Why PsyAsia suggests clients choose Psychologists as their Psychometric Test Partners

Psychometrics Knowledge · https://psyasia.com/kb/why-psyasia-suggests-clients-choose-psychologists-as-their-psychometric-test-partners/

One of the first things clients will want to know when choosing who to work with when ordering psychometric tests is “why should I choose xyz company”?

As the field of psychometrics continues to grow, overseas publishers are working hard to make inroads into local markets. Clients should therefore be wary of the expertise (or lack of it) in organisations that are distributing tests.

We firmly believe that those in the best place to distribute psychometric tests are those who have a background in personality psychology and/or organisational psychology. In fact this premise was shared by many reputable test publishers until relatively recently.

Greed and motivation to expand market share have taken over in many cases and some test publishers have delegated test distribution to non-psychologists or those with short-course qualifications in this area.

The downsides of this are tremendous. Not only does it threaten the very integrity of the test and the industry, but it brings into the fore concerns regarding malpractice and the like.

Registered Organisational Psychologists are registered with government bodies. They therefore report to these bodies on issues involving competence. In addition to their 6-10 years of training in psychology (i.e. as much as a medical doctor!), they are bound to undergo continuous professional development and must submit proof of this on an annual basis. This means they need to attend high-level conferences, read peer-reviewed professional and academic journals and more.

Non-psychologists of course are not subject to any of the aforementioned. In fact, many clients who have come over to us from such distributors have entertained us with stories of gross negligence and

incompetence of these “salespeople” who lack expertise and passion for the subject matter. A couple of examples follow:

1. A client told us how when they contacted “******** Assessments” in Hong Kong and asked for more information on how the test has 95% predictive accuracy (as published on their website). They were told that this related to 2 things.

Firstly that the test has a sophisticated lie detection system and so is very accurate. A psychologist will tell you this has nothing to do with predictive accuracy! Predictive accuracy (or validity) is about using the test scores to predict work performance or something similar.

This same client was then told:

“The second form of predictive accuracy is construct validation which relates to the job prediction score”.

Again, a psychologist would point out that this salesperson is getting confused. Construct validity and predictive validity are two different forms of validity. Most importantly though, no psychometric test is 95% predictive! Psychologists know that and if they claim any different they would be reported to their board and struck off!

Unfortunately, at no time was this client provided with hard-data or evidence that this test (which is based on a theory that has not been peer-reviewed and has not been independently tested in Asia or Australia) actually predicts meaningful workplace behaviours and performance.

2. Another client told us how they contacted a non-psychologist distributor of another test brand in Singapore. They asked for information about impact of dyslexia on aptitude test scores and also wanted to know about the comparison between certain tests within that brand and those of the competition.

This distributor had no idea there and then, and said he would need to go away and find out. A psychologist would not need to do this. Unless the client is asking about an obscure test, Psychologists are trained to have the answers.

As we know, there are many things to consider when choosing the right psychometric test. Issues such as reliability, validity, norm groups, standard error of measurement, cost versus validity (ROI), report options, online assessment options and so on. This short article has added to that list and

suggested that the background and currency of the people in the distributorship are also important.

To cast doubt aside, it is best to work with distributors who have demonstrated their passion in psychology and psychometrics through years of training in the subject along with years of experience. Choose those holding full registration as psychologists with government/professional bodies who must undergo professional development on a continual basis.

Purchasing psychometric tests from non-psychologists may amount to asking a private pilot to fly a jumbo jet. They may be able to get it off the ground (”may”!), but what happens when they encounter problems or when they try to land??!!!