

Examining Test and Non-Test Techniques for Effective Counselling

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Abstract: Counselling is a helping process that requires adequate and accurate information about the client to be effective. To understand the client holistically and provide appropriate intervention, counsellors employ various techniques for data collection and assessment. These techniques are broadly classified into test and non-test techniques. This study examines the concept, types, uses, advantages and limitations of test and non-test techniques in counselling. Test techniques refer to standardized and objective instruments used to measure specific traits, abilities and characteristics of individuals. They include psychological tests such as intelligence tests, aptitude tests, achievement tests, interest inventories, personality tests and attitude scales. These instruments provide quantifiable and comparable data that aid in diagnosis, prediction and decision-making. Non-test techniques, on the other hand, are non-standardized and subjective methods of gathering information about the client through direct interaction and observation. They include observation, interview, questionnaire, anecdotal records, autobiography, sociometry, case study and cumulative record. These techniques provide qualitative information on the client's background, behaviour, emotions and social interactions which cannot be easily obtained through standardized tests. The paper highlights that both techniques are complementary rather than mutually exclusive. Effective counselling requires the integration of data from both sources to gain a comprehensive understanding of the client. The study also discusses factors influencing the choice of techniques, ethical considerations in their use, and the implications for effective counselling practice in schools and other settings.

Keywords: *Counselling Techniques, Test Techniques, Non-Test Techniques, Psychological Assessment, Client Appraisal.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Counselling is a systematic and professional process of assisting individuals to understand themselves, their environment, and to make informed decisions for personal growth and adjustment. Central to effective counselling is the availability of adequate, accurate, and relevant information about the client. Without a comprehensive understanding of the client's abilities, interests, personality, values, family background, and environmental influences, the counsellor cannot provide meaningful intervention. The process of gathering such information about the client is technically

referred to as appraisal or assessment, and it is achieved through the use of various techniques commonly classified as test and non-test techniques. Client appraisal is the foundation upon which counselling decisions are made. It enables the counsellor to diagnose problems, predict future behaviour, and evaluate progress. To achieve this, counselling psychology has developed a wide range of tools and methods for collecting data. These methods are broadly categorized into two: test techniques and non-test techniques. Test techniques are standardized, objective, and psychometrically sound instruments designed to measure specific psychological constructs. They include intelligence tests, aptitude tests,

achievement tests, personality inventories, interest inventories, and attitude scales. These techniques provide quantifiable data that are valid, reliable, and comparable across individuals and populations, thus making them valuable for educational, vocational, and personal-social counselling.

Non-test techniques, in contrast, are non-standardized, subjective, and largely qualitative methods of data collection. They involve the use of less structured procedures such as observation, interview, questionnaire, autobiography, anecdotal records, sociometry, case study, and cumulative records. These techniques provide in-depth information about the client's feelings, attitudes, social relationships, and life history - information that is often difficult to capture through standardized testing alone. They allow the counsellor to understand the client as a unique individual within his or her life context. In practice, neither the test nor the non-test technique is self-sufficient. Over-reliance on test techniques may lead to a narrow and decontextualized view of the client, while exclusive use of non-test techniques may result in subjective and unreliable judgments. Contemporary counselling practice therefore emphasizes the complementary use of both techniques to achieve a holistic appraisal of the client. The skilled counsellor must know not only the nature and types of these techniques but also when, how, and why to use them, including their strengths, limitations, and ethical implications.

