place outside the formal teaching context (Coombs et al., 1973).
3. We refer here to the encyclopedia edited by Mark A. Runco and Steven R. Pritzker, published in 1999 by Academic Press.
4. See <https://en.unesco.org/creativity/files/investing-creativity>.
5. In the East, the conception of creativity tends to prioritize high spiritual growth, collectivity, and tradition (Kaufman & Lan, 2012; Lubart, 1999).

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