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SEX DIFFERENCES ON MENTAL HEALTH AMONG CREATIVE ARTISTS

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ABSTRACT

The study examine whether there is any difference between male and female creative artists on mental health. A sample of 181 male and 115 female creative artists within the age group 20-60 was randomly selected from different fields of art in Kerala. The tools namely mental health status scale and personal data schedule was used for the data collection.The tools were administered and scored according to the instructions given in the manual. The collected data was analysed using SPSS. The result indicates that the female creative artists have high mental health as compared to male creative artists and is significantly different at .01 levels.

Introduction

Art is an expression of life, which means it expresses emotions. Creative artist is a person who uses their creativity to produce works of art, music, literature or other forms of expression that are 8ntended to evoke emotion or thought in an audience. Creative artists may work in variety of fields, including visual arts (such as painting, sculpture etc), performing arts (such as music, dance etc) and literary arts (such as writing and poetry).They often draw upon their own experiences, emotions and imagination to create their work. They may use a variety of techniques and mediums to bring their ideas to life, and may work independently or collaborate with others.

Creative artists translate their internal thought via an external channel and become available in the world to see and learn from. They spend a lot of time and may create their master piece works which fill the life with joy and give it the sense of completeness and that may affect their mental health. Hence the mental health of artists has been a subject of research and concern for many years. While many people view the creative process as a positive outlet for emotions and self-expression, artists may also face unique challenges and stressors that can

impact their mental health. Artists particularly in the field of music and visual arts are at an increased risk for mental health issues such as depression, anxiety and substance abuse. The creative process itself can be emotionally taxing and may involve grappling with difficult or uncomfortable emotions and experiences. This can be particularly challenging for artists who may feel a need to constantly produce new and innovative work. The importance of gender in creativity has been explored to determine not only if males and females differ in terms of creative ability but also that may influence their mental health. The creative artists have difference in their mental health.

Mental Health is the full and harmonious functioning of the whole personality. The full expression and co-ordination of all these functions are necessary to a healthy life. Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices. Mentally healthy people are characterized by a positive state of well being. They have attained a high degree of personal adjustment as reflected in their daily lives.

Jahoda (1958) gives 6 aspects of mental health, like:

1) Attitude towards self- Knowledge of self, self acceptance, self concept etc.
2) Self actualization-Utilizing one's abilities
3) Integration-Unifying outlook on life and resistance to change
4) Autonomy-Self reliance in decision making

   Relatively independence of physical and social environment
5) Perception of reality-Free from need distortion there.
6) Environmental mastery-Ability to love, work and play, adequacy in interpersonal

   relations efficiency in solving problems.

There can be sex differences in mental health. For a positive life style mental health is necessary. The study intends to understand the male female differences of creative artists on mental health.

Need and Significance of the study

Creative process can be emotionally intense and artists may be more likely to experience intense emotional highs and lows than others. While creating art can be rewarding and fulfilling experience, it can also be emotionally challenging and can sometimes take a role on an artist's mental well being. Additionally, they may face unique stressors such as financial insecurity, rejection, social isolation which can contribute to the poor mental health. However, it's important to note that not all artist experience mental health issues and that many are able to find ways to manage their emotions and create meaningful work without experiencing negative consequences. It is important for artists to prioritize their mental health and seek support when needed. By taking care of themselves,

artists can continue to create meaningful and impactful work while also prioritizing their own well being. One of the most consistent stereotypes is that women are so emotional and they cannot make rational decisions or handle crises and top level responsibilities. It had a belief that women were unable to think like men and they seem to be not much successful like men in creative field. Both men and women tend to experience significant differences even when they are in a creative world and the causes of these differences are probably both innate and cultural. Emotional intelligent women on average appear to experience deeper, richer and more expressive emotional lives, according to Daniel Goleman. However, it is important to note the complex relationship between gender, artistic creativity and mental health and to develop effective interventions and supports for artists who may be struggling with mental health challenges.

Here a study on sex difference open a thought that the mental health favours male or female while considering the creative artists.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To compare the mental health of male and female creative artists.

  On the basis of the objective the following hypothesis are formulated

HYPOTHESIS

There will be significant difference between male and female creative artists on mental health and its sub components

METHOD

PARTICIPANTS

The sample (N= 296) consists of female creative artists (n=181) and male creative artists (n=115) students, randomly chosen from the various colleges. The age range is between 20-50 years.

MEASURES

Mental health status scale developed by Gireesan and Sam Sananda Raj (1988), was used for the investigation. The scale also measures the six aspects or components.

