
Chapter 5 Personnel Selection and Placement

True/False Questions

6-1. The degree to which a measure is free from random error refers to its reliability.

Ans: T

Difficulty: E

Page 180

LO1

6-2. A concurrent criterion-related validation strategy correlates job incumbents' scores on a test with their performance appraisal scores.

Ans: T

Difficulty: E

Page 185

LO1

6-3. A measure must be reliable to have validity.

Ans: T

Difficulty: E

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LO1

6-4. Content validation strategies employ experts' judgments regarding the validity of the selection method.

Ans: T

Difficulty: E

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LO1

6-5. Where there are small sample settings, content validation is generally less applicable than criterion-related validation.

Ans: F

Difficulty: H

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LO1

6-6. The degree to which information provided by a selection method enhances the effectiveness of selecting personnel in real organizations refers to the selection method's generalizability.

Ans: F

Difficulty: M

Page 188

LO1

6-7. The utility of a test will tend to decrease as the selection ratio gets lower.

Ans: F

Difficulty: M

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LO2

6-8. The utility of any given selection procedure will be higher as the number of people to be tested goes up.

Ans: F

Difficulty: M

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LO2



6-9. The Civil Rights Act of 1991 explicitly prohibits the granting of preferential treatment to minority groups.

Ans: T

Difficulty: M

Page 191

LO3

6-10. Under the Americans With Disabilities Act, employers are prohibited from requiring job applicants to submit to a medical examination prior to an offer of employment.

Ans: T

Difficulty: E

Page 191

LO3

6-11. Research is beginning to show that the employment interview works well if interviewers are trained to be more in touch with their instincts regarding candidates and the questions asked are varied based on the flow of the interview.

Ans: F

Difficulty: E

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LO4

6-12. The use of situational questions in job interviews is generally recommended.

Ans: T

Difficulty: M

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LO4

6-13. Biographical data has high utility, especially for occupational categories such as clerical and sales.

Ans: T

Difficulty: M

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LO4

6-14. Tests of physical abilities for physically demanding jobs often are relevant for predicting occupational injuries.

Ans: T

Difficulty: M

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LO4

6-15. A concern that employers should have regarding the use of cognitive ability tests is that they have been shown to have an adverse impact on black applicants.

Ans: T

Difficulty: E

Page 196

LO4

6-16. Personality inventories tend to have high reliability, low (criterion) validity, and low generalizability.

Ans: T

Difficulty: H

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LO4

6-17. Of the five major dimensions of personality inventories, “agreeableness” has generally been found to have the highest validity in predicting job performance.

Ans: F

Difficulty: M

Page 197



LO4

6-18. An “in-basket” test is an example of a work sample test for managerial positions.

Ans: T

Difficulty: M

Page 197

LO4

6-19. The use of polygraph tests by private employers was banned (with few exceptions) by the Polygraph Act of 1988.

Ans: T

Difficulty: E

Page 198

LO4

6-20. The use of drug tests is controversial primarily because their results have low reliability and validity.

Ans: F

Difficulty: M

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LO4

6-21. Work sample tests tend to have high reliability, high validity, and high legality.

Ans: T

Difficulty: M

Page 200; Table 6.6

LO5

6-22. Drug tests tend to have low validity, low legality, and low utility.

Ans: F
Difficulty: E
Page 200; Table 6.6
LO5

6-23. Reference checks tend to have moderate reliability, moderate validity, and moderate utility.

Ans: F
Difficulty: E
Page 200; Table 6.6
LO5

6-24. Concurrent validation is superior to predictive validation.

Ans: F
Difficulty: M
Page 185
LO1

6-25. Situational specificity is a particular concern when using standard cognitive ability tests in employee selection.

Ans: F
Difficulty: M
Page 188
LO1

Multiple Choice Questions

6-26. The degree to which a measure is free from random error refers to its
a. reliability.
b. validity.

- c. generalizability.
- d. utility.

Ans: a

Difficulty: E

Page 180

LO1

6-27. The degree to which two sets of numbers are related is referred to as the

- a. validity.
- b. standard error of the measure.
- c. utility.
- d. correlation coefficient.

