

# Creative Life Orientations in Socially Diverse Groups: Research Review

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This article presents the results of many years of research on creative life orientations carried out in socially diverse groups – among secondary school students, university students, and teachers – as regards their socio-demographic characteristics. It describes the theoretical assumptions of analyses, being part of the author’s original concept of creative life orientations. It discusses the understanding of this category, its interdisciplinary sources, and the specificity of life orientations in the creative versus conservative dimension. The methodological basis for the field research is explained, including the description of the original research tool, the Creative Life Orientation Preference Scale. The article then presents the generalized results of research on the respondents’ preferences for creative life orientations obtained as part of several research projects. These analyses are the basis for conclusions from research concerning the respondents’ preferences for creative, ambivalent and conservative life orientations, as well as their determinants.

## Introduction

The aim of this article is to present the diagnosis of preference for creative life orientations in different social groups – secondary school students, university students, and teachers – in light of the results of research carried out over many years. This issue is particularly important in the contemporary world, since creativity is inherent in the structure of a human when approached dynamically, as a being *in statu nascendi*. Everyday creativity is necessary in the dynamically changing world nowadays. It is required of students at various levels of education, teachers, workers in the modern labour market, politicians and entrepreneurs. It has long been present in education teleology as an important goal of education and upbringing processes. Creativity is treated, not only as a human need and a value, but also as a kind of

commitment and response to the growing dynamics and complexity of humans' living environments. Creative behaviours are increasingly present in the lives of individuals and communities, in the sphere of modern work and in different areas of social life. They should also be an inherent component of teachers' professional biography.

The next section of the article is an introduction to the author's understanding of life orientations, particularly in the creative versus conservative dimension. It identifies the sources of the concept of creative life orientations and the concept's basic assumptions. The subsequent section describes the research projects completed by the author so far, concerning the diagnosis of creative life orientation preferences among youths and teachers. Generalized findings of each project are also presented. The final section gives the conclusions from the previous analyses regarding several basic research problems. Because of the review character of the paper, it is necessary to exclude from the presentation many detailed issues examined in particular projects. The text focuses on showing the respondents' attitude to life orientations on the continuum of 'creativity' (as a personality trait) to 'conservatism'.

### **Creative Life Orientation**

The concept of creative life orientations is my own concept and I first described it in 2004 (Cudowska, 2004). I developed it in subsequent author monographs (Cudowska, 2014, 2017). Creative life orientations are a specific type of life orientation, an interdisciplinary category linking an individual's attitudes, opinions and views, values the person upholds and their hierarchy, plans and aspirations, as well as specific behaviours and actions taken in order to accomplish them. They have a transgressive and self-fulfilling dimension in their supra-individualistic character, expressed in the realization of one's own development potential and also for the common good. Creative life orientations, understood as creating oneself and one's own world in the phenomenological experience of daily life, fit the broader philosophical perspective of the idea of creative life and constructing one's identity as incomplete, in constant dialogue with the world, with the Other, with oneself, looking for the proper place in the world of diversity and changeability. Creative life orientation is a unique resource, contributing to the achievement of well-being. It is formed throughout a person's life on the basis of many complex internal and external factors, from micro- to macro-social living conditions, depending on personality traits, developmental potential, abilities and the opportunities to develop them, as well as the family situation, environment, and everyday experiences. Among these multiple factors, education plays a special role. Being a lifelong process, learning begins before school, but school is a very important area of developing a creative attitude oneself, to life, and to satisfaction with one's functioning in the social reality.

Creative life orientations are person-specific, because no two ways of realizing personal creativity are the same. The basic imperative for the development of life orientation is the awareness of one's choices and the self-determination effort.

