

## Children's Creative Storytelling Processes: A Cross-Cultural Study in the United States and Spain

Jessica D. Hoffmann<sup>1</sup>, Zorana Ivcevic<sup>2</sup>, and Shengjie Lin<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Yale University, New Haven, CT, USA, ORCID: 0000-0003-4339-2836

<sup>2</sup> Yale University, New Haven, CT, USA, ORCID: 0000-0002-0321-2071

<sup>3</sup> Yale University, New Haven, CT, USA, ORCID: 0000-0002-1352-321X

### ABSTRACT

Creativity is contextual; opportunities for and ways of being creative vary by culture. While studies have documented the differences between creative behavior in Eastern and Western cultures, comparisons between the United States and Western European nations have been much rarer. This paper presents research comparing the creative storytelling of children in the United States and Spain. Moreover, instead of focusing only on differences in mean scores, we ask a different question—what predicts ratings of children's creative storytelling from different cultures? Results show that in the U.S., only novelty predicted ratings of creativity, but in Spain, novelty and the use of emotions independently predicted ratings of story creativity. Several explanations for these observed differences are discussed, including differences in overall culture, as well as possible differences in socialization at school. We discuss how cultural values and national identity contribute to how children approach creative tasks.

### KEYWORDS:

creativity, storytelling, cross-cultural, emotion expression

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### Corresponding author at:

Jessica Hoffmann

E-MAIL: [Jessica.hoffmann@yale.edu](mailto:Jessica.hoffmann@yale.edu)

## **CHILDREN'S CREATIVE STORYTELLING PROCESSES: A CROSS-CULTURAL STUDY IN THE UNITED STATES AND SPAIN**

Around the globe, cultures have different traditional stories; however, most follow basic themes such as overcoming a monster, rebirth, quest, journey and return, rags to riches, tragedy, and comedy (Booker, 2006), which include both common organizational structures and universal emotions. Referred to as the *monomyth*, Campbell (1949) describes the arc of a protagonist setting out, having a transformative experience, and returning home as a universal character development that we can all relate to, making it a useful way to share stories with each other, and compare literary traditions across cultures. While we may all arrive at these same archetypes in the end, there are many open questions about cultural differences in storytelling. Does the process of generating the story differ by culture? Do some cultures rely on originality in creating stories more than others? Are the emotions used in stories different, and are those emotions used to further story creativity?

### **Definitions of Creativity**

Within the realm of creativity research, creativity is most often defined as something that is both original and appropriate (Sternberg & Lubart, 1995). When we consider the creativity of a story, both criteria of originality and appropriateness hold true. For example, a child who jumps up and down when asked to tell a story may be providing a unique response, but not a narrative, and therefore not a creative story. Alternatively, a child who retells “Little Red Riding Hood” verbatim has told a compelling narrative, but has not produced something original, and therefore has also not achieved creativity.

Across cultures, however, we see differences in conceptualizations of creativity. Lubart (1999; 2010) outlined four ways in which cultures can vary in how they think about creativity: their definition of creativity, their understanding of the creative process, the degree to which creativity is nurtured or discouraged, and the direction in which creativity is channeled. As a culturally-embedded phenomenon, creativity is influenced by different social norms, historical backgrounds, and educational policies in different cultures (de Vries & Lubart, 2019; Glăveanu et al., 2019, 2020; Guo et al., 2018; Karwowski et al., 2020). For instance, Eastern cultures generally view creativity as reinterpretation of traditional ideas, such as finding a new point of view, while Western cultures tend to approach creativity as a break with tradition (Ivancovsky et al., 2019; Kristeller, 1983; Lubart, 2010; Lubart et al., 2021). Li (1997) distinguishes between the Western horizontal tradition in which artistic creativity is subject to modification and even radical changes such as Picasso’s cubism, in contrast to the Eastern vertical tradition in which content and techniques of art are constrained over time, such as in Chinese brush paintings.

