MPQ®

Multidimensional Personality Questionnaire®

Manual

for Administration, Scoring, and Interpretation

Auke Tellegen | Martin Sellbom | John Kamp | Richard W. Handel

Manual

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Multidimensional Personality Questionnaire® (MPQ®) Manual for Administration, Scoring, and Interpretation

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Chapter 1 | Introduction to the MPQ: History, Development, and Literature Review

The Multidimensional Personality Questionnaire® (MPQ®) is a 256-item self-report measure of a broad array of normal-range, individual-differences personality traits. The publisher, the University of Minnesota Press, has decided to make the instrument available for applied use for those with appropriate qualifications (see Chapter 2). Pearson Assessments is the licensed distributor in the United States. This chapter describes the development of the MPQ and provides an overview of representative studies from the available research literature.

The decision to offer the test for applied use (in addition to research) in any area in which normal-range personality assessment could be useful prompted new rounds of recent data collections focused on modest scale revisions, an appraisal of reliability and validity, and development of representative norms. Chapters 3 and 4 describe these efforts. Chapter 5 describes procedures for administration and scoring the MPQ, and Chapter 6 provides extensive descriptions of the item content and correlates of each scale. Table 1-1 provides a brief overview of the MPQ scales included in this published version of the instrument.

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Table 1-1. Brief Overview of MPQ Scales

Validity scales	
VRIN: Variable Response Inconsistency	Random responding
TRIN: True Response Inconsistency	Fixed True or False responding
UV: Unlikely Virtues	Underreporting/positive impression management
Higher-Order scales	
PEM: Positive Emotionality	Broad tendency toward positive emotions and active engagement
NEM: Negative Emotionality	Broad tendency toward negative emotions and adversarial interpersonal relations
CON: Constraint	Broad tendency toward being planful, cautious, and conventional
Primary Trait scales	
WB: Wellbeing	Cheerful, enthusiastic, optimistic
SP: Social Potency	Enjoys taking charge in social situations
AC: Achievement	Values and exhibits persistence and hard work
SC: Social Closeness	Values being with people and close interpersonal relationships
SR: Stress Reaction	Frequently experiences anxiety and similar emotions
AL: Alienation	Feels a victim of the malevolent wishes and actions of others
AG: Aggression	Enjoys and engages in physical and/or verbal aggression
CL: Control	Deliberate, careful, planful, self-controlled
HA: Harmavoidance	Prefers safer experiences, even if unpleasant, to more dangerous ones
TR: Traditionalism	Believes in traditional values regarding morality and propriety
AB: Absorption	Easily caught up in sensory and imaginative experiences

Initial Development

Originally titled the Differential Personality Questionnaire (DPQ), the MPQ was constructed by Auke Tellegen over a period of about 10 years in an iterative manner using factor-analytic methods. His initial intent in developing the MPQ was to use test construction to explore and clarify basic dimensions of personality. Tellegen originally collected data with a series of seven questionnaires that were sequentially modified by removing items that did not effectively measure the concepts in question and revising or replacing them based on each new round of factor-analytic data.

As noted by Tellegen (1982), as well as in the preface of this manual, DPQ/MPQ constructs were tentative ideas. The iterative development process allowed for the constructs to inform efforts for further data collection and vice versa. During each stage in the iterative process, the constructs informed item selection and development, and subsequent data analyses led to the revision or consolidation of each construct. At the end of this process, the 11 Primary Trait scales and the three higher-order factors were well-defined (Tellegen, 1982). Following is a summary of the development and validation process. For a detailed overview of MPQ development and validation, please refer to Tellegen and Waller (2008).

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Primary Trait Scales

As described in Tellegen and Waller (2008), MPQ development began as an exploratory study focusing on personality characteristics relating to hypnotic susceptibility. Tellegen and Atkinson (1974) developed the first questionnaire consisting of newly written items and items reworded from earlier studies (e.g., Roberts & Tellegen, 1973). Factor analyses of these items revealed a Neuroticism factor, an Extraversion factor, and a third factor that Tellegen and Atkinson referred to as Absorption. Because these three constructs required further analyses and clarification, a second questionnaire was developed consisting of items from Tellegen and Atkinson's (1974) work as well as new candidate items for Neuroticism, Extraversion, and Absorption. Following analyses based on the second questionnaire, six preliminary scales (Stress Reaction, Alienation, Social Potency, Social Closeness, Control, and Absorption) were constructed. Moreover, the two questionnaires formed the basis for the identification and construction of four additional scales (Traditionalism, Harmavoidance, Achievement, and Aggression).

