

## **Creative Problem-Solving in Countries East and West: Some Organizational Implications**

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### **Abstract**

Creativity and creative problem-solving are supported by two different cognitive styles, one concerned with adaption (doing things better), and the other with innovation (doing things differently). The current preoccupation with innovation would appear to favour western countries where a more innovative cultural bias exists. Furthermore, countries from the East would appear disadvantaged due to a similar bias towards adaption. However, organisations to sustain success need a diversity of style irrespective of the significance of any social or organisational leadership bias towards a single style. The pursuit of a dominant single style, be it adaption or innovation, leads to a diminishing organisational performance albeit by different routes.

### **Introduction**

Many people in their place of work will have experienced situations where managers, some very senior, have asked their organization/staff to be more creative. When these demands are further analysed it is not clear what is meant by 'being creative'. Is it being used **adaptively** where in general, individuals, problems and solutions are seen as sound, conforming, safe, predictable and wedded to the system and thus ready improvement to the general day-to-day working arrangements are on offer, or alternatively **innovatively** where problems and solutions are seen as exciting, risky, threatening, and disturbing of the established system but offer to change performance beyond what is currently seen as possible (Kirton 2011, 1976)

Here, the main goal is to consider the differences in styles east and west, by including the role of culture in the conceptual framework in contrast to the current position where style is considered to be determined by individual preferences solely within the domain of personality (see Figure 1).