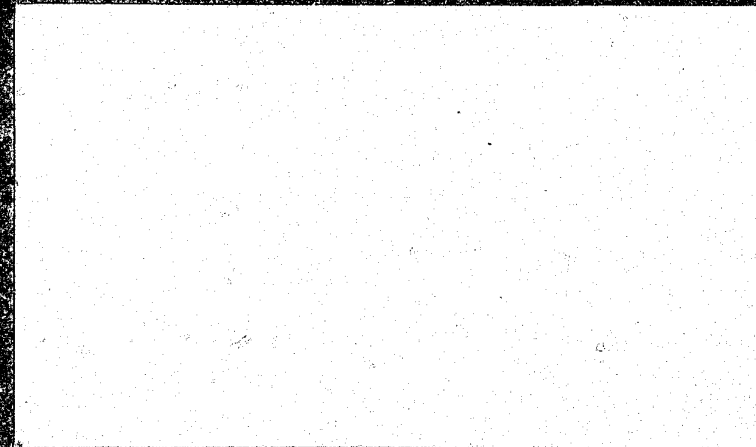


Commonwealth of Kentucky
Department of Justice
Bureau of Corrections



Office of Administrative and Fiscal Affairs
Division of Management Information Systems
Research and Evaluation Unit



U.S. Department of Justice
National Institute of Justice

79735

This document has been reproduced exactly as received from the person or organization originating it. Points of view or opinions stated in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the National Institute of Justice.

Permission to reproduce this copyrighted material has been granted by

Kentucky Bureau of
Corrections

to the National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS).

Further reproduction outside of the NCJRS system requires permission of the copyright owner.

X
USE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL SCREENING IN HIRING
NON-CLERICAL CORRECTIONAL PERSONNEL:
A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF ISSUES

Prepared By:

Deborah House

NCJRS

JUN 18 1981

ACOL

79735

At Patricia Martin's direction, the Research and Evaluation Unit began reviewing the subject of psychological tests for non-clerical correctional staff. However, because of the nature of the subject, information was not limited to correctional officers but was expanded to include law enforcement personnel. In an effort to provide an adequate review of the issue, several activities were involved:

1. Personal contacts with agencies, clearinghouses, and others. These contacts provided specific articles and referrals and are documented in Appendix A.
2. Reference material was obtained from NCJRS and the complete articles from interesting abstracts were requested. Those articles relating to the subject of this report are discussed in the annotated bibliography.
3. A literature search was conducted by reviewing the contents of the last two years' issues of social science journals using Current Contents. This material, together with agency related information from NCJRS, is compiled in the bibliography.
4. To obtain the most timely information about testing utilized in other state correctional systems, a survey was distributed to all states.

With this information, it is hoped that decisions can be made about the feasibility of psychological testing for non-clerical correctional staff. Most of the documents discussed herein are available through the Research and Evaluation Unit.

The following is a list of agencies contacted for information about the use of personality evaluations in correctional agencies.

1. NCJRS - Mr. Len Sipes - A request was made for an information search on the topic. A bibliography on this issue was received in December. This contact was made by Deborah House on 11/20/1980.
2. Council of State Governments, Lexington, Kentucky - Ms. Ruth Osser - Ms. Osser responded to the inquiry by mailing two articles: "Psychological Screening of Police Candidates", Beutler, Larry E. and Dennis O'Leary, Police Chief, August, 1980, and "Professional Standards for Local Law Enforcement Officers", Texas Advisory Committee on Intergovernmental Relations, 1978. This contact was made by Deborah House on 11/20/1980.
3. Federal Bureau of Prisons, Division of Personnel - I talked with Mr. Laddie Tabor, who works in the examining unit that handles the Correctional Officer Register. Mr. Tabor stated that the Federal Bureau does no psychological testing. Applicants for correctional officer are interviewed at the federal prison nearest their home. If any question about suitability is raised, the Office of Personnel Management can conduct an investigation of the person's background. This contact was made by Deborah House on 11/20/1980.
4. Contact - Ms. Donna Hunzeker - Ms. Hunzeker said she would send information on hiring guidelines as soon as possible. The information consisted of several items: 1) summary of states' use of psychological tests or evaluations for correctional officers - October, 1980 Contact, 2) a summary of screening methods for correctional officers from 1976 Sourcebook of Criminal Statistics, and 3) table of contents from 1978 National

Manpower Survey of the Criminal Justice System, Vol. 1. (This document contains sections on Personnel Recruitment and training, and is available from U.S. GOP.) CONTACT also sent a copy of a Seventeen-State Study of criteria for Bureau of Corrections personnel. This contact was made by Jann True on 11/20/1980.

