

## CREATIVITY IN FINE ART: THE ROLE OF CORE SELF-EVALUATION AND SOCIAL FEEDBACK

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### **Abstract**

*Creativity is the driving force in every society's fine arts domain. Understanding what it means to be creative and the antecedents of creativity in the fine arts domain is fundamental to students' relationship with their lives and the art-making process. The present study examined personality and social variables (core self-evaluation and social feedback) as scarcely explored variables that could explain the variation in creativity among fine arts students. Participants in the study included one hundred and thirteen ( $n = 113$ ) students enrolled in fine and applied art departments at tertiary institutions in River State, Nigeria. Self-report measures were used to obtain data. The data were subjected to a multiple linear regression analysis, which showed that CSE and social feedback significantly predicted creativity in fine arts. The result has implications for developing creativity in fine arts.*

**Keywords:** *creativity, fine arts, CSE, social feedback, students*

## INTRODUCTION

Over the years, arts have been acknowledged as a means of communicating ideas through symbolic artistic expression. The term reflects the diverse ways in which people can express themselves creatively. The domain of fine arts has focused on creative thinking processes, problem-solving, and innovation, while appreciation for and understanding art are essential components of the art-viewing experience. (Specker et al., 2020). Fine arts studies have always emphasized arts as expressing individual creativity and imagination through painting or sculpture while communicating helpful information. According to research, visual art is an integral part of people's lives that has a far more significant impact than they might anticipate (Naletelich & Paswan, 2018).

The field of fine arts is not about doing something better than others. It is about thinking, exploring, discovering, and imagining. Thus, it describes a human feature that compels more extensive cognitive, visual, and bodily input (Petcu et al., 2016). In many cultures, art is seen as a vehicle for conveying norms, values, and normative beliefs. It is a way to communicate nonverbally about feelings, thoughts, and outcomes. Art's value to individuals and communities has been the focus of countless studies. (Brezovnik, 2015; Foca, 2018; Haeyen et al., 2020; Lloyd, 2017; Marrino, 2018; McCathy et al., 2018; Morris et al., 2016; Pongarn et al., 2019; Radbourne et al., 2010; Sowden et al., 2015). Creating and appreciating art has been linked to enhancing cognitive and creative functioning, greater self- and cultural awareness, better learning and interpersonal outcomes, and enhanced well-being. It would be impossible to overstate the value of art school in strategically constructing cultural meanings in the conversation about the creative economy (Kasiyan, 2019). The importance of the arts in learning has been well demonstrated (Sajani et al., 2020), but less attention has been paid to the variations in artistic creativity.

Developing and managing artistic creativity is essential to the overall success of fine arts students. Observing, imaging, modeling, visualization, abstracting, pattern recognition, and pattern invention, analogizing, dimensional thinking, body or kinesthetic thinking, manual dexterity, tool familiarity, converting data into visual or graphical forms, converting theories into mechanical procedures, and understanding data and experiment are all examples of creative skills. Because it requires mental processing, manipulation, and imagery, artistic talents, and abilities are essential in obtaining innovative knowledge in the arts (Anuar et al., 2019). Fine arts students can integrate into society thanks to creativity. Creativity focuses on the process of forming original ideas through exploration and discovery. In fine arts, creativity develops from experiences with the process rather than concern for the finished product.

Creativity is one of the critical areas in gifted education (Eratay, 2017). The concept of artistic creativity describes the overall artist's enthusiasm embedded in their ability to formulate and fashion meaningful creative ideas. Creativity has been understood as products or processes (van der Schyff et al., 2018) that involve ideation, divergent and critical thought, and dynamic processes. In most contexts, creativity is linked to the concept of genius, thus regarding creativity as a fundamental human trait. However, current knowledge has suggested that creativity describes a process that results in some form of creative output that is original and useful and may combine ideas or materials in novel ways (Runco & Jaeger, 2012). Notably, van der Schyff et al. (2018) emphasized creativity as a product that can be nurtured rather than a divine or biological gift. Increasingly, it is explored in terms of complex processes that occur in given situations. Creativity studies have often investigated creativity in terms of thinking processes and problem-solving techniques (Griffith, 2021). Indeed, the present research associates creativity in the domain of fine arts with personality traits (like core self-evaluation) and social context (social feedback), thus, recognizing the concept of creativity in fine arts as a process.