As described in Tellegen and Waller (2008), a third questionnaire included a variety of items adapted from other sources (e.g., Ernhart and Loevinger's [1969] measure of Authoritarian Family Ideology) as well as further modifications to the item pool by removal or rewording of items. This version of the questionnaire was instrumental in further delineating Absorption and Alienation.

A fourth questionnaire included items to further clarify several constructs. A group of Harmavoidance items was introduced, and subsequent factor analyses demonstrated that Harmavoidance was distinct from Stress Reaction. Questionnaire four also elucidated the boundaries of the Social Potency construct as that scale evolved. Specifically, a set of items dealing with perfectionism, effort, work, and persistence were included to explore achievement. Factor analyses demonstrated that these achievement-related items formed a replicable construct that was distinct from Social Potency. Questionnaire four also included a set of items describing aggressive, vindictive, and victimizing propensities to further clarify the interpersonal domain (Tellegen & Waller, 2008). Analyses based on this questionnaire identified an Aggression dimension that was distinguishable from Social Closeness. At this stage, the interpersonal dimensions included Social Potency, Social Closeness, Aggression, and Alienation. After data collection, analyses, and revisions using these four questionnaires, the MPQ had 10 scales similar in item composition to Tellegen (1982).

A fifth questionnaire was a 10-scale precursor of the MPQ. In this round of data collection, the goal was to evaluate whether adequate personality domain representation was accomplished (Tellegen & Waller, 2008). It was administered with a 60-item mood inventory to identify extratest correlates. Subsequent analyses supported the construct validity of the preliminary MPQ scales and raised the possibility of identifying a separate Wellbeing dimension. Candidate items for that dimension were included in a sixth questionnaire and a Wellbeing factor was identified. Following the writing of additional items for a seventh questionnaire and subsequent data collection, the final Wellbeing scale was completed.

The 1982 and 2003 Booklets

The 300-item MPQ (Tellegen, 1982) contained 11 Primary Trait scales, regression-based higher-order scale scores, and six Validity scales (described below). Tellegen's (1982) item pool was subsequently revised over the next two decades resulting in a 276-item booklet (Tellegen, 2003). The original booklet was revised by deleting some items, adding one new item, and rewording many items to simplify the content.

Additional Analyses

Additional analyses of the MPQ item content, psychometric scale properties, and first- and second-order factor structures were conducted as were external correlate studies (Tellegen & Waller, 2008). For item content analyses, Tellegen identified 59 descriptive clusters based on an empirical analysis of a sorting task conducted by 10 to 12 participants. These 59 clusters were subsequently scored and factor analyzed in several independent (i.e., not previously used in the development of MPQ scales) samples of 4,340 college students and community adults. The analyses supported the 11-factor structure of the Primary Trait scales and an overarching, three-factor, higher-order structure. Factor loadings were quite similar to an earlier analysis by Tellegen (1982) using a sample of 600 college women and 600 college men. In these analyses, a three-factor structure emerged that Tellegen (1985) labeled Positive Emotionality (PEM), Negative Emotionality (NEM), and Constraint (CON). Regarding the specific pattern of factor loadings for the higher-order factors, Tellegen and Waller's (2008) analysis demonstrated that the Primary Trait scales Wellbeing, Social Potency, Achievement, and Social Closeness were markers of PEM, and NEM was characterized by high loadings for the Stress Reaction, Aggression, and Alienation scales. The primary markers for CON were Control, Harmavoidance, and Traditionalism. In the three-factor model, Absorption exhibited roughly comparable loadings on both PEM and NEM.

Tellegen and Waller (2008) presented coefficient alpha data on the Primary Trait scales for four different samples. Alpha coefficients ranged from .77 to .90. Thirty-day stability coefficients based on 75 college men and women ranged from .82 to .92.

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Original Validity Scales

Tellegen (1982) originally included six validity scales in the DPQ/MPQ: Associative Slips, Unlikely Virtues (UV), Desirable Response Inconsistency (DRIN), True Response Inconsistency (TRIN), Variable Response Inconsistency (VRIN), and Index of Invalid Responding (INVAL). Associative Slips required the test taker to read a stimulus word and identify which one of two response words is most (or least) similar in meaning to the stimulus word. UV consisted of items espousing highly improbable virtues or denying common shortcomings. DRIN, TRIN, and VRIN all consisted of item pairs that satisfied two criteria: first, the items had to represent the same content area; second, the item pairs could be keyed so that the response pattern would indicate inconsistent content and also support the response style being measured (Tellegen, 1982). DRIN was designed to measure a socially desirable versus undesirable response set. TRIN was designed to measure acquiescent versus counter-acquiescent response styles. High scores are indicative of indiscriminate

acquiescent responding, whereas low scores indicate a counter-acquiescent response set. The VRIN scale was developed to assess content-inconsistent response variability. Finally, INVAL was based on a composite of all the validity scale scores with the exception of DRIN scores. Associative Slips, DRIN, and INVAL were later excluded from the standard set of MPQ validity scales because of excessive false-positive rates, with subsequent versions employing only UV, VRIN, and TRIN.

