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IDADA: The individual difference approach to assessing and developing diversity awareness

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Abstract

This paper outlines a new approach to cultural awareness training, the Individual Differences Approach to Diversity Awareness (IDADA). IDADA is distinguished from other approaches in three ways: (a) it eliminates the need to characterise cultures, (b) it addresses unfair discrimination of any kind (e.g., weight, height, attractiveness), (c) it teaches employees to become aware of how their attitudes affect organisational performance, and (d) it focuses on job requirements. Initial evidence supports the validity of the model. The paper also introduces a new measure of diversity-openness called the Ideal Employee Inventory. Preliminary reliability and validity evidence for the measure is provided.

Keywords: workforce diversity, cross-cultural management, diversity training, cross-cultural interactions, cultural sensitivity scale

IDADA: THE INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCE APPROACH TO ASSESSING AND DEVELOPING DIVERSITY AWARENESS

The composition of the modern workplace is more diverse than ever before (Bakker, Van Der Zee, & Van Qudenhoven, 2006). Christian, Porter, and Moffitt (2006) argue that this increase in workplace diversity can be attributed to changes in such things as cultural and demographic factors. For example, Australian census data reveals that 23.9 percent of the population were born overseas (DIAC, 2008). It is widely accepted that workplace diversity will continue to increase well into our future (e.g., Jackson, Joshi, & Erhardt, 2003; Olsen & Martins, 2012). As such, one of the most challenging issues facing organisations today is that of workplace diversity management.

While workplace diversity is proposed to offer organisations a number of benefits such as increased creativity, innovation and social capital (Van De Ven, Rogers, Bechara, & Sun, 2008; Wang & Sangalang, 2005), diversity research to date indicates that the increased conflict and miscommunication which can arise as a result of workplace diversity has meant many organisations fail to realise the potential benefits of their diverse workforce (Ayoko, Härtel, & Callan, 2002; Birrell & Healy, 2008). Consequently, rather than being a source of competitive advantage (Offermann & Gowing, 1993; Sinclair, 2006), many organisations experience reduced employee satisfaction, commitment and performance (Van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007). For this reason, numerous leading-edge organisations are pursuing a range of policies, practices, and training programmes aimed at reducing the potential negative impacts of workplace diversity, e.g., conflict, and increasing the full participation of all their employees within the business environment to capitalise on the potential advantages of workplace

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diversity (e.g., Bendl, Fleischmann, & Hofman, 2009; Olsen & Martins, 2012). Unfortunately, available evidence suggests that some of these well-intentioned efforts at diversity training have had unexpected negative consequences including increasing prejudicial attitudes (Ely & Thomas, 2001; Rynes & Rosen, 1995; Sinclair, 2006), underscoring the importance of well planned and developed diversity training initiatives. For this reason, in this article, we examine the diversity literature and the multicultural literature to identify key factors contributing to successful diversity training outcomes. Based on this, we introduce a concept referred to as the Individual Differences Approach to Diversity Awareness (IDADA) and assess the reliability and concurrent validity of the Ideal Employee Inventory (IEI), a measure based on the IDADA approach.

FACTORS AFFECTING THE OUTCOMES SUCCESS OF DIVERSITY TRAINING PROGRAMMES

The approach adopted by a diversity programme has a significant effect on the likelihood of achieving positive outcomes (Kulik & Roberson, 2008), such as the personal development and productivity of workers, or negative outcomes, such as resentment, dissatisfaction and polarisation among some or all groups of employees (Gottfredson, 1992; Roberson, Kulik, & Pepper, 2009).Traditional approaches to diversity training have two key vulnerabilities. First, when cultural characteristics are the unit of analysis for the diversity programme, diversity is viewed as culture and an entire culture is reduced to a manageable number of stereotypes. Ho (1995) describes how knowledge about a group can lead to the automatic activation of expectations and judgements about members associated with that group (cf. Devine, 1989). Consequently, intra-cultural differences are discounted (Rhuly, 1976) and this increases the risk of offending both members and non-members of the target culture (Solomon, 1990). For this reason, Ho (1995) suggested a more appropriate approach is to operate from the basis that no two individuals share the same worldview.

