

## VALIDITY

OBJECTIVE: To increase the understanding of the concept of validity and to provide an exercise in the calculation and interpretation of one type of validity.

### GENERAL INFORMATION - VALIDITY

The concept of validity in the field of testing refers to an evaluation of how well a test measures what it purports to measure. There are several approaches to validity assessment. Validity of a test can be evaluated by analyzing the content of the test, by relating it to some external criterion (e.g., job performance or other test score), or by examining the particular psychological construct which is to be measured by the test. Test validation is an on-going process which ultimately depends on an accumulation of data. Each of these approaches contribute evidence to the overall validity of a test and are not considered mutually exclusive.

### TYPES OF VALIDITY

CONTENT VALIDITY: refers to the extent to which the sample of test items represent the sum total of the domain which the test was designed to measure. Content validity most often depends upon the opinion of experts who decide whether the test adequately represents the domain of interest.

A related term but not really considered a measure of validity is face validity. Whereas content validity is from the perspective of experts, face validity is from the perspective of the test-taker. Face validity refers to the apparent appropriateness of test items. If a test looks and acts like a measure of the behavior, attitudes, skills, or knowledge it is supposed to assess, then we say the test has face validity. Face validity can be important in obtaining the cooperation of the examinee.

CRITERION-RELATED VALIDITY: refers to the extent to which a test score can be used to predict a criterion score or a non-test behavior. This type of validity involves the computation of a correlation coefficient between test scores and scores on the criterion. When the test score is significantly correlated with another measure available at the time of testing, we say that the test has concurrent validity (e.g., when MMPI-2 scores correlate with current psychiatric evaluation). When the test scores are significantly correlated with some other measure available at some time in the future, we say the test has predictive validity (e.g., when SAT scores are correlated with college freshman GPA).

CONSTRUCT VALIDITY: refers to the extent to which the test or instrument is a measure of the particular psychological construct it was designed to measure. This type of validity involves the theoretical meaning of test scores. Generally, construct validity answers the question of whether, based on results of the test, do we find evidence of non-test behaviors the theory would predict. You can think of construct validity as subsuming the other types of validity - content, concurrent, and predictive,

because they all provide evidence of construct validity. Sources of construct validity include evaluations by experts, assessment of internal consistency, experimental and observational research, and intercorrelational patterns among tests designed to measure the same and different constructs.

### YOUR HOMEWORK:

In this assignment, you will also use the correlation coefficient. In this case, however, the goal is to examine the validity of a hypothetical test. Let's assume that we have created a test to assess depression. We call our test the VSU Depression Inventory (VSUDI). We now want to validate our test against another test that is established and well-accepted in the field as being a valid measure of depression, such as the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI). We give both tests to 10 people. If our new test does indeed measure depression, then our scores should correlate significantly with those of the established test. You will be asked to make a decision about our test based on your results.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

### VALIDITY WORKSHEET

1. Below are the scores of ten people who were given the established BDI test and the newly developed VSUDI test. Calculate the correlation coefficient between these two tests. This assignment can be done by computer provided you show all the required information (see below).

<u>BDI</u>	<u>VSUDI</u>
25	17
31	18
36	19
20	14
28	16
21	14
23	15
33	20
29	16
23	15

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<u>X</u>	<u>X<sup>2</sup></u>	<u>Y</u>	<u>Y<sup>2</sup></u>	<u>XY</u>
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2a. Is our new test a valid measure of depression?    Yes                      No

2b. What type of validity was assessed in this exercise? \_\_\_\_\_

How do you know that the particular validity was or was not supported?

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