



INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY GUWAHATI
SHORT ABSTRACT OF THESIS

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SHORT ABSTRACT

There are contradictory findings in the work psychology and HRM literature related to the importance of diversity in leveraging the competitive advantage of an organisation. The *information decision approach* argues that a well-managed informational diversity can lead to creativity in the workplace. On the other hand, proponents of *social identity theory* posit that diversity results in social divisions that impede group communication and team performance. Taking a cue from this paradox, the present research work has investigated team diversity from a social identity perspective focusing on the effects of team members' deep-diversity on team creativity. *Deep-level dimensions* are psychological in nature and are not readily apparent (e.g., attitudes, values, beliefs, preferences, and identities). Past research indicates that deep-level characteristics play a more critical role than surface-level dimensions and analysis of such effects are more pertinent in diversity management context. Moreover, the present study has conceptualised team creativity climate as a mediator in the diversity and creativity link which shapes deep-diversity effects on team creativity.

The thesis encompasses two studies namely Study 1 (experimental) and Study 2 (survey) to address the deep-diversity effects on team creativity. Study 1 (N=90) focused on the team creativity output based on team members' subjective experiences that are bounded by their

views and understanding of their relative positions (deep-level similar or dissimilar) with other members (*self-team deep-diversity*). Study 2 (N = 303) analysed the effects of actual differences of deep-level variables (*deep-level heterogeneity*) at the team level (N = 73) on team creativity and creative output.

The findings of Study 1 revealed that perceived deep-level heterogeneity in a team could impede a team's creative output while perceived deep-level homogeneity may facilitate it. In a favourable climate of creativity condition both deep-level homogeneous and heterogeneous group perceived high creative output while in an adverse climate condition, a heterogeneous group perceived much lower creative output than a homogeneous group. In study 2, team learning climate was found to mediate the negative effects of deep-diversity on perceived team creativity climate. However, task interdependency was found to moderate the relationship between deep-diversity and team learning climate such that in the condition of low task interdependency, a negative relationship was observed between deep-diversity and learning climate and in case of high task inter-dependency, a positive relationship surfaced.

The thesis has undertaken both subjective and objective analysis of deep-diversity on team creativity which is a unique contribution in the body of diversity and creativity literature. Organizations can focus on building a culture which does not pose any threat to an individual's identity but at the same time value employee-level differentiation and collaboration.