

Abstract

Does the Stepladder Technique Improve Group Decision Making? A Series of Failed Replications

Past research has demonstrated the effectiveness of a structured group decision-making technique, termed the Stepladder Technique, in improving group decisions (e.g., Rogelberg, Barnes-Farrell, & Lowe, 1992). The purpose of the present series of studies was to replicate and extend this research. Five studies (three using different tasks than previous studies, and two using the same task) compared the decision quality of groups using the self-paced Stepladder Technique to unstructured groups. In all studies, stepladder groups failed to perform better than unstructured groups. This failure to replicate and extend past research suggests that there are definite boundaries, such as the sample or the experimenter, which may limit the overall effectiveness of the Stepladder Technique.

Submitted for Publication