ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Exploring the psyche of artists: Differences in ego functions, attachment and narcissism

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ABSTRACT

Background: Artist persona has always remained a point of interest in research realm. Though there exist several works in this line, but they focused on associating creative psyche with psychopathology. Few studies tried exploring the genetic and biological factors, but only a handful work tried exploring underlying personality traits in creative process. Even those works also focused on understanding basic factors like extraversion, neuroticism, etc. Less work is in line with other facets such as ego functions, attachment, and narcissism. Those existing have shade an ambivalent light. The present study tried to bridge this gap by delving deeper into artist personality. *Method and Materials:* A sample of 120 professional artists, engaged in vocal music, dance, acting, and painting for at least three years, was selected from Kolkata, West Bengal. A control group of 120 non-artist professionals from self-employment or MNC service sectors, with no formal training in any art form, was also included. Descriptive-comparative research design with multistage sampling was used, and all participants underwent a screening process. The General Health Questionnaire-12 (GHQ-12) was administered to rule out the mental health morbidity, with a cut-off score of 2. The main instruments used were the Ego Function Assessment Scale, Narcissistic Personality Inventory, and Attachment Style Questionnaire. Data analysis involved descriptive, multivariate, and correlational statistical methods. *Results:* Results revealed a significant role of ego flexibility, attachment patterns, and adaptive narcissism in artistic endeavours. Statistically significant differences were found between the artist and control groups, along with significant correlations among these three variables. These findings further elucidate the personality differences observed in the artist group. *Conclusion:* This work may find its applicability in training, development and nurturance of creativity and expressive art therapy.

Keywords: Creativity, artist, ego functions, attachment, narcissism

INTRODUCTION

The word creativity originated from the Latin term 'creo' which in simple words mean to make something or to create. Sternberg and Lubart (1999) defined[1] creativity as a dynamic process of producing a work that is novel or unique in nature. It is noteworthy that when the Western world of psychology described creativity as the phenomena of producing something meaningfully novel, Eastern perspective viewed creativity as an inward journey or movement that evolves through stages resulting in external manifestation of a wholesome execution[2].In this sense, the creative process can be explained as both an internal as well as external development. In this context, the persons who dedicate themselves in creative pursuits, and engage in presenting and representing various forms of aesthetics and arts like music, dance, painting, acting, writing, sculpting, etc. are considered as artists. Artists are exceptionally creative in nature, who manifest and express self through uniquely creative venture. These artists are most likely to take their art forms as a professional venture so that they can dedicate their entire lifetime in this creative process.

From the dawn of creativity research in psychology, researchers have constantly attempted to understand creative psyche in relation to mental health and personality factors.[3-5] The concept of ego psychology has

Access the Article Online

DOI: 10.29120/IJPSW.2024.v15.i1.618

Quick Response Code

Website: http://pswjournal.org/index.php/ijpsw

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How to Cite the Article: Majumdar A. Exploring the psyche of artists: Differences in ego functions, attachment and narcissism. Indian J Psychiatr Soc Work 2024;15(1):28-38.

gained much popularity. However, in-spite of few evidences regarding constructive part of ego functions in creative process, many earlier works on ego functions and its relationship with creativity have constantly been linked with psychopathology and mental health concerns[6-8]. This constant linking of mental health concerns with artistic persona has given rise to an ambivalent outlook towards the concept.

Along with exploring ego functions, another popular trend in creativity research is to understand the role of attachment pattern. Many researchers have argued that development of creativity within individuals is essentially embedded in the formation of their attachment. Several studies in this line, both earlier and recent, have specified that creativity blooms when an individual tend to experience secure attachment to remain preoccupied with own work by dismissing others for some considerable amount of time[9-13]. However, despite several studies opining about subtle role of attachment formation in artistic endeavour, there are few works that have placed more importance in the genetic and biological factors[14-17]. One exclusive work by Betty[18] (2011) totally negated relation between creative process and attachment styles.

