Doodling as Self-Expression: Building Self-Efficacy in Normally Functioning Adults

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Doodling as Self-Expression: Building Self-Efficacy in Normally Functioning Adults

By

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A culminating thesis, submitted to the faculty of Dominican University of California in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Marriage and Family Therapy

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Abstract

While previous studies identify doodling as a useful educational tool, this study sought to determine if doodling can build creative or emotional self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is an individual’s belief in their own capacity to express behaviors necessary to attain specific performance goals. The current study also sought to determine if doodling can be a form of self-care. Research collected was quantitative and qualitative using surveys to measure both creative and emotional self-efficacy along with a doodling activity. Ten participants were recruited through convenience sampling on social media and were included in the study after meeting the inclusion criteria of identifying themselves as a normally functioning adult. Individual times spent on doodling ranged from thirty minutes to three hours. The study took place during the Covid-19 pandemic which impacted the ability to recruit volunteer participants. The researcher collected data from the Emotional Self-Efficacy Scale (ESES) and Creative Self-Efficacy Scale (CSES). The results from this study support the use of doodling in art therapy as well as its effect on an individual’s self-expression and self-efficacy. The research also explores the use of doodling as a form of self-care. Recommendations for future research include expanding the population size and variety, as well as having a facilitator present to guide and witness the process.
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This thesis is dedicated to the teachers in my life that allowed me to doodle during class time, incorporated doodling into my IEP and allowed me to doodle as a form of note-taking. I want to thank most importantly my colleagues, family and fiancé who helped guide me through this thesis writing process. I want to personally thank my second reader Annalinda Harbottle, for all the time and effort she dedicated to this process during the last year and a half. Thank you. I am an artist who identifies their art style as doodling and my goal is to share a deeper understanding of an art form with others. I hope doodling will be recognized as a form of self-expression through art, colors, shapes and symbols.

I hope this study inspires anyone who reads it to create a doodle of their own and reflect on it. Thank you to my participants who bravely attempted something that they may not do every day and put themselves out there for me and my research. Thank you so much.
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**Introduction**

Doodling has been popularized as a form of note taking and has been continuously studied as a way of information retention, while there is far less existing research surrounding doodling as a form of self-expression. One area of concern for this study is establishing doodling as a standalone form of self-expression. For the purposes of this study, the definition of doodling is a visually dense drawing of self-expression connecting shapes, items, objects, faces, people, and places with minimal empty space. The art therapy literature addresses a wide range of uses for art making with a variety of individuals with different diagnoses. In addition to the clinical applications, normally functioning adults also need a way to connect to art and self-expression on a regular basis, ultimately as a form of self-care. Theories that support the research referenced in this study come from a positive psychology therapeutic approach combined with art therapy techniques. One goal of this study was to determine if doodling as self-expression can build self-efficacy in normally functioning adults. This study used doodling as an art therapy directive by asking the participants questions about how they felt about doodling, self-expression, creativity, self-efficacy, and creating art. The basic research design for this study focused on two scales, creative and emotional self-efficacy, and the doodle itself. The feelings that come up for the participants during the process were recorded as well. This study sought to determine the relevance and relationship doodling has to art therapy theory and practice. In addition, this study explored doodling as a mode of self-expression and in turn discovered ways doodling can be used in art therapy.

While it is known that self-expression is beneficial to individuals, doodling as a means of self-expression is only beginning to be recognized (Stuckey et al., 2010). One objective of this research is to connect normally functioning adults to self-expression through art, more
specifically doodling. Previous research has studied the benefits of doodling focusing more on the educational values it has on information retention (Andrade, 2010). These studies showed how doodling improved individuals information retention during phone conversations and lectures. However there have been deeper examinations into drawing as a form of self-expression. This is what most of the research in this study is inspired by. Cited research in this study specifically looks into normally functioning adults and the benefits of drawing. Additional studies noted looked into flow effect and how it relates to visual creativity, which has brought more insight to the concept of flow. The concept of flow is generally described as “being in the zone” (Cseh, 2015, p. 2). Another theory suggests that there can be a hybridization approach to art therapy and other therapeutic modalities. When utilized together one will enhance the other strengthening the process as a whole (Carrol, 2018).
Chapter I. Problem Statement

Definition of Doodling

For the purpose of this study the definition of doodling is a visually dense drawing of self-expression connecting shapes, items, objects, faces, people, and places with minimal empty space. Doodling is often recognized in regards to its ability to improve concentration as a form of note-taking and information retention. It has been accepted as a way to keep the mind from daydreaming by aimlessly sketching patterns. Despite this recognition doodling as a form of self-expression is only beginning to be recognized as an art form and as a beneficial tool for art therapy.

Doodle Research History

The areas that have been previously researched surrounding doodling were focused on what doodling does for memory retention. One noteworthy study concluded that doodlers retain more information while passing the time during a lecture or telephone call than non-doodlers. In this study half of the group was assigned a doodling condition while the other half was not. The results of this study were that doodlers retained more information than non-doodlers. Overall this is a great landmark for doodling as a viable form of note-taking and information retention (Andrade, 2010).

An additional study explored doodling as an internal exploration. The researchers studied how doodling can allow for internal reflection and contribute to experiences of flow. Solo and collaborative explorations into doodling were done to examine the experiences of flow and how it can be applied to self-reflection research. The researchers asked participants to inquire about their doodles in an attempt to bring life to the spaces between conscious drawing and unconscious drawing. This study collected data involving multiple avenues of artistic
exploration using solo works, collaborative works and interviews involving artists from the project. This is one of the only studies examining and encouraging doodling as a way to induce flow and creativity. This research study has the potential to inform educational and therapeutic practices about the benefits of doodling (Wilkinson et al., 2013).

**Differentiating the Scribble from the Line**

The scribble is defined as a form of line and style of writing performed carelessly or hastily (Merriam-Webster. Scribble. 2021). A doodle is defined as a sketch or a design itself (Merriam-Webster. Doodle. 2021). While both are forms of marks on paper, for the purposes of this study a scribble can be a doodle, but a doodle cannot be a scribble. Scribbling is a form of line, while doodling is the visual materialization of that mental picture that emerges from the scribbled line. Doodling is the ability to physically draw that mental picture that materializes from the line. Lines come in many forms and some examples are zig-zag, wavy, thick, thin, flowing, sketchy, straight, crooked, sharp, round, abstract, scribble, clean and messy (Yocum, 2017).

**Art Therapy**

The field of art therapy has historically been known for combining traditional therapeutic practices with artistic practices, providing an avenue for communication without words. One of the foundational ideas of art therapy uses art media and processes to tap into subconscious feelings and ideas (Rubin, 1999). Doodling as self-expression in art therapy is just beginning to be recognized as a valuable practice. As art therapy has historically attempted to bring meaning to imagery, doodling could be a way this is explored in the field of art therapy.
Normally Functioning Adults

The absence of a problem is not equivalent to the absence of need. When an adult has no apparent mental or physical health issues they are clinically known as “normally functioning adults.” While doodling is known to be beneficial for clinical and educational populations there is a need for studying the effects of doodling on normally functioning individuals. Normally functioning adults need a way to connect to art and self-expression on a regular basis, ultimately as a form of self-care (Loi, 2013). The confinement due to Covid-19 increases the need for non-clinical populations to engage in self-care and doodling could be one way this population practices this.

Art therapy often focuses on specific issues and treating specific populations as a way to measure the effectiveness of various art therapy directives or interventions. One reason for studying normally functioning populations and applying doodling as an art directive is to provide a baseline for further doodling research to be applied to numerous populations. This study provides a foundation for future research by defining doodling and exploring flow through creativity. Additionally, it provides a better understanding of the relationship between self-expression and doodling and discusses the application of these ideas to the field of art therapy as a whole.

