



UK Creativity Researchers 2025 Conference

Creativity: The Dark Side and More

4th June, 2025 · 13:00 - 16:00 BST · Online

About

UK Creativity Researchers is a collaborative community open to anyone with an interest in the psychology of creativity. We are a network that facilitates the organisation of annual creativity conferences, to bring together researchers, practitioners, academics, students, and any other interested parties.

The conferences are not-for-profit events organised by volunteer committee, one of whom normally hosts at their home institution, see our website for more information. We aim to keep our registration fees low, to be as inclusive as possible, and put all fees back into the costs of the conference events.

UK Creativity Researchers was founded by Dr Lindsey Carruthers at Edinburgh Napier University, Dr Gill Hill at University of Buckingham, and Dr Shelly Kemp at King's College London.

<https://creativityresearchers.co.uk>

Agenda

Welcome	
Opening remarks	04
Keynote Address	
Hansika Kapoor, PhD <i>A Spotlight on Dark Creativity</i>	06
Short Talks	
Sarah Rezaei <i>Development and Behavioral Validation of the Dark Creativity Deception Battery (DCDB)</i>	08
Melissa McMullan <i>A Spotlight On Creativity: Narcissism and The Performing Arts</i>	09
Manuel Santos <i>Developing creative coaching practice through Action Research: Why and how context matters</i>	10
Edith Haim <i>Forma mentis networks predict creativity ratings of short texts via interpretable artificial intelligence in human and GPT-simulated raters</i>	11
Poster Presentations	
Session 1	13
Session 2	26

Creativity: The Dark Side and More

This year's theme incorporates Dark Creativity, leading from our keynote address. This can include a wide variety of methods and topics, and we welcomed abstract submissions from all creativity researchers/practitioners.

Keynote Address

Keynote Address

A Spotlight on Dark Creativity

The implicit assumption that creativity is meant for good and benevolent deeds is currently being challenged. In this talk, I will outline my work on dark creativity, stylistically understood as how people get good ideas to do bad things. In general, features of the person (like moral flexibility) and situation (ill-defined instructions) interact within a certain zeitgeist to yield dark creative acts. Through the AMORAL model of dark creativity (Kapoor & Kaufman, 2022), I will describe the components of such acts at the individual, societal, and broader cultural levels, as well as their immediate and long term consequences. I will also illustrate the emergence of dark creativity across multiple domains (e.g., public policy, misinformation, artificial intelligence) to make a case for its future investigation in diverse settings.



Hansika Kapoor, PhD

Monk Prayogshala

✉ hk@monkprayogshala.in

🌐 <https://www.hansikakapoor.in/>

Dr. Hansika Kapoor is a Research Author at the Department of Psychology, Monk Prayogshala, Mumbai, India. She holds a PhD from IIT, Bombay in the area of dark creativity aka how people get good ideas to do bad things. She is the recipient of the Fulbright-Nehru Post-Doctoral Research Fellowship (2019-2020) and is an Affiliate at the University of Connecticut.

Short Talks

Short Talk

Development and Behavioral Validation of the Dark Creativity Deception Battery (DCDB)



Dark creativity

Personality traits

Deceptive behavior

Moral foundations

Creative deception assessment

Our study presents the development and validation of the Dark Creativity Deception Battery (DCDB), a novel behavioral assessment that captures creative deception across three motivational contexts: prosocial, self-serving, and antisocial. Participants (N = 755) from India, the United States, and Austria generated deceptive responses to scenario-based tasks. These responses were rated on dimensions of creativity, moral valence, goal-directedness, deception, virtue caveat, fluency, and flexibility. Multiple hierarchical regressions revealed distinct predictors for creative deception across contexts. Prosocial creativity was predicted by being younger, lower moral disengagement, and greater negative affect, whereas creativity on self-serving and antisocial situations were driven by higher trait deceptiveness and lower income. Moral justifiability of deception was paradoxically predicted by higher psychopathy (in self-serving situations) and lower individualizing moral foundations (in antisocial situations). Deception use itself was highest in antisocial and self-serving conditions and associated with high sadism, lower creative self-efficacy, and mixed moral foundation patterns—particularly higher individualizing and binding foundations (self-serving) and higher individualizing foundations (antisocial). Notably, individuals with strong moral values (individualizing foundations) also engaged in antisocial deception. Fluency and flexibility were influenced by higher malevolent creativity, lower positive affect, and dark personality traits. Virtue caveat (refusing to use deception) was most common in antisocial contexts. The DCDB offers a reliable, ecologically valid tool to assess creative deception and brings to light the nuanced ways in which morality, personality, and motivation interact in deceptive behavior. These findings have implications for ethics training, personality assessment, and applied research in fields where strategic deception is common.

*Hansika Kapoor **Sarah Rezaei**, Apoorva Thakur, T. Roy, Corinna Perchtold-Stephans, James C. Kaufman*

Monk Prayogshala · sr@monkprayogshala.in

Short Talk

A Spotlight On Creativity: Narcissism and The Performing Arts



Creativity

Narcissism

Self-Efficacy

Performing arts

Motivation

The performing arts has recently become an area of interest in psychology; however, this research remains limited in exploring relationships and potential predictions of personality and motivational factors for involvement or achievement in these arts. This research aimed to investigate whether achievement and involvement in the performing arts is related to and predicted by: grandiose narcissism, which may relate to the performing arts through the desire to be admired and a tendency towards interpersonal competition; vulnerable narcissism, possibly observed in performing artists through difficulty with rejection and an exaggerated focus on the self; intrinsic motivation, the performing artists choice to be involved in this career for personal enjoyment, extrinsic motivation; a desire for external reward such as money or fame, and creative self-efficacy, as musicians, dancers or actors must believe in their personal creative abilities to choose to be involved in their art.

This quantitative survey project used convenience sampling online using social media and to theatres (N = 129). The results found creative self-efficacy positively predicted involvement in music, dance, and acting and achievement in music and acting. Grandiose narcissism positively predicted involvement in music and acting and vulnerable narcissism negatively predicted involvement in acting. Overall, this study provides novel contributions to research in the arts and psychology, as it provides evidence for performing artists as creative suggesting that performing artists value their creative abilities. As well as, outlining the presence of personality traits related to narcissism within the performing arts which have not been explored in this context.

Melissa McMullan

Edinburgh Napier Univeristy · melissa.mcmullan@napier.ac.uk

Short Talk

Developing creative coaching practice through Action Research: Why and how context matters



Creativity

Coaching

Creativity has become a key focus across various fields, including sports coaching, where attention has turned toward fostering athlete creativity (e.g.: Santos & Morgan, 2019). Yet, very little attention has been brought to developing coaches' creativity. In line with such trend, the aim of this project was to develop coaches' professional creativity through an action research (AR) design, as an attempt to develop sports coaches' knowledge and practice.

Each cycle began with a focus group (FG) exploring creativity adjacent concepts — such as the propulsion model of creativity (Sternberg et al., 2003). Coaches were then observed, interviewed, and brought back for further FGs with the purpose of reflecting on their practice and learning, and introducing new concepts that can inform their practice. Four head coaches from different sports were recruited based on their enthusiasm for creative thinking and their capacity to implement change in their roles.

Despite initial enthusiasm, coaches encountered challenges embedding creative ideas in their practice. Many misunderstood creativity, viewing it as oppositional or incompatible with their context. This feeling often stemmed from a perceived lack of agency to bring change to practice. Findings highlight the importance of appreciating contextual dynamics and fostering a nuanced understanding of creativity in coaching. Ultimately, coaches must be equipped to navigate the complex social, political, and interactional landscapes of sport to meaningfully engage with creative practice.

Dr Manuel Santos, Prof Robyn L. Jones, Prof Kevin Morgan

Cardiff Metropolitan University · mdsantos@cardiffmet.ac.uk

Short Talk

Forma mentis networks predict creativity ratings of short texts via interpretable artificial intelligence in human and GPT-simulated raters



Creativity

Short stories

Machine learning

AI narrative creativity

Semantic networks

Creativity is a fundamental skill of human cognition. We use textual forma mentis networks (TFMN) to extract network (semantic/syntactic associations) and emotional features from approximately one thousand human- and GPT3.5-generated stories. Using Explainable Artificial Intelligence (XAI) we test whether features relative to Mednick's associative theory of creativity can explain creativity ratings assigned by humans and GPT-3.5. Using XGBoost, we examine 3 scenarios: (i) human ratings of human stories, (ii) GPT-3.5 ratings of human stories, and (iii) GPT-3.5 ratings of GPT-generated stories.

Our findings reveal that GPT-3.5 ratings differ significantly from human ratings not only in terms of correlations but also because of feature patterns identified with XAI methods. GPT-3.5 favours "its own" stories and rates human stories differently from humans. Feature importance analysis with SHAP scores shows that: (i) network features are more predictive for human creativity ratings but also for GPT-3.5's ratings of human stories; (ii) emotional features played a greater role than semantic/syntactic network structure in GPT-3.5 rating its own stories. These quantitative results underscore key limitations in GPT-3.5's ability to align with human assessments of creativity. We emphasise the need for caution when using GPT-3.5 to assess and generate creative content, as it does not yet capture the nuanced complexity that characterises human creativity.

Edith Haim, Natalie Fischer, Salvatore Citraro, Giulio Rossetti and Massimo Stella

Trento University · edith.haim@unitn.it

Poster Presentations

Session 1

Poster Presentations

Sarah Rezaei

Sentencing, Harm, and Severity: Do perceptions differ based on the creativity in a crime?

Nicholas LeBoutillier

Exploring Creativity: The Impact of Light and Dark Triads on Performance-Based Measures of Creativity

Lydia Perryman

'With Malicious Intent' – When Creativity, Risktaking and Unethical Strategies Emerge As Criminally Motivated Behaviour

Hyechin Kong

Emergence of Collective Intelligence Through the Disruption of Microbial Behavior: Does Homeostatic Breakdown Trigger Systemic Reorganization for Creative Problem Solving?

Elena Botts

Nothingness as Practice

Nicholas LeBoutillier

Creativity and the critical positivity ratio

Poster

Sentencing, Harm, and Severity: Do perceptions differ based on the creativity in a crime?

Creative crime

Moral valence

Sentencing perceptions

Dark personality traits

Cross-cultural justice

Drawing on the AMORAL model of dark creativity (Kapoor & Kaufman., 2022), our study examines how laypeople judge crimes varying in creativity (creative vs. non-creative) and moral valence (evil, sinful, self-interested, ambiguous). Participants from India and the United States will evaluate robbery and theft scenarios differing along these two dimensions and provide ratings of perceived severity, perceived harm, sentencing, and rehabilitation. Other variables like the Dark Tetrad personality traits, moral foundations, creative self-efficacy, and legal knowledge will also be assessed to explore their influence on crime perception.

Using a 2x4 within-subjects design and cross-cultural comparisons, the study seeks to answer: (1) whether creative crimes are judged less harshly than non-creative crimes of similar moral valence; (2) how cultural context modulates these perceptions; and (3) what factors predict judgments of severity and rehabilitation. Our pre-registered study aims to explore the relationship between creativity, morality, and justice by combining legal, psychological, and cultural perspectives. Our findings may contribute to both theoretical models of dark creativity and practical insights into public attitudes toward justice, punishment, and reform.

Sarah Rezaei

Monk Prayogshala · sr@monkprayogshala.in

Sentencing, Harm, and Severity: Do perceptions differ based on the creativity in a crime?

Hansika Kapoor, Sarah Rezaei, Apoorva Thakur,
Mrinmayee Wadke, James C Kaufman

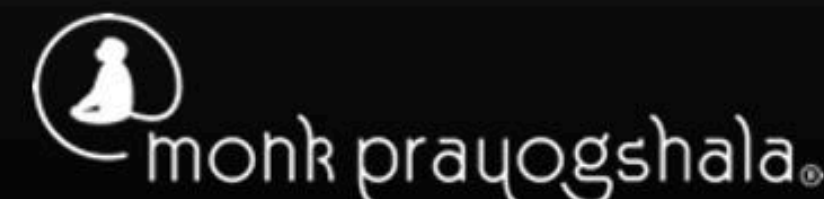
BACKGROUND

- Perceptions of crime severity and harm depend on context, especially when crimes are creative or unconventional, as they may seem intelligent or morally ambiguous (Ashby, 2018; Rodriguez & Blanco, 2016; A. Cropley & Cropley, 2011, Gamman et al., 2010).
- The AMORAL model explains how creativity and morality interact in shaping these perceptions, which vary with moral valence (Kapoor et al., 2022).
- Dark Tetrad traits are linked to both creative achievement and lawbreaking, suggesting creative crimes may evoke admiration similar to artistic work (Gamman et al., 2010).
- Crime context, legal beliefs, moral frameworks, and sociocultural context also shapes judgements related to appropriate punishments (Adriaenssen et al., 2019; Piquero et al., 2012).

