ABSTRACT: The purpose of this project was to develop and validate an entry level written exam for the job of deputy sheriff. In addition, the study investigated a novel approach to collecting criterion data—panel appraisals. A 265 item pilot test was developed in order to cover the KSAO's identified by a thorough job analysis. A concurrent criterion-related validation strategy was employed in which: (1) criterion data were collected in the form of supervisory job performance ratings (i.e., using the panel appraisal format), performance in training, and performance over time on 373 deputies and corporals, and (2) the pilot test was then administered to these same deputies and corporals. Item analysis procedures on an 80% calibration sample resulted in the selection of 75 items for the final version of the written exam. Validity estimates, calculated on a 20% holdout group, were significant for the job performance and performance in training criteria, $r = .26$ and $r = .40$, respectively. Subsequent comparisons of the three performance criteria indicated that the panel appraisal format produced a highly reliable criterion measure.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this project was to develop and validate an entry level written exam for the job of Deputy Sheriff. In addition, this study presented us with an opportunity to field test a novel method for collecting criterion data—panel appraisals. Perhaps the most important and problematic aspect of test validation is the development of suitable criteria to serve as the standards against which to validate tests and other...
screening procedures. This paper focuses on both the appraisal panel method and the test validation study.

The Organization

The Sheriff's Office, within which the job is situated, consists of several divisions (including Patrol, Organized Crime, Criminal Investigations, Vice, etc.) and provides a variety of law enforcement services to an urban/suburban county of approximately 387,000 in the southeast. Approximately 8% of the county is black and 1.5% is Hispanic. The total force consists of 377 deputy sheriffs and 44 corporals.

The Job Analysis

The job analysis was conducted several months earlier (Levine & Baker, 1987) and employed the C-JAM method outlined by Levine (1983). First, initial observation and interview data were used to develop a preliminary task inventory for the job of Deputy Sheriff (excluding correctional officers). Duty categories were formed on the basis of task similarity and other law enforcement job analyses. Second, a group of Subject Matter Experts (SME's) reviewed the task list for completeness and rated the tasks using job analysis scales described by Levine (1983). These ratings were used to compute task importance values. This procedure produced ninety-five tasks organized into eight duty categories. Third, a second group of SME's were gathered to identify the KSAO's necessary to perform the tasks. Once a comprehensive list of KSAO's has been generated the SME's rated each K, S, A, and O on scales outlined by Levine (1983). These ratings were used to determine the importance of each KSAO with respect to selection and training.

The Job of Deputy Sheriff

The job analysis results, bearing on the work itself, including each duty category, its definition, and a task example are summarized briefly.

Special Services: Tasks which require specialized training (e.g., Maintains/handles K-9 in order to assist patrol in apprehending law violators.)

Interrogate/Interview: Tasks in which officers communicate with others and discover relevant facts as part of conducting criminal investigations (e.g., Meets with complainant in criminal/civil offense in order to obtain information for further action).

Patrol/Investigation: Tasks which involve conducting investigative actions and preventing illegal activities (e.g., Responds to emergency