Organizational Assessment and Survey Methodologies: Analytical Concepts and Implementation Techniques

PART 1

Importance of Studying Attitudes and Worker Perceptions in Organizations

♦ Job Satisfaction has demonstrated that it has significant implications for organizational turnover and absenteeism. These two outcomes have profound implications for organizational staffing costs, work continuity and throughput.

♦ Worker attitudes regarding coworkers may either facilitate or adversely effect task activities based upon teamwork concepts.

♦ Certain key psychological states (alienation, boredom/monotony and psychological stress) may adversely effect relationships with coworkers/supervisors; encourage work stoppages & wildcat strikes; result in adverse coping responses ranging from union militancy to chemical dependencies.

♦ Mismatching leadership styles to emergent task and employee characteristics may serve to negatively impact productivity and attitudes among workers.

Assessment of Employee Attitudes and Perceptions Using Survey Methodologies

Methodological Requirements for Employee and Organizational Climate Surveys

♦ Survey questionnaires must be constructed in order to measure critical attitudes, psychological states or worker perceptions.

♦ Scales on Survey instruments must be assessed for Validity and Reliability prior to being administered to employees on an organization – wide basis.
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Validation of Survey Instruments

♦ Validity represents the degree to which a proposed scale or measurement index truly measures what it intends to measure.

♦ Types of Validity: (1) Content Validity; (2) Concurrent Validity; (3) Face Validity; (4) Construct Validity.

Concurrent Validity

♦ expresses the degree to which respondent scores on a proposed scale or measure are significantly related to respondent scores on another commonly accepted measure of the targeted attribute.

♦ Scores obtained from the proposed scale are correlated with the commonly accepted measure of the targeted attribute.

♦ Example: a proposed scale measuring psychological stress is correlated with simultaneous measures of an individual’s Serum Dopamine- B- Hydroxylase (a blood enzyme whose level is strongly indicative of physiological/psychological stress).
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Content Validity

♦ Reflects the degree to which a proposed scale or measure adequately samples the attribute, behavior or state under investigation.

♦ Expert judges evaluate whether the proposed scale/measure adequately samples both the frequency, level and specific dimensions that the scale purports to measure.

♦ Example: In creating an “In-Basket” Test which assesses the managerial aptitudes of planning, delegation, coordination and knowledge of company policies, have experts view individuals participating in the test and discern whether the test adequately sample the required aptitudes at the both level and frequency with which they exist in managerial jobs within the firm.

Construct Validity

♦ Expresses the degree to which a proposed scale or measure of an attribute is statistically related to known outcomes or consequences of the attribute.

♦ Individual scores obtained from the proposed scale/measure are correlated the outcomes/consequences commonly associated with the presence of the attribute.

♦ Example: correlate individual scores on a proposed job satisfaction measure with their observed levels of turnover and absenteeism.
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Face Validity

♦ Reflects the degree to which a proposed measure/scale appears to reflect the theoretical dimensions of the attribute which is to be measured.

♦ Validation of the scale is based upon the degree to which the measure/scale's dimensions are judged to be similar to the underlying theoretical or behavioral properties of the attribute that the scale proposes to measure.

♦ Example: examination of a supervisory style measure to see whether it asks respondents to evaluate key supervisory behaviors or traits commonly associated with the supervisory style as defined by existing theories of leadership.

Reliability Assessment of Survey Instruments

Reliability:

♦ Refers to the degree to which a proposed measure consistently measures the attribute under investigation.

♦ Relationships between Validity and Reliability: A Valid scale must always be able to consistently measure the proposed attribute. Therefore, Valid measures must also be reliable measures. However, a scale (1) may consistently measure a particular attribute; but (2) may not accurately measure the attribute it seeks to assess. Thus, Reliable measures may not necessarily be Valid Measures.

♦ Common Types of Reliability: Test-Retest Reliability and Internal Consistency of Scale Items.
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Test-Retest Reliability

♦ Assesses the degree to which a proposed scale exhibits stability or consistency of measurement over time.

♦ Common Method of Assessment: Administer a questionnaire to persons at time period 1 (i.e.: T1). Administer the identical version of questionnaire to the same individuals a second time 2 weeks later (i.e.: T2). Correlate individual scores on each questionnaire item/scale at T1 with the scores obtained at T2. A correlation coefficient in .87 to 1.0 range is considered to be evidence of the proposed scale or questionnaire items’ stability of measurement over time.

Internal Consistency

♦ Assesses the degree to which the items comprising a proposed scale exhibit a high degree of inter-correlation (i.e.: persons scoring high on a particular scale item respond in a consistent manner on all other items comprising the scale).

♦ Common Method of Assessment: Collect data from survey respondents and perform a reliability assessment by calculating Chronbach’s Alpha. An Alpha coefficient ranging from .8 to 1.0 is deemed indicative of acceptable reliability/internal consistency.
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Techniques for Improving the Reliability of Measures/Scales on Survey Instruments

♦ Develop questionnaire items that are unambiguous and not subject to multiple interpretations.

♦ Administer questionnaires under standard, well-controlled and similar conditions for each respondent. All instructions should be written or orally communicated in a clear and unambiguous fashion. Clear and standardized instructions tend to reduce errors of measurement.

♦ If an instrument, measure or scale fails to achieve satisfactory levels of reliability, add additional questionnaire items to the scale. These items should (1) reflect similar properties to constructs included in the original scale items; and (2) be of equal quality. This may serve to reduce measurement errors and thereby enhance the reliability of the proposed scale.