

Happy extraverts are more creative: study

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(PhysOrg.com) -- Outgoing people who are in a good mood are significantly more creative than people who keep themselves to themselves, according to a new study.

In the first study to examine links between personality type, mood and performance, a psychologist at the University of Portsmouth found extravert people in a good mood are the most creative thinkers.

Introverts on the other hand are no more creative whether they are in a good or neutral mood.

Dr Lorenzo Stafford, of the psychology department, said his results showed personality and mood play a vital role in creativity.

Extraverts are likely to be more successful at creative tasks because they have a higher than average level of dopamine, the 'happiness chemical', in their brains than introverts and this chemical floods the brain at even higher doses when a person is in a good mood, according to Dr Stafford.

“The more outgoing a person is the more active their [dopamine system](#) is and a positive mood increases dopamine activity even further in many parts of the brain. It's effectively a combination of these two things I would suggest leads to greater activity in certain areas of the brain controlling [mental ability](#),” he said.

“This is interesting in itself because it demonstrates that it is the combination of the extravert personality-type in a positive mood which

encourages more creative performance, and not simply positive mood alone.”

Dopamine occurs naturally in the brain and affects a range of behaviour including mood, sleep, reward, learning and movement.

Dr Stafford’s research was published recently in the journal *Personality and Individual Differences*.

He said: “This is the first study to investigate how personality type and [positive mood](#) affect the [brain](#)’s ability to carry out mental - especially creative - tasks and the results are fascinating.

“Previous studies have shown that people in a good mood perform better overall at creativity tasks but finding that character type also influences creativity has added a whole new dimension.

“I hope these results will open the door for more research into how personality influences the mind.”

Eighty-six people took part in the study ranging in age from 18 to 53 years. Participants completed a questionnaire to determine their [personality-type](#) then listened to different types of music to put them into a good or neutral mood before completing a word association test, a response test and a memory test.

The word association test was used to assess participants’ creative ability. Subjects were given three words and had to find a common word that can be used to form a new word or phrase. For example ‘horn’ would be the solution for the words ‘french’, ‘car’ and ‘shoe’. Extraverts’ scores virtually doubled in a positive compared to a negative mood, whereas introverts hardly changed at all.

Provided by University of Portsmouth

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