A Systematic Approach for Assessing the Recency of Job-Analytic Information

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Motivation

*Job analysis is important to the valid development of many HR systems

*Change is a fundamental fact of organizational life

*Therefore, organizations need guidance on whether job analyses are "up-to-date" (e.g., content validity of exam still defensible)

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We noticed a void

- Little guidance on checking for job analysis recency, in spite of literature on organizational change

- Major reviews typically do not mention when, or how, to check for recency (Fine & Cronshaw, 1999; Goldstein, Zedeck, & Schneider, 1993; Harvey, 1990; McCormick, 1979; Morgeson & Campion, 1997)

- Brannick & Levine (2002) say not to be "stale"; Sackett & Laczo (2003) mention "recently changed" job; Cascio (1998) mentions "periodic audit" of tests/manuals

- Practitioners (including those responsible for O*NET) indicated importance of recency; yet all indicated that no established procedures currently existed

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Guidelines and Principles have little

- Section 5 of *Guidelines* states, "There are no absolutes in the area of determining the currency of a validity study."

- Section 3 of *Guidelines* states a test may be used "until such time as it should reasonably be reviewed for currency"; little else

- *SIOP Principles (3rd ed.)* say, "There should be a periodic audit" of selection procedures; say "A systematic plan for review should be followed"; little else

- *SIOP Principles (4th ed.)* say "The researcher should consider whether the work and the worker requirements are reasonably stable"; little else

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Our proposed systematic protocol

- Assume a thorough job analysis was previously conducted

- Protocol is based on SME input and focused on *changes* to the job, if any, that result in important task and KSA issues

- Potocol is efficient and builds upon prior work

- Has four stages

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Protocol stages

- Conduct background work

- Invite subject matter experts (SMEs) to a two-part meeting (includes guidelines for SMEs)

- Conduct open, group-level, discussion of what tasks and/or KSAs might have changed during the intervening years. (Important to focus on reasons for any such changes to maintain an emphasis on change.)

- Develop task and KSA statements, if any, which reflect change

- Using the same scales (e.g., importance) and criteria for inclusion as in prior job analysis, SMEs individually rate any tasks or KSAs that are suggested as possible changes

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When stages completed →

- Add/subtract any tasks or KSAs from the job analysis lists (based on screens used in the prior job analysis)

- Include (or document elsewhere) any minor edits that arose in Stage III

- Others can use recency analysis to determine if products of the job analysis (e.g., selection exams) remain current

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Does it work?

- Yes!

- Implemented in a variety of civil engineering related jobs in a state agency; including technical positions and a supervisory position

- Agency had conducted thorough job analyses about 5-7 years prior and needed to expediently assess recency in order to assess maintenance of content validity

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Lessons from unique protocol

- Focus on change and major implications; avoids re-rating entire lists and introducing statistical noise

- As cues, have complete list of KSAs and tasks available to SMEs; encouraged SMEs to write on these lists

- Present an overview of purpose and role of change before talking about job-specific tasks and KSAs. Avoids strong human urge to idiosyncratically revise

- Keep asking the question, "So what has changed?"

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Summary

- Developed and used a protocol to begin to fill job analysis recency void

- Even less guidance on how often to check job analyses for recency; another problem that needs attention

- We hope our protocol will help move organizations forward and keep their HR systems maximally effective

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