

Choosing Police Recruits for Job Longevity and Successful Careers In Policing: Preferred Attributes of Police Chiefs

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Abstract

A survey about desired attributes for recruits was administered to the Texas police chief association members. The survey is a replication of several police chief state association surveys conducted previously with police chief associations. It represents the state of Texas police chief association, the ninth police chief state association in a series of surveys about recruit selection. The others conducted were the Midwest associations and southern states, and the Caribbean association. For these surveys, the term characteristic, or attribute, is related to the physical, aptitude, and emotional traits a recruit should have to do the police job successfully. The data are intended to recognize police recruit skills and traits that determine higher success rates in training and policing. Police chiefs were asked to rate the importance level of 11 traits and skills they believed essential for recruit success. The survey will provide information for administrators to have a basis for intelligent selection strategies for police candidates, and to identify the recruits with the best potential career performers. The article examines the importance levels of attributes considered essential when selecting entry-level police candidates for successful performance and future growth in the state of Texas as submitted by members of the state's police chiefs' association. The 11 items represent traits and skills (attributes) police chiefs believe lead to success in basic training, probation, and overall career performance.

Keywords: *Selection Criteria; Preferred Attributes; Traits and Skills; Selection Characteristics; Police Recruits; Police Candidates*

Introduction

Resistance to police authority today is more common than in the past. When a violator is detained or arrested, it results in assaults on the officer, not only by the perpetrator, but by onlookers. The anti-police agitators such as Antifa, and many times the media, perceive the police as the bad guys. Daily interaction with the community when rendering services or maintaining the peace requires police to have good judgment in decision-making. Police officers require strong mental and physical skills to function in constantly changing environments. They need to keep up with changing technology. They need to interact with diverse and changing communities. To do this, police officers need critical thinking and problem-solving abilities such as provided in higher education. Integrity should be above reproach with a strong character to resist corruption and excessive force. Evaluating candidates during selection with the proper evaluation tools is a step toward finding these kinds of officers. The next step forwarded is through meaningful training. Good selection and training are important for developing a stable and accountable police agency [19]. Having selection methods that identify candidates with the ability to successfully complete training and perform according to department policies is the goal of agencies. The right type of recruits will add to the value of their agencies.

The Texas project is a survey of police chiefs about the levels of importance for certain characteristics (traits and skills) they believe lead to successful career performance. These skills and traits (AKA attributes) were determined to enhance training and operational effec-

tiveness from prior research conducted in the early nineties by Gwynne and is still applicable today [10]. The attributes used in the instrument were determined from the results of research in that included input from 10,000 chiefs about their highest rated attributes. These attributes improve effectiveness of both training and operations [17,19]. The instrument administered to the Texas police chiefs sought their belief of importance levels of specific attributes and cognitive abilities for success in basic training, inservice training, and long police careers. In addition to training needs, the project addressed common and uncommon areas for police selection criteria. The study covertly raised three important questions for agencies while recognizing characteristics that should be looked for during the selection process. (1) How does an agency select the recruits who will be successful police officers with the desired characteristics? (2) Is selection a major component along with appropriate training in predicting officer success? (3) What characteristics lead to officer success? Results of the project can assist in affecting selection and training criteria that lead to the best practices for selection and training. According to Harris [13], unambiguous approaches are available to law enforcement agencies to use in their selection of employees.

Because of social media, the police are almost always visible while interacting daily with citizens and non-citizens. Agencies must select and train officers who have the mental, emotional, and physical traits to perform appropriately in constant changing communities. Integrity and non-corruptible character evidenced by their ethical mental and emotional behavior is a must for officers. Corruption leads to an atmosphere of distrust by the community, including possible litigation. This type of atmosphere works against the strength and security of a community and creates a negative view of police. Selection and training are the most important processes toward developing a responsible and respected police department [21].

The survey items are intended to develop a better understanding of what police chiefs in Texas desired in the profile of recruits. The items were designed to describe the level of importance of recruit's general cognitive abilities for basic training, probation, and long term work assignments. The survey also covertly assessed the approval of the selection process and training satisfaction. The author wanted to know the level of importance of traits and skills police chiefs believed are important for success in training and careers in policing. These attributes are important in basic training, field training during the probationary period, inservice training, and specialized training.

Selection is the foremost stage of determining an officer's mental, emotional, and physical wellbeing in reference to career performance. A key element of intelligent selection and employment prerequisites is a thorough background investigation of candidates. It is found to be one of the most accurate predictors of a successful police career. Past performance and behavior can measure skills, incentive, and uncover lifestyles, while helping to predict future behavior issues. The best forecaster of potential behavior is past behavior under comparable conditions [19]. The background examination should scrutinize the applicant's education, friends, experiences, conduct, trustworthiness, motivation, and self-image [9]. This procedure reassures current officers that recruits have the traits and character to do the job. After certification, recruits enter their agencies with the mental, emotional, and physical traits and skills to connect to the community.

Contemporary policing is demanding and requires officers to be proactive with problem solving and sometimes creative [11]. Effective performance of officers is more likely with effective selection and training. The attributes of the survey are believed necessary for finding recruits that can deliver contemporary services necessary for today's community policing. Selection assessment should include the tools intended to recognize the desired attributes of applicants during selection. Selection is slowly adopting a process of screening in candidates with favorable attributes for contemporary community policing. Screening out applicants, the most common method in selection today, allows potential leaders and career officers who may have the traits (traits are innate, skills can be learned) necessary for successful police careers to be lost from the agency [16,20].