Narcissism is described as an extreme level of self-absorption, which in psychological realm has been mostly linked with a state of dark and destructive personality. In context to psychological disorder, narcissism is also associated with psychopathology, as it is placed in Cluster B group of personality disorders. Many earlier works[19] have indicated a subtle link between narcissistic traits and artist persona. If narcissism is destructive and disorder condition, then how its relationship with creative psyche is giving rise to a novel disposition? Further, few researchers also opined that creativity is not necessarily comprising narcissism, rather narcissistic individuals pretend to be creative and manifest boastful and dominating behaviour pattern[20-22]. With these contradictory findings, the mystery of artistic persona remains.

These earlier works have kept the interest and zeal of finding what goes inside artistic minds alive. It is observed that artists are quite organized and thorough with their works, this organizational ability undoubtedly require structured thinking, sound, and flexible mind. Then linking creative psyche with psychopathological condition seems ambiguous and to some extent unfair. The present study, therefore purported to delve deeper in exploring the creative psyche and find answer to the ambiguity existing in this field of work.

Hence, in view of the mentioned ambivalent findings, the present study focused its aim to assess ego functions, attachment styles and narcissism components of individuals engaged in creative endeavour to gain insight into artistic personality. Further, this study also explored relation between ego functions, attachment styles and narcissism, if any, in connection with artist psyche.

Objectives of the study

1. To assess ego functions, attachment patterns, and narcissism between persons engaged in artistic profession and control group.
2. To explore relation between ego functions, attachment patterns, and narcissism of persons engaged in artistic profession.

Hypotheses: Keeping connection with the mentioned objectives of the present study two hypotheses were as follows:

1. There exists a significant difference in ego functions, attachment patterns, and narcissism between the persons engaged in artistic profession and control group.
2. There exists a significant relation between ego functions, attachment patterns and narcissism of persons engaged in artistic profession.

METHOD AND MATERIALS

Participants: A sample of 120 professional artists, who are professionally engaged in various art forms- vocal music, dance, acting and painting, for at least three years or more were selected as target group for data collection. Another 120 non-artist professional counterparts were selected as control group. All the participants selected were residents of Kolkata, West Bengal. Multistage sampling technique was implemented, based on descriptive-comparative research design, for sample selection.

Flow of the Multistage Sampling for Artist group selection: Sampling technique used was multistage sampling. The steps followed were:

Kolkata city was divided into 4 major zones- East, West, North and South. North and South zones were randomly selected for this study. Few popular art schools from these 2 zones were then selected randomly after careful screening of those schools which assist in grooming for reality shows and professional port-folio development. From all these schools, in each category of art, and from each zone, 10 schools were randomly selected to be approached for data collection purpose. 5 schools from various parts of North and 6 schools from various parts of South Kolkata, for each category of art, provided their informed consent first were finalized for collecting data. These 5-6 art schools of each category were then personally approached for data collection. Initially 10 students who were not very famous or popular but working successfully as professionals for at least 3 to 10 years, were collected at random order. Then 6 names were randomly selected from the previous list of 10 students. Final data collection was then done from 2-3 participants (both genders), from each zone of school of each art category (North zone- 5 schools; South zone- 6), from the randomly selected 6 names, whoever gave their informed consent first and provided sufficient time to complete filling-up the data sheets. Total of 30 participants' data from each art category (4 categories) from all these 11 schools of both zones were collected making it a final total of (30x4) 120 participants.

Inclusion & Exclusion Criteria: Both artists and non-artists professionals were included in the study after a screening process. The inclusion criterions for participant selection comprised of following points: They were between 20 and 40 years old, included both married and unmarried individuals, and had a monthly income ranging from Rs. 20,000 to Rs. 60,000. All participants held at least a graduate degree and had been professionally working for 3 to 10 years. Additionally, they resided in urban areas. Control group participants were chosen from self-employment or MNC service sectors and had not received any formal training in any art form.

Instruments used:

Preliminary information schedule to note the details like name, age, monthly income, marital status, years of professional experience, formal training received in any art form, years of training, etc. This schedule was used as the first level of screening process in participant selection.

