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## **Meaning of Testing Techniques / Standardized Tests**

There are four types of standardized tests. These include achievement, interest, aptitude and personality testing. There is some overlap in these categories, especially in interest and personality. Let us examine these one by one.

### **1. Aptitude Tests**

Aptitude may be defined as a trait that characterizes an individual's ability to perform in a specific area or to acquire the learning necessary for performance in a given area. It presumes an inherent or natural ability that can be developed to its maximum through learning or other experiences. However, it cannot be expanded beyond a certain point, even by learning. In theory, then, an aptitude test measures the potential of one to achieve in a given activity or to learn to achieve in that activity. Aptitude tests may potentially be used by counsellors and others because (1) they may identify potential abilities of which the individual is not aware; (2) they may encourage the development of special or potential abilities of a given individual; (3) they may provide information to assist an individual in making educational and career decisions or other choices between competing alternatives; (4) they may serve as an aid in predicting the level of academic or vocational success an individual might anticipate; and (5) they may be useful in grouping individuals with similar aptitudes for developmental and other educational purposes.

**Special Aptitude Tests** – You might have seen or heard about clerical aptitude test, numerical ability test, etc. Special aptitude tests usually refer to those that seek to measure an individual's potential ability to perform or to acquire proficiency in a specific occupation or other type of activity. Tests that measure special aptitude are sometimes referred to as single aptitude tests because they only secure a measure for one specific aptitude. Counsellors, most frequently use standardized tests to measure a single aptitude in areas of mechanical, clerical, or artistic abilities. Single aptitude tests have also been developed for use in various graduate and professional schools. Aptitude tests are also available for particular school subjects.

**Vocational Aptitude Batteries** – Multiple aptitude tests typically consists of a series of subtests that relate in varying combinations to a series of occupations or occupationally related activities. Commonly used multiple aptitude batteries are the General Aptitude Test Battery (GATB); the Differential Aptitude Battery (DAT); the Flanagan Aptitude Classification Test (FACT); and the Academic Promise Test (APT).

**Scholastic Aptitude Test** – Scholastic or academic aptitude tests measure one's potential for performing in academic situations. Such tests are those that comprise the SAT and PSAT batteries have much merit in so far as predicting academic performance at higher educational levels. However, a more appropriate label would be academic achievement, because they tend to predict future academic achievement on the basis of past learning, rather than on the basis of natural ability.

### **2. Achievement Tests**

You have been using these tests to assess student's performance in school subjects. All unit, semester and terminal examination tests are nothing but achievement tests. These tests focus on skills or abilities that are traditionally taught in the schools. Therefore, achievement tests may be defined as tools designed to measure the degree of student learning in specific curriculum areas common to most schools, such as Mathematics, English usages, etc. Achievement tests are used as learning measures of (1) the amount of learning, (2) the rate of learning, (3) comparisons with others or with achievement of self in other areas, (4) level of learning in sub-areas, and (5) strengths and weakness in a subject matter area because of their extensive use and relatively easy task of identifying appropriate context measures.

### **3. Interest Inventory**

Interests are related to general ability, special aptitudes and values in various ways. Linguistic and scientific interests are positively correlated with intelligence, technical interests are related to mechanical aptitude and business interests are related to the tendency to stress material as opposed to theoretical, social or aesthetic values and so on.

Interest testing is done to achieve some purpose i.e.

- i) To provide teachers and counsellors with information regarding the students preference and aversions which will help them acquire better understanding of students and their problems.
- ii) To help the students to identify and clarify their interests in terms of the demands of varied courses and careers and choose work and experiences consistent with their interests.
- iii) To enable teachers, counsellors and parents to know the kinds and intensity of the student's interests and assist him to prepare his educational and vocational plans consistent with his interests.
- iv) To help channelize the energies of the youth in appropriate directions.
- v) To help in the selection of the right person for the right work, and thus save frustration, unhappiness and disappointment in the lives of the individuals and increase productive capacity of individuals.

### **4. Personality Tests**

Personality is inclusive of everything about one's physique, socio-emotional and personal characteristics. Therefore, personality is the sum total of an individual behaviour in social situations. Purpose of Personality Testing – Personality testing is necessary to achieve the following purposes:

- i) It helps the students in proper educational and vocational choice. Personality plays an important role in individual, personal, educational and vocational adjustment and success. It is, therefore, important to diagnose the individual's personality pattern to see whether he possesses the traits which are likely to contribute significantly to his adjustment to the course or career he is choosing.

