

Intelligent police selection: importance of select qualities of recruits as valued by police heads of several states and Caribbean islands

Abstract

The article compares selected police attribute importance levels chosen by police chiefs of six southern states (Alabama, Georgia, Florida, the Carolinas, and Texas) and five Midwestern states (Illinois, Iowa, Indiana, Ohio, Nebraska) and commissioners of the Caribbean Islands. Two separate areas are considered, these are preparation for the training and effective permanent careers. The preferred traits and skills (attributes) chiefs and commissioners believe lead to recruits' success in selection, training, and long-term career in policing that are also good for the community. Intelligent selection methodologies can generally predict candidates' success. Predictive success in training includes three general types of training: basic, in service, and specialized. These skills and trait (attributes) are helpful in determining candidates' success during assessments and beyond. The intent of the 12 separate surveys was to determine how important chiefs thought these skills and traits (attributes) were toward success rates of recruits in training and policing. The police chiefs in Midwest and southern states and Caribbean commissioners believe these attributes expand the success rates towards long police career. This article compares importance levels of 11 attributes in 12 replicated surveys of state police chiefs' and Caribbean Commissioners importance of preferred recruit skills and traits. police training, police skills and traits, police attributes, police selection, selection assessment, intelligent selection, predictive selection Intelligent Police Selection: Importance of Select Qualities of Recruits as Valued by Police Heads of Several States and Caribbean Islands.

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Abbreviations: MMPI, minnesota multiphase personality inventory; LEO, law enforcement officers; ADA, American with disabilities act

Introduction

No doubt, being in law enforcement is very demanding, especially with the current protests, criminal rioting, and criminal assaults on police. Reactions of police are expected to be passive by the politicians and protestors. While the police are expected to act professionally, policing in itself is not a true profession. Based on the accepted elements needed to be classified as a true profession, policing is still lacking the element of a universal agency college degree requirement, even though some individuals may have a college education. Although an agency may be lacking all of the elements of a true profession, it is important to note that most officers are professional in their duties. For example, being analytical and creative are innate traits and not skills gained solely through an education; they are traits required in community problem solving.¹ Quality selection of recruits is intelligent selection having the potential to enhance overall police performance. Quality selection is accomplished through carefully thought out intelligent selection procedures followed by meaningful intelligent training. There are some attributes that are subjectively more important than others. It is vital to find the candidates with the skills and traits that make a good career officer. The chiefs' choices of importance levels stated in the 12 surveys in this study offer constructive advice about the qualities they believe essential for new recruits to have positive police careers.

Recruits today need to be able to deliver services necessary in community and problem-oriented policing (C&POP). Law

enforcement officers (LEOs) with the qualities to meet the demands of policing today are more likely to become career officers since successful job performance increases morale and self-confidence. These qualities are generally not looked for during selection, but they need to be. Intelligent selection should attempt to screen in recruits with the qualities favorable toward contemporary policing and C&POP. Too many agencies continue screening out can did at instead of accepting (screening in) those with the preferred qualities or attributes. The selection assessments involve a series of hurdles set to trip (screen out) candidates trying to get over the challenge. Subsequently, even when a candidate has traits and skills favorable to positive police careers and training, if they trip, they are screened out, eliminated from the process. According to Frank et al.¹ assessments that *screening out* candidates are not as depend able in selecting as those that use the screening in philosophy toward applicants. Selecting candidates that lack the skills and traits to be successful in this challenging job is harmful to both the public and the recruit. Since human resources and police administrators cannot define a method for selecting recruits who will become successful career officers, they use candidate intelligence as an attribute most important in policing. They justify this approach since research indicates a correlation of low intelligence scores with negative police performance. However, high intelligence scores do not necessarily associate with positive police performance.¹ The Minnesota Multiphase Personality Inventory (MMPI₂) is a common screening out exam of applicants with psychological irregularities, but the MMPI₂ and other psychological examinations are not able to determine who will be a career officer. Examinations for selection are usually those recommended by purveyors that have a focus on *screening out* applicants with objectionable characteristics.¹ When determining the specific exams to be used in the selection process,

they should ask whether the exam includes a level of importance of desired skills and traits. Do they screen out or screen in applicants? Desired qualities based on the need for recruit success in training and a long-term career in policing should be the basis for determining the assessments to be used. The chief surveys attempt to show the level of importance of various attributes they believe lead to long-term careers.

Purpose of study

The purpose of these surveys was to determine the qualities police chief executives in the overall study jurisdictions thought were important in a candidate. These qualities (attributes, skills and traits) can help pre dicta recruit's ability for basic training, probation, and long-term policing. The questionnaire, surreptitiously evaluated the selection process and trainings at its faction. Gaining an understanding of the importance levels of the traits and skills police chiefs' thought were important for training and policing. These skills and traits were selected based on earlier research and are essential for completing all aspects of basic and in service training.²

The overall study attempted to understand the intellectual skills and attributes that police chiefs believe necessary for success in training and policing. The researcher wanted to know the level of importance the chiefs assigned to each attribute to accomplish training and a career in policing.³ The article is mostly about skills and traits (attributes) that should be sought in applicants during the selection process. Collected data is about the believed important to selection, training, and career. Although the literature review is mostly about selection, it does correlate with basic training which is the culmination of the selection process after successfully completing the training to begin a police career. The survey measured the police chiefs' choices on importance levels of attributes that most likely will lead to career success measured against the intellectual abilities of recently certified recruits.

Stages of selection

The agency defines the types of skills and traits in candidates required to meet their needs. The published recruitment advertisement must include the characteristics needed by applicants for the position. Here in lies a problem when agencies continue to hire as they did years ago and fail to make changes in the process. An important step in recruitment is attracting interested candidates. The selection process begins with advertising and ends with completion of probation.⁴ The advertisement is the first the first step in the *selecting out* process followed by the written application which has self-elimination characteristics designed by some of the questions. The application is customary to begin the process of selection for agencies. It is possible to self-eliminate some applicants originally interested in applying. For example, sometimes a fee is required to receive or submit the application. Applicants may opt out of paying to apply. Another self-elimination feature is not returning the application because of the required information. It is the least expensive step in the selection process. It is advisable to use the least expensive assessment early in the process and keep the most expensive assessment when the remaining applicant group is reduced. Assessments protected under the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) should be administered after a conditional offer to employ.⁴ More detail on the stages of selection are presented later in the article.

Tables represent the alternatives most frequently chosen in the 12 separate replicated surveys of police chiefs in several Midwest and southern states, and the Caribbean regarding importance of attributes they believe lead to successful career performance. The tables show

comparisons of what chiefs from various jurisdictions believe are important police recruit attributes. The various terms of attributes, qualities, characteristics, traits, and skills, are used interchangeably throughout the article and for the purpose of this report, mean the same. The selected 11 attributes used in the survey were determined from research by Gwynne several years ago; the attributes are still appropriate today.⁵ The attributes gathered by Gwynn's research augment the value of recruit preparation and policing procedures.^{3,6} The survey instrument asked the police chiefs about levels of importance of the selected skills and traits needed for success in training and a successful career in policing. The survey suggests important skills and traits to identify during the selection process. When deciding on the assessments for selection, the following should be considered: (1) do selection assessments predict long-term success of candidates? (2) Do selection assessments reveal candidates with the desired attributes? (3) What are the skills and traits that lead to officer policing success? The results of the surveys will assist in determining selection criteria of agencies for successful training and careers.

