Can Engaging in Creative Tasks Influence Donation Behavior? Exploring Differential Effects of Divergent versus Convergent Creative Thinking on Donation Behavior

ABSTRACT

Scant literature studying the downstream effects of creativity on social behaviors has so far treated creativity as a unilateral concept, without considering the different creative thinking processes that may lead to a creative outcome. Extending the extant literature in this domain, the proposed work explicates the role of two types of thinking styles (i.e., divergent and convergent thinking) that could be adopted during creative tasks and examines their effects on consumers’ donation behavior. It is proposed that divergent creative thinking, that utilizes an exploratory process and requires consumers to search for many possible solutions that satisfy loosely defined criteria, will induce an expansive thinking, which in turn activate an inclusive mindset that will enhance donation behavior. Convergent thinking, on the other hand, employing a more evaluative and selective cognitive process that satisfies well-defined criteria, induces a more restrictive thinking style, which in turn attenuate the activation of inclusive mindset and thus attenuating donation behavior. This research contributes to creativity literature by not only examining the downstream consequences of creative engagement but also differentiating between two types of creative thinking tasks (i.e., divergent vs. convergent) and demonstrating that they have differential effect on subsequent behaviors. It also contributes to donation behavior literature by examining how incidental cues (i.e., creative engagement) can affect donation behavior. Practically, the current research identifies a novel yet effective way that charitable organizations can adopt to increase donor’s willingness to donate.