Positive Psychology

Positive psychology promotes individual’s strengths and has noted that people who use their strengths are happier and have higher levels of social and emotional well-being (Psychology Today, 2021). Positive psychology is defined as “the study of positive subjective experiences, positive individual traits, and positive institutions that promises to improve quality of life” (Seligman et al., 2000). By focusing on positive thinking and positive thinking through
art, the combination of positive psychology and art therapy is beneficial. Doodling as an art directive can reinforce the views of positive psychology and art therapy by internally strengthening the individual through the creation of art. The benefits of positive psychology include improved relationships, higher self-esteem and a better outlook on life in general. One example of positive psychology is using positive thinking to reimagine events or experiences in a person’s life. This includes focusing on positive emotions like; inspiration, joy, happiness, excitement, love and generally positive states of being. Doodling can be used to encapsulate a range of emotions visually by including symbols, shapes, lines, colors and other elements that make up a doodle (Gable et al., 2005).

**Art Therapy & Positive Psychology**

Researchers and clinicians of positive psychology and art therapy have academically proposed the term “Positive Art Therapy” as a way to combine the two fields. Through the use of positive art therapy therapists can enhance a person’s insight into their own emotions, well-being and strengths through art making and positive psychology. The research from positive psychology has shown that art can connect an individual to a flow like state. In turn enhancing a person’s engagement in their own individual talents. Art therapy has shown that expressive art making and self-expression have a positive effect on repairing mood. In addition, art therapy has the ability to generate mastery over flow and is shown to improve mood and inspire creativity. The burst of positive emotions of hope and inspiration felt from art making has been called “the driving force of art therapy” and promoting this burst of emotions from the creation of art itself have proven to be beneficial (Wilkinson, et al. 2013, p. 8).
Doodling & Self-Expression

Self-expression through drawing by normally functioning adults is starting to become recognized as therapeutic and beneficial (Johns, 2012). Positive psychology strives to induce micro flow within creativity and has noted that “doodling is just one example,” of something that can be used as a tool to induce micro flow (Johns, 2012, p. 37). Micro flow is when “your body and mind are completely in sync and your level of mental arousal is at a peak” (Whitbourne, 2015). Macro flow is a similar experience but felt with a greater level of intensity of selflessness, timelessness, effortlessness and richness (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991). Because doodling is recognized by positive psychology then connecting doodling as a form of self-expression to art therapy could be beneficial to the field of psychology as a whole. The field of art therapy has yet to focus on the connection between doodling and self-expression and the positive outcomes from the combination of the two (Andrade, 2010). Doodling as self-expression can provide an avenue of study for art therapy.

Self-Expression, Self-Care, Flow & Creativity

While previous research has examined the relationship between creativity and flow, more information is needed to understand the acquisition of flow through creativity and how it can be beneficial for individuals and their ability to engage in the creation of art as self-care (Seligman, et al. 2014). Doodling as a form of self-expression can be linked to visual creativity and flow. Research has provided a definition to the feeling of flow as the state of being in the zone. This feeling of flow has been reported to have positive consequences on performance and creativity (Cseh, G. M. 2015, p. 2). The goal of this study is to show that doodling can be a creative form of self-expression and self-care through the experience of flow.
Art & Self-Efficacy

Researchers have found that art-making can be used as a tool to enhance self-efficacy. These studies show that there are long-term benefits for mood and health through writing and art-making (Stuckey, et al. 2010). In addition, journaling has been utilized to reduce anxiety and other negative psychological effects. One study was done to measure whether drawing is a distraction or a coping mechanism, with the results showing a significant improvement in mood from drawing. The researchers invited participants to engage in creating art using any material, and participants had approximately 45 minutes to complete their art. Overall, the study found “statistical significant support for the changes in affect and self-efficacy as a result of the open studio art-making session.” This is just one example of why self-efficacy is important to the individual, as well as art and self-expression (Kim, et al. 2007).

Need for Doodling in Art Therapy

Doodling as an art form is at a unique point in history due to the proliferation of self-care coloring books and doodle exercises. The American Art Therapy Association “supports the use of coloring books for pleasure and self-care, however these uses should not be confused with the delivery of professional art therapy services, during which a client engages with a credentialed art therapist” (Betts & Carolan, 2015). For the purpose of this study, doodling as self-expression is vastly different than doodling for note-taking. Doodling for note-taking is often focused around how much information can be retained while listening to a phone call or lecture and subconsciously scribbling notes about what is being listened to. While doodling as self-expression is turning the listening inwards and reflecting to one’s self about what images are coming to mind and why. There have been a limited number of studies that examined doodling as a form of self-expression. However, doodling as self-expression can be a mutually beneficial
tool to both the artist and art therapist. People often relate doodling to taking notes or scribbling and this accessibility offers a platform for art therapy to include doodling in its practices (John, 2012).

**Purpose of the study**

The purpose of the study is to determine what the benefits of doodling as self-expression are for normally functioning adults, as it applies to the field of art therapy. Doodling is often represented as a form of note taking, however doodling needs to be elevated as a form of self-expression through its therapeutic and artistic benefits. Doodling with normally functioning adults can provide foundational research into the examination of the effectiveness of doodling in art therapy. Choosing this population addresses the need for art therapy for everyone, as well as provides a foundation of the benefits of doodling as self-expression. Normally functioning adults have become increasingly more aware of the benefits of engaging in self-care and self-expression, and could benefit from doodling.
Chapter II: Literature Review

This chapter explores a historical understanding of doodling and art therapy with normally functioning adults. The literature highlights what methods of art therapy have been beneficial for normally functioning adults and how doodling as self-expression helps individuals engage in flow, and ultimately build their self-efficacy. Overall, the literature helps reinforce the discovery of the emotional benefits of doodling as self-expression for art therapy. Generally, doodling is stereotyped as a mindless activity. Some educators are starting to understand that doodling is a note-taking tool that can strongly enhance audible information retention. While researchers have discovered some benefits of the way doodling can be used in education, there is less research connecting the benefits of doodling to art therapy.

History of Doodling

The Webster dictionary definition of doodling is, “mindlessly scribbling” (Merriam-Webster, Doodle. 2021). While the Oxford English Dictionary defines the doodle as “an aimless scrawl made by a person while the mind is more or less otherwise applied.” Theses definitions contrast the evidence that doodling can improve memory retention. This literature review is a call to change that definition fortified with proof as to why doodling is so important and more than the current definition describes. Doodling as an educational tool has been proven useful with studies showing the effects doodling has on information retention (Andrade, 2010). In one study participants were asked to process and recall a lecture or telephone call. Half of the group was assigned a doodling condition while the other half was not. The results of this study were that doodlers retained more information than non-doodlers. Believing that doodling is much more than just mindless drawings, Jeremy A. Yokum, wrote his master’s thesis qualitatively surveying people on “Who doodles, and why?” He found that most people engage in doodling as
a means of distraction and artistic expression, rather than using it for information retention. While previous studies into doodling have primarily focused on what doodling can do for education and who doodles and why, more research on doodling as artistic expression is needed to verify its overall health benefits.

**Education**

Doodling for educational purposes focuses more deeply on memory retention. One study researched high school students and showed that there were higher academic performances and levels of memory retention in those students who doodled (Tadayon et al., 2016). This study noted that future research should focus on doodling itself and be self-paced, and also be conducted as a way of exploring doodling for engagement. Findings from this article and previous studies regarding memory retention and attention, show that doodling helps maintain a level of attention necessary to complete a simple task such as listening to an auditory lecture (Roche et al., 2007). While doodling is shown as a valid form of engagement that enhances learning, psychologists are just beginning to explore the psychological benefits from doodling as a form of self-expression.

