# School Leadership – International Perspectives

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The volumes – monographs and edited volumes – should represent work from different parts in the world.

# Chapter 16
# The Recruitment and Selection of School Leaders – First Findings of an International Comparison

**Stephan Gerhard Huber and Maren Hiltmann**

**Abstract** This chapter looks at the growing importance placed on activities to select and recruit school leaders that has led to the development of systematic selection procedures in many countries in recent years. The central question is: Do we have policies and strategies that ensure that qualified individuals are recruited to be principals?

The chapter offers an overview of current practices to select and recruit school leaders which is international in scope, draws on experience and a synthesis of existing literature as well as from the first findings of a comparative research study that includes 20 countries worldwide (in this first exploratory phase, data from around 10 countries were gathered). For the purpose of illustration in this chapter, we offer brief summaries from five countries, including examples from Europe, Asia, Australia, and North America. The countries selected are England, Germany, Singapore, Australia, and the United States.

The respective Country Reports focus on providing answers to questions such as the following:

– What is the overall approach to recruit and select school leaders?
– Are the selection procedures conducted centrally or de-centrally?
– Who is responsible for conducting the selection procedure?
– Do the countries have standards for school leaders?
– Do the countries have prerequisites for applicants for leadership positions?
– What are the steps of the selection process?
– What methods are applied?
– What criteria are relevant for the decision on who is selected?

The final section examines similarities and differences with regard to the countries' approaches to recruitment and selection. It asks what can be learned more

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generally about the selection and recruitment of school leaders from these examples and looks for common solutions. Finally, emerging issues are identified and discussed.

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. The school leader is most often cited as the key figure in the individual school's development, either blocking or promoting change, acting as the internal change agent, overseeing the processes of growth and renewal. Moreover, the school leader's role has to be seen in relationship to the broad cultural and educational contexts in which the school is operating. Since schools are embedded in their communities and in the particular national educational system, and these in turn are embedded in the particular society, schools and their leaders have to cope with, and respond to the social, economic and cultural changes and developments taking place. Schools, and consequently the expectations on school leaders, also change as a result of more subtle and indirect forces in society – social, political and economic changes – that are gathering pace across the world. Moreover, direct changes in the educational system have a particularly strong impact on the school leader's role. In most countries, the tasks and structures of schools and of the education system are changing. These change processes strongly influence the leadership of schools.

Consequently, more and more attention is being given to the role of school leaders in creating the conditions for an effective school. There is broad international agreement about the need for school leaders to have the capacities needed to improve teaching, learning and pupils' development and achievement.

For these reasons, it is essential to select (and develop) suitable individuals for school leadership positions. In many educational systems around the world it is a difficult (if not an impossible) process to dismiss an incompetent leader to correct problems stemming from mediocrity in management. Therefore, the issue of who is allowed into formal educational leadership positions is indeed of fundamental importance for educational systems around the globe. Furthermore, to establish and modify appropriate training and development opportunities has become a major focus of professional development programs in many countries, as shown by an international comparative research project (Huber, 2004) about school leadership development. But – compared to selecting leadership personnel in the private sector – insights in appropriate selection procedures and criteria for school leaders are still lacking to a great extent in the educational sector.

The growing importance placed on activities to select and recruit school leaders has led to the development of systematic selection procedures in many countries in recent years. The central question is Do we have policies and strategies that ensure that qualified individuals are recruited as principals?

The chapter provides an overview, which is international in scope and draws an experience and a synthesis of existing literature as well as from the first findings of a comparative research study that includes 20 countries worldwide (in this

first exploratory phase, data from around 10 countries were gathered; see Huber, 2005, 2006, 2007; Huber et al., 2007). For the purpose of illustration in this chapter, brief summaries from five countries are offered, including examples from Europe, Asia, Australia, and North America. The countries selected are England, Germany, Singapore, Australia, and the United States.

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– What methods are applied?
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Then, similarities and differences in approach are examined. The final sections ask what can be learned more generally about the selection and recruitment of school leaders from these examples and look for common solutions. Finally, they identify emerging issues.