5. University of Louisville - Dr. Holmes - Dr. Holmes has a copy of a 1973 Attitude Survey that deals with attitudes toward juvenile justice policies. A copy of this survey was received on November 24, 1980. This contact was made by Jann True on 11/21/1980.

Survey Results

Only seven states responded that they currently use some form of psychological screening for correctional officers (Table 1). As shown, four of these states use the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory as a major screening device. The use of the MMPI is discussed in several articles in the annotated bibliography.

At the present time, four states responded that they are considering the use of psychological evaluation in the hiring process. One of these, Pennsylvania, is currently administering tests on an "experimental basis". The vast majority of the states indicated no interest in this type of screening, with five states responding they had discontinued using psychological screening because of impracticality, lack of validity, and cost.

Indiana corrections officials stated that a psychologist attended an oral interview with candidates. However, it was not clear exactly what impact he has in the hiring process.

TABLE 1
STATES' USE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL SCREENING DEVICES
FOR HIRING CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS

State	Does Not Use Psychological Testing	Does Use - Method
Alabama	X	
Alaska	X	
Arizona	X	
Arkansas	X	
California	X	
Colorado	X	
Connecticut		Structured oral interview focusing on job-oriented personality traits and motivation - results in consensus rating of applicant by panel. This is only part of screening which also includes written test and background investigation.
Delaware	X	
District of Columbia	X	
Florida	X	
Georgia	X	
Hawaii	X	
Idaho	X	
Illinois	X	
Indiana	X	
Iowa	X	
Kansas	X	
Louisiana	X	
Maine	X	
Maryland	X	
Massachusetts	X	

State	Does Not Use Psychological Testing	Does Use - Method
Michigan	X	
Minnesota	X	
Mississippi	X	
Missouri	X	
Montana	X	
Nebraska	X	
Nevada	X	
New Hampshire		Oral board consisting of three senior staff assessing attitudes and mental sets.
New Jersey		MMPI, House-Tree-Person
New Mexico	X	
New York	X	
North Carolina	X	
North Dakota		Interview, MMPI, Edwards Personal Preference Schedule, Shipley Institute of Living Scale
Ohio		Note: Testing has been used in one institution for several years. Considering statewide adoption.
Oklahoma	X	
Oregon	X	
Pennsylvania	X	
Rhode Island		MMPI
South Carolina	X	
South Dakota	X	
Tennessee	X	
Texas	X	Note: Uses MMPI - post-hiring.
Utah	X	
Vermont	X	
Virginia	X	

<u>State</u>	<u>Does Not Use Psychological Testing</u>	<u>Does Use - Method</u>
Washington	X	
West Virginia	X	
Wisconsin	X	
Wyoming	X	

Review of the Use of Personality Inventories for Employee Selection

The use of personality inventories as employee selection devices is an extremely sensitive, controversial issue. Historically, public opposition to the use of such tests has centered around ethical considerations. Namely, it has been deemed unethical that an applicant should be judged on his conformity to corporate "standards" of employee attitudes. Questions have been raised about the interpretation of these test results and concern has been expressed about the validity of personality inventories. Since such selection devices must demonstrate lack of bias and satisfy Equal Employment Opportunity standards, it is crucial that validity be firmly established or an agency could leave itself vulnerable to litigation.

Therefore, the choice of an appropriate personality inventory is difficult. The screening device must be valid. That is, there must be an empirically demonstrated relationship between the constructs measured by the test and job performance. At this time, there is a paucity of validity studies on these tests.

