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A Validation Study of the Nebraska Department of Corrections Inmate Classification Model

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A VALIDATION STUDY OF THE NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS INMATE CLASSIFICATION MODEL

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THESIS ACCEPTANCE

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Inmate classification models have recently shifted from subjective criteria to objective classification. With this change, classification has moved away from reformation of inmate behavior to managing prison populations. Objective classification seeks to accomplish two functions. First, the models attempt to make decisions that are rational, consistent, and fair. Second, variables used in objective models attempt to predict which offenders will have institutional adjustment problems.

The present study assesses Nebraska's inmate classification model for its objectivity and its predictive capacity. A sample of 458 male offenders admitted into Nebraska prisons in 1990 was used. Offenders divided into three custody levels; minimum, medium and maximum were measured on 11 independent variables; five classification and six demographic variables and on five dependent variables of institutional adjustment.

Results indicate that the Nebraska model is making objective classification decisions based solely on the classification variables. A low override rate and insignificant differences between the demographic variables and custody level support the model's objectivity. However, the model is not a valid instrument for predicting institutional adjustment problems of incarcerated

offenders. Age and education level--two variables absent from this model--emerged in this study as the best predictors of adjustment. None of the classification variables in Nebraska's model, with the exception of escapes, showed a consistent level of predictive validity.

This study suggests the Nebraska classification model can be improved to do a better job of predicting institutional adjustment. To increase the predictive quality of the classification decisions, certain demographic variables, mainly age and education level, need to be incorporated and ranked higher than other variables. Improving the classification system in this way will reduce over-classification, help to alleviate overcrowding and decrease the costs associated with caring for Nebraska's prison population.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Classification of inmate populations is one of the most important functions of any correctional department. Reasons for classifying inmates into sub-populations include control of inmate behavior, minimizing institutional adjustment problems and assignment of inmates to programs and services (Levinson, 1988; Mackenzie & Buchanan, 1990).

The importance of inmate classification can not be understated. Several examples illustrate this point:

> In California, 1983, an inmate with a history of mental illness and violent criminal behavior was misclassified from maximum custody to minimum custody resulting in an escape from a minimum security facility followed by a murder of a family of three (Austin, 1986).
>
> On February 16, 1987 in Fort Meyers Florida, a convicted killer who was medically classified as a paraplegic and had spent seven years in a wheelchair while incarcerated, was returning to the Avon Park Correctional Institution from a nearby medical center when he suddenly jumped from his wheelchair and took a guard, a medical technician and another inmate hostage and escaped in a stolen car (New York Times, 1987).
>
> On October 10, 1991 four inmates serving time at a minimum security facility in Hastings, Nebraska for theft, burglary and assault broke through a security window and escaped (Omaha World Herald, 1991). Two of the inmates were apprehended within one week of the escape and one of those inmates was charged

with additional crimes of theft and burglary while on escape status (Parole Board Files, 1991).

Ideally, classification models separate the dangerous from the non-dangerous, although in these cases the models failed to identify these inmates as potential threats to society.

In its simplest form, classification models score inmates on a variety of variables. After the variables are individually scored and summed, the inmate receives an overall score identifying the appropriate custody and security level. Custody level refers to the amount of supervision needed to care for a particular inmate. Security level refers to the type of institution that an inmate should be assigned to.

In the past, classification was done by subjective means whereby professionals (case managers, psychologists and administrators) relied on expert opinion in deciding how offenders should be classified. Recently there has been a shift away from this subjective process to objective classification models. Objective models score each inmate on a standardized set of variables. There are two issues of importance in these models. First, the models attempt to be objective. Accordingly, every offender is classified using the same variables. This procedure attempts to reduce biases found in the subjective process while at the same time increasing equity and fairness. Second, the models attempt to predict which inmates will have institutional adjustment problems. That is, which inmates will be most disruptive during their incarceration time. This prediction process determines the appropriate custody level for

each inmate. For example, if an inmate has a history of violence and a record of previous escapes the appropriate custody level would in most cases be maximum due to the danger posed by the inmate towards staff and society. On the other hand, if an inmate is non-violent and incarcerated for a low severity offense then the custody level would probably be minimum because of the low risk of dangerousness. The models rely on variables believed to be valid predictors of behavioral problems. Although most of the new generation of classification models attempt to achieve objectivity and predictability, implementation and success varies dramatically.

Nebraska, like many other states, has adopted the Federal Bureau of Prisons Security Designation and Custody Classification Model. This is an objective model that relies on five criterion variables to classify each inmate. The variables used include current offense, prior commitments, escapes/attempted escapes, past violence and projected length of incarceration. Each offender is classified into one of four custody levels: community, minimum, medium and maximum. The process of scoring each variable individually and arriving at a total custody score is illustrated in Appendix A. It appears that Nebraska's model, by scoring each offender according to the five variables, achieves objectivity. This however, may not be the case.

There are three issues important to all classification models. First, overrides involve changing initial classification scores from lower custody levels to higher custody levels or vice versa. When

override rates exceed 10 percent of all classification scores, the objectivity of the model is seriously threatened (Austin, 1986). Second, over-classification occurs when a model relies on variables that are not valid predictors of institutional adjustment. Valid predictors are those variables that are correlated with institutional adjustment. When a model is making classification decisions by relying upon variables that are not correlated with adjustment then the models predictive validity is limited. Third, overcrowding may nullify any classification process by forcing administrators to make custody decisions according to space availability. In other words, if an offender is classified as minimum custody but room is only available at a medium security facility, then the inmate's custody level may be changed to medium in order to place that inmate in a permanent housing facility. As prisons continue to be overcrowded, more emphasis may be on determining what type of facility has room and then matching the offender's custody level to that facility.

Research Questions

To determine the ability of Nebraska's classification model to accomplish it's goals, this study attempts to answer two research questions. First, is the classification model objective? That is, are inmates classified into distinct groups based solely on the classification variables or are other factors exerting an influence into the classification process. Second, are the classification variables in the model predictive of institutional adjustment? That

is, are the variables in the classification model correlated with institutional adjustment?

In this study, a review of the literature on classification models is presented. This review consists of identifying factors that are correlated with institutional adjustment and determining what classification models combine objectivity with predictability. Next, chapter three discusses the research design used in this study of Nebraska's classification model. Here a discussion is presented on the development and implementation of the classification model currently used in Nebraska. In addition benefits of this study for the Department of Correctional Services (DCS) are addressed.

In this study of the Nebraska classification model, the sample was selected from 1100 admissions into the Nebraska Correctional System in 1990. By viewing parole board files and other data information was collected on 11 independent variables: five classification variables; current offense, past violence, length of incarceration, escapes and prior commitments and six demographic variables; education level, age, drug abuse, marital status, religious belief and race. The dependent variables of institutional adjustment were operationalized as number of disciplinary reports, amount of time spent in segregation, number of days of lost good time, number of days spent on room restriction and number of severe disciplinary reports.

The focus of this project is to determine if Nebraska's model is classifying offenders objectively. This is accomplished by

looking at the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable of custody level in terms of chi-square and correlation analysis. This study also attempts to determine which of the independent variables are predictive of institutional adjustment by analyzing the relationship between the independent and dependent variables through correlation and regression analysis. Chapter four reveals the results of the analyses of the model's objectivity and predictability. Finally, chapter five, provides a brief discussion of the major findings, an analysis of policy implications, a description of limitations of this study, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Traditionally, subjective classification models have used classification as a means to accomplish deterrence, incapacitation and rehabilitation. All three objectives are dependent on subjective criteria, that is professional opinions based on interviews and personality profiles, to identify homogeneous sub groups within prison populations (Braiker, 1979). For rehabilitative purposes, the premise is that different offenders will respond to different types of treatment. Thus, by identifying sub groups, offenders can be effectively matched to appropriate programs (Braiker, 1979). Likewise for deterrent purposes, the idea is that different groups will respond differently to various levels of punishment (Braiker, 1979). Determining what levels of punishment work with what types of offenders is a problem that needs to be addressed before deterrent effects can be assessed. The objective of incapacitation has focused on the career criminal approach. The idea is that a select number of criminals commit the majority of crimes. If career criminals could be identified from the general prison population, then they could be selectively incapacitated. It is assumed that the identification and incapacitation of career criminals would result in better use of prison resources and a reduction in crime (Braiker, 1979).

SUBJECTIVE CLASSIFICATION MODELS

Several different methods for classifying offenders into categories have been tried or developed. First, there were attempts to classify criminals based on offense data. Believing that offenders who committed similar types of crimes would be similar in many other aspects was the underlying assumption of this approach. However, most offenders are not limited to single types of crimes and other than offense type, offenders rarely have other important variables in common (Megargee, 1977). There have also been attempts to classify offenders based on physical characteristics. Lombroso's atavism theory is the most well known of these models (Megargee, 1977). This model was shown to be tainted with unsound methodology. For example, Lombroso argued that criminals could be identified by body type, head size and other physical characteristics. Attempts to use this model today would be discriminatory and unconstitutional because people have no control over biological characteristics. To use a biological approach to classify inmates would result in too many errors and a lack of predictive validity.

Another approach uses demographic variables such as age, socio-economic status and race. The problem with traditional approaches is that they have been unable to reflect the changes inherent in these variables (Megargee, 1977). For example, variables such as education, age and employment status are dynamic and continue to change. An illiterate inmate at initial classification

may not be illiterate after participating in prison educational programs. Thus the original classification score is no longer valid concerning the variable of education. However, annual re-classification procedures can take into account any changes occurring in these demographic variables.

Race on the other hand is a static variable. In McClelland v. Sigler (1971) a group of black inmates filed suit against the Nebraska State Penitentiary accusing the state of making classification assignments based on race by denying the inmates housing assignments in the east cell block. Judge Warren Urbom ruled that racial classification of inmates is unconstitutional and adversely affects the rights of black inmates to be rehabilitated (Jacobs, 1983, p. 89). Citing Brown v. Board of Education (1954), Urbom stated that through desegregation, equality of the races in society must also be maintained in the prison setting.

Finally, psychological and psychiatric attempts at classifying offenders have not enjoyed much success. They have been limited by a lack of knowledge about human behavior in their attempts to identify mental problems which many offenders do not have (Megargee, 1977).

Subjective models have typically been subject to biases and discriminatory practices limiting their uniform application to all offenders (Austin, 1983). Certain problems are inherent in models that rely on subjective criteria. Using these models is a time consuming process. Professionals spend considerable amounts of

time conducting interviews and tests in hopes of predicting institutional adjustment problems (Austin, 1983). A study by Cooper and Werner (1990) tested the ability of staff to predict inmate violence using a subjective model. Results showed that psychologists and case managers were only able to predict one out of five inmates as being violent and one out of four were predicted as false positives--predicted as violent who were actually non-violent (Cooper & Werner, 1990). Due to the slowness of the classification process, inmate movement through the system is delayed resulting in classification decisions based on a space available approach (Austin, 1983; Bonta & Motiuk, 1990; Clements, 1982). These problems have led to court decisions requiring correctional institutions to change from subjective to objective criteria (Austin, 1983).

In Pugh v. Locke (1976), an inmate in the Alabama correctional system filed a lawsuit seeking relief from violations of his Eighth and Fourteenth Amendment rights. The issues consisted of unconstitutional conditions of confinement which included an improper classification system. The U.S. district court stated,

> There is no working classification system in the Alabama penal system, and the degree to which this impedes the attainment of any proper objectives of a penal system cannot be overstated (p. 324).

The court concluded that the Alabama classification model resulted in inmates being housed on a space available approach, mentally disordered and psychologically impaired offenders not being properly

identified, a failure to separate predatory inmates from passive inmates, and over-classification of inmates which contributed to already serious problems of overcrowding. The court ruled for the plaintiff requiring the Alabama department of corrections to implement a new classification system that included considerations of age, mental and physical characteristics, educational and vocational needs, criminal history, and treatment programs.

In a similar case, Ramos v. Lamm (1979), Colorado inmates filed suit alleging the conditions of confinement at the Colorado State Penitentiary, a maximum security facility in Canon city were unconstitutional. The inmates stated that the classification system resulted in assignments into more restrictive security confinements than was necessary. Problems evident in the Alabama department of corrections existed in Colorado as well. The U.S. District Court found the Colorado classification process resulted in severe over-classification of inmate populations. Reviewing departmental files, the court discovered that out of 586 maximum security offenders housed at Canon city, 520 should have been classified as either medium or minimum security.

The Eber Diagnostic model was used in Colorado in the late 70's to make classification assignments. This model relied on the use of personality tests to make predictions about institutional behavior. Any classification assignment that is made by the model however, can be over-ridden by security officers without requiring justification. The developer of this model, Dr. Eber, has stated that

the predictions made by the model concerning future behavior are so poor that the model should not be used for classification assignments unless there are no other means available and then should only be used by trained staff (Ramos v Lamm, 1979, p. 148). Final classification decisions are made by one of five programmers relying upon information obtained from the personality tests and security officers. No method was established to assure that similar classification decisions were made for similar offenders. The Colorado court stated,

> While there is no constitutional right to classification as such, a valid classification system provides a reasonable method by which prison officials can protect and afford to inmates other constitutional rights such as safety and medical care (p. 159).

In addition, the court stated that any classification model must make decisions that are not arbitrary, irrational or discriminatory and as presently used, the Colorado model is unconstitutional (p. 159).

Obviously in the Alabama and Colorado systems inmates were assigned to custody designations based not on their classification scores but rather on a space available approach. In addition, the classification process of both states was unconstitutional due to the subjectivity of the models. In both cases, the courts purpose was to increase the equity and fairness of classification models and to achieve some level of predictive validity which was not obtainable in subjective models (Austin, 1983; Clements, 1982).