General Health Questionnaire-12 (GHQ-12))[23] was then administered to the participants to understand their recent mental health status. For the present study a cut-off score of two (2) was considered as the qualifying criteria for the respondents for their final selection in the study process. This screening was done to ensure inclusion of mentally healthy individuals for the study, and to affirm the notion that artist personality does not only mean psychopathological conditions. For the research purpose, the three specific measures were used:

Ego Function Assessment (EF) Scale:[24] The Indian adaptation by Basu & Banerjee (1998) [24] of the ego function assessment scale comprising 12 sub-scales, originally devised (1973) [25] and modified by Bellak (1989), was used for the study purpose. The scale consists of total 120 items, and split-half reliability of the scale ranges from 0.52 to 0.86, and the Cronbach's alpha ranges from 0.50 to 0.78 for different sub-scales.

Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI):[26] The Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI) is a self-report measure. It evolved through a 54-item, four-factor version (Raskin & Hall, 1979) to its current 40-item, seven-factor version (Raskin & Terry, 1988). The NPI version used for this study includes 40-items that reflect 7 components. The scale demonstrates adequate reliability; internal consistency is reported as high (0.83), for alternate forms reliability was found to be 0.72, and for split-half reliability, the result was 0.80.

Attachment Style Questionnaire (ASQ):[27] The modified version of ASQ was developed by Van Oudenhoven, Hofstra and Bakker in 2003. The scale has been derived from theoretical model of Griffin and Bartholomew's Relationship Style Questionnaire (RSQ, 1994). The reason for using ASQ over the original construct RSQ is ASQ's high reliability which ranges from 0.59 to 0.81 for different sub-scales and its loading is also high (> 0.45) for the corresponding factors. Whereas, RSQ suffers from low reliability, especially for secure attachment style (r= 0.41) low factor loading as compared to ASQ. The construct validity of the ASQ is also satisfactory.

Data analysis: Descriptive, multivariate, and correlational statistical methods were employed for analysis purpose. Statistical tool used for the analysis was Statistical Package for the Social Sciences version 20 (SPSS-20).

RESULTS

In this research work the target (artist professionals) and control groups (non-artist counterparts) were taken as the independent variables, and the ego functions (12 components separately), attachment patterns (4 styles separately) and narcissism components (7 components separately) were considered as the dependent variables. In the following sections, the results of multivariate analysis of ego functions, attachment patterns and narcissism between artist professionals and control group, and the correlation between ego function, attachment styles and narcissism components of artist professionals, are tabulated and mentioned separately.

Ego Function Assessment

Results of multivariate analysis (MANOVA) to understand the group effect on 12 ego functions taken together reveals significant difference between the target and control groups.

Group, Wilk's Λ = .656, F (12, 227) = 9.899, $p = 0.0001$; partial η^2 = .344

Further, univariate ANOVA was calculated to assess the effect of group on each ego component separately.

The target group of artist professionals significantly differed in the number of ego function components where they mostly scored lower than their non-artist counterparts. The ego components in which control group participants scored higher were Reality testing, Judgment, Sense of reality, Drive control, Synthetic integrative function, and Mastery competence. However, in case of Adaptive regression component the difference noted was significant where the artist professional group scored higher than the control group (table 1).

Attachment Styles

Results of multivariate analysis (MANOVA) to understand the group effect on 4 attachment styles taken together reveals significant difference between the target and control groups.

Group, Wilk's Λ = .490, F (4, 235) = 61.199, $p = 0.0001$; partial η^2 = .510

Further, univariate ANOVA was calculated to assess the effect of group on each attachment pattern separately.

From result table 2, it could be observed that the target and control groups differ significantly in their attachment patterns. The artist professionals scored better in fearful style, revealing the control group individuals as more fearful in their attachment. Further, the artist group scored higher in preoccupied and dismissive attachment styles in comparison to their non-artist counterparts.