**Psychology**

The psychological research surrounding doodling ranges from the analysis of a person’s doodles, to using doodling as an art form that can engage into entering the subconscious. Sigmund Freud, known as the father of psychoanalysis, had a prolific impact on the surrealist art movement throughout the early 20th century. Freud believed that dreams could illuminate hidden meanings and unveil people’s innermost desires. His theories would start a movement where artists would seek out a wide range of techniques in hopes that they could connect to the subconscious and unconscious mindset of the dream, subsequently transferring this into their art.
This would become known as the Surrealist movement that adapted Freud’s techniques, of “free association” and “automatic drawing.” “Free association” is known as a technique used in psychoanalytic therapy to assist an individual in learning more about what they are thinking and feeling. While “automatic drawing” is a drawing technique often described as a way for an individual to express their subconscious. These improvised methods of creating, drawing, painting and overall free flowing techniques would lead to the creation of the doodle (Lesso, 2020). Though informed by psychoanalysis and surrealism, the current study does not aim to connect with the subconscious, but rather to connect to self-efficacy through doodling. This study applies positive psychology and art therapy as a way of understanding the benefits of doodling in building self-efficacy.

**Art Therapy**

Art therapy is defined by the American Art Therapy Association as “an integrative mental health and human services profession that enriches the lives of individuals, families and communities through active art-making, creative process, applied psychological theory, and human experience within a psychotherapeutic relationship.” The application of art therapy and its techniques have been shown to expand certain functions of the brain. These include an individual’s visual and sensory information as well as the ability to process information and formulate memories. Art therapy also explores mood state drawings and the benefits that expressive therapies have for various populations (Lusebrink, 2011). Art therapy aims to combine artistic and therapeutic practices to enhance a person’s health and wellbeing. A thorough review of numerous articles that looked into therapy for the adult population concluded that art is a receptive form of engagement and overall art therapy improves health and wellbeing in normally functioning populations (Heli, 2021). New research suggests that art plays a
significant role in health sciences around the world and that allowing the self to interpret emotions through art allows oneself to better understand themselves. Doodling as a form of self-expression for normally functioning adults can promote an internal exploration that can have positive psychological effects. While the approaches of art therapy studies have varied the findings of these studies have expanded the knowledge of many areas of human psychology (Regev, 2018).

Art therapy practitioners and researchers can benefit from understanding the effectiveness of the variety of modalities utilized in the field of art therapy. One way of understanding the effectiveness of art therapy applications is by having a baseline of foundational research (Kaiser & Deaver, 2013). The aim of this study is to provide foundational research in art therapy for doodling as it applies to normally functioning populations.

Art Therapy for Normally Functioning Adults

There are varying definitions of what “normally functioning” may mean across social, mental, physical and health areas. To be considered “normally functioning,” participants in this study reported the ability to meet their own needs in these respected areas. The definition of a “normally functioning” adult from the World Health Organization (WHO) is an individual who has “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being.” Some of the arguments surrounding studying this population include the difficulty of defining and agreeing on what a normally functioning person is, as well as what the benefits for studying this population are (Loi, 2013). Practicing art therapy with normally functioning adults has been shown to have positive results for both art therapy research and the individual receiving the art therapy. Art therapy has shown to improve the elasticity of the brain by engaging in flow. In addition, there have been higher levels of engagement found in art therapy as compared to other therapeutic modalities.
(Cseh et al., 2014). One study addresses the widespread institutionalization of older adults and the feelings of isolation they experience while going through major life changes. The study also reviews the significance of applying arts-based experiences with these individuals during such times. Programs were implemented as a way to foster a sense of identity, provide an alternate or supplementary form of communication, serve as a life-long learning process and ultimately alleviate depressive symptoms. This study attempted to identify and mend the gap between utilizing art with older adults and understanding the benefits of intergenerational shared experiences through art (Adams, 2020). Similar philosophies promote the use of art with older adults as a means to tend to the whole person and process of aging (Partridge, 2019). More than just addressing decline and disease, art therapy and positive psychology can be used as a way to increase engagement and build self-esteem with older adults.

Another example of using art therapy with normally functioning adults comes from D. L. Johns who writes about drawing as self-expression. This theoretical approach is based in positive psychology and applied positive psychology, as a way to understand what makes people feel pleasure (Johns, 2012). The research into understanding the benefits of art therapy for this specific population is only beginning to be understood. By researching and studying this population specific advancements and conclusions can be made and applied to others. Thus, providing foundational research into what art therapy and doodling can do for normally functioning populations and beyond.
Positive Psychology and Art Therapy

Positive psychology reinforces optimism within individuals and studies the effects of their positive, subjective experiences. It encourages using one’s internal ability to view the brighter side of any given situation and practice having a positive outlook. Positive psychology can be linked to Martin E.P. Seligman in 1998, where he concluded that psychology had largely rejected the idea of helping people live more productive and fulfilling lives by nurturing their talents (Linley et al., 2006). Positive psychology contributes to optimal functioning in people and exists to provide a more complete picture of the human experience and condition. Positive psychology is based in subjective experiences, and combining it with art therapy may allow for future research to give a language to the subjective experience, through art therapy and doodling. The three pillars of positive psychology are subjective experiences, positive individual characteristics, and positive instructions and communities (Gable & Jonathan, 2005). While the field of positive psychology aims to improve their understanding of the positive subjective experience, art therapy utilizes the creation of art as a way of constructing a visual representation of these experiences. Through a combination of both positive psychology and art therapy there will be a deeper and more meaningful understanding of both fields.

Hybridization

Previous research studied the hybridization of cognitive behavior therapy and art therapy and concluded that each practice enhanced the other in a mutually beneficial way (Carrol, 2018). The study proposed that future research should examine adapting hybrid approaches across a variety of fields. The term positive art therapy was coined by Chilton and Wilkinson in 2009, stating that their goal was to explore the potential that these fields hold for each other. Art therapy helps people experience a sense of well-being using a wide variety of creative art
activities, and positive psychology can highlight specific elements that can increase a person’s positive emotions and engagement. This positive engagement in the art making process has been related to a state of flow, and the flow state has been found by art therapists to be beneficial for the person experiencing it (Wilkinson & Chilton, 2013).

Flow

Flow is often described as being “in the zone,” and this state of flow can be beneficial for art and the field of art therapy. Flow is a mental state that involves a person performing an activity, fully immersed and feeling completely focused. The flow model was developed by Csikszentmihalyi in 1975, and suggests that when a person can meet a challenge using their individual optimal skill set, it can induce flow. Furthermore, it promotes the idea that people experiencing flow undergo the highest level of happiness (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2014).

Flow is just one result from art making, more specifically doodling. If flow is linked to happiness as studies have shown, then maybe flow can also be linked to self-care. There is a beneficial link between flow and creativity that art therapists utilize in order to encourage re-engagement in the art making process. When measuring the links between flow and visual creativity both have supporting evidence that flow benefits mood and wellbeing, ultimately as a form of self-care (Cseh et al., 2015).

Self-care

Self-care is the ability to actively take care of one’s mental, physical, and emotional self. Self-care can lead to improvement within a person’s behavior and perspective due to enhanced feelings of self-efficacy (Lillyman, & Farquharson, 2013). One way to promote self-care is to provide an entertaining way to engage in it. Doodling could be a way individuals participate in self-care that is both beneficial and pleasurable. Maintaining ongoing self-care will promote
psychological wellness and ongoing self-awareness and self-reflection. Some researchers believe that self-care and the avoidance of negative coping strategies must be viewed as part of the essential roles and responsibilities of all psychologists. In addition, these researchers promote the importance of maintaining one’s physical and mental health as the highest ethical pursuit of any practitioner (Barnett et al., 2007).

Self-care is important to the field of psychology as an essential tool for maintaining physical and mental health. Self-care has been linked to helping people recover from and prevent depression, burnout and relationship problems. Psychologists also recognize self-care as important in maintaining one’s own self-developed principles. This ethical behavior has been adapted and applied over time to be understood and identified as self-care, a form of maintaining the best care for oneself. Ultimately this study aims to connect the feeling of self-care to the action of creativity.

