A COMPARISON OF THREE GROUP DECISION-MAKING STRATEGIES
AND THEIR EFFECTS ON THE GROUP
DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

by

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(ABSTRACT)

The objective of this experiment was to compare three group decision-making strategies and their effects on the group decision-making process. Two of the strategies, Dialectical Inquiry and Devil’s Advocacy, were structured while the control condition, Unstructured Consensus Seeking, was non-directed, thus unstructured. The following dependent variables were measured: (a) decision quality, (b) cognitive conflict, (c) affective conflict, and (d) decision commitment. Seventy-two undergraduate participants were randomly assigned across 3 conditions into groups of 6 to solve an interactive group decision task. Thirty-six trained observers were randomly assigned across the same conditions to observe intra-group cognitive and affective conflict and to assess how well the undergraduate participants implemented the structured approaches. The unit of comparison was groups (n = 12). The results of this study were analyzed using analysis of variance and no statistical difference was found between the treatment groups on any of the four dependent variables measured.
Cognitive conflict levels and commitment to the decision, while not statistically significant, were higher in the two structured conditions compared to the unstructured control condition. A discussion of these results along with directions for future research is provided.
DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to the my best friend, soul mate, and wife Kathryn and to my parents, Tom and Jo Ann. To my wonderful wife for being my number one cheerleader, proofreader, editor, and project manager this would not have been possible without all your help, encouragement, and love. To my parents who were my first and best teachers, words cannot express my love and gratitude for the opportunities in life you all have provided.
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