CLASSIFICATION AS A MANAGEMENT TOOL

With little success in achieving rehabilitation, deterrence and incapacitation, subjective classification models have given way to equity-based objective models. These models seek to classify each inmate objectively by scoring a set of classification variables believed to be valid predictors of institutional adjustment. With the design and implementation of objective models, classification as a process has changed from one primary purpose, reformation of offender behavior, to classification as a means of managing inmates. This involves implementing a system whereby correctional managers can assign inmates to appropriate security/custody levels, make housing designations and match offenders to programs and services in a non-biased, uniformly applied method with the intention of managing offenders and minimizing institutional adjustment problems (Austin, 1986; Buchanan, Whitlow, & Austin, 1986; Clements, 1981; Kane, 1986; Kennedy, 1986; MacKenzie & Buchanan, 1990). An objective system should be reliable and valid and attempt to reduce adjustment problems while at the same time providing opportunities for changing criminal behavior (MacKenzie & Buchanan, 1990; Toch, 1981).

For classification to be effective, the process should be viewed as a transaction between inmate and staff in which each fully understands the classification process (Toch, 1981). There are two advantages to this approach. First, staff are in a better position than case managers (those in charge of classifying

offenders) to observe inmate behavior on a day to day basis. Providing this information to case managers enables them to make recommendations that would match offenders to appropriate programs and services (Toch, 1981). Second, if inmates are participating in the process they are less likely to be resistant to their classification score thereby increasing the staff's ability to manage them (Toch, 1981).

This is not to say that the management approach is without problems. Such concerns as staff resistance to the system, lack of resources, overcrowding and poor training may limit the success of management classification (MacKenzie & Buchanan, 1990). Classification as a management tool is a viable alternative to the process of classifying offenders strictly for behavioral changes, especially since changing behavior is so difficult to achieve.

PREDICTING INSTITUTIONAL ADJUSTMENT

The primary function of classification systems is the assignment of offenders to appropriate security/custody levels. The rationale is to minimize institutional problems by predicting which inmates will be disruptive and/or violent. The security designation refers to the type of institution. As shown in Figure 1, a Level II institution is a maximum security facility and a Level V institution is a community facility. The custody level consists of community, minimum, medium and maximum and is in reference to the type of custody each offender requires.

FIGURE 1
SECURITY/CUSTODY LEVEL CHART

Security Level			
I and II	I and III	I and IV	V
Custody Level			
Maximum Medium Segregation	Minimum Levels A & B, Segregation	Minimum-Level B Segregation	Community-Levels A & B

Note. DCS, 1988.

Most models in use today rely on classification variables assumed to be predictive of institutional adjustment problems. While most models use similar variables, the amount of weight or relative contribution of each variable is not always the same across different models. However, some variables have been shown to be better predictors of institutional adjustment than others.

Age

Hanson, Moss, Hosford and Johnson (1983) attempted to determine the best predictor for institutional adjustment using four different classification models. The four models consisted of Security Level, Custody Level, Megargee Typology and Demographic Variables consisting of age, education, sentence length and criminal history. These factors were the independent variables. The dependent variable was institutional adjustment and was

operationalized as misconduct reports, days of lost good time, time spent in segregation and work performance. The sample consisted of 337 inmates from a federal penitentiary at Lompoc, California. Age was correlated (r=.-39) with institutional adjustment indicating that the younger the offender the more problematic his behavior (Hanson et al., 1983). Age was found to be the best individual predictor of institutional adjustment when measured by misconduct reports.

This finding was supported by a study conducted by Cooper and Werner (1990). The researchers were also interested in what variables were predictive of institutional adjustment. The dependent variable was the prediction of violence and the independent variables consisted of seventeen factors such as age and education. Age was negatively correlated with violence and was found to be the most important variable for predicting inmate violence (Cooper & Werner, 1990). Some caution is warranted here. The sample size was small (n=33) with only eight inmates being identified as violent. Another problem is the absence of random sampling procedures. The use of small samples and the lack of random sampling procedures increases the amount of sampling error. This, in turn, effects the degree of generalizability of the results to the larger population.

A third study providing support for the predictive validity of age was conducted by Carey, Garske and Ginsberg (1986). The researchers used an MMPI model (see page 33) with additional

demographic variables in an attempt to predict prison adjustment. Adjustment was measured as l) number of cell changes, 2) number of nights spent in a adjustment cell, 3) number of rule infractions, 4) referrals to mental health, 5) placement in administrative control, and 6) participation in educational/vocational programs. A sample of 503 inmates was used with behavior being the dependent variable and group identification and demographic factors being the independent variables. Chi-square analysis revealed age was significantly associated with institutional adjustment even when controlling for race and group identification (Carey et al., l986). Once again the relationship was negative, with age being the most important variable in relation to institutional adjustment.

These three studies suggest age is a good predictor of institutional adjustment. But there is a problem with using age to predict institutional adjustment. First, as mentioned earlier, age is a dynamic variable. Yearly re-classification procedures can take this change into account, thus reducing the negative effects associated with a changing variable. Second, is the problem of policy makers deciding what age is predictive of adjustment problems. In other words, how should age be scored on an objective classification model? Younger inmates appear to be more troublesome than older inmates but the question that needs to be answered is how young? Aside from these problems, age is one of the best predictors of institutional adjustment. Even when other

variables are controlled, age is still negatively correlated with adjustment problems.

Past Violent Behavior

The National Institute of Justice (1987) reports that past violent behavior is the second most important variable for predicting institutional adjustment. Using a random sample of 1100 inmates from 35 federal prison facilities, researchers found that violent history was significantly correlated with a variety of institutional problems. Disciplinary transfers, violence, overall misconduct and severity of misconduct have predictive validity when using an offenders past violent behavior (NIJ, 1987). Caution should be used when examining these results. It is unclear if all of the offenders were maximum security inmates or if the distribution was representative across several custody level designations. Also unclear are the definitions of violence and misconduct. How these were measured, whether by disciplinary reports or some other measure, was not revealed in this study.

Cooper and Werner (1990), in a study of newly admitted inmates in a Colorado correctional facility, found past violent behavior unrelated with institutional violence. Although the psychologists and case managers predicted history of violence to be a strong predictor of institutional adjustment, the results showed no statistical significance with regards to actual institutional violence (Cooper & Werner, 1990). Once again caution is needed when viewing these results due to the small sample size (n=33) and to the

possibility of under and over representation of distinct variables in the two groups studied (violent vs. non-violent). Supporting Cooper and Werner's conclusions about the low predictability of past behavior is a study by Hanson et al. (1983). The researchers indicated that the correlation between past behavior and institutional violence was only (r=.05) thus supporting the conclusion that past behavior is not a good predictor of institutional adjustment.

Previous Institutional Behavior

In Hanson et al's. (1983) study of four classification models, the best overall predictor of institutional adjustment measured as disciplinary reports, segregation time and loss of good time is the custody classification model. This model uses past/present institutional behavior to make classification decisions. That is, if an offender behaved violently during a previous incarceration then it is assumed that the same offender will behave violently during their present prison term. This approach rests on the idea that past behavior is indicative of future behavior (Hanson et al., 1983). Problems exist with this approach. First, it only applies to individuals previously incarcerated. Second, the model does not incorporate any changes that may have occurred in an inmate's behavior. For example, the offender may be older now and more passive than when previously incarcerated. Finally, disciplinary reports are not necessarily synonymous with institutional adjustment problems, since reports can be written for a variety of

frivolous reasons not associated with adjustment problems (Light, 1990). Using disciplinary reports in addition to lost good time and time spent in segregation would increase the validity of the measures.

Results contrary to Hanson et al. were found by Buchanan et al. (1986) who tested the Illinois, Wisconsin and California classification models for their ability to predict institutional adjustment using previous institutional behavior. Analyses of correlation strength between previous behavior and adjustment explained less than ten percent of the variance when using disciplinary reports as a measure of institutional adjustment (Buchanan et al., 1986). Again, disciplinary reports may not be a valid measure of institutional adjustment. Researchers suggest that taken alone, previous behavior is not a good predictor of institutional adjustment. When, however, previous behavior was combined with other variables such as age, prior record, and severity of offense, the models in this study demonstrated some ability to predict adjustment problems. It is unclear which variables provided the greatest amount of predictability.

Sentence Length

In the NIJ (1987) study, the researcher found sentence length to be associated with two types of inmate adjustment; transfers for disciplinary reasons and violence. Sentence length was not correlated with overall misconduct or severity of misconduct. By contrast, findings by Cooper and Werner (1990) found sentence

length to be negatively related to institutional violence (r=-.07). In other words, the longer the sentence the less disruptive the offender. Both studies suffer from weaknesses such as small sample size and undefined operationalizations of the variables. In addition, sentence length has never been cross validated to determine how much weight should be given to this variable with regards to predictive validity (Austin, 1983). In other words, sentence length was weighted subjectively by professional opinion from institutional managers and classification experts instead of statistical analysis for determining the appropriate weight of the predictor variable.

Severity of Offense

Severity of offense was found to be positively correlated with violence and overall misconduct in the Federal prison study (NIJ, 1987). Yet the strength of the correlation was not revealed in the study so it is unclear whether this variable was strongly or weakly correlated with misconduct. Cooper and Werner (1990) found severity of offense to be negatively correlated with institutional misconduct (r=-.20). That is, the more severe the sentence the less problems of institutional misconduct.

Some support exists for Cooper and Werner's findings. In their study of classification models, Hanson et al. (1983) found that the security classification model was the least predictive of institutional adjustment of the four models studied. Two factors included in this model are sentence length and severity of offense.

This lack of predictive validity may occur because severity of offense may be more related to behavior in the community rather than institutional behavior (Hanson et al., 1983). Sentence length and severity of offense may or may not be good predictors of institutional adjustment.

Miscellaneous Predictors

Other predictors receiving attention include prior commitments, type of detainers, history of escapes, number of prior convictions and drug/alcohol abuse. The utility of these variables to predict institutional adjustment is unclear. Hanson et al. (1983) concluded that none were strong predictors of institutional adjustment. The number of prior convictions was the only variable to reach statistical significance for predicting violence in a Colorado correctional facility (Cooper & Werner, 1990). In the NIJ (1987) study, however, all of the above variables, with the exception of drug/alcohol abuse, reached statistical significance ($p<.05$) for predicting overall misconduct and violence.

In general, many of these variables have not enjoyed much success in predicting institutional adjustment. Reasons for this may be the low rate of behaviors that they are trying to predict and the lack of cross validation studies (Clements, 1981; 1982). Further study is needed to determine the strength of these predictors and their effectiveness for predicting institutional adjustment.

CLASSIFICATION MODELS

Recent research has sought to combine the best predictor variables with objectivity in a search for valid classification models. There are currently around ten different models in use around the country (NIJ, 1987). Some states develop their own models while others use models already in existence. Most models seek to combine objectivity with predictability in making classification decisions.

California Classification Model

The California predictive model uses a combination of 26 criterion variables in making initial classification assignments (Austin, 1983; Buchanan et al., 1986). Some of the variables include age (defined as under/over 26 yrs. old), prior institutional behavior, criminal record, and sentence length. The predictive model ranks criminal, clinical, and social factors in order of importance to arrive at a classification score designating the appropriate security and custody level (Austin, 1983).

This model was first tested for its objectivity in a sample of 1000 Nevada inmates (Austin,1983). The model was compared with two other models, the Federal Prison model and the National Institute of Corrections model, in an attempt to determine differences in classification scores. Results showed all three models classified 52-57 percent of the Nevada population as minimum custody. Whereas, relying on subjective criteria, the Nevada classification committee classified 16 percent as minimum

custody (Austin, 1983). The high agreement rate between the three models suggests that the California model may be objective especially when compared to the scores obtained by the subjective committee.

By using age and prior institutional behavior it appears that the model may have a significant level of predictability. Upon closer analysis however, Austin (1986) and Buchanan et al. (1986) found this model to be lacking in any predictive validity. There are several reasons for this. First, as indicated in Table I, the weight given to the variable age is insignificant in the classification score. That is, although age is scored it does not carry enough weight or is not ranked highly enough to alter the overall classification rating. Similar to age, other social factors such as education, marital status and employment history are scored, but due to the low amount of weight assigned these variables they are unable to exert any influence on the custody score (Austin, 1986).

Second, prior institutional conduct is also assigned an insignificant amount of weight in the classification score. By decreasing the weight assigned to these two variables, the effectiveness of the model to predict institutional adjustment is limited because studies have shown age and prior institutional behavior to be good predictors of adjustment (Carey et al., 1986; Cooper & Werner, 1990; Hanson et al., 1983). Other variables that may not be valid predictors are more heavily weighted thus reducing the model's ability to predict behavioral problems.

TABLE I REGRESSION SCORES OF CLASSIFICATION VARIABLES BY CLASSIFICATION MODELS

Factors used in classification	Classification Models			
	Federal Model	California	NIC	Nebraska
Current Offense				
length of sentence	.15			.23
expected time served		.76		
seriousness of offense	.51		.32	.30
Criminal Record				
escapes	.15	.04	.03	.08
juvenile incarcerations		.02		
adult incarcerations	.02	.10		.03
felony convictions			.16	
assualtive offenses	.01		.25	.20
Previous Institutional Behavior				
negative behavior		.02	.02	
positive behavior		.01		
Social Factors				
age		.01	.06	
education		.01	.00	
marital status		.01		
military record		.00		
alcohol/drug abuse			.04	
employment		.01		
Detainers/Warrants	.17	.02	.11	

Note. Values for California, Federal, and NIC models taken from Austin, 1983.