Second, teaching employees about specific cultures may serve to make the differences among cultures more salient than the similarities, thereby raising the level of perceived dissimilarity. Research indicates that simple contact between people with different backgrounds, as suggested by the contact hypothesis, is unlikely to be sufficient to reduce intergroup bias (Hobman, Bordia, & Gallois, 2004). Further, as identified in Byrne's (1971) similarity-attraction paradigm, individuals who possess similar characteristics and attitudes perceive one another as similar, and perceived similarity is an essential determinant of interpersonal attraction (Triandis, Kurowski, & Gelfand, 1994). Thus, perceived similarity has been linked with managers' evaluations of subordinates (Pulakos & Wexley, 1983), subordinate performance (Joshi & Roh, 2009), leader–member exchanges (Liden, Wayne, & Stilwell, 1993), recruiter evaluations of applicants (Graves & Powell, 1995; Härtel, Douthitt, Härtel, & Douthitt, 1999), and rating accuracy (Härtel et al., 1999; Zalesny & Highhouse, 1992). For these reasons, perceptions of similarity between organisational members critically affect interpersonal relationships within the organisation (Härtel & Fujimoto, 1999, 2000).

Training people in specific knowledge and interpretation of dissimilar others at a cultural level may lead to greater levels of perceived certainty concerning interpretation of behaviour. According to Schneller (1989), interpretation-certainty interferes with communication effectiveness. The highly certain individual perceives a low probability of misinterpretation and therefore expends little effort to clarify or verify the interpretation (cf. Watzlawick, 1976). Consequently, increased interpretation-certainty may produce more mis-decodings in communication.

Furthermore, programmes using a culture-based approach may have greater variability in the quality of training that is offered. Their ability to facilitate behaviour change is limited by the scope of the training curriculum (Härtel, Härtel, & Barney, 1998). Thus, a cultural assimilator would probably not improve interpretation accuracy of behaviours not included in the exercise.

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Another concern with traditional diversity programmes is that only officially recognised minorities are addressed, leaving others unprotected. A culture based programme's focus on culture as the source of diversity may cause non-cultural factors such as physical characteristics, place of schooling, or marital status to be overlooked. Yet these factors may also be a source of prejudice within the workforce. The consequence of only focusing on the difficulties experienced by a subset of an organisation's employees is that it may lead to resentment in those who are excluded. Therefore, it is not surprising that in a survey of 785 human resource professionals, a broad inclusionary definition of diversity was associated with higher levels of perceived training success (Rynes & Rosen, 1995).

Finally, a key weakness of traditional diversity approaches is that they problemitise diversity (Joshi & Roh, 2009). For example, the personalization approach (Ensari & Miller, 2006), although encouraging understanding, still problemitises diversity with its focus on assimilation.

Following on from the concern with traditional diversity programmes outlined above, researchers have begun to propose alternative non-culture specific models for dealing with diversity. For example, Härtel and Fujimoto (2000) proposed a model of openness to perceived dissimilarity in which they argue that all people possess both their own unique individual differences, as well as group differences, and as such suggest that it is critical for policy makers to recognise issues that arise as a result of either. Furthermore, their model suggests that it is not the presence of diversity itself that determines the effects of diversity on the organisation and its members, but rather, it is the level of openness to dissimilarity present in the organisation's members, work groups, and culture that does. In other words, diversity is not the problem but rather the manner in which it is dealt with is.

More recently, Ensari and Miller (2006) proposed a model that was aimed at increasing communication, understanding, familiarity and empathy of diverse others through increased personalised interaction. Based on the contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954), Ensari and Miller argue that increasing personalised contact between group members would allow perceptions which reflect out-group member's unique characteristics to develop, while also producing feelings of familiarity, understanding and empathy between members of different groups. Consistent with Härtel and Fujimoto (2000), it appears that the balancing of awareness of group difference on the one hand, and individual difference (for increased understanding and familiarity) on the other, will lead to positive organisational outcomes such as increased intergroup interaction.

