Reviewer's report

Title: Small Business Owners' Health and Safety Intentions: A Cross-Sectional Survey

Version: 1 Date: 12 July 2005

Reviewer: Catherine Heaney

Reviewer's report:

General
This manuscript applies the Theory of Planned Behavior to the issue of small business owners' intentions to improve employee health and safety.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

(1) The Theory of Planned Behavior was developed to predict/explain intentions to engage in specific behaviors. Instead of using one specific behavior as the dependent variable, the authors have used a set of behaviors. It is not clear the extent to which these behaviors "hang together" (internal consistency reliability). In addition, the set of behaviors seems to emphasize behaviors aimed at facilitating employee behavior change rather than hazard elimination/reduction.

(2) Some of the measures used do not seem to be highly valid. For example, this reviewer has never seen a global attitude measure that contains a question about convenience. In addition, the subjective norm measure (which asks about improving health and safety) does not seem to be appropriate for small businesses that are already doing a good job in terms of employee health and safety. (This may explain the lack of association between the normative beliefs and the subjective norm measure.) The TPB suggests that attitude toward a behavior is a function of expected outcomes and the value of those outcomes. The value of those outcomes is not measured. The TPB suggests that subjective norm is a function of normative beliefs and motivation to comply. Motivation to comply is not measured. Why is this?

(3) Although the data analysis is appropriate, it would be better to use structural equation modelling with latent variables. In addition, it is not clear why continuous variables are sometimes dichotomized (without a conceptual rationale for the cutpoint). The TPB posits linear relationships between continuous variables.

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

Level of interest: An article of limited interest
Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests.