

TEST-TAKING EFFORT IN INTERNATIONAL LARGE-SCALE ASSESSMENTS VIA RESPONSE TIMES, NUMBER OF ACTIONS, AND SELF-REPORTS

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International large-scale assessments are low-stakes programs for the participating students and their motivation to perform at their best may not be high. When students taking a test do not invest adequate effort, their test scores underestimate their true proficiency level. Thus, these assessments are often criticized as inaccurate in representing achievement. In this presentation I will discuss findings on rapid guessing behavior based on item response times from PISA computerized administrations. In 59 jurisdictions and three subjects, the prevalence of rapid guessing was generally low, but varied across samples and different item types. Filtering out examinees who engaged in rapid guessing, led to increased average country scores, yet resulted in minimal changes in the rankings in almost all cases. Recognizing the limitations in how rapid responses capture the construct of "test-taking effort", I will present an initial investigation for using the variable "number of actions on the computer" as an alternative indicator for detecting rapid guessing. Finally, I will highlight an additional challenge in the study of test-taking behaviors: cross-cultural variations in attitudes towards assessments. In a survey experiment, the stakes of a test were manipulated in a local sample and results suggest that attitudes like effort, importance and anxiety may (or may not) differ across high and low stakes tests. Findings from similar experiments in other countries suggest that the effects of test stakes are not universally homogeneous. Hence, the study of test-taking behaviors like effort is consequential in international assessments and should not be neglected in validity investigations.

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