Third, the model only applies to those who have been previously incarcerated. One can not measure an inmates prior institutional behavior if that inmate has not been previously incarcerated.

Finally, sentence length accounts for 75 percent of the classification score. Sentence length has not been established as a good predictor of institutional adjustment. The models objectivity is also limited, because, in effect, judges are classifying offenders based on the length of sentences handed down. This model lacks predictive validity and its objectivity is questionable.

Federal Prison Systems Model (FPS)

The FPS model is divided into two categories--security level designation and custody level designation. The security level designation is known as an equity-based model because the classification score is based on six legal variables comprised of severity of offense, expected time served, warrants, prior adult incarcerations, prior violent offenses and escape history (Austin, 1983; NIJ, 1987). The exclusion of such variables as age, education and marital status lends credibility to the model's objectivity. The model's rationale is that it classifies everyone according to a set standard of legal variables, those variables that are related to criminal activity, rather than relying on social characteristics, thus eliminating any variation. This model appears to be weighted more towards objectivity than predicting adjustment since two of the

best predictors of institutional adjustment-age and prior institutional behavior-are absent from this model (see Table I).

Disagreement exists as to the security level model's ability to predict adjustment. The NIJ (1987) study concluded that this model was able to predict disciplinary transfers, violence and overall misconduct. Contrary to this finding, Hanson et al. (1983) concluded that this model was not useful in predicting institutional adjustment. None of the variables were correlated with any measures of adjustment problems. Due to the lack of substantiated predictor variables in this model, it appears that it is not a good predictor of institutional adjustment, nevertheless, it satisfies the objective requirement.

The Custody Level Designation category, arrives at a classification score based on an inmate's past/present institutional behavior (Hanson et al., 1983). Classification variables used for the custody score are drug/alcohol abuse, mental stability, family and community ties and types and frequency of disciplinary reports. When comparing custody level with security level, the Megargee typology and demographic variables, Hanson et al. (1983) concluded custody level to be the best predictor of institutional adjustment. The researchers found a significant correlation ($r=.90$) between custody level and the dependent measures of disciplinary reports, segregation time and lost good time. This model appears to be superior in predictive validity compared to the other four models in

the study since it is based on an inmate's past/present institutional behavior.

Two weaknesses exist with this model. First, the process may be slow and cumbersome. How much behavior must be observed before a classification score can be assessed with any degree of predictability? Second, objectivity may be compromised if evaluations of behavior are subjective in nature. How institutional adjustment behaviors are operationalized and recorded may determine how objective the model really is. The problem is that community ties and mental stability are operationalized by professional opinions based on subjective criteria. Adding age into the classification score would improve the model's predictive quality (Hanson, et al., 1983).

National Institute of Corrections Model (NIC)

The NIC model is an additive, three part process. In the first part, history of institutional violence, severity of offense, prior violent offenses, escapes, drug abuse, prior incarcerations, detainers and a variety of stability factors are rated in determining a custody score. The second part consists of a needs assessment designed to determine an offender's behavioral problems. For the third part, a summary sheet is completed consisting of program recommendations and total scores for the needs and custody sections (NIJ, 1987). This model relies heavily on current offense and prior record which accounted for 87-92 percent of the variance in the study of Nevada inmates by Austin (1983). According to the

literature, these two variables are not good predictors of institutional misconduct. Therefore, by relying on current offense and prior record in making classification assignments, the model's ability to predict adjustment is limited. As shown in Table I, age and prior institutional behavior, both good predictors of adjustment, are included. Since these variables are not ranked highly enough in the scoring scheme however, they are unable to provide any measure of predictability.

An evaluation of the model's objectivity indicates a 20 percent override rate of classification scores suggesting the model is not making the appropriate classifications (Austin, 1983). Relying on administrative overrides decreases the model's objectivity especially if the reasons and the goals of the overrides are defined ambiguously. This model has the potential to increase its predictive validity if variables such as age and prior institutional behavior were more highly weighted which, in turn, may decrease the need for a high percentage of administrative overrides.

Jessness Inventory Classification Model

The Jessness inventory classification model, a typological model, seeks to match offenders to programs and to develop effective management strategies (Jessness, 1988). A 155 true/false questionnaire is employed to classify offenders into one of nine sub groups based on scores obtained from eleven personality scales; sub groups are categorized into three distinct levels. Level II consists of unsocialized aggressive and unsocialized passive offenders. Level

III is distinguished by cultural conformists, immature conformist and manipulators. Level IV is characterized by neurotic acting out, neurotic anxious, inhibited and adaptive type inmates (Jessness, 1988). Multiple regression analysis comparing age, economic status, ethnicity and aptitude with group identification concluded that group identification revealed more information about the offender than did a variety of background characteristics.

A test-retest procedure was conducted on a sample of county jail inmates who were classified with this model. After three to twelve months, only 58 percent of the group maintained their original group membership as assigned by a case manager (Jessness, 1988, researchers defined group membership as the assignment of each inmate by a case manager into one of the nine groups based on the inventory scale). This suggests that either the model is unstable revealing different results upon retest procedures or that the offenders are unstable by changing group membership. On the other hand, the model is in some respects objective. Reliability tests have shown that different classifiers have obtained similar results when classifying offenders due in part to the simplicity and shortness of the test (Jessness, 1988). As for predicting institutional adjustment, the model was not designed to predict adjustment but rather the matching of offenders to programs (Jessness, 1988). The high frequency of group change raises serious questions about the model's usefulness as a management tool since

it is unable to identify those offenders who will have institutional adjustment problems.

Quay's AIMS Classification Model

A second typological model is Quay's AIMS (adult internal management system) classification model. This model identifies five groups of inmates, Groups I & II classified as "heavies" who are violence prone, manipulative predators, Group III classified as "moderates" made up of reliable hard working individuals, and Groups IV & V classified as "lights" consisting of anxious victim prone inmates (Levinson, 1988). Effective management of these inmates can only be accomplished through the separation of each group from the others. The classification score is a two step process. First, correctional officers fill out adjustment checklists based on inmate behavior during a two to four week time frame. Second, case managers fill out life history checklists based on background information obtained from court records, pre-sentence reports and inmate interviews (Levinson, 1988; Megargee, 1977).

All indications suggest the model is lacking in objectivity. First, having correctional officers decide what behavior is displayed and how such behavior should be defined introduces subjectivity into the classification process. Due to the nature of their work, officers tend to interact with inmates in terms of rewards and punishments. Inmates who do what the officer wants are more likely to be rewarded with a favorable rating on the checklist than are non-conforming inmates. The process of completing the life history

checklist is also subjective. Answers to the checklist are based on pre-sentence reports (professional opinions of probation officers) and interviews (professional opinions of case managers).

Despite the model's apparent lack of objectivity, there is support for its predictive validity. The AIMS model was pilot tested in two correctional facilities; a South Carolina Penitentiary and a U.S. Federal Prison in Pennsylvania. Results revealed that after a trial run over a one and a half year period, serious incidents decreased from 16 per 1000 to 8 per 1000 in the South Carolina prison. At the Federal prison, assaults on staff decreased by 2/3 and inmate on inmate assaults decreased by 1/3 (Levinson, 1988).

Data indicate the AIMS model is successful in reducing institutional adjustment problems. On the other hand, the results may not be valid. The study of the two prisons may suffer from such validity problems as history or maturation whereby the decrease in institutional problems is attributed to some other cause. Levinson (1988) did not reveal much about the methods for testing the AIMS model at either facility. Heavies received the majority of disciplinary reports in the federal institution and this group accounted for 60-90 percent of the disciplinary reports at the South Carolina facility compared to only 4-9 percent of the moderates (Levinson, 1988). These results may be misleading because it is unclear how the inmates were distributed among the three groups. For example, there might have been 1000 heavies and only 100 moderates in either facility so it is reasonable to conclude that the

heavies would have more disciplinary reports. This model does not appear to be objective nor does it have reliable evidence for its predictive ability. Overall, this model's usefulness in predicting institutional misconduct has yet to be established.

Megargee Classification Model

The Megargee typological classification system has its roots in the MMPI (Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory) and was constructed after years of research by Edwin Megargee, professor of psychology at Florida State University, and colleagues. Using the inventory, the researchers were able to classify offenders into ten distinct groups that differed substantially in regards to social characteristics, demographic variables, personality profiles and attitudes (Carey et al., 1986; Kennedy, 1986; Louscher et al., 1986; Zager, 1988). Based on the 566 question inventory, groups are distinguished by non-descript (for purposes of anonymity) names ranging from least deviant to most deviant. For example, group "Item" (least deviant) consists of stable well adjusted offenders while group "How" (most deviant) is characterized by unstable, agitated mental health cases (Zager, 1988).

The initial research of the model was conducted at a medium security federal correctional center in Tallahasee Florida. The data base consisted of 500-600 youths ranging in age from 18-27 years old. Researchers identified ten groups of offenders (Megargee, 1977). A computer program has been designed that is able to classify 80-90 percent of offenders. The remaining 10 percent must

be classified by a clinician using established guidelines and policies. There is also a variation of 5-10 percent that are unclassifiable using this model (Carey et al., 1986; Zager, 1988).

Inter-rater reliability studies have been done to determine if the typology is an objective classification model. Comparing clinical classification scores of researchers in three different studies, researchers found that on average 83 percent of the classification scores were in agreement with clinical scores obtained by Megargee (Zager, 1988). Carey et al. (1986) found a high agreement rate (95 percent), when compared with Megargee scores for tied profiles but only a 40 percent agreement rate when classifying the unclassifiable profiles.

Louscher et al. (1983) has suggested that untrained clinicians using this model would not be able to objectively classify offenders. On the other hand, if clinical classification is necessary for those unclassified by the computer program, established guidelines developed by Megargee, should be observed in order to achieve objectivity.

Is this model capable of predicting institutional adjustment? Louscher et al. (1983) studied the model's effectiveness in the prediction of dangerous behavior of approximately 800 inmates at a federal penitentiary in Lompoc, California. Researchers found all ten groups of the typology were in existence at this facility and they did not differ significantly from the Tallahasee sample on such variables as age, race or offense type. Groups identified as having

no adjustment problems in Tallahasee were found to have the most adjustment problems in Lompoc (Louscher et al., 1983). Researchers found prior criminal behavior to be a better predictor of institutional adjustment than group identification in a penitentiary setting.

Kennedy (1983) measured the model's predictive validity with over 30,000 federal prison inmates. Results support the idea that the effectiveness of this model is substantially reduced when classifying older, more sophisticated inmates. Also of importance was the finding that violence prone groups did not commit more violent acts than those groups identified as non-violent, a conclusion supported by Hanson et al. (1983) where only one group was found to be correlated (r=.23) with violence.

Carey et al. (1986) assessed the models predictive validity in a state correctional facility in Ohio. Using a random sample of 503 inmates, measures were conducted on the dependent variable (behavior) with the independent variables being group identification. Researchers found the typology predictive for misconduct reports and use of mental health services but not predictive for cell changes and emergency placements (ie. segregation confinements). A major weakness with these findings is that the typology only worked for younger, white inmates. It is unclear as to why the researchers used such things as mental health services or cell changes for predicting behavior because these items may not be indicative of institutional adjustment problems. Many times inmates will request cell changes

for such reasons as smoking habits, race, and friendship. None of these reasons suggest any amount of adjustment problems but rather different preferences with regards to living conditions. As for requesting mental health services, inmates will request all types of services in order to get out of their cells for a while. Inmate requests to talk to mental health counselors does not mean that inmates will have substantial institutional adjustment problems. It is evident that the typology is not able to predict such behaviors for black inmates or those who are older. In conclusion, the Megargee typology does achieve some level of objectivity but it lacks any predictive value for determining what groups will have institutional adjustment problems (Carey et al., 1986; Kennedy, 1986; Louscher et al., 1983).

METHODOLOGICAL PROBLEMS

A major methodological problem inherent in all of the classification models is the lack of concern or control for environmental factors. Any inmate, regardless of classification score, put into a violent atmosphere (maximum security prison) may resort to violence in order to survive. The prison environment is an important variable that needs to be taken into account if classification models are to achieve any measure of predictive validity (Clements, 1981; 1982; Kane, 1986). Offenders classified as non-violent in regards to institutional adjustment may become quite the opposite when confronted with a dangerous environment where violence is the norm. A non-violent atmosphere, however, will exert

little if any influence on violence-prone inmates to alter their behavior. Failure to control for environmental factors may result in poor validity measures when determining the success of classification models to predict institutional adjustment (Kane, 1986).

A second problem relates to the operationalizations of the dependent variables. Disciplinary reports are not always related to institutional adjustment problems. Misconduct reports can be written for a variety of reasons which may have nothing to do with adjustment problems. Smoking in unauthorized areas, abusing telephone privileges and other minor rule violations are all grounds for misconduct reports. It is highly unlikely that these minor rule infractions are representative of institutional adjustment problems. Subjectivity in the reporting process can also result in overrepresentation of misconduct reports for some offenders due to the cohesiveness of the security force. If an inmate is uncooperative and causes problems for a guard, word gets around, and most of the other guards will go out of their way to make life miserable for that particular inmate. This includes writing misconduct reports for reasons that have little relationship to maladjusted inmate behavior.

Differences in the definitions of institutional adjustment across studies may produce contradictory conclusions. For example, NIJ (1987) indicates that history of violence and severity of offense are significantly associated with institutional misconduct. On the

other hand, Hanson et al. (1983) concluded that neither variable was correlated with institutional misconduct. The problem may lie in the way institutional misconduct is defined and how it is measured. The NIJ (1987) study does not reveal how misconduct was operationalized or measured whereas the Hanson (l983) study does. It may be that different findings have resulted from different measurement techniques. Researchers would be well advised to use similar definitions and measurements in order to allow comparability across studies.