Ans: d

Difficulty: H

Page 181

LO1

6-28. You would be in the best position to decide whether or not to hire one applicant versus another based on their respective scores on the cognitive ability test if

- a. a content validation design had been used.
- b. a concurrent criterion-related design had been used.
- c. reliability of the test was known.
- d. it was shown that the validity of the test was “situationally specific.”

Ans: b

Difficulty: E

Page 184

LO1

6-29. The extent to which performance on the selection measure (i.e., the predictor) is associated with performance on the job is called

- a. reliability.
- b. validity.
- c. generalizability.
- d. utility.

Ans: c

Difficulty: H

Page 183

LO1

6-30. Which of the following validation strategies is most likely to be adversely affected by the “restriction of range” problem that results from current employees tending to be homogeneous?

- a. Predictive criterion-related
- b. Concurrent criterion-related
- c. Content
- d. Face

Ans: b

Difficulty: M

Page 185

LO1

6-31. To test the validity of your selection device for widget makers, you have given it to the present widget makers in your company and correlated it with their latest performance appraisal scores. What type of strategy have you used?

- a. Predictive criterion-related validation
- b. Content validation
- c. Concurrent criterion-related validation
- d. Utility

Ans: c

Difficulty: E

Page 185

LO1

6-32. A new mechanical aptitude test has been developed that has a maximum possible score of 100 points. This test is administered twice, with the following results:

	Time 1	Time 2
John	10	47
Cathy	89	33
Pete	95	80

Tom 56 91

If these results are typical, this test is

- a. reliable and valid.
- b. reliable, but not valid.
- c. unreliable, though may still be valid.
- d. neither reliable nor valid.

Ans: d

Difficulty: M

Page 180-185

LO1

6-33. A validation study that gives a test to job applicants and then compares these scores to a future measure of job performance is called

- a. content validation.
- b. predictive criterion-related validation.
- c. concurrent criterion-related validation.
- d. split-halves validation.

Ans: b

Difficulty: E

Page 184

LO1

6-34. The general method of establishing the validity of a selection method by showing that there is an empirical association between scores on the selection measure and scores for job performance is called

- a. criterion-related validation.
- b. split-half estimate of validation.
- c. content validation.
- d. reliability of the measurement and validation.

Ans: a

Difficulty: E

Page 184

LO1

6-35. You want to establish the validity of a test designed for computer technicians using a predictive

criterion-related validation strategy. To do so, you must administer the test to

- a. at least half your present computer technicians.
- b. people doing similar jobs in other companies.
- c. people applying for computer technician jobs in your company.
- d. only your current computer technicians who are performing at or above acceptable levels.

Ans: c

Difficulty: H

Page 184 LO1

6-36. You are considering using a specific cognitive ability test in your selection of employees for the job of production supervisor at a furniture plant in North Carolina. The test was validated one year ago using a predictive criterion-related design and 110 production supervisors from automobile manufacturing plants in Michigan. The obtained validity correlation was 0.40; this validity correlation is

- a. low relative to those typically found for personality tests.
- b. seriously suspect due to the small sample size.
- c. high relative to traditional interviews.
- d. less likely to have been influenced by a restriction of range problem than if a concurrent criterion-related design had been used.

Ans: d

Difficulty: H

Page 184-185

LO1

6-37. Concerns about the large role that subjective judgments play should be greatest when using

- a. predictive criterion-related validation.
- b. concurrent criterion-related validation.
- c. content validation.
- d. test-retest estimates of reliability.

Ans: c

Difficulty: E

Page 187

LO1

6-38. Which of the following forms of validation becomes relatively more attractive as the sample available for validation becomes smaller?

- a. Predictive criterion-related
- b. Concurrent criterion-related
- c. Content validation
- d. Face validation

Ans: c

Difficulty: M

Page 187

LO1

6-39. A criterion-related validation study with a small sample of employees (e.g., 20 people)

- a. Is much more efficient, and, as a result, is likely to have high utility.
- b. requires many subjective judgments about whether the skill or knowledge assessed is essential to the job.
- c. requires the use of a concurrent criterion-related design.
- d. is almost doomed to fail from the start.

Ans: d

Difficulty: M

Page 186

LO1

6-40. A firm is seeking to hire 15 electricians. It has no plans to train them and intends to hire only experienced electricians. A test is developed that requires applicants to identify the mistakes in a miswired circuit and then correct those mistakes by rewiring the circuit properly. What would be the most appropriate method to use in validating this test?