Creative life orientations are axiologically saturated and ethically engaged, dynamic and processual, since they are not formed in a single act of emergence but keep revealing, developing and changing throughout the person's life. They have an emancipatory and dialogic character; they develop in the person's relations with the world, in the process of gaining subjectivity and freedom, in dialogue with the Other. They are not necessarily manifested in a creative form and are evaluated with consideration of a specific product, although they may involve many products. The realization of creative life orientation is possible when the person submits to the imperative to act, is liberated from their limitations, and acts in pursuit of creating something new. What is needed is perceiving the reality from the phenomenological perspective, i.e. regarding ordinary things as phenomena. The ability to see things differently is the essence of a creative entity. The person creates their own life when they see its current state and they do not stop there. They can see the possibility to change and influence their life, so they accept challenges and follow the imperative to act. Therefore, they follow the road towards their personal freedom by realizing what is, what can be changed, and what may be achieved through that change.

It is assumed that people with a creative life orientation are better equipped to function in the complex, dynamic reality, in an open-minded society, because whatever is new and unknown strongly motivates them to learn, examine and experience. They are characterized by autonomous cognitive motivation, in which curiosity and craving for new experiences give direction to their actions. They accept change as something natural, they approve of differences, and they can harmoniously combine opposite characteristics. They perceive reality more efficiently than do people with conservative orientations because they have the ability to see concrete things, to generalize, to abstract, to classify, and to approach things with fresh eyes. We may say that although they are looking at the same thing, they can see more than others, because they are more sensitive and reflective. People preferring creative orientations are able to concentrate fully on a certain issue and be fascinated with a problem. They engage in actions in various areas, of different character and scope. Their creative attitude to life manifests itself both in incidental, occasional actions and in systematic, long-term behaviours. They have a strong need of self-actualization, which can be satisfied both through group activity, in larger groups and small family communities, and while alone, in contact with the internal world of their experiences. The creative attitude to life is reflected both in everyday tasks, responsibilities and challenges they accept and in the way of coping with existential crises. Updating one's own predispositions, i.e. enriching self-knowledge and axiological awareness and acquiring new skills, is a significant although not the only dimension of human's creative orientation. An important part in the purposeful, subjective creation of their biographies is also played by various products of their activity, although these are not conditional for creative life orientation. People with such an orientation can seek self-fulfilment not only in everyday fluid creativity, or 'little c creativity'; they can also have achievements in the field of crystallized creativity, which requires gaining specific knowledge, skills, patience, courage and endurance.

It is conjectured that socio-cultural conditions promoting or inhibiting outstanding creativity are also the stimulators or inhibitors of creative life orientations. However, those conditions are unlikely to be identified, because the results of research on this subject with regard to outstanding creativity are ambiguous, often contradicting the findings of biographers of people creating extraordinary works. Humans' creative activity is entangled in various antinomies and paradoxes – what stimulates one person to creativity may discourage another. The development of creative life orientations is also a process with multiple determinants, which requires the harmonization of significant human development mechanisms: biological, psychological, social, as well as the individualization mechanism, which probably determines our biographies to the greatest extent and is decisive for our creative/conservative life orientation preferences. So far, no research has been done concerning the conditions conducive to the development of a creative attitude to life. We only have fragmentary information, usually limited to selected aspects of the family situation of people preferring creative orientations.

