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Qualitative Assessment of Test and Non-Test Techniques of Appraisal in Guidance and Counselling

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Abstract

This paper examines the application of test and non-test techniques of appraisal in Guidance and Counselling practice. Appraisal is an essential component of the counselling process because it enables counsellors to obtain systematic information about clients' abilities, interests, personality characteristics, attitudes, academic performance, and behavioural patterns. The paper reviews the concepts, types, purposes, and applications of both test and non-test appraisal techniques in Educational and Counselling settings. Test techniques discussed include intelligence tests, aptitude tests, achievement tests, personality tests, and interest inventories, while non-test techniques include interviews, observation, case studies, rating scales, checklists, autobiographical records, sociometric techniques, and cumulative records. The review highlights how these techniques assist counsellors in understanding clients, identifying individual differences, making educational and vocational decisions, diagnosing learning and behavioural difficulties, planning appropriate interventions, and evaluating counselling outcomes. It also emphasized that neither approach should be used in isolation. Effective appraisal requires appropriate selection, administration, interpretation, and integration of information from multiple sources while observing ethical principles such as confidentiality, informed consent, fairness, and professional competence. The paper concludes that the effective application of both test and non-test techniques enhances the accuracy and quality of counselling decisions and promotes individualized guidance services. It recommends continuous professional development for counsellors in appraisal procedures and the appropriate use and interpretation of assessment information.

Keywords: Appraisal, Guidance and Counselling, Test Techniques, Non-Test Techniques, Psychological Assessment, Counsellor

Introduction

Counselling is a professional helping process concerned with assisting individuals to understand themselves, their circumstances, and the challenges they encounter in their personal, educational, social, and vocational lives (Adu, 2022). An important component of effective counselling is the systematic collection and interpretation of information about the client. This process is commonly referred to as appraisal or assessment. Popoola and Oluwatosin (2018) explained that, through appraisal, the counsellor obtains information that can contribute to understanding a client's characteristics, needs, strengths, difficulties, interests, abilities, and circumstances. Consequently, appraisal provides an important foundation for identifying counselling needs, establishing appropriate goals, selecting interventions, and evaluating progress. The importance of assessment and appraisal in counselling has continued to receive attention in contemporary counselling scholarship. Cade and Lenz (2024) observed that assessment, appraisal, testing, and related practices have become increasingly represented within the scope of professional counselling and counselor education. Appraisal in counselling involves more than administering psychological tests. It encompasses a range of procedures through which information is obtained from clients and other relevant sources. These procedures can broadly be classified into test and non-test techniques. Test techniques involve structured instruments designed to measure particular characteristics or behaviours, while non-test techniques involve methods such as interviews, observation, questionnaires, case studies, rating scales, sociometry, autobiographies, and the examination of relevant records. The use of these different approaches allows

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counsellors to obtain information from multiple perspectives and may provide a more comprehensive understanding of the individual. Gantt-Howrey et al. (2024), in a study of social determinants of mental health assessment in counselling, found that assessment frequently occurred verbally and that the assessment of clients' social and economic circumstances was associated with client satisfaction. The study also identified potential differences and biases in assessment practices, demonstrating the need for counsellors to consider contextual factors when gathering and interpreting information.

Appraisal in Guidance and Counselling

Appraisal counselling is a counselling service involves a counsellor collecting, analyzing and using a variety of objective data that can enhance better understanding of the client. A counsellor without adequate and reliable information of a client will have difficulties in assisting him/her. It is therefore important to collect and make available a variety of information through observation, interview, testing, history, and social adjustment data about each client so that they can be in a position to plan satisfying educational, vocational and social programme (Marandu, 2018). Also, Marandu (2018) explained that, appraisal involves the collection, administration, interpretation and clinical usage of variety of test devices in order to provide effective counseling services to students. Data collection instruments and methods are considered for by the school counsellor for school testing programs, for both individuals and groups.

