Environmental affects on Creativity

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Introduction

My report on creativity examines the relationship between physical environments and creativity, specifically how different surroundings can affect peoples abilities to come up with new ideas, focus, and overall be more creative. My research focuses not only on environments themselves but, comfortability, familiarity, and organization. By making my own personal observations and looking t existing research, my report explores how different environments can either support or limit creativity.

My research for this topic helped me explore the connection between the two. Lee and Lee (2023) reviewed 33 studies and found that things like visual stimulation, lighting, and privacy can influence creativity. Similarly, Rhee et al (2025) I perceived was research on other environmental factors such as lighting, nature, and the layout of the space you are in. McCoy and Evans (2002) focused more on interior design but found that natural views, colors, and other visual details can influence creative thinking. Blomberg and Kallio (2022) reviewed existing research like myself and really helps develop an understanding of how physical spaces reflect your creativity like workspaces, social dynamics, and the relationship itself between creativity and spaces.

after reviewing all my sources and using my own data, I became interested in how different environments affect my creativity in everyday situations. I noticed that certain environments such as a clean space, a familiar room, sunshine, or even quietness deeply affected my ability to be creative or come up with new ideas. This data led me to develop my research question, “How do different environments affect my creativity and ability to come up with new ideas?”

Methods

My methods for collecting personal research began with holding little experiments. When I needed to be creative or come up with new ideas I would go to different places to see if I would feel more creative or limited.

I ended up being able to come up with a significant amount of data wether it was positive or negative. Places I was familiar with, like my room, places with natural lighting or a view of nature, and quiet places I found made me more creative. Whereas places I am not so familiar with, loud, or weird bright lighting just gave me a headache and limited any creativity I could’ve had.

At first I carried around a notebook where I would record my findings, but I found myself forgetting it a lot and It being a hassle to whip out whenever I felt creative. So I started a new list on my iPhones notes app. My phone I bring everywhere and can just slip in and out of my pocket. I feel like collecting data this way was important for my study because it seems more natural and less like a chore. When I'm feeling creative and “in the zone” I don’t want to have to sidetrack myself for research purposes, it seems like I’m just back tracking. I ended up just combining my written data with the data I collected on my phone and I think I was able to collect a lot more in doing so.

Findings

1. morning routine- I feel more creative when I have time to get ready and organize my things for the day.

2. Clean bedroom- When my room is clean and organized, I feel less distracted and can think more clearly.

3. Messy bedroom- When my room is messy, I notice myself getting distracted by things I need to clean instead of focusing on new ideas.

4. Quiet room- Being in a quiet room helps me organize my thoughts and focus on developing ideas.

5. Noisy room- Loud conversations or other background noise can make it harder for me to concentrate

6. Natural sunlight- Being in a room with sunlight can improve my mood and help me feel more awake and motivated.

7. Dim lighting- Dim lighting can help me feel relaxed, but it can also make me tired and less motivated.

8. Outside- Sitting outside helps me relax and think of new ideas about fashion, business, and plans for the future.

9. Outside- looking at the sky, seeing birds can make me imagine different art works i can try

10. Parks/ outside- Being in a natural environment can help me feel less stressed and more open to thinking creatively.

11. Coffee shops- Sitting in a coffee shop inspires ideas for decorating, fashion, social media, and business because I notice the environment and people around me.

12. Busy public places- Being around different people can give me inspiration, but too much noise and activity can also distract me.

13. New environment- Visiting a place I have never been before- the Filson downtown, makes me notice different colors, styles, layouts, and decorations that i like

14. Clothing stores and boutiques- Looking at clothing displays, colors, and outfit combinations can inspire fashion ideas and help me think about how stores attract customers.

15. Comfortable spaces- Sitting somewhere comfortable helps me relax and brainstorm without being rushed- in this case my new vanity chair

16. Uncomfortable spaces- If a chair is uncomfortable or the room temperature is unpleasant, I focus more on being uncomfortable than on my ideas.