OBJECTIVES

- Understand how people perceive the severity, harm, rehabilitation, and sentencing of crimes like robbery and theft based on creativity and moral valence.
- Explore the relationship between crime perceptions, Dark Tetrad traits, legal knowledge, and moral foundations across different crime types.
- Assess how various factors influence views on crime severity, harm, sentencing, and rehabilitation.
- Compare Indian and American cultural differences in perceptions of creative crime.

CAN CREATIVITY OF A CRIME TIP THE SCALES OF JUSTICE?



METHOD & DESIGN

The study uses a 2 x 4 within-subjects design with:

1. Creativity of the crime (creative vs non-creative)
2. Moral valence of the crime (evil, sinful, self-interested, ambiguous)

Each participant will evaluate 4 out of 8 crimes, one from each valence. Two of these will be creative and two non creative.

PROPOSED ANALYSIS

- We will compute descriptive statistics and scale reliabilities.
- ANOVAs and MANOVAs will test group differences across crime types and moral valence categories.
- Hierarchical regressions will assess predictors of severity, harmfulness, sentencing, and rehabilitation, entering demographics, Dark Tetrad personality traits, moral foundations, creative self-efficacy, legal knowledge, crime creativity, moral valence and the interaction between crime creativity and moral valence.

APPLICATIONS

- Understanding how laypeople judge crime severity can guide how governments/media frame crimes to the public.
- Shifting the focus in crime narratives to prioritize the harmful impact of the offense over the creativity of the modus operandi.
- Raising awareness among judicial decision-makers about how creative characteristics of offenders can influence sentencing, rehabilitation outcomes.

Poster

Exploring Creativity: The Impact of Light and Dark Triads on Performance-Based Measures of Creativity

Creativity

Dark triad

Light triad

The study aimed to investigate the relationships between performance-based measures of creativity and the Light and Dark Triads, and to assess whether individuals in high and low quartiles performed differently on these tasks. A total of 254 participants took part in the correlational study, revealing two significant small negative Pearson r associations between the Dark Triad and the Alternative Uses Task (AUT) scores.

Further investigation, utilizing an independent groups quasi-experimental quartile-split design, found that participants scoring low on the Dark Triad ($N = 109$) produced significantly more AUT responses than those scoring high on this measure. Additionally, participants scoring high on the Light Triad ($N = 88$) achieved significantly higher originality scores on the AUT measures. Both findings indicated medium-sized effects. These results are discussed in the context of previous research on the link between the Dark and Light Triads and creativity.

Nicholas LeBoutillier

Middlesex University · nicholas3@mdx.ac.uk

Poster: Creativity and The Critical Positivity Ratio

Introduction: This study utilized Fredricksen and Losada’s (2005) critical positivity ratio to classify individuals' psychological states as one of, Depressed, Languishing, or Flourishing (utilizing discrete categories from the Positive and Negative Affect Scale), and examined their performance on creativity tasks. It is hypothesised that the Depressed group < Languishing group < Flourishing group.

Method: Three-hundred and fifty-nine volunteers in the North London region took part in the study. The study employed a quasi-experimental multivariate design whereby the independent variable was the three discrete groupings derived from PANAS (Watson, Clark & Tellegen, 1988). The three dependent variables were derived from two tests of creative thinking. One was from the Remote Associates Task (RAT; Mednick, 1962) and two were from the Alternative Uses Task (AUT: Guilford, 1967).

Results: Following non-significant Levene’s tests (based upon the median) a MANOVA was conducted. The Hotelling’s trace showed an overall multivariant significant difference (F (6,610) = 2.945, p = .014. $\eta_p^2 = .028$). Univariate analyses are presented below:

RAT variable (F (2,308) = 2.75, p = .065. $\eta_p^2 = .018$).

AUT Total variable (F (2,308) = 6.54, p = .002. $\eta_p^2 = .041$). Bonferroni Depressed < Languishing; Depressed < Flourishing

AUT Originality (F (2,308) = 3.15, p = .044. $\eta_p^2 = .020$). Bonferroni Depressed < Flourishing

Discussion: This report initially confirmed the overall hypothesis that the three positive-to-negative categories predicted differences in overall creative performance response. This study highlights the importance of the positive-to-negative-affect ratio in enhancing creativity. The findings contribute to our understanding of the complex relationship between mental health and creative performance.

References

Frederickson, B. L., & Losada, M. F. (2005). Positive affect and the complex dynamics of human flourishing. *The American Psychologist*, 60(7), 678–686.

Guilford, J.P. (1967). *The nature of human intelligence*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Mednick, S. (1962). The associative basis of the creative process. *Psychological Review*, 69, 220-232. doi: 10.1037/h0048850

Watson, D., Clark, L. A., & Tellegen, A. (1988). Development and validation of brief measures of positive and negative affect: the PANAS scales. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 54(6), 1063.

Figure 1. Mean RAT and 95% Confidence Intervals by Mental Health Continuum Scores

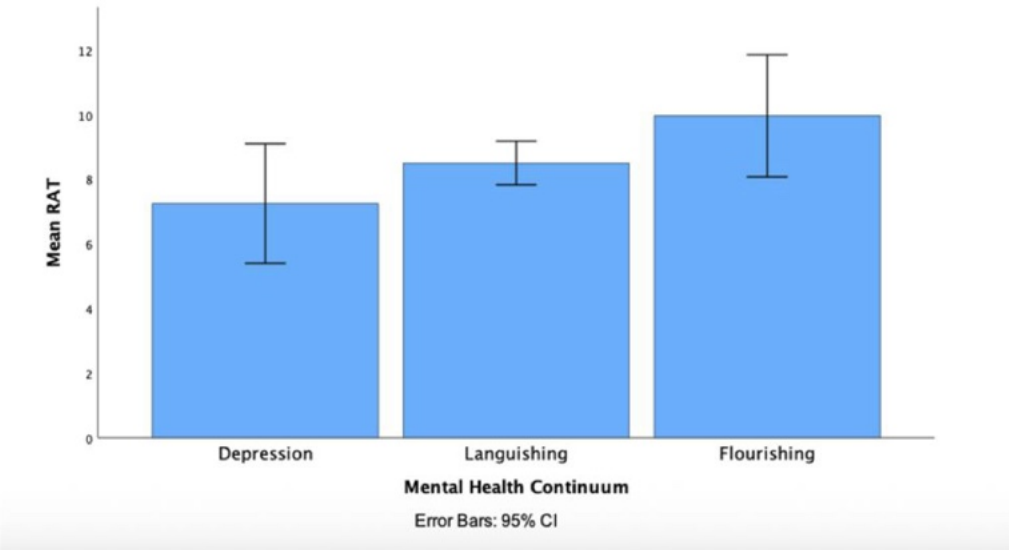


Figure 2. Mean AUT Total and 95% Confidence Intervals by Mental Health Continuum Scores

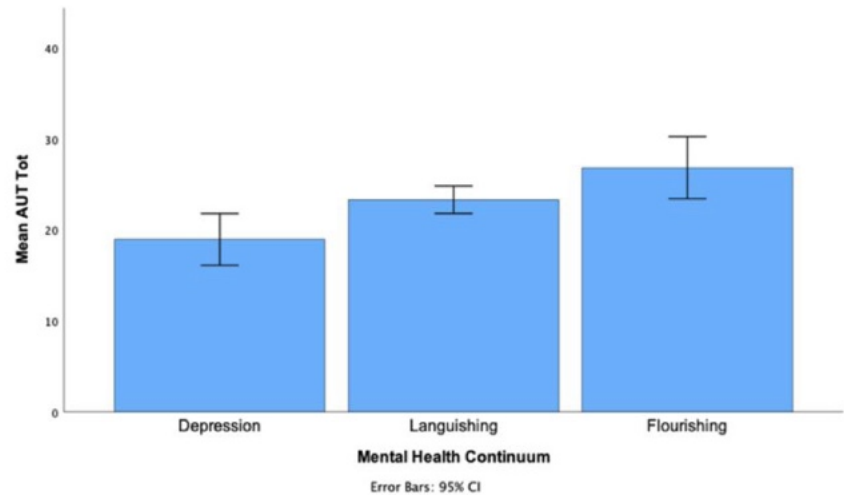
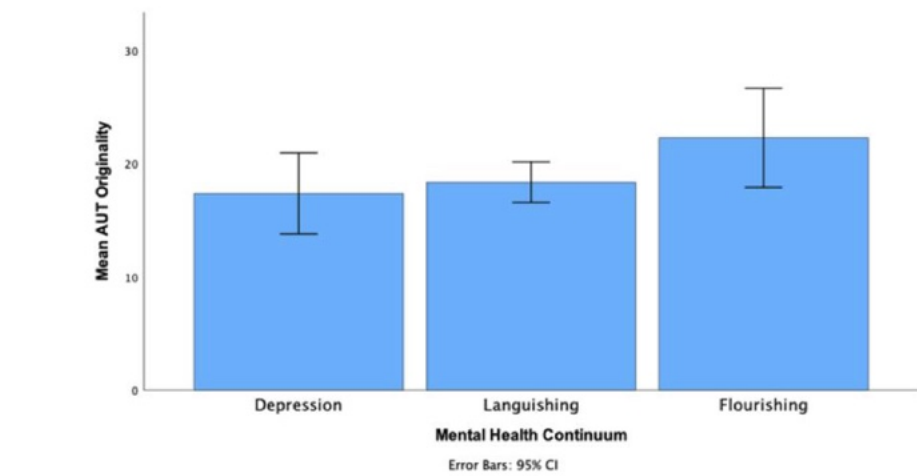


Figure 3. Mean AUT Originality and 95% Confidence Intervals by Mental Health Continuum Scores



Poster

‘With Malicious Intent’ – When Creativity, Risktaking and Unethical Strategies Emerge As Criminally Motivated Behaviour

Creativity

Policing

Emerging strategies

Complexity

Ethics

Dark Creativity here is a focus on heavy handed Policing bordering on the criminal and their involvement with a LL's intent on getting their own way. Police assisted the Landlord's in a 'back door' eviction of a longstanding Tenant, following the LL's claims that the Tenant was running a Prostitution racket. Ironically the Officer's own 'moralising' led to them making highly unethical, illegal decisions mirroring the LL's attempts at ruining the Tenant's good character. The Tenant was held in custody for hours without reasonable grounds for arrest, and apparently no rights at all as a victim, before being summarily evicted. The Police had been selective in what they noticed, and systematic in their attempts to cause carnage, maliciously misrepresenting the Tenant in person and online. Crucially, in an attempt to protect them the Police did not report the Landlord's to the Local Authority or liaise with their own colleagues, instead they threatened the Tenant into accepting a criminal record. But if the Police expected gratitude from the LL's, they were mistaken, instead they and others were bombarded with complaints, indecent images and a long list of crimes perpetrated by their remaining Tenants. Unfortunately, the Tenant now homeless and facing destitution, was forced to be creative when seeking allies and strategies for justice. As a Researcher I had to become more familiar with Housing Legislation and related Policing matters. The Eviction process is a Civilian matter with a clearly defined process and timescale. The Protection from Eviction Act 1977, safeguards Tenant's rights. Evictions like this one where the Tenants are threatened or lied about to speed things along are a Criminal offence. The cost of living crisis means increased numbers of illegal evictions. This study was an attempt to address several questions. Why did the LL's find it so easy to enlist help from the Police given their 'safeguarding' issues. Why was it possible for the Police to act as if they were gangster's rather than Police Officer's? What was it about the LL's past that left them unconcerned with behaving so irresponsibly? Complexity, changing the mental representation of the problem, helped expose the particular pattern of manipulative behaviour underlying most of the LL's interactions with other's. It wasn't logical, but motivated by greed, sour grapes, sexual jealousy and a propensity to violence. It became possible to see that the person who was most at risk wasn't the Tenant, but someone who knew their secrets, and who now appeared a threat.

