

Abstract

In North America, it has been systematically found that intrinsic motivation and problem finding facilitate creativity, while extrinsic motivation hinders it except for in the terminal phase of validation and communication of ideas. The goal of this study is to examine the relationship between motivations, problem finding and creativity in a Chinese context. 38 Hong Kong college students engaged a creative writing task in experimental conditions resembling those of an in-class task. Participants were shown a 10' movie clip and asked to write a story "as dramatic and creative as you can" based on it in 35'. The whole process was videotaped for assessing problem finding in the form manipulations of the clip and text. Creativity of stories was evaluated blindly and independently by a teacher and a peer. Findings confirmed the expected positive relationship between intrinsic motivation and creativity. As expected, intrinsic motivation correlated positively with problem finding. Surprisingly, problem finding correlated negatively with creativity. The unexpected potential negative mediating effect of problem finding on the association between intrinsic motivation and creativity suggests that intrinsic motivation may fail to facilitate creativity if it stimulates a non-exploratory, detail-oriented form of problem finding.