

Critical incidents
technique of job
analysis psychology
essay



Critical Incidents Technique of job analysis is the recording of behaviours by the worker that are specific to successful or unsuccessful job performance. The qualities needed to do the job also the systematic study of the responsibilities, duties and tasks to perform a job is known as job analysis. Job analysis produces four products which are job description, job specification, job evaluation and performance criteria. These products is where personnel functions are used to asses the worker and the job and how the worker is performing the job. Trying to understand all of the different duties and tasks of any job is never easy, so job analysis methods need to be as precise and comprehensive as possible. One of the methods used is the Critical Incident Technique. This is a technique that is used specifically to record successful or unsuccessful behaviours that relate to job performance. This is done by a questionnaire or an interview method , of the person in the job their supervisors or other experts in the job. with hundreds of these crucial incidents the job analysis can build up a very good understanding of what the job entails such as the skills knowledge and responsibilities needed to perform the job in a successful way.

This technique can also be used in the performance appraisals, in which the workers performance is measured using standardised appraisals. For an individual worker performance appraisals can be used for many different reasons such as salary increases, promotions and also to recognise where the job performance can be improved and show where there are deficiencies in their job performance. There are two ways of measuring performance appraisals. Objective performance criteria where quantifiable measures are used such as how many units are produced or how much money was made

through sales . Or how long it takes to complete a task. Subjective performance criteria involves using ratings or judgements made by either the workers co-worker or their supervisor. This criteria is useful when it is difficult to ascertain the objective criteria of a job performance. One of the disadvantages of using objective criteria is that they tend to only look at job performance in a quantifiable way, rather than other aspects of the job. Which may be just as important to job performance such as the workers attitude and the ability to adapt to different situations and how the worker fits in with their fellow workers especially when working in a group environment which can be critical to job performance. This is where the Critical Incident Technique can be utilised to look at different aspects of how the worker performed their job. by appraising all of the Critical incidents they should help the job analysis to build up a fairly representative picture of the worker. Building up a picture by talking to the workers supervisors and co-workers and looking at the specific incidents in where the worker performed their job successfully. By asking questions such as what did the worker do to help fellow workers or what action they took to improve the job performance and were they helpful to the group as a whole. Or were their actions unhelpful in the job performance.

The most valuable asset of an organisation are it's employees and it's key to the company success. Companies must be as sure as possible in their selection process, to enable them to keep a competitive edge in their in their industry. especially as the cost effectiveness of conducting psychometric tests Fars out weights the cost of selecting the wrong employee for a position in the organisation. Which can cost the organisation between a few

thousand and a few hundred thousand Euros (Wanous, 1992). Some studies have put the cost of replacing an employee at between one and a half to three and a half times their annual salary (Baxi, 2008; Right management consultants, 2006). Faced with this potential cost what organisations need in place is a rigorous selection process, as psychometric tests cost on average four per cent of the organisations selection process costs (The Talent Institute, 2008). One of the other benefits of using psychometric tests is that it is an objective measurement method rather than a subjective measurement method. By using an objective measurement method the organisation will have a better understanding of what type of person they are employing and if that person is suitable for that particular position in the organisation. Also in the case of someone who is disabled or belonging to an ethnic minority trying to claim discrimination because of their physical disabilities or their ethnic background the company can produce the results of that persons tests and so show that hopefully if the tests were conducted properly and by a qualified person that no discrimination took place.

The most widely used method of selecting and screening potential employees is an interview. It might be the most used but it is not the most reliable and is a bad predictor of future job performance (Arvey & Campion, 1982; Harris, 1992; Huffcutt & Arthur, 1994). One of the problems with interviews is their validity as interviews can vary so much in the way they are conducted and with very little structure (Wright, Lichtenfels & Purcell, 1989). Some companies give very little thought that the interview should be used the same ways as any psychological test and should have the same reliability and predictability as any other standardised test.(Dipboye, 1989).

Unlike specific quantifiable information which can be obtained from screening tests and application forms the information obtained from interviews is based more on the judgements of the interviewer. Therefore the interviewer's judgement can be problematic, with different interviews arriving at different interpretations of the candidate's suitability for the position (Arvey & Campion, 1982; Riggio & Throckmorton, 1998). Another cause for concern with interviews is that the applicant can vary from interview to interview due to fatigue, nervousness or some other reason which can also cause low reliability. One of the biggest concerns for interviews is the interviewer's bias such as the applicant's gender, race, assertiveness, physical disabilities, which can affect the interviewer's judgements. Another problem is that interviewers can sometimes make snap judgements; this is where the interviewer forms an opinion good or bad about the applicant in the first few moments of meeting them, and then compares that impression of the applicant for the rest of the interview. One of the other biases that can affect interviewers is the contrast effect in which after a good or bad interview of an applicant the interviewer compares all subsequent applicants to that initial interview. Also the interview might fail as a predictor for job success as the information gathered and what the job requirements are might not be very well matched. The way in which the applicant conducts themselves in the interview may also give a false impression as the communicative skills they portray may not be what is required to perform the job successfully (Guion & Gibson, 1988; Hanson & Ballestreri, 1985; Kacmar, Delery & Ferris, 1992).