### **Cultural Views of Creativity Shape Creative Production**

Although interest in cross-cultural creativity research is on the rise, most studies still tend to focus on comparing creativity among people from the West and the East, particularly between Ameri-

cans and Chinese people (Guo et al., 2021; Katz-Buonincontro et al., 2021; Lan & Kaufman, 2012; Niu & Kaufman, 2013). A few studies explore more nuanced dynamics, such as Gaida & Oie's (2017) study comparing Japan (collectivist), and Poland (described as a formerly socialist country of Central and Eastern Europe that continues to be equally split between collectivist and individualistic values). Still, comparisons between Eastern and Western cultures are likely the most well-studied because of the pronounced differences between the Western individualistic values (emphasis on self-uniqueness, individual expression) compared to the Eastern collectivistic values (social harmony, focus on behavior conforming to social roles; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Oyserman, 2017; Tsang & Prendergast, 2009; Triandis & Gelfand, 2012).

Even within Western societies however, the pressure to conform to community norms can affect creativity. Torrance (1964) compared stories produced by 9–11-year-old children in the United States, England, France, Puerto Rico, Turkey, and Greece. The type of pressure (self, parent, peer, society), the form of pressure (advice, laughter, isolation), and the consequence of pressure (conformity, resistance) varied across cultures, and the United States and Puerto Rico had the highest levels of perceived pressure to conform. In her review, Kim (2005) also notes that several beliefs and attitudes can block creative potential in Americans such as excessive faith in logic, fear of mistakes and perfectionism, and rigid scheduling that impairs freedom to explore.

Creativity involves both cognitive and affective processes (Russ, 1993; 2014). Cognitive processes such as the ability to generate a variety of ideas, and to make free associations increase the likelihood of novel and original ideas. Affective processes like being able to access emotional states and emotional memories broadens thinking, again leading to more unconventional connections, and therefore creativity. Hoffmann and Russ (2012; 2016) found that creativity in storytelling was related to creativity in divergent thinking, as well as to imagination and emotion expression in pretend play. Thus, differences in either the cognitive process or affective processes across cultures, could lead to differences in creativity, and the creative process across cultures could be relatively more influenced by one or the other set of processes.

There is some evidence that different cultures may apply their cognitive and emotional processes to creativity tasks in different ways and degrees (Averill et al., 2001). In a study of fantasy play, children from the United States showed higher mean scores for imagination in their play, while children from Italy showed significantly higher mean scores for the variety of emotions expressed and the overall amount of positive and negative emotions expressed during play (Chessa et al., 2013). Furthermore, when children completed a divergent thinking task and a scale of coping ability where children were asked to brainstorm multiple solutions to everyday problems, differences in the pattern of correlations emerged (Hoffmann et al., 2014). Both American and Italian children's pretend play scores significantly predicted their divergent thinking; however, there was a significantly stronger correlation between imagination in play and divergent thinking in the U.S. than the Italian sample. Additionally, the frequency of affect expression in play significantly correlated with coping skills for the Italian children, but not for the U.S. children, while the frequency of imagination in play significantly correlated with coping skills for the U.S. children but not for the Italian

children. These differences suggest that children in each culture may have used their stronger play process (imagination for American children, emotion for Italian children) in approaching the creativity tasks.

### **Creativity in the United States and Spain**

The present study focused on predictors of story creativity in children in the United States and Spain. We ask whether creativity is similarly predicted by novelty and the use of emotions across cultures. While little research has focused specifically on comparing performance on a creative task across these two countries, there is some theoretical reason to suspect we might find differences. Using data collected on cultural values and beliefs from 61 nations, Hayton et al. (2002) identified 10 cultural clusters around the globe; the United States was included in the Anglo cluster, and Spain was included in the Latin-European cluster. On the dimension of individualism versus collectivism, the U.S. is rated higher on individualism than Spain. In relatively more individualistic cultures people value personal uniqueness (Morris & Peng, 1994; Xie & Paik, 2019) and encourage imagination and personal expression in children (Fevre et al., 2020; Inglehart & Oyserman, 2004; Tamis-LeMonda et al., 2008). This difference can affect creativity as in individualist countries originality becomes an integral part of what makes something creative. There are also cultural differences in the perceived appropriateness of both positive and negative emotions (Diener & Lucas, 2004; Tsai, 2007; 2017). Researchers have suggested that people from more individualistic societies tend to promote more high-arousal positive emotions (e.g., excitement, enthusiasm), whereas their counterparts with collectivistic backgrounds are more likely to value low-arousal positive emotions (e.g., calm, serenity; Lim, 2016; Tsai et al., 2017).