### Sources of the Concept of Creative Life Orientations

The concept of creative life orientations was developed almost 20 years ago, and it has its sources in several fields of knowledge. At the ontological level it fits two problem areas: (1) the philosophy of dialogue and metaphysics of orientation, seeking the purpose of life outside theoretical categories, i.e. in participation and engagement, with dialogue as its foundation (Schnädelbach 1992); (2) the idea of *homo explorens*, a person who perceives themselves as a thinking individual, exploring and changing the reality, experiences their own ontic activity, and gains the awareness of their creative role, enabling them to engage in 'purposeful creation'. Awareness and self-awareness give the person an opportunity of intentional self-enrichment, resulting in creative accomplishment and creation of their own unique lifestyle (Cudowska 2004). The psychological plane of the concept is described by the approach to creativity proposed by humanistic psychologists, Erich Fromm (1959, 1981), Carl R. Rogers (1954, 1961), Abraham H. Maslow (1954, 1959, 1962, 1971), Rollo May (1959, 1994), Frederick S. Perls (1969), and Joseph Zinker (1977), who associate creativity, not with the product but with the lifestyle, treating it as a value that gives meaning to human life. Creative potential is attributed to each individual, but it can only be developed in favourable conditions, so relatively few people go through the process of self-actualization. The perception of creativity in the psychology of culture is also extremely important in defining creative orientations. In one of textbooks on this subject, *The Handbook of Culture and Creativity* (Leung *et al.* 2018), it is approached as an individual choice, interpretation and restructuring of the perception of the world so that it is associated with everyday experience of the person. It involves the analysis of the creator's functioning in a certain environment, with consideration of the process of creation, creative personality, and the product (Glăveanu 2010). This is the reason for the special importance of the theory of

everyday creativity in the development of the creative life orientation concept. Creativity is perceived by Ruth Richards (Richards *et al.* 1997; Richards 1999), Marc Runco (2005, 2006) and Anna Craft (2000) as a way to complete mental health (tantamount to self-actualization) and as a characterological orientation. Everyday creation occurs in the subjective, personal dimension and is an expression of a certain lifestyle. This understanding of creativity includes both the creative personality and the effects of creativity, such as products, ideas, and behaviours resulting from humans' everyday activity in all their spheres of life, from professional activity to leisure time (Richards, 1999). Everyday creation is associated with the need of development, transforming the environment, survival in different conditions, looking for the meaning of life, and phenomenological experiencing of daily life. It results from carrying out developmental tasks, solving problems and designing one's own future. In this meaning, it belongs to people and is as universal as people's participation in culture, yet varied in terms of specificity, intensity, character, kind and importance. Everyday creation is inherent to the process of individual's self-actualization, helps achieve mental well-being, and works in the service of health. Such creation is typical of all the forms and fields of human activity, not only selected areas of culture. It involves the generation of products and behaviours that are new and valuable for the person, and is embedded in their axiological awareness. The element of subjectivity does not diminish the importance of that activity for the individual and for the community, as their creativity enhances the well-being of the whole community.

In this approach, creative life orientation can be perceived in the category of specific resources allowing the achievement of well-being. This is emphasized by Robert Sternberg (2003, 2005), who points to four factors of harmonious personality development and pursuit of general well-being: (i) Wisdom, (ii) Intelligence, (iii) Creativity, and (iv) all these elements Synthesized. In orientations understood in this way, creativity is egalitarian, democratic, universal, and is inherent in people's everyday activities. It is an act of subjective creation, through which the individual perceives themselves as a part of a bigger whole, mindfully experiences daily reality, is open to new events, and approaches the reality from many different perspectives. Such creation enables the person to make an effort to influence their life, ensures a reflective approach to social rules adopted in the process of socialization, and conscious confrontation with their fears and weaknesses (Richards, 2007). It has a personal character, is inherent in human nature, and is manifested in the original interpretation of everyday experiences, reasoning before acting, and engaging in intentional actions to achieve one's own development and changes in the environment for the common good (Runco, 2007). Everyday creativity involves self-understanding and understanding the world. It allows one to see, identify and solve problems encountered each day, in different situations, and helps achieve goals. 'Little c creativity' is perceived as a specific personality disposition allowing the person to create their own unique way of life (Craft, 2001). It is also a specific resource that allows everyday use of one's virtues and competencies. Ingenuity, productivity, an innovative approach to various things, cognitive insight, inquisitiveness and curiosity

about the world, which are the manifestation of creative life orientations, contribute to the achievement of well-being and a good life (Seligman, 2002).

