Validity Study

Relationship Between Education Level and Cadet Performance in a Police Academy

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The education level of 301 cadets attending a regional police academy was correlated with the cadets' final academic scores in the academy. The results indicated that education was significantly related to performance in the academy (r = .34).

Sample

N	301 cadets attending a regional law enforcement academy
Gender	89% were men, 11% were women
Race	Approximately 95% were White

Location

The site for the validity study was a regional law-enforcement academy serving approximately 50 small to moderate law enforcement agencies in Virginia.

Predictor Information

The predictor in the study was the cadets' level of education. Education was coded in three ways. The first was the number of years of education. For example, a high school graduate would receive a code of 12, a person with an associate's degree a code of 14, and a person with a bachelor's degree a code of 16. The second approach coded education on the basis of degree type. The coding for this approach is as follows:

1 = GED
2 = High School Diploma
3 = Some college, but no college degree
4 = Associate's degree
5 = Associate's degree and current work toward a bachelor's degree
6 = Bachelor's degree
7 = Master's degree

The third approach coded education based on the receipt of a college degree. Degree codes 1-3 were coded as 0 and degree codes 4-7 were coded as 1.

Criterion Information

The criterion measure was the average of 20 tests taken during the 16 weeks the cadets were in the academy. The internal reliability of the exams was .90. Because the average GPAs ranged from 88.3 to 95.5 across the 10 academy classes (overall average was 92.3), cadet grades in each class were standardized by subtracting the cadet's average from the class average and dividing by the class standard deviation.

Validity Information

As shown in Table 1, regardless of how education was coded, there was a significant correlation between education and cadet performance in the academy. Validity coefficients were highest when academy grades were standardized across the 10 academy classes. There were no gender differences in academy performance.

Table 1
Validity Coefficients

Predictor	Raw GPA	Standardized GPA
Education		
Years of school	.20*	.34*
Education level	.17*	.32*
College degree (0=no, 1=yes)	.15*	.31*
Criminal justice major (0=no, 1=yes)	- .05	- .04
Sex (1=male, 2=female)	- .04	.03

As shown in Table 2, it appears that cadets without college degrees performed worse than did cadets with college degrees. However, cadets with bachelor's degrees did not outperform cadets with associate's degrees.

Table 2
Mean GPA by Education Level

Education level	N	Raw GPA	Standardized GPA
GED	0		
High school diploma	105	91.61[a]	- .37[a]
Some college	88	92.22[ab]	- .07[b]
Associate's degree	24	92.78[ab]	.38[c]
Associate's degree +	5	93.67[ab]	.58[c]
Bachelor's degree	74	93.06[b]	.38[c]
Master's degree	5	94.26[ab]	.78[c]

Note: Means in a column are significantly different if they do not share the same superscript