Cross-cultural research not focused on mean differences across cultures previously examined two sets of questions. The first is about the structure of commonly used measures assessing different aspects of creativity. For example, Katz-Buonincontro et al. (2021) examined measurement invariance of creative self-efficacy in teaching and Guo et al. (2024) examined measurement invariance of divergent thinking tests and a creative self-efficacy scale in the United States and China. Similarly, Storme et al. (2015) examined the pattern of correlations among creative thinking tests in different domains in French and Chinese children. This research asks about the similarity in meaning of creativity measures across cultures.

The second line of inquiry is more closely related to the focus of the present research. It examines the relative importance of novelty and appropriateness, two criteria in the standard definition of creativity, across cultures. This research finds that appropriateness is relatively more important for evaluation of creativity in Eastern cultures, whereas novelty is more important in the West (Shao et al., 2019). For example, Loewenstein and Mueller (2016) found that both Chinese and U.S. participants identified descriptors such as breakthrough, surprise, and potential as indicative of creativity. However, descriptors that elucidate the appropriateness or usefulness criterion like “easy to use,” “feasible,” and “for a mass market” were considered as indicating creativity by Chinese and non-creativity by U.S. participants. Instead of focusing on originality and appropriateness and evalua-

tions of creative products, the present study examines novelty and use of emotions as predictors of story creativity. Thus, we are not asking about perception of products, but attributes of creative products produced by children.

### **Present Study**

We examine how novelty and emotions are used in the service of creativity in a sample of elementary school girls in the United States and Spain. Based on the theorized cultural differences in valuing emotions, creativity, and originality and the limited research conducted in this area between Europe and the United States we hypothesized that:

- (1) Mean differences would be found such that U.S. children's stories would be more novel than the Spanish children's stories, and Spanish children's stories would contain a higher frequency of affect expression than U.S. children's stories.
- (2) The correlations among creativity, novelty, and emotion use would differ cross-culturally, such that U.S. children's creativity would be more highly associated with novelty, and Spanish children's creativity would be more highly associated with emotion use.

## **METHOD**

### **Participants**

*U.S. Participants.* Participants were 53 female students in grades 1–3, ages 6–9 ( $M = 7.11$  years old,  $SD = 0.80$ ) from a suburban school in the Midwest region of the United States, in which research on children's creativity and emotions was being conducted. Children were recruited through their school to participate in a larger study in which the storytelling task was one of the measures.

*Spanish Participants.* Participants were 78 female students in grades 1–3, ages 6–9 ( $M = 7.16$ ,  $SD = 1.01$ ), from five suburban schools in the Cantabria region of Spain, in which research on children's creativity and emotions was being conducted.

### **Storytelling Measure**

All children completed the same standardized storytelling task. Children met with an examiner individually and were asked to dictate a story that went along with the pictures to Mercer Meyer's (1967) picture book *A Boy, A Dog, and a Frog*. Children were given unlimited time to complete their stories, though most finished in less than 10 minutes. All children completed the task at school, during the school day.

Two bilingual raters in the U.S. coded all stories. Both raters were undergraduate psychology majors with additional training in children's creativity. The raters were not blind to the sample because stories were in English for the U.S. students and in Spanish for the students from Spain,

but raters were blind to the study hypotheses. The examiners who had transcribed the children's stories were blind to study hypotheses as well. The participants' stories were rated in two ways based on previous studies that had used this storytelling measure (Hoffmann & Russ, 2012; 2016).

