

The Processes of Implementing Job Analysis Technique in Nigeria Technical Schools

Babatunde **SANUSI**

babatundesanusi80@gmail.com

+234 803 684 4574

Department of Foundations of Education

Kwara State College of Education

Oro, Kwara State, Nigeria

Abstract

This paper states that job analysis is an issue of considerable importance in the generality of contemporary formal organizations including Nigeria technical and vocational education schools. The problem is that, inspite of very many advantages derivable, the required records and experts for utilizing the technique are not available in adequate proportion. Therefore, it states the procedure for the study of these jobs. This begins with preliminary preparation of securing and arranging information for guiding a study and then proceeds to sampling of population under study. Naturally, this leads to the stage of data gathering the outcome of which is compiled and interpreted to results. Beyond this, it explains each of the stages with specific examples in the vocational and technical education departments in the country to conclude that the head or supervisor of the department should be familiar with the procedures and infact the products for the purpose of adequate utilization of the techniques. The staff, the management and the proprietors of the schools should ensure maximum utilization of the products of this technique.

Keywords: job analysis, job analysis technique, technical schools, Nigeria

Introduction

The schools share common characteristics with other former organisations. Most of these formal organisations however lack required documents for the processes of developing job analysis document (Hale, 2004). The specialist that will utilise these records are also extremely few in the organisations. It is however important to note that as long as the supervisor has to get work done through the inputs of some others, analyzing the various jobs of others shall remain issue of importance to him/her. How then, is the administrative technique of job analysis applied? The steps to be taken in doing job analysis are five (Ivansevick, 2010). These include one: collection of background information, two: selecting representative positions, three: collection of job analysis data, four: developing job description and five: developing the job analysis.

Collection of Background Information: Available information is gathered at this stage by job analyst. This is usually organizational aims, organization charts, and identification of tasks, jobs, class specification and job description. Organization charts show hierarchical arrangement from top executive to lower- arches. Class specification show how different jobs belong to same categories while job description states the duties of each one in specific terms. These documents, we must note, are not always there because of the level of expertise required to develop and utilize them. This is especially true of developing countries. In such case, the analyst has to do both job description and specification to complete whole process of job analysis. This situation, it should be noted, occur in the cases of workers in vocational and technical education departments in Nigeria (Aina, 2009).

Selecting Representative Positions: Dynamics of human society and production factors vary from time to time. In fact, it also varies from one organization to another. This is especially true of developing nations such as Nigeria. For this reason, the consultant analyst needs to consider the population of the incumbents to enable him/her select appropriate sample representative positions.

Collection of Job Analysis Data: This is the stage at which the fact finding process of research is employed to collect data on elements of the job, required employee skills and human traits. On this, Cole, (2005) includes interview, direct observation, questionnaire and participant logs. These are the techniques that experts have traditionally used to collect job analysis information and even more recent advances in job analysis techniques depend on these basic techniques. Others also state observation, interview and questionnaire as basic techniques. They explained further that other methods are conferences and participant logs while equipment and design, blueprint and data, films and photocopies and even maintenance records are now added as sources of information. They concluded however that employers should consider the issue of multiple methods of data collection because it is unlikely that any single method will provide all the information to be documented in a job properly. In the same vein, some other authors concluded that the methods of collecting information are suitable for use on their own but analysis is more reliable when more than one method is used.

This is the heart of the process of job analysis. This is where information about job is gathered in data form. This is where experts talk of methods or techniques of job analysis. The established techniques or methods are therefore direct observation, questionnaire, interview and participants log. These information collection strategies are examined in juxtaposition to the actual jobs analyzed with a view to picking the most appropriate for situational requirements (Torrington, Hall and Taylor, 2005) . This review then examines each of the strategies.