Variant Forms

Several variant forms of the MPQ have been developed, primarily to facilitate research on the test. Patrick et al. (2002) developed and validated a 155-item brief form (MPQ-BF) mainly to foster the measure's inclusion in research studies. Patrick et al. employed three mixed-gender community samples of participants from the Minnesota Twin Registry for development and validation. The development sample consisted of 1,639 participants, and an independent cross-validation sample included 558 participants. The latter sample was used to further evaluate the psychometric properties of the brief form including its factor structure in comparison to the 276-item MPQ. The normative sample for the MPQ-BF—a subsample of the development and cross-validation samples—was the same sample of 1,350 participants used by Tellegen (1982). Despite the shorter length of the MPQ-BF Primary Trait scales, alpha coefficients in the cross-validation sample were in an acceptable range (.74 to .84). Pearson correlations between scales scores for the 276-item MPQ and MPQ-BF were all in excess of .91. Principal components analyses in the cross-validation and development samples resulted in similar three-component (i.e., Positive Emotionality, Negative Emotionality, and Constraint) pattern matrices across MPQ forms (Patrick et al., 2002). Finally, correlations between both versions of the MPQ and other personality measures using independent samples of university students supported the construct validity and comparability of the MPQ-BF.

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Simplified-Wording Form

To broaden the applicability of the MPQ, Patrick et al. (2013) developed a simplified-wording form (MPQ-SF) composed of items with reading levels of seventh grade or less. The MPQ-BF (Patrick et al., 2002) provided the initial item pool for the development of the simplified-wording form. However, some items from the 276-item MPQ were used as replacement items in cases where brief form items were challenging to effectively simplify. Moreover, the authors ensured that items were included to appropriately represent the VRIN and TRIN validity scales.

After selecting 160 candidate items for the simplified-wording form, all remaining items from the 276-item MPQ were also included. In some cases, these additional items were included in both their original form and a simplified version. These supplementary items were included as potential replacements for candidate items if necessary (Patrick et al., 2013). The pool of items was administered to university undergraduate validation and cross-validation samples with some replacement items included for the cross-validation administration. The development sample analyses led to the exclusion of a small number of candidate items, and some supplementary items were therefore subsequently added to the measure. Analyses using the cross-validation sample supported the internal consistency reliability, higher-order factor structure, and external criterion validity of scores on the 157-item MPQ-SF.

Abbreviated Research Scales

Marquardt et al. (2021) developed a 55-item brief version of the MPQ to efficiently measure the broad dimensions of Positive Emotionality (PEM), Negative Emotionality (NEM), and Constraint (CON) because these scales on the 276-item version of the MPQ are scored using proprietary regression equations. The authors created item-based approximations of these scores using both classical test and item response theory (IRT)

approaches. In addition, they sought to construct five-item versions of the Primary Trait scales. The samples included data from the MPQ-276 normative sample for scale development with cross-validation data from twins and co-twins drawn from Iacono and McGue's (2002) Minnesota Twin Family Study. Additional cross-validation analyses were conducted using a sample of university undergraduates. Marquardt and colleagues concluded that their abbreviated version produced correlations with external measures similar to those of the MPQ-276 version while maintaining adequate measurement precision.

Translations

The MPQ has been translated into several other languages for research purposes. To date, research translations have been developed in Hebrew, German, and Dutch.

Hebrew

Ben-Porath et al. (1995) developed a Hebrew translation of the MPQ using the 300-item, English-language version as the starting point. Items were translated and back translated using the procedure described by Butcher (1982). Forty-three items were subsequently retranslated because their original meaning had been altered, and three experimental culture-specific items were added. Ben-Porath and colleagues found significant support for the cross-cultural comparability of the translated version as shown by robust congruence coefficients for both lower- and higher-order factor structures. Internal consistency estimates for the Primary Trait scales were also comparable. Several cultural differences emerged in terms of mean scale scores.

German

A German translation of the MPQ (Angleitner et al., 1993, as cited in Johnson et al., 2008) was developed in consultation with Tellegen using a translation and back-translation procedure. The German version was used in a cross-cultural, IRT-based study described later in this chapter (i.e., Johnson et al., 2008).