First, stories were rated for creativity and novelty, using 5-point Likert-type scales. Creativity was defined as the amount of content in a story that was not obvious from the pictures and that added something useful to the narrative. Raters coded each story on a 5-point scale from 1 (no added content beyond what is shown in the pictures) to 5 (content added that is not in the pictures, such as character's names, backstories, feelings, thoughts, motivations, or dialogue). For example, in a picture of a boy walking with his dog, the lowest score would be assigned to a story where the child said, *"There is a boy walking with a dog. The boy is wearing boots and a hat, and the dog is looking in a bush,"* while a higher score would be assigned to a story where the child said, *"A boy named Jason is walking his new dog. The dog is wondering what type of bunny might be in the bush"* because despite no difference in length, details such as the boy's name, the fact that the dog is new, and what the dog is wondering, are all additions created by the storyteller.

Novelty was defined as the amount of added content to the story that other participants in the sample did not include, thus measuring uniqueness regardless of relevance or usefulness. Raters were asked to read through all the stories in the sample to know what content was common, and what was unusual or unique (e.g., the river is actually a lava flow; the frog uses telekinesis to knock the dog into the water). Stories were rated from 1 (no unique or unusual content) to 5 (many examples of unique content).

Two raters coded all the stories and achieved inter-rater reliability of .78 for creativity and .81 for novelty. The two raters' scores were averaged so that each story had one score for novelty and one for creativity.

The second rating system for the stories involved tallying the amount of emotional content in the stories. This was done using an adaptation of the Affect in Play Scale coding system (Russ, 2004) in which children's narratives are coded for 11 affect themes that can be divided into five positive themes: happiness, nurturance/affection, competition, oral, and sexual; and six negative themes: anger/aggression, anxiety/fear, sadness/hurt, frustration/dislike, oral aggression, and anal. Each unit of emotion was also coded as either a direct statement (e.g., the boy was sad, the frog was scared), or an implied affect statement (e.g., the boy frowned, the frog hid). The same two raters scored the emotion content, and 9 scores were calculated for each story: (1) total positive affect ( $\alpha = .94$ ), (2) direct positive affect ( $\alpha = .87$ ), (3) implied positive affect ( $\alpha = .65$ ), (4) total negative affect ( $\alpha = .95$ ), (5) direct negative affect ( $\alpha = .97$ ), (6) implied negative affect ( $\alpha = .87$ ), (7) total direct affect ( $\alpha = .97$ ), (8) total implied affect ( $\alpha = .89$ ), and (9) total affect ( $\alpha = .96$ ). In addition, each story was assigned a variety of affect score (0–11) depending on the number of affect-theme categories the child employed ( $\alpha = .76$ ).

## RESULTS

### Preliminary Analyses

Independent *t*-tests compared the mean scores of the U.S. and Spanish stories on each of the creativity and emotion criteria (see Table 1). Mean creativity scores did not differ between the U.S. ( $M=2.51$ ,  $SD=1.13$ ) and Spain ( $M=2.18$ ,  $SD=0.96$ ). The U.S. stories were rated as more novel than the Spanish stories (U.S.:  $M=2.35$ ,  $SD=0.99$ ; Spain:  $M=1.94$ ,  $SD=1.01$ ),  $t(129)=2.31$ ,  $p=.02$ .

Table 1. Independent samples *t*-test comparing creativity and emotion in the U.S. and Spain

|                   | U.S. Sample |           | Spanish Sample |           | <i>t</i> | <i>p</i> |
|-------------------|-------------|-----------|----------------|-----------|----------|----------|
|                   | <i>M</i>    | <i>SD</i> | <i>M</i>       | <i>SD</i> |          |          |
| Creativity Scores |             |           |                |           |          |          |
| Creativity        | 2.51        | 1.13      | 2.18           | 0.96      | 1.80     | .08      |
| Novelty           | 2.35        | 0.99      | 1.94           | 1.01      | 2.31*    | .02      |
| Emotion Scores    |             |           |                |           |          |          |
| Direct Positive   | 0.18        | 0.44      | 0.07           | 0.25      | 1.80     | .08      |
| Implied Positive  | 0.69        | 1.33      | 0.16           | 0.42      | 3.27**   | .001     |
| Total Positive    | 0.68        | 0.87      | 0.24           | 0.59      | 3.47**   | .001     |
| Direct Negative   | 3.02        | 2.43      | 0.82           | 0.97      | 7.21***  | <.001    |
| Implied Negative  | 6.67        | 2.73      | 6.13           | 1.86      | 1.35     | .18      |
| Total Negative    | 9.85        | 4.33      | 6.94           | 2.34      | 4.96***  | <.001    |
| Total Direct      | 3.21        | 2.53      | 0.88           | 1.07      | 7.23***  | <.001    |
| Total Implied     | 7.26        | 2.79      | 6.29           | 1.98      | 2.32*    | .02      |
| Total Affect      | 10.53       | 4.64      | 7.18           | 2.56      | 5.30***  | <.001    |
| Variety (0–11)    | 3.29        | 1.07      | 2.80           | 0.72      | 3.14**   | .002     |

