

*Blatníková, Šárka*

**Aplikace klinických a testových metod v kriminologickém výzkumu.  
Psychological Testing and Criminology Research.**

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*Summary*

Criminology endeavours to obtain, examine and systematically increase erudition regarding criminal behaviour and problematic areas of criminality in general. It strives to map contexts and also monitors the structures of individual phenomena. Empirical research in the field of criminology relies on combined methods and techniques from various scientific fields. The Institute of Criminology and Social Prevention as a research inter-disciplinary institution endeavours, in addition to other tasks, to guarantee research, analytical as well as theoretical-expert activities. The methodological apparatus of criminology strives for exactness, be it through carefully elaborated mathematical verifications, profound analysis, case studies or psycho-diagnostic tests that inform about the offender's or group's personality (or sample of offenders). In current psychology as well as criminology, we may observe a trend directed at the combination of methods with the aim of achieving more complex and valid results (this may involve making a diagnosis or confirming a research hypothesis). The selection and focus of the methods used must also correspond to the subject and aim of the research. This also applies to the inclusion of standardised psycho-diagnostic tests as a research method.

The subject of our research involves the methods and techniques are owned by the field of psychology, which may contribute (or have already contributed) to the fulfilment of criminological research goals. The aim of this publication was to present and describe studies that focused on the methodological apparatus of criminology, the inter-disciplinary nature of this field and the possibilities presented by psycho-diagnostic methods (usage and limitations of psychodiagnostic methods in process of administration, scoring, their interpretation). Our aim was to complete, specify as well as acquire new information and knowledge regarding psychological assessment<sup>1</sup> and **psychological testing** especially with regard to their

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<sup>1</sup> Psychological assessment is similar to psychological testing but usually involves a more comprehensive assessment of the individual. Psychological assessment is a process that involves the integration of information from multiple sources, such as test of normal and abnormal personality, tests of ability or intelligence, tests of

**application/use in criminological research.** Psychological testing is a field characterized by the use of samples of behaviour in order to assess psychological constructs, such as cognitive and emotional functioning, about a given individual. The technical term for the science behind psychological testing is psychometrics. The valid use of any psychological test is specified by the constraints under which that instrument was developed. Typically, a test is assumed to be valid for some specific population, for a particular setting, and for well-defined areas of application. On the other hand, the stressed “standardness” of psychodiagnostic techniques need not represent a limitation to their creative use/application.

The study was divided into several thematic units. The general introduction to the issues of applied psychology, psychodiagnostics as well as more general psycho-methodological subjects such as the qualitative versus quantitative research approach, is followed by two more extensive sections. In the first of these, we focused on **clinical, diagnostic methods** that are more often associated with qualitative methodology and research procedures and that capture the person under investigation in all his/her dynamics of manifestation. These include methods that are also applied by other fields- e.g. the interview or observation. The interview in psychology is a diagnostic method as well as a research tool, whereby the methodological difference between them need not be too significant. Both cases involve the collection of data with the aim of determining facts when resolving a research or clinical problem. Nonetheless, criteria of reliability, validity and objectivity do not apply to the research interview (as a scientific tool). Specific variants of the interview that are used in forensic psychological procedures and criminologically oriented research inform about other possible applications. We also included in this section issues relating to errors and misrepresentations in interpersonal perception, which are mechanisms that may affect not only the research process per se but especially its result. The other clinical research methods in psychology that we deal with in this section include the analysis of documents or products (content analysis) and the research experiment. These again involve methods “shared” by several disciplines and several chapters were devoted to them in the first volume (Cejp, 2011). In our publication, we therefore focused on certain already implemented social-psychological-forensic research and certain particularities. The last selected representative of clinical methods is psychological anamnesis, which is often part of criminological research. We demonstrated the frequency of

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interests or attitudes, as well as information from personal interviews. Psychological assessment – is the use of specified procedures to evaluate the abilities, behaviors, and personal qualities of people.

its application using several concrete examples, as well as the form in which this history is processed and presented in such research.

