AIFP Testing Predicts Academy Performance of Victoria Police Recruits
Phase 1 - Summary

T H E   A U S T R A L I A N   I N S T I T U T E   O F   F O R E N S I C   P S Y C H O L O G Y

AIFP Research Report

Overview

AIFP was able to predict recruit performance at the Police Academy with a high degree of accuracy. This is particularly noteworthy as predictions were made only on test data, without the opportunity to meet and interview any of the subjects.

Background

In 1991 Victoria Police and AIFP began a joint study to determine the effectiveness of the AIFP Profiling System in assisting with the selection of police recruits. This pre-employment psychological profiling system was introduced to Australia from the USA by Dr. Ken Byrne in 1990. This was the first study undertaken with an Australian police department.

The AIFP Profiling System consists of several components. First is a group of psychological tests that have been 'tailor-made' for the challenge of screening police applicants. Several different types of reports are prepared based on the applicant's response to the questionnaires.

AIFP also provides its unique TRAIT© Interview System. This has numerous techniques to evaluate the integrity of the applicant, and measures a wide range of personality traits of interest to police administrators.

Phase 1 of the study was specifically concerned with comparing AIFP profile results with Academy performance.

Methodology

On June 18, 1991, a group of 51 police recruits were tested during their second day at the Police Academy. The group consisted of 43 males and 8 females. They ranged in age from 19 to 33, with an average age of 22. The average age for males was 22 and for females, 20. Most recruits had an educational level of year 12.

These recruits were selected from about 3000 applicants. Psychological screening was done with the MMPI-2. Having passed a rigorous selection process, it would be expected that these recruits would be 'the best of the best'.

The AIFP test results were analysed and a ranking of 'Above Average', 'Average' or 'Below Average' was assigned to each tested recruit.

Based on AIFP test scores alone, prediction was made that six (6) recruits would be 'Above Average' and twelve (12) would be 'Below Average' in suitability. These predictions were provided to Victoria Police at the end of June.

At the end of the 19-week Academy training, data regarding each cadet's performance was then collected from Phase Evaluation Card reports, Student Information Reports and faculty comments. These three sources of Academy performance feedback were then combined to assign an Academy ranking of 'Above Average', 'Average' or 'Below Average' to each Academy graduate. There were four recruits who did not complete the Academy course for performance reasons. They were assigned a ranking of 'Poor'.

Results of Phase 1

The predictions made based on testing were statistically significant in three categories:

- Predicting 'Above Average' performance

- Predicting 'Below Average' performance

- Identifying those who would be ranked in the top 10%

In predicting those who would be in the bottom 10% of the group our findings were better than chance, but not statistically significant.

In analysing the reports of those who were dismissed or who were regarded as 'Below Average' performers, we found that in all cases there were significant warning signs. In a 'real world' application, these would have provided fertile ground for interviewing.

A comparison of the top 10% and bottom 10% of performers showed that two of the AIFP tests did an excellent job (retrospectively) of identifying members in each group.

Implications of Phase 1

It is clearly in the interest of any police organisation to recruit people who will be successful—that is, become at least 'Average' performers—during their Academy training. To admit and train those who are dismissed, or who otherwise become marginal performers, is enormously expensive. Beyond just the dollars invested in recruitment and training is the potential for future problematic behaviour on the job.

This study—the only one in the extensive literature on police selection that actually made written predictions before seeing the performance outcomes—demonstrates that the AIFP Profiling System has considerable potential for improving the accuracy rate of police screening.

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