Direct Observation: Flippo (1980:112) asserted that “if a particular job is simple and repetitive, observation may be the only technique”. In the same view, Cascio and Awad (1981:150) agreed that “job observation is most appropriate for job that require a great deal of manual, standardized, short-circle activities, while job performance is most appropriate for the jobs that analyst can readily learn”. Beyond this, they explained that to be useful and valid, observation should include a representative sample of job behaviours. This may involve a continuous, in-depth focus on a single individual (for example fire-fighter or school workshop attendant in Nigeria circumstance) or a sample representative of worker in the

same job classification such as teachers who are given different assignments (for example supervising practical class and supervising teaching practice). In all observation cases however, the analysis must ensure that mere observation of a phenomenon does not alter its very nature. This is to say that analyst should neither interfere with the process nor the perception of subjects.

Data are extracted from narrative response to formats or short answer to structured question. To arrive at such concrete data, a number of state agencies such as United States department of labour have developed guiding instruments. An example guides analysis to identify what tasks are preformed, why and how and on what they are preformed. Worker function therein guides analysis to describe the orientation and level of worker's activity with data, people and things.

Interview: This is the most widely used techniques for both standardized and non – standardized activities of physical as well as mental works. This is because the worker acts as his or her own observer and so can report activities and behaviours that would not often be observed (Yalokwu, 2006). It provides information that are not readily observable and the verification of information obtained by means of other techniques. Casio and Awad (1981:154) went beyond this to reason that “Moreover, because of his or her thorough knowledge of the job, the worker reports information that might not be observable to the analysts from any other source”.

Interview here is conversation with specified purpose. The success of this technique is dependent on the skill of the interviewer. The major difficulty in this technique therefore is tendency to extract distorted information which could be due to honest misunderstanding or deliberate falsification. If for example, a worker thinks that the result of job analysis will affect a wage increase, he or she may exaggerate or minimize some responsibilities. For the purpose of reliability and efficiency, a thorough advanced planning of interview technique should precede the actual interview. The interview itself should follow a well prepared format that systematically covers the materials to be gathered during interview.

The following points are generally highlighted.

- i. Introducing the job analysts: The specialist should be introduced with precise intention of the programme stated clearly. Workers are to be taught that the exercise is not for any detrimental effect. Rather, it is for more realistic training, better organization and more equitable payments.
- ii. Developing sincere interest in the work and the job incumbents: This is necessary because it is difficult to fake sincerity. Experience show that workers easily detect pretence and in such cases they become impatient.
- iii. Expertise of job analysts: It is desirable for the analyst to know a little about the job. However, the analysts should realize that he/she is an expert in describing the job. He should also allow job incumbent to supply required information rather than imposing it on them.
- iv. Communication skill: Analysts need to take cognizance of the fact that staff belong to different socio-cultural backgrounds. Appropriate diction and socialization process should be employed to get acquainted with the workers whose jobs are to be analyzed. The process of interview is a process of interactional relationship.
- v. Distinction between the work and worker: The objective of job analysis is not to describe characteristic of particular employee but rather the job that he performs. That the employee has bachelor degree for example does not mean that the job requires minimum of bachelor degree. The approach should be scientific. It should differentiate facts from inference and opinions.
- vi. Doing a complete job study:- Information derived from job analysis is practically used in all aspects of personnel activities (Cluming, 1994). Therefore, it cannot be handled as motion study or physical description of what the worker does. Rather, it is a whole record of logical connections between job requirements, actual skills involved and its interrelationships with others, and general structures of the formal organization. The job analysts would go beyond observed behaviours to find reasons behind those job behaviours.
- vii. Verification of information: Job analysis should not be confined to work done by one worker. Data collected from an employee ought to be checked with others holding the same job. In this way, the

specialist and supervisor should work together with sampled workers to be interviewed. The specialist should establish rapport quickly such as in knowing names and establishing the purpose of the exercise. He/she should follow structured guide questions and verify data after interview.

Participant Dairy/Logs: Workers are asked to keep logs of what they do with indication of time at which they are done. This provide comprehensive picture of job if supplemented with subsequent interview especially if exaggerations are prevented by making the diary indicate chronological order of the events.