Assessments used to screen out are not as reliable as the screening in process. Picking candidates without the tools for successful careers is detrimental to the agency and community. Unfortunately, police agencies are hard pressed to define a selection process that determines which candidates will become successful career officers, let alone implement one [11]. Positive predictions of potential are made from high aptitude scores, but according to Burkhart, higher aptitude scores may not mean better police performance. He indicated

low IQ scores correlated with poor performance, but good police performance did not correlate with high IQ scores [11]. The Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) screens out applicants with mental and emotional irregularities, but no psychological tests are able to determine the best career officers. Most selection assessments emphasize elimination of candidates (screening out) with objectionable characteristics [11]. Assessments should address the desired traits for recruits based on potential for success in training and career in policing [17]. Officers must have the characteristics (attributes) to successfully complete basic and inservice training and have a successful career in policing.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this project is to identify the levels of importance of the desired attributes believed necessary to achieve success in training and policing. Selection should identify recruits with attributes that lead to successful completion of the academy, inservice training, and career in policing. The basis of this article involves two separate but related areas - selection and training. The instrument measured chiefs' attitudes about the level of importance of certain traits and skills of recruits coming out of basic training (preservice and basic). The levels of importance of specific attributes were identified that should be identified during selection. The following questions for agencies when developing selection assessment tools should be asked. (1) How does an agency get the recruits that will be successful police officers with the desired attributes? (2) Is selection a major ingredient along with appropriate training in predicting officer success? (3) What characteristics lead to officer success

Literature Review

Defining traits and skills

To select the applicants with the desired characteristics, police chiefs need to define the attributes for Human Resources that lead to success in training and careers in agencies. According to Cordner and Cordner [4], outcomes of recruitment by agencies with 24 or less officers and larger agencies (with more than a 1,000) found that 45 percent of police chiefs interviewed were not satisfied that recruits had the attributes the police chiefs desired [4]. Human Resources (HR) were more satisfied than the police chiefs. This indicated a lack of understanding about the recruits attributes desired by the police chiefs. Something was missed in the selection process. Did HR in smaller agencies think they knew better what was needed than the chiefs? Seventy-eight percent of the police chiefs in larger agencies said they wanted to attract candidates with college degrees; 63 percent wanted recruits with preservice training. The smaller agencies (66 percent) preferred preservice basic training, whereas only 13percent of larger agencies wanted pre-trained recruits. Ninety percent of the police chiefs from both small and larger agencies wanted recruits with good communication (written and spoken skills) in addition to critical thinking and problem-solving abilities. Incorporating basic training into their undergraduate curricula was favored by 51 percent, a model adopted years ago by nurses and teachers as an education and practice model. Cordner and Cordner concluded that police chiefs should identify and convey specific attributes needed to their human resources personnel [19].

Agency needs should determine the criteria for selection. Several methods are used during selection to verify the accuracy of candidates' information on their application and to assess candidates' suitability for training and the job. This is also an important element in establishing reliable and credible police training programs. Successful training programs are either relevant, or they are not considered successful. Candidates selected should meet agency needs based on the attributes desired by the chiefs, and training should allow officers attain higher levels of knowledge [21].

Selection assessment tools should provide an evaluation that can be used for prediction of success in both selection and training much in the same manner as Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores that predict success in college. In a 10 year study by Gwynne, it was determined that success of recruits was greatly increased, in basic training and in agencies, when candidates were profiled into areas designed specific to review each candidate against recognized criteria prior to any educational or employment processing [17,21]. The use of selection assessment tools with validated criteria allows agencies to find recruits with the desired police attributes. Success in basic and field training confirm that agencies have made the right selection choices. Further training while inservice should refine officer effectiveness. Success of police officers is more likely when selection tools that identify the desired attributes that impact officer success rates have been validated [17].

Positive selection

The goal of selection is to hire applicants who will be successful police officers. The survey items were designed to determine the mental qualities for basic training and probationary assignments to gain a better understanding of what police chiefs desired in an applicant's aptitude profile [21].

When developing selection criteria, it is important to consider the following: (1) The purpose of the assessment instrument. (2) Thoroughness of the depth of the inquiry of the instrument. (3) Is discretionary decision-making measured, that is, does the criteria measure the ability to make street level decisions? (4) The success rate of recruits while in the academy? (5) What problems does field training officer encounter during the probationary training period? (6) Are deficiencies in a recruit corrective or is the new officer subject to termination?

Agencies should give equal effort to developing both a superior selection process and, outstanding training program. The evaluation of an individual's potential to perform ethically and productively is extremely important in developing the abilities of officers and in protecting the interests of the public. Research and development of methods for selection assessment must be ongoing toward improvement. Public safety issues are in continuous change with a diverse new job assignments. Those involved in selection and training must be prepared to recognize and adopt increasingly effective standards to meet the demands of contemporary policing [21].

The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) in 2007 conducted a national survey of police chiefs and found strong interest in researching selection criteria and training. The result of the survey produced the first National Law Enforcement Research Agenda (NLERA) that included two major topics, selection and training [15]. Of the 60 topics on the NLERA list, almost all rely on training to deal with the 60 topics [15]. While a lot has been done with training, it would be interesting to determine the types of selection assessment improvement. Apparently, it is easier it change training programs than selection criteria.

A study by Scrivener in 2001 [27] for the U.S. DOJ Office of Community Policing Consortium was initiated to develop a plan to find recruits for community policing. The five agencies involved in the study were King County, WA, Burlington, VT, Hillsborough County, MI, Detroit, and Sacramento. The common attributes identified that correlate with this study, in addition to other attributes, included integrity, professional demeanor, interpersonal communication, and good decision-making and judgment [27]. Development of reactive policing was supported in the late 1960s by the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) that led to hiring police recruits motivated by the spirit of service in contrast to the spirit of adventure [27]. However, television programs, still focus on the adventures of policing, rather than the spirit of service. The adventure orientation is characterized as over-emphasizing reactive style policing [27]. This style of policing invariably distances the agency from the community. It establishes a department that is separate from and not a part of the community.

