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Abstract: *Using schemas as a theoretical framework, this paper explores students' cognitive representations of managing gender and racio-ethnic diversity initiatives on college and university campuses. Exploration of student schemas is necessary to inform higher education administrators of the existing expectations present among students since these expectations interplay with student responses and reactions to diversity management efforts. Using content analysis of students' narratives, results concerning students' cognitive representations are offered, and key managerial implications are shared for those in higher education leadership.*

> "Schemas may prove to be informative for educational programs and interventions, and may provide a better understanding of the types of sociolinguistic messages individuals use, and the types of feelings experienced" (Hajek & Giles, 2005, p. 164).

INTRODUCTION

United States' college and university campuses continue to become more culturally and racially diverse. The diversifying of student enrollment makes it essential for management in higher education to focus on diversity initiatives that make their campuses more inclusive and that increase awareness of cultural and racial differences in efforts to minimize race-related incidents, such as those that have recently and frequently garnered national attention.

The lack of diversity initiatives or simply the failure to recognize the changing racial dynamic on college and university campuses results in situations of campus unrest. This type of campus strife occurred in the 60's and launched the Black Campus Movement that lasted from 1965 to 1972 (Rogers, 2012). African American students were being accepted into predominately White colleges; however, the schools failed to fully understand the race of students they were admitting. Students began to revolt over the lack of response from school administrators regarding campus issues negatively impacting them due to their race (Dowd, 1971). More than 50 years later, students and higher education leaders are still confronted with similar race-related issues.

This paper explores students' cognitive representations of managing gender and racio-ethnic diversity initiatives on college and university campuses. We argue that an exploration of student schemas is necessary to inform management in higher education of the existing expectations present among students since these expectations interplay with student responses and reactions to diversity management efforts. To date, no research has undertaken this task using schemas as a mechanism for addressing diversity issues that plague higher education in an effort to better inform managerial interventions.

RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

Racially motivated events have plagued several colleges and universities that have been challenged with particularly troubling race-related issues on campuses. At Harvard Law School, portraits of African American professors were vandalized with black tape covering the faces (Mineo, 2015). A noose was found hanging from a tree at Duke University (Zhang, 2015). Without regard to how students would be offended, a teacher at the University of Kansas flippantly used the "n-word" during a class discussion (Jaschik, 2015). At Yale University, female students were turned away from an SAE fraternity party on the basis that it was for White girls only (Jackson, 2015). At Ithaca College, there was an invitation to a "Preps & Crooks" party that identified the crooks' dress code as thuggish with baggy pants, bandanas, and "bling" – a style typically worn by minorities such as Hispanic or African Americans (Svrluga, 2016). The Dean of Students at Claremont McKenna College sent a racially insensitive email discussing racially diverse students and indicating they do not "fit the mold" of the institution (Shire, 2015).

At the University of Missouri, several disregarded race-related incidents occurred over time that eventually escalated to national attention due to a student's hunger strike. Incidents included cotton balls spread outside of the Black Culture Center, racial slurs hurled at students, and a Swastika drawn in human feces at a residence hall (Calamur, 2015; Pearson, 2015). A slew of incidents at the University of Oklahoma occurred over time as well which include urinating on a tepee during Native American week, racial slurs, and offensive, stereotype-themed parties such as Mekong Delta, Cowboys and Indians, and Border Patrol (Duara & Hennessy-Fiske, 2015). However, it was a video from SAE fraternity members at the University of Oklahoma that made headlines. The video showed two fraternity students leading a chant of racial slurs referring to hanging Black men and excluding them from the fraternity (Berrett, 2015).

Students were frustrated over the insensitive and racially-motivated incidents, but more importantly, their frustration stemmed from the lack of sufficient responses from higher education managers in leadership. As a result, students responded by sharing their stories on social media, assembling protest rallies, staging hunger strikes, refusing to practice or play in football games, and gathering petition signatures in efforts to evoke change or have a teacher or administrator removed (Duara & Hennessy-Fiske, 2015; Jaschik, 2015; Shire, 2015; Pearson, 2015).

