

25 Highlights of Using the MMPI/MMPI-2 with Criminal Offenders¹

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Extensive research has been conducted on the use of the MMPI and MMPI-2 scales in forensic settings to assess criminals in pre-trial and in-prison evaluations (see Reference File for more complete listing). The following highlights describe special contributions that were made to assure that the scales on the test were appropriate, reliable, and valid in predicting behavior of criminal populations. Major research studies and valuable summary projects are highlighted and their findings/implications noted here. The early journal publications on the Multiphasic Schedule by Hathaway & McKinley (1940) and McKinley and Hathaway (1944) provided several empirical scales that serve as a basis for assessment of criminal offenders, particularly Pd, Pa and Ma.

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- 1949 Fry conducted a study evaluating male and female prisoners compared with a normal sample using the MMPI. He found that male prisoners significantly differed on several MMPI scales (Hypochondriasis, Depression, Psychopathic-Deviate, Paranoia, Schizophrenia, and Hypomania. Female prisoners differed from normals in the categories of Depression, Psychopathic-Deviate, Abnormal Sexual Interests, and Paranoia.
- 1952 Clark found that Army general prisoners deviate significantly on all clinical scales of the MMPI regardless of their psychiatric classification when compared with a “normal” group of soldiers; that is, when compared with Schmidt’s normal group, they have more neurotic; psychopathic and psychotic trends. The scales that most significantly distinguish between anti-social personality groups and other groups are: Pd, Pa and Ma.
- 1955 An early study of the MMPI in a broad range of correctional institutions in Texas, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Washington and Minnesota) found that inmates showed only minor variations in mean profiles with the Pd scale being consistently the most prominent (see Smith, 1955)
- 1961 Rosen and Mink conducted an evaluation of male prisoners and a normal sample to evaluate the MMPI for self-appraisal of personality factors,

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personal desirability, and social desirability. Results were interpreted not only for the prisoner group but also between this group and the normal population. The normals and prisoners differed in several respects: (a) in relation to personal and social desirability profiles, (b) in number increase of items consisting of admission of antisocial and psychopathological tendencies, and (d) in D and Pd scores.

- 1965 Lawton and Kleban found that a group of prisoners who were psychopathic on the MMPI-2, as measured by the Pd scale, were unable to manipulate their responses to appear non-psychopathic. They found that a group of prisoners, who were strongly sociopathic based on their MMPI Pd scores, were unable to successfully simulate “a person who has had no trouble with the law.”
- 1969 Jacobson and Wirt conducted an extensive study of the effectiveness of group psychotherapy with improving the adjustment of men in prison. They tested all the men with the MMPI prior to treatment and obtained follow-up data to examine the effectiveness of treatment reporting that those with more neurotic profile patterns made greater progress than those with antisocial behavior problems.
- 1971 Davis and Sines describe a narrowly defined MMPI profile (4-3 profile pattern) and the behavior problems associated with it in a state hospital, a state prison, and a university medical center. The MMPI 4-3 profile with the Pd and Hy scales elevated in a particular configuration entailed a behavior pattern that includes hostile-aggressive acting out. The hostile-aggressive behavior pattern characterized most of the 60 male Ss with this MMPI profile in each of 3 settings studied. The frequency of this profile pattern and the social and psychological importance of the behavior pattern are important to researchers and clinicians.
- 1971 Persons and Marks (1971) replicated the study by Davis and Sines that found the MMPI high point pattern of 4-3 is associated with commission of violent acts. A group of 48 male inmates with the 4-3 codetype patterns were compared with the 3 most frequently occurring other MMPI code types in a prison and with the institutional base rate for commission of violent criminal offenses. The 4-3 inmates committed significantly more violent acts than any of the other personality groups and significantly more violence than the base rates of inmates in general. Of the 4-3 Ss, 85% had a history of violence.
- 1973 Although prisoners, as a group, tend to have homogeneous MMPI scale scores with a prominent elevation on Pd, Sutker and Moen conducted research to determine if sub-groups of prisoners vary on some characteristics. Using a large sample of prisoners in Louisiana they found that inmates who showed notable behavioral difficulties within the prison setting were characterized by significantly more disciplinary write-ups on

the MMPI than were those who had incurred no disciplinary write-ups during their incarceration—particularly Scales F and 9. Both groups showed elevations on the Pd scale.