Appraisal is a systematic process through which a counsellor gathers, organizes, analyses, and interprets information about a client for the purpose of understanding the client's characteristics, needs, strengths, difficulties, and circumstances. In counselling, appraisal provides information that assists the counsellor in identifying problems, establishing counselling goals, planning appropriate interventions, making educational or vocational decisions, and monitoring progress. Appraisal is broader than psychological testing because it includes several methods of obtaining information. The American Psychological Association (APA) (2020) describes assessment methods as encompassing the different ways information can be obtained, while the term test generally refers to instruments involving standardized administration, scoring, and interpretation (APA, 2020). Consequently, appraisal may involve standardized tests as well as interviews, observations, questionnaires, records, and information obtained from significant others. An appraisal/assessment service which is designed to collect, analyses and use a variety of data for the purpose of better understanding the students. This will also assist them to understand themselves. It involves the use and interpretation of psychological and educational standardized tests and measurement. Recent literature continues to emphasize the importance of assessment and appraisal within professional counselling. Cade and Lenz (2024) reported that assessment, appraisal, and testing have become increasingly represented within the professional scope and educational requirements of counsellors, although regulations concerning particular assessments and tests continue to vary. Appraisal is therefore an important part of the counselling process because effective counselling decisions depend partly on the quality and relevance of information available to the counsellor (Marandu, 2018).

Skills Required for Effective Appraisal in Guidance and Counselling

Appraisal involves competencies in selecting, administering, and interpreting clients' intelligence, aptitude, achievement, interest, and personality instruments. It also examines current research involving assessment relative to educational, social, and industrial settings. The counsellor for effective students' appraisal program they required the following basic skills (Altine & Bilyaminu, 2021):

1. School counsellors need to know basic descriptive statistics and their application to psychological tests and measures.
2. School counsellors should be able to determine if a measure is valid and reliable.
3. School counsellors need to be able to recognize the types of available assessment tools (e.g., instruments, observations, interviews, focus groups), what they measure, and how they can be applied to various school and college settings.
4. School counsellors should be able to develop the skills to administer, interpret, and formally report the results of assessments within their scope of training and qualification.
5. School counsellors should be able to design an outcomes assessment within a school or college student affairs setting.

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6. School counsellors should be able to identify the ethical and legal issues involved in creating, administering, and interpreting assessment tools.
7. They should be able to develop skills of analysis, synthesis, and communication (verbal and written) concerning issues and ideas relevant to appraisal techniques

Test and Non-Test Techniques of Appraisal in Guidance and Counselling

Counsellors use tests and non-test techniques of appraisal generally for assessment, placements, guidance and appraisals to as assist clients to increase their self-knowledge, practice decision making, and acquire new behaviors. They may be used in a variety of therapies e.g. individual, marital, group, and family and for either gathering of data on clients, assessing the level of some traits, such as stress and anxiety, or measuring clients' personality types (Sandra, Nurfarhanah, & Ardi, 2025).

Test Techniques of Appraisal in Guidance and Counselling

Test is one of the Appraisal techniques in Guidance and Counselling Program especially in school situation whereby a counsellor may present some questions or any stimuli and assess students' response or performance. The score of the test may be use as data for many Guidance and Counselling purposes. Test technique of appraisal sometimes known as Psychological Testing. Test techniques refer to systematic assessment procedures designed to obtain information about particular characteristics, abilities, behaviours, interests, or psychological attributes of individuals. Tests generally involve standardized administration, scoring, and interpretation. They may be interpreted using norms or predetermined criteria depending on the purpose of the assessment (Sandra, Nurfarhanah, & Ardi, 2025). The use of tests in Guidance and Counselling enables counsellors to obtain structured information that may complement information obtained through interviews and other non-test methods. The Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing emphasize that test use should be supported by appropriate evidence concerning validity, reliability, fairness, and the suitability of interpretations for the intended purpose and population (AERA, APA, & NCME, 2014). This involves development of validation and reliable assessment of many psychological constructs such as intelligence, aptitude, achievement, attitude and interest. Test is a method or procedures for measuring a persons' ability, knowledge and performance in a given area. Tests yield scores that mirror attributes or characteristics of individuals. A test is an instrument or systematic procedure for measuring a sample of behavior (Marandu, 2018). Psychological tests are defined as standardized, repeatable procedures used to elicit and measure samples of human behavior and it involves measurement procedures for coding, scoring, or quantifying the behavior that is elicited so that it can be compared with normative data systematically collected on similar samples (Sandra, Nurfarhanah, & Ardi, 2025).

