



**POLICE RESEARCH AND EDUCATION NETWORK SEMINAR:
THE INFLUENCE OF OCCUPATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY WITHIN POLICING**

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OVERVIEW



**Northumbria
University**
NEWCASTLE

- Introduce myself and the profession of Occupational Psychology
- Discuss how Occupational Psychology generally influences Policing
- Outline work carried out with Northumbria Police since 2014
- Present planned research projects for summer 2018
- Demonstrate the link between research, academia and practice

BACKGROUND

- Completed MSc at Northumbria University in 2009 following BSc
- PhD September 2010-2014
- Enrolled on Stage 2 Qualification in Occupational Psychology in 2012

Have worked for:

- **Middlesbrough Council:** Organisational Development Project Assistant
- **Northumbria University:** Research Assistant / Senior Lecturer in Occupational and Organisational psychology
- **Gentoo:** Senior Learning and Development Advisor
- **Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust:** Organisational psychologist
- **Sunderland University:** Lecturer in Psychology



PRIMARY RESEARCH INTERESTS

- Occupational Health Psychology

- Aims to:

Improve quality of work life by promoting the health, safety and well-being of workers by applying psychology and by developing evidence-based knowledge”

- We spend much of our lives either working or sleeping

- I'm interested in how these interact and affect our health and well-being

CONSULTANCY WORK



- Psychometric testing and recruitment evaluation within the NHS



- Nissan development centres



- Assessment and development centres for housing association merger



- Northumbria Police recruitment and selection consultant



WHAT IS OCCUPATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY?

What is occupational psychology?



When you hear the phrase 'occupational psychology', you might think of the character Dr Madolyn Madden from Martin Scorsese's film, *The Departed*, who helps Leonardo Di Caprio and Matt Damon to cope with their intense police work.

True, some occupational psychology jobs could be like that, but they're probably less likely to involve violence, adultery and fraternising with Hollywood heartthrobs!

Basically, occupational psychologists use their expert knowledge of psychological theory and techniques to address work-related issues, problems and challenges.

WHAT IS OCCUPATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY?



What is Occupational Psychology?

What is Occupational Psychology?

Occupational Psychology is the application of the science of psychology to work. Occupational psychologists use psychological theories and approaches to deliver tangible benefits by enhancing the effectiveness of organisations and developing the performance, motivation and wellbeing of people in the workplace.

How do occupational psychologists use their skills?

Occupational psychologists develop, apply and evaluate a range of tools and interventions across many different areas of the workplace, including:

- **Psychological assessment:** Selecting and assessing employees using methods such as interviews, assessments centres, situational judgement tests, and personality questionnaires and cognitive ability tests. Profiling jobs and matching job requirements to future performance. Developing and choosing valid, reliable, fair and suitable selection procedures.
- **Learning, training and development:** Including training and employee development, the training cycle (identifying needs, transfer of learning to the job, evaluation); employability; talent and succession planning; innovation and creativity; occupational choice; career development; coaching, counselling and mentoring.
- **Wellbeing at work:** Measuring and promoting wellbeing in the workplace, including mental and physical health, work-life balance and resilience. Working in areas such as unemployment; retirement; occupational health; stress; bullying, harassment and conflict; and emotions in the workplace.
- **Work design, organisational change and development:** Including the design of jobs and work environments; people and technology; human factors and ergonomics; workplace safety and risk management; organisational effectiveness, productivity and performance; communications; organisational structure, culture and climate; organisational and individual change and development.
- **Leadership, motivation and engagement:** Including work motivation, performance appraisal and management; leadership; power, influence and negotiation; employee engagement and commitment; citizenship and positive behaviours; derailment and counterproductive behaviours; psychology of groups, teams and teamwork.