Most police agencies practice selecting out of candidates during selection assessments. Selecting out finds faults in a candidate that suggests something is wrong. Selecting out happens with a multi-hurdle approach to selection. Selecting out prevents candidates from moving to the next selection hurdle. It remains the primary method of choice for most agencies today. A new method gaining popularity is selecting in [20]. Selecting in makes sense because it "looks at what is right with the candidate, how he or she meets the criteria that the department is seeking and evaluates his or her potential for effective job performance" [27, P. 27]. If a candidate is later terminated from the department, it is because of failure to perform the job appropriately, not because the officer should have been selected out. There were complications with screening out, a command and control approach to recruiting and selecting candidates, became obsolete when problem oriented policing was introduced as a prevailing philosophy. Since critical thinking skills are required for problem solving strategies, command and control policing does not work well with community policing and problem solving [27].

Law enforcement officers today require a high level of intellectual traits and applied skills. They need critical analysis and must be able to identify and solve problems, and adapt to changing technology, in addition to dealing with more complicated situations in the community. "Utilizing the right selection criteria critically impacts an applicant's ability to successfully complete a course of basic training,

functionally perform in a manner consistent with departmental policies, and have the qualities and ability to add value overtime to the organizations developing needs” [21, p. 10].

Reliable assessment tools are critical for finding recruits that can deliver the services to the community appropriately. Tools for recruit assessment have stagnated and are out of step with the needs of many police agencies today. Assessment methods for selecting in, can find officers with the traits and skills administrators believe appropriate for their city [27]. Basic training and field training are extensions of selection, as such trainable deficiencies of the recruit should be recognized. Correctible deficiencies can be addressed during field training and subsequent inservice training. Dismissal of the recruit is recommended when deficiencies cannot be corrected [21].

The selection process

Police chiefs should determine the agency’s criteria required for applicants. Many agencies are still hiring the same as they did 30 years ago. The first step of selection is to develop an announcement to attract a pool of applicants and the last step is the completion of probation [6]. After the announcement, a comprehensive application is submitted followed by an aptitude test. In a selecting out process, a comprehensive application has self-exclusion features by eliminating those not motivated to complete the application and who may not be the most desirable for the position [21]. Another elimination feature is when there is a fee for the application, when submission misses the deadline, or because of the required data. These were useful reasons for cutting expenses when the economy was not as good as today’s, but now the problem is attracting enough applicants. To keep selection costs at a minimum, the least expensive assessments should be administered first and the most expensive saved for later when there are fewer candidates. Assessments covered under the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) protection should be given only after a conditional employment offer [6].

After the application is accepted, an aptitude test is administered with a usual cutoff score of 70. According to Cox and others [6], there is little variation in ability for scores that have a separation of only five to ten points. After the aptitude test, a physical ability or agility test is administered, followed by a formal board interview. Approximately eight percent of agencies use the physical ability test [6]. Physical ability tests are inexpensive compared to other assessments and are best conducted just after or before the aptitude test [22]. The board interview is used to determine a candidate’s command presence and ability to communicate. Candidates should be asked the same questions, for example, discuss current events, interest in law enforcement, personal and professional backgrounds, and any discrepancies found in the application. A comprehensive background investigation follows the interview.

Areas of investigation include an in-depth background check of driving and criminal records, neighborhoods, lifestyles, education, work place, and credit history, and visits to secondary schools and colleges with interviews of teachers. Critical to selection is an interview of former employers to discuss work ethic, civility, and trustworthiness since past behavior is a good indicator of future behavior is. Important sources to verify information are credit histories, past employers, addresses, creditors, and any civil actions. A credit history serves to verify information on past employers, addresses, creditors, history of credit payments, and any civil action taken against the candidate. Two national surveys of police supervisors identified absenteeism, laziness, and doing just enough to get by as being problematic [13].

According to Harris [13], candidates often have the psychological, physical, and emotional attributes for successful risk for employment, but past work ethic indicates problems as cited in Martin, *et al* [20]. The background investigation is more expensive than a board interview, so it should be after a conditional offer of employment. A second interview after the background investigation is advisable to clarify questions from the background check. Some agencies are using integrity assessments.

Integrity assessment can save the agency money by eliminating those likely to fail the polygraph or the psychological examinations [20]. According to Coulton and Field [5] as cited in Decicco [8], police misconduct results from stress, poor decision-making, supervision, and management and can result in severe agency liability (p. 1). Appropriate selection assessments can help agencies avoid lawsuits for substandard selection and training procedures.

After the foregone assessments are passed, applicants are ranked and placed on an eligibility list, or in some cases just placed unranked on a list. When an applicant is reached on the list, a conditional offer of employment is made followed by the ADA protected assessments. The psychological examination should be given after a conditional offer so as not to violate ADA requirements. Once a conditional offer is made, agencies should continue with the least expensive examinations and progress to the most expensive.

The medical examination is generally expensive and should be last, just before an offer of probationary employment [21]. Probationary employment is not the same as a conditional offer of employment. Sometimes a psychological interview is required based on the results of the written psychological or polygraph exam, so there is a need to determine which is more expensive. The polygraph is effective for verifying answers on the application and to corroborate psychological evaluations. It also detects honesty and integrity. Comparing candidates' responses of the polygraph and psychologist's evaluations can help determine the need for an interview [18]. The polygraph examination is popular in the selection process. Use of the polygraph in selection is used by about 60 percent of agencies serving populations between 50,000 and 100,000. Agencies serving populations of a million or more use the polygraph 81 percent of the time [23]. The polygraph examiner and psychologist should share information for the best clinical results which is also a good validity check.

Validity

There is value in correlation the methods of selection and training, but rarely done. The selection process true validity is easier to determine when compared with training [14]. Need to share the results of selection, training, and probationary assessment of new personnel rather than keeping them compartmentalized. Standards for selecting and training should reflect agencies' beliefs about the appropriate trait and skills necessary for career success. These attributes should also be the basis of the content of the basic training curriculum. The methods can be validated when performance is compared to the attributes of the recruit and the selection and training methods [17]. Sharing candidate evaluation results with those evaluating candidates will improve selection recruits and training of officers. Hunter [14] in 1994 as cited by Martin [17] stated that a coordinated evaluation system with appropriately shared data will help to improve the evaluation features among selection, preparation, and training.