It should be noted however that maintaining a focus on the difference of minorities (out-group members) and how they can best be understood and assimilated into the organisation may also create problems. Increasing the focus on perceptions of difference through increased interaction, in conjunction with continued recognition of out-group (or minority group) category membership, may just as easily perpetuate the growth of prejudice as reduce it. Further, increased attention may result in more pressure to conform, leading to the assimilation and acculturation of out-group members into the in-group, which will suppress valuable diversity and perpetuate diversity-closed mentality in all groups (Härtel & Fujimoto, 2000).

In recognition of the foregoing efforts and the admonition of Härtel and Fujimoto (2000) and Hobman et al. (2004) to avoid problemitising diversity, we attempt to address the concerns associated with traditional diversity training approaches. Specifically, we introduce and develop a concept referred to as the *IDADA*. IDADA is based on the fundamental premise that any two individuals, whether from the same culture or not, differ with respect to some characteristics or experiences, but have others in common. This will be explained in detail in the following section.

THE INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES APPROACH TO DIVERSITY AWARENESS

The IDADA is congruent with Ho's (1995) call to recognise individual differences in people's points of view within a culture, which is also corroborated by cross-cultural psychology research on deviation

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within cultures (i.e., allocentrism). Tests and interventions adopting the IDADA framework, therefore, focus on assessing and modifying employees' openness or acceptance to individual differences, with the goal of creating an organisational culture characterised by dissimilarity openness.

When treating diversity non-culturally, five main types of diversity have been identified that influence group processes (Härtel & Fujimoto, 1999). These are social category diversity, diversity in values and beliefs, skills and knowledge diversity, diversity in verbal and non-verbal behaviour and organisational cohort diversity. The importance of each to the IDADA framework is discussed next.

Social category diversity refers to observable dissimilarity such as age, race/ethnic background and gender. Perceived dissimilarity based on observable characteristics such as these is likely to produce negative short-term effects derived from evoked stereotypes. For this reason, social category diversity can negatively affect group processes during the initial stages of the integration of members into a workgroup (Fujimoto, Härtel, & Härtel, 2004). However, evidence does suggest that these negative effects are overcome in time when departures from the stereotypes have been established (Jackson, Stone, & Alvarez, 1993; Milliken & Martins, 1996). Therefore, it appears plausible that emphasising culture in diversity programmes may actually prolong the disruptive effects of social category diversity by slowing acceptance of departures from stereotypical behaviours.

Diversity in terms of values and beliefs consists of implicit differences in culture, work style and social values. This type of diversity generally becomes apparent to group members as they replace initial stereotypes with a deeper knowledge of the psychological features of the individuals in their group (Fujimoto, Härtel, & Härtel, 2004). Consequently, implicit actual dissimilarity in values and beliefs becomes more salient over time and is therefore likely to produce long-term effects on group processes. Promoting a common overarching value of dissimilarity openness among diverse individuals then would be a key goal of improving relationships and facilitating inclusive workplaces.

Skills and knowledge diversity in terms of differences in specialisation and industry experience is a third type of diversity proposed to influence group processes. While diversity can positively impact on a group, Tom (1971) argued that people prefer environments matching their own profiles. Therefore, group members may experience an uneasy working relationship in situations where members' profiles differ due to their development taking place within different environments. Again, assisting individuals to be open to dissimilarity and even fostering perspective seeking among different occupational types should enhance decision making and innovation as well as a positive workplace environment.

Diversity in verbal and non-verbal behaviour is a significant influential factor in group processes as it communicates a deeper level of actual dissimilarity, including values and beliefs (Fujimoto, Härtel, & Härtel, 2004). Due to differences in the frame of reference of individuals from diverse backgrounds, the opportunity for miscommunication when verbally interacting with diverse others is much greater than when working in a homogeneous group (Verderber & Verderber, 1995). Furthermore, non-verbal behaviour may distort the communication process even when appropriate wording is used (Dick, 1986). Therefore, the degree of 'fit' between group members on this diversity type will influence the effectiveness and ease of intra-group communication and thus needs to be part of a diversity training approach.

