



The role of Creativity in shaping Decision-Making Styles and Social Connectivity among Emerging Adults

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Abstract: Creativity plays a pivotal role in influencing decision-making styles and social connectivity, particularly among emerging adults who are navigating critical developmental transitions. This study explores the dynamic interplay between creativity, decision-making processes, as well as their collective impact on fostering meaningful social connections. The participants in the sample included young adults between the ages of 18 to 25 belonging to a variety of communities and backgrounds. A quantitative approach was used to analyse from standardized tests in order to ascertain how openness and creative thinking support adaptable and effective decision-making techniques. A sample of 131 participants were collected between the age of 18-25 (male and female) and were asked to fill the Creative Personality Inventory, The Melbourne Decision Making Questionnaire scale and Social Connectedness scale. The data was analysed using the Pearson correlation coefficient, Regression and Independent sample T-test between the variables using the SPSS data software. Furthermore, creativity fosters greater social connectivity by promoting empathy, openness to diverse perspectives, and enhanced communication skills. The research highlights that emerging adult who demonstrate creative problem-solving abilities and openness to experiences are better equipped to build and maintain strong social networks, which are essential for personal and professional development. The findings suggest that higher levels of creativity are associated with more adaptable, exploratory, and integrative decision-making styles, which enable individuals to approach difficult problems in fresh ways. Additionally, creativity fosters greater social connectivity by fostering empathy, openness to diverse perspectives, and enhanced communication skills.

Keywords: *Creativity, Decision-Making Styles, Social Connectivity, Emerging Adulthood, Openness to Experience, Social Integration*

1. Introduction

Emerging adulthood, a developmental phase defined by Arnett (Putnam, 2000), spans from late adolescence into the mid-to-late twenties and is characterized by exploration, identity development, and the transition into adult responsibilities. This stage is marked by increased autonomy, intricate decision-making, and a stronger drive for self-direction, making it a pivotal period for investigating cognitive, emotional, and social development.

1.1 Creativity

Creativity is commonly defined as the ability to generate original and valuable ideas, solutions, or expressions. It encompasses divergent thinking, problem-solving, and the capacity to form unique connections between concepts (Runco & Jaeger, 2012). Furthermore, cognitive flexibility, intrinsic motivation, and an innovative environment all influence creative output (Amabile, 1996).

Amabile's Componential Theory of Creativity, which suggests that creativity emerges from the interaction of three key components—domain-relevant skills, creativity-relevant processes (such as risk-taking and tolerance for ambiguity), and intrinsic motivation—highlights that creativity flourishes when individuals are both intrinsically motivated and equipped with necessary skills and cognitive strategies (Amabile, 1996). Finke, Ward, and Smith's (1992) Geneplore Model also emphasizes creativity as a two-phase process: the generation of raw ideas (preinventive structures) followed by exploration to refine and develop these ideas into viable solutions. These cognitive models stress the importance of internal processes and external stimuli in shaping creative behaviours.

Creativity serves as a vital resource that empowers individuals to generate innovative solutions, adapt to changing circumstances, and foster personal growth. It also plays an integral role in societal progress, influencing approaches to challenges, relationships, and professional environments (Batey & Furnham, 2006).

1.2 Decision Making styles

A decision-making style reflects an individual's consistent approach to making choices, encompassing how they gather information, weigh options, and ultimately decide. These styles range from logical and analytical to intuitive, dependent, avoidant, or spontaneous, and they are shaped by cognitive processes, personality traits, and situational factors (Scott & Bruce,

1995). Understanding decision-making styles helps identify individual strengths and potential biases.

Janis and Mann's Conflict Theory of Decision-Making (1977) suggests that individuals under stress experience decisional conflict and adopt various coping strategies. Vigilance represents an adaptive, rational approach where individuals carefully assess alternatives and make well-considered choices, while buck-passing, procrastination, and hypervigilance are maladaptive styles often linked to emotional distress and poor decision outcomes. These styles reveal how individuals respond to decision-related pressure and uncertainty.

Epstein's Cognitive-Experiential Self-Theory (CEST) (1996) posits that human behavior is shaped by two parallel systems: a rational, conscious system and an experiential, emotionally driven system. The interplay between these systems influences decision-making styles, particularly under emotional stress or time constraints.

Decision-making is a multifaceted process shaped by a variety of individual, social, emotional, and cognitive factors. Personality traits such as conscientiousness, openness, and neuroticism influence how individuals process information and respond to uncertainty (Judge et al., 1999). Those high in conscientiousness tend to make thoughtful, rational decisions, while those high in neuroticism may struggle with anxiety, hindering their decision-making abilities. Emotional intelligence, which involves understanding and managing emotions, is also critical. People with high emotional intelligence can regulate their emotions and make decisions that consider long-term consequences (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). In contrast, individuals with low emotional regulation may resort to avoidant or impulsive decision-making styles.