- a. Concurrent criterion-related validation
- b. Predictive criterion-related validation
- c. Construct validation
- d. Content validation

Ans: d

Difficulty: H

Page 187

LO1

- 6-41. Unlike predictive and concurrent validity, content validity is
- measured statistically.
 - more valid.
 - based on judgments.
 - not legally approved.

Ans: c

Difficulty: E

Page 187

LO1

- 6-42. What type of validation is not appropriate to use in settings where applicants are expected to learn the job in a formal training program after selection?
- content
 - concurrent criterion-related
 - predictive criterion-related
 - standard error of the measurement

Ans: a

Difficulty: M

Page 187

LO1

- 6-43. The degree to which the validity of a selection method established in one context is valid in other contexts refers to the selection method's
- reliability.
 - validity.
 - generalizability.
 - utility.

Ans: c

Difficulty: E

Page 188

LO1

- 6-44. The best alternative for validating selection methods for companies that cannot use

criterion-related or content validation is

- a. validation by demonstrating very high reliability.
- b. validity generalization.
- c. the use of commercial, “off the shelf” selection tests.
- d. validation by demonstrating a very low standard error of measurement.

Ans: b

Difficulty: M

Page 188

LO1

6-45. A content validation ratio of 1 means that

- a. all judges believe a test measure to be essential.
- b. all judges believe a test measure to be unessential.
- c. the test measure perfectly correlates with performance.
- d. the test measure does not correlate with performance.

Ans: a

Difficulty: M

Page 187

LO1

6-46. The process of determining statistically whether criterion-related validity obtained in one sample holds up in another sample is

- a. selection validity.
- b. cross validation.
- c. predictive ability analysis.
- d. validity generalization.

Ans: d

Difficulty: E

Page 188

LO1

6-47. “Situational specificity”

- a. has been strongly supported by recent research.
- b. is the argument that validity coefficients (for a given test) varied widely depending on the specific

organization in which the test was used.

c. refers to the advantages of using specific situational questions in employment interviews.

d. should be a major concern when considering the use of standard intelligence or cognitive ability tests for employee selection.

Ans: d

Difficulty: M

Page 188

LO1

6-48. The degree to which the information provided by selection methods enhances the effectiveness of selecting personnel in real organizations refers to the selection method's

a. reliability.

b. validity.

c. generalizability.

d. utility.

Ans: b

Difficulty: M

Page 188

LO1

6-49. Which of the following will have a positive effect on the utility of a given test?

a. There are a small number of people to be selected (i.e., positions to be filled).

b. The selection ratio is low.

c. The economic consequences of failure versus success on the job are not very significant.

d. There are considerable variable costs (e.g., higher salaries) associated with hiring better performers.

Ans: b

Difficulty: M

Page 190

LO2

6-50. The utility of any given test will tend to be low when

a. the cost of administering the test is low.

b. those who quit the job tend to be low performers.

c. the job is one most people can perform well.



d. the organization can afford to accept only a small percentage of those who apply for jobs

Ans: c

Difficulty: H

Page 190

LO2

6-51. An organization is most likely to hire the best employees when its selection ratio is

a. 1/1.

b. 20/100.

c. 60/100.

d. 70/200.

Ans: b

Difficulty: E

Page 190

LO2

6-52. The percentage of people selected versus the total number of applicants is called

a. success rate.

b. selection ratio.

c. content-validation ratio.

d. utility of the test.

Ans: b

Difficulty: M

Page 190

LO2

6-53. Two tests, A and B, have the same validity correlation between the tests and performance. If the selection ratio is lower when using test A than test B. The utility of test A

a. is higher than test B.

b. is lower than test B.

c. has no relationship to selection ratio.

d. none of the above.

Ans: a

Difficulty: H
Page 190
LO2

6-54. Employment testing that results in a disparate (or “adverse”) impact on a class protected under Title VII

- a. is legal when the discrimination is unintentional.
- b. is legal if the employer can demonstrate that its customers prefer employees who do well on the test.
- c. is legal if the employer can show that the test is job related and consistent with a business necessity.
- d. is illegal and prohibited under all circumstances.

Ans: c
Difficulty: M
Page 191
LO3

6-55. Which of the following statements is true?