Table 1: Caparison in ego function components between target and control group

Ego Functions	Artist n=120 Mean ± SD	Non-Artist n=120 Mean ± SD	F (1, 238)	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Reality Testing	15.00 ± 2.970	17.05 ± 2.242	36.698	.0001	.134
Judgment	13.95 ± 2.650	15.94 ± 2.931	30.482	.0001	.114
Sense of Reality	14.79 ± 2.866	16.18 ± 2.421	16.504	.0001	.065
Drive Control	13.60 ± 2.711	15.45 ± 2.722	28.074	.0001	.106
Object Relation	07.91 ± 3.596	07.20 ± 3.339	2.559	.111	.011
Thought Process	15.19 ± 2.664	15.10 ± 2.632	0.072	.789	.000
Adaptive Regression	11.18 ± 3.238	10.19 ± 3.093	19.207	.0001	.075
Defensive Function	14.35 ± 2.851	14.93 ± 2.824	2.535	.113	.011
Stimulus Barrier	13.04 ± 2.574	13.65 ± 2.955	2.891	.090	.012
Autonomous Function	15.10 ± 2.880	15.45 ± 2.523	0.955	.329	.004
Synthetic Integrative Function	13.81 ± 2.869	15.31 ± 2.728	17.219	.0001	.067
Mastery Competence	14.68 ± 3.300	15.72 ± 3.031	6.483	.012	.027

Table 2: Caparison in difference in attachment patterns between target and control group

Attachment Styles	**Artist n=120 Mean ± SD**	**Non-Artist n=120 Mean ± SD**	**F (1, 238)**	**Sig.**	**Partial Eta Squared**
Secure	23.37 ± 3.531	23.50 ± 3.488	.087	.769	.000
Fearful	11.15 ± 2.782	2.67 ± 3.443	14.086	.0001	.056
Preoccupied	22.50 ± 4.130	14.61 ± 4.019	225.014	.0001	.486
Dismissive	16.69 ± 3.453	14.30 ± 3.096	31.897	.0001	.118

Table 3: Caparison in difference in narcissism between target and control group

Measure Narcissism	**Artist n=120 Mean ± SD**	**Non-Artist n=120 Mean ± SD**	**F (1, 238)**	**Sig.**	**Partial Eta Squared**
Authority	4.55 ± 1.459	2.65 ± 0.949	144.099	.0001	.377
Exhibitionism	2.76 ± 0.914	2.30 ± 0.742	18.174	.0001	.071
Superiority	2.48 ± 0.788	1.35 ± 0.763	128.026	.0001	.350
Vanity	2.16 ± 1.006	2.31 ± 0.829	1.586	.209	.007
Exploitativeness	1.15 ± 0.943	0.92 ± 0.675	4.850	.029	.020
Entitlement	1.19 ± 0.910	0.67 ± 0.675	24.928	.0001	.095
Self-sufficiency	2.85 ± 1.063	1.85 ± 1.050	54.605	.0001	.187

Table 4: Correlation of artist professionals for the components of ego functions and attachment style

Ego Functions	**Attachment Styles**				
	Values	Secure	Fearful	Preoccupied	Dismissive
Reality Testing	r	.186*	-.010	.053	.143
	p	.042	.912	.562	.118
Judgment	r	.179	-.168	.095	.168
	p	.051	.067	.301	.066
Sense of Reality	r	.189*	.100	.151	.093
	p	.039	.278	.100	.314
Drive Control	r	.090	-.110	-.011	.250**
	p	.326	.231	.905	.006
Object Relation	r	-.019	.135	-.215*	-.090
	p	.834	.142	.018	.328
Thought Process	r	.344**	-.042	.380**	.256**
	p	.000	.645	.000	.005
Adaptive Regression	r	-.071	.128	-.139	-.083
	p	.443	.163	.129	.367
Defensive Function	r	.214*	.096	.028	.166
	p	.019	.297	.759	.071
Stimulus Barrier	r	-.001	-.056	-.163	-.002
	p	.993	.543	.075	.980
Autonomous Function	r	.155	-.068	.174	.333**
	p	.092	.460	.057	.000
Synthetic Integrative Function	r	.150	-.061	.262**	.249**
	p	.101	.510	.004	.006
Mastery Competence	r	-.003	-.137	-.021	.248**
	p	.977	.137	.817	.006

df = 118 **Correlation significant at 0.01 level *Correlation significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Narcissistic Personality

Results of multivariate analysis (MANOVA) to understand the group effect on 7 components of narcissism taken together reveals significant difference between the target and control groups.

Group, Wilk's Λ = .463, F (7, 232) = 38.454, $p = 0.0001$; partial η^2 = .537

Further, univariate ANOVA was calculated to assess the effect of group on each narcissistic component separately.

