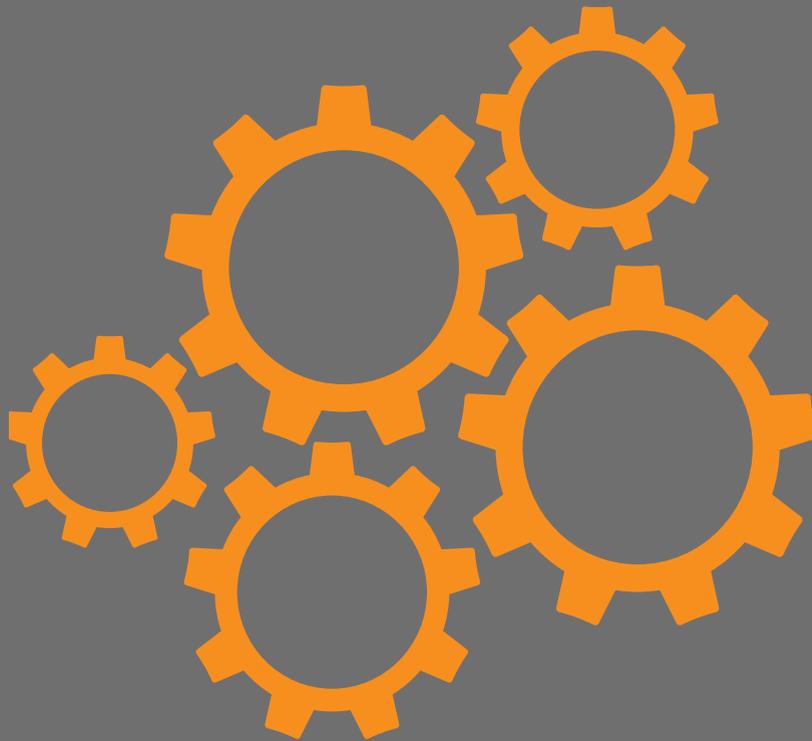


Criterion Validation Study

— OF THE —

SHRM COMPETENCY MODEL



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Executive Summary

In 2011, SHRM embarked on a research journey to assess the competencies of human resource (HR) professionals and to truly understand what it takes to succeed as an HR professional. This journey led to the development and validation of the most comprehensive evidence-based competency model for the HR profession. The SHRM Competency Model, which provides the framework for the SHRM Body of Competency and Knowledge (SHRM BoCK), was developed using rigorous job analysis methods and the active engagement of the global HR community.

To identify the critical competencies necessary for success in the HR profession, SHRM conducted 111 focus groups involving 1,200 HR practitioners. Focus group participants included HR professionals from 33 countries, representing a diversity of attributes, both personal (e.g., career level, tenure) and organizational (e.g., sector, industry, size).

SHRM confirmed the importance, relevance, and universality of the SHRM Competency Model through a content validation survey, which drew responses from more than 32,000 HR professionals worldwide. Finally, a highly diverse sample of more than 1,500 HR professionals and their supervisors participated in a series of large-scale multi-organizational criterion validation studies, which established that an HR professional's proficiency in the competencies identified in the SHRM Competency Model is closely linked to successful job performance.

Development of the SHRM Competency Model

Model Development	Content Validation	Criterion Validation
111 focus groups 1,200 HR professionals	32,000 HR professionals	1,500 HR professionals and their supervisors

The collective results of the criterion validation studies show that:

- The competencies in the SHRM Competency Model are closely related. This is evident through the high intercorrelations among the competencies, especially on the self-report assessment and supervisor-rated performance measure. From an analytical perspective, this presents challenges, but from a conceptual perspective, the intercorrelations support the framework of the SHRM Competency Model, in which each competency is intended to complement the others.
- The results of the regression analyses suggest that the technical competency *HR Expertise (HR Knowledge)* predicts job performance beyond demographic characteristics. Most importantly, the results also suggest that behavioral competencies predict job performance over and above *HR Expertise (HR Knowledge)* and demographic characteristics.
- The final model also indicates that the technical competency *HR Expertise (HR Knowledge)* predicts job performance beyond demographic characteristics, and that behavioral competencies predict job performance above and beyond both *HR Expertise (HR Knowledge)* and demographic characteristics (model $R^2 = .13$; adjusted $R^2 = .12$).
- The utility of behavioral competencies in predicting job performance suggests that they should take a central role as a factor in the recruitment, selection, training and development, and appraisal of HR professionals. Organizations that rely only on technical knowledge to make personnel decisions are putting themselves at a significant disadvantage in identifying top HR talent.

Key Findings

HR expertise is important, but behavioral competencies predict job performance over and above.

Behavioral competencies offer great utility in predicting job performance.

Further research is needed to assess incremental validity.

Introduction

As a global leader whose mission is serving and advancing the human resources (HR) profession, the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) is committed to empowering HR professionals with the proper tools and resources they need to succeed. With more than 275,000 members in over 160 countries, SHRM recognizes that successful HR professionals utilize both expertise and experience to carry out organizational strategy and achieve organizational goals. To accomplish this, HR professionals must develop and utilize technical as well as behavioral competencies.

In response to member feedback requesting a resource that addresses the work of HR professionals across all career levels, SHRM set out to identify these competencies. Following extensive global research, SHRM created the comprehensive SHRM Competency Model, comprised of nine competencies, one technical and eight behavioral. Proficiency in these competencies is the basis for effective performance as an HR professional.

Purpose of This Study

SHRM undertook a substantial and rigorous process of model development and refinement to ensure that the SHRM Competency Model accurately reflects the competencies HR professionals need to be successful. Focus groups involving more than 1,200 subject matter experts (SMEs) from around the world were used to develop the model, and a content validation study drawing responses from more than 32,000 HR professionals was used to ensure its accuracy and refine its content.

Acknowledging the importance of continual improvement and refinement, SHRM also recognized the need to ensure that its model would be predictive of HR professionals' on-the-job success. Demonstration of a relationship between the SHRM Competency Model and job performance would suggest that HR professionals with higher levels of proficiency in these competencies perform at higher levels on the job. A study collecting and evaluating criterion-related validity evidence in the SHRM Competency Model is described in this report—specifically, data collection methodology, analyses performed, and results and conclusions.