INFLUENCE OF OCCUPATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY WITHIN POLICING

- Psychological Assessment

- Recruitment and selection
- Employee development

- Learning, Training and Development

- Training
- Organisational Development (e.g. coaching)

- Wellbeing at work

- Agile working
- Interventions

- Work Design, Organisational Change and Development

- Stress risk assessment
- Analysing the health consequences of shift patterns and implementing changes as a result

- Leadership, Motivation and Engagement

- Performance appraisal
- Talent identification and management



COLLEGE OF POLICING (COP)



- Established in 2012 as the professional body for everyone who works for the police service in England and Wales
- Aims to provide those working in policing with the skills and knowledge necessary to prevent crime, protect the public, and secure public trust
- Employer of Occupational Psychologists, trainees and graduates to work on projects such as:
 - Design and implementation of assessment and development centres (incorporating psychometric testing)
 - Performance management and appraisal techniques
 - Development, application, coaching and training in selection and assessment tools and processes
 - Research data management and quality assurance to support professionalism in policing

NORTHUMBRIA POLICE RECRUITMENT PROCESS REVIEW

- The Problem
 - Police Officer recruitment attracting very large volumes of applicants
 - Paper and pencil application
 - Sift process subjective and very time consuming/labour intensive
- Initially data collection carried out to review current process, information available to candidates and COP Competency and Values Framework for policing
- Comparisons then made with best practice evidence from the academic research literature base and comparisons made to the Metropolitan Police Service practices and other blue light services
- Methodology included:
 - Observation and review of all aspects of the current process
 - Employee focus groups and one to one interviews
 - Literature review of recruitment and selection literature
 - MSc Thesis research project



RESEARCH PROJECT 1

- **Trait Emotional Intelligence in Police Officers**
- MSc Thesis project conducted in 2015
- Investigated prevalence of trait emotional intelligence in police officers and whether it relates to occupational constructs of:
 - Organisational commitment, job satisfaction, organisational and operational stress, turnover intentions and work engagement
- Overall aimed to determine whether emotional intelligence was a useful construct to assist with the recruitment and selection of police officers

RESEARCH PROJECT 1

■ *Methodology:*

- Online survey
- Measured trait emotional intelligence, organisational commitment, job satisfaction, occupational stress, turnover intentions, work engagement

■ *Participants:*

- Sample consisted of 269 police officers of various ranks and length of service
- Average age 42; 171 males, 95 females and 3 did not disclose
- Length of service ranged from 1 year 1 month to 30 years

■ *Findings:*

- Emotional intelligence was high in comparison to findings from other research studies and significantly related to all occupational measures in the study
- All occupational measures significantly predicted organisational commitment, except emotional intelligence

RESEARCH PROJECT 1

■ *Practitioner Points*

- Practitioners should be monitoring and working on improving employees' job satisfaction, turnover intentions, work engagement and organisational and operational stressors as they predict organisational commitment in police officers
- The monitoring of emotional intelligence in police officers should also be considered as it is related to various positive occupational outcomes which have been found to affect performance in past research
- Although incorporating the assessment of emotional intelligence in the recruitment and selection process of police officers may not be beneficial, providing trait emotional intelligence training to current employees may yield positive results

RECOMMENDATIONS



- Conclusions of the review, based on best practice and research, included the following:
 - Online process
 - Inclusion of competency based questions in application form and scoring framework
 - Avoid focusing on emotional intelligence
 - Further review of pulse interview process
 - Consideration of realistic job preview, situational judgement test and personality/behaviours assessment
 - Website update
 - Continued and on-going evaluation of process

OUTCOMES

- Apollo online assessment platform and SIFT (Screening Individuals for Fit & Talent) Process purchased for use from a&dc
 - Developed in collaboration with 6 south-west constabularies – specifically for police constable recruitment and in collaboration with serving officers
- Benefits:
 - Less resource intensive
 - Can sift high volumes
 - Easy to use and freedom to apply anywhere and at anytime (with internet access)
 - Online administration
 - Ability to assess core competencies and values
 - Predict potential to perform in role
 - Fair as possible to all demographic groups (e.g. gender, ethnicity, age)
 - Comprehensive process which should increase perceptions of fairness and enhance employer brand

OUTCOMES

For more information see:

<http://careers.northumbria.police.uk/application-and-selection.html>

Application and Selection

- The below is a detailed outline of the application and selection process involved in Police Officer recruitment within Northumbria Police.

