

PSYCHOLOGICAL TESTING IN SCHOOLS: AN ASSESSMENT¹

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The paper traces the development of the use of psychological testing in educational, clinical, and industrial settings. Based on the information obtained using the survey method, the paper describes the present status of psychological testing in government, private, and special educational institutions. The status of psychological testing in schools was assessed in terms of information given regarding (1) tests administered, (2) purpose of test administration, (3) training received by test administrator on psychological measurement, and (4) ratings on the usefulness of tests. It has been observed that with respect to percentage of institutions engaged in testing and also with respect to the development of scientific literature, the educational sector is definitely ahead of the clinical and industrial sectors.

This paper is an excerpt from a longer empirical study which encompasses the clinical, educational, and industrial settings. Since I have been requested to make an assessment of psychological testing in schools, I shall then try to focus on the educational setting for my task.

Assessment entails some ideal or criterion against which certain state of affairs are compared. In psychological testing, there are implicit ideals such as test validity, and reliability which I shall not care to explicate here. I shall assume that this is common knowledge for all of us.

Psychological testing has long been a point of controversy in Philippine psychology. It is, perhaps, a facet of psychology that is most widely used as it is misused or abused. The practice seems to have become so widespread that to the Filipino layman, psychology and psychological testing are one and the same thing.

Ranging from business to education to the industrial field, the uses for psychological tests are very wide today. Results of psychological

tests, particularly intelligence and/or aptitude tests, have increasingly become the criteria for the hiring of personnel in many companies. Attesting to the popularity of psychological tests for business is the emergence of a number of establishments offering specialized services: such as the Philippine Psychological Corporation, the Personnel Evaluation and Placement Services, D'Prets, the Decision Research Corporation, and the Institute of Human Interaction.

In education, similar developments have occurred in the past five years. The Fund for Assistance to Private Education was commissioned in 1972 to devise the National College Entrance Examination (NCEE) as a step towards the implementation of a presidential decree institutionalizing a college entrance testing program. Presently administered by the National Testing Center of the Department of Education and Culture the NCEE is now a requirement for collegiate studies, making, in effect, psychological tests of vital importance to the Filipino youth.

Finally, psychological testing is likewise used in the medical field as basis for the diagnosis and evaluation of mentally-ill patients as well as for the recruitment of medical students.

Concern over psychological testing in the Philippines began as early as the 1920's (Car

¹Paper read at the 14th Annual Convention of the Psychological Association of the Philippines, Alumni Hostel, University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City, May 7-8, 1978.

reon, 1926) and since that time, studies on this subject have greatly increased.

Studies in psychological measurement initially arose in the educational field and was largely focused on ability testing, especially intelligence testing (Carreon, 1926). Thus, the greater bulk of psychological measurement literature pertains to educational assessment and evaluation (Guzman, 1958; Alarilla, 1962; Leonor, 1963; Hidalgo, 1963; Bumatay, 1963; Ty, 1965 and 1966; Clemente, *et. al.* 1967; Laconico, 1968; Alarilla, 1968.)

At the University of the Philippines, the trend was the same (de la Llana, 1973). It is significant that the *first* psychology thesis at the UP involved intelligence testing (Gloria, 1922) and subsequent theses within the next decades also mainly dealt with ability testing (Ramos, 1922; Rayos, 1924; Ibalio, 1933; Padilla, 1953).

A shift in interest occurred in the 1950's when psychologists investigated the Rorschach test (Arana, 1954; Floro, 1965); which at that time was widely being used for the diagnosis of psychopathology.

The number of studies on psychological testing in education has continually increased up to the present. This may be due to the institutionalization of college aptitude testing especially with the creation of the National Testing Center.

In contrast is the dearth of materials in clinical and industrial testing and evaluation. Except for a couple of studies (Arana, 1954; Floro, 1965), very little has been written regarding clinical testing. The same is true of psychological testing in business and industry.

EDUCATIONAL SETTING

The sample for the educational setting consists of public and private schools which were classified according to the level of education offered: kindergarten, primary, elementary, secondary, colleges, university, and graduate schools. In the case of private schools, it was found necessary to use additional categories for

classification to make an adequate sample. These categories are: vocational schools, hospital schools, seminaries, and others. The latter category include highly specialized institutions which could not be easily classified into any one of the previous categories.

The sample covers the Greater Manila Area which include the cities of Manila, Pasay, Quezon, and Caloocan, and the municipalities of Makati, Parañaque, Pasig, San Juan, Mandaluyong, Pateros, Navotas, Malabon, Las Piñas, and Marikina, all in the Metropolitan Manila area.

