

Review

Recruitment of Police Candidates Through MMPI and CPI Personality Inventories: A Perspective Review for Albania

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Abstract

Psychological assessment of police candidates represents a core area of police psychology. The main focus of psychological assessment is to identify those applicants who demonstrate specific traits or attributes that are suitable for the police officer profession.

The study aims to provide insights from contemporary practices regarding the usefulness of personality tests in recruiting police candidates and their future application in Albania. The study focuses on examining two personality tests: the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) and the California Psychological Inventory (CPI). The study was based on a systematic literature review using the ScienceDirect, PsycNet and Google Scholar databases from the period 2000 to 2024. The literature was filtered by identifying and analyzing key terms such as

"MMPI and police officer" or "CPI and police officer".

Based on the studies used and international practices, the application of psychological tests during the recruitment stages of applicants for police officers provides qualitative information on mental health and job suitability for the police organization and academic and research units.

The application of psychological tests in the selection of candidates for police officers provides important data for police and academic structures regarding the psychological state and the prediction of work performance and professional integrity in the future. A significant part of the studies emphasizes that in addition to the use of psychological tests, it is useful to include additional data such as clinical interviews and information regarding educational and demographic

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characteristics. Based on the studies used and international practices, the use of personality tests in the recruitment process would be positive for the police organization, the Security Academy and research purposes.

Keywords: *Public safety officer, personality test, MMPI, CPI.*

Introduction

The employment of a new candidate in the police structures is not only about fulfilling the criteria of educational, physical and theoretical training, but also about suitability in psycho-emotional terms. In the police organization, it is assumed that individuals combine several traits that form a particular "police personality". This personality is defined as a specific value orientation for police officers. Skolnick (1966) emphasizes that the work personality of a police employee consists of cynicism, suspicion, external isolation, internal solidarity, self-confidence, aggression and conservatism (Bennett & Greenstein et al., 2005). The application of psychological testing in the assessment of future performance has been documented since 1300 BC, when the Israelite army operating under Gideon used military aptitude tests to select suitable soldiers (Guion, 1976). Blau (1994) noted that psychological testing was used during World War I for the selection of military personnel. During World War II, the Army General Classification Test (AGCT) was developed and administered. During the late 1970s, the most popular personality tests in police settings were the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI), the California Psychological Inventory (CPI), the Inwald Personality Inventory (IPI), the 16-Personality Factors (16-PF), the Edwards Personal Preference Sheet (EPPS), and the Personality Inventory (NEO) (Fabricatore et al., 1978). In recent years, another set of psycho-

logical instruments has been applied to police selection, such as the Personality Assessment Inventory (PAI), which is essentially a psychopathology test and has many similarities to the (MMPI). The (M-PULSE) test is an instrument first introduced in 2008 that assesses a range of attitudes and beliefs specifically related to police work tasks (Davis, 2008).

Methods of systematic literature review

Research aim and objectives

The study examines the usefulness of personality inventories (MMPI), (CPI) and their versions in the selection of candidates for police officers.

Literature search terms and search process

According to the focus of the study, the ScienceDirect, PsycNet and Google Scholar databases covering the period from 2000 to 2024 were used. The specific search terms are: "MMPI and police officer", or "CPI and police officer".

Study characteristics

The study includes 9 original articles, of which one is a meta-analysis, six are quantitative studies, one is an experiment and a literature review. The total sample size in the included studies is about 7096 participants and 16 studies.

Results

After the completion of the study filtering, 9 articles were considered suitable for use (Fig. 1). For scientific articles, the study followed the steps according to the guidelines of the systematic review report in the Prisma process (Prisma, 2021).

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Figure 1. Flowchart of the research strategy (PRISMA).