Lydia Perryman

lydiaperryman2019@gmail.com

'With Malicious Intent' – When Creativity, Risktaking and Unethical Strategies Emerge As Criminally Motivated Behaviour

L. A. Perryman
BSc (Hons), M.A. CQSW. PGDip.
Mental Health (Kings)
m 07444476271
lydiaaperryman@gmail.com

Introduction

Creativity is not always found where you expect it. In this case it is in the interaction between a local Landlord, their Tenant and the Police. And the in person/online strategies they feel justified to use.

Method

- Thematic analysis revealed underhand behaviours that the Police and the Accuser had in common. According to Minzberg (1985), emergent strategies are adaptive, with experience we learn both what works, but also what we can get away with. It was not just that the arresting Officer's, were determined to follow through with the arrest, and serve the local businesses. By contrast, the Tenant needed to realise something shocking that, being on the wrong side of the law, the Police were not prepared to show any interest at all.



Results

- Why did the LL's find it so easy to enlist help from the Police given their own 'safeguarding' issues?
- The LL's presented themselves to the Police as victims accusing the Tenant of sexually assaulting another Tenant, a friend, and of being a 'whore'. Having accepted this version of events the Police were biased in how they went about things; even when it became obvious that the LL's. were playing games, had set them up, and used them to scare the Tenant. There were several instances where the Arresting Officers' 'heavy handed' behaviour mirrored that of the LL's, and was unjustified. The allegations were groundless.

Why did the Police act as if they were gangster's?

- The markers that should have flagged up inconsistencies in the LL's version of events were ignored. The Arresting Officer failed to consider their own experience of the Tenant, had they looked up the Police records of goings on at the property, the 'safeguarding issues'; noted an absence of a criminal record, their brief search of the accommodation and anecdotal evidence. Apart from the documents provided by the LL's, and their own biases and prejudices, no other evidence was properly considered. They didn't just ignore what was there, they dismissed it as not relevant. There was a lack of diligence. Either way their Policing didn't stand up, they compounded the situation by forcing the Tenant to accept a criminal record with threats, and an eviction, followed up by threatening online posts, cementing the impression of them as being corrupt even criminal.
- But as we don't exist in a vacuum other Police Officer's were affected by these malicious online messages. Their own Colleagues resented how things played out. Officer's who lived locally, or worked as part of the response teams were asked awkward questions, were mercilessly 'trolled' online. They got fed up with the reputation they gained for being 'brutal', ill informed, and acting without any conscience. Other Agencies took issue with the Tenant on the back of the Police online posts, and posted their own.

What was it about the LL's past that left them unconcerned with behaving so irresponsibly?

- Their arrogance, came from what they knew of the Tenants problems, 'Everyone has a past'. Their perception of the Tenant was limited to their interactions as LL/and Employer. With no identity beyond that. They were prepared to use blackmail and humiliation by broadcasting what they knew; In their fantasies and in reality, they could interfere in other's affairs to get their own way. Here, their intention was to punish, and they assumed, rightly so that they would get away with it. In evolutionary terms they are 'benefit cheats', those who gain at the expense of other's, by 'reneging on the deal'. They exploited other's shortcomings and vulnerabilities. The timeline above shows this frequently used strategy playing out. Having arranged to meet with the Police to sign a witness statement, they failed to turn up. In other words the crime as reported was not the crime that was punished.

Summary

The situation that presented itself, a reported crime, became an Eviction, a civilian matter, leaving the Force with a questionmark over their Policing. Their roles appeared more criminal than heroic. Although thematic analysis revealed underhand behaviours that the Police and the Accuser had in common, the most obvious strategy was the use of online social media posts as provocation, closely followed by an arrogance and a lack of accountability, no one was in a position to challenge them. Other's joined in, based on the original posts, believing that they were justified in doing so. Between the Police Officer's, the local Agencies and the LL's reaching out to punish online, the distressing, often retaliative messages kept being reposted, more worrying the drama caused confusion and concern. The Code of Ethics (2024) requires that Police Officer's behave responsibly online whether 'at work/ or in private'. Moreover, Officer's need to consider the impact that their decisionmaking could have on those affected'. How can any guidance be expected to work in practice when few acknowledge the routine use of these risky, creative, and unethical workplace strategies.?

References

- American Psychological Association. (2017). Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct. <https://www.apa.org/ethics/code>
- BPS Code of Human Research Ethics (2021) Oates, J., Carpenter, D., Fisher, M., Goodson, S., Hannah, B. and Kwiatkowski, R ISBN (print): 978-1-85433-792-4, Published: 04-2021, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.53841/bpsrep.2021.inf180>
- Capra, F. (2002). The Hidden Connections: Integrating the Biological, Cognitive, and Social Dimensions of Life Into a Science of Sustainability. New York. Doubleday Press.
- College of Policing (2024) Code of Ethics. College of Policing. <https://www.college.police.uk/ethics/code-of-ethi>
- Mitleton-Kelly E., Paraskevas A. and Day C. (2018) Eds. [*Handbook of Research Methods in Complexity Science - Theory and Applications*](#), published by Edward Elgar.
- Perryman, L. (2018) (2023). *Two Sides of the Same Coin – 'The Dark Triad', Risk Perception and Negative Creativity as Predictors of Financial and Ethical Risktaking* [Unpublished]. Milton Keynes, The Open University.
- Waldrop, M. M. (1992) Complexity: The emerging science at the edge of order and chaos, USA, Simon and Schuster.

Poster

Emergence of Collective Intelligence Through the Disruption of Microbial Behavior: Does Homeostatic Breakdown Trigger Systemic Reorganization for Creative Problem Solving?

Biocognitive systems

Metastability

Microbial collective intelligence

Homeostatic disruption

Creative adaptation

Recent research has increasingly highlighted the significant role of microbial ecosystems in regulating host cognition, behavior, and systemic stability. However, a pressing question remains: can the disruption of microbial homeostasis not only cause dysfunction but also trigger creative systemic reorganization? This study proposes that the breakdown of microbial behavioral stability can catalyze the emergence of collective intelligence and adaptive problem-solving. Using a computational modeling framework grounded in complexity theory, we examine how microbial quorum sensing and metastability drive nonlinear feedback loops that affect system-wide dynamics, from cognitive to immunological functions. By simulating transitions between stable and unstable states, we explore how homeostatic disruption opens novel solution spaces and fosters creative adaptation at the system level. Our findings suggest that microbial dysbiosis, typically viewed as pathological, may under certain conditions serve as an entry point for higher-order adaptation. Rather than being merely a breakdown, this disruption could foster emergent intelligence across biological hierarchies, paving the way for innovative problem-solving and system reorganization. This work offers both theoretical insights and computational tools to rethink how instability and system breakdown contribute to the emergence of biological intelligence, with applications in creativity research, systems neuroscience, and bio-inspired design.

Hyechin Kong

King's College London · hyechin.kong@kcl.ac.uk

Emergence of Collective Intelligence Through the Disruption of Microbial Behavior

Does Homeostatic Breakdown Trigger Systemic Reorganization for Creative Problem Solving?

Introduction

Microbiota play critical roles in cognition, immunity, and systemic regulation. Traditional view: Dysbiosis = dysfunction. Our question: Can microbial instability foster emergent intelligence?

Hypothesis

Disruption of microbial homeostasis may induce nonlinear systemic reorganization, enabling adaptive problem-solving and collective intelligence.

Theoretical Framework

Complex Systems Theory: Biological systems as dynamic, self-organizing networks. Microbial Quorum Sensing: Local interactions create system-wide effects. Metastability: Transitions between states enable flexibility and innovation.

Methodology

Computational Simulations of microbial signaling and network dynamics. Modeled transitions between stable (homeostatic) and unstable (perturbed) states. Explored emergent behavior under varying levels of disruption.

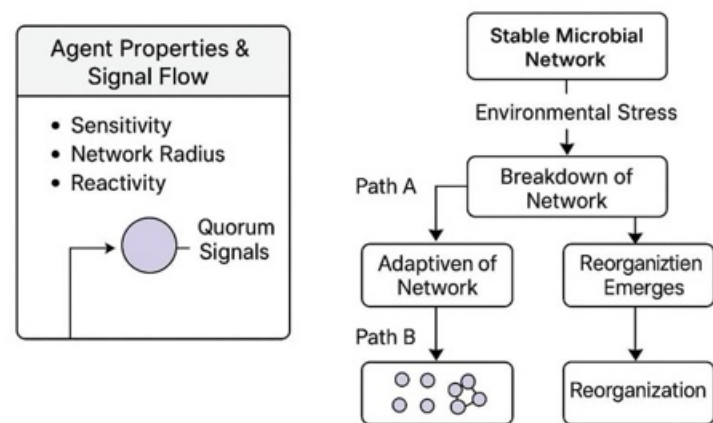
Conclusion

- Homeostatic collapse is not purely pathological—it can be generative. The breakdown of microbial stability may serve as a driver of systemic reorganization that supports adaptation and creativity, rather than simply indicating disease.
- Microbial behavior influences not only biological but cognitive complexity. Changes in microbiota—via quorum sensing, diversity shifts, and feedback loops—can modulate host cognition, flexibility, and problem-solving capacity.
- Creativity and intelligence may emerge from instability under specific systemic conditions. In complex systems, transitions between order and chaos (metastability) provide opportunities for innovation, not just dysfunction.
- Dysbiosis should be reconceptualized as a potential precursor to higher-order adaptation. Rather than seeing microbial imbalance as a static marker of disease, it should be explored as a dynamic phase transition, with the potential to reorganize biological hierarchies.

Core Mechanism for differential abundance analysis

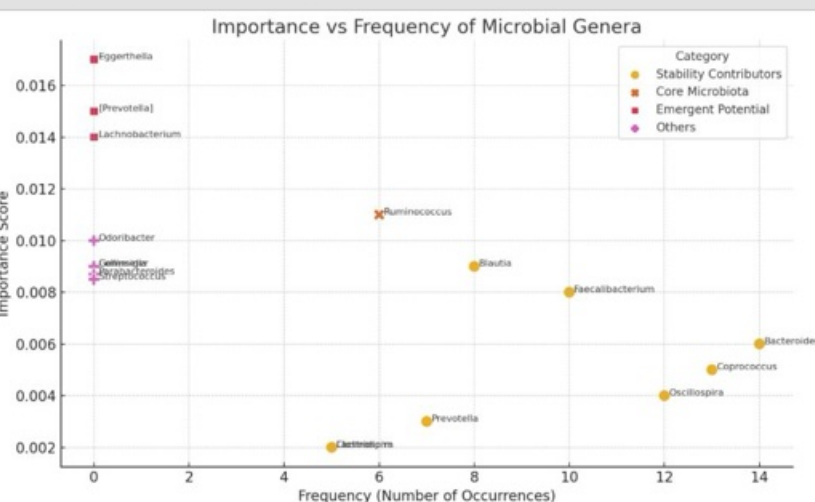
Microbial breakdown → feedback loops → cognitive/immune plasticity → system-wide adaptation.

Agent-Based Microbial Simulation



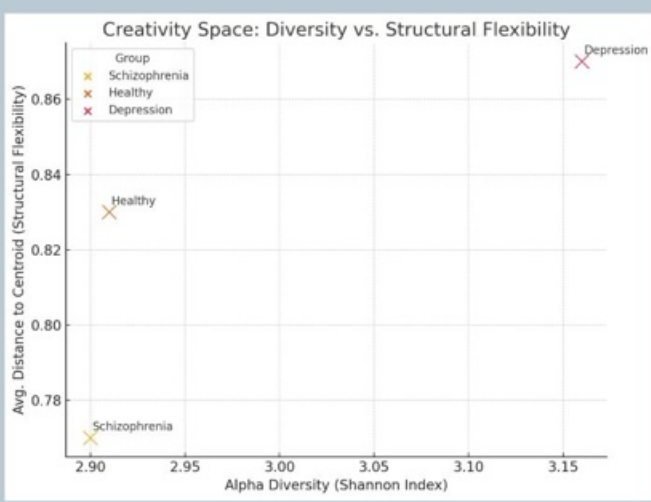
Taxonomy

In our dataset, we identified a differential abundance of genera such as *Prevotella*, *Faecalibacterium*, and *Lactobacillus*, all of which have been implicated in cognitive flexibility and emotion regulation. Their altered levels in schizophrenia and depression groups may point to a microbial signature associated with disrupted cognitive integration.



