

by a large number of corporations in America, on test-retest at the University of Chicago, came out 0.64 on its seven scales rather than the 0.9 or so that the tester claimed. On one scale it was a low 0.48. When test gets below 0.8, or 0.7, like a thermometer that registers between 95 and 105 when it means 98.6, it has to be thrown out.

The MMPI, which claims high reliability also showed up badly on test-retest. On one university sample, the reliability of its "depressive" scale dropped to 0.66, and to 0.56 on the paranoid scale. This means that the potential accuracy of it has been destroyed before the test begins, because the same person who comes out a psychopathic deviate on the MMPI on Tuesday might be perfectly normal on Thursday, because of the lack of reliability of the scales.

Even if the scales of a test are 100 percent reliable, you must then face the question of validity. There are numbers involved here that are very deceiving. For example, someone will say "The IQ, has a 0.5⁰ coefficient of validity." This sounds to laymen like an accuracy of "one-half". When I first began my investigation, this is what I assumed—that if a child has a 140 IQ, and we anticipate grade scores of B+ or A's for this child, then it will be true 50 percent of the time or a 0.50 correlation. This is not true. It turns out that on the curve of predictive efficiency, meaning how much better do we do than flipping a coin, a 0.50 validity coefficient is only 13 percent better than chance.

And there is no personality test with even a claimed validity coefficient of 0.5⁰. If the tests would operate near their highest maximum claimed level, you would have a validity of only 13 percent better than chance. My personal opinion, and this is proven out by statistics, is that the fallible human being has a predictive ability or an equal percentage better than chance. As an example of that, consider IQ scores, and remember that an IQ is a much more valid instrument than personality tests. IQ scores predict college performance, predict academic grades in junior high school and high school and in grade school, approximately 13 percent better than chance.

College Entrance Examination Board tests predict college grades approximately 13 percent better than chance. But teachers' grades in grade school, junior high school, and high school—the fallible human element—predicts a little bit better than the college boards and the IQ. So the infallible personnel man, unscientifically, through hunch, guess, chance, intuition, does better than the best claimed personality test in the evaluation of behavior.

The experiments disproving the tests number in the thousands, most of them done by psychologists. The MMPI was given at the University of California, Los Angeles, to find sexual deviates, ostensibly with an 88 percent accuracy. If this were true, this would be a very valuable instrument for prison wardens. A prison warden in Texas, I believe at Huntsville, decided to give the test, but tried it out first on his known sexual deviates in prison and the men he knew to be normal. The scale did not work at all. This has prompted many psychologists and many observers to state that claims made for tests in one sample generally fail to hold up in another sample. The reason is that chance, rather than science, is generally operating in the situation.