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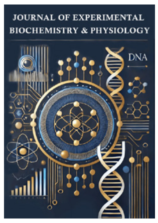

Review Article

Emotion and Creativity A Review of EEG Beta-2 Band Power and Connectivity in Creative Tasks

Haruki Tanaka*and Aiko Nakamura

[1]*Department of Virology, Kyoto University, Kyoto, Japan*

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Abstract

Creativity is a complex cognitive function influenced by both neural activity and emotional states. The power and coherence of the β2 EEG band in individuals performing creative tasks involving emotionally significant and emotionally neutral words. Their findings provide insights into the neural mechanisms underlying creativity, highlighting the role of emotional valence in modulating brain activity. The β2 EEG band (18–25 Hz) is associated with higher-order cognitive functions, including problem-solving, divergent thinking, and emotional processing. The study observed increased β2 power and coherence in response to emotionally significant words compared to neutral words, suggesting that emotional stimuli enhance neural synchronization and information integration during creative processes. The heightened β2 activity indicates greater cognitive engagement, potentially facilitating novel idea generation and flexible thinking.Moreover, the study revealed hemispheric asymmetry in β2 coherence, with the right hemisphere exhibiting stronger connectivity patterns, particularly in response to emotionally charged words. This finding aligns with prior research suggesting the right hemisphere's dominance in processing emotional and creative stimuli. The observed differences in EEG activity between emotionally significant and neutral words underscore the intricate relationship between emotion and cognition in creative thinking. These findings have broader implications for creativity research, cognitive neuroscience, and psychology. Understanding how emotional valence influences neural dynamics can inform strategies to enhance creative performance in various domains, including education, the arts, and problem-solving tasks. Additionally, the study contributes to the growing body of research exploring the neural basis of creativity, emphasizing the importance of emotional context in cognitive processing.

Introduction

Creativity is a fundamental aspect of human cognition, enabling individuals to generate novel ideas, solve problems, and adapt to new situations. It involves complex neural processes that integrate memory, perception, and executive functions. Understanding the neural basis of creativity has been a longstanding goal in cognitive neuroscience and psychology [1]. One promising approach to studying creativity is the use of electroencephalography (EEG), which measures brain electrical activity and provides insights into neural oscillations associated with creative thinking. Among the various EEG frequency bands, the beta-2 (18–25 Hz) band has been linked to higher-order cognitive functions, including attentional engagement, problem-solving, and cognitive flexibility. EEG studies suggest that beta-band activity is crucial for information processing, with increased power and coherence indicating greater neural synchronization and efficiency. The beta-2 frequency range, in particular, has been associated with active cognitive engagement, suggesting that it plays a role in facilitating the integration of ideas and concepts during creative tasks. Additionally, emotional stimuli have been shown to influence cognitive performance, potentially affecting the neural mechanisms underlying creativity. The interaction between emotion and cognition is an essential aspect of creative thinking, as emotions can enhance or hinder the generation and evaluation of ideas interplay by investigating the effects of emotionally charged words on beta-2 power and coherence during creative tasks [2]. Their study aimed to determine whether emotional valence specifically, emotionally significant versus emotionally neutral words modulates brain activity in ways that impact creative performance. The researchers hypothesized that emotionally charged words would elicit greater beta-2 activity, reflecting heightened neural processing and connectivity. By analyzing EEG power and coherence, they sought to uncover patterns of brain activity that distinguish emotionally driven creativity from neutral cognitive processing [3]. One of the key

∗**Correspondingauthor:** Haruki Tanaka, Department of Virology, Kyoto University, Kyoto, Japan; E-mail: tanaka@haru.jp

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findings of their study was that emotionally significant words led to increased beta-2 power and coherence compared to neutral words. This suggests that emotional stimuli enhance neural synchronization, possibly facilitating greater cognitive flexibility and originality in idea generation. Moreover, hemispheric asymmetry was observed, with the right hemisphere exhibiting stronger beta-2 coherence in response to emotionally significant words. This finding aligns with existing research suggesting that the right hemisphere plays a dominant role in processing both emotional and creative stimuli [4].

The implications of these findings extend beyond theoretical neuroscience and into practical applications. Understanding how emotional stimuli influence creativity could inform strategies to enhance creative thinking in educational and professional settings. For instance, incorporating emotionally engaging content in problem-solving exercises may stimulate cognitive engagement and improve creative performance. Additionally, these insights could be applied in therapeutic contexts, such as using emotionally evocative stimuli to enhance cognitive function in individuals with mood disorders or cognitive impairments. The relationship between emotion and creativity at the neural level. Their findings provide valuable insights into how emotionally significant stimuli can modulate brain activity, enhancing creative performance through increased beta-2 power and coherence. Future research should explore how different emotional valences, task complexities, and individual differences affect EEG patterns during creative tasks. By bridging the gap between neuroscience and psychology, such studies can contribute to a deeper understanding of creativity and its underlying neural mechanisms [5].