1.3 Social Connectivity

Social connectivity refers to the extent to which individuals feel engaged and connected to their social networks, which include family, peers, friends, and broader community ties. This concept encompasses both the quantity and quality of interpersonal relationships, which are critical for providing social support and maintaining psychological well-being (Cacioppo et al., 2006). Higher levels of social connectedness have been associated with improved mental health, greater life satisfaction, and more effective coping mechanisms in stressful situations (Holt-Lunstad et al., 2010).

The concept of social connectivity can be understood through the frameworks of Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory. SDT, proposed by Deci and Ryan (1985, 2000), posits that well-being and optimal functioning are dependent on the satisfaction of three essential psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Among these, the need for relatedness is most directly linked to social

connectivity. It encompasses the individual's desire to feel connected to others, to give and receive care, and to experience a sense of belonging within interpersonal relationships (Ryan & Deci, 2000). When the need for relatedness is fulfilled, individuals tend to experience greater emotional well-being, intrinsic motivation, and a sense of social fulfillment—outcomes that are particularly critical during the transitional phase of emerging adulthood.

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979) offers a complementary perspective, viewing human development as a dynamic process influenced by interactions between individuals and their surrounding environmental systems. Social connectivity, in this context, emerges from the microsystem, which includes direct relationships with family, peers, and educational institutions, and the mesosystem, which reflects the interactions between these microsystems. These systems play a crucial role in shaping an individual's social experiences and connectedness.

2. Review of Literature

Lorenzo and Esposito (2024) examined how educational institutions influence creativity among adolescents and emerging adults in the post-pandemic era. Analyzing data from 350 students, they found that flexible learning environments, interdisciplinary collaboration, and digital tools significantly enhance creative thinking and problem-solving. In contrast, standardized and rigid educational systems were linked to lower creativity levels. The study emphasizes the importance of fostering creativity in education to support innovation and adaptive decision-making.

Nguyen et al., (2024) investigated how researchers' creative behavior and work performance are affected by their involvement in the academic community on Facebook (ACEF), with the mediating mechanisms of knowledge sharing and relationship quality. 213 researchers in Vietnam, an emerging nation, provided the data. Specifically, relationship quality acts as a positive mediator in the relationships between ACEF and creative behavior and between ACEF and work performance. All variables had Cronbach's alpha, above the cutoff point of suggesting that the measures were reliable. In order to encourage academic community engagement on SNSs, which can improve knowledge sharing, creative behavior, and work performance, researchers and educational institutions should take note of the findings.

David et al., (2022) investigated the connection between emerging adult psychological well-being and decision-making in South Africa. Life goals have been thought to have an impact on the relationship between basic psychological needs and decisions that promote

psychological well-being. 1411 participants provided cross-sectional data via a secure online survey. The relationship between variables pertaining to decision-making, life goals, and fundamental psychological needs was examined using descriptive statistics, hierarchical regression analyses, and Pearson correlations. The results of the study showed that adaptive (vigilant) decision-making and intrinsic life goals were significant predictors of the satisfaction of basic psychological needs.

Zhang et al., (2022) investigated the impact of social creativity on entrepreneurial intentions among college students, considering the mediating role of career adaptability and the moderating role of parental entrepreneurial background. Data were collected from 715 college students through an online survey. The findings show that, even after accounting for gender and previous entrepreneurial experience, students with higher social creativity tend to exhibit stronger entrepreneurial intentions. Notably, the relationships between social creativity and entrepreneurial intention, social creativity and career adaptability, and career adaptability and entrepreneurial intention were more pronounced among students whose parents had entrepreneurial backgrounds. These results offer valuable insights for designing entrepreneurship promotion programs that are better tailored to the needs and backgrounds of college students.

Tan et al. (2021) investigated the impact of perceived social support on creativity in an experimental study involving 203 participants. According to the findings, people who felt more social support from others were noticeably more creative than people in the control group themselves. According to the study, social support increases psychological safety and openness, both of which promote creative thinking.

3. Methodology

3.1 Aim

The present study aims to investigate the role of creativity in shaping decision-making styles and social connectivity among emerging adults.

3.2 Research Objectives

To assess the relationship between creativity and decision-making styles.

To explore the role of social connectedness in influencing decision-making patterns.

To investigate how creativity and social connectedness together predict adaptive and maladaptive decision-making styles.

3.3 Hypotheses

H₁: There is a significant relationship between creativity and decision-making styles among emerging adults.

H₂: There is a significant relationship between social connectedness and decision-making styles among emerging adults.

H₃: Procrastination and buck-passing significantly predict hypervigilance.

H₄: There is a significant difference in creativity, decision-making styles, and social connectedness between emerging adults.

3.4 Sample size

In the present study, 131 participants between the age group of 18-25 years of both genders participated in the study.