Discussion

To conceptualize creativity, we propose a 2D entropy-integration space where schizophrenia reflects low-entropy rigidity, and depression reflects disorganized entropy.

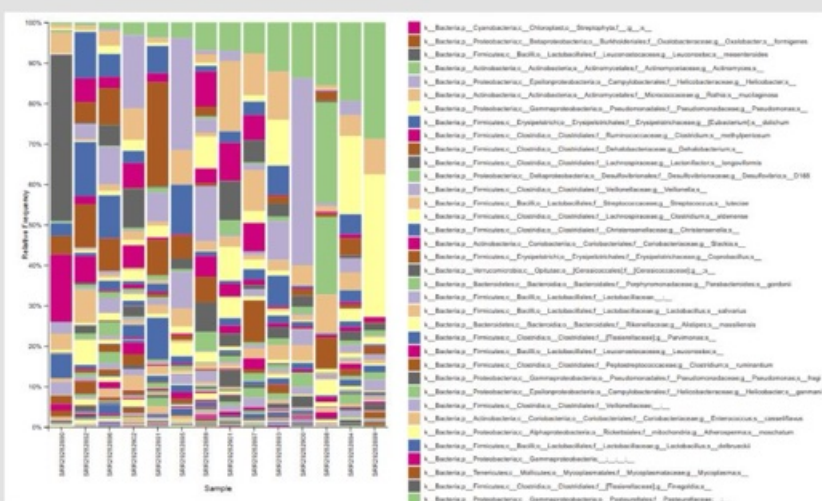
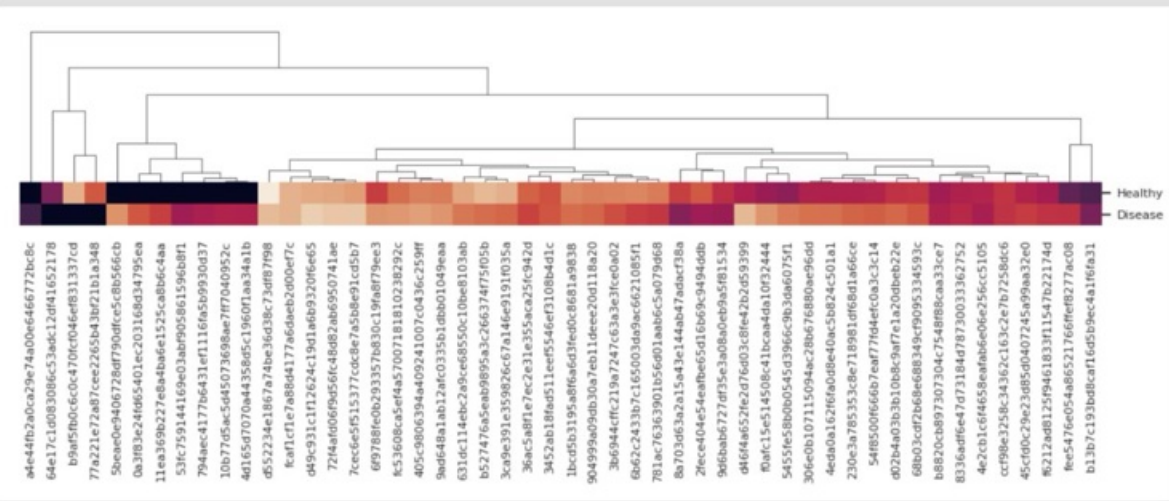


SRA Source

The microbiome data analyzed in this study were obtained from publicly accessible datasets hosted on the NCBI Sequence Read Archive (SRA), including projects: PRJNA289586: Gut microbiome profiles in schizophrenia (Nguyen et al., 2019) PRJNA316969: Microbiota and depression (Zheng et al., 2016)

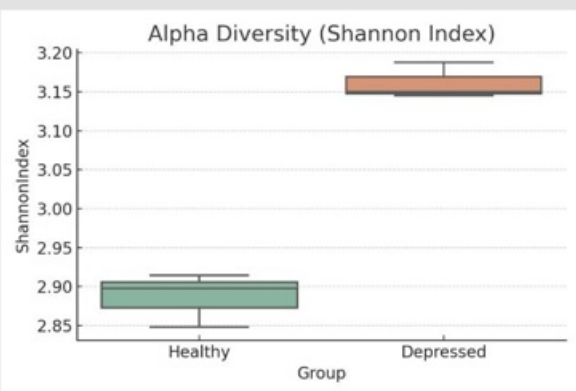
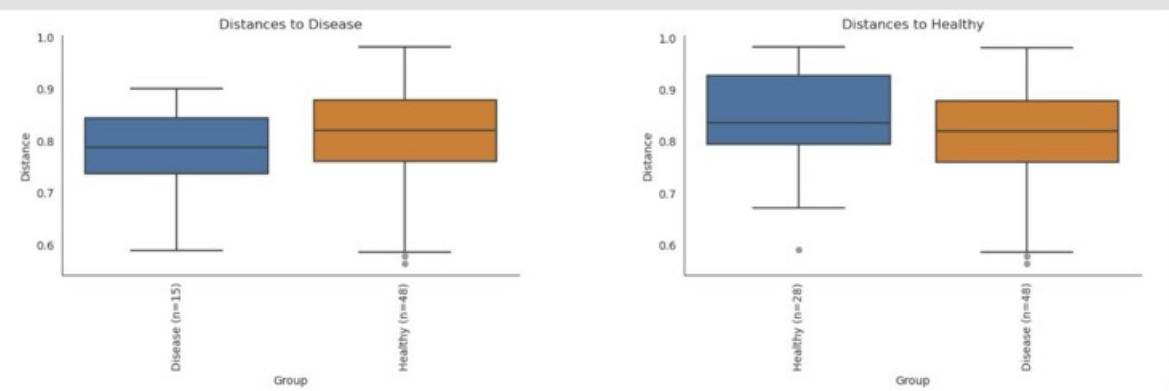
Clustered Heatmap between cognitively healthy and impaired individuals. Cognitive health

Distinct microbial clustering is observed between cognitively healthy and impaired individuals. Cognitive health is linked to adaptive processing, a foundation of creative thinking. Thus, microbial disruption may not only signal dysfunction but also enable emergent creativity



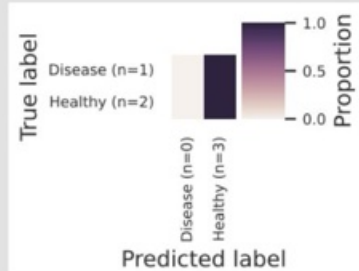
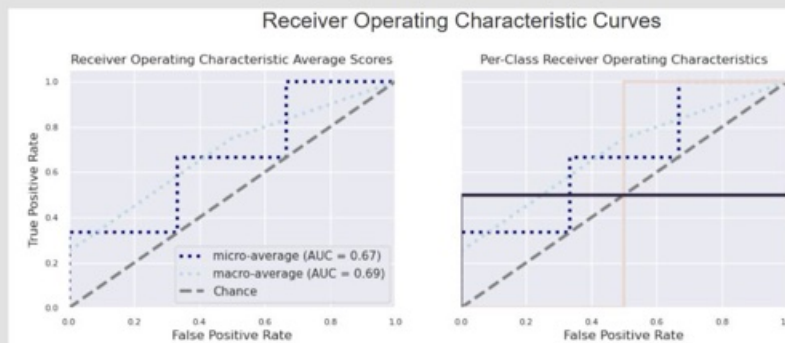
Distance variability

The structural flexibility and diversity observed in healthy states may reflect a system's capacity for adaptive exploration. Such variability is a hallmark of creative systems—where resilience and openness to multiple configurations enable novel problem solving.



From Prediction Failure to Emergent Intelligence

Disrupted predictions in patient classification indicate microbial homeostatic collapse. Such instability can act as a trigger for nonlinear systemic reorganization. According to complexity science, prediction failure may precede adaptive creativity. Emergent intelligence may arise when biological systems escape rigid predictive models. For this, we used basic classification models (e.g., logistic regression, decision trees) to simulate breakdown effects.



Healthy states occupy a balanced region—sufficiently diverse yet structurally coherent—suggesting a system primed for adaptive, creative function. We argue that microbial homeostatic disruption, often labeled as pathological, can under certain systemic conditions catalyze creative reorganization, offering a new lens on dysbiosis as a potential trigger for emergent collective intelligence.

Poster

Nothingness as Practice

Nothingness

Religion

Quantum physics

This research proposes a counter-ontology grounded in nothingness, not-self, and not-knowing—as deficits or nihilistic gestures, and as ontological necessities for reconfiguring being, relation, and attention. Dominant metaphysical frameworks—across Western rationalist, empirical, and capitalist paradigms—assume the self as fixed, reality as graspable, and knowledge as accumulation.

In contrast, this project draws from Mahāyāna Buddhism, Christian apophatic mysticism, Islamic metaphysics, Indigenous relational epistemologies, and quantum physics to develop a practice-based ontology that centers absence, impermanence, and subjectivity as fluid. It contends that undoing the assumptions of identity, presence, and knowing is only philosophically vital and ethically and politically urgent. Nothingness, far from void, becomes the generative space of relation; not-self becomes the basis for interdependence; and not-knowing becomes an epistemology of humility and care. This project is a call for unmaking, for an ontology that breathes.

Elena Botts

Essex · elenabotts@gmail.com

Mechanisms of Cooptation

- **Cultural Funding:**
Promotes participation rhetorically, but structurally enables control (e.g., selective grant funding).
- **Instrumentalization:**
State/media filter out difference, constructing the "enemy" as already-known, foreclosing otherness.
- **Disinformation Ecosystems:**
Polarization erodes trust, normalizes surveillance, and depoliticizes rights under the guise of transparency.



Memory Politics & Practice

- **Intersubjective Memory:**
Memory as a dynamic, co-created process-opposes static, institutionalized remembrance.
- **Dialectic of Resistance & Cooptation:**
Politics shapes collective memory through funding, gatekeeping, and framing.
- **Practice-Based Interventions:**
 - Experimental sound art in repurposed churches
 - No-budget VHS films
 - Small press publishing
 - Community radio programs
 - Artist housing cooperatives and grassroots activism

Interventions

- **Disrupting Groupthink:**
Use of disidentification, analytic red-teaming, and collaborative models to surface

Media Cooptation, Memory Politics, and the Limits of Institutional Imagination

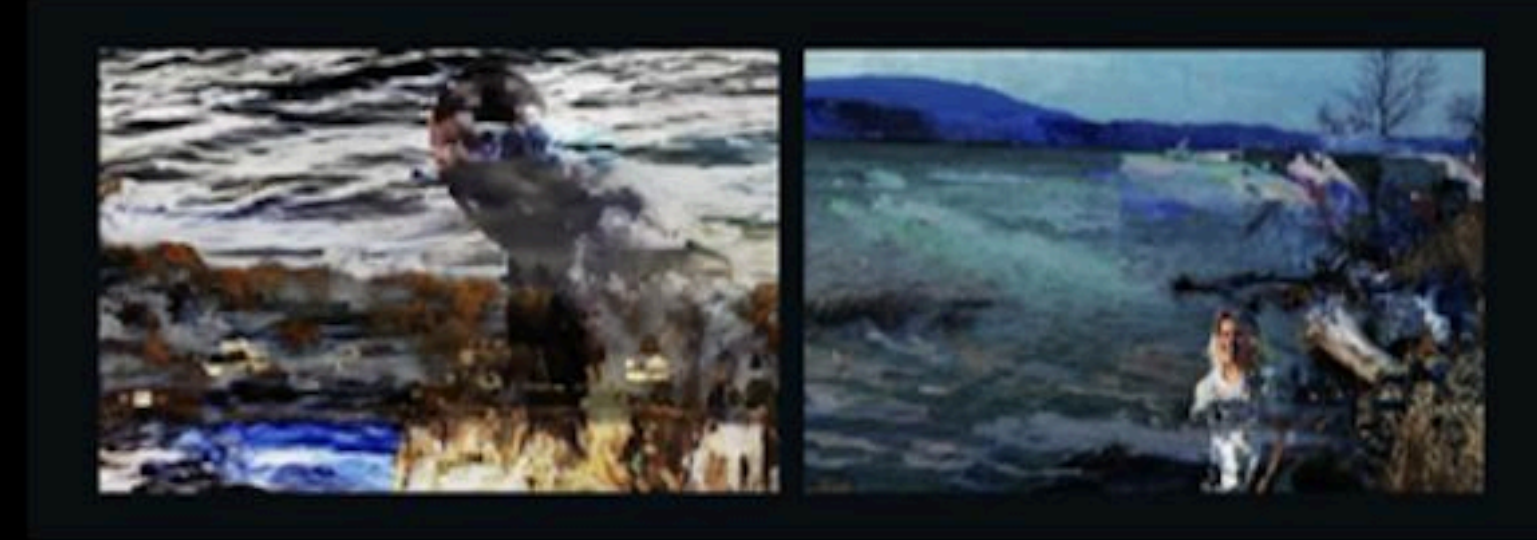
Central Question

How does media cooptation via cultural funding contribute to politicization in information ecosystems?