## Selection and Recruitment Around the World

For this section, we have chosen five countries to give some examples from different parts of the world. The countries selected are England, Germany, Singapore, Australia and the United States. In each report, we will provide information regarding the context, the overall approach and organization of the selection procedure, advertising and marketing, prerequisites and pre-selection, job profiles in use, selection methods and selection criteria applied and whether there is any evaluation of the selection procedure available.

## England

In England's decentrally organized education system, nationally, the responsibility for the education policy lies principally with the Department for Education and Skills (DfES).[1] Regarding the selection of school leadership personnel, the DfES has set standards for their education and development programs. On the district

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[1] Reconstituted in 2007 as the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). Scotland and Northern Ireland have different far-reaching ranges of freedom of decision in education policy and therefore differ from what is described here for England.

level, the local education authorities (LAs) remain responsible for the performance of publicly financed schools in their respective districts, and their tasks include ensuring that there are sufficient school places and school buildings suitable for the education of children living in the district. The regional differences which shape the school system in England can be accounted for by the freedom with which the LAs can establish schools and design and implement individual school profiles. In the course of the "Education Reform Act 1988", the LAs' capacities to determine the distribution of funds to schools, to develop curriculum locally, to appoint teaching staff and to inspect schools have all been eroded, as the national policy has moved towards a partnership built around a strong government and strong schools that has squeezed the LA's powers. The individual schools have obtained considerably increased powers, which extend to the selection of teaching staff, and, significantly, the appointment and suspension of the teachers and of the headteacher. Specific regulations regarding the appointment of a headteacher and deputies, other teachers and support staff are laid down in the "The Education (School Staffing) England Regulations 2003" made under sections 35 and 36 of the Education Act 2002.

The following information about the current school leader selection procedure is primarily based on a recent 2-year study by the National College for School Leadership (NCSL, 2006).

## *Organization of the Selection Procedure*

The responsibility for the selection of teaching staff, the establishment of salary and promotion policies and, significantly, the appointment and suspension of the teachers and of the headteacher lie with the respective school governing body. Members of this committee (governors) include the headteacher, elected representatives of the parents, representatives of the teaching and the non-teaching staff and of the LA, and partly so-called co-opted members (invited influential representatives of politics and economy). This board is in charge of selecting and appointing new headteachers, too. A specific panel of five to seven governors is appointed to conduct the selection process. Altogether, the selection and appointment procedure of school leaders can be divided in the following seven phases (see NCSL, 2006): (1) Continuous Preparation, (2) Defining of Need, (3) Attraction, (4) Selection, (5) Appointment, (6) Induction and (7) Evaluation.

The proper selection procedure (without the preceding marketing and other preparatory measures and without the design of job profiles) typically starts with long-listing. It results in a first pre-selection on the basis of all applications received, and it defines which applicants will be invited to interviews with the board members. Due to the results of the interviews another and more restricted selection is made (short-listing). Sometimes, the applicants chosen take part in an assessment centre as the next step. In those cases the selection procedure in the narrow sense is finalized with the decision making process after the assessment centre.

## *Advertising and Marketing*

The School Governing Body informs the LA of the vacancy and advertises the vacancy. The most commonly used recruitment efforts comprise advertising in the Times Educational Supplement, in online job boards, in regional newspapers or relying on word-of-mouth recommendation, and using the LA networks. Since 1985 the "Annual Survey of Senior Staff Appointments in Schools in England and Wales" carried out by the Education Data Surveys (www.educationdatasurveys.org.uk) provides information on the number of advertisements and vacancies. The 2007 report indicates a high need of headteachers and problems in filling vacancies: many schools failed to appoint a new headteacher after their first advertisement (36% in the primary sector, 29% in the secondary sector and 48% in the special school sector).

The process of personnel marketing includes all the advertising efforts, the provision of application packs, visiting schools, providing information on the school's website, and letters by the Governors. According the NCSL survey (2006), the advertising costs per school ranged from 500 to 1000 pounds sterling. In regions with particularly difficult recruiting conditions, additional "incentives" such as "Golden Hellos" or relocation packages are offered to attract potential candidates.