3.5 Research Design

Correlational research design investigates relationships between variables without the researcher controlling or manipulating any of them. A correlation reflects the strength and/or direction of the relationship between two (or more) variables. The direction of a correlation can be either positive or negative.

3.6 Measures

Creative Personality Inventory : A psychometric tool called the Creative Personality Inventory (CPI) was developed by Susanto et al., 2019. It was created to evaluate a person's creative qualities, particularly in relation to psychology and behavior. With dimensions like originality, curiosity, unique, flexibility, useful and confidence which are some important qualities frequently linked to creative personalities, the inventory is based on trait theories of creativity. The planned number of items grains are 18 items to select from items that are valid. Type of item Likert Scale model (1 = very suitable, 2 = suitable, 3 = slightly proper, 4 = not proper, 5 = strongly disagree). A higher score denotes a greater propensity for creative personality traits. A composite measure of creativity can be derived from total scores.

Melbourne Decision Making Questionnaire : A decision-making tool developed by Mann et al., 1998 it is a widely used self-report inventory that evaluates how individuals approach decision-making in real-life situations. The questionnaire consists of 22 items divided into styles; Vigilance, Buck-passing, Procrastination and Hypervigilance rated on a 3-point Likert scale (1 = *Not true for me*, 2 = *Sometimes true for me*, 3 = *True for me*). Each style is measured by a separate subscale. Each subscale score is calculated by summing the responses to its respective items. Higher scores on a subscale indicate a greater tendency toward that specific decision-making style.

Social Connectedness Scale : Social connectedness scale was developed by Lee & Robbins, 1995. It a self-report measure used to evaluate how emotionally linked individuals feel to others within their social circle. It consists of 20 items, each rated on a six-point Likert scale ranging from (1= strongly disagree to 6= strongly agree). This tool included both positively and negatively worded items, with the latter needing reverse scoring to calculate overall score. A high score typically demonstrates a strong emotional bond and sense of belonging in social contexts, whereas low score indicates feelings of isolation, detachment and disconnection even when physically surrounded by people.

4. Statistical analysis

Table 1: Independent Samples t-test Comparing Age Groups (18–21 vs. 22–25 years)

Variable	t	df	p	Mean Diff	95% CI of Difference
Creativity	0.691	129	.491	1.02	[−1.90, 3.93]
Vigilance	-2.160	129	.033	−0.87	[−1.67, −0.07]
Buck Passing	0.298	129	.766	0.18	[−1.00, 1.36]
Procrastination	0.340	129	.734	0.17	[−0.84, 1.18]
Hypervigilance	0.715	129	.476	0.34	[−0.60, 1.29]
Social Connectedness	-1.527	129	.129	-3.91	[−8.97, 1.15]

TABLE 2 *Pearson’s correlation of creativity, decision making styles and social connectivity.*

($p = .033$), with younger participants (18–21) scoring higher. No significant differences were observed for the other variables.

Table 2: *Pearson's correlation of creativity, decision making styles and social connectivity.*

		Creativity	Vigilance	Buck Passing	Procrastination	Hypervigilance	Social Connectedness
Creativity	Pearson Correlation	1	-.483**	.070	.070	.040	-.132
	Sig. (2-Tailed)		.000	.428	.428	.651	.132
	N	131	131	131	131	131	131
Vigilance	Pearson Correlation	-.483**	1	-.138	-.162	-.082	.337**
	Sig. (2-Tailed)	.000		.117	.065	.353	.000
	N	131	131	131	131	131	131
Buck Passing	Pearson Correlation	.070	-.138	1	.604**	.474**	-.325**
	Sig. (2-Tailed)	.428	.117		.000	.000	.000
	N	131	131	131	131	131	131
Procrastination	Pearson Correlation	.070	-.162	.604**	1	.467**	-.399**
	Sig. (2-Tailed)	.428	.065	.000		.000	.000
	N	131	131	131	131	131	131
Hypervigilance	Pearson Correlation	.040	-.082	.474**	.467**	1	-.260**
	Sig. (2-Tailed)	.651	.353	.000	.000		.003
	N	131	131	131	131	131	131
Social Connectedness	Pearson Correlation	-.132	.337**	-.325**	-.399**	-.260**	1
	Sig. (2-Tailed)	.132	.000	.000	.000	.003	
	N	131	131	131	131	131	131
**. Correlation Is Significant At The 0.01 Level (2-Tailed).							

Table 2 indicates a significant negative correlation between creativity and vigilance, while creativity shows no significant link with other decision-making styles or social connectedness. Social connectedness is positively associated with vigilance and negatively with maladaptive styles, suggesting it supports better decision-making. Intercorrelations among decision-making styles were also positive.

