

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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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	ii
Dedication	iv
Acknowledgement	v
List of Tables	xii
Chapter I: Introduction	1
<i>Background</i>	1
Statement of the problem	6
Need for the Study	7
Hypotheses	8
Limitations	9
Ad Hoc Groups	9
Decision Task	9
Small Number of Participants	10
Time Frame	10
Volunteers	11
Delimitations	11
Practice with the Strategies by Participants	11
Observer Training	12
Implication of this Study	12
Definition of Terms	13
Summary	13

Chapter II: Review of the Literature	15
<i>Introduction</i>	15
Group Decision-Making Strategies	15
Unstructured Consensus Seeking (UCS)	16
Overview of Two Structured Decision-Making Techniques	19
Overview of Devil’s Advocacy	19
Overview of Dialectical Inquiry	22
Previous Research	24
Qualitative Research on Dialectical Inquiry	25
Summary of Qualitative Research on DI	27
Experimental Research on DI, DA, and Consensus	27
Previous Design Limitations and Improvements Offered for this Study	34
Individual versus Group	34
Group Size	37
Expert Judges	38
Conflict Levels	39
Accuracy of Applying the Decision Process	42
Summary of Improvements Over Past Research	43
Rationale for Selected Variables	44
Independent Variable	44
Dialectical Inquiry	44
Devil’s Advocacy	45

Unstructured Consensus Seeking	45
Dependent Variable	46
Decision Quality	46
Cognitive and Affective Conflict Levels	47
Decision Commitment	47
Summary	48
Chapter III: Method	50
<i>Introduction</i>	50
Population and Sample	51
Volunteer Recruitment Process for Participants	51
Observer Recruitment Process	52
Differences Related to Volunteers vs. Non-Volunteers	52
Treatment Condition Assignments	54
Measures	54
Instruments	54
Decision Quality	54
Cognitive Conflict	55
Affective Conflict	57
Decision Commitment	57
Procedures	58
Prior Preparation	58
Facilitation Phase for all Three Conditions	59



Manipulation Checks	60
The Roles of the Trained Observers	60
Data Analysis	61
Summary	62
Chapter IV: Experimental Procedures	63
<i>Introduction</i>	63
Volunteer Recruitment Process	63
Communication in the Recruitment Process	66
Observer Recruitment Process	67
Communication in the Recruitment Process of Observes	68
Observer Training	68
Random Assignment of Participants	70
Random Assignment of Observers	71
Experimenter Helper Roles	72
Random Alternate Participant and Observer Assignments the Day of the Study	73
Room Arrangements	75
Treatment Facilitation	75
Dialectical Inquiry and Devil's Advocacy	76
Unstructured Consensus Seeking (Control Group)	77
Summary	78
Chapter V: Findings	79
<i>Introduction</i>	79

Descriptive Data for Volunteer Participants	79
Descriptive Data for Observer Volunteers	81
Reliability	83
Reported Observations for DI and DA	84
Impact of Conditions on the Decision-Making Process	84
Decision Quality	85
Cognitive Conflict	87
Affective Conflict	89
Decision Commitment	91
Summary	93
Chapter VI: Discussion, Recommendations, and Conclusions	97
<i>Introduction</i>	94
Discussion of Results	94
Decision Quality	94
Cognitive Conflict	99
Affective Conflict	101
Decision Commitment	103
Limitations	104
Delimitations	106
Recommendations for Future Research	107
Summary	110
References	111

Appendix A Table Card Advertisement	118
Appendix B Poster Advertisement	120
Appendix C Online Website	122
Appendix D Adventure in the Amazon (Ukens, 1998) Correct Ranking	125
Appendix E Decision Commitment Scale	127
Appendix F Decision Technique Overview for Participant Subjects in DI & DA	129
Appendix G Specific Instructions for Participants by Condition DI, DA, & UCS	132
Appendix H Observer Checklist for DI and DA Conditions	139
Appendix I Affective and Cognitive Conflict Scale	146
Appendix J Descriptive Data Online Signup Form	148
Appendix K Written Handouts for Observer Training	150
Appendix L Consensus Tips	156
Appendix M Observer Instructions the day of the Study	158
Appendix N Treatment Condition Facilitator Instructions the day of the Study	164
Appendix O Treatment Facilitator Returned Materials Checklist	174
Appendix P Adventure in the Amazon Letter of Permission	179
Appendix Q Decision Commitment Instrument Permission	181
Appendix R Conflict Instrument Permission	184
Vita	187

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1:	Student Organizations Contacted for Recruitment Purposes	64
Table 2:	Frequencies and Percentages of Reported Undergraduate Majors	80
Table 3:	Frequencies and Percentages of Reported Observer Majors	82
Table 4:	Analysis of Variance for Decision Quality	86
Table 5:	Means and Standard Deviations for Adventure in the Amazon Group Scores by Condition	86
Table 6:	Analysis of Variance for Cognitive Conflict	88
Table 7:	Means and Standard Deviations for Cognitive Conflict Observation Scores	88
Table 8:	Analysis of Variance for Affective Conflict	90
Table 9:	Means and Standard Deviations for Affective Conflict Observation Scores	90
Table 10:	Analysis of Variance for Decision Commitment	92
Table 11:	Means and Standard Deviations for Decision Commitment Scores	92