## *Prerequisites and Pre-selection*

Since 1997 teachers aspiring headship take part in a training and development program, the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH), in order to qualify for application. Since 1 April 2009, it is mandatory to have completed NPQH prior to appointment to a first headship. The program consists of six modules, whose contents are aligned to the National Standards for Headship (a national catalogue of requirements relevant for the qualification and assessment of candidates aspiring headship) (see Starkebaum, 1998). Besides going through the NPQH, applicants have to meet further requirements (Eurydice Report, 1996; now known as Eurybase):

1. a "Qualified Teacher" status (teachers of special needs schools must have an additional qualification, e.g. as a teacher for students with sight defects);
2. adequate teaching experience;
3. appropriate management knowledge and skills.

There are no explicit demands regarding the time span of being a teacher and the kind of functions held so far. However, often some experience as a deputy headteacher is expected.

## Job Profiles

According to the survey by the NCSL, 37 per cent of the schools included have formulated specific demands for the headteacher role based on the "National Standards for Headteachers" (edited by the DfES 2004). In most cases, this national catalogue was only slightly adapted or modified to fit to the local conditions.

## Selection Methods

After screening incoming applications various methods are employed to screen the candidates: panel interviews by the committee (75.3%), presentations by the applicants (89.2%) and finalizing interviews (88.5%). Psychological tests (7.2%) and talks with representatives of the parents (5.4%) are applied more rarely. External assessment centres are seen to be useful even though not widely used (NCSL, 2006). They were conducted with external support by 5.7 per cent of the schools. Providers are, e.g. the Secondary Heads' Association (SHA), the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) and the National College of School Leadership (NCSL).

## The Specific Role of the Assessment Centre

Linked to the increase of demands on school leaders in the course of the Education Reform Acts, the assessment centre as a method to find suitable candidates was introduced in 1990. The National Educational Assessment Centre, NEAC (1995), was developed by SHA and the Oxford Brookes University, in cooperation with the industry and economy. According to Schneider (1997), the pilot scheme was widely supported by authorities during the 1990s. It is the objective of an assessment centre to gain evidence for the actual capacity and competencies of a candidate with regard to the criteria described in the National Standards or additionally formulated by the schools. The assessment centre developed by NEAC is underpinned by a development model with 12 competencies, which can be grouped into four areas:

– *Administrative Competencies*: problem analysis, judgement competence, organizing competence, decision making competence
– *Interpersonal Competencies*: leadership potential, empathy, stress resilience
– *Communicative Competencies*: oral and written communication
– *Personal Versatility*: a broad range of interests, motivation, educational values

The candidates taking part in the AC go through four to six position-related exercises: discussing a case, to which consensus should be found within a given time span; working on 10 in-tray tasks related to every-day or more rarely occurring situations; analysing individual position-specific problems and presenting the results; watching a video of a lesson and discussion of the professional development plan of the teacher; analysing a current study on education and instruction in schools. After

all observations have been recorded and coded, the team of assessors goes into the final assessment process. If an assessment centre is used, the selection process itself is completed after the AC with the decision making process.

## Selection Criteria

The last phase of the procedure comprises the information of and a feedback to the candidates (if judged not suitable, the candidates are entitled to be given reasons for rejection and another chance to apply again in the following year), the reference checks, and the finalizing of the contract. According to the NCSL (2006), there is widespread agreement on the conduction of reference checks. Due to their rather low validity they serve more as an additional confirmation of the decision already made than as an actual basis for the decision.

Information about the criteria relevant for decision making process is provided by the survey by the NCSL (2007). The governors interviewed regard the following criteria as utmost relevant:

**Table 16.1**   Governors' ranking of relevant criteria in the decision making process

|  | Primary schools (%) | Secondary schools (%) |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Expertise in teaching and learning | 94 | 88 |
| Leadership and management skills | 87 | 94 |
| NPQH qualification completed | 49 | 57 |
| Proficiency in budgeting and finances | 32 | 37 |
| Experience in collaboration with the community | 34 | 35 |
| Former school leadership experience | 13 | 23 |

The appointment is made by the LA in charge, on the basis of the respective school committees' recommendation (for community, voluntary-controlled, community special or maintained nursery schools). In the case of a foundation, voluntary-aided or foundation special school, the school itself makes the appointment.

