

# PSYCHOLOGY AND INNOVATIVENESS IN POLAND

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In the face of rapidly changing technology across the globe and increasing expansion of Asian countries, our post-industrial civilisations' survival depends on making the most of human creativity and the ability to change by linking our economies with our values. In the coming years' development and economic success will depend considerably more on innovativeness and creativity of science than in the past. Change is inevitable and it is essential to activate creativity and innovation of organizations and workers. Thus, psychological knowledge and skills will play a crucial role in the process of innovation, activation, transfer, implementation and adoption of innovation. Considering a low innovativeness level, Poland in particular should get involved in all of these activities. Elimination of factors limiting innovative activities in Poland embodies one of the most significant objectives of the National Development Plan (2007-2013).

Considering budgetary and non-budgetary expenses designated for research and development activities; the situation in Poland seems to be shaping unfavourably.

Psychology offers a number of approaches with both theoretical models and practical solutions that will assist innovation. However, research to date indicates there are a number of psychological barriers to innovation that will need to be overcome. One condition being that psychology should be treated as a partner by other

disciplines; and that psychologists themselves, through their expertise and determination, need to participate in supporting and improving innovative processes. One factor weakening the inventiveness of the Polish economy is an underestimation or even a lack of consideration of the role of psychological factors in innovation. Human capital, with their capabilities and restraints must one hand evoke creative abilities of workers, while at the same time promoting and maintaining the adoption and diffusion of new practices.

But, it is often taken for granted that the development of human potential is a key factor influencing innovation organisations. Innovations are both complex and systematic phenomena, and yet, strategies for changes at country, regional and organizational level, often exclude human factors due to the complexity of this picture (Schumpeter, 1960). It is evident that problems concerning the implementation and adoption of innovative processes are underestimated; and do not take advantage of the impact of social and institutional factors on organizational innovativeness. Psychology offers a number of instruments that are underestimated or are simply unknown to educators and managers. For instance: a) the diagnosis of level of creativity; b) methods of creative simulation and tools that can be used to raise group flexibility, openness and tolerance towards a change; and c) methods of stress reduction towards change in the

workplace; which may be widely applied in innovative processes both by psychologists and trained managers.

In the course of history we have observed a prominent role of innovation and discoveries with psychology offering ideas and new scientific discoveries in the field of creation and implementation of innovations. Research indicates blockades and barriers and signals the necessity to introduce new management models and new pro-innovative educational programmes. Nowadays, when organizations are dominated by technology, engineers, economists, management specialists, and lawyers the application of psychological knowledge and skills are in short supply. Therefore, it can be said that the utilisation of knowledge and skills associated with organizational psychology will constitute an innovation in itself. The skills of implementing innovations in consecutive stages are challenges for psychologists.

However, we are unable to manage this by ourselves and interdisciplinary efforts and support provided by other specialists, scientists and practitioners are required.

We are in a new era and face the challenge of searching for values, meaning and ideas to enable our world to survive and continue to develop. The time has come for psychologists to take decisions about active participation in supporting and improving innovation in work. Research aiming to understand the innovation process and psychological factors that encourage innovation have been developed within the Institute of Psychology (University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland) and the following articles offer examples of this work.

Schumpeter J., 1960: *Teoria rozwoju gospodarczego* (Theory of economical development). Warszawa, PWN.