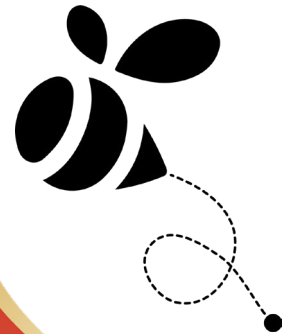


research snapshot

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Are Boredom Prone Individuals Creative and Curious About Their Environment?



WHAT IS THE RESEARCH ABOUT?

Which personality characteristics are prominent in creative and curious individuals? So far, research in this area has focused on the role of the Big Five personality characteristics extraversion, conscientiousness, openness, agreeableness, and neuroticism in creativity and curiosity. One intriguing personality characteristic that has not yet been explored is boredom proneness. Thus, the present study sought to determine if boredom prone individuals are more likely to be creative and curious. This study is a worthy endeavour because it may shed light on boredom prone individuals' thoughts, feelings, and motivations - for instance, do they have no interest in their surroundings (i.e. lack curiosity and creativity), are they are especially motivated to be engaged (i.e. highly curious and creative), are they are unable to properly channel their creativity or curiosity, etc. Answers to these questions will contribute to a better understanding of boredom and may help inform future boredom interventions.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

After controlling for overall personality characteristics, boredom proneness did not predict creativity, but did positively predict people's motivation to seek out novel experiences and find answers to things they do not understand. Thus, future work should explore how to use these relationships to help individuals respond effectively to the experience of boredom.

WHAT DID THE RESEARCHERS DO?

The researchers asked participants to complete self-report scales measuring broad personality characteristics (specifically, honesty/humility, emotionality, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to experience), boredom proneness, creativity, and four types of curiosity.

WHAT DID THE RESEARCHERS FIND?

Consistent with past research, individuals who were more open to new experiences were more likely to be creative and curious. The novel finding was that when general personality characteristics were accounted for, boredom proneness did not predict creativity but was a positive predictor of two types of curiosity: the desire to reduce the unpleasant feeling of not knowing information, and the desire to seek out novel experiences.

HOW CAN YOU USE THIS RESEARCH?

This research suggests that, after accounting for the impact of broad personality characteristics on curiosity, boredom prone individuals are motivated to seek out novel experiences and find the answers to things they do not understand. Such motivations may, in part, explain why boredom prone people often feel bored. Simply put, the environment may often frustrate these desires, leaving them unsatisfied and looking for more. Additionally, boredom prone individuals may be curious about exploring things they do not understand because they have difficulty identifying activities which will fulfill their desires. Therefore, boredom prevention techniques should focus on helping individuals discover the content of their desires and activities that satisfy these desires. Lastly, future research could investigate the relationship between boredom proneness and different types of creativity not examined here.

ABOUT THE RESEARCHERS

Jennifer Hunter and Andrew Hunter are Ph.D. students in Clinical Psychology at York University under the supervision of Dr. Eastwood. Eileen Abraham and Lauren Goldberg were undergraduate thesis students under Dr. Eastwood's supervision at the time that this article was written. Dr. John Eastwood is an Associate Professor in the Department of Psychology at York University.

KEYWORDS

Boredom proneness, Personality, HEXACO, Creativity, Curiosity

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