

## **ANALYSIS OF CURRENT TRENDS REVISION OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE USE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL TESTS**

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*Received: 15.03.2023*

*Revised: 19.04.2023*

*Accepted: 19.04.2023*



This article aims to carry out an analysis of modern trends, problems and requirements for the application of psychological assessment methods, which have been identified by scientists from various countries. The study considers contemporary articles from various scientific journals and educational books that have been published over the past five years. Thus, the analysis carried out is of a comparative nature and indicates the specifics of approaches to the methods of psychological assessment and the degree of compliance with the basic requirements for their use in research and practical activity of psychologists from different countries. To this end, a survey was conducted of expert psychologists with more than 14 years of experience in providing counseling and therapeutic services. The question and comments on the most preferred methods of assessment received a logical answer about "combined assessment", which involves the use of both conversations and tests and observations. Compared to Armenian psychologists, for practicing American psychologists, the use of psychological assessment methods is a priority and must comply with accepted diagnostic protocols.

After conducting such a study, it is necessary to take into account modern challenges of a socio-psychological nature and changes in the conditions of research, counseling and therapy. In this regard, it was assumed that these transformations influenced the form and format of obtaining a psychological diagnosis: meeting of a psychologist and a client in person or in absentia; filling out the test on a paper form or through a computer; use of online forms for testing and surveys; and global collection of testing data.

**Key words:** *comparative analysis, method, survey, psychological assessment, counseling, therapy, tests*

## **АНАЛИЗ СОВРЕМЕННЫХ ТЕНДЕНЦИЙ ПЕРЕСМОТРА ТРЕБОВАНИЙ К ИСПОЛЬЗОВАНИЮ ПСИХОЛОГИЧЕСКИХ ТЕСТОВ**

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В данной статье ставится задача провести сравнительный анализ современных тенденций, проблем и требований к применению методов психологической оценки, которые были выявлены учеными разных стран. Исследование рассматривает современные статьи из различных научных журналов и учебных пособий, вышедших за последние пять лет, а также результаты опроса экспертов психологов. Таким образом, проведенный анализ носит сравнительный характер и свидетельствует о специфике подходов к методам психологической оценки и степени соответствия основным требованиям их использования в исследовательской и практической деятельности психологов разных стран. С этой целью был проведен опрос психологов-экспертов, имеющих более 14 лет опыта оказания консультационных и терапевтических услуг. На вопрос и в комментариях о наиболее предпочтительных методах оценивания был получен логичный ответ о «комбинированном оценивании», предполагающем использование как бесед, так и различных тестов и наблюдений. По сравнению с армянскими психологами, для практикующих американских психологов использование методов психологической оценки является приоритетным и должно соответствовать принятым диагностическим протоколам.

По результатам проведения данного этапа исследования становится очевидным, что необходимо учитывать современные вызовы социально-психологического характера и изменения формата и условий исследования, консультирования и психологической терапии. В связи с этим предполагалось, что данные трансформации повлияли на методологию и формат получения психологического диагноза, а именно, следующие обстоятельства: встречи психолога и клиента в очной или заочной форме; заполнение теста на бумажном бланке или через компьютер; использование онлайн-форм для тестирования и опросов; и глобальный сбор данных тестирования.

**Ключевые слова:** *сравнительный анализ, метод, опрос, психологическая оценка, консультирование, терапия, тесты.*

**ՀՈԳԵՔԱՆԱԿԱՆ ԹԵՍՏԵՐԻ ԿԻՐԱՌՄԱՆ ՊԱՀԱՆՋՆԵՐԻ  
ՎԵՐԱՆԱՅՄԱՆ ԱՐԴԻ ՄԻՏՈՒՄՆԵՐԻ ՎԵՐԼՈՒԾՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ**