### **Research on Creative Life Orientations**

So far, four research projects have been carried out to diagnose life orientation preferences on the creative/conservative dimension, involving 2801 persons in total. The vast majority of the sample were university students (70.3% respondents). Secondary school students accounted for 15.3%, and teachers 14.4%. The tested samples were representative due to the distribution of variables of interest to the researcher. The clear prevalence of university students results from the unique character of this social group. It is made up of people whose personality traits are already developed, who are intellectually, axiologically and morally mature, and aware of their capabilities. They usually have precise goals they would like to achieve, specific pursuits, aspirations and short-term and long-term plans. Thus, they have quite clearly defined lifestyle preferences, and yet they continue learning, acquire new skills, engage in various activities, and enrich their experiences with relationships with other people. In addition, they are willing to take part in research projects and are prepared to reflect on their attitudes, values and pursuits. On the one hand, they are adults, although they do not yet assume all the social roles connected with this stage of life, and on the other hand, they are still subject to various influences affecting their minds and wills, so developing their cognitive and practical competencies. Hence, they make a very important group in the process of recognizing the specificity and determinants of preference for creative life orientations, because whatever job they look for, creativity will always be required of them.

The first study on preference for creative life orientations was carried out in the years 2000–2002 among 354 pedagogy students from universities in three towns: in the north-eastern, central, and southern part of Poland. Another research project was conducted in the years 2006–2012 among 340 secondary school students, 276 university students and 322 teachers in Podlaskie province in Poland. It did not only provide the diagnosis of preference for creative life orientations in socially diverse groups, but also enriched the narratives and concepts of creative life orientations with the dialogic approach of this category and helped to expand its interpretation in the context of development of individuals' identities. The aim of the third project, carried out in the years 2014–2015 among 363 students of pedagogy at the University of Białystok, was not only to diagnose the preference for creative life orientations but also to verify the hypothesis concerning the relationships between creative life orientation preference and the respondents' sense of coherence, which is an empirical category in the salutogenetic model of health by Aaron Antonovsky (1979). Nearly half the respondents, 48.9%, had a high level of sense of coherence: they scored above average in their group, so on the continuum of strong–weak sense of coherence they were closer to the end indicating a high value of that variable. On the creative/conservative life orientations continuum over half of the respondents

(65.8%) were located on the creative orientations side, as they obtained scores above the average of their group, although the level of agreement was not very high. Statistical analysis confirmed the hypothesis that there is a relationship between creative life orientation preferences and the respondents' sense of coherence. The two correlating variables occur together. A strong sense of coherence is accompanied by creative life orientation preference, and a weak sense of coherence is accompanied by conservative life orientation preference. A strong correlation between the sense of coherence and creative life orientation preference – as generalized indicators of attitude to life – has been observed in the examined sample (the Spearman's correlation coefficient was 0.53). Positive results of correlation analysis were also observed for the relationship between particular components of these two variables. The components of the sense of coherence are: (1) the sense of comprehensibility (SC), (2) the sense of resourcefulness (SR), and (3) the sense of meaningfulness (SM); and the four elements of creative life orientation are: (1) new situations (NS), (2) new products (NP), (3) flexibility, agility and originality of thinking (F), and (4) creativity as a value (CV). The empirical analyses carried out in this area also enabled the development of the concept of creative life orientations by describing them as a special resource that, together with an appropriate sense of coherence, enables the achievement of well-being, i.e. perceiving one's life as satisfying. Thus, the description of creative life orientations has been expanded by the relations with humans' health and well-being. The last of the empirical projects carried out so far was carried out among students of two universities, one in Poland and one in Belarus. In the 2015/2016 academic year, the study involved 573 Polish and Belarusian pedagogy students (303 students from Poland and 270 students from Belarus). All the studies were conducted using the same instrument, the original Creative Life Orientation Preference Scale, whose reliability and validity were confirmed in the course of statistical analyses. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the Scale questionnaire was 0.86.