1. Eligibility	8. Selection Event
2. Initial Registration	9. Pre Assessment Centre Briefing
3. Engagement Event	10. SEARCH (Structured Entrance Assessment for Recruiting Constables Holistically) Assessment Centre
4. Realistic Job Preview	11. Interview and Pre-appointment Briefing
5. Behavioural Styles Questionnaire	12. Interview
6. Situational Judgement Test	13. Pre-Employment Checks
7. Application Form	14. Appointment

REALISTIC JOB PREVIEW

4. Realistic Job Preview

You will complete a short self-selection questionnaire which will present you with information about various demands and challenges you may face in the role, to help you choose whether you want to continue with your application.

- Not a pass or fail component but aimed at allowing individuals to receive some feedback at an early stage of the process and to self-assess their suitability for the role

Problem Solving Capacity		Always/Mostly	Sometimes	Rarely/Never
1.	I can assimilate information quickly.			
2.	I understand what is being asked of me without needing much direction.			
3.	I consider the risks of decisions I make.			
4.	I make logical and clear decisions.			
5.	I make effective decisions under pressure.			

(Example above from COP Fast Track Programme)

BEHAVIOURAL STYLES QUESTIONNAIRE

5. Behavioural Styles Questionnaire

You will complete a questionnaire about your typical behaviour and the values you emphasise at work. Your responses are scored in relation to the competencies and values that have been shown to best predict performance of police officers. If you do not meet the required standard you will be unable to continue with your application.

Further information on the Behavioural Styles Questionnaire can be found below:

[Behavioural Styles Questionnaire Briefing Document](#)

Example Question

Some completed statements are shown below as an example, to help you understand the format of the questionnaire. In the example below, the respondent has indicated that they strongly agree with Statement 1 and 2, strongly disagree with Statement 3 and somewhat agree with Statement 4.

- Measures a candidate's typical behaviour and preferences at work, to assess whether they have the right behaviours and attitudes to be effective in the role.

	Completely Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Completely Agree
I ensure that I do things to the highest standard	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I stay true to my beliefs, even when it is easier not to	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I don't keep things hidden from other people	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I don't leave tasks unfinished	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

(Example above from a&dc briefing document)

SITUATIONAL JUDGEMENT TEST

- Assesses judgement and decision making skills in relation to job-relevant situations.

6. Situational Judgement Test

This test will present you with a series of realistic scenarios that officers might face in the role. You must rate the effectiveness of different actions that could be taken in response to the scenario using a multiple choice format. If you do not meet the required standard you will be unable to continue with your application.

Further information on the situational judgement test can be found below:

[Situational Judgement Test briefing document](#)

- In the test candidates are presented with a series of scenarios based on the role of an Event Facilitator at a fictional sporting event. The scenarios have been set outside the context of a Police Constable role to ensure that participants do not need prior knowledge of policing policies and procedures to respond to the scenarios presented.

Counter-productive	Ineffective	Fairly Effective	Effective
An unacceptable action that will make the situation worse.	A poor action which will not help the situation.	A useful action that will be of some help to the situation.	A good action that will help to resolve the situation.

(Example above from a&dc briefing document)