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Հոգևաբանական նպատակն է համեմատական վերլուծության միջոցով բացահայտել տարբեր երկրների գիտնականների կողմից կարևորված հոգեբանական գնահատման մեթոդների կիրառման ժամանակակից միտումները, խնդիրները և պահանջները: Հետազոտության մեջ ուսումնասիրվում են վերջին հինգ տարիների ընթացքում հրատարակված ժամանակակից տարբեր գիտական ամսագրերում հրատարակված հոդվածները և ուսումնական ձեռնարկները, ինչպես նաև փորձագետ հոգեբանների հարցման արդյունքները: Այսպիսով, կատարված վերլուծությունը կրում է համեմատական բնույթ, ցույց է տալիս հոգեբանական գնահատման մեթոդների մոտեցումների առանձնահատկությունը, տարբեր երկրների հոգեբանների կողմից հետազոտության և գործնական աշխատանքում դրանց կիրառման հիմնական պահանջների առանձնահատկությունները և համապատասխանության աստիճանը: Այդ նպատակով հարցում է անցկացվել խորհրդատվական և թերապևտիկ ծառայությունների մատուցման ավելի քան 14 տարվա փորձ ունեցող փորձագետ հոգեբանների շրջանում: Հարցման և գնահատման առավել նախընտրելի մեթոդների մասին մեկնաբանություններում ստացվել է տրամաբանական պատասխան «համակցված գնահատման» մոտեցման մասին, որը ներառում է ինչպես զրույցի, այնպես էլ տարբեր թեստերի ու դիտման մեթոդի կիրառում: Հայաստանի հոգեբանների համեմատ՝ ամերիկացի հոգեբանների համար հոգեբանական գնահատման մեթոդների կիրառումը առաջնահերթություն է և պետք է համապատասխանի ընդունված ախտորոշիչ արձանագրություններին:

Սույն փուլի հետազոտության արդյունքների հիման վրա ակնհայտ է դառնում, որ անհրաժեշտ է հաշվի առնել սոցիալ-հոգեբանական բնույթի ժամանակակից մարտահրավերները և հետազոտության, խորհրդատվական և հոգեբանական թերապիայի ձևաչափի ու պայմանների փոփոխությունները: Այս առումով ենթադրվում էր, որ այդ փոխակերպումները ազդել են հոգեբանական ախտորոշում ստանալու մեթոդաբանության և ձևաչափի վրա, մասնավորապես՝ հետևյալ հանգամանքների վրա. հոգեբանի և շահառուի հանդիպումներն առկա կամ հեռակա. թեստը լրացնելը թղթային ձևի կամ համացանցի միջոցով. թեստավորման և հարցումների առցանց ձևերի օգտագործումը. և թեստավորման տվյալների բազմության հավաքագրում:

**Հանգուցային բաներ<sup>1</sup>** համեմատական վերլուծություն, մեթոդ, հարցում, հոգեբանական գնահատում, խորհրդատվություն, թերապիա, թեստեր:

Analysis of modern trends related to changes in requirements for the use of psychological tests in the research and practice of psychologists is of relevance for determining further prospects. Thus, it was envisaged to conduct a comparative analysis of the specifics of approaches to the methods of psychological assessment in research papers and the opinions of psychologists who have experience in practical activity with clients. Initially, it is necessary to study the recommendations that are presented in the APA documents, since the psychological community of various countries is mainly guided by them and scientific publications refer to the APA official website. In its official documents clearly presents the requirements and current challenges for psychological assessment and testing. This trend can be observed in APA Guidelines, where all these aspects are presented in detail for different areas of human activity [2]. As the discipline of psychology has expanded, the application of psychological assessment has also developed in response to new areas of practice. Integrated medical and primary care, online assessment and scoring, and global initiatives are examples of these new areas. Since the last publication of test user qualifications guidelines (APA, 2001), neuropsychology, forensic psychology, cognitive science, consulting, industrial/organizational, integrated health, and other fields have evolved into more defined and recognized specific areas of practice with developing professional practice guidelines, standards of practice, and identified consistency with the APA Ethics Code (APA, 2017a) [2]. However, it should be noted that compliance with the APA recommendations in other countries is difficult to monitor and compare with the accepted ethical standards of psychologists.

So, in order to identify the previously indicated features, it is necessary to consider those studies that are related to the publication on the practical methodology of psychologists and compliance with regulatory standards. This research topic has been launched to support the professional development of students and junior behavioral scientists through the Junior Researchers Program, an initiative that supports six multi-country psychological research projects each year. Experienced scientists were also invited to submit manuscripts of their own multinational research. Reflecting the field on a whole, the study included an analysis of 19 published manuscripts by experienced psychologists, where were found significant differences in the completion of protocols and primary findings in various fields of activity. These differences have arisen in studies of personality, education, health,

development, technology, data privacy, social media activity, and the like. As the authors state, this research topic is primarily focused on protocols, where they reflect on the approaches, issues, feedback from reviewers, and the overall direction of these manuscripts as a means to guide the next wave of junior researchers. The conclusions of the article are in line with other studies, which emphasize the importance of new standards in the field [13].