However, despite their importance, there is evidence that many counsellors, especially in school settings in Nigeria and other developing countries, lack adequate competence in the selection, administration, scoring, and interpretation of both test and non-test techniques. This is compounded by problems of unavailability of culturally relevant tests, poor record-keeping, and unethical use of assessment data. These challenges undermine the quality and credibility of counselling services. It is in light of this that this article examines test and non-test techniques in counselling. The article seeks to provide a conceptual clarification of the two categories of techniques, discuss their various types, highlight their advantages and limitations, and explore their relevance for effective counselling practice. A proper understanding of these techniques will enhance counsellors' appraisal skills and improve the overall effectiveness of counselling interventions in educational and non-educational settings. Counsellors use a blend of **testing** (standardized) and **nontest** (qualitative) techniques to assess clients. Testing provides objective, quantitative data about a client's abilities or traits, while non-test techniques provide deeper, subjective insights into a client's emotions, life history, and behaviors. Guidance is the scientific procedure for assisting an individual. Various types of tools and techniques are used in counselling clients for various purposes. Assessment and appraisal are at the core of effective counseling. Counsellors utilize two primary categories of techniques to understand a client's needs, behaviors, and potential: **testing techniques** (standardized, quantitative

assessments) and non-testing techniques (qualitative, observational, and self-reported methods).

II. TEST-TECHNIQUES IN COUNSELLING

Test techniques are standardized instruments for measuring psychological attributes. A psychological test is a systematic procedure for observing and describing behaviour with the aid of a numerical scale or category system. They are characterized by objectivity in administration, scoring and interpretation, and they possess psychometric properties of validity and reliability.

There are many behaviour characteristics in man that require peculiar measures for appropriate classification and treatment. This is why there are lots of testing instruments available for counsellors' use today. Fremer and Wall (2004) identified five major uses of tests in the professional practice of counselling. These are selection and placement, diagnosis, accountability and evaluation, identifying trends or progress and self-discovery. For each of these testing instruments have been developed and are usually available for use by counsellors.

➤ *Characteristics of Test Techniques:*

- Standardization of procedure, materials and scoring.
- Objectivity in assessment.
- Quantifiable results.
- Established norms for comparison.
- Evidence of validity and reliability.

➤ *Test- Techniques are of different types*

• *Achievement Tests:*

These are primarily designed to measure what an individual has learnt. Achievement tests are often used in educational or employment settings. They attempt to measure how much a person knows about a particular topic, that is, the person's achieved knowledge. Counsellors use achievement tests for diagnostic and selective purposes in educational institutions and work places. (Poopola & Oluwatosin, 2018).

• *Aptitude Tests:*

These are specifically designed for selection and production purposes. According to Hamersma (1972), aptitude tests are largely concerned with the question of what a person's capacity or competence is in a special area. This testing tool is relevant in making right prognosis on clients' problems.

• *Interest and Occupational Tests:*

A counsellor sometimes needs to assist his or her clients to make distinctions between their interest and occupational realities. There are lots of familiar grounds in this area when it comes to making occupational and institutional decisions. Occupational tests, such as Ottis Employment Test, Strong Vocational Interest Blank, Minnesota Vocational Interest Inventory and Vocational Interest Inventory(Nigerian version),

attempt to match the client's interests with the interests of persons in known careers. The logic here is that if the things that interest the client are also things that interest people in his or her target occupation, then he or she might be a suitable candidate for the target occupation.

- *Personality Tests:*

Testing and assessment in counseling involves collecting information to analyze clients, identify problems, and plan treatment. These are tests designed to measure the way a person typically responds to stimuli around him/her over time. Two of the most well-known personality tests are the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI), or the revised MMPI-2, composed of several hundred "yes or no" questions, and the Rorschach (the inkblot test), composed of several cards of inkblots in which a person simply gives a description of the images and feelings experienced in looking at the ink blots. Others include: personality testes, Marital Adjustment, Marital Satisfaction Tests, Career Adjustment Test, Self-Concept, Locus of Control Test, Interest Inventories, Marital Compatibility Test, among others:

- *Intelligence Tests*

These are tests which attempt to measure a person's intelligence, that is, a person's basic ability to understand the world around him, assimilate its functioning, and apply this knowledge to enhance the quality of life. Intelligence, therefore, is a measure of a potential, not a measure of what has been learnt (as in an achievement test), and so it is supposed to be independent of the client's culture. The use of tests by counsellors usually follows a number of procedures which include selection, administration, scoring, interpretation and dissemination of test results (Hoover, 1988).