The SHRM Competency Model

Nine competencies, eight behavioral and one technical, are identified in the SHRM Competency Model as necessary for success as an HR professional. For each competency, the model incorporates the following components:

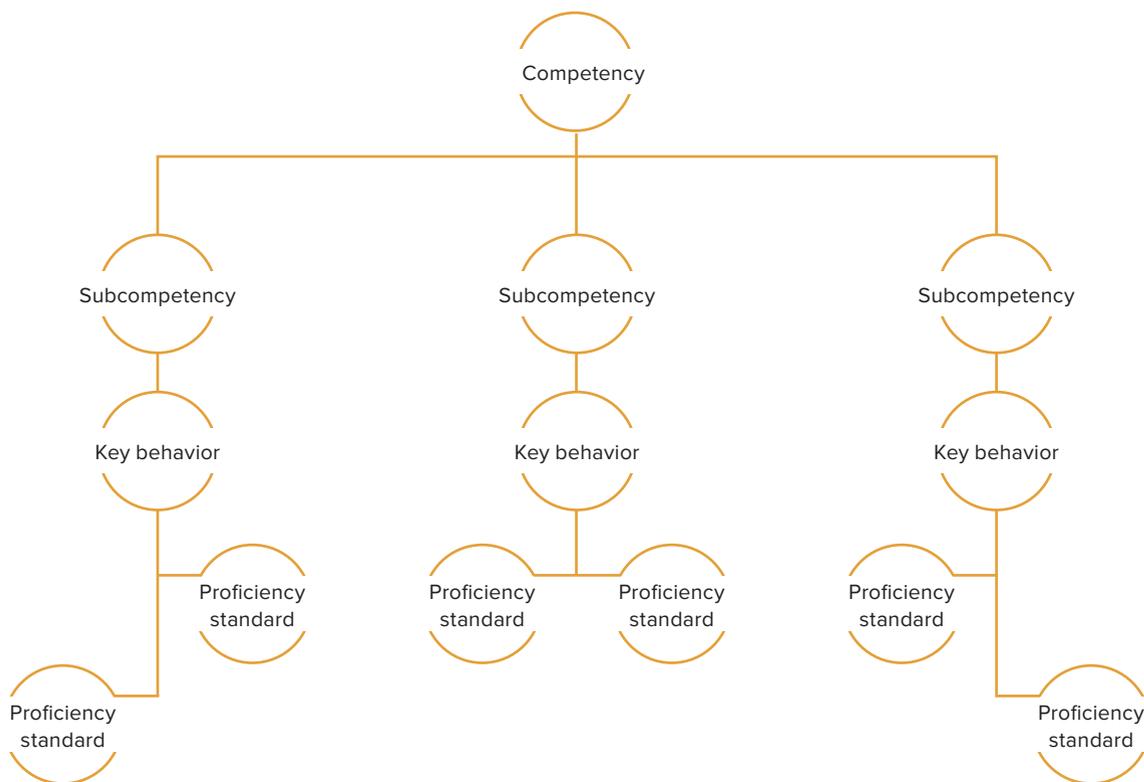
- A **definition** of the competency. (See Appendix A for definitions of all nine competencies.)
- Several **subcompetencies** – smaller clusters of knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) embedded within each competency. Subcompetencies are not distinct from their associated core competency; rather, they are specific manifestations of it. In aggregate, the subcompetencies form each competency.

- **Key behaviors** – behaviors engaged in by the most competent HR professionals as they perform their jobs. Narrower and more specific than subcompetencies, these aspirational behaviors contribute to an expanded, broad operational definition of each competency.
- **Proficiency standards** – specific, job-relevant behaviors associated with performance in each competency at each of the four HR professional career levels (described below). There is a unique set of proficiency standards, specific to each level, for each competency.

These four components of the SHRM Competency Model form a hierarchical structure, as shown in the simplified example in Figure 1, below.

Additional information about the SHRM Competency Model is available on the SHRM website.

Figure 1. Simplified structure of the SHRM Competency Model.



Development of the SHRM Competency Model. To develop the competencies needed by HR professionals and the overall competency model, SHRM followed best practices as delineated by the Society for Industrial Organizational Psychology (SIOP) taskforce on competency modeling, and reviewed relevant academic and professional literature about competency modeling (e.g., Campion et al., 2011; Schippmann et al., 2000). First, SHRM developed a working model to describe the competencies, based on a review and synthesis of (a) research focusing primarily on existing HR competency models, and (b) literature describing the work responsibilities of HR professionals. Then, to refine the model, SHRM staff trained in industrial-organizational (I/O) psychology conducted 111 focus groups in 29 cities across the globe and captured input from over 1,200 HR professionals. Focus group participants edited, revised, and enhanced the working model to ensure that it accurately reflected the attributes of successful HR professionals. The *Content Validation Study of the SHRM Competency Model* and additional information about the development of the model are available on the SHRM website.

HR career levels. SHRM has identified four career levels for HR professionals: early, mid, senior, and executive. General descriptions are provided in Table 1, below. These career levels reflect the varying types of responsibilities for which HR professionals are accountable. Specifically, less experienced or junior levels (i.e., early and mid) reflect responsibilities that are more transactional in nature, while more experienced or senior levels (i.e., senior and executive) reflect responsibilities that are more strategic. These categories reflect the fact that the jobs of HR professionals differ qualitatively across career levels, a concept incorporated into the SHRM Competency Model.

Table 1. HR Professional Career Levels and Descriptions

Career level	Typical characteristics
Early	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is a specialist in a specific support function or a generalist with limited experience.• Holds a formal title such as, but not limited to, HR assistant, junior recruiter, or benefits clerk.
Mid	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is a generalist or a senior specialist.• Manages projects or programs.• Holds a formal title such as, but not limited to, HR manager, generalist, or senior specialist.
Senior	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is a very experienced generalist or specialist.• Holds a formal title such as, but not limited to, senior manager, director, or principal.
Executive	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is one of the most senior leaders in HR.• Has the top HR job in the organization or holds a title such as, but not limited to, VP.

Method

This section provides details about the data collection procedure, instruments, participants, and analysis involved in the present criterion validation study.

Data collection occurred between April 2013 and May 2014. To collect data from participant HR professionals and their supervisors, SHRM collaborated with four corporate partners, and provided four grants to academic researchers through the SHRM Foundation. SHRM developed the following instruments: self-report assessment (SRA) and situational judgment test (SJT) (see below), demographic questionnaires, and supervisor performance measure (see Appendix B). SHRM compiled and analyzed all data.

Procedure

Custom-built online survey software was used to collect data. A unique web link to the instruments was created for each corporate and academic partner, distributed to participant HR professionals via SHRM’s corporate point-of-contact or academic researchers. Each participant was required to provide his or her supervisor’s email address so that performance ratings could be collected via a survey sent directly to supervisors. All data was collected and stored electronically.

Participant HR professionals and their supervisors were assured of the confidentiality of the data they provided. Participants were not provided with access to their supervisors’ ratings, and supervisors were not provided with information about their subordinates’ scores. All results, including those provided to SHRM’s corporate partners, were reported only at a group level (minimum 10 participants per group) so that individual responses could not be identified.

Measures

The instruments used to collect data for this study include the SRA and SJT¹—the primary means of assessing the participant HR professionals’ proficiency on the competencies—and the supervisor-rated measure of participants’ job performance.