Characteristics of Standardized Test used for Test Appraisal

The following are common characteristics of standardize test used for Test Appraisal in Counselling (Sandra, Nurfarhanah, & Ardi, 2025):

1. Standardize Psychological tests are developed by experts in educational Test and measurement and professional counsellors.
2. They measure objectives common to many individuals at different locality, state, country, or sub-region.
3. Cover wide subject matter content such as one whole human psychological construct or a number of them.
4. They meant to be used over a wide geographical area such as a state, country, or sub-continent.
5. They have items that are of known and high quality.
6. Their items are carefully written and trial-tested.
7. They have higher validity and reliability content.
8. They have a set of uniform or standard procedure for administration and scoring, they are usually accompanied by a test manual.
9. They are accompanied by norms which provide the basis for interpreting the psychological construct of different groups of individuals in the test.

Standardized tests may be used for a wide variety of counselling purposes. For example, educational, personal, social, marital, vocational etc.

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Types of Test Techniques of Appraisal in Guidance and Counselling

The following are a few representative examples of the most common forms of standardized test:

1. **Aptitude Tests:** Aptitude Tests are those that measure functions that improve little with practice, examples musical aptitude, artistic aptitude, e.t.c. Aptitude test is a proficiency test that measures ability to perform some task significant in its right; it is intended to predict success in some occupation or course of training. Aptitude tests attempt to predict a student's ability to succeed in an intellectual or physical endeavour by, for example, evaluating mathematical ability, language proficiency, abstract reasoning, motor coordination, or musical talent. Aptitude tests are "forward-looking" in that they typically attempt to forecast or predict how well students will do in a future educational or career setting. There are many types of aptitude tests such as engineering aptitude, musical aptitude, reading aptitude, clerical aptitude, spatial aptitude, and numerical aptitude. An example of aptitude test commonly used for school educational and vocational counselling programmes is the Differential Aptitude Tests (DAT).
2. **Achievement Tests:** Achievement tests measure knowledge or skills that an individual has acquired through education or training. In school counselling, achievement information can help identify academic strengths, learning difficulties, and areas requiring additional educational support. Achievement tests are those designed specifically to measure the degree of accomplishment in some particular educational experiences. Examples: Geography test, History test, or English test, e.t.c. Achievement Test are defined as tests designed to evaluate how much learning has taken place under a given period. Teachers have the responsibility of assessing how much learning or change in behaviour that has occurred as a result of their instructional programme. This will certainly help teachers to determine their instructional effectiveness. A difference characteristic between achievement test and scholastic test, such as aptitude and personality test is that whereas aptitude tests, test for natural endowments, achievement test, test the outcome of instruction. Aptitude tests are designed to estimate an individual's potential to learn or perform particular types of tasks. They may be used in educational and vocational counselling to provide information relevant to academic programmes, occupational choices, or areas in which an individual may demonstrate potential. Also, aptitude tests are generally standardized test while achievement tests are usually teacher-made tests. Achievement tests are not concerned with affective domain and it focuses more on cognitive domain than on psychomotor domain. An example of published achievement test is: Stanford Achievement Test. It measures areas like reading, mathematics, language, science, social studies, work-study skills, etc.
3. **Intelligence Tests:** Intelligence Tests is a test of general mental ability referred to as scholastic aptitude test, since intelligence tests sample abstract reasoning or ability to understand ideas and the relationship among them. Intelligence tests are designed to assess selected aspects of cognitive functioning, such as reasoning, problem-solving, verbal comprehension, and processing abilities. In counselling, information from appropriately selected cognitive assessments may contribute to educational planning and understanding an individual's learning-related strengths and difficulties. However, intelligence test results should not be interpreted in isolation. Their meaning depends on the purpose of the assessment, characteristics of the individual, and evidence supporting the interpretation of scores. The areas for measuring intelligence include: verbal ability, reading ability, and retentive memory. An example of published intelligence test is: ***Test of cognitive skills.*** It measures areas like sequences, analogies, memory, verbal reasoning, etc.
4. **Personality Tests:** Personality assessments are used to obtain information about characteristics and patterns of behaviour, attitudes, and emotional or interpersonal functioning. Depending on the assessment purpose, personality measures may be useful in understanding aspects of adjustment, interpersonal relationships, and individual differences. Counsellors should exercise particular care when interpreting personality assessment results because conclusions should be based on appropriate evidence and should take the individual's cultural and contextual circumstances into account.
5. **Interest Inventories:** Interest inventories are designed to identify individuals' preferences for particular activities, subjects, occupations, or areas of work. They are especially relevant to career counselling because they can help clients explore educational and occupational possibilities that correspond with their interests.