Creativity

Some art therapists believe that “in modern times, the notion of people being creative has diminished. It is as if creativity is seen as a private attribute of the artist, entertainer, or scientist” (Moon, B. L. (2008). For the purposes of this study creativity is understood as the tendency to generate or recognize ideas, alternatives or possibilities that might be useful in problem solving, communicating with others and entertaining ourselves and others. Creativity as a form of engagement into self-care can promote a person’s individual health, prevent disease and limit their illnesses (Levin & Idler, 1983). The use of creativity as a form of self-expression in art therapy has shown that people are more likely to re-engage in therapy and self-care if the person finds the therapy to be fun, entertaining as well as beneficial. This shows the importance of self-care and how art and creativity as a form of engagement can have numerous beneficial results for
the individual. Self-expression and creativity can ultimately be used as a form of self-care through art therapy, more specifically doodling.

**Self-Expression**

One study researched drawing as a form self-expression with normally functioning adults and applied a theoretical approach that was based in positive psychology as a way to attribute what makes people feel pleasure (Johns, 2012). In addition, the concept of “micro flow” as a way to produce short durations of flow during activities has been found to have benefits in restoring attention, “doodling is just one example” (Johns, 2012). Doodling as a mode of self-expression is just beginning to be understood as a beneficial, positive way to engage in micro flow. The field of psychology acknowledges that doodling is not just a way to think differently but a way to feel differently as well. In general art expression may help individuals reconnect to feelings, build implicit sensory memory as well as explicit narrative capabilities. While doodling the whole brain is activated spontaneously resulting in enhanced memory, mindfulness, self-care, self-soothing and satisfaction. It is up to art therapist and psychologist in general to champion the potential of doodling (Malchiodi, 2014). Doodling has been understood as a process that gave rise to spontaneous drawing as well as other intuitive art and forms of self-expression. Doodling as self-expression can promote subconscious imagery and in-turn strengthen the structure of functioning for the visual system and various motor functions (Yenawine, 2013). Cave paintings and art created during the Paleolithic time period throughout the world have been debated as the earliest forms of doodles. It’s possible that doodles may “be subconsciously informed by biological- perhaps even entopic- phenomena [visual sensations]” (Faulstich, 2008). Art therapy aims to discover reoccurring themes and applications of various art modalities as self-expression that can be replicated and further understood.
Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is the reflection of confidence in the ability to maintain control over one’s own motivations, behavior and social environment. Individuals with higher self-efficacy have been shown to be more confident and motivated to work towards a goal (Scott, 1996). Art activities increase self-efficacy, in turn building internal motivations towards future goals and activities (Lummis & Morris, 2014). When developing self-efficacy in students it is thought that increasing self-efficacy increases resilience. In addition, students who build self-efficacy through creative means have been found to be more successful in demonstrating self-regulating strategies. In these studies art and creativity have been used as tools that allow students to become increasingly more confident in making decisions and positively reflect on those decisions (Richardson, 2017). Creating art is shown to be a safe place to succeed as well as a safe place to fail and try again. This healthy relationship people can develop with creativity in turn builds self-efficacy.

Doodling in Art Therapy

Using doodling as an artistic tool and a form of self-expression can offer insight for art therapists looking to understand its benefits. Doodling has the ability to provide a language beyond words and use art as a way to display emotional expression. When incorporating doodling into the art therapy world there needs to be a universal understanding that doodling does not equal disconnection, in fact it’s the exact opposite (Hoeve, 2017). Doodling allows people to retain information as well as connect to their emotions. Through doodling as self-expression research is beginning to find more ways that doodling can be utilized in the art therapy world. Previous research has focused on the benefits of drawing for normally functioning adults. One study required participants to complete a small series of drawings of self-expression.
This study showed that most participants were able to grow their internal flexibility by using drawing in different ways that would benefit their engagement, calmness and self-reflection. The conclusion of this study can be directly related to the mind/body connection through creative self-expression (Johns, 2012).

Doodling as self-expression is becoming more popularized as a mode of self-care through coloring books and tutorials. Drawing itself is being recognized and studied by positive psychology as a way for people to feel pleasure (Johns, 2012). Art therapy and education need to consider doodling as more than a tool for learning but also as a tool for self-expression. Doodling gives the artist the ability to visually and internally explore and foster creativity by using art and imagery to tell their individual story. While doodling is known to be beneficial for clinical and educational populations there is a need for studying the effects of doodling on normally functioning populations. Normally functioning adults need a way to connect to art and self-expression on a regular basis, ultimately as a form of self-care.

Conclusion

The history of doodling shows that people generally understand and engage in doodling as a distraction and as an artistic expression. Researchers in the field of education have found that doodling is beneficial for memory retention and has been shown to improve auditory memory. Doodling as a way of connecting to the subconscious has been a topic of debate for a long time. While doodling as a form of art therapy is just beginning to be understood as beneficial to the field of psychology. Incorporating this understanding the foundation of the study is that doodling can be related to artistic expression. Art therapy integrates mental health services with human services as a way to enhance their clients lives. This integration and understanding of art as therapy is another foundational part of this study. The population that
this study focuses on is normally functioning adults as a way to provide a baseline to future research into doodling and art therapy.

Positive psychology is used as a way to reinforce optimism and can affect an individual’s overall outlook of doodling and art therapy. A hybridization approach to art therapy has been shown to be beneficial to each included modality. This study aims to hybridize art therapy and positive psychology with doodling as a way to improve each modality. Creativity is a form of engagement that has proven to have numerous beneficial results. Art therapy and doodling rely heavily on creativity. Self-care has been shown to promote an individual’s health and well-being ultimately preventing diseases in people who practice self-care regularly. Drawing and doodling as a form of self-expression was also studied and researchers found that self-expression can lead to micro flow. As previously stated flow is the state of being “in the zone” and has numerous cognitive benefits. Self-efficacy refers to a person’s internal belief in their own abilities to successfully accomplish an activity. This study also aims to measure if creative and emotional self-efficacy can be built through doodling and art therapy.
Chapter III: Methodology

Introduction

The methodology of this study was designed to build a general understanding of doodling as a creative way to explore self-expression. For the purposes of this study the definition of doodling will be a visually dense drawing of self-expression connecting shapes, items, objects, faces, people and places with minimal empty space. Creativity was defined as the tendency to generate or recognize ideas, alternatives or possibilities that might be useful in problem solving, communicating with others and entertaining ourselves and others. Self-efficacy was defined as a reflection of confidence in the ability to maintain control over one’s own motivations, behavior and social environment. In this study, there was an integration of pre-and post-scales and four open ended questions. The two pre-and post-scales measured creativity and self-efficacy. The participants were introduced to a description of the study as well as an explanation of how the entire study was to be conducted. Additional information was provided such as general definitions of doodling, creativity and self-efficacy.

Hypothesis and Questions of Discovery

This study aimed to connect doodling to creativity and self-expression and through this process build self-efficacy. This study predicted that doodling would become a more recognized form of self-care for the participants. In addition, the questions of discovery allowed the participants to reflect on what their own opinions of creativity, self-expression and doodling were.

Questions of Discovery

1. What are your opinions about personally creating art?

2. What are your opinions about personally creating a doodle?
3. What are your opinions about personal self-expression?

4. How do you personally build your own self-efficacy?

**Participants**

The participants in this study self-identified as normally functioning adults between the ages of twenty-two and sixty-five. They spent one-two hours filling out pre-and post-surveys as well as completing a doodling directive in-between. The study was held on Jotforms which instructed participants to answer four open-ended questions. They filled out a pre-survey on creativity and self-efficacy and then doodled for their desired amount of time. Once the participants completed the doodle they took an additional survey on creativity and self-efficacy. The recruitment for this study was done online via digital flyers, snowball sampling, personal outreach and convenience sampling.

