Opening the Creative Minds of High Need-for-Closure Individuals through Activating Uncreative Ideas

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Background
- Creativity is a highly prized skill and creative products are often well sought after.
- But, high need for cognitive closure (NFC) dampens creative performance:
  - Bias towards easily accessible normative domains and conventions (e.g., Ip et al., 2006).

However, this might not be the complete picture:
- Fu et al. (2007): High NFC individuals’ bias towards conventions might be due to their strong desire to have consensus validation.

Critical Link 1: Kosic et al. (2004) - Initial interaction in host country determines how well high NFC individuals integrate into the host country.
- What this means: Closure providers can be different for different high NFC individuals, depending on the initial reference point.

Critical Link 2: Kruglanski et al. (2002) - High NFC individuals prefer homogenous out/in-groups to the extent that they were self-similar.
- What this means: High NFC individuals are more attracted to the consensual provider if it matches their self-characteristic.

Putting these findings together, perhaps (i) activating the consensually valid closure provider and (ii) aligning it with one’s self-characteristic might enhance creative performance among high NFC individuals.

Present Study
- Investigate if high NFC can be beneficial for creativity through:
  1. Manipulating the initial reference point: Cognizant of conventional/uncreative ideas or not.

- Link 1: By directing the attention to what is NOT the desired outcome will make high NFC individuals more aware of what is consensually desired, i.e. counter-priming.
- Link 2: Those who tend to be ideationally creative will be more likely to seek creative ideas as their closure provider.

Hypothesis
- Three-way interaction: NFC x IC x Activation of conventional ideas on creative performance:
  - Individuals high in both NFC and IC will perform more creatively when they are aware of conventional ideas.

Method
- Participants completed:
  1. Chocolate Design Task (Manipulation & DV)
  2. Runco Ideational Behavior Scale (IV: IC, Runco et al., 2001)
  3. Need for Closure Scale [IV: NFC; Kruglanski et al., 1993]

- 2 between-participants conditions:
  1. Participants drew conventional chocolate designs before drawing creative chocolate design (uncreative-cognizant condition), or
  2. Only draw creative chocolate design (uncreative-incognizant condition)

The Chocolate Design Task Scenario
“...move their designs away from traditional chocolate. “Chocolate in Belgium is an icon, like pasta in Italy. But why do we feel obliged by tradition? We must disturb the traditional shapes. We must create new combinations, new ingredients,” says Giovanna Massini, a researcher who is leading this chocolate design initiative in Brussels, Belgium. Suppose you are a member of Giovanna’s research lab, your task is to revolutionize the design of chocolate.”

Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correlations</th>
<th>IC level</th>
<th>Close-mindedness</th>
<th>Openness to experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creativity score</td>
<td>+ve</td>
<td>+ve</td>
<td>+ve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.49</td>
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</tbody>
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Uncreative-incognizant condition
- Low NFC (-1SD) High NFC (+1SD)
- Uncreative-cognizant condition
- Low NFC (-1SD) High NFC (+1SD)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NFC</th>
<th>Uncreative-Incognizant</th>
<th>Uncreative-Cognizant</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High NFC</td>
<td>No effect of IC (β = .15, t(24) = .55, p = .59)</td>
<td>High NFC participants more creative (β = 1.16, t(23) = 2.70, p = .01)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Low NFC</td>
<td>High IC participants more creative (β = .61, t(24)=2.15, p = .04)</td>
<td>No effect of IC (β = .13, t(23)=.41, p = .69)</td>
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