Casey Carnnia

Professor Costa

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It has been stated that intelligence tests are reliable but not valid. Can you explain what this statement means?

Reliability of a system is defined by the repeatability of that system. We learned on pager 382 that psychologist try to prove the reliability of the tests that they devise by repeating the test or by dividing the test and evaluating the outcomes. This tells me that if two different institutions tested my current intelligence markers they are likely to provide the same test results. They would reliably measure my computational prowess, my language skills, my spatial ability, or any other factor that they are prepared to measure.

Validity of intelligence test however is based on how predictive they are. This part becomes a bit confusing and requires a good understanding of standardization (explained on page 380). My test results are measured based the results of a sample group that I resemble. This is why intelligence test applied to young students is most predictable of their school achievements and as the time goes by, they lose their predictability power. This is to say that if one’s math skills stand out as a sixth grader it is predictable of math success as an eighth grader while the sampling pool is still large. Though, it may have very little predictability power regarding college level classes.

Psychological tests are diagnostic tools. What does this statement mean and how do you approach test results?

Test in and of themselves are too limited to provide a complete answer. But, as evaluating tools in the hands of a professional can play a valuable part. Test are by their nature discriminatory. They are designed to distinguish between people and help establish classifications. However, these classifications cannot automatically have diagnostic accuracy. When we studied bias on page 398, we learned that the environment that a test is conducted could influence the outcome of the test. These matrixes can help proved guidelines based on which we could improve ourselves. In another words, tests in general and psychological tests in particular are not designed to exclude people but to eliminate talents and capabilities to be nurtured and improved upon.

As for my own approach to test results, I am reminded of a saying: falling sleep to my own lullaby is difficult. It has taken a long time for me to understand to be objective about test results, but I am not there yet. To know that the process of evaluation is not by itself determinant of my future achievements is something that I have to actively remind myself of. We test our knowledge of various subjects of study just as diagnostically as we measure our blood pressure or any other vital sign. Based on this measurement we can modify our behavior and adjust our systems; just as soon as we finished feeling sorry for ourselves.

Works Cited

Myers, David G. *Psychology.* 10th ed. New York: Worth Publishers, 2011. Print.

Hi Ali,

I guess I am a bit confused about what you wrote. If I took a reliable test to evaluate my math skills how can we invalidate the test based on its “pertinence”, as you put it? The test is certainly related to math.

As I understood what the test may not be related to is my future aptitude to learning math. This is to say that I score low on math placement test in elementary school we can with a higher level of success predict my difficulty with math in the immediately pursuing years but there is no reason why I could not develop this skill in the long run.

Hi Rebecca,

Let us assume that we know that an IQ test performed by XYZ institution is reliable. Is it your assertion that the test is more valid in predicting the future performance of those who scored in the top 10 percent and the predictability of the test diminishes as we move to those who performed poorly?

If that is the case, then why? If one’s good performance can be a sign of future success shouldn’t one’s bad performance be the sign of future failure?

Hi Nicole,

Good job with the SAT example. One important thing that I got out of reading the text is that it’ll be a long while before we’d have to worry about the results of our intelligence tests based on our age. Checkout the graph on page 383. The testes you take at a younger age are more valid because of the fact that they are evaluating you among your peers at that age. These tests have a lot less validity in the long run. As you said one reason is that, we grow and purposefully improve our skills.

Hi Diane

If “Intelligence tests are not valid because you can’t measure one’s intelligence” then what is the reason for an IQ tests? The way I understand the text is that they are less valid in predicting your future aptitude but there is nothing to invalidate the test by itself.