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Title:

Self Assessment for school leadership - a web-based potential analysis instrument

The pivotal role of the school leader as a factor in effective schools has been corroborated by findings of school effectiveness research over the last decades. School improvement researchers have also demonstrated increasing recognition of the importance of school leaders for all stages of the school improvement process (reviews of international studies from the field of school effectiveness and school improvement see Huber, 1999, 2003a,b, 2005a,b, 2009; Huber & Mujs, 2010). For these reasons, it is essential to select and develop suitable individuals for school leadership positions. To establish and modify appropriate selection processes and training and development opportunities has become a major focus of professionalization tendencies in educational research. Overall, we know from the field of recruitment and selection that it is the "fit" between job characteristics and a person's skills, attitudes, and ability to learn (potential) that matters (e.g. Schuler, 2006; Schuler & Höft, 2007; Sekiguchi, 2004).

There is good reason to support future school management personnel in its orientation as early as possible. While selection is often seen as a one way process of an institution selecting suitable candidates, the overall quality for all parties included is influenced by first of all being able to attract the right candidates and to help people get an idea whether the new position will suit them (Huber & Hiltmann, 2010). Therefore, supporting processes of orientation and self-selection are equally important. In turn, opportunities for teachers to find out whether they fit to the personal demands of the school leadership role have become more important. In other fields of career development, self assessments based on psychometric tests have been proven stated to be helpful (Stiftung Warentest 2004, 2007, 2008). However, such tools are not known in the educational sector, particularly not in the German speaking context.

The paper will briefly outline the tool's development and psychometric properties. Besides psychometric properties, a very important aspect of the usefulness of a career counselling

tool is its social validity. How is the tool accepted? What do participants expect of an online career counselling tool and were expectations met? Are results useful in itself or will further advice (e.g. workshops or individual counselling) be needed? The paper will present results on a follow up evaluation study.

KPSM was developed by Huber, Hiltmann and Hader Popp in cooperation with eligo, a German consulting firm specialized on online-based aptitude testing. KPSM is an online-based self-assessment orientation tool for clarifying personal strengths and weaknesses for interested, newly appointed, or experienced members of school leadership teams. It has been used in the context of preparation and training programs. It consists of 24 test dimensions, which - following Schmidt & Hunter (1998) - focus on cognitive abilities as well as on job related attitudes and motives. Furthermore, the selection of test scales relates to theories of school leadership (see Moos & Huber, 2007) and studies of the job profiles of school leadership in the German speaking context (Huber & Schneider, 2007a,b). To explore psychometric properties, a pilot study was conducted in Germany in 2007 and 2008 (N=400; Huber & Hiltmann, 2008). An evaluation study on the experiences of the participants was undertaken as well (N=264).

The PC-based test administration and calucalation of test reensures a standardized test procedure and interscorer objectivity. Written feedback reports form a basis for objectivity for interpreting test results when the tool is used appropriately. About 20 of the 24 test scales show good alpha coefficients between .70 and .86. Significant correlations between test scales and external variables (e.g. being steering committee member) serve as first indicators for the tool's validity. With regard to social validity, findings of the evaluation study show that participants have adequate expectations corresponding with the formative purpose of the tool, that their expectations were met (79%), that the self-assessment advised them of aspects worth thinking about (75%) and taking into account in future (79%), and that they would recommend the self-assessment to colleagues (82%). Nevertheless, additional studies focusing on retest reliability, construct and criterion related validity shall be conducted. Modifications of the tool and possible complementary instruments will be discussed.

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