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6. **Attitude and Other Psychological Measures:** Counsellors may also use scales and inventories to assess attitudes, values, self-concept, motivation, or other constructs relevant to a particular counselling question. Such instruments should only be selected when they are appropriate for the purpose and when evidence supports their intended interpretation. Sample of Standardized Test for Appraisal in Guidance and Counselling involves: Achenbach System of Empirically Based Assessment, Asperger Syndrome Diagnostic Scale, Behavior Assessment System for Children (BASC), Beck Youth Inventories, Behavior Rating Inventory of Executive Function (BRIEF), Career Assessment Inventory, Delis-Kaplan Executive Function System, Interest Determination, Exploration & Assessment System etc.

Non- Test Techniques of Appraisal in Guidance and Counselling

Non-testing techniques in Guidance and Counselling refer to those techniques which do not involve a test (Sandra, Nurfarhanah, & Ardi, 2025). Therefore, many tests like aptitude test, achievement test, interest inventory, and personality tests are not part of it. Non-testing techniques are also called as non-standardized techniques. Furthermore, these techniques have common usage for individual analysis by counsellors. Also, the employment of these setting is in various settings. Non-testing techniques in guidance provide a broader and much more subjective approach to data gathering and interpretation. Non-test instruments are testing instruments in addition to learning achievement tests. Assessment tools that can be used include observation or observation sheets (such as diaries, portfolios, life skills), attitude test instruments, interests, interview techniques, questionnaires, sociometry, case studies, and so on (Sandra, Nurfarhanah, & Ardi, 2025). Non-test techniques are systematic methods of collecting information about clients without relying primarily on standardized tests. They provide information about an individual's experiences, behaviour, relationships, perceptions, environment, and circumstances. Non-test techniques are particularly useful because some important aspects of a client's situation may not be adequately represented by test scores. A recent review by Sandra, Nurfarhanah, and Ardi (2025) found that combining test and non-test instruments can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of students' needs, potential, and problems, although practical and methodological challenges remain.