There are a limited number of companies offering selection assessments used by police agencies.⁷ Existing assessments have not changed much over the years, possibly because of the costs to change assessment instruments; or maybe because agencies are satisfied with the current instruments and resist change. Agencies rely on vendors and consultant psychologists' recommendations and what they claim the tests can do for a competitive price. Unfortunately, not one consultant will say their assessments determine which candidates will be successful long-term career officers. Only time will tell whether the results of the 11 surveys will lead to change of police selection assessments and training toward officer success. This article compares regional choices among the chiefs. The importance levels of the attributes desired by the police chiefs in these three regions (mid western and southern states, and Caribbean Islands) sought in selection are believed to enhance overall value of operations.

Skills and traits

The skills and traits selected for the survey are based on research of police chiefs conducted by Gwynne in 1994.⁵ These attributes are essential successful policing and career development. What is the difference between a skill and a trait? Skills are learned through education and training applicable to policing, whereas, traits are characteristics innate with individuals and applicable to all types of employment. The police are a principal unit of government in communities. As such, the police are the most visible unit of government and subject to frequent scrutiny and criticism while interacting with the community. Understandably, police administrators want officers who have the intellectual and physical characteristics to meet the challenging and ever changing requirements of communities. Another trait LEOs must have the temperament to live ethical lives.

Corruption, excessive use of force, and unethical behavior lead to law suits which may also develop distrust in the community. Distrust by the community works against the strength of the agency and creates a negative reputation: "Entry-level assessment and training is there for one of the most important processes toward developing a strong, stable, and responsible police force".⁵

Literature review

Predictive performance of police candidates is evaluated during an intelligent selection process. When intelligent selection is made, LEOs begin with their chosen agencies with characteristics that help them identify with their communities, psychologically, physically, and emotionally. Detailed background investigations are an

important requirement of intelligent selection.⁸ It is a major mistake when agencies try to save on the expense of an in-depth history of applicants. The importance of a thorough background investigation cannot be over emphasized. It can predict somewhat accurately an applicant's future behavior. An applicant's personal history can reveal skills, show lifestyles, and evaluate incentives. More importantly, it can underscore historical behavior issues of both positive and negative attitudes. Past conduct under similar circumstances is a reliable predictor of future conduct. The historical inquiry should examine deeply into education, behavior, integrity, enthusiasm, and confidence.⁹ A thorough inquiry will gain the support of current LEOs by hiring recruits that showed proven traits for the job from the past. Selection procedures also look at a candidate's ability to succeed in training. There are three general categories of training for policing: (1) basic training, (2) in service training, and (3) specialized, or career development training.^{10,11}

The criteria and recruiting strategies in selection are based on the agency's needs. One criteria of selection should include verifying information in a candidate's application. Other criteria should include assessments that predict candidate suitability. Selection measurements should provide an evaluation suitable for both selection and training of recruits similar to the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores as a predictor of college success. Based on a 10-year study conducted by Gwynne, candidates' levels of success greatly increased in the training academy and organizationally when the candidates were profiled into areas designed to evaluate each recruit against established standards prior to any employment or training processing.⁵

Predictive selection that determines candidates most likely to have a successful career in policing is difficult, but critical in new recruits. When criteria of assessment tools are validated, agencies are provided the ability to find recruits with the desired attributes for basic and field training success which optimistically translates into as that impact officer success rates. Success in training validates agency accuracy of selection methods. Selection methods can be further refined toward officer effectiveness and personnel stability through in service and specialized training.

The desired traits and skills are essential for LEOs to provide the basic services in community policing. Community oriented policing requires LEOs to be proactive and creative.¹ After agencies decide on the desired attributes, the selection assessments used should be able to identify those attributes. Does the agency attempt to screen in candidates or, or as many agencies do, screen out? Screening out is designed to eliminate undesirable characteristics instead of recognizing recruits with skills and traits that are positive for the agency.³ With the proper attributes, recruits can embark on have a career with an advantage. Without the proper attributes, recruits are at a career disadvantage. The visibility of the police through social media makes it vital to select recruits with the potential to successfully perform policing. Resistance to police authority has become common place when suspects are detained or arrested. Black Lives Matter and An tifa groups advocate and engage in violence and riots, assault (verbally and physically), and even assassinate officers have become more common today. Media perception is almost always that of siding against the police, but some social media counters that perception. Good judgment in decision-making is required while communicating with citizens when providing services or maintaining order. Police officers should have the rational and physical capabilities to function in a fluctuating culture and the honesty to opposed is honesty and unnecessary force. The selection process is the first opportunity to evaluate potential performance. Beyond selection, training is also significant manner in having a trusted police force.⁶ During selection,

future officers are evaluated emotionally and physically for fitness of performance.

Predictive selection is intelligent selection and is the first step toward intelligent policing. Whether an applicant will have a successful career can be determined by an intelligent background examination. An intelligent background examination can predict applicant's future behavior from historical behavior. The background examination should include education, personal contacts, experiences, honesty, motivation, and self-esteem.⁹ A thorough look at history of past behavior can reveal skills and traits, uncover lifestyles, measure attitude, and motivation. With intelligent selection, officers can connect with their agencies and with citizens in the community. Existing personnel believe that by selecting recruits intelligently, they have the desired skills and traits will have their respect, knowing the recruits withstood a rigorous selection process.⁹

Selection methods

Assessment instruments for selection are based on projected requisites of the agency. Verification of information on the application is part of the selection process. It is also vital to determine a reliable police training program for recruits participating in the training process. The organization's needs should be met during selection. Appropriate training allows all personnel of the organization opportunities to reach higher levels.⁵ The choices of selection assessment tools should provide an all-inclusive appraisal of candidates before selection. Gwynne's study found that recruit success was increased substantially in training and subsequent careers by profiling them into detached areas for evaluation of each candidate against benchmarks before selection.⁵

Too many times, agencies decide to advertise for officers based on numbers without deciding whether there are specific needs beyond bringing the number of officers up to an authorized number. Thorough analyses should be made each time before a recruitment cycle is started. The assessment tools selected should assist in choosing candidates with career potential that will perform policing effectively. Methods of selection to identify candidates suitable for policing have not changed much in the past 30 or 40 years, in spite of the types and demands of service requests from the communities becoming more complex and expanding. Agencies should decide the depth of methods of assessment and the kind of instruments used. Questions the agency should ask include: does the agency rely solely on the recommendation of the psychologist, or do they use a combination of assessment findings? Are assessment tools used to only manage candidate eligibility lists or are they geared toward an officer being able to complete basic training? How is judgment measured? What are the success rates of recruit training? What are the probationary period problems encountered? Can the success rate be changed with different methods of selection? Selection assessment during selection is the basis of verification of information in the applicant's application as well as mental and physical fitness for duty. Several selection instruments are used to assess suitability of candidates for the job. Credible training program curricula is can determine suitability of applicants for meeting agency needs. For example, four of the most used instruments are the MMPI, IPI, PST, and CPI?¹² The program will then allow recruits to grow intellectually and accomplish their ambitions.⁵ Vendors who market pre-employment screening assessments need to continually improving their products for better selection methods. The selection methods have been stagnant for several years because of the lack of research based on agency desires. The standards for selection should come from police chiefs, not those in other industries. Police services change frequently with

their communities and are multifaceted as evidenced by changing community needs. An agency can make the right decisions during the selection process by analyzing several areas before beginning the process. For example, identifying potential for successful performance of candidates; determining the depth of the probe of assessments; are the tools to be used for managing employment lists, or to determine a specific need; identify the need, such as an applicant's ability to successfully complete academy training; selection criteria should include the measurement of judgment; review past success rate of recruits in basic training academy based on current selection criteria; and review problems encountered during the probation. With the retirements of GenXers and Baby Boomers, police recruitment will be even more challenging.¹³ And now, the potential for mass retirements because of a lack of political support and defunding in some Democrat led cities supporting the defund police mantra, such as New York City and Minneapolis, recruitment has become more critical, subsequently compounding the problem. Selection strategies can develop a large pool of candidates with characteristics to shape an agency's character^{14,15} stated that selecting recruits with the desired attributes means that "CEOs and HR officials might need to communicate and coordinate more closely".^{8,16}