A third problem, relating to typological models, concerns stability of group membership. Simons, Johnson, Gouvier, and Muzyczka (1981) assessed the stability of the Megargee typology. The researchers retested fifty inmates at a Memphis correctional facility who were initially classified using the MMPI instrument. The retest showed that 36 out of 50 offenders changed group membership after ten months and 10 out of 13 changed groups after one to four months of incarceration (Simons et al., l981). The authors concluded that the Megargee typology is unable to account for inmates changing group membership thus resulting in an unstable model that should not be used in classifying offenders.

In response to the article by Simons et al. (1981), Zager (1983) argued that Simons's findings were premature. Zager pointed out the sample size of 50 offenders was too small. Due to the small sample size, the number of offenders in each group was unknown. It may well be that those groups identified as stable may not have been

represented in the study. This seriously questions the reliability of Simon's results. Another problem is that Simons and his colleagues indicated they used a random sample, yet they only used volunteers, again suggesting that some group types may have been underrepresented (Zager, 1983). Finally, Simons et al. (1981) suggest that group change is bad indicating the typology is unstable. One of the main purposes of incarceration is to change behavioral patterns. Without knowing if the offenders changed from more deviant groups to less deviant groups or vise versa, it is impossible to say the typology is unstable and has no value. Problems regarding the changing of group identity are applicable to Quay's AIMS approach and the Jessness inventory as well. Research should focus on assessing the reasons for group change in order to determine if changes are due to attitudinal/behavioral adjustments or environmental factors (Zager, 1983). Any adequate model must take into account the dynamic nature of the inmate population.

FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

Classification models have changed substantially over the years. Although traditional models using subjective criteria have been replaced by objective models, the search for a superior model continues. The models described thus far have been unable to attain a high degree of accuracy for predicting institutional adjustment. Likewise, those models that do have some predictive value may achieve such value at the expense of being objective. In response to the development of typological models, the ability to predict

institutional adjustment on the basis of interviews and personality profiles has been unsuccessful (Clements, 1981; 1982; Hanson, et al., 1983).

Typological models deserve close scrutiny. The use of these models may be a step in the wrong direction--a step towards more traditional methods of classifying offenders not unlike Lombroso's atavism theory. The days of predicting human behavior based on physical characteristics or psychological profiles has not only proven to be unsuccessful but discriminatory as well. Reliance upon factors such as race, body size and personality scores returns us to the days of subjective classification decisions whereby professionals are arbitrarily classifying offenders based on opinion rather than on factual data. Using such typological schemes as the Jessness inventory, AIMS approach or the Megargee typology have no better success than pure chance for predicting institutional adjustment problems among incarcerated inmates.

A superior classification model must meet objectivity and predictability requirements, while taking into account environmental factors. An effective model must be sufficiently complete, have clearly explicit operational goals, be reliable and valid, achieve economical feasibility and be dynamic so that behavioral changes in offenders are reflected in changes in the classification process (Megargee, 1977). If predicting institutional adjustment and objectivity are the two most important goals inherent in any classification model, then it is unlikely that any

typology will be able to realize these goals. Classifying offenders based on psychological tests has not in the past nor probably will in the future enjoy much success at predicting institutional behavior.

Models that hope to predict institutional adjustment need to rely on and appropriately weight those criterion variables that have shown some predictive quality such as age, past violent behavior and previous institutional behavior. In addition, environmental factors should be controlled when assessing a classification models success. The prison environment has the power to alter offender behavior from passive to active in institutions where violence is the norm. Failure to recognize this will certainly limit the ability of classification model's to achieve objective classification decisions in addition to predicting adjustment problems within prison populations.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH DESIGN

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the validity of Nebraska's classification model. This evaluation answers these two questions. (1) Is the Nebraska classification model objective? (2) Are the classification variables used in the model valid predictors of institutional adjustment?

This chapter will discuss several important points in the design of this study. First, the Nebraska classification model will be addressed. How the model was developed, by whom and for what reasons, will be the focus of this section. Second, how this project may be utilized by the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services will be discussed. Assessing the validity of the classification model will be the third area of concern. This will include a statement of four hypotheses, methods of sample selection, data collection procedures and data analyses.

Nebraska's Classification Model

Prior to 1981, Nebraska relied on a subjective classification committee for classifying incarcerated offenders. This sub-classification committee, as it was called, was chaired by the warden of the Diagnostic and Evaluation Unit and involved anyone who had any knowledge about a particular offender. For example, if a correctional officer had intimate knowledge about an inmate's propensity towards violence, that officer would be involved in the

classification decision by sitting on or reporting to the committee anything known about the offender. This process of classification was not only time consuming, by having administrators and other correctional staff sit on committees, but it also produced a wide variety of decisions that were arbitrary and unscientific (Tewes, 1991). With court decisions in the 1970's holding subjective classification models in Colorado and Alabama as being unconstitutional because of irrational, arbitrary and discriminatory decision making, Nebraska looked to develop a more efficient classification model that would reduce disparity in classification decisions.

In 1981, the Nebraska department of corrections began developing an objective classification model. Lacking any experience or knowledge of objective designs, Larry Tewes, director of classification, Gary Grammar, superintendent of the Diagnostic and Evaluation Unit and Dr. Ligget, a departmental psychologist, reproduced an objective classification model from the Federal Bureau of Prison's Security Designation and Custody Classification Model. In 1983, the Nebraska model was implemented and used for the first time to classify inmates.

The Nebraska model is known as an additive model whereby five classification variables; current offense, prior commitments, escapes, past violence and projected length of incarceration are scored and summed to arrive at one of four custody levels; community, minimum, medium and maximum (See Appendix A).

The model attempts to accomplish two goals. First, it seeks to classify offenders objectively. Each offender is scored on the same variables and those variables designate a custody level. There is however, some subjectivity built into the process. A committee comprised of psychologists, case managers and other correctional staff may override classification scores for reasons such as housing space, security needs, program assignment or any other reason deemed necessary by the department of corrections (DCS, 1988). Override decisions must be stated in writing and approved by a Directors Review Committee. Currently the classification override rate is running under ten percent of all classification decisions (Seibold, 1992). Overrides are rarely issued to lower custody levels; the typical override occurs to higher custody levels. For example, if an inmate is displaying a high level of aggressive and violent behavior while at the Diagnostic and Evaluation Unit but only receives six points on his custody score, it may not be in the best interest of the department or society to send this offender to a minimum security facility. Thus the inmate's score may be over-riden in order to assign him to a more secure facility (Philson, 1992).

Two cases involve automatic overrides. Anyone with an outstanding warrant (detainer) from another state may be automatically over-riden to a higher custody level to prevent escape. Another case involves mentally disordered sex offenders. According to legislative guidelines, these offenders can not be classified

below medium custody. Even if this type of offender receives less than 16 points on his custody score, the score will be automatically over-riden to either medium or maximum custody (Philson, 1992).

The second goal of the classification model, is to predict which inmates will have institutional adjustment problems. The variables used in Nebraska's model are thought to be valid predictors of inmate adjustment. As discussed in the previous chapter, age, previous institutional behavior and past violent behavior are variables that have shown some ability to predict institutional adjustment. Unlike age and previous institutional behavior however, the predictive quality of past violent behavior in relation to adjustment has received mixed results. Some studies have indicated that it is a good predictor (NIJ, 1987) while others have found no predictive value (Cooper & Werner, 1990; Hanson et al., 1983).

One concern about the classification variables in Nebraska's model is whether or not the right variables have been chosen. Of the five classification variables used in Nebraska's model, research indicates that past violent behavior is the only one to have demonstrated any predictive quality.

Another concern relates to the amount of weight assigned to each variable. The most heavily weighted item in Nebraska's model is severity of current offense. This variable has not received much research support for being a valid predictor of adjustment. The second most heavily weighted items in Nebraska's model consist of past violent behavior, and projected length of incarceration (see

Table I). The literature has shown that length of incarceration is not a good predictor of adjustment. It also appears questionable to use incarceration length along with severity of current offense. The variables are positively correlated, as one increases so does the other. This is like scoring the same item twice which in turn decreases the model's predictive quality (Kane, 1986).

All male inmates sentenced to the Nebraska Department of Corrections are sent to the Diagnostic and Evaluation Unit to undergo the classification process. Upon arriving at the Diagnostic and Evaluation Unit, each inmate is assigned a case manager who is responsible for classifying offenders. Case managers receive an inmate's file containing information ranging from criminal history to personal characteristics. In some cases, files are incomplete and the case manager must contact the county where the offense was commited in order to obtain the missing information. After the necessary data is obtained, the case worker will classify the inmate using the objective model. Some of the number values can be adjusted at the case worker's discretion. For example, the variable of past violence requires a score of 10 for anything involving a weapon within the past 5 years (See Appendix A). If an offender is arrested for burglary and is carrying a pocket knife, the offender could be charged and convicted of carrying a concealed weapon which in turn would translate into an incident of past violence resulting in a score of 10 according to the scoring instrument. In contrast, the case manager may contact the county about the incident and make a

determination that the concealed weapon charge was not really a case of violence and adjust the number accordingly to reflect the actual incident (Philson, 1992).

In addition to using the objective scoring model, DCS relies on a variety of tests in determining offenders ability to adjust to prison and to make predictions about future behavior (Last, 1992). Currently, inmates take two academic tests and several personality tests such as the MMPI. When the testing is completed and the classification model is scored, the case manager and a correctional psychologist inform the inmate of his classification rating through an interview process that includes questions on criminal history, personal characteristics, family background and future goals. Once this process is completed the inmate remains at the Diagnostic and Evaluation Unit until bed space is found at the appropriate institution corresponding to his custody level.

There is no rationale for the classification variables used in the Nebraska model other than it being a reproduction of the Federal Bureau of Prison's model. The Federal model was the only classification model that DCS looked at before adopting it into their program (Tewes, 1991). Although Nebraska has revised the model in recent years, most variables however have not changed. A notable exception was the elimination of current detainers from the scoring process.

Changes have occurred in the values assigned to the variables. Values in and of themselves have no particular meaning. For

example, current offense is scored into one of five categories ranging from lowest to greatest with the values being 0,2,6,10, and 14 (See Appendix A). The values could just as easily be 0,1,2,3, and 4. There is one reason for the differences in values between variables. The developers of the Nebraska model wanted those offenders who committed a greatest offense (14) and received a sentence of 96 months or longer (10) to be automatically classified as maximum custody (minimum score of 24 = maximum custody) when adding only these two variables. Sensitivity to public confidence is the justification for using this procedure which is mainly used for classifying those doing life sentences.

Benefits of this Study

The Nebraska classification model has never undergone a validation study to determine its objectivity and predictability. This study may benefit the Nebraska Department of Corrections in several ways. First, it will determine if offenders are being classified objectively according to the classification variables. Second, this research will determine which variables are most predictive of institutional adjustment and how much weight should be assigned to those valid predictors. Third, this study will show how many offenders are being over-classified. That is, it will indicate how many offenders are classified as maximum and medium custody when they could be minimum or community custody. This is a significant area of concern since the Nebraska prison system continues to increase in population and costs. Finally, DCS may

utilize this study for making decisions on future expansion. If a high percentage of inmates now housed in maximum security facilities could be housed in less restrictive facilities, the department could accomplish two goals by expanding community facilities: a reduction in construction and operating costs and avoidance of the negative effects of the maximum security environment, thereby fostering a more rehabilitative atmosphere.

Hypotheses

H1: There should be significant differences between the classification variables and custody level.

H2: There should be no differences between the demographic variables and custody level.

With an override rate of less than ten percent and reliance upon a set of legal criterion variables, Nebraska's model appears to be making classification decisions based on objective criteria. Furthermore, of the number of override requests made to the director's review committee only 40-50 percent of those requests are granted (Tewes, 1991). If the model is making objective classification decisions then differences in custody levels should only be found in the five classification variables. There should be no differences in custody levels in regards to the demographic variables.

H3: The classification model has a limited ability to predict institutional adjustment.

The Nebraska model does not include variables that have shown good predictive quality in relation to inmate adjustment. Two of the best predictors of inmate adjustment--age and previous institutional behavior--are absent from Nebraska's model. The model does incorporate past violent behavior which in past studies has been found to be a good predictor of adjustment. Research has shown that none of the other variables in this model, current offense, prior commitments, escapes and length of incarceration have any ability to predict adjustment problems.

H4: The classification variables in Nebraska's model are inappropriately weighted thus minimizing its predictive quality.

Current offense carries the greatest amount of weight in the scoring process (see Table I, p. 25). Other variables carrying a significant amount of weight include past violence and incarceration length. Of these variables, only past violence has shown some predictive quality. By weighting all of the variables similarly, the model decreases its effectiveness in predicting which inmates will have adjustment problems. Valid predictor variables must be more significantly weighted in order to increase the models ability to predict adjustment problems.

METHODS

Sample

Data was collected on 458 male inmates from a population of approximately 1000 new admissions into the Nebraska Correctional System in 1990. The sample was drawn from four Nebraska Correctional Institutions: Nebraska State Penitentiary, Lincoln Correctional Center, Omaha Correctional Center and the Hastings' Correctional Center. All inmates that met the following criteria were selected for this study: 1) initially classified between January, 1990 and December, 1990, 2) maintained their initial custody level for a period of six months, 3) classified as either maximum, medium or minimum custody and 4) resided at only one institution during the six month measurement period.

