

Agenda effects in decision-making groups: Old and new business instigate different group processes in the hidden-profile paradigm

Torsten Reimer, Andrea Reimer, & Verlin Hinsz

Abstract

Groups frequently have meetings at which they consider decision tasks either as old business (predecided groups), or new business (naïve groups). We hypothesized that predecided groups will employ a preference-driven style by focusing their discussions on members' preferences, whereas naïve groups will employ an information-driven style by focusing on members' task-related knowledge. This hypothesis was confirmed in the hidden-profile paradigm (Wittenbaum, Hollingshead, & Botero, 2004). When information was provided in the form of common cues, naïve groups detected the hidden profile throughout. The results indicated that introducing a decision task as old or new business had substantial effects on group discussions and decisions.