

## CULTURAL ACTIVITIES, ARTFORMS AND WELLBEING

Fujiwara D & MacKerron G. & O'Connor N. Arts Council England – January 2015. Available online at [http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/Cultural\\_activities\\_artforms\\_and\\_wellbeing.pdf](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/Cultural_activities_artforms_and_wellbeing.pdf).

### Introduction

The report looks at the link between happiness and relaxation and cultural activities. Data was collected using the Mapiness iPhone app through which tens of thousands of individuals in the UK submit their activities and wellbeing observations in real time. This research is the first to use such data in a cultural study. The results were controlled to allow for a range of other factors which could affect wellbeing results.

### Key Findings

The research shows a statistically significant association between arts and cultural activities and individual levels of happiness and relaxation.

While there were recorded differences between the result for different artforms and cultural activities, these were found to be marginal.

The study also recorded whether levels of happiness and relaxation associated with cultural activities were greater than, or less if the individual was alone or with others. There was found to be no real difference to the effect on happiness and relaxation whether participation was solitary or in a group, suggesting that the cultural activity itself increases wellbeing and the positive association cannot simply be attributed to the benefits of social activity.

### Evidence

The table below shows the impact of varying activities on happiness levels, with the cultural activities listed in pink. Coefficients indicate a positive or negative relationship with the activity in question with negative numbers showing a decrease in happiness and positive numbers showing an increase in happiness.

Activity	Coefficient
Theatre, dance, concert	8.735
Singing, performing	7.731
Exhibition, museum, library	7.457
Hobbies, arts, crafts	5.737
Talking, chatting, socialising	3.789
Drinking alcohol	3.646
Listening to music	3.518
Childcare, playing with children	2.888
Reading	2.331
Watching TV, film	2.084
Housework, chores, DIY	-0.651

The second table shows the impact of varying activities on relaxation levels, with the cultural activities listed in pink. Coefficients indicate a positive or negative relationship with the activity in question with

negative numbers showing a decrease in relaxation and positive numbers showing an increase in relaxation.

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>
Exhibition, museum, library	6.017
Hobbies, arts, crafts	4.618
Theatre, dance, concert	4.483
Singing, performing	4.171
Reading	4.124
Drinking alcohol	4.045
Watching TV, film	3.562
Listening to music	3.027
Talking, chatting, socialising	2.859
Childcare, playing with children	0.877
Housework, chores, DIY	-3.668

### **Support for Culture Counts advocacy**

The research shows that arts and cultural activities are linked to higher levels of individual happiness and relaxation. The positive association is found across varying forms of activities and remains constant whether culture engagement takes place alone or with others.

This evidence contributes to Culture Counts' beliefs that:

- Cultural is fundamental to our quality of life.
- Culture makes important contributions to improving the learning, health wellbeing and confidence and quality of life for individuals and our communities.

### **Other Sources**

Further studies that provide evidence of a positive association between culture and wellbeing are Museums and happiness: The value of participating in museums and the arts, Fujiwara D, Happy Museums Project, April 2013 - [http://www.happymuseumproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Museums\\_and\\_happiness\\_DFujwara\\_April2013.pdf](http://www.happymuseumproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Museums_and_happiness_DFujwara_April2013.pdf).

Quantifying the Social Impacts of Culture and Sport, Fujiwara D, Kudrna L, Dolan P - Department for Culture, Media and Sport, April 2014 - [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/304896/Quantifying\\_the\\_Social\\_Impacts\\_of\\_Culture\\_and\\_Sport.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/304896/Quantifying_the_Social_Impacts_of_Culture_and_Sport.pdf).

Healthy Attendance: The Impact of Cultural Engagement and Sports participation on Health and Satisfaction with life in Scotland, Leadbetter C & O'Connor N. Commonwealth Games Culture and Sport Analysis, Scottish Government 2013 - <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0043/00430649.pdf>.

A full range of research relevant to the Culture Counts campaign can be found on our Delicious page - <https://delicious.com/culturecounts>.