

Predictions of Salisbury
Law Enforcement Candidates

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to select an efficient assessment, the California Personality Inventory, to utilize as a screening device for the Salisbury Police Department. The CPI was administered to twenty-six potential law enforcement officers currently involved in a thirteen week training program. Of the twenty-six potential officers, eight planned to work for the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The hypothesis of this study was that these eight candidates would score significantly higher on the CPI scales. Of the eighteen CPI scales, the DNR group scored significantly higher on nine; those scales included: intellectual efficiency, achievement via conformity, achievement via independence, responsibility, socialization, self-control, communality, sociability and psychological-mindedness. Consequently, the hypothesis in this particular study was supported.

Recently, psychologists have become more involved in selection procedures and screening devices for job candidates. Various tests, profiles, and inventories have been created in order to learn more thoroughly about the type of person who is applying for the job and whether or not his personality type is congruent with that particular field or occupation. One advantage of these assessment tests is that they have become so specialized and can be easily administered to a large group. Another advantage is that the assessment tests usually provide accurate and reliable results in a minimal time period. One of the major problems of pencil and paper tests is that the validity of the instrument always is in question and needs to be ascertained through extensive research and experimentation.

Numerous personality tests have been developed to aid in swift and accurate assessment of the human personality. The Minnesota Multiple Personality Inventory, Kuder Occupational Interest Survey, and the California Personality Inventory serve numerous purposes and have been utilized as means to evaluate potential job applicants. One particular area that relies upon these tools for screening devices for job candidates is law enforcement.

The Minnesota Multiple Personality Inventory, the Kuder Occupational Interest Survey and the California Personality Inventory have been widely administered to potential law enforcement officers. Until recently, the Minnesota Multiple Personality Inventory was viewed as being the most accurate of the personality inventories. Even though the Minnesota Multiple Personality Inventory

has been accepted as an instrumental screening device, no study to date has demonstrated beyond a doubt that the Minnesota Multiple Personality Inventory is helpful in ascertaining which law enforcement applicant is more qualified for the job. For instance, Shoenfeld, Kobos, and Phinney (1980) measured the Minnesota Multiple Personality Inventories profiles of four hundred and twenty-four members who had served between three and twelve years at the San Antonio Police Department. In contrast to the supervisor's ratings, the unacceptable officers were able to project a positive personality score despite the fact that actually they had repetitive incidents of behavior problems that interfered with effective law enforcement interaction within the community.

The Minnesota Multiple Personality Inventory has been devalued and criticized because the content of the questions tend to focus on abnormal or unhealthy psychological traits which usually do not have any relevance to an average job applicant. For instance, Bartol (1982) found that law enforcement officers tend to score higher on psychopathic deviant, paranoia, and hypomania scales than the general population. This type of personality assessment does not seem to provide the relevant information required to screen job applicants. Since the more recent research has demonstrated that the Minnesota Multiple Personality Inventory is not an appropriate tool to be employed as a screening device, other measurement tests such as vocational guidance tests have been substituted. However, David Lester and

Charles Purgavie (1978) state that these type of tests, more specifically, Kuder Occupational Interest Survey, seem to be of minimal worth for accurately predicting potential successful police officers. Lester and Purgavie administered the Kuder Occupational Interest Survey to one hundred and fifteen male state law enforcement recruits who had previously graduated from police academies with twenty-four who had resigned or were dismissed. The researchers discovered that both groups did not differ on their police officer capability scale. This failure not to differiate between the successful and unsuccessful law enforcement candidates suggests that this tool should not be utilized as a meaningful screening device.

Since the favored Minnesota Multiple Personality Inventory and other assessment tools have been shown to be inadequate screening devices for law enforcement candidates, the California Personality Inventory is being used for this purpose more often and is attaining credibility. The California Personality Inventory (CPI) was first published in 1956 and was created by Harrison Gough. Gough developed an inventory with the purpose to assess healthy, everyday behaviors. Most of the content consists of typical behavior patterns, customary feelings, opinions and attitudes concerning social, ethical and family matters.

The CPI is a self-administered paper and pencil personality test. The CPI consists of four hundred and sixty-eight questions in addition to twelve of those questions

being repeated twice for a sum total of four hundred and eighty questions. The subject reads the question and indicates whether or not the statement is true or false for him by placing an "X" in a box labeled "T" or "F".

