

Drawing Hobby As a Medium to Manage Stress and Self-development

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ABSTRACT

The pandemic has changed many aspects of life; mainly, most activities are carried out from home, starting from school, work, and shopping. Staying at home can reduce the risk of spreading the virus, but staying at home for too long may increase stress. This study is taken from various books and journals on psychology that discuss the relationship between stress and hobbies to relieve stress and as a medium for self-development. One of the hobbies that can be a stress reliever is drawing. There is a strong correlation that drawing can turn a negative quarantine impact into a positive one if the coping methods described are applied correctly.

Keywords: Pandemic, Drawing, Hobby, Stress management, Self-development, Art therapy.

INTRODUCTION

Many activities are currently being carried out at home due to a pandemic, and this situation is certainly not easy for the whole world community. Then activity limitations are applied to reduce the risk of a pandemic. However, a new problem arises because of this limitation, namely increased stress and anxiety, which can risk mental health. This paper describes stress, maintaining it, having a hobby as a stress reliever, and a medium for self-development.

RESEARCH METHOD

The method used in this article is a survey, where data is obtained from a questionnaire targeted at young adults aged around 17-25 years old. The survey aimed to see a correlation between hobby and mental health and their awareness of the positive effect of hobbies by seeing their willingness to make time for themselves and a literature review, where the researcher examines and processes theories and concepts obtained from collected sources related to the topics. The researcher's sources in this literature review are books and scientific articles related to theory, the concept of stress and hobbies to applying coping methods, and the benefits of hobbies. The articles reviewed are registered, have a DOI, and have been published in the last ten years. The books studied are also registered books, have an ISBN, have been published in the past ten years, and are written by people who have expertise in psychology.

Discussion topic about stress and hobbies is chosen due to current situations to see the correlation between the pandemic that affects mental conditions and activities such as drawing to reduce the mental impact that occurs due to the pandemic and other benefits for self.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Pandemic has been a highlight in the past two years. Furthermore, it has changed many aspects of life, starting from the downside of the world's economy, business, and healthcare system, including lifestyle changes. The fact that can not be denied is that the pandemic is also affecting the world community; life is not the same anymore. People have to shift and adapt their lifestyles, and the world's mental health is also affected by this phenomenon.

Studies have been carried out to monitor the effects of a pandemic on stress and the mental health of the world community. Most of them show that stress levels, depression, and anxiety increase during the critical time (Shevlin *et al.*, 2020). Stress in the context can be understood as conditions or events that are pressured and burdensome for humans to adapt to their environment or as a response to certain events that the self cannot control. Stress happens as a sign of adaptation

failure caused by the severity of the external pressure from the environment and the lack of ability to respond rationally and constructively (Gea, 2011).

Another impact due to pandemics is the lack of human interaction; Taylor et al. 2010 describe this happening along with the rules to minimize the spread of Covid-19. Such as the limitation of activity, social distancing, quarantine, and school and work closure, while the reliance level of support is severely needed to get through the hard times (Limcaoco *et al.*, 2020).

Studies and surveys also show that certain groups may have more severe effects due to the social and economic struggle during the pandemic. Those whose income has been affected, those with children, and people with pre-existing health conditions make them worried about the more devastating effects of the Covid-19 (Shevlin *et al.*, 2020). Other groups that are also affected by the pandemic are the layoff victim patients and mentally unstable people due to the pressure of a long period of quarantine which later could cause conflicts in a family such as domestic violence or even divorce (Rifani & Rahadi, 2021).

During this challenging time, the world now is aware of the importance of mental health and stress management, which is critical to maintaining because it allows people to work productively, realize potential and develop self, making a contribution to the community and increasing the ability to deal with stress (Rifani & Rahadi, 2021). In order to maintain our mental health, specific approaches can be adopted, such as focusing on things that can be controlled, having a good interpersonal relationship, and lastly, doing relaxation (Gea, 2011). As said before, lots of action has been taken to minimize the virus spreading. One of them is quarantine. Most people's activity has been shifted online, such as school, work, and even shopping. Staying at home and following the government's instructions is an excellent way to contribute to the pandemic, but staying home for too long can cause more stress as time management to running errands and responsibility become mixed. The way to maintain this is by applying stress management to life, and here is how;

In dealing with stress, we do not have control over the causes of stress, but we can control how we react to the stressor (Muslim, 2020). Stress management taught us that one of the ways to deal with stress is having a coping mechanism. According to Cohen and Lazarus (1979), coping is a cognitive and behavioral

effort to manage specific demands, whether it is external or internal, that is tiring or exceeding human capacity (Saleh Baqutayan, 2015). There are two kinds of stress coping functions: emotion-focused coping and problem-focused coping.