The final type of diversity to be discussed is organisational cohort diversity. Individuals generally identify more easily with others who entered the group at the same time as themselves (Tsui, Egan, & O'Reilly, 1992). While cohort diversity may help prevent groupthink and improve creativity, it also tends to decrease the level of attraction between group members. The result of this could be lower group satisfaction and higher turnover rates.

In addition to addressing diversity at a decomposed or individual level, a second feature of IDADA is its incorporation of the concept of diversity-openness. Diversity openness, introduced by Härtel and associates (e.g., Härtel et. al., 1999; Härtel & Fujimoto, 1999), refers to the way in which individual characteristics are evaluated within specific contexts. Specifically, openness refers to basing actions and

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judgements on objective needs and not personal biases or stereotypes. Therefore, IDADA recognises that peculiar individual difference characteristics can be necessary for the performance of some jobs. For example, physical strength may be a requirement for a furniture mover, but not for a clerical position. Within the organisational context, it is important therefore to separate identification of job-relevant from non-job-relevant individual differences so that the attribution of job-related importance to an individual difference characteristic is not confounded with personal biases and stereotypes.

Using IDADA, diversity openness is operationalised as having two aspects. First, a diversity-open person evaluates individual characteristics as important employee characteristics only when they are objectively *essential* to the conduct of a task and not a function of arbitrary job design characteristics. These characteristics can then be further classified as either desirable or undesirable to task performance. Second, a diversity-open person evaluates individual characteristics, which are objectively *not essential* to the conduct of a task as *unimportant*. These characteristics are viewed as neither desirable nor undesirable in terms of employee characteristics. According to IDADA, diversity-open individuals do not consider non-job-essential individual difference characteristics in their job-based judgements of employees whereas diversity-closed (DC) individuals do. This is because DC individuals are intolerant to general individual differences.

ADVANTAGES OF IDADA

The *IDADA* has several advantages over broader, culture-based approaches. First, IDADA does not perpetuate cultural stereotypes, but instead recognises that individuals vary within as well as between cultures. By focusing on individual differences, no generalised characteristics are assigned to entire groups, thereby reducing the likelihood of offending employees who are internal or external to a given culture. Second, programmes designed using IDADA are simplified because cultural identifiers need not be used. Third, an objective and open-minded view of job requirements will be fostered because employees are taught to recognise that some individual characteristics are essential to the target job, while many others are not. Fourth, IDADA focuses employee attention on job relevant characteristics, which, according to research by Greenwald and Banaji (1995) may reduce the effects of implicit stereotyping. Fifth, approaching diversity awareness in terms of job-relevance may result in lower levels of employee resistance (including ethical, moral, and individual rights-related objections) compared to other approaches to diversity awareness. This would increase the probability of behavioural change as a result of the training (cf. Hay & Härtel, 2000; Warr & Bunce, 1995). Sixth, focusing on individual differences benefits everyone, not just a targeted subset (i.e., specific cultural groups). In the organisational context, individuals and organisations alike may hold biases or prejudices against individuals not matching their preconceived standards for ideal employees. Thus, individual difference variables such as family status (e.g., single parent) may be more important than cultural variables in some situations. For example, the organisational standards for an ideal employee in Western cultures favour Caucasian males, but also prescribe certain clothing, transportation, housing, entertainment and religious preferences. In some organisations, the pressure to conform may be substantial (Härtel & Fujimoto, 2000). Note that only a small set of these individual difference variables would be covered in typical diversity awareness training programmes, yet all are typically unrelated to job performance.