Dutch

Eigenhuis et al. (2013) developed a 132-item Dutch brief form of the MPQ by employing the same item selection procedures as Patrick et al. (2002). The starting point was a Dutch translation of the 276-item MPQ. Eigenhuis and colleagues used a Dutch normative sample, a U.S. cross-validation sample, and a Dutch external validation sample. Cronbach's alpha coefficients were similar to those reported by Patrick et al. (2002) for the MPQ-BF. These investigators also found high correlations between scores on the Dutch Brief Form of the Multidimensional Personality Questionnaire (MPQ-BF-NL), MPQ-BF, and 276-item MPQ Primary and Higher-Order scales. Moreover, in general, factor structure and relations with external criteria were in line with expectations. In subsequent research studies, Eigenhuis et al. (2015, 2017) evaluated the measurement invariance of the MPQ-BF-NL. In the first study, Eigenhuis and colleagues (2015) used samples from the United States and the Netherlands and found differential item functioning (DIF) for 19% of items when MPQ scales were analyzed separately. In analyses involving the full model, 40% of items demonstrated DIF. In other words, these analyses suggested some cultural differences. Eigenhuis and colleagues (2017) evaluated the measurement invariance of the MPQ-BF-NL in a general population sample and a clinical sample. Overall, their results provided support for clinical applications of the MPQ as there was strong evidence for a common structure of normal and pathological personality.

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MPQ Research Overview

The following section provides a general overview of representative studies from the MPQ research literature organized by topic area. This literature review is not intended to be an exhaustive account of all published MPQ studies.

Stability

McGue et al. (1993) tested monozygotic and same-sex dizygotic twin pairs from the Minnesota Twin Registry with the 300-item MPQ on two occasions. The participants averaged 19.8 years old (*SD* = 3.4) at time 1 and 29.6 (*SD* = 2.5) at time 2. McGue and colleagues concluded that genetic factors strongly influenced the stable core of personality with environmental factors associated with personality change.

Although effect sizes were small, Caspi and Silva (1995) found evidence in the Dunedin longitudinal study for certain behavioral styles measured at age 3 years being related to personality traits measured by the MPQ at age 18 years. For example, children characterized by behavioral ratings at age 3 as exhibiting an impulsive and undercontrolled style produced MPQ scale scores at age 18 consistent with some of these earlier inferences (e.g., impulsivity).

Kremen and Block (2002) examined trait absorption by aggregating standardized scores from two different administrations of the 34-item Absorption scale (i.e., one in late adolescence and one in early adulthood). This aggregated composite was subsequently correlated with observer ratings of personality. Kremen and Block concluded that their results supported the construct validity of Absorption with some gender differences noted.

In a large sample of twins, Johnson et al. (2005) found strong evidence for personality stability from repeat MPQ administrations in late adulthood. Moreover, genetic influences on MPQ scale scores were strong and nonshared environmental influences were also correlated across the two testing sessions.

Joint Factor Structure

In addition to analyses presented in Tellegen and Waller (2008), researchers have examined the joint factor structure of the MPQ and other measures. DiLalla et al. (1993) examined the joint factor structure of MPQ (300-item version) and Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory® (MMPI®; Hathaway & McKinley, 1943) scales using a sample of twins. At least one twin in each pair had been admitted for inpatient or outpatient psychiatric treatment. DiLalla and colleagues found meaningful associations between MPQ Primary Trait and Higher-Order scales and MMPI scales. Although a full description of the results is beyond the scope of this manual, DiLalla et al. concluded that the MPQ measures constructs highly related to some MMPI constructs but also that the two measures are not redundant. For instance, in a joint principal components analysis, the MMPI scales Psychasthenia (Pt) and Depression (D) and the MPQ scales SR and WB (negative) were all associated with high loadings (≥ |.77| on the first component). For zero-order correlations, the correlation between MPQ SR and MMPI Pt was .84, whereas the maximum correlation (in terms of absolute values) between the MPQ TR scale and MMPI Clinical and Validity scales was only .17.

Using a sample of college student volunteers, Church (1994) explored relations between the higher-order models of personality structure from the Big Five Model as measured by Costa and McRae's (1985) NEO Personality Inventory (NEO-PI; as cited in Church [1994]) and Tellegen's (1985) model assessed by the MPQ. Examinations of correlation matrices and joint factor analyses indicated that MPQ constructs could be conceptualized within the Big Five Model. For example, MPQ NEM was positively correlated with the NEO-PI Neuroticism scale and all of its facet scales. Moreover, with the inclusion of the Absorption scale, the NEO model could be well organized under Tellegen's higher-order model.