The newly appointed headteachers get a contract equivalent to that of employment in the civil service. Hence, in most cases they get a permanent contract (Eurydice/Eurybase, 1996).

## Evaluation of the Selection Procedure

The school governing body is strongly advised to carry out an evaluation of the recruiting process. However, evaluation takes place in an informal manner, if at all. The NCSL survey found that in 47 percent of the cases evaluation has taken place.

Regarding formal evaluations, an evaluation of the NEAC model, the progress of the first 100 AC participants was examined. According to Schneider (1997), the

collecting of competence-related evidence has a much higher validity (0.40 to 0.60) than the formal interview with a validity of 0.30 with regard to the prognosis of future success in the job. Unfortunately, in Schneider's (1997) study, details of how the data were collected and of the kind of interview conducted remain unclear.

First general findings regarding the practice and effectiveness of the English scheme for the selection of school leaders are as follows (NCSL, 2006):

Errors may occur in any phase of the actual selection procedure. Yet the interviews seem to be particularly prone to mistakes. To guarantee that the best possible candidate gets in post at their school, the Governors have to be capable of correctly "translating" the demands and needs of their school into selection criteria that the successful candidate will have to meet. Apparently, however, sometimes the Governors prefer the "safe route". In these cases they seek for an individual as similar as possible to the previous school leader in post instead of focusing on the future needs of the school. Moreover, there are great differences concerning the quality and the amount of support (e.g. interview training) that Governors get from their LAs.

In sum the NSCL expects "some basic changes to rationalize the processes of recruitment and appointment. Possibilities include changes to resignation dates and notice periods; the provision of formal, regional or national assessment centres; the proliferation of fast-track schemes to accelerate candidates; technology-enabled advertising and matching of candidates to posts; formalized training and support to governing bodies; advertising and looking for candidates beyond the teaching profession; standardization of procedures across different children's services; the formalization of different career paths; the development of context-specific job descriptions and person specifications; increased emphasis on succession planning and talent management at the school and local level." (NCSL, 2006, p. 54).

To sum up, Table 16.2 provides an overview:

**Table 16.2** Recruitment and selection in England

| ASPECT | DESCRIPTION |
|---|---|
| OVERALL APPROACH | 1. Distinctive decentralization (responsibility lies with the schools) |
| SELECTION BODY | 2. School Governing Body |
| ADVERTISING & MARKETING | 3. Advertised throughout England and Wales: Times Educational Supplement, in regional newspapers, online job boards |
| | 4. Provision of application packs, visiting schools, providing information on the school's website and letters by the Governors |
| | 5. Advertising costs per school ranged from 500 to 1000 pounds sterling |
| JOB PROFILE PREREQUISITES | 6. Based on national standards, formulated in 37% of the schools |
| | 7. Participation in The National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH); mandatory from 1 April 2009 |
| | 8. A Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) adequate teaching experience, appropriate management knowledge and skills (e.g. from experience as a deputy headteacher) |

**Table 16.2**   (continued)

| ASPECT | DESCRIPTION |
|---|---|
| SELECTION METHODS | 9. Presentations by the applicants (89.2%), finalizing interviews (88.5%), interviews by the committee (75.3%), psychological tests (7.2%), talks with representatives of the parents (5.4%), sometimes reference checks (per cent ages refer to secondary schools) |
| | 10. Depending on number of applicants and funding: an assessment centre |
| SELECTION CRITERIA | 11. Leadership and management skills (94%), expertise in teaching and learning (88%), NPQH qualification finished (57%), an understanding of budgeting and finances (37%), experience in collaboration with the community (35%), former school leadership experience (23%) (important criteria to governors) |
| | 12. Appointment made by the LA in charge on the basis of the respective school committees' recommendation |
| EVALUATION | 13. Differences in experiences and preparation of Governors influences quality of interviews |
| | 14. Analysis of the NEAC assessment centre |

# Germany

The German school system is under federal control. At a national level, independence in matters of education and culture lies with each state due to the federal principle. This means that each of the 16 federal states (the German "Länder") has an individual school system ensured by jurisdictional and administrational laws. Hence, the legal basis for the selection and appointment of school leaders is within the responsibility of the respective state as well and is formulated in its respective laws. School leaders are employed by each state as civil servants and in general they have non-terminable (lifelong) tenure. Hence, for promotion the career regulations for civil servants are valid. Legally, all appointments have to be in accordance with the goal laid down in the "Grundgesetz" (the Constitution), article 33, postulating an equal access to any public position for every German, according to her or his aptitude, competence, and professional performance (Grundgesetz, 2005).

