

Assessment Types

by Sophia Tutorial



WHAT'S COVERED

This lesson will cover different kinds of assessments. Our discussion breaks down as follows:

1. Questionnaires
 - a. Reliability and Validity
2. Projective Tests

1. Questionnaires

Assessments are used to measure the various aspects and traits of a person's personality. Each approach uses different types of assessments. One type is a questionnaire. These are important because it underlies the importance of **objective tests**.

An objective assessment is when the same questions and measures are used for each person so they're not varying and can be studied in more depth. In addition, a questionnaire or an objective form of assessment should give the same score when different people are scoring it.

A **personality questionnaire** is a written form of test, where a person is given a list of questions that reveal different aspects of a person's personality, depending on the answers they give. Personality questionnaires often include questions about likely behaviors, a person's feelings, and their responses in different kinds of scenarios.

An advantage of questionnaires is that they can be given to a large number of people. A large amount of data can be collected to support whatever theories are being tested.

The weakness of questionnaires is that they can be inflexible. They can't be changed depending on what type of person is being studied. They can also be biased toward particular groups. The way that they are written can affect what kinds of scores you get from different kinds of people.



TERMS TO KNOW

Objective Test

Test with standardized, consistent scoring and administration

Personality Questionnaire

Type of objective test; a written test with questions that ask about aspects of a person's thinking, feeling, or behavior

1a. Reliability and Validity

Questionnaires can also vary widely in terms of reliability and validity, which are two important scientific terms. **Reliability** means that the results are consistent. In other words, you get the same results each time you give a particular questionnaire. If, for example, you were to take the same questionnaire twice in a short period of time, you should be essentially getting the same score. Otherwise, the test isn't reliable.

Validity means that the test measures what it's supposed to measure. It isn't being affected by any outside variables. In addition, its results are similar to other tests that are reliable about the same kinds of subjects. If you were to test the validity of your questionnaire, you would look at other assessments that are measuring the same type of thing, that have been shown to be effective over time. If the results are similar to the results of your test, then you have a valid questionnaire.



TERMS TO KNOW

Reliability

Consistency of responses to assessment across time

Validity

Test measures what the researcher is attempting to measure

2. Projective Tests

Another type of test is a **projective tests**, which is a little bit different. Projective tests tend to use ambiguous words or images to attempt to uncover unconscious thoughts or desires. Projective tests are focused on psychodynamic theories of the unconscious.



EXAMPLE The Rorschach inkblot test is a projective test that records people's responses to different images of inkblots, which are then interpreted by an observer.

The strengths are that projective tests are very difficult to fake because there aren't right or wrong answers. Often, the person doesn't realize what they're being tested on, because the test focuses on their unconscious, rather than their conscious mind. These tests can also provide in-depth information about the subject's mental processes that are otherwise very difficult to understand.

Weaknesses for projective tests include that they tend to be very low in validity since it is hard to tell at times what they are measuring. They're also subject to some interpretation by the psychologist who's giving it because the psychologist is recording the responses. There are specific procedures when scoring, however, so it's not completely up to the psychologist to determine what the interpretation will be.



TERM TO KNOW

Projective Test

Tests that present ambiguous stimuli; responses are analyzed for meaning.



SUMMARY

Different approaches of psychology use different kinds of assessments to measure aspects of personality. The **questionnaire** is a form of written test that can reveal personality traits based on the answers a test taker gives. These can be given to a large number of people, and are helpful for collecting large amounts of data. However, they can be inflexible and can vary in reliability and validity.

Projective tests are used for testing the unconscious. These tests give insight into mental processes that are otherwise hard to understand, though they tend to have low validity due to the fact that it is hard to determine scope of measurement.

Good luck!

Source: This work is adapted from Sophia Author Erick Taggart.



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