

Bonus Table 6.A

Strengths and Weaknesses of Tests

Strengths of tests (especially standardized tests)

- Can provide measures of many characteristics of people.
- Often standardized (i.e., the same stimulus is provided to all participants).
- Allows comparability of common measures across research populations.
- Strong psychometric properties (high measurement validity).
- Availability of reference group data.
- Many tests can be administered to groups which saves time.
- Can provide “hard,” quantitative data.
- Tests are usually already developed.
- A wide range of tests is available (most content can be tapped).
- Response rate is high for group administered tests.
- Ease of data analysis because of quantitative nature of data.

Weaknesses of tests (especially standardized tests)

- Can be expensive if test must be purchased for each research participant.
- Reactive effects such as social desirability can occur.
- Test may not be appropriate for a local or unique population.
- Open-ended questions and probing not available.
- Tests are sometimes biased against certain groups of people.
- Nonresponse to selected items on the test.
- Some tests lack psychometric data.