- *Adjustment Inventory or Schedule*

Adjustment schedules are frequently called self-report blanks, adjustments questionnaires, or inventories. It is impossible to differentiate them clearly from 'tests' designed to measure such personality traits as introversion, self-confidence, etc., since most, if not all, aspects of personality are related to adjustment. They are self-report questionnaires used in counselling to measure how well a person is adapting to life situations - school, work, marriage, social life, emotions, etc. They help the counsellor spot areas of maladjustment fast. The purpose of adjustment schedules is to estimate an individual's degree of adjustment or maladjustment. In their preparation, as series of questions designed to reveal attitudes, feelings and behaviour indicative of maladjustment is gathered, attempts are made to validate them and they are administered to a representative group, norms are established. Thus, when the inventory is subsequently administered to an individual, the degree of maladjustment indicated by these responses can be compared with those of the original group. (Popoola & Oluwatosin, 2018).

➤ *Types of Adjustment Inventories*

The adjustment inventories are related to different areas—Home, Health, Social, emotional and School (Popoola & Oluwatosin, 2018). They help the counsellor spot areas of maladjustment fast. These inventories are of the following types:

- *Based on Area of Life Adjusted to*

These are the most common in schools/clinics:

- ✓ Social Adjustment Inventory: Measures peer relations, cooperation, leadership, social anxiety. E.g. Bell's Adjustment Inventory - Social subscale
- ✓ Emotional Adjustment Inventory: Measures mood swings, anxiety, depression, emotional stability. E.g. Bell's - Emotional subscale, MMPI scales
- ✓ Home/Family Adjustment Inventory: Looks at parent-child relations, family conflict, sense of belonging at home. E.g. Bell's - Home subscale
- ✓ Health/Physical Adjustment Inventory: Covers sleep, appetite, fatigue, psychosomatic complaints
- ✓ Educational/Academic Adjustment Inventory: Study habits, attitude to teachers/subjects, exam anxiety. E.g. AISS - Academic Adjustment Inventory for School Students
- ✓ Occupational/Work Adjustment Inventory: Job satisfaction, relations with colleagues/boss, work stress. E.g. Minnesota Job Satisfaction Questionnaire
- ✓ Marital Adjustment Inventory: Communication, conflict resolution, intimacy between spouses. E.g. Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Test

- *Based on Scope/Breadth*

- ✓ Comprehensive/Multivariable Inventories: Cover 4-6 areas in one test. Example: Bell's Adjustment Inventory = Home, Health, Social, Emotional. Saves time.
- ✓ Univariable/Single-area Inventories: Focus on just one area like only marital or only academic adjustment.

- *Based on Purpose*

- ✓ Diagnostic Inventories: Pinpoint specific maladjustment areas. Used at start of counselling. Bell's, Student Problem Checklist
- ✓ Prognostic Inventories: Predict future adjustment, like predicting college success or job performance
- ✓ Research Inventories: Used to study adjustment patterns across groups

- *Uses of Adjustment Inventory:*

According to Popoola & Oluwatosin (2018) adjustment inventories cannot yield conclusive assessment due to the following reasons:

- ✓ It is difficult to formulate diagnostic questions which are understood by all and have the same meaning for all.
- ✓ It is not possible by the use of the inventories which limits to true or false; it is an inventory to expose the extent of adjustment.
- ✓ An adjustment inventory can be validated.

- ✓ It is not the reliable. It cannot differentiates.
- ✓ It depends on frankness of the subject in responding.

The adjustment inventories are useful in school situations in the following ways:

- ✓ For identifying some of the pupils needing special aid in adjustment. Those who need help but cannot bring themselves to answer the questions frankly will, of courses, have been located through some other means.
- ✓ For uncovering unsuspected personal problems through noting an pupil's answers to the specific questions. The existence of such problems must then be verified through other techniques.
- ✓ For discovering clues to the basis of the adjustment difficulty by means of a thorough analysis of the answers.
- ✓ For confirming a suspected maladjustment of a pupils when other evidence yields inconclusive data. (A low score, however, would leave the issue undecided). (ACA, 2003).

