

Trends in Assessment and Development Centres

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Overview



- ◆ “Thumb suck” view AC
- ◆ Impressions about AC
- ◆ Job Analysis Methods
- ◆ Exercises
- ◆ Technology
- ◆ Reports
- ◆ New Ingredients
 - Development Centres
 - Portfolio-based assessments
 - Situational Judgment Test (SJT)
- ◆ Disturbing Trends
- ◆ The way Forward

References

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- ◆ Lievens, F. (2006, March). *The use of situational judgment tests in high stakes selection settings*. Paper presented at the 26th Assessment Centre Study Groups conference, South Africa, Stellenbosch
- ◆ Lievens, F. (2006, March). *Easing the inferential leap in competency modeling*. Paper presented at the 26th Assessment Centre Study Groups conference, South Africa, Stellenbosch
- ◆ Lievens, F. & Thornton, C. T., (2005). Assessment Centre: Recent Developments in Practice and Research. In A. Evers, O.Smit-Voskuilj, & N. Anderson (Eds). Handbook of Selection (pp. 243-264)
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First: a thumb suck

Personally-conducted,
Randomly-sampled,
Anecdotally-collected
and informal research
“Spoeg en Plak”

Ref. (I asked a few friends)



Impressions about Assessment Centres

- ◆ Assessment Centres are getting shorter
- ◆ People want the same results in less time “cheaper”
- ◆ Corners get cut
- ◆ You don't need any training to develop a AC

Impressions about Assessment Centres (cont)

- ◆ Any person can be a observer without any training at “all”
- ◆ Clients want shorter reports
- ◆ Long paragraphs are labourious to write and read
- ◆ 10-20 page reports are so “uncool”



Job Analysis Methods

- ◆ Competency modeling debate
- ◆ SIOP-1997, “Junk Science”, “Old wine in new bags”



Job Analysis Methods **(cont)**

- ◆ Broader competencies needed because of breakdown of rigid divisions of labour
- ◆ Competencies often defined too broadly for valid and reliable assessment
- ◆ Techniques needed to translate competencies into performance dimensions

Competency Movement

"[Proponents of competencies have] shown that in complex jobs, competencies are more likely to determine success than are skills and knowledge. But they go on to say that competencies represent a set of skills and knowledge, abilities, behavioral characteristics, and other attributes that predict superior performance. **I don't know about you, but I find all this very confusing.**" (Lawler, 1996, p. 4).

Competency is it use full?

Popular in Practice

- ◆ Relatively quick, user-friendly, & flexible
- ◆ Face valid
- ◆ Common language
- ◆ Link with business strategy
- ◆ Future oriented

Schippmann et al. (2000)

Skepticism in Academia

- ◆ Jeopardizes legal defensibility
- ◆ Deprofessionalization of job analysis
- ◆ Better example of successful marketing than of successful science
- ◆ Seamlessly working system of inaccurate data

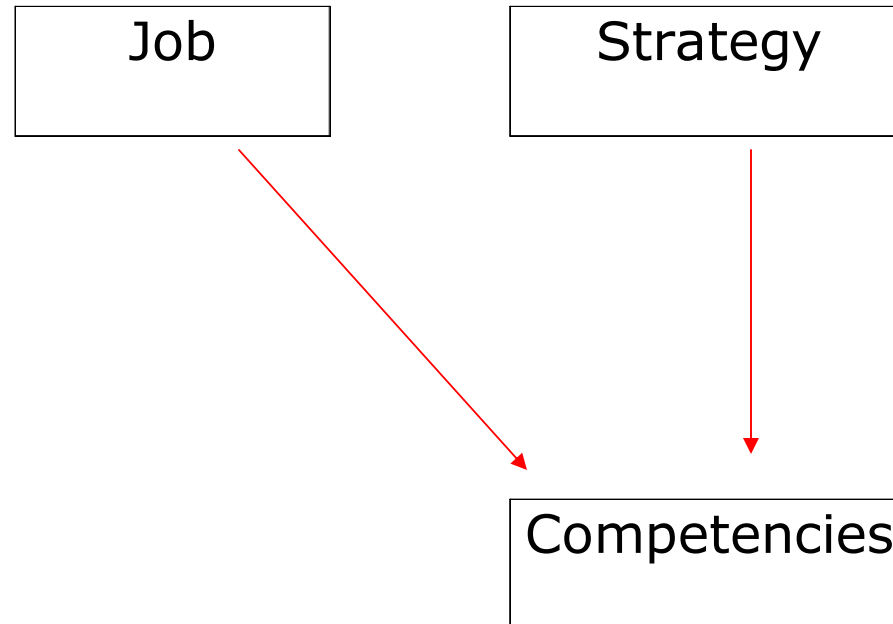
Pearlman (2002)

