

Israel Organizational Behavior Conference 3rd January 2018. Tel-Aviv, Israel

Title: *Psychological Safety, Group Diversity and Creativity*

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Psychological safety is an interpersonal climate in which individuals feel safe to speak up and express their opinions and ideas (Edmondson, 1999). This environmental condition was identified as important to innovation and creativity (Edmondson & Mogelof, 2006). In the current research we study the role of a safe and non-judgmental environment in overcoming the challenges of group diversity.

Diverse groups may potentially build on their diverse ideas and knowledge facilitating creativity. However, research that studied the associations between group diversity and creativity has yielded contrasting results, and showed that gaining creative benefits among diverse teams requires careful management of the group process (Hennessey & Amabile, 2010). In this project we study whether experiencing group diversity in a psychologically safe environment increases creativity among team members.

We studied this research question using an organizational intervention named Diversity IceBreaker (DIB) that was developed by Bjørn Z. Ekelund, and was successfully implemented in multiple organizations in Europe and the US (Ekelund, 2010). The intervention incorporates self-revealing and humoristic interpersonal interactions attempting to arouse questions about diversity. The non-judgmental environment developed through the intervention was found particularly empowering in cross-cultural settings (Romani, 2013). We reasoned that the intervention creates psychologically safe environment, and studied its impact on participants' emotions, and their attitudes towards others (Study 1a-b), as well as on their performance in idea generation (Study 2).

Studies 1a-b: DIB as a tool to build a positive and relational environment

Study 1a (N=211) followed a before and after design. As hypothesized, positive affect increased ($t(210) = 2.42, p < .05, \text{Cohen's } d = 0.33$) and negative affect decreased ($t(210) = 2.56, p < .05, \text{Cohen's } d = 0.35$) after the 2 hour intervention, as well as participants' trust

and tolerance (trust: $t(210) = 1.86, p < .05$, Cohen's $d = 0.26$; tolerance: $t(210) = 3.06, p < .05$, Cohen's $d = 0.42$).

In Study 1b ($N=82$), the participants' social identity was assessed, either prior or following the intervention. As hypothesized, participants' identity included more relational terms when assessed following the intervention than prior to the intervention ($t(80)=2.03, p<.05$, Cohen's $d = 0.44$). The intervention did not change the extent to which participants described themselves in individualistic terms.

Study 2: Creativity in idea generation

Participants ($N=72$) performed creativity tasks either prior or following the intervention. The idea generation tasks included solving a marketing problem and proposing ideas for improving their program of study. In both tasks the quantity of ideas was similar in both experimental conditions (prior and after the intervention), whereas the quality of ideas was improved following the intervention. In the marketing problem the ideas generated after the intervention were more novel and scarce ($t(70) = 1.694, p < .05$, Cohen's $d = 0.405$). In the program of study task the ideas were evaluated on three orientations (helping people, increasing efficiency, and applying innovation), with complex ideas incorporating more than one orientation. As hypothesized, the results indicated that the ideas generated following the intervention were more complex ($t(70) = 2.35, p < .05$, Cohen's $d = 0.56$). In addition, the students were more likely to volunteer to present their ideas in a strategic faculty meeting when asked following the intervention than prior to the intervention ($t(70) = 1.68, p < .05$, Cohen's $d = 0.40$).

In sum, the 2-hour Diversity IceBreaker intervention created a friendly and open atmosphere increasing individuals' well being, and sensitivity to others (Studies 1a-b), and improving their creativity in idea generation (Study 2).