Prior Literature Reviews

Previous literature reviews on this subject have noted that "no single study clearly demonstrated predictive validity for a personality inventory used as a selection device".¹

As far back as 1953, a literature review showed that while, under some circumstances, personality inventory scores correlated higher with job performance than might be expected, the negative results of the majority of studies reviewed indicates a need for caution in their use. In addition, they noted that inventories were efficacious for occupations where personality would likely to be of little importance.²

In a later review, besides noting a number of methodological problems with the validity of the 97 studies reviewed, the authors concluded that no conventional personality inventory demonstrated effectiveness as a personnel selection device.³

The authors cited in this section all mentioned various methodological flaws in the studies reviewed that tended to obscure the results. In the absence of these flaws, the results may have been different. Therefore, it cannot be assumed that there is no relationship whatever between personality traits and job success, even though a large body of literature attests to this contention.

However, the intuitive belief that personality traits are somewhat related to job performance persists and some justifications for such screening can be made on the basis of the sensitivity of the correctional officer's or police officer's work. In this case, there is concern with identification of candidates who possess the necessary interpersonal skills to cope with high pressure situations, and the elimination of individuals with outright pathology.

Issues Involved in Testing

In the area of law enforcement, traditional civil service examinations and cursory interviews have long been the accepted methods for screening applicants. Recently, however, officials have perceived the need to screen out applicants who were unsuited for police work. Psychological screening processes are currently used primarily by police departments. The methods range from pencil-and-paper examinations, such as the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory to full-fledged assessment centers.

Psychological screening requires candidates to non-voluntarily disclose their attitudes to prospective employers. Psychologists consider such screening

to be an invasion of privacy as the subject does not wish to disclose himself to the psychologist. This is in contrast to the use of such tests in counseling where a subject has freely sought such services, and the information obtained from testing is deemed necessary for treatment. When considering the question of using personality inventories as screening devices for correctional officers, the issue of personal privacy must be weighed against the need for predicting suitable candidates for correctional officers. Is the individual's right to privacy abrogated by his application for this job? In addition, the question of confidentiality must be dealt with; how will the agency ensure that test scores are kept confidential?

Another issue of great importance is the above-mentioned conformity to Equal Opportunity standards. Along with the difficulty of establishing validity of personality inventories, this is no doubt a major reason that personality screening is so little used as compared to standard aptitude tests.

The possible consequences of using an unvalidated screening device are very grave indeed. This is an area in which there can be no laxity: standards for the establishment of validity must be rigidly followed before the screening device is put to general use. Besides establishing the fact that a personality inventory actually measures what it purports to measure, there must be a proven relationship between the personality traits tested and job success.

FOOTNOTES

¹"The Validity of Personality Inventories for the Selection of Personnel: A Review of the Literature and Recommendations for Research"; Kozlowski, Steven; Pennsylvania State University, December, 1978.

³"Validity of Personality Measures in Personnel Selection", Givon, R. M., and Gottier, R. F., Personnel Psychology, 1965, 18, pp. 135-164.

²"The Validity of Personality Inventories in the Selection of Employees", Ghiselli, E. E. and Barthoe, R. P., Journal of Applied Psychology, 1953, 37, pp. 18-20.

⁴Essentials of Psychological Testing (2nd Ed.), Cronbach, L. J., Harper and Row, New York, 1960.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. "What You Always Wanted to Know About Assessment Centers But Were Afraid to Ask"

Brown, Gary E. Police Chief, June, 1978

Definition - The Assessment Center is defined as a process whereby a standardized evaluation of a person's capabilities and behavior habits are compiled.

The author lists standards which define a true assessment center:

1. Multiple assessment techniques must be used;
2. Multiple assessors must be used;
3. Judgments resulting in an outcome (i.e., recommendation for promotion, etc.) must be based on polling information from assessors and techniques;
4. An overall evaluation of behavior must be made by the assessors at a separate time from observation of behavior;
5. Simulation exercises are used;
6. The dimensions, attributes, characteristics or qualities evaluated by the assessment center are determined by an analysis of relevant job behaviors;
7. The techniques used in the assessment center are designed to provide information which is used in evaluating the dimensions, attributes or qualities previously determined.