The current research proposes that making individual differences the unit of analysis in diversity training continues to address the needs of the cultural awareness movement while avoiding some of the shortcomings of traditional approaches. It appears that people who have intolerant attitudes about other cultures, called culturally-closed (CC), are also intolerant to general individual differences (DC individuals). Compared with open individuals, closed individuals may strongly prefer others

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who they perceive as similar and strongly hold preconceived notions about those who differ from themselves. Furthermore, CC attitudes may affect people's judgements of others because they are more likely to be influenced by variables that are not relevant to the judgement being made. For example, a worker's assessment of a co-worker's performance might be influenced by non-job-related variables such as culture, gender or other individual differences. Closed individuals may find it difficult to exclude non-relevant information from their judgements. Therefore, they would be more prone to developing and retaining cultural biases than individuals with open attitudes, who would be more likely to base their opinions on relevant information.

In order to obtain preliminary evidence to support the proposition that diversity-openness (DO) is related to cultural-openness (CO), preliminary empirical research was undertaken. This involved three steps. First, an instrument was developed for assessing openness towards general, non-job-related individual differences. This instrument is called the IEI. Second, participant's performance on the IEI was compared to peer ratings of their cultural openness. Third, the IEI was compared to direct self-report questionnaires about one's attitudes towards race and cultures. The hypotheses tested in the research are as follows:

Hypothesis 1: Scores on the IEI, which reflect an individual's attitude of openness towards general individual differences or diversity, will be closely related to judges' ratings of the individual's cultural openness. Namely, diversity-closed individuals will be rated by peers as lower on cultural openness and vice versa.

Hypothesis 2: Diversity-closed individuals are more likely than diversity-open individuals to feel different about people from other cultures compared to their own, and to feel that some cultures are more 'correct' than other cultures.

STUDY 1 METHOD

Participants

Participants in Study 1 were 20 graduate students (including nine women, one Hispanic and one African-American) enrolled in an organisation theory class.

Development of the Ideal Employee Inventory

The first stage of this research was the development of a measure of diversity-openness called the IEI. The aim of the IEI was to assess the likelihood that a person would view non-job-essential individual difference characteristics as important to his or her stereotype of the ideal employee for a specific job or organisation. Past research and findings in the area of cultural stereotypes and differences (e.g., Gudykunst, Stewart, & Ting-Toomey, 1985) were reviewed to produce a comprehensive list of perceived cultural differences representing each of the five main types of diversity discussed earlier. From the resulting list, 22 items were extracted that clearly represented non-job-essential differences for the position of Office Assistant (the job description used was provided by a small city government). Standardised item-statements were developed to represent each of these individual differences. For example, Gudykunst et al. (1985) state that 'Blacks tend to be more expressive and prone to show their emotions in front of non-family members' than Caucasians. This information was the basis for item number one: 'This employee's presentations or conversations are very animated with vigorous gesturing and intonation.' Note that the question does not focus on the culture as the unit of analysis. Rather, the question is worded so that attitudes towards this non-job-essential characteristic

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may be assessed. Similarly, the items do not perpetuate cultural stereotypes. That is, the characteristic presented in each item may or may not be associated with a given culture.

Instructions to the IEI explain that individuals should indicate how important it is to their image of the ideal employee that a characteristic is either present or absent. Ratings are made on a four-point likert-type scale ranging from *Not at All Important* (0) to *Very Important* (3). Preliminary items for the IEI were reviewed by the Minority/Females Business Coordinator for a small city government, who provided content judgements on: (a) each item's representativeness of cultural stereotypes encountered in the business world, (b) the complete set of items' representativeness of the primary range of cultural stereotypes encountered in the business world, and (c) the clarity of the instructions and items on the IEI. Subsequently, four knowledgeable persons (graduate students with experience in psychometrics and with some practical work experience) independently scrutinised the clarity of the IEI's items, response scale, instructions and format. This information guided the revision of the IEI. This version, containing 22 items, was used in Study 1.

Procedure

Participants were students with management related work experience enrolled in a postgraduate subject on organisation theory. Participants were given the IEI during class time and were asked to complete the IEI with reference to themselves. At the time of administration, students were engaged in playing one of the later sessions in the simulation, The Organisation Game (Miles & Randolph, 1985). The IEI was given to them as part of the simulated organisation's HRM Department's activities.