From result table 3, it could be observed that the target and control groups differ significantly in their narcissism. The artist professionals scored higher in six out of seven narcissism components, namely authority, exhibitionism, superiority, exploitativeness, entitlement and self-sufficiency. Hence, hypothesis 1 is accepted.

Correlation between Ego Functions and Attachment Styles

Pearson Product Moment (r) correlation calculated between the components of ego functions and attachment styles for the target group of artist professionals to understand the relation between these variables under study.

Result table 4 reveals significant correlation between a few components of ego functions and attachment patterns for artist professional group. Strong positive correlation observed between reality testing, sense of reality, thought process, defensive function, and secure attachment; drive control, thought process, autonomous function, synthetic integrative function, mastery competence, and dismissive attachment style; thought process, synthetic integrative function and preoccupied attachment style; and a negative correlation was noted between object relation and preoccupied attachment.

Correlation between Ego Functions and Narcissism

Pearson Product Moment (r) correlation calculated between the components of ego functions and narcissism for the target group of artist professionals to understand the relation between these variables under study.

Table 5: Correlation of artist professionals for the components of ego functions and narcissism

Ego Functions		**Components of Narcissism**							
		Values	Authority	Exhibitionism	Superiority	Vanity	Exploitativeness	Entitlement	Self sufficiency
Reality Testing	r	.242**	.009	.208*	.084	.228*	.143	.290**
	p	.008	.920	.023	.360	.012	.119	.001
Judgment	r	.122	-.067	.040	.006	.104	.147	.018
	p	.183	.465	.666	.946	.258	.110	.842
Sense of Reality	r	.145	.045	.179	.129	.283**	.015	.211*
	p	.115	.622	.051	.162	.002	.867	.021
Drive Control	r	.059	-.130	-.039	.022	.097	.157	.047
	p	.522	.159	.676	.815	.291	.086	.609
Object Relations	r	.015	-.103	-.027	-.087	.039	-.147	-.003
	p	.868	.263	.768	.347	.676	.110	.973
Thought Process	r	.234*	.084	.332**	.317**	.352**	.096	.214*
	p	.010	.361	.000	.000	.000	.299	.019
Adaptive Regression	r	-.012	-.016	.076	-.002	-.038	-.036	.004
	p	.894	.866	.412	.985	.683	.697	.964
Defensive Function	r	.128	.041	.119	.070	.145	.191*	.172
	p	.163	.655	.197	.446	.115	.037	.061
Stimulus Barrier	r	.014	-.028	.060	.095	.001	-.125	-.093
	p	.880	.762	.512	.304	.994	.172	.313
Autonomous Function	r	.203*	.150	.217*	.081	.127	.152	.224*
	p	.026	.102	.017	.381	.168	.097	.014
Synthetic Integrative Function	r	.233*	.060	.136	.208*	.206*	.062	.159
	p	.010	.512	.138	.022	.024	.502	.082
Mastery Competence	r	.185*	.042	.179	.148	.067	.107	.224*
	p	.043	.648	.051	.108	.464	.244	.014

df = 118 **Correlation significant at 0.01 level *Correlation significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 6: Correlation of artist professionals for the components of narcissism and attachment styles

Narcissism Components	Attachment Styles				
	Values	Secure	Fearful	Preoccupied	Dismissive
Authority	r	.133	.089	.202*	.289**
	p	.146	.334	.027	.001
Exhibitionism	r	.116	.047	.065	.182*
	p	.208	.611	.480	.047
Superiority	r	.167	.105	.228*	.247**
	p	.069	.256	.012	.007
Vanity	r	.119	.153	.242**	.252**
	p	.194	.095	.008	.006
Exploitativeness	r	.277**	-.016	.216*	.245**
	p	.002	.866	.018	.007
Entitlement	r	-.057	.042	.070	.313**
	p	.540	.652	.448	.001
Self-sufficiency	r	.030	.178	.244**	.320**
	p	.746	.052	.007	.000

df = 118 **Correlation significant at 0.01 level *Correlation significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Result table 5 reveals significant correlation between a few components of ego functions and narcissism for artist professionals. Positive correlation noted between reality testing, thought process, autonomous function, synthetic integrative function, mastery competence, and authority components; reality testing, thought process, autonomous function, and superiority components; thought process, synthetic integrative function, and vanity; reality testing, sense of reality, thought process, synthetic integrative function, and exploitativeness; defensive function and entitlement; reality testing, sense of reality, thought process, autonomous function, mastery competence, and self-sufficiency components.