EEG Beta-2 Band and Cognitive Function

Beta-band oscillations, particularly in the beta-2 range (18–25 Hz), are associated with higher-order cognitive functions such as cognitive control, decision-making, and attentional focus. These oscillations are crucial for maintaining task-related engagement and regulating neural processing efficiency [6]. Studies have shown that increased beta-2 activity is linked to tasks requiring high cognitive demands, including mathematical problem-solving, logical reasoning, and working memory tasks. The role of beta-2 activity in these domains highlights its importance in sustaining mental effort and integrating complex information [7].

One of the key aspects of beta-2 oscillations is coherence, which refers to the synchronization of neural activity across different brain regions. High coherence in the beta-2 range suggests strong functional connectivity, indicating efficient communication between cortical areas involved in cognitive processing. In creative tasks, such connectivity may facilitate the integration of diverse ideas, allowing for more effective problem-solving and innovative thinking. For example, studies have found that individuals with greater beta-band coherence exhibit improved performance in tasks requiring mental flexibility and associative thinking. Beta-2 activity is expected to reflect the cognitive demands associated with both idea generation and refinement [8]. While idea generation involves divergent thinking and novel associations, refinement requires analytical processing and evaluation of creative output. Beta-2 oscillations may contribute to both phases by supporting attention, working memory, and executive control. Given the influence of emotional stimuli on cognition, beta-2 activity may also be modulated by emotionally charged content, further shaping the creative process. Understanding these dynamics can provide deeper insights into the neural mechanisms underlying creativity and inform strategies for enhancing creative performance in various domains [9].

Role of Emotional Stimuli in Cognitive Processing

Emotional stimuli play a crucial role in modulating cognitive performance by influencing attention, memory, and problem-solving strategies. Research suggests that emotionally significant stimuli capture attention more effectively than neutral stimuli, leading to enhanced cognitive engagement and deeper processing. This heightened engagement can improve performance in tasks that require sustained focus and complex mental operations [10]. In the context of creativity, positive and negative emotions impact cognitive processes differently. Positive emotions are often linked to divergent thinking, which involves generating novel and flexible ideas. They promote cognitive flexibility, facilitating associative thinking and broadening the scope of thought. On the other hand, negative emotions can enhance analytical processing, encouraging more detailed evaluation and structured problem-solving. This suggests that different emotional states may support distinct phases of the creative process, from idea generation to refinement. The effects of emotionally significant words on EEG activity during creative tasks. Their study provided insights into how emotional valence influences neural oscillations, particularly in the beta-2 frequency range. By examining these changes, their research contributes to a deeper understanding of the emotion-cognition interaction and its implications for creative performance and neural processing [11].

Increased Beta-2 Power with Emotional Stimuli

Participants showed increased beta-2 power when processing emotionally significant words compared to neutral words. This heightened activity suggests greater cognitive engagement and attentional focus in response to emotionally charged content. Emotional stimuli may enhance neural processing efficiency, facilitating deeper cognitive involvement during creative tasks. The findings indicate that emotionally significant words activate brain regions associated with attentional control and cognitive effort, potentially improving creative performance. This supports the idea that emotions play a crucial role in shaping cognitive processes, particularly in tasks requiring complex problem-solving and idea generation, reinforcing the interaction between emotional valence and neural activity [12].

Higher Coherence in Frontal and Temporal Regions

Greater coherence in the frontal and temporal lobes was observed during tasks involving emotionally significant words, suggesting enhanced connectivity between brain regions involved in language processing, emotion regulation, and creative ideation. This increased synchronization may reflect the brain's effort to integrate emotional and cognitive information, facilitating a more dynamic and interconnected neural network. The frontal lobes, associated with higher-order thinking and decision-making, likely work in conjunction with temporal regions, which process language and emotional content, to enhance creative performance. These findings highlight the crucial role of emotional stimuli in modulating neural activity during creative tasks.

Differential Effects Based on Emotion Type

Positive and negative emotional words elicited distinct patterns of beta-2 activity, highlighting the complex interplay between emotion and cognition. Positive words were associated with increased beta-2 power in frontal regions, suggesting enhanced divergent thinking and creative flexibility. In contrast, negative words triggered heightened beta-2 activity in areas linked to analytical processing, indicating a more focused and detail-oriented cognitive approach. These findings suggest that emotional valence modulates neural engagement during creative tasks, with positive emotions fostering idea generation and negative emotions enhancing problem-solving precision. This nuanced influence underscores the role of affective states in shaping cognitive performance.