A score is established by placing opaque templates over the answer sheet and for each scale count the number of "X's" that appear in the clear plastic windows. After the raw scores are compiled, they are transferred to a profile sheet. By plotting the scores on the profile sheet, the scores are then converted to T scores with a mean of fifty and a standard deviation of ten. These scores are based upon norms collected from more than over six thousand men and seven thousand women.

The CPI is divided into four separate categories and yields eighteen different scales. According to the CPI manual, the first category measures poise, self-assurance, and interpersonal adequacy. The first category includes six scales, and they are: dominance, capacity for status, sociability, social presence, self-acceptance, and sense of well-being.

The dominance scale consists of forty-six items, twenty-three items which are keyed to be true and twenty-three which are false. The high scores of this particular scale tend to be perceived as being confident, persistent, self-reliant and as possessing leadership qualities. The low scores tend to be viewed as being inhibited, indifferent, unassuming and lacking in leadership capabilities. An example of a question for the dominance scale is, "I am a

better talker than listener." This question should be marked true on the answer key and implies a dominant outlook.

The second scale in the first category is the capacity for status scale. The CPI manual states that this scale attempts to assess the personal qualities which underlie or lead to the achievement of status. High scores on this particular scale tend to be viewed as being ambitious, resourceful, and versatile. Low scores are labeled as being shy, awkward in new or unfamiliar social situations and basically dull.

The third scale of the first category of the CPI is termed the sociability scale. This scale is utilized to identify people who are extroverted and like to be around people in general. High scores are viewed as being outgoing, competitive, and enterprising. On the other hand, low scores are perceived as being impressionable, awkward, and shy. Examples of questions asked identifying this characteristic are "I would like to belong to several clubs or lodges." or "I am a good mixer."

The fourth scale included in this category is social presence. Social presence is defined as possessing poise and self-confidence in social settings. A high score suggests that the person is clever, talkative, and vigorous. A low scorer would be viewed as being self-restrained and deliberate. This scale is composed of fifty-six items. One example is "I like to go to parties and other affairs where there is lots of loud fun."

The fifth scale that incorporates the first category

is called self-acceptance. This scale measures qualities such as sense of personal worth and capacity for independent thinking and behavior. A high scorer is defined as being sharp-witted, intelligent, and demanding. A low scorer would be seen as easygoing and passive. An example of a question which addresses this trait is " I am certainly lacking in self-confidence."

The last scale of the first category of the CPI is sense of well-being. This quality is supposed to identify people who lack self-doubt and typically reduce the importance of their worries and complaints. High scores on this scale indicate that a person is energetic, productive, and values work as an end in itself. Low scores are judged as being apathetic, defensive, and conventional.

In the second category of the CPI, the purpose is to assess socialization, maturity, responsibility, and intrapersonal structure of values. This category also is comprised of six scales. The six scales are responsibility, socialization, self-control, tolerance, good impression, and communality.

The responsibility scale consists of forty-two items that identify people who are dependable and conscientious. A high score suggests that the person possesses qualities such as thoroughness, independence, and efficiency. On the other hand, a low score denotes that the person is dogmatic, lazy, and impulsive. An example of an indicator of responsibility is " Every citizen should take the time to find out about national affairs, even if it means giving

up personal pleasures."

The second scale of this category is socialization. Socialization is defined as being a person who is socially mature and functions well in social interactions. A high scorer is viewed as being serious, industrious, and honest. A person who scores low in this scale is rebellious, defensive, and stubborn. The scale contains forty-four items and one example that assesses socialization is "The members of my family were always close to one another."

The third component of this category is self-control. This scale is designed to measure the adequacy of self-regulation. A high scorer would be labeled as being calm, practical, and inhibited. A low scorer would tend to be impulsive, irritable, and self-centered. According to the CPI key, a person who is characterized as being self-controlled would not do anything on a dare.

Tolerance is the fourth scale of the second category of the CPI. This scale reflects openness and flexibility in comparison to rigidity or dogmatism. A tolerant person, according to the CPI, should possess broad and varied interests and be clear-thinking. An intolerant person would be labeled as being suspicious, judgmental, and narrow-minded. This person would probably answer true when asked if there is only one true religion.

