

## Summary

# Attitude change and need for cognition in debaters and non-debaters

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The aims of this research were to establish whether participating in competitive debate clubs affects the resistance of attitudes of high school students, and whether there were differences between debaters and non-debaters on the dimension of the need for cognition (NFC). Participants were high-school students, members of debate clubs (N=30) and high-school students who were not members of debate clubs (N=58). In the first stage of the research, their initial attitude towards a given object (the proposal of lowering the legal age for the consumption of alcohol from 18 years to 16 years) was measured. Three weeks afterwards, the participants were given the assignment to list all the arguments they could think of against that proposal. During the same session, NFC was measured and student attitude towards the given object was measured once again.

The results show that attitudes of debaters are equally (non)resistant to change as attitudes of non-debaters, pointing to the conclusion that participating in debate clubs does not influence resistance of attitudes. Debaters showed a higher NFC, probably because young people with a higher NFC were more likely to choose debate as an activity. In this research, the correlation of NFC and attitude resistance was not demonstrated. Age of participants was a relevant variable for the magnitude of attitude change. Younger participants had a more restrictive initial attitude that was more resistant to change than attitudes of older participants, probably because the chosen object was more important to younger than to older participants.

**Key words:** attitude change, cognitive dissonance, need for cognition, competitive debate.