### **Methodological Assumptions of the Original Research**

All the studies were carried out in the triangulation paradigm and had a diagnostic and explanatory character. The studies and analyses were carried out in two separate stages. In this article I refer only to the results of quantitative research. The first stage was quantitative in character, and the object of study was defined using the assumptions of the original concept of creative life orientations and the terms specific for it, and was tested using the Creative Life Orientation (CrLO) Preference Scale (Cudowska, 2004). At that stage, the distribution of respondents' preferences concerning creative or conservative life orientations was determined with the method of a diagnostic poll and anonymous questionnaire technique, and measured using the Creative Life Orientation Preference Scale. The technique of including all the aspects of the measured object and the significant elements of each object was used in the construction of the instrument. This produced a profile that provided the basis for formulating each question or statement in the instrument.

The questionnaire of the Creative Life Orientation Preference Scale includes four components of creative life orientations: New situations (NS), New products (NP), Flexibility, agility and originality of thinking (F), Creativity as a value (CV). Each of these was presented as 12 sentences, so the whole questionnaire included 48 statements describing the respondent's preferences. The statements were verified as part of a pilot study and their validity was evaluated by competent jurors. Their index is the number of points obtained in particular subscales of the Creative Life Orientation Preference Scale. Based on the responses, the respondents' location on the creative/conservative life orientations continuum is determined.

The first, quantitative, stage of exploration concentrated on diagnosing the respondents' preferences for life orientations expressed as the creative/conservative continuum, as well as on looking for factors determining particular declarations in this regard. The determinants of preference for creative life orientations were sought in environmental and demographic living conditions of the respondents, such as gender, age, place of residence, their parents' education, and the respondents' professional situation, the academic major (in the case of students), the family situation (in the case of teachers), and the country of origin and specificity of university pedagogical education therein (in the latest research project). In the case of school and university students, the preference for creative life orientations was mostly correlated with their parents' education: a higher level of parents' education was related to preference for creative life orientations at the mean level of the contingency coefficient ( $C_{\text{cor}}$  between 30 and 40), as well as the respondents' place of residence: students from big cities more often declared a preference for the creative attitude to life than did their peers from small towns and villages. However, as in the previous case, the relationships were not very strong (Cudowska, 2004, 2014).

The results of quantitative research were subject to statistical analysis using the Statistica 10.0 program. Tests by Hubert Lilliefors and by Samuel S. Shapiro and Martin Wilk (the Shapiro–Wilk test) were used to check whether the dependent variables followed the normal distribution. Non-parametric methods were used to verify the hypotheses, because the distributions significantly differed from the normal distribution. The Henry B. Mann and David R. Whitney test (Mann–Whitney U test) was used for comparisons between the two groups in the research conducted among students in 2015–2016, and whenever the number of the compared groups was higher than two, the test by William H. Kruskal and W. Allen Wallis (the Kruskal–Wallis test) with the post-hoc test by Oscar J. Dunn were applied. The correlation analysis was conducted using the rank correlation test by Charles Spearman with the significance test for this coefficient. The adopted significance level was  $\alpha=0.05$ . Thus, the results were regarded as statistically significant when the calculated test probability was  $p<0.05$ . Because the distributions significantly differed from the normal distribution, non-parametric methods were used to verify the hypotheses. The results of CrLO were compared between two groups with the Mann–Whitney U test, and if the number of compared groups was higher than two, the Kruskal–Wallis test (with Dunn's post-hoc test) was applied. The Polish and Belarusian groups were compared in terms of socio-demographic characteristics

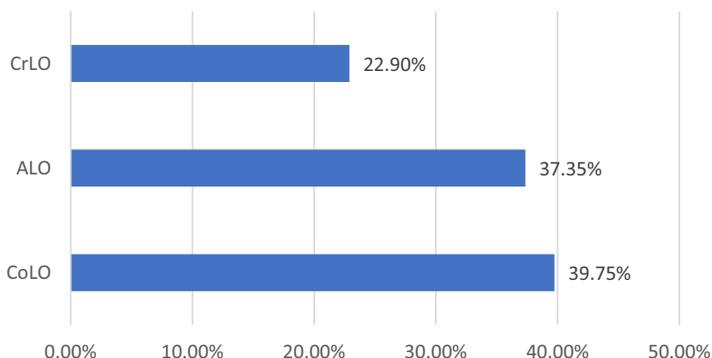
with the chi square test, and the correlations between age and scores of particular scales were calculated using the Spearman's rank correlation coefficient. The significance level of  $\alpha=0.05$  was adopted, so the results were regarded as statistically significant when the calculated test probability was  $p < 0.05$ .