**Noted Benefits and Risks**

It was predicted that the benefits would far outweigh the risks of this study. This research proposed that practicing the application of self-expression through doodling would result in the participant gaining a greater understanding of the benefits of doodling as well as creativity and self-expression. This study further predicted that by improving self-expression and creativity doodling could improve self-efficacy. The minimal risk of this study was the minor emotional or psychological discomfort that may have arisen from answering questions and doodling. This study focused on normally functioning adults as a way to provide foundational research into what doodling can do for creativity and self-expression.

**Research Design**

This research was conducted online with normally functioning adults. The goal for this study was to gather data on self-efficacy before and after doodling. The participants answered a
mix of qualitative and quantitative questions regarding their understanding of flow, self-efficacy and doodling. The demographic questionnaire (Appendix E), the creative self-efficacy scale (Appendix C) and the emotional self-efficacy scale (Appendix D) were used as well. Researchers analyzed responses from the questionnaires to identify the trajectory of self-efficacy as well as identify common themes in the participants answers.

**Data Collection**

The data was collected over one month and required roughly ninety minutes of the participants time. The participants engaged in the online survey, doodled and then completed a departure survey. Recruitment for this study was done via digital flyers, snowball sampling, personal outreach and convenience sampling. The participant entered the study by using their cellphone or tablet and took a picture of the QR code or clicked a link. The location of this study was done entirely online and allowed for the participant to enter the study at their own leisure.

**Measurements**

Participants were given a link to Jotforms that allowed them to fill out the Creative Self-Efficacy Scale (Appendix C) (Carmeli & Schaubroeck, 2007) and Emotional Self-Efficacy scale (Appendix D) (Kirk et al., 2008) at the beginning and the end of the art directive. At the end of the study the pre-and post self-creativity and self-efficacy scales were measured. Each scale was authorized for use for educational purposes. The creativity scale was comprised of eight questions scaled one-five. The emotional self-efficacy scale was comprised of fifteen questions scaled one-five. The combination of scales intended to measure participants opinions on personal creativity, doodling, self-expression and self-efficacy through open-ended questions and two Likert scales.
Following the scales and questionnaires the participants were asked to create a doodle as self-expression. They were instructed to gather materials and find a comfortable position to complete the task. The activity simply stated to create a doodle using self-expression for 30-60 minutes. This study was intended to take no more than two hours in total including pre-and post-scales with a doodling directive in-between.

**Creative Self-Efficacy Scale**

Eight questions, rated responses were on a five-point Likert- scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

**Emotional Self-Efficacy scale**

The instructions directed respondents to rate their confidence through fifteen questions, on a five-point scale in which a ‘1’ indicated ‘not at all’ and a ‘5’ indicated ‘very’.

**Materials**

**Research Forms**

- Appendix A: Agreement to Participate in Research
- Appendix B: Consent to use Artwork
- Appendix C: Creativity Self-Efficacy Scale
- Appendix D Emotional Self-Efficacy Scale
- Appendix E: Demographic Survey & Open-ended Questions
- Appendix F: Debriefing Statement
- Appendix G: Thank You Coloring Page
- Appendix I: Closing Survey

**Art Supplies and Materials**

- Paper, 8 x 11 (computer paper)
- Pen, Pencil, (drawing material)
- (optional coloring material)
- Color: pen, pencil, crayons, markers
Data Analysis

The qualitative and quantitative data in this research was collected online through the Jotform platform. The pre-and post-scales were measured and compiled to determine if any changes in the individual’s self-efficacy occurred throughout the doodling process. The art was viewed by researchers to examine the doodles as pieces of self-expression that possibly represented a change in creativity and self-efficacy. The researchers reviewed each participant’s work including their open-ended questions as well as their doodles side by side in order to discover any commonalities or connections that may have occurred. The researcher analyzed how the participants described their emotions throughout the surveys alongside their doodle to compare and contrast the gathered information.

Protection of Participants

This research was done in the comfort of the participants own home or chosen space in which they felt comfortable enough to make art and fill out the surveys. The only recognized risk in this study was the risk of emotional engagement or disengagement resulting from the doodling itself. All work and results were collected online and analyzed and identities of the participants were kept anonymous. All completed surveys, scales and artwork were sent to a password protected e-mail address that will be deleted within one year from the completion of the study. This research adheres to the guidelines of California Association of Marriage and Family Therapists of Dominican University of California, and American Art Therapy Association (AATA).
Chapter IV: Results & Analysis

Introduction to Results

This research study included ten normally-functioning adults. Participants created a doodle and recorded any changes in their self-efficacy through two scales. They submitted their responses and doodle through an online platform and the researcher analyzed the data. This study took place during the COVID-19 pandemic, which may have impacted the number of participants involved. Individuals’ access and ability to navigate the study online may have inhibited potential participants. Other complications, discomforts and performance anxieties related to the survey and art making process may have been contributing factors as well. In addition, because this process was done online difficulties navigating the internet and uploading photos from a cellphone or tablet may have provided further complications for participants.

Results

This study aimed to connect doodling to creativity and self-expression as a means to build self-efficacy. The researcher predicted that after the participants completed their artwork they would recognize doodling as a form of self-care. The ten adults in this study were ages 22-65. 70% identified as female, 20% identified as male and 10% identified as non-binary. Based on the responses from the ten participants in this study, results were mixed.

Some participants described their experience to be beneficial as a form of not only self-expression but also self-care. The qualitative data was recorded in the survey questionnaire where the majority of participants reported having a positive experience. The participants’ doodles and survey questions were individually examined in order to identify specific emotions related to their doodle and feelings of self-expression. Most of the participants recorded some positive emotions after doodling. One theme that occurred throughout the qualitative data related
to the participants self-efficacy was that many of the participants pre and post responses were similar to one another. The seven most common emotions listed from the participants were “relaxation,” “self-expression,” “fun,” “joy,” “freedom,” “flow,” but also “anxiety.” In addition, while many participants reported positive feelings related to their experience their self-efficacy scale was lower post-doodle. Overall while doodling as a form of self-expression and self-care showed promising results, doodling as a way to build self-efficacy had mixed results.

The CSES data found 60% experienced a positive result, 10% experienced a neutral result and 30% experienced a negative result. The ESES data found that 40% experienced a positive result, 10% experienced a neutral result and 50% experienced a negative result. These percentages were quantitatively calculated from the survey and scale questions.

All participants have been coded in order to remain anonymous by randomly assigning them a color as their identity. Each participant’s color code is positioned alongside their age, gender, pre and post ESES and CSES totals and feelings listed by each participant post-doodle.
Figure 1 Identification of Participants: Female 70%. Male 20%. Non-binary This could be considered a relatively diverse population considering the total number of participants.
Figure 2 List of Feelings

Figure 2 shows the feelings reported by the participants post-doodle: Freedom, Flow, Fun, Joy, Anxiety, Self-expression, and Relaxation.
The Emotional Self-Efficacy Scale was implemented to measure the participants change in emotional self-efficacy after doodling. The results of this study show that 50% of participants exhibited some change in their emotional self-efficacy. Neutral 50%. Positive 40%. Negative 10%.
The Creative Self-Efficacy Scale was implemented to measure the participants' change in creative self-efficacy after doodling. The results of this study show that 90% of participants exhibited some change in their creative self-efficacy. Positive 60%. Negative 30%. Neutral 10%.
### Identification and Results