Emotion-focused coping is used to regulate the emotional stress response. If an individual cannot change the stressful environment, they regulate their emotions. While problem-focused coping is used to eliminate the stressor, this way is usually used by adults to learn new skills as a way to cope and tend to use these strategies if they are sure that they can change the situations (Muslim, 2020).

A general benefit of these methods is having instrumental and emotional support from large social networks, which provide positive experiences and a stable, socially rewarded role in the community. This kind of support will affect the overall well-being because the positive effect, sense of predictability and stability in life, and self-worth recognition can be felt by an individual (Saleh Baqutayan, 2015).

Doing an activity is also an effective way to cope with stress, the key while doing the activity is that its purpose is to zen out the lifestyle. How well an individual responds to life's troubles depends on several factors, including physical condition and how they take care of themselves (Parrouty, 2014).

Trying to find satisfaction in a hobby or interest can be another way of reducing stress. It is a big mistake to reject or abandon a hobby because it is less important than other responsibilities (Elkin, 2013). Make time out of the busy schedule for a few hours every week for me time. Spend time doing anything that relaxes the mind off the work or assignments, whether it is a hobby, interest, or spending time with loved ones. During that time, do not think of responsibilities, and that activity will boost spirit and happiness (Parrouty, 2014).

Having a hobby is very positive for stress; it provides joy and works as a stress buffer. When focused on a hobby, time seems to fly by, connecting with others with the same interest. This will isolate the worry and daily struggle (Elkin, 2013). A survey was conducted to study whether young adults aged around 17-25 years old are aware of hobbies' importance and positive effects. Out of 17 respondents, 16 always try to make time for a hobby or relaxing activity no matter how busy they are, which shows that young adults around 17-25 years old are aware of their well-being.

Do you always try to provide me time even though you are busy?

17 responses

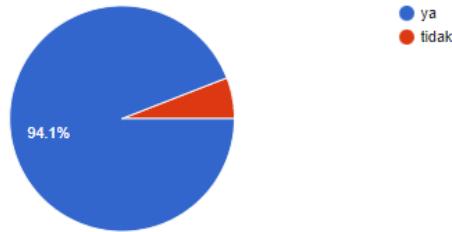


Figure 1 Survey question. (Sumber: personal survey, 2021)

A study has proven that well-being is linked to the ways people spend their time during the pandemic. The study found that activities, such as engaging in hobbies like drawing and being physically active, are the most significant benefit for overall well-being (Lades *et al.*, 2020). Suppose people engage in creative activity during a pandemic with a clear intention to spend time effectively, fight boredom and focus on meaningful activity. In that case, the quarantine will also have a positive effect (Karwowski *et al.*, 2021).

Hobbies are an excellent boost for mental health and reduce stress. The boosting part of hobbies is that it allows people to counter the pressures of demands daily by letting them engage in intentional inefficiency. It is where they let go of demands and let loose, becoming inefficient and unorganized (Gruman & Healey, 2018).

Another positive effect of having hobbies is self-development. Many people do hobbies as an alternative activity to spend time effectively and productively. Another plus point gained by doing a hobby is improving skills and self. The hobby refers to individual activity and leisure time for some people. A hobby can fulfill various functions in life, such as providing rest time and leisure, developing interest and talents, creative self-expression, and improving knowledge and skills (Krnjaic, 2020).

Also, if the hobby is taken seriously and passionately, it might be a good source of income. There are many examples where hobbies become a source of income, and they might not be boring since it is done passionately (AGGARWAL, 2015).

During Covid-19, many people seemed to be aware of the effect pandemic has on mental health, and many people started to take action or even more action to maintain their well-being. One of their efforts is seeking help or finding enjoyment in a hobby such as drawing.

Creating arts enhances stress management and, at the same time, makes it possible to reflect on the content and understand it because making art involves a complex dialog between emotion, cognition, and the senses. It helps people reach more enabling levels of meaning to create a sense of coherence (SOC) and induces organisms to manage stress (Huss & Samson, 2018).

Engaging in art-making activities, even for a short period, may significantly reduce anxiety, which can also reduce emotional stress (Nur Kamarina Binti Tajuddin and Keat, 2020).

