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THE IN BASKET TEST AS

PRACTICAL PSYCHOLOGY

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this thesis is to demonstrate the value of the in basket test as practical psychology. Practical psychology is defined as applied psychology that is used by practitioners. In the case of personnel selection the practitioners are those who select people for work; this includes a large number and a wide variety of people.

For the in basket test to be regarded as practical psychology it was hypothesised that a single variable method of overall assessment of performance on the in basket test should be as good as a multivariate method; the in basket test should be reliable; the single variable approach should be a valid method of assessing performance on the test; and the validity of the in basket test should be demonstrated in an industrial setting. Four studies were conducted to test these hypotheses; a reliability study, a factor analytic study, an assessment of the validity of the in basket test using discriminant analysis, and a study of the test in a meat freezing works.

It was concluded that the single variable method of overall assessment of performance on the in basket test was as good as the multivariate method. It was argued that there were inherent difficulties in establishing the reliability of the in basket test, but inter scorer reliability was demonstrated. It was shown that the single variable of overall assessment on the in basket test was valid. The study conducted in a meat freezing works showed that the in basket could be used validly in an industrial setting.

As a result of the research and a review of other personnel selection

methods and their relationship to practical psychology, it was concluded that work sample tests need to be promoted more by psychologists as useful selection methods in industry.

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