Selection attributes

When human resources are in charge of selecting police candidates, they should select candidates based on the desired attributes of the police chief. Police chiefs need to be able to define the attributes that lead to success in training and long-term careers. Research by Cordner and Cordner¹⁵ found that recruitment in small agencies (24 or less officers) and larger agencies (more than a 1,000), and that 45 percent of the chiefs were not pleased that recruits did not have attributes they preferred (p. 14). Conversely, human resource (HR) departments were more satisfied than the chiefs which indicated that something was missing in the selection process, that is, HR lacked an understanding of the qualities the police chiefs wanted in a recruit. Corners went on to state that large agencies were more satisfied than small ones with 78 percent of the chiefs wanting to attract candidates with college degrees; 63 percent of large and small agencies want candidates with pre service training; 66 percent of those that preferred pre service basic training were from small agencies; whereas, only 13 percent of larger agencies wanted pre service recruits. Ninety percent of the police chiefs wanted better communication skills, i.e., good writing and speaking skills; as well as analytical thinking with problem-solving skills. The chief suggested that colleges put more emphasis on these skills. When asked about incorporating basic training in their undergraduate curricula, 51 percent indicated they were in favor of integrating the two, similar to nurse and teacher education adopted years ago as models. Cordner and Cordner maintained that police chiefs should identify specific attributes and convey these preferences to their human resources departments.¹⁶ Agencies should determine the methods of selection criteria based on current agency needs, not benchmarks. "Selection and training should meet the needs of the organization and allow recruits to increase personal knowledge and goal achievement".⁵

Selection includes an assessment of application information and other selection assessments. Success in the selection process includes potential of success in basic training and later in service training. During the selection process, it was proposed by Gwynne after 10 years of extensive research that success in basic training and a policing career were enhanced when candidates were profiled into groups designed to associate each candidate with recognized conditions before training or employment processing.^{5,8}

Assessment standards for selection

Consensus exists among police chiefs and city managers on training on specific topics, but not for the attributes on selection assessment methods. Evaluating a candidate's potential for reliable and productive policing is important in protecting the public.^{16,17} Selection assessments and subsequent training must have effective standards to meet the demands of community policing and up-to-date expectations of the public.⁵ A study conducted by Scrivener¹⁸ for the Community Policing Consortium of the U.S. Department of Justice attempted to identify ideal attributes for community policing. Several traits and skills were identified as being essential. These skills and traits include integrity, professional attitude, personal interaction, and good judgment. Five agencies were involved in the study, including King County, Washington; Burlington, Vermont; Hillsborough County, Florida; Detroit; and Sacramento. Typically, agency recruiting practices are not so much based on attracting candidates interested in the service aspect of policing (proactive policing), but attracting those interested in the adventure side of policing (reactive policing). Hiring officers interested in the spirit of service rather than the spirit of adventure was supported by the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) in the past.¹⁸ The adventure side gets plenty of publicity of excitement from various television programs and the sensationalism of the media. Every once in a while, a TV program will throw in some of the services provided to citizens, but services are generally not very entertaining.¹⁸ also stated that proactive policing does not distance agencies from their communities. Selection assessments for police generally involve an elimination process, manifested by various hurdles for the applicant to get past. The elimination process allows agencies to choose leftover candidates by selecting out as opposed to selecting in. Selecting out disqualifies candidates based on something negative, resulting in the suspension of a candidate's application process. What kind of skills and traits do those that are selected out have that would be useful to an agency and recruit? Selecting out may mean that an agency misses out on a candidate with attributes conducive to community policing.

Candidate screening-in or out

Candidates who fail any assessment during selection are eliminated. Regrettably, even those applicants that may have characteristics appropriate to a community-based policing agency. There is no attempt to determine whether the candidate has attributes favorable to or associated with success.¹⁹ According to Scrivener,¹⁸ the method of selecting in assesses the criteria the department is seeking and whether the candidate has any of those attributes toward future effective job performance. When an officer is terminated from an agency, it is generally because of poor performance that may be the result of poor selection methods that fail to classify suitable skills and traits identified as needed by the agency.³ A problem-solving philosophy is not compatible to a command and control approach to policing. Screening in will allow selection of candidates with such problem-solving skills such as analytical thinking required in community policing.¹⁸ Today, officers require a higher level of intellect social skills to interact appropriately with the community. Critical thinking ability to solve problems is also needed. Candidates should also be capable with technology. During selection, it imperative to determine candidates' aptitude to complete basic training and have the qualities to add value to the agency over time.¹⁶ Using the philosophy of *selecting in* allows a better chance recruiting LEOs with the attributes appropriate for their municipality.¹⁸ Validity of selection assessment methods used is essential.

Selection validity

How valid are the assessments used for recruit selection? Selection and training processes, and probationary evaluation of recruits are characteristically kept separate, but should be shared.³ According to Hunter,²⁰ the criteria for selection and the curricula of training are seldom linked to selection component validity. Criteria and assessment methods used should be validated for both selection and training in a coordinated evaluation process. Data on recruit preparation, selection, training, and how each complements the other should be evaluated and compared against each component.²⁰ Correlating overall information from various assessments can determine needed improvements. Information sharing improves preparation, selection, and training of LEOs. Recruiting should be in step with agency needs. Selection of recruits should include assessments for successful basic and in service training and predictive long-term careers. Selection should find candidates with skills and traits desired by the agency, i.e., attributes leading to success in training and career policing. Field training is related to selection and should be designed to recognized efficiencies that can be corrected, but when the deficiency is not correctable, the recruit should be dismissed.^{5,8} According to Coulton and Field,²¹ selection and methods of basic and in service training must address the inadequacies of police misconduct that results from stress, poor judgment, poor supervision and poor management. These types of misconduct can result in expensive liability for the agency.

Selection activities and predictive policing

It is important to keep in mind that the least expensive assessments should be used in the early stages of selection when the number of applicants is greater and saves the agency money while establishing a list of qualified candidates. After submission of the application, a physical skill assessment is given. Approximately 80 percent of agencies use the physical skill assessment.⁴ Since the skill test is inexpensive, it is good practice to conduct the test early in the selection process, possibly before the interview and aptitude assessment.⁵ Applicants still in the mix are then given an aptitude test usually with a cutoff score of 70. Nevertheless, according to,⁴ studies have shown little difference in skills and traits for aptitude scores five to ten points dissimilar. But what may be most important is having an aptitude assessment that includes questions about thinking critically, a fundamental aspect of policing when exercising judgmental decision-making. Good judgment analysis allows an officer to be able to explain unbiased decisions. Discretionary decision-making requires quick critical thinking ability to assess a situation safely. The assessment should be followed up with critical thinking exercises for recruits during basic and in service training. Being able to analyze situations quickly and safely on the street by officers is allows safer street operations and command and control judgments.²²

Police officers today are rationally and functionally challenged differently from their for runners regarding intellectual and applied skills.⁵ With the changes in communities, LEOs need better analytical intellect and problem-solving skills. Community needs and technology rapidly change, so LEOs need to adapt cognitively to these changes. Selection assessments should recognize candidates with the skills and traits for successfully training and performance of department policies. Recruits with the desired skills and traits should add value to their departments. After the skill test and aptitude assessment, a board interview is conducted.