Measurement

Information was gathered on twelve independent variables. The independent variables were categorized into ordinal levels of measurement (See Appendix D). The classification variables include: 1) current offense--the criminal offense for which the offender is currently incarcerated; 2) prior commitments--prior commitments for other offenses not related to the current offense; 3) escapes--escapes/attempted escapes from custody or supervision; 4) past violence--incidents of violence over inmates criminal past excluding current offense; 5) projected length of incarceration--amount of time expected to be incarcerated from date of sentence to

tentative release date; 6) custody level--as determined by the summation of the five classification variables.

The demographic variables include: 1) education level--highest level of education obtained prior to incarceration; 2) marital status--current marital status; 3) religious belief--identified as either faith or no faith; 4) race--measured as either white or minority; 5) drug/alcohol abuse--measured as no use, infrequent use, moderate use, or excessive use; 6) age--age of offender at time of classification.

The dependent variables used in this study consist of the following: 1) number of disciplinary reports--a misconduct report filed by a staff member on an inmate for rule infractions; 2) number of severe disciplinary reports--severe misconduct on the part of an inmate defined as a code 1 offense in the inmate rule book (See Appendix C); 3) number of days spent on room restriction--time spent confined to room/cell due to a rule infraction; 4) number of days spent in segregation--time spent in a solitary cell separated from the general population; 5) number of days of lost good time--good time days that are subtracted from an inmate's sentence that are forfeited due to disciplinary misconduct. (see Appendix D for sample characteristics and measurement frequencies).

Data Collection

Data on each of the 458 inmates in the sample was collected by viewing Parole Board files located at the central office of the Department of Correctional Services in Lincoln, Nebraska. Once an

inmate is incarcerated a parole file is initiated on his or her behalf. The file contains a wide variety of information including offense data, personal characteristics, departmental evaluations, health needs, programming recommendations and any other information thought to be needed by the department. Each file also contains initial classification and yearly re-classification information.

The independent variables of custody level, classification variable scores and demographic variables were obtained from these files due to the availability of the information and the accessibility of the central office. Information on the dependent variables was obtained from a departmental inmate discipline computer file. Data in the file included inmate's name, number and living location, types of disciplinary reports, reporting officer and types of punishments ranging from verbal reprimands to loss of good time.

Data Analyses

In order to test the first and second hypotheses, whether differences exist between the classification variables and custody level and the demographic variables and custody level, chi-square analysis were run on the classification variables in relation to custody level and the demographic variables in relation to custody level. Chi-square analysis was selected due to the categorical nature of the independent variables (Williams, 1986). This procedure is used to detect differences between the three levels of custody and the various independent variables. A correlation analysis was used to determine the relationship between the classification

variables and custody level. This procedure is a further indicator of the level of objectivity in the classification model. If the model is objective, there should be a high correlation between the five classification variables and custody level.

To test the third hypothesis, the ability of Nebraska's model to predict institutional adjustment, correlation analysis were used to determine the relationship between the classification variables and institutional adjustment. The reason for this procedure is to discover what variables are correlated with the measures of adjustment. For example, if the analysis shows that none of the classification variables are correlated with adjustment, then it would be reasonable to say that the classification variables are not valid predictors of adjustment. On the other hand, if some of the demographic variables are significantly correlated with adjustment then the model may increase in effectiveness by adding those variables to the scoring process. In addition, multiple regression analysis was used to identify the best predictor model for each of the five dependent measures. One regression analysis was run for each of the five measures of adjustment.

In testing the fourth hypothesis, namely the proposition that variables in Nebraska's model are inappropriately weighted, multiple regression analysis was used to determine which of the independent variables correlated with adjustment, should be weighted most heavily to improve the model's predictive ability. The Beta weights were used for determining the most salient

predictors of institutional adjustment. Chi-square, correlation and regression analyses were used because these statistical procedures have been used in previous studies addressing objective classification models (Austin, 1983; Austin, 1986; Carey et al., 1986; Cooper & Werner, 1990; Hanson et al., 1983; Louscher et al., 1983).

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Hypotheses 1 and 2

Overall the results support hypothesis **1: Significant differences exist between the classification variables and custody level.** As shown in Table II, differences were found between the three levels of custody in relation to the five classification variables: Current Offense, X^2 (df=8, n=458) = 154.07, p<.001; Prior Commitments, X^2 (df=8, n=458) = 23.89, p<.01; Escapes, X^2 (df=8, n=458) = 47.73, p<.001; Past Violence, X^2 (df=8, n=458) = 109.21, p<.001 and Length of Incarceration, X^2 (df=10, n=458) = 141.26, p<.001. These results are expected if the model is making objective classification decisions using the classification variables.

Results also support hypothesis **2: There are no differences between the demographic variables and custody level.** As Table III shows, no significant differences between custody level and the following four demographic variables were found: Religion, X^2 (df=2, n=458) = 3.20, N.S.; Education Level, X^2 (df=4, n=458) = 8.12, N.S.; Marital Status, X^2 (df=2, n=458) = .07, N.S. and Drug Use, X^2 (df=6, n=458) = 7.39, N.S. On the other hand, two of the demographic variables showed significant differences in relation to custody level: Race, X^2 (df=2, n=458) = 12.91, p<.01 and Age, X^2 (df=6, n=458) = 13.0, p<.05.

TABLE II
PERCENT DISTRIBUTION OF CUSTODY LEVEL BY CLASSIFICATION VARIABLES

	Custody Level			
	Minimum	Medium	Maximum	
Current Offense				
Low	50%	25%	25%	
Low Moderate	50	37.5	12.5	
Moderate	52.7	31.8	15.5	
High	6.7	33.3	60	$X^2 = 154.07$
Great	4.4	31.7	63.9	df = 8, p < .001
Prior Commitments				
None	34.4	36.1	29.5	
Jail Less 30 Days	33.3	43.8	22.9	
Jail More 30 Days	38.5	30.8	30.8	
Felony Probation	41.7	33.3	25	$X^2 = 23.89$
Felony Incarceration	23.4	28.3	48.4	df = 8, p < .01
Escapes				
None	34.9	34.9	30.1	
Over 3 years ago	35	32.5	32.5	
Within Past 3 years	32.2	32.2	35.6	
Over 5 years ago	16.7	11.1	72.2	$X^2 = 47.73$
Within Past 5 years	0	13.8	86.2	df = 8, p < .001
Past Violence				
None	55.2	23.2	21.6	
Over 3 years ago	33.3	40.5	26.2	
Within Past 3 years	27.7	38.3	34	
Over 5 years ago	9	38.2	52.8	$X^2 = 109.21$
Within Past 5 years	3.5	38.4	58.1	df = 8, p < .001
Length of Incarceration				
22 months or less	52.2	23.9	23.9	
23-35 months	31.7	47.2	21.1	
36-47 months	31.6	34.2	34.2	
48-65 months	10.9	41.3	47.8	
66-95 months	0	17.9	82.1	$X^2 = 141.26$
96 months or longer	0	11.1	88.9	df = 10, p < .001

TABLE III
PERCENT DISTRIBUTION OF CUSTODY LEVEL BY DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

	Custody Level			
	Minimum	Medium	Maximum	
Religion				
Faith	29.8%	34.3%	35.8%	$X^2 = 3.20$, df=2
No Faith	36.8	26.4	36.8	N.S.
Education Level				
Less Than High School	32.6	35.3	32.1	
High School or GED	36.5	24.7	38.8	$X^2 = 8.12$, df=4
More Than High School	24	37.3	38.7	N.S.
Race				
White	37.4	26.7	35.9	$X^2 = 12.91$, df=2
Minority	23.4	39.9	36.7	$p < .01$
Marital Status				
Single, Divorced	31.6	32.3	36.2	$X^2 = .065$, df=2
Married	32.6	30.4	37	N.S.
Drug Use				
None	32.3	19.4	48.4	
Infrequent	22.4	38.8	38.8	
Moderate	36.6	32.1	31.3	$X^2 = 7.39$, df=6
Excessive	32.5	32.1	35.5	N.S.
Age				
Under 20	42.3	20.6	37.1	
21-30	30.7	35.6	33.7	
31-40	26.1	37.8	36	$X^2 = 13.0$, df=6
Over 41	26.7	26.7	46.7	$p < .05$

Since race may affect custody level as a result of more serious charges being filed against minorities such as weapons violations, chi-square analysis were run on race by custody level controlling for past violence. The differences disappeared with one exception. Analysis yielded a significant effect for the category of no violence, X^2 (df=2, n=194) = 6.75, p<.05. The difference appears in the minimum and medium custody levels. Of those who commited no past violent offenses, 60.5 percent of whites were classified as minimum custody whereas 44.6 percent of minorities received minimum custody scores. Analysis also found, 17.8 percent of whites and 33.8 percent of blacks with no past violence were classified as medium custody.

The effects of age on custody level may be explained away by the use of prior commitments in the classification model. That is, age and prior commitments are positively correlated, as age increases so does the likelihood that the offender will have more prior commitments (see table IV). When controlling for prior commitments, analysis showed only an affect for the prior commitment of jail more than 30 days, X^2 (df=6, n=117) = 13.3, p<.05. The under 20 years of age seems to account for most of the difference with fewer inmates classified as medium custody (15%) than either minimum (44.2%) or maximum (40.4%). The other prior commitment categories did not differ significantly when comparing custody level with age.

Further support for the model's objectivity is seen in Table IV. Correlation analysis indicate that the five classification variables are positively correlated with custody level. The strongest correlations occurred for current offense ($r = .55$, $p < .01$), past violence ($r = .45$, $p < .01$) and length of incarceration ($r = .48$, $p < .01$). Prior commitments ($r = .17$, $p < .01$) and escapes ($r = .29$, $p < .01$) were correlated with custody level, although the strength of the relationship was not strong.

Finally, correlation analysis in Table IV reveal that none of the demographic variables correlated with custody level. Education level ($r = .06$, N.S.), marital status ($r = .00$, N.S.), religion ($r = .03$, N.S.), race ($r = .09$, N.S.), drug use ($r = -.05$, N.S.) and age ($r = .09$, N.S.) do not exert any influence in the classification model on custody level. This further supports the model's objectivity.

Hypothesis 3

Results from the correlation analysis support hypothesis **3: Nebraska's classification model is limited in its ability to predict institutional adjustment.** Although some of the classification variables reached significance in relation to the adjustment variables, none of the correlations are particularly strong. As seen in Table IV, the strongest correlation occurred between escapes and severe disciplinary reports ($r = .14$, $p < .01$). As escape history increases in severity so does the number of severe disciplinary reports. The relationship between past violent behavior and the dependent variables found two significant but weak

TABLE IV ZERO ORDER CORRELATIONS

	X2	X3	X4	X5	X6	X7	X8	X9	X10	X11	X12	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5
Classification Variables																
Current Offense (X1)	-.19**	.06	.03	.36**	.55**	.05	.01	.03	.01	-.10*	-.02	.09*.	.02	.08	.06	.12
Prior Commitments (X2)		.23*	.23**	.04	.17**	.17**	-.01	-.11*	.04	.15**	.23**	.02	.03	.02	.06	-.05
Escapes (X3)			.08	.04	.29**	.00	-.06	-.08	-.08	.04	-.11*	.09	.11*	.11*	.14**	.10*
Past Violence (X4)				.10*	.45**	-.06	-.05	-.02	.15**	.01	.02	.10*	.02	.12**	.07	.08
Incarceration Length (X5)					.48**	.09	.05	-.03	.11*	-.10*	.11*	.13**	-.01	.11*	.07	.05
Custody Level (X6)						.06	.00	.03	.09	-.05	.09	.20**	.09	.13**	.13**	.12*
Demographic Variables																
Education Level (X7)							.10*	-.01	-.08	-.06	.27**	-.05	.01	-.19**	.02	-.19**
Marital Status (X8)								.06	-.03	.01	.31**	-.07	-.06	-.13**	-.05	-.13**
Religious Faith (X9)									.06	-.03	.15**	-.05	-.02	-.09*	-.02	-.06
Race (X10)										-.18**	.03	.11*	-.01	.06	-.02	.10*
Drug Use (X11)											-.07	-.09	.02	.01	-.01	-.05
Age (X12)												-.14**	-.13**	-.34**	-.09	-.38**
Dependent Variables																
Segregation Time (Y1)													.75**	.49**	.60**	.33**
Good Time (Y2)														.46**	.75**	.30**
Disciplinary Reports (Y3)															.40**	.76**
Severe Disciplinary Reports (Y4)																.30**
Room Restriction (Y5)																

*p <.05, **p <.01, N=458

correlations. Past violence is correlated with segregation time ($r = .10$, $p < .05$) and with disciplinary reports ($r = .12$, $p < .01$). This indicates that those who have a higher severity of past violent behavior tend to receive more disciplinary reports and spend more time in segregation.

Table IV indicates that of all the independent variables, age has the highest correlations with the adjustment variables. Age is negatively correlated with disciplinary reports ($r = -.34$, $p < .01$) and room restriction ($r = -.38$, $p < .01$). Age also correlated with segregation time ($r = -.14$, $p < .01$) and good time ($r = -.13$, $p < .01$) although not nearly as strong. Two other demographic variables are significantly correlated with the measures of adjustment. Education level is correlated with disciplinary reports ($r = -.19$, $p < .01$) and room restriction ($r = -.19$, $p < .01$) and marital status is correlated with disciplinary reports ($r = -.13$, $p < .01$) and room restriction ($r = -.13$, $p < .01$). These results indicate that young, single, less educated inmates have more problems with adjustment.