### Core self-evaluation and creativity in fine arts

Core self-evaluations provide one way to conceptualize essential positive self-construal (Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2011). Core self-evaluation (CSE) represents individuals' actual appraisals of their self-worth and capabilities (Chang et al., 2012). It is conceptualized as a higher-order construct composed of broad and evaluative traits (e.g., self-esteem and generalized self-efficacy). It provides a framework through which individuals make a subjective cognitive appraisal. Core self-evaluation (CSE) has been proposed as an antecedent of creativity (Li et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2021; Y. Zhang et al., 2020). Drawing on the approach and avoidance framework in the core self-evaluation literature, Chiang et al. (2014) proposed that core self-evaluation may not only prompt a person to acquire more job-related knowledge but may also inspire intrinsic motivation and indirectly help an individual think of creative ideas in their field. Surveying time-lagged data from workers in Taiwanese firms, Chiang et al. (2014) found support for the mediating effects of core self-evaluation on creativity. The basic premise is that artists with high CSE are more likely to be skilled in creative production because they use positive resources from their environment. These persons are confident in their abilities and feel control over the events. In the artistic creation process, such a person positively performs tasks without significant stress.

*Hypothesis 1: Core self-evaluation will predict creativity in fine arts students.*

### Social feedback and creativity in fine arts

Social feedback is data that allows people to evaluate their effort and product. People in the social milieu providing input on the quality or significance of a work of art are social feedback. When it comes to motivating actions, feedback may have a variety of consequences (Burgers et al., 2015). As a result, a strategy for assisting artists in judging their artistic work might be based on the feedback supplied by onlookers. The social environment provides opportunities to evaluate and give feedback on people's work. Feedback is one of the most significant effects on learning and performance.

Extensive literature has established a link between feedback and motivation (Agricoliar et al., 2020; Bos et al., 2021; Fonge et al., 2019; Geister et al., 2006; Harackiwiz, 1979; Koenka et al., 2019; McIntyre et al., 2016; Teasley, 2017; Willbert et al., 2010; Zhang et al., 2020). However, the effect can be positive or negative (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Positive social feedback reinforces artists' motivation and enhances their artistic skills. Social feedback serves to correct mistakes and develop understanding through explanations, generate more learning by identifying further study tasks, and promote cognitive abilities. However, most artists are demotivated due to negative feedback from society, thus, relapsing their artistic creativity. Thus, the current study proposes a connection between social feedback and creativity in fine arts.

**Hypothesis:** *Social feedback will predict creativity in fine arts.*

**Method**

**Participants**

Students enrolled in fine and applied art in tertiary institutions in River State, Nigeria, constituted the study population. With the aid of research assistants and contact persons in the respective departments, fine and applied art students comprising males and females were approached between December 2022 and February 2023 and asked to participate in the study. The researcher explained the aim of the study to them and equally informed them that participation in the research is voluntary. After that, the study instrument was distributed to those who consented to participate. A total of 132 questionnaires were handed out to the respondents and were completed and retrieved. However, following the evaluation of the returned questionnaires, some (19) were improperly filled and discarded. Hence, only the adequately filled questionnaires (113) were used for the study

**Measure**

The CSE was measured with a 12-item questionnaire developed by (Judge et al., 2003). The scale contains items such as "I am confident I get the success I deserve in life" and "When I try, I generally succeed." Each item is rated on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The scale scores are the sum of the ratings of the items. Relevant items were reverse-coded. In the present study, the internal consistency was 0.79.

