

# Examining the Impact of Gender Diversity on Project Team Dynamics and Female Members' Experiences: A Multi-Method Approach

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## ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** In the dynamic landscape of Pakistan's workplace, gender diversity is on the rise; however, persistent biases and inequalities persist. This study meticulously examines the repercussions of gender diversity on project and individual outcomes within the telecom sector of Lahore and Islamabad, with a particular emphasis on the unique experiences of female employees.

**Design/Methodology/Approach:** This research adopts a comprehensive multi-method quantitative design to delve into the nuanced dimensions of gender diversity within the telecommunications sector of Lahore and Islamabad. Two distinct studies employ surveys, statistical analysis, and post-positivist philosophy to scrutinize the impact on project teams and the experiences of female employees. Data triangulation enhances validity, while a post-positivist lens accommodates the complexities of social phenomena. The sampling strategy involves convenience and snowball methods, ensuring representation of managerial perspectives (Study 1) and female employee insights (Study 2) within the top five telecom companies.

**Findings/Results:** In the telecom sector of Lahore and Islamabad, gender diversity does not significantly affect team social cohesion or creativity climate, though project performance benefits from a conducive team creativity climate, with no direct impact from team social cohesion. Emotional intelligence does not moderate the link between gender diversity and team social cohesion. In Study 2, gender diversity alone does not directly influence affective commitment or involvement in creative project work for female employees. Psychological safety does not mediate the relationship between gender diversity and affective commitment or creative involvement. Work group inclusion moderates the impact of gender diversity on affective commitment, underscoring the importance of an inclusive work culture. Workplace gender inclusion, however, does not moderate the relationship between gender diversity and involvement in creative project work, suggesting the influence of other factors in fostering creative engagement.

**Practical Implications:** The practical implications for organizations in the telecom sector of Lahore and Islamabad, and similar industries in Pakistan with diverse teams, are twofold. Firstly, fostering an inclusive work environment by addressing cultural biases and promoting gender diversity is crucial for enhanced team and project performance. Encouraging idea-sharing, collaboration, and recognizing diverse perspectives contribute to a thriving environment. Secondly, Study 2 emphasizes the importance of psychological safety in boosting affective commitment among female employees in gender-diverse teams. Organizations can achieve this by promoting open communication, constructive feedback, and addressing social identity threats. Mitigating negative effects of gender diversity through work group inclusion and supporting diverse perspectives fosters positive attitudes and behaviors among female employees. In summary, organizations should be mindful of cultural factors and social identity dynamics,

fostering inclusivity and a creative climate to maximize the benefits of gender diversity on team dynamics, individual well-being, and project outcomes.

**Originality/Value:** This study significantly advances gender diversity understanding in Pakistan's workplace, focusing on the dynamic telecom sector in Lahore and Islamabad. Using a meticulous multi-method quantitative design, it addresses the research gap, adopting a post-positivist philosophy for nuanced insights. The study explores gender diversity's impact on project teams and female employees, challenging norms. Contrary to expectations, gender diversity minimally affects team social cohesion or creativity climate but strongly influences project performance through a conducive team creativity climate. Study 2 emphasizes psychological safety and work group inclusion for female employees. These insights provide valuable guidance for organizations navigating gender diversity in Pakistan's telecom industry, contributing to the broader discourse on workplace inclusivity and performance outcomes.

**Keywords:** *Gender Diversity, Emotional Intelligence, Team Social Cohesion, Team Creativity Climate, Project Performance, Work Group Inclusion, Psychological Safety, Affective Commitment towards Project Team, Involvement in Creative project Work, Social Role Theory, Congruence Theory and Social Identity Theory*