- 1976 Panton studied a sample of male inmates sentenced to be executed compared with a large sample of inmates from the general prison population. He found that Death Row inmates presented significantly higher scores on Pa and Sc than other inmates. He concluded that the test revealed more feelings of resentment, hopelessness, failure, frustration, isolation and social alienation than other inmates.
- 1977 Rader conducted an evaluation of men arrested for indecent exposure, rape, or assault. He found that K corrected mean raw scale scores were significantly greater for the rapists than those of the exposers group on *F*, *Hs*, *D*, *Hy*, *Pd*, *Pa*, and *St* and greater than those of the assaulter group on *Pd*, *Pt*, and *Sc*. Rapists who have committed offenses involving both violence and sex would produce test results indicating greater psychological disturbance than individuals committing offenses involving either only sex (exposers) or only violence (assaulters). The group profile for the rapists may be interpreted as follows: appear irritable, hostile, angry, and suspicious, perhaps also somewhat depressed and anxious. They may be seen as being unpredictable and peculiar in action and thought.
- 1977 Megargee developed a quantitative system for the classification of profiles in assessing adult criminal offenders (Megargee, 1977). Ten profile clusters were found to identify discrete prison groups: Able, Baker, Charlie, Delta, Easy, Foxtrot, George, Howe, Item and Jupiter. Rules were developed to classify prisoners in each profile type. The ten MMPI-based groups were found to differ on a broad range of factors such as family background, behavioral correlates and tendency toward repeat offenses. The Megargee typology has been replicated in numerous subsequent studies.
- 1981 Jones, Beidleman & Fowler provided valuable information on the differentiation of violent vs. non-violent criminal offenders. The MMPI scales that contributed most to prediction of group membership were F, Pa, Pt, and Sc.
- 1985 Guy, Platt, Zwerling & Bullock examined the mental health status of 486 inmates (mean age 25 yrs) admitted to the Philadelphia Prisons, using a test battery that included the Structured Clinical Interview, MMPI, Wide Range Achievement Test, Quick Test, and a demographic questionnaire. 161 Ss also completed the Rorschach, and 96 Ss completed a psychiatric diagnostic interview. Results indicate that approximately $\frac{2}{3}$ of Ss were identifiable by relatively stringent criteria as being psychiatrically disturbed and in need of specific mental health treatment services, and 34% were identifiable by all indicators of psychopathology used.

- 1986 Pavelka studied records of a random sample of 86 of the 261 forensic psychiatric evaluations requested by the Dayton Regional Office of the Ohio Adult Parole Authority during 1974–1984. The Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) was administered to 62% of the parolee population and resulted in characteristics indicative of long-term pathological behavior, usually recognizable during early adolescence. Demographic characteristics of Ss paralleled those of the US at large. Recidivism and other problems exhibited by Ss correlated significantly with unemployment, substance abuse, and antisocial personality characteristics.
- 1988 Wasyliw, Grossman, Haywood & Cavanaugh administered the MMPI to defendants undergoing evaluation for fitness to stand trial and or insanity at the time of the trial with a group of persons previously found NGRI who did not stand to gain from such an assessment. Insanity defendants showed significantly more malingering than the NGRI subjects. The findings support the use of the MMPI validity scales in assessing malingering within criminal forensic settings and support the generalizability across race.
- 1989 Carmin, Wallbrown, Ownby & Barnett conducted a factor analytic study of the MMPI on a large sample of criminal offenders. They found that there were five factors that are comparable to prior factor-based research. They concluded that the study supported the utility of the instrument with an offender population.
- 1993 Lanyon conducted a study comparing male sex offenders with prison controls. He found MMPI special scales showed highly significant differentiations between sex offenders and a general control group. Admitters accounted for the significance; no admitters differed relatively little from the controls on these scales. Even no admitters could be discriminated from no offenders on the basis of sexual deviance and not simply on defensiveness.
- 1995 Borum & Grisso conducted a survey of psychological test use in criminal forensic evaluations and reported that the MMPI/ MMPI-2 was the most widely used personality test in criminal evaluations, 96 % of psychologists who use testing reported using the MMPI.
- 1995 Ogloff provided an excellent review and overview of the admissibility of the MMPI-2 in forensic cases. He reviewed 279 state level cases and 179 federal cases in which the MMPI or MMPI-2 was employed for a variety of purposes. He concluded that the MMPI-2 can be a valuable tool in forensic assessments but pointed out that clinicians needed to be cautious about employing the MMPI-2 for purposes for which it was not intended. Courts have generally held that the MMPI-2 can be admitted in cases in

which the mental health status of the client is addressed.

- 2002 Nieberding, Moore and Dematatis described a valuable model for using test information and background information to provide evaluations for determining possible recidivism, re-offense, and dangerousness in an outpatient criminal release program. They found that the MMPI-2 and Rorschach could greatly assist in the determination of effective treatment interventions and evaluation of therapeutic progress.
- 2010 Steffan et al. conducted a study that has important applied implications for the assessment of malingering. By comparing models of the validity indicators, instead of comparing individual indicators, they found that clinicians can use the MMPI-2 effectively to assess malingering in prison populations by relying on detection models with explicit guidelines or rules for using the validity indicators, clinical judgment in the assessment of malingering will be reduced. This method emphasizes the actuarial approach, which has frequently outperformed clinical judgment in decision tasks.
- 2010 Pennuto provides a comprehensive overview of the use of the MMPI-2 in assessing murderers. The author points out several reasons for the MMPI-2's utility in this application: 1) the validity scales address the credibility of the individual's test-taking attitudes, 2) the MMPI-2 is interpreted objectively, using external, empirically based correlates, 3) the MMPI-2 has high test-retest reliability, and 4) it has high inter-rater reliability, 5) the extensive research on the MMPI-2 is published in peer-reviewed journals, and 6) the results of the MMPI-2 are easy to communicate to non-psychologists, such as those involved in the judicial process.
- 2011 Grover reviewed the literature on using the MMPI-2 in correctional evaluations. She pointed out that the MMPI-2 is especially useful in correctional settings due to its objectivity with standardized administration and scoring. In evaluating its use with sex offenders, it seems that certain scales including the L, F, Pd, and Sc scales are elevated with this population of offenders. However recent research differentiates between sex offender typologies and finding that there are differences between groups of sex offenders on their MMPI-2 scores.
- 2015 Butcher, Hass, Greene and Nelson provided an extensive review of MMPI-2 measures employed in forensic settings including a chapter devoted to assessment of individuals in criminal settings.

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