17. Warm environments- A comfortably warm environment can help me relax, although too much heat can make me tired and less focused.

18. Cold environments- When a room is too cold, I may become distracted and have trouble focusing on what I am trying to think about.

19. Neat workspace- Having my supplies and belongings organized makes it easier to find what I need and focus on a task.

20. Messy desk: Too many items around me can make it harder to concentrate on one idea at a time.

21. Bedroom versus living room- Different rooms can affect my mood and focus differently depending on how comfortable, quiet, or organized they are.

* in this case I'm more comfortable in my bedroom but also because they are decorated different

22. Indoor versus outdoor environments- Being indoors helps me relax and focus on things like homework and hobbies, while being outdoors helps me be more creative and gives me inspiration

23. Bright and colorful spaces- Seeing interesting colors, patterns, and decorations inspire ideas for outfits, room designs, and art projects.

24. Plain environments- A boring room with is good for fewer distractions and helps me focus on one idea without being distracted by everything around me.

25. noises- Sounds like birds, wind, and leaves can create a peaceful environment that helps me relax and think- especially when I'm tanning on my trampoline

26. noises- Hearing people talk in the background may sometimes inspire ideas, but conversations that are too loud can interrupt my concentration especially at work

27. Crowded places are cool for me to experience new styles and others ideas, but they can also make me feel overwhelmed.

28. Spacious environments Having more open space can make me feel less confined and more comfortable thinking through ideas.

29. Changing locations- Moving from one environment to another may help me see a problem differently when I feel stuck.

30. Being familiar with a space like my house, room, work, the gym can help me feel comfortable and get into a routine and keep my thoughts organized

31. When the space around me feels peaceful, my mind feels like its slowing down and i can think through ideas without feeling pressured.

32. When I'm under a lot of stress and not in a familiar place there is a lot happening around me, I trouble focusing and coming up with ideas.

33. nature- Looking outside at trees, buildings, or the sky can give me a short break and help me return to a task with a new perspective.

34. agave and rye- Interesting artwork, furniture, and decorations inspire ideas about how to design or improve a space.

35. Preparing my space before starting a task- Cleaning my desk, gathering supplies, and removing distractions can help me brainstorm

36. Working in an unfamiliar place- Being somewhere unfamiliar can make me pay more attention to my surroundings and notice details I might usually overlook.

* Even though sometimes unfamiliar places make me feel stressed out I'm in a nice cute coffee shop I haven't been to before and I'm organizing my day

37. Being surrounded by things I like can make me feel comfortable and more confident sharing or developing creative ideas.

38. environment- Having privacy can make it easier to think freely, while being around other people can sometimes make it so I can't focus

39. An environment with lots of visual activity- I'm at a carnival and I feel very creative but not able to really focus on one thing

40. An environment with minimal distractions- Fewer distractions can help me develop an idea more deeply instead of jumping between different thoughts.

Discussion

Across my observations, I noticed an important finding is that different environments appear to support different kinds of creativity. Some environments help me focus and organize my thoughts, others inspire creativity, and then some just limit my creativity altogether.

Clean and organized spaces, quiet rooms, and comfortable surroundings seem particularly helpful when I want to concentrate or develop an idea, and natural light, parks, and clothing stores, often give me visual inspiration and encourage me to think about new possibilities.

However, not every environmental feature has a consistently positive effect. Dim lighting, and comfortability can help me relax but may also make me tired. Unfamiliar places can inspire new ideas but paired with too much visual stimulation and loud noises make me too distracted and limit my creativity overall.

1. Clean and Organized spaces

One of the most noticeable patterns in my data collection was the difference of my creativity and ability to think when my space or room is clean or unorganized. When my bedroom or workspace is clean, I feel less distracted by the things around me. I can focus more easily on what I want to accomplish and spend more time developing my ideas. When my room is messy, I sometimes begin thinking about the things I need to clean or organize instead of concentrating on my original task. Organization feels like a big key in being able to think clearly, if my space is organized, my mind will be too. These observations connect with the ideas of Lee and Lee (2023) and Rhee et al. (2025), they both review how physical arrangements and the characteristics of a space reflect on one's creativity. My personal research suggests that organization helps the with the concentration needed to develop new ideas and be more creative.