Item Response Theory

Multiple studies have applied IRT models to evaluate the MPQ scales. Reise and Waller (1990) used a subsample from the Minnesota Twin Registry to evaluate the feasibility of applying a two-parameter, logistic item response model to MPQ scales. Overall, results suggested that the two-parameter model fits MPQ

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data. Reise and Waller encouraged the broader use of IRT for normal-range personality assessment. In a subsequent study, Waller and Reise (1992) focused on the Wellbeing, Social Potency, Stress Reaction, and Traditionalism scales in a study examining genetic and environmental influences on item response pattern scalability. Finally, Reise and Waller (1993) employed an IRT-based scalability index using 1,000 participants who completed the 300-item MPQ. They concluded that scalability indices can play a role in examining the fit between personality trait constructs and behavior. In a real-data simulation study using the Absorption scale, Waller and Reise (1989) demonstrated that IRT-based computerized adaptive testing worked very well and yielded substantial savings in terms of the number of items administered while maintaining measurement precision. Waller et al. (1996) developed a 30-item measure of Negative Emotionality from the MPQ item pool and conducted preliminary validation analyses. These authors employed nonlinear factor analysis and a two-parameter logistic IRT model to develop their scale. Finally, Johnson et al. (2008) employed IRT in a cross-cultural MPQ study using samples matched on gender and age from Germany and Minnesota and found some evidence of cultural differences as well as several items exhibiting differential item functioning in each MPQ scale.

Phenotypic, Genetic, and Nonshared Environmental Personality Structure

Krueger (2000) used principal components analyses in a large sample of predominantly middle-aged twins to evaluate the phenotypic structure of MPQ scales. Krueger provided component loadings for phenotypic, additive genetic, and nonshared environmental correlations. The results demonstrated considerable similarities across these three groups of correlation matrices with three-component solutions emerging of negative emotionality, positive emotionality, and constraint.

Cross-Informant Validity

Harkness et al. (1995) administered the 300-item MPQ to university undergraduate students and also constructed a rating instrument that was used to describe each participant who completed the MPQ. The rating instrument was designed to be completed by each participant's mother, father, and a peer. A validity subsample with complete data (i.e., the MPQ and all three ratings) was used in subsequent analyses. Although a full description is beyond the scope of this manual, Harkness and colleagues found varying degrees of convergence between MPQ scale scores and informant ratings. In general, there were higher degrees of convergence in the positive emotionality domain than in the negative emotionality domain.

Psychopathology

Although the MPQ is a measure of normal-range personality traits, multiple studies have explored relations between MPQ scale scores and various measures of psychopathology. Such research is useful to identify normal personality vulnerabilities toward developing and coping with mental health problems (e.g., Tackett & Mullins-Sweatt, 2021).

Watson et al. (1988) used the MPQ's PEM and NEM scales as measures of trait positive affect and negative affect, respectively, to explore relations between these constructs and depression and anxiety diagnoses and symptoms in samples of twins and co-twins evaluated in inpatient, outpatient, and substance abuse treatment facilities. Overall, the results indicated that negative affect functioned as a marker of general distress, whereas positive affect was only related to depressive symptoms and diagnoses.

Krueger et al. (2001) explored connections between personality constructs measured by MPQ scales and internalizing and externalizing scores (internalizing and externalizing scores were based on principal components analyses). The sample consisted of men and women from the Minnesota Twin Family Study.

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MPQ NEM scores were positively correlated with internalizing psychopathology for men and women. MPQ CON scores were negatively correlated with externalizing psychopathology for men and women. Finally, internalizing psychopathology was negatively correlated with MPQ PEM scores for women only.

Miller et al. (2003) used the MPQ-BF (Patrick et al., 2002) and other measures in a study of male combat veterans. Data were collected as part of a multisession diagnostic assessment for posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). In terms of the MPQ results, cluster analyses identified a cluster with MPQ scale scores falling near the normative sample mean and two additional clusters, both of which had high scores on measures of NEM and low scores on PEM and CON. This research ultimately led to formulations of internalizing and externalizing subtypes of PTSD (e.g., Miller, 2003).

Using a large sample of university undergraduate students, Sellbom and Ben-Porath (2005) examined relations between scores on the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory-2 (MMPI-2; Butcher et al., 2001) Clinical scales, the MMPI-2 Restructured Clinical (RC; Tellegen et al., 2003) scales, and MPQ scales. This study was focused on the MMPI-2 RC scales with MPQ scales serving as criterion measures. Overall, the results supported hypothesized convergences between scores on the MPQ Higher-Order and Primary Trait scales and scores on the RC scales (e.g., Low Positive Emotions [RC2] scores were negatively correlated with PEM scores; Dysfunctional Negative Emotions [RC7] scores were correlated with NEM scores).