The organisation simulation gives students the opportunity to observe interpersonal behaviour and decision making over ten 1-hour sessions. Subsequently, in the last session of the simulation, students were given another questionnaire which asked them to evaluate the openness towards (i.e., tolerance of) cultural differences of all persons they had contact with in the simulation. From the responses on this questionnaire, the experimenter classified participants as either low (diversity-closed) or high (diversity-open) on openness towards individual differences. Classification required that the following criteria were met: (a) Participants had to be evaluated by at least two peers, (b) Participants had to have a minimum of two designations (as either diversity-open or diversity-closed) for every opposite designation and, (c) Evidence corroborating the classification of a participant in the form of specific observed interpersonal interactions needed to be present in at least one of the individual written reports submitted by other class members at the end of the simulation.

Using this method, the experimenter was able to classify 14 of the 20 participants as low (diversity-closed) or high (diversity-open) on openness towards individual differences. It should be noted that the IEI and participant's open/closed classification were independently coded to achieve a single-blind design.

Results

The standardised Cronbach's alpha for this version of the IEI was 0.75, indicating adequate reliability. A Spearman rank correlation coefficient was conducted on the 14 classified participants' average rank based on the total IEI score. Participants classified as closed or low on diversity-openness (receiving a high average ranking from peers) tended to receive IEI scores near the closed end of the scale (high scores) and vice versa for those participants classified as open or high on diversity-openness ($r = 0.61$, $p < 0.05$). A regression of the classification of the 14 participants on their average rank on the IEI showed a strong positive relationship between the IEI and peer perceptions of participant's openness towards cultural differences ($R = 0.60$, $F(1,12) = 6.82$, $p < 0.05$). Thirty-six percent of the variance in participant's open/closed classification was accounted for by their average rank on the IEI.

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Feedback from the students indicated problems with the clarity of a few of the items. These items were revised, forming the IEI used in Study 2 (See Appendix for the revised IEI scale used in Study 2).

STUDY 2 METHOD

Participants and procedure

The revised IEI was administered to twenty-eight undergraduate students (3 men, 25 women). After completing the IEI, participants also completed a three-item criterion measure containing direct questions about their attitudes towards race and culture. The three self-report items (Ethnocentricity, Racial Equivalency, and Cultural Correctness, respectively) on the criterion measure were: 'I feel the same towards my own culture as I do towards all other cultures', 'I feel the same towards people of my race as I do towards people of other races', and 'Some cultures are more ''correct'' than other cultures'. Participants rated these items using a four-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'. Participants were told to answer as honestly as possible and to not put any identifying information on either questionnaire. Feedback on the clarity of the IEI was again sought so that it could be improved for future use.

Results

The standardised Cronbach's alpha for the revised IEI showed it to be quite reliable ($\alpha = 0.87$). The observed variability on each IEI item response explained by the remaining items on the IEI ranged from 62 to 96% (mean = 89%, median = 90%, mode = 95%). The standardised Cronbach's alpha for the three-item criterion measure was somewhat low ($\alpha = 0.56$). The mean and standard deviation for each of the items, on a scale ranging from 0 to 4, was 2.04 and 0.92 for Ethnocentricity, 1.54 and 1.07 for Racial Equivalency, and 0.89 and 0.88 for Cultural Correctness, respectively. There was a significant intercorrelation between Ethnocentricity and Racial Equivalency ($r = 0.47$, $p < 0.05$), Ethnocentricity and Cultural Correctness ($r = 0.10$, $p < 0.05$), and Racial Equivalency and Cultural Correctness ($r = 0.34$, $p < 0.05$).

The mean of the three self-report criteria was regressed on the independent variable, the mean IEI score. Concurrent validity evidence would be indicated if the mean IEI score correlated positively with the mean of the three self-report criteria. The regression showed a multiple correlation of 0.42 between the mean IEI score and the mean criterion score ($p < 0.05$). Seventeen percent of the variance in the mean criterion score was accounted for by the mean IEI score ($R^2 = 0.17$, $F(1,26) = 5.41$, $p < 0.05$).

