PSYCHOLOGICAL TESTS

Preety Shekhar
Assistant Professor, Dept. of Psychology
Gautam Buddha Mahila College, Gaya
Magadh University, Bodh Gaya
Contents

➢ Understanding Measurement
➢ Difference between Physical measurement and Psychological measurement
➢ Defining a Psychological test
➢ Classification of the Psychological test
➢ Characteristics of a Good Psychological Test
➢ Purpose of Psychological test
Measurement

When the quality and the quantity of anything is measured by using standard equipment or device, it is called Measurement. In the words of Chaplin (1975)- “Measurement means quantifications of variables.” It is an important part of life, which can be divided into two types:

1. **Physical Measurement**: It is a technique of measuring physical bodies using standard. For example, measurement of the length of a desk or measurement of the volume of a glass of water, etc.

2. **Psychological Measurement**: It is a technique of measuring attributes, attitudes, personality characteristics and abilities of living beings. It is of two types-
   a. Psychological tests.
   b. Scales.
Differences between Physical measurement and Psychological measurement

- 1. In physical measurement, the measurement starts from true zero but in psychological measurement, zero is just as reference point. It is relative zero, not true zero. For example, psychological attributes such as reaction time can never be zero.

- 2. The unit of physical measurement are equal and uniform throughout the measurement but there is a lack of equal and uniform unit in psychological measurement.

- 3. Physical measurement is applicable on those things about which we get knowledge by the sense organs but in psychological measurement, we can’t get knowledge of it’s subject matter such as intelligence and personality characteristics by our sense organs. In other words, physical measurements is direct but psychological measurement is not direct.

- 4. Physical measurement are to the point and it’s measurement is exact but the psychological measurements are not precise.
Defining a Psychological Tests

In general life, we often use the term ‘Test’ which simply means to examine. According to Reber and Reber (2001)- “Test refers to any measurement which yields quantitive data”. But in context of Psychology, the meaning of test depends upon it’s applications. Qualities such as intelligence, attitude, aptitude, personality characteristics and abilities are the subject matter of the psychological tests, which can not be viewed directly.

In psychological test, one observe people’s behaviour in a systematic way and make inferences about the underlying attributes that stimulate that behaviour. As Reber and Reber (2001) said, “A psychological test refers to all the test of psychological nature.”

According to F. S. Freeman (1965)- “A psychological test is a standardized instrument designed to measure objectivity one or more aspects of a total personality by means of samples of verbal and non-verbal responses, or by means of other behaviours.”
According to Lee. J. Cronbach (1949)- “A test is a systematic procedure for observing a person’s behaviour and describing with the aid of a numerical scale or category system.”

This way we can say that ‘A psychological test’ is a structured technique used to generate a carefully selected sample of behaviour. This behaviour sample is used in turn, to make inferences about the psychological attributes of the people who have been tested, attributes such as intelligence, self-esteem and so forth. Psychological tests are behaviour samples that are uniform, objective and interpretable. They are designed to gauge individual differences and norms are often developed to help interpret these differences.
Classification of Psychological Test

According to Anastasi, there are three criteria of classification of the psychological tests:

1. **On the basis of Contents**: on this basis, psychological tests can be divided into two types-

   (i) **Cognitive test**: Cognitive tests are those tests which are used to measure different abilities and capacities. It is also called Ability test. Some of it’s examples are as follows-

   (a) *Test of general intelligence*: these tests are designed to measure general intelligence of people. For example, an adult’s ability to cope with general intellectual problems.
(b) **Test of creative intelligence**: these tests are designed to measure creative capacity.

(c) **Test of aptitude**: Aptitude usually refers to the ability to learn a particular kind of skill required in a specific situation. Test of aptitude is designed to measure it, such as, musical aptitude test, mechanical aptitude test, clerical aptitude test, etc.

(d) **Test of achievement**: these tests are designed to measure the capacity or ability to achieve the goal. These tests help in the prediction of the people’s achievement in their field.
(ii) Non- Cognitive test: Non-cognitive tests are those tests which are used to measure different aspects of personality. It is also called Personality test. Some of it’s examples are as follows-

(a) Test of personality: these tests are designed to reveal an individual’s personality which includes characteristics patterns of thinking, feeling and behaving.

(b) Test of traits and temperaments: these tests are the deep study of the traits and temperaments of a person, i.e. the way a person responds emotionally and cognitively to another person, thing and/or situation.

(c) Test of values and interests: these tests focused on the personality attributes of interests and values. For example, vocational interest.
2. **On the basis of Purpose**: on this basis, psychological tests can be divided into two types:

(i) **Descriptive test**: these are those tests in which the mode of the answer will be descriptive, i.e. the testee has to give his response in a descriptive manner. Descriptive test may be (a) Cognitive test or (b) Non-Cognitive test or the mixture of both the types.

