

Effectiveness of role plays on process-oriented behaviour in daily work practices: An analysis in the financial services sector

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Abstract. We examine whether role plays have the potential to advance process-oriented behaviour (i.e. employees perform their activities while considering other activities and colleagues in the process) of employees in daily work practices. Process-oriented behaviour is difficult to achieve. To become process-oriented requires employees to have the ability (i.e. task and context-specific knowledge) and cognitive capabilities, as well as a willingness (i.e. intrinsic and extrinsic motivation) to change their daily work towards a cooperative and integrated procedure. In our paper we argue that role plays in which participants take over fictitious roles are a promising learning method. However, effects of role plays on subsequent behaviour in daily work practices are missing so far in the literature. Our results from 153 participants of a financial service institution reveal that the role play used has a significant impact on employees' process-oriented behaviour in terms of their cross-functional coordination, their process knowledge and their continuous process reflection, but not on employees' process awareness. Given that outcome, we argue that despite the application costs, role plays are beneficial for companies to train their employees in process orientation. Moreover, we show that there is no impact of the number of employees trained per department on individual process-oriented behaviour. Thus, initial pilot projects can be started and employees can be trained independent from their team. To increase the effect it should be repeated after a certain time, which we assume should not be more than one year, while keeping the cost of the role play training in mind.

Keywords: process knowledge, process-oriented behaviour, role play

Resubmission of Leyer, M./Hirzel, A./Moormann, J. (2015), Effectiveness of role plays on process-oriented behaviour in daily work practices: An analysis in the financial services sector, in: Becker, J./vom Brocke, J./de Marco, M. (Hrsg.), Proceedings of the European Conference on Information Systems 2015, 26.-29.05.2015, Münster, Deutschland, Paper 1870.

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