Multiple regression analyses reveal that the classification model is limited in its ability to predict adjustment. Regression analyses were run on each of the five dependent measures of adjustment with all five of the classification variables entered simultaneously in the model. Table V shows the model significantly predicted institutional adjustment for four of the dependent variables: disciplinary reports, $F (5, 452) = 3.46$, $p < .01$; room

restriction, F (5, 452) = 3.07, p < .01; segregation time, F (5, 452) = 3.06, p < .01 and severe disciplinary reports, F (5, 452) = 2.59, p <.05.

TABLE V
MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSES OF CLASSIFICATION MODEL

	R square	F	Significance
Dependent Variables			
Disciplinary Reports	.04	3.46	p < .01
Room Restriction	.03	3.07	p < .01
Segregation Time	.03	3.06	p < .01
Loss of Good Time	.01	1.11	N.S.
Severe Disc. Reports	.03	2.59	p < .05

Note. The following independent variables were entered simultaneously in each analysis: current offense, escapes, past violence, prior commitments and incarceration length.

Although the model reached statistical significance in four of the five measures of adjustment, the amount of variance accounted for each adjustment variable is relatively low. Table V indicates that the r squared value ranged from a high of .04 for disciplinary reports to a low of .01 for loss of good time. Overall, the model accounts for less than 5 percent of the variance in each of the adjustment scores.

Another set of regression analyses were run to include both the demographic and the classification variables. With the inclusion of all the independent variables in the model, statistical significance was reached for 3 of the adjustment variables: disciplinary reports, $F (11, 416) = 7.43$, $p < .001$; room restriction, $F (11, 416) = 8.61$, $p < .001$; and segregation time, $F (11, 416) = 2.71$, $p < .01$. Neither model significantly predicted loss of good time.

Table VI shows that the amount of variance increases dramatically for three of the five measures of adjustment when the demographic variables are added to the classification variables into one model. The r squared value ranged from a high of .19 for room restriction to a low of .03 for loss of good time. These results suggest that inclusion of certain demographic variables into the classification process increases the predictive quality of the classification model. Although this is a substantial increase, the amount of variance explained is still rather weak.

Hypothesis 4

Multiple regression analyses support hypothesis **4: The variables in Nebraska's classification model are inappropriately weighted.** Current offense is the most heavily weighted item in the model. However, this variable is not a significant predictor for any of the measures of adjustment. As seen in Table VII, severity of escapes is the most significant predictor for disciplinary reports (beta = .11, $p < .05$), room restriction (beta = .11, $p < .05$), loss of good time (beta = .10, $p < .05$)

TABLE VI
MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSES OF CLASSIFICATION AND DEMOGRAPHIC MODEL

	R square	F	Significance
Dependent Variables			
Disciplinary Reports	.16	7.43	$p < .001$
Room Restriction	.19	8.61	$p < .001$
Segregation Time	.07	2.71	$p < .01$
Loss of Good Time	.03	1.23	N.S.
Severe Disc. Reports	.04	1.41	N.S.

Note. The following independent variables were entered simultaneously in each analysis: current offense, escapes, past violence, prior commitments, incarceration length, age, race, religion, education,m drug use, and marital status.

and severe disciplinary reports (beta = .12, $p < .01$). Of the other variables used in the model, past violence is a significant predictor of disciplinary reports (beta = .11, $p < .05$) and length of incarceration is a significant predictor of segregation time (beta = .10, $p < .05$). In addition to current offense, prior commitments is not a valid predictor of any of the dependent measures. These results suggest that the classification variable of escapes is the

TABLE VII
SUMMARY OF REGRESSION ANALYSES OF CLASSIFICATION VARIABLES

Dependent Variables	B	Beta	t
Disciplinary Reports			
Independent Variables			
Escapes	.21	.11	2.12*
Incarceration	.14	.08	1.64
Prior Commitments	-.07	-.03	-.50
Past Violence	.15	.11	2.31*
Current Offense	1.87	.04	.78
Room Restriction			
Escapes	.73	.11	2.62*
Incarceration	.10	.02	.33
Prior Commitments	-.80	-.08	-1.60
Past Violence	.38	.08	1.74
Current Offense	.37	.09	1.70
Segregation Time			
Escapes	.55	.08	1.67
Incarceration	.62	.10	2.03*
Prior Commitments	-.09	-.01	-.18
Past Violence	.40	.08	1.75
Current Offense	.20	.05	.92
Lost Good Time			
Escapes	1.10	.10	2.13*
Incarceration	-.18	-.02	-.38
Prior Commitments	.21	.01	.27
Past Violence	.07	.01	.20
Current Offense	.14	.02	.40
Severe Disciplinary Reports			
Escapes	.02	.12	2.56**
Incarceration	.01	.05	.94
Prior Commitments	.01	.03	.56
Past Violence	.01	.05	.98
Current Offense	.01	.04	.83

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

best predictor of adjustment with the exception of segregation time, and should be the most heavily weighted item in this model.

Regression analyses were run including both demographic and classification variables for each of the measures of adjustment. Results in Table VIII show that some of the demographic variables are more valid predictors of adjustment than are any of the classification variables. Overall, age is the most significant predictor of adjustment for disciplinary reports (beta = -.33, $p < .001$), room restriction (beta = -.36, $p < .001$) and segregation time (beta = -.19, $p < .001$). Education level is a significant predictor for disciplinary reports (beta = -.13, $p < .01$) and room restriction (beta = -.10, $p < .05$). The only other demographic variable to show some predictive quality is drug use in relation to segregation time (beta = -.12, $p < .05$). The only classification variable to be a significant predictor of adjustment in this model is incarceration length for disciplinary reports (beta = .11, $p < .05$). This indicates that not only are the variables in Nebraska's classification model inappropriately weighted to maximize institutional adjustment predictions, they are less valid predictors of adjustment than are age and education level.

TABLE VIII
SUMMARY OF REGRESSION ANALYSES OF CLASSIFICATION VARIABLES AND DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

Dependent Variables	B	Beta	t
Disciplinary Reports			
Independent Variables			
Escapes	.09	.05	.95
Incarceration	.19	.11	2.25*
Prior Commitments	.24	.08	1.58
Past Violence	.08	.06	1.32
Current Offense	.04	.03	.60
Age	-1.97	-.33	-6.38***
Education	-.94	-.13	-2.65**
Race	.24	.02	.47
Drug Use	-.17	-.03	-.65
Religion	-.17	-.01	-.31
Marital Status	-.33	-.02	-.39
Room Restriction			
Escapes	.46	.07	1.50
Incarceration	.21	.04	.74
Prior Commitments	.25	.03	.50
Past Violence	.23	.05	1.09
Current Offense	.31	.08	1.53
Age	-7.29	-.36	-7.08***
Education	-2.53	-.10	-2.15*
Race	2.61	.07	1.54
Drug Use	-1.04	-.05	-1.16
Religion	.54	.01	.29
Marital Status	-.65	-.01	-.23
Segregation Time			
Escapes	.07	.01	.20
Incarceration	.57	.09	1.82
Prior Commitments	.59	.06	1.08
Past Violence	.26	.06	1.13
Current Offense	.16	.04	.75
Age	-3.78	-.19	-3.39***
Education	-.59	-.02	-.46
Race	1.91	.05	1.04
Drug Use	-2.35	-.12	-2.44*
Religion	.62	.01	.31
Marital Status	-.52	-.01	-.17

TABLE VIII (continued)

Lost Good Time			
Escapes	.34	.03	.63
Incarceration	-.28	-.03	-.56
Prior Commitments	.99	.06	1.11
Past Violence	.04	.01	.10
Current Offense	.12	.02	.32
Age	-5.51	-.17	-3.04**
Education	1.66	.04	.80
Race	-1.51	-.03	-.51
Drug Use	-.50	-.02	-.32
Religion	2.39	.04	.73
Marital Status	-.52	-.01	-.11
Severe Disciplinary Reports			
Escapes	.01	.05	.98
Incarceration	.01	.04	.83
Prior Commitments	.03	.09	1.63
Past Violence	.01	.04	.86
Current Offense	.00	.04	.67
Age	-.08	-.14	-2.47*
Education	-.01	-.01	-.29
Race	-.04	-.04	-.85
Religion	.02	.01	.27
Marital Status	-.01	-.01	-.10

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Findings

Results indicate Nebraska's classification model is an objective model. The objectivity of the model is accomplished in two ways. First, the model makes classification decisions by scoring each inmate on a set of criterion variables related to criminal activity. Significant differences were found between the three levels of custody and all five of the classification variables. These differences were expected if the model was to satisfy its objectivity requirement. In addition, correlation analyses revealed strong associations between the classification variables and custody level. None of the demographic variables however, were significantly correlated with custody level. This further supports the model's objectivity, indicating that classification decisions are based solely on the five classification variables and not on any of the demographic variables.

Second, the number of overrides issued for all classification decisions is below ten percent. Since overrides rarely occur, it was expected that there would be no differences between custody level and the demographic variables. This was true for four of the six variables. Race and age appeared to show some differences in relation to custody level; however, the majority of these differences disappeared when controlling for past violence and prior commitments. Based on the chi-square and correlation analyses,

Nebraska's classification model appears to be objectively classifying offenders.

Evidence from this study suggests that Nebraska's model is limited in its ability to predict institutional adjustment. None of the classification variables used in the model are strongly correlated with any of the five measures of adjustment. Although escapes, past violence and incarceration length are significantly correlated with adjustment, the strength of the relationships are rather weak. Several of the demographic variables however, show a significant correlation with adjustment. Of all the independent variables, the strongest correlations occur between age and adjustment and education level and adjustment. Marital status is also correlated with adjustment, however the relationship is not as strong.

Regression analyses reveal that the classification model, using only the five classification variables, is able to explain less than five percent of the variance for each of the adjustment variables. When the demographic variables are added to the classification variables into the model, the amount of variance explained in the adjustment variables rises dramatically. This suggests that inclusion of certain demographic variables such as age and education level into the classification model will improve the models predictive quality.

The Beta weights offer further support for the model's limited predictability. In the classification model, current offense is the

most heavily weighted item, yet this variable is not a significant predictor of any of the adjustment variables. Escapes is the best predictor among the classification variables for four of the five measures of adjustment. This is contrary to findings from other studies indicating that escape history is not a valid predictor of inmate adjustment (Cooper & Werner, 1990; Hanson et al.,1983).

Considering all 11 independent variables, age is the best predictor of institutional adjustment in this study. Age significantly predicted all five of the adjustment variables indicating that the younger the inmate, the more problematic his behavior. Several other studies (Carey et al., 1986; Cooper & Werner, 1990; Hanson et al., 1983; Monahan, 1981) support this finding. So strong is the influence of age that it may be a stronger predictor of inmate violence than is overcrowding (Mackenzie, 1987; Olson, Barrick & Cohen, 1983).

Education level is the second best predictor of inmate adjustment in this study. Offenders with higher levels of education have fewer adjustment problems than those with lower levels of education. This is supported by a study of state prison inmates that found 56 percent of those with less than a high school education violated prison rules at least once compared to 48 percent of those with a high school education or more (Stephen, 1990). This seems to be a reasonable conclusion, that inmates who are more educated know what is expected of them in terms of obtaining early release

and therefore may be more capable of avoiding trouble that translates in disciplinary reports and other punishments.

Results of this study indicate Nebraska's classification model is objective, yet, it is not a valid instrument for predicting institutional adjustment. The best predictors of institutional adjustment are age and education level--two variables not included in this model. In addition, the most highly ranked variable in this model, current offense, is not a valid predictor for any of the adjustment variables.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Because the model is not a valid predictor of institutional adjustment, a high percentage of inmates are being over-classified. As a result, over-classification may be contributing to the overcrowding in Nebraska's prisons.

The lack of predictive quality in Nebraska's classification model is resulting in problems of over-classification. Disciplinary reports and severe disciplinary reports as measures of institutional adjustment are used for making comparisons between custody levels. The other adjustment variables--segregation time, room restriction and loss of good time--are outcome measures defined as punishments, resulting from disciplinary reports which vary widely according to type of infraction, makeup of adjustment committee and other non relevant variables.

Table IX shows that 42 percent of the maximum, 37 percent of the medium, and 49 percent of the minimum custody offenders

received no disciplinary reports during the six month measurement period. Looking at those who received a minimum number of disciplinary reports, 30 percent of maximum, 47 percent of medium, and 36 percent of minimum custody offenders received at least one but not more than five disciplinary reports. Since disciplinary reports are influenced by several variables, officer discretion, type of institution, changing rules, and management style, it is unlikely that many offenders will serve an entire sentence without receiving at least one disciplinary report. In this sample, 57 percent of all inmates received at least one report for rules violations within six months of their initial incarceration. Figure 2 shows that the mean number of disciplinary reports received by maximum custody offenders is 4.52, medium custody is 2.44 and minimum custody is 2.84.

The same pattern emerges when looking at severe disciplinary reports. Table X reveals that 83 percent of maximum and 90 percent of medium and minimum custody offenders did not receive one severe disciplinary report during their first six months of incarceration. A higher percentage of maximum custody offenders, 17 percent, received at least one severe report compared to 10 percent of medium and minimum offenders.

TABLE IX
PERCENT DISTRIBUTION OF DISCIPLINARY REPORTS BY CUSTODY LEVEL

	Disciplinary Reports			
	0	1-5	6-10	Over11
Custody Level				
Minimum	49%	36%	7%	8%
Medium	37%	47%	11%	5%
Maximum	42%	30%	12%	16%

TABLE X
PERCENT DISTRIBUTION OF SEVERE DISCIPLINARY REPORTS BY CUSTODY LEVEL

	Severe Disciplinary Reports			
	0	1-5	6-10	Over11
Custody Level				
Minimum	90%	10%	0	0
Medium	90%	10%	0	0
Maximum	83%	17%	0	0

FIGURE 2
MEAN NUMBER OF DISCIPLINARY AND SEVERE DISCIPLINARY REPORTS BY CUSTODY LEVEL

	Disciplinary	Severe Disciplinary
Custody Level		
Minimum	2.84	.10
Medium	2.44	.12
Maximum	4.52	.27

None of the inmates in any of the three custody levels received more than 5 severe disciplinary reports indicating that either code I offenses rarely occur or that detection of these offenses is difficult. As indicated in Figure 2, the mean number of severe disciplinary reports received for maximum custody offenders is .27, medium custody is .12 and minimum custody is .10.