Theoretical Foundations

- **Marcuse's Administered Culture:**
"Pluralist" societies absorb dissent, turning critique into compliance through aesthetic-legal forms.
- **Psychoanalytic Limits:**
Failure to engage true "otherness" leads to security logics and repression; the unconscious is reduced to identity confirmation, not difference



- **Adversarial Participation:**
Explainable AI, algorithmic audits, and civic oversight as models for decentralizing authority and enabling genuine accountability.
- **Guerrilla Memory:**
Subversion nested within institutional forms (e.g., decolonial art in churches); memory adaptive, fragmentary, and insurgent.



Thoughts

- **Genuine accountability and mutual learning** are essential for democratic stabilization and resisting epistemic violence.
- **Memory as guerrilla practice**-fragmentary, adaptive, and always learning-offers a path to participatory, pluralistic information ecosystems.

Poster

Creativity and the Critical Positivity Ratio

Creativity

Affect

Languishing

Flourishing

Depression

This study utilized Fredricksen and Losada's (2007) critical positivity ratio to classify individuals' psychological states as one of, Depressed, Languishing, or Flourishing (utilizing discrete categories from the Positive and Negative Affect Scale), and examined their performance on creativity tasks. An independent groups design with 359 participants was employed with the critical positivity ratio as the independent variable and the creative performance measures as the dependent variables. Following a non-significant Levene's tests, the study (employing a MANOVA) found an overall significant effect of critical positivity ratio on performance on the creativity tasks; as measured by the Alternative Uses Task (AUT) and the Remote Associates Task (RAT).

Univariate analyses revealed significant differences in both AUT Total and Originality Scores. Bonferroni-adjusted pairwise comparisons indicated that 'Depressed' individuals performed significantly worse on the AUT compared to both 'Languishing' and 'Flourishing' individuals. Additionally, 'Languishing' individuals performed worse than 'Flourishing' individuals. These findings support the hypothesized relationship between positive affect and creativity, though they do highlight the challenges in defining discrete categories within the mental health continuum.

Nicholas LeBoutillier

Middlesex University · nicholas3@mdx.ac.uk

Poster: Exploring Creativity: The Impact of Light and Dark Triads on Performance-Based Measures

Introduction: There is a considerable empirical literature on creativity and the dark triad (see, Lebuda, Figura, & Karwowski,2021) but little on the link between the light triad (Khan, Safdar, & Durrani, 2021) and nothing on how the light and dark ‘within us’ compares on creativity.

Method: Employing the Alternate Uses Task (Guilford,1967) and the Remote Associates Task (Mednick, 1962) as the Dependent variables, and the ratio of the Light-to- Dark Triads as both correlational (N =253) and a quartile split quasi-independent variable. Where the Light Triad represents Faith in Humanity, Humanism, and Kantianism (Kaufman, et al. 2019) and the Dark Triad represents Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy (Jones and Paulhus, 2014)

Results: There was an expected significant medium-strong negative relationship between the Light and Dark Triads (r (251) = -.453 , $p < .001$). Table 1 shows four significant small associations between the Dark Triad and the AUT scores but nothing else.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Item-averaged Light & Dark Triad Scores and Pearson r Correlation Coefficients with The Creativity Measures (N = 253)

Measure	Mean	St. Dev.	RAT	AUT-Total	AUT-Orig.
Dark	2.79	0.49	.003	-.156*	-.130*
Light	3.65	0.52	.071	.112	.109
Light-to Dark	1.35	0.38	-.021	.131*	.132*

MANOVA on Quartiles: Hotelling’s Trace: (F (2,116) = 2.864, $p = .046$. $\eta_p^2 = .072$)

Univariate Analyses: RAT variable (F (1, 109) = 0.13, $p = .719$, $\eta_p^2 = .001$); AUT Total (F (1, 109) = 7.13, $p = .009$. $\eta_p^2 = .061$); AUT Originality; (F (1, 109) = 7.56, $p = .007$. $\eta_p^2 = .065$).

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for Creativity Measures by High and Low Light-to-Dark Triad Ratios (N = 111)

Dependent Variable	Quartile	Mean	St. Error
RAT	Low (N=57)	7.56	0.70
	High (N=54)	7.93	0.72
AUT Total	Low	20.32	1.55
	High	26.24	1.59
AUT Originality	Low	18.21	1.88
	High	25.63	1.93

Discussion: The findings concur with Lebuda et al.’s (2021) meta-analysis, showing a small negative association between the Dark Triad and creativity. They are harder to evaluate in the context of Khan et al.’s (2021) findings as they employ very different methods. But produced the same outcome. When the High and Low groups were compared those with a higher light-to-dark ratio performed significantly better on both AUT measures. The findings also produce larger effects (medium vs small) than the correlations.

References

Guilford, J.P. (1967). *The nature of human intelligence*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Jones, D. N., & Paulhus, D. L. (2014). Introducing the short dark triad (SD3) a brief measure of dark personality traits. *Assessment*, 21(1), 28-41.

Kaufman, S. B., Yaden, D. B., Hyde, E., & Tsukayama, E. (2019). The light vs. dark triad of personality: Contrasting two very different profiles of human nature. *Frontiers in psychology*, 10, 467.

Khan, I. U., Safdar, U. K., & Durrani, M. Z. (2021). The light triad traits, psychological empowerment, creative self-efficacy, self-resilience and innovative performance in ict of Pakistan. *Gomal University Journal of Research*, 37(3), 297-310.

Lebuda, I., Figura, B., & Karwowski, M. (2021). Creativity and the dark triad: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 92, 104088.

Guilford, J.P. (1967). The associative basis of the creative process. *Psychological Review*, 69, 220-232. doi: 10.1037/h0048850

Session 2

Poster Presentations

Iyad Sawaftah

When Walls Breathe: Bridging the Gap Between Biophilic Design and Creativity in Virtual Environments

Allison Ehrke

From Creator to Curator: How Generative AI Is Reshaping Design Ideation

Jacqueline Toal

Immersive Co- Creativity: Building Inclusive XR and AI experiences through Feminist and Community of Practice Frameworks, an Autoethnographic study

Smira Javed

Illuminating Strengths: A Visual Approach to Character Strengths Identification in University Students

Tang Minh Nguyen

Exploring Emotional Labor in Vietnam Advertising with LEGO® Serious Play®

Victoria Laliberte

The Magic Forest Keepers: Helping Children Build Resilience Through Storytelling

Poster

When Walls Breathe: Bridging the Gap Between Biophilic Design and Creativity in Virtual Environments

Creativity

Biophilic design

Environment

Virtual reality

This study examines how natural environments and basic lab space affect cognitive flexibility and creativity by introducing four virtual environments inspired by biophilic design principles. Participants experienced a basic white lab, a lab with a window, a biophilic lab enriched with natural elements, and a fully immersive nature scene. We explored how varying degrees of nature integration affect divergent thinking, verbal fluency, spatial memory (encoding), and participants' preferences and subjective perceptions of their performance.

Task performance remained stable across environments. However, participants consistently reported greater feelings of creativity and cognitive flexibility in environments containing natural features, particularly in the biophilic lab and nature setting. These findings highlight the psychological power of biophilic design within virtual spaces, suggesting that even subtle integrations of nature can positively shape user subjective experience in creativity and cognitive flexibility without compromising task efficiency.

Iyad Sawaftah

Edinburgh Napier University · iyad.sawaftah@napier.ac.uk

When Walls Breathe: Bridging the Gap Between Biophilic Design and Creativity in Virtual Environments.

Iyad Sawaftah, PhD Candidate

 IYAD SAWAFTAH

Email: iyad.sawaftah@napier.ac.uk

Supervisors: Dr Marina Wimmer, Dr Suha Jaradat, Dr Lindsey Carruthers, and Dr Nicolas Pugeault

Edinburgh Napier
UNIVERSITY



INTRODUCTION

We spend much of our lives indoors, often in spaces that lack a strong connection to nature (Evans, 2003; Kuo, 2015).

Biophilic design introduces natural elements like greenery, daylight, and organic textures (Africa et al., 2019; Joye, 2007; Zhong et al., 2022), which is linked to improve mood, focus, and creativity.

This experiment examined how different virtual settings—like sterile labs, nature-inspired spaces—affect creativity, cognitive flexibility, offering insights for designing environments that better support the mind.

RESEARCH AIM

To examine how **biophilic design affects creativity and cognitive flexibility**, by:

- **Comparing** divergent thinking and cognitive flexibility across four virtual environments; nature, biophilic lab, lab with window into nature, basic lab.
- **Assessing** subjective feeling of creativity and cognitive flexibility across the four environments.

METHOD



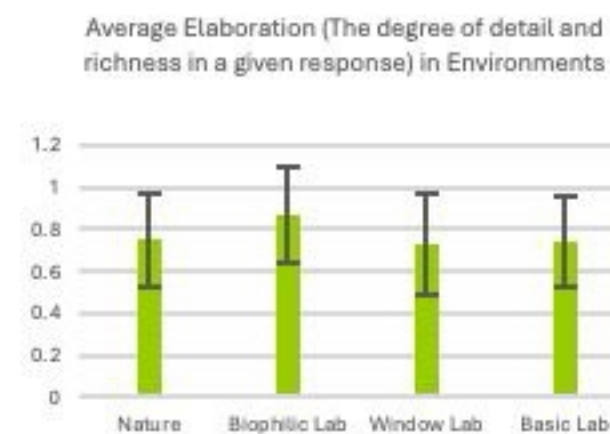
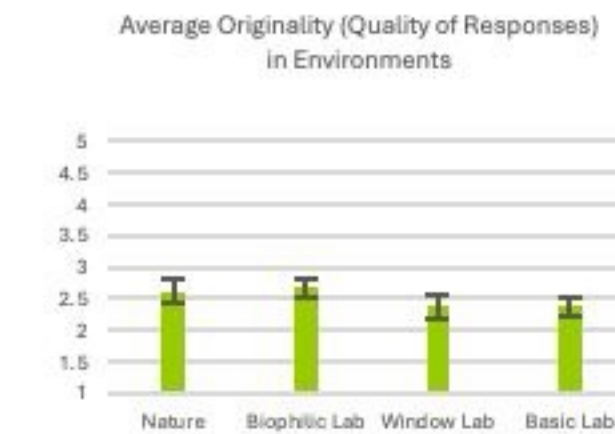
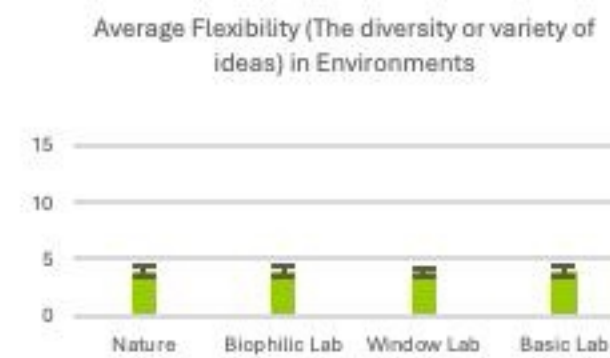
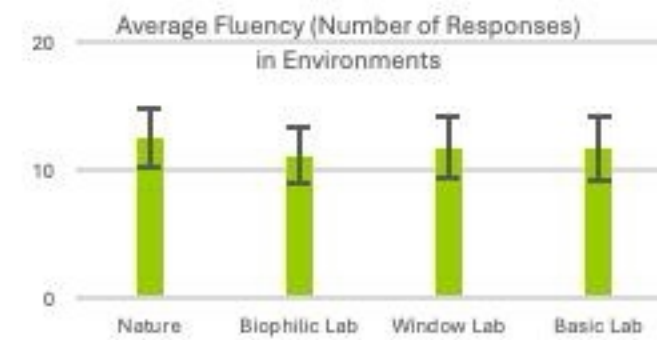
- **Participants:** 30 individuals