In a study specific to patients diagnosed with borderline personality disorder, Lenzenweger et al. (2012) found relations between psychodynamic processes (e.g., primitive defenses) and MPQ scales, with the alienation, aggression, and absorption constructs emerging as particularly important predictors of these processes.

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Psychopathy

Brislin et al. (2015) developed triarchic psychopathy scales (Boldness, Meanness, Disinhibition) from the MPQ item pool using a sample of community participants. Subsequent analyses evaluated the convergent and discriminant validity of scores on these scales in both the sample of community participants and an independent sample of incarcerated participants. The overall results supported the construct validity of the MPQ-Tri scales, and scale internal consistencies were adequate. In a subsequent study, Brislin et al. (2017) conducted additional validation analyses in samples of incarcerated females, undergraduate students, and male offenders from a substance abuse treatment facility. High internal consistency estimates were obtained across the three samples and few gender differences emerged in terms of relations with external criterion variables. Correlations with extratest measures of psychopathy and psychopathology revealed a clear convergent and discriminant pattern of associations. Garofalo et al. (2021) evaluated the longitudinal measurement invariance and construct validity of the triarchic psychopathy scales in a large, archival sample of high-risk participants. Data were collected at four time points between ages 16 and 25 years. Overall, the results largely supported the construct validity of these scales. Most recently, Veltman et al. (2023) validated these scales in the Dunedin longitudinal study from New Zealand across age 18 and age 26 cohorts, with good support for both temporal stability and convergent and discriminant validity.

Police Preemployment Evaluations

Sellbom et al. (2021) examined the construct, concurrent, and predictive validity of the MPQ in a large sample of preemployment police candidates drawn from numerous law enforcement agencies. Extratest information included self-reported psychosocial history data, postoffer ratings from a psychologist, and a subsample with posthire performance outcome data. The construct validity of MPQ scores was supported. Moreover, the authors concluded that the predictive validity of MPQ scale scores in the police preemployment evaluations was supported.

In a subsequent study using an updated version of Sellbom et al.'s (2021) dataset, Sellbom and colleagues (2022) investigated the incremental validity of MPQ scale scores above and beyond scale scores on the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory-2-Restructured Form (MMPI-2-RF; Ben-Porath & Tellegen, 2008/2011) in the prediction of psychological suitability dimensions and posthire outcomes in police candidates. This study addressed the important topic of the practical utility of including a measure of normal-range personality traits (i.e., the MPQ) in addition to a measure of psychopathology (i.e., the MMPI-2-RF) in preemployment assessments of police candidates. The authors provided extensive analyses on zero-order correlations between the various measures before conducting hierarchical ordinal logit regression analyses to address the primary question of incremental validity. Overall, the authors found that the inclusion of MPQ scales resulted in incremental validity above and beyond MMPI-2-RF scale scores in 17 of 19 analyses providing support for the inclusion of the MPQ in assessments of this nature.

Vocational Interests

In a sample of gifted adolescents, Larson and Borgen (2002) observed correlations between many MPQ scales and various vocational interests. Hierarchical regression analyses supported most of their hypotheses that specific individual MPQ Primary Trait scales would account for additional variance in predicting interests above and beyond MPQ Higher-Order scales.

Staggs et al. (2003) employed the MPQ in a study of vocational interests and personality in a college student sample. The authors used the 1994 version of the Strong Interest Inventory® (SII; Harmon et al., 1994, as cited in Staggs et al., 2003). Although not all hypotheses were supported, these authors found support for relations between scores on several MPQ scales and vocational interests. For instance, AC was positively correlated with science and mathematics, and PEM was correlated with public speaking. Moreover, in a series of hierarchical regression analyses, these authors found that scores on some Primary Trait scales predicted vocational interests above and beyond scores on the Higher-Order scales.

Absorption Scale

Absorption is the most frequently studied MPQ scale, and research on this specific scale has amassed a voluminous literature. Although a complete accounting of this literature is beyond the scope of this manual, Lifshitz et al. (2019) provide a comprehensive review of studies on the Absorption scale's relations with other psychological constructs (e.g., imagery ability, empathy) within the context of an article focusing on Absorption and spiritual experience. Most recently, Luhrmann (2020) devoted an entire book to the topic of spiritual experience, and the Absorption scale is discussed in detail within that context.