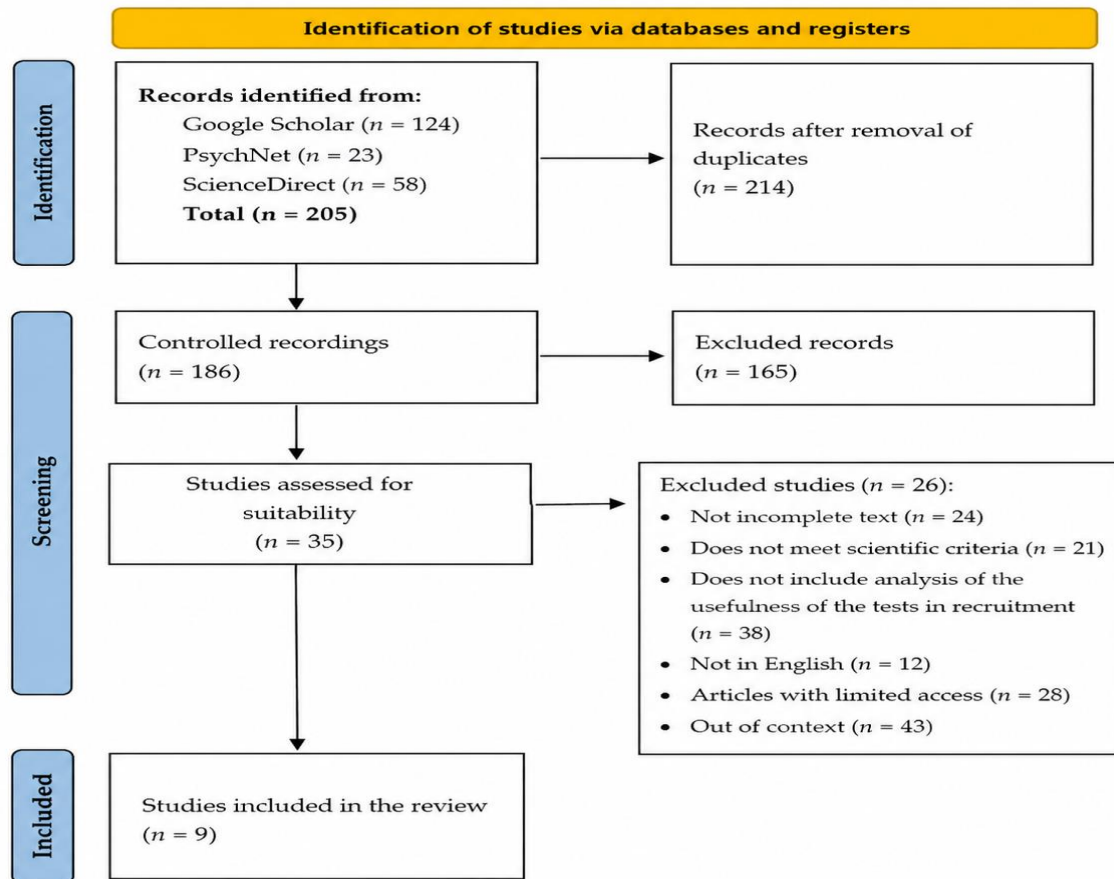


Table 1. Original research articles

Year	Author(s)	Study type	Sample size	Findings/results
2002	Daniels, S., & King, E.	Quantitative study	96	The use of (MMPI-2) in distinguishing successful from unsuccessful police officers, comparing them with superiors' assessments, presented positive data.
2007	Fischler, G.L., Ben-Porath, Y.S., & Sellbom, M.	Quantitative study	291	The (MMPI-2) indicators on the RC scales showed good predictive validity.
2008	Stewart, Casey, O.	Quantitative study	372	The test (CPI) showed significant data regarding levels of occupational risk, suitability, and the probability of involuntary dismissal.
2017	Tarescavage, A. M. Ben-Porath, Y. S., & Corey, D. M.	Literature review	320	The (MMPI) and (MMPI-2) scales showed consistent validity in predicting negative outcomes in police officer candidates.
2018	Ben-Porath, Y. S., Roberts, R. M., Tarescavage, A. M., & Roberts, M. D.	Quantitative study	143	The (CPI) and (MMPI-2-RF) data on emotional dysfunction and aspects of interpersonal functioning of police officer applicants were useful.

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2019	Curt R.B., Anne, M.B.	Experiment	120	The (MMPI) data showed positive correlations of the field performance of police officers.
2021	Detrick, P., & Roberts, R. M.	Quantitative study	5000	Several scales of the (CPI) showed modest support for construct validity.
2023	Zakaria, N. Z., Osman, I., & Noranee, S.	Meta-analysis	16 studies	The results of the (MMPI) were significant on scales related to emotional issues and performance prediction in the context of selecting competitors for police officers.
2023	Holmes, K., Whitman, M.R., & Ben-Porath, Y.S.	Quantitative study	754	The (MMPI-3) and (NEO PI-3) scores were positive in predicting the performance of police officer recruits.