Generally after the aptitude test, a formal board interview is conducted. Interviews are useful to evaluate candidates' ability

communication and judgment. Candidates may be asked to discuss current news, their interest in policing, personal and professional backgrounds, and any inconsistencies found in the application. Next, candidates' histories are conducted by the agency, but sometimes a private investigator is used. Assessing candidates' background histories is an analytical phase of the selection process. Besides looking at driving and criminal records, candidates' neighborhoods and lifestyles should also be researched. The inquiry should include an in-depth background check that includes visits to high schools, colleges, and interviews of current and former teachers, former employers that can reveal work ethos, courtesy, and honesty. Historical behavior is a good indicator of prospective behavior. Financial histories can verify information on past employment, residences, creditors, and any civil actions. Two national surveys of police supervisors⁷ identified absenteeism, laziness, and doing just enough to get by (slacking) as being potentially problematical. According to Harris⁷ candidates may express the physical and emotional characteristics indicating a good risk for employment, but past work histories may indicate a problematical work ethic Martin et al.³ The background investigations are more expensive than oral board interviews, so it is recommended to be conducted after a conditional offer of employment. A second interview after the background investigation serves to clarify questions arising from the background inquiry.

Integrity tests

The U. S. Government Office of Personnel Management (OPM. Gov) believes integrity testing (also known as honesty testing) became popular in the 1980s. Integrity tests is cost effective and is being used more by agencies by purging applicants likely to fail polygraph and the psychological assessments. They are included in the aptitude assessments, but test developers are slow to make the changes to the aptitude tests. According to the OPM, "Integrity tests have been shown to be valid predictors of overall job performance as well as many counterproductive behaviors such as absenteeism, illicit drug use, and theft." "The use of integrity tests in combination with cognitive ability tests can substantially enhance the prediction of overall job performance".²³

Psychological examination-predictive policing

In the selection process, pre-employment psychological evaluations (PEPE) reduce negligent hiring risks.¹² The U. S. Supreme Court has not yet ruled on whether a psychological examination administered before giving a conditional offer of employment violates the American Disabilities Act, but as it stands, the exam measures mental issues so it is logical to assume that it does violate the ADA. The PEPE identifies multi-tasking ability; resiliency between dealing with explicit wounds and tedium; and evaluate diversity appreciation, emotional steadiness, consideration, decisiveness, honesty, antagonisms, and possible for drug abuse. There are several frequently used PEPE assessments. For example, the most popular are the MMPI, CPI, IPI, and PST. Other assessments used but not as frequently include the following self-reporting assessments: the 16 Personality Factor Questionnaire (16PF), Eisenach Personality Questionnaire, the NEO Five Factor Personality Inventory, and the Hilson Safety/Security Inventory. Frequently, after the results are reviewed by a psychologist, an interview is arranged.¹² Candidates' responses to the psych exam and the polygraph examination should be compared to determine whether an additional interview with the psychologist is determined. The final assessment before an offer of probationary employment is the medical examination which can be rather expensive, so it should be last.⁵

Polygraph

The polygraph which promotes honesty and integrity is being used more often by agencies during selection. It is very effective in verifying applicant responses in the application. It can also help to corroborate psychological evaluations when shared with the psychologist. Large agencies that serve a population of a million or more use the instrument around 81 percent of the time, and 60 percent of agencies serving municipalities with populations between 50,000 and 100,000 use the polygraph during selection.²⁴ The polygraph examination is comparatively inexpensive compared to the costs of litigation. Information should be shared between polygraph examiners and clinical psychologists about an applicant to help clarify responses for best clinical results. Many agencies do not share information. The results of one may explain an adverse result of the other. The result of each selection step should be only a small part of the final resolution to appoint an applicant.

Mock scenes

Pseudo or mock scenarios during selection is a good way to assess good decision making. Mock crime scenes, simulated traffic stops, and use of force scenarios are suggested by Decicco²¹ to evaluate judgment. Keep in mind that when using these, the inexperienced applicant is often at a disadvantage. The skills used in these situations can be learned in basic and in service training. Assessments extraneous to policing may be more suitable such as those centered on situational analysis Decicco.²¹ Relying on basic and in service training to develop judgment on using force and discretionary decision making serves just as well since most applicants do not have any depth of experience in policing. Even those with a military police background may not have similar types of familiarities.

Assessment centers

The use of an assessment center (AC) as an asset for selection Decicco.²¹ Although ACs have are generally used during promotion assessments, they can be used for selection. The AC can provide an agency with an all-inclusive profile of the applicant by creating a record that includes criteria to be used to *select in*, such as attributes of judgment and critical thinking, aptitude scores, social behavioral history, polygraph, and emotional evaluations. The profile report provides flexibility in the hiring process with less emphasis on test scores. Selection assessment should use profiles and patterns of behaviors well as test scores. Rather than relying on a test-by-test sequence of qualifying hurdles, the profile allows a synergistic approach that evaluates the totality of candidate's skills and traits toward the decision to hire.²¹ Validity of ACs is its strength.

A validity study on ACs found six mutual characteristics ACs: (1) respect and cognizance of others, (2) communication, (3) ambition, (4) persuading others, (5) arranging and preparation, and (6) problem solving.²⁵ Assessing situations in ACs using these six characteristics will help determine whether an applicant is trainable and whether the applicant is a critical thinker with analytical skills. The ACs have value beyond the simple use of aptitude tests for selection of candidates.²⁶ Entry level situational scenarios in ACs at the should be based on what a reasonable person would do in a similar situation, not what a police officer would do. The risks of liability for agencies can be reduced with careful well thought out selection procedures.²⁷ Good judgment skills in discretionary decision-making is critical in policing. Agencies should provide in service training with situational

scenario assessments, and supervision during (when possible) on the use of discretion. Gaining experience is respected while on the job, but training is needed to develop competency to deal with the various situations LEOs encounter on the job.²⁷ While mock situational awareness scenarios on using discretion and force are served well in basic training, in service training develops proficiency of skills and a basis for good judgment in discretionary decision-making.

Licensing

Most states have a certification process for LEOs to practice policing and a few have a licensing process. Licensing allows states to have more control of those allowed to be police employed in the state. The decertification process is in place so that officers who do not pass the FTO process cannot be hired by another agency based on their certificate of basic training completion.²⁸ But, what about problem officers that may not have completed field training and probationary satisfactorily? There are definite advantages of licensing over certification. A license can be revoked easier than revoking a certificate by non-renewal for not meeting mandated standards. For example, if states have a yearly license fee for renewal of the license, states can choose to not renew the license of problematic officers based on cause and/or lack of recommendation for renewal. Licensing regulations can also require a college degree, more annual in service training hours, and continuing education. Required probationary periods can also be part of the licensing requirement.

Operational functions

General policing activities consist mostly of service and order maintenance. These functions occupy LEOs time about 80 percent of their time. Discretionary decision making in all policing situations should be critically evaluated. Basic and in service training curricula should include responses to citizens with mental illness, domestic violence, race relations, discretion, ethical decision making, and community relations.²⁸ Basic training content should reflect the actual working milieu and should be evaluated regularly. In service training is designed to enhance LEO performance and develop skills to handle elevated levels of accountability in diverse situations,²⁹ Critical thinking exercises in training, a necessity for LEOs, should be included.