- a. In the area of managerial selection, personality tests are cornerstone in assessment centers.
- b. The Civil Rights Act of 1991 prohibits preferential treatment to minority groups.
- c. State laws prohibiting discrimination in employment can not provide employees more protection than federal laws.
- d. Executive Order 11246 requires all private employers to take affirmative action to hire minority applicants.

Ans: b
Difficulty: M
Page 191
LO3

6-56. Under the Americans With Disabilities Act (1991), employers

- a. cannot ask an applicant if he or she can perform the essential functions of the job.
- b. need not make accommodations that cause “undue hardship.”
- c. must make all possible accommodations for disabled applicants, without regard to the cost or hardship that might be involved.
- d. are not permitted to consider safety threats to others (e.g., co-workers) in determining whether accommodations can be made to allow a disabled applicant to perform the essential functions of the job.

Ans: b

Difficulty: E

Page 191

LO3

6-57. It is possible to improve the reliability of interviews by

- a. increasing the length to one hour.
- b. structuring the interview format.
- c. decreasing the number of interviewers.
- d. allowing the interview questioning format to vary in order to capture the unique KSAs of each applicant.

Ans: b

Difficulty: M

Page 192

LO4

6-58. During an interview for a sales position, you are asked the following question: “Suppose one of your clients refuses to speak to you after you lost one of his orders; what would you do to regain his business?” What type of interview question is this?

- a. Job sample
- b. Job knowledge
- c. Situational
- d. Worker requirements

Ans: c

Difficulty: M

Page 193

LO4

6-59. Research is beginning to show that the employment interview works well when

- a. it is limited to questions concerning situations related to job performance.
- b. interviewers are trained to be more in tune with their instincts regarding candidates.
- c. the interview is unstructured.
- d. the interviewer asks different open-ended questions to different candidates.

Ans: a

Difficulty: M

Page 193

LO4

6-60. Which of the following statements regarding the use of biographical data in selection is *false*?

- a. It has high criterion-related validity, especially for occupational categories such as clerical and sales.
- b. Its utility can be enhanced significantly if it is used in conjunction with a well-designed follow-up interview.
- c. The biographical information is typically assessed through long questionnaires using multiple-choice formats.
- d. The high cost of obtaining biographical data significantly diminishes its relative utility.

Ans: d

Difficulty: E

Page 194

LO4

6-61. Of the following, your greatest concern regarding the use of the cognitive ability test should be that

- a. the validity coefficient was validated in one situation, and you would be generalizing it to another situation.
- b. the true validity coefficient is likely to be substantially lower because of the passage of time.
- c. cognitive ability tests have been shown to have an adverse impact on black applicants.
- d. because of the costs involved, cognitive ability tests typically have low utility.

Ans: c

Difficulty: M

Page 196

LO4

6-62. A test that assesses an applicant's ability to perform actual tasks that will be part of the job is called a

- a. work sample test.
- b. peer assessment test.
- c. nominal integrity test.
- d. work honesty test.

Ans: a

Difficulty: E

Page 197

LO4

6-63. A typing test for an administrative assistant job is an example of a

- a. spatial abilities test.
- b. perceptual accuracy test.
- c. work sample test.
- d. mechanical test.

Ans: c

Difficulty: E

Page 197

LO4

6-64. Which personality dimension has generally been found to have the highest validity in predicting job performance?

- a. Extroversion
- b. Adjustment
- c. Agreeableness
- d. Conscientiousness

Ans: d

Difficulty: E

Page 196

LO4

6-65. The personality characteristic that should relate most to success in sales is

- a. extroversion.
- b. adjustment.
- c. conscientiousness.
- d. inquisitiveness.

Ans: a

Difficulty: M

Page 197

LO4

6-66. An assessment center

- a. is a place where job applicants undergo rigorous psychological analysts.
- b. is relatively inexpensive.
- c. uses multiple selection methods to rate either applicants or job incumbents on their managerial potential.
- d. is a selection method generally used for clerical and secretarial positions.

Ans: c

Difficulty: E

Page 197

LO4

6-67. With few exceptions

- a. it is recommended that polygraph tests be routinely administered to managerial employees that have access to an organization's financial records or accounts.
- b. polygraph tests have been found to have high reliability, moderate validity, and moderate utility.
- c. polygraph tests have been found to have high reliability, high validity, and high utility.
- d. the use of polygraph tests has been banned by legislation.