(ii) **Selection test**: in selection test the testee has to choose or select the right choice from the multiple choice questions. Selection test may also be (a) Cognitive test or (b) Non-Cognitive test.
3. **On the basis of Form**: on this basis, psychological tests can be divided into five types-

(i) **Oral test**: the mode of this type of test is oral, i.e. spoken. There is a lack of written work.

(ii) **Paper-pencil test**: in this type of test, a test booklet and an answer sheet is provided to the testee and he perform written work using paper, pencil, etc.

(iii) **Speed test**: in this type the questions of the test booklet are arranged in such a manner that it can’t be completely solved within that time limit. There is a lot of questions in the test booklet and the testee has to solve it in a short time-limit. The scoring is done on the basis of speed, i.e. number of the solved questions.
(iv) **Power test:** In this type of test, a test booklet and an answer sheet is provided to the testee and there is also the time limitation but the scoring is done on the basis of correctness, i.e. accuracy of the answers.

(v) **Performance test:** performance tests are those tests in which the language is either used to direct or may not be used when pantomime and gesture is used for the direction but in the items the language is never used. There are few objects kept physically in front of the testee and they are asked to manipulate and/or disentangle.

   These tests are both, individual as well as group. One of the performance test which is widely used for the measurement of intelligence is Alexander’s Battery of Performance test.
Characteristics of a Good Psychological test

- There are five main characteristics of a good psychological tests, which are as follows:
  - Objectivity
  - Reliability
  - Validity
  - Norms
  - Practicability
Characteristics of a Good Psychological test

1. **Objectivity**: The test should be free from subjective judgements such as wish, prejudice, etc. regarding various attributes which are to be measured and evaluated like, the ability, skill, knowledge or potentiality, traits, etc.

2. **Reliability**: This simply refers to the extent to which the results obtained are consistent or reliable, when the test is administered for more than one with a reasonable gap of time, a reliable test will yield the same scores. It simply shows that the test is trustworthy. Though, there are many methods of testing the reliability of a test.

3. **Validity**: The validity of the test signifies that the test measures what it meant to measure. For example, when an intelligence test is developed to assess the level of intelligence, it should assess the intelligence of the person, not other factors. There are many ways to assess validity of a test. Simply, we can say that it explains us whether the test fulfils the objective of it’s development.
4. **Norms:** It refers to the average performance of a representative sample on a given test. According to Chaplin (1975) - “A norm may be a single value or a range of values expressing the typical performance of a group against which any individual can be prepared. Norms may be expressed in terms of age, percentile or simple average.” On the basis of nature, there are mainly four types of norms:

   i. Age norms
   ii. Grade norms
   iii. Percentile norms
   iv. Standard score norms

5. **Practicability:** The psychological test must be practicable in- time required for completion, the length, number of items or questions, scoring, etc. The test should neither be too lengthy nor too short and difficult to answer as well as scoring.
Purpose of Psychological test

Psychological test is an objective and standardised measure of an individual’s mental and/or behavioural characteristics. The purpose of all the psychological tests is to measure or to find out all the dimensions of psychological attributes, i.e. individual differences. The study of the individual differences is done in the following fields:

1. **Prediction:** by using psychological test, assessment is done and the gathered information is used for the prediction of future behavioural patterns. There are some fields of prediction which are as follows:

   (a) **Clinical field:** for assessment and prediction about any individual, a clinical psychologist generally conduct psychological tests.
For example, if he conduct test of emotional adjustment on a person and he finds that the score of that person is very less than the average score of that test, i.e. poor emotional adjustment. Then he can easily predict that the person may suffer from some mental illness if not helped.

**(b) Field of academic achievements:** Prediction is also done in the field of academic achievements by psychological testing. For example, in schools, the intelligence is measured of the student by using psychological tests and prediction is done about the probability of his future achievements on the basis of his scores.

**(c) In the field of selection for employment:** tests are also used to select the appropriate person for a particular job. By the help of the score obtained the prediction is done about the performance. The selection of best employee is done on the basis of this prediction, which is based on the psychological tests.
2. **Description and Selection:** on the basis of psychological tests, the assessment and description of the mental and/or behavioural characteristics of an individual and his selection for a particular job or post is done, where he can perform his best.

3. **Diagnosis and treatment:** the psychological tests play an important role in the interpretation and analysis of the individual behaviour. There is an analysis of different aspects of behaviour.

   For example, a school counsellor can easily conclude that why a student who is of high I.Q. fails to perform better in his class, on the basis of the psychological tests. A clinical psychologist can easily diagnose any patient suffering from any mental disease on the basis of psychological testing.

   The treatment is carried out further after the diagnosis.
4. **Research**: One of the aim of the psychological test is to research about the new theories and techniques. The psychological tests are used widely now a days in the field of research. According to Gulliken (1954), there is mutual relationship between the psychological test and the research. Many psychological tests are the result of the research and many researches are going on the theories which are the product of the psychological tests.

In this way it is clear that, the psychological tests are widely used for the various purposes such as for clinical diagnosis, guidance, personnel selection, placement, training, etc.
THANK YOU