Correlation between Narcissism and Attachment Styles

Pearson Product Moment (r) correlation calculated between the components of narcissism and attachment style for the target group of artist professionals to understand the relation between these variables under study.

Result table 6 reveals significant correlation between a few components of narcissism and attachment patterns for artist professionals. Strong positive correlation observed between authority, superiority, vanity, exploitativeness and preoccupied attachment; exploitativeness and secure attachment style. Further, it is noteworthy that all seven narcissism components are found to be positively correlated with dismissive style of attachment. Hence, hypothesis 2 is accepted.

DISCUSSION

From the above section of results, it can be observed that the target group of artist professionals differ significantly from control group in terms of ego components, attachment styles and narcissism. Moreover, that the components of ego functions, attachment styles and narcissism of artist group found to be significantly correlated with each other. Thus, all the hypotheses are found to be accepted in this present study.

The artist professionals scored low in all the other ego functions, but in adaptive regression component scored considerably higher in comparison to their non-artist professional counterparts. This finding is in line with earlier studies conducted in the field[27-30]. Adaptive regression is that component of ego that helps make its functioning flexible resulting in creative integration. This is a general tendency of artist persona and creative minds to be unconventional and non-conformist. Creative minds often tend to daydream or fantasize, which could be considered the ideation phase. Again, to give shape to their ideas, artistic minds travel through the stages of elaboration and execution. This 'dual dwelling' or an adaptive journey between inner world of fantasy and outer world of reality requires certain extent of ego flexibility, which could be considered as the mark of artist persona.[31-33] The present work, thus, emphasized the notion

that flexibility of ego functions is crucial in development of creative potential as well as delivery of any art content. Many early research works linked psychopathology and mental ill-being with low scoring in ego function components for creative individuals. This connection to some extent has been overemphasized by not considering role of adaptive regression component. Artists and creative people score better in adaptive regression, thus, indicating and explaining low scores in other related ego components. Therefore, as revealed by the present study, it can be assumed that not the psychopathological condition rather a greater amount of ego flexibility is linked with artistic endeavors, which made the artist professionals score differently from their non-artist counterparts.

The component scores for ego functions, attachment styles, and narcissism of artist professionals observed to be correlating with each other. This correlation, along with observation of low score in fearful attachment and high in preoccupied and dismissive style in target group is noteworthy for this study. The preoccupation with self or with the work and dismissal of others that have been observed in this study could be considered a temporary phase for artistic individuals. Creative endeavors demand shutting oneself out of all kinds of distractions, especially during the incubation and the synthetic process phases[34]. Further, as the artist professionals in this study are showing less fearful pattern of attachment, they tend to feel more secure in expressing their preoccupation and dismissiveness. The preoccupied and dismissive style of attachment demonstrated by the artists, therefore, could be considered as their preparation towards a novel creation by shutting out distractions. This preoccupied and dismissive style can further be explained in the light of scoring high in adaptive regression function of ego. As mentioned regarding adaptive regression concept, it is a special ability to dwell in dual world of inner fantasy and outer reality. The artists or the creative minds during the ideation stage need to embark upon a journey inward, which during the stage of elaboration needs to be executed with real-life applicability.[35-38] Thus, preoccupation and dismissiveness are a journey inward, which is essentially temporary that finds alteration with production phase of creative process.