Synesthesia

Rader and Tellegen (1987) examined relations between synesthesia, intelligence test scores, and MPQ scores in a sample of university undergraduates. Synesthesia was defined as "the occurrence of imagery in one sense modality in response to sensations in another" (Rader & Tellegen, 1987, p. 981) and was measured through performance tests and self-report. Of the various MPQ scales, only Absorption scale scores were meaningfully correlated with visual–auditory synesthesia experiences.

Summary

The MPQ has been researched in a wide array of populations for the purpose of answering questions about basic personality phenomena as well as exploring specific applications of the test. This literature has identified extensive empirical correlates of the MPQ scales. These correlates are incorporated in the interpretive guidelines, which are covered in detail in Chapter 6.

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Chapter 2 | Intended Uses, User Qualifications, and Protection of Test Materials

Intended Uses

The MPQ is a broadband measure of normal-range personality traits. It is intended to serve as a primary measure for any applications in which assessment of normal-range personality traits is needed or desired. For example, the MPQ has utility in preemployment screenings for public safety positions (e.g., Sellbom et al., 2021). Moreover, as described in Chapter 1, multiple studies have established relations between MPQ scores and various measures of psychopathology. Given this literature, the MPQ may also be considered useful as part of a battery in applied clinical settings insofar as normal personality traits can play a role in the formulation of dysfunctional states. For any application, the interpretive guidelines presented in Chapter 6 can be used to identify relevant psychological and behavioral descriptors.

User Qualifications

The *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* (American Educational Research Association [AERA] et al., 2014) indicate that documents for a given test should specify qualifications for test administration, scoring, and interpretation. As noted by Ben-Porath and Tellegen (2020a), governmental agencies have resisted efforts to restrict access to psychological tests. Test publishers have adopted intentionally inclusive user qualification policies to balance responsible purchase of test materials with restriction of trade concerns (Ben-Porath & Tellegen, 2020a). MPQ qualifications provided by the test publisher, the University of Minnesota Press, and distributor, Pearson, should be considered the minimum qualifications for ethical test usage in the United States and Canada. Further information regarding user qualifications for obtaining MPQ materials can be found on the Pearson website.

In the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing,* overarching standard 9.0 and associated standards stress that test users must be knowledgeable about the validity evidence in support of intended test score interpretations, and they also have legal and ethical responsibilities to ensure the security of test content. Each of these areas will be covered in turn.

Training Recommendations

At minimum, MPQ users should have graduate-level training in psychological testing and assessment to competently review and evaluate the literature on the psychometric

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properties of MPQ scores. Test users should have familiarity with psychometric principles such as reliability, measurement error, and validity. Training in the administration, scoring, and interpretation of the MPQ is also necessary. MPQ training opportunities are available through the University of Minnesota Press and Pearson. If possible, supervised experience in using the MPQ is desirable. Moreover, given that the focus of the MPQ is on normal-range personality, test users should ideally also have graduate-level training in personality psychology. Although not necessarily required for all MPQ applications, test users should have graduate-level training in psychopathology and other relevant areas for use of the test in applied clinical settings. Finally, test users should remain current with emerging MPQ research in addition to maintaining familiarity with the MPQ empirical literature and psychometric information presented in this manual.

Protection of Test Materials

As noted earlier, the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* indicate that test users have an ethical and legal obligation to protect test materials. For the MPQ, these materials include the test booklet, answer sheets, manual, and score reports. MPQ materials should not be released to individuals other than those under direct supervision of a qualified user or to qualified colleagues within the same organization. One notable exception to this requirement is if test materials are subpoenaed as part of legal proceedings—Figure 2-1 provides a recommended letter for use in such cases. When the test is used in applied clinical settings, Pearson's website provides the latest information concerning the release of materials in accordance with the U.S. Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1996 (Pub. L. No. 104-191). Test users in other countries should carefully consider law and professional practice regarding the privacy and protection of health information. Finally, test users may not reproduce any MPQ materials without the explicit written permission of the University of Minnesota Press (www.upress.umn.edu/test-division).

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Figure 2-1. Sample Litigation-Related Demand for Disclosure of Copyright- and Trade-Secret-Protected Test Materials Distributed by Pearson

To whom it may concern:

NCS Pearson, Inc. ("Pearson") understands that, from time to time, you receive demands to produce or disclose copyright-protected and/or trade-secret-protected psychological test materials in connection with litigation or administrative hearings. If such demands were to be fully complied with, the material to be disclosed might include test booklets, answer sheets, record forms, manuals, user's guides, scoring software, computer-generated output reports, or other published and unpublished material protected under intellectual property law.