Types of Non-Test Techniques of Appraisal in Guidance and Counselling

The various types of non-testing techniques are the questionnaire, observation, autobiography, anecdotal record, case study, cumulative record, interviews, and checklist. However, the most important among them are the case study, interview, and checklist (Sandra, Nurfarhanah, & Ardi, 2025). The following are types of test use in Guidance and Counselling appraisal services (Gantt-Howrey, et al., 2024; Sandra, Nurfarhanah, & Ardi, 2025):

1. **Sociometric Test: -** As one of the appraisal counselling technique is designed for gathering information on the internal social structure of a group. It is useful for studying the individual's position in the group. Sociometric and related techniques help to sensitize counsellors to interpersonal and inter-group difficulties among students. A Sociometric test can be presented in sociogram, social distance scale and quest who, i.e. questionnaire. Sociometry is a technique used to examine patterns of interpersonal relationships within a group. In educational settings, it may provide information concerning peer relationships, social preferences, group acceptance, and interpersonal patterns. Such information can assist counsellors in identifying students who may require support with social adjustment or interpersonal relationships.
2. **Observation: -** Observation as one of the appraisal counselling technique refers to watching systematically somebody or something like situations or environment with a purpose of eliciting data, i.e. Information for decision making. This technique can be used successfully in several situations or environment like in the school setting, places of work, at home or where people socialise together. The observer records should include observed behaviour, sequence intensity and frequencies. The types of observation include: Naturalistic Observation, Structured Observation, Anecdotal Record, Rating Scales. Observation involves systematically watching and recording relevant aspects of an individual's behaviour. In school counselling, for example, a counsellor may observe classroom participation, peer interaction, communication, or behavioural responses. Observation can provide information about actual behaviour in particular contexts. Nevertheless, counsellors should recognize that the presence of an observer and the interpretation of behaviour can introduce potential sources of error.
3. **Questionnaire: -** Another technique of appraisal technique in counselling is questionnaire. It involves asking a carefully selected group of people a set of clearly defined and predetermined questions listed in black and white or through e-mail. It is used to collect assessment information that mainly concern with affective attributes. The

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questionnaire can be administered on individuals or a large group of people distributed over a wider range of places. For instance, a counsellor may administer questionnaire to students in order to measure their personality disorders, mental issues or behaviour problems or some effect concerning teaching and learning process. Results of the questionnaire may be distorted if respondents use response set, are reluctant to admit to certain feelings, beliefs, or behaviour. A questionnaire consists of a set of written questions through which information is obtained from respondents. Questionnaires may be used to obtain information concerning students' interests, attitudes, experiences, needs, perceptions, or concerns. Questionnaires are relatively efficient for collecting information from larger groups, but their usefulness depends on the quality of the questions and the honesty and understanding of respondents.

4. Interview: - An interview is being defined as a purposeful conversation between a school counsellor and clients like teachers, administrators, students, parents, or community members. It is designed to find out particular information about method of teaching, situation of learning, learners satisfaction. Useful results often emanate only from the interviewers who are warm, interested to admit their feelings, beliefs, perception, or behaviour. Interview may be face to face, by phone, television, or radio programme, or via internet. During interviews, both verbal and non-verbal forms of communication of the interviewee can be noted. An interview is a conversation with a purpose. The purposes for which interviews take place are fact-finding, introductory, evaluative, and informative in nature. Here an interviewer asks a set of questions to an interviewee to find out the responses. The interview is a purposeful interaction between the counsellor and client through which information is obtained through questioning, listening, clarification, and discussion. Interviews may be structured, semi-structured, or relatively unstructured. Interviews are valuable because they allow counsellors to explore the client's experiences, perceptions, concerns, goals, and circumstances in greater depth. They can also provide contextual information that may not be captured by standardized instruments.

Checklist: The checklist technique is also a non-testing technique in guidance. The checklist technique involves a series of statements. Furthermore, these statements are positive and negative, that the evaluator answers yes or no. This technique checks if the evaluator shows that behaviour or leaves it unchecked. The checklist system includes statements about the habits in the workplace and the skills of individuals. Workplace habits for individuals may include:

a) Reports for work on time on most days.
b) Exhibits a pleasant behaviour towards the colleagues.
c) Stays at work until important tasks are completed.
d) Tends to take criticisms quite personally.

Hence, the first three statements are positive attributes. However, the fourth statement is a negative attribute.