The second stage had a qualitative character and it was focused on the respondents' perception of creative life orientation and the ways of implementing it through their actions. Individual interviews were conducted with people who had obtained high scores in the Scale of Preference for Creative Life Orientations in the first stage of the research and agreed to talk to the researcher. This study was mostly carried out among university students with various majors and among teachers. This stage also included the examination of documents, mostly carried out in the last research project. The technique of content analysis of legal acts regulating academic education, curricula, university schedules and syllabuses of both studied universities in Poland and in Belarus was used in order to show the specificity of pedagogical education at Polish and Belarusian universities against the background of the situation of higher education systems in both countries, with special consideration of subjects connected with psychology and pedagogy of creation, activities aimed at the development of creative thinking and creative behaviours and axiological legitimization of creativity in students' and teachers' daily lives. The technique of participant observation was also used at various stages of the didactic process and teachers' daily work (Cudowska *et al.* 2019).

### **Results – Creative Life Orientation Preferences**

It is difficult to present generalized results of analyses of preference for creative life orientations due to the diversity of respondent groups within the 20 years of doing the research. However, some tendencies can be found in the observations involving such a large sample (2801 people). Preference for creative life orientations is usually declared by approximately one-quarter of the respondents, The majority opt for the conservative orientation, and the least numerous group is people with ambivalent orientations, unsure which one to choose. This is roughly the image of the distribution of preferences for creative/conservative life orientations resulting from the analyses of findings of the first research projects, carried out in the years 2000–2012 (Figure 1).

There was a change in the distribution of the respondents' life orientation preferences in the next two research projects, carried out in the years 2014–2016. However, this happened, not only due to university students' re-evaluation of their attitude to life, but also – perhaps, primarily – due to a methodological change in the interpretation of the obtained results. Instead of considering them as the opposition of creative versus conservative plus the middle category of ambivalent orientation, they were approached as a creative/conservative continuum. This led to new interpretation of the scores of the Creative Life Orientation Preference Scale: instead of attributing points to particular standard ten norms corresponding to each type of



**Figure 1.** Mean values of life orientation preferences in the creative/conservative dimension in the entire sample in the years 2000–2012.

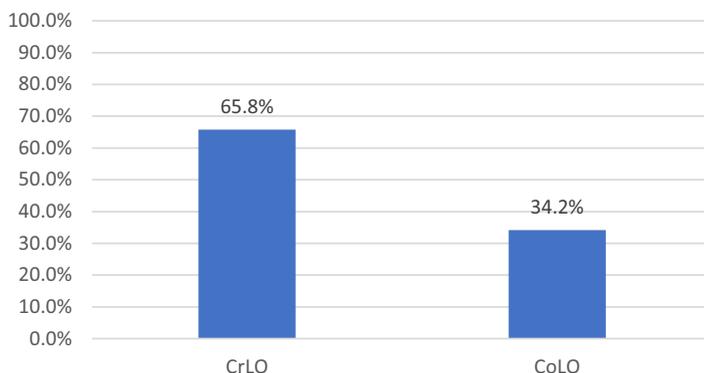
CrLO – creative life orientation preferences, ALO – ambivalent preferences, CoLO – conservative life orientation preferences.

Source: Author's study.