Note: \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

Significant differences were also observed between the U.S. and Spanish stories for emotional content. The U.S. stories had more positive affect (U.S.:  $M=0.68$ ,  $SD=0.87$ ; Spain:  $M=0.24$ ,  $SD=0.59$ ,  $t(129)=3.47$ ,  $p=.001$ ), and more negative affect (U.S.:  $M=9.85$ ,  $SD=4.33$ ; Spain:  $M=6.94$ ,  $SD=2.34$ ,  $t(129)=4.96$ ,  $p<.001$ ), as well as higher direct affect (U.S.:  $M=3.21$ ,  $SD=2.53$ ; Spain:  $M=0.88$ ,  $SD=1.07$ ,  $t(129)=7.23$ ,  $p<.001$ ) and implied affect (U.S.:  $M=10.53$ ,  $SD=4.64$ ; Spain:  $M=7.18$ ,  $SD=2.56$ ,  $t(129)=5.30$ ,  $p<.001$ ). Finally, U.S. stories had more variety of affect than Spanish stories (U.S.:  $M=3.29$ ,  $SD=1.07$ ; Spain:  $M=2.80$ ,  $SD=0.72$ ,  $t(129)=3.14$ ,  $p=.002$ ). There was no difference in the amount of direct positive affect, which was low for both groups, and there was no difference in the amount of implied negative affect.

The U.S. children wrote significantly longer stories than the Spanish children (U.S.:  $M = 212.42$  words,  $SD = 87.88$ ; Spain:  $M = 115.22$  words,  $SD = 40.59$ ,  $t(129) = 8.43$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

### Predicting Creativity

Correlations between story creativity and emotion scores were run separately for the United States and Spain (Table 2). Creativity was significantly related to emotion variables in both countries, apart from direct positive affect in the U.S. sample ( $r(51) = .23$ ,  $p > .05$ ), ranging from  $r = .30$ – $.55$  in the U.S., and  $r = .30$ – $.49$  in Spain. No statistically significant differences were found in the strength of the correlations for emotions and creativity across the two nations. However, novelty was more strongly correlated with creativity in the U.S. ( $r(51) = .87$ ,  $p < .001$ ) than in Spain ( $r(76) = .70$ ,  $p < .001$ ;  $z = 2.55$ ,  $p = .005$ ).

**Table 2. Correlations Among Emotion, Novelty, and Creativity Scores by Country**

| Emotion Variables            | United States <sup>a</sup> | Spain <sup>b</sup> |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|
| Total Positive Affect        | .54***                     | .42***             |
| Direct Positive Affect       | .23                        | .46***             |
| Implied Positive Affect      | .30*                       | .30**              |
| Total Negative Affect        | .48***                     | .42***             |
| Direct Negative Affect       | .36**                      | .42***             |
| Implied Negative Affect      | .46**                      | .31**              |
| Total Affect                 | .55***                     | .48***             |
| Total Direct Affect          | .38**                      | .49***             |
| Total Implied Affect         | .54***                     | .35**              |
| Variety of Affect Categories | .51***                     | .31**              |
| Novelty                      | .87***                     | .70***             |

Note: \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ ,  
<sup>a</sup> $n = 53$ , <sup>b</sup> $n = 78$

Regression analyses tested how well novelty and total affect scores predicted creativity scores in each country (Table 3). For the U.S. stories, only novelty was a significant predictor of creativity,  $B = .93$ ,  $t(50) = 10.00$ ,  $p < .001$ . For the Spanish stories, both novelty ( $B = .58$ ,  $t(75) = 7.81$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and total affect ( $B = .12$ ,  $t(75) = 3.90$ ,  $p < .001$ ), predicted creativity.

