

Validity Study

Relationship Between Peer Evaluations in a Police Academy and Various Measures of Future Police Performance

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Peer evaluations of 2,968 policemen gathered in a police academy were correlated with three different on-the-job criteria measures. All peer evaluation dimensions showed predictive validity with at least two of the criteria measures. The correlations with on-the-job supervisory ratings ranged from .07 to .32. Correlations with on-the-job peer assessments ranged from .14 to .43. The correlations with On-the-job discipline complaints were lower and ranged from .00 to .21.

Sample

The sample consisted of 2,968 policemen who attended a national law enforcement academy in Israel between 1999 and 2003. Of the sample, 80.88% were men and 19.12% were women. The data for the validity study were collected at Israeli police facilities. The Behavioral Science Department managed the data collection and analyses.

Predictor Information

The predictors were peer evaluations that were collected during basic police courses (close to the end of the course). The peer evaluation tool was comprised of seven performance dimensions. Five dimensions (motivation level, course performance of missions, integrity, interpersonal relationship and commanding ability) were measured through peer rating method. Every evaluator rated all course colleagues using 1-7 scale (1=low, 7=high). As shown in Table 1, the interater reliabilities for these five dimensions, corrected for the number of supervisory evaluations per officer (4.22), ranged from .82 to .87.

Table 1
Predictors Reliabilities and intercorrelations

Predictors	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	Sex
1. Commanding ability	(.87)	.74	.92	.68	.74	.56	-.29	.31**
2. Interpersonal relationships		(.87)	.82	.88	.82	.35	-.58	.24**
3. Course performance of missions			(.84)	.80	.84	.51	-.38	.29**
4. Integrity				(.84)	.84	.32	-.57	.25**
5. Motivation level					(.82)	.41	-.44	.18**
6. Future job success						(.74)	-.11	.18**
7. Aggressiveness							(.72)	-.01

Notes: All coefficients between the predictors are significant at the .0001 level.
Significance level - * .05, ** .01,
Reliability estimates are in parentheses.

The two other dimensions (“future job success” and “aggressiveness” were measured by peer nomination method. The nomination procedure required every evaluator to choose 0-3 cadets who they thought would be the best policemen in the future, and 0-3 cadets who demonstrated a high level of aggressiveness during the course. The nomination score of every cadet on these dimensions was simply the number of nominations he or she received. Table 1 contains the reliabilities and intercorrelations of the seven predictors.

Criteria Information

We used three criteria: supervisory ratings of job performance, peer assessments of job performance, and the mean number of discipline violations. The supervisory ratings score was the mean (over years) of an overall performance score that is given annually to every policeman by his/her commander. The mean number of supervisory evaluations per policeman was 4.22 and 2,861 policemen had at least one supervisory evaluation. The average correlation between the ratings made by two supervisors was .64, which is a reasonable estimate of the reliability for one supervisor. Using the Spearman-Brown formula to adjust this correlation for the average of 4.22 supervisor ratings per officer, results in a corrected reliability estimate of .88.

The peer assessment score was the mean (over years) of a performance ability dimension that was part of a job performance evaluation tool that is used annually in the Israeli police. The mean number of peer evaluations per policeman was 2.21 and 2,424 policemen had at least one peer on-the-job peer assessment.

The discipline violation score was the mean number of disciplinary complaints (over years) submitted against an officer. All 2,968 policemen in the study had this criterion (0-6.5 complaints per year). Table 2 contains the reliabilities and intercorrelations of the three criteria. The reliability coefficient in Table 2 represents the correlation of complaints across years ($r = .257$) adjusted for an average of 4.77 years of complaint information.

Validity Information

Table 3 presents the correlations between predictors and criteria. These correlations represent the predictive validity of peer evaluation measures that were gathered in police academy settings against various on-the-job performance criteria collected several years after the completion of the police basic training course.

Table 2
Criterion Reliabilities and Intercorrelations

Criteria	(1)	(2)	(3)	Sex
On-the-job supervisory ratings	(.88)	.45**	.04*	.03
On-the-job peer assessments		(.83)	.05**	.22
On-the-job discipline complaints			(.60)	.17

Notes: Significance level - * .05, ** .01,
Reliability estimates are in parentheses.

In the present study, peer evaluations measured at an early stage of a police officer's career (during basic training in the police academy) predicted quite well job performance years later. Overall, the results showed three main patterns. First, it is evident that validity level is highest with on-the-job peer assessments, possibly because of the similarity in the measurement method. Second, the lowest validity is with the number of discipline complaints. Third, the only measure of negative behavior in the training settings, aggressiveness, has the highest correlation with the negative future behavior taken on the job, disciplinary complaints.

These results suggest that evaluations measured in training environments can be used for organizational purposes outside that of the training environment. For example, the selection process of policemen can proceed beyond the entry selection stage, and data from basic training courses can be used to determine which cadets will be promoted to field positions.

Table 3
Validity coefficients

Predictor	Criterion Measures		
	On-the-job supervisory ratings	On-the-job peer assessments	On-the-job discipline complaints
Commanding ability	.300**	.389**	.025
Interpersonal relationship	.200**	.315**	-.057**
Course performance of missions	.283**	.300**	-.001
Integrity	.172**	.271**	-.088**
Motivation level	.223**	.285**	-.069**
Future job success	.250**	.268**	.005
Aggressiveness	-.068**	-.124**	.163**

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$,

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