- **Tasks in each environment:**

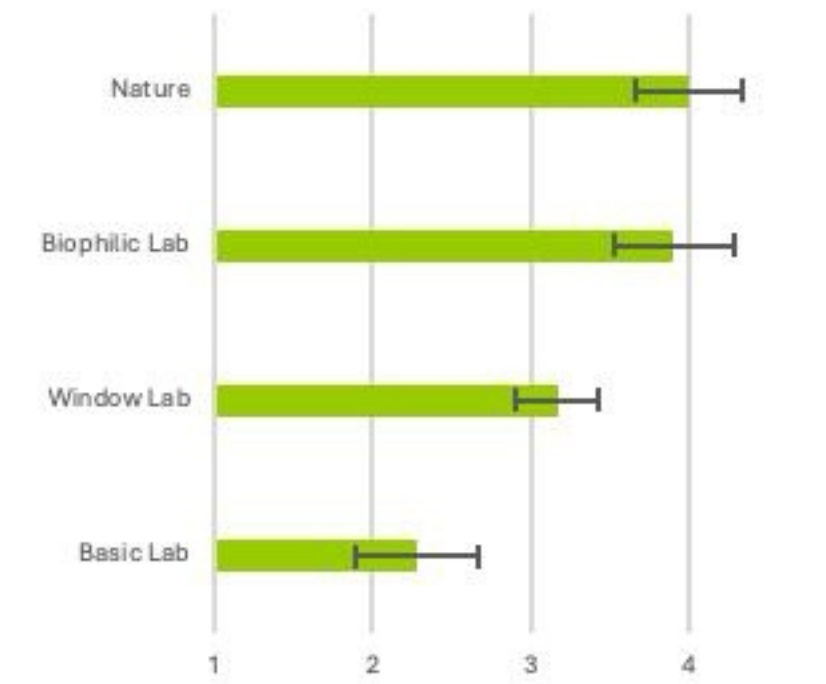
- 3 min: Alternative Uses Task (AUT)
- 1 min: Phonemic Verbal Fluency (PVF)
- 1 min: Semantic Verbal Fluency (SVF)

RESULTS

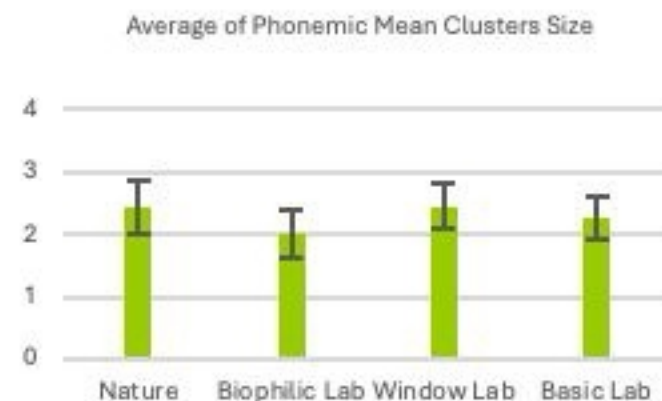
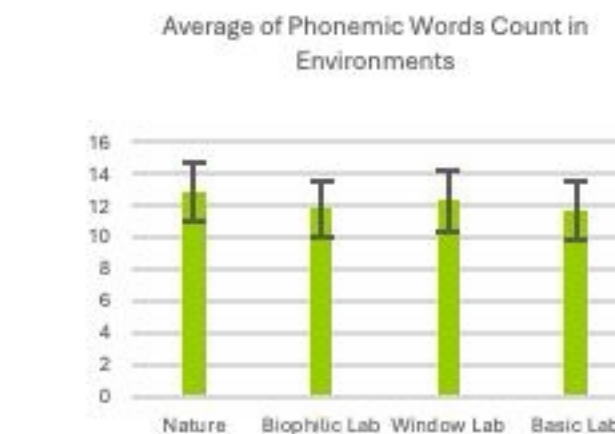
Creativity



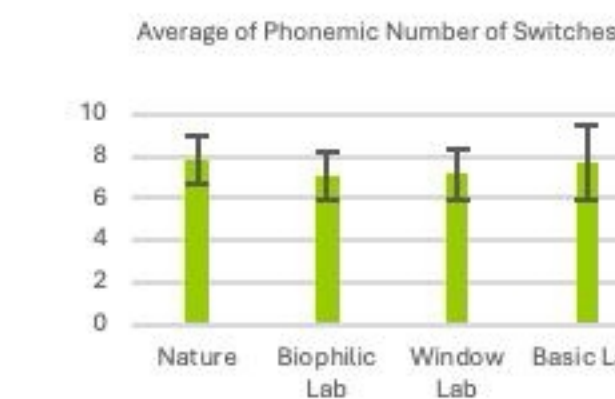
Subjective Creativity Ranking (Rank the environments based on which you felt you were most creative: 5= most creative, 1= the least creative.)



Cognitive flexibility



Preference Ranking (Rank the environments based on your preferences; 4= the most preferred environment, and 1= the least preferred environment.)



Subjective Cognitive Flexibility Ranking (Rank the environments based on which you felt you were most able to generate words from the same letter and category; 5= most able to generate words, 1= the least able to generate words.)



DISCUSSION

- There were no differences in objective performance of divergent thinking and cognitive flexibility across all environments.
- Participants felt more creative in both nature and biophilic lab than both lab with a window and basic lab. They felt least creative in the basic lab.
- Participants felt equally cognitively flexible in nature, biophilic lab, and lab with window than basic lab. They felt least cognitively flexible in basic lab.
- Participants ranked nature as the most preferred environment, followed by the biophilic lab, then the lab with window. The basic lab was the least preferred.
- These findings highlight biophilic elements have an impact on the subjective feeling of creativity and cognitive flexibility.

REFERENCES

- Evans, G. W. (2003). The Built Environment and Mental Health. In *Journal of Urban Health: Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine* (Vol. 80, Issue 4).
- Kuo, M. (2015). How might contact with nature promote human health? Promising mechanisms and a possible central pathway. In *Frontiers in Psychology* (Vol. 6). Frontiers Media S.A. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2015.01093>
- Africa, J., Heerwagen, J., Loftness, V., & Ryan Balagtas, C. (2019). Biophilic design and climate change: Performance parameters for health. *Frontiers in Built Environment*, 5. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fbuil.2019.00028>
- Zhong, W., Schröder, T., & Bekkering, J. (2022). Biophilic design in architecture and its contributions to health, well-being, and sustainability: A critical review. In *Frontiers of Architectural Research* (Vol. 11, Issue 1, pp. 114–141). Higher Education Press Limited Company. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foar.2021.07.006>
- Joye, Y. (2007). Architectural Lessons From Environmental Psychology: The Case of Biophilic Architecture. *Review of General Psychology*, 11(4), 305–328. <https://doi.org/10.1037/1089-2680.11.4.305>

Poster

From Creator to Curator: How Generative AI Is Reshaping Design Ideation

Generative AI

Design ideation

Cognitive effort

Creative ownership

Human-AI collaboration

Designers are increasingly using generative AI tools to support early idea generation, prompting new questions about how these tools influence the quality of ideas and the experience of creating. Ideation in design typically relies on divergent thinking, iteration, and subjective evaluation, processes that may shift as AI tools increasingly contribute to how ideas are generated, selected, and refined. This in-progress narrative synthesis examines how generative AI may impact designers' creativity, cognitive effort, and psychological experience during early-stage ideation. Using a structured PICOS framework, fifteen empirical studies were included that report outcomes across four domains: Divergent Creativity, Convergent Creativity, Cognitive Effort, and Psychological Experience. Key emergent themes such as shifts from creator to curator, designer experience-based differences, cognitive offloading, and emotional ambivalence were identified during synthesis.

Preliminary findings suggest that generative AI tools can enhance idea fluency and reduce mental effort, especially when used for inspiration. However, when AI generates more complete outputs, designers, particularly those with less experience, often engage less critically, reducing elaboration, flexibility, and sense of authorship. Several studies point to a risk of over-reliance, raising concerns about long-term creative skill development. While idea generation and novelty are commonly assessed, fewer studies examine the feasibility of outputs or capture designers' psychological experiences, such as satisfaction, agency, and trust. This synthesis explores whether AI tools are subtly shifting the cognitive role of the designer—from active creator to passive curator—and identifies the need for platforms that support both creative outcomes and psychological engagement. Findings aim to guide future research and inform the development of design tools that actively support designers in creating feasible, user-relevant solutions while maintaining a sense of ownership and long-term skill development.

Allison Ehrke

King's College London · allison.ehrke@kcl.ac.uk

From Creator to Curator: How Generative AI Is Reshaping Design Ideation

A narrative synthesis of creativity, cognitive effort, and designer experience

Allison Ehrke

King’s College London

allisonehrke.com · K21174931@kcl.ac.uk



Background

The rise of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) is transforming design ideation through its ability to produce novel, data-driven content. Traditionally grounded in human-centred exploration, design practice is shifting as AI generates partial or complete concepts. Designers are evolving from active creators to passive curators, focusing more on selecting and refining AI outputs than generating ideas themselves. This transformation raises several concerns: decreased cognitive engagement, heightened fixation, and reduced sense of ownership, particularly among novice designers. While AI can enhance ideation fluency and speed, it may compromise elaboration, originality, and skill development. Despite these significant implications, AI's cognitive and psychological impacts on design remain understudied. This review addresses this knowledge gap by synthesizing findings from 15 studies examining how generative AI influences creativity, effort, and designer experience during ideation.

Research aims

1. Creativity and Cognitive Effort

Examine how GenAI affects divergent creativity (fluency, flexibility, novelty), convergent creativity (usefulness, elaboration, feasibility), and cognitive effort (fixation, mental demand, revision efficacy) during design ideation compared to traditional methods.

2. Psychological Experience

Explore how GenAI shapes designers’ psychological experience (percieved agency, affect and self-efficacy) during ideation.


















Methods

This narrative synthesis reviewed 15 empirical studies (2023–2025) examining GenAI use during early-stage design ideation. Eligible studies included novice or professional designers aged ≥18 using GenAI tools during the ideation phase to generate sketches, concepts, or early design ideas, and reported outcomes in at least one domain across creativity, cognitive effort, or psychological experience. Studies were thematically analyzed using Popay et al.'s (2006) narrative synthesis framework.


References

Abrusci et al., 2023; Chandrasekera, 2023; Choi & Lee, 2025; Davis, 2024; Ding et al., 2024; Fu & Leung, 2024; Gong & Zhao, 2024; Huang & Sun, 2025; Kaljun & Žavbi, 2024; Khan & Akhtar, 2024; Sankar & Lee, 2023; Wadinambirarachchi & Fernando, 2023; Wang & Li, 2023; Won & Choi, 2025; Zhou & Wu, 2023. Full reference list available upon request.

