

# Self-presentation Processes in Job Analysis: A Field Experiment Investigating Inflation in Abilities, Tasks, and Competencies

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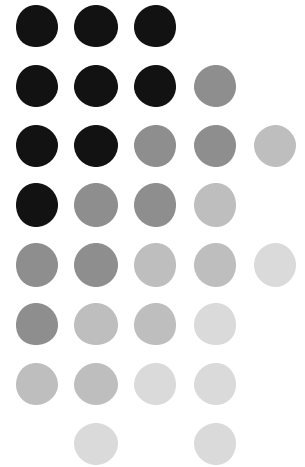
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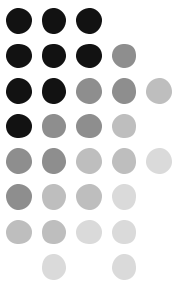
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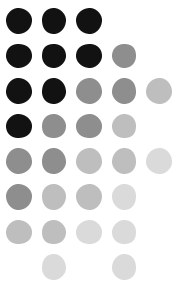




# Overview

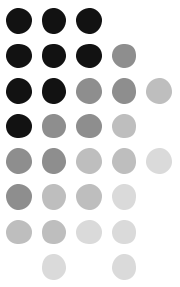
- Job analysis is one of the most widely used organizational data collection techniques
- Forms the foundation of numerous HR systems
- Implicit assumption is that this information is accurate
- But is it?
- Some examples...

# Job Analysis Scenario #1



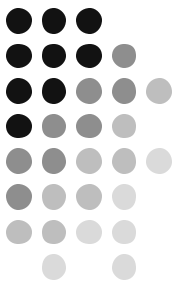
- Job evaluation study
- Respondent knows there might be pay implications of his responses
- Questions on amount of supervision of other workers
- Only supervises secretary and student interns, and others only on a project basis
- Exaggerates job analysis response

# Job Analysis Scenario #2



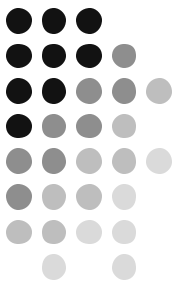
- Job analysis focus group
- Discussion turns to importance of teamwork
- Respondent knows that teamwork is a major buzzword in the organization
- But respondent hasn't really seen any increase in teamwork on her job
- Nevertheless, she goes along with group that teamwork is important because she thinks it is the expected answer

# Job Analysis Scenario #3



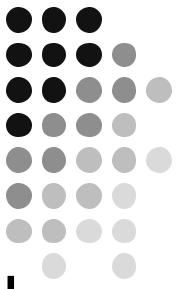
- Respondents required to come to a conference room at the end of their shift to fill out some forms for “Personnel”
- The form turns out to be a 12-page, 300-item job analysis survey that requires ratings on importance, time spent, and needed at entry
- Purpose of form is unclear. Seems like more busywork from Personnel. Items all sound the same.
- The survey is all that is standing in the way before “Miller Time”
- Respondent circles answers as quickly as possible without really reading the items

# Job Analysis Scenario #4



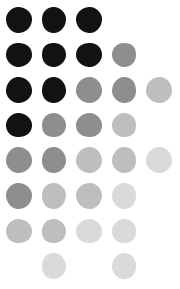
- Job analysis being conducted to generate validity evidence AFTER a selection system has been put in place
- Selection system includes cognitive ability tests
- Respondent feels only job requirement is “a strong back and a good attitude”
- Analyst persists in trying to identify cognitive requirements of job

# Limitations in Human Judgment



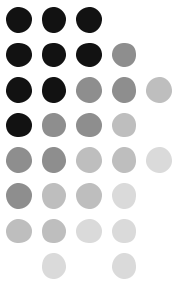
- Numerous areas of psychology have identified many limitations to human judgment
- Social sources of inaccuracy
  - Social influence, self-presentation processes
- Cognitive sources of inaccuracy
  - Limitations & biases in information processing
- Sampling strategies may not reduce these inaccuracies (because they are systematic)
- Traditional measures of job information quality may not detect these inaccuracies