2. Quiet rooms and background noise

Another important factor I found within my research was the amount of noise in my environment when I'm in a quiet room and I'm uninterrupted I find it easier to concentrate on an idea and organize my thoughts. I feel like a quiet environment, makes it easier to be creative and think through different possibilities. Loud conversations and excessive background noise, however, can make it difficult to keep my train of thought interruptions caused me to lose focus and concentrate when I'm trying to be creative on the other hand. I have noticed that being around people and having a little bit of background noise can provide inspiration, for example being in a public space like a coffee shop or a nicely decorated restaurant can help inspire ideas about fashion, social media, interior, design, etc. This made me realize that noise and things going on around me do not always affect my creativity in the same way there's times a quiet environment may be more useful when I need to come up with ideas while a public environment may give me inspiration. So in this way, the amount of stimulation that feels helpful may depend on the task in my ability to concentrate.

3. Nature and natural light

Spending time outdoors is another situation where I noticed creative thinking when I sit outside in the sunshine, I often feel inspired to think about activities, plans, and new possibilities for example, I have thought of fun dates ideas while sitting outside and consider what to get for my sister for her birthday while spending time in a park looking at natural things like the sky clouds and observing the surrounding areas can also encourage me to be more creative. These experiences suggest that nature provides visual details that can give me something new to think about. I want to group nature and natural light together because I feel like they go hand-in-hand with the visual stimulation you're getting from the outside world hence a bright room can make me feel more awake but depending on the lighting, it could give me a headache, whereas dim lighting can help me relax, but sometimes makes me feel tired. This difference shows that lighting could affect my creativity, depending on my mood and energy level. This data relates to the environmental factors mentioned in Lee and Lee (2023), Rhee et al. (2025), and McCoy and Evans (2002), specifically of their research of natural elements, lighting, and window views. My experiences align with their ideas, so I think they are worth studying.

4. Comfortable environments/ personal space

My bedroom is an example of how personal space and comfort can affect my creativity. When I am in a comfortable, familiar environment, I feel more relaxed and have an easier time brainstorming new ideas, such as nail designs or outfits. This connects to McCoy and Evans (2002), who discuss how a physical environment, such as visual details, can help create spaces that support creativity. Lee and Lee (2023) also discuss how factors like privacy and the arrangement of a space can influence creative thinking. I notice that when I have a comfortable space to myself, or I'm somewhere I'm familiar with, I can focus better and think of new ideas

more easily. However, when I am uncomfortable or distracted by my surroundings, it becomes harder to concentrate. This shows how having a personal space that feels comfortable and fits my needs can support my creativity.

Conclusions

My findings from this research indicate that physical environments really can and do have an affect on creativity and the ability to come up with ideas. Across my observations, there were clear patterns of environmental impact positively and negatively. Grouping the patterns into distinguishable groups made it even clearer to see how things like organization, comfortability, familiarity, and natural surroundings impacted my ability to focus on new ideas and be creative, my findings also suggest that different environments may support different types of creative thinking. My personal observations are consistent with the reviews by McCoy and Evans (2002), Blomberg and Kallio (2022), Lee and Lee (2023), and Rhee et al. (2025). Each course identifies physical environment features that can influence creativity. The findings from my project demonstrate how these factor into everyday environments and affect individual creative experiences.

A limitation in my research was that the data collection was based on my individual observations rather than a larger group of people. This makes it hard to determine wether some of the same environmental factors would affect other people in the same ways. Additionally creativity can be affected by other factors within a single person such as mood, opinion, and energy. Future research could include a larger group of people for data collection, longer observation periods, and in a more study like setting. This would provide a better understanding of which environmental factors have the greatest influence on creativity.

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