- ii) It helps the individual in resolving emotional conflicts. Personality diagnosis becomes essential when the difficulty the individual encounters in making proper adjustment with the educational and occupational choices, lies in emotional conflict about which the client has no knowledge. When the cause of the individual's mental conflict is diagnosed, it may be possible for him to solve his problem in his own way.
- iii) It helps the teacher and the counsellor. Personality testing through various techniques will help the teacher and counsellor to get this information and help the individual on the basis of this information.
- iv) It helps the employer in proper selection of the personnel.
- v) It helps the clinical psychologist. A clinical psychologist can use personality assessments to help choose the best therapy for his clients.

### **Meaning of Non-Testing Techniques / Non Standardized Tests**

Non-testing techniques in guidance refer to those techniques which do not involve a test. Therefore many tests like aptitude test, achievement test, interest inventory, and personality tests are not part of it. Non-testing techniques are also called as non-standardized techniques. Furthermore, these techniques have common usage for individual analysis by counsellors. Also, the employment of these setting is in various settings.

Non-testing techniques in guidance provide a broader and much more subjective approach to data gathering and interpretation. Moreover, the various types of non-testing techniques are the questionnaire, observation, autobiography, anecdotal record, case study, cumulative record, interviews, and checklist. However, the most important among them are the case study, interview, and checklist.

### **Case Study**

A case study refers to a collection of all available information. Furthermore, this information could be social, physiological, biographical, vocational, and environmental. Moreover, this collection of information is with the aim of explaining a single individual. Most noteworthy, the case study is a comprehensive collection of information. Also, this collection of information takes place through the use of different techniques and tools of data collection. It is certainly the best technique of studying the whole individual. Below are the variables whose collection must be made in the case study:

The physical, socio-economic and cultural environment- First of all, the physical environment includes the neighbourhood and surroundings in which an individual lives. The socio-economic environment consists of the society in which the person grows up and the economic condition. Finally, the cultural environment refers to the ideas, views, and behaviour of those among whom one lives.

Family- Collection of detailed and diverse information regarding one's family must take place. This certainly helps in understanding the characteristics of the individual under study. There

must be a collection of information regarding the educational and occupational status of family members. Other questions regarding the love, harmony, understanding, conflict among family members find their place in the case study.

Personal history- There must be a collection of information regarding the personal history of the individual under study. This information is history of an individual's physical health, abilities, social development, and attitude.

### **Interview**

An interview refers to a conversation with a purpose. The purposes for which interviews take place are fact-finding, introductory, evaluative, and informative in nature. Here an interviewer asks a set of questions to an interviewee to find out the responses. The interview is certainly a very important technique among non-testing techniques. Following are the major types of interviews:

Employment interview- The purpose behind such interviews is to check the suitability of a person for a job. The interviewer talks more than the interviewee.

Fact-finding interviewee- Here the purpose is the collection and verification of facts.

Diagnostic interview- Here the purpose is remediation. Furthermore, here an effort is made by the interviewer to diagnose the problem of the interviewee. Also, interviewer identifies the symptoms and tries to solve the problem.

Counselling interview- The purpose of this interview is to provide a suggestion, insight, or advice to the interviewee. Most noteworthy, the interview begins with the work of information collection, then proceeds to guidance, and ends with a psychological treatment of the problem.

### **Checklist**

The checklist technique is also a non-testing technique in guidance. The checklist technique involves a series of statements. Furthermore, these statements are positive and negative, that the evaluator answers yes or no. This technique checks if the evaluator shows that behaviour or leaves it unchecked. The checklist system includes statements about the habits in the workplace and the skills of individuals. Workplace habits for individuals may include:

- Reports for work on time on most days.
- Exhibits a pleasant behaviour towards the colleagues.
- Stays at work until important tasks are completed.
- Tends to take criticisms quite personally.

Hence, the first three statements are positive attributes. However, the fourth statement is a negative attribute.

## **INTEREST:**

### **Meaning of Interest:**

An interest is a subjective attitude motivating a person to perform a certain task. It affords pleasure and satisfaction. It results in curiosity towards the object of interest, enthusiasm to be attached to the object, strength of will to face difficulties while engaged in the task of one's interest, a definite change in behaviour in the presence of the object characterized by attention and concentration. Guidance experts make a further explanation of interest from the guidance point of view.

