

Abstract of the thesis entitled:

Tapping and Assessing Practical Intelligence

- by Tacit Knowledge Test

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Recent psychological research (e.g. Wagner & Sternberg, 1985, 1988, 1991) found that one major factor in achieving success in the workplace depends on the acquisition of tacit knowledge. Tacit knowledge constitutes the knowledge base serving practical intelligence in the task of solving everyday problems. The focus of the study is to develop two Tacit-Knowledge Tests (TKTs), the scenario-based recruitment tests specific to the Human Resources practitioners and Insurance Agents in Hong Kong that assess the job-related tacit knowledge of the people with different levels of expertise in the occupations.

The development of the TKT for both occupations consisted of two phrases: the construction phrase and the verification phrase. In the construction phrase, a newly developed framework, the EPS analysis, was used to generate and construct typical work-related problems encountered by the job-holders, each associated with alternative solutions (responses). In the verification phrase, experts and novices of a certain occupation were asked to complete the tests. The tree-based models were employed to identify the key responses that differentiate people with different levels of expertise. The odds analysis was conducted in order to transform the tree-based models into a marking scheme that specified the likelihood of a potential candidate of being an expert or a novice given his/her ranking in certain items.

The results showed that both TKTs were selective recruitment tests that helped reflect the different kinds of tacit knowledge possessed by people in different expertise-categories. The test utilization and administration, the study limitations and the potential usage of TKT were also discussed.