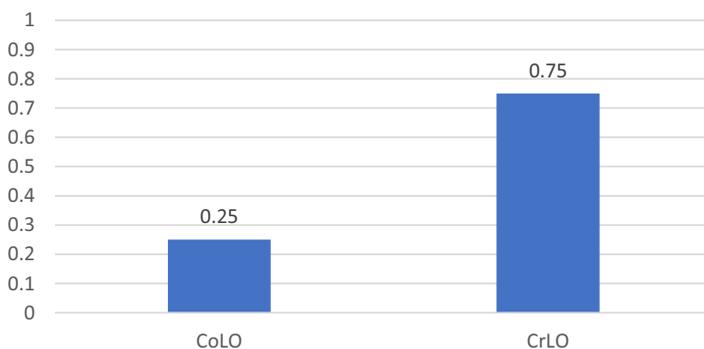
orientation, two bands were determined – on the left of the scale centre, toward the end of creative orientations, and on the right, toward the end of conservative orientations. In the questionnaire, including a four-item scale, the respondents could obtain from 0 to 144 points. Scores between 73 and 144 indicate creative orientation preference, while scores between 0 and 72 indicate conservative orientation preference. The higher the score, the more the respondent moves toward the left end of the continuum, i.e., a strong preference for creative life orientation. The lower the score, the closer the respondent is to the right end of the continuum, reflecting a strong preference for conservative life orientation. Hence, some gradation of the respondents' life orientation preferences is possible, because those who obtained certain scores within one of the bands may differ in the degree of agreement with statements characteristic of that attitude to life. This way of interpreting the results of the Creative Life Orientation Preference Scale eliminated the middle category, i.e. the ambivalent orientation, and allowed us to show the strength of preference for a particular type of orientation, growing as the person's score is closer to the respective end of the scale (Figures 2 and 3).

The use of such an analytical procedure led to the presentation of the analysed variable in a binary system. Therefore, preferences for creative orientations and their opposite, i.e. a preference for a conservative orientation, were distinguished. This did not change the fundamental tendency in the preferences of the respondents, as preferences for creative life orientations still dominated, although at a very low level of acceptance (Figures 3).

In the last research project, involving Polish and Belarusian students, the strength of preference for life orientation among people with scores to the left of the scale centre (reflecting a creative attitude to life) was also analysed. It was observed that the declared preference was very weak and the vast majority of that group express the preference for creativity in their everyday life but without great



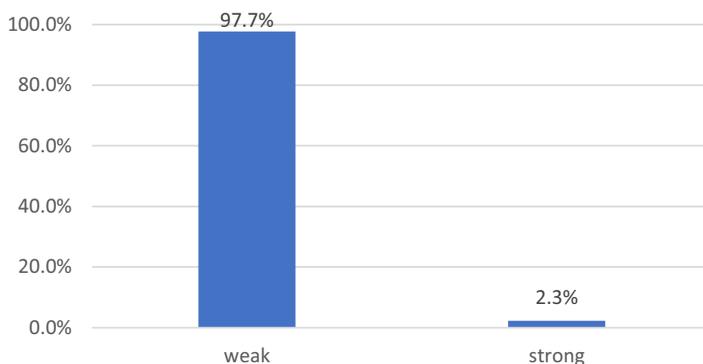
**Figure 2.** Respondents' life orientation preferences on the creative/conservative continuum in the study carried out in the years 2014–2015. CrLO – creative life orientation preferences, CoLO – conservative life orientation preferences. Source: Author's research.



**Figure 3.** Respondents' life orientation preferences on the creative/conservative continuum in the study carried out in the years 2015–2016. CrLO – creative life orientation preferences, CoLO – conservative life orientation preferences. Source: Author's research.

conviction. Only under 3% respondents had a clearly creative attitude to life, accepted new situations and treated creativity as a value, engaged in creative activities in everyday functioning, problem solving and new products generation, and were characterized by flexible, agile and original thinking (Figure 4).

