Difference between competency modelling and traditional job analysis-"sanchez”

What is the difference between Competency Modeling and Traditional Job Analysis. Human Resource Management Review (2008) This article is a brief discussion about Traditional Job Analysis (TJA) and Competency Model (CM). It points out major differences and fundamental goals of two approaches by the HR. The article provides ways in which TJA combined with CM can help an organization to achieve strategic objectives by directing employee behavior.

The article further highlights that CM links results to business goals which is not the case with TJA approach. In addition, TJA is more methodological in terms of data collection, level of detail, assessment of reliability of results and documentation of research process. The author maintains that TJA and CM supplement each other and they are best applicable when they co-exist in Human Resource Application. Three important points of this article are:

1. Differences between Traditional Job Analysis (TJA) and Competency Model (CM): Traditional job analysis approach explicitly links skills and abilities to the bigger picture i. e. KSAOs (Knowledge, Skill, Ability or Other Characteristics), whereas competency modeling aims at identifying skills and abilities that can be used for a variety of purposes and for a variety of jobs in the same organization. Competency model approach uses behaviour indicators such as desirable, undesirable and moderate that helps to manifests competencies in employees.

Competencies are primarily based on behavioral descriptions, while the KSAO's produced by a Job Analysis are not. Another difference is that in TJA approach job is described as an abstract entity. Job is considered a social construction that exists separately from the person holding the job and

performance a by-product of the employee's interpretation of the job. On the other hand CM approach influences employees to enact their role in a manner which is consistent with organizational strategy and performance is considered employee's interpretation of the role.

Thus, CM has an advantage that an employees' job performance can be influenced by encouraging the employee to interpret his job in a way which best aligns with organization's strategy. Another major difference is that TJA focuses solely on the job with formal job responsibilities and KSAOs requirements of the job, whereas CM focuses on set of competencies that cut across jobs and layers of organization. CM " prescribes the most valued behavioral themes of the organization, regardless of the job" (Sanchez, 2008).

TJA employs description of the job tasks and KSAOs that are required by a particular job and therefore these descriptors are unique to each job and do not allow between job comparisons. On the other hand, management can use CM approach to instill critical values and behaviors in their employees which can further help them to define their brand. The most important aspect of CM is that since the competencies represent universal behavior themes and they cut across all the jobs in an organization, it has an ability to simplify succession planning and career development systems.

Thus, employees know exactly that development of certain behavior themes valued by the organization will help them advance in their careers and get better paid jobs and competencies become the drivers of their potential career progression. In TJA emphasis on the job is on the way it has been

performed till date and source of information is from the incumbents who have an experience in that particular job. In CM the nature of competencies allows employee collaboration and helps in shaping the meaning of the competency according to circumstances and encourages employees to achieve future objectives.

TJA determines the basic work requirements or minimal qualifications for job entry whereas, CM offers guidance to the employees who have already met the basic job requirements and wish to move to the next level of performance. Therefore, CM facilitates growth and change.

2. How TJA can supplement CM at various points of CM process: Though the above point highlights the differences between TJA and CM approaches, the article also illustrates how the practice of CM can be enriched through TJA. One requires detailed task statements prior to inferring competencies.

It would be difficult to infer competencies in the absence of detailed job statements which are provided by TJA. For example, employee selection procedures require job specifications such as knowledge, skills, abilities and other characteristics (KSAOs) on one hand and important job behaviors on the other hand. During employee selection, job analysis is carried out so as to arrive at a job description and then behavior interviews are conducted in order to identify competencies for that particular job.

Even though CM leads to superior performance on the job, still we cannot ignore the fact that particular industries, sectors and strategies require specific inventory of KSAOs. There are two ways in which the relation between the two is further emphasized: First, information about the

organization's strategy provides the HR function with a common frame of reference regarding the strategic implications, which further facilitate the process of identifying competencies aligned with such a strategy. Second, the information about important task statements decrease the complexity of the competency.

Therefore, elements of traditional job analysis such as task-related information and subject matter expertise can be fruitfully incorporated into competency modeling to enhance the quality of inferences. In other words, TJA provides dimension to CM.

3. Application and development of CM and TJA while designing a staffing system: Ideal approach to design a staffing system consists of blending the two approaches of TJA and CM. An effort should be made by an organization to blend the two approaches and incorporate organization's strategy into the derivation of broad worker attributes or competencies.

In addition, the methodological rigor of task analysis with task statements should be used prior to inferring KSAOs. Such a blended approach will help to improve the quality of the competency. The appropriateness of a hybrid approach would be entirely dependent upon the needs of the company. HR should develop competency models for the entire organization so that the competencies can be used in various talent management systems such as selection, performance management, succession planning, workforce planning, etc.

Special care should be taken in defining the competencies because CM serves as an internal language of an organization which is capable of

influencing day-to-day employee behaviors. Defining the competencies enables the HR to assess the employee's competencies against those required for current or future roles within the organization. Also, assessment based on competencies provides the organization with an indication of the extent to which employee workplace behavior has improved.

In addition, HR can target learning and training plans around the competencies that have been defined or can provide support tools for their employees to develop these competencies. Competencies are a high-level product of the job analysis process, and make KSAO's more measurable and useful. Conclusion: Though there are differences between the two approaches of TJA and CM, an organization will gain from its combined use in HR applications. We should learn to capitalize on the strengths of both TJA and CM approaches.