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<th>Post-ESES &amp; CSES</th>
<th>Difference</th>
<th>Feelings Post Doodle</th>
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<td>50 &amp; 28</td>
<td>+1 &amp; 3</td>
<td>Self-Expression</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 1 Identification of Results*
Figure 5 shows the total ESES and CSES scores alongside the participants coded identity.
This participant felt that creating art is “important.” They noted they would “try” to create a doodle. They claimed to build their own self-efficacy through “classes, reading, practice, asking others.” The amount of time they intended on doodling was for “20-30 minutes”. After the doodle, they experienced no change in their emotional self-efficacy and a small negative change in their creative self-efficacy. This quantitative data could indicate that doodling may not be the best modality when building this individual's personal creative self-efficacy. However, the participant qualitatively identified feelings of “some calmness and relaxation” during the doodling process.
This participant said that “art helps [them] get out of [their] head and helps [them] relax after a long day.” This participant indicated that they grew up in an analytical “very science heavy,” environment and that practicing art is a very important part of their self-care already. They experienced no change in their emotional self-efficacy and a slight negative change in their creative self-efficacy.
This participant “considers [themselves] an artist and believe[s] the visual arts are for everyone! [That] All people are inherently creative.” They said that “self-expression is a crucial part of the human experience and should be taken seriously. For me, self-expression is essential to my personal growth process.” This participant showed a slight decrease in both emotional and creative self-efficacy. When noting their feelings before and after the doodle they recorded that “the doodle process was relaxing, cathartic, calming, and fun.” The feelings they listed that came up during the doodle were “calm,” “accomplished” and “happy.”
This participant said that creating art “takes a lot of creativity and skill” but that doodling “helps kill time.” They noted that self-expression is “healthy to regularly practice.” They build their own self-efficacy “by acknowledging past successes and putting effort into practicing towards new skills.” They showed a slightly positive change in their creative self-efficacy and stated after their doodle that doodling “can be relaxing.” They listed the feeling of “joy,” “frustration” and “calm”. The participant was noted to be watching cartoons at the time of performing this doodle and may have influenced some of the imagery within the doodle itself.
This participant stated to have “no opinion” about creating art and that they had “never thought about” creating a doodle. They noted that they were “not very comfortable” in their own personal self-expression. However, they showed a large positive change in emotional self-efficacy and a slight positive change in creative self-efficacy. After the doodle, this participant noted that they “admire artists,” and their opinions about self-efficacy went from “good” to “excellent”. When asked about the feelings that came up for them they were quoted in saying “that I am not artistic; that I am linear in thought.” This participant was the only individual to create their doodle on lined paper, exemplifying this quote. The participant also created a linear pattern, however was not following the lines of the paper. The act of creating a linear drawing but not following the linear lines of the paper may have been liberating to the participant. In addition, this feeling of liberation may have contributed to this specific participants results who grew their own emotional self-efficacy.
This participant felt that creating is “absolutely wonderful, [and] necessary.” They recorded that creating a doodle is “something that happens automatically when [they] have a pen and paper.” Their personal opinions about self-expression is that it is “always [done] with a pen” which is “necessary if words aren’t sufficient.” This participant showed a positive change in their emotional and creative self-efficacy. This could be contributed to their previous experience making art and doodles. They also stated post-doodle that creating art is one of their “basic needs after sleeping and eating.” When asked to list the feelings that came up they noted that “first I was unsure about the line but then creativity sparked and now it feels accomplished.”
Figure 12 Nicole Dollanganger

Code: Orange
Age: 31
Gender: Male
Ethnicity: Caucasian

This participant felt that creating art “greatly benefits the creator and audience as therapy, education, and entertainment.” This participant said “I think spontaneous art might be the truest kind” and that they “doodled a lot as a child but then “grew out” of it, as [they] began to need a concrete endgame for [their] art.” This specific participant expressed that they thought it is “sad and wrong,” and that “we need fewer filters on our creative process, like children and spontaneous doodlers.” They felt that “we need more [self-expression] in this age of isolation and dishonesty” and that self-expression is “the best part of art.” This was the only participant who scored completely neutral in the pre-and post-scales on their creative and emotional self-efficacy.
This participant felt that “art is not only expressive, but important for processing feelings and thoughts.” Their personal opinions about creating a doodle were that “doodling is super therapeutic and a core part of [their] art practice.” This quote indicates that this participant has previous experience creating art and identifies as an artist. They build their own self-efficacy by setting aside “time to practice drawing and journaling.” There was no overall change in this participant’s emotional self-efficacy, however, there was a slight positive change in their creative self-efficacy. This positive change in creative-self efficacy could be attributed to the doodling process. This participant identified themselves as an artist and the data shows that their creative self-efficacy was improved. Artists often identify themselves as being creative individuals so improving an artist’s creative self-efficacy may be akin to improving a large portion of how they identify themselves. After doodling, this participant noted changes in how they felt before and after the doodle. They responded that they “often feel proud of what [they] put down and it makes [them] happy to see things that come organically to me on paper.” Post-doodle this participant recorded the importance of creating a doodle as a way “to reflect on ourselves.” The feelings listed for this participant were, “calm,” “excitement,” “playfulness,” “proud” and “happy.”
This participant noted that they “enjoy” creating art and that they more often do “multimedia projects, not drawing.” They felt that their doodle could “be a very childlike doodle.” They were “confident” in their ability to self-express, however, felt “pretty limited when it comes to art” and self-efficacy. This participant showed a slightly positive change in their creative self-efficacy and stated that they found doodling to be “strangely relaxing.” After doodling, they stated that they felt “calm, thoughtful, [and] aware of [their] surroundings.” This participant noted that “a lot of pent up energy was doodled out.” This participant believed that “art is needed in their community, and artists need to be uplifted.” Their personal opinions about creating a doodle changed from being concerned their doodle would be “childlike” to recognizing doodling as a “great way to burn off stress and tap into creativity.”
They felt that creating art “is a great form of stress relief and a way to make you feel like an individual in a world that can feel mundane.” They also felt that creating a doodle is a “great way to produce ‘mindless’ stress free art and pass the time.” This participant noted that one way they build their own self-efficacy is by reminding themselves that “practice makes perfect, and challenging [themselves] to try new skills.” This participant showed a positive change in emotional and creative self-efficacy and noted more positive feelings post doodle. When noting any changes in how this participant felt before and after the doodle they said that it “put [them] into a better headspace.” The participant noted that creating art is “fun even if you’re not good at it” and that creating a doodle was “pretty liberating.” The feelings that came up for this participant were “bouts of judgement” and then the realization that “no one was judging” her or her art.
Analysis & Discussion

This study aimed to connect doodling to creativity and self-expression in order to build self-efficacy. The researcher predicted that after the participants completed their artwork they would recognize doodling as a form of self-care. Researchers are unable to draw generalizable conclusions from this study due to the limited number of participants.

The analysis of the quantitative data concludes that 90% of the participants experienced a change in their self-efficacy after doodling. The results of the Emotional Self Efficacy Scale (ESES) show that 40% of participants showed a positive change, 10% showed a negative change, and 50% showed no change in their emotional self-efficacy. The results of the Creative Self Efficacy Scale (CSES) show that 60% of participants showed a positive change, 30% showed a negative change and 10% showed no change in their creative self-efficacy. A deeper analysis of the ESES shows that the range of those who scored neutral or negatively was between 0 and -2, while those who scored positively ranged between +1 to +10. This shows that while individuals may have had a negative experience that experience was minimally negative. However, those who had a positive experience may have had a more drastically positive change in their emotional self-efficacy. On the other hand, an analysis of the CSES shows that while the majority of participants experienced a positive change there was a smaller positive range, being between +1 and +3. Those who scored in the neutral or negative range scored between 0 and -3. While there was a wider range of negative results on the CSES, there was also a larger number of participants who scored overall more positively post-doodle (60%). Overall there was a higher rate of change in creative self-efficacy compared to emotional self-efficacy.

When looking strictly at the doodles there was limited discernibility between those who had a positive experience and those who had a negative experience. Viewing the doodles
alongside the quantitative and qualitative data provided this study with a deeper understanding of how doodling affected the participants view of their own self-efficacy and self-expression. Additionally, it showed how doodling could be a form of self-care.