➤ *Advantages of Test Techniques*

Provide objective and scientific data

- Results are quantifiable and comparable
- Save time and can cover large groups
- Useful for prediction and selection

➤ *Limitations of Test Techniques*

Cultural bias, especially when foreign tests are used locally

- Anxiety and test conditions can affect performance
- Limited to what they are designed to measure, they cannot measure the total person
- Require trained personnel for administration and interpretation • High cost of procurement

III. THE NON- TEST TECHNIQUES IN COUNSELLING

Non-test techniques are non-standardized, qualitative methods of collecting information about the client. They rely on observation and subjective judgment and are useful for obtaining information about aspects of behaviour that cannot be easily measured by tests.

Non-testing techniques rely more on subjective observation, clinical judgment, and open-ended exploration. They provide a holistic view of the client's lived experiences and emotional context.

The non-test techniques include:

➤ *Observation Technique:*

This is a subjective technique even though it is indispensable techniques. Here the counsellor watches the client in specific settings to evaluate their natural behaviors, social interactions, and physical demeanour.

• *Advantages of Observation*

Some of these include:

- ✓ **Non-Verbal Communication:** Observation allows counselors to analyze clients' non-verbal cues, such as body language, facial expressions, and gestures, which can provide additional information beyond verbal communication (Egan, 2014).
- ✓ **Behavioral Patterns:** By observing clients in various contexts, counselors can identify recurring patterns of behavior, triggers, and coping mechanisms, which can inform the therapeutic process and treatment planning (McLeod, 2013).
- ✓ **Contextual Understanding:** Observation provides counselors with a deeper understanding of clients' environments, relationships, and interactions, enabling them to tailor interventions to specific needs and contexts (Ivey, Ivey, & Zalaquett, 2013).
- ✓ **Enhanced Rapport:** Engaging in observation can strengthen the therapeutic alliance by demonstrating counselors' attentiveness and commitment to understanding clients' experiences holistically (Egan, 2014).

• *Limitations:*

- ✓ **Subjectivity:** Observations are inherently subjective and influenced by counselors' biases, interpretations, and cultural backgrounds, which may affect the accuracy of assessments (McLeod, 2013).
- ✓ **Observer Effect:** The presence of a counselor or observer may alter clients' behavior, leading to artificial or biased representations of their natural responses and interactions (Ivey, Ivey & Zalaquett, 2013).
- ✓ **Limited Scope:** Observation provides only a snapshot of clients' behaviors and interactions within specific contexts, potentially overlooking relevant factors or dynamics occurring outside of the observed settings (Egan, 2014).
- ✓ **Ethical Considerations:** Maintaining clients' privacy and confidentiality can be challenging when using observation techniques, raising ethical concerns about consent, confidentiality, and respect for autonomy (McLeod, 2013).

• *Way Out:*

This involves the followings:

- ✓ **Triangulation:** Combining observation with other assessment methods, such as self-reports, interviews, and psychometric tests, can enhance the reliability and validity of clinical assessments by cross-validating findings across multiple sources (Ivey et al., 2013).
- ✓ **Training and Supervision:** Providing counselors with training in observational skills, cultural competence, and ethical guidelines can mitigate biases and enhance their ability to conduct objective and ethical observations (Egan, 2014).
- ✓ **Informed Consent:** Prior to engaging in observation, counselors should obtain informed consent from clients, explaining the purpose, procedures, and potential risks

involved, while ensuring their right to withdraw consent at any time (McLeod, 2013).

- ✓ Regular Review: Counselors should regularly review and reflect on their observational practices, seeking feedback from peers, supervisors, and clients to identify and address any biases, limitations, or ethical concerns (Ivey, Ivey & Zalaquett, 2013).