Validity of each assessment component for selection is difficult to determine without comparing each component. Results of the selection, training, and probationary evaluation processes are usually kept unconnected [20]. How valid is the process used for selection of officers? A coordinated assessment procedure to establish validity of criteria for selection and training curricula and methods should be interconnected. Data on selection, recruit preparation, and training, and how they complement each other should be compared against each component [14].

Compared data can show where improvements of preparation, selection, and training of officers are needed. Selection and training methods should be based on finding applicants with the preferred attributes developed by the agency that are believed appropriate for successful careers. The attributes determine the criteria for selection and the basic training curriculum. In addition, basic training extends into field training and is an extension of the selection process. It should be designed to recognize a recruit's trainable deficiencies. Dismissal of the recruit from the agency is necessary when deficiencies are determined to be uncorrectable [19,21]. As indicated earlier, research by Coulton and Field [5] indicated police misconduct often results from stress, poor decision-making, poor supervision, and poor judgment, resulting in liability of the agency, as cited in Decicco [8]. The criteria for selection assessments and training curricula must eliminate these shortcomings. Some suggest the use of assessment centers (AC) to improve the selection process. Can ACs improve the selection recruits?

Assessment centers

Decicco [8] suggested using assessment centers (ACs) for training to evaluate judgment and decision-making of candidates by incorporating mock crime scenes, simulated traffic stops, and shoot/don't shoot scenarios, but why not use them during selection as well. Although applicants inexperienced in policing may be at a disadvantage, the AC curricula can be modified to evaluate appropriately even without such experience.

A validity study on assessment centers found six common dimensions, including: (1) consideration of others, (2) communication, (3) drive, (4) influencing others, (5) organizing and planning, and (6) problem solving. These dimensions assist in determining whether applicants will be successful police officers, trainable, and whether they have critical thinking and analytical skills [2].

An evaluation of assessment centers by Dayan, Ronen, and Fox [7] found the AC's dimensions to be valid for promotions and entry-level selection of candidates. Using the reasonable person standard of what a person may do in a similar situation rather than police specific situations responses was found to be a reliable entry level situational assessment. An analysis of officer success rates after basic training and compared with the cost of losing the recruit will help determine whether the AC is cost effective. There are other assessment programs, for example the Municipal Police and Fire Registry.

The Municipal Police and Fire Registry developed a transcript evaluation system that develops a profile of an applicants built on selection criteria and data from polygraph and psychological examinations. The transcript is based on a rational-actuarial system that allows flexibility in hiring instead of using only test scores, a system designed to provide comprehensive assessment of the individual. The transcript shows patterns instead of scores; thus allowing decisions based on a comparison of all applicant information. Transcripts provide a synergistic approach toward selection instead of test-by-test evaluation. This synergistic assessment is proven to be a valid form of assessment in promotional venues as well as selection [21].

Liability of police agencies is decreased when administrators take great care in selecting the best possible recruits [5]. There are serious consequences when the best possible candidates are not selected for example police misconduct is extremely costly in terms of dollars and lost respect; a lack of respect from the community affects department morale. Limited lateral entry and unions place limitations on the supervisory pool from within the agency because supervisors are chosen from the same pool as recruits. When the agency pool is not large, there are serious implications for quality supervisors. Supervisors should be individuals that have the same attributes as recruits desired by the agency as determined by the criteria for selection [5]. Since supervisors are usually selected from within, leadership potential in recruits should be considered during selection assessment in order to build the quality of supervision. The cost of having poor selection, training, and supervision resulting in poor judgment is exemplified by the Rodney King incident.

Sound judgment (discretionary decision-making) is critical in policing. The assessment center characteristic of presenting scenarios is a good method to evaluate discretionary decision-making rather than learning through litigation. Controlling stress is also critical in policing and can negatively impact judgement. Experience and training are necessary for officers to learn to respond appropriately in policing [5]. The review of the literature clearly illustrates that selection is very important responsibilities of law enforcement agencies.

Methodology

The 11 items in the survey, some presented as statements and some as questions, were intended to develop a better understanding of what police chiefs desire in the attributes (traits and skills) of recruits. The instrument was sent using email addresses from a list serve of members of the Texas Association of Police Chiefs using Survey Monkey. The items were designed to describe the importance of recruits' general mental cognitive abilities for basic and inservice training and long term work assignments. The survey also covertly gauged the selection process and training satisfaction of the respondents. The author wanted to know the levels of importance of mental abilities, skills, and attributes police chiefs believed are important for success in training and career success. Developed from previous comprehensive research by Gwynne [10], the attributes are important in basic training, field training and the probationary period, inservice training, and specialized training.

Survey Monkey was used to disseminate, collect, and analyze the participants responses. The number of respondents, the number of respondents for each alternative of the 11 items, the frequencies the percentages of responses for each alternative selected by respondents was recorded. The data was forwarded to the researcher's Survey Monkey site. The survey was open for seven months. Fifteen reminders were sent by email to the association members that had not responded. The percentages and frequencies are presented in tables. The 11-item instrument was replicated from eight earlier Midwest and southern state surveys. The results of the earlier surveys will be used

to compare the levels of importance of attributes chosen by the respondents of other state police chief associations [18-20]. The 11 items in the survey were designed to define what police chiefs preferred in an applicant’s intellectual aptitude and knowledge for basic training and later probationary assignments. Questions were designed to covertly assess satisfaction of the selection and training processes [21].

