

# Behavioral Activation Therapy: Boosting Happiness and Creativity Among College Students


Jingjing. Ying<sup>1\*</sup>, Kamdin. Parsakia<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Shanghai Institute of Early Childhood Education, Shanghai Normal University, Shanghai, China



<sup>2</sup> Department of Psychology and Counseling, KMAN Research Institute, Richmond Hill, Ontario, Canada

\* Corresponding author email address: [jingying@shnu.edu.cn](mailto:jingying@shnu.edu.cn)

### Editor

Anna Coleman  
Senior Research Fellow, Division of Population Health, Health Services Research and Primary Care, School of Health Sciences, University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PL, UK  
[anna.coleman@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:anna.coleman@manchester.ac.uk)

### Reviewers

**Reviewer 1:** Citra Suraya  
Program Studi Ilmu Keperawatan, STIK Bina Husada Palembang. Email: [citra\\_suraya@yahoo.com](mailto:citra_suraya@yahoo.com)  
**Reviewer 2:** Sarah Croke  
Research Associate, Division of Population Health, Health Services Research and Primary Care, School of Health Sciences, University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PL, UK. Email: [sarah.croke@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:sarah.croke@manchester.ac.uk)

## 1. Round 1

### 1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

In the abstract, the statistical methods and results are mentioned but not detailed. For example, "Data analysis included repeated measures ANOVA and Bonferroni post-hoc tests using SPSS version 27." Consider adding the specific statistical findings, such as "The repeated measures ANOVA indicated significant improvements in subjective happiness ( $F(2, 56) = 43.56, p < .001$ ) and creative thinking ( $F(2, 56) = 61.34, p < .001$ ) in the intervention group."

The control group received no intervention, but it is important to clarify if they were given any placebo or minimal intervention to ensure blinding. State explicitly, e.g., "The control group attended three health education sessions unrelated to the study's objectives to control for attention effects."

The detailed description of the BAT sessions is useful. However, it would enhance clarity to include the specific activities or exercises used in each session. For example, "Session 4 included activities such as scheduling 'pleasure activities' using a weekly planner and reflecting on their mood changes."

The data analysis section mentions checking assumptions of normality, homogeneity of variance, and sphericity. It would be helpful to provide specific test statistics and p-values for these assumptions, e.g., "The Shapiro-Wilk test for normality was not significant ( $p > .05$ ) for both SHS and TTCT scores."

In Table 1, it would be useful to include effect sizes to better understand the magnitude of changes in subjective happiness and creative thinking. For instance, "Include Cohen's  $d$  values for the differences between pre- and post-intervention scores."

Consider adding visual representations of the data, such as line graphs showing changes in SHS and TTCT scores over time for both groups. This can help readers easily grasp the intervention effects.

The discussion provides a broad interpretation of the findings. It would benefit from a more detailed explanation of how the significant improvements in happiness and creativity can be practically applied in university settings, e.g., "These findings suggest that integrating BAT into student wellness programs could lead to substantial improvements in students' psychological well-being and creative output, potentially enhancing their academic performance."

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

### 1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

In the introduction, when discussing the prevalence of stress, anxiety, and depression among university students, it would be beneficial to provide more recent and specific statistics to support this statement, e.g., "Recent surveys indicate that 60% of university students experience moderate to severe anxiety (National College Health Assessment, 2023)."

The literature review mentions the efficacy of BAT in clinical settings but lacks specific examples. Include more detailed examples of studies with quantitative outcomes, such as "Armento et al. (2012) found that BAT reduced depressive symptoms by 35% in college students ( $p < .05$ )."

The section on participants states the inclusion criteria but lacks details on how participants were recruited. Specify the recruitment process, such as "Participants were recruited through flyers posted on campus, emails to student mailing lists, and announcements in university classes."

When discussing the Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS) and the Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking (TTCT), provide more detail on their psychometric properties. Include Cronbach's alpha values or other reliability indices, e.g., "The SHS has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.86 indicating good internal consistency."

When comparing the results with previous studies, specify the effect sizes and statistical significance from those studies. For example, "Our findings align with Armento et al. (2012), who reported a 25% increase in subjective happiness following BAT ( $p < .01$ )."

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

## 2. Revised

Editor's decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief's decision: Accepted.