

Development of Personality Spontaneity by Tools of Playback Theater

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Abstracts

The relevance of the research topic is due to the fact that the issue of the positive manifestation of such a human character trait as spontaneity has not been sufficiently studied. In the results the developmental program of personality development by means of the Playback Theater aimed at the development of personality spontaneity was developed and tested. Spontaneity is a quality that arises from self-confidence and confidence in the world, inherent in self-actualized people. The ability to spontaneously testifies to the possibility of such a behavior that is not calculated in advance, that a person is not afraid to behave naturally and uninhibited, to show others their emotions. The forms of Playback Theater used in the molding program are not only a creative tool for the creation of Playback performances, but also an adequate mechanism for the development of personality spontaneity. The authors show the appropriateness of developing the spontaneity of the individual through such a form of creativity as the Playback Theater. The forming program for developing personality spontaneity can be useful and used to solve a wide range of tasks in various contexts, which is reflected in the recommendations for its use.

Key-words: Interdependence, Creativity, Improvisational Games, Program, Spontaneity Training.

1. Introduction

Recently, there has been an increasing number of references to spontaneity, its importance and impact in various areas of life. For example, the field of organizational psychology is popular now, which due to the development of spontaneity through improvisational games prepares executives and

managers for unpredictable changes in organizations [1]. Preparation allows people to move forward and deal with the change. E. Slingerland believes that the excessive attention paid by modern man to the mind, willpower and self-control does not allow us to assess the importance of “body-thinking”: semi-automatic actions arising from the subconscious with little or no conscious mind involvement. The state of spontaneity, the author claims, is pleasant because a huge number of problems cannot be solved with the help of the conscious psyche. To cope with them, you need to free quick unconscious perception. Cognitive scientists are increasingly convinced that our conscious, explicit consciousness often becomes a cunning liar, and spontaneous, unconscious gestures reflect what is really on a person’s mind. It is physiologically difficult to consciously cause spontaneity, but it is still possible to develop this personality trait [2].

A number of scientists conducted a study aimed at researching the two characteristics of spontaneity, its relationship to creativity and impulsivity. They hypothesized a positive relationship between spontaneity and creativity, and they also suggested the presence of the negative relationship between spontaneity and impulsivity. Results confirmed both hypotheses [3]. There are different points of view regarding the conditions for the manifestation of spontaneity, and they all agree on one thing that it is possible to “see” spontaneity during creative activity. Not any, but one that requires preliminary preparation and training. J. Moreno proposed at the beginning of his activity a method of spontaneity training [4]. First of all, an indispensable condition for such a training is direct interaction with other people. Teaching books, computer programs, not only do not contribute to the development of spontaneity, but, on the contrary, impede this process. Spontaneity, or the ability to a non-standard situation and independent action, arises in the individual in response to the active (spontaneous) resistance of other people, which stands in the way of stereotyped actions and forces one-self, having mobilized all one’s resources, to make workarounds. So, the main auxiliary psychological tool for training spontaneity is the interaction of the person with other people, with their spontaneous reactions.

Spontaneity is a way of creativity’s existence, not an isolated state, but a direct experience of subjectivity. If creativity is the most common thing in the world, then spontaneity, on the contrary, seems to be a privilege, according to R.A. Vaneigem [5]. It is possessed only by those whose prolonged opposition to power endowed them with a consciousness of their own individual value. While the radiance of creativity continues, spontaneity remains a chance, the author believes. In our opinion, the best place for creativity to interact with spontaneity is the theater, namely the Playback Theater and all the processes that take place in it: rehearsals, practicing techniques, group processes in the troupe, performances, and so on. Playback Theater is a theater of improvisation and

spontaneity, where the audience tells their stories, and the actors immediately play them on stage. As described by V.V. Savinov, it combines elements of stage and street theater, interactive art (happening, performance), psychological shows and psychodramatic staging [6]. There are three parties involved in the Playback Theater: the audience (viewers and storytellers), actors and conductor (or presenter). After the conductor's preliminary communication with the narrator, the Playback actors play the story of the last on stage without preliminary preparation, spontaneously improvising and revealing the aesthetic essence of the story.

Was to put the ideas, principles and elements of the Playback Theater as the main mean of developing the spontaneity of personality for two reasons. Firstly, as it was established above, spontaneity is closely connected with creativity and is best manifested precisely during the creative process, and the Playback Theater can be safely called a new modern form of creativity. Secondly, the idea of the Playback Theater creates the best conditions for the development and manifestation of spontaneity due to improvisation what actors use on stage to display audience stories [7-10]. Our forming program is built in a similar way with the rehearsals of the Playback Theater, as a result of which the participants in the forming program are equated with Playback actors. The difference between the actors' regular rehearsals and the forming program is to shift the goal of two processes: if Playback actors need to practice certain forms and skills for a successful performance, then program participants need to develop similar skills and try to reproduce the most common forms of theater to develop spontaneity as personality properties. The purpose of the article is to study the program of personality spontaneity by means of the Playback Theater.