Conversely, he identifies activities which do not constitute an assessment process:

1. Panel interviews or a series of sequential interviews as the sole technique;
2. Reliance on a specific technique (regardless of whether a simulation or not) as the sole basis for evaluation;
3. Using only a test battery composed of a number of pencil and paper measures, regardless of whether the judgments are made by a statistical or judgmental pooling of scores.
4. Single assessor assessment;
5. The use of several simulations with more than one assessor where there is no pooling of data; i.e., each assessor prepares a report on performance in an exercise, and the unintegrated individual reports are used as the final product of the center.
6. A physical location labeled as an assessment center which does not conform to the requirements noted above.

Positive Factors

Provide a broad-based approach to evaluation of executive personnel.

Match individual to job.

Assessment centers appear to meet EEOC standards more than the traditional means of paper and pencil tests and/or panel interviews.

Serve as a training tool.

Candidates feel it is a fairer process for promotional determinations.

Is as valid or more valid than any other currently used technique.

Assessment centers serve to select managers of the future.*

Comments:

*Conflict between these two statements is obvious. The first statement is based on the author's assertion that 'assessment centers will identify those individuals who will be able to cope with rapid change and future needs.' However, the second statement is based upon this reasoning. "Process can only detect with some certainty the 'now-oriented manager'; data regarding concurrent validity is produced, not predictive validity. They fall short of determining who will be successful in coping with problems yet undiscovered or lying just beneath the surface."

Negative Factors

Assessment centers are expensive to operate. \$300-\$500/participant

Those not selected to attend will feel rejected.

It produces a great amount of anxiety.

They tend to identify and promote the "Organizational Man".

They do not forecast the manager of the future.*

People would rather be judged on real life experience than simulation.

There has not been enough research to determine validity.

2. "Professional Standards for Local Law Enforcement Officers", Texas Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, 1978.

Note: Texas Commission on Law Enforcement Officer Standards and Education recommends but does not require that police officer candidates be examined by a qualified psychologist, physician, or psychiatrist.

Approaches Used by Texas Cities

Abilene - has used psychological testing for at least 16 years. Testing includes MMPI, projective tests, and an interview using a biographical sketch. The psychologist sends a report to the Department but retains actual scores to ensure applicant's privacy. Few applicants are rejected on a basis of this test.

Alvin - Eight unspecified tests are used. Cost is \$200 per person. To date, no one has been rejected due to this testing.

Dallas - uses "extensive" tests. A small number of applicants have been rejected outright because the psychological screening detected pathology.

Austin - Twenty tests are administered to applicants. These are not part of the selection process, however, but are being used to develop a battery of tests for that purpose.

Other States

A survey conducted by the National Association of State Directors of Law Enforcement Training showed that six states impose mandatory testing standards: Arkansas, Oklahoma, Minnesota, Tennessee, Montana, and North Dakota. Four of these states' standards are summarized below.

Arkansas - All recruits are required to take one of these tests during a one-year probationary period: MMPI, Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, the Strong Vocational Interest Blank, or California Personality Inventory.

Oklahoma - An evaluation similar to MMPI is required statute only but administration of this is left up to each locality and compliance is not uniform.

Minnesota - Each applicant is required to undergo evaluation, generally either the MMPI or California Personality Inventory.

Tennessee - Applicants are given written intellectual, psychological, and vocational preference exams. No one is denied certification solely on basis of these tests.

It was noted that law enforcement administrators generally express three concerns about psychological screening: 1) control of hiring process; 2) potential problems in meeting EEO guidelines, and 3) cost.

3. "Psychological Screening of Police Candidates", Beutler, Larry E. and Dennis O'Leary, Police Chief, August, 1980.

This article describes what the authors consider to be "important and paradoxical variables" in the selection of police officers. An example of how a screening procedure corresponded with officer performance is also presented.

Briefly, characteristics important to a police officer are:

1. The ability to "implement precise amount of control needed in a situation" without becoming "budge-heavy" or inviting the other person to try and aggressively re-establish control.
2. The control of intense, internal urges combined with appropriate and readily-available ways to discharge job-related tensions.
3. Ability to comply with and exercise authority.
4. Perseverance without stubbornness.

The evaluation process consists of a battery of psychological tests and an intensive interview, designed to directly assess these important characteristics. Certain background factors believed to be important predictors were noted.