Table 3. Summary of Regression Analysis for Creativity Scores in U.S. ( $N = 53$ ) and Spanish Samples ( $N = 78$ )

| Variable                          | $B$ | $SE(B)$ | $\beta$ | $t$      | Sig. ( $p$ ) |
|-----------------------------------|-----|---------|---------|----------|--------------|
| <b>U.S. Sample<sup>a</sup></b>    |     |         |         |          |              |
| Novelty                           | .93 | .09     | .81     | 10.00*** | <.001        |
| Total Affect                      | .03 | .02     | .11     | 1.34     | .19          |
| <b>Spanish Sample<sup>b</sup></b> |     |         |         |          |              |
| Novelty                           | .58 | .07     | .61     | 7.81***  | <.001        |
| Total Affect                      | .12 | .03     | .31     | 3.90***  | <.001        |

Note: \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

<sup>a</sup>  $R^2 = .77$ ,  $F(2, 50) = 82.99$ ,  $p < .001$

<sup>b</sup>  $R^2 = .58$ ,  $F(2, 75) = 50.69$ ,  $p < .001$

## DISCUSSION

Our findings suggest that children in the United States and Spain had different approaches to telling creative stories, and yet achieved a similar outcome: stories rated as equally creative. For Spanish children, both novelty and use of emotion predicted overall story creativity, while creativity of U.S. stories was predicted only by novel story elements, despite the U.S. stories being longer, and having higher mean scores on both novelty and affective variables. This finding is in line with results presented by Hoffmann et al., (2014) in which Italian children were found to have connections between imagination and emotions when generating ideas in a divergent thinking task or generating ideas for how to cope with everyday situations, while U.S. children demonstrated only a connection between imagination and divergent thinking and no connection with emotion use.

One framework through which these results can be interpreted is the cultural differences between the U.S. and Spain with regards to how much each culture values and promotes individualism—or in the context of creativity—individuality or uniqueness. As would be expected, given the relative higher degree of individualism in the U.S. as compared to Spain, more novelty was presented in the U.S. stories, and novelty was a significant predictor in the regression analysis in predicting U.S. students' creativity scores.

In addition to novelty, Spanish children had another route to creativity—expressing emotion. This study does not allow us to make conclusions about the reasons behind this finding; however, some cultural differences in emotion-related variables could be a potential mechanism. For instance, cultures differ in their beliefs about appropriateness of different emotions, from feeling happy and cheerful to worried and sad (Diener & Lucas, 2004; Ford & Gross, 2019; Tsai, 2007; 2017). It could be the case that these differences in expressiveness translate to preferences in using emotions in thinking (which is a dimension of individual differences that can be reliably assessed;

Soosalu et al., 2019), and therefore it is conceivable that those who consider emotions more valuable would also be more likely to use them toward performance on tasks such as storytelling.

Another possible avenue for interpretation of the findings is through the concept of need for affect (NFA), which describes a person's general motivation to approach or avoid emotions and emotional situations, including their belief that emotions are useful (Maio & Esses, 2001). While most work studying NFA has been on how people approach, understand, and react to messaging (e.g., how easily are they persuaded by the emotional content or advertisements), some research has also found that people with higher NFA are more inclined to express their emotions (Deng et al., 2023). No research has yet examined NFA across Spanish and U.S. cultures, nor in the context of creative storytelling. However, the broad argument has been made that NFA across individuals within a group is likely impacted by cultural variables, such as interdependent self-views and the value placed on in-group member relationships (Kim & Eom, 2019), and therefore could play a role in the differential use of affect in storytelling across samples of different cultures.

