



## The Position of mood swings and affliction of artists' artistic creativity using the Grounded Theory Method

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### ABSTRACT

*This study was carried out to investigate and determine the establishment of the moral casualties and fluctuations in artistic people creation. The applied method is based on the grounded theory and quality-based cases in this research. About six artists (three males and three females) of painting creative artists using target-based sampling method were taken up in this study. A semi-structured interview was carried out in order to gather the related data. The data analysis process was carried out in three open, coordinated and selective coding phases; finally, the obtained results were designed in a paradigm model. The obtained results of the present study were appeared in five processes of central phenomenon, background-based conditions and intervening, causative conditions, navigations and categorization consequences and interrelationship of the processes. One of these results determining the purpose of the research is subjected to the moral casualties and fluctuations as the main causative conditions among artistic creative people.*

**Key words:** moral casualties, pain, creation, grounded theory

### INTRODUCTION

Without doubt one of the most beautiful humankind's feature is the power of creativity. It is with the help of the same quality that humankind is able to fulfill its idealistic aim and enhance their abilities. In literature and the logic of psychology, the issue of creativity is raised within topics related to the discussion of intelligence and thinking and reasoning. Nowadays, psychologists, sociologists and other scientists have recognized the value and importance of creativity and would place emphasis on that; because they all have found out this fact and believe that science and art and technology owes to mankind and is the product of man creativity process, and there is a correlation between them and the process of creativity (Peivaste gar and colleagues, 1389). With regard to the essence of creativity, there are several definitions and interpretation been offered that each one alone contains defects and needs supplementary explanations. It seems that since creativity is expressed in different ways, it is thought of as a syndrome or a set influenced by various factors such as character, genetic make-up, social environments, biological factors and culture, creative production, the process of creativity (Fouli and Park, 2005; quoted by Zare, 1389). Eysenck (1979) believe that creativity is a mental process that leads to the solution to the problem, idealization, conceptualization, making art forms and theorization that is novel and unique. One of the elements existing in creativity and it defines the relationship between humankind and existence in such a deep and mysterious way is "art". Art is regarded as the most widespread and beautiful expression of human creativity. Artistic creativity is regarded as one of the types of creativity which refers to what we expect of art and artists and their intellectual creativity. Torrance (1998) defines artistic creativity this way; "Creativity is the ability to creating a new and novel topic to the extent that it is completely unique. Creativity exists potentially in every body and at all ages, but according to conducted researches, artist people's score is higher than ordinary ones' (Mahmoudi, 1379). Becker (1989) believes that a great number of people take part in the process of creativity but only few of them are recognized as creative artists (Becker, 1982). Then, it can be said that not any creative person is known as an artist and also, not any artist is regarded as creative.

This research focuses on the artistic creativity of artists. Artist people who have been able to create something new and unique from their inside and mind. Creators of masterpieces are included in the

