Individual differences (evaluation of the usefulness of the psychometric approach...

Psychology

Evaluation of the Usefulness of the Psychometric Approach For Understanding Personality or Human Intelligence Introduction Psychometric approach is one of the most popular ways of measuring human intelligence and personality, and it is based on the quantitative interpretation of the collective traits of an individual including verbal skills, mathematical and spatial skills, intelligence, and psychomotor skills (Barenbaum & Winter, 2010, p. 7). However, questions about the usefulness of intelligence testing arise due to inconsistencies in the measurement methods, particularly in the diverse expression of human beings in their inherent and unquantifiable capacities. Initially, this paper contends that there is no foolproof way in intelligence testing because of the various and unprecedented factors that may affect the cognitive and behavioral development of individuals. Accordingly, this paper explores the different benefits and drawbacks of selected intelligence and personality measurement related to psychometric approach. Galton’s Stimuli Sensitivity Galton’s theory of individual differences takes root from his theory of Eugenics wherein cognitive and behavioral development is attributable to genetics. In elaborating Galtonian Eugenics, Bulmer (2003) explains that Galton’s theory of individual different focuses heavily on the influence of heredity on mental development wherein children of parents with good genes tend to become more talented (p. 80). Further, Burmer (2003) added that Galton’s argument on individual differences is primarily based on the genes of a person, considering that the high quality genes of parents drive the genetic composition of their offspring. Relatively, Galton also contends that intelligence and personality testing should consider the rate at which and individual responds to environmental

stimuli. Galton contends that intelligence level is attributable to the flexibility, promptness, and sensitivity of an individual in responding to external factors effectively and appropriately. However, fast response speed alone is not enough proof of high intelligence, considering that different avenues of intellectual expression among human beings. Binet's Reasoning-Vocabulary-Problem Solving Measurement Another highly debated psychometric testing theory is Binet's theory of individual differences as attributable to skills in problem-solving, reasoning, logic, and vocabulary. According to Weinberg (1989), Binet's theory relates to the differences in the demonstration of skills in one's daily life including verbal and logical thinking skills, objective judgment, information acquisition, and navigational skills (p. 98). Specifically, Binet's idea relies heavily on acquiring quantifiable data concerning a person's fundamental cognitive skills; this process allows a variety of test questions aiming to quantify the performance of takers. Further, Boake (2002) added that the benefits of this testing method are the accessibility of results that help in determining the strong and weak points of a person's cognitive development (pp. 385-86). However, Weinberg also mentions that the underlying drawback of Binet's psychometric testing method is that it overlooks the inherited aspect of behavioral and hereditary aspects. For instance, a person may not have the mental capacity to do highly logical tasks although he/she is gifted in the arts. Intelligence and Individual Differences Considering the two theories, it is likely that no single intelligence testing method will work in all cases because of the inherent drawbacks of those methods. This is also because of the diverse cultural and intellectual trainings that people undergo throughout their developmental

life stages. For instance, Haslam and Baron (1994) mention that individual differences may result from the inherent personality, cognitive capacity, heredity, and cultural trainings from parents (p. 33). Haslam and Baron (1994) mention that both aspects help in advancing the holistic development of a person; character builds social skills while intelligence builds technical skills. On one hand, the theory of multiple intelligences supports the inevitability of intellectual diversity, particularly in the classroom wherein students come from diverse cultural backgrounds; this also relates to Galton's explanation on the hereditary roots of intelligence. Specifically, Gardner and Hatch (1989) mention that students manifest different avenues of self expression that mirrors their inherent learning preferences (p. 6). For instance, students may showcase their social skills, spatial abilities, verbal and logical skills, psychomotor skills, and self-reflective skills. Conclusion Considering the two theories about psychometric approaches, one can say that, although psychometric approach provides enough data about the intellectual and behavioral aspects of an individual, it is not reliable enough to make a universal tool for intellectual measurement. This is because of the inherent drawbacks that such an approach offers when it is not used in its specific fields. For instance, although Galton's stimuli sensitivity measures inherent reaction speed and motor skills, it fails to measure and explain the different manner of reaction among individuals. As for Binet's Cognitive response, it only provides data on the nature of responses, regardless of the potential cultural and behavioral roots of those reactions. Conclusively, in studying the two commonly used methods of psychometric approach, it is possible that psychometric testing is useful only when used along with other

reliable cognitive and behavioral testing methods. References Barenbaum, N. B., & Winter, D. G. (2010). History of modern personality theory and research. In O. J. John, R. W. Robins, and L. A. Pervin (Eds.) Handbook of personality: Theory and research (3rd ed) (pp. 3-28). New York, NY: the Guilford Press. Boake, C. (2002). From the Binet-Simon to the Wechsler-Bellevue: Tracing the history of intelligence testing. Journal of Clinical and Experimental Neuropsychology, 24 (3), 383-405. Bulmer, F. (2003). Francis Galton: Pioneer of heredity and Biometry. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press. Gardner, H., & Hatch, T. (1989). Multiple intelligences go to school: Educational implications of the theory of Multiple Intelligences. Educational Researcher, 18 (8), 4-10. Haslam, N., & Baron, J. (1994). Intelligence, personality, and prudence. In R. J. Sternberg & P. Ruzgis (Eds.), Personality and intelligence (pp. 32-60). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press. Weinberg, R. A. (1989). Intelligence and IQ: Landmark issues and great debates. American Psychologist, 44 (2): 98-104.