The sample schools were randomly chosen from the lists obtained from records at the Bureau of Public Schools and Bureau of Private Schools and the FAPE directory of private schools (1970-71).

The number of institutions included in the sample and the corresponding population are tabulated in Table 1.

For the government sector, available records show that there are 309 elementary schools, 67 secondary schools, 1 city college, 4 state colleges, and 1 state university within the area covered.

For the private sector, Manila has a total listing of 173 private schools while there are 223 schools in the suburbs distributed among the cities and municipalities specified above.

As a rule, the geographical location and the total number of schools within an area were considered in sampling.

It must be noted that the classification of schools into the different academic level is rather ambiguous since some schools offer two or more levels. In some cases, academic and vocational courses are offered in one school.

For convenience and clarity in the analysis of data, the categories stand for either the highest level offered in the institution or the only level offered in the said institution.

In the analysis of the data, this ambiguity could be eliminated by obtaining data for all

TABLE 1
Number of Institutions Included in the Sample:

<i>Academic Level</i>	GOVERNMENT		PRIVATE	
	Population	Sample	Population	Sample
A. Kindergarten			27	11
Primary			19	15
Elementary	309	61	42	12
Secondary	67	28	109	52
Colleges	5	5	67	53
Universities	1	1	21	15
Graduate Schools			3	3
B. Vocational Schools			84	12
Hospital Schools			15	1
Seminaries			7	3
Others			2	2
	382	95	396	179

levels offered within one institution. However, this procedure was done only for the second half of the sample. Analysis of these data is still ongoing and is not included in this report.

Materials

A questionnaire was developed initially by the author as a survey instrument for the study. However, this version of the questionnaire was later modified with the help of another person. This revised form was then used in the survey proper.

Procedure

A questionnaire was distributed inquiring into: (1) the use of psychological tests in the institution; (2) test administrators and their qualifications; (3) tests administered; (4) purposes for which tests are administered; (5) training in the use of psychological tests; (6) publications and researches in psychological testing; (7) problems and difficulties in the use of psychological tests; and, (8) other psychological services needed in the institution.

The questionnaires were delivered in the sample institutions. Then, replies were personally collected by or mailed to the investigators. In most cases, however, brief interviews were conducted to verify or clarify data provided by the respondents.

Analysis of Data:

Protocols were classified according to the appropriate categories: government, private, special institutions, etc.

A directory of the respondents for each institution was prepared and frequency tallies were made for (1) tests administered, (2) purposes of tests administration, (3) training on psychological measurement, and (4) ratings on the usefulness of tests.

Those who are deeply involved in educational testing may find some of these findings obvious or self-evident but let me nevertheless state these findings to give a summary picture.

1. Of 71 educational institutions surveyed, 86.87% had psychological tests in con-

- trast to 49% and 64% for clerical and industrial settings, respectively.
- 2. Psychological tests are used mainly for admission to academic programs and vocational counseling and guidance.
- 3. Tests commonly administered in schools are the Otis-Lennon Mental Ability Test, Otis-Lennon Mental Maturity Test, Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale, Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children, Stanford-Binet, Differential Aptitude Test, Cattell's 16 PF, Mooney Problems Checklists, Edwards' Personal Preference Scale, and the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory.
- 4. About 51% of educational institutions with psychological tests provide training for their psychometrics personnel in the form of seminars and workshops.
- 5. Tests are used as basis for decision making in about 65% of the educational institutions surveyed.

In terms of the sheer percentage of institutions engaged in testing, schools definitely outnumber clinics and industrial firms.

Moreover, more schools provide psychometric training for their personnel and probably suggest a better level of professionalism in the trade as compared to the two other settings.

● However, the degree of importance attached to testing in education does not appear significantly different from the clerical and industrial settings.

In terms of the development of scientific literature, education definitely outnumbers the clinical and industrial sector.

● A great bulk of literature on educational testing is presently being generated at the FAPE. Industrial and clinical institutions equivalent to FAPE have not emerged nor have gained any prominence.

Although education may be considered to have advanced farther than industry and the clinic at least in terms of the scientific literature, it still shares essentially the same problems.

Assessment entails some ideal or criterion against which contemporary state of affairs are compared.

Nevertheless, an appraisal of the field may inevitably come as one describes existing practices in the field.

To my mind, an assessment can be done either by analyzing the progress of events in the field within a certain time frame or by comparing developments in testing from one setting to another.

In the matter of psychological testing, it may be rather misleading to generalize and categorically state that progress and advancement have occurred.

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