

✓ VALIDITY GENERALIZATION

There are 304 municipal and county police departments in the State of Washington, of which a representative sample was included in the many aspects of the 1977 validation study. Because a great many of these departments are quite small, it was not feasible nor necessary to include all of these departments in the validation project. However, it should be observed that the majority of medium and large sized departments were included in the validation sample (see p. 5 of Validation Report).

The federal guidelines on testing permit such validation research based upon a sample of departments in a similar occupational setting. Section 1607.4(c)(2) of the EEOC Guidelines states, in part:

" . . . There may also be instances where evidence of validity is appropriately obtained from more than one company in the same industry. Both in this instance and in the use of data collected throughout a multi-unit organization, evidence of validity specific to each unit may not be required: Provided, That no significant differences exist between units, jobs, and applicant populations. "

A subsequent section of these guidelines, 1607.7 refers to the "Use of Other Validity Studies." This guideline states, in part:

" . . . Any person citing evidence from other validity studies as evidence of test validity for his own jobs must substantiate job comparability and must demonstrate the absence of contextual or sample differences cited in paragraphs (a) and (b) of this section. "

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The FEA Guidelines, Section 50.14.06(c) specifically permit the "generalization" of validation results to agencies meeting certain requirements with respect to the similarity of jobs:

"Selection procedures shown by one user to be content valid in accord with 12c will be considered acceptable for use by another test user for a performance domain if the borrowing user's job analysis shows that the same performance domain is present in the borrowing user's job. The selection procedure may be used operationally if the conditions of 12c (3) and 12c (6) are satisfied by the borrowing user."

Further, Section 50.14.06(e) states:

"If validity evidence from a multi unit or cooperative study satisfies the requirements of sub-paragraphs b, c or d above, evidence of validity specific to each unit or user usually will not be required unless there are variables in the units not studied which are likely to affect validity significantly."

It should be recognized that no single methodology exists for ascertaining the comparability of jobs. The Division 14 Principles recognize this problem:

"The pressing problem in employment psychology is that of determining how to generalize validities. Psychologists are strongly urged to engage in cooperative research ventures such as industry-wide validation studies, consortia of civil service jurisdictions (emphasis added), and the like."
(p. 13)

These same professional Principles allow, in connection with test implementation requirements, that it may be proper to expand validity results to departments who did not participate in the original validation study, but whose jobs are similar:

"Validity evidence obtained in one unit of a multi-unit organization or in a consortium, may be applied to other units where jobs and job settings are essentially similar." (APA Principles, p. 13)

Documentation of Validity Evidence (Part III) of the FEA Guidelines, Section

50.14.13(c) relates directly to the matter of extending the results of a validation study beyond the limits of the original validation sample:

"A full description should be provided of the similarity between the performance domain and the user's job and the performance domain measured by a selection procedure developed and shown to be content valid by another user (ESSENTIAL). The basis for determining this similarity should be explicitly described (ESSENTIAL)."

The intent of this guideline is clear. A police department which did not participate in the validation study may, nevertheless, properly and legally claim validity for the use of the resulting tests if the "job performance domain" measured by the tests corresponds to the job performance domain for which the examination has already been validated.

The FEA Guidelines require that a performance domain be defined in terms of job tasks and responsibilities. These guidelines also allow for the definition of such domain in terms of abilities required for performance; they also provide that such abilities must be linked to job duties:

"The domain should be defined on the basis of competent information about job tasks and responsibilities (ESSENTIAL). Where the performance domain is defined in terms of knowledges, skills, or abilities, there should be an operational definition of each knowledge, skill or ability and a complete description of its relationship to job duties, behaviors, activities, or work products (ESSENTIAL)." (FEA 50.14.13[c] 1)

Pursuant to this guideline, a "link-up" may be performed which would permit a comparison between the borrowing test user and the original validation sample.

This link-up procedure pertains to three aspects of the original validation study:

(1) Task Analysis; (2) Reading Analysis, (3) Writing Skills Analysis.

A 289 item Task Questionnaire for Patrol Officers was developed for the job analysis portion of this research. The task statements which comprised this questionnaire measured 13 functions of an entry-level police officer's job. These functions are defined in the validity report. Under each function, a variable number of task statements were listed. Table 5 of the validity report provides mean ratings on the 289 task statements. Those statements with ratings of 3.0 and above were regarded as being important to critically important. The link-up analysis should be restricted to those task statements having a mean rating of at least 3.0. It is recommended that the departmental personnel completing this questionnaire be command-level police officers who are thoroughly knowledgeable about the requirements of the entry-level police function in their department. The guidelines provided for sampling are related to department size. For departments with fewer than 25 sworn personnel, it is recommended that one individual complete the job analysis questionnaire. For larger departments, a consensus of 3-5 individuals responding to the questionnaire would be preferable. Personnel completing this questionnaire are instructed to mark those tasks which are performed by entry-level officers in their department. It is not necessary that importance ratings be made for this purpose. Respondents should place a checkmark next to a task statement if in the opinion of that individual the statement represents a task which is performed by entry-level police officers in his department. The percentages of affirmative responses in each of the functional categories provides a direct indication of the degree of similarity between job performance domains for those tasks or responsibilities

which were judged by the original job analysis sample to be most important.