2. Materials and Methods

Based on the results of a regression analysis conducted in a previous study, it was found that spontaneity is most affected by indicators of creativity, autonomy, and uncertainty tolerance [11]. Given this, the goal of the program for the development of spontaneity in a person involves solving the following tasks: to increase creativity; to develop creative abilities and creative thinking; to develop autonomy and independence in their own choices; to develop the ability to be prepared for uncertain situations. As a result of the regression analysis, it was found that spontaneity affects: locus control, self-regulation and autonomy, which allows us to assume that as a result of the development of spontaneity by using the forming program, the personality will be able to form and develop such personal qualities as: personal responsibility, self-regulation, creativity, empathy. The success of the forming program can be evaluated both statistically and with the help of traditional psychotherapeutic

criteria, namely: direct observation and evaluation of participants by the host, who first of all assesses the psychological mood of the participants, the degree of mastery of new skills by them. Another indicator may be the degree to which participants' expectations from the program are consistent with gained experience [12-15]. The last lesson is devoted to the collection of such information.

The main principles of building the forming program: the principle of “here and now”; the principle of confidentiality; the principle of frankness; the principle of active participation; the principle of personal responsibility. The program was attended by 18 people aged 19-25 years (6 men and 12 women). Two participants had participated in the Playback Theater before (participating in a master class and attending performances), six participants had heard about the Playback Theater before, and for the other half of participants the Playback Theater was previously unknown. The forming program contains a set of training and developmental exercises and games aimed at developing spontaneity through the development of creative abilities of a person, developing attention and creative thinking, developing acting skills and developing autonomy and tolerance for uncertain situations. In addition to the described exercises and games, the program uses various forms and techniques of the Playback Theater, which are not only a creative tool for creating Playback performances, but also an adequate mechanism for the development of personality spontaneity. In addition, the use of Playback Theater forms allows a better understanding of the spontaneity features and those factors that determine the specifics of its manifestations. The structure of the forming program consists of six interconnected blocks.

1. “Introduction”. The purpose of the first block is to introduce the participants, explain the essence of the program. Clarification of the meaning of basic concepts, familiarization with the expectations of participants. Theoretical excursion into the theme of spontaneity and Playback theater. Establishment of an atmosphere of trust, acceptance, which contributes to the self-disclosure of participants.
2. “The development of spontaneity through creativity”. The purpose of this block is to release creative potential and creative energy, to familiarize one selves with methods of activating creative self-expression and creativity, to recognize and overcome the barriers of manifestation of creativity, to develop creative thinking and search for original ideas.
3. “The development of spontaneity through tolerance to uncertainty”. The purpose of this block is to master the ability to be ready for new experiences and changes, to free oneself from internal blocks. In order to be able to see new options and possibilities, this block also

includes the development of such mental processes as: attention, memory, thinking, imagination.

4. “The development of spontaneity through autonomy”. The purpose of this block is to teach to be independent in their choices and decisions, to develop a sense of integrity in the individual.
5. “Generalization and combination” The purpose of this block is to consciously combine the previous stages, consolidate and develop the knowledge and skills gained.
6. “Summing up”. The purpose of this block is to comprehend the experience gained at previous meetings, reflection on the topic of how this can be used in everyday life, receiving feedback and summarizing.

After the forming program for the development of personality spontaneity, its effectiveness was analyzed. The analysis consisted of an initial and final survey of participants (who were the experimental group for the study of the forming stage) in the forming program of spontaneity. Repeated testing was also carried out with a control group, which included 36 participants who did not participate in the forming program. In addition, a qualitative analysis of the effectiveness of the forming program was carried out by processing and analyzing the statements and feedback provided by the program participants during and at the end of the forming program. Comparison of data obtained as a result of control testing was carried out using comparative analysis (Two-Related Samples), the level of statistical significance was determined using the nonparametric statistical Wilcoxon T-test [1]. The computer program SPSS was used for statistical processing of data intended for applied research in the social sciences.