Descriptions of personality inventories MMPI and CPI

Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI)

The Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) is a standardized psychometric personality test for adults. The test was developed by clinical psychologist Starke Hathaway and neuropsychiatrist J.C. McKinley, faculty members at the University of Minnesota. The MMPI is designed to identify mental disorders. Mental health professionals and psychologists use several versions of the MMPI based on the purpose of their work, such as developing treatment plans, making diagnoses, or recruiting suitable candidates for employment. The basic clinical scales of the MMPI are: hypochondria, hysteria, depression, psychopathic deviation, masculinity/femininity, paranoia, psychasthenia, schizophrenia, hypomania, and social introversion. In 1959, the MMPI was first applied by King, Norrell, and Erlandson to the selection of police personnel. Under the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Inventory (MMPI) is considered a clinical test suitable for use in selecting police officers after all other factors have been considered. In 2008, a shortened version (MMPI-2-RF) was updated to include 338 questions, which also included police norms. In 2024, the (MMPI-3) was published, which focuses on assessing the pre-employment suitability and on-duty suitability of individuals in public safety occupations.

California Psychological Inventory (CPI)

The California Psychological Inventory (CPI) is a self-report test designed to assess human behavior in normal populations. The (CPI) was originally published as a 480-item test, and in subsequent revisions the number of items has changed, being reduced to several versions, 434 and 260 (Gough, 1957). The most widely used inventory is the (CPI-434) which contains 20 scales measuring individual traits and interpersonal functioning (Groth-Marna, 2009). The main scales of the (CPI) are dominance, sociability, social presence, self-acceptance, capacity for status, independence, empathy, responsibility, socialization, self-control, good impression, interaction, sense of well-being, tolerance, achievement through conformity, achievement through independence, intellectual efficacy, psychological well-being, flexibility and femininity-masculinity. The Police Personality Inventory (CPI) is a personality test that is often used in police recruitment, as it aims to assess behavioral characteristics and qualities that are associated with success in social roles. The CPI also contains subscales for specific purposes directly related to the police officer position, including managerial potential, police leadership, agreeableness, anxiety, narcissism, and police officer career orientation (Gough & Bradley, 1996). The CPI is the second most widely used pre-employment assessment test for police officers in the United States (Super, 2006).

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The role of the psychologist in the Albanian State Police

The beginnings of the psychological service in the police organization in Albania date back about 18 years. The task of the psychologist in the police structures is defined through standard work descriptions and procedures. Currently, the main focus of the psychologist in the state police is on the assessment, testing and psychological counseling of police employees within the police structure and on the recruitment of new candidates for students. Psychologists in the state police have undertaken several initiatives to reform and improve the psychological service. In 2021, the "Police Psychologist Manual" was published. In cooperation with the Human Resources Directorate and the Training Sector at the General Directorate of the State Police, in 2022, a commission was established to draft the standard procedure for psychological assessment, testing and counseling. A training course was also held with a psychologist from the Lithuanian police, where the main focus was the recruitment of police officers. Psychologists from various institutions of the State Police are part of the psychological testing in the selection of candidates for police officers at the Security Academy. Currently, the level of professional preparation of psychologists in police structures is at satisfactory levels, based on qualifications, training, licensing and engagement in scientific research. Despite institutional and individual initiatives to improve the role of psychologists in the state police, it is currently necessary to draft a work protocol according to international standards, including personality tests for recruitment purposes.

Psychometric properties of personality inventories the (MMPI), the (CPI), and their versions

Regarding the usefulness of psychological tests, two components are important; predictive validity and competitive validity. Predictive validity in

an inventory or test is the extent to which it predicts the performance that a person will have on the dimensions that the instrument is designed to assess. A test has predictive validity if it is able to identify which competitors will perform well or not in the job position for which they are applying. Competitive validity is the unit of measurement in which a test or inventory identifies a person's actual performance on the dimensions and tasks that it is supposed to assess. A large number of studies have reported positive data regarding the application of the (MMPI) in the selection of police officers. Data from a study involving 120 police officer candidates, where the (MMPI) test was administered before their employment, the results showed the effectiveness of the instrument (Bernstein et al., 1982). The Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI-3) was used by the California Peace Officer Standards and Training Commission to assess public safety police officers prior to employment. The data presented showed not only good reliability and criterion validity, but also predictive ability. One study examined the ability of pre-employment scores (MMPI) to predict future police officers with respect to serious criminal offenses and on-duty integrity. Scores on the emotional, cognitive, and behavioral domains of the scale were positively associated with excessive use of force, conflicts with superiors, poor performance, procedural violations, embezzlement/fraud, accidents, inappropriate dismissal of cases, and other off-duty offenses (Tarescavage & Ben-Porath 2016). Another study examined the validity of scores on the Restructured Clinical (RC) and Substance Abuse (MMPI-2) scales in predicting inappropriate behavior in police officer applicants. Predictive validity was moderate to strong in predicting inappropriate behavior in police officers according to a study evaluating the Restructured Clinical (RC) scales. The Victoria Police Department, Australia, has administered the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) and MMPI-2 to all recruits since 1985. The study included 1347 police officers, and the data showed high scores on the lying scale. Based on the results of

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the MMPI-2-RF, Sellbom et al. (2007) identified problems with integrity and misconduct in a group of 291 male police officers. The results of another study concluded that the MMPI and MMPI-2 scales showed consistent validity in predicting negative outcomes in police candidate outcomes. Although the MMPI is the most widely used test in police organizations, several studies have identified limitations in some of the scales. According to Daniels and King (2002), the (MMPI) scales were unable to make any specific distinction between successful and unsuccessful police officers, compared with performance ratings by their supervisors.

