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Military Compatibility

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Briefing Agenda

- Background and History of Military Compatibility Research
- Current and Planned Work

Background and History of Military Compatibility Research

Independent Review Commission (IRC) on Sexual Assault in the Military

- In 2021, at the direction of the President, the Secretary of Defense ordered an Independent Review Commission (IRC) on Sexual Assault in the Military
 - Goal was to address sexual assault and harassment in the force
 - Made recommendations related to accountability, prevention, climate and culture, and victim care and support
- One recommendation was to implement a pre-accession assessment to screen for alignment with military core values (i.e., military compatibility)
 - Recommendation 2.6 c: The Secretary of Defense should immediately authorize operational testing . . . with a cross-Service pre-accession sample, allowing for important research and intervention development.

Military Compatibility Research Group

- Prior to the IRC recommendation, the Military Compatibility Research Group (MCRG*) formed to ensure the men and women selected to serve as members of the military possess traits supportive of, and positively aligned with, military core values.
- Military Compatibility Research Group Plan of Action and Milestones
 - *DoD seeks to minimize entrance of persons who are likely to become disciplinary cases, security risks, or who are likely to disrupt good order, morale, and discipline.*



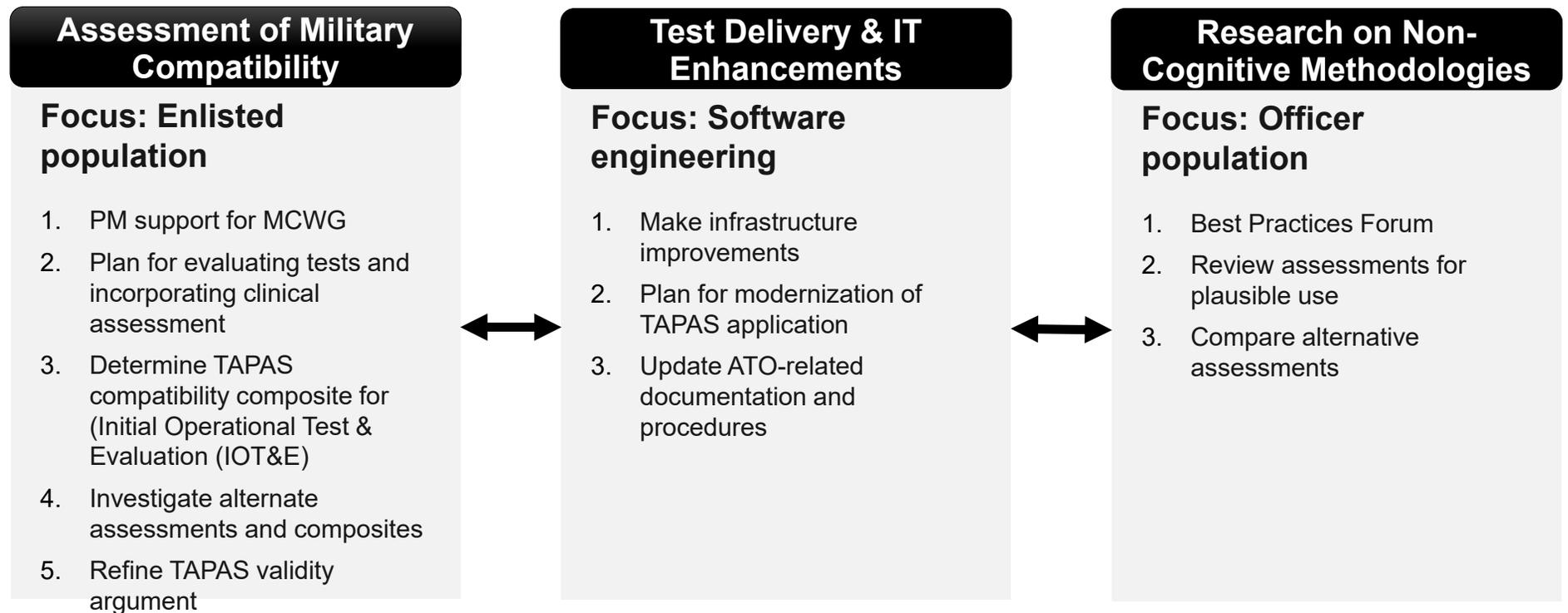
*MCRG membership includes representatives from the military departments and services, Military Service Academies, DoD's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office (SAPRO), Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ODI), Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence & Security (OUSD I&S), Office of People Analytics (OPA), and DoD's General Counsel (GC).

Initial Work Supporting Military Compatibility

- Initial work (2020–2022), performed by the Defense Personnel and Security Research Center (PERSEREC)
 - Literature review: identification of conceptual predictors of misconduct, counterproductive workplace behaviors (CWBs), violence, sexual assault, crime, antisocial behavior, and attrition (Schneider et al., 2022)
 - Review of existing security screening practices in the military (Schneider et al., 2020)
 - Review of existing security screening practices in other federal agencies and in law enforcement (Schneider et al., 2020a)
 - Comparison of Applicant Compatibility Assessment Practices (Schneider et al., 2020b)

Current and Planned Military Compatibility Work

Three Lines of Research



Identification of TAPAS Compatibility Composite(s)

- TAPAS identified as the principal tool for assessing enlisted members' personality and character attributes
- Create a compatibility composite or composites and minimum score(s) to be used in initial operational testing for military compatibility (using Army TAPAS Conduct composite as baseline) in the enlisted population
 - Objective is to develop one or more TAPAS composites that are predictive of military compatibility with the goal of reducing sexual assault, security risks, and other counterproductive work behaviors
- Procedurally, the approach is very similar to the creation of the joint-Service TAPAS composite
 - Some unique challenges include specifying the criterion space and research with low base rate criteria (see Evaluation Plan in coming slides)

