

Happy extraverts are more creative: study

August 3 2010

(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

Citation: Happy extraverts are more creative: study (2010, August 3) retrieved 2 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2010-08-happy-extraverts-creative.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.