Table 2. Summary of Data Collection Measures (by Data Provider)

Completed by participant HR professionals	Completed by participants’ supervisors
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demographic questionnaire• Self-report assessment (SRA)• Situational judgment test (SJT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demographic questionnaire• Supervisor survey/performance measure (ratings of participants’ job performance)

¹Although the study collected additional data, this report describes only those instruments and data used to evaluate the criterion validity of the SHRM Competency Model.

Self-report assessment. The SRA was comprised of 73 statements about behaviors reflecting each of the nine competencies in the SHRM Competency Model. Participants rated the extent to which they performed each behavior. (For example, participants rated how effectively they engaged in the following behavior: “I actively network with contacts both internally and externally to ensure effective HR services.”) The ratings scale ranged from 1 (“Not at all”) to 5 (“To a very great extent”). The response option “Not relevant to my job” was also provided; items so marked were not scored and did not contribute to or detract from participants’ scores.

Scores for each competency were determined by creating a mean of the ratings for each of the behavioral statements associated with each competency. (For example, a mean for the *Communication* competency was created using all of the ratings for the behavioral statements related to *Communication*, but none of the ratings for statements related to other competencies.)

Importantly, not all behavioral statements applied to all HR professionals at all career levels. (Some items applied solely to senior HR professionals, for instance, and not to HR professionals at other stages in their careers.) Accordingly, only those items applicable to a given career level were scored for participants at that career level. (Thus, items intended only for senior HR professionals were not scored for early HR professionals.) Similarly, participants did not receive a score for a competency on which they marked the associated behavioral statements “Not relevant to my job.”

Situational judgment test. The SJT was comprised of 17 scenarios and 85 items measuring seven behavioral competencies. (Neither the *HR Expertise (HR Knowledge)* nor *Ethical Practice* competencies were measured because SMEs were unable to write items that fully captured their associated behaviors.)

SJT participants were presented with a brief, 200- to 250-word scenario about a work-related HR problem, and asked to rate the effectiveness of several different behavioral responses for resolving it. The rating scale ranged from 1 (“Highly ineffective”) to 7 (“Highly effective”). The ratings provided by participants were compared to the “true score” ratings provided by a panel of SMEs; the score for each item was the absolute value of the distance between those ratings. As with the SRA, separate scores were determined for each competency by creating a mean of the ratings associated with each competency (nine on the SRA, seven on the SJT). An overall score collapsing ratings across competencies was not created.

Supervisor performance measure. Participant HR professionals were required to identify their supervisors. All supervisors so identified received a survey asking them (a) for demographic information (similar to that collected from participants), and (b) to rate their participating subordinates’ job performance on a relative rating scale developed specifically for this study (see example in Appendix B), based on the SHRM Competency Model’s information about the HR profession. Supervisors provided a single rating for each of the nine competencies in the SHRM Competency Model. A mean of these ratings was computed to create an overall job performance rating.

In the context of job performance ratings, a stream of research (Goffin, Gellatly, Paunonen, Jackson & Meyer, 1996; Heneman, 1986; Jelley & Goffin, 2001; Nathan & Alexander, 1988; Wagner & Goffin, 1997) suggests that relative rating scales are psychometrically superior to absolute rating scales. A relative rating scale has raters rate the subjects’ performance in comparison to the performance of other employees. It differs from an absolute rating scale, which has raters rate the subjects’ performance in comparison to some objective performance standard (e.g., the frequency with which job-relevant behaviors are performed—once per day, once per week, etc.).

This study used the SHRM Competency Model to define job performance and a relative rating scale to rate job performance. Because the SHRM Competency Model was developed through rigorous, extensive job analytic methods, and evidence supports its content validity, the competencies identified in it reflect HR professionals’ job performance better than a generic performance standard (used with an absolute rating scale).

Participants

Participants for the study were identified and recruited by SHRM's corporate and academic partners in several ways. Among corporate partners, SHRM's point-of-contact at each organization had discretion to identify and recruit participants. Among SHRM's academic partners, the researcher who was awarded a grant handled identification and recruitment.

Because the target organizations varied significantly in terms of size, industry, and other characteristics, the sampling frame and specific identification and recruitment methods differed among them. (For example, in one organization all HR professionals were invited to participate in the study, while in another only a single division of HR professionals was invited.) Because of this variation in organizations and methods, the response rate cannot be calculated and nonresponse cannot be analyzed.

HR professionals. Data was collected from 1,513 HR professionals. Table 3, below, provides a breakdown of the number of participants by career level. The executive-level group was removed from further analysis because of the small number of participants², resulting in a final usable sample size of 1,447 HR professionals.³

Table 3. Career Levels of Participant HR Professionals

Career level	Number of participants	Percent of total data collected	Percent of total used for analyses
Early	230	15.2	15.9
Mid	857	56.6	59.2
Senior	360	23.8	24.9
Executive	66	4.4	N/A
Total	1,513 (1,447 excluding Executive)	100.0	100.0

Information about participants' demographic characteristics is presented in Tables 4 and 5, below. A majority (59.2%) were mid-level HR professionals working in an HR generalist function (54.7%); the most common job titles included manager (29.4%) and generalist (21.1%). Respondents were highly educated: 41.7% reported having earned a bachelor's degree and 32.1% an advanced degree. Participants were 76.1% female and 65.8% white, with an average age of 40.8 years, and an average of 12.3 years' experience in HR.

² Statistical analyses at the executive level were limited by the small number of participants ($n = 66$; $N/n =$ sample size). Item-total correlations are stable with about 200 participants, with 100 forming the lowest threshold of acceptability (Penfield, 2013). Because of the instability of item- and scale-level analyses performed on executive-level study participants, this group was removed from further analysis and data associated with it is not further described in this report.

³ The software and website hosting the SRA and SJT stored data only from complete assessments. Therefore, incomplete data from these self-assessment measures was not available for analysis. (Partial data provided by supervisors, however, was used whenever possible.)

Table 4. Demographics of Participant HR Professionals

Category	Percent of participants	Category	Percent of participants
Career level		Education	
Early	15.9	High school/GED	14.1
Mid	59.2	Associate's degree	6.5
Senior	24.9	Bachelor's degree	41.7
HR title (most common)		Master's degree	21.5
Manager	29.4	MBA	9.4
Generalist	21.1	JD	.4
Specialist	7.8	Doctorate	.8
Director	4.5	Other/Prefer not to answer	5.2
Other*	37.2	Race/Ethnicity	
Job function (most common)		Native American	.8
HR generalist	54.7	Asian/Asian-American	6.4
Employee relations	6.7	Black/African-American	13.5
Administrative	5.5	Hispanic/Latino	7.7
Compensation/Benefits	5.7	Middle Eastern	.1
Employment/Recruitment	5.3	White	65.8
Other**	22.1	Mixed race	1.7
Certification		Other/Prefer not to answer	3.9
PHR	18.0	Gender	
SPHR	8.2	Female	76.1
		Male	23.9

Note. Due to rounding, totals may not add up to 100%. *N*'s range from 1,408 to 1,443.