The ability to critically think enables LEOs to efficiently and safely assess a condition. Unfortunately, many agencies, do not promote critical thinking, even though officers make daily decisions affecting lives, civil rights, security, media opinion, and agency accountability. The ability to critically analyze operational situations is vital on the street and for making command decisions. Every LEO's career includes basic, field, inservice, and specialized training; critical thinking emphasis should permeate training throughout.²²

Most training sessions involve pedo logical (lecture) training where obedience is encouraged and arguments are discouraged. In opposition is and ro logical (discussion) training where arguments are encouraged¹⁷ Critical thinking involves evaluating possible solutions and the reasons the officer came to that conclusion. Was it based on culture, bias, heredity, and/or experience that affected the choice? The different facets of training during police careers should encourage empowerment and resourceful thinking. Improved critical thinking and decision-making is positive for the department and the community. Critical thinking allows an officer to see the entirety of a situation. Critical thinking (analysis) should permeate all instructive training, not just offered as a stand-alone topic or course.²²

Design of the study

The survey instrument was sent to members of the respective police chief state associations and the Caribbean commissioner association. Performance for all surveys is defined as “the fit between the important job functions in a given police organization and the abilities, skills, and performance-based attributes an individual possesses to successfully perform these job functions”.⁵ This study is defined by the attributes desired by police chiefs they believe are important for successful careers in policing.⁵ The overall project involved 12 separate surveys administered to members of their state chiefs’ association in 11 southern and Midwestern states and one administered to Caribbean Islands commissioners. The first survey involved an association of Alabama police chiefs, followed by separate surveys of police chiefs in state police chief associations in Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Florida, and Texas. The Midwest states surveyed were Illinois, Iowa, Nebraska, Indiana, and Ohio. A survey of the Commissioners of the Caribbean Islands is grouped with the mid west states. The same 11 item instrument of attributes was replicated for 12 surveys. Using the same instrument allows comparisons of desired skills and traits.^{5,6,30} Responses were sought on how important police chiefs believed these 11 attributes in the instrument were for recruits’ success in their overall training and long-term careers. This study compares the two most selected responses of a five-item Like art Scale of importance; the top two of each item are extremely important and very important. The survey items were designed to determine knowledge and reasoning ability attributes for basic training and later field training and probationary assignments to understand better the kinds of attributes (skills and traits) preferred by agency police chiefs and commissioners in an applicant’s profile. Questions also steal thily calculated agreement of their selection and training processes.⁵

Replication

After the completion of the initial survey, the instrument was replicated for 10 more states and the Caribbean for a total of 12 entities as part of the overall project. Because of the numerous survey replications, the 11 items in the instrument and their meanings have been maintained with the same language for consistency. There are 11 attribute items in the survey instrument illustrating police chiefs’ desires of these attributes for police recruits. The survey was designed to allow respondents to select their responses quickly using a 5-alternative Likert Scale: (5) Extremely Important, (4) Very Important, (3) Important, (2) Somewhat Important, and (1) Not Important. The items of the instrument included the following.⁵

The surveys were sent by email using Survey Monkey (SM) to the members of the Police Chief Associations of the states using available list serves. A survey was also sent to members of the Caribbean Commissioners Association. There were 511 respondents. The total response rate was very poor for the Midwest chiefs. Some state surveys were sent by association staff with a submission link to SM using available list serves. Most of the 11 items in the instrument require critical thinking by officers.⁸ The initial emails and follow-up emails were sent through Survey Monkey. List serves provided by the individual state’s police chief associations were the source of the addresses. A hyperlink at the bottom of the e-mail served as the beginning of the survey; when it was clicked to respond and the first item was answered, the remaining 10 survey items became available for response. Frequencies and the percentages of the responses were recorded and accessible to the researcher. Numerous follow-up requests were sent to through Survey Monkey (SM) and

responses were then recorded to the respondents’ data. There were low response rates in spite of numerous follow-up emails possibly because chiefs are swamped with emails daily, even from their respective associations. The Survey Monkey data collected included the number of respondents, the frequency of responses for each item, and a calculation of the percentages of responses for each of the five Likert Scale alternatives. The data were then forwarded to the researcher’s site. The surveys were open from four and sometimes up to nine months, depending on the rate of return. Several follow up requests were sent by email as well. The results of the 11 Midwestern southern surveys, and one Caribbean survey were combined in this study to show item and respondent comparisons involving the two top alternatives attribute importance. The 11 items and their assigned meanings are as follows.⁵

1. Memory – The ability to recall the essence of previously studied material.
2. Judgment – The ability to take appropriate action after considering alternative approaches.
3. Reading Comprehension – The ability to read and effectively respond and/or take action to written instructions/material.
4. Observation Ability – The ability to recognize objects/people after they have undergone physical change.
5. Mathematical Reasoning – The ability to do foundational arithmetic and solve mathematical word problems.
6. Judgment and Decision Making – The ability to analyze incomplete information to make decisions.
7. Deductive Reasoning – The ability to make logical inferences from stated propositions.
8. Analytical Reasoning – The ability to understand, analyze, and evaluate arguments. Report Writing – The ability to understand
9. and properly use and spell words correctly.
10. Reading Maps and Diagrams – The ability to understand the linguistics of drawn materials.
11. Written Communication Skills – To what extent can the candidate effectively express ideas in writing?

In Table 1 & 2, the results of the two top alternatives of five levels of importance of alternatives Likert Scale are illustrated in the table for the various states and the Caribbean. The top two alternatives chosen for each of the 11 items are Extremely Important and Very Important. These two alternatives were chosen because the vast majority of the chiefs in the six entities selected them over the lower three alternatives. The Likert scale included five alternatives: extremely important, very important, important, not very important, and not important, so for this article, only the data for the first two alternatives were recorded since a vast majority of all respondents chose these two alternatives. In Table 1 & 2, the number of respondents for each item selected for alternatives, extremely important or very important are illustrated for each of the 11 items. In most cases, the comparisons of states indicate similar selections of alternative importance that corresponds with the survey items. The data analysis includes two comprehensive tables and 11 single item tables to indicate the comparison selections for each entity. Tables 1 & 2 show the comparisons of chiefs in the southern and Midwest states and the Caribbean (note: Caribbean chiefs are titled commissioners).

Table 1 Midwest and caribbean police chiefs

Top two alternatives of attribute item importance levels extremely important and very important								
States	IL	IA	NE	OH	IN	CBN	Sum	%
Respondents	76	40	20	28	18	16	198	
Item								
1 Memory	64	33	16	23	15	14	165	87.5
2 Judgment	77	40	19	28	15	15	172	94
3 Reading comprehension	66	36	18	24	13	16	173	100
4 Observation	59	27	14	19	14	10	143	62.5
5 Math reasoning	15	6	6	2	3	4	36	25
6 Decision-making	75	39	17	28	18	13	190	81.3
7 Deductive reasoning	67	37	18	28	18	12	180	75
8 Analytical reasoning	69	35	18	23	17	12	174	75
9 Report writing	72	39	20	23	14	16	184	100
10 Map reading	43	23	10	12	10	6	104	37.5
11 Writing skills	72	37	20	26	17	14	186	87.5

Table 2 Southern police chiefs

Top two alternatives of attribute item importance levels extremely important and very important								
States	GA	AL	SC	NC	FL	TX	Sum	%
Respondents	59	86	19	14	92	46	303	
Item								
1 Memory	50	71	14	14	73	35	257	84.8
2 Judgment	57	84	19	14	90	43	297	98
3 Reading comprehension	53	78	14	14	79	39	277	91.4
4 Observation	45	71	16	12	73	26	179	59
5 Math reasoning	16	25	3	14	15	11	84	27.7
6 Decision-making	54	77	19	14	86	44	294	97
7 Deductive reason	51	67	18	14	79	42	258	85.1
8 Analytical reason	49	70	15	12	84	42	272	89.7
9 Report writing	58	78	18	13	43	41	214	70.6
10 Map reading	36	52	9	7	47	27	138	45.5
11 Writing skills	56	78	16	12	88	42	272	89.7

Data analysis

As illustrated in Table 1, the 198 Midwest chiefs who were members of chiefs’ state association in Illinois (76), Iowa (40) Nebraska (20), Ohio (28), Indiana (18), and 16 commissioners in the Caribbean responded to the survey. In Table 2, the number of respondents was a little more encouraging with 303 southern states’ police chiefs responded to the surveys. The 303 respondents included 59 chiefs in Georgia, 86 in Alabama, 19 in South Carolina, 14 in North Carolina, 92 in Florida, and 46 in Texas.