The Wilcoxon signed-rank test is a non-parametric statistical hypothesis test used to compare two related samples, matched samples, or repeated measurements on a single sample to assess whether their population mean ranks differ (i.e. it is a paired difference test). It can be used as an alternative to the paired Student's t-test (also known as “t-test for matched pairs” or “t-test for dependent samples”) when the distribution of the difference between two samples' means cannot be assumed to be normally distributed [1]. A Wilcoxon signed-rank test is a nonparametric test that can be used to determine whether two dependent samples were selected from populations having the same distribution. The criterion is used to compare indicators of changes in two different conditions among the same sample of subjects. With its help, it can be determined whether the indicator shifts in one direction are more significant than in the other.

3. Results and Discussion

In our case, significant changes in indicators in one direction or another in the experimental group will indicate the effectiveness and efficiency of our forming personality development program, that is, significant changes in the studied indicators were caused by the experience gained by the participants during the meetings. While noticeable shifts in indicators among the control group will indicate that there is a certain level of existential impact on the subjects. Therefore, in order to discard the influence of the environment and everyday life on the change of indicators, conducted a comparative analysis of the shifts in the indicators of the control and experimental groups, the results of which are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 - The Dynamics of the Indicators of the Studied Personality Properties in Representatives of the Experimental and Control Groups

Respondents	Control group		Experimental group	
	Before	After	Before	After
Spontaneity	8.9	8.9	7.94	10.5**
Creativity	11	10.8	10.33	14.21**
Autonomy	9.7	9.60	8.47	12.33**
Communication flexibility	8.7	8.7	8.2	9.1*
Uncertainty tolerance	10.8	6.8*	11.08	15.3**
Self-regulation	13.4	12.2	12.36	13.32*
Locus of control	47.4	50.3*	32.59	35.87**

Note: *correlation on the level 0.05; **correlation on the level 0.01

As can be seen from Table 1, a noticeable shift (at a significance level of $p < 0.05$) is present in the indicators of tolerance to uncertainty and general internality among representatives of the control group. The change in the indicator of tolerance to uncertainty took place in the direction of reduction. This means that during the time that was between the first and second testing, the participants in the control group felt less prepared for indefinite situations. Perhaps it will be more accurate to say that tolerance to changing situations has decreased over this time. This can be explained by social, political and economic events in the public life of the study participants. At the same time, the change in the indicator of general internality with the level of statistical significance ($p < 0.05$) took place upward. This may indicate an increase in the level of responsibility among the control group and movement from the external to the internal locus of control. After the forming program of personality spontaneity, important changes took place in the studied indicators of the experimental group, namely: spontaneity, creativity, autonomy, tolerance to uncertainty, and general internality

($p < 0.001$). Important changes have also taken place in terms of flexibility in communication, strong-willed self-regulation, scales of internality in the field of achievements, in the sphere of family and interpersonal relations.

The obtained results indicate the effectiveness and efficiency of the developed forming program of spontaneity. An interesting observation is that in the two studied groups – in the experimental and in the control – there were significant changes in the indicators of tolerance to uncertainty, but in different directions. This may indicate that despite the influence of everyday life, participation in the forming program allowed participants to increase their level of preparedness for indefinite situations. A significant change in the indicator of general internality in the experimental group can be explained by changes in the same indicator among the control group due to the influence of life. However, the appearance of a significant shift in the indicators on several scales of internality may indicate that the changes did occur under the influence of the forming program. A lower level of statistical significance in changes in indicators of flexibility in communication and strong-willed self-regulation can be explained by less close relationships of these indicators with others, which was established by the correlation and regression analyzes described above.

Also conducted a qualitative analysis of the statements and feedback of the participants in the forming program. During each meeting, the participants shared their expectations and actual experiences, and at the end of the lesson they answered four questions in writing: 1. What was easy during the lesson? 2. What was difficult? 3. What was important and had greatest importance? 4. What and how was associated with spontaneity? Answers to these questions throughout the program allowed us to observe the dynamics of the process of development of personality spontaneity, monitor the emotional states of participants and adjust the process when necessary. If at the beginning of the forming program certain concerns were expressed among the participants regarding what the Playback Theater is and whether they can feel free to play the role of actors of this theater, then at the end of the program these fears were no longer observed. Examples of this include the following statements: at the 1st lesson, “What will they think of me?”, “I don’t know how to express emotions”, “Playback is incomprehensible, but I understand that it can be useful”; at the 9th lesson, “It is interesting to work on a character through an image”, “Now there is already much less inconvenience”. This indicates that during the lessons the participants arose and did not weaken the interest as to what the Playback Theater is and how it works, and at the same time the insecurity in the beginning and self-confidence that were at the beginning have disappeared, which indicates the general positive influence of the forming program on self-perception.