Jones states, **“Interest is a feeling of likening associated with a reaction, either actual or imagined to a specific thing or situation.”**

Jones mentions two distinct types of interests- extrinsic and intrinsic. The former are pleasurable emotions connected with a purpose or goal of an activity. It may involve fame, name, money, victory or such external motives of conduct.

But the latter are connected with the activity itself, being basic and real attraction without any external motive, this intrinsic interest is continuous and permanent, even if the immediate goal is reached. The extrinsic interest, dies as soon as the goal is reached.

## **INTELLIGENCE:**

Intelligence has been an important and controversial topic throughout psychology's history. Despite the substantial interest in the subject, there is still considerable disagreement about what components make up intelligence. In addition to questions of exactly how to define intelligence, the debate continues today about whether accurate measurements are even possible.

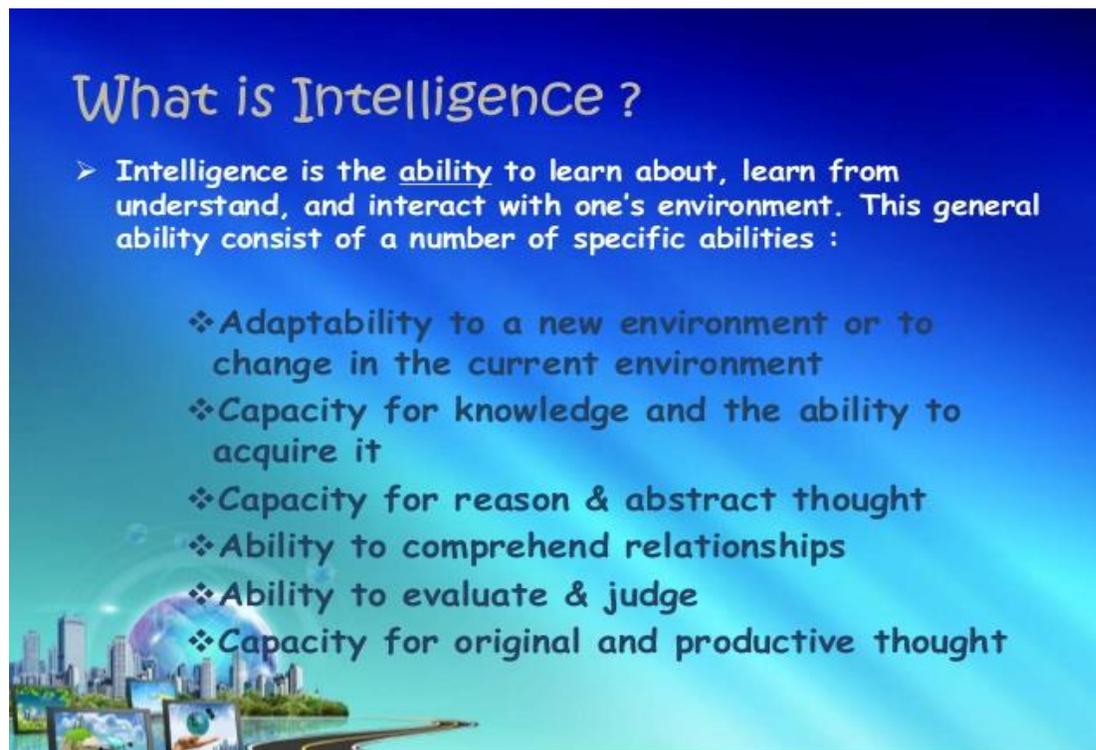
At various points throughout recent history, researchers have proposed some different definitions of intelligence. While these definitions can vary considerably from one theorist to the next, current conceptualizations tend to suggest that intelligence involves the level of ability to do the following:

- **Learn:** The acquisition, retention, and use of knowledge is an important component of intelligence.
- **Recognize problems:** To put knowledge to use, people must be able to identify possible problems in the environment that need to be addressed.

- **Solve problems:** People must then be able to take what they have learned to come up with a useful solution to a problem they have noticed in the world around them.<sup>1</sup>

Intelligence involves some different mental abilities including logic, reasoning, problem-solving, and planning. While the subject of intelligence is one of the largest and most heavily researched, it is also one of the topics that generate the greatest controversy.

While psychologists often disagree about the definition and causes of intelligence, research on intelligence plays a significant role in many areas. These areas include decisions regarding how much funding should be given to educational programs, the use of testing to screen job applicants, and the use of testing to identify children who need additional academic help.