Fourteen officers selected using this evaluation procedure were rated by two supervisors on a ten-point scale dealing with their ability to handle stress, how well they took responsibility, and adapted to police role. These two supervisors were in essential agreement in reporting their subjective impressions of these officers.

It was found that when historical/demographic data and psychological test data were combined, a moderate to high correspondence with supervisor ratings of job performance was obtained.

4. "Utility of the MMPI (Minnesota Multiphasic Inventory) in Assessing the Personality Patterns of Urban Police Applicants", Gottesman, J.

Comparison of the mean profile of 203 urban, New Jersey police applicants with that of a group of Cincinnati, Ohio applicants and that of a control group of 100 veterans demographically similar to the New Jersey group.

Statistical analysis of the results of the study raises doubts about the validity of interpretations of the personality patterns of police applicants based on use of the MMPI normal group.

5. "Public Policy and Personnel Selection - Development of a Selection Program for Patrol Officers", Barrett, G. V., O'Connor, E., Balasco, L. Alexander, R. A., Forbes, J. B., Garver, T.

This research project was undertaken to develop an entrance level patrol officer selection program in Akron, Ohio that was relevant to job performance and free from factors that discriminate against minority groups. 180 white and 6 black officers participated.

The research effort was successful in predicting the job performance of patrol officers using a concurrent validity design. Data from black and white applicants taking the examination in June, 1974 show that the test battery was valid, job related, and non-discriminatory. Initially, a job analysis and job descriptions were completed for the Akron Police Force. Patrol Officer performance evaluation measures were devised, based on employee service rating reports in Akron for Patrol Officers, monthly activity police summary reports, and employment history information. Performance measures so developed were dependability, job knowledge, communication, crime prevention, dealing with the public, judgement, demeanor, report writing, equipment, investigation, commitment, relations with others, integrity, initiative, traffic, using force, work attitude, public safety, and teamwork. Tests believed to be job-related were not as predictive of job performance as expected. It is concluded that actual job experience does not greatly modify scores on tests that measure individual attributes important for the general concept of job success and that individuals most likely to profit from training and experience related to a job are those who score high on attributes important for job success. References are listed, and supporting data are provided. Forms, the position analysis questionnaire, and additional narrative and statistical information on the research project are contained in appendixes.

6. "Police Selection and Career Assessment", Dunnett, M.D., Motowidlo, S. J., 1975

The major objective of this research program was to develop new methods for evaluating persons who apply for positions in police work and for assessing the potential of present police officers being considered for promotion. Critical features of four different police jobs were determined: general patrol officer, investigator/detective, patrol sergeant, and intermediate command. The means by which these critical features and other information such as job performance ratings were utilized to develop and validate two personnel evaluation instruments are described in detail. The first evaluation instrument developed, which came to be called the Police Career Index, consists of a brief, easily administered and objectively scored inventory to be used in preliminary screening of applicants and candidates for police jobs. The second procedure, the Regional Assessment Center, consists of a series of police job simulation exercises designed to elicit behavioral indicators of a person's potential for success in various aspects of police work. Procedures for utilizing these instruments are outlined.

7. "Relationship of selected Psychological Tests to Measures of Police Officer Job Performance in the State of Illinois - Results of the Illinois Local Community Police Officer Selection Project", Furcon, J. and Froemel, E. C., 1973

The program goal was the validation of specific psychological tests for use in selecting police officers and the establishment of general standards for use in the police selection process.

The basic aim of the project was to develop a low-cost, systematic, and effective procedure for selecting police officers and placing them in assignments best utilizing their mental abilities, skills, and behavioral attributes. In addition, it was the aim of the project to provide accurate and equitable selection procedures for applicants, regardless of race or cultural background. The procedures and results of the patrolman job requirements analysis, outlines the criteria used for selecting tests, and describes the psychological tests used in the project. Chapter three provides a description of the supervisory and objective patrolman job performance measures and reviews the results of their application. Chapter four describes the results of the test administration to police officers in participating agencies and the results of test validation analysis. Chapter five provides recommendations for implementation of project results in the screening of police applicants in the State of Illinois. A list of references is also included.