Good impression is the fifth criteria in the second category. This scale is concerned with people who are capable of creating favorable impressions and who are con-

cerned with how others react to them. High scorers are perceived as being warm and cooperative. Low scores tend to be seen as cautious, distant, and self-centered. The scale contains forty items.

The last scale of the second category is communality. This scale focuses on conveying good socialization and conventional behavior and attitudes. A person who scores highly on this particular scale is described as being realistic, sensible, and possesses good or sound judgment. A person who is characterized as being disorderly and confused would tend to score below the norm on this scale.

The purpose of the third category, which is labeled achievement potential and intellectual efficiency, is to predict whether or not the individual has personality traits which are associated with academic success. This category consists of three scales and they are: achievement via conformance, achievement via independence, and intellectual efficiency.

The first scale of the third category is labeled achievement via conformity and the purpose of this scale is to identify people who have a strong need for achievement coupled with a deeply internalized appreciation and desire for structure and organization. This scale is comprised of thirty-eight items and focuses upon whether or not one enjoys academic settings. Capable, efficient, and stable are qualities that are associated

with someone who scores highly on this scale. In comparison, a person who is lacking in self-discipline and who is stereotypical in thought would score poorly on this scale. The statement, "If given the chance, I would be a good leader of people.", is seen as measuring this quality.

Achievement via independence is the second component of this category which is utilized to measure academic success. This scale was created to predict achievement in settings where independence of thought, creativity, and self-actualization are rewarded. A person who scored highly on this scale would be perceived as being dominant, independent, and possessing above-average intelligence. In comparison, a low scorer would tend to be seen as being submissive, dull, and compliant.

The last component of this category is intellectual efficiency. This scale possesses items that correlate significantly with measures of intelligence. A person who performed well on this scale would place a high value on cognitive and intellectual matters. A low scorer would be described as being shallow and conventional in thought and action. This scale is comprised of fifty-two items and the statement, "I like to read about history." is an example of a true response that is used to achieve this judgment.

The final category of the CPI measures intellectual and interest modes. This category is comprised of three scales which are psychological-mindedness, flexibility,

and femininity. This category emphasizes the reflection or accumulation of attitudes. The purpose of the psychological-mindedness scale is to identify individuals who are insightful and concerned about the well-being of others. This type of person is interested in the needs and experiences of others. In addition, this person tends to understand how others feel and think. A person who performs well on this scale is described as being observant, perceptive, and spontaneous. A low score on this scale would convey that a person tended to be apathetic and unassuming in nature. This scale is composed of twenty-two questions.

Flexibility is the second component of this category. This scale identifies people who are adaptable in their thinking, behavior, and temperament. Adjectives that describe a person who scores well on this scale are adventurous, confident, and assertive. A person who obtained a low score would be regarded as being rigid and methodical. A person who is flexible would not agree with the statement, "I don't like things to be uncertain or unpredictable."

The last scale of the CPI is called the femininity scale and this scale provides a continuum of masculine versus feminine traits. A person who scored above the mean on this scale would be described as being gentle, patient, and respectful. Low scores tend to be viewed as being manipulative, restless, and ambitious. This scale consists

of stereotypical statements, such as, " I would like to be a nurse."

The CPI was carefully constructed by selecting a pool of items that appear to reflect a specific quality. The scales were derived by asking friends and acquaintances to nominate members of their group who were either high or low in the particular trait in question. At that point, after literally thousands of subjects had been tested, the scales were formulated on the basis of high and low scales in the population.

In order to understand the meaning of a profile, one should note the overall profile evaluation. For instance, if all scores are well above the mean score, chances are that the person is healthy and functioning well in society. Next, the differential evaluation of the four different categories is meaningful. For instance, if category one is more elevated than category three, one could assume that social skills are more developed than intellectual and academic skills. Finally, the unique features of the profile should be viewed. The more extreme the scores are of a particular scale, the more likely the provided set of adjectives in the key characterizes the person.