➤ *The Diary Record Method:*

Detailed observation of one child is usually for the purpose of comparison with other data already at hand and to determine the kinds of situations in which he has difficulty. For this purpose a running diary account of the pupil's behaviour is usually the most length of time and in a variety of situations. The elementary child may be watched in class, on the playground, in the halls of the child, on the way home, and if possible in the home; the secondary pupil, in the home-room, in various classes, during examinations, in the study hall or library, at a club meeting or in a child dance, in the child criteria and in games or sports with his peers. (Leppma & Jones, 2013).

➤ *Interview Technique:*

Another important technique is the interview technique which is used for collecting information's about the individual from his parents, peers, teachers or other family members. It is a direct, face-to-face conversation to gather personal background, assess emotional states, and build a safe, trusting therapeutic relationship. It has also some limitations to have the reliable data. From the standpoint of diagnosis, there are two immediate reasons why parents should be seen by the elementary child teacher—to gather sufficient knowledge about a child to provide him with the most suitable educational experiences, and to obtain additional insight into the causes of the behaviour of the child who already has difficulties in adjustment. The same two reasons apply to the secondary child teacher as well, although the problem of contacts with the parents of the adolescent is complicated by the implied reflection on his feeling of personal worth. Information for the first of these purposes may sometime be obtained through a questionnaire plus short contacts after child affairs or parents teacher meeting. Although home visits are usually desirable, in most communities teachers do not have time to visit the homes of many of their pupils. (Messer, 2011).

➤ *The Cumulative Record:*

The cumulative record is a record of all information kept on each client in the school. It is a means of keeping readily available permanent data about a child. These data in themselves are likely to aid the counsellor or teacher in appraising the child's assets and liabilities. The record can also serve as a source of new knowledge if an analysis of the meaningful relationships among the different items is made. (Dogar, Azeem, Majoka, Mehmood, & Latif, (2011). Each cumulative record card includes the following:

- ✓ Tests: Intelligence and standardized achievement;
- ✓ Marks: Elementary and high school;
- ✓ Home: Occupation and nationality of parents, names and ages of siblings, languages spoken;
- ✓ Health: Medical examination, physical development, defects, and treatment;
- ✓ Prolonged absences, with causes;
- ✓ personality-short description by teacher;
- ✓ vocation-educational aim, vocational aim, special interests,
- ✓ Vocation-educational aim, vocational aim, special interests, outside employment, school activities;
- ✓ Records of conferences with pupil-important attitudes, remarks, and decisions.

This cumulative record provide a valuable tool for guidance of the student in selecting courses, curricula, advanced educational, and a vocational career. (Stewart & Chambless, 2010). It is useful in understanding the maladjusted pupil chiefly as a source of clues for further inquiry. Obviously such a brief compilation of more or less objective data cannot include the type of information needed to understand the sources, and dynamic factors in, most pupil maladjustments.

➤ *The Case Study:*

The case study is an in-depth compilation of a client's history—including medical, educational, and family backgrounds—to understand the root of current problems It is an attempt to synthesize and interpret the material gathered by the other techniques for the purpose of making an inclusive picture of the individual and of the background factors affecting his life. (AARC, 2012). In order words, the client or groups of clients are studied to understand their behaviour or challenges in grater details and as well use that knowledge to explain the behaviour of their larger group. The case study is the most comprehensive of all methods of special inquiry for use with maladjusted children or with those who exhibit unusual but undeveloped abilities. Such a study is often made by a specialist, though teachers are finding an increasing need to use this method in the course of their specialist, though counsellors are finding an increasing need to use this device in the course of their dealing with clients. The case study is employed in a variety of situations.

• *Items Included in a Case Study*

The amount and kind of information in any one varies greatly. In accordance with Allport's suggestion that successful case studies seem naturally to fall into three sections – (a) A description to the present status, (b) An account of past influences and successive stages of development, and (c) An indication of future trends, the topic have been arranged in that fashion. In line with its relevance to the particular individual studied, the adequate case study will, with certain exceptions, include information in the nine area listed below.