Is it different ?

Statement	CM	JA
Focus on core competencies	4.00	2.45
Link with strategy	4.45	2.27
Focus on technical skills	2.00	4.55
Type of descriptor (tasks, etc.)	1.73	3.82
Information gathering procedure (interviews, etc.)	2.00	3.73
SMEs	2.90	3.70
Study of reliability	1.73	3.55
Documentation	3.36	4.64

Schippmann et.al (2000)

Competency modeling approach





Competency modeling approach (CONT)

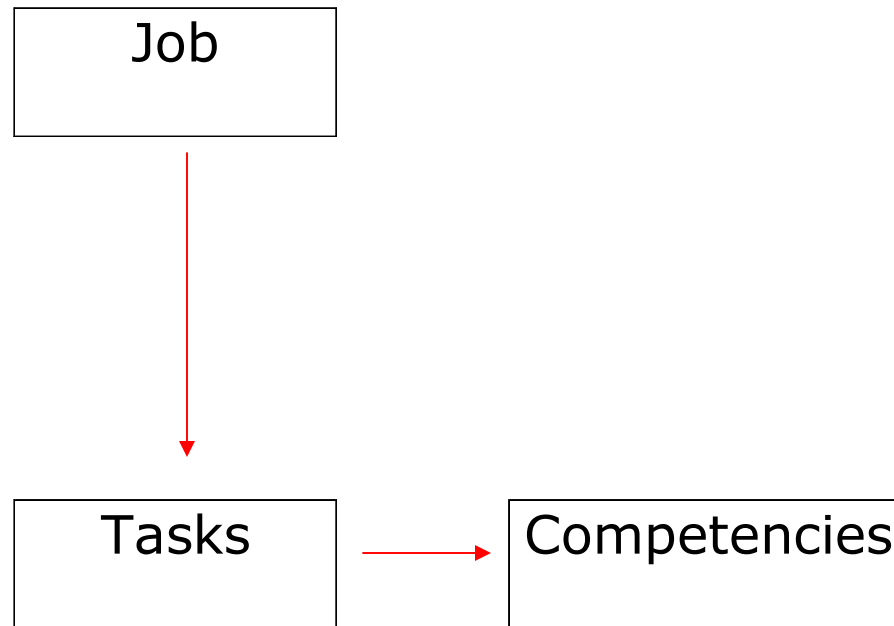
“Making and justifying these inferential leaps on the slippery floor of behaviorally-fuzzy competencies is certainly a methodological challenge”
(Sanchez & Levine, 2001, p. 85)