The survey was sent by email using Survey Monkey to 374 members of the Texas police chief association list serve asking them to participate in the survey. There were 111 emails opened, 199 not opened, 43 emails bounced and 21 chiefs opted out. The first question was imbedded in the email so when a response to the item was made, the rest of the survey opened. When the survey was finished, a submission link sent the results to Survey Monkey. The format provided for easy access to the instrument and subsequent submission. During the six months the survey was live, there were a total of 47 responses, or 12.5 percent of the 374. In the initial request, only 111 recipients (29.68%) of the 374 emails sent opened the survey, but all did not respond, and 21 opted out (5.6%), so it was decided to send follow-up invitations. There were a total of 16 follow-up requests to those not yet responding to the survey. Overall, 220 of 374 invitations received were unopened (58.82%), and an additional 43 bounced (11.49%), and 21 received the invitations but opted out of the survey, resulting in 111 invitees that opened the questionnaire with 47 responding. After 16 follow-up emails, 111 opened the instrument, 47, or about 42.34 percent, submitted responses; the 47 responses are almost 12.56 percent of the 374 initially sent. The response rate of the 111 that actually opened the instrument increased the rate of responses to 42.34 percent (47 respondents) when using the opened instrument figure of 111.

Table 1 illustrates the rate of returns of the initial invitations. Responses include results of initial and 16 follow-up invitations.

	Number	Percent
Initial list serve invitations	374	
Responses out of 374	47	12.56%
Total opened invitations out of 374	111	29.60%
Returned completed survey out of 111	47	42.34%
Unopened emails out of 374	199	53.30%
Bounced invitations out of 374	43	11.49%
Opted out of survey (374)	21	5.61%

Table 1

For this study, performance was defined as the suitability between important police job functions and the performance (skills, abilities, and attributes) an individual possesses to successfully perform the functions. The project began using the results of the Gwynne study [10] that assessed agency selection evaluation procedures dealing with candidates’ intellectual abilities. The Gwynne study was designed to determine the attributes and skill sets sought or required for predicting success in a contemporary law enforcement environment [18].

Survey instrument

The survey instrument consists of 11 items about the desired mental attributes of police recruits. The instrument was designed so the population could respond quickly to the 11 items by choosing one of five alternatives from a numbers based Likert Scale.

The items and short definition of the attributes are:

1. Memory: The ability to recall the essence of previously studied material.
2. Judgment: The ability to take appropriate action after considering alternative approaches.
3. Reading Comprehension: The ability to read and effectively respond and/or take action to written instructions/material.
4. Observation Ability: The ability to recognize objects/people after they have undergone physical change.
5. Mathematical Reasoning: The ability to do foundational arithmetic and solve mathematical word problems.

6. Judgment and Decision Making: The ability to analyze incomplete information to make decisions.
7. Deductive Reasoning: The ability to make logical inferences from stated propositions.
8. Analytical Reasoning: The ability to understand, analyze and evaluate arguments.
9. Report Writing: The ability to understand and properly use and spell words correctly.
10. Reading Maps and Diagrams: The ability to understand the linguistics of drawn materials.
11. Written Communication Skills: To what extent can the candidate effectively express ideas in writing?

The five alternatives to choose from in the Likert Scale are: (1) Not Important (2) Somewhat Important, (3) Important, (4) Very Important, and (5) Extremely Important. The survey was administered to the members of the Texas Association of Chiefs of Police using the association list serve using Survey Monkey. There are approximately 374 email addresses of members of the association on the list serve. Of the 374 original emails, a meager 47, or 12.56 percent completed the survey. The population was asked to click on the first item at the bottom of the email that opened the full questionnaire to allow respondents access to the 11 items of the survey instrument. A link at the bottom of the instrument enabled a submission to Survey Monkey. In the initial invitation, 111 emails were opened and 119 unopened. Forty-three emails bounced and 21 police chiefs opted out of the survey. Another 46 chiefs clicked through the email. There were 16 follow-up invitations.

Results

Of the 11 items, the results indicate that 47 respondents recorded at least one of the five Likert Scale designed alternatives in each of eight survey items, with three chiefs selecting not important in only three of the items. None of the participants omitted an item in the survey. The results of the 11 items are illustrated in the 11 tables below.

Item 1: Memory

The first item illustrated in table 2 below is the attribute memory, defined for this study as the ability to recall the essence of previously studied material. It asked for a rating of importance for having the ability to recall previously studied material. The following 11 tables represent each of the corresponding survey items.

Answer Choices	Responses	
	Percent	Number
(5) Extremely Important	27.66%	13
(4) Very Important	48.94%	23
(3) Important	14.89%	7
(2) Somewhat Important	8.51%	4
(1) Not Important	0.00%	0
	Answered	47
	Skipped	0

Table 2: Item 1. Memory - The ability to recall the essence of previously studied material.

In table 2, there were 47 responses to the memory item with no respondent indicting it was not important. There were 36, or 76.6 percent, indicating that it is either extremely important or very important. While a large majority believed that memory recall was important, very important, or extremely important, only four selected that it was only somewhat important; none selected not important.

Item 2: Judgment

Item 2, Judgment, in table 3 below refers to the ability to take appropriate action after considering alternative approaches, i.e., discretionary decision-making. The attribute of judgment is similar to the item represented in table 7 below because both deal with discretion-

ary decision-making, although table 3 deals with the item of discretionary decision-making to take an action based on alternatives that are allowed by policy or law involving officer discretion, and table 7 deals with the ability to decide on action based after analyzing limited information. Both items had the highest percentage of extremely important.

Answer Choices	Response	
	Percent	Number
(5) Extremely Important	76.60%	36
(4) Very Important	17.02%	8
(3) Important	6.38%	3
(2) Somewhat Important	0.00%	0
(1) Not Important	0.00%	0
	Answered	47
	Skipped	0

Table 3: Item 2. Judgment - The ability to take appropriate action after considering alternative approaches.

As illustrated in table 3, the highest level of importance (extremely important) for the of the judgment attribute was chosen by 36, or 76.6 percent of the chiefs and only nine chose either very important or important. None selected somewhat important or not important.