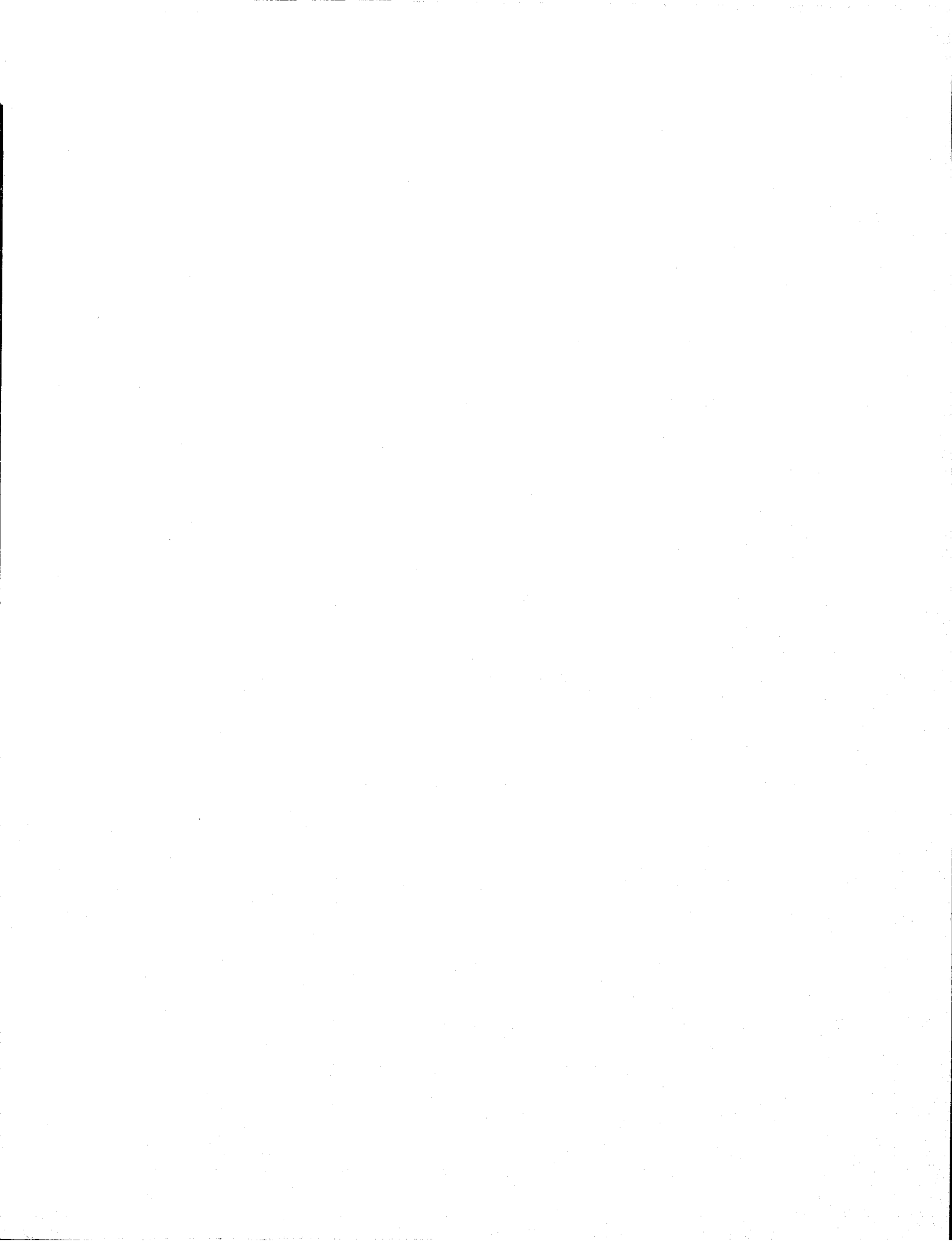
For this reason, the link-up process is scored entirely on the basis of those items which have importance ratings of 3.0 and above. For example, there may be 30 such task statements in a particular function which have importance ratings of 3.0 or greater. Let us assume that, for a particular department, 20 of these statements have been checked, indicating their relevance to that department. These 20 responses are related only to those responses which comprise a given function for which average ratings of 3.0 or greater were attained. In other words, 20 of the 30 most important task statements were checked (in this circumstance, a 66% degree of similarity exists between the police department wishing to link-up with the original study and the original validation sample).

Naturally, there is no discrete dividing line which separates departments on the basis of their similarity, since judgments are in actuality a matter of degree. As a general guideline, however, it is felt that at least 60% similarity is required in order to sustain the claim that essentially similar jobs are being performed in the original and borrowing agencies. Specifically, a comparison between the original validation sample and the borrowing agency may be made on a function-by-function basis.

The second part of the link-up process deals with the reading analysis performed as part of the original validation sample. Nine topical areas of police reading subject matter have been identified in the original validation report (p. 77). Under each general topic, respondents should list the types

of reading sources used by their departments. Such reading sources may be on-the-job materials or training subject matter. To the fullest extent possible, this listing of reading sources should be exhaustive. In evaluating the responses to this part of the link-up analysis, a qualitative judgment must be made, since no meaningful numerical analysis can be provided regarding the similarity of reading materials. This part of the link-up provides a checklist which is essential for documenting the common reading requirements between the original sample and the borrowing department.

A similar documentary procedure for determining comparability with respect to writing skills constitutes the third and last part of this procedure. Table 25 lists 286 types of reports which are completed by Washington police departments (pp. 109-163). Departments wishing to link-up should review this table carefully and prepare an exhaustive listing of the reports which have been identified in this table and which are utilized by their own departments.



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