

Creativity and Well-Being

Abstract

Creative acts of today predict the well-being of tomorrow. This article reflects and reiterates the beneficial effects of creativity on well-being and the value of creative interventions which will help solve daily life hassles whilst simultaneously improving the quality of life and building resilience to challenges. [1]

Keywords

Creativity, health, and wellbeing,

Introduction

"Creativity is seeing what others see and thinking what no one else ever thought." Albert Einstein

Creativity is sometimes seen as the realm of the tortured soul like Kurt Cobain, or Vincent Van Gogh. However, everyone appreciates Cobain's, and Van Gogh's works of great art. Many have defined creativity as they have perceived or experienced it, and it is widely accepted that a creative idea should be both novel and useful [2]. Creativity is defined as a modifiable, deliberate process and the ability to produce original and unusual ideas, or to make something new or imaginative that exists to some degree in each person.[3]

While intelligence refers to analytical skills, creativity refers to generating ideas and behaviours in any situation.[2] Creativity can be seen in the production of new work, divergent thinking, or willingness to experiment with new ideas and experiences [4]. creative self-perception and self-efficacy. [5] When the appropriate opportunity is available, creativity happens if one awakes their latent potential to produce something original [4] and is different from creative achievement reflected in creative behaviours and products. [6]

Many creative individuals were more satisfied with their lives even after accounting for perceived stress and their personality traits. [7] In the 21st century, one faces many complex challenges and hence develops the capacity and skills to address this situation. [8]

Geetha Upadhyaya, OBE
Consultant in Metabolic Medicine,
Counsellor, and Psychotherapist

geethaupadhyaya29@yahoo.co.uk

Cite as: Upadhyay. G (2024)
Creativity and wellbeing. Sushruta
J Health Pol vol 16; Issue 1: Art 7
DOI 10.38192/16.1.7

Article Information

Submitted Jul 23

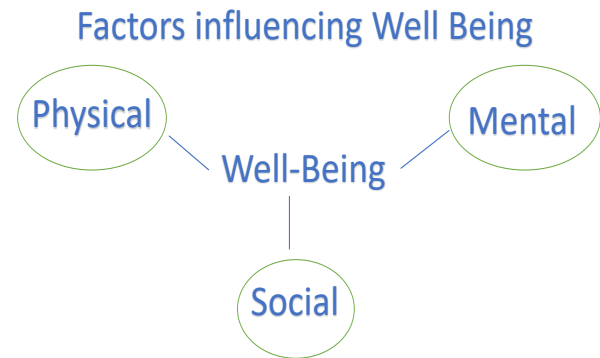
Published Mar 24

Creativity and Well-being

Considered an asset in life, creativity has a significant impact on well-being. As an example, visual arts is associated with stronger connectivity of the frontal and parietal cortices and predicted higher psychological resilience. [9] Creativity makes us leave our comfort zone and embrace the struggles we face whilst developing the emotional skills to confront the stress. Having emotional intelligence allows you to regulate the ups and downs so the emotions do not interfere with creativity.

The positive effect of creativity may be explained by the fact that creative individuals are more ingenious in finding solutions for overcoming life difficulties, which may then make their life experience more interesting and satisfying. It is well known that people report being happy and energized when they are engaged in everyday creative endeavours and that being in a positive mood goes hand in hand with creative thinking and everyday creativity leads to more well-being. [10] Studies have shown that the life span of men with high creativity live longer, reducing mortality risk by 12% [11] and their positive personalities had a strong effect on their creativity. [12] Adults practising creativity were found to achieve positive achievements [13], of perceived well-being [14] in particular neuroticism, extraversion and conscientiousness [15].

The COVID-19 pandemic, an unprecedented event affected most individuals. It is during these times of uncertainty and crisis that many creative individuals benefit from their ability to generate new ways to achieve work-life balance, staying healthy, and productive, with stronger resilience and better recovery from the pandemic. [16] Creativity is defined as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.[17]



Every small daily creative act addresses the lows and struggles as well as the uplifts and successes and hence influences the overall well-being rather than being a momentary 'feel good' tool. Everyone has an inert creative part of themselves, and they are sometimes blissfully unaware of this skill. If one delves into the routine of everyday life, there is a huge variety of creativity.

Creativity starts at home and should become engrained in every aspect of life, both at home and at work to achieve and maintain well-being. Cooking, baking, home decoration, gardening, fine arts such as sewing, crocheting, knitting, cross stitching, origami, candle making, basket making, weaving, photography, woodwork, pottery, sculpture, hairdressing, drawing, painting, and performing arts such as music, dance, theatre, poetry, creative writing, exercise, sports, yoga are few popular creative activities.

Creativity and well-being are popular subjects in psychological and organizational studies and there are mixed perspectives about the nature of the relationship between the two. While the crazy-genius hypothesis seems to imply a negative relationship between the two, trends in the field of creativity, such as everyday creativity and general psychology (i.e., positive psychology) linked them positively. The relationship between creativity and well-being was significantly higher when creativity was measured by instruments focusing on creative activity and behaviour ($r = 0.22$) than the divergent thinking tasks ($r = 0.06$). [18] It has also been demonstrated that there was improved physical and mental

health of individuals who write about their emotional experiences.[19]

Case studies

Creativity is known to reduce inhibition and can contribute to the changes in basic cognitive and linguistic processes whilst predicting better health Implications and is illustrated in the case studies given below.