Literature Review and Identification of Alternate Constructs/Assessments

- Investigate alternate facets, composites, and instruments to predict compatibility in the enlisted population
- Conduct a literature review and evaluation of:
 - Criterion space, including dark triad and dark tetrad specifically
 - Predictors of sexual assault/sexual harassment
 - Predictors of other counterproductive workplace behaviors (CWBs)
 - Approaches to validating assessments designed to predict low base rate behavior (e.g., forensic and clinical assessment literature)

Feasibility of Assessment by Licensed Clinician

- Develop a potential plan/feasibility analysis to incorporate evaluation by a licensed clinician into the enlisted accessions process
- Develop a clinical assessment process model and evaluate feasibility given applicant volume, geographic disbursement, and other logistic challenges
- Address questions such as:
 - Required credentials for licensed professionals?
 - Which applicants should be assessed?
 - How many can reasonably be assessed?
 - Where in the accessions process should clinical assessment occur?

Evaluation Plan

- Develop a plan and research design to evaluate applicable test(s) of military compatibility for the enlisted population
- Design a longitudinal research plan to evaluate how well we can identify individuals who possess traits incompatible with core military values or otherwise at risk of committing violent or criminal acts, based on:
 - TAPAS military compatibility composites
 - Alternate personality/psychological assessment(s)
 - Assessment by a licensed clinician
- Challenges include:
 - Predicting low base rate criteria
 - Multidimensionality of CWB criterion space
 - Availability (or lack thereof) of criterion data

Military Compatibility of Officers

- Pathway of officers to the military differs from enlisted personnel, requiring a different approach to assessing military compatibility
- Established a Non-Cognitive Assessment for Military Compatibility Best Practices Forum*
 - Goal is to ensure OPA is current on all research, possible methods, and technological advances for assessing compatibility while maintaining best practices in the use of personality and compatibility assessments
- TAPAS and other non-cognitive assessments will be investigated for use with officers (across the officer commissioning sources)

■ **OPA** Design research to compare alternative non-cognitive assessment options

*Members: Laura Barron, USAF; David Corey, Forensic Psychologist; Louise Fitzgerald, University of Illinois; Jennifer Lee, University of Minnesota; Mark Scullin, University of Nebraska; Chad Van Iddekinge, University of Iowa

Questions for DAC Consideration

- Initially, we anticipate creating multiple TAPAS military compatibility composites. For example, one for predicting sexual harassment, one for predicting extremist behavior, one for predicting violent behavior, etc. What risks should we be most concerned with when creating multiple composite scores from the same assessment instrument—and how can we mitigate those risks?
- Are there specific individual difference constructs (or measures) that have demonstrated strong predictive validity evidence that we should consider?
- Are there other novel approaches (for example, faking resistant) to self-report personality assessment that we should consider?
- Are there specific alternative validation strategies or analytic methods you recommend we consider for predicting low base rate criteria?

Thank you!

For more information
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Appendix: History of Military Compatibility Research

Initial Work Supporting Military Compatibility

- Literature review: identification of conceptual predictors of misconduct, counterproductive workplace behaviors, violence, sexual assault, crime, antisocial behavior, and attrition (Schneider et al., 2022)
 - Biographical data: alcohol use, tobacco use, behavioral history of misconduct or violence, educational history, psychiatric history
 - Risk factors: authoritarianism, dishonesty, disinhibition, hostility/anger/aggression, impulsivity, Machiavellianism, narcissism, neuroticism, psychopathy
 - Protective factors: grit, hardiness, resilience

Initial Work Supporting Military Compatibility

- Review of existing security screening practices in the military (Schneider et al., 2020)
 - Described processes currently used by DoD military services to evaluate the compatibility of applicants for active-duty enlistment and commissioning
 - Described the assessment instruments used to inform these evaluations
 - Described the gaps that subject matter experts (SMEs) identified in current processes and approaches they recommended to address these gaps
- Review of existing security screening practices in other federal agencies and in law enforcement (Schneider et al., 2020a)
 - Described processes used by non-military organizations to evaluate applicants' compatibility, including law enforcement vetting specifically

Initial Work Supporting Military Compatibility

- Comparison of Applicant Compatibility Assessment Practices (Schneider et al., 2020b)
 - Conducted gap analysis between current DoD applicant assessment practices and constructs found in academic research literature to predict misconduct
 - Highlighted assessment practices of other government organizations that could address gaps in current processes identified by DoD SMEs
 - Described legal concerns noted by the OGC, including potential disparate impact and the requirement that any screening tool used for selection have excellent psychometric properties
 - Provided recommendations and next steps for the MCRG's review and consideration

Initial Work Supporting Military Compatibility

- Independent, red team review of Schneider et al., (2020b) recommendations
 - Recommendation 1: Expand use of publicly available electronic information, including social media
 - Recommendation 2: Conduct psychological trait screening of all applicants
 - Recommendation 3: Conduct psychological assessments with a subset of applicants
 - Recommendation 4: Continue to research and develop DoD assessment instruments

Initial Work Supporting (or Relevant to) Military Compatibility

- Additional studies supporting the MCRG have explored
 - Accessions data and TAPAS as predictors of misconduct (Breslin et al., 2021)
 - Development and Test of Dark Tetrad Research Forms for the U.S. Air Force (Drasgow Consulting Group, 2020)
 - An Initial Evaluation of the Potential of Social Media Data to Inform Enlisted Recruiting in the U.S. Military (McGonigle & Putka, 2023)
 - Implementation models for psychological/clinical assessment (Lo et al., 2023)