For Item 1, memory is defined as the ability to recall the substance of earlier reviewed information. This attribute is used frequently when writing thorough statements after interviews have been conducted. Item 1, memory is related to Item 4, observation ability since an officer may identify a person from an earlier posted bulletin. In the Table 3 for Item 1, *memory*, of the 303 respondents to this attribute, 257 (84.8%) of the southern states’ police chiefs chose either extremely important or very important as the top two alternatives. The distribution of the respondents’ choices from the southern states included 59 from Georgia, 86 from Alabama, 19 from South Carolina,

14 from North Carolina, 92 from Florida, and 46 from Texas. The number of respondents choosing the top two importance levels for Item 1 in the Midwest states surveys include 76 from Illinois, 40 from

Iowa, 20 from Nebraska, 28 from Ohio, 18 from Indiana, and 16 from the Caribbean Constable Association.

Table 3 Item 1

Southern states	GA	AL	SC	NC	FL	TX	Sum	%
Respondents	59	86	19	14	92	46	303	
Memory	50	71	14	14	73	35	257	84.8
Midwestern states	IL	IA	NE	OH	IN	CRB	Sum	%
Respondents	76	40	20	28	18	16	198	
Memory	64	33	16	23	15	14	165	83.3

In Table 3, Item 1, the total number of respondents from the Midwest police chiefs (182) is considerably less than that of the southern states (303), but it illustrates about the same for percentages (83.4 percent and 84.8 percent respectively) for the top two Likert Scale choices for the *memory* attribute. The Caribbean commissioners chose the top two importance levels of memory alternative for total of 87.5 percent.

Item 2 in Table 4, judgment, refers to the ability to take appropriate action after considering possible alternatives (i.e., discretionary

decision making). Discretion is used frequently by police officers in most jurisdictions while performing the job of policing. The misuse of discretion, however, during the performance of police duties can mean trouble for officers. Item 2 is similar to Item 6 in that they both deal with judgment, although Item 2 deals with discretionary decision making to take action (i.e., the analysis is based on alternatives allowed based on agency policy or law involving officer discretion, and Item 6, judgment and decision-making, deals with the ability to make a decision based on analysis of limited information.

Table 4 Item 2

Southern states	GA	AL	SC	NC	FL	TX	Sum	%
Respondents	59	86	19	14	92	46	303	
Judgment	57	84	19	14	90	43	297	98
Midwest states & Caribbean	IL	IA	NE	OH	IN	CRB	Sum	%
Respondents	76	40	20	28	18	16	198	
Judgment	77	40	19	28	15	15	194	97.9

As illustrated in Table 4, Item 2, a total of 297 of 303 (98%) respondents in the southern states chose the highest levels of importance for *judgment* extremely important and very important. Similarly, the Midwest and Caribbean chiefs chose the top two alternatives of importance for the attribute judgment 194 of the 198 respondents (97.9%).

Item 3, Table 5, reading comprehension refers to reading and

responding to or acting on written directions. Electronic and hard copy directives are posted frequently. The manual of standard operating procedures (SOP) and policies, must be comprehended. Placing signatures or initials on the document affirms officers have read and understand the manual. Most departments provide in service training on SOPs and legal updates since officers cannot rely totally on their memory to cite laws, many of which are generated annually.

Table 5 Item3

Southern states	GA	AL	SC	NC	FL	TX	Sum	%
Respondents	59	86	19	14	92	46	303	
Reading comprehension	53	78	14	14	79	39	277	91.4
Midwest States & Caribbean	IL	IA	NE	OH	IN	Car	Sum	%
Respondents	76	40	20	28	18	16	198	
Reading comprehension	66	36	18	24	13	16	163	82.3

In the Table 5 for Item 3, 440 police chiefs and Caribbean commissioners (87.8%) rated the attribute for *reading comprehension* as extremely or very important. Overall, the choices for extremely and very important were chosen consistently across the 12 entities, with the number of southern chiefs selecting the top two alternatives for reading comprehension 277 out of 303 (91.4%) respondents. The

Midwest and Caribbean chiefs chose the top two alternatives 82.3 percent of the time, or 163 out of 198 respondents.

Item 4, Table 6, observation is the ability to identify items and persons after they have undertaken material alteration. Item 4 is similar to the memory item (#1). Item 4 includes the ability to recognize faces

and automobiles from a published or television announcement. Other examples include an individual wearing a concealment who may have

an unusual gait or a dispatch that describes a suspicious or wanted individual, and the officer then notices a person fitting the description.

Table 6 Item 4

Southern states	GA	AL	SC	NC	FL	TX	Sum	%
Respondents	59	86	19	14	92	46	303	
Observation	45	71	16	12	73	26	179	59
Midwest states & Caribbean	IL	IA	NE	OH	IN	Car	Sum	%
Respondents	76	40	20	28	18	16	198	
Observation	59	27	14	19	14	10	143	72.2

As illustrated in the Table 6 for Item 4, for observation, the southern states chiefs chose the top two alternatives 179 out of 303 (59%), as opposed to a higher selection rate of just over 72 percent for the Midwest and Caribbean chiefs' selections (143 out of 198). Overall, *observation* was rated by the chiefs as either extremely important or very important 322 out of 501 (64.2%).

For Item 5, Table 7, mathematical reasoning is being able to do fundamental math and solve verbal mathematical problems. The attribute is essential for accident and crime scene reestablishment, firearm traces, and understanding the function of the breath analyzer. The attribute is also good for developing analytical thinking skills.

Table 7 Item 5

Southern states	GA	AL	SC	NC	FL	TX	Sum	%
Respondents	59	86	19	14	92	46	303	
Math reasoning	16	25	3	14	15	11	84	27.7
Midwest states Caribbean	IL	IA	NE	OH	IN	Car	Sum	%
Respondents	76	40	20	28	18	16	198	
Math reasoning	15	6	6	2	3	4	36	18.1

Table 7, Item 5, illustrates that mathematical reasoning has one of the lowest ratings overall in terms of level of importance. As indicated, for Item 5, southern police chiefs chose the top alternatives for math reasoning 84 of 303 (27.7%). For the Midwest chiefs, only 32 Midwest police chiefs and four Caribbean Commissioners (18.1%) chose extremely or very important as their number one choice for this attribute.

analyze incomplete information to make decisions. This item is related to Item 2, judgment. Item 2 deals with officer discretionary decision making on the basis of written policy, traffic law, and criminal law and procedure. Item 6 is making a decision based on analyzing limited information or situations not covered in written documents. It is similar to supplying a missing word to complete a sentence to fit into the context of a situation. This attribute is based on experience in the environment.