Doing creative activities is a great way to channel stress into beauty. Creative activities can have a healing and protective effect on mental well-being. Creative activities can help promote relaxation, reduce stress, reduce blood pressure while boosting the immune system, and help us to practice mindfulness because the act itself brings us to the present moment (Nur Kamarina Binti Tajuddin and Keat, 2020).

Studies have proved the positive effects of creating arts on reducing stress. Creating art has become one of the therapy methods for all ages, young to elderly, for all kinds of problems such as stress, dementia in the elderly, mental illness, and even helping kids with neurodiversity.

As the pandemic never seemed to end, art spectrum therapy, exercise, or relaxation will be crucial for many people to deal with stress and the physical, emotional, and financial impact of lockdown and quarantine (Hilton, 2021).

Why art therapy? Therapists claim that art therapy is essential for spreading information, guiding expression and inspiration, developing resilience, helping stress and relationships, and intensifying hope (Hilton, 2021).

This theory is supported by studies that show that Two-thirds of studies resulted in improved symptom outcomes. Four of the included studies showed a significant reduction in depressive symptoms after eight to twelve weekly therapy sessions, equal to receiving traditional psychotherapy (Chiang, Reid-Varley & Fan, 2019).

Art therapy is known as the therapeutic use of art-making for people who experience illness, trauma, or challenges in living within a professional relationship such as therapists. After lots of studies proved the benefits of art therapy, thus it is used as a tool to overcome helplessness, passivity, and opportunity for self-expression and introspection (Cousineau, 2021).

Art therapy is a tool that can be utilized during quarantine to benefit individuals and maybe can be used throughout the life course (Hilton, 2021).

Art therapy is used to connect and help patients communicate with themselves, their environment, and the people around them. It also helps them increase their confidence as a coping mechanism, and cognitive and social functions, and decrease their symptoms (Chiang, Reid-Varley & Fan, 2019).

Art therapy has many benefits, from building confidence, understanding, and interacting with the environment to helping patients engage in a positive relationships, increasing motivation, decreasing loneliness, and promoting a sense of belonging (Cousineau, 2021).

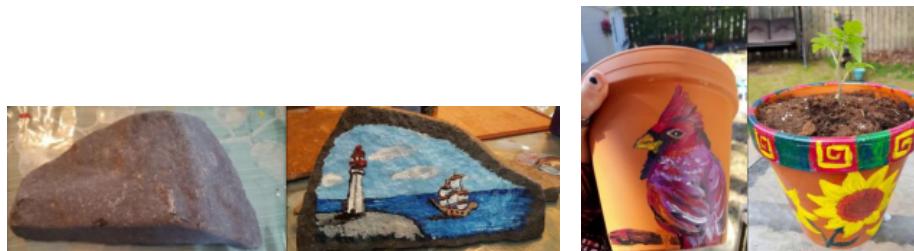


Figure 2 Rock Painting. (Sumber: Cousineau, 2021)

Figure 3 Pot Painting. (Sumber: Cousineau, 2021)



Figure 4 A Day in Quarantine Drawing. (Sumber: Cousineau, 2021)

Figure 5 Feelings of a World Falling Apart. (Sumber: Cousineau, 2021)

Further discussion is needed to learn deeper into this topic, how hobbies help develop positive emotions during the quarantine, and the correct method to develop skills through hobbies.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the pandemic changed our lives, and many actions have been taken to minimize the virus spreading, such as quarantine. Being in the quarantine may negatively affect mental health and increase stress, and it can be prevented if the stressor is known and the right strategy to manage stress is applied. One of the ways to manage stress is having a hobby such as drawing. Having a hobby is very beneficial to keep stress away. Hobby helps to detach from responsibilities and obligations, helps create a sense of coherence (SOC), and helps discover a hidden talent, which can also be a medium to develop skills that may be beneficial if taken seriously.

During Covid-19, many people seemed to be aware of the pandemic effects' on mental health; one of their efforts was seeking help or finding enjoyment in a hobby such as drawing.

Doing creative activities are a great way to channel stress into beauty. The creative activities can help promote relaxation, reduce stress, and reduce blood pressure while boosting the immune system and helping us to practice mindfulness. Engaging in creative activity may significantly reduce anxiety and reducing emotional stress.

Drawing has many benefits and helps people with any problem from any age, so it is used as a therapy method. Art therapy proved that drawing has many benefits, such as building confidence, increasing motivation, decreasing loneliness, and promoting a sense of belonging. Studies show a decreasing number of depressive symptoms, thus showing the effectiveness of art therapy and why it can help some people who struggle during the pandemic.

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