Instead of being proactive with diversity initiatives, universities were forced to react to the turmoil on their campuses. Reactive responses include faculty and administrators being forced to resign their positions, mandatory diversity training for students, staff and faculty, and newly created diversity officer positions (Keller, 2016; Shire, 2015; Stripling, 2016; Svrluga, 2016). Universities are also susceptible to loss of income from decreases in funding, in donations, in tuition revenue, and penalties for game cancellations, in addition to national shame.

These numerous and continued race-related incidents on college and university campuses underscore the importance and worth of diversity initiatives at today's colleges and universities. While diversity management is essential, little is known about students' existing knowledge structures and expectations about school diversity initiatives. This investigation explores students' cognitive representations through examining schemas.

SCHEMAS AS A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

For decades, schemas have been the most popular mechanism for exploring mental representations that reside in long-term memory (Smith, 1998). Schemas are "knowledge structures that organize information in memory about our past experiences. Schemas are not individual memories of particular events; rather, they are a blend of past comparable experiences, created by the repetition of these events" (Kean & Albada, 2003, p. 283).

Bartlett (1932) is credited with the advancement of schema theories through his insistence that knowledge was summative, which is in line with the gestalt psychologists' view. He argued that people's past behavior and experiences are structured and organized in such a way that facilitates future understanding and behavior. Repeated experiences strengthen the entire structure so that it can be rendered useful as an all-or-none entity. The nature of that structure, when accessed, leads to "systematic biases and distortions in interpretations" (Weary & Edwards, 1994, p. 293).

Head and Holmes (1911) are credited with being among the first to use the term schema, and Immanuel Kant employed the term schema to discuss the possibility of knowledge (Stein, 1992). Unlike associative networks, which are regarded as spiker-like structures that reside in long-term memory, schemas are accessed in summation; they are "activated by the external world and simultaneously provide an interpretation of it" (Stein, 1992, p. 47). As a structure of the mind, schemas provide a useful venue for understanding cognitions associated with diversity efforts. For greater clarity on how cognitions reason through interpretations of an institution's management of race-related diversity activities, schemas provide an ideal entryway.

As a theoretical framework, schemas have been used successfully to explore intergroup communication (Hajek & Giles, 2005) and college students' alcohol use (Kean & Albada, 2003). We argue that similar to these studies schemas have been created in students' long-term memory through their repeated exposure to and engagement in diversity conversations, activities, and initiatives both on and off college campuses. Thus, the nature of these cognitive structures are likely to influence students' reactions and responses to college and university diversity initiatives. Our aim is not to explore schema formation or examine students' personal experiences that have culminated in diversity schemas. Instead, we seek to better understand the representations of diversity schemas to assist leaders in higher education at being more effective in managing diversity issues on their respective campuses. Thus, this research poses the following six questions related to diversity schemas:

RQ1: What is the tone and specificity of student schemas associated with gender and racio-ethnic diversity initiatives?

RQ2: Who are the participants in attendance in student schemas associated with gender and racio-ethnic diversity initiatives?

RQ3: What are the *different identities* mentioned in diversity initiatives of student schemas?

RQ4: Who are the stakeholders mentioned in diversity initiatives of student schemas?

RQ5: What are the primary activities mentioned in diversity initiatives of student schemas?

RQ6: What are the focal areas mentioned in diversity initiatives of student schemas?

METHOD

Participants

The sample for the study consisted of 313 students from a Midwestern university where neither local media, nor campus media had referenced any diversity incidents or issues at the educational institution beyond those present in students' ordinary campus experiences. Half of the sample (48.65%) were males and 48.31% were females with 9 participants not reporting their sex. The majority of participants were Caucasian (62.16%), with 14.19% African American, 12.50% Asian, 4.73% Hispanic American, 3.72% American Indian, and 2.7% who reported some other racio-ethnic background. The majority of participants were senior students (58.11%), with 33.11% juniors, 6.76% sophomores, 13.51% freshman, 1 graduate student, and 1 student not reporting his/her year in school.

Procedures

The study employed the use of narratives to operationalize schemas similar to previous research (e.g., Hajek & Giles, 2005). After providing informed consent and sharing basic demographic information, students were given the following scenario and asked to write a story. The instructions and scenario for this investigation read:

We would like for you to create a story based on the following information.