Item 3: Reading Comprehension

In table 4, Item 3, the reading comprehension attribute illustrates the following responses. Since agencies post electronic and hard copy directives daily, respondents thought this item was either extremely important (almost 32 percent) or very important (a little over 53 percent), a total of 44. In addition, the standard operation procedures (SOP) manual is expected to be read and understood by all personnel. By signing or adding initials to a document, officers acknowledge understanding the memos, and that they have read and comprehend the SOP manual. Some agencies have inservice training on procedures and policies. It is also important for officers to read and be familiar with current laws. The responses for the attribute resulted in the majority of respondents choosing extremely and very important attribute.

Answer Choices	Responses	
	Percent	Number
(5) Extremely Important	31.91%	15
(4) Very Important	53.19%	25
(3) Important	12.77%	6
(2) Somewhat Important	2.13%	1
(1) Not Important	0.00%	0
	Answered	47
	Skipped	0

Table 4: Item 3. Reading Comprehension - The ability to read and effectively respond and/or take action to written instructions/material.

In table 4, over 95 percent of the respondents indicated the ability to read effectively and follow written directions was very important, with about 32 percent choosing extremely important and about 53 percent choosing very important. Whereas, a little over 12 percent, or six respondents, indicated that reading comprehension is only an important characteristic. One chose only somewhat important. In this

item, 40 respondents chose very important or extremely important. Surprisingly, about 32 of these respondents indicated the ability to read effectively and follow written directions was extremely important.

Item 4: Observation ability

Table 5 includes the chiefs’ importance levels of the attribute of observation, somewhat similar to memory attribute. Observation is the ability to recognize objects and people after they have undergone physical change. Being able to recognize a person or a vehicle illustrated on a flyer or from a broadcast on television. Other examples include a person wearing a disguise but having a peculiar walk, or a dispatcher describing suspicious or wanted person and the officer later perceives someone fitting the description. Included in table 4 below are the choices of the respondents for Item 4, observation ability.

Answer Choices	Responses	
	Percent	Number
(5) Extremely Important	27.66%	13
(4) Very Important	29.79%	14
(3) Important	29.79%	14
(2) Somewhat Important	12.77%	6
(1) Not Important	0.00%	0
	Answered	47
	Skipped	0

Table 5: Item 4. Observation - The ability to recognize objects/people after they have undergone physical change.

In table 5, the selections by the chiefs for the importance levels of this item include over 87 percent of the respondents choosing this attribute to be either extremely important, very important, or important. Twenty-seven participants chose very important or extremely important. About 30 percent indicated that the ability to observe accurately is very important, and almost 28 percent believed it was extremely important.

Item 5: Mathematical reasoning

Table 6 below illustrates the selections for Item 5, mathematical reasoning, which for purpose of this survey is the ability to do foundational arithmetic and solve mathematical word problems. The attribute is helpful with accident and crime scene reconstruction, firearm trajectories, and understanding the operation a breath analyzer requires an understanding of math. The attribute is also good for developing analytical or critical thinking.

Answer Choices	Responses	
	Percent	Number
(5) Extremely Important	2.13%	1
(4) Very Important	21.28%	10
(3) Important	38.30%	18
(2) Somewhat Important	36.17%	17
(1) Not Important	2.13%	1
	Answered	47
	Skipped	0

Table 6: Item 5. Mathematical Reasoning - The ability to do foundational arithmetic and solve mathematical word problems.

The results of the item in table 6 show this attribute has one of the lowest overall ratings of importance. About 38 percent chose important as their number one choice for the attribute of math reasoning. And a little more than 36 percent indicated that math reasoning is only somewhat important. A little over 21 percent of the respondents selected mathematical reasoning as very important. The same number that thought it was extremely important picked not important.

Item 6: Judgment and decision making

Items 2 and 6 are similar in that they both deal with judgment. Table 7 illustrates the responses for judgment and decision making which is the ability to analyze incomplete information to make decisions. This item is related to Item 2, judgment, choosing the correct action among several alternatives. Item 2 deals with judgment in discretionary decision-making situations to take action based on alternatives that are allowed by written policy, traffic law, or substantive criminal law and procedure; it allows officer discretion whereas Item 6 is the action basis on making a decision based on a analysis of limited information. This attribute deals with the ability to make a decision in situations not covered in written documents. It is similar to supplying a missing word to complete a sentence so it fits into the context of a situation. This decision is based on a person’s experience in the environment. Both attributes, Item 2 and Item 6, had the highest Likert Scale rating averages of all the attributes.

Answer Choices	Responses	
	Percent	Number
(5) Extremely Important	61.70%	29
(4) Very Important	34.04%	16
(3) Important	4.26%	2
(2) Somewhat Important	0.00%	0
(1) Not Important	0.00%	0
	Answered	47
	Skipped	0

Table 7: Item 6. Judgment and Decision Making - The ability to analyze incomplete information to make decisions.

Table 7 illustrates the responses for judgment and decision-making. Almost 96 percent, or 29 chiefs, indicated that this item was either very important or extremely important. None of the chiefs indicated that this item was not important or somewhat important.

Item 7: Deductive reasoning

Item 7, the attribute of deductive reasoning was presented in table 8 below to the respondents for their choice of importance level. Deductive reasoning means there is a presumption of events based on facts and information available in a particular environment. The choices in Item 7 illustrate that a large majority of the respondents (91.5 percent) believed that deductive reasoning is either very important or extremely important. The Likert Scale ratings these two alternatives were almost equal.

Answer Choices	Responses	
	Percent	Number
(5) Extremely Important	46.81%	22
(4) Very Important	44.68%	21
(3) Important	8.51%	4
(2) Somewhat Important	0.00%	0
(1) Not Important	46.81%	0
	Answered	47
	Skipped	0

Table 8: Item 7. Deductive Reasoning - The ability to make logical inferences from stated propositions.

In table 8, the attribute of deductive reasoning, illustrated that almost 91.5 percent of the respondents, or 43 of the 47 respondents, believed that deductive reasoning is either very important or extremely important.