### **CASE STUDY:**

Case studies are in-depth investigations of a single person, group, event or community. Typically, data are gathered from a variety of sources and by using several different methods (e.g. observations & interviews).

The case study research method originated in clinical medicine (the case history, i.e. the patient's personal history). In psychology, case studies are often confined to the study of a particular individual.

The information is mainly biographical and relates to events in the individual's past (i.e. retrospective), as well as to significant events which are currently occurring in his or her everyday life.

The case study is not itself a research method, but researchers select methods of data collection and analysis that will generate material suitable for case studies.

Case studies are widely used in psychology and amongst the best known were the ones carried out by Sigmund Freud, including Anna O and Little Hans.

Freud (1909a, 1909b) conducted very detailed investigations into the private lives of his patients in an attempt to both understand and help them overcome their illnesses. Even today case histories are one of the main methods of investigation in abnormal psychology and psychiatry.

This makes it clear that the case study is a method that should only be used by a psychologist, therapist or psychiatrist, i.e. someone with a professional qualification.

There is an ethical issue of competence. Only someone qualified to diagnose and treat a person can conduct a formal case study relating to atypical (i.e. abnormal) behavior or atypical development.

The procedure used in a case study means that the researcher provides a description of the behavior. This comes from interviews and other sources, such as observation.

The client also reports detail of events from his or her point of view. The researcher then writes up the information from both sources above as the case study, and interprets the information.

The research may also continue for an extended period of time, so processes and developments can be studied as they happen.

Amongst the sources of data the psychologist is likely to turn to when carrying out a case study are observations of a person's daily routine, unstructured interviews with the participant herself (and with people who know her), diaries, personal notes (e.g. letters, photographs, notes) or official document (e.g. case notes, clinical notes, appraisal reports).

The case study method often involves simply observing what happens to, or reconstructing 'the case history' of a single participant or group of individuals (such as a school class or a specific social group), i.e. the idiographic approach.

The interview is also an extremely effective procedure for obtaining information about an individual, and it may be used to collect comments from the person's friends, parents, employer, workmates and others who have a good knowledge of the person, as well as to obtain facts from the person him or herself.

Most of this information is likely to be qualitative (i.e. verbal description rather than measurement) but the psychologist might collect numerical data as well.

## **QUESTIONNAIRE:**

A Questionnaire is a research instrument composed of a series of questions designed to gather information about a certain topic. It can be administered via paper and pencil, where respondents simply fill out a survey form and send it back by mail or other means. It can be administered by an interviewer, who asks a set of questions face-to-face or over the phone. It can also be computer – administered, such as when you are browsing a web site and a survey window pops

up on the screen, inviting you to participate. However the mode of administration, information gathered from questionnaires are typically subjected to statistical analysis.

Questionnaires may have close-ended questions such as multiple choices or Yes/No items or open-ended questions such as sentence completion items, or straightforward questions asking about opinions or thoughts of the respondent about a certain topic.

## **OPINIONNAIRE:**

### **OPINIONNAIRE**

“Opinion polling or opinion gauging represents a single question approach. The answers are usually in the form of ‘yes’ or ‘no’. An undecided category is often included. Sometimes large number of response alternatives if provided.”

- Anna Anastusi

An opinionnaire is defined as a special form of inquiry. It is used by the researcher to collect the opinions of a sample of population on certain facts or factors the problem under investigation. These opinions on different facts of the problem under study are further quantified, analysed and interpreted.

### **Purpose :**

Opinionnaire are usually used in researches of the descriptive type which demands survey of opinions of the concerned individuals.

Public opinion research is an example of opinion survey.

Opinion polling enables the researcher to forecast the coming happenings in successful manner.

### **Characteristics :**

- The opinionnaire makes use of statements or questions on different aspects of the problem under investigation.
- Responses are expected either on three point or five point scales.
- It uses favourable or unfavourable statements.
- It may be sub-divided into sections.
- The gally poll ballots generally make use of questions instead of statements.
- The public opinion polls generally rely on personal contacts rather than mail ballots.

### **INTERVIEW:**

Interviews are self-report techniques that involve an experimenter asking participants questions (generally on a one-to-one basis) and recording their responses.