The second part of this publication is dedicated to **psychological tests** that are most frequently associated by the public with psychological assessment. As these tests are sometimes confused with many of tools, techniques and “ordinary questionnaires”<sup>2</sup>, we wanted to inform at the beginning of this chapter also about the fact that without adequate validation, without careful verification, adjustment of reliability and without item analysis, questionnaires are widely divergent from psychometrically satisfactory tests (inventory and questionnaire with psychometric properties). *Psychological tests* can strongly resemble questionnaires, which are also designed to measure unobserved constructs, but differ in that psychological tests ask for a respondent’s maximum performance whereas a questionnaire asks for the respondent’s typical performance. A useful psychological test must be both valid (i.e., there is evidence to support the specified interpretation of the test result) and reliable (i.e., internally consistent or give consistent results over time, across raters, etc.). Many psychological tests are generally not available to the public, but rather, have restrictions both from publishers of the tests and from psychology licensing boards that prevent the disclosure of the tests themselves and information about the interpretation of the results. Of the **performance tests**, we focused on **IQ tests** that are used relatively frequently when assessing offenders in criminological research and whose results it is not advisable to overestimate. Psychological **measures of personality** are often described as either 1) projective personality tests (free response measures), 2) self-report measures (personality inventory or questionnaires) and 3) performance-based personality tests that are not that well known by the public (lay persons). **Projective personality tests** – such as the Rorschach inkblot test, Lüscher colour test or drawing techniques- remain thanks to their “magicalness” appealing techniques that attract the attention of both researchers and readers. It must be remembered that in psychological assessment they only play a complementary role and serve mainly as a tool for acquiring information regarding emotivity (and eventually the development of a personality). They do not replace standardized personality inventory. Projective techniques are capable of offering information even about the internal structure of the personality, about its maturity, integrity or about the given person’s contact with reality. Projective personality tests have their avowed supporters and opponents and we have attempted to interpret the arguments of

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<sup>2</sup> These tests are different from ordinary questionnaires (or check lists) in the way they are constructed and protested.

both sides in this paper. In general it is stated that the validity of projective methods grows with the psychologist's experience and with the method used and it is no secret that the value of certain techniques in their current form is very debatable. A more precise expression of the validity of these diagnostic methods is mainly expected from the application of modern procedures such as mathematical-cybernetic modelling etc.

**Psychological personal tests** – questionnaires and inventories– are probably most frequently associated with the term “psychological testing”. In this study, we focused on tests that are currently used in our country or that eventually are potentially useful for criminological research. Moreover, tools are being developed in criminology on the basis of questionnaire method constructions that are helping to distinguish e.g. persons at risk of repeating their criminal behaviour from individuals with a good prognosis and that are based on the psychopathological analysis of personality and social factors in repeat offenders. The text analyses in greater details the Minnesota Multiphasic Personal Inventory, the Eysenck's and Cattell's Personality Inventories as well as the Freiburg personality inventory that is still used in our country in daily practice as is Leary's Interpersonal Check List or the Mikšik's questionnaire. Of the „newer“ personality test in our country, we included e.g. NEOPI-R is a measure of the five major domains of personality, Cloninger's Temperament and Character Inventory (this has not been officially standardised as yet in our country) or the Kuhl's & Kazen's Personality Style and Disorder Inventory. We added to these multi-dimensional personality questionnaires a chapter on the assessing the **aggressive component of personality**, which was incorporated in view of its close link to forensic-psychological and criminological subjects. Although rating scales are not designed for psychological testing (personality diagnosis), i.e. they do not involve tests in the narrow sense of the word, they have some of the properties of psychometric methods. They may be used as a general method or technique for measuring various phenomena or processes- they serve e.g. for recording the characteristics (of persons or objects) in a manner that ensures a certain degree of objectivity and enables the quantitative expression of the studied phenomenon. At the end of the publication, we thus list certain basic data relating to their division and application. For example, in forensic psychology and criminology, self-rating scales are utilised in predictive instruments, covering the dimensions that are directly linked to the offender's personality and subsequently also those associated with the circumstances of the offence and its offending. At the end of the publication we also briefly review some of the ethical principles of research work and the science codex. Naturally, wherever research involves human subjects and deals

with personal and sensitive data, the informed consent of the participating persons is necessary.