> You are on your way to attend a meeting on your campus about the value of your school's efforts to promote a more diverse campus: to increase racial and gender diversity, especially among faculty and students. What kinds of things do you expect to be discussed at the meeting? What types of people will attend and speak at the meeting, and what will these people say about your university's efforts? Add any details that you would like about the individuals involved in the meeting, the setting, or the activities.

Participants were given approximately 15-20 minutes to complete their story. After writing the narrative, participants were free to leave. Of the 313 participants, 296 (94.57%) narratives were completed and capable of being coded, while 7 (2.23%) of the narratives were incomplete. The average word count of the completed narratives was 71 words, with a range as few as 3 words and as many as 240 words.

Content Analysis and Coding Procedures

A content analysis process, as advanced by Kaid and Wadsworth (1989) was used to examine the manifest content offered in student narratives. Each narrative served as the unit of analysis.

Coding Categories. To address the research questions, a code book with the coding scheme for all measures was developed with the categories for all measures designed to be exhaustive and mutually exclusive (Kaid & Wadswoth, 1989; Krippendorff, 1980). The first four measures include: 1) tone of narrative, categorized as positive, negative, or neutral; 2) specificity of narrative, categorized as high, low, or can't tell/no indication; 3) specificity of racio-ethinic identities, categorized as high, low, or can't tell/no indication; and 4) tone of on-campus diversity climate, categorized as positive, negative, or neutral.

The categories for the remaining set of measures are identified in Tables 2 and 3. These measures include: 5-9) mentions or refers to any student, faculty, staff, administration, or off-campus/community participant; 10-16) mentions or refers to a specific group or ethnicity (international students, Black/African American, Asian American, Hispanic American, Native American, minority, or other racio-ethnic group); 17-18) mentions or refers to sex (male or female); 19-26) mentions or refers to

specific different identities (e.g. ethnicity or gender) in diversity initiative activities; 27-32) mentions or refers to specific stakeholders (e.g. student or administration), in diversity initiative activities; 33-35) primary level of engagement; and 36-41) focal area of the diversity initiative.

Coders and Intercoder Reliability. After the code book and code sheet development, two undergraduate students were trained to serve as coders for the investigation, and intercoder reliability was calculated using Scott's (1955) π. The code book and code sheet were pilot tested in training (1 hour) followed by coders completing independent coding to achieve greater clarification on the categories employed for study. Subsequently, revisions were made to the code book and code sheets with additional coder training (two hours). After training, each coder independently coded the remaining subset of the sample, for the purpose of calculating inter-coder reliability, which demonstrated excellent overall consistency, $\pi = .96$. See Table 1 for details of the reliabilities by coding category. After achieving acceptable reliabilities, research packets with participant narratives were split randomly between the two coders (Krippendorff, 2005) with an equal distribution of packets given to each coder for coding. Together, coders made 12,136 coding decisions that culminated in the data for this investigation.

Data Analysis. This study used frequencies to calculate the presence or mentions of various categories from the code book. Frequencies for tone and specificity in this investigation will sum to the total of completed narratives ($n = 296$); however, multiple mentions were possible for each of the other categories thus making it possible to exceed the sum total of completed narratives.

RESULTS

The overall aim of this investigation is to understand the cognitive representations in student diversity schemas for the purposes of assisting higher education leaders in managing diversity initiatives on their respective campuses.

Research Questions 1 & 2

The first research question probed the tone and specificity of the diversity schemas. See Table 2 for these results. Overall, the tone of students' cognitive representations was neutral (75%) with more positive (19.93%) than negative (5.07%) representations. The tone of the on-campus diversity climate was neutral as well (66.22%) with more positive (28.38%) than negative (5.41%) representations. The specificity and level of detail in the narratives were more high (57.77%) than low (38.18%); however, the level of detail in cognitive representations for specific racio-ethnic identities was more low (52.70%) than high (10.47%) with several narratives unclear on containing racio-ethnic identities (36.82%).

The second research question explored the types of participants in attendance as mentioned in the schemas. Student (30.74%) and faculty (25.68%) participants were mentioned more frequently than off-campus/community participants (11.82%), administration (11.15%), female (7.77%), and staff (6.76%) participants.