# Renewed Concern



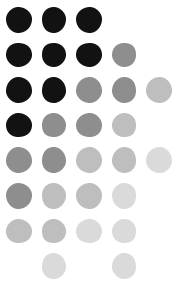
- Occupational Information Network (O\*NET)
  - Replaces Dictionary of Occupational Titles
  - More ability based, more abstract inferences
- Competency oriented approaches
  - Replacement for traditional task based methods
  - Holistic, global judgments
- Both likely to be subject to inflation
  - Compared task, ability, and competency statements across frequency, importance, and required at entry measures

# Differences Between Tasks & Abilities



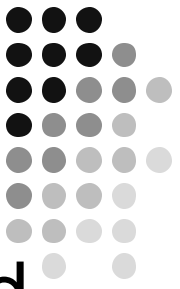
- Distinction between job- and worker-oriented information
- Differ in extent to which they are specific, concrete, and observable
- Abilities require more abstract inferences
- More difficult to verify the presence of an ability than the performance of a task
- Incumbent responses to abilities are more likely to be affected by self-presentation processes than responses to tasks

# Ability & Task Endorsement



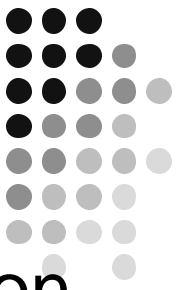
- This will manifest itself in several different ways
- H1: More ability statements will be endorsed as being part of the job compared to task statements
- Incumbents will say that more abilities are needed than tasks are performed

# Summed Task & Ability Ratings



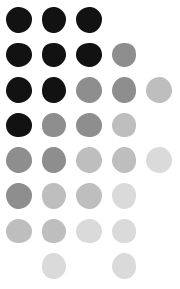
- Obviously needed will be correctly identified
- Differences between tasks and abilities will be most noticeable on non-essential statements
- Self-presentation will affect less essential ability statements because greater subjective judgment
- H2: Summed ability statement ratings will be higher than comparable task statement ratings

# Averaged Task & Ability Ratings



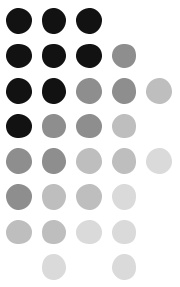
- Hypotheses 1 & 2 are two ways to index inflation
- The sum of items (H2) and number of items endorsed (H1) are two components of mean
  - $\text{sum of items} / \text{number endorsed} = \text{mean rating}$
- What happens when the mean is calculated?
- H3: Mean ability statement ratings will be lower than comparable task statement ratings
- More, lower rated statements pulls down the mean
- Disguises impact of self-presentation

# What is Non-essential?

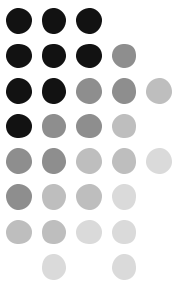


- General social desirability results in more non-essential ability statements being endorsed than task statements
- Yet this comparison involves actual task and ability statements (things people might do)
- Need truly non-essential items to test hypothesis (no one should endorse)
- Use bogus items (fictitious tasks and abilities)
- H4: Summed or mean bogus ability ratings will be higher than comparable bogus task ratings

# Now on to Competencies



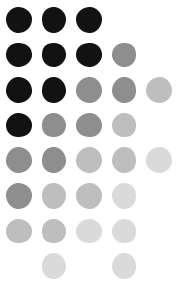
- What is a competency – no one really knows
- Combinations of knowledge, skills, abilities, motivation, beliefs, values, interests...
- More global or comprehensive level
- Can people make such global judgments?
  - Decision making research says decomposed is the way to go (compared to holistic)
  - Job analysis research says yes and no
- Failure to use comparable holistic and decomposed rating stimuli



# More Competencies

- Global competencies offer more opportunities for inflated responding
  - Inability to rate individual parts
  - Seem more complex and important
- H5: Frequency and importance ratings will be higher for competencies than ability and task statements
- H6: Needed at entry ratings will be lower for competencies than ability and task statements

# Method



- Participants

- 431 office clerical employees (equivalent jobs)
- Large, statewide public organization in Northeast

- Measures

- Job analysis survey; 12 major job components
- Specific list of tasks and abilities for each component
- Ability and task statements matched for content
  - Phrase “ability to” added to task statements
- Competency statement were created by combining task and ability statements into global statement
  - Summarize content of task and ability statements

# *Example Competency, Ability, and Task Statements for the Preparation of Written Materials Job Component*

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## *Competency*

Demonstrate competence in recording routine information, answering and composing original correspondence, preparing minutes of meetings, proof-reading and correcting written materials, and verifying legal citations and references.