Item 8: Analytical reasoning

As with other reasoning and judgment item types in tables 3, 7 and 8, the data for analytical reasoning in table 9 shows a Likert Scale rating for the attribute to be very important as the choice for analytical reasoning and is similar to other reasoning and judgment items. The analytical reasoning items with the two judgment items are preferred abilities of police officers according to the data from the Texas police chiefs. Ironically, the mathematical reasoning does not show that the chiefs perceived any connection to the other types of reasoning abilities. Is this because analytical and deductive reasoning may be enhanced by math reasoning, but may not be considered an absolutely necessary item? Did the respondents not see any value to police work as being based on advanced math skills and abilities? Analytical reasoning is a logical, methodical, and systematic evaluation of information available. The data for the attribute of analytical reasoning show a high selection rate by the respondents.

Answer Choices	Responses	
	Percent	Number
(5) Extremely Important	46.81%	22
(4) Very Important	42.55%	20
(3) Important	10.64%	5
(2) Somewhat Important	0.00%	0
(1) Not Important	0.00%	0
	Answered	47
	Skipped	0

Table 9: Item 8. Analytical Reasoning - The ability to understand, analyze, and evaluate arguments.

Table 8 indicates that a little over 47 percent of the chiefs, or 22, chose extremely important and about 47 percent chose very important. Almost 47 percent chose extremely important and almost 42.5 percent chose very important. The analytical reasoning attribute and the two judgment attributes (Items 2 and 6) are highly preferred characteristics for police recruits according to the responses of the police chiefs.

Item 10: Report Writing

Table 10 indicates the perceived importance of report writing, which is the ability to understand and properly use and spell words correctly. Report writing is a definite needed skill for new recruits. Official written reports are open to other government officials and the public; therefore, it is an obvious skill needed by all officers, in addition to new recruits. Poorly written documents can embarrass the officer and the department. It is a frequently observable activity of all officers who write many offense reports and summaries of events. The supervisors want understandable error free reports, many of which may end up in the prosecutor’s office. Because of the frequently observable nature of this item, the vast majority of the chiefs believe it is imperative to not embarrass the officer and the department by a poorly written report.

In table 10, 40 of the chiefs, or a little more than 89 percent, rated the ability to write well attribute as either an extremely important or very important attribute. Only five chiefs selected somewhat important and none selected somewhat important or not important.

Item 10: Reading maps, diagrams

Table 11 below illustrates the 10th item, the attribute of reading maps and diagrams. Not only is it imperative to read maps accurately, it is an essential for understanding accident and crime scene schematics. Sometimes it is necessary for reading blueprints, for example in buildings with hostage situations. The chiefs’ responses for the attribute illustrate a mixed view of its importance. There clearly is a split of those respondents choosing this item’s importance as desirable.

Answer Choices	Responses	
	Percent	Number
(5) Extremely Important	34.04%	16
(4) Very Important	55.32%	26
(3) Important	10.64%	5
(2) Somewhat Important	0.00%	0
(1) Not Important	0.00%	0
	Answered	47
	Skipped	0

Table 10: Item 9. Report Writing – The ability to understand and properly use and spell words correctly.

Answer Choices	Responses	
	Percent	Number
(5) Extremely Important	17.02%	8
(4) Very Important	42.55%	20
(3) Important	31.91%	15
(2) Somewhat Important	8.51%	4
(1) Not Important	0.00%	0
	Answered	47
	Skipped	0

Table 11: Item 10. Reading Maps, Diagrams, etc. - The ability to understand the linguistics of drawn materials.

In table 11, the chiefs’ responses on the skill of reading maps, diagrams, and other documents illustrates that 15, or about 32 percent, indicated that the ability to read maps and diagrams in this item is important, and 20, or about 42 and a half percent, believed the skill is very important. Extremely important, was chosen by eight chiefs, or about 17 percent, as a desirable characteristic. These selections seemed to indicate that this attribute was not perceived as significant as extremely important.

Item 11: Written communication skills

The results of Item 11 are shown in table 12 below. Written communication skills for this study means the ability to effectively express ideas in writing. The significance of this attribute is obvious when writing a report. Officers should say precisely what they mean. Written reports need to be clearly understood without police jargon and writing concisely in short declarative sentences. Sentences should be carefully constructed and clearly stated so that there is no misunderstanding about the exact meaning of subject matter. The report should be stated so well that anyone anywhere, can read it, understand it, and react to it without benefit of the officer’s presence.

Answer Choices	Responses	
	Percent	Number
(5) Extremely Important	48.93%	23
(4) Very Important	40.42%	19
(3) Important	10.60%	5
(2) Somewhat Important	0.00%	0
(1) Not Important	0.00%	0
	Answered	47
	Skipped	0

Table 12: Item 11. Written Communication Skills - The ability to effectively express ideas in writing.

As indicated in table 12, 42 of the 47 respondents indicated, or a little more than 90 percent, believed that written communication skill is either very important or extremely important. Only five, or about 10 percent, indicated that written communications skills rate only as important. None chose somewhat important or not important.

Discussion Selection

The application is the beginning of selection process. Selection is the most important step to determine future police officer success. Comprehensive applications tend to eliminate those not motivated enough for the position [21]. The other important aspects of evaluation to consider are: (1) purpose of instruments used for evaluation, (2) depth of inquiry in instruments desired, (3) measurement of discretionary judgment and the ability to make street-level decisions, (4) academy success rate of recruits, (5) problems encountered during the probationary period and FTO, and (6) remedial deficiencies versus deficiencies subject to termination [20].

The results of the data collected in this project indicate that the Texas chiefs are rather constant with the levels of importance they place on the various survey attributes. Significant effort is needed in two areas for law enforcement agencies: (1) Selection is related to education and past behavior; therefore, selecting recruits without a history of behaviors that later may result in disciplinary problems is absolutely necessary, and (2) agencies should retain qualified recruits as career officers who are physically, mentally, and emotionally capable of performing the job. Performance is related to supervisor contact, direction, support, and training opportunities [13].