8. "Hiring Despite the Psychologist's Objections - An Evaluation of Psychological Evaluations of Police Officers", Lester, David, et al., Criminal Justice and Behavior, Vol. 7, No. 1, March, 1980.

This article examines the degree of congruence between the psychologist's decisions about police applicants and the department's decisions to hire or not hire. In addition, those hired in spite of negative recommendations by the psychologist are compared to those hired with positive recommendations in order to compare criteria used by the psychologist in his decisions with the police department's criteria.

Results

The police department hired 43 of the 50 men (86%) for whom the psychologist recommended "yes"; hired 23 of 28 men (82%) for whom the psychologist recommended "yes, but" or "probation", and hired 17 of the 41 men (41%) for whom the psychologist recommended "no". Overall, decisions made by the police department concurred with those made by the psychologist on 76% of the applicants.

With regard to criteria used for making recommendations, the psychologist used clearcut guidelines: he recommended applicants with social service and scientific interests, high needs for intraception and endurance, and not too low a need for deference. However, decisions made by the police department to hire or not were independent of the scores on these tests. (Note: tests used were Edwards' Personal Preference Schedule, the Kuder Vocational Preference Record, and Raven's Progressive Matrices.)

The authors advance these reasons for the discrepancies:

1. Psychologist was a clinical psychologist for whom police screening was only a small part of his practice;
2. Psychologist had additional data available for his decisions, as applicants were also administered Rorschach, Thematic Apperception, and House-Tree-Person Tests. Data from these projective tests is interpreted subjectively, is difficult to quantify, and was therefore omitted from the report;
3. The police department also had background data such as employment record, which was not available to psychologist.

9. "The Prediction of Correctional Officer Job Performance: Construct Validation in an Employment Setting", Peterson, Norman G. and Houston, Janis S., 1980

Author's Abstract

A predictive validity design was used to evaluate the criterion-related validity of an experimental selection battery for predicting successful performance as a Correctional Officer in the adult correctional institutions of the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction. The study built on prior work at one adult correctional institution (Marion) in Ohio, and is seen as a major step in demonstrating the construct validity of certain selection procedures for predicting Correctional Officer for performance. Job analysis findings at that institution were verified in the other seven institutions. Worker characteristic constructs and predictor measures selected as appropriate by experts in the Marion, Ohio study were confirmed as appropriate for the other correctional institutions. Additional predictors were also chosen to be evaluated for this study. Measures of cognitive ability, personality dimensions, biographical data, and vocational preferences were included as well as an instrument specially developed to predict Correctional Officer job performance, (Correctional Officer Interest Blank, Gough, 1956). Special job performance rating scales were developed for use as criteria in the study. Measures of turnover, tardiness, absenteeism, and disciplinary actions were also included as criteria.

Results showed that measures of personality dimensions as weighted by a panel of experienced psychologists and the Correctional Officer Interest Blank predicted job performance ratings and early turnover. Cognitive measures also predicted performance in aspects of the job that, intuitively at least, seemed to require cognitive skills, but did not predict performance in other areas. Adverse impact and test fairness analyses indicate no evidence of unfairness with regard to race or sex, even though there is some adverse impact with respect to race. The recommended use in selection is a unit-weighted sum of three measures: Gough's Correctional Officer Interest Blank, the Ohio Correctional Officer Psychological Inventory as Keyed by experts, and a Reading Comprehension Test.

The authors do not identify the names of the Personality Scales comprising the Ohio Correctional Officer Psychological Inventory. They maintain this is due partly to publisher's wishes and partly to ensure the "security of the selection process".

Name and Title of Respondent _____
Organization _____
Address _____
_____ Zip _____
Phone Number _____

1. Has your agency ever used any method of personality evaluation when hiring non-clerical institutional personnel? ____ no ____ yes
2. If your state has discontinued use of a personality evaluation, please state why. _____

3. Does your agency currently use such a device? ____ no ____ yes
4. Please describe the method used. Interview _____

Test _____

5. What tests are administered? _____

6. When did you initiate this policy? _____

7. If you use a test developed in-house, may we obtain a copy of the test and description of the methodology? _____

Check box if you would like a copy of the survey results. ☐