The first case study is based on a project done at the Bradford-based arts company Kala Sangam. A group of women who had suffered various forms of abuse and severe depression were isolated and had no social interaction for many years. They only interacted with their silence and loneliness. A creative writer was commissioned to work with the group. Connecting and relating with the group was an uphill task as there was great resistance from the group to breaking their self-drawn boundaries. However, with patience, persistence and an unrelenting approach, these women responded by pouring their pain into poetry to create the most moving publication 'Unlocking Creativity' and performed for nearly 150 audiences in a theatre.

The second study proves that creativity is the basis of success amidst challenges. Stephen Wiltshire, diagnosed with autism, developed language skills related to his twin obsessions - drawing and buildings. Stephen was set the challenge by Channel Five for its documentary, 'Extraordinary People: The Human Camera'. Stephen memorised the appearance and position of hundreds of London's buildings on the exact scale during a helicopter ride along the Thames. After just one flight over the city and purely from memory, Stephen drew the seven-square mile panorama, including landmarks such as the Swiss Re tower, and Canary Wharf in fine detail! [20]

Creativity is the precious key which opens new chapter of life looking into the future.

References

- 1 Tan C-Y, Chuah C-Q, Lee S-T, *et al.* Being Creative Makes You Happier: The Positive

- Effect of Creativity on Subjective Well-Being. *Int J Environ Res Public Health.* 2021;18:7244.
- 2 Simonton DK. Taking the U.S. Patent Office Criteria Seriously: A Quantitative Three-Criterion Creativity Definition and Its Implications. *Creat Res J.* 2012;24:97–106.
- 3 Ford DY, Harris Iii JJ. The Elusive Definition of Creativity. *J Creat Behav.* 1992;26:186–98.
- 4 Lubart T, Zenasni F, Barbot B. Creative Potential and its Measurement.
- 5 McAleer JT, Bowler JL, Bowler MC, *et al.* Implicit and explicit creativity: Further evidence of the integrative model. *Personal Individ Differ.* 2020;154:109643.
- 6 Sordia N, Martskvishvili K, Neubauer A. From creative potential to creative achievements: Do emotional traits foster creativity? *Swiss J Psychol.* 2019;78:115–23.
- 7 Gosling SD, Rentfrow PJ, Swann WB. A very brief measure of the Big-Five personality domains. *J Res Personal.* 2003;37:504–28.
- 8 Global framework on core skills for life and work in the 21st century. 2021. http://www.ilo.org/skills/pubs/WCMS_813222/lang--en/index.htm (accessed 6 March 2024)
- 9 Bolwerk A, Mack-Andrick J, Lang FR, *et al.* How Art Changes Your Brain: Differential Effects of Visual Art Production and Cognitive Art Evaluation on Functional Brain Connectivity. *PLOS ONE.* 2014;9:e101035.
- 10 Diener E, Emmons RA, Larsen RJ, *et al.* The Satisfaction With Life Scale. *J Pers Assess.* 1985;49:71–5.
- 11 Turiano NA, Spiro A, Mroczek DK. Openness to experience and mortality in men: analysis of trait and facets. *J Aging Health.* 2012;24:654–72.
- 12 Storme M, Tavani J-L, Myszkowski N. Psychometric properties of the French Ten-Item Personality Inventory (TIPI). *J Individ Differ.* 2016;37:81–7.
- 13 Amabile TM, Barsade SG, Mueller JS, *et al.* Affect and Creativity at Work. *Adm Sci Q.* 2005;50:367–403.
- 14 Cohen S, Kamarck T, Mermelstein R. A global measure of perceived stress. *J Health Soc Behav.* 1983;24:385–96.

- 15 Anglim J, Horwood S, Smillie LD, *et al.* Predicting psychological and subjective well-being from personality: A meta-analysis. *Psychol Bull.* 2020;146:279–323.
- 16 Reizer A, Munk Y, Katz Frankfurter L. Laughing all the way to the lockdown: On humor, optimism, and well-being during COVID-19. *Personal Individ Differ.* 2022;184:111164.
- 17 What is the evidence on the role of the arts in improving health and well-being? A scoping review. <https://www.who.int/publications-detail-redirect/what-is-the-evidence-on-the-role-of-the-arts-in-improving-health-and-well-being-a-scoping-review> (accessed 6 March 2024)
- 18 Acar S, Tadik H, Myers D, *et al.* Creativity and Well-being: A Meta-analysis. *J Creat Behav.* 2021;55:738–51.
- 19 Francis ME, Pennebaker JW. Putting stress into words: the impact of writing on physiological, absentee, and self-reported emotional well-being measures. *Am J Health Promot AJHP.* 1992;6:280–7.
- 20 Cosslett RL, @rhiannonlucyc. 'This was my form of language': the artist who draws cities from memory. *The Guardian.* 2017. <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2017/may/04/artist-draws-cities-memory-stephen-wiltshire> (accessed 6 March 2024)