20/05/2024

A longitudinal evaluation of political astuteness leadership development training – a study of police managers in a United Kingdom police force

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This project aims to establish if training can increase the policital astuteness behaviour of a UK police officers.

Key details

Lead institution	University of Worcester
Principal researcher(s)	Berni Gaughan berni.gaughan@warwickshire.pnn.police.uk
Police region	West Midlands
Level of research	PhD
Project start date	January 2016
Date due for completion	April 2024

Research context

To determine over an 18 month period if training increases political astuteness behaviour and then whether political astuteness behaviour predicts change behaviour.

Aims and objectives

There are two main aims:

Aim one – Develop evidenced based political astuteness vignettes to be delivered to police leaders in a training environment

20/05/2024

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Aim two – Conduct a longitudinal study, to evaluate the research model applied in this study to establish if change happens over time

Specifically the research will:

Objective one – design and deliver a political astuteness leadership development training intervention for police leaders

Objective two – apply a mixed methods research methodology, to evaluate if political astuteness leadership development training increases political astuteness behaviours

Objective three – track students over a longitudinal period to understand if training increases political astuteness behaviour as a result of the training

Objective four – measure over time if leader's political astuteness behaviour predicts change-orientated behaviours as measure

Objective five – Integrate quantitative and qualitative data

Objective six – Report on researcher's reflective practice throughout the study.

This researcher is supported by the College of Policing bursary scheme

Research methodology

A mixed methods research methodology was adopted. The first phase of the research was a large scale quantitative study and the second phase of the research was the qualitative study.

Large scale quantitative study

For the quantitative study workforce strategy group (Staffing Information, 2018) within a UK police force supplied a list of all 378 front line officers, sergeants and inspectors. This purposive sample was used to recruit participants and all participants were self-selected.

Whilst taking part in the training was mandatory, candidates were invited to take part in the research study. With five predictors, the required sample size for power = .95 is 138 (based on a medium effect size (Cohen, 1992) f2 = .15, α = .05, one predictor and power $(1 - β^2)$ = .95. However the larger sample frame was selected to allow for attrition.

20/05/2024

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The same quantitative measure collected data at three different time points, baseline data (T1) collected before participants attend the training. Follow up data (T2) was collected 12 weeks after participants had attended the training and then a final measure (T3) was collected at the end of the training delivery. The quantitative data was then analysed.

For the large scale quantitative study a t-test will be conducted on matched base line measure (T1), follow up 12 week post training measure (T2) and final end of programme training delivery (T3) to establish any significant changes in the responses to questions about levels of confidence before and after attending the training.

Additionally to measure over time if police leader's political astuteness behaviour predicts change-orientated behaviours, a multiple linear regression will be applied. The predicator variables from the political astuteness measure scale and sub-scale will be used along with the outcome variable change-orientated behaviour at scale-level and sub-scale level.

A time series regression analysis will be applied to compare political astuteness at scales and sub scale level predicting change orientated behaviour at scale and sub scale level over the three time points.

Qualitative study

The results from the large scale quantitative study will be used in a qualitative study. The purposive sample frame will select participants who took part in the quantitative study, in order to examine the quantitative results from a multiple range of different perspectives, such as different ranks, role and working context.

The semi-structured interview will apply IPA data analysis method to understand participant (n=10) personal opinions about the quantitative results and the workplace challenges encountered when transferring the learning into the workplace. The results from both studies were then synthesised to answer the research question.