Preliminary Findings


Outcome Domain	Measure	Meaning	Theme	Summary of Preliminary Findings
Divergent Creativity	Fluency	Quantity of ideas generated	 	Idea fluency is often higher when GenAI is used as inspiration, but lower when AI generates full concepts, limiting designer-driven idea generation.
	Flexibility	Range or variety of idea types		Novice designers show more variety in idea types with GenAI prompts; experts show little change .
	Novelty	Originality and uniqueness of ideas	 	Novelty is higher when GenAI provides unexpected prompts, but drops when outputs feel repetitive or generic, reducing originality and engagement .
Convergent Creativity	Usefulness	Relevance and practicality of ideas	 	AI-generated ideas are often seen as useful , but may lack depth or context; designers sometimes accept them without critique , especially novices.
	Elaboration	Depth and completeness of ideas	 	Experts tend to build on AI ideas more deeply; novices are more likely to stop early , especially when AI drives the initial concept.
	Feasibility	Perceived implementability		Novices often assume AI ideas are feasible , though these assumptions are rarely tested or critically evaluated.
Cognitive Effect	Fixation	Repetition or reliance on early ideas		GenAI can reduce fixation with diverse ideas, but when outputs are high-fidelity, designers may anchor too early and explore few alternative directions.
	Mental Demand	Perceived cognitive load or effort		Designers report lower mental effort when using GenAI, though this may reflect cognitive disengagement more than true efficiency.
	Revision Efficacy	Efficiency and depth of revisions	 	Some designers revise more quickly with GenAI, but heavy reliance, especially among novices, often results in less critical or thoughtful refinement.
Psychological Experience	Affect	Emotional response to AI use		Designers report mixed feelings: satisfaction with speed and fidelity, and frustration when outputs are repetitive or irrelevant.
	Agency	Perceived authorship/decision control		Designers report reduced ownership when AI generates full concepts. Refining may regain partial control, but sense of creative contribution remains limited .
	Self-Efficacy	Confidence in creative ability		Confidence increases when GenAI supports ideation; declines with reliance , especially among novices who feel less capable of contributing original ideas.

Emergent Themes

**Creator to Curator**
Designer role shifts from active generator to passive editor

**Experience Differences**
Novices follow AI; experts question, refine, or reject it

**Cognitive Offloading**
GenAI replaces rather than supports thinking processes

**Emotional Ambivalence**
Satisfaction or frustration depends on expectation/control

Poster

Immersive Co- Creativity: Building Inclusive XR and AI experiences through Feminist and Community of Practice Frameworks, an Autoethnographic study

Generative AI

Extended reality

Generative AI

Learning

In the online environment it can be challenging to engage students (Bergdahl, 2022). There is an increasing number of international learners with language barriers, diversity in age, gender and ethnicity. A challenge can ensure learning resources are inclusive for the underrepresented, who connect from a variety of geographical locations. Tight (2022, p. 248) emphasises that online technology can support this. The nature of the subjects in teaching requires a need for fostering creativity in learning, creativity is an aspect that is closely linked with engagement and “social connectedness” (Putney et al., 2024, p. 2). Barrett et al. (2021) highlight that social interaction, communication and collaboration are key elements to creativity as well as cultural diversity, situated learning in socio-cultural perspective. Creativity and engagement are powerful tools for social change in a feminist context for reshaping narratives in learning and envisioning more equitable futures, it empowers and drives inclusion in community. (Van Breen et al., 2021). Nkansah (2023) is an advocate using Feminist Theory as an educational research lens, for inclusive online immersive co-creativity. This study explored the lived experience via an autoethnographic methodology. Feminist theory, as a female educator-researcher, provides a lens to explore gendered power dynamics and personal agency (Nkansah, 2023). Community of Practice (CoP) in context of this research is the educational environment for fostering collaborative learning, shared experiences and creativity. The use of the Systems Domain Model of Creativity (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997; 2006) allows the educator-researcher to position themselves in the creative system, allowing the opportunity to acknowledge their teaching, research and the institutional educational environment can influence their practice.

Jacqueline Toal

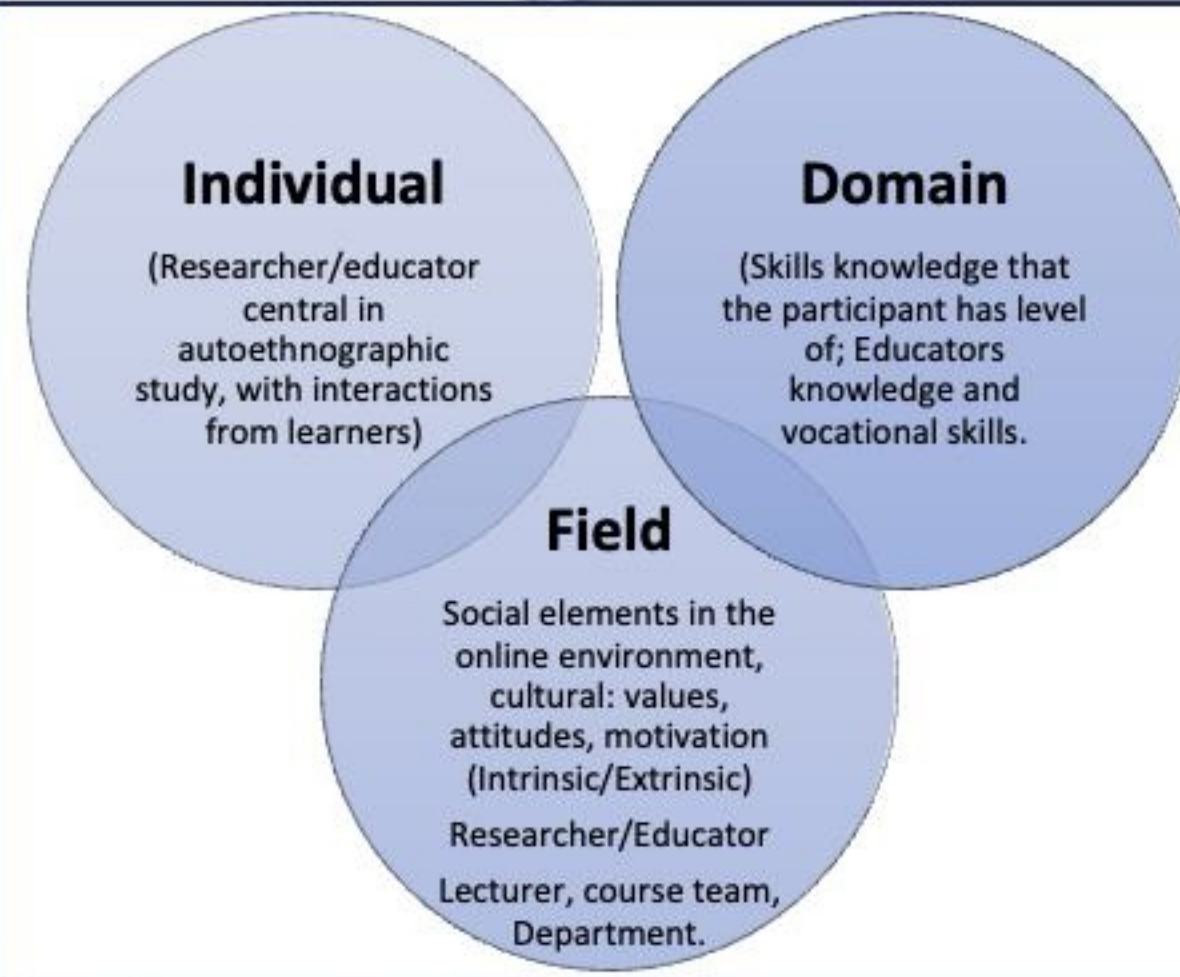
Dundalk Institute of Technology · jacqueline.toal@dkit.ie

Immersive Co- Creativity: Building Inclusive XR and AI experiences through Feminist and Community of Practice Frameworks, an Autoethnographic study.

Yes EThe aim of this study is to explore using immersive technologies XR and AI for creativity and engagement:

The choice of Frame VR in this online module will add additional value, Rossi (2023, p. 77) states a “digital space needs to be welcoming, organised...and highlighting we should co-create with students”. Frame VR also allows for customising the design, allowing for reducing sensory overload for some learners. Co-creation and participatory design can be fostered to support learning (Martens et al., 2019). Maroukias (2023) emphasise interest in VR as a learning tool. Creativity and motivation can be enhanced as students can take on the role of avatar to explore in either fully immersive VR or via desktop VR, enhancing creative learning, intrinsic motivation and social presence (Hwang et al., 2023).

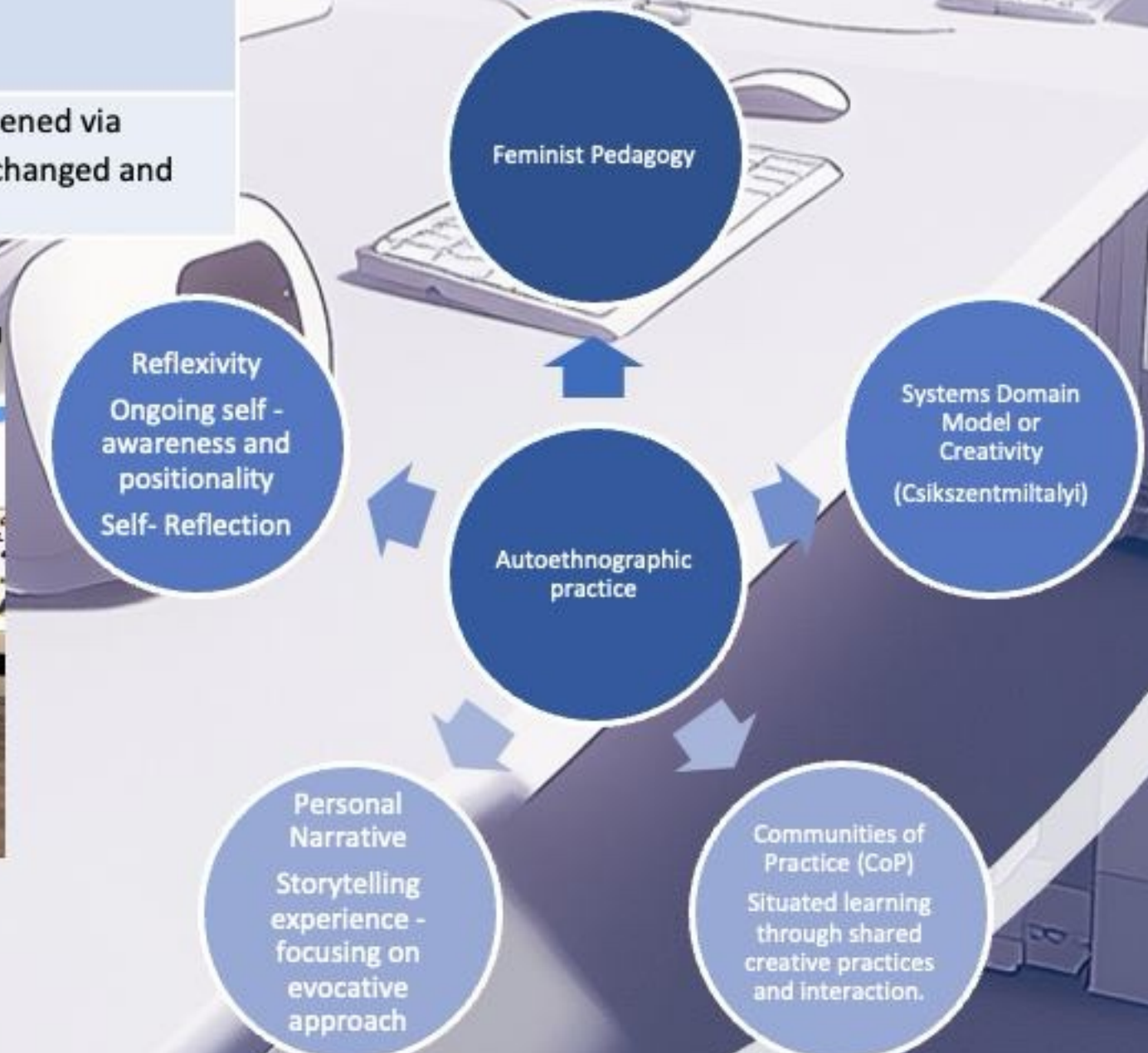
RQ1 : How can an autoethnographic approach to immersive learning spaces foster creativity, inclusiveness and collaborative engagement within communities of practice?
RQ2: How can feminist approaches to the virtual space design foster inclusive and equitable creative practices in participation?
RQ3 : How does embodied learning in XR environments contribute to Creative development and community of practice?



