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To Include or Exclude, That is the Question: The Impact of Social Exclusion or Social Inclusion on Creativity Scores

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Presenter Information

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TO INCLUDE OR EXCLUDE, THAT IS THE QUESTION: THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION OR SOCIAL INCLUSION ON CREATIVITY SCORES

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This study seeks to explore the impact of social exclusion and inclusion on creative thinking, specifically whether negative or positive feelings contribute to increase in creativity. Previous research has often referenced the “muse” phenomenon, where women fuel and inspire creativity in men. Other research has found that the power of positive feelings and multicultural identities generate more creativity in individuals. Together, these studies run counter to the “starving artist” phenomenon, or the idea that hardship and struggle lead to greater creativity. Previous studies have shown that social pain as a result of exclusion creates negative feelings. We explore whether negative feelings generated by social exclusion may increase creativity for participants. Our participants will engage in several online activities using Qualtrics. First, participants will be primed for either social inclusion or social exclusion by asking them to recall a time in which they experienced either, and then to write about how that incident made them feel. In a second part participants will complete a Remote Associates Test to assess their convergent thinking, and a pasta naming test to assess their divergent thinking. Past research successfully used these measures to test creativity and utilized experiential primes for social exclusion. If data analysis reveals a significant relationship between being primed for social exclusion and divergent or convergent thinking, then this study will provide future support for the theory that individuals who experience higher rates of social exclusion experience increased creative growth, which will support the stereotype of a starving artist. If, on the other hand, our data demonstrates greater creativity under conditions of inclusion, then our research will support theories for happiness/positivity contributing to creativity. This hypothesis has never before been tested in a controlled experiment and will add to our understanding of creativity.