The other paper discusses the criteria that should be considered when selecting psychological assessment tests in a research context. Traditionally attention has focused – and still does – on the stages that must govern any process of test construction/ adaptation. This work is guided by internationally accepted standards, whose scientific importance is agreed by the scientific community. However, beyond any construction/ adaptation process, the use of tests is a constant feature of psychological research, so it is of vital importance to select the tests adequately. The information presented is organized into six sections: a) conceptual definition of the construct to assess; b) information about item construction and qualitative assessment; c) results of the statistical analysis of the items; d) empirical evidence of the internal structure of the test; e) results of the reliability estimation; and f) external evidence of score validity [5]. The presented analysis and the selected six parameters for the creation and selection of psychological tests are of both research and practical importance.

Natoli, A. P. rightly points out that modern psychological research must use multimethodological approaches. From this statement, it can be concluded that an integrated approach must be applied in the design of the choice of measuring methods. Approaches using only one psychological approach create problems, since even with a large number of data bases, problems arise in comparing the results. The author accurately associates the high objectivity of personality assessment with multimethodological approaches, which in research and clinical practice should become a common practice in psychology [1].

A similar approach to research organization using different application methods for use in projective research. A detailed analysis of projective methods, of course, also indicates their shortcomings from the point of view of the accepted criterion, i.e. reliability. It is also obvious that the diagnostic complex implies the presence of methods that complement each other. However, in many cases, especially when the methods are used for research purposes, this is not sufficient for objectivity [3].

A recent study details the principles of personality assessment, developed from an extensive review of the literature and numerous stakeholder feedback

on the subject. The authors argue that, based on these guidelines and accepted professional standards, psychologists can ensure that they work ethically, competently, with due regard for diversity, and in accordance with the highest standards of the profession [12]. This approach is popular in many textbooks and publications for special courses on teaching methods for psychological assessment. Such textbooks indicate that psychological tests are used for research and practical purposes, such as recruitment, placement, training, guidance, diagnostics in clinical cases, consulting practice in applied areas of human activity. It is important to know that the characteristic for which the test is being developed is clearly defined, and all subtests and individual questions or statements are unambiguously related to this characteristic [9].

University education of psychologists involves the formation of professional skills both in research and in practical work, including the ability to assess the mental characteristics of a person, analyze and interpret assessment data. Also, in many countries, when granting a professional license, a practicing psychologist is required to participate in internships or special training in a particular method. For example, one study aimed to test a recently developed competency criterion for psychology trainees, the Psychological Competence Assessment Tool for Skills Assessment (PsyCET-A). Most experts came to consensus on thirteen of the original fifteen PsyCET-A items after two phases of Delphi. Other aspects of the tool, including clarity of language, grading scale, and general structure, were found useful by all clinicians, and overall, PsyCET-A was rated useful or very useful by all experts [6]. Thus, it can be confidently stated that research aimed at testing psychological assessment techniques for educational programs is of great importance in the preparation of competent psychologists.

Although significant progress has been made in attempts to measure personality, most methods and assessment techniques have certain disadvantages and limitations that must be kept in mind when using them; responses to tests or interview questions, for example, often are easily controlled or manipulated by the subject and thus are readily “fakeable.” Some tests, while useful as group screening devices, exhibit only limited predictive value in individual cases, yielding frequent (sometimes tragic) errors [14]. All these shortcomings and limitations are exacerbated by the use of modern and increasingly popular online forms of testing. These features are indicated by many scientific articles and textbooks published recently.

Since with this form of testing, there is almost always a complete lack of interaction between the test person and the psychologist, which can jeopardize the quality and completeness of value judgments and subsequent decisions

[10]. In a fairly detailed report on Internet testing, which provides great opportunities, a conclusion was made about a positive trend in the modern psychological assessment of a person. As a result of this possibility, there is a particular need for the ethical and professional use of test results. The authors encourage scientists and practitioners to think creatively about how the situation can be improved when implementing the Internet testing method [7].