Educator/Researcher in an Autoethnographic study	Feminist Pedagogy	Systems Domain Model	Communities of Practice (CoP)
Accessibility and empowerment	Knowledge sharing and openness to diversity and different perspectives	Enable participation, accessibility	Mutual learning, inclusive spaces to contribute meaningfully
Collaboration and inclusiveness	Emphasising learning as a collective and social process.	Creativity is validated through interactions between individual, domain and field.	Peer learning in collaboration by group critiques and shared mentorship.
Experiential and embodied learning	Active participation in meaning making and learning.	Developing competences – more real-world experiences, sustainability.	Deep learning, authentic creative practice.
Knowledge and power dynamics	Challenges traditional hierarchy – Educator – student.	Recognised bodies of knowledge e.g., skills in animation, vocational knowledge of educator/students.	Encourages shared expertise and collaboration in learning
Identity development forming	Learning as self-actualization transformation. (drawing on Maslow hierarchy of needs) reaching full potential, personal identity and growth. Self-reflexivity	Individual (researcher, Educator, students) – navigating role as a creative practitioner in the domain and field	Members develop professional and personal identities within a community of practice.
Transgression and Innovation.	Breaking norms and questioning and driving new ways of doing things	Creativity results from risk taking, challenging the norms.	Innovation happened via shared know exchanged and dialogue.

Findings

- Creative and immersive way for engaging students.
- Interesting method to drive more creativity and presence in engagement.
- Encouraged more diversity in taking on new roles, embodied learning.



Poster

Illuminating Strengths: A Visual Approach to Character Strengths Identification in University Students

Photography

Character strengths

Self-reflection

Positive psychology

Qualitative research

In a context where creativity can be harnessed for both prosocial and potentially harmful aims, this qualitative study explores how university students experience using photography as a creative tool to identify and reflect on their character strengths. Nine psychology undergraduates took part in a week-long intervention where they captured 9 to 12 images of personally meaningful subjects. These photographs were then discussed in semi-structured interviews and analysed using reflexive thematic analysis. Four key themes were developed: Experiencing the Strength, Feeling Uplifted, Being Reflective, and Looking to the Future. Findings indicate that, for participants, engaging in photographing meaningful content appeared to support reflective processes and a clearer recognition of their strengths. Participants described a deepened emotional connection to their strengths, which appeared to support their ability to articulate and consider purposeful applications of these strengths in their lives.

While this study is not intended to be generalisable, it contributes to the growing field of arts-based psychological research and highlights the potential of visual methods in supporting student well-being and ethical self-concept development. The findings suggest that photography, when used reflectively, can encourage self-awareness and meaningful engagement with one's personal values and goals. The study was approved by a university ethics committee and conducted in line with British Psychological Society guidelines.

Smira Javed

The House of Wellness · info@thehouseofwellness.uk

The House of Wellness presents:

Illuminating Strengths: A Visual Approach to Character Strengths Identification in University Students by Smira Javed



Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has intensified mental health challenges, increasing demand for well-being support. Positive Psychology Interventions (PPIs) have shown promise in addressing such needs through strengths-based approaches. This study adapted Steger et al.'s (2014) photo-taking task to examine how university students use meaningful photographs to explore and connect with their character strengths, with possible implications for well-being.

Method

Participants: 9 undergraduate psychology students

Procedure: One-week photography task (9–12 photos of meaningful subjects)

Data Collection: Semi-structured interviews

Analysis: Reflexive Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke)

Results

Four key themes emerged

Experiencing the Strength:

Engaging with strengths through meaningful moments

Feeling Uplifted: Positive emotions linked to visual reflection

Being Reflective: Deeper awareness and internal dialogue

Looking to the Future: Envisioning goals and strength-based action

Conclusion

Participants found the photography task profound and enriching. The use of meaningful images supported self-identification of strengths and promoted emotional connection, self-reflection, and clarity around personal values. This creative approach offers promising applications for strengths-based interventions in higher education and beyond.

Further opportunities to connect- Email: info@thehouseofwellness.uk Visit: www.thehouseofwellness.uk

Connect: LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/samjaveduk/> . Experiential Training Workshop also available

Linked publication: [How do university students experience using photos to self-identify their character strengths? A Thematic analysis | Journal of Happiness and Health](https://journalofhappinessandhealth.com/index.php/johah/article/view/78) (<https://journalofhappinessandhealth.com/index.php/johah/article/view/78>)

Poster

Exploring Emotional Labor in Vietnam Advertising with LEGO® Serious Play®

Emotional labor

Cultural context

LEGO® Serious Play®

Vietnamese advertising

Background: Emotional labour (EL)—managing feelings professionally—is vital in advertising, yet under-researched in creative industries/specific cultures. This study explores EL among advertising professionals in Vietnam, a market facing collectivist values, harmony focus, hierarchy, and intense industry pressure.

Aims: We investigate how Vietnamese cultural values and economic factors shape professionals' EL during challenging client interactions, exploring their internal experiences, outward presentations, and coping strategies in relation to cultural norms and expectations.

Methods: This qualitative study involves 15 Vietnamese advertising professionals using LEGO® Serious Play® (LSP). Participants build three metaphorical models: internal experiences, external presentations, and coping strategies. LSP helps externalise complex, tacit EL emotions/cognitions via tangible metaphors, facilitating reflection and navigating cultural communication norms around sensitive topics. Model-building, concurrent narration, and Clean Language interviews provide rich data.

Results: Thematic analysis of interview/narration transcripts and model interpretations, using EL theory and Vietnamese cultural frameworks, will identify key patterns related to internal states, external displays, and coping mechanisms within this specific context.

Conclusions: Findings will illuminate EL complexities, offering practical insights for employee well-being and client management in Vietnam's ad sector. The research contributes understanding of EL in collectivist creative contexts, highlighting LSP's value for exploring sensitive experiential topics.

Tang Minh Nguyen

Hutech University of Technology · nt.minh@hutech.edu.vn

Exploring Emotional Labor in Vietnamese Advertising with LEGO® Serious Play®

TANG MINH NGUYEN
 ADVISOR: DR. SHELLY M. KEMP

Background

Emotional Labor (EL), initially defined as the management of feelings and expressions to meet organizational demands (Hochschild, 1983; Grandey & Gabriel, 2015), continues to be a significant area of research, with studies exploring its profound consequences on individuals and organizations (Humphrey, 2021). In service industries, a positive demeanor is often expected, regardless of true feelings (Hochschild, 1983).

Mismanaged EL, the gap between felt and displayed emotions, is linked to mental health issues (Jeung et al., 2018), impacting business turnover and productivity (Adams & Mastracci, 2020). These consequences affect customer relations, organizational reputation, and overall social well-being (Humphrey, 2021), critically impacting the service industry's health.

EL is crucial in Vietnam's advertising industry, **a collectivist culture** emphasizing social harmony (Nguyen et al., 2020). Current research often overlooks creative fields like advertising within specific cultural contexts (Mastracci & Adams, 2018).

This study investigates EL influenced by Vietnamese cultural values like "**Sự hài hòa**" (harmony) and "**Giữ thể diện**" (saving face), which shape emotional expression (Matsumoto et al., 2008; Giang et al., 2023). Understanding EL in collectivist Vietnam is critical (Mastracci & Adams, 2018), especially with its expanding advertising market (Ciochetto, 2013; Adger et al., 2012).

Aims

This study investigates how Vietnamese cultural values and economic pressures influence the emotional experiences of advertising professionals during challenging client interactions. The research questions are:

- **What internal emotions/thoughts are perceived** during challenging client interactions, relating to Vietnamese cultural norms?
- **How is outward presentation perceived**, how does this compare to internal experience, and how does this relate to cultural expectations?
- **What coping strategies are used** for the internal/external discrepancy, relating to cultural values?

YOUR VOICE MATTERS!

ARE YOU AN ADVERTISING PROFESSIONAL WHO



01 Works directly with clients?



02 Navigates the challenges of the creative process?



03 Operates within Vietnam's dynamic advertising landscape?

PLEASE PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY
 EXPLORING THE CRUCIAL ROLE OF EMOTIONAL LABOR
 IN VIETNAM'S ADVERTISING INDUSTRY.

WHAT'S INVOLVED?

A 2.5-HOUR INTERACTIVE WORKSHOP
 CREATIVE EXPRESSION USING
 LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY®

SHARING YOUR VALUABLE
 EXPERIENCES AND INSIGHTS

WHY PARTICIPATE?

HELP US GAIN A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING
 OF THE ROLE OF EMOTIONS IN
 PROFESSIONAL SETTINGS.

CONTRIBUTE TO RESEARCH ON
 EMOTION MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES
 OF VIETNAMESE AD PROFESSIONALS.

WHO CAN JOIN?

VIETNAMESE ADVERTISING PROFESSIONALS
 CLIENT-FACING EXPERIENCE ESSENTIAL
 ABOVE 18 YEARS OLD - ALL GENDERS WELCOME

EXPLORING EMOTIONS IN VIETNAM'S ADVERTISING

INTERESTED?
 CONTACT US!

NT.MINH@HUTECH.EDU.VN

STRICT CONFIDENTIALITY: YOUR PRIVACY IS VALUED.

Methods

This research explores EL's discourse process: managing self-presentation and communication to regulate emotions. It aims to reveal hidden aspects, linking language, non-verbal cues (LEGO® models), and emotional effort (James, 2014).

Participants will concurrently narrate thoughts and feelings during model construction (LSP Workshop procedure). Semi-structured interviews using Clean Language (Lawley & Linder-Pelz, 2016) will explore symbolic meanings (Brown & Collins, 2018).

A multimodal analysis (visual/verbal) (James, 2014) will be used for a comprehensive understanding.

LEGO® Serious Play® (LSP) is optimal for this qualitative study:

- **Overcomes Language Limits:** Expresses beyond words (Brown & Collins, 2018); vital in collectivist cultures where direct emotional articulation can be constrained (Nguyen et al., 2020).
- **Makes Emotions Tangible:** Externalizes thoughts/feelings via models (Brown & Collins, 2018; Quinn, Trinh, & Passmore, 2021).
- **Reveals Latent Aspects:** Uncovers tacit EL knowledge (Polanyi, 1966; McGehee, 2022). Three models: Internal Experience (Model 1), External Presentation (Model 2), Coping Strategies (Model 3) (Al-Jayyousi & Durugbo, 2020; Barton & James, 2017).

Outcomes (Expected):

This study will offer foundational insights into Vietnamese ad professionals' emotional discourse using LSP models. It fills a gap concerning advertising in collectivist, high power-distance cultures (Mastracci & Adams, 2018; Nguyen et al., 2020).

SCAN QR CODE
 FOR THE FULL
 RESEARCH PROPOSAL
 WITH REFERENCE LIST



Poster

The Magic Forest Keepers: Helping Children Build Resilience Through Storytelling

Resilience

Emotional development

Children's books

Storytelling

Creativity

This poster will explore how storytelling and illustration can support emotional resilience in children, using my self-published book *The Magic Forest Keepers* as a case study. Co-created with my mother, Kari, a clinical neuropsychologist, the book combines creative expression with clinical insight into how children process emotion. While I am currently completing my master's in psychology and working toward becoming a child psychologist, this project has been a way to explore the intersection of creativity and emotional development in children. The story follows a group of mushrooms living in a Norwegian forest who must work together to protect their environment, value their connections, and support their families. Each book in the planned 10-part series focuses on a different aspect of resilience, such as teamwork, feeling left out, understanding emotional needs, and navigating family dynamics. Through their adventures, children are invited to explore how they can face similar challenges in their own lives. At the end of each book, the "Forest Keeper Tips" summarise how the characters overcame the book's challenge, providing young readers with simple strategies they can apply in their own lives. I will share feedback from young readers, including how they engage with the story, point out colours and characters, and deepen their emotional connections with the themes. The illustrations, informed by Kari's clinical experience, use visual storytelling to reflect emotions and spark discussions about family, connection, and environmental responsibility. This project is grounded in the belief that books, music, and creative media can positively influence children's emotional development, particularly for those who may lack consistent emotional support at home. If a story can offer comfort, model resilience, or help a child feel seen, it becomes a valuable tool for growth and emotional learning.

Victoria Laliberte

King's College London · victorialaliberte1@gmail.com



Can storytelling help build emotional resilience in children?



Inspiration

- The Magic Forest Keepers
- Everyday emotional resilience



Relevance

- Overdiagnosing
- Misinformation
- Struggling public health & school systems
- Modern pressures (social media, metaverse)
- Accessible, holistic & easy to implement



Literature

- Art therapy used in trauma intervention (sexual abuse, domestic violence)
- Underdeveloped area
- No focus on children
- Hard to measure



Thesis

- Narrative synthesis
- Symbols/metaphors/concepts
- Non-verbal communication
- Existing evidence, difficult to link
- Longitudinal study?



Join us next year!

UK Creativity Researchers 2026 Conference

Edinburgh Napier University



Thank you!