Recognition of preferences in the field of creative life orientations during the Covid-19 pandemic, in the years 2020–2021 among students of pedagogy at the University of Bialystok did not bring new decisions in this area. As in the previous research project carried out in 2015–2016, over 70% of the surveyed young people declared acceptance of a creative approach to life, but the strength of this preference was very low. Only slightly more than 2% of the respondents obtained high scores on the CLO Preference Scale, at the level of 124–144 points, which proves a high preference for creative life orientations. Most of the 230 surveyed students declared weak



**Figure 4.** Strength of creative life orientations in both student groups.  
Source: Author's research.

support for a creative approach to life and expressed a preference for a conservative type of life orientation. The pandemic period was not conducive to conducting research on life orientations among teachers who, burdened with new tasks during remote teaching, and often resentful of the lack of adequate support from the educational authorities and understanding from the students' parents, refused to participate in the scientific project. In April 2022, I started another research project on the determinants of creative life orientations among teachers in a nationwide group. So far, data have been collected from over 600 teachers from primary and secondary schools across the country, and efforts are being made to enlarge this sample. This year, it is planned to analyse the results and prepare a preliminary research report.

### Conclusions

This article shows the respondents' preferences for creative life orientations but ignores the correlation analyses of their socio-demographic and environmental determinants, as these analyses are impossible to describe in a journal article. Thus, the results of the research mainly focus on the diagnosis of preferences for creative life orientations in socially diverse groups.

The research conducted in the years 2000–2012 showed the diversity in the respondents' preferences and confirmed the dominance of a preference for the conservative model of life orientation, with less than one-quarter of the respondents choosing creative life orientations. In the research conducted in the years 2014–2016, the choice of creative life orientations was dominant but at a relatively low level. Most scores were actually closer to the centre of the creative/conservative orientations continuum than to the left end. Indeed, the respondents do not seem to be strongly engaged in unleashing their creative potential. Tightening the criteria of attributing the respondents' declarations of the degree of agreement with particular statements in the Creative Life Orientation Preference Scale would lead to the

conclusion that a considerable number of respondents have an ambivalent attitude to life, between the creative and conservative life orientations. This evokes the reflection on whether the students' declarations showed their real beliefs, impacting their everyday activities or whether they resulted from the opinion that creativity is desirable, which is popular in the educational circle. This uncertainty is unavoidable in research in which respondents' self-declarations are actually the only way of obtaining information on the variables the researcher seeks to investigate. Such results can also be interpreted from the perspective of the specificity of the respondents' developmental period. Most of the respondents are young people, often in the process of looking for their own path of life, whose beliefs concerning various important issues of daily life are still developing and are not yet rooted well enough in the intra-subjective axiological sphere. Hence, the not very strong preference for creative life orientation is understandable. Their future life experiences, including engagement in the realization of their creative potential or failure to do so, will probably modify those preferences for life orientations. In some individuals they may be consolidated and move towards the left end of the creative/conservative continuum, and in others they will move towards the right end, i.e. non-creative orientations. The dynamics of life preferences depends on many internal (personality) and external (environmental) factors.

Although the results of the research do not provide the basis for generalization, they do point to the need to teach and develop a creative attitude to life among youths and adults taking part in broadly understood education activities, not limited to school. Creative orientations foster the development of a strong sense of coherence, which is connected with the person's broadly understood health and well-being. The belief that you understand the surrounding world and have an influence, at least on some events, that you can cope with various problems using your creative potential, stimulates you to accept challenges, carry out new tasks, and engage in problem solving. It makes you feel healthier and more satisfied with your life. You are also more willing to be creative in everyday life, you can see unusual things and opportunities where others cannot see anything of interest. You are satisfied as you overcome obstacles, look for new ways of expression through various activities, you may make your passion your profession, and, if this is impossible, you can draw satisfaction from developing your non-professional interests. Thus, it is necessary to make an effort to develop creative attitudes, behaviours and thinking among school and university students and teachers, as manifested in preferences for creative life orientations, because they are the individual's resources to be used in coping with everyday problems and accepting new challenges.

### **Declarations of interest**

The author declares there are no conflicts of interest.

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