Regarding Armenian psychologists and their research in the field of psychological assessment it is worth mentioning some of their studies. This issue was investigated by M. Karapetyan, who reveals the important role of psychological tests for counseling, therapy and reliable psychological assessment, emphasizing the importance of proven standardized tests and projective methods. As an example, the Big Five model developed by P. Costa and McCray is considered, which objectively reveals the personal qualities of modern people [8]. The manual in the Armenian language presents psychological tests and questionnaires, namely, methods for assessing the components of the motivational sphere of a person, which reveal self-control of a person, professional orientation, attitude to success and failure, life, creative activity, independence, initiative and other important indicators and which directly promote self-knowledge and professional orientation of the student. Another subsection presents methods aimed at assessing professional activity (professional training, professional growth and maturity, readiness to take action, and others) [11]. Another example is a textbook on psychodiagnostics in Armenian, in which it presents an overview of the development of psychological assessment, theoretical and methodological aspects of testing, classification of tests, techniques for interpreting them, etc., as well as processing databases of results. The authors point out that adapted, reliable and valid tests are presented aimed at diagnosing personality characteristics and mental processes [4].

Analyzing these publications, it is difficult to draw a conclusion about the degree of scientificity of the methods of psychological assessment translated from the original. The authors point out the accuracy of the test transfer rules, the representativeness of the sample and the use of statistical methods to confirm the validity. However, it is often difficult to compare the validity of studies conducted in different countries, since ethical principles are not always monitored.

One of the stages of the study included a survey of expert psychologists from Armenia and the United States, which was conducted during 2020-2021 using a specially designed questionnaire. This questionnaire consisted of 23 questions and corresponding subsections for additional comments on the

problem of the correlation of approaches in theoretical and practical psychology. In this case, we will consider only two aspects related to the use of psychological tests, confidence in them and the degree of intuitive approach in the practical work of psychologists with clients. Of the entire group of interviewed psychologists with more than 14 years of practice experience, those who had a PhD degree (total 36 persons) were separated for analysis.

Experts' comments pointed out that when applying psychological diagnostic methods, particular importance is attached to taking into account the peculiarities of the diversity of cultural, social, national, linguistic means and ways of communication. Differences were found among Armenian experts on the significance of national and religious differences, which is associated with mono-ethnic and mono-religious demographics in Armenia. In this regard, the question of the importance of taking into account socio-cultural and other aspects in the conduct of assessment activities was specifically envisaged. In Armenia, 33.3% and 45.8%, and in the USA 48.7% and 54.2% of respondents, respectively, noted the special importance of these aspects, and 20.8% (Armenia) and 9.6% (US) of psychologists from ignore this factor. About the importance of the role of professional intuition for assessing the state, 87.5% answered positively, and only 12.5% of psychologists in both groups spoke negatively (total N = 36 people). The degree of accuracy of the intuitive approach is presented in the following ratio: 71% and 62% - approximately, 21% and 33% - erroneous, 8% and 5% - exactly. Trust in the intuitive approach prevails among Armenian psychologists. As you can see, most practical psychologists have rated this campaign as approximate or approximate. Next, consider the answers about the degree of significance of the use of diagnostic methods: very important - 54.2%, important - 41.7%, not important - 4.2%. Respondents identified age, social status, gender differences, education and specialty (more than 67%) among other main features taken into account during diagnostics in the process of practical activity. The following answers were given to the question about the most preferred methods of assessment and psychodiagnostics of the patient: conversation - 20.8%, projective tests - 18.2%, observations - 16.9%, psychological tests - 13%, and combined assessment - 31.1%. The logical answer is "combined assessment", since the comments to this answer indicate that this implies the use of conversation, various tests and observation. Next, consider the answers about the degree of significance of the use of diagnostic methods in both groups. The analysis determined the following ratio: the use of psychological tests is very important - 54.2% (Armenia) and 62.3% (US), and accordingly important - 41.7% and 38.5%, does not matter - 4.2% and 2.2%. This indicates that for practicing



American psychologists, the use of psychological assessment methods is a priority and must comply with accepted diagnostic protocols.

Thus, we can conclude that modern transformations have influenced the form and format of obtaining research data and psychological diagnosis: a meeting of a psychologist and a client in person or in absentia; filling out the test on a paper form or through a computer; using Google or other online forms for tests and surveys; and global collection of testing data. These changes reveal interesting perspectives (large dates, cross-cultural comparisons, rapid evaluation and analysis) and, at the same time, certain limitations (response control, complex feedback, etc.). It is also necessary to conclude that in modern publications describing psychological tests, it is necessary to interpret the possibility of their use in online versions. A comparative analysis of the results of a survey of expert psychologists made it possible to identify the priority methods of psychological practice and, in particular, the attitude towards assessment tests. Naturally, in the case of the established system of psychological therapy in the United States, the survey answers had a more clear and formalized character, which it is desirable to disseminate in Armenia as well.

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