

Job analysis in rapidly changing organizations management essay



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The importance of job analysis in obtaining the right people for organizations has been established in literature (Siddique, 2004; Palmer and Valet, 2001; Baruch and Lessem, 1995). Job analysis refers to the process of analyzing the requirements of jobs and identifying skills, behaviours, knowledge, and other characteristics needed for satisfactory job performance (De Cieri and Kramer, 2003; Palmer and Valet, 2001; McKillip, 2001). In recent years however, there have been issues regarding the relevance of job analysis in staffing for modern organizations because of its specific and detailed outcomes, which are inconsistent with the flexible nature of contemporary organizations (Brannick and Levine, 2002).

Given the arguments for and against the relevance of job analysis, can it be considered as essential in getting the ‘ best staff’ to work in modern and rapidly changing organizations? Analyzing this statement merits a clear look into the characteristics of ‘ best staff’ in modern organizations and the context where they are working.

As opposed to traditional organizations that offer rigid and stable working environments, modern and rapidly changing organizations have been described as flexible (Dessler, Griffiths, and Lloyd-Walker, 2004), dynamic, competitive, and less hierarchical (Brannick and Levine, 2002; Hammer and Champy, 2001; Sanchez, 1994), multidimensional (Hammer and Champy, 2001), influenced by technological, social, political, and global changes (Dessler, et. al., 2004), and boundaryless with tasks and roles that are more fluid and less defined (Nelson, 1997; Hirschhorn and Gilmore, 1992). Given this work context, the ‘ best staff’ to work for modern and dynamic organizations can be considered as those who are flexible, open to learning, <https://assignbuster.com/job-analysis-in-rapidly-changing-organizations-management-essay/>

dynamic, empowered, and self-directed, able to respond to changing demands of the job, and with sound interpersonal and collaborative skills necessary for team work (Dessler et. al., 2004; Brannick and Levine, 2002; Hammer and Champy, 2001; Hirschhorn and Gilmore, 1992). Possession of the essential work-related skills (Palmer and Valet, 2001) and the ability to manage complicated tasks (Hammer and Champy, 2001) is also important.

Looking at the characteristics of modern organizations, wherein jobs are constantly changing, a traditional type of job analysis which focuses on specific job descriptors and employee characteristics to match these may no longer be relevant (Nelson, 1997; Sanchez, 1994). A more modern type of job analysis that selects staff on the basis of their capability to function in a dynamic set-up is more appropriate (Sanchez, 1994). Consequently, job analysis, when used appropriately, has been seen to meet the demands of new working environments (Siegel, 1996; Sanchez, 1994). Therefore, job analysis is essential in getting the best staff to work in modern organizations so long as it is performed in a pro-active way (Siddique, 2004) and is able to accommodate and adapt to fast-changing demands (Clifford, 1994).

Job analysis is essential in getting the best staff to work in modern organizations, first because it is capable of adapting to organizational needs in regards to providing relevant information for describing jobs and work environment, and staff characteristics that is best for the organization (Siddique, 2004; Nelson, 1997; Sanchez, 1994). Second, it strengthens the validity of measurement tools used to identify characteristics of jobs and employees (Kubiszyn and Borich, 1996). Third, it provides information on education and training needs for staff development (Dessler et. al., 2004; De <https://assignbuster.com/job-analysis-in-rapidly-changing-organizations-management-essay/>

Cieri and Kramer, 2003). Fourth, it provides the basis for evaluating staff performance needed to enhance their performance (Brannick and Levine, 2002; Palmer and Valet, 2001). Last, job analysis provides data needed in setting-up a working environment that would motivate staff to work at their best (Dessler et. al., 2004).