DESCRIPTION OF SUB SCALES

1) ATTITUDE TOWARD SELF

The sub scale measures various aspects of attitudes of an individual towards the self. The three major aspects of this variable are self-acceptance, self-confidence and self-reliance.

Knowledge of self, self acceptance, self concept etc.

SELF ACCEPTANCE: implies that a person has learned to live with himself, accepting both the limitations and possibilities he may find in himself.

SELF CONFIDENCE: Expresses the judgment that balances the self as good, capable and strong.

SELF RELIANCE: Carries the connotation of self confidence and in addition of independence from others and of initiative within. The content of the scale consists of tarits, motives, feelings, interests or natures.

2) SELF ACTUALIZATION

Utilizing one's abilities

The sub scale measure the individual's ability to utilize his potentialities and his orientation toward the future. Maslow observes self actualizing people in general focus on problems outside themselves and they have feeling for mankind, a genuine desire to help the human race, they are capable of deeper and more profound interpersonal relations than any other values. They are strongly ethical and have desired moral standards. A self actualizing individual has the capacity to evoke empathetic, warm and compassionate responses from others. Self actualization means the fullest, most fullest most complete differentiation and harmonious blending of all aspects of man's total personality.

3) INTEGRATION

Unifying outlook on life and resistance to change**.**

The unifying photocopy of life results in the individuals feeling that there is purpose, and meaning of his life. Balance of ego, super ego, and id or of unconscious, preconscious and conscious psychic events are treated as a criterion of mental health status**.**

4) AUTONOMY

Self reliance in decision making

Relatively independence of physical and social environments.

5) PERCEPTION OF REALITY

Free from need distortion

The way an individual perceives the world around him. The perception of reality is called mentally healthy when what an individual sees corresponds to what is actually there.

6) ENVIRONMENTAL MASTERY

Ability to love, work and play, adequacy in interpersonal relations efficiency in solving problems.

PSYCHOMETRIC PROPERTIES

This scale is reported to have the split half reliability and has fairly good validity.

Result and Discussion

Table 1

Difference between the mental health of male and female creative artists

** Significant at .01 levels

Variable	Category	N	mean	SD	t value	Significance
Attitude towards self	Male	181	41.36	5.072	.124	.902
	Female	115	41.29	4.777		
Self actualization	Male	181	43.72	6.274	.332	. .740
	Female	115	43.50	5.034		
integration	Male	181	41.18	5.179	1.745	. 082
	Female	115	42.20	4.741		
autonomy	Male	181	39.43	5.744	1.156	.248
	Female	115	40.13	4.595		
Perception or reality	Male	181	40.24	6.281	4.138**	.000
	Female	115	43.03	5.243		
Environmental mastery	Male	181	39.08	5.337	2.783**	.006
	Female	115	40.83	5.225		
Overall mental health	Male	181	244.38	18.529	3.053**	.003
	Female	115	250.99	17.911		

The mean and the standard deviation scores obtained by the male creative artists and female creative artists on mental health and its different components are shown in table 1.It can be observed that significant difference exists between the sex groups on variables overall mental health and its sub components namely perception of reality and environmental mastery only.

The mean obtained for mental health score for male and female creative artists for the overall mental health is found to be M = 244.38 with SD = 18.529 and M = 250.99 with SD = 17.911 respectively. The t value obtained is found to be t = -3.053 which is significant at 0.01 levels. For the sub components of mental health namely perception of reality the mean value and SD obtained is found to be M = 40.24, SD = 6.281 for male creative artists and M = 43.03, SD = 5.243 for female creative artists. The t value obtained is found to be 4.318 which are significant at .01 levels. While considering the sub component of mental health namely environmental mastery there exists

significant difference at .01 levels. The mean value and SD obtained is found to be *M* = 39.08, *SD* = 5.337; for male creative artists and *M* = 40.83, *SD* = 5.225 for female creative artists. The t value obtained is found to be t = -2.783.

No significant difference was observed between male and female creative artists for the other sub variables of mental health viz . , attitude towards self, self actualization, integration and autonomy. The mean value and SD obtained for the male creative artists for the variable attitude towards self is found to be M = 41.36, *SD* = 5.072 and that for female creative artists is M = 41.29, *SD* = 4.777. The t value obtained is .124. For the variable self actualization the mean, SD and t value obtained is found to be *M = 43.72, SD = 6.274* for male creative artists and *M =43.50, SD=5.034* for female creative artists. The t value obtained is found to be *.332* which is found to be not significant. Integration, another mental health component shows no significant difference on male and female creative artists. The mean value and SD obtained for male creative artists is found to be *M =41.18, SD =5.179* and for female creative artists it is *M =42.20, SD=4.741* in which the t value is found to be t =1.745. For the variable autonomy the mean value and SD is found to be *M= 39.43, SD=5.744* for male creative artists and *M = 40.13, SD = 4.595* for female creative artists .The t value obtained is found to be t = 1.156 which indicate no significant differences.

