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Author: Como, Peter Gerald

Title: *The use of multiple
personality variables to predict
recidivism in prisoners*

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~~APPROVED:~~

Director

Reader

Reader

Reader

Dean, The Graduate School

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Abstract

Research in recidivism in prisoners has led to inconsistent results and few studies have been successful in discriminating recidivists from non-recidivists. The author believes that previous studies failed to obtain significant results because they relied on unsophisticated experimental designs and analyses. This thesis attempts to overcome the previous inadequacies through the use of a refined analytical technique - multiple discriminant analysis. The subjects in this study were drawn from the mental health files of a large Federal Correctional Institution near El Paso, Texas and each was classified as recidivist or non-recidivist. The Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) scores and various demographic measures were recorded for all subjects and subjected to a multiple discriminant analysis. The results revealed that, by applying five experimental scales along with the standard validity and ten clinical scales of the MMPI, 78% of the subjects were correctly classified as either recidivist or non-recidivist. These results suggest that an effective recidivism scale can be constructed from the MMPI. Further, multivariate analysis in personality and behavioral research involving correctional inmates would appear to be the technique of choice.

Table of Contents

	<u>Page</u>
Acknowledgments	iii
Abstract	iv
List of Tables	vi
Introduction	1
Hypotheses	22
Method	23
Subjects	23
Materials	23
Procedure	23
Results	24
Discussion	35
References	46
Appendices	51
Vita	57

List of Tables

<u>Table</u>		<u>Page</u>
1	Correlations of Recidivism with the Independent Variables	26
2	Crosstabulation of Recidivist/Non-Recidivist by Type of Offense	27
3	Crosstabulation of Recidivist/Non-Recidivist by Marital Status	28
4	Crosstabulation of Recidivist/Non-Recidivist by Ethnicity	29
5	Independent Variable Means and Univariate Discriminating Power	32
6	Intercorrelation Matrix - Significant Unitary Discriminant Variables by Variables Significantly Correlated with Recidivism	33

for Lucille -- a love so strong,

a life too short,

a memory unending.

INTRODUCTION

The field of corrections in the United States has undergone substantial changes. From the early shackles and chains representative of the middle 18th century to the present multi-dimensional approach of reintegration to society, the field has utilized research as a prime means for change. The basic approach to criminals over the years can be summarized as a succession of four R's: Revenge, Restraint, Reformation, and Reintegration (Leeke and Clements, 1973). Until the mid 18th century revenge was the primary response to crime and corrections primarily focused on punishment and retribution. In the early 19th century, as a consequence of the growth of Western democracy, criminals came to be seen not as possessed by evil, but people who had deliberately chosen to violate the law because it gave them pleasure or profit. As a result, the correctional institution came into being (the Pennsylvania and Auburn, New York systems started in 1829). The philosophical approach became more concerned with the criminal's restraint and limited access and communication to the community. The late 19th century and early 20th century saw the introduction of reformation as a response to the inadequacy of institutionalization and this approach gained impetus through growth of Freudian psychology and the social sciences. Reformation called for treatment, rather than solely punishment, and introduced a complex approach to corrections extending far beyond confinement.

Today the reformation approach has been extended into reintegration of the offender to the pressures of living in a free society.

With the onset of the reformation approach to corrections, the field became an area of interest to the social scientists since the social, psychological, and cognitive components of the criminal were being examined in order that modes of treatment could be devised. The reintegration philosophy also gave the researchers an opportunity to test the various treatment modalities that were devised. The development of research and of rehabilitation in corrections coincident with the McNaughten rule and the Durham Act that emptied from criminal liability both those who did not know that they were doing wrong and those who knew but could not keep from doing wrong facilitated the rapid growth of correctional psychiatry and psychology (Dean, 1973). The use of psychiatrists and psychologists as expert witnesses in trials is now widespread. Moreover, psychologists and social scientists within the correctional institution have now become part of the correctional process. Most social scientists agreed that removal from society to the institution alone constituted adequate punishment and resulted in increased emphasis on treatment.