1. **Case Study:** A case study refers to a collection of all available information. Furthermore, this information could be social, physiological, biographical, vocational, and environmental. Moreover, this collection of information is with the aim of explaining a single individual. Most noteworthy, the case study is a comprehensive collection of information. Also, this collection of information takes place through the use of different techniques and tools of data collection. It is certainly the best technique of studying the whole individual.

   A case study involves the systematic collection and organization of detailed information about an individual. Information may be obtained from interviews, observations, educational records, questionnaires, and other appropriate sources. The case study approach is useful when the counsellor needs a broad understanding of the client's background and circumstances rather than information about a single characteristic.

   Below are the variables whose collection must be made in the case study (Gantt-Howrey, et al., 2024):

a) **The physical, socio-economic and cultural environment-** First of all, the physical environment includes the neighborhood and surroundings in which an individual lives. The socio-economic environment consists of the society in which the person grows up and the economic condition. Finally, the cultural environment refers to the ideas, views, and behaviour of those among whom one lives.
b) **Family-** Collection of detailed and diverse information regarding one's family must take place. This certainly helps in understanding the characteristics of the individual under study. There must be a collection of information regarding the educational and occupational status of family members. Others questions regarding the love, harmony, understanding, conflict among family members find their place in the case study.

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c) **Personal history**- There must be a collection of information regarding the personal history of the individual under study. This information is history of an individual's physical health, abilities, social development, and attitude.

Also, in preparing a case study the information is collected from the following sources:

(1) Preliminary Information: Name, age, sex, parent's age, education, occupation, income, number of children, social status

2) Past History: Condition of mother during pregnancy, any incident, child's development after birth, physical, mental, emotional, social- illness, relation between parents and other members of the family, achievement of the child, parents' death, birth order etc.

(3) Present Condition: The information may be collected under the following heads:

(i) Physical: Results of medical examination of any diseases.

(ii) Medical: I.Q., special abilities, general intelligence

(iii) Social: House environment, friends and their types, social environment in school, home and neighbourhood.

(iv) Emotional: Anxiety, fear, temperament, attitude etc.

(v) Interest: Personal, social, vocational and special aptitude.

(vi) School Achievement: Position in school, failure, special achievement etc.

Application of Non- Test Techniques of Appraisal in Guidance and Counselling

The purpose of non-tests techniques of appraisal is to stimulate further or more in-depth interaction with the client (Sandra, Nurfarhanah, & Ardi, 2025). Non-directive Counselling approach was attributed to Carl Rogers, this technique was designed to allow the individual in emotional turmoil to talk out problems and resolved difficulties with a minimum of direction being provided by the person serving as counsellor. Rogers believed that everyone has the motivation and ability to change in order to become a better, more "self-actualized" person (Gantt-Howrey, et al., 2024).

Application of Non-Test Techniques of Appraisal in Client-Centred Counselling Approach

The client-centred counselling approach, developed from the work of Carl Rogers, places the client at the centre of the counselling process. The approach emphasizes the client's subjective experience, capacity for self-direction, and active participation in the counselling relationship. Contemporary scholarship continues to describe person-centred counselling as an important approach within counselling and psychotherapy, while also emphasizing that it should not be reduced to a simplistic or purely non-directive model (Cornelius-White, 2025). Within this approach, appraisal is particularly concerned with understanding the client as a whole person rather than simply assigning scores or labels. Consequently, non-test techniques such as interviews, observation, self-report, case studies, and autobiographical information can be particularly useful because they allow the counsellor to understand the client's perceptions, experiences, feelings, relationships, and personal circumstances. The following non-test techniques of appraisal could be applied in client-centred counselling approach as (Osumah, Ehigbor, & Osemeikhian, 2024):

