SUMMARY

In the past few years, there has been an emerging interest in examining conceptions of creativity across and within cultures, particularly within USA and East Asia (Chan & Chan, 1999; Niu & Sternberg, 2002; Susannah & Peng, 2008; Sternberg, 1988; Panda & Yadav, 2005). These have been primarily useful in demonstrating differences and similarities in traits associated with creativity. The main research paradigm involves collecting lists of traits associated with creativity and then showing that these traits are more important than others in the evaluation of creativity in people. The general assumption that creativity is related to originality, imagination and so on seems to be common. These studies also point out that cultural differences in creative traits seem to be related to other cultural values, such as conformity and independence.

Perhaps one of the most recent developments in the social sciences in general, is implicit or folk theories of psychological constructs. Unlike explicit theories where there are opinions and views held by scientists and typically based on some psychological or scientific construct (Runco, 1990), implicit theories are tacit knowledge held by an individual and are often “personal than shared” (Runco, 1999). These are conceptions or theories held in people's minds and can serve as "mental prototypes that can be used to decide if a product, behaviour or person is creative" (Davis, 2004). The implicit theory approach studying creativity provides a precise way of measuring at a particular cultural moment the assumptions the individuals have about creativity. It is an individual level measurement that does not rely on the interpretation of social institutions or on data from an elite few in a culture’s history. Furthermore, its impact on individual thoughts and feelings is more proximal than explicitly held values (Hong et al., 2000; Susannah et al, 2008). These reasons imply that implicit theory approach may be better able to reflect the dynamic changes in people’s minds that
often result in and are the product of institutional and cultural reforms (Peng et al., 2001).

Sternberg (1993) underscores the reason for the study of implicit theories: “In studying implicit theories, one is trying to find out what the stereotypes are, to find out how people process the information”. Implicit theories are related to judgment and expectations that have an impact on development and behaviour (Runco, 1999) they can be used to improve strategies for evaluating creative products (Plucker & Runco, 1998) and theory can be used to evaluate the “social validity” of psychometric examinations (Runco & Bahl eda, 1986; Plucker & Runco, 1998). Finally, the study of implicit theories may help to make definitions more practical and realistic (Runco & Bahleda, 1986). Implicit theories can be useful for “providing a conceptual framework for the development of explicit theories” and helping to formulate the common- cultural views that dominate thinking among a given psychological construct (Sternberg, 1985).

However, implicit theories are not stable and may change over time. Although there is general agreement about what characterizes creative traits across culture, there are some differences. For example, some collectivist cultures value traits such as being courteous, orderly, and socially competent traits that have been more associated with noncreative behaviors. Similarly, teachers also mistakenly characterize creative children as conforming and cooperative and fail to recognize creative children who are impulsive and nonconforming.

Indian perspective on creativity does not maintain dualism between individual and the society, between originality and conformity (Coomarswami, 1987; Panda & Yadav, 2005). It views creativity as a disciplined intellectual exercise embedded in the social context and heightened by moral and social values; and emphasize emotional, personal and intra psychic elements (Gulati, 2004). It is not an individualistic utilitarian act, as it is perceived in China (Chan, 1997; Yue & Rudowicz,
2002). It is rather a disciplined and value based act of intellect which is focused and in which the individual and society are fused together (Panda, 2004). Here the processes are accorded much importance than the product itself. Another characteristic aspect of Indian creativity is that reproduction of historically important art, sculptor, narrative, religious ideas and texts is not considered less creative as long as the artists follow certain culturally approved processes. While examining lay theories of scientific creativity in Indian scientists, the authors concluded that there were many similarities between Indian and Western scientists (Kapur, Subramanyam & Shah, 1997). Indian work on creativity in the western framework often yields confirmation of an apparently universal view of the concept.

So far, most of the researchers on creativity in India have blindly followed the western concepts and theories without sufficiently examining their relevance to Indian culture (Mohanty, 1988; Raina, 1993). A review of Indian researches on creativity (e.g., Passi’s, 1997) clearly reveals how western ideas have been recycled in India. Implicit theories can be viewed as providing conceptual framework to enrich explicit theories that explain the creative behaviour of Indians. Over the last couple of decades, Sternberg (1985, 1999) has been emphasizing the role of implicit notions and theories rooted in cultural–historical contexts in the development of culturally sensitive explicit theories of creativity.

The present study has been designed to explore the shared understanding of creativity among the college/university going students in India. Are these constructions different from cultural construction of creativity in other countries on which comparable data are available? Additionally, this study also intends to examine the gender differences in the perceptions of creative individuals. Many Asian cultures support gender roles; perhaps to a greater degree than is present in Western contexts (Shweder, 2003). Thus, it can be argued that, in India, the imagery of an ideal creative person can be function of one’s gender. So, it is necessary to
examine the role of gender in cultural construction of creativity in India. This issue in this regard will be of prime concern in the present study– Do the nature of implicit theories of creativity among Indian females differ from that of Indian males?

Given this, the problem of the proposed study can be stated as: “IMPLICIT THEORIES OF CREATIVITY IN INDIA: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY”.