### Limitations and Future Directions

There are several limitations to this study worth noting. First, while the samples in the study are meant to represent two different cultures—that of the United States and Spain, in reality, they are drawn from singular locations within each of these countries—a Midwest school in the U.S., and a northern city in Spain. Despite differences between countries, there are substantial within-country variations in level of individualism/collectivism (Oyserman et al., 2002; Talhelm, 2020; Talhelm et al., 2014), as well as creativity-relevant variables (Chua et al., 2019; Dakhali & de Clercq, 2004), and therefore we must recognize the power of the individual school, or individual teacher to shape and support student creativity. Secondly, samples are also rather small, limiting the power to detect significant effects. We see this study as an inspiration for other scholars to examine similar questions, using larger samples across cultures.

Another limitation is the measure of storytelling we employed. Although the picture book *A Boy, A Dog, and a Frog* has been successfully used in other research (e.g., Hoffmann & Russ, 2012; Ivcevic et al., 2022; Zyga et al., 2022), it can be argued that the depicted story is highly structured, showing a clear and unambiguous set of events, which can limit the ability of children to be original. Future studies should extend research on storytelling with other picture book material. For example, the *Mysteries of Harris Burdick* by Chris Van Allsburg (1984) could provide a more open-ended alternative to the study of storytelling. This picture book includes 14 drawings rich in detail, each with a caption that could start a story. This book can provide material for multiple stories, thus suitable in studies able to assess creativity of different stories, which would increase reliability of measurement. Pretesting of these pictorial story stems could provide information on what drawings result in stories similar in rated performance criteria, making them suitable as parallel forms of a storytelling assessment.

Booker (2006) points out that the lack of research on storytelling is curious, given how ubiquitous storytelling is to our daily lives, whether it be on television, in newspapers, or recounting our

everyday experiences in conversation. Storytelling makes an excellent medium for exploring cross-cultural differences in the cognitive and affective processes that impact creative production. As we uncover the multiple pathways to creative outcomes (i.e., through the use of novelty elements as U.S. children did, or also through the use of explicit emotion words as the Spanish children did) we learn more about how to help others achieve creativity, and how cultures can learn from each other to enhance everyone's creative potential. Indeed, research on storytelling through pretend play with young children has found benefits of simultaneously fostering imagination and use of emotion (e.g., Hoffmann & Russ, 2016; Russ, 2014).

The child's environment, their family, school, and society, can influence how children approach creative tasks (and what cognitive and emotional processes they tend to deploy), and these environments can enhance or extinguish a child's sense of creative self-efficacy (Beghetto & Schmidt, 2023) and attitudes toward creativity (Ivcevic & Hoffmann, 2022), which predict creative behavior. Teacher expectations about students' creative skills had a significant effect on the development of verbal creativity among primary school children (Justo, 2008). Teacher implicit and explicit opinions about creativity transfer to their classrooms and their students (Karwowski et al., 2020). In the United States, adults and students tend to think of creativity with an art-bias. This leads people to interpret their creative ability in terms of experiences with the arts, and to consider creativity more important for artistic classes and professions than for other occupations (e.g., engineering, philosophy; see Glăveanu, 2014). This art-bias impacts what kinds of academic assignments are perceived as creative, which then impacts students' motivation and persistence (Hoffmann et al., 2016). Meanwhile, in a study of Spanish student teachers, participants were asked how often their creativity had been noticed when they were in school (Muhonen et al., 2011). 41.2% of Spanish student teachers stated that their creativity was never noticed and 36% reported creativity was hardly ever noticed. When asked where their creativity was noticed in school, only 11.7% reported linguistic areas such as "being asked to make up tales and... poems..." (p. 21). The authors also noted that while students saw themselves as having creative abilities, they had few opportunities to utilize their skills in the school context, suggesting the need for additional ways that classrooms can create opportunities for students to display and foster their creativity.

Moving forward, we assert that more can be learned from exploring differences in the creative process among cultures, rather than continuing the more frequent comparison of mean scores. Returning to Lubart's (1999; 2010) four-part outline, a classroom culture (as a microcosm of the region's culture) can support students' creativity by adopting a broad definition of creativity, accepting multiple creative processes—both more cognitive/imaginative and affective/expressive, building a climate in which creativity is nurtured, and offering opportunities for children to channel their creativity productively and successfully.

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