To discuss the first point, job analysis is relevant in getting the best staff for modern organizations because it presents dynamic and new ways of describing jobs, work environments, and organization culture; and the staff characteristics needed to get the work done. Therefore, it serves its basic function of providing a match between organizational needs and staff characteristics. Job analysis no longer limits itself to identifying specific job descriptions and job specifications. Modern job analysis techniques such as the “ worker-oriented” methods of job analysis (Nelson, 1997, p. 43) and “ competency-focused approach” (Siddique, 2004, p. 225) provides information on broader qualities such as conflict management skills, motivation, and flexibility that are critical for success in a variety of jobs for modern organizations. In addition, job analysis can also identify ‘ team descriptions’ that can facilitate collaboration in a team-based nature of modern organizations (Brannick and Levine, 2002; Siegel, 1996).

It is worth mentioning however, that there have also been arguments regarding the applicability of job analysis to modern organizations (Sanchez, 1994). Several authors (Brannick and Levine, 2002; Sanchez, 1994) for instance discussed the setbacks of job analysis as being rigid and inconsistent with the fluid nature of modern businesses. However, Brannick and Levine (2002) discussed that problems with job analysis stem from its <https://assignbuster.com/job-analysis-in-rapidly-changing-organizations-management-essay/>

products such as job descriptors and not necessarily on the entire job analysis procedure.

In contrast to accusations, the ability of job analysis to identify characteristics needed to get the best staff to function in modern organizations has been evident in several instances. For example, Milan and Tucker (1992) discussed the story of British Petroleum, the world's third largest oil company, wherein teams of staff members from its different divisions and locations worked together to develop a skills matrix that included descriptors for families of skills and corresponding performance levels. As a result, the matrix enabled the employees to understand the different roles that they can play in the company and the level of performance required, thus empowering them to take charge of their own development. Similarly, Laabs (1993) related the story of Gillette Co, a fast growing global company that benefited from identifying important broad staff characteristics like adaptability, enthusiasm, and aggressiveness which effectively helped the company in attracting and tapping new graduates that meet its global and competitive needs.

Since jobs keep on changing in modern organizations, identifying work environment characteristics has been seen as more important in identifying compatible staff members than specific job descriptors (Nelson, 1997). Job analysis has been discussed to serve this function. For instance, Siegel (1996) mentioned the applicability of job analysis in a TQM environment by detailing the characteristics of the organizations systems and subsystems to enable staff to work interdependently. Similarly, job analysis is also

important in ensuring that employees match the organization culture by <https://assignbuster.com/job-analysis-in-rapidly-changing-organizations-management-essay/>

operationalising and providing a framework for an organization's culture and the necessary staff characteristics that would fit the culture (Dessler et. al, 2004; Nelson, 1994). Clearly, so long as job analysis is up-to-date, it can function as a roadmap for companies to use in selecting the best staff both from within and outside the organization.

Job and work descriptions and specifications can only be effective in getting the best staff if measures used to identify relevant characteristics are valid. Dr. Howard Hane (cited in Palmer, H. and Valet W., 2001) said that job analysis aids in the valid and reliable development of these tools by specifying what needs to be measured for a given task and at what standards. For instance, Day (1989, p. 27) emphasized the importance of conducting job analysis in designing a 'personality inventory' and providing an accurate measure for personality traits in selecting employees. Valid personality measurements and other competency measures are important in selecting the best staff for modern organizations because these provide characteristics that are needed for a wide array of jobs.

Getting the best staff does not end with matching organizational needs with employee characteristics. Once, their in the organization, they will only continue to be the 'best' if given proper education and training. Education and training are important because in modern organizations, people are expected to be versatile and to attune their skills and knowledge to organizational changes (Dessler, et. al, 2004; Hammer and Champy, 2001).

Job analysis is essential in employee education and training needs assessment in modern organizations by identifying skills and competence

that needs to be developed and by forecasting skills that will be needed for future responsibilities (Dessler et. al., 2004). For instance Siegel (1996) discussed the use of job analysis in a TQM environment by providing information on employee cross-training for them to work spontaneously in different subsystems. As Clifford (1994) suggested, job analysis also assists the organization and its staff in determining training needs for professional growth planning. Furthermore, job analysis strengthens the validity of training procedures by providing a means to match important characteristics and the emphasis given to these in trainings (McKillip, 2001).