* Other HR titles included internal consultant, administrator, assistant, and vice president.

** Other job functions included HR information systems, labor/industrial relations, organizational development, and strategic planning.

Table 5. Age and Tenure of Participant HR Professionals

Category	Mean (<i>SD</i>)*	Median	Minimum	Maximum
Age	40.8 (10.1)	40.0	20.0	78.0
Job tenure	4.3 (4.3)	2.7	.1	35.2
HR tenure	12.3 (7.9)	11.4	.1	42.0
Organizational tenure	8.9 (7.6)	7.0	.1	41.0

Note. *N*'s range from 1,173 to 1,439.

* *SD* = standard deviation

The above demographic characteristics are consistent with those of SHRM members. In terms of gender, SHRM membership is 79% female; this sample, 76.1%. With regard to job title and function, the most common job title among both SHRM members and study participants is manager (SHRM members, 34.4%; study participants, 29.4%), and the most common job function is HR generalist (SHRM members, 49.1%; study participants, 54.7%). Similarities also extend to education: 47% of SHRM members have earned a bachelor's degree, compared to 41.8% of study participants, and 35.4% of SHRM members have earned an advanced degree, compared to 32.1% of study participants. The current sample was slightly more diverse in terms of racial/ethnic identity; specifically, 78% of SHRM members, and 65.8% of study participants, are white.

Supervisors. Participant HR professionals were asked to provide email addresses for their supervisors. Once the participants' data was collected, the supervisors were contacted and asked to provide job performance ratings for their participating subordinates. A total of 841 supervisors did so. Not all supervisors, however, provided complete data. This resulted in a final matched dataset—complete assessments from participants and complete performance ratings from supervisors—of 835.

Information about the demographic characteristics of the respondent supervisors is presented in Tables 6 and 7. A vast majority (94.9%) held HR or HR-related positions (versus non-HR-related positions such as accounting or finance) at senior or executive levels. The majority (69.3%) were managers or directors; 63.9% worked in an HR generalist function. Respondents were 65.4% female and 71.8% white, with an average age of 46.2 years, and of those who identified themselves as HR professionals, an average of 16 years' experience in HR.

Overall, these demographic characteristics suggest that the supervisors who participated in the study had a significant amount of experience as upper-level HR professionals, and were likely well qualified to rate their subordinates' job performance. Specifically, nearly all (94.9%) identified themselves as HR professionals, most (65.0%) as senior-level (compared to 59.2% of participant HR professionals, who identified themselves as mid-level). Most supervisors also had a substantial amount of experience as HR professionals (17.6 years, compared to 12.3 years for their subordinates).

Data Cleaning and Preparation

Raw data from all sources—both corporate and academic partners, and both participant HR professionals and their supervisors—was combined into a single dataset. To clean the data, it was examined for outliers, such as out-of-range values, repeat responding (e.g., marking only the midpoint of the scale on all assessments), and similar issues. Six respondents were removed from the dataset. A small number of data points were edited, when the issue was readily apparent, by changing the relevant value to “missing” (e.g., one participant's age was changed from 7 to missing).

Item and scale analysis and revision for SRA and SJT.

Item-total correlations were computed (within career level) between individual items, with their respective competency composites and with supervisor job performance ratings. Items with a negative or zero correlation (including internal reliability, if the item was deleted) and/or extreme scores (indicating that participants consistently rated the item very high

Table 6. Demographics of Supervisors

Category	Percent of participants
Job type*	
HR/HR-related	94.9
Not HR-related	5.1
Career level (HR professionals)	
Mid	2.3
Senior	55.8
Executive	41.9
Career level (non-HR professionals)	
Early	.2
Mid	15.1
Senior	65.0
Executive	19.7
HR title	
Manager	38.8
Director	30.5
Assistant/Associate director	16.1
Vice president or Assistant/Associate vice president	7.0
Other	7.6
Job function	
HR generalist	63.9
Strategic planning	8.6
Other	27.5
Race/Ethnicity	
Native American	.9
Asian/Asian-American	5.3
Black/African-American	12.5
White	71.8
Mixed race	3.3
Other/Prefer not to answer	6.0
Gender	
Female	65.4
Male	34.6

Note. Due to rounding, totals may not add up to 100%. *N*'s range from 43 to 841.

* Not all participants were supervised by another HR professional. (For example, some supervisors were accounting or finance professionals.) A total of 43 supervisors (5.1%) identified themselves as non-HR professionals.

Table 7. Age and Tenure of Supervisors

Category	Mean (<i>SD</i>)	Median	Minimum	Maximum
Age	46.2 (8.0)	46.0	27.0	78.0
Job tenure	5.5 (5.0)	3.8	.1	26.3
HR tenure	17.6 (7.8)	16.0	.5	42.0
Organizational tenure	11.7 (8.0)	10.0	.2	44.0

Note. *N*'s range from 723 to 824.

or very low), were flagged for removal from the scales and from further analysis (see Penfield, 2013).⁴ Revised career-level competency composites were created using the results of the item analysis. Career-level competency composites for the SRA were formed using only career-level-appropriate items. (For example, SRA items relevant only to senior-level HR professionals were not scored for early- and mid-level HR professionals, and were not used to create early- or mid-level composites or to compute reliability coefficients.)

Table 8, below, presents the descriptive statistics for the SRA and SJT, as well as the internal reliability of the competencies measured by the SRA.⁵ Overall, most of the SRA scales show acceptable internal reliability (.70 or higher). The scales for some competencies, however, notably *HR Expertise (HR Knowledge)*, fail to meet this threshold. These low reliabilities are possibly a function of the small number of items on the SRA scales that were used to measure this very broad construct. Also notable are the high mean scores on the SRA for the *Ethical Practice* competency, which ranged from 4.68 to 4.71 (on a 5-point scale). These high scores may be reflective of scale items focusing on behaviors (such as those relating to legal compliance) that have little room for variance in performance.