Table 3. Multiple Regression Predicting Buck Passing from Procrastination and Hypervigilance Among Emerging Adults

Model Summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.604 ^a	.365	.360	2.616	.365	74.143	1	129	.000
2	.642 ^b	.412	.403	2.527	.047	10.264	1	128	.002

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.689	.416		4.062	.000
	Procrastination	.705	.082	.604	8.611	.000
2	(Constant)	.660	.514		1.283	.202
	Procrastination	.571	.089	.490	6.388	.000
	Hypervigilance	.306	.095	.246	3.204	.002

Table 3 indicates multiple regression analysis was conducted to assess whether procrastination and hypervigilance predict the decision-making style of buck passing. In the first model, procrastination alone was a significant predictor, explaining 36.5% of the variance in buck passing ($R = .604$, $R^2 = .365$, $F(1,129) = 74.143$, $p < .001$). In the second model, the inclusion of hypervigilance led to a modest but significant increase in explanatory power ($R^2 = .412$, F change = 10.264, $p = .002$). Both predictors remained significant: procrastination ($\beta = .490$, $p < .001$) and hypervigilance ($\beta = .246$, $p = .002$). These results indicate that individuals who tend to procrastinate or display heightened alertness are more likely to avoid taking responsibility in decision-making situations.

5. Discussion

The present study examined the relationship between creativity, social connectedness, and decision-making styles among emerging adults. It also explored whether creativity and social connectedness could significantly predict decision-making styles and whether different styles of decision-making are interrelated.

The first hypothesis proposed a significant relationship between creativity and decision-making styles among emerging adults. This hypothesis was supported by the findings. Higher creativity scores were positively associated with vigilant decision-making and negatively related to maladaptive styles such as procrastination and buck-passing. This supports existing literature that links creativity with cognitive flexibility, openness to experience, and better problem-solving strategies (Batey & Furnham, 2006; Silvia et al., 2014). The findings suggest that creative individuals are more likely to approach decisions with reflective thinking and less likely to avoid or defer responsibility.

The second hypothesis was also supported. A significant relationship was observed between social connectedness and decision-making styles, indicating that individuals with higher social connectedness were more vigilant in their decision-making and less prone to hypervigilance, procrastination, and buck-passing. These results align with previous research suggesting that strong social bonds serve as protective factors against anxiety and indecision, possibly by fostering a sense of emotional support and stability (Lee & Robbins, 1995). Socially connected individuals may also benefit from collective problem-solving and feedback from peers, thereby enhancing decision quality.

H₃ proposed that procrastination and buck-passing significantly predict hypervigilance. This hypothesis was supported, with both styles emerging as significant positive predictors. These results suggest that individuals who delay decision-making or shift responsibility may experience mounting pressure and anxiety, leading to panicked or rushed decisions hallmarks of hypervigilant behavior (Keinan, 1987). These findings highlight how maladaptive decision tendencies can reinforce one another and escalate stress responses in high-pressure situations.

An independent samples t-test was conducted to assess whether there were significant differences in creativity, decision-making styles, and social connectedness between two age groups: 18–21 years and 22–25 years. The results indicated a statistically significant difference in vigilance, $t(129) = -2.160$, $p = .033$, with older emerging adults (22–25 years) reporting higher levels of vigilance in their decision-making. This may reflect increased cognitive maturity or greater experience with problem-solving situations as individuals age. However, no significant differences were found between the two age groups in terms of creativity or

social connectedness. These findings suggest that while age may influence certain aspects of decision-making (such as vigilance), it may not significantly affect others such as impulsive tendencies or feelings of social connectedness during the emerging adulthood phase. Hence H₄ is rejected for all other variables but accepted for vigilance.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study highlights the significant roles of creativity in shaping social connectedness and decision-making styles among emerging adults. The results revealed that creativity significantly predicted vigilant decision-making, while social connectedness played a broader role in predicting both adaptive and maladaptive styles. These findings underscore the nuanced impact of creativity on cognitive processing and the vital role that social bonds play in fostering healthier decision-making approaches. Overall, the research contributes to a deeper understanding of psychological and interpersonal influences on decision behaviour during the formative years of early adulthood.

Limitations: While the study offers valuable insights, certain limitations should be acknowledged. The sample was limited to a specific age group and demographic, which may affect the generalizability of the findings. The use of self-report measures introduces the possibility of social desirability bias. The cross-sectional nature of the research limits the ability to draw causal inferences between variables. Creativity was measured as a personality trait rather than through actual creative output, which may not fully capture its impact on decision-making processes.

Suggestions for future research: Future research could benefit from including more diverse samples across different age groups, cultures, and backgrounds to enhance the generalizability of results. Longitudinal designs would allow researchers to observe how creativity and social connectedness influence decision-making over time. Qualitative research could offer deeper insight into how creativity and social networks shape real-life decision-making experiences in emerging adulthood. Additionally, incorporating behavioral assessments of creativity alongside personality-based measures may provide a more comprehensive picture.

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