

Diversity, Creative Style and Problem-Solving: A Discussion of Outcome and Organisational Implications

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Abstract

If innovative change is followed by more innovation, costs tend to rise, and the organisation moves towards a more chaotic form. The opposite occurs where innovation is avoided, adaptive ideas predominate, and organisations move towards a more predictable form with low differentiation between competitors. By continuing with either style to the point where profitability is affected, the organisation moves towards the lower end of performance ranking for the sector albeit by different routes. To avoid this position, it is necessary to have enough stylistic diversity available to the team or the organisation to both generate ideas and make decisions that offer a situational advantage. Without such diversity, a diminishing organisational performance can be expected.

Keywords: creativity, cognitive style, idea style, innovation, adaption

Introduction

Many people in their place of work will have experienced situations where managers, some very senior, have asked that their staff be more creative. When these demands are analysed, it is not clear what is meant by 'being creative'. Is it being used **adaptively** to improve the general day-to-day working arrangements or **innovatively** to change performance beyond what is currently seen as possible? (Kirton, 2011). This lack of clarity usually comes about for a number of reasons. This short article identifies 6 key reasons based on a carefully selected literature in this field. Discussion of each of the reasons with critical argument and conclusions are presented as followed.

Literature Review

The Problem-Solving Context

To be creative, we need a problem to solve as well as the motivation to solve it: our lives are spent solving problems. However, before we can solve a problem, the context and expected outcomes need some consideration, and to help with this, we build a mental model of