

PSYCHOLOGICAL TESTING: AN INTRODUCTION (2ND EDITION)

Author:Shanya Pillay¹**Affiliation:**

¹School of Psychology,
University of Kwa-Zulu
Natal, South Africa

Correspondence to:

Shanya Pillay

e-mail:

shanya@mailbox.co.za

Postal address:

University of Johannesburg,
PO Box 524, Auckland Park,
2006, South Africa

Keywords:

psychological testing;
reliability of tests; validity
of tests; construction of
tests; test administration

Dates:

Received: 18 Apr. 2008

Accepted: 02 Feb. 2009

Published: 07 May 2009

How to cite this article:

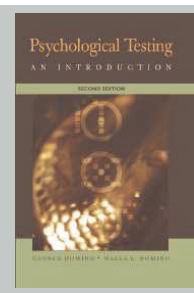
Pillay, S. (2009).

Psychological testing: An
introduction (2nd edition).

*SA Journal of Industrial
Psychology/ SA Tydskrif vir
Bedryfsielkunde*, 35(1), Art.
#807, 2 pages. DOI: 10.4102/
sajip.v35i1.807

This article is available at:<http://www.sajhrm.co.za>

© 2009. The Authors.
Licensee: OpenJournals
Publishing. This work
is licensed under the
Creative Commons
Attribution License.



ISBN: 978-0-5218-618-16

By: George Domino & Marla L. Domino

Published by: Cambridge University Press

Postal Address:

PO Box 50017

Victoria and Alfred Waterfront

Cape Town 8002

South Africa

Tel: +27 (0) 21 412 7800

Fax: +27 (0) 21 419 8418

e-mail: information@cup.co.za

The book under review provides a comprehensive introduction to psychological testing. It is divided into five parts, each dealing with a different aspect of testing.

Part 1 looks at basic issues surrounding psychological testing. It addresses issues such as the nature of tests, test administration and reliability and validity issues. Generally, the information provided in Part 1 is clear - however, given that these sections essentially introduce the reader to the subject area of psychological testing, it could have been more thorough.

Of note, the section on Tests and Experimental Procedure could be expanded to include greater detail on the issues of situational variables, experimental variables and subject variables. The section on Test Categories is excellently laid out and was easy to follow. The content included is more than sufficient and is pitched at a level suitable for undergraduate teaching.

Ethical standards and practices is an intricate and sensitive topic within the area of psychological testing. I found the text describing related issues to be sufficient but not overly detailed. Issues discussed could have been elaborated further, preferably with the use of case studies and practical examples, making it ideal for the undergraduate student. As it stands, the concepts related to ethical issues may be somewhat difficult to grasp at an entry level.

The section on test construction, administration and interpretation was excellent. The reader should have no trouble at all following and understanding the related procedures. The chapter includes detailed information on the entire process, from identifying which test/s to consider to test refinements. Test items are discussed in great detail with interesting examples that assist the reader in understanding. The explanation on test interpretation is also well presented. The text assumes that the reader has no prior experience in the field and therefore provides a detailed yet simple overview of the entire process.

Part 2 of the text focuses on the various dimensions associated with testing. The dimensions include: discussions on personality, cognition, attitudes, psychopathology, and normal, positive functioning. Descriptions of basic associated issues such as rating scales and report measures are adequate. The descriptions of specific tests, however, could have been simplified and discussed using practical examples. As it stands, undergraduate readers may encounter some difficulty, given that this might be their first exposure to these tests. The discussion tends to be quite complex and intricate. However, a brief review of the suggested readings following on from this section indicates that the authors have provided an excellent supplement to the material covered in the text. The readings were easy to locate electronically.

Part 3 of the book addresses psychological testing in the context of children, older adults, and disability and rehabilitation.

The chapter on children focuses on tests used on children who have difficulties in their development and learning. This chapter is especially well presented in that it provides a very detailed overview and analysis on how to identify such children. There is also a discussion on international law in this area. The chapter provides information on realistic challenges in evaluation and on the actual functions of this specific type of assessment. Issues of reliability and validity are well integrated into this section and it follows very logically from the initial descriptions of reliability and validity discussed in the preceding chapters. Also, the text is particularly useful in that aside from the theoretical discussions attached to testing children, there is a more than adequate inclusion of contemporary tests that are currently used.

The chapter on disability and rehabilitation is equally well presented. The overview provided is particularly good in that it presents an excellent review of disabilities, including the various categories of disability which exist and challenges which may arise. Although not extensive, the information provided in this chapter is clear and pitched at a level that was very easy to understand. Legal issues surrounding this sensitive area are also presented in a manner that is both interesting and easy to understand.

Part 4 focuses on the different settings where testing can occur, such as schools, the workplace, and clinical and forensic settings. All of the above areas are relatively well covered, each including a simple introduction, progressively detailed content and an adequate summary. However, more practical examples would have been useful. For example, the point of departure in each of the above-mentioned sections is very technical in nature. Information is provided on administration, scoring, and, among other things, scaling. The information on interpretation tends to be a little scant. Overall, however, this section is well presented.

Part 5, which looks at challenges associated with testing, is presented well. The information is relevant and ties in perfectly with all the sections preceding it. This part of the text provides very detailed information on the challenges which had been mentioned briefly in the previous chapters/areas. The text is set out in such a way that it relates to all tests that had been discussed earlier in the book. Each challenge is dealt with comprehensively, with explanations provided from numerous sources and authors. In addition, actual tests are mentioned with their associated challenges to illustrate how these challenges occur in practice. Indeed, the most beneficial aspect of this section is the practical element that is provided. The reader is able to see exactly how these challenges both occur and can be resolved. There are many tables, statistics and graphs that are also included which provide excellent technical information for the reader.

Perhaps most worthy of recognition is the inclusion of the chapter on the role of computers. An interesting, accessible historical overview of testing using computer technology sets the tone for this chapter. The discussions on computer scoring and administration of tests are more than sufficient. Although very technical in nature, the information provided in this chapter is easy to understand.

The chapter on testing behaviour and environments provides information in a systematic manner which flows from a historical/traditional perspective to more modern/contemporary perspectives. The section on behavioural assessment is useful, particularly the discussion on direct assessment methods. Practical examples used in explanations makes this easy to understand. Furthermore, the benefits associated with behavioural assessment (in comparison with other forms of assessment) provide the reader with an analysis of these different methods. This information is provided both graphically and theoretically. What is especially valuable in this chapter is that previously mentioned challenges are integrated into these methods, allowing the reader to relate this material to previous discussions. A discussion of assessment scales is provided, which includes a simple introduction and insightful summary.

The last section of the book deals with the history of psychological testing. Although this is well presented as a chapter in itself, it could be situated earlier on in the book as it touches on many of the issues/challenges and information presented in the other chapters. The history provided is particularly interesting, and draws on a number of different areas, including science and religion as well as other contexts.

Overall, the content of the book is useful and well laid out. Each section is introduced clearly, followed by graded content and then concluded with both suggested readings and discussion questions.

The flow of chapters in the book is excellent. Each new chapter follows from previous discussions and is introduced with the chapter's aims. The language used is pitched at a level which is suitable for undergraduate students. In fact, the introductory text is simple enough for a reader with no previous knowledge in this area, making it ideal for undergraduate teaching.