category of artist people; because they have a basic need to discover and create something new; the one that could be comprehensive, coherent, harmonious and beautiful. But, there are a few people who find such an opportunity, and more importantly, there are even fewer people who direct their determination and expedient towards such work. Following several researches conducted on creative people's temperament and characters, a moderate correlation between some specific traits of personality and creativity has been seen. Traits such as independence, self-reliance, self-confident, non-conformity to group are of noticeable personality features of creative people. These people are less affected by others and not satisfied being face with uncertain and complex situations. These people are curious and inquiring and have great imaginations. These features to some extent differentiate them from the others (Baron and Hanigton, 1981). One of the important issues related to creativity is the discussion of its relationship with psychopathology and mental health. Researchers through studying biographies, medical documents, letters and artists' other documents have confirmed that generally among artists and especially among authors and painters psychological trauma is higher (Fadaei, 2009). Through the investigation of creative people's mental health, some researchers identify the existence of an element of disturbance and incidence of mild personality disorder and in several cases mood swings in some people (Prentki, 1989). Pour afkari (1373) views mood as a lasting emotional condition (Pour afkari, 1373). In fact, mood consists of 3 general states: normal, elevated or depressed; people ordinarily experience intermittent shifts in broad spectrum of mood. These intermittent shifts in mood swings are called mood states (Saduk and Caplan, 2007). These swings are sometimes normal and at times abnormal and would become so severe that it is referred to as mood disorders. There are several theories that have proposed the relationship between mood swings and creativity. But, the results of these investigations have not been concluded yet. Some of researches attribute creativity to a mental disorder especially mood disorder. However, some other researches have indicated that not only the amount of the incidence of mental disorders in terms of creative activity is low in some cases, but there is no sign of disorder in most of creative people (Khosravi and Gilani, 1386). The relationship between creativity and genius to mental disorder has been under consideration for at least two thousand years. Aristotle attributed creativity to epilepsy, melancholia and depression. Aristotle has written "Those who have been counted as personages in philosophy, poetry and art, all have had the tendency to depression" (quoted by Pour afkari, 1373). But in the early twentieth century, Ellis with publishing a book in England rejected the relationship among insanity, creativity and genius. On the whole, it can be said that not every creative people are affected by a mental disorder and not any psychopath is a creative and talented person. But, looking at the number of people owning artistic creativity who have been affected by mood swings like maniac-depressive, brings this picture to mind that there might be a relationship between creativity and mood disorders (Pourafkari 1373). Creators of masterpieces such as Kafka, Hemingway, Van gogh, Beethoven, Tchaikovsky are of this group. Vincent Van gogh, famous Dutch painter, was one of the artists who had suffered from severe mood swings and he had made 200 paintings during the periods of mania (Pourafkari, 1368). But, there are researches that reject the relationship between being creative and mood swings and refers to the negative relationship between mood swings and creativity (Khosravani and Gilani, 1386). Thus, it cannot be claimed that there is a causal relationship between creativity and mood disorders, but this hypothesis is worth examining that perhaps creative artists possess special structures of personality and mood so that on the one hand, it prepares them for creativity and on the other hand, it steers them towards some behavioral problems; that this issue will create a difference between them and other people in the society which follows aftereffects like avoiding the community, difficulties in establishing interindividual relationships, lack of being understood by others and so on. Therefore, mood swings may have a different position and role in creativity. Will mood swings have an influence on creation, quality and quantity? The current research attempts to realize what position can mood swings has in artist's creativity. As stated before, creative artists are distinct from other people in some aspects. They are highly sensitive to what is occurring in their internal and external environment. In fact, their sense of fragility and sensitivity which is combined with pain and suffering, distinguishes them from others. Since the time when man stepped on the earth, pain and suffering has traversed around the worldwide along with him. In the life of humankind, pain and suffering seem to be inevitable factors and man values anything causing him to escape and releasing from them (Gorji, 1388). Philosophers believe that the issue of pain and suffering like any other philosophical issues is either credit-based and subjective or objective and empirical. Any phenomenon and issue that we can consider it to be independent in terms of its existence, that issue is objective and if the quality and quantity of the phenomenon is subject to the individual's mind, it is called credit-based and subjective. Thus, since the issue of suffering arises from individual subjective presuppositions, it is credit-based. Perhaps an occurrence would seem painful for me but normal for the other and this is and indicator for it being subjective. Some believe that suffering plays an important role in the artist's creativity. Suffering causes the artist to achieve to a kind of self-awareness. When an individual has difficult, painful and even

