

Co-creation Method: The Role of Arts towards Impacting the Quality of Well-being¹

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Abstract. A preliminary review of past studies has shown that the method that was used to engage the community with arts is often articulated very poorly. In addition, formal evaluations and reflections on community art engagement projects are extremely rare. Therefore, this study aims to explore the co-creation method for community-engaged art with selected communities in Kampung Muhibbah, Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia. The objective of the discussion is to highlight how co-creation can offer a participative approach for both art practitioners and non-art practitioners that contribute to elevating the quality of life. The research was done in a mixed method that utilized a co-creation project as a case study for data collection whereby interviews and participant observations were conducted in a qualitative method and a well-being evaluation score was done in a quantitative method. Results showed that the co-creation project could establish good interactions within the community through art activities and subsequently elevate their well-being quality. A deeper understanding of the co-creation method with community engagement can challenge the conventional participative art practice. The exploration of the co-creation method through art as a medium had indeed contributed extensively to the knowledge of co-creation practice in community engagement to elevate well-being.

Keywords: community engagement; co-creation; the role of arts; quality of life; well-being

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[es] Método de cocreación: El papel de las artes como factor influyente en la calidad del bienestar

Resumen. Una revisión preliminar de estudios anteriores ha evidenciado que el método utilizado para involucrar a la comunidad en las artes suele estar muy mal articulado. Además, las evaluaciones y reflexiones formales sobre los proyectos de participación artística comunitaria son muy escasas. Por lo tanto, este estudio pretende explorar el método de cocreación del arte comprometido con la comunidad con comunidades seleccionadas en Kampung Muhibbah, Kuching, Sarawak, Malasia. El objetivo del debate es destacar cómo la cocreación puede ofrecer un enfoque participativo que contribuya a elevar la calidad de vida tanto para los profesionales del arte como para los que no lo son. La investigación se llevó a cabo con un método mixto que utilizó un proyecto de cocreación como estudio de caso para la recopilación de datos, mediante entrevistas y observaciones de los participantes en un método cualitativo y una puntuación de evaluación del bienestar en un método cuantitativo. Los resultados mostraron que el proyecto de cocreación podía establecer buenas interacciones dentro de la comunidad a través de actividades artísticas y posteriormente elevar su calidad de bienestar. Una comprensión más profunda del método de cocreación con la participación de la comunidad puede poner en tela de juicio la práctica artística participativa convencional. La exploración del método de cocreación a través del arte como medio ha contribuido ampliamente al conocimiento de la práctica de la cocreación en el compromiso de la comunidad para elevar el bienestar.

Palabras clave: compromiso comunitario; cocreación; el papel de las artes; calidad de vida; bienestar

Summary: 1. Introduction. 2. The Quality of Well-being: A Definition. 3. Malaysian Well-being Index (MyWI) 2020. 4. The Role of Creative Arts in the Quality of Well-being. 5. Co-creation: A Definition. 6. The Relationship between Co-creation and Creative Arts. 7. The Concept of Co-creation Method. 8. Method. 9. Data Collection. 10. Participation and Implementation. 11. Data Analysis. 12. Discussion. 13. Conclusion.

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1. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the overall well-being of mankind. According to ILO, FAO, IFAD & WHO (2020), the pandemic has brought about a dramatic loss of human lives all over the world and challenges the public health, food system, and job security. It has also given a significant impact on mental health such as the ever-growing cases of stress, anxiety, and depression in our community that cause grave concern nowadays. Not to mention the woes of depression and suicide are increasing on top of the cases that have already existed prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Death cases and lockdowns to prevent the spread of the virus have weakened the economy (Nicola et al., 2020) ultimately affecting the mental health and well-being of the people (Fisher et al, 2020; Khan et al., 2020). The negative effects on the quality of well-being due to the COVID-19 pandemic were influenced by several factors such as the loss of loved ones, the economic crisis that affects household income, and many more. However, in the Malaysian art scene, the nationwide Movement Control Order (MCO) brought about one positive shift in the community. Art practitioners had no choice but to bring all art-related activities virtually. Therefore, the emergence of online-based art activities such as webinars, online exhibitions, art