

S, S-, and S-% Interpretations Based Upon Police Department Research

Our research group also has some preliminary research that weighs in on this issue.

We have been doing research for a couple of years now, looking at how test data can predict job performance of local police officers. At the time of these analyses, we only had Rorschach data (obtained right after they were hired) and annual supervisor's job performance ratings on 42 officers, but I think the results are pretty interesting, especially since our hypotheses were specifically based on the S, S-, and S-% variables.

What we found was that, at the time of the first-year supervisory evaluation, the S and S- variables did not correlate with any of the performance rating items that we had hypothesized. We did, however, find that the S-% variable was positively correlated with supervisor ratings of "acting without thinking." Additionally, S-% was also positively correlated with supervisor's ratings on the item "Would you hire this officer, knowing him/her as you do now, if they were applying for the job now?" In other words, the higher the S-%, the more likely the officer was rated as acting without thinking and as less likely to be rehired by their supervisor.

Although these are fairly decent findings, especially in regard to the question of rehiring the officer, we were still disappointed because these were the only two items out of approximately ten that were related to the Rorschach data.

Well, one of our group members started thinking and wondered whether or not the officers might be on their best behavior during their first year of employment? After all, this is the length of the probation period and, additionally, they are under close supervision of their training officer during this one-year period.

When we re-ran the data using the supervisors' performance ratings taken at the end of the officers' second year, we hit gold, so to speak.

The S- variable still didn't correlate with anything, but we found S to be significantly correlated (in the expected direction) with ratings involving getting along with fellow officers, and the "acts without thinking" item.

Additionally, we found S-% to be positively correlated (again, in the expected direction) with ratings involving: · Getting along with fellow officers, · Having justified citizen complaints made against the officer, · Social skills with the public, · Acting without thinking, · Getting angry at citizens, · Making things worse in tense situations, · Quality of problem-solving/ judgment, · Displaying any evidence of emotional problems, and · The "rehire" question

Exner (in Volume 1, 3rd edition) doesn't say much about the S-% variable, but

what he does say seems to fit rather well with these findings:

"Thus when the S-% exceeds 40% in records that have more than three minus answers, it is reasonable to postulate that strong sets, created by negativism or anger, are contributing to mediational distortions." (P. 472).

We then took this data one step further and tried to see if we could come up with some cutoffs that could help us make hypothetical hiring decisions, since we have a list of all the officers who have been fired.

While the best way to screen out all of the "bad" cops (officers who were later fired) was to set the cutoff at S-% = 0, it also screened out a fair bit (34%) of the "good" cops (officers who were not fired). However, using a cutoff rule of S-% = 0 or S-% < .5 AND S < 3 (3 or more space responses being possibly related to a trait-like characteristic), we were able to screen out 11% of the "bad" cops, but to successfully "screen in" 61% of the "good" cops. The former cutoff might be employed in the situation where you have a lot of candidates to choose from, and the latter might be employed in a situation (like we frequently have) where you have few candidates, and need to get all of the good officers you can.

I think I had posted a while back, inquiring about the reasons for dropping the S-% variable from the CS. I vaguely remember Tony Sciara briefly saying that it was dropped due to a lack of empirical support at the last Rorschach workshop I went to. This workshop was prior to this research, however, so I didn't inquire the issue much further. Based on our findings, it seems like it might be a good idea to include it in the system.

I hope this all made sense, Monday mornings can be particularly challenging! =).

Phil

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On Sat, 24 Jul 2004 09:34:20 -0400, Sharon Rae Jenkins <jenkinss@UNT.EDU> wrote:

From our lab, Jed Davis reported at SPA a couple of years ago that a group of outpatients with histories of aggressive behavior had higher S- % scores than a comparison group with no such histories.

Sharon Rae Jenkins

On 24 Jul 2004, at 2:15, Henry Clark wrote:

I would like to believe that there is some empirical evidence for the premise that Space Responses (S, S-, or S-%) does imply something meaningful.

Exner claims that "if the number of S responses is excessive, issues of negativism, oppositionality, or even anger must be considered.... [It] becomes important to differentiate findings that are more situational as contrasted with those signifying a trait-like feature" (2003, p. 302).

The so called "findings" related to S responses seems to be anecdote at best and dogma at worst. I am missing something?

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