The most interesting and notable findings observed in this study are regarding narcissism. As previous researchers[39] have indicated an ambiguity in terms of narcissism and artist's personality, the present findings rule out those notions with its observation regarding difference in narcissistic components in relation to artist professionals. The earlier works[40] have conceived no link between narcissistic tendency and artists and have stated that narcissistic individuals rather boast and fake being more productive and creative through self-proclamation. Few studies[41-42] also opined that the relation between being high in narcissism and being creative comprised a thin line in psychopathological realm. In this sense, the narcissistic components found within creative individuals are more often perceived as eccentric, egoistic, and dark boastful personality patterns rather than as organized and productive. But the present work revealed a different facet of narcissism in relation to artist's persona. Not only did artist professionals score higher in various narcissistic components but also the components correlated positively with those of ego functions and attachment patterns. To be engaged and successful in artistic pursuits, individuals need a focused mind with high amount of dedication, self-control, and discipline. Moreover, artists require a strong sense of individuality and situational alertness to recognize and grab the available opportunity; alongside a well-organized mental activity needed to think, plan, and execute tasks independently in most unique and unconventional way. Wolson's (1995) work[43] on adaptive grandiosity of artists emphasized that creative individuals tend to show narcissistic traits with grandiose beliefs and to some extent manipulative attitudes, but this group particularly manifests an organized thinking pattern and task execution when it comes to their work in terms of artistic creation. Further, few early works have affirmed that persons with creative potential often tend to show cold, aloof, and distant behaviour, and exert authority and dominance during task execution process. These studies emphasized that manifestation of superiority and dominance channelizes a positive enthusiasm which helps in expressing creative ideas and generating sense of self-sufficiency. These findings are unique in not only unravelling an exceptional personality characteristic of artists but also

ruling out the existing notion of relating psychopathology with demonstration of narcissistic tendency in artists and creative persons.

Nevertheless, the results observed from the present study not only unveiled the importance of ego flexibility, role of attachment, and narcissistic tendency in artistic endeavors but also indicated a different outlook toward studying creativity. Most of the earlier works on creativity have been conducted on either art school student population or with organizational sector employees, where researchers tried understanding the underlying process of creativity demonstrated by individuals related to their work settings[44-47]. And another group of early studies on artists and creative persona, as also mentioned in introduction part of this article, have focused on exploring mental health-related concerns and underlying psychopathology in relation to creativity[48-52].

Implication: Despite these few limitations, this work has successfully unveiled some novel areas of artistic personality. The findings observed from this study could be effectively utilized to rule out the notion of psychopathology prevailing in relation to creative psyche. This work's findings can be applied in the processes of creativity training and expressive art therapy, as the concepts of adaptive regression and adaptive grandiosity can pave the foundation for development and nurturance of creativity. Further, this work can be utilized as a plinth to conduct an extension study focusing on qualitative aspects to explore and understand the artistic process and psyche in an in-depth manner.

Limitation

This study has several limitations. Firstly, despite the unique sample comprising four specific categories of artist professionals, the sample size is limited to only 120 participants. Additionally, since the data was collected solely from Kolkata, West Bengal, the scope for cultural variation is restricted. Moreover, the study relied exclusively on self-report measures, which limits the depth of the findings. Incorporating qualitative methods could have enriched the data and analysis, particularly in exploring attachment patterns and narcissism among the artist group.

CONCLUSION

The above-mentioned results and discussion sections indicate a very different facet of creativity research. First, the study is unique in nature for its group of samples. So far very few studies have empirically worked with artist population, and that too such diverse groups from various arenas of art endeavour. Hence, this work could be considered unique in its approach to assessing various underlying factors in terms of ego functions, attachment patterns, and narcissism among artist professionals. Furthermore, this study may help irradicate the age-old psychopathological notion associated with artistic personality by emphasizing more on the flexible cognitive interplay in pursuit of creation. Though this study has not directly delved into cognitive ability, but a subtle association may be conceived here in terms of the "dual dwelling" mentioned as adaptive regression and adaptive grandiosity. It may be considered that probably artist persona is more cognitively flexible to adapt to certain ways of thinking and emotional attachment patterns which help in facilitating creative pursuits. However, this link can only be confirmed when further work is done with artists where their cognitive factors are explored in connection with ego functions, narcissism and attachment styles.

Ethical clearance: Taken

Source of funding: Nil

Conflict of interest: None

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Received on: 08-07-2024

Revised on: 15-07-2024

Accepted on: 16-07-2024

Published on: 16-07-2024