When asked how the participants build their own self-efficacy one participant initially recorded that they “remind [themselves] practice makes perfect…,” but responded after the doodle that they are “open to new activities and trying things without giving [themselves] pressure to be good at something.” Initially they felt that perfection was important in order to build their self-efficacy, but after creating their doodle noted that they didn’t feel the “pressure” to seek out perfection in order to improve their personal self-efficacy. This shift from a desire to make things “perfect” to allowing themselves to create something without expectation suggests that doodling could have a positive effect on an individual’s opinions about personal self-efficacy and confidence. In addition, it could also affect what they feel is required to build the two. Another participant noted that they felt “pretty limited when it comes to art” and how to build their own personal self-efficacy. After their doodle they recorded that “positive self-talk” was how they build their own self-efficacy. While this participant initially did not have a noted means of building self-efficacy through creating art prior to their doodle, they seemed to have gained personal insight into how to do this after the study.

This study also suggests that utilizing doodling as a form of self-expression in art therapy could be beneficial to the field of psychology as a whole. An additional analysis from the data showed that multiple participants related doodling to feelings of “self-expression,” “freedom” or “liberation.” Using doodling as a form of self-expression could provide a deeper avenue of study for art therapy. The field of art therapy has yet to focus on the connection between doodling and self-expression and the positive outcomes from the combination of the two (Andrade, 2010).
When analyzing the participants response to the question related to their opinions surrounding their own personal self-expression most participants initially recorded positive responses. One participant felt “confident in [their] self-expression” and another noted that “self-expression [was] essential to [their] personal growth process.” In contrast, an additional participant noted that they were initially “not very comfortable” with their self-expression but after the doodle recorded that they felt “excellent” about personal self-expression. These responses show how doodling can be used as a form of self-expression as well as a way to build an individual’s opinions about their own self-expression.

In addition, the feelings reported by individuals in this study after creating a doodle could reveal more about how doodling may be connected to self-care. One participant in this study described their overall experience with doodling to make them feel “happy to see things that come organically to [them] on paper.” The majority of participants reported positive feelings elicited from creating a doodle such as “calmness,” “relaxation,” “fun,” “freedom,” “self-expression” and “flow.” Previous research has shown that being in a state of “flow” contributes to high levels of happiness (Seligman et al., 2014). Positive psychology has noted that “doodling is just one example,” of something that can be used as a tool to induce micro flow (Johns, 2012). In this study “flow” was used by participants to describe their experience while doodling, suggesting that doodling itself may also induce high levels of happiness and therefore may be a reliable form of self-care.
Chapter V: Recommendations & Conclusion

Implications

The findings from this research are important for promoting an understanding of the positive implications of doodling as a form of self-expression, self-care and building self-efficacy.

This research shows that doodling has a positive effect on an individual’s opinion towards self-expression. This could influence whether or not art therapists in the future include doodling in their therapeutic practice as well as who they would recommend it for. In addition, the findings surrounding the application of art therapy with normally functioning adults could affect insurance policy coverage. This research implies that the value doodling has on self-expression for normally functioning adults may warrant medically insuring all populations to receive benefits from art therapy.

The implications from this study related to doodling as a form of self-care could impact future therapy practices and research as well. In this study doodling was found to be a form of self-care. Future researchers may be inclined to study and discover alternative forms of self-care while art therapists may offer alternative modes of self-care to their clients that they may not have considered before.

The results from the study also suggest that doodling can have a positive effect on an individual’s personal self-efficiency. In addition, this study suggests that doodling can aid an individual’s understanding of how to build their own self-efficacy. This could be important for art therapists in understanding ways in which they can promote an individual’s independence when it comes to building their own self-efficacy.
Recommendations for Future Research

This particular research is intended for forming a baseline for future research. While this study addressed how doodling may be connected to self-expression, self-efficacy and self-care, there are many other additional avenues for future research surrounding doodling to explore. Recommendations for future research consist of including a variety of individuals with a larger sample size and having a facilitator present during the art making process.

One recommendation for future research when using doodling in art therapy is to apply this research to a variety of populations with a larger sample size. By recruiting educators to refer or recommend students, researchers may be able to gather more participants as well as specific populations. These studies could be performed by asking participants to create an abstract line that will ultimately form a doodle. The researcher should ask the participant questions related to their doodle as well as their experience. One specific population this researcher suggests would be individuals with attention deficit disorder (ADD) based on the known benefits doodling has on attention and education. Previous research proves that doodling for educational purposes improves attention as well as helps maintain prolonged attention. This indicates that the stimulation induced from doodling overall enhances learning (Roche et al., 2007). Drawing as a form of self-expression has been applied to positive psychology and has induced micro flow that results in restoring attention, and doodling is noted to be one example. Future research could focus on including populations with ADD because doodling has been shown to improve attention as well as restore attention.

Future research involving doodling would also benefit from having a facilitator or researcher present during the process. Having a facilitator in the room could allow for more organic questions to arise and more observable information to be recorded. Facilitating and
witnessing the doodling process in person could additionally provide a more in-depth inquiry by the researcher. The researcher could provide the participant with a deeper understanding of what a doodle is as well as a deeper understanding of the study. The researcher would also have the opportunity to inquire about what the participants doodle is, the imagery within the doodle and in general have more qualitative data to expand upon. In addition, the way in which a participant creates a doodle may be more telling than the doodle itself. The action of doodling could be observed and this action process could provide additional avenues of research. Possibilities for in-person examination, questioning and observation could focus on line quality, frequency, sharpness, repetition as well as time spent on doodling and emotions that came up during the doodling process.

The data in this study shows that there was a change in the participants emotional self-efficacy and a higher rate of change in the participants creative self-efficacy. When looking strictly at the individual’s doodles it became increasingly difficult to make meaningful connections that could be confirmed between the artist and researcher. Understanding meaningful connections between the artist and their doodle could be highlighted in future research by having a facilitator present during the doodling process.

Future research should focus on including various populations and provide in person facilitation of the experience. Researchers should view and facilitate the art making process in conjunction with the questioning. In addition, future research should include a larger sample of participants in order to draw generalizable conclusions. Each of these areas should be considered in future research related to doodling to better understand the emotions elicited from the creation of a doodle as well as its effect on emotional and creative self-efficacy across a variety of populations.
Conclusion

This research attempted to connect doodling to building both creative and emotional self-efficacy as well as improving participants opinions surrounding personal self-expression. It also attempted to discover if doodling can be a form of self-care. This study indicates that doodling is a way for individuals to improve their creative self-efficacy as well as their opinions surrounding their personal self-expression. Overall there was a higher rate of change in creative self-efficacy compared to emotional self-efficacy for the individuals in this study. In addition, doodling was found to be a beneficial form of self-care. This study and noted research is a call to change the current definition of doodling fortified with proof as to why doodling is more important and complex than the historical definition describes. This research exemplifies that doodling gives the artist the ability to visually and internally explore and foster creativity by using art and imagery to tell their individual story. Future research needs to be conducted related to doodling as a practice in art therapy, what emotions are elicited from doodling as well as how it affects an individual’s understanding of self-expression, self-efficacy and self-care.
References

Adams, L. (2020). The Benefits of Intergenerational Arts-Based Experiences for Older Adults: A Review of the Literature.


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Proactive-FP, F. E. T. Consultation workshop.


of the 12th EAI International Conference on Pervasive Computing Technologies for Healthcare (pp. 138-147).
Appendix A: Agreement to participate in research
Agreement to Participate in Research

RESPONSIBLE INVESTIGATOR: Journey Coward

TITLE OF RESEARCH PROJECT: Doodling as self-expression, building self-efficacy in normally functioning adults.

I have been asked to participate in an arts-based research study that is investigating the experience of doodling as self-expression in this arts-based study. Through, art therapy as it relates to feelings in self-expression, creativity, and self-efficacy. The results of this study should further our understanding of using doodling as self-expression as an art assessments as fosters self-expression, creativity, and increasing self-efficacy, leading to an understanding of doodling as self-expression, for normally functioning adults.