Questionnaire: This has been a popular method of obtaining job analysis information. Job analyst has to decide how structured the questionnaire should be. Some questionnaires are highly structured. For example, employees may be provided an inventory of hundred specific jobs and asked to indicate whether or not they perform each task and if they do, they are to indicate the amount of time spent on each. At the other extreme, employees are simply asked to describe the jobs that they do indicating areas in which they take independent decisions. Quite often however, most questionnaires combine the two so that appropriate type is used for each of the item in the instrument.

These then are strategies for collecting information in job analysis. The four of them are often used together. This is because no single strategy is best applies alone for any of the situations. Therefore, job analysts use combination of these even though with greater learning to one or two. This applies to this paper's position as previous steps indicate that the questionnaire method is most appropriate for contemporary jobs in the Nigerian vocational education department in schools. However, questionnaire here should be guided with structured questions which take items from well established instruments of job analysis in available literature and direct participation of researcher in form of interview and observatory study.

Developing Job Description: Information collected in step three is used to articulate in writing the activities of the job. This is “job description”. Contemporary authors show consensus on this: For example, Mullins (1989) listed job title, department, wages, duties, responsibilities to, responsible for, specific functional contact, signature and data. Flippo (1980) listed job specification job summary, duties performed, supervision given and received, relation to other jobs, machine, tools and materials, working conditions, definition of term and comments which add to and clarify the above. Desler (1981) listed job identification, working conditions and physical environment. Thus, these, indicate consensus of opinion on what should be contents of study of this topic.

Developing Job Analysis: Qualities required to perform the job should be specified from assembled information at this stage of job analysis process in the technical education departments. This could be for trained or untrained personnel. It is usually easier for trained workers as what analysts need to add is experience or qualities such as physical traits, personality or even sensory skills. Job specification could be based on either judgment of manager, supervisor and analysts. This can be done by presenting list of tasks and job duties to incumbent and their supervisor to rate according to required knowledge, skills, abilities and other characteristic (Torrington, Hall and Taylor, 2005). Job specification is then done on consensus of opinion. Another approach is to compare performances statistically. The lower level of education of those who perform satisfactorily becomes standard. It should be noted here that examples of trained staff in technical education department are teachers and technicians while messengers and labourers are in the less trained cadres.

One other aspect of job analysis that requires attention is in structure of language. Desler (1981) posits that it should be clear, indicate scope, be specific, show supervisory responsibilities, be brief and rechecked. It should be terse and direct. It should give the impression of action. The purpose of style here is to facilitate communication through completeness, conciseness and clarity. Therefore, available literature provide sufficient information on methods of job analysis.

In summary, this paper starts with an introduction that explained the needs for employing the managerial technique. Subsequently, it states the steps to be taken in implementing the technique. Beyond this, it provided detailed explanations of each of the steps. Consensus of authors opinions on what should be general characteristics of such reports were also provided.

Conclusion: It should be realized that the administrative technique of job analysis actually operates in highly sophisticated research procedure. It begins with preliminary preparations of arranging available information for guiding a study and then proceeds to sampling of the population under study. Naturally, this leads to the stage of data gathering, the result of which is compiled and interpreted to report.

In spite of the tedious procedure however, it is a necessity for the headship of contemporary vocational and technical education school or department. One, the jobs that they are employed to implement are actually to be done through supervision of others. Two, expectations from the clients or parents and sponsors are very high. Beyond this, there is a historical responsibility to make a breakthrough in form of sustainable technical development. On this, the professional has a responsibility at national and in fact international levels. This seemingly sophisticated technique is a necessity at this period of the evolution of Nigeria as a nation.

Recommendations: The proprietors of technical and vocational schools and other institutions of learning should always make provision for the consultancy service. Also, the managers and professionals in the organization should always ensure comprehensive utilization of the provisions. The staff in general should always ensure adequate utilization of the services.

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