Table 8. Descriptive Statistics and Internal Reliability of SRA and SJT

Category		Assessment				
		SRA			SJT	
Competency	Career level	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	Median	<i>α</i>	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	Median
HR Expertise (HR Knowledge)	Early	3.69 (.100)	4.00	.46	-	-
	Mid	3.75 (.70)	3.80	.67	-	-
	Senior	3.90 (.56)	4.00	.65	-	-
Relationship Management	Early	4.32 (.53)	4.43	.74	5.10 (.68)	5.20
	Mid	4.30 (.48)	4.38	.78	5.29 (.60)	5.40
	Senior	4.27 (.44)	4.33	.85	5.07 (.68)	5.00
Consultation	Early	4.37 (.64)	4.50	.46	5.10 (.53)	5.13
	Mid	3.80 (.67)	3.83	.78	5.64 (.44)	5.71
	Senior	3.91 (.60)	4.00	.78	5.04 (.43)	5.10
Leadership & Navigation	Early	3.60 (1.03)	3.67	.73	4.83 (.69)	4.83
	Mid	3.88 (.72)	4.00	.83	4.70 (.71)	4.67
	Senior	3.99 (.58)	4.00	.81	5.17 (.66)	5.14
Communication	Early	4.30 (.61)	4.50	.73	4.50 (.74)	4.57
	Mid	4.22 (.50)	4.22	.85	4.75 (.69)	4.83
	Senior	4.21 (.46)	4.20	.85	4.85 (.81)	5.00
Global & Cultural Effectiveness	Early	3.99 (.92)	4.00	.41	5.43 (.54)	5.43
	Mid	4.01 (.71)	4.00	.83	5.48 (.52)	5.50
	Senior	3.95 (.65)	4.00	.85	5.53 (.47)	5.50
Ethical Practice	Early	4.68 (.39)	4.75	.79	-	-
	Mid	4.71 (.33)	4.83	.64	-	-
	Senior	4.70 (.37)	4.86	.77	-	-
Business Acumen	Early	3.43 (.10)	3.50	.68	5.29 (.54)	5.29
	Mid	3.52 (.81)	3.60	.83	6.14 (.68)	6.00
	Senior	3.70 (.68)	3.75	.80	5.74 (.59)	5.80
Critical Evaluation	Early	3.40 (.11)	3.50	.70	5.65 (.41)	5.70
	Mid	3.76 (.76)	3.83	.88	5.42 (.45)	5.40
	Senior	3.89 (.67)	4.00	.87	5.51 (.47)	5.50

⁴ Participants may not have answered all of the SRA items for two reasons. First, some items were appropriate to certain career levels but not others (e.g., senior- versus mid-level). Second, not all participants engaged in the job duties described (e.g., a participant working in a primarily domestic organization would not rate global HR-related behaviors); where this occurred, participants marked the item "Not applicable." Any items so marked were not included in data analysis, and as a result, sample sizes differed slightly for each SRA item. Where possible, all available data was used for analysis (i.e., pair-wise rather than list-wise deletion of cases).

⁵ Because SJT items are construct-heterogeneous, internal reliability estimates are an inappropriate metric for evaluating the reliability of SJTs, and therefore were not computed. Other estimates of reliability (e.g., intra-rater) have been suggested for use with SJTs (see Whetzel & McDaniel, 2009), but were not available for this study.

Results

SRA and SJT

The correlations among competency scores for the SRA and SJT are presented in Table 9, below. For the SRA, all nine competencies had statistically significant positive relationships with one another ($p < .01$). These correlations ranged from .24 (between *Critical Evaluation* and *Ethical Practice*) to .68 (between *Critical Evaluation* and *Business Acumen*). For the SJT, all seven competencies (*HR Expertise (HR Knowledge)* and *Ethical Practice* were not measured) showed positive relationships with one another. The intercorrelations among the SJT-measured competencies, however, were generally weaker than the intercorrelations among the SRA-measured competencies, and not all correlations were statistically significant. These correlations ranged from .03 (between *Leadership & Navigation* and *Consultation*, and between *Business Acumen* and *Global & Cultural Effectiveness*) to .48 (between *Leadership & Navigation* and *Communication*).

Relationships among competencies also differed when comparing across the SRA and SJT. Of the seven competencies measured on both instruments, self-ratings on the SRA were negatively related to scores on the SJT (that is, a participant self-rated high in a competency on the SRA, but received a proportionately low score in that competency on the SJT); for five competencies, this negative relationship was statistically significant ($p < .05$).

Table 9. Correlations Among Competencies Measured by SRA and SJT

Competency	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1. HR Expertise (HR Knowledge) (SRA)	-														
2. Relationship Management (SRA)	.44*														
3. Consultation (SRA)	.42*	.65*													
4. Leadership & Navigation (SRA)	.42*	.53*	.49*												
5. Communication (SRA)	.35*	.64*	.57*	.48*											
6. Global & Cultural Effectiveness (SRA)	.43*	.53*	.47*	.51*	.50*										
7. Ethical Practice (SRA)	.28*	.46*	.28*	.29*	.45*	.36*									
8. Business Acumen (SRA)	.44*	.50*	.50*	.65*	.43*	.46*	.25*								
9. Critical Evaluation (SRA)	.43*	.45*	.47*	.62*	.44*	.44*	.24*	.68*							
10. Relationship Management (SJT)	-.07**	-.12*	-.13*	-.08*	-.13*	-.09*	-.05	-.08*	-.07*						
11. Consultation (SJT)	-.03	-.06**	-.17*	-.04	-.08*	-.06**	-.01	-.09**	-.03	.28*					
12. Leadership & Navigation (SJT)	-.09*	-.18*	-.10*	-.09*	-.13*	-.17*	-.13*	-.05	-.05	.33*	.03**				
13. Communication (SJT)	-.03	-.12*	-.14*	-.06**	-.09*	-.10*	-.09*	-.04	-.03	.37*	.21*	.48*			
14. Global & Cultural Effectiveness (SJT)	.03	.00	.03	.01	-.01	-.05**	-.03	.04	.03	.10*	.08*	.14*	.13*		
15. Business Acumen (SJT)	-.01	-.03	-.14*	.02	-.07*	-.04	-.06**	-.03	.03	.13*	.30*	.05	.12*	.03	
16. Critical Evaluation (SJT)	-.05	-.10*	-.00	-.10*	-.10*	-.12*	-.08*	-.07*	-.05	.20*	.09*	.36*	.23*	.21*	.05

Note. N's range from 1,380 to 1,438.

* $p < .01$.

** $p < .05$.

Importantly, these negative relationships were relatively weak—in fact, only two of these correlations exceeded .10 in absolute magnitude (*Relationship Management*, -.12, and *Consultation*, -.17). In addition, most of the correlations between the SRA and SJT, regardless of competency, were relatively weak and frequently negative. Because these weak relationships hold little practical utility⁶, it may be more accurate to view the SRA and SJT as having no relationship rather than a negative relationship.

These results have several implications. First, the high correlations among the competencies as measured by the SRA may indicate that participants viewed the competencies as similar to one another, or viewed their proficiency in them as similar across competencies. This explanation may have limited applicability to the SJT, if these items have lower face validity. Alternatively, while the behavioral statements on the SRA are associated with different competencies, they may be similar enough to one another as to measure the same underlying construct. This seems less likely regarding the SJT, given its weaker intercorrelations among most of the competencies, but the SJT could be deficient in measuring the entire criterion space associated with each competency. Last, the strength of these correlations could be stronger due to common source and/or method variance, or other unknown methodological factors.

There are also several possible reasons for the negative relationship between the competencies as measured by the SRA and as measured by the SJT. The weak relationship between the two instruments could indicate a disconnect between their two methods of assessment, suggesting that the respondents' perceptions of their abilities (on the SRA) do not align with an objective measure of those abilities (on the SJT). A similar possibility is that these two instruments are measuring distinct, but similar, components of the competencies.

