

# Arts engagement has a positive effect on quality of life

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This research was conducted by **Alex C. Michalos and P. Maurine Kahlke** at the **University of Northern British Columbia, Canada**

## Summary

This paper reports the findings of a large-scale survey that was designed specifically to measure the impact of arts engagement on the quality of life of the population of British Columbia in Canada. The results from a representative sample of the population suggested that more than 75 per cent thought that their artistic activities had either a positive effect on their life, helped relieve stress, gave them self-confidence, strengthened their community or contributed to their wellbeing. However, the exact relationship between arts engagement and these outcomes is more complex than might seem at first.

## The survey took a broad view of the arts

The survey's definition of arts included things like flower arranging and gardening, in addition to more familiar activities like listening to music or painting and drawing. Data were also collected on people's motivation for engaging in the arts, the frequency of that engagement as well as range of standard demographic data (such as age and gender etc.). The survey also collected lots of other information relating to people's happiness, life satisfaction and wellbeing.

## Detailed analysis showed that arts activity has a relatively low impact on life satisfaction

The research found a wide variety of factors affect overall life satisfaction (and the survey was designed to capture as many of these as possible). Levels of arts activity actually had a relatively modest impact on satisfaction when

compared with things like financial security and health. The authors hope that future research will explain why this is the case, and how these factors act together to create an overall sense of life satisfaction.

## Keywords

**wellbeing** **satisfaction** **health** **quality of life** **Canada** **survey** **population**

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