Art seems to be favored for better mental health. Large number of studies come up with the evidence that gender based difference contributed significantly to the mental health issues and which is found to be higher among females (WHO, 2002). But here the result revealed that female creative artists perceive better functioning in their mental health and its components Perception of reality and environmental mastery than male artists.

According to WHO (2020) 2 among 5 people are experiencing mood, anxiety , substance abuse disorders and they need assistance during the onset of the disorder. Gender is considered as a crucial determinant of mental health. Ball (2013) in his research study on gender differences of mental health reported that women show 40% of high mental illness than men and they are likely to have depression and anxiety. Another study by Freeman (2013) reported that approximately 75 % of women are reported to have depression and 60 % of them have anxiety where that of men were likely to have substance abuse more. Hence the majority of studies quoted women are high in mental issues .But interestingly in this study it can be noted that the female creative artists have higher mental health than male creative artists. It may be because of the role differences that they are playing in the society as artists or the passion for their creative art (performance and visual) would make changes in their life which improve their overall mental health. Opportunities seem to be high for women artists in present scenario. Hence they may try to overcome the stress, anxiety and other mental tension by managing them in a creative way. Even though they are shouldering the burden of multiple roles, they are growing in the society with their creative talents which makes them productive and which leads to successful life. In contrast to the female artists, most of the male artists spend their time out of the house which may cause disturbance in their personal relationships. It is supposed that the involvement in creative works is higher for men than women. They prefer to be do tasks alone and are not much interested in seeking support from others. Hence the internal conflicts affects more than that of female artists which

in turn affect their mental health. A study by Winter (1996) in his multivariate analysis also supported the results that male artists seems to have higher risk for suicide than females and the logistic regression analysis indicated that compared to non artists the artists have higher risk of suicide. Also a profession wise study conducted by Olivia Rudgard (2017) noted that those who are working in the creative profession have lower mental health and in which the male artists committed suicide twice than females. The studies supported the results of lower mental health among male artists which may be because of the fact that lack of dealing of relationships and commitment towards others which makes others to not create an intimate space for them.

Similarly, the components of mental health viz., perception of reality and environmental mastery of the female artists are found to be higher than the male artists. However, the female artists are more able to accept their mistakes than male artists. Their perceptions are free from need distortion and they are socially sensitive compared to the male artists. The female creative artists projected practical intelligence in analyzing different conflicts and hence they perceived things in a right way. Moreover, the distorted perception of the male artist may be a reason for their low mental health. The impulsivity in the behavior of the male artists made them to behave in such a manner. In the case of environmental mastery also female artists seems to be better than male artists for solving problems and to meet the situational requirements. Female creative artists are more adjusted and adaptive to the surrounding they live in it may be because they found their creative life as rewarding one instead of the other roles they are playing which resulted in higher mental health. The male artist cannot balance the conflicting needs challenging in the environment and also shows difficulties in managing everyday affairs which affect their mental health badly.

Finally both male and female artists' exhibits similar characteristics when it came to the other components of mental health viz., attitude towards self, self actualization, integration and autonomy. This can be interpreted to mean that both male and female artists accept their strength and weaknesses in the same level. A recent study conducted by Matud, Lopez and Fortes (2019) on gender and psychological well being reported that men scored higher than female counter parts on self acceptance and autonomy. Also women scored higher than male counterparts in personal growth and positive relations. The result is contrary on creative artists. A singer belongs to the music family want to sing, he sings. A poet must write, a dancer must dance, a painter must draw .All these bring peace to them and what they can be, and they must be ie. self actualization. The man's desire to reach fulfillment by their potential. The self actualizers have a mission in their life beyond themselves for the better upliftment of the society. In the case of male and female artists the prestige, power and freedom they achieved are found to have no difference. Being in to the creative fields of achievements both artists may give importance to their self satisfaction obtained by the creative works. Hence the self actualization remains no difference. Both category of self actualizers resist the social, cultural and political pressures and think and behave according to their own thought.

Finally the integration and autonomy on female and male artists also remains same. i e . , both of them show similar involvement in balancing the psychic forces and they seems to be not differ in handling mild level of anxiety and stress. The stability of self remains same in both male and female artists. The state of independency, self determination and confidence also remains same.

Summary and Conclusion

Female creative artists are high in mental health and it can be concluded that the state of independency, confidence and the artistic work they preferred improved the mental health.

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