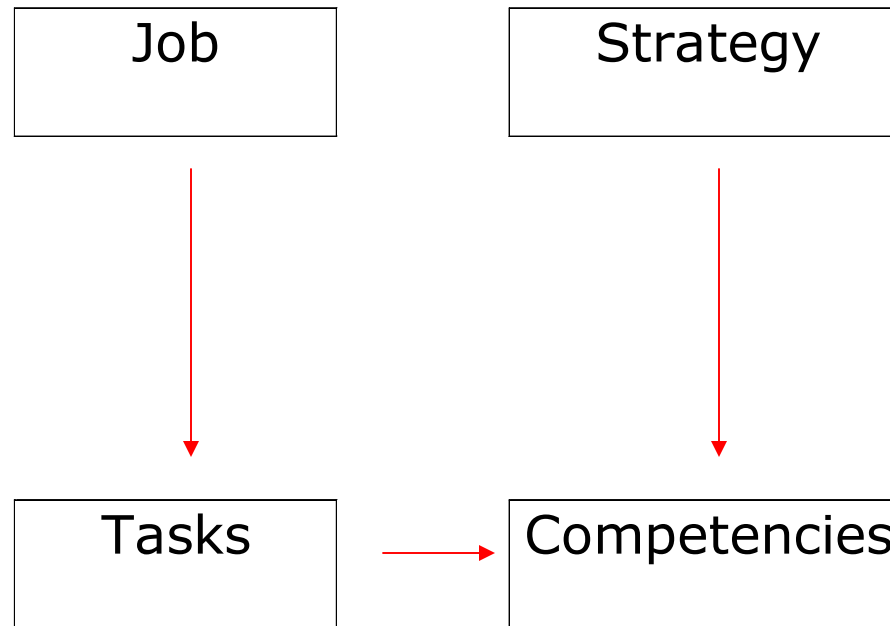
SIOP 2003 – Validation Guidelines

“Any methods used to obtain information about work or workers should have reasonable psychometric characteristics
Lack of consensus about the information contained in the work analysis of work should be noted and considered further”

Task Approach



Blended Approach





Lievens and Thornton's view

Virtually any personal attribute is amenable to assessment if:

- Dimension clearly defined in terms of behaviours on the job and observable in exercises
- Exercise constructed to elicit relevant behaviours



Other trends in dimensions

- ◆ Increase in interpersonal dimension assessment (e.g. teamwork, cooperation, informal leadership)
- ◆ Tolerance for ambiguity, emotional intelligence (Kozloff, 2003)
- ◆ Developable Dimensions (e.g. cultural adaptability, emotion management, fairness, readiness to develop) (Gibbons & Rupp, 2006)



Other trends in dimensions (Cont)

- ◆ No dimensions should be assessed but rather the performance of behaviour in the exercise as a whole should be assessed (Thoreson, 2002)



Exercises



- ◆ One-to-one exercises, group discussions still very popular
- ◆ Written “working alone” shown biggest changes
- ◆ People work load does not come in in-try or in-basket anymore but **email equivalents**

Exercises (cont)

- ◆ “A day in the life” – high face valid experience, a day that has a lot of stretch points
- ◆ Interactive video and DVD vignettes (development centres)
- ◆ Online Assessment Centre, limited to non-interactive exercises, dehumanising affect, reliability technology, access to pc, privacy, **authenticity of candidates submissions**

Testing for Authenticity

- ◆ **New Security in Online Assessments**

'At **Saville Consulting** we have pioneered a completely new approach to online assessment with the back up of separate secure supervised versions for both ability and personality online assessment.'

Press Release. Claygate, UK, Jun 01, 2006

- ◆ **SHL 31 May 06 - Online Testing Without the Compromises - SHL Launches Revolutionary New Online Recruitment Tool**



New technology

- ◆ **Administration Software**, replace dependence on dedicated secretarial support and staff
- ◆ Use of the **Web** to facilitate, administration, exercise delivery, scoring, data tracking, report writing and feedback
- ◆ **Online-assessment**, staff time, cost, information distribution, psychometric test included, technologically advanced, computer literacy ensured
- ◆ **Use of notebook, Text, video, audio**



AC - Reports

- ◆ A reading Age of about 2
- ◆ Easy to read results presentation – e.g. Assessment matrix
- ◆ Plenty of coloured pictures to look at (to retain interest for more than 1 minute)
- ◆ Short paragraphs, plenty of headings
- ◆ Graphs, bar charts, bullet points



Development Centres

- ◆ Increase in use
- ◆ But questionable impact on participants
- ◆ Career advancement of assessed and non-assessed managers same (Jones and Whitmore, 1995)
- ◆ Most managers don't follow up (T. Byham, 2003)