For the first time, Rosenbusch, Huber and Knorr investigated the selection procedures of school leadership personnel in Germany in 2002. A second study was undertaken by Huber and Gniechwitz (2006).

## *Organization of the Selection Procedure*

The selection and appointment of a school leader lies within the responsibility of the Ministry for Education of the respective German federal state. Regulations of the school laws vary from one "Land" to another regarding how detailed they are. Summing up, however, it becomes obvious that all states (with the exception of Berlin, Bremen, Lower Saxony and North Rhine-Westphalia) do not go beyond a

general description of the selection procedure. In the states mentioned as exceptions, criteria are formulated a priori in the school law, and, more precisely, in the official regulations and stipulations.

One finding of the 2002 exploratory study shows that the departments of the ministries of education and the education authorities not only are in charge of the selection and appointment procedure, but they are also involved in the development of the selection methods. In some states, the authorities are supported by state academies or state-run teacher training institutes or the personnel department.

The filling of a vacant position needs long-term personnel planning by the authority. In this context, in a publication of the German School Leader Association (ASD, 2005) the creation of a "pool" of applicants by the state is regarded as a relevant condition for a successful selection and appointment procedure. In Bremen, Berlin, Hamburg, Hesse, Lower Saxony, Saxony, Schleswig-Holstein, and Thuringia, the creation of such a "pool" on the basis of the candidates' taking part in development programs early in their careers is being considered and realized in some pilot schemes. Other federal states are following.

## Advertising and Marketing

In all federal states, vacant school leader positions (or those expected to become vacant) are advertised in the official information published by the Ministry, in regional official newsletters and partly on the internet (see Rosenbusch et al., 2002). Generally speaking, those advertisements comprise the name of the school, the details of the school profile, the exact title of the position, the level of salary and relevant information about the formal requirements and deadlines of the application procedure. States such as Brandenburg and Hesse additionally use regional and national newspapers, and so does North Rhine-Westphalia, where (like in Lower Saxony) optionally public advertising by the "Schulträger" (institution or political community in charge of the maintenance of the school) is not unusual (see Rosenbusch et al., 2002). Only in exceptions (e.g. in Bremen and Lower Saxony), the text of the advertisement is precisely adapted to the individual school's needs. According to the authorities in charge of selection and to the School Leader Associations of the individual federal states, on a national average there are 1.3 to 5.6 candidates per vacant position. In some "Länder", such as Baden-Württemberg, Bavaria, Berlin, Bremen, Hesse, Lower Saxony, North Rhine-Westphalia, Saxony and Saxony-Anhalt, interviews with potential school leader candidates are conducted. Marketing measures in a classic sense are not in use.

## Prerequisites and Pre-selection

In all federal states, a new school leader is required to have teacher training for, and teaching experience in, the respective type of school. Moreover, additional qualifications are an advantage, like experiences as a deputy school leader, in leading

teams, or working as an instructor in charge of the induction phase of teacher training, etc. Mostly, however, the state examinations after teacher training are decisive as well as the regular official performance assessments by superiors. The candidates who are evaluated as most suitable are appointed school leaders for life (see Eurydice/Eurybase – Germany, 2004/2005; Huber, 2004).

In almost all states, with the exception of Bavaria, where the regular official performance assessment by superiors is taken into account, the teachers aspiring for school leadership are evaluated for this purpose (see Rosenbusch et al., 2002). Consequently, the assessment of one's professional performance and achievements is not only a basis for promotion (see the section about selection criteria), but also the central precondition for the application. In some states, it is considered to establish a systematic training before the application as a prerequisite for taking over school leadership, as it is the case in some other European countries (Knorr, 2004).

