

Psychology assessments - reliability and validity



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Reliability and validity Reliability refers to a value that can be given to something with certain level of acceptability and trust. Validity on the other hand is a certain measure that would make something reliable. Validity tells up to what extent a certain thing has reliability because it gives a picture of certain level of acceptability and trust. Acceptability and trust are highly associated with the reality, what is seen or observed or measured, the information given and what the human logic could readily understand or perceive (Nooteboom, 2002; Damer, 2008; Carter, 2009). It is in line with this that reliability and validity are strongly linked with each other through a certain level of acceptability and trust. There are some cases in which an assessment instrument can be reliable but not be valid. Suppose for instance a person used an assessment instrument. There are corresponding results in the assessment using the said instrument. However, the use of the assessment instrument cannot be entirely valid if the person using it is not an expert at understanding the results from the assessment. Thus, this is the same as the assessment instrument is not valid at all considering that it gives results but cannot be acceptable. The assessment instrument therefore has to be used by the right person in order for its result to be valid and in general, it can be reliable. In this case, the reliability and validity of the assessment instrument is associated with its user. Thus, a higher level of reliability cannot be given to the assessment instrument considering that the validity issue is in question. In the above illustration, the entire issue is not a two-way process between the reliability and validity issues within the assessment instrument. There has to be another external factor and in this case the level of reliability and validity of an assessment instrument may vary with respect to its user. On the other hand, an assessment instrument

that is not reliable can never be deemed valid. As defined earlier, validity of a certain thing determines up to what level of reliability has to be given to it. If there is a case in which an assessment instrument can be reliable but not valid, then there are some cases in which it cannot be reliable and eventually not be valid at all. Experts have to use assessment instruments with great level of reliability. In fact, doctors for instance have to use assessment instruments with high level of accuracy because their opinions about the health conditions of their patients rely on the given results. Suppose the assessment instruments they use are not reliable when it comes to giving accurate results, then the validity is also in question. Validity in this case may also refer to the level of acceptability of the given results. If the acceptability of the given results is not too high, then it follows that their reliability is also in the level that trust is not too high either. This boils down to the fact that if the assessment instrument used produced invalid results then reliability issue is in great consideration. People have to buy pregnancy test with high level of accuracy. The point is to ensure high validity of the test result. This is the only way in which a higher level of trust, acceptability or reliability on the assessment instrument can be given. Conversely, this depicts the fact that if there is no validity in the assessment instrument then there can be no high guarantee of reliability either. References Carter, S. L. (2009). *The social validity manual: a guide to subjective evaluation of behavior interventions in applied behavior analysis*. California: Academic Press. Damer, E. (2008). *Attacking faulty reasoning: a practical guide to fallacy-free arguments*. California: Cengage Learning. Nooteboom, B. (2002). *Trust: forms, foundations, functions, failures and figures*. Massachusetts: Edward Elgar Publishing.