The aim of this work was not merely to present a complete list of tests and psychodiagnostic techniques, but to expound on those most often used and to acquaint the wider professional public with the basic approaches used for interpreting psychodiagnostic methods and techniques in criminological research. The potential of individual methods and their application/use in criminological research are illustrated on examples and references to concrete research probes. The publication works with themes related to criminological research and offers a view of the methods and techniques from the field of forensic psychology and psychological testing as research methods in criminological studies. We attempted to map, describe and analyse selected research methods and empirical approaches that may be (and are) used in criminological research.

The publication should provide summary encompassing information regarding the practical application of the selected methods and techniques in criminological research. The group of persons for whom the publication is intended is thus defined.

We would be pleased if the publications from this series were to benefit not only researchers in criminology but also other experts and specialists, enabling their better orientation, understanding and practical application of findings included in reports from criminological research. This volume is resource for legal practitioners and researchers who wish to keep abreast of forensic psychological assessment, and is of particular interest to researchers and students in criminology, forensic psychology and social work.

In the subsequent methodological volumes, it would be possible to focus in more detail not only on individual techniques but also on specific issues- thematic units (e.g. the issue of assessing offender motivation, differentiation on the basis of criminal styles of thinking, useful combinations of standardised psycho-diagnostic techniques and experimentally developed techniques etc.). It is important that we approach the measurement or assessment of any properties and characteristics complexly, i.e. within the context of the personality of the individual being assessed as a whole, as well as within the context of the wider application of psycho-diagnostic methods.

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**Conclusion:** Thanks to its inter-disciplinary nature, applied research in the field of criminal behaviour enables the creative use/application of a number of methods, thanks to which it is possible to monitor and follow the interactions and dynamics of individual phenomena. Professionally prepared criminological research is always designed with regard to the nature

of the studied phenomena, which enables the utilisation of a wide scope of research techniques. Information and data may be taken, collected or fixed using observation, interviews, questionnaires, document analysis or tests. This requires not only professional erudition but also concrete knowledge and creativity on the part of researchers in order to apply suitable research methods, procedures and techniques. If a certain method is used in research, it is useful to have a general awareness as to “what” we can expect of it and how (if actually at all) can such a technique help us meet our research goals. The individual methods and techniques cannot be applied mechanically to any criminological theme. On the other hand, the stressed “standardness” of psychodiagnostic techniques need not represent a limitation to their creative use/application. We attempted to illustrate this fact on research probes conducted at our Institute (ICSP) and which involved the use of a test or clinic psychodiagnostic methods as one of the research tools. The aim of the undertaken research was to map, describe and analyse selected research methods in the field of psychology, which may be used and applied today and under current conditions in criminological research. Our aim was to complete, specify and acquire new information and knowledge. We selected those psycho-diagnostic techniques that are commonly used in our country (or abroad) and that may be (or have already been) used as research methods. A larger part of the text is intentionally devoted to test methods – personality questionnaires, among other things because compared to methods of observation or document analysis, these techniques are exclusively administered by the field of psychology.

When selecting methods in criminological research, the particularities of the concrete empirical work must be taken into consideration – in general the target group (research group) must also be taken into consideration. Every technique may be effective in a different section of the research task and it must certainly be kept in mind that these techniques cannot be applied mechanically without considering the context of the research as a whole or the concrete situation. This is also associated with the need to assess the suitability of certain selected methods for application, e.g. in a prison environment to take into consideration the attitude of the convicted persons to the investigation diagnostic techniques, which may differ from the attitude of other persons to test situations etc.

The contribution of criminological research and the applicability of its findings in practice are among others associated with the advancement of individual methods and techniques. Findings from the field of forensic psychology and awareness about psycho-diagnosis- its tools (tests), potential and limits, have their place not only in expert and legal assessor activities or penitentiary practice. In this publication, we attempted to demonstrate

that diagnostic methods have a firm and irreplaceable position in criminological research. The text may also be considered to be a certain source of basic information regarding diagnostic techniques- it includes numerous references that will simplify the search for further information- and we would be pleased if this publication proves helpful not only to criminology researchers but also to other involved professionals (from criminal law, penology or social-psychological environments).

*Translated by: Presto*