passionate experiences, he can gain insights which could be deep and meaningful and maybe these painful but passionate lead to the creation of a creative and durable work (AYugoslavian artist expresses his view about suffering this way "An artist has to suffer. It is through suffering that the best pieces of work emerges. Suffering brings transformation with and the artist's spirit will gain ascendancy through it"). Some also are against this viewpoint and believe that this high sensitivity, pain and suffering are the grounds formost of psychological distress that can prevent him from creating works. Now, according to existing evidence, this research is an attempt to answer this question that what position mood swings and human sufferings can hold among artists' creativity and genius. Do these two issues act as a stimulus for the development of individual creativity? Or cause apathy and inactivity in the artist's mind. Santosa and his colleagues (2007) proved that people with a background to bipolar disorder in comparison to healthy people and people with a background to chronic depression disorder had significantly gained a better score on the SAWB scale. Simenova and colleagues (2005) support the relationship between bipolar disorder and creativity and the relationship between the transfer of creativity to family and genetic predisposition to bipolar disorder. Ludwig (1994) proves that considered Russian women feel the pain of mood disorder more than the rest of the members of patients.

**Research procedure:**

The participants in this research are 6 (3 men and 3 women) people of creative artists in painting and drawing, between the ages of 25 and 35 who are at least undergraduates and from Tehran. The researcher has selected the samples from creative people who had created something new and novel in painting and drawing.

**Collection tool:**

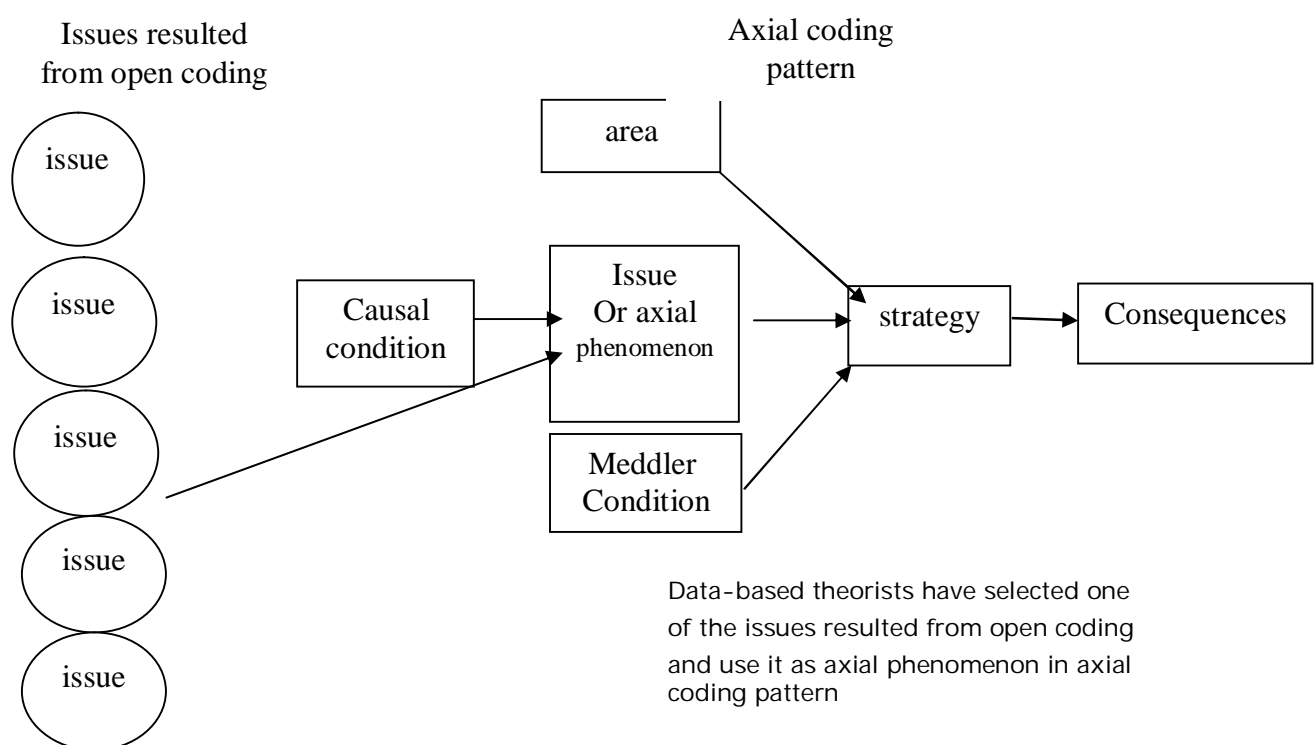
In this research, according to the grounded theory method and with a view to the topic, interview technique has been used to gather data.