Perceived social feedback was measured using a developed Social Feedback Assessment Scale. The 10-item scale was developed to ascertain the participant's evaluation and acceptance of feedback from others. The Likert-type scale was validated after a pilot study, and a Cronbach alpha .78 reliability coefficient was obtained.

The artistic creativity was assessed using a self-developed Artistic creativity Scale. The scale measures students' confidence in their ability to formulate and create an artistic impression in their respective domains. The scale contains a five-point Likert-type scale measuring degrees of confidence, willingness, and enthusiasm. Higher scores indicate higher creativity. The Cronbach alpha .81 Coefficient was obtained in the scale.

**Result**

A cross-sectional design was employed. Data collected from the respondents were analyzed using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS. Version 23).

**Table 1:** multiple linear regression results.

	B	SEB	β	t	Sig
CSE	1.57	.067	.167	62.43	.000
Social Feedback	.175	.097	.174	52.79	.000
R <sup>2</sup>	422				

Note. CSE = Core self-evaluation; B = Unstandardized regression coefficient; SEB = Standardized error of the Coefficient; β = Standardized coefficient; R<sup>2</sup> = Coefficient of determination, ΔR = Adjusted R<sup>2</sup>. \*P>.05

The multiple linear regression analysis performed to examine the effect of CSE and social feedback on creativity among fine art students revealed that both variables (CSE, β=.167) and (social feedback, β=.174) significantly predicted creativity in fine arts, F (1, 111) = 6.231, p > 0.00. In particular, the result showed that CSE and social feedback accounted for about 42.2% of the variation in creativity among the respondents.

**Discussion**

The current study investigated the variation in the artistic creativity of fine art students based on core self-evaluation and social feedback. Specifically, the study intended to provide insight into how personality traits and comments, reviews, and suggestions from others might influence fine art students' creative skills. The current paper assumed that CSE and social feedback would significantly predict creativity in fine art students. The result showed that CSE (β =.167) significantly predicted creativity in fine arts. Although, studies on creative personality have revealed that the relationship between personality and creativity remains unclear. Various types of creative thinking have been associated with various personality traits (Pérez-Fabello & Campos, 2011). Assessing the influence of core self-evaluation on creativity in the context of fine arts students, in which the creative process plays a key role, the present results revealed a significantly positive influence of CSE on creativity. This means that fine arts students scoring high on CSE are more likely to perform

better in creative imagination and creative experiences. In contrast, low scores in CSE might be inversely related to creative imagination and creative experiences. The result corroborates previous findings (Li et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2020). Thus the result validates the first assumption of the study ( $H^1$ ).

Furthermore, the result revealed a statistically significant effect of social feedback on creativity in fine arts. In other words, the second assumption of the study ( $H^2$ ) was confirmed ( $\beta=.174$ ). This finding corroborates previous literature linking feedback to motivation (Bohdick et al., 2020; Eckner et al., 2011; Kaymaz, 2011; Ling & Law, 2019; Tricomi & DePasque, 2016). This present knowledge could be explained by understanding that the social environment's reviews, comments, and overall perception are essential for creating artistic concepts. If people within the social background do not appreciate the work of art, the idea could relapse. To this effect, social feedback becomes a critical determinant of artistic creativity.

### Conclusion

The present study aimed to assess students' artistic creativity variance based on CSE and social feedback. The analysis conducted on the data confirmed the study's hypothesis that CSE and social feedback significantly influence creativity in fine arts. Thus, the paper concludes that CSE and social feedback are essential variables in fine art students' artistic creativity. However, caution is advised in generalizing the outcome of this study because the data was based solely on a self-report measure which poses a research limitation. A multiple data collection approach is required to gain a comprehensive insight into the phenomenon. Also, the study sample size may not reflect a reliable criterion for generalization. Thus, a more comprehensive sample might provide a robust ground for inference. However, the present study contributed to the creativity literature by revealing CSE and social feedback as positive predictors of artistic creativity. Also, the study finding provides relevant data to researchers in art and creativity. Hence, future researchers should increase interest in personality traits and social variables to improve artistic creativity among Nigerian art students.

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