Research Questions 3-6

The remaining research questions queried which types of different identities, stakeholders, primary activities, and focal areas were mentioned in the diversity initiatives of student schemas. See Table 3 for these results. Cognitive representations contained the greatest mentions of minorities (10.47%), other identities (7.43%), females (5.07%), males (4.73%), and African Americans (3.72%). The greatest mentions of stakeholders were for students (45.95%) and faculty (32.77%), and the most mentions for level of engagement were for discussions/dialogue (51.69%) and observation/listening (46.62%). The greatest type of focal area within cognitive representations were campus-specific (68.92%), followed by global/international/world relations (14.19%) and other focal areas (13.51%).

DISCUSSION

Rather than robust and well-reasoned structures, students' diversity schemas appear to be unsophisticated cognitive representations. Though mostly neutral or favorable in tone, the content of students' diversity schemas suggests a more diverse campus is desirable without students' schemas containing the 'whys' and 'hows' associated with the effort. In particular, very few schemas contained specific mentions of the racio-ethnic groups or key focal areas (e.g., sex issues/equality, U.S. domestic relations, or exclusion/tolerance/inclusion) that are typically associated with the need for U.S. diversity initiatives on college and university campuses. And, the majority of diversity schemas were not decidedly favorable in tone. Consistent with the literature (Bartlett, 1932; Stein, 1992), schemas, function as knowledge structures that students draw on for interpretation of an institution's diversity activities, despite the lack of sophistication or detail in structure.

Diversity schemas did contain mentions of campus-specific activities such as: increasing diversity on campus, increasing the diversity of students who attend the university, increasing diversity in the classroom and increasing the diversity of teachers or faculty. In addition, specific activities related to discussing diversity or listening to speakers share statistics about diversity were mentioned. This further suggests schemas serve as structures in students' memory (Smith, 1998) and exist as cognitive representations that contain diversity-relevant activities, even as they remain vague and ambiguous on the issues or different identities associated with diversity initiatives.

Managerial Implications

The structure of students' cognitive representations hints at a proclivity to emphasize neutrality, offer generic support, and use politically correct phrases or language. What then does this offer for managers who work in higher education leadership and grapple with situations like many of the recent race-related incidents?

A first implication is for managers in higher education to begin with educational efforts on actual issues of diversity rather than diversity activities and to personalize these issues in educational efforts. The majority of schemas contained the activities of discussion and listening. However, few schemas contained representations concerning equality, inclusion, or tolerance despite the focus of narratives on gender and racio-ethnic diversity initiatives that was offered in the study. Personalizing these actual issues can make for a more compelling case and stimulate greater vested interest.

Another implication is for managers to incorporate or re-focus diversity initiatives on different identities. Without different identities, there is no diversity. As Nkomo and Cox (1995) suggest, different identities are at the heart of diversity. Clearly articulating the historical relevance, marginalized experiences, and underrepresentation of different identities can provide students with exposure opportunities that can eventually culminate in more robust cognitive representations.

A final, and perhaps, most critical managerial implication is for managers to recognize that neutral cognitive representations are the most "swayable," particularly when the weak support offered for the benefits of diversity initiatives is challenged (Lumsdaine & Janis, 1953; McGuire, 1961). When repeatedly attacked, cognitive representations that are not decidedly favorable may be just as easily converted to structures of serious concern as they are to be transformed to strong advocates of diversity initiatives. *This means a strong need exists for two-sided messages in diversity managerial programming that offer both the benefits of diversity initiatives and the arguments that can be used to refute those who would attack or challenge those initiatives.* To provide only the benefits of diversity initiatives is to render cognitive representations most vulnerable.

Future research can examine key attributes associated with the formation of schemas as well as unpack the cognitive representations present among research participants who identify along other dimensions (e. g., religion, socio-economic status, etc.) of diversity besides race and ethnicity. Another element of heuristic value is to operationalize schemas using a different sample type than what was used in this investigation.

CONCLUSION

Until now, research has yet to explore diversity management on college and university campuses through an examination of students' diversity schemas. Given the all-or-none entity of schemas, these cognitive representations can serve as a pathway for higher education leaders to more effectively implement diversity initiatives. Our hope is that managers follow the suggested key implications for improving the practice of diversity management on college and university campuses.