**Analysis procedure:**

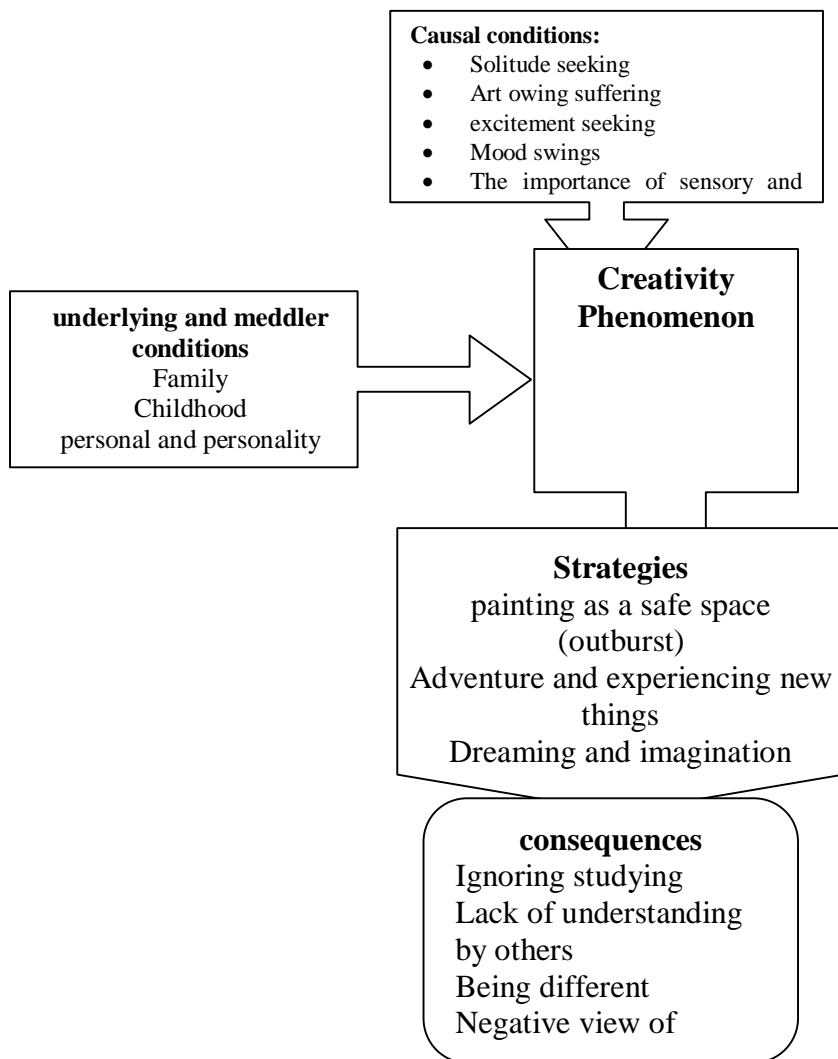
Information analysis using open selective axial coding and finally findings have been drawn in the form of a as a paradigm in the form of a diagram. Srauss and Cobin's (1998) recommended procedure has been used for data analysis; in a way that each interview text was studied and data coded several times. Three stages of open axial and selective coding were done on the data. To that end, first each interview text was read line by line and then open codes were extracted. In open coding, statements and occasionally words that formulate a concept were coded.

At the next stage, coding was done in the axial form; in a way that resulting codes were compared to each other and the codes that were similar to each other in terms of concept were divided in a class so that the stages were gradually formed. The stages were also compared with each other and if necessary, were merged together or separated from each other until the themes were finally obtained. The manner of the relation among formed issues with each other were specified in selective coding.