1. **Application of the Interview:** The interview is one of the most important non-test techniques applicable to client-centred counselling. It provides an opportunity for the counsellor and client to engage in purposeful dialogue through which the client can describe concerns in his or her own words. Rather than approaching the client primarily as an object of measurement, the counsellor uses the interview to understand the client's subjective frame of reference. In client-centred counselling, the interview should be conducted in a manner that encourages openness and self-exploration.
2. **Application of Observation:** The counsellor may observe changes in tone of voice, facial expression, pauses, level of engagement, emotional expression, and patterns of interaction. Such observations should not automatically be treated as definitive evidence of a particular psychological condition. Instead, they can be used as prompts for gentle exploration with the client.
3. **Application of Case Study:** The case study technique involves collecting information about a client from several relevant sources and organizing it to develop a comprehensive understanding of the client's circumstances. In client-centred counselling, case-study information can include the client's personal history, educational experiences, relationships, significant life events, current concerns, strengths, and coping experiences.
4. **Application of Questionnaire and Self-Report Techniques:** Questionnaires and other self-report methods can be used to obtain information about clients' perceptions, experiences, interests, concerns, and goals. In a client-centred

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approach, self-report information can be particularly valuable because the client's own understanding of the problem is an important source of counselling information.

5. **Application of Autobiography:** An autobiography allows a client to provide a personal account of significant experiences, relationships, achievements, difficulties, aspirations, and turning points. It can be especially useful in client-centred counselling because it gives the client an opportunity to decide which experiences are meaningful and how those experiences should be described.
6. **Application of Rating Scales:** Rating scales can be used as non-test appraisal tools to obtain information about the client's perceptions of particular experiences or behaviours. For example, a client may rate the intensity of a concern, level of satisfaction with an aspect of life, perceived confidence, or progress toward a personally identified goal.
7. **Application of Sociometric Techniques:** Sociometric techniques can be used, particularly in educational counselling, to understand patterns of interpersonal relationships within a group. They may provide information concerning peer relationships, social preferences, group participation, and perceived acceptance.
8. **Application of Anecdotal Records:** Anecdotal records consist of brief descriptions of significant behaviours or events. In school counselling, they may be prepared by teachers or counsellors to document relevant patterns of student behaviour.
9. **Application of Cumulative and Documentary Records:** Relevant educational or counselling records can provide useful background information. Such records may include academic history, attendance information, previous counselling information, and other records that are legitimately available to the counsellor.

Relationship between Test and Non-Test Techniques

Test and non-test techniques should generally be viewed as complementary sources of assessment information rather than competing approaches. Test techniques can provide structured and standardized information about particular characteristics, while non-test techniques can provide contextual and behavioural information about the individual. Zatrahadi, Daharnis, and Yusuf (2022) reported that test and non-test instruments were used in relation to one another in counselling services, with their application depending on the purpose and context of the counselling programme. Similarly, Sandra et al. (2025) concluded from their literature review that combining test and non-test approaches can improve the comprehensiveness of counselling assessment, although implementation can present methodological and practical difficulties. For example, an interest inventory may indicate that a student has a strong preference for a particular occupational area, while an interview may reveal the personal experiences or expectations underlying that preference. Likewise, an achievement test may identify an academic difficulty, while observation and interviews may help the counsellor understand contextual factors associated with the difficulty. Therefore, using multiple appropriate sources of information can provide a more complete basis for counselling decisions than relying exclusively on a single technique.

Testing Process of Appraisal in Guidance and Counselling Program

Steps involved in the process of using tests in school appraisal counselling program include selecting the test, administering test, scoring the test, interpreting results, communicating the results.

1. Selecting: Having defined the purpose for testing, the counsellor looks to a variety of sources for information on available tests. Resources include review books, journals, test manuals, and textbooks on testing and measurement (Anastasi, 1988; Cronbach, 1979). The most complete source of information on a particular test is usually the test manual.
2. Administering: Test administration is usually standardizing by the developers of the test. Manual instructions need to be followed in order to make a valid comparison of an individual's score with the test's norm group. Non – Standardization tests used in counselling are best given under controlled circumstances. This allows the counsellor's experience with the test to become an internal norm.
3. Scoring: Scoring of tests follows the instructions provided in the test manual, the Counsellor is sometimes given the option of having test machine scored rather than hand scored. Both the positive and negative aspects of this choice need to be considered. It is usually believed that test scoring is best handled by a machine because it is free from bias.

