

School psychologist job



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A job analysis is used to assess and describe jobs and the characteristics that would be most suited for that job; these are usually conducted by an industrial/organizational psychologist. To gather this information either a job-oriented, a person-oriented approach, or a combination of both is utilized. The job-oriented approach is used to describe the tasks that are necessary to complete a particular job.

In contrast, the person-oriented approach gathers information about the characteristics someone would need to possess to effectively do the job in question; this includes gathering information about the knowledge, abilities, skills, and other personal characteristics (e. g. being organized) an individual would need to be most effective in the job being analyzed. This paper will analyze the job of a school psychologist using the task inventory job analysis method. The information gathered from a job analysis can be used for numerous purposes, but for the purpose of this paper only selection and vocational counseling will be discussed.

It will then go on to discuss objective and subjective measures used to appraise an individual's performance in being a school psychologist. It will finally discuss the pros and cons of these appraisal methods. Gathering Information for a Job Analysis Information for a job analysis can be gathered in numerous ways by various people. Information can be gathered by a job analysts, a supervisor, the person who holds the position be analyzed, or by trained observers (Spector, 2008).

The various methods used to collect this information from one of the four people previously mentioned include performing the job, observing the employees at work, interviewing the supervisor or the person that holds the

job, or administering a questionnaire; these methods can also be combined so that the limitations of one method can be countered by the strengths of another (Spector, 2008). Performing the job can give a job analyst insight to the tasks that are required to do a job, but can be time consuming and expensive; therefore, it is rarely used.

Job analysts or trained observers can observe employees at work to gather information about the job by completing forms that lists various activities. The observer must record how often the employee completes each activity. This, however, can also be time consuming and expensive (Spector, 2008). Interviewing supervisors and the people who hold the job are the most popular way to collect information for a job analysis, which gives the person doing the job analysis a list of the tasks involved in the job being analyzed. The most effective way to collect the information for a job analysis is to administer a questionnaire.

This is the most effective way because “ it can contain hundreds of questions about the job and can be administered easily to thousands of employees” (Spector, 2008, p. 63). Task Inventory Method As previously discussed, the methods used to conduct a job analysis use one or more of the sources and ways of collecting the information needed for the job analysis. The task inventory job analysis method uses a questionnaire that lists specific tasks that may be completed for the job being analyzed and at least one rating scale for each task listed on the questionnaire (Spector, 2008).

This questionnaire is given to the person that holds the job; usually to numerous people who hold the same job. This is done because some people that have the same job title spend different amounts of time on certain tasks

and a task inventory can help provide an average of the importance or time spent completing various tasks (Spector, 2008). Results of a Job Analysis for a School Psychologist School psychologists deal with “ principles of clinical psychology and educational psychology” that are “ used for analyzing children’s behavioral and learning problems and carrying out an appropriate treatment” (Psychoid, 2010, para.). This is done by putting together and interpreting student’s test scores and gathering information from parents and teachers. School psychologists are also responsible for selecting, giving, scoring, and interpreting psychological tests to students and preparing reports of the results for teachers, parents, and administrators of the school (O*Net, 2010). They offer counseling to families of children that show conflict in learning and adjusting; also consult on learning styles and behavior modification techniques.

School psychologists are also responsible for reporting information to authorities when they come across cases of child endangerment, neglect, or abuse (O*Net, 2010). They are responsible for maintaining student records as it pertains to special education reports, confidential records, services provided, and behavioral information; use these records, observation, and conversations with parents and teachers to assess a child’s needs. School psychologists also collect and analyze data to ensure that academic programs, other services provided are effective.

Furthermore, they try to promote understanding of child development with the relationship it has on learning and behavior (O*Net, 2010). In order to carry out these tasks, school psychologists must knowledgeable in psychology, therapy and counseling, English, education and training,

sociology, mathematics, and computers and electronics. They must have skills in listening, reading, communication, writing, critical thinking, observing, complex problem solving, judgment and decision making, and social perceptiveness (O*Net, 2010).

They must have the ability to orally (and read and write) comprehend and express information and ideas, speak clearly, reason deductively and inductively, be sensitive to problems, understand others speech, and see details up close (O*Net, 2010). Purposes of Conducting a Job Analysis for School Psychologists There are numerous reasons to conduct a job analysis. These include among others, career development, legal issues, performance appraisal, employee selection and training, vocational counseling, and research (Spector, 2008).

However, this paper will only cover employee selection and vocational counseling as it pertains to school psychologists. As discussed in the previous section, someone applying for a school psychologist job should have knowledge in certain areas, as well as certain skills, abilities, and other attributes such as being perceptive. According to O*Net, many employers require a school psychologist to have either a master's degree or Ph. D. in at least one of the areas mentioned in the previous section and at least five years' experience (2010).

Conducting a job analysis for a school psychologist can also help improve the work that they may do for children with learning disabilities in vocational counseling. School psychologists can help adolescents gain access to a college education by providing “ high school evaluations that include transition planning goals” (Joyce & Rossen, 2006, para. 1). Furthermore,

school psychologists can help these individuals prepare for college by teaching them self-advocacy skills and self-reliance. Performance Appraisal Methods

Numerous methods may be used to assess an individual's job performance. The two most common ways are though objective and subjective measures. According to Spector (2008), “ objective measures are counts of various behaviors or of the results of job behaviors” and “ subjective measures are ratings by people who should be knowledgeable about the person's job performance” (p. 86). Objective measures have five components that measure job performance, which include absences, accidents, incidents at work, lateness, and productivity.

These can be found in organization records, but may be collected at any time to appraise an employee (Spector, 2008). The subjective measures are more commonly used than objective measures to appraise employees. However, these are more prone to personal bias and human judgment mistakes. The accuracy of subjective measures can be increased with the use of rating forms, of which the graphic rating form is the most widely used. This type of rating form assesses numerous aspects of performance and focuses on traits such as quality and quantity of one's performance (Spector, 2008).

On the other hand, behavior-focused rating forms focus on past behaviors or expected behaviors. Pros and Cons of Appraisal Methods The use of objective and subjective measures both have advantages and limitations when used. Advantages of objective measures include results that are easily interpreted; makes it easy to compare different individuals who hold the same position;

easily tied to goals of the organization and are easily found in records (Spector, 2008). There are also several limitations to using objective measures as an appraisal method.

These include not being compatible with all types of jobs; information taken from the organization's records may not be accurate or unreported incidents; only considers quantity instead of quantity and quality (Spector, 2008). Subjective measures also have advantages and disadvantages. Advantages of subjective measures include a more accurate picture of performance, which includes both quality and quantity. However, these can be unreliable as there can be leniency biases and the rater may not be able to accurately distinguish the different aspects of performance (Spector, 2008).

Conclusion The successful relationship between an organization and an employee are reliant on job analysis and performance appraisals. The job analysis enables the organization to select individuals that will be most suited for the job and beneficial to the organization. Performance appraisals allow for the organization to judge the worth of any employee. In order to obtain and keep a valuable and effective organization both job analysis and performance appraisals are crucial.