Table 8, Item 6, judgment and decision-making, is the ability to

Table 8 Item 6

Southern states	GA	AL	SC	NC	FL	TX	Sum	%
Respondents	59	86	19	14	92	46	303	
Judgment & decision-making	54	77	19	14	86	44	294	97
Midwest states & Caribbean	IL	IA	NE	OH	IN	Car	Sum	%
Respondents	76	40	20	28	18	16	198	
Judgment & decision-making	75	39	17	28	18	13	190	95.9

Item 6, judgment and decision-making in Table 8 illustrates that the respondents chose the alternatives extremely or very important for this attribute 484 out of 501 (96.6%) responses. Both Item 2, judgment, and this item had the overall highest Likert Scale ratings of all eleven items of the survey. It is curious that a few respondents (one chief from Illinois, one from Iowa, and two from Nebraska) rated this item as only important which is the third alternative. The southern chiefs

chose alternatives extremely and very important 294 of 303 (97%) of the item, and the Midwest chiefs and Caribbean commissioners chose these two alternatives 190 out of 198 times (95.9%).

Table 9, Item 7, deductive reasoning means making an assumption based on occurrences, proofs, and data available in a specific situation (situational decision-making).

Table 9 Item 7

Southern states	GA	AL	SC	NC	FL	TX	Sum	%
Respondents	59	86	19	14	92	46	303	
Deductive reasoning	51	67	18	14	79	42	258	85.1
Midwest states & Caribbean	IL	IA	NE	OH	IN	Car	Sum	%
Respondents	76	40	20	28	18	16	198	
Deductive reasoning	67	37	18	28	18	12	180	91.9

The choices for Item 7, Table 9, show overall, 438 respondents, including 12 Caribbean commissioners (97.4%) respondents, believed that deductive reasoning is either very important or extremely important. Of the 438 respondents, 258 (85.1) were from the southern states and 180 (91.9) were from the Midwest states and the Caribbean.

The next Table 10, Item 8, is analytical reasoning, which is a methodical and rational appraisal through enquiry the data available. This attribute was not selected as much as the two judgment attributes (Items 2 and 6), but it is still a highly preferred attribute of these respondents.

Table 10 Item 8

Southern states	GA	AL	SC	NC	FL	TX	Sum	%
Respondents	59	86	19	14	92	46	303	
Analytical reasoning	49	70	15	12	84	42	272	89.7
Midwest states & Caribbean	IL	IA	NE	OH	IN	Car	Sum	%
Respondents	76	40	20	28	18	16	198	
Analytical reason	69	35	18	23	17	12	157	79.2

According to the data in Table 10 for Item 8, 429 of the 501 (85.6%) police chiefs and commissioners chose the top two alternatives, extremely important or very important. Of this total, 272 of 303 (89.7%) respondents of the southern chiefs chose the two alternatives extremely or very important, and 157 or 198 (79.2%) Midwest and Caribbean respondents chose the top two alternatives.

Item 9 in Table 11, *report writing*, is being able to understand and correctly use and spell words. Writing reports is a frequent function of LEOs who write daily reports and summaries of events. Intelligible and accurate reports will prevent embarrassment if read by the prosecutor or the court. Writing well and accurately is a desired skill for all officers. It is vital that the potentially observable written reports not embarrass the officer or the department.

Table 11 Item 9

Southern states	GA	AL	SC	NC	FL	TX	Sum	%
Respondents	59	86	19	14	92	46	303	
Report writing	58	78	18	13	43	41	214	70.6
Midwest states & Caribbean	IL	IA	NE	OH	IN	Car	Sum	%
Respondents	76	40	20	28	18	16	198	
Report writing	72	39	20	23	14	16	171	86.3

The overall data for Item 9 in Table 11 indicate that this attribute was not quite as important as some of the other attributes with 385 of the 501 respondents (76.8%) selecting extremely important or very important. The southern chiefs chose the top levels of importance 214 of 303 (70.6%) and the Midwest chiefs and commissioners of the Caribbean Islands chose this item 171 of the 198 (86.3%).

for understanding accident and crime scene graphics, and sometimes it is necessary in hostage situations for reading blueprints of buildings. The police chiefs' responses illustrate a mixed view of its importance. There was a division of those respondents choosing this item's importance as a desirable attribute with about half of the overall respondents indicating this skill was either extremely important or very important.

Table 12, Item 10, reading maps and diagrams is the ability to understand the semantics of maps and diagrams. It is a skill essential

Table 12 Item 10

Southern states	GA	AL	SC	NC	FL	TX	Sum	%
Respondents	59	86	19	14	92	46	303	
Map reading	36	52	9	7	47	27	138	45.5
Midwest states & Caribbean	IL	IA	NE	OH	IN	Carib	Sum	%
Respondents	76	40	20	28	18	16	198	
Map reading	43	23	10	12	10	6	104	52.5

The breakdown in Table 12 for Item 10 top alternatives for map reading shows total responses of 242 (48.3%) of the chiefs and Caribbean commissioners chose extremely important or very important. The southern respondents chose the top two importance levels of this attribute 138 of the 303 (45.5%) responses and 104 of 198(52.5%) Midwest and Caribbean respondents chose these levels. These numbers indicate that this attribute did not seem as highly important as some of the others attributes.

Table 13, Item 11, writing skills, is defined as the ability to put ideas in writing effectively. When writing reports, officers need to state accurately what they mean. Writing in a report needs to be understandable without police verbosity. It is best to use short declarative sentences. Sentences should be constructed carefully with clear statements so that there is no mistake about the accurateness of the material. The report should be stated so anyone can read it, understand it, and react to it without the benefit of the officer’s presence to explain it.

Table 13 Item 11

Southern states	GA	AL	SC	NC	FL	TX	Sum	%
Respondents	59	86	19	14	92	46	303	
Writing skills	56	78	16	12	88	42	272	89.7
Midwest states & Caribbean	IL	IA	NE	OH	IN	Car	Sum	%
Respondents	76	40	20	28	18	16	198	
Writing skills	72	37	20	26	17	14	186	93.9

As indicated for Item 11 in Table 13, 458 of 501 (91.4%) of the respondents believe that writing skills are either very important or extremely important. The southern chiefs chose these two alternatives 272 of 303 (89.7%) responses. The Midwest chiefs and Caribbean commissioners chose the top two alternatives 186 of 198 (93.9%).

surveys. The levels of importance of southern states, Midwest states, and Caribbean surveys are overwhelmingly similar.^{30,31} In addition to the literature review, the collected responses on skills and traits data preferred from the 12 surveys indicate a need to overhaul the criteria of agencies and assessments methodology for police candidate selection. A Likert Scale with five alternatives of importance levels served as the basis of the survey. The article in cludesa comparison of 12 respondent states on the top two importance levels of 11 preferred attributes. The preferred attributes include the ability to recall the core of earlier reviewed material; read and respond successfully, and follow written directives and deduce information; choose applicable action after quick deliberation of alternate resolutions; recognize an object or a person after a physical modification; be able to do basic arithmetic and solve verbal math problems; evaluate bits of information to make a judgment; conclude rationally from identified proposals; comprehend, consider, and calculate disputes; understand and properly use and spell words correctly; recognize the semantics of sketched materials; and express their ideas in writing successfully.

Discussion

The literature review indicates that selection assessment methods have not changed much in the past three to four decades. Research toward improving selection assessments must continue to select recruits with the potential to be successful in training, perform productively and ethically, and sustain a long police career. The services demanded by communities dictate the services provided by police, but demands frequently change and are becoming increasingly more complex. Instruments of assessment decided on for selection to use in selection are critical. When deciding, agencies should ask the questions: How do we make the decision? What attributes should be identified for entry-level police candidates? What is the depth of examination of assessment instruments to be used? Do the assessment tools manage applicant employment lists or are they directed toward a specific agency need such as the ability to complete basic training? Is the ability to make street-level decisions based on an assessment of candidate judgment? Is the success rate of recruits in basic training based on selection-based data? Are probationary period problems encountered, and can they be tied to the lack of sounds election tools? Are probation period problems such that they can be corrected in the recruit or is termination required?