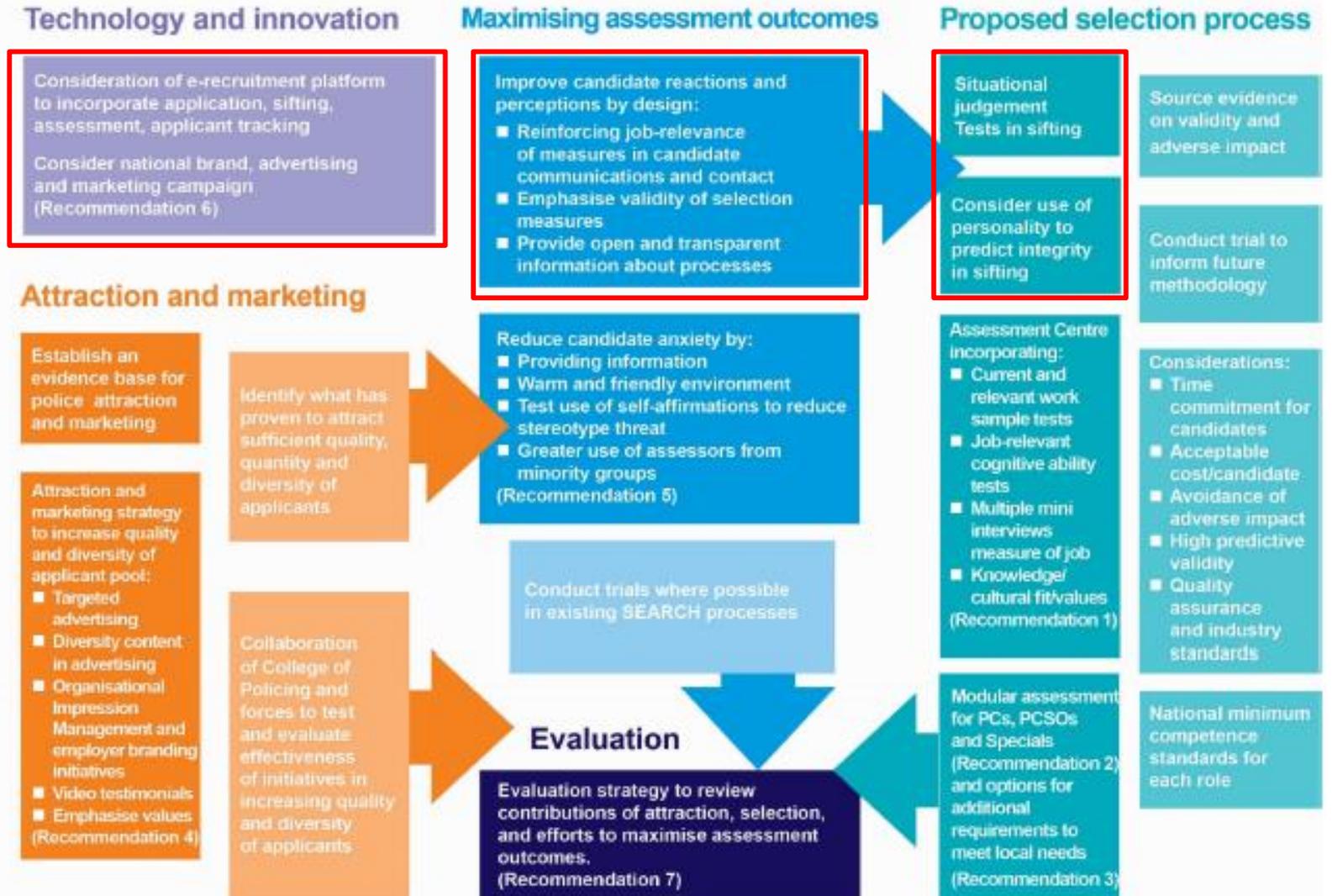
COMPARISON

- COP undertook a review of police initial recruitment between September 2015 and June 2016
 - Concerns at that time that the current police recruitment may not be designed for current and future recruitment needs
- Carried out a rapid evidence assessment (REA) and reviewed over 8,000 academic journal articles
- Produced a final report with 7 recommendations
- Final report with recommendations can be found at:
 - <http://www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Development/Pages/Review-of-Police-Initial-Recruitment.aspx>

COMPARISON

- Similar conclusions:
 - For sifting, organisations should trial situational judgement testing and personality testing
 - Evidence based interventions should be put in place aimed at improving applicant experience and subsequent enhancements in applicant performance
 - Interventions should be reviewed and evaluated on a regular basis
 - Consideration should be given to developing a national police e-recruitment platform

Summary of recommendations



IMPACT

- Feedback from Northumbria Police:
 - More robust mechanism for managing large volumes of candidates
 - Enabled us to focus resources where they add value (revising Pulse initially extending it then replacing)
 - Pulse V1 – your observations on this led to extending the process and adding some more police focused questions to test understanding of a police officer
 - Further work with you led to removal of pulse and introduction of assessed group exercise – feedback from candidates and applicants overwhelmingly positive (perceptions of procedural justice and transparency)
 - Significant pass rate at SEARCH assessment centre and have received fewer complaints regarding the application of the process
 - Advice on where to best test competencies led to a revision of the application form from the broad question of the initial campaign to testing two specific competencies in the 2016 campaign and the repositioning of these from the application form to the group exercise in our 2017 campaign