**Figure 1-4-The coding of data-based theory; from open coding to axial coding pattern**



**Figure 2-4-The results of Paradigm model produced from the research**



### **DEBATE AND CONCLUSION**

As already stated, creativity is one of the concepts deserving consideration in the field of psychology that by delving more and taking advantage of conducted researches and studies in this field, it seems that we call an individual creative when a kind of creativity or innovation can be seen in his thoughts or behaviors. The same topic puts forward a set comprising different causes such as personality, genetic make-up, social environments, biological factors and culture. It is right here where the element of "Art" needs to be distinguished in this concept as well, and that it is to be specified that artistic creativity as one of the kinds of creativity consists of those who have been able to create something new and unique from their instinct and mind. Since artistic creativity includes a set of different complex matters and how it emerges and its product involves different matters, the process of the research progressed along with the main question "What position do mood swings and suffering hold in artistic creativity?". In fact this research was conducted through grounded theory method with the aim of determining the position of mood swings and suffering in artists' artistic creativity. It is necessary to mention that for reason of the selection of the grounded theory method of research, no hypothesis was not specified in the current research, because the purpose of examination was not in the form of hypothesis but the aim was to clarify dimensions and the core concept of artistic creativity and its different definition and also determine the position of mood swings and suffering as influential factors among the others that have been under consideration so far. Meanwhile, according to limited researches carried out in this area, in this research, it was tried that based on the gathered data though a face-to-face interview with artists, a deeper understanding of the link of related issues was created. The findings of the current issue indicates that among people who are interviewed, most of the considered factors had a noticeable impact on the process of artistic talent and indeed in their art life. These factors have caused the product of their creativity to be more affected by

causal conditions obtained from the results of the research. In this respect, when creativity is defined as the result of the conflict created in the unconscious mind or nature from the perspective of psychoanalysis, the concept of "unconscious idea" which is expressed by individuals could be explained and understood. Unconscious mind makes an attempt to find a solution in order to resolve the created conflict which it can be the creation of work. In Freud's view, creative work is stimulated by unresolved conflicts and is connected with nature and unconscious. This process is in close proximity to the content that examined people have expressed. Meslo also cited two kinds of creativity: primary and secondary; and considers the primary creativity to be originated by unconscious. It is obvious that these theories refer to the one which has been gained in considerations. If creativity comes out from the depths of the human's mind and characters and his unconscious part, then these kinds of introspections is a form of deliberate thought that some disorders like depression can cause inside journey. Researches indicate that people who are in states of minor depression are more realistic than ordinary people and such people's ideas are near to reality. Hence, this direct and open encounter and confrontation with reality, it should naturally be accompanied by some pain and suffering; the pain and suffering that Eliot cites and believes that human cannot tolerate reality too much and too long. Irritable and sensitive moods are the other obtained concepts that Jamison considers it to be a sense of fragility and sensitivity that is combined with awareness, pain and suffering. These are very sensitive and have a high sensitivity to what occurs in their internal and external environment. When a person have difficult, passionate, great and even painful experiences, he or she can garner insights which are deep and meaningful and cause a creative work to be made and created. Some theories regard the existence of suffering for creativity as necessary and important and believe that creative people should not avoid pain and suffering, they should honestly encounter suffering so that they could achieve excellence and growth. This manner of thought has been accepted in most of cultures and a lot believe that art has the aspect of therapy and healing the suffering more. This is exactly what it was referred to through the analysis of the interviewees as "painting as a relaxation". In fact, art and creation of artwork are counted as a kind of balm that it can highlight the role of "art therapy" which is also counted as one of the researcher's concerns. Perhaps it is possible that through the spread of art therapy, we could take a major step in healing most of the Psychological Problems.

