Employee Business Awareness Scale Development and Validation

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Abstract

In a context of heightened competition, responsibility and initiative is distributed more widely and companies increasingly rely upon employees' use of good judgment in all situations (Pfeffer, 2005). They are expected to discern, compare, show insight and understanding, and just generally be aware of the situation in which judgment is to be exercised. To be aware is having or showing realization, perception, or knowledge and it involves vigilance in observing or alertness in drawing inferences from what one experiences (Merriam-Webster, 2000). The construct of employee business awareness is therefore defined as individual non-managerial employee realization, perception or knowledge of the employing organization's business environment as demonstrated when involved in decision making or problem solving that affects the business (Haines, Rousseau, Grimard-Brotheridge, & Saint-Onge, 2012). It is, defined as such, a specific form of basic awareness of one's external world. An employee demonstrating business awareness would not only perceive relevant elements in the business environment but also consider them in decision making and problem solving in light of pertinent goals.

As is often the case with new concepts, there does not appear to be a clear way of operationalizing the specific construct of employee business awareness. We consider that the development and validation of a measure of this construct is a necessary step that will facilitate the field's progress toward better understanding employee cognitions in participatory work settings. This paper will therefore delineate the context of this concept, apply accepted scale development procedures (Hinkin, 1995, 1998), and provide initial validity evidence supporting the developed measure. We will also describe the next steps involved in this research program.