## Job Profiles

Job profiles or competence profiles have been set up in 11 (out of 16) federal states (Huber & Schneider, 2007a,b). Others may have them now as well. However, they are not always explicitly formulated as job profiles. Besides, it is striking that most of the descriptions comprise both goals and central school leadership tasks as well as requirement with regard to competencies. Some states explicitly claim that the advertisements for vacant positions are supposed to be based on the criteria formulated in the profiles, which should be adapted to the local conditions. In some states, these descriptions also function as a basis for the evaluation/assessment of school leaders.

## Selection Methods

The choice of selection methods differ widely across the federal states so that there is no Germany-wide selection procedure (Rosenbusch et al., 2002). After the applications have been received and passed on to the authorities in charge, the first step is a general check to see if the candidate is suitable with regard to the results of the regular official assessments by his superiors.

In Bavaria and Hesse, the focus is only on these formal criteria indicating performance and abilities as stated in the regular official assessment. This selection method is the explanation for the fact that the complete selection procedure takes comparatively little time. Interviews play only a minor part in Bavaria and Hesse. They are only fallen back upon in case the applicant's documents and evaluation results do not show clear picture in terms of selecting the best.

In the federal states Baden-Württemberg, Brandenburg, North Rhine-Westphalia and Saxony-Anhalt, among the selection methods are classroom observations (and analyses), chairing of conferences (not in Baden-Württemberg), and interviews.

In Lower Saxony, Thuringia, Saxony, Hamburg and Berlin the emphasis is on the interviews, though the type and length of interviews differ. The impression of the applicant gained through the interviews is most influential for the decision on who is selected (see Rosenbusch et al., 2002). In those states, the time span of the procedure is the longest.

In Schleswig-Holstein and Bremen, too, the personal presentation of the applicant plays a decisive part. In Schleswig-Holstein, the interviews are conducted in the selection committee; in Bremen, however, the applicants do not personally introduce themselves to the panel. There, the interviews with the pre-selected candidates are conducted by the respective board at the school itself. A further particularity of those two countries is that they establish a pool of candidates on the basis of professional development talks, potential analyses, and training and development programs, which can be fallen back upon in case of new appointments, thus shortening the length of the procedure to approximately 3 months.

For some years, in Lower Saxony, Hesse, and Schleswig-Holstein an explicit restructuring of the school leader selection procedure has been aimed at with regard to selection methods (see Niermann, 1999; Hoffmann, 2003; Denecke et al., 2005; http://www.modelle.bildung.hessen.de). Those new conceptions particularly stand out due to a linking of personnel planning, staff development and selection, in which different potential analysis procedures and/or components of an assessment center are applied after the candidates' taking part in a development program.

## Selection Criteria

According to the unpublished study by Rosenbusch et al. (2002), in all federal states there is consensus that the best candidate shall be selected for a school leadership position. Bavaria, Berlin, Bremen and Schleswig-Holstein stated that above all the objectivity and lucidity of the procedure are the most relevant criteria for the selection. The applicants shall get the chance to fully understand the decision made. In all federal states, in the genuine selection procedure, the aptitude, capability, and professional performance of the applicant are assessed on the basis of his or her evaluation of achievement as a teacher.

The assessment of the professional abilities and performance of the future school leader is the central basis for promotion and appointment (see Eurydice/Eurybase, 1996). In quite a number of states, additional emphasis is put on performance in the personal interview. With the exception of countries that only focus on assessments of professional performance, the criteria for the final selection remain unclear. In some federal states, the individual schools have a say in the procedure, in most cases, however, in terms of having a counselling voice. In Hamburg, Bremen, Schleswig-Holstein and Lower Saxony, the individual school is actively taking part in the process through a specific panel.

## *Evaluation of the Selection Procedure*

When comparing the duration of the selection procedures of the German federal states, there are some striking differences (see also Rosenbusch et al., 2002). In Bavaria, Bremen, and Schleswig-Holstein the average time span is between 2 and 3 months. Those three states are below the German average of approximately 4 to 6 months. In Saxony and Thuringia, for example, the procedure takes 1 year on an average and is clearly longer than the German average.

