HOW HOBBIES, MUSIC, AND FILMS HELP US

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Abstract: This article provides a broad overview of the role and impact of creative activities in human life. It discusses how hobbies contribute to personal development, mental well-being, and social connection. The paper also examines the influence of music and music therapy on the brain, emotion regulation, and cognitive processes, supported by scientific findings. Furthermore, it highlights the advantages of using films in second-language learning, particularly in improving listening, pronunciation, vocabulary acquisition, and learner motivation. The second part of the article critically analyzes the ecological consequences of contemporary land art and artistic interventions in natural environments. Overall, the paper emphasizes both the positive effects of creative activities on human development and the importance of ecological responsibility when interacting with natural ecosystems.

Keywords: hobbies, music, music psychology, music therapy, films in language learning, motivation, mental health, cognitive development, ecology, land art, art and nature, creative activities, education, stress reduction, language skills.

Introduction

Human creativity takes many forms—hobbies, music, films, and artistic interaction with the natural world. Each of these activities reflects the human desire to learn, express emotions, build identity, reduce stress, and find meaning in everyday life. Research consistently demonstrates that hobbies improve personal well-being, music influences cognitive and emotional systems of the brain, and films offer powerful tools for language learning by providing authentic exposure to real communication. At the same time, artistic expression has expanded beyond traditional spaces and increasingly enters natural environments through environmental art, land art, large-scale installations, and multimedia projects. While the intention of such works is to highlight nature's beauty or communicate environmental messages, they sometimes cause ecological damage, unintentionally contradicting their own purpose. As creative activities become more central to education, psychology, and culture, it is important to examine not only their benefits but also their consequences. Hobbies improve mental health and foster personal growth; music and music therapy activate complex neural systems that influence memory, emotion regulation, and cognitive development; and films in language learning create enjoyable, motivating, effective learning experiences. Yet, the same creative impulse that enriches human life can also harm natural ecosystems when artistic interventions disregard environmental limits. This dual nature of creativity reveals a profound tension between human expression and ecological responsibility. The following research explores these dynamics by examining the psychological, educational, and neurological value of hobbies, music, and films while critically assessing the ethical challenges of artistic intervention in natural landscapes. Understanding this balance is essential for developing a sustainable and responsible approach to creativity—one that supports human development without harming the environment.

1. The Importance of Hobbies for Mental and Physical Well-being

Hobbies are more than simple leisure activities—they are structured, purposeful, and personally meaningful practices that support long-term development. Engaging in a hobby stimulates enthusiasm, improves self-identity, builds community connections, and helps individuals cultivate skills in a chosen area. Whether gardening, sewing, knitting, or collecting items, hobbies create routines that support emotional resilience and mental clarity. Research shows that hobbies reduce stress levels, increase life satisfaction, and improve mood by offering a sense of mastery and personal fulfilment. Creative hobbies such as painting, writing, or crafting reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression, creating therapeutic effects comparable to mindfulness activities. Furthermore, certain hobbies contribute to physical health; for example, hobbies involving movement—such as walking, hiking, or dancing—can reduce blood pressure, strengthen the cardiovascular system, and lower the risk of chronic illness. Neurologically, hobbies stimulate beneficial brain processes, increasing adaptability, supporting memory function, and promoting cognitive flexibility. In this way, hobbies play a vital role in maintaining holistic well-being throughout life.

2. Music Psychology: Understanding How Music Affects the Brain

Music psychology examines how musical experiences influence human behavior, cognition, and emotion. Music engages multiple parts of the brain, including the amygdala (emotional processing), the hippocampus (memory formation), the nucleus accumbens (reward center), and the prefrontal cortex (cognitive regulation). Because of this neural complexity, music has unique psychological effects. On the cognitive level, music enhances the development of both hemispheres of the brain and supports the integration of abstract and visual thinking. Rhythm training improves attention, especially in children with attention deficit disorders. Melody learning supports language and logical

development, strengthening linguistic abilities. On the emotional level, music can evoke powerful feelings—joy, sadness, peace, excitement—through changes in rhythm, melody, and harmony. It can also trigger subconscious memories and help individuals process deep emotions. Music influences neurotransmitters such as dopamine (pleasure), serotonin and oxytocin (connection and bonding), and cortisol (stress reduction). Different tempos and rhythms can alter brainwave states, guiding the mind into relaxation or meditation. Because music activates so many psychological and physiological systems, it is one of the most powerful non-verbal tools for influencing mental health and emotional balance.

