

How Internal Constraints motivate Consumers to be Creative

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How Internal Constraints motivate Consumers to be Creative

Abstract

Constraints can play a positive role in consumers' creative problem solving. Prior research has typically found that resource-based constraints, such as living in impoverished situations, motivate consumers in creative consumption. This research examines unexplored constraints in creative consumption, beyond resource-restricted factors. We draw on Self-Determination Theory to investigate how internal constraints (manifested as frustrated psychological needs for competence, autonomy and relatedness) can motivate consumers to be creative in consumption. We interview forty-eight creative consumers in the car consumption context, identifying seven themes that highlight how internal constraints drive creative consumption. Our findings provide insights into the arising tensions consumers experience under constraints and which are transformed into opportunities for creative consumption, allowing them to reassert autonomy, competence and relatedness. Creative consumption thus in the car context becomes a "hands-on" instrument towards the achievement of self-determination, a process which repositions the proposed constraints experienced into sources of creativity, mastery, fulfilment and personal meaning-making. The findings have implications for understanding of creative consumers in both theory and praxis.

Track: Consumer Behaviour