ABSTRACT: This study investigated the predictive validity of a selection battery for insurance agent support persons. The selection battery included cognitive tests, personality scales, and biodata scales. Predictor data were collected as part of the agent support person selection process. Behavior summary scale ratings made by immediate supervisors of agent support persons were used as criteria in this study. Uncorrected correlations for six matched predictor composite-criterion dimension combinations identified in a previous concurrent validation study (Ashworth, Barge, Dunnette, & Carter, 1987) ranged from .17 (p < .01) to .28 (p < .01) (M = .21, N = 357).

ORGANIZATION

This research was conducted for a large multiple line insurance company.

PURPOSE

This study investigated the predictive validity of a selection test battery for agent support persons.
SETTING

Several hundred insurance agencies located throughout the United States participated in this research.

JOB STUDIED

The agent support person job was studied. Ashworth, Barge, Dunnette, and Carter (1987) developed a 120-item task inventory for this job and administered the inventory to 674 agent support persons. Principal components analysis of the inventory responses yielded nine activity dimensions: (a) preparing applications/answering client questions, (b) sales duties, (c) using the computer system, (d) performing general clerical duties, (e) supervising others, (f) evaluating claim fraud, (g) providing policyholder service, (h) processing claims, and (i) utilizing job knowledge.

METHOD

Sampling Strategy

The target sample consisted of all agent support persons who (a) were hired during the first six months of operational use of the test battery, (b) completed the test battery as part of their selection process, (c) remained at their position at least four months, and (d) worked at agencies located in the United States. Of the approximately 550 persons who met all four criteria, usable predictor and criterion information was received for 357 persons, or 65 percent of the target sample.

Data Collection

The predictor data were collected over a six month period as part of the agent support person selection process. A criterion rating form was sent to the supervising agent approximately six months after a support person was hired. A subsample of agents (those who hired a support person during the final two months of the predictor data collection period) were asked to provide a second set of ratings approximately one month after making their original ratings.

Sample

The sample consisted of 357 agent support persons. All had been in their jobs approximately six months.