I understand that:

1. I will be asked to take two surveys at the beginning and completion of the doodle activity that should take approximately thirty (30) minutes to complete. I will be asked to engage in a short 3- part art assessment online. I will be asked to engage in a doodling experience during the bulk of the session and must be completed in-between the surveys.

2. The possible psychological risks of participating in this study are considered minimal and may include some emotional discomfort based on reaction to the doodling or questions on the survey. Should any feelings be elicited based on my participation in this study, I will be provided with a list of low-cost agencies that provide psychological services.

3. There may be minor benefits to me personally in the area of well-being and self-care as the results of this study will help expand our knowledge of doodling for normally functioning adults.

4. Although alternative procedures may be used, the present procedure is the most advantageous and economical.

5. The results of this study may be published, but any information from this study that can be identified with me will remain confidential and the data will be collected online to maintain anonymity.

6. Any questions about my participation in this study will be answered by Journey Coward through email or by telephone (Journey_doodle@gmail.com or (925)437-0952. Any questions or concerns about this study should be addressed to Supervisor at (Phone Number). Complaints or concerns about this study may be addressed to Amy Backos at (650)508-3674.

7. My consent is given voluntarily without being coerced. I may refuse to participate in this study or in any part of this study, and I may withdraw at any time, without prejudice or with any future contact with NDNU.

8. I have received a copy of this consent form for my record.
I HAVE MADE A DECISION WHETHER OR NOT TO PARTICIPATE. Please check one:

_______YES, I agree to participate in this research study and I agree to have my art as part of the study data.

_______NO, I do NOT agree to participate in this research study and have my art as part of the study data.

__________________________________ Print Participant’s Name

__________________________________

Date

__________________________________ Participant’s Signature

__________________________________ Investigator’s Signature
Appendix B: Consent to use Artwork
Study Title: Doodling as self-expression, building self-efficacy in normally functioning adults.

Approval Date: __________

I allow _______________________________ to use my artwork in an art therapy research project. I understand that no one will know that I participated in this study. My name and all other personal information (including anything I choose to talk about) will be kept secret and confidential.

I understand that some of my drawings might be shown to other art therapists, but my name will not be attached to my artwork.

I understand that my art will be photographed.

SIGNATURE

If you agree to allow your artwork to be discussed in this study, please sign here:

__________________________________________________ Signature of Participant Date

__________________________________________________ Printed Name of Participant Date
Appendix C: Demographic Survey
1. Date of birth.

2. Do you identify as, a normally functioning adult? No ___ / Yes ____

3. What is your ethnicity? _______________________ / Gender _________________

4. What are your opinions about personally creating art?

5. What are your opinions about personally creating a doodle?

6. What are your opinions about personal self-expression?

7. How do you personally build your own self-efficacy? (DEFINITION OF SELF-EFFICACY)

8. How much time do you intend on doodling for? (30-60 minutes)
Appendix D: Creativity Self-Efficacy Scale

CREATIVE SELF-EFFICACY SCALE

The instructions direct respondents to rate their level of agreement on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree, in being at the present able to carry out functions described by each of the 8 items.

**Definition of Self-Efficacy; Refers to an individual’s belief in their own capacity to execute behaviors necessary to produce a specific performance goal.**

___ I will be able to achieve most of the goals that I have set for myself in a creative way.
___ When facing difficult tasks, I am certain that I will accomplish them creatively.
___ In general, I think that I can obtain outcomes that are important to me in a creative way.
___ I believe I can succeed at most any creative endeavor to which I set my mind.
___ I will be able to overcome many challenges creatively.
___ I am confident that I can perform creatively on many different tasks.
___ Compared to other people, I can do most tasks very creatively.
___ Even when things are tough, I can perform quite creatively.
Appendix E: Emotional Self-Efficacy Scale
EMOTIONAL SELF-EFFICACY SCALE
The instructions direct respondents to rate their confidence, on a five-point scale on which a ‘1’ indicates ‘not at all’ and a ‘5’ indicates ‘very’, in being at the present able to carry out functions described by each of the 15 items.

_____ Understand what causes your emotions to change
_____ Correctly identify your own positive emotions
_____ Use positive emotions to generate good ideas
_____ Generate the right emotion so that creative ideas can unfold
_____ Change your negative emotion to a positive emotion
_____ Figure out what causes you to feel differing emotions
_____ Correctly identify your own negative emotions
_____ Know what causes you to feel a positive emotion
_____ Get into a mood that best suits the occasion
_____ Create emotions to enhance cognitive performance
_____ Regulate your own emotions when close to reaching a goal
_____ Create a positive emotion when feeling a negative emotion
_____ Create emotions to enhance physical performance
_____ Calm down when feeling angry
_____ Regulate your own emotions when under pressure
Appendix F: Debriefing Statement
DEBRIEFING STATEMENT

Thank you for your participation in this research on doodling as self-expression. The purpose of this study is to measure self-efficacy through doodling, this study predicts that doodling will increase self-efficacy in normally functioning adults, and currently the definition of doodling is a mindless scribble, this study aims to change that. This study aims to introduce doodling as a form of self-expression, in turn building self-efficacy. The written, and scale questionnaires were used for measuring self-efficacy and personal response to the creation of art in this study. The goal of the questionnaires was focused on, gathering information on normally functioning adults and their individual rating of self-efficacy, and could doodling as self-expression help build self-efficacy in normally functioning adults, and can this study be applied to other populations. And finally, to evaluate the degree to which doodling as self-expression can affect an individual’s perception of their own self-efficacy. Whether a normally functioning adult perceived positive or negative effects from doodling, it was hypothesized that doodling as self-expression would build self-efficacy in normally functioning adults. The degree to which normally functioning adults would more often reengage in doodling as a form of self-care. If you would like to learn more about doodling as self-expression, building self-efficacy for normally functioning adults, please see the references listed below. *

Current research has found that doodling helps improve auditory information retention, and engagement in lectures, and telephone calls. Your participation was important in helping researchers understand how doodling as self-expression can improve an individual’s self-efficacy.

Final results will be available from the investigator, Journey Coward, by September, 1, 2021. You may contact me at Journey_coward@yahoo.com to receive an email copy of the final report. All results will be grouped together; therefore, individual results are not available. Your participation, including your name and answers, will remain absolutely confidential, even if the report is published.

If you have any additional questions regarding this research, please contact (information above).
Appendix G: Recruitment Flyer
Volunteer’s needed for a graduate research study, exploring doodling as self-expression. This study can be done in the comfort of your own home, from any device that can connect to the internet, and with access to any drawing materials. Volunteers will be asked to complete a 15 minute survey before and after a 45 minute doodle. If you are interested click the link below.

**WHAT CAN DOODLING DO FOR YOU?**

**Materials:**
- One sheet of paper
- Drawing material (pens/pencils)

**Participants must be:**
- Normal Functioning Adult (18+)
- Internet Access
- Available for 60 minutes
- Access to drawing materials

**ARE YOU** Curious about how art can make you more confident, build your self-esteem and improve decision making? This study is giving 50 participants the opportunity to doodle as a form of self-expression.

**READY NOW?**

Please use your cellphone camera to scan the QR code in the bottom left corner of this flyer, or click the link below.

For more information please contact:
Journey Coward
Art Therapy Graduate Student
Notre Dame de Namur University
(925)437-0952
journey_coward@yahoo.com

https://form.jotform.com/210256595860157
Appendix H: Thank You Coloring Page
Appendix I: Closing Survey
Note any changes in how you felt before the doodle and after.

1. What are your opinions about personally creating art?

2. What are your opinions about personally creating a doodle?

3. What are your opinions about personal self-expression?

4. How do you personally build your own self-efficacy?

5. How much time did you spend doodling?

6. List any feelings that came up for you.