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4. Interpreting: The interpretation of test results is usually the area which allows for the greatest flexibility within the testing process. Depending upon the Counsellor's theoretical point of view and the extent of the test manual guidelines. Whereas scoring is best done by a bias-free machine, interpretation by machine is often too rigid. What is needed is the experience of a skilled test user to individualize the interpretation of results.
5. Communicating: Feedback of test results to the client completes the formal process of testing. Here, the therapeutic skills of Counsellors come fully into play. The Counsellor uses verbal and non-verbal interaction skills to convey messages to clients and to assess their understanding of it.

The issue of confidentiality is of great important. The ethical and legal restrictions on what may be disclosed from counselling apply to the use of tests as much as to other private information shared between client and counsellor. The trust issue, which is inherent in confidentiality, is relevant to every aspect of testing. No information can be shared outside the relationship without the full consent of the client. Information is provided to someone outside the relationship only after the specifics to be used from the testing are fully disclosed to the client. The counsellor preparation is also important. Tests are only as good as their construction, proper usage and the preparation of the counsellor intending to use them.

Validity, Reliability, and Appropriate Use

An important conceptual issue in counselling appraisal is the quality of the information obtained. For standardized tests, counsellors need to consider evidence concerning validity, reliability, fairness, and the appropriateness of norms and interpretations (Cook & Wind, 2024). The AERA, APA, and NCME Standards emphasize these considerations in the responsible development and use of educational and psychological tests. The same principle applies to non-test information. Interviews, observations, self-report, and information obtained from other people may vary in accuracy and consistency. APA guidance emphasizes that counsellors and psychologists should select assessment methods according to the assessment question and consider the characteristics and context of the person being assessed. Consequently, counsellors should avoid treating any single source of information as automatically accurate. Instead, information from different sources can be compared and integrated where appropriate.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the study establishes that appraisal is an essential component of effective Guidance and Counselling practice. It provides counsellors with systematic information about clients' abilities, interests, personality characteristics, behaviours, experiences, needs, and circumstances. Such information provides an important basis for understanding clients, identifying counselling needs, setting appropriate goals, selecting suitable interventions, and evaluating progress. The paper demonstrates that test techniques and non-test techniques provide different but complementary forms of information. Test techniques, including intelligence, achievement, aptitude, personality, and interest measures, can provide structured information that assists counsellors in making evidence-informed decisions. However, test results should not be interpreted automatically or in isolation. Lenz (2025) emphasizes that interpretations of test scores should be supported by an appropriate body of validity evidence rather than simply by the fact that an instrument is commonly used. Non-test techniques, including interviews, observations, questionnaires, rating scales, case studies, sociometry, anecdotal records, and cumulative records, provide additional information about clients' experiences, behaviours, relationships, and contexts. Recent literature indicates that non-test methods can contribute substantially to a holistic understanding of clients, particularly when information about affective, social, and psychological experiences is required.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Counsellors should strengthen their knowledge and competence in assessment and testing through regular professional development, workshops, seminars, and conferences.
2. Counsellors should be using both test and non-test techniques when appropriate as this can provide a more comprehensive understanding of clients' needs, strengths, and problems.
3. Assessment instruments should be selected systematically according to the purpose of the counselling assessment rather than convenience or familiarity with a particular test.
4. Counsellors should pay particular attention to validity and reliability of the test when interpreting test results.

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5. Interviews, observations, questionnaires, and other non-test approaches should be conducted using clearly defined objectives and procedures. Counsellors should document relevant information carefully and distinguish factual observations from personal interpretations.

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