Selection is the initial step in finding recruits who will be successful as a career police officer. The selection criteria and examinations should identify the attributes necessary for a successful long-term career in policing evidenced by exemplary performance and subsequent training. Competent recruits should be identified during the hiring process, especially since the police are the most recognizable representatives of government. Entry-level assessment and basic training are the most important processes for having a stable and responsible police force. Assessments should be developed based on department needs. Information verification in applications should be made by using various evaluation instruments to determine suitability. Selection assessments should identify factors that can lead to effective career job performance. The methods should identify the most competent recruits and hired. The methods for selection should be correlated with recruit job performance criteria. Highly motivated applicants begin early to satisfy agency hiring criteria, whether it is a formal education or advertised criteria.

Training

The ability to be trained successfully is an important an important component of selection. It can be argued that training beyond basic knowledge develops competent and confident officers that are encouraged to work harder and become more effective. Inservice training enables officers to develop higher morale and noticeable professional demeanor. It can also be argued that a professional demeanor builds professionalism throughout the agency and commands the respect of the community. Police officers who understand their jobs and attain the skills to perform the tasks of the job through training (and education) have fewer citizen complaints. The relevance of training determines the success or failure of the training program, and many times, the success of the officer. When evaluating officer performance levels and promotions, police supervisors will usually look at previous training.

There are three general areas of training: (1) basic, which is preparatory (includes preservice certification) academy training (includes field training); (2) inservice training dedicated to the review and/or updating of primary skills and knowledge sets; and (3) specialized or career development training [18]. Preservice training, also known as pre-employment training is when the tuition costs for basic training is paid by those wanting to secure a police agency appointment. It has gained popularity in many agencies throughout the country because of cost effectiveness and the education component since most programs are situated in community college and offered in conjunction with associate degrees [18]. More advanced training also has an academic component. For example, Allen [1] wrote about management training of sergeants in Great Britain where they include a cross disciplinary approach to understanding problems encountered by police. The inclusion of psychology, interpersonal communications, leadership, motivation, building morale, assessment, and appraisal was

stressed. By including these areas in supervisor training, sergeants develop a better understanding of officers' reactions, perceptions, and interactions with citizens and witnesses. Sometimes when it is perceived that an employee may be unruly or a problem employee, disciplinary action is needed.

Iannone, Iannone, and Bernstein [16], shared their definition of two general types of discipline: negative and positive. When it becomes necessary to discipline employees, the supervisor can choose either positive or negative discipline. Negative discipline involves punitive measures and positive discipline involves no punishment [16]. Punitive measures should be the last resort. Punitive actions should follow progressive sequences from the least serious to the most serious, such as verbal warning, a letter of reprimand, demotion, suspension, and finally termination from the agency. Non-punitive, or positive discipline, is nurturing of employee toward dedication to the agency, and hopefully loyalty, through counseling, training, and positively conditioned behavior. Supervisors hope positive measures deter others and hope it forces compliance [25]. Punishment for well-intentioned mistakes is counterproductive toward employee dedication. For example, when an officer is assigned to a training class because of an unintentional mistake, it may be perceived as punishment by the officer and the positive benefits of correction is lost. For misconduct deterrence to work, punishment must be certain, swift, fair and impartial, and consistent [16].

Licensing

Most states have a process of decertification so problem officers not passing probationary period with the FTO cannot be hired by another agency based on the certificate of basic training completion [28]. As a new hire, the officer is required to attend basic training again, but that does not guarantee the problems have been corrected. The states with a licensing process can revoke or deny a license much easier than revoking a certificate. States can refuse to accept the annual license fee for renewal for problem officers for example. They can also require more continuing education and training as a licensing requirement, in addition to probationary periods [28].

Conclusion

Based on this replicated survey, the desired characteristics for police recruits to succeed in policing, illustrated by the chiefs' levels of consistent with previously projects with the southeast police chief associations in Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina, the Midwest associations in Nebraska, Iowa, Illinois, and the commissioners of the Caribbean association importance selected from the Likert Scale alternatives, not important to extremely important, is [19-21]. Each item in the survey covered an attribute related to police officer success in Texas specifically, and law enforcement agencies in general.

According to the review of literature and the survey results of this project and other previous surveys, the data appears to support the rewriting of police selection examinations to address these desired characteristics for recruits. The desired attributes include the ability of police officers to recall the essence of previously studied material; read and take action on written instructions and material; take appropriate action after considering alternative approaches; recognize objects and people after they have undergone physical change; do foundational arithmetic and solve mathematical word problems; analyze incomplete information to make decisions; make logical inferences from stated propositions; understand, analyze, and evaluate arguments; understand and properly use and spell words correctly; understand the linguistics of drawn materials; and, effectively express ideas in writing. Police chiefs believe that success for recruits as police officers is dependent on their ability to have these distinctive attributes. These attributes should be identified in selection criteria and later measured for success in basic and inservice training as they relate to selection criteria.

Recommendation

It is recommended that a follow up survey of this project should include a third component related to this project comparing college education with these desired attributes. There are questions to consider for future research. An important factor in establishing a reliable and credible police training system is the ability to determine suitability issues of those who will participate in the training process. Thus, meeting the needs of the agency while allowing the candidates to excel toward academic excellence and goal achievement. Just as SAT scores are used to determine success when applying to college, diagnostic assessment in selection can be used to determine success

in training. Among the important dynamics in the establishment of a reliable police training process is determining basic suitability elements of those who will be participating in the training process, and who will meet the requirements of the agency. Proper suitability will allow the candidates to excel toward academic excellence and personal goal achievement.

The future study will include training data with selection data from this study, while comparing college and non-college police officers. It is hoped that the results of this study assists in identifying the methods and procedures that can be used to determine continuous success rates among officers when binding the procedural aspects of entry-level criteria for officer selection into preparatory (basic) training, field training/mentoring, and inservice training programs.

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