DISCUSSION

In this paper, we identify the problems associated with traditional diversity approaches and offer the *IDADA* as a way of overcoming these weaknesses. We provide the IEI, a measure based on this approach, and demonstrate its utility. Throughout, we have argued that regardless of how diversity programmes are implemented in practice or what theoretical models are proposed in the literature, if diversity is still conceptualised as a problem that needs to be addressed, cultivating positive organisational outcomes will be challenging.

The IDADA framework focuses on dissimilarity openness as an outcome, addressing Hobman et al. (2004) point that the integration of dissimilarity should be the desired goal, not cultural suppression and assimilation. Further, by shifting individuals' focus away from judging people to

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recognising the individual characteristics which are essential to the target job, openness to non-job-related individual differences as well as an objective and open-minded view of job requirements can be encouraged. Evidence from the two studies of the IEI support this view.

The reliability and concurrent validity evidence from both studies of the IEI strongly support the proposition that diversity-closed individuals are more likely than diversity-open individuals to consider non-job-essential individual difference characteristics as important employee traits. Diversity-closed persons had difficulty dealing with characteristics dissimilar to their own, giving credence to defining diversity-openness in terms of the work stereotypes that people hold.

The results from the three-item self-report criterion measure showed that some people will acknowledge difficulty working with culturally different others when directly questioned about it. However, the reliability of these direct questions was only .56, below the recommended alpha level of .70. The respondents in this study were students who, unlike employees in organisations, may not fear repercussions for such disclosures. Therefore, this reliability estimate may be higher than would be found in the general workforce. In contrast, the IEI assesses cultural openness through more indirect means, asking people about the importance of particular individual difference characteristics in employees. The superiority of the latter approach is evident in this research from the much higher reliability ($\alpha = 0.87$). Furthermore, the regression showed that people who tend to be open and tolerant to the individual difference variables on the IEI also judge themselves to have less difficulty working with culturally different others. Therefore, indirect assessment of cultural-openness (such as with the IEI) may yield more reliable measurements than direct assessment approaches (such as the three-item criterion measure).

The IEI measures if people use non-job-essential individual difference characteristics for their judgements. This research has shown that the extent to which a person does this is related to their cultural bias as measured by self and peer evaluations. Thus, approaching diversity training at the level of individual differences is a valid alternative to approaching diversity training by focusing on cultural awareness. The results obtained with the IEI suggest that one way to approach measuring and training diversity-openness is to identify non-job-essential individual difference characteristics and the specific closed attitudes (those attitudes that may be biasing the work-related judgements specific to the job performed by a group) of the group to be trained. This involves a three-step process. The first step would comprise a diversity job-analysis, which we define as a job analysis with respect to relevant and non-relevant individual difference characteristics; and illustrated by the technique use herein to develop the IEI. Such a diversity job-analysis would provide a list of job-essential and non-job-essential individual difference characteristics for a specific job. In step two, a diversity-openness needs analysis would be completed. The job-relatedness approach defines diversity-openness in the context specific to the particular job an employee performs. Using the IEI-format, employee's attitudes would be assessed within a given job on the non-job-essential individual difference characteristics identified in step one. In step three, a training curriculum could be designed that targets the closed attitudes of the assessed work unit, identified by the diversity-openness needs analysis in step two. The programme would illustrate that differentiating between job-essential and non-job-essential individual difference characteristics is important to organisational competitiveness and well-being. Employees would learn to recognize when identified target characteristics are irrelevant to the job and how to exclude these from the decision making process.

In summary, it is argued that instead of addressing the differences in cultures directly, diversity-openness training should look only at those variables along which people differ that are not relevant to a job. In this way, diversity-openness training will focus more generally on the variables along which people differ, so that cultures are not viewed as homogeneous and unidimensional but rather as complex and diverse. The job-relatedness approach may be more effective because it might cultivate a more general type of openness, compared with traditional training programmes which may foster

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specific openness to specific cultures and perpetuate perceptions of cultural homogeneity. Training based on either broad cultural differences or those aiming to address specific cultural differences within the organisation have had mixed results. While non-job-related approaches tend to focus on the culture as the unit of analysis, job-related approaches focus on the variables along which people differ at the cultural level (between cultures) and the individual level (within a culture). Further, making diversity-openness-training context-specific (job-specific) may improve employee acceptance and, in turn, improve its effectiveness.

