Creativity and Innovation in Virtual teams

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Statement of Originality

I hereby certify that the work embodied in this Dissertation Project is the result of original research and has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other University or Institution

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Abstract

Advances in communication technology have enabled geographically and temporally dispersed teams to work collaboratively in virtual teams. Organisations worldwide are using or considering using virtual teams to take advantage of the skills located elsewhere to drive innovation and to lower costs.

We have seen growing support for creative/innovative activities to be undertaken by virtual teams and/or non-collocated contributors. On the other hand some high technology organisations suggest that face to face (f2f) collaboration is essential for them to sustain their levels of innovation.

The speed and frequency of large scale technological changes has increased, driving organisations to implement new innovations in an environment of virtual teams, in order to survive and prosper.

With many organisations using virtual teams, and implementing new innovations to sustain and grow their business; the factors that make an innovation implementation successful in virtual teams has become an important area for study.

This study investigates the factors required for innovation effectiveness in virtual teams using a case study approach of an organisation employing virtual teams that has implemented a radical innovation implementation. The innovation implemented was sourced from outside the organisation.
Mixed methods were used for the study. Surveys and semi-structured interviews were used for data collection. Quantitative and qualitative methods were used for data analysis.

Innovation effectiveness is dependent on organisational and individual factors. The study investigated the effect of implementation team effectiveness, group identity, trust and presence, the factors specific to virtual teams; on innovation team effectiveness.

Findings indicate that group identity and implementation team effectiveness were the main predictors for organisations that had high intra team trust, high group identification and long tenured virtual teams.

The study concludes that a synthesis of various concepts from the theories on virtual teams, organisational behaviour, resource based view, upper echelon theory and process theory determines innovation effectiveness and suggests new avenues for research.

**Key Words:** Innovation effectiveness, Implementation team effectiveness, Trust, Group Identity, Presence, Virtual teams
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