Another point of consideration when evaluating these scales is whether or not they actually represent the person being assessed. Three scales have been created solely for this purpose. These scales, good impression, sense of well-being, and communality, help to determine whether or not the results obtained are distorted. If the good im-

pression scale is highly elevated in relationship to the other scales, this could indicate that the person is very concerned with being perceived in a favorable light. Very low scores on the sense of well-being scale would suggest that the person tends to exaggerate personal problems or predicaments. The communality scale was designed to detect answers that are given in a random or unmeaningful pattern. If scores are low on this scale, this could be the reason for the score.

In order to understand the significance of testing results, scores above the mean ($T=50$) indicate positive adjustment and those below the mean indicate problem areas. However, this judgment fluctuates with age of the population or sample being assessed. For instance, a male high school student with a T score of forty on the intellectual efficiency scale is actually a little above average when evaluated and when compared to high school norms. On the other hand, a graduate student in psychology with a T score of sixty is below average for psychology graduate students.

The CPI has been utilized as a screening device for law enforcement applicants. In one study, Hogan (1976) first compared the CPI scores of unsuccessful applicants with cadets who had successfully completed the requirements that were necessary to become a member of the law enforcement department. Although the unsuccessful applicants scored the same as or above the male adult mean on every scale except tolerance, their mean scores were significant-

ly lower than those successful applicants on eight scales, they were: dominance, capacity for status, social presence, self-acceptance, achievement via independence, intellectual efficiency, and psychological-mindedness.

Recent literature has begun to show that the CPI does have predictive value in various educational settings. Holland (1959) found in his study of National Merit Scholarship Corporation finalists that the CPI yielded more superior forecasting abilities than any other test scores. In addition, Maxwell (1960) found CPI patterns to be accurate in forecasting graduation versus dropping out in college.

Since the CPI has been successfully utilized in a variety of settings and situations, the CPI was administered to a group of twenty-six Salisbury police cadets for the purpose of evaluation. Through the course of research, it was discovered that eight applicants of the group of twenty-six were preparing to become officers for the Department of National Resources (DNR) and the other eighteen candidates planned to serve as law enforcement officers for communities similar to Salisbury. Since the candidates who plan to be employed with the DNR tended to have a slightly different view of the purpose of the required course and its relevance to their future, it was predicted that there would be a significant difference between the scores of the two groups involved in the class.

Past research has shown that officers of DNR and similar departments have interests and outlooks that differ

from law enforcement officers. The reasoning behind this personality difference might be attributed to the nature of the jobs themselves. For example, officers that work for state parks and forests tend to be more interested in the environment and ecology. In addition, these officers are usually older and better educated by the time they attend this type of training program.

The training program for the Salisbury cadets is thirteen weeks in duration. During this period, they are extensively trained to be professionals in law enforcement in every aspect. They are evaluated by successfully accomplishing a number of required skills that will enable them in the future to become competent law enforcement officers. The training program is a high stress situation and many areas of law enforcement are introduced in a high-paced situation. For instance, each candidate must successfully accomplish a number of skills in order to complete the training program. Many of the skills have to deal with self-protection, handling weapons, hand-to-hand combat, physical fitness endurance, skillful driving and various other imperative skills.

The NRD and the potential law enforcement officer tend to view this required class differently. An officer who is employed in a state park situation has much different duties and responsibilities than a law enforcement officer who is involved in controlling a high crime community. For instance, an officer who is employed by the NRD only has arresting powers within the state park boundaries. This type of officer probably will not utilize many of the skills that

are taught in this thirteen week course. Nevertheless, they are required to attend the class and successfully accomplish the required specifications of the training program.

Since the potential law enforcement officers and the potential DNR officers were perceived as possessing varying personalities, the CPI was administered to discover if the two groups were different in personality traits and if personality profiles were similar with each group. Another purpose of this study was to find out what kind of person was attracted to law enforcement. Numerous studies have questioned whether or not a "police personality" exists. Some suggest that law enforcement officers tend to be more cynical and authoritarian. While other studies, suggest that people are attracted to this occupation because of their desire to serve mankind. Even though only a small sample was involved in the experiment, this study wanted to discover just what type of person desired a law enforcement career.

