



The Inwald Personality Inventory (IPI) and Hilson Research inventories: Development and rationale

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 9 August 2008

Accepted 28 April 2008

Available online 11 May 2008

Keywords:

Hilson Research tests

Inwald Personality Inventory

Police psychological testing

Inwald test development

Inwald Hilson tests

Personality test development

Pre employment psychological testing

Robin Inwald test development

ABSTRACT

This article provides a “behind-the-scenes” account of how and why the Inwald/ Hilson tests were developed. Since the 1970s, personality testing has been adapted and customized for use in selecting applicants for different occupations, including police, public safety, fire and emergency services personnel. The author developed the Inwald Personality Inventory (IPI) in 1979 as the first comprehensive behaviorally-based personality measure designed and validated specifically for use in high risk occupations, such as law enforcement. Over time, studies consistently demonstrated that the IPI was a better predictor of poor job performance than were traditional tests of psychopathology. While antisocial behavior patterns and characteristics measured by the IPI predicted poor job performance, there also developed a need for measures that would predict above-average/excellent performance in the workplace. In 1988, the author designed and validated the first comprehensive test of “positive” work-related characteristics or “emotional IQ,” the Hilson Personnel Profile/Success Quotient (HPP/SQ). Other instruments followed, including the Inwald Survey 5—Revised (IS5-R) with questions added on domestic violence. This article describes the theoretical rationale, development and validation of several instruments developed by the author and now widely used for high risk occupations and for screening corporate managers and key personnel in occupational settings.

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1. Introduction

The previously undocumented “behind-the-scenes” account of how and why the Hilson Research tests were developed follows my own development as a personality test author. This account is a reflection of my interests and career in the field of personnel psychology, with a specialization in “high-risk” occupations. The development of the Hilson Research tests, beginning with the *Inwald Personality Inventory (IPI)*, was a direct result of my interest in obtaining information that was not readily available using other instruments in employment screening settings.

While detailed information regarding Hilson Research tests and their validation has been documented in technical manuals, journals, and review articles over the past 25 years, I previously have not described the background and thought processes behind the development of these scales and instruments. To this end, this article will include both a summary of the development and initial research data associated with several Hilson tests, as well as an explanation of the practical application and rationale relating to each test.

2. The Inwald Personality Inventory

2.1. Practical need for the development of the IPI

In the spring of 1978, I was hired as a consultant by a large urban public safety agency to conduct pre-employment psychological evaluations. I was handed a file of tests that had been used in that agency including the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI), a Draw-A-Person test, a stick-figure projective test, and a sentence completion exercise. My graduate school training had focused on the importance of defining what you wish to measure in any assessment procedure as well as the need to assure that any tests used actually measure the desired characteristic(s). When I asked for further definition or a description of individuals identified as “psychologically unsuited for an officer's position” (my apparent goal in doing these evaluations), I was informed that this meant to screen out any “serious psychopathology” that would keep someone from performing well as an officer. However, there were no data or descriptions available about a “good” or “bad” officer's profile on pre-employment psychological tests, and no information as to how a diagnosis of “serious psychopathology” actually related to subsequent job performance. I was asked by a personnel administrator simply to review MMPI profiles, identify those individuals whose profiles appeared to be “abnormal” or “troublesome,” and to interview these job candidates to arrive at a clinical judgment regarding their psychological suitability for the job.

As I began the interviewing process, my skepticism grew regarding my ability to make a truly job-related evaluation using the combination of available instruments along with my clinical judgment. Without any “psychological” job analysis (that I later would develop — Inwald, 1994) and without any link to the job-relatedness of indicators of psychopathology (measured by elevations on the MMPI), I believed that an organization using these psychological tests might be vulnerable to discrimination charges based on the 1978 Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's *Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection*. These guidelines indicated that if a selection process were found to show “adverse impact” under the law, the employer's defense could be based on a demonstration of the job-relatedness of the selection process. My view was that, regardless of any legal ramifications, it would be unfair to screen

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