What does this mean? Simply put, it suggests that if classification decisions are made based on predicting institutional adjustment, then too many offenders are being classified at higher than necessary custody levels. A substantial number of inmates, 42 percent of maximum and 37 percent of medium custody offenders, based on disciplinary report data, could be classified as minimum custody. If it is assumed that a majority of all inmates will receive

at least one disciplinary report during their time of incarceration but not more than 5, then the number of inmates presumably over-classified rises dramatically. A staggering 72 percent of maximum and 84 percent of medium custody inmates could be classified as minimum custody. For minimum custody offenders, 36 percent who received no disciplinary reports could be reclassified as community custody. If those who received at least one but not more than 5 reports were included into the lower classification level, the number of minimum custody inmates who could theoretically be reclassified to community custody increases to 66 percent.

It would not be advisable to use severe disciplinary reports as justification for reclassifying offenders to lower custody levels for two reasons. First, code I offenses rarely occur and limited detection by staff contributes to the rarity of these offenses being made known. Second, nobody would support the idea that 83 percent of the maximum custody prison population in Nebraska should be reclassified to minimum custody based on predictions that inmates will not commit any severe rule violations. Predicting human behavior is an imperfect science and there are too many intervening variables that effect misconduct by incarcerated offenders. Predictions of violence are accurate in only one out of three cases, although predictions can be improved by taking into account situational and environmental factors (Morris & Miller, 1987). Nevertheless, using overall disciplinary reports, which include severe disciplinary reports, as justification for reducing the number

of inmates housed in high custody levels appears to be substantiated by the fact that in this study many inmates did not receive any disciplinary reports or received very few.

Overcrowding is another issue being influenced by the classification model. In 1990 the Nebraska State Penitentiary was operating at 145 percent of its capacity, the Lincoln Correctional Center at 162 percent of capacity, the Omaha Correctional Center at 145 percent of capacity and the Hastings Correctional Center at 97 percent of capacity (DCS, 1989/90). Overcrowding is positively correlated with violence (Gaes & McGuire, 1985; McCain, Cox & Paulus, 1980). As institutions become more crowded, the incidents of violence increase. Overcrowding seems to exert a more profound effect on such inmate problems as assaults, suicides and disturbances in maximum security facilities more than in minimum security facilities (Innes, 1987).

Relying on a valid classification model would not only reduce overcrowding, it would limit the consequences of overcrowding. Figure 3 shows that from 1985 to 1990 the percent of inmates classified as maximum and medium custody have increased while minimum and community custody inmates have decreased (DCS, 1989/90).

This suggests that as more inmates enter into the Nebraska Correctional System, a higher percentage of them will be predicted, by the current classification model, as having institutional adjustment problems thus resulting in increased crowding in

Nebraska's maximum security facilities, followed presumably by higher incidents of inmate violence.

FIGURE 3
ADULT PRISON POPULATION BY CUSTODY LEVEL (1985-1990)

	Custody Level							
Fiscal Year	Maximum No.	%	Medium No	%	Minimum No.	%	Community No	%
1985	572	32.2	376	21.2	517	29.2	306	17.3
1986	745	39.4	361	19.1	538	28.4	249	13.1
1987	816	40.6	356	17.7	521	26.9	297	14.8
1988	873	41.7	420	20.0	446	21.3	357	17.0
1989	863	37.9	526	23.1	561	24.6	327	14.4
1990	940	39.0	580	24.0	583	24.2	310	12.8

Note. DCS, 1989/90.

To alleviate some of the problems being experienced in the maximum security facilities, DCS could classify more offenders into lower custody levels such as minimum and community in addition to making more use of work release centers. This is not to say that minimum security facilities do not have problems associated with overcrowding. The point is that overcrowding does not effect lower security facilities as negatively as it does maximum security prisons. Nebraska can diminish the effects of overcrowding in its' maximum security facilities by having a valid classification model that is predictive of institutional adjustment.

Another way to alleviate the problem of overcrowding would be to build additional facilities. These too would eventually become overcrowded and the need for more space would be an ever increasing problem for Nebraska.

Costs

Nebraska's prison population increased from 69.1 incarcerations per 100,000 in 1971 to 129 per 100,000 in 1988 (Flanagan & Maguire, 1989). In terms of raw numbers, the population of incarcerated males in Nebraska has increased from 1522 in 1981 to 2637 in 1990 (DCS, 1989/90). As the prison population increases so do the costs of operating and building facilities to accommodate more inmates.

To reiterate, Nebraska's classification model is increasingly classifying a high percentage of inmates at the maximum and medium custody levels. This increases expenditures to house and to care for inmates and it also heightens pressure to build costly, higher security facilities. In Austin (1983), Attorney General William French Smith stated:

> Maximum security facilities cost more money which should not be spent where it is not needed. We will continue to urge states to reexamine their classification procedures and to explore the use of less costly security facilities for less dangerous inmates (p. 1).

In 1978, the average cost per bed for a maximum security prison was $46,500, compared to only $18,500 for a minimum security prison. Even though these figures are several years old, there is no reason to assume that the construction costs between a high security and low

security prison have narrowed. In addition, maximum security prisons require more security measures such as double perimeter fencing, armed guard towers and roving patrols whereas minimum security prisons do not (DCS, 1988).

For the fiscal year 1989-90, Nebraska DCS spent 38 million dollars in operating costs on adult facilities and centers (DCS, 1989/90). Housing one inmate per year as a maximum or medium custody offender in Nebraska costs around $17,000, this cost decreases to about $14,000 to house an inmate as a minimum custody offender and for community custody the cost drops to around $10,000 per year (DCS, 1989/90). Table XI, indicates that reducing the number of inmates in high custody levels to lower custody levels translates into substantial savings in terms of operating costs. Based on an average daily population of 940 maximum custody inmates in 1990, a change in custody level to minimum custody of 42 percent of those who did not receive any disciplinary reports at a savings of $3,000 per year per inmate would save $1,190,000 dollars per year. If 37 percent of the 580 medium custody offenders in 1990 could be classified as minimum custody the reduction in operating costs would be $650,000. Reclassifying 50 percent of 583 minimum custody offenders who received no disciplinary reports in 1990 to community custody would save $1,180,000 dollars per year. If inmates who received a minimal number of disciplinary reports (1-5) were included into this custody reduction plan, the savings would be even more dramatic as shown in Table XII.

TABLE XI
COST ANALYSES BY CUSTODY LEVEL REDUCTIONS FOR 0 DISCIPLINARY REPORTS RECEIVED

Population		% Reclassified	New Custody	Savings (dollars)
Custody Level				
Maximum	940	42% (N=395)	Minimum	1,190,000
Medium	580	37% (N=215)	Minimum	645,000
Minimum	583	50% (N=292)	Community	1,170,000
Total	2103	40% (N=852)		3,000,000

Note. Figures based on 1990 population and cost data.

TABLE XII
COSTS ANALYSES BY CUSTODY LEVEL REDUCTIONS FOR 1-5 DISCIPLINARY REPORTS RECEIVED

Population		% Reclassified	New Custody	Savings (dollars)
Custody Level				
Maximum	940	72% (N=677)	Minimum	2,000,000
Medium	580	84% (N=487)	Minimum	1,460,000
Minimum	583	85% (N=496)	Community	1,980,000
Total	2103	78% (N=1660)		5,440,000

Note. Figures based on 1990 population and cost data.

It should be noted that this cost reduction plan is based on aggregate data. Many other factors go into the classification decision besides custody and security level. Such things as education, psychological care, vocational programs and medical expenses influence the cost of caring for each inmate. It is clear however, that reducing the number of inmates housed in maximum security facilities would reduce the amount of costs associated with caring for Nebraska's prison population.

Making greater use of lower custody facilities can reduce operating costs and in theory, avoid the negative effects associated with maximum security prisons. In addition, studies have shown that the public is supportive of using less costly measures, contrary to popular belief that people want the most punitive punishment possible for all offenders. Two studies in particular found that when facility costs are an issue, an overwhelming majority of those interviewed in public opinion surveys, favored making greater use of community facilities in place of more restrictive facilities for handling of non-dangerous offenders (Skovron, Scott & Cullen, 1988; Williams, Johnson & McGrath, 1991). Of course, this is only possible if there is adequate space available to facilitate such changes in custody levels. Nebraska needs to allocate more space for minimum and community custody offenders through either new construction or renovation of existing facilities. For future policy, Nebraska would do well to limit the number of inmates housed in its' maximum security facilities and seek to make better use of minimum and

community facilities if for no other reason than costs. In order to accomplish this, DCS must rely on a valid classification model that is predictive of institutional adjustment.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

One limitation in this study, is the lack of control over environmental factors. The environment of a maximum security prison may nullify any success at classification by transforming non-violent inmates into violent, troublesome offenders. Thus, inmates classified as maximum custody may not be adjustment problems, however, once influenced by the atmosphere their behavior may be altered so that it appears they were classified appropriately. Validity testing is questionable when environmental factors are uncontrolled (Kane, 1986).

Ideally this study would have compared similar custody levels across different institutions in regards to the adjustment variables. This was not possible because maximum and medium custody offenders are housed at two maximum security facilities; the Nebraska State Penitentiary and the Lincoln Correctional Center. All minimum custody offenders are housed at either the Omaha Correctional Center or the Hastings Correctional Center, which are designated as minimum security facilities. A comparison could have been made, for example, if minimum custody offenders were housed at one of the two maximum security facilities. This would have allowed for testing the environmental effects between a maximum

and minimum security facility on minimum custody offenders in relation to the adjustment variables.

Future research on the validity of inmate classification models should take into account environmental factors. It is not surprising that in this study, maximum custody offenders received more disciplinary and more severe disciplinary reports than either medium or minimum custody offenders. It is unclear however, if this is a result of maximum custody offenders having more adjustment problems to start with or if their adjustment problems are a consequence of the environment.

Another limitation in this study is the reliability of official prison data. This is not a problem for the independent variables but rather for the dependent variables of adjustment. It is assumed that any rule violation observed by correctional staff will be reported as an official misconduct report. This, however, is not the case. There is a wide latitude of discretion involved in enforcing inmate discipline and the difference between official and unofficial discipline may be more characteristic of correctional officer attitudes than inmate behavior (Light, 1990; Poole & Regoli, 1980). On one hand, correctional officers feel pressure to enforce the rules and write misconduct reports on all violations. On the other hand they feel constrained by unofficial norms to deal with rule violations informally so as not to waste time over official processing of trivial rule breaking (Light, 1990).

This may seriously effect the reliability of official prison data. For example, Poole and Regoli (1980) in their study of inmate discipline at a medium security prison, found only 16.5 percent of the sample had official reports of rule violations while 91.8 percent of the inmate sample admitted to at least one rule violation. Several possible explanations exist for the disparity between official and unofficial rule enforcement. First, correctional officers may feel that reporting rule violations is a waste of time because the punishments meted out do nothing to deter future misbehavior. Second, rules are constantly changing as to what inmates can and can not do. Keeping up with these changes and enforcing the rules requires dedication on the part of the officers--something that many of them are unwilling to do. Third, management style may dictate that certain areas of misconduct be dealt with unofficially. Finally, it may be that many of these violations went undetected which is not surprising given the high inmate to low staff ratio of approximately 30 to 40 inmates to 1 staff.

Finally, this study is limited in its generalizability due to the absence of random sampling procedures. Because there were certain criteria that needed to be met in order to measure the dependent variables, it was impossible to select a random sample from all inmate admissions in 1990. Inmates having been initially classified at the Diagnostic and Evaluation Unit usually undergo additional classification upon arrival at their prospective facility. Thus, an inmate's initial classification score may be changed by unit

classification teams at each facility several times over the course of a year. It may be that those inmates who consistently change to lower custody levels are the most well adjusted offenders and those who maintain their original custody level for six months or longer are the adjustment problems. If there is any validity to this statement, the lack of random sampling procedures directly effects the generalizability of the findings of this study to the prison population because only the more problematic inmates were included in this sample (Williams, 1986).

Future research would benefit from selecting samples randomly and over a period of years. While this study only used admissions from 1990, it may be better to use admissions over a three to five year period, depending on how long the classification model has been in existence. This would take into account any changes that have occurred that would directly or indirectly effect the study of the classification model. For example, a new law passed might send an influx of drug offenders into prison in 1990. Since the sample was drawn from that year, the result would be a skewed distribution with a high number of drug offenders in the sample that is not representative of the general prison population. The study may indicate that younger, uneducated offenders with histories of past violence have more adjustment problems. However, it may be that this is true of drug offenders but not for those convicted of non-drug related crimes. By selecting a random sample

over a period of time, maturation and historical threats to validity can be effectively controlled.

CONCLUSION

The conclusions of this project suggest two paths that DCS can take. First, is to simply ignore the results and continue to use the current classification model. Second, is to use this project as a guide to future research with hopes of improving the classification system in Nebraska. If DCS wants a more reliable and valid classification instrument, it should consider the following.