Second, we have argued that the key advantage for organisations of defining diversity-openness in terms of job-relevance is that it does not ask any employee to change who they are, rather it instructs them in how to make decisions about organisational and job-related activities. In this way the IDADA approach helps organisations address the four critical issues associated with employee diversity training: (a) societal views of organisational responsibilities and the boundaries of those responsibilities, (b) ethics of training goals and methods, (c) legal requirements and prohibitions, and (d) contribution to organisational goals of effectiveness and efficiency.

The research demonstrated that diversity-openness can be reliably and validly assessed by asking questions about attributes of others that do not necessarily characterise a particular culture. The IEI accomplishes this and acknowledges the diversity within cultures by assessing openness to individual differences rather than cultural differences. Furthermore, this study provides a definition of diversity-openness as differentially evaluating the importance of the individual difference characteristics possessed by an employee based on their relevance to the employee's job. The development procedure and format for the IEI demonstrates how indirect and job-related assessment of diversity-openness might be accomplished.

Limitations to the current research resulted from the participant pool. As mentioned previously, all participants were university students who may not be representative of a broader organisational population. The number of participants in each study was also quite small and the gender inequity in the participant pool is another cause of concern. Future research is needed to overcome these limitations and to replicate the current findings within an organisational context. If these investigations support the use of the IEI, further studies are required to determine the extent to which the diversity-closed employee can be helped to become more diversity-open.

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APPENDIX

Employee inventory

Instructions: Please picture in your mind your ideal employee. What characteristics would they have, what would they look like, how would they behave? Keep this image in mind as you answer the following questions. For each statement, please circle the response that best represents how important the presence or absence of the characteristic is to your ideal employee.

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1) This employee's presentations or conversations are very animated with vigorous gesturing and intonation.

0	1	2	3
Not at All Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important

2) When conversing with you this employee stands closer to you than people usually do.

0	1	2	3
Not at All Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important

3) This employee is always good for a lively conversation about sports.

0	1	2	3
Not at All Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important

4) This employee does not maintain eye contact with you but instead seems to focus on some point in the room.

0	1	2	3
Not at All Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important

5) This employee never questions your instructions even when he or she knows a better way or detects some problem with them.

0	1	2	3
Not at All Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important

6) This employee is a sharp dresser.

0	1	2	3
Not at All Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important

7) This employee fulfils all job requirements, but places family priorities higher than work priorities.

0	1	2	3
Not at All Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important

8) This employee takes part in all company sponsored events.

0	1	2	3
Not at All Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important

9) This employee speaks with a strange accent, although it is not difficult to understand.

0	1	2	3
Not at All Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important

10) This employee is openly and deeply religious.

0	1	2	3
Not at All Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important

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11) This employee makes their career their top priority.

0	1	2	3
Not at All Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important

12) This employee wears strange or unusual styles of clothing.

0	1	2	3
Not at All Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important

13) This employee is 'really' the head of the household.

0	1	2	3
Not at All Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important

14) This employee always speaks very softly, almost in an undertone, although he or she is not shy.

0	1	2	3
Not at All Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important

15) This employee seems to wear the same outfit day after day although it is always clean.

0	1	2	3
Not at All Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important

16) This employee helps organise birthday and Christmas parties at the office.

0	1	2	3
Not at All Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important

17) This employee socialises with colleagues after hours.

0	1	2	3
Not at All Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important

18) This employee likes to wear a lot of jewellery.

0	1	2	3
Not at All Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important

19) This employee believes that fate or other external forces control life.

0	1	2	3
Not at All Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important

20) This employee is very gracious and treats everyone (including strangers) like an honoured guest.

0	1	2	3
Not at All Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important

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21) This employee associates everything that happens to them in the organisation to be due to their personal actions rather than environmental/organisational factors or luck.

0	1	2	3
Not at All Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important

22) This employee likes to keep his hair or beard very long.

0	1	2	3
Not at All Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important

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