Table 1 Allport's Nine Areas of Case Study

	Present	Past	Future
1.	Problem	History of problem	Educational plans
2.	Educational status	Educational history	Prediction of ultimate level
3.	Intellectual status	Intellectual development	Prediction of future health
4.	Health and physical status	Health and physical history	
5.	Maturity level	Developmental history	
6.	Personality	Personality development	
7.	Social relations	Social history	
8.	Vocation	Vocational history	Vocational plans
9.	Family relationships	Family history (including home and neighbourhood).	

Suggestions for specific items in the areas must of necessity be tentative. So many variable affect the nature of the information gathered—age, sex, type of problem, to mention but a few—that inevitably some irrelevant items are included and many relevant items are omitted. An attempt has been made to be inclusive rather than brief because many case studies made by teachers and other workers in child have come to erroneous or unsure conclusion owing to the commission of items crucial to understanding the case.

• *Steps in Conducting a Case Study*

Case studies usually begin with certain identifying data. These include the child's name, address, age, sex, grade, nationality, colour and religion. Frequently, too, a very brief description of his physical appearance and a thumbnail sketch of his personality are included. The purpose is to orient the reader or to recall that particular child to the writer of many case studies (AARC, 2012).

The next topic covered should be the problem, but after that the order of topics depends upon the specific case investigation. The following information's are to be collected:

- ✓ Problem at present,
- ✓ Education at present,
- ✓ Intelligence,
- ✓ Health and physical conditions,
- ✓ Development at present,
- ✓ Personality make up,
- ✓ Social adjustment,
- ✓ Educational status if any, and
- ✓ Family conditions-economic and cultural level.

This material should enable one to judge whether the problem originated in the home, the child, or both. In this area one is especially likely to find background material that goes a long way to explain the child's behaviour.

IV. THE CASE STUDY MATERIALS

In children, the best procedure in starting a case study is to assemble the information already collected on the child. The cumulative record, if available, should be consulted first. Usually, it is necessary to arrange for tests as the ones on file are not likely to be recent enough. If there is the slightest

indication of a physical basis for the problem, a thorough medical examination should be made (AARC, 2012). The usual medical examination by the child physician is almost certain to be too superficial to be of much use. Interviews should usually be held with the parents, and the child should be observed in as many situations as can be arranged. Interviews with the child are essential, as only through this means can one establish the type of relationship necessary for understanding the problem and aiding readjustment (AARC, 2012).

➤ *Diagnosis*

After the material considered pertinent is gathered, there must be an attempt to synthesize; it by comparing the information in the different sections and interrelating it (AARC, 2012). The purpose is to make a diagnosis, which may be defined as a description of the maladjustment together with the causative factors in both the past and present. The process is exceedingly difficult; it frequently happens that even when the expert draws on all the psychological and social knowledge at his command he still finds that the case remains unexplained. Certainly the teacher in attempting a diagnosis must use the knowledge of his own motivation and his experiences with other, taking what precautions he can against his own bias (AARC, 2012).

➤ *Remedial Measures*

All the methods of approach to understand the child, constitute at the same time an opening for the prevention of maladjustment. It is through such methods that the teacher can acquire the knowledge of the child's particular assets and liabilities and of the factors at the basis of his difficulty which are indispensable to the proper use of corrective procedure assets and liabilities and of the factors at the basis of his difficulty which are indispensable to the proper use of corrective procedures.

General prescriptions for handling children's problems must be of limited value; only the person who understands the specific child can judge whether or not the suggested method of handling is wise or unwise.

➤ *Advantages of Non-Test Techniques*

- Provide in-depth, qualitative information about the client
- Flexible and can be adapted to various situations

- Useful for understanding the client's subjective world
- Inexpensive and easy to use
- Can be used continuously

➤ *Limitations of Non-Test Techniques*

- Highly subjective and prone to bias
- Lack standardization and psychometric properties
- Time-consuming, especially case study and observation
- Difficult to quantify and compare
- Reliability depends on the skill of the user.