After the CPI was administered to both groups, the results were calculated and evaluated. Many significant differences were discovered between the two groups. After calculating the means of each scale for both groups, a clear pattern developed. The DNR group possessed a higher mean on every single scale of the CPI test. The most salient difference was on the intellectual efficiency scale. The DNR group had a mean of thirty-nine point five

(39.5) and the law enforcement group had a mean of thirty-one (31). While a mean of thirty-nine point five is well above the normal mean for the general population, a mean of thirty-one is a little over the mean of thirty on the profile sheet which indicates problems in functioning well in areas where intellectual efficiency is concerned. A $t(24) = 2.30$; at .05 significance level and this shows that the difference was significant.

Another finding when comparing the two groups is that the two groups differ drastically in the entire category of intelligence and academic functioning. This category includes the above mentioned intellectual efficiency scale in addition to achievement via conformity and achievement via independence. When T scores were tabulated for the achievement via conformity and achievement via independence scales, the results showed $t(24) = 2.05$, $p < .05$ and $t(24) = 3.02$; $p < .05$, respectively.

Another category in which both groups differed significantly in was the category that assesses socialization, maturity, responsibility, and intrapersonal structuring of values. Of the six scales in this category, the DNR performed significantly higher in four of them. The four scales included responsibility, socialization, self-control, and communality. This result suggests that the DNR group is much more adept socially and is perceived as being more capable and dependable. T scores were once again tabulated and the results for the responsibility scale

were $t(24)=3.14$; $p < .01$. In addition, the T score of the sociability scale was $t(24)=2.24$; $p < .05$. The T scores for the self-control and communality scales were $t(24)=2.15$; $p < .05$ and $t(24)=2.54$; $p < .05$ respectively.

As stated previously, a low score on the communality scale could imply an attempt for that group or person to intentionally distort or randomize the results. Since the mean for the communality scale for the law enforcement group was way below the normal mean of the general population, this possibility must be taken into account when examining the CPI in general. However, the probability of eighteen people who just happen to fall into the same category and, at the same time, intentionally randomize their answers is remote. Also, the potential officers were given the impression that this inventory was part of their evaluation for graduation and should be approached with the upmost sincerity.

The DNR also performed better in two additional scales of the CPI. The DNR group rated higher on the sociability and the psychological-mindedness scales. The T scores were $t(24)=2.34$; $p < .05$ and $t(24)=2.13$; $p < .05$. This suggests that generally this group is seen as being more outgoing and concerned with the well-being of others.

By using the CPI as a means of measurement, the DNR group proved to score significantly higher in nine of the eighteen scales of the CPI. In general, the DNR group showed considerably higher ratings on the CPI. As a group, the law enforcement scored poorly on the sense of

well-being, communality and intellectual scales.

As stated previously, a poor score on the sense of well-being scale could imply that as a group the law enforcement candidates tended to exaggerate their worries and problems. This score could be explained by the timing of the administration of the CPI. The thirteen week training program depicts a highly stressful situation and successful graduation is dependent upon future career plans. This type of severe stress could be reflected on this scale and pressure of the program itself could result in feelings of self-doubt and lowering of confidence.

When judging individual inventories, many patterns began to develop. For instance, individuals who scored above the mean on one scale tended to score above the mean on the rest of the scales in the inventory. In comparison, individuals who continued to score below the mean on several scales continued to score poorly on the rest of the skills. The CPI manual states that ninety-five percent of the population should score some where between the mean of thirty to seventy. This was not always the case with some individuals especially when evaluating the intellectual efficiency, sense of well-being, and the communality scales. If the CPI is an efficient screening device for law enforcement candidates and is relevant to this type of utilization, many subjects in this study should not become law enforcement officers due to poor performance ratings.

Of course, other factors are taken into account when selecting law enforcement officers. For instance, case history or background information, performance of skills and many other criteria are pertinent in the selection process. The utilization of the CPI in this instance enhances the accuracy of the perception of selecting a competent law enforcement officer.

In conclusion, our society has become extremely dependent upon these type of assessment tools, such as the CPI, to supply accurate evaluations in a limited amount of time. Only through continuous research and arduous effort can these assessment tools reach respectability and validity. The acceptance of the CPI and other assessment tests is vital to the importance of future exploration of similar tools and , subsequently, future exploration is imperative in order for deeper or improved understanding of the highly complicated matter of the human personality.

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