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TABLE 1
OVERALL INTERCODER RELIABILITY AND INTERCODER RELIABILITIES OF CODING CATEGORIES

Category	% of Observed Agreement	Overall Scott's π
		.96
Tone of the Overall Narrative	.97	
Specificity of the Overall Narrative	.99	
Specificity of Racio-Ethnic Identities in the Overall Narrative	.99	
Tone of On-Campus Diversity Climate	.93	
Participants in Attendance		
Student participants	.99	
Faculty participants	.99	
Staff participants	1.00	
Administration participants	.99	
Off-Campus/Community participants	.94	
International Student participants	.94	
Black/African American participants	1.00	
Asian American participants	1.00	
Hispanic American participants	1.00	
Native American participants	1.00	
Minority participants	.99	
Other Racio-Ethnic participants	.94	
Male participants	.97	
Female participants	.96	
Identities Mentioned in Diversity Initiatives		
Black/African Americans	.96	
Asian Americans	.96	
Hispanic Americans	.99	
Native Americans	1.00	
Minorities	.93	
Male	.96	
Female	.94	
Other Identities	.90	
Stakeholders Mentioned in Diversity Initiatives		
Students	.99	
Faculty	1.00	
Staff	.99	
Administration	.88	
Off-Campus/Community	.91	
Other	.85	
Level of Engagement in Diversity Initiatives		
Discussions/Dialogue	1.00	
Observation/Listening	.93	
Activity/Ceremony	.94	
Focus of Diversity Initiatives		
Global/International/World Relations	.99	
U.S. Domestic Relations	.94	
Sex Issues/Equality	.96	
Issues of Exclusion/Tolerance/Inclusion	1.00	
Campus-Specific Focal Areas	1.00	
Other Focal Areas	.84	

TABLE 2
CODING RESULTS FOR TONE, SPECIFICITY, AND PARTICIPANT MENTIONS IN THE NARRATIVES

Category $n = 296$	Frequency	Percentage
Tone of the Overall Narrative		
Positive	59	19.93%
Negative	15	5.07%
Neutral	222	75.00%
Specificity of the Overall Narrative		
High	171	57.77%
Low	113	38.18%
Can't Tell	12	4.05%
Specificity of Racio-Ethnic Identities in the Overall Narrative		
High	31	10.47%
Low	156	52.70%
Can't Tell	109	36.82%
Tone of On-Campus Diversity Climate		
Positive	84	28.38%
Negative	16	5.41%
Neutral	196	66.22%
Participants in Attendance		
(Mentions in descending order of importance)		
Student participants	91	30.74%
Faculty participants	76	25.68%
Off-Campus/Community participants	35	11.82%
Administration participants	33	11.15%
Female participants	23	7.77%
Staff participants	20	6.76%
Minority participants	19	6.42%
Male participants	17	5.74%
Black/African American participants	14	4.73%
International Student participants	14	4.73%
Other Racio-Ethnic participants	9	3.04%
Asian American participants	5	1.69%
Hispanic American participants	1	.34%
Native American participants	0	0%

TABLE 3
CODING RESULTS FOR IDENTITIES, STAKEHOLDERS, LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT, & FOCUS OF DIVERSITY INITIATIVES IN NARRATIVES

Category n = 296	Frequency	Percentage
Identities Mentioned in Diversity Initiatives		
(*Mentions only in descending order of importance*)		
Minorities	31	10.47%
Other Identities	22	7.43%
Females	15	5.07%
Males	14	4.73%
Black/African Americans	11	3.72%
Asian Americans	4	1.35%
Hispanic Americans	0	0%
Native Americans	0	0%
Stakeholders Mentioned in Diversity Initiatives		
(*Mentions only in descending order of importance*)		
Students	136	45.95%
Faculty	97	32.77%
Administration	27	9.12%
Off-Campus/Community	27	9.12%
Staff	23	7.77%
Other	3	1.01%
Level of Engagement in Diversity Initiatives		
(*Mentions only in descending order of importance*)		
Discussions/Dialogue	153	51.69%
Observation/Listening	138	46.62%
Activity/Ceremony	20	6.76%
Focus of Diversity Initiatives		
(*Mentions only in descending order of importance*)		
Campus-Specific Focal Areas	204	68.92%
Global/International/World Relations	42	14.19%
Other Focal Areas	40	13.51%
Sex Issues/Equality	10	3.38%
U.S. Domestic Relations	4	1.35%
Exclusion/Tolerance/Inclusion	0	0.00%