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)*
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
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

• Protocol 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
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
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
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