1. DCS could replicate this study on a larger and more comprehensive scale. Where this study used only data from 1990, DCS would be advised to use data over a variety of years. Using samples from different time frames would offer controls for such validity threats as maturation and history and would offer further support for the results of the current study. DCS may also want to consider other variables, not used in the current study. It may be, for example, that such variables as employment history and family life are correlated with adjustment problems and have some predictive quality. Replicating this study would allow DCS to determine the reliability of the data. If results obtained in this study are not found in future studies, then the use of official prison data is questionable and may need to be replaced by self-report data.

2. DCS could develop a more precise definition of adjustment. This would help determine how well adjustment problems can be measured. Many inmates receive disciplinary reports that have

nothing to do with adjustment problems. DCS research could determine what types of and at what frequency disciplinary reports, constitute adjustment problems. Categorizing rule violations into more categories than the three currently being used would enable DCS to determine that offenses such as disobeying a direct order, use of threatening language and gestures, and disruption of authorized duties may be valid measures of adjustment. This type of research would also permit the weeding out of trivial rule violations that are not indicative of adjustment problems.

3. DCS could perform correlation analyses between a variety of demographic variables and different types of rule violations. For example, if it is determined that less educated individuals have more misconduct reports for not following direct orders, educational training may benefit those inmates and enable them to reduce their adjustment problems.

4. DCS could conduct a study concerning the relationship between correctional staff and disciplinary reports. Biases and prejudices that run deep between inmates run just as deep between staff and inmates. One danger of using the frequency of disciplinary reports as a measure of adjustment is that any staff member who does not like a particular inmate may write numerous misconduct reports based on forms of inmate misbehavior that are not indicative of adjustment problems. A study of staff characteristics in relation to types and frequency of disciplinary reports would be useful for determining not only biases in reporting practices but

also the reliability of official prison data as it relates to inmate adjustment.

5. DCS could pilot test the suggestions of reclassifying offenders in lower custody levels. For example, taking a sample of offenders who would normally be classified as maximum custody and using the results of this study to reclassify them as minimum custody would be useful to determine if this is a feasible approach for dealing with over-classification and overcrowding.

Nebraska DCS is presented with a unique opportunity. Only 10 percent of the states use a classification model that is objective (Langston & Sapp, 1992). Few states have done any type of validation study to determine if their models are both objective and predictive.

> Before any correctional facility or system uses any classification scheme, the scheme should be validated for the population with which it is to be used (Wright, 1988, p. 470).

Nebraska is one step ahead of the rest of the country. By making a commitment to the goals of classification and a continuous effort to research and fine tune its classification model, the Nebraska DCS could become a leader in the area of objective and predictive classification.

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APPENDIX A
NEBRASKA'S INITIAL CLASSIFICATION FACTOR RATING INSTRUMENT

1. **Current Detainers** _____Yes _____ No

2. **Current Offense**: Categorize and score the most serious crime of conviction for which the inmate is currently incarcerated, using the severity of offense scale.
0 = Lowest
2 = Low Moderate
6 = Moderate
0 = High
14 = Greatest
_____

3. **Prior Commitments**: Evaluate inmate's criminal record in terms of prior commitments other than those related to the current period of incarceration. Score most serious commitment
0 = None
1 = County Jail (less than 30 days)
2 = County Jail (more than 30 days)
3 = Felony Probation
5 = Felony Incarceration
_____

4. **Escapes or Attempted Escapes**: Evaluate incidents of escape or attempted escape, either from confinement or supervision and score as indicated. Supervision shall mean: work detail, furlough, parole, probation. Confinement shall mean: institution or facility; or under custody. Exclude failure to appear for traffic fines and failure to appear due to incarceration.
0 = None (From supervision with no actual threatened force or violence)
1 = Over 3 years ago
3 = Within past 3 years (From confinement or with actual or threatened force or violence)
7 = Over 5 years ago
10 = Within past 5 years
_____

5. **Past Violence**: Evaluate incidents of violence over the inmate's entire criminal past, excluding current offense, using the classification manual for crimes of violence.
0 = None (not involving weapons or resulting in injury)
1 = Over 3 years ago
3 = Within past 3 years (involving weapons or resulting in injury)
7 = Over 5 years ago
10 = Within past 5 years
_____

6. **Projected Length of Incarceration**: Determine and score the inmate's projected length of incarceration using date of sentence to tentative release date, including applicable jail time.
0 = 22 months or less
2 = 22-35 months
3 = 36-47 months
5 = 48-65 months
7 = 66-95 months
10 = 96 months or longer
_____

Rated Custody Grade
___ 0-7 = Community ___ 8-15 = Minimum ___ 16-23 Medium ___ over 24 = Maximum

APPENDIX B
SEVERITY OF OFFENSE SCALE

Greatest Severity

Aiding Prisoner
Assault (any kind) *
Assisting in Suicide *
Burglary with Explosives *
Burning Penitentiary *
Destruction of Property by Using Explosives *
Disposing of Firearms to Prisoners *
Escape (from detention, jail or prison)
Escape using Force *
False Imprisonment (first degree) *
Introducing Escape
Kidnapping *
Maiming and Disfiguring *
Manslaughter *
Murder (first and second degree or attempt) *
Permitting Escape
Poisoning with Intent to Destroy Life *
Prisoners Breaking Jail or Prison
Rape *
Riot *
Robbery *
Sedition (overthrow of government)
Sexual Assault (first and second degree) *
Shooting or Stabbing with intent to kill, wound or maim *
Sodomy (forced) *
Syndicalism
Terroristic Threats *
Threatening to Use Explosives *
Treason
Using Knife, Firearms or Explosives to commit a felony *

High Severity

Accepting a Bribe

* = Crime of Violence

APPENDIX B (continued)

Arson (first and second degree) *
Attempt to Corrupt Juror or Witness
Blackmail
Bribery
Conveying False Information Regarding Destructive Devices
Debauching a Minor
Disposing of Drugs to Prisoners
Entering Bank with Unlawful Intent
False Imprisonment (any kind) *
Flight to Avoid Arrest
Incest (any kind) *
Inmate Detaining Another *
Obtaining Explosive Permit through False Representation
Possession of Firearm by a Felon *
Possession of Destructive Device *
Possession of Firearm by Fugitive from Justice *
Sabotage
Sexual Assault (third degree) *
Tampering with Witness, Informers or Jurors *
Unlawful Possession of Explosive Materials *
Unlawful Possession of Machine Guns *
Unlawful Sale of Explosive Materials *
Use of Explosives without a Permit

<u>Moderate Severity</u>

Abuse of an Incompetent *
Abduction (enticing females for prostitution) *
Aiding and Abetting Felon
Altering Brands of Stock
Altering or Defacing Auto
Arson (deception of insurer) *
Arson (third degree) *
Auto Theft
Breaking and Entering Automobile
Burglary (attempt)
Burning to Defraud Insurer *

* Crime of Violence

APPENDIX B (continued)

Carrying a Concealed Weapon*
Cattle Stealing
Child Abuse *
Concealing the Death of Another Person
Contributing to the Delinquency of a Minor
Conversion by Bailee, Clerk or of Rental Property
Counterfeiting, Coinmaking or Keeping Instruments
Defacing a Firearm
Dispose of Alcohol to a Prisoner
Drawing or Uttering Insufficient or no Fund Check
Drugs (second or third offense)
Embezzlement (any kind)
Executing or Delivering False Bills of Lading or Receipts
Fail to Appear
Failure to Return Rented Motor Vehicle
False Impersonation
False Impersonation of Officer
False Reporting
False Statement as to Security
False Statement of Financial Condition
Falsifying Public Utility Records
Forgery (any kind)
Fraud by Consignor
Fraud on Life Insurance Companies
Fraudulent Transfer of Property
Gambling Debt Collection
Grand Larceny
Hog Stealing
Horse Stealing
Interfering with a Firearm
Issuing Bad Check (any kind)
Larceny by Bailee
Larceny from Person
Leaving State by Parolee without Permission
Motor Vehicle Homicide *
Obstructing a Police Officer
Obtaining Money by False Pretenses

* Crime of Violence

APPENDIX B (continued)

Operating a Motor Vehicle to Avoid Arrest
Possession of Forged Instrument or Forgery Devices
Poultry Stealing
Receiving Altered or Defaced Auto
Receiving, Retaining, Disposing of Property (any kind)
Receiving Stolen Bonds, Bank Bills, or Notes
Receiving Stolen Goods, Harboring Robber or Thief
Removing, Abandoning or Concealing a Dead Human Body
Resisting Arrest *
Sale of Disease Meat
Selling Land without Title
Stealing, Destroying or Secreting Will
Stealing or Receiving Stolen Sheep
Subornation of Perjury
Theft
Theft of Trade Secrets
Transporting or Possessing Prohibited Weapons
Unlawful Banking
Unlawful Use of Credit Cards
Uttering Forged Bank Notes
Uttering Forged Instrument

<u>Low Moderate Severity</u>

Abortion (any kind)
Altering an Identification Number
Altering Coin
Arson (under 100 dollars) *
Attempting to Pass Counterfeit Coin or Bank Notes
Criminal Mischief
Criminal Trespass (first degree)
Destruction of Property (malicious)
Drugs (first offense)
Indecent Exposure (any kind)
Interfering with the Police Radio Service
Issuing Unlawful Currency
Keeping a Place of Prostitution

* Crime of Violence

APPENDIX B (continued)

Obstruction of Government Operations
Pandering
Possession of Spurious Coins
Receiving an Altered Article
Tampering with Physical Evidence
Violation of Child Custody

Lowest Severity

Abandonment of Wife, Child or Stepchild
Adultery
Bigamy Criminal Nonsupport (violation of court order)
Failure to Support Wife, Child, or Stepchild
Gambling (first and second offense)
Libel
Petit Larceny
Possession of Burglar's Implements
Refusal to Pay Child Support

Source: Adult Inmate Classification Manual, Nebraska Department of Correctional Services, 1988.

APPENDIX C
CODE 1 OFFENSE CATEGORY

A. Murder/Manslaughter--The killing of another person.

B. Mutinous Actions--Mutiny, inciting to riot, insurrection, taking of hostages, and/or arson in any part of the institution.

C. Aggravated Assault/Assault/Fighting--Assault on another person which causes pain or bodily injury, threatened assault or fighting.

D. Possession or Manufacture of Weapons--Possession or manufacture of any weapon or article to be used as a weapon.

E. Escape--Escape or attempted escape from any part of the facility or any work assignment.

F. Work Stoppage/Work Strike--Encouraging or preventing other inmates from working or participating in designated programs.

G. Refusal to Submit to a Search--Refusal to submit to a search of person, clothing, property or living quarters by authorized personnel.

H. Drug or Intoxicant Abuse--Use of or trafficking in drugs, narcotics or medication not prescribed by facility personnel or of intoxicants.

I. Escape Paraphernalia--Possession, manufacture, or use of escape paraphernalia.

J. Destruction of Property over 500 Dollars--Destruction, alteration, unauthorized use, or wasting of property which belongs to the state or another person valued over 500 dollars.

K. Demanding Payment for Protection--Demanding or receiving from another person in exchange for protecting another person from the inmate population.

Source: Inmate Rules and Regulations Handbook, Nebraska Department of Correctional Services, 1989.

APPENDIX D

DATA CODING SHEET

Subject No. Offender ID No.

Date of Classification

Classification Variables		N	%
Current Offense			
Lowest	=0	8	1.7
Low Moderate	=2	32	7
Moderate	=6	220	48
High	=10	15	3.3
Greatest	=14	183	40
Prior Commitments			
None	=0	61	13.3
County Jail (less 30 days)	=1	48	10.5
County Jail (more 30 days)	=2	117	25.5
Felony Probation	=3	48	10.5
Felony Incarceration	=5	184	40.2
Escapes/Attempted Escapes			
None (not involving force or violence)	=0	312	68.1
Over 3 Years Ago	=1	40	8.7
Within Past 3 Years (involving force or violence)	=3	59	12.9
Over 5 Years Ago	=7	18	3.9
Within Past 5 Years	=10	29	6.3
Past Violence			
None (not involving weapons or injury)	=0	194	42.4
Over 3 Years Ago	=1	42	9.2
Within Past 3 Years (involving weapons or injury)	=3	47	10.3
Over 5 Years Ago	=7	89	19.4
Within Past 5 Years	=10	86	18.8

Projected Length of Incarceration			
22 Months or Less	=0	159	34.7
23 to 35 Months	=2	142	31
36 to 47 Months	=3	38	8.3
48 to 65 Months	=5	46	10
66 to 95 Months	=7	28	6.1
96 Months of Longer	=10	45	9.8
Custody Level			
Minimum	=0	145	31.7
Medium	=1	147	32.1
Maximum	=2	166	36.2
Demographic Variables			
Education			
Less Than High School	=0	184	40.2
High School of GED	=1	178	38.9
More Than High School	=2	75	16.4
Marital Status			
Single, Divorced, Widowed	=0	412	90
Married	=1	46	10
Religious Belief			
No Faith	=0	125	27.3
Faith	=1	332	72.5
Race			
White	=0	270	59
Minority	=1	188	41
Drug/Alcohol Abuse			
None	=0	31	6.8
Infrequent Use	=1	67	14.6
Moderate Use	=2	112	24.5
Excessive Use	=3	234	51.1

Age			
Under 20	=0	97	21.2
21-30	=1	205	44.8
31-40	=2	111	24.2
Over 40	=3	45	9.8

Dependent Variables

Number of Days Spent in Segregation	_____
Number of Days of Lost Good Time	_____
Number of Disciplinary Reports	_____
Number of Severe Disciplinary Reports (defined as code I offenses)	_____
Number of Days Spent on Room Restriction	_____