In summary, these results tend to indicate that the competencies relate to one another, but also that the method of assessment has an important influence on these relationships—both on the correlations among competencies within each assessment, and on the correlations between the same competencies across assessments. Although several possibilities are suggested above to account for these differing patterns of relationships, further exploration is beyond the scope of this project at the current time—but should be investigated.

Supervisor Performance Measure

Descriptive information about the supervisors' ratings of their subordinates' job performance is presented in Table 10. The mean rating on the performance scale was 4.9 ($SD = 1.1$) out of 7.0, and the median rating was 5.0. The supervisor performance measure demonstrated negative skewness of -.49 ($SD = .08$) and kurtosis of -.07 ($SD = .17$). This indicates that performance ratings were generally higher than would be expected from a normal distribution.⁷ In other words, supervisors provided more high ratings than low ratings (the most common rating was 5.0; the midpoint of the scale was 4.0), which often occurs in the context of job performance ratings. The measure's internal reliability was very high, $\alpha = .93$, indicating that the items on the scale were highly related to one another.

Table 11 presents the correlations among supervisors' competency ratings. All of the competencies were significantly correlated at $p < .01$, with correlations ranging from .47 (between *Global & Cultural Effectiveness* and *Ethical Practice*) to .75 (between *Business Acumen* and *Critical Evaluation*). This pattern of strong intercorrelations indicates that the competencies (at least as measured here) closely relate to one another. Overall, the magnitude of correlations among supervisor-rated competencies is similar to the magnitude of correlations among self-rated competencies (on the SRA), and, similar to the SRA, the strength of these correlations could be stronger due to common source and/or method variance.

Table 10. Descriptive Statistics of Supervisor Performance Measure

Mean (SD)	4.9 (.11)
Median	5.0
Minimum	1.0
Maximum	7.0
Skewness (SD)	-.49 (.08)
Kurtosis (SD)	-.07 (.17)
Internal reliability (α)	.93

Note. N (mean, median, minimum, max, skewness, kurtosis) = 877. N (α) = 748.

⁶ These statistically significant relationships are largely a function of sample size.

⁷ Significance of skewness and kurtosis was tested using the method suggested by Tabachnick and Fidell (2003), $Z_{skewness} = 5.30$, $p < .001$, $Z_{kurtosis} = -.42$, ns.

Table 11. Correlations Among Supervisor Performance Ratings

Competency	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. HR Expertise (HR Knowledge)	-							
2. Ethical Practice	.59							
3. Relationship Management	.63	.52						
4. Communication	.70	.58	.68					
5. Consultation	.70	.55	.63	.69				
6. Leadership & Navigation	.66	.52	.64	.66	.70			
7. Global & Cultural Effectiveness	.50	.47	.57	.53	.56	.61		
8. Critical Evaluation	.64	.50	.50	.61	.66	.65	.56	
9. Business Acumen	.62	.50	.50	.57	.65	.68	.54	.75

Note. All correlations are significant at $p < .01$. N 's range from 798 to 869.

SRA and SJT as Predictors of Performance

Correlations were computed between the SRA and SJT composites and supervisor-rated job performance; these correlations are presented in Table 12, below. The correlations of SRA and SJT scores with their respective supervisor performance ratings appear in bold. Overall, the correlations between the predictors (SRA and SJT scores) and supervisor-rated job performance are relatively weak. The strength of these correlations, however, is comparable to those of similar attribute-based predictors of job performance, such as personality.

Table 12. Correlations of SRA and SJT with Supervisor-Rated Performance

Competency	Overall Perf	HR Exp	Rel Mgt	Cons	Lead & Nav	Comm	Glob & Cul Eff	Eth Prac	Bus Acu	Crit Eval
1. HR Expertise (HR Knowledge)	.15*	.13*	.12*	.16*	.14*	.10*	.14*	.06	.12*	.15*
2. Relationship Management (SRA)	.13*	.10*	.17*	.14*	.12*	.11*	.14*	.03*	.08*	.11*
3. Consultation (SRA)	.06	.05	.06	.06	.03	.04	.10*	.01	.04	.09*
4. Leadership & Navigation (SRA)	.15*	.13*	.11*	.17*	.13*	.09*	.13*	.08**	.15*	.14*
5. Communication (SRA)	.16*	.12*	.14*	.16*	.14*	.16*	.12*	.09**	.11*	.16*
6. Global & Cultural Effectiveness (SRA)	.04	-.01	.07	.05	.01	.02	.08**	.04	.04	.06
7. Ethical Practice (SRA)	.07**	.04	.05	.06	.07	.07	.06	.08**	.05	.08**
8. Business Acumen (SRA)	.06	.05	.04	.07**	.05	.03	.06	.01	.08**	.06
9. Critical Evaluation (SRA)	.14*	.16*	.09**	.13*	.08**	.08**	.14*	.11*	.13*	.17*
10. Relationship Management (SJT)	.09*	.04	.06	.07**	.11*	.08**	.05	.10*	.10*	.07
11. Consultation (SJT)	.10*	.06	.04	.10*	.12*	.06	.07**	.07**	.11*	.08**
12. Leadership & Navigation (SJT)	.11*	.10*	.05	.08**	.11*	.11*	.08**	.07	.13*	.12*
13. Communication (SJT)	.11*	.08**	.05	.10*	.09**	.13*	.06	.10*	.12*	.07
14. Global & Cultural Effectiveness (SJT)	.11*	.10*	.08**	.13*	.06	.12*	.14*	.07	.05	.08**
15. Business Acumen (SJT)	.17*	.14*	.07**	.17*	.17*	.10*	.11*	.15*	.18*	.18*
16. Critical Evaluation (SJT)	.13*	.13*	.09**	.13*	.10*	.11*	.08**	.08**	.12*	.15*

Note. Competency names in column headings are abbreviated. Columns represent overall performance and relative rating scales for each competency.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

Next, two sets of regressions were conducted: one using the SRA⁸ as a predictor of supervisor-rated performance, and another using the SJT as a predictor of supervisor-rated performance. The hierarchical regressions presented below examine not only the extent to which each instrument predicts performance, but also the incremental variance accounted for by the behavioral competencies, over and above both *HR Expertise (HR Knowledge)* and demographic characteristics. Specifically, both regressions enter variables into the regression equation in the following steps: step one, demographic characteristics; step two, *HR Expertise (HR Knowledge)*, as measured by the SRA; step three, behavioral competencies, as measured by either the SRA or the SJT.

Two demographic characteristics—career level and HR tenure—were included in these models. From an empirical perspective, they were included partly due to their nontrivial correlations with performance. To maintain a parsimonious model, additional demographic characteristics—those that might reasonably be expected to influence either actual job performance or job performance ratings—were considered. From a conceptual perspective, HR professionals with greater HR tenure and at an advanced career level might perform better on the job (or might be perceived as better performers by their supervisors) than HR professionals with less tenure or at a lower career level.