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### *Ability Statements*

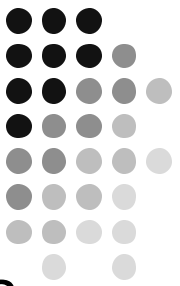
- Ability to record phone messages and other routine information.
- Ability to answer correspondence (e.g., letters, memos, etc.) using form letters or standard wording to answer inquiries or provide basic information.
- Ability to compose original correspondence (e.g., letters, memos, etc.), without using form letters or standard wording to answer inquiries or provide information.
- Ability to prepare minutes of meetings, conferences, and similar events.
- Ability to proofread and correct written materials (e.g., letters, memos, reports, etc.) for errors in punctuation, spelling, grammar, etc.

### *Task Statements*

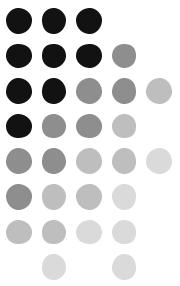
- Record phone messages and other routine information.
  - Answer correspondence (e.g., letters, memos, etc.) using form letters or standard wording to answer inquiries or provide basic information.
  - Compose original correspondence (e.g., letters, memos, etc.), without using form letters or standard wording to answer inquiries or provide information.
  - Prepare minutes of meetings, conferences, and similar events.
  - Proofread and correct written materials (e.g., letters, memos, reports, etc.) for errors in punctuation, spelling, grammar, etc.
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# Method

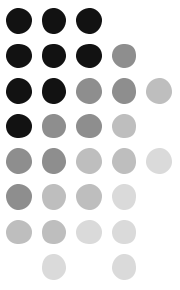
- Measures (continued)
  - Bogus items: 14 fictitious task and ability statements
  - Four ratings of all statements
    - Part of job (yes/no), frequency of performance, importance, and required at entry
  - Sum or mean by component
    - Reasonable internal consistency reliabilities (.70-.80)
- Procedures
  - Two survey forms
    - Competency/task statements or competency/ability statements
  - Between subjects design with random assignment



# Results



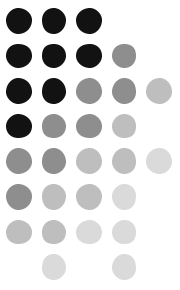
- H1: Endorsement of task/ability statements
  - More ability statements endorsed as part of job for 11/12 job components,
- H2: Summed ability/task ratings
  - Frequency: Ability higher for 9/12 components
  - Importance: Ability higher for 10/12 components
  - Required at entry: Ability higher for 11/12 components
- H3: Mean ability/task ratings
  - Frequency: Ability lower for 10/12 components
  - Importance: Ability lower for 4/12 components
  - Required at entry: Ability lower for 1/12 components



# Results

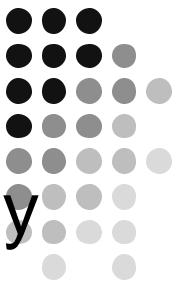
- H4: Summed/mean bogus ability/task ratings
  - Both summed and mean bogus ability ratings were significantly higher than comparable task ratings
- H5: Competency v. task/ability (frequency & importance)
  - Frequency/ability: Competency higher for 10/12
  - Frequency/task: Competency higher for 8/12
  - Importance/ability: Competency higher for 6/12
  - Importance/task: Competency higher for 4/12
- H6: Competency v. task/ability (required at entry)
  - Ability: Competency lower for 8/12
  - Task: Competency lower for 5/12

# Discussion



- Enabled direct comparison of tasks and abilities
- Ability statements more susceptible to self-presentation
  - First direct support of Morgeson & Campion (1997)
  - Fairly weak manipulation (“ability to...”)
- Responding to non-essential ability statements is responsible for inflation
- Effect of self-presentation differed depending on operationalization (sum vs. mean)

# Discussion



- Fairly low motivation to self-present in this study
  - Current study done to simply update task and KSAOs
  - What about situations where motivation would be greater?
    - Job evaluation study
- Implications for worker-oriented descriptors (like those found in O\*NET)
  - Can people make direct estimates of KSAOs accurately?
  - Do KSAOs need to be explicitly linked to tasks?
- Competency modeling
  - Uh oh. Maybe can't make holistic judgments.

