



Abstract:

Title of Document: EXPLORING THE AFFECTIVE CONSEQUENCES OF CREATIVE TASKS

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Creativity is one of the most intriguing of human capabilities and an enigmatic facet of human brain and cognition. Creativity is usually considered a positive trait that promotes benevolent activities and is generally positive for the creator. However, recently some studies have started showing the unintentional negative consequences of creativity (e.g. depression, dishonesty, reduced integrity, narcissism, addictive behaviours, etc.) that can be detrimental to the creator as well as the society. From the literature review, it was found that the negative consequences of creativity are similar to those observed after the impaired self-control, reduced empathy and pro-sociality, and a narrow attentional breadth or local processing. Seven studies were performed using a combination of the interrogative, observational, correlational, subjective experiential account, and experimentation to explore the role that the self-control and the related factors play in modulating the creative task-induced affect/affective states leading to the positive or the negative affective consequences. In Study 1, we investigated what kinds of affect the participants reported while performing a creative task and found that while all the participants approached the task in their unique ways, all faced affective vulnerability provocations during the various stages of the task. Study 2 carried out an ethnography/design ethnography inspired qualitative research using semi-structured interviews and correlational participative observation of the participants from a design background to understand their feelings and the mental states and the possible triggers that may lead them to the affective vulnerabilities. Study 2 found that during the creative task performance, there might be about seven moments of affective vulnerability

arousals/triggers that may lead to affective consequences. At these times, the interplay of the personality and situational pressures may decide the subsequent behaviour. Study 3 explored the influence of the creative task on self-control and found a significant decrement of self-control after a creative task. Perhaps that is the most crucial factor in producing the affective consequences. Study 4 explored the impact of the creative task on the juror severity and found that the creative activity might preferentially significantly reduce the severity shown towards crimes that are desirable, even if illegal. Thus, reinforcing the findings of the previous study. Study 5 explored the influence of the creative task on empathy on two separate groups from a design background and one additional group from the non-design background and found that the empathy was significantly reduced in the design groups after the creative task. No such effect was seen in the non-design group, which agrees with the prior research. Study 6 explored the influence of the creative task on pro-sociality using the Dictator (giving only) format and found that after the creative task participants kept a more significant sum of money for themselves suggestive of reduced pro-sociality, which can result due to the reduced self-control. Study 7 explored the impact of the creative task on the global/local processing and found no significant bias towards any specific processing, thus showing that cognitive processing may not be directly interacting with the affective consequences. However, the affective processes might likely be modulating the cognitive processes. Previous studies have shown that the self-control strength impacts empathy, juror severity, pro-sociality, and global/local processing, and here we found that the creative task might impact self-control. This thesis provides a holistic perspective through the correlational combination of the subjective experiential and the experimental studies on the probable reasons for the affective consequences induced during or after the creative task. The thesis provides novel evidence that self-control strength might be one of the significant factors modulating the affective consequences after the creative task and opens up future research on the role of Executive functions in the consequent behaviours after the creative tasks.