Objectives:

1. To explore how Indian college/university students think about creativity.
2. To examine the gender differences in Indian implicit theories of creativity.
3. To examine the relationship between measures of implicit and explicit creativity.
4. To examine convergence/divergence between implicit and explicit conceptualizations of creativity.

It being an exploratory study, no hypotheses have been formulated.

METHOD

This study was conducted in two phases. In Phase-I a Creative Behaviour Checklist was prepared on the basis of creative behaviours reported by a sample of 507 University students (229 male and 278 female). In Phase-2 a separate sample of 300 University students (122 male and 178 female) was tested on Creative Behaviour Checklist to finalise the Creative Behaviour Questionnaire and to test its factorial/construct validity. They also received two psychometric tests of so called explicit creativity.

Measuring Instruments:

1. Torrance Test of Creative Thinking (Words- Form A): (Torrance et. al. developed the test in 1966 in Minnessota. This test is containing seven subtests or activities. This test is suitable for kindergarten through
graduate school to assess four creative abilities: fluency, flexibility, originality and elaboration. Give brief description in 2-3 sentences-who developed, No. of items, dimensions measured etc.)

2. Torrance Test of Creative Thinking (Figural- Form A): ((Torrance et. al. developed the test in 1966 in Minnessota. This test is consisting of three subtests or activities. This test is suitable for kindergarten through graduate school to assess the same four creative abilities: fluency, flexibility, originality and elaboration give brief description in 2-3 sentences-who developed, No. of items, dimensions measured etc.)

3. Creative Behaviour Checklist: This checklist contains 70 items which represented implicit theories of creativity of university students. The checklist was based on the pattern of the studies done by Runco et. al. (1993), Lim & Plucker (2001) and Panda & Yadav (2005).

Analyses:

The data collected during Phase-I were treated for frequency and percentage of common creative behaviours reported by the University students. The items in Master List of Creative Behaviours were subjected to item-metric analysis, i.e., item inter correlations and item factor analysis. The data on final Implicit Creative Behaviour Questionnaire and tests of explicit creativity (verbal & figural) were treated statistically for descriptive statistics, z-test for mean difference, Pearson correlation, and factor analysis.

Main Findings:

The findings of the study may be summarised as under:

1. In Phase-1 a sample of 507 University students was asked to list as many behaviours of an ideal creative person as they could think of. They listed a total of 283 behaviours which were largely common among the respondents. On the insight from earlier literature a behaviour which was listed by at least 10 respondents (i.e., 2 percent of the sample size)
was compiled into a master list of creative behaviours. This criterion provided 70 behaviours which represented implicit creativity according to the sample of University students.

2. In Phase-II this 70-item Creative Behaviour Checklist (implicit) was given to another sample of 300 University students with a 5-point scale response format ranging from 1 (least characteristic) to 5 (highly characteristic). Item intercorrelations between these 70 behaviours indicted that some of the behaviours related to each other in a linear fashion to a great extent. In general, correlations ranged between .11 and .57. There were many items which have yielded very low item correlations indicating as if they don’t go well with the core concept of Implicit Creative Behaviour.

3. On the insight offered by item intercorrelations the item scores on 70 items were subjected to factor analysis. Cattell’s scree test for number of factors provided 5 factors on which 37 of 70 items loaded substantially. These factors can best be described as Cognition and Motivation, Task Persistence, Unconventional Personality Orientation, Leadership, and Sociability. Therefore, a set of 33 items was finally selected as measures of 5 dimensions of implicit creativity with quite satisfactory factorial validity.

4. The groups of male and female students showed significant differences on all the 5 dimensions of implicit creativity and 3 dimensions each of explicit creativity (verbal and figural). Interestingly, on all the variables of creativity, implicit and explicit, female respondents out scored their male counterparts with z-values significant at .01 probability level. However, in view of some earlier studies which did not report striking gender differences, these findings need further verification through future research.
5. The results of corelational analysis demonstrate that 5 variables of implicit creativity and 3 of explicit creativity (verbal) have modest to upper modest degree positive relationship with each other. These correlations range between .20 and .48. All these positive and strong correlations between most of the dimensions of implicit and explicit creativity suggest these two notions of creativity share something in common.

However, the correlations between measures of implicit creativity and explicit creativity (figural) are relatively stronger. The correlations range between .26 and .53. These results show that explicit creativity (figural) shares more in common with implicit creativity as compared to explicit creativity (verbal).

6. Results of Factor analysis are revealing and interesting in respect of the nature of two conceptualizations of creativity, i.e., implicit and explicit. The second-order factor analysis located two clear common factors each representing to explicit and implicit creativity.

All the six measures of explicit creativity (3 verbal and 3 figural) loaded highly on 1st factor while measures of implicit creativity had non-significant loadings on this factor. Likewise, all the five measures of implicit creativity loaded highly on 2nd factor with low and mostly non-significant loadings of explicit creativity dimensions. It is evident from these results that there exists clear independence/divergence between explicit and implicit creativity.

In sum, results of the present study support five dimensional implicit theory of creativity in Indian setting representing Cognition and Motivation, Task Persistence, Unconventional Personality Orientation, Leadership, and Sociability. Results further indicate that though there exists some degree of relationship between the measures of implicit and explicit creativity, they maintain conceptual independence/divergence from each other.