VALIDATING AN ALLY SKILL-BUILDING WORKSHOP: ASSESSING ANTECEDENTS AND OUTCOMES

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Abstract:

Ally Skill-Building workshops are a recent development within the diversity field. Building allies in the workplace is essential to creating a culture of inclusion and respect and assists in mitigating the potential negative implications of an ever-increasing diverse workforce. While theoretical evidence exists surrounding individual and contextual factors that may impact the effectiveness of an Ally Skill-Building Workshop, no study has addressed the social norms, personality dispositions, biases stemming from social categorizations, reactions, and behavioral intentions over time. Specifically, assessing the level of inclusivity of participating organizational departments via social norms will help determine the environment in which an ally skill-building workshop will have the power to be impactful. Further, understanding individual differences such as a belief in the malleability of personality and the extent to which one holds color-blind racial attitudes and sexist beliefs, the present study seeks to determine a pathway that identifies the individual and contextual variables that impact the behavioral outcomes of an Ally Skill-Building Workshop. However, identifying the antecedents to an impactful Ally Skill-Building workshop is only half of the story being told. The present study will also assess participant reactions to the Ally Skill-Building workshop and their intention to display allyship behaviors post-workshop. Utilizing an applied longitudinal analyses, the present study will contribute to the diversity literature by assessing a unique combination of antecedents and outcomes over time.

SUMMARY

The present study is designed to validate an Ally Skill-Building workshop intended to mitigate bias and establish egalitarian behaviors and norms within a work setting. No study to date has addressed the antecedents of an effective diversity training paired with behavioral intentions and attitudes towards diversity training over time. By assessing the extent of Implicit Person Theory and Social Identity Theory with current social norms and basic demographic information, the present study seeks to guide better understanding of the conditions in which an Ally Skill-Building workshop can be most effective (e.g., Chiu et al., 1997).

As intergroup bias stems from social identities via social categorizations we will measure the implications of two salient categorizations, gender and ethnicity, through the Color-Blind Racial Attitudes scale (CoBRAS) and the Modern Sexism scale (MSS), respectively (Neville et al., 2000; Swim et al., 1995). Further, to validate the Ally Skill-Building workshop we will measure reactions to the workshop over time as well as future- and past-oriented behavioral intentions and actions using the Theory of Reasoned Action (i.e., a predictive model of human behavior; Azjen & Fishbein, 1975).

The present study will be completed by administering the Ally Skill-Building workshop within four participating departments of a Fortune 500 insurance company. Each department will offer the workshop to 50 employees and will contrast the antecedents and outcomes of the present study to comparison groups housed within each department. This methodology will allow us to make both within and between-group comparisons across the departments. Utilizing a longitudinal design, we will gather baseline data measured two-weeks prior to the scheduled workshop, reactionary data measured immediately post-workshop, and follow-up data two-weeks after employees complete the workshop.

SUMMARY

To better understand the antecedents and moderators of an Ally Skill-Building workshop, it is paramount to examine an individual's characteristics and the social norms within their organization. Then, we can begin to strengthen senior leaders' attempts at developing an Ally Skill-Building workshop and in turn create significant positive changes in employee's attitudes and perceptions, deliver a long lasting, cost-effective, and impactful Ally Skill-Building workshop.