➤ *Ethical Considerations in the Use of Appraisal Techniques*

- Tests must only be administered and interpreted by qualified personnel.
- Confidentiality of test and non-test information must be maintained.
- Informed consent of the client should be obtained.
- Tests must be culturally relevant and not used to label or discriminate.
- Results should be communicated in a clear, non-technical language that the client can understand.
- Assessment data should not be used for purposes other than those for which they were collected.

V. IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNSELLING PRACTICE

➤ *Implications of Test Techniques*

- Increased Objectivity and Credibility: Tests reduce counsellor bias. Decisions are based on data, not just intuition. This makes counselling more scientific and acceptable to clients, parents and schools.
- Precise Diagnosis and Prediction: They help in early identification of problems - e.g. learning disability, giftedness, career mismatch. A counsellor can predict with reasonable accuracy how a client may perform in a course or job.
- Time Efficiency: A single test can gather a lot of information quickly that would take many interview sessions to get.
- Need for Professional Competence: This is a major limitation. If misused, tests harm clients. Implications: Counsellors must be trained in test administration, scoring and interpretation • Wrong choice of test, poor administration, or wrong interpretation leads to wrong labelling • Many tests are culturally biased. Tests developed in the West may not be valid for clients in Benin or other parts of Nigeria without adaptation.
- Ethical and Cost Issues: Tests are expensive, need secure storage, confidentiality, and informed consent. Over-reliance can make counselling dehumanizing - reducing a person to a score.

➤ *Implications of Non-Test Techniques*

- Provides Holistic Understanding: Non-test techniques give context that tests cannot. A low score in an achievement test means more when you have the case history showing family conflict or illness. They reveal attitudes, values and feelings.
- Enhances Therapeutic Relationship: Methods like interview and observation build rapport, trust and empathy. The client feels heard, not just tested. This is the core of counselling.
- Flexibility and Low Cost: They can be used anywhere, anytime, with no special materials. Very useful in Nigerian schools where standardized tests are scarce.
- Subjectivity and Low Reliability: The main weakness. Data depends heavily on the counsellor's skill and bias. Two counsellors may interpret the same anecdotal record differently. Information can be distorted if the client wants to impress.
- Complements Test Data: Non-test data is essential to validate test results. For example, a high interest in Engineering on an inventory should be checked against the client's actual behaviour, school performance and interview responses.

➤ *The Integrated Implication*

Modern counselling practice does not choose one over the other. The implication is eclectic use: Test techniques tell you WHAT the client is, Non-test techniques tell you WHY and HOW the client became so.

➤ *Best Practice Requires:*

- Use non-test techniques first to build rapport and gather background, then select relevant tests
- Never make a major decision - like career choice, promotion, or clinical diagnosis - on a single test score
- Interpret test results within the context provided by non-test data
- Maintain ethical standards: confidentiality, informed consent, and proper record keeping for both.

In short, test techniques make counselling practice more objective and precise, while non-test techniques make it more human, contextual and therapeutic. A competent counsellor needs both to be effective.

VI. CONCLUSION

Test and non-test techniques are indispensable tools in the hands of a professional counsellor. While standardized tests provide objective, measurable data about a client's abilities, interests, and personality, non-test techniques such as observation, interview, case study, and rating scales offer valuable qualitative insights into the client's background and behavior. Neither approach is sufficient on its own. An effective counsellor, therefore, integrates both methods to obtain a holistic understanding of the client. Relying on only one will give an incomplete picture of the client. As professional counsellors, our responsibility is to select and combine these

tools ethically and skillfully, so that we can guide, support, and empower clients toward self-understanding and better decision-making. Ultimately, the goal is not just to assess, but to help. This comprehensive approach ensures accurate assessment, proper diagnosis, and the planning of interventions that are tailored to meet the unique needs of each individual. Both are needed for a holistic understanding of the client. While test techniques provide precise, objective measurement of specific traits, non-test techniques offer rich, qualitative insights into the client's personality and environment. The mark of a competent counsellor lies in the ability to judiciously select, combine, and ethically use these techniques to facilitate effective helping.

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