Ans: d

Difficulty: M

Page 198

LO4

6-68. One of the advantages of using an assessment center for selection systems is

- a. it is quick and easy to administer.
- b. only one rater is needed to assess candidates.
- c. high reliability and validity.
- d. it is relatively inexpensive when assessing a large group.

Ans: c

Difficulty: E

Page 197

LO4

6-69. Which of the following selection devices typically has the *highest* validity relative to the others?

- a. Biographical inventories
- b. Unstructured interview
- c. Personality inventories
- d. References

Ans: a

Difficulty: E

Page 200; Table 6.6

LO5

6-70. Work sample tests tend to have

- a. high reliability, high validity, and low utility.
- b. high reliability, high validity, and high generalizability.
- c. high validity, high generalizability, and moderate utility.
- d. high validity, high legality, and high utility.

Ans: d

Difficulty: M

Page 200; Table 6.6

LO5

6-71. Physical ability tests tend to have

- a. high reliability, moderate to high validity, and low generalizability.
- b. moderate reliability, moderate validity, and moderate generalizability.
- c. moderate to high validity, high legality, and moderate generalizability.
- d. high validity, low generalizability, and high utility.

Ans: a

Difficulty: H

Page 200, Table 6.6

LO5

6-72. Drug tests tend to have

- a. high reliability, low validity, and low legality.
- b. high reliability, high validity, and high generalizability

- c. moderate validity, high legality, and moderate generalizability.
- d. low validity, low legality, and low utility.

Ans: b

Difficulty: H

Page 200; Table 6.6

LO5

6-73. Reference checks tend to have

- a. moderate reliability, moderate validity, and moderate utility.
- b. moderate validity, high generalizability, and moderate utility.
- c. low validity, high legality, and high generalizability.
- d. low validity, low generalizability, and low utility.

Ans: d

Difficulty: M

Page 200; Table 6.6

LO5

6-74. Personality inventories tend to have

- a. moderate reliability, moderate (criterion) validity, and moderate utility.
- b. high validity, high generalizability, and high utility.
- c. high reliability, low (criterion) validity, and low generalizability.
- d. moderate utility, low generalizability, and moderate (criterion) validity.

Ans: c

Difficulty: H

Page 200; Table 6.6

LO5

6-75. Which of the following selection methods typically involves the least concern about the legality of its use?

- a. Interviews
- b. Reference checks
- c. Physical ability tests
- d. Work sample tests

Ans: d

Difficulty: M

Page 200; Table 6.6

LO5

Essay Questions

6-76. Define what is meant by reliability and validity in the employment selection context, and discuss the relationship of reliability to validity.

Ans: —Reliability is the degree to which a measure (i.e., a selection device) is free from random error.

—Validity is the extent to which performance on a measure is associated with performance on the job.

—The relationship is a measure that must be reliable to be valid; but a reliable measure is not necessarily a valid one.

Difficulty: E

Page 180-184

LO1

6-77. Briefly describe how both a concurrent criterion-related validation study and a predictive criterion-related study are conducted, and identify a potential advantage of the predictive criterion-related validation study.

Ans: Concurrent criterion-related validation studies assess the correlation between job incumbents' scores on a selection test with measures of their performance on the job. Predictive validation studies seek to establish the correlation between test scores taken prior to persons being hired and their eventual performance on the job. The selection tests are administered to job applicants, not current employees. Also, one must wait for some time after the test administration to see how a subset of those applicants (i.e., those who were actually hired) performed. Potential advantages of the predictive design Job applicants are typically more motivated to perform well on the test than job incumbents. Current employees tend to be more homogeneous, and, as a result, there may be restriction range problems associated with the concurrent design. 3. Current employees have learned many things on the job that job applicants have not.

Difficulty: M

Page 184-186

LO1

6-78. Identify and discuss at least five factors likely to affect the utility of any test.

Ans: Utility is the degree to which the information provided by a selection method enhances the effectiveness of selecting personnel in real organizations. Factors likely to affect the utility of a test include

1. Reliability
2. Validity
3. Generalizability
4. Selection ratio
5. The number of people selected
6. The rate and nature of employee turnover
7. The degree of difficulty of performing well on the job
8. The economic consequences of failure versus success on the job
9. The company's variable costs

Difficulty: M

Page 188-190

LO2

6-79. Describe what a work sample test is, and discuss how it meets the demands of reliability, validity, generalizability, utility, and legality.