There are two types of interview:

Structured – where the interviewer has a set list of questions to lead the conversation, a framework which will be rigidly stuck to

Unstructured – where the interviewer may have a list of topics or questions, but has extra flexibility to lead the conversation further, should participant responses lead to deeper/more detailed discussion

Evaluation of interviews

Strengths:

- Unstructured interviews provide potential to gather rich and detailed information from each participant – more so than questionnaires.
- The conversational nature of unstructured interviews is best suited to discussing complex or sensitive issues, as participants are more likely to relax and give better responses as the dialogue flows.
- Interviews can be used as part of a pilot study to gather information prior to conducting proposed research.

Weaknesses:

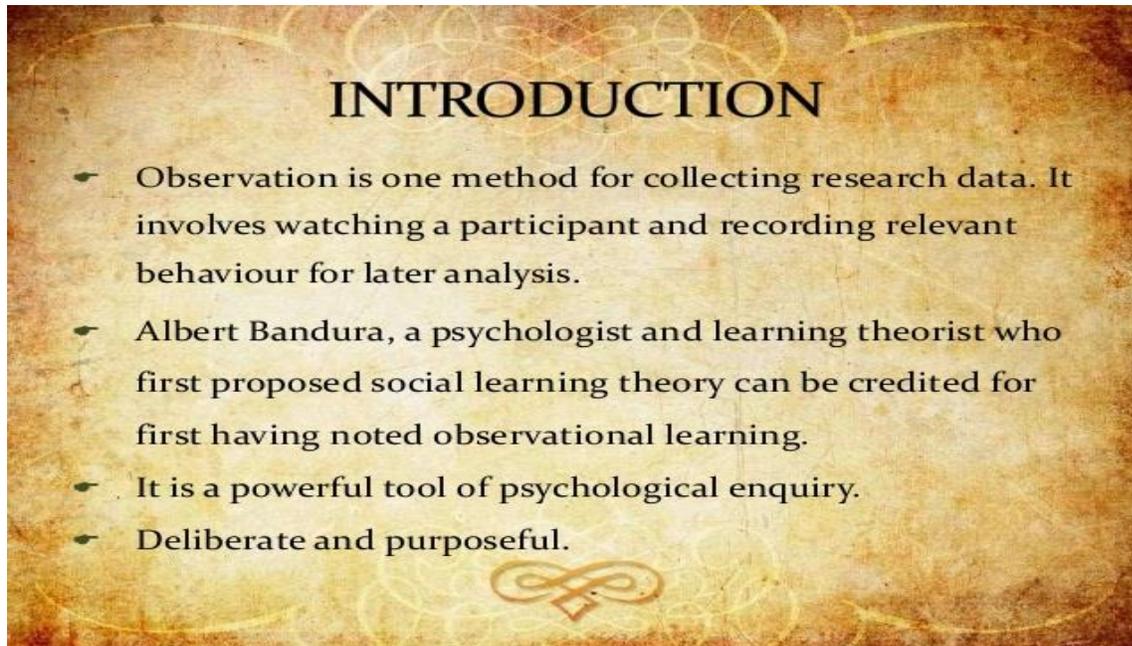
- There is a lot of time and expense involved when training interviewers, to conduct unstructured interviews in particular.
- Social desirability bias can be a problem with self-report techniques, i.e. participants give responses that are thought to be the most socially acceptable, rather than necessarily truthful.
- Interview data can be a time-consuming task to analyse and interpret when it is so detailed (and in a qualitative [written] format).
- Interviews require participants to have basic competencies for interviews to be successful (e.g. adequate communication skills, memory, honesty) which could potentially limit the sample's size and representativeness of the population if not met.

## **OBSERVATION:**

Observation is one method for collecting research data. It involves watching a participant and recording relevant behavior for later analysis. One example of a study using the observational method would be when a researcher wants to study how children manage sharing of toys. He could observe a group of children playing in the classroom, and record what things they say or do that determine who gets to play with a coveted toy.

The observation method has the advantage of providing direct evidence of the phenomenon that

is being studied. In the example above, the researcher gets data on how the children actually manage to share or not share. This is more objective than other ways of collecting data like for example, interviewing the children or their teacher.



## INTRODUCTION

- Observation is one method for collecting research data. It involves watching a participant and recording relevant behaviour for later analysis.
- Albert Bandura, a psychologist and learning theorist who first proposed social learning theory can be credited for first having noted observational learning.
- It is a powerful tool of psychological enquiry.
- Deliberate and purposeful.

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*AS Psychology*



## Types of observation

**Unstructured observation:** The researcher records ALL relevant behaviour but has no system

**Structured observation:** The researcher records observed behaviours according to preset **behavioural categories**

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