“We now have a more robust and transparent process which has enabled us to maximise conversion rates at each stage, delivering confidence in the process and the officers it produces and allowing more effective utilisation of resources” Ellen Glynn, HR Resourcing and Recruitment Analyst

PLANNED RESEARCH PROJECT 2

- **Evaluation of Applicant Perceptions of New Recruitment and Selection Process**

- Potential areas to explore:

Whether Big Five personality and Psychological capital (Hope, Optimism, Resilience and Self-Efficacy) are related to applicant perceptions

Differences in applicant perceptions between the three cohorts of applicants who have completed the process since the revision

The role of psychological capital and big five personality factors in predicting applicant justice perceptions of the selection process, likelihood to recommend the organization and self-evaluation of performance

PLANNED RESEARCH PROJECT 3

- **Identify Factors that Encourage Applicant Diversity**

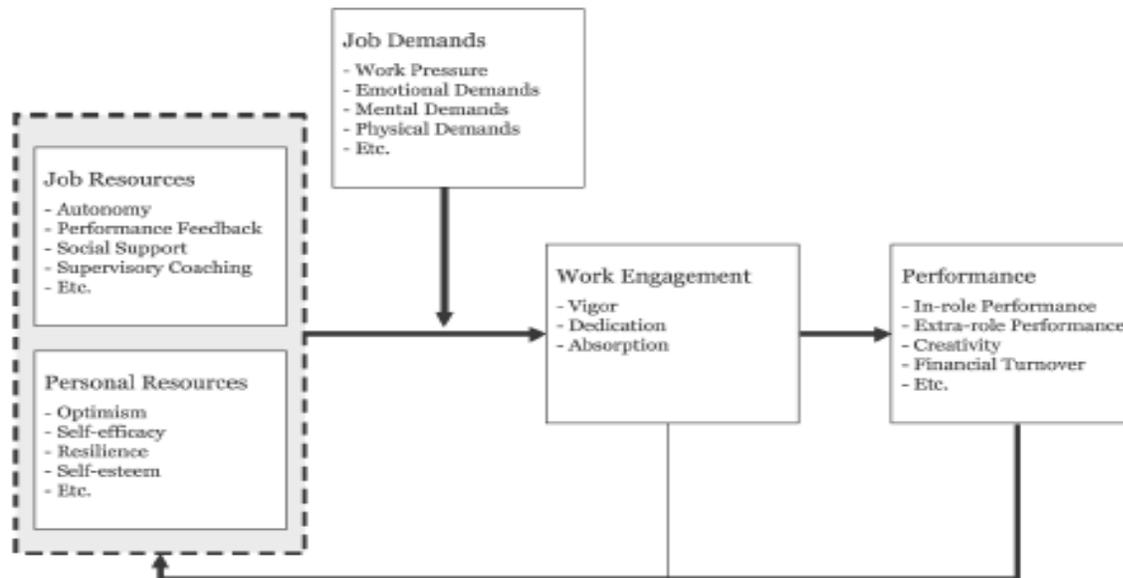
- Potential areas to explore:

What would encourage individuals from a diverse range of backgrounds to be a Police Officer?

Why have BME and females chosen a career as a Police Officer?

PLANNED RESEARCH PROJECTS 4 AND 5

- **Factors Affecting Work Engagement in UK Police Officers: A Job-Demands Resources approach**



Source: Based on Bakker & Demerouti (2007)

PLANNED RESEARCH PROJECTS 4 AND 5

- **Factors Affecting Work Engagement in UK Police Officers: A Job-Demands Resources approach**

- Potential areas to explore:

Personal resources such as mental toughness and psychological capital and their relationship with work engagement and self-rated performance

The relationship between job resources such as social support and autonomy, and work engagement

Whether personal and job resources buffer the impact of high job demands such as work overload and emotional demands on work engagement

NEXT STEPS

- Begin and carry out planned research
- Disseminate findings
- Explore collaboration opportunities for evaluation
- Utilise findings to inform future iterations of the recruitment process as well as well-being interventions

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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QUESTIONS AND CONTACT DETAILS

Thank you for listening



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