As far as we know, interviewing authorities and school leader associations in Germany did not bring about any insights in the reliability and validity of individual selection procedures and methods, as no state could provide any information about such results in 2002. This situation has not substantially changed in Germany. At present, studies focusing on the validation of selection methods cannot be found.

To sum up, Table 16.3 provides an overview:

**Table 16.3**   Recruitment and selection in Germany

| ASPECT | DESCRIPTION |
| --- | --- |
| OVERALL APPROACH | 1. Centralized selection process in most federal states |
| SELECTION BODY | 2. The departments of the Ministries of Education in the respective German federal state |
| ADVERTISING & MARKETING | 3. In the official information publications of the Ministry, in regional official newsletters and partly on the internet |
| | 4. General advertisements of open positions (no specifications about the individual school's needs) |
| | 5. No information about any marketing activities |
| JOB PROFILE | 6. Job profiles or competence profiles in 11 federal states, however, not always explicitly formulated as such |
| PREREQUISITES | 7. Teaching experience in the respective school type |
| | 8. Good results in previous performance assessments |
| | 9. Completion of a qualification program (is currently discussed) |
| SELECTION METHODS | 10. General check of the results of the regular official performance assessments by the superiors |
| | 11. Mostly focused on formal criteria indicating performance and abilities as stated in the regular official performance assessment |
| | 12. Additional selection methods such as classroom observations and analyses, chairing of conferences and interviews are used in some federal states |
| SELECTION CRITERIA | 13. Additional qualifications are usually an advantage |
| | 14. The weighing of single selection criteria differ widely across the federal states; the criteria for the final selection remain mostly unclear |
| EVALUATION | 15. No information on the reliability or validity of the selection procedures or methods |

## Singapore

From 1824 to 1945, Singapore was a British colony. During those 120 years Singapore took over England's education system. In that time, the management, supervision, evaluation, selection, and the training and development of staff were within the responsibility of the schools themselves. After the independence from the British Empire in 1945, the government decided to manage the education sector centrally and to control it more strictly.

Singapore's present school system is determined by a meritocratic policy approach with strong emphasis on achievement, efficiency and economic success. Most influential in the education sector is the Ministry of Education (MOE). The ministry formulates and implements education policies, and it is responsible for the design of the curriculum and allocates resources. Furthermore, it controls the development and administration of the government and government-aided schools and also supervises private schools. The school division of the MOE wants to ensure that schools are effectively managed and that the education provided is in accordance with national objectives.

Moreover, the ministry is in charge of the selection, training and development of school leaders. The school leaders and the whole school leadership team are supervised, guided, supported and assessed regarding their effectiveness by superintendents. Hence, school inspection is allocated directly at the ministry level.

The responsibility for the individual school lies with the school leaders, yet most schools actually are directly administered by the ministry (with regard to selecting staff, admitting pupils, buying material needed, etc.). Thus, the tasks of school leaders are almost completely reduced to implementing the stipulations of the ministry, assessing whether the quality of instruction is good, and launching improvement efforts if necessary. Singapore's education system is extremely competitive, and there is much pressure on the schools, the teachers and the pupils, as pupil achievement is evaluated through standardized tests and the results are published in ranking lists (league tables).

Since the end of the 1980s, there have been calls for a decentralization of educational governance. The school leaders have demanded more responsibility on school level in order to be able to introduce initiatives and respond more flexibly to changes. Since the beginning of the 1990s, the demands for more autonomy have been responded to positively.

In 1997, the MOE introduced the "Thinking Schools, Learning Nation" concept. The school principal obviously plays a key role in this transition from a very result-oriented approach of viewing schools to a more process- and learning-oriented one. The principal has to make sure that the school reacts to varying needs and challenges, and she or he supervises the development of school programs. The main emphasis will be on character building, motivation and innovation, creative and committed learning. This could mean even more pressure to succeed for the single principal, since there will still be ranking lists and competition among schools while the range of criteria for all that has changed and increased. It could thus be argued that school principals in Singapore have to cope with conflicting demands. On the one hand they need to drive forward the holistic vision of a thinking school:

developing into a more organizationally independent and self-reflecting entity, even as they are ranked. In fact, schools are supposed to develop contrary to what has shaped them for decades. The school principal, therefore, plays an important role in this politically propagated societal change.

