

**REVIEW: TESTS AND MEASUREMENT FOR PEOPLE WHO  
(THINK THEY) HATE TESTS AND MEASUREMENT**

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**Salkind, N. J. (2013). *Tests and measurement for people who (think they) hate tests and measurement (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.)*. Los Angeles: Sage Publication.**

Learning about tests and measurement can be intimidating for some if not most students who do not enjoy Mathematics and Statistics. *Tests and Measurement for People Who (Think They) Hate Tests and Measurement* is meant to accommodate this group of postgraduate or undergraduate students, providing fundamental concepts and very interesting issues about tests, testing and measurement. In the first section of the book, *A Note to the students: Why I wrote this book*, Salkind states that this material is offered at a level he thinks students who are new to this field “can understand and learn with some reasonable amount of efforts” (p. XX). His attempts to accomplish this goal can be noticed in every chapter throughout the book.

The book consists of five parts. The first part is an introduction, and begins with a brief history of testing, and basic ideas as a foundation for developing and using tests, together with the ways to use the book and to learn about tests and measurement. While reading this part, readers may feel like they are listening to a kind, thoughtful teacher talking to them in their first class of tests

and measurement course. The explanation in this part is both informative and encouraging. The second part deals with levels of measurement, reliability, validity, and the concepts of norms and percentile. The third part covers different types of test items: short answer and completion items, essay items, multiple-choice items, matching items, true-false tests, portfolios and interviews, in terms of their characteristics, and how to create and use them effectively. The fourth part explains the design and use of each test: achievement tests, personality tests, aptitude tests, intelligence tests and career choices. The last part discusses current issues in testing, which are test bias, as well as laws and ethics in the field of education.

The first edition of this book was published six years ago, and this is its second edition. Salkind mentions in the introduction that reader feedback from the original edition has been adopted for the changes in this edition. Both new exercises and current online references at the end of each chapter are added. An additional section provides a review of journal articles so that readers can learn how topics they read can be applied in their research studies. Moreover, there are also updated materials regarding law and ethical issues in testing in the American context, such as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, and the use of high-stake tests for school and university admission. This section allows the author to give critical comments on the current situation in the American educational system.

The author's friendly tone of voice and casual style of writing are very distinctive, and this unique approach develops the sense of being supportive among readers. To begin with, the titles of chapters are not conventional as in other textbooks. For example, there are chapters entitled 'Multiple-choice items: Always pick answer C and you'll be right about 25% of the time', 'True-False test: T or F? I passed my first measurement test', and 'Short answer and completion items: Baskin Robbins® has \_\_\_\_\_ flavors'. The way Salkind names the chapters not only induces a sense of relaxation among readers, but also conveys some common beliefs about those topics, and, in turn, reminds them of issues they often come across.

In addition, at the first page of each part, there is a single-panel or two-panel comic, which conveys a sense of humor and informality. Under the title of each chapter, there is also an inventive ‘difficulty index’, symbolized by one to five smileys and a short description which aims to give readers some idea about the difficulty of that chapter so as to know what to expect before starting to read. At the chapter about essay items, for instance, four smileys are put in place, since it is ‘really pretty easy’, and the chapter about reliability is given only two smileys because it is ‘tougher than most’.

The other four icons are used throughout the book to signify a specific purpose of a particular subsection being supplemented in each chapter. For example, the ‘Tech Talk’ icon is used for the discussion of more technical ideas and tips beyond the scope of the content. The ‘finger with the bow’ icon is for the section of ‘Things to remember’ which is a short paragraph to reinforce important points about the topic they are reading. This technique of dividing information into small parts is cleverly used since it helps the readers to follow the flow of the explanation, and at the same time to decide if they should read that subsection right away, or come back to it later.

One of the most practical values of this textbook lies in three useful sections supplemented at the end of each chapter. First, there is a summary section presenting a paragraph reviewing important concepts of that chapter. The second section is ‘Time to practice’. In this section, a variety of exercises are provided to check the readers’ understanding, with the answer keys in Appendix C. The questions vary from “Describe...”, “Give definitions of...” to the ones including researching skills such as, “Find different definitions from library sources and the Internet, and explain differences between...”, and also the questions that need a critical analysis, for example, “What conclusion might you draw if...?” or “If you were..., what would be the five principles on which you would operate ....?” The last section of the chapter is ‘Want to know more?’, which introduces a collection of additional resources in case the readers are interested to learn more about that topic. It includes a review of books and other references, a

list of websites with detailed explanations on how the sites can benefit readers, as well as links to online tests with a very clear instruction. This section ends with a review of research articles from academic journals, illustrating how the concepts presented can be further investigated in research studies in different fields.

It is clear that the author tries to facilitate readers, especially those who are new to the field or do not have good backgrounds in Mathematics and Statistics. Fundamental ideas about tests, testing, and measurement are explained in a simple and intelligible way. This book can also be a good, solid background for learners who want to continue further investigation in tests and measurement in a higher level. It is therefore a highly recommended addition to any student's personal collection.

### **The Reviewer**

**Sakolkarn Insai** is a full-time English instructor at Dhurakij Pundit University. Her responsibility is to teach English to English majors. She is now studying in a doctoral program in English as an International Language at Chulalongkorn University. Her research interests are translation problems and translation training.