The importance of job analysis in employee training for a modern organization was seen in the case of Dixie Group Inc., a major carpet industry in the United States. This company used job analysis as basis for staff education and development to enable them to keep up with and deliver good results amidst fast changing technology (Palmer and Valet, 2001).

Once employees are hired, put in the right position, trained, or educated, the effective way of determining the quality of performance is evaluation.

Evaluation will provide an objective basis whether the ' best staff' is indeed at place in the organization. The basis for all evaluation is of course a clear criteria or standard of how jobs and tasks should be accomplished (Borich and Kubiszyn, 1996). Job analysis again enters the picture by providing up-to-date information for acceptable standards of job performance that will be used to assess the quality of work of staff (Dessler et. al., 2004; Siddique, 2004). If duties and standards are clearly provided by a job analysis, then evaluation procedures would proceed smoothly (Clifford, 1994). The results

of the evaluation can then be used for training needs analysis as well as <https://assignbuster.com/job-analysis-in-rapidly-changing-organizations-management-essay/>

personal improvement plans of the staff. It can also be the basis for putting people in job categories wherein they excel.

Another area of employee evaluation wherein job analysis is important has to do with compensation decisions (Dessler et. al., 2004). Fast changing organizations would likely get the best staff that they require if compensation packages are reasonable and commensurate to the responsibilities given to people and their qualifications. The information on various jobs provided by job analysis is very essential in this process (De Cieri and Kramer, 2003).

Finally, getting the best staff also means keeping them at their best by providing motivation. Good employees in modern organizations are normally flexible and talented; therefore they will not stay in organizations that do not offer stimulating work environments. Job analysis addresses this issue by providing information needed in designing and redesigning interesting jobs that foster team work, responsibility, challenge, and employee empowerment (Dessler et. al., 2004; Brannick and Levine, 2002). For instance, proper combination of positive job characteristics in a job design may lead to positive work outcomes (Dessler et. al., 2004), thereby maintaining the staff at their best performance levels.

Modern organizations have indeed moved from a static and bureaucratic system to one that is dynamic, flexible, and boundaryless; resulting to changes on the characteristics of the ' best staff' needed for these organizations. Since jobs keep on changing, employees are no longer chosen on the basis of specific skills or how well they can perform specific tasks.

This makes the question of whether job analysis is essential in getting the best staff to work in modern and rapidly changing organization an important point for discussion.

There have been arguments regarding the applicability of job analysis in modern and fast changing organizations because it was regarded as providing rigid information that is inconsistent with the flexible nature of organizations. On the contrary, however, literature on job analysis (Siegel, 1996; Sanchez, 1994) has shown that it is capable of adapting to the requirements of modern organizations and has evolved to incorporate methods that enable companies to get the best staffs that are suitable to its changing needs. Thus, job analysis, as long as up-to-date, is important in getting the best staff because it still serves its primary functions of first, providing relevant information about people and work characteristics needed to get the best staff (Siddique, 2004; Nelson, 1997; Sanchez, 1994); second, strengthening the validity of measurement tools used to identify characteristics of best staff (Kubiszyn and Borich, 1996); and third, providing relevant information for staff education, training (Dessler et. al., 2004; De Cieri and Kramer, 2003), evaluation (Brannick and Levine, 2002; Palmer and Valet, 2001) and design of a motivating work environment to keep the staff at their best (Dessler et. al., 2004).

Clearly, so long as job analysis is able to keep abreast with the dynamic needs of organizations, it is essential in getting the best staff to work in modern organizations. This topic, however, still merits more research on the applicability of job analysis in acquiring the best staff for real organizations and the development of more relevant job analysis tools.

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