RISK PREDICTION INDEX

PREDICTS RESIGNATIONS AND TERMINATIONS OF CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS

A global provider of outsourced and privatised Correctional Services has been using the SafeSelect RPI since 2014, and during this time has assessed over 4,600 Correctional Officer candidates. Correctional Officers have responsibility for the safety, wellbeing and rehabilitation of prisoners. The role of a Correctional Officer is a high-risk one and involves working with prisoners with significant offending/violent behaviour, exposure to bribery and coercion, the threat of violence and harm and the potential use of force.

The organisation partnered with SafeSelect to conduct validation research to examine the relationship between turnover and psychological risk (as measured through the RPI) of Correctional Officer candidates prior to commencing employment. Turnover was investigated in terms of both resignations and involuntary terminations.

SafeSelect Risk Prediction Index

SafeSelect Risk Prediction Index (RPI) The RPI is a personality and behaviour assessment measuring psychological risk across:

- Working with others
- Work style
- Psychological adjustment
- Self-control

Based on the results of the above scales the individual is assigned an overall psychological risk rating ranging from low risk to high risk.

RESULTS

The research found the following:

A Significant Relationship between Psychological Risk and Turnover

Employees who resigned from the organisation had a lower level of psychological risk than those who were involuntarily terminated. As demonstrated, of all employees who resigned only 14% were classified as having an elevated level of psychological risk (Above Average Risk or higher). In comparison, 22% of those who were involuntarily terminated had an elevated psychological risk.

Psychological Predictors of Involuntary Termination

Significant predictors of involuntary termination were found to be:

Attitude towards enforcing rules – Employees who adopted an overly rigid and hardline approach to enforcing rules were more likely to be involuntarily terminated. It's likely that these individuals were quite harsh in how they addressed prisoner misbehavior and may not have considered extraneous circumstances when deciding on a punishment or consequence.

Interpersonal Sensitivity – A tendency to lack interpersonal sensitivity and be blunt and skeptical towards others was a significant predictor of involuntary termination. Individuals who have risks in this area are likely to be authoritarian in their approach, particularly in their views about the roles of power and sub-ordinance in the workplace.

Assertiveness – Individuals who were overly assertive were more likely to be terminated than those who were not. It's likely these individuals may come across as domineering and authoritarian to prisoners and thereby have poorer prisoner outcomes.

Psychological Risk and Turnover

Resigned	14% Elevated Psychological Risk
Involuntarily Terminated	22%

Psychological Predictors of Resignations

No psychological risk factors were found to significantly predict resignations. It may be that people resign due to circumstantial factors (e.g. salary, working conditions, etc.) rather than psychological risk factors.

Average Profiles of Involuntarily Terminated Employees

On average, Officers who were involuntarily terminated had risks in the areas below. It's important to note that these risks were only evident for involuntarily terminated employees, and on average no risks were identified for the resignations group.

- Dominance – Involuntarily terminated individuals tended to enjoy being in a position of power and giving orders to others. They were likely to get impatient with people who disagreed with them or resisted their requests. The role of Correctional Officer involves significant power and authority over inmates, and Officers who tend to be overly dominant are at higher risk of abusing that power.

- Attitude towards enforcing rules – On average Officers who were involuntarily terminated from the organisation adopted a rigid and hardline approach to enforcing rules, and as previously mentioned this was also a key predictor of termination.

- Gambling – Involuntarily terminated individuals tended to have slight risks in gambling. They may have gambled more than they could afford at times, may have lied to someone about their gambling, or have been preoccupied with gambling in the past. Officers with gambling problems are likely to be distracted on the job, potentially fatigued and may even be accessing gambling services during work hours on mobile devices. When faced with high-risk situations these Officers ability to respond effectively will be impaired, leading to poorer prisoner outcomes.

On average, individuals who were dismissed were overly dominant, took a rigid approach to enforcing rules and had risks in gambling.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper has demonstrated a relationship between psychological risk and employee turnover. Based on these findings, we make the following recommendations:

- Individuals with elevated levels of psychological risk were more likely to leave the organisation, specifically through involuntary termination. Therefore, we recommend preference be given to candidates who fall in the Low Risk to Below Average Risk categories, when deciding which candidates to progress to interview.

- The most significant predictors of involuntary termination were found to be; a rigid and hardline approach to enforcing rules, a lack of interpersonal sensitivity and a tendency to be overly assertive. Given this, it's important to be aware that if a candidate has significant risks in these areas they are more likely to be terminated from the organisation. We recommend further exploration of these risks at interview.

CONTACT US

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