

Exploring the relationship between organizational culture for diversity, organizational trustworthiness, and employees' attitudes towards diversity training.

Abstract

Organizations increasingly rely on diversity training programs to foster inclusive workplaces. However, employee responses to diversity training are often varied. This study examined how organizational culture for diversity and perceived organizational trustworthiness relate to employee attitudes toward diversity training using an exploratory multi-methods approach.

Participants were employees recruited through Amazon Mechanical Turk. Data were collected through an online survey with both qualitative and quantitative components. Participants first answered open-ended questions about diversity, organizational trustworthiness, and diversity training. They then completed standardized measures of organizational culture for diversity, perceived organizational trustworthiness, and attitudes toward voluntary and mandatory diversity training.

Quantitative findings showed that constructive organizational culture for diversity was positively associated with perceived organizational trustworthiness and with more favorable attitudes toward voluntary and mandatory diversity training. Perceived organizational trustworthiness was also positively associated with training attitudes. Passive/defensive and aggressive/defensive cultural norms were not significantly associated with trustworthiness or training attitudes.

Qualitative findings added depth to these results. Participants described trustworthiness in terms of fairness, consistency, transparency, and follow-through on diversity commitments. Diversity training was viewed more positively when organizations appeared authentic and consistent in their diversity practices. In contrast, mandatory training was sometimes seen as symbolic, coercive, or performative when organizational commitments to diversity seemed weak or inconsistent.

Although quantitative analyses showed few significant differences between majority and minoritized participants in overall organizational culture for diversity scores, qualitative findings suggested meaningful differences in interpretation. Minoritized participants more often emphasized lived experiences of equity, authenticity, and inclusion, while majority participants more often focused on demographic representation and formal organizational processes.

Overall, the findings suggest that employee responses to diversity training are associated not only with training format, but also with broader organizational culture and perceived organizational trustworthiness.