Implications for Creativity Research

These findings emphasize the significant role of emotional stimuli in shaping neural activity during creative tasks. The observed increase in beta-2 powers and coherence suggests that emotionally charged content enhances cognitive flexibility and ideational fluency by promoting stronger neural connectivity between brain regions involved in language processing, emotion regulation, and creative ideation. This has important implications across various domains. In educational and workplace settings, understanding how emotional stimuli influence creativity can help develop strategies to foster innovation and problem-solving by incorporating emotionally engaging content into learning and brainstorming environments. Additionally, these results contribute to neurocognitive models of creativity, supporting the integration of emotional processing into theoretical frameworks of creative cognition. By highlighting the dynamic interplay between affect and thought, this research suggests that emotional states are not merely incidental to creativity but play an active role in shaping the cognitive processes underlying idea generation and refinement. Furthermore, insights from EEG studies on emotion and creativity have potential clinical applications, particularly for individuals with mood disorders or cognitive impairments. Understanding how emotional valence modulates neural activity can aid in the development of targeted therapeutic approaches, such as cognitive training or emotion-based interventions, to enhance cognitive flexibility and creative thinking in clinical populations. By bridging neuroscience, psychology, and applied fields, these findings offer valuable perspectives on the complex relationship between emotion, cognition, and creativity, paving the way for future research on optimizing creative potential through emotional and cognitive regulation [13].

Broader Relevance to Neuroscience and Psychology

The link between emotional processing and EEG beta-2 activity. Their findings provide a neurophysiological framework for understanding how emotions influence cognitive performance, particularly in creative tasks. By highlighting the role of emotionally significant stimuli in modulating brain activity, this study underscores the dynamic interplay between affect and cognition in the creative process. Future research could explore individual differences in emotional reactivity and creativity, examining how personality traits, mood states, or cognitive styles influence beta-2 activity during creative tasks. Additionally, investigating the impact of different types of creative tasks such as artistic expression, problem-solving, and verbal fluency—on beta-2 coherence patterns could provide deeper insights into task-specific neural mechanisms. Another important avenue for research is the examination of cross-cultural variations in emotional processing and creative cognition, as cultural factors shape emotional experiences and their influence on cognitive performance. By expanding on these aspects, future studies could refine our understanding of the neural and psychological factors underlying creativity, offering potential applications in education, psychology, and clinical interventions aimed at enhancing creative potential through emotional and cognitive regulation.

Discussion

The interplay between emotional valence and neural activity during creative thinking is a fascinating area within cognitive neuroscience, and the findings regarding β2 EEG band activity provide compelling insights into this dynamic. The β2 frequency range (18–25 Hz) is closely linked to higher-order cognitive functions such as abstract thinking, attentional control, and emotional regulation. The study's observation of increased β2 power and coherence when individuals engaged with emotionally significant words suggests that emotional content has a substantial impact on cognitive engagement during creative processes.
This elevated β2 activity indicates heightened neural synchronization, which is critical for integrating information across different brain regionsa process essential for creativity. The ability to form novel connections and generate unique ideas relies on this kind of integrative processing, and emotional stimuli may serve as catalysts that enhance such cognitive flexibility. Emotionally charged words likely evoke richer semantic associations, deeper personal relevance, and more vivid imagery, thereby stimulating broader neural networks and encouraging divergent thinking.The finding of hemispheric asymmetry, particularly the increased coherence in the right hemisphere in response to emotional words, further supports the long-standing hypothesis that the right hemisphere plays a dominant role in creative and emotional processing. This aligns with previous literature suggesting that the right hemisphere is more involved in tasks requiring imagination, metaphorical thinking, and emotional nuance—traits that are integral to many forms of creative expression.

These results have practical implications for various domains, including education, psychotherapy, and creative industries. For instance, incorporating emotionally resonant content in learning environments or creative training programs could foster enhanced cognitive engagement and ideation. In therapeutic settings, understanding the neural basis of creativity in the context of emotion may offer new avenues for interventions aimed at enhancing emotional expression and problem-solving skills. Moreover, these findings contribute to the growing recognition of creativity as not just a spontaneous or mystical ability but as a function of identifiable neural processes. They emphasize that emotional context is not merely peripheral but central to how the brain generates and organizes creative thought. Future research might explore how individual differences in emotional sensitivity and personality traits modulate these EEG patterns, offering a more personalized understanding of creativity and its neural underpinnings.

Conclusion

The role of emotional stimuli in shaping EEG beta-2 activity, illustrating the complex interplay between emotion, cognition, and creativity. The observed increases in beta-2 power and coherence suggest that emotionally significant stimuli enhance cognitive engagement, attentional focus, and ideational fluency during creative tasks. These insights contribute to a deeper understanding of how affective states influence creative thinking, with potential applications in education, workplace innovation, and clinical psychology. Incorporating emotional elements into learning and problem-solving strategies could optimize creative performance, while neurocognitive research on emotion-cognition interactions may inform therapeutic approaches for individuals with mood disorders or cognitive impairments. Future studies should explore individual differences in emotional responsiveness, the impact of various creative tasks, and cross-cultural influences on creativity. Refining our understanding of these mechanisms could lead to innovative strategies for fostering creativity and emotional well-being in diverse settings.

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