3. Music Therapy: Healing Through Sound and Participation

Music therapy applies music as a clinical tool to support mental, emotional, and physical health. It can be divided into two major types: active and passive. Active music therapy involves direct participation—singing, improvising, writing lyrics, or playing instruments. This form encourages emotional expression, communication, and self-awareness. It is particularly effective for children, autistic individuals, and people with emotional expression disorders, providing safe non-verbal ways to release anger, fear, or sadness. Passive music therapy, by contrast, involves listening to carefully selected music in collaboration with a trained therapist. It is commonly used for anxiety reduction, sleep improvement, stress management, and pain control in medical settings such as surgeries, intensive care units, and rehabilitation centers. Several structured music therapy systems—such as Nordoff-Robbins Therapy, Guided Imagery in Music (GIM), and Neurologic Music Therapy (NMT)—provide targeted therapeutic approaches for developmental disorders, trauma, brain injury, and motor rehabilitation. The science behind music therapy is supported by neuroimaging studies that show how music activates emotional centers, regulates stress responses, and promotes neural recovery.

This makes music therapy one of the most scientifically grounded forms of creative healing.

4. Films as a Tool for Second Language Learning

Films offer one of the most effective and enjoyable ways to learn a foreign language. They provide authentic input—real speech, cultural expressions, gestures, and communication styles that textbooks cannot replicate. Because films naturally follow Krashen's Input Hypothesis (i+1), they expose learners to slightly more advanced language in a comprehensible context.

Studies show that films improve multiple language skills:

- Listening: learners hear natural accents, pronunciation, and speaking patterns
- Speaking: exposure to dialogue improves fluency and confidence
- Pronunciation: learners imitate stress, intonation, and rhythm
- Vocabulary: repeated exposure helps learners retain new words in meaningful contexts
- Writing and reading: subtitles enhance reading comprehension and writing accuracy

Films also increase motivation by creating an enjoyable, low-anxiety learning environment. Students report greater engagement and willingness to participate when films are used in the classroom. Films also introduce cultural knowledge—traditions, lifestyle, values—which enriches learners' global awareness. Thus, films combine cognitive, linguistic, and emotional benefits, making them an essential tool in modern language education.

5. Artistic Intervention in Nature: The Ethical and Ecological Conflict

While hobbies, music, and films enhance human life, modern environmental art presents a complex challenge. Artists increasingly use natural landscapes as canvases for large-scale installations—painted rocks, giant benches, metal structures, temporary film sets, wrapped cliffs, or monumental sculptures. Though these works claim to celebrate nature or raise environmental awareness, they often cause ecological harm.

Negative impacts include:

- disturbance of wildlife
- soil compaction and erosion from increased tourism
- vegetation destruction
- introduction of pollutants such as paint, plastics, or treated materials
- disruption of water flow in rivers or coastal areas
- long-term ecological changes even after installations are removed

Artists such as Christo, Jeanne-Claude, and land art pioneers argue that their works are temporary and leave no lasting damage. However, ecological research shows that sensitive ecosystems can take years—or decades—to recover. Even minimal interventions, like collecting stones or building temporary structures, alter natural habitats. This reveals a contradiction: art intended to highlight the beauty or fragility of nature may accidentally harm the very ecosystems it seeks to protect. As a result, scholars argue that truly sustainable art should be placed in urban or peri-urban areas where it raises awareness without damaging ecosystems. Digital or virtual art can also replicate immersive environments without physical impact. Collaborative projects between artists and ecologists may transform degraded lands into

restored ecological and artistic spaces. The key challenge is finding ways for artistic expression to coexist with ecological responsibility.

Conclusion

Creative activities—hobbies, music, films, and artistic expression—are essential to human development. They strengthen mental health, enhance cognitive abilities, improve language learning, and enrich cultural understanding. Music activates powerful neural systems, films provide authentic linguistic input, and hobbies support emotional and physical well-being. Together, these activities demonstrate the transformative power of creativity in shaping personal growth and psychological resilience. However, creativity must be balanced with environmental responsibility. While art can inspire reflection and raise awareness, artistic interventions in natural environments often risk causing ecological harm. Temporary installations, large-scale structures, and human intrusion into protected areas disrupt ecosystems and contradict principles of sustainability. Therefore, a forward-looking approach to creativity requires ethical consideration of both human needs and environmental limits. To ensure that art continues to serve as a force for education, healing, and inspiration, it must respect the natural world and avoid actions that damage fragile ecosystems. Sustainable artistic practices—such as urban installations, digital art, or ecological restoration projects—offer promising ways to harmonize creativity with environmental stewardship. Ultimately, true artistic progress will be achieved when creative expression enriches human life while safeguarding the natural systems upon which all life depends.

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