The field of correctional psychology evolved from early psychiatric criminology. Initially the field focused on clinical observations welded into a viewpoint that sought to analyze normal and abnormal factors in criminal

acts and formulate therapeutic approaches from these observations. Most research stemmed from these observations in an attempt to identify the prime factors that make up the criminal. The early compilation of these factors came about as the reformation philosophy in corrections developed. These included the application of traditional psychiatric therapies to the criminal as well as a commitment to assist the community in the administration of correctional justice (Halleck, 1968). Since the concept of rehabilitation in corrections was introduced, there have been many attempts to operationally define rehabilitation in corrections, and although they vary, most agree that its focus should be on keeping the ex-offender from returning to illegal behavior and being reincarcerated. This viewpoint is shared not only by psychiatrists and psychologists but also by the legal profession as well as the federal government that must support the habitual criminal. The identification of these prime behavioral factors has thus gained considerable attention in correctional research.

According to Diamond (1968), the identification of these prime factors follows the basic assumption that criminal behavior cannot be adequately explained by any reductionist theory. Psychopathology alone, whether described in meaningful psychodynamic terms or in meaningless diagnostic labels, cannot account for the great bulk of criminal behavior. Criminal behavior is usually a much more complex phenomenon than is

generally recognized. Accordingly to Diamond (1968) "the criminal act is a function of complex social, psychologic, economic, political and biologic factors." (p. 50).

The psychological investigation into criminal behavior has followed a basic underlying proposition that crime can be visualized as human misbehavior rather than as some manifestation of evil (Bromberg, 1968). In this view, we can analyze criminality and the psychological components that underly it. We can regard criminal behavior as a form of maladjustment to society which is the product of internal and external factors. By analyzing these variables, it should be possible to establish patterns of criminal behavior enabling one to predict certain aspects of criminal behavior in the general population. These variables include such things as where criminal behavior is most apt to occur, the kind of individual prone to becoming a criminal, and the kinds of treatment conducive to rehabilitation. It is this rehabilitative mode from which the field of correctional psychology has emerged. Correctional research has focused on identifying the factors that influence and contribute to rehabilitation and conversely, identification of those factors that contribute to the return to illegal behavior. When an individual is re-arrested and re-institutionalized he is labeled a recidivist. The study of recidivism has been of great interest to correctional psychologists, correctional officials, and to the public.

From the research and discussion in the identification of these factors, rehabilitative modalities have evolved and are being applied in the correctional institution. The present status and application of correctional psychology has been reviewed by Wicks (1974), noting the major correctional problems and therapeutic approaches in corrections. The trend in research has shifted from the identification of the behavioral factors in criminality to the application of these factors in the post-institutional period.

The most common evaluation of correctional effectiveness during the post-institutional period is the variable of recidivism, the number of offenders returning to crime after a correctional experience. Research in recidivism has been hampered because, until recently, systematic data about transactions in the criminal justice system have not been collected (Duffee & Fitch, 1976).

The first study of recidivism of major significance was done by Burgess (1928), related to the implementation of the Illinois Indefinite Sentence Law. The Burgess method was characterized by the inclusion of as many variables as possible and by equal weighting of those variables significantly related to recidivism in the form of prediction tables. Glueck and Glueck (1930, 1934, 1940, 1943), differed in their strategy. They collected as much data as possible about variables related to parole outcome but included in their prediction tables only the six strongest predictors.

Although both studies were early attempts to predict recidivism, they later were criticized on statistical procedures and methodology (Duffee & Fitch, 1976).

Ohlin (1951), combining the Burgess and Gluecks' approaches, used broad, subjective categories of "social type" and gave each variable equal weight in the prediction table but also included the most highly correlated variables.

One of the most widely recognized studies, both in content and precision, is that of Mannheim and Wilkens (1955). They examined boys released from the English Borstal Schools (training schools) in 1946 to 1947. They reviewed many variables related to outcome and selected the most significant, using an unequal weighting system, involving positive or negative characteristics relative to the proportion of their predictive strength.

As the research in recidivism became more sophisticated, many factors were extrapolated from the large number of correlational investigations. The great number of variables found appeared to align around several major factors. These include personality characteristics (Mack, 1969; Singh, 1974; Holland & Holt, 1974; Christensen & Le Unes, 1974), social psychological variables (Martin & Barry, 1969; Blackburn, 1971; Sutker & Moan, 1973), and cognitive components such as self concept or self-esteem