Ans: Work sample tests attempt to simulate the job in some miniaturized form. They generally have high reliability, high validity, low generalizability, high utility, and high legality.

Difficulty: M

Page 197

LO5

6-80. You have recently developed a new work sample test to be used in the selection of skilled tradesmen at a furniture plant. Because of past discrimination claims at the plant (18 of the 19 current skilled tradesmen are white and male), legal counsel has advised you that a validation effort should be undertaken before the test is actually used as a basis for selection decisions. Forecasting efforts identified a potential shortage of 10 skilled tradesmen in the coming year due to growth, changes in the production process, and turnover. As a result, you are eager to put the test into use as soon as possible. Under these circumstances, what would be the best validation strategy to use? Defend your choice.

Ans: Best strategy is content validation. Rationale

1. Content validation is appropriate for work sample tests.
2. The history of discrimination and the fact that 18 of 19 current skilled tradesmen are white males raises questions of restriction of range associated with a concurrent criterion-related validation strategy.
3. A predictive criterion-related design cannot be completed prior to using the test, and the employer has been advised to validate the test before putting it into use.
4. The small sample size effectively precludes a criterion-related study.

Difficulty: H

Page 186-187

LO1

6-81. Traditional job interviews have demonstrated low validity in terms of predicting job performance. Describe how job interviews should be conducted in order to maximize their validity.

Ans: The validity of job interviews can be maximized by

1. Keeping the interview structures standardized and focused on accomplishing a small number of goals
2. Asking questions that force the applicant to display required knowledge or ability (e.g., situational interview questions)
3. Using multiple interviewers who are trained

Difficulty: E

Page 192-193

LO4

6-82. Explain what an assessment center is, comment on its reliability and validity (generally), and identify a class of jobs for which assessment ~ centers are a particularly useful selection method.

Ans: An assessment center is a selection program that employs multiple selection methods (e.g., work sample test, in-basket exercise) to rate either applicants or job incumbents on their managerial potential.

1. High reliability
2. High validity
3. Particularly useful for managers

Difficulty: E

Page 197

LO4, LO5

6-83. You are considering using a standardized cognitive ability test in your selection of employees for the job of production supervisor at a small parts manufacturing plant in Ohio. For a number of reasons, it is not possible for you to conduct your own original validation study. However, numerous validation studies have been conducted on the test in other settings, and their findings have consistently yielded a validity coefficient of approximately 0.40. Describe the steps that you would go through to establish the generalizability of those previous findings to your use of the test in the Ohio plant.

Ans: The three steps in the validity generalization process are

1. Provide evidence from previous validity studies (conducted in other situations) that a specific test is a valid predictor for a specific job.
2. Provide evidence from a job analysis to document that the specific job that the company wants to validate is similar in all major respects to the job validated in the “other” studies.
3. Show that the test the company wants to use is the same or similar to the test that was validated in other settings.

Difficulty: H

Page 185-187

LO1

6-84. Personality inventories have been receiving a lot of attention in recent years. Discuss how well (in general) personality inventories meet the demands of reliability, validity, generalizability, utility, and legality.

Ans: In general, personality tests have the following properties

1. Reliability—high
2. Validity—low criterion validity for most traits; content validity inappropriate
3. Generalizability—low
4. Legality—low, because of cultural and sex differences on most traits

Difficulty: M

Page 200; Table 6.6

LO5

6-85. Identify and discuss two specific ways in which the Americans with Disabilities Act has impacted (or constrained) the process of selecting employees.

Ans: The Americans with Disability Act

1. Makes it necessary for employers to identify the “essential functions” of jobs in their organizations
2. Prohibits employers from discriminating against a disabled applicant (because of his or her disability) if the applicant can perform the essential functions of the job with or without reasonable accommodations



3. Requires employers to make reasonable accommodations for disabled applicants/employees if doing so will allow the applicants to perform the essential functions of a job Restricts many preemployment inquiries, such as medical examinations, prior to an offer of employment

Difficulty: M

Page 191

LO3