Poster
TITLE
Does a Measure of Adaptive Performance Predict In-Basket Performance?

Abstract
The ability for employees to adapt to a given situation is critical for organizations hoping to remain successful in today's turbulent environment. For law enforcement officers, adapting to a situation is even more critical since this can be the difference between life or death. In an effort to assist law enforcement in promoting personnel with the adaptive performance (AP) skill required to be effective, this study examines the relationship between AP and an individual's performance on an in-basket assessment. The study found that AP significantly predicts in-basket performance when rank is considered.

The selection, promotion, and development of adaptive law enforcement officers has become a prevalent concern in today's turbulent environment. The role and importance of Adaptive Performance (AP) in the work of law enforcement is even more salient with heightening tensions between civilians and police officers in recent years. Now more than ever, law enforcement officers must demonstrate an ability to accurately understand the dynamic aspects of a situation and act appropriately depending upon the circumstance. While much research has been done surrounding the predictors of individual AP and how AP contributes to successful performance in more traditional roles (Charbonnier-Voirin et al., 2010; Good, 2014), little research has examined AP in the law enforcement sector.

Pulakos et al., (2000) suggested that adaptive performance is an individual's ability to modify or change their behaviors to successfully maintain performance in a changing environment and presented an eight-dimension taxonomy of AP (see table 1). Building off of the Pulakos et al. (2000) and a model proposed by Griffin and Hesketh (2003), Lillard, et. al., (2012) developed the Measure of Adaptive Performance (MAP). Using exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis, the MAP was found to have a robust nine factor MAP structure (see table 2; Marlow, Calarco, Frame, & Hein, 2015). Marlow, et al. (2015) suggested that a logical next step in the assessment of AP would be to validate measures such as the MAP on measures related to job performance and determine if AP can predict performance on the job. While such steps could ultimately lead to better selection decisions on jobs that require AP, few studies have examined the relationship between AP and performance on measures often used to predict job performance, such as in-basket work samples.

The in-basket assessment was first developed by Frederiksen, Saunders, and Wand (1957) in an attempt to create an instrument that measured an individual's ability to organize

pieces of information, discover issues within a situation, and to make decisions given numerous

pieces of information. Tett and Jackson (1990) found that delegation, seeking advice, following

advice, requesting to meet with an individual, seeking non-advisory information, and asking to

be kept informed as to how a problem is progressing are all reliably measured using an in-basket.

Whetzel, Rotenberry, and McDaniel (2014) found a validity of .42 in a more recent meta-

analytic review regarding in-baskets when raters were trained on how to use the rating scales.

In general, the in-basket has two distinct pieces. The first piece contains background

information about the imaginary situation that the test taker will pretend to be in. This includes

things like an organization chart, job description, type of company, a calendar, and the

explanation behind the hasty promotion into a new role and unfamiliar role (Kesselman, Lopez,

& Lopez, 1982).

The second piece of the in-basket deals with the set of problems that the test taker will

face during the assessment. This includes information and documents via memos, voicemails,

radio messages, and emails that the test taker will have to respond to. Additional material

included in this piece are the items that test takers will need in order to answer and work on the

issues such as pens, pencils, paper, blank forms and paper clips (Kesselman, Lopez, & Lopez,

1982).

Lopez (1966) discusses the many advantages of using an in-basket assessment to evaluate

and predict performance. One advantage is that it requires test takers to utilize higher problem

solving and analytical skills than other assessments. In-baskets also give test takers the ability to

demonstrate their creativity skills by solving problems in a variety of ways. This assessment also

requires test takers to pay attention to details in order to solve problems which is something that

is critical to measure when it is job relevant. Finally, it tests an individuals ability to come to a

decisions while keeping in mind multiple different perspectives. The relationship between in-baskets and other measures, such as the MAP, has largely gone unexamined.

In an effort to assist law enforcement in promoting personnel with the AP skill required to be effective law enforcement personnel, a validation study was conducted using the MAP and analyzing data from Troopers and Sergeants. This study examined the relationship between the individuals' scores on the MAP and their performance on an in-basket required for promotion. **Research Question.** Can a measure of Adaptive Performance predict the performance of Troopers and Sergeants on an in-basket work sample?

Methods

This study utilized data collected from state highway patrol Troopers (n=476) and Sergeants (n=146) in April 2016 from an online survey. One-hundred and forty six responses were removed from analysis due to detection of insufficient effort responding. In May of 2017, Troopers (n=164) and Sergeants (n=87) participated in a promotional process in which candidates were given an in-basket. Participants responses on the MAP were matched with their respective in-basket scores. The final sample for the study included 111 Troopers and 52 Sergeants. All were either Troopers being considered for promotion to Sergeant or Sergeants being considered for promotion to Lieutenant.

Results

To answer the research question, the present study also examines whether rank moderated the relationship between each of the MAP dimensions and in-basket scores. Rank and the centered mean of each MAP dimension was entered at step 1 and each of the interaction terms in step 2. Overall, the model containing the main effects significantly predicted in-basket scores, $R^2=.98$, $F(10,162)=656.02$, $p<.01$. There was a significant effect on rank on in-basket

scores, B=9.116, *p*<.01. Specifically, there was a significant interaction between rank and

Emotional Perception (B=.727, *p*=.037), such that the relationship was significantly more

positive for sergeants than troopers. Additionally, while there was not a significant main effect of

proactive learning (B=-.01, *p*=.959), there was a significant interaction between proactive

learning and rank (B=-1.192, *p*=.017), specifically the relationship was significantly more

negative for sergeants than for troopers.

Discussion

These findings will be presented and explained within the context of the organization, the

two positions/ranks, and the broader context that law enforcement personnel are operating in and

dynamic and challenging environments and situations.

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