Usually successes and great special achievements are not influenced by emotional stability, satisfaction and peace but they are caused by the experience of suffering, sensation seeking and psychological stress and such things that bring innovation. Mental distress may facilitate creativity directly because these distress cause persistent experience of suffering and following that, creative people attempt to express and resolve those conflicts using creativity. The analysis resulted from interviewing creative artists implies that these people can work long times without exhaustion and experience creativity at a high level similar to hypomania episode. Indeed, the concept that is expressed by interviewees as "continuous painting without exhaustion" states this point. On the whole, it should be acknowledged that traits related to mood swings such as the experience of the period of depression, mania or hypomania increase creative people's creativity power. People whom these studies are conducted on see the existence of suffering and experiences of sadness as part of themselves and their creative work and apparently they cannot be separated from them and perhaps this is the reason that they avoid their psychological treatments and have negative views about it. In their opinion, the alleviation of these sufferings is the end of their existence and suspect that along with the end of their sufferings, their art will also be destroyed. As Jameson has already noted, most of creative people have no tendency to refer to psychologists in order to get their pains sufferings reduced that this matter cannot be understandable for others. The current psychological treatments have set the prescription for some of painkillers and tranquilizers on their agenda in order to get the devastating effects of the pain and mood swings reduced. But, in Jameson's opinion, the prescription for these medicine will come at a high price and that is why it faces the general intelligence of a person with interruption and confronts the individual's excitement with an obstacle and that is why most of creative people who have emotional and mood disorder have no tendency to pursue the medical treatment. This lack of pursuits are at times saddening and become tragic and some of artists and geniuses have been affected by severe mental and spiritual illnesses and even brings an end to their lives. Anyway, if it is observed that sometimes creativities will be caused by sufferings or such issues, this shows that an amount of suffering and distress are necessary for the incidence of creativity and naturally it brings in a benefit for the whole of mankind. If we cite these people's vigilance, intelligence, acumen, ingenuity, we need to understand them and look at all their aspects with respect and value all their pains and sufferings. Of course it is clear that treatment and healing of such sufferings are needed to a degree until they reach a relative balance and it should not be imagined that pain and suffering are originated from creativity so that we leave weak and ill people alone. Dangerous activities, unconventional way of life, and lack of accepting uniformity are other obtained results and deserve reflection. The feature of excitement seeking in these people needs excitement, new various and complex experiences and the

tendency to take health and physical risks are caused by these experiences. An individual who seeks excitement too much prefers the constant external stimulation of brain, would never get tired of ordinary work and is constantly searching for the ways to increase arousal through an exhilarating experience. Individuals who seek excitement are ones who have qualities such as Extroversion, self-determination, courage and incoordination. In religious and political perspectives, they tend more towards free thinking and have more tolerance when facing ambiguous situations like taking a trip to strange places, listening to exciting or unusual music, experiencing addictive drugs or living in the form of non-collective and heterogeneous. They have more tendency to leave familiar environments and go to new places and take trips to unfamiliar places: that this concept is illustrated since these people these people accepted the suggestion of having an interview easily. With regard to what is obtained from observing and having an interview with artists, it was clarified that people who have a high creativity are autonomous, have self-confidence in their relationships with others, do not have conformity and seek danger. They act differently from traditions or customs or needs and views of other people and they respect their needs first and organize their lives in a way that they maximize independent and self-actualization opportunities. Creative people also tend to address something which Freud calls it thought or primary process. This means that mental imagination, dreams and daydreams which are sometimes so transparent that the differentiation between this physical stimulants and reality is possible be difficult. These people are constantly looking for new experiences and if they cannot find them in external occurrences, they will be likely to search them in the hypothetical internal world or create them in their imagination. According to "investment theory", creative people produce ideas which look like to depreciate assets. These assets and ideas are generally not accepted by people. Usually when creative ideas are offered, are seen as inappropriate, useless or even stupid ideas and they are rejected. In addition, a person who offers creative ideas is always suspected and scorned. This lack of understanding by others in sensory and emotional matters will be clarified which cause difficulties or hardship in interindividual relationships especially with the opposite gender.

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