SRA and performance. The results of step one of the regression equation, shown below in Table 13, indicate that demographic characteristics account for a modest proportion of the variance in aggregate performance, $R^2 = .06$, $p < .001$. When the competency *HR Expertise (HR Knowledge)* was added to step two of the regression equation, the increase in explained variance was statistically significant, $\Delta R^2 = .01$, $p < .01$. Last, in step three, the behavioral competencies were added to the regression equation, again resulting in a significant increase in variance explained, $\Delta R^2 = .03$, $p < .05$. The final regression equation indicates that *HR Expertise (HR Knowledge)* predicts performance beyond demographic characteristics, and that behavioral competencies predict performance beyond *HR Expertise (HR Knowledge)* and demographic characteristics (model $R^2 = .10$; adjusted $R^2 = .08^9$).

Table 13. SRA and Performance: Model Summary

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	ΔR ²
1	.24	.06	.05	.06*
2	.27	.07	.07	.01**
3	.31	.10	.08	.03***

* $p < .001$.

** $p < .01$.

*** $p < .05$.

Table 14 provides information about the regression coefficients, including unstandardized and standardized weights as well as standard errors and t-values. These results show that, of the behavioral competencies, Communication has the largest positive coefficient and *Global & Cultural Effectiveness* the largest negative coefficient. With these exceptions, none of the other behavioral competencies nor *HR Expertise (HR Knowledge)* have significant regression coefficients. Additionally, three of the predictors—for *Global & Cultural Effectiveness*, *Ethical Practice*, and *Business Acumen*—changed in sign from a positive correlation to a negative coefficient. This change in sign is often indicative of substantial multicollinearity¹⁰ among the predictors (Neter, Kutner, Nachtsheim, & Wasserman, 1996).

⁸ For the purposes of data analysis, career-level competency composite variables were combined to form a single competency composite variable, reflecting the scores on a given competency across all career levels. (For example, the early-, mid-, and senior-level *Communication* composites for the SRA were combined to form a single *Communication* composite for the SRA.)

⁹ The adjusted R^2 accounts for an increase in explained variance (R^2), which occurs as a result of adding predictors to the model—the adjusted R^2 increases only when a new term in the regression equation accounts for more variance than would be expected by chance alone.

¹⁰ Multicollinearity refers to situations in which predictors (in this case, the competencies) have a high proportion of shared variance (i.e., are highly correlated with one another).

Table 14. SRA and Performance: Coefficients

Competency	B	SE B	β	T
HR Expertise (HR Knowledge)	.12	.07	.08	1.64
Relationship Management	.12	.13	.05	.90
Consultation	.00	.09	.00	.01
Leadership & Navigation	.09	.08	.06	1.14
Communication	.29	.12	.14*	2.51*
Global & Cultural Effectiveness	-.15	.07	-.10*	-2.09*
Ethical Practice	-.05	.14	-.02	-.39
Business Acumen	-.06	.08	-.05	-.82
Critical Evaluation	.05	.07	.04	.73

* $p < .05$.

Beta coefficients describe the expected change in the dependent variable as a result of a change in the predictor variable, while holding all other variables constant (Neter et al., 1996)—in other words, beta weights only reflect the unique effects of individual predictors. As a result, highly correlated predictors contribute little to an analysis of their unique effects (i.e., they underestimate the effects of individual predictors), compared to their contribution to the overall model (i.e., multicollinearity has no impact on the overall regression model). The small coefficients in this regression equation, as well as the reversal in sign of some coefficients from their respective correlations, are indicative of multicollinearity.

This finding is especially interesting for *Global & Cultural Effectiveness*, *Ethical Practice*, and *Business Acumen*. It suggests that, after accounting for the positive contribution to performance from shared variance, the variance unique to these three competencies negatively contributes to performance (albeit weakly for *Ethical Practice* and *Business Acumen*). It is important to note this does not indicate that these competencies detract from performance; the zero-order correlations for these variables indicate that they relate to performance.

SJT and performance. The model summary for the SJT and performance analysis is presented in Table 15. As with the SRA, the results of step one of the regression equation indicate that demographic characteristics account for a large proportion of the variance in aggregate performance, $R^2 = .06$, $p < .001$. When *HR Expertise (HR Knowledge)* is added to step two, the increase in explained variance is statistically significant, $\Delta R^2 = .02$, $p < .001$, again mirroring the results of the SRA. Last, in step three, the behavioral competencies were added to the regression equation, again resulting in a significant increase in variance explained, $\Delta R^2 = .05$, $p < .001$. The final model indicates that *HR Expertise (HR Knowledge)* predicts performance beyond demographic characteristics, and that behavioral competencies predict performance beyond *HR Expertise (HR Knowledge)* and demographic characteristics (model $R^2 = .13$; adjusted $R^2 = .12$).

Table 15. SJT and Performance: Model Summary

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	ΔR^2
1	.25	.06	.06	.06*
2	.29	.09	.08	.02*
3	.36	.13	.12	.05*

* $p < .001$.

Additional information about the regression coefficients, including unstandardized and standardized weights as well as standard errors and t-values, is provided in Table 16. These results show that, of the behavioral competencies, *Business Acumen* and *Critical Evaluation* have the largest positive coefficients. With these exceptions, as well as *HR Expertise (HR Knowledge)* (from the SRA), none of the other predictors significantly contributes unique variance to the prediction of performance. As with the SRA, these results partly reflect the moderate amounts of shared variance among the predictors. Intercorrelations among the competencies measured

by the SJT, however, are lower in magnitude than the correlations among the competencies measured by the SRA. This suggests that, at least for the SJT, some competencies have little unique contribution to job performance.

Table 16. SJT and Performance: Coefficients

Competency	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>t</i>
HR Expertise (HR Knowledge) (SRA)	.22	.05	.15*	4.17*
Relationship Management	.07	.07	.04	1.04
Consultation	.13	.08	.07	1.63
Leadership & Navigation	.00	.07	.00	-.06
Communication	.05	.06	.03	.72
Global & Cultural Effectiveness	.07	.08	.04	.99
Business Acumen	.15	.06	.10**	2.68**
Critical Evaluation	.25	.09	.11**	2.70**

* $p < .001$.

** $p < .01$.

Summary of Data Analysis

These analyses provide several interesting results and raise additional questions. First, nearly all of the competencies as measured by the SRA and SJT are correlated with supervisor ratings of job performance. While none of the correlations were negative, however, some were weak and nonsignificant, specifically: *Consultation* and *Business Acumen* (on the SRA), for both aggregate overall performance and performance ratings on the same competency; *Global & Cultural Effectiveness* (on the SRA), for aggregate overall performance only; and *Relationship Management* (on the SJT), for performance ratings on the same competency only.

