Psychometric Testing in Singapore

Psychometric Test Purchasing · https://psyasia.com/kb/psychometric-testing-in-singapore/

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The Market for Psychometrics in Singapore

There are so many Psychometric Tests on the market in Singapore now, the task of choosing the right one is not easy. Choice is always a good thing, however as humans we often look for easy or stereotypical ways of making those choices and they are not always the best ones to make. For example, a client of ours was preparing for an upcoming team-building session. He approached us asking if we had a certain test that he could use in that session. Our answer was that we don’t supply that test for various very good reasons. The client’s response was “but so many people use it”. This is a typical response. Another potential client had been looking around in Singapore for Psychometric Personality Tests to use in his training sessions as an added benefit. He categorically advised us that he was not interested in validity and was looking for something simple and cheap! The reality here is that at best he is wasting his time and the time of those who will complete his tests. At worst and most likely, his trainees will be led to believe things about themselves which frankly may not be true (reliable or valid!).

Science, Psychology, Psychometrics and the Real World of Business

As busy professionals we often assume that if lots of other people are using a test it must be a good one. This is a huge mistake. Our evolution has programmed us to be seduced by glossy advertising materials and confident, friendly salespeople. On the other hand, we have a tendency to be turned off by less glossy scientific figures, statistics and perhaps psychologists such as myself who speak about the science and real value behind a test, its validity! Ultimately then, both our clients and ourselves

as psychologists have problems to overcome!!

Psychologists have to be able to explain in more “glossy” terms about the technical properties of a test and our clients, usually the HR and aligned professions, are invited to turn their ears our way for a little while, just long enough to get the notion that there is more to a psychometric test than meets the eye!

Technical Properties of Psychometric Tests

When we talk of the technical properties of a psychometric test, we are referring to things such as its reliability and validity as well as how it was constructed. If a test is constructed well, it will take time. Not months, often years. The test will also evolve over time and validity data will be added to its manuals. This process is costly, hence good tests cost money.

If you come across cheap tests, that should start to ring alarm bells. It’s possible to write a few questions on a napkin in a restaurant and call it psychometric and even try to sell it. If it looks good and the questions look relevant perhaps it will sell and gain a huge following. But how reliable is that test?

In other words, can it provide consistent measurement of your candidate? If your bathroom scales provide different results each time you weight yourself you take them back and say these are not reliable. Likewise with a test, you need to ensure that it is consistently assessing the constructs that it purports to assess. We often come across new clients who are shocked when we tell them that good personality tests often contain around 200 questions. However, buyer beware! We know that the longer the test, the more reliable the results (as long as it is not so long that the candidate falls asleep!).

An unreliable test can not be a valid test, hence reliability is a precursor to validity. However, validity is arguably the most important aspect of a test. You choose to use tests because you want them to illustrate where a candidate stands in terms of their ability or personality or in order to predict how your candidate will perform or behave in a job. The test’s ability to meet this need is referred to as validity.

Some tests on the market are simply more valid that others. In fact, one test in the past year has proven to be more valid than all other tests it was compared with on the market! How come users stay with their current test then? Perhaps because of preference, habit, price, mass-following and so

on. However, do ask yourself and your test supplier, how valid is your test – this is the single most important technical property in a psychometric test!

Sometimes tests which are more valid will be more expensive but this makes sense. If a test took a long time to develop, was developed well and by a reputable publisher and is based on well founded theories that have been researched internationally, then surely it is worth paying the extra as such a test will provide an excellent return on investment with its strong validity.

Training to use Psychometric Tests in Singapore

Properly developed psychometric tests require proper training to be used competently. If your test supplier requires that you undergo very limited or no training, this is a reflection of the test as well as their lack of understanding of psychometrics. You need to understand the concepts referred to above, as well as error in testing and how to make decisions based on test results, let alone how to feed back results properly to candidates and decision-makers. The type of questions (i.e., forced choice versus rating scales) will also dictate how you can use the results – you need to be trained to understand this! In some parts of the world (South Africa for example), only psychologists can use psychometric tests. Whilst this is a strict rule, it has its logical basis in how easy it is for untrained professionals to use tests wrongly.

Purchasing Psychometric Tests in Singapore

You may also wish to consider where you purchase your tests from, particularly in Singapore. In recent years we have seen an influx of profiteers in the industry who seek to make money but lack any depth of understanding in psychometrics or psychology at work. This will change in time as psychology in Singapore develops. For now however, be wary of this and we suggest that you only purchase psychometric tests from fully registered organisational psychologists who have a firm grounding in personality, psychometrics and psychology at work and who are answerable to professional competence and ethics boards. Many of those selling psychometric tests in Singapore are simply not answerable to anybody in terms of their conduct or competence. You can therefore not be certain that any advice they provide is relevant, up-to-date or will work in your organisation.

There are many more things to be aware of when choosing psychometric tests in Singapore. We cannot entertain them all here due to space constraints. You may wish to look out for training courses

in Psychometric Assessment such as our our Psychometric Assessment at Work training which leads to the internationally recognised British Psychological Society Register of Qualifications in Test Use - Levels 1 & 2 (previously BPS Level A & B Certificates of Competence in Occupational Testing). Such courses will prepare you further for choosing the right test and therein avoid costly selection and development mistakes. Look for courses run by experts in psychometrics who have a strong understanding of test use aligned with local culture, laws and practice.

Note: Some Singapore firms will ship in trainers from outside of Asia to run psychometric training. We suggest you avoid this training reseller model given that the facilitator is based far away and is thus likely to lack knowledge of the Singapore business/legal and cultural environment for Psychometric Testing.

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