Pearson distributes many sensitive psychological and diagnostic tests which are sold, under contractual restrictions, only for use by qualified professional practitioners. Those tests include the MPQ (Multidimensional Personality Questionnaire), as well as many other frequently used psychological and educational assessment instruments. I am writing to set forth Pearson's position vis-à-vis the litigation-related disclosure of these sensitive materials.

Psychological and diagnostic testing materials and software distributed by Pearson are protected by copyright and trade secret law and are distributed only to those individuals who satisfy the requirements of our qualification policy and agree to abide by, and use the testing materials in accordance with, the *Ethical Standards* and the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Tests* set forth by the American Psychological Association and Pearson's Terms and Conditions of Sale and Use of Pearson Products. Pearson established these policies for the purpose of safeguarding the integrity and validity of these testing materials and ensuring their proper use.

The testing materials that Pearson publishes or distributes are protected by trade secret and copyright law. For example, the copyright for the MPQ test is owned by the Board of Regents of the University of Minnesota. None of the exclusive rights accorded to a copyright owner by the United States Copyright Act, including, but not limited to, the exclusive right to reproduce and copy, distribute, or publish, may be exercised with respect to copyrighted testing materials without the express written permission of Pearson and/or the copyright holder. Pearson does not waive its trade secret protection.

The question of disclosure of psychological and diagnostic testing material in connection with such proceedings is difficult because of the concerns surrounding maintaining continuing integrity of testing materials and preventing their improper use. We do recognize that, given the nature of our legal system, compelling reasons for disclosure of psychological testing materials may arise. Such disclosure may include, but is not limited to, review of the test materials and questioning of witnesses in court and in the course of deposition testimony. If such disclosure is deemed ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY by the judge, hearing officer, or arbiter, we encourage the use of appropriate protective agreements and orders to satisfy the needs and concerns of all involved. We recommend that such protective agreements and orders include the following minimum elements: (a) restricting access to the materials and the testimony regarding the materials to the most limited audience possible, preferably only to individuals who satisfy Pearson's qualification policy; (b) restricting copying of the test materials; (c) requiring the inclusion of an appropriate restrictive legend on the produced materials indicating that the test materials are subject to specified terms of the identified protective order and may be used solely for limited purposes in connection with the specified case; (d) requiring return or destruction of the materials at the conclusion of the proceeding (and confirmation of such return or destruction); and (e) sealing the record (including disclosed writings and transcripts of courtroom and deposition testimony) to the extent any portion of such materials is disclosed in pleadings, testimony, or other documents.

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Figure 2-1. Sample Litigation-Related Demand for Disclosure of Copyright- and Trade-Secret-Protected Test Materials Distributed by Pearson (*continued*)

It is possible that the demand requires you to turn the materials over to an attorney. If so, with all due respect, the Court should understand that it is rare that attorneys possess the qualifications required to obtain, administer, or interpret restricted tests, such as the MPQ, MMPI-2, MMPI-2-RF, MMPI-3, MCMI-III, or VIP tests. If disclosed, the test materials should be turned over to another qualified professional. The following note may also be persuasive to the Court in evaluating the appropriateness of the protective procedure I suggest above:

> In 1990, the State of Illinois adopted legislation that addresses this very issue and substantially restricts the disclosure requirements in court proceedings. The 1990 legislation included in the Illinois "Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Confidentiality Act" provides that: "(c) Psychological test material whose disclosure would compromise the objectivity or fairness of the testing process may not be disclosed to anyone including the subject of the test and is not subject to disclosure in any administrative, judicial or legislative proceeding. However, any recipient who has been the subject of the psychological test shall have the right to have all records relating to that test disclosed to any psychologists designated by the recipient. Requests for such disclosure shall be in writing and shall comply with the requirements of Subsection (b) of Section 5 of this Act." [Subsection (b) of Section 5 of the Act deals with legal requirements for valid consents.] Illinois Revised Statutes, Ch. 91 1/2, Paragraph 803.

To the extent that you have not already done so, you may also wish to consult with your local psychological association as well as with the American Psychological Association on this particular issue. The Committee on Legal Issues for the American Psychological Association and/or the Office of General Counsel for the American Psychological Association in Washington, DC, in particular, may have some additional thoughts on how to deal with this matter.

We very much appreciate your sensitivity to the issues surrounding appropriate use of and access to psychological and diagnostic testing materials. If you have additional questions regarding the listed tests or any others published or distributed by Pearson, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Respectfully,

Michael Walsh
Senior Counsel
Pearson VUE/Pearson Clinical Assessment
5601 Green Valley Drive
Bloomington, MN 55437

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