The Effect of Thought Self-Leadership Training on Graduate Student Self-Leadership Skills and Managerial Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Perceptions

Anna A. Filipova, Ph.D.
University of Wisconsin Oshkosh
Department of Public Administration

Introduction

Little attention is paid to teaching students about cognitive distortions (e.g., extreme thinking, magnifying, etc.) that can fuel dysfunctional thinking patterns & influence managerial decision-making (Burns, 1989).

Furter et al. (2012) argue that students’ constructive thought patterns can be optimized through targeted education in the classroom.

The underlying premise of thought self-leadership (TSL) is that people can influence and control their own thoughts through the application of three cognitive strategies that lead to constructive thought patterns & ultimately individual/organizational performance (Neck & Manz, 1996).

Moreover, research confirmed that TSL behaviors can fuel dysfunctional types of thinking and replace them with more constructive thinking (Neck, 1996).

The TSL teaching method has an effect on graduate students’ pretest and posttest TSL cognitive strategies scores, TSL quiz scores, and managerial decision-making self-efficacy beliefs scores. These hypotheses are tested at a .05 level of significance.

Hypotheses

In general:

H₀: µ₁ = µ₂ (Population median difference is zero).
H₁: µ₁ ≠ µ₂ (Population median difference is not zero).

The null and alternative hypotheses in my study are:

H₀: The TSL teaching method has no effect on graduate students’ pretest and posttest TSL cognitive strategies scores, TSL quiz scores, and managerial decision-making self-efficacy beliefs scores.
H₁: The TSL teaching method has an effect on graduate students’ pretest and posttest TSL cognitive strategies scores, TSL quiz scores, and managerial decision-making self-efficacy beliefs scores.

Methodology

Design

Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics 24. Figure 3 shows descriptive statistics of socio-demographic and program characteristics of MPA students in the MPA 715 Leadership and Ethics course in Fall 2017.

The null and alternative hypotheses in my study are:

H₀: The TSL teaching method has no effect on graduate students’ pretest and posttest TSL cognitive strategies scores, TSL quiz scores, and managerial decision-making self-efficacy beliefs scores.
H₁: The TSL teaching method has an effect on graduate students’ pretest and posttest TSL cognitive strategies scores, TSL quiz scores, and managerial decision-making self-efficacy beliefs scores.

These hypotheses are tested at a .05 level of significance.

Hypotheses

In General:

H₀: µ₁ = µ₂ (Population median difference is zero).
H₁: µ₁ ≠ µ₂ (Population median difference is not zero).

The null and alternative hypotheses in my study are:

H₀: The TSL teaching method has no effect on graduate students’ pretest and posttest TSL cognitive strategies scores, TSL quiz scores, and managerial decision-making self-efficacy beliefs scores.
H₁: The TSL teaching method has an effect on graduate students’ pretest and posttest TSL cognitive strategies scores, TSL quiz scores, and managerial decision-making self-efficacy beliefs scores.

These hypotheses are tested at a .05 level of significance.

Hypotheses

In General:

H₀: µ₁ = µ₂ (Population median difference is zero).
H₁: µ₁ ≠ µ₂ (Population median difference is not zero).

The null and alternative hypotheses in my study are:

H₀: The TSL teaching method has no effect on graduate students’ pretest and posttest TSL cognitive strategies scores, TSL quiz scores, and managerial decision-making self-efficacy beliefs scores.
H₁: The TSL teaching method has an effect on graduate students’ pretest and posttest TSL cognitive strategies scores, TSL quiz scores, and managerial decision-making self-efficacy beliefs scores.

These hypotheses are tested at a .05 level of significance.

References


Qualitative Results (N = 10)

1. What TSL strategy could aid you the most in managing this nonprofit organization? 40% positive thinking
2. What TSL strategy could aid you the most in managing this nonprofit organization? 40% positive thinking
3. How would you feel if the organization fired you? What thought patterns could aid you the most? 70% opportunity thinking

Discussion of Major Findings

The TSL teaching method has enhanced graduate student:

Knowledge of thought self-leadership. The quiz showed that students’ knowledge on pre-test post-test scores increased in terms of knowledge about the (1) TSL concept (Q1, 6, 9), (2) beliefs & assumptions concept (Q3, 4, 5), (3) imagined experience concept (Q12, 13), (4) self-talk concept (Q2), and opportunity/beliefs concept (Q7, 8, 10, 11, 15).

Knowledge in the application of opportunity thinking. Students were able to identify opportunity thinking as a strategy when presented by opportunities and setbacks. Opportunity thinkers tend to try harder and persist longer in the face of challenges and use constructive ways to deal with challenges situations, leading to successful outcomes (Neck, 1996).

Influence of authoritarian thinking. Students were able to identify opportunity thinking as a strategy when presented by opportunities and setbacks. Opportunity thinkers tend to try harder and persist longer in the face of challenges and use constructive ways to deal with challenges situations, leading to successful outcomes (Neck, 1996).

Impact of the application of opportunity thinking. Students were able to identify opportunity thinking as a strategy when presented by opportunities and setbacks. Opportunity thinkers tend to try harder and persist longer in the face of challenges and use constructive ways to deal with challenges situations, leading to successful outcomes (Neck, 1996).

Influence of authoritarian thinking. Students were able to identify opportunity thinking as a strategy when presented by opportunities and setbacks. Opportunity thinkers tend to try harder and persist longer in the face of challenges and use constructive ways to deal with challenges situations, leading to successful outcomes (Neck, 1996).

Ethical Considerations

Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the UW Oshkosh Institutional Review Board.

Acknowledgments

Special thanks to UW System OPID and the UW Oshkosh Provost Office for the opportunity to be part of the 2017-2018 Wisconsin Teaching Fellow and Scholars Program.

Contact

Postal designed by Dr. Anna Filipova
Phone: (920) 424-0037
Email: Filipova@uwosh.edu

Teaching Implications, Study Limitations & Future Research

Teaching implications

Teaching students to manage their own thinking may be useful, for developing students’ constructive thinking patterns and strengthening their beliefs in their capabilities to affect personal control in decision-making at a university setting.

Study limitations

Nonparametric statistics was used for this study due to lack of sample size. Therefore, students’ gains in this course cannot be compared with students’ gains in other universities.

Students’ enhanced decision-making self-efficacy beliefs may be attributable to factors other than the course, such as students’ maturation and the effect of MPA advanced education.

Future research

This study was pre-experimental in nature. Future research needs to replicate the study using designing with a control group. Additionally, an analysis of a quiz with other content may not only continue analysis in a post-study design but also allow for testing correlational relationships among the variables.