The CPI has shown utility in the psychological testing of police candidates and those in service. The test has demonstrated several advantages in terms of cross-cultural understanding of concepts and ease of interpretation (Gough, 1968). Results of one study showed that officers who had not had serious problems on the job (e.g., illegal behavior, excessive use of force, etc.) during their service showed significantly higher scores on scales measuring aspects of socialization and self-control (Hargrave & Hiatt, 1989). Another study examined the relationship between predefined profiles (CPI-434) and disciplinary behaviors of police officers. They found that officers in the control group scored higher on scales of responsibility, socialization, and self-control (Cutler & Muchinsky, 2006). A study using the (CPI) which was primarily intended to predict police performance found high correlations between good job performance, personal well-being, self-control and responsibility. Another study also examined the relationship between risk levels (e.g., aspects of integrity, illegal drug use, criminal behaviour, poor job performance, etc.) and the suitability of police officers. The test data showed high predictability for applicants with high scores on problem behaviours (Roberts and Johnson, 2001). Aamodt (2004) conducted a meta-analysis of CPI studies on the prediction of job performance variables, finding moderate correlations for levels of tolerance and intellectual efficiency. According to him, these are desirable

characteristics for police officers because they tend to show higher job results in the future. The CPI has shown positive predictive validity for both future individual and group behavior (Groth, 1997). Another study analyzed data from the CPI and the MMPI-2-RF and concluded that scales of emotional dysfunction and interpersonal functioning domains were useful for police candidates. A small number of studies have shown that the CPI has shown modest support for construct validity on some scales. The CPI is designed to assess personality across the spectrum of normal human behavior and is not focused on identifying extreme behaviors or mental health disorders. Hargrave (1985) and Sarchione et al. (1998) noted that the CPI scales were not successful in assessing aspects of police performance.

Discussion

A careful review of the cited studies shows that the main purpose of the (MMPI) is to diagnose psychological disorders and assess personality structure. The inventory is used in clinical settings, in the evaluation of police personnel, and in judicial cases. The results are interpreted by qualified professionals and usually require in-depth analysis to identify specific disorders or pathological tendencies. Despite criticisms, the (MMPI) is the instrument widely applied for police recruitment purposes in English-speaking countries. The main focus of the (CPI) is the assessment of personality traits in normal populations, which focuses on the assessment of social and interactional aspects. It finds considerable application in police structures, especially in the recruitment of employees for positions requiring interpersonal skills and leadership. The interpretation of the results is easier and provides a broad picture of social traits. The test is widely used in social sciences and academic research. The (MMPI) and (CPI) inventories are widely used in countries such as the USA, Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom, Iceland, France and Germany.

10. Conclusions

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Personality inventories (MMPI) and (CPI) are important tests that have different structures and purposes in their composition. The (MMPI) test is more focused on identifying psychological disorders, while (CPI) focuses on social traits and interpersonal skills. Based on the cited studies, the reviewed tests are the most used in police institutions. Their wide application in police organizations shows that their results represent reliability and validity. Despite the wide scope of use, some researchers have identified some limitations and shortcomings in terms of psychometric properties.

Some studies emphasize that psychopathological tests such as (MMPI) often do not reflect clinically relevant data in police structures due to the fact that applicants for police officers tend to be psychologically healthier than the general normal population. When selecting candidates for police officers, researchers suggest the need for additional data such as clinical interviews, demographic characteristics, information about education and employment experiences.

In the Albanian context, in the framework of the reform of the police organization and its approximation to contemporary standards, it is necessary to apply one of the three personality inventories analyzed in the study. Currently, police psychologists apply various psychological tests in the structures where they work, which they have translated and adapted individually. It is recommended that a working group be established with the support of the decision-making structures of the State Police to draft a psychological assessment protocol for pre-employment recruitment and treatment during employment.

Declarations

Funding: This study received no external funding.
Conflict of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Study Limitations: This study is limited by the methodology employed, the number of references included, and its geographical scope.

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