**Abstract**

Resource-based theories of self-regulation posit that exerting self-control to regulate one’s thoughts, feelings, and behaviors depletes people’s available self-regulatory resources, leaving them cognitively depleted and less able to exert self-control in subsequent activities. The literature to date has predominantly focused on the detrimental effects of resource depletion, such as weak resistance to temptation and engagement in impulsive and interpersonally damaging behavior. Although the detrimental effects of cognitive depletion are well-established, we challenge this prevailing view by proposing that depletion can in some instances have beneficial effects. Across multiple experiments, our current research provides evidence that depletion heightens individuals’ creativity. In two initial experiments, we found that depletion improves individuals’ performance in different creativity endeavors. In a follow-up experiment, we found that this beneficial effect of depletion on creativity is explained by heightened novelty seeking when individuals are depleted. In a final experiment, we explore a boundary condition of this depletion-creativity effect by demonstrating that it only emerges for individuals who believe their ability is malleable.

**Keywords:** Self-regulation; Creativity; Depletion; Implicit theory