Development Centres (cont)

- ◆ 4 generation DC
 - **First generation** (1970-1980s), being different AC, 1,1.5 days, selection, identifying potential
 - **Second generation** (1980-1990s), feedback and development planning



Development Centres (cont)

- **Third generation** (mid-late 1990s), real work-related issues/problems, more time, attention development planning at centre and afterwards, empowerment of participants - doing own assessments
- **Fourth generation**, “peer centres”, peer feedback and coaching after each exercise, real-life problems and activities to identify personal value, personal and group planning, follow-up through mentoring



Development Centres Concerns

- Raises expectations that organizations may not be able to meet
- Difficult to translate development plans back to work
- Lack of line managers support for the individual
- Financial cost

Portfolio-Based Assessment

- ◆ New addition, individual submitting a portfolio of their work collected over specified period of time
- ◆ Give advance notice, reflection and self-evaluation, range data sources, assesses ability over time period
- ◆ Logistically challenging, assessors training time consuming, scoring-understanding situation, ensuring authenticity



Situational Judgment Test (SJT)

- ◆ Assesses judgment in work related situations
- ◆ Present applicants with work-related scenarios (written or video-based). For each situation, applicants are asked to indicate how they would most likely respond

SJT - Example

It is time for you to take your lunch break. Before leaving, you make sure the Associate in the department next to yours is going to cover your department while you are gone. Instead, he tells you he is also going to lunch. You know he is not scheduled for lunch until later. What is the best response?



Answers

1. Nothing
2. Tell your boss and let him sort it out
3. Confront the Associate and point out that it is time for your lunch break and not his.
4. Let the other Associate go and take your own lunch during his scheduled time.
5. Try and convince the Associate to stick with the lunch schedule.

Popularity of SJT

- ◆ High face validity – job relatedness
- ◆ SJT have significant criterion-related validity (.56) (McDaniel, Morgeson, Finnegan, Campion, & Braverman, 2001)
- ◆ Have **incremental validity** over and above cognitive ability & personality tests (Chan & Schmitt, 2002)

Popularity of SJT (cont)

- ◆ People respond favorably to SJTs because they perceive SJTs to be job-related
- ◆ SJTs show less adverse impact against minorities than traditional cognitive ability tests (Glevenger et al., 2001)
- ◆ **Most studies concurrent in nature**

What do SJT Measure?

- ◆ Big debate
- ◆ Sternberg & Wagner - “practical know-how”
- ◆ Schmidt & Hunter (1993) – “job knowledge”
- ◆ SJT – “is measurement method” – that measure a variety of constructs (McDaniel et al 2001)

What do SJT Measure? (cont)

- ◆ Borman et al.(1991, 1995) Ability-
job knowledge - technical
proficiency - job performance
- ◆ SJT correlation with cognitive ability
(0.36)
- ◆ SJT – Big Five – emotional stability
(0.34)



SJT as criterion measure

- ◆ Typically measure job knowledge and problem-solving, decision making, and interpersonal skills part of the job



Disturbing Trends AC

- ◆ Streamlined processes affect accuracy
- ◆ Inadequate Job Analysis,
- ◆ Ill-defined dimensions,
- ◆ Inadequate assessor training
- ◆ “ACs” that include only paper and pencils tests



Disturbing Trends AC (cont)

- ◆ Only one assessor
- ◆ No observation of behaviour
- ◆ Computerized in-baskets that offer choices of pre-defined alternative behaviours



The way forward AC

- ◆ Construct validity debate continues
- ◆ Equal opportunities and diversity, fairness, bias, cultural issues, global AC
- ◆ What's next ?
 - Standards & Guidelines
 - Reduce administrative workload and cognitive workload on administrators
 - Pure psychological construct VS AC Dimensions
 - Fully automating the scoring of in-basket or email equivalents
 - Speed and change in workplace – “openness to change” and how to measure it

The South African situation