Furthermore, the literature review indicates that selection is just as important for police agencies as training. The value of each attribute based the levels of importance of attributes chosen by police chiefs and commissioners is apparent. The respondents believe possession of these skills and traits can sustain a positive career in law enforcement. The data from the 12 surveys indicate that the police chiefs and Caribbean commissioners.^{2,3,6} are consistent with the levels of importance they place on the 11 attributes in the surveys. Several reasons for improving selection and retention efforts of officers in agencies need to be considered. First, if recruits have a history of poor behavior, there very well can be grave discipline troubles in the future.

Based on the 12 surveys, the responses of the police chiefs regarding the 11 desired skills and traits are consistent among respondents of all

Second, keeping capable recruits as career officers with preferred physical skills and mental traits to perform policing is important to the overall atmosphere of the agency. The third consideration is to have less turnover of personnel with frequent contact with a supervisor, clear directions, meaningful basic, in service, and specialized training, and agency support.⁷

Determining a candidate's future potential to act dependably and effectively is imperative to protect the community interest.⁶ Choosing a candidate who will be successful in basic and in service training, and ultimately a career, is dependent on the value of assessment methods. Selection methods should identify candidates with the skills and traits for successful training and overall career performance. Only the most capable candidates should be identified and selected. Competent selection methods during assessment and subsequent meaningful training are crucial in acquiring a steadfast and reliable police force.

Assessment methods for selection should be based on agency needs. In addition to determining a candidate's suitability for policing, entry-level assessments confirm information in written applications. Building a skills and traits profile of candidates can provide agencies a diagnostic overview for both selection and training of candidates. As mentioned, the candidate profile is like colleges using SAT scores to determine college success.³

Predictive police selection

Based on the current environment of protesting the police and pending retirements, many agree that changes in policing must take place. Defunding the police is not the answer, but better police officers is. What can be done to reduce the hiring and retention of police officers who are not suitable for policing or become rogue cops? How can police applicants and police be identified having the potential to abuse citizens and run very high risks of excessive force or criminal actions? A very new and high-tech answer to that question might be the creation of a Statewide Licensing Office. Another way would be innovations in the selection process, i.e., predictive selection and retention. In addition to the assessment of attributes identified in this study as preferred, Geoffrey Barnes, a Pennsylvania native now working in Great Britain developed the Durham Police algorithms for identifying high-risk officers and applicants not suited for policing. A similar system could be adopted by some of the 18,000 local police agencies in the states. In the current anti-police atmosphere, Sherman does not advise any state to reduce the number of police agencies. That battle is not winnable with the current threats to defund the police.³² Using predictive police selection in the assessment of selecting and retaining police officers, a statewide database such as the one used by the Durham Police could be developed to use algorithmic forecasting to identify the developing or likely rogue cops, either before selection or after they demonstrate a pattern of poor treatment of citizens.³² Such a system could trigger a professional review and record of the officer's conduct, taking into consideration the exact estimate of risk by or harm to the officer.³² While formula for collected data would not make the decision, it would enlighten the decision of the persons making the decision who would do so, subject to licensing procedure and review.

Conclusion

Calls to defund the police are not very logical. If defunding were to be adopted, one solution as proposed by Sherman³² is to use state legislation to slowly dissolve any broken police agencies and replace them with a newer model or jurisdiction. This solution is not likely to have many proponents, but it has proven successful, for example, Bibb

County, GA and Camden, NJ. This solution would allow the county sheriff's office to absorb the city police functions as a county police agency solely for that jurisdiction. Another less expensive alternative solution is a proposal for agencies to use more sophisticated means of assessment such as intelligent selection, or predictive selection. Agencies need to ask the right questions during selection assessments. Questions should drill down to determine mental fitness of policing. Policy change in the selection process should start at the agency level and progress to a state mandated level. Regarding dismantling an agency in a small city, it does not matter which jurisdiction governs the police or types of services of policing offered without having proper selection procedures. The focus should be on legislative responses at the local level (but mandated by the state and coerced (\$\$) by the feds to write feasible legislation more possible to be implemented. No state in the USA is likely to pass such legislation to end policing because of the likelihood of encountering out of control crime and disorder that it would be quickly rescinded or ignored.³²

Licensing

Instead of having a state Board of Certification to decertify problematic officers, identify rogue police officers and broken police agencies with the proactive power of a State Department of Police Licensing (agencies as well as officers can be licensed). Agency licensing is much like the CALEA³³ accreditation process of agencies, but licensing is granted by the state after meeting and maintaining mandated standards. The decertification process would potentially be delayed and likely tied up in court by lawyers. Instead of having a potentially litigious decertification process controlled by a state office, a licensing renewal would also be up to the state whether to renew a police license based on the individual or the agency meeting required annual standards(objective data), or concerning an individual's behavior. Both would be less likely to be contested as they would under judicial review when certain criteria have not been met annually. The denial of license would be objective based on written facts and/or missing facts. The political discretion of renewal is removed and is based on measurable objective data. It is easier to not renew a problematic officer's license than to decertify an officer. Not renewing the annual license relies on an administrative body rather than judicial decertification that may be prolonged in a court with lawyers scrambling to delay the process.

A problematic rogue police officer blemishes the character of the entire agency and eventually spreads distrust to other agencies throughout the states, and expands rapidly to blemish policing throughout other representative countries worldwide. Keeping a watchful eye on these developments in the U. S. seems to be a wise advice for police professionals today in any democracy on earth³² can a potential rogue officer be identified in the ranks of experienced officers? As previously indicated, two national surveys of police supervisors⁷ identified absenteeism, laziness, and slacking (doing just enough to get by) as being potentially challenging for the supervisor. Maybe this is an early warning indicator of a future rogue officer that needs to be identified as needing training.

Recruiting police applicants that are good for the community today is challenging. Retention of experienced officers is just as challenging. Within the 18,000 agencies in the U. S. with about one million employees with approximately 70 percent being sworn officers. In spite of having more police officers in the U.S., the ratio of once having about one officer for every 500 citizens (a long time FBI recommended target), the ratio did not keep pace of the increased population. In spite of the change in the ratio, the crime rate has dropped

considerably. Currently, the ratio is more like one officer to every 250 residents. Even though the crime rate is lower, the demands for services have increased with the increase of the population.¹³ According to a recent survey conducted by the,³⁴ 25 percent of the agencies had to “reduce or eliminate some services” (p.3), and 50 percent had to “change agency policies in an attempt to increase chances of gaining qualified applicants” (p.3). Efforts should be made to recruit the best candidates, instead of just increasing the number of applicants. There is consensus for the need to train, but there is no consensus for the kinds of skills and traits (attributes) to look for in selection.¹⁷ There should also be consensus for selection assessment methods; when quality is sacrificed for quantity, agencies have problematic personnel. This means there needs to be reform of the selection assessments. Individuals who develop re-employment assessment methods for police candidates must realize that improving selection methods should be a continuing task. Policing and public safety issues are incessantly fluid, and those involved in selection assessment and training must be ready to identify and adapt to meet new performance demands of policing. Research needs to continue toward improving assessment methods of selection. The career success of police recruits who survive the rigorous selection and training processes is dependent on their having the desired skills and traits.

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None.

Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that they have no known conflicts of interest.

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