*Summed Ability and Task Ratings for Each Job Component*

	Job Component											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	Frequency Scale											
Ability Statements	16.48 <sub>a</sub> (5.93)	10.53 <sub>a</sub> (3.61)	19.61 <sub>a</sub> (6.06)	10.08 <sub>a</sub> (3.86)	7.16 <sub>a</sub> (3.88)	12.86 <sub>a</sub> (6.18)	27.71 <sub>a</sub> (8.79)	9.93 <sub>a</sub> (4.20)	10.09 <sub>a</sub> (2.98)	13.86 <sub>a</sub> (3.14)	38.23 <sub>a</sub> (11.12)	27.49 <sub>a</sub> (10.54)
Task Statements	13.75 <sub>b</sub> (6.52)	8.71 <sub>b</sub> (3.43)	18.06 <sub>b</sub> (6.13)	8.02 <sub>b</sub> (3.44)	5.63 <sub>b</sub> (3.00)	11.83 <sub>a</sub> (5.80)	24.73 <sub>b</sub> (9.38)	9.56 <sub>a</sub> (4.17)	10.17 <sub>a</sub> (3.31)	13.32 <sub>b</sub> (3.14)	36.08 <sub>b</sub> (12.63)	18.79 <sub>b</sub> (9.40)
	Importance Scale											
Ability Statements	12.98 <sub>a</sub> (4.95)	8.61 <sub>a</sub> (2.75)	15.36 <sub>a</sub> (4.59)	8.35 <sub>a</sub> (3.45)	7.16 <sub>a</sub> (2.98)	11.63 <sub>a</sub> (5.18)	20.62 <sub>a</sub> (7.38)	7.55 <sub>a</sub> (3.14)	7.29 <sub>a</sub> (2.39)	9.84 <sub>a</sub> (2.54)	27.78 <sub>a</sub> (8.64)	20.81 <sub>a</sub> (7.91)
Task Statements	10.53 <sub>b</sub> (5.15)	6.98 <sub>b</sub> (2.84)	13.95 <sub>b</sub> (4.75)	6.43 <sub>b</sub> (3.09)	5.29 <sub>b</sub> (2.03)	10.19 <sub>b</sub> (4.89)	18.01 <sub>b</sub> (7.03)	7.08 <sub>a</sub> (3.02)	7.50 <sub>a</sub> (2.63)	9.25 <sub>b</sub> (2.60)	25.83 <sub>b</sub> (9.44)	14.23 <sub>b</sub> (7.46)
	Required at Entry Scale											
Ability Statements	11.33 <sub>a</sub> (4.66)	7.39 <sub>a</sub> (2.70)	11.06 <sub>a</sub> (4.52)	6.29 <sub>a</sub> (3.01)	4.24 <sub>a</sub> (2.45)	8.52 <sub>a</sub> (4.04)	18.35 <sub>a</sub> (7.50)	6.12 <sub>a</sub> (2.92)	5.30 <sub>a</sub> (2.17)	8.08 <sub>a</sub> (2.61)	21.56 <sub>a</sub> (7.84)	18.57 <sub>a</sub> (7.72)
Task Statements	8.49 <sub>b</sub> (4.14)	5.95 <sub>b</sub> (2.61)	8.96 <sub>b</sub> (3.81)	4.54 <sub>b</sub> (2.48)	3.08 <sub>b</sub> (1.70)	5.91 <sub>b</sub> (3.53)	14.53 <sub>b</sub> (6.85)	4.96 <sub>b</sub> (2.79)	5.18 <sub>a</sub> (2.28)	7.38 <sub>b</sub> (2.58)	19.21 <sub>b</sub> (7.56)	12.97 <sub>b</sub> (7.07)

*Note:* Within each component, values with corresponding letters are not significantly different ( $p < .05$ , one-tailed). Higher values indicate that the statements are performed more frequently, are considered more important, and are more required at entry. Standard deviations are in parentheses.