These correlational findings suggest, first, that the competencies in the SHRM Competency Model relate to job performance. Second, it is clear that the competencies, as a set, account for variance in job performance, and that the behavioral competencies account for variance in job performance above and beyond both demographic characteristics and *HR Expertise (HR Knowledge)*. Last, the SJT has slightly more predictive power in accounting for variance in job performance, when examining the final model R^2 and adjusted R^2 (even with one less predictor—*Ethical Practice* was measured only by the SRA).

Unfortunately, these statistical issues make it difficult to interpret the coefficients for the individual competencies. Other methodological issues possibly contributed to this difficulty. (For example, the primarily domestic employment of the study participants gave them little opportunity to develop or exhibit proficiency in the *Global & Cultural Effectiveness* competency. Similarly, the scores for *Ethical Practice* showed very little variability, due to very negatively skewed mean ratings.) From a conceptual perspective, the SHRM Competency Model was designed to reflect the interactions among competencies in influencing job performance. As a result, looking for each competency's unique contributions may be an approach conceptually at odds with how the model was developed.

Summary of Findings

The results of this study suggest that the competencies in the SHRM Competency Model are closely related. This is evident from the high intercorrelations among the competencies, especially on the SRA and supervisor-rated performance measure. It is possible that the strong relationships among the competencies are a function of measurement (e.g., same source and/or common method variance) or conceptualization (all of the instruments were based on the same information, i.e., the SHRM Competency Model). From a conceptual perspective, however, the competencies identified in the model are expected to be highly related, given their role as predictors of job performance in a profession that shows relatively high similarities across jobs. Moreover, the SHRM Competency Model was designed in such a way that the competencies work together in influencing job-relevant behaviors. In other words, strong relationships among the competencies are not only to be expected, but are present by design.

Unfortunately, the substantial amount of shared variance among the predictors hinders easy interpretation of specific competencies' contributions to an overall model predicting job performance. Regardless, the results of the regression analyses suggest that the technical competency *HR Expertise (HR Knowledge)* predicts job performance beyond demographic characteristics. Most importantly, the results also suggest that behavioral competencies predict job performance over and above both *HR Expertise (HR Knowledge)* and demographic characteristics. This finding is especially significant because it empirically demonstrates that HR professionals' job performance is affected not only by technical knowledge, but also by behavioral competencies and their associated domain-specific KSAs—all of which, together, form the SHRM Competency Model.

For organizations that employ HR professionals, the implications of this finding are key. The utility of behavioral competencies in predicting job performance suggests that they should take a central role as a factor in the recruitment, selection, training and development, and appraisal of HR professionals. Organizations that rely only on technical knowledge to make personnel decisions are putting themselves at a significant disadvantage in identifying top HR talent.

Limitations

There were several limitations to this study. First, not enough data from respondents at the executive career level could be collected for the researchers to analyze; and for early and other career levels, sample sizes were smaller than desired. Despite these sample size limitations, the researchers were able to conduct meaningful analyses pointing to the criterion validity of the SHRM Competency Model. Second, because the study did not collect data about other known predictors of job performance, such as personality and intelligence, the researchers were unable to investigate the SHRM Competency Model's incremental validity in predicting job performance (although some demographic characteristics were included in the present analyses).

Future Work

Further work with this dataset could help to refine these findings. Analyses could be performed on additional data that was collected but not analyzed (concerning virtual role-play, supervisor ratings of anticipated future job performance, etc.) and on additional theories (e.g., k-fold cross validation). New data could be collected to address remaining research questions (such as the relationship between subjective and objective measures of competencies as predictors of job performance). Last, while the study included international participants, the respondent

sample analyzed for this report was primarily domestic, and the collection of further data from non-U.S. HR professionals could enhance those findings associated with the *Global & Cultural Effectiveness* competency.

Conclusion

This study, which includes data from over 1,500 HR professionals and their supervisors, indicates that the SHRM Competency Model is generally associated with supervisor ratings of HR professionals' job performance. The results of the study suggest that, as a whole, HR professionals proficient in the competencies identified in the SHRM Competency Model are likewise perceived as competent by their supervisors.

Along with the rigorous process of model development and content validation, this study contributes to a growing body of evidence that supports the validity of the SHRM Competency Model as a useful exemplar for HR professionals.

These results provide criterion-related validity evidence for the SHRM Competency Model, and also point to the applicability of the SHRM competencies to HR professionals' training and development. When designing an individual development plan or seeking out additional education and training opportunities, HR professionals may choose to focus on the behaviors described by the SHRM Competency Model.

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Appendix A

SHRM Competency Model: Competency Definitions

Ethical Practice

The ability to integrate core values, integrity, and accountability throughout all organizational and business practices.

Relationship Management

The ability to manage interactions to provide service and to support the organization.

Human Resource Expertise

The knowledge of principles, practices, and functions of effective human resource management.

Communication

The ability to effectively exchange information with stakeholders.

Consultation

The ability to provide guidance to organizational stakeholders.

Leadership & Navigation

The ability to direct and contribute to initiatives and processes within the organization.

Business Acumen

The ability to understand and apply information with which to contribute to the organization's strategic plan.

Critical Evaluation

The ability to interpret information with which to make business decisions and recommendations.

Global & Cultural Effectiveness

The ability to value and consider the perspectives and backgrounds of all parties.

Appendix B

Supervisor Performance Measure: Sample Competency Rating

The table below presents the competency name, definition, and a set of example behaviors that describe performance associated with this competency. Please review this definition and each of these example behaviors before making your ratings.

Human Resource Technical Expertise and Practice

Definition: The ability to apply the principles and practices of human resource management to contribute to the success of the business.

1. Maintains up-to-date knowledge of relevant laws, legal rulings, and regulations.
2. Effectively prioritizes own work duties.
3. Effectively prioritizes the work duties of others.
4. Maintains up-to-date knowledge of general HR practices, strategy, and technology.
5. Utilizes existing HR-related best practices.
6. Develops HR-related best practices.
7. Delivers customized HR solutions.
8. Engages in professional development.
9. Maintains up-to-date knowledge of critical HR functions (e.g., strategic business management, compensation and benefits).
10. Identifies ways to improve work processes.
11. Effectively utilizes business and HR-specific technologies to address business needs.
12. Effectively applies knowledge of HR disciplines and functions to work.

Consider each employee’s job performance over the preceding year. Using the competency definition and illustrative behaviors listed above, please rate the employee’s job performance on this competency **relative to all other employees you have observed at the same career level** (not just compared to the other employees you are rating). If you have not had an adequate opportunity to observe the employee’s performance, click on the button for “Not Observed/Cannot Rate.”

	Below average: Bottom 1/3 of peer group		Average: Middle of peer group			Above average: Top 1/3 of peer group		Not observed/ Cannot rate
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	N/A
Employee 1, self-reported career level	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