Here are a few examples of how program participants explain the connection between what happened during the meeting and spontaneity. At the beginning of the program, statements regarding spontaneity were as follows: “It’s hard to decide to accept the unknown”, “Spontaneity is connected with creative tasks”, “The need to instantly reflect the emotions of another person”. At the end of the program, participants described their impressions and thoughts on how spontaneity manifests itself and develops, using the following statements: “The lesson helps to develop spontaneity and hear my inner voice”, “Spontaneity is manifested through the development of relaxedness in movements”, “Spontaneity made me feel light”, “Awareness of movements and feelings occurred at the same time”, “Interest in the result makes me look for solutions”, “Spontaneity when it is necessary to take the first step is to take the initiative in various tasks”.

These statements of the participants in the forming program prove the existence of a connection between spontaneity and other personality traits that study. For example, in the statement “Spontaneity is connected with creative tasks”, the connection between spontaneity and creativity, which the participants of the program felt during the first lessons, is manifested; in the expression “Classes helps to develop spontaneity and hear my inner voice” can talk about meeting with autonomy as the integrity of the personality, when awareness and acceptance of oneself takes place; “Interest in the result makes me look for solutions” – this expression indicates the development of creativity and tolerance for uncertainty, which manifests itself in the readiness to respond in new ways in both new and familiar situations; in the expression “Spontaneity when you need to take the first step is to take the initiative in various tasks”, responsibility develops through the development of spontaneity, which allows participants to try and feel for themselves what it means to take the initiative and take the first step.

In addition to illustrating the connection between spontaneity and other personality traits, these statements allow us to see how the thoughts and feelings of the participants in the forming program were transformed by spontaneity and how it manifests. If at first the program participants had certain difficulties in manifesting themselves and their spontaneity (“It’s hard to decide to accept the unknown”) and there was a need to learn more about oneself, to feel your inner nature (“It is important to learn something about yourself”), then during the program, these difficulties and fear of unknown have been changed by relaxedness (“Spontaneity is manifested through the development of relaxedness in movements”, “Spontaneity made me feel light”) and gave answers to questions about the inner world of program participants (“Awareness of their movements and feelings at the same time”, “Lesson helps to develop spontaneity and hear my inner voice”).

Recommendations for using the forming program of personality spontaneity. The above quantitative and qualitative evidence of the effectiveness and efficiency of the forming program of personality spontaneity developed by us allows to use it in various contexts. This forming program can be used by teachers and curators in elementary courses in higher education with the aim of the earliest formation and development of such important personality traits as spontaneity, autonomy, responsibility, creativity. In addition to the obvious benefits for the development of a student's personality at the beginning of early adulthood, this will facilitate the process of adapting students to the new environment and new opportunities and responsibilities, and can also positively affect the learning of educational material and attitude towards learning in general. Also, this forming program can be used by the leaders of Playback theaters in order to develop the personality of the Playback actor. In this case, the difference between regular rehearsals and activities of the forming program will be a shift in emphasis from working out certain forms to the development of the actor's personality.

The need to make such a shift in emphasis in the process of the Playback Theater may arise for several reasons: if this Playback Theater is recently created, and for the formation of an effectively functioning team, the leader wants to first of all pay attention to the identity of each individual actor and the level of development of those qualities that they will need in this process; if this Playback Theater is in a state of creative crisis: the theater does not develop, there is no unity in the team, as a result of which all these affect the quality of the performances and relationships in the theater; to search for new ways to express yourself creatively [16-22]. This path is useful for the prevention and struggle with patterns and stereotypes of the way actors exist on stage during performances and rehearsals of the Playback Theater [23-26]. This forming program can be used not only by the leaders of Playback theaters, but also by the leaders of any other creative associations (theaters, studios, workshops) with the aim of self-improvement of their creative activity through the development of spontaneity by means of the Playback theater. This forming program can be used among psychologists in personality development centers and among psychologists working with groups of people with a low level of spontaneity, responsibility, communication skills, self-regulation, creativity and a high level of external locus of control.

4. Conclusion

The developed and tested forming program for personality development by means of the Playback Theater is aimed at developing personality spontaneity. Statistically significant differences

between the data of the experimental group before and after the forming program, together with the results of a comparative analysis of testing among the control group, make it possible to conclude that the forming program developed can be considered as an effective means of developing personality spontaneity. During the program, the process of development of spontaneity and the personality as a whole took place along with the obvious manifestation of the connections of spontaneity with other studied personality traits. The results of a qualitative analysis of the statements and feedback of the forming program participants illustrated the presence of spontaneity with other personality traits and indicated how the thoughts and feelings of the forming program's participants were transformed regarding spontaneity and how it manifests. If at first the program participants had certain difficulties in manifesting themselves and their spontaneity, then during the program these difficulties changed by understanding and awareness of the peculiarities of their spontaneity.

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