## Organization of the Selection Procedure

The possible further career steps for teachers within their school (e.g. to become a head of department or deputy school leader) are regulated by the Education Service Professional Development and Career Plan Path System. It was developed to plot the training needs and career prospects of all teachers, and it functions as a formal guideline for promotions, positioning a teacher within a school according to his or her academic achievements and teaching experience as well as the reports. It differentiates three career tracks: the teaching track, the leadership track, and the senior specialist track.

## Advertising and Marketing

Unfortunately, we could not gather any information available about means of recruiting suitable applicants and ways of advertising vacant positions.

## Prerequisites and Pre-selection

As a prerequisite for a school leader position, the compulsory preparatory program Diploma in Educational Administration (DEA) was a requirement. The program was developed and conducted in conjunction with the MOE and the National Institute of Education of the "Nanyang Technological University". Recently, a new program has replaced the DEA. This shorter qualification called Leaders in Education Program (LEP) is, at its core, an executive program conceiving of the principal's role as that of a Chief Executive Officer. It is shorter in duration from the previous DEA, adopts an innovative process-as-content model to place the emphasis on learning, on problem solving and decision making, draws on the expertise available in industry and provides opportunities for field trips abroad.

## Job Profiles

There is no information available about any job profiles.

## Selection Methods

In the selection procedure in a narrow sense, teachers are invited to interviews upon the recommendation of the district superintendent. The main criteria for the selection of school leaders are their academic achievement, their teaching experience and their evaluation reports.

## Selection Criteria

The school leaders should at least hold a master degree. If there is an exception, the degree can later be done at the Ministry or at a University of Education. The final decision regarding the appointment is made by the Board of Education.

## Evaluation of the Selection Procedure

It seems that evaluations are not conducted, as there is no information available about any evaluation of the school leader selection procedure.

To sum up, Table 16.4 provides an overview:

**Table 16.4** Recruitment and selection in Singapore

| ASPECT | DESCRIPTION |
| --- | --- |
| OVERALL APPROACH | 1. Highly centralized |
| SELECTION BODY | 2. The Ministry of Education (MOE) |
|  | 3. Basis: a formal Career Advancement Chart |
| ADVERTISING & MARKETING | 4. No information available |
| JOB PROFILE | 5. No information available |
| PREREQUISITES | 6. Mandatory prerequisite: participation in the "Leaders in Education Program" (LEP) |
|  | 7. A Master degree |
| SELECTION METHODS | 8. Interviews upon the recommendation of the district superintendent |
| SELECTION CRITERIA | 9. Academic achievement, teaching experience and performance according to assessment reports (career up to now). |
|  | 10. Final decision regarding the appointment by the so-called Board of Education. |
| EVALUATION | 11. No information available |

## Australia

New South Wales (NSW) is one of the six federal states of Australia. Australia's federal structure of government assigns most of the responsibility for schooling to the six states and two territory governments. The federal government through the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) provides national cohesion across the various school systems, a system of vocational training, funding for universities, which operate relatively autonomously, and a policy framework linking education to the economy, society and culture of the nation. Each state and territory has developed its own system of educational administration within this framework; New South Wales is the largest public school system, with 2200 schools, 750,000 pupils and 46,000 teachers. In New South Wales, as in most other states of Australia, reforms in the field of educational policy took place in the course of the 1990s. The

central administration was reduced and schools were given more decision making power in terms of site-based management, by which local school committees and school leaders were delegated more tasks and responsibility. Since then, to some extent, individual schools and their leaders are to a larger extent held. In the course of these developments, a new conception of leadership has become operational, namely School Leaders in Learning Communities.

On the basis of this new conception of school leadership, the NSW Department of Education and Training launched a comprehensive training and development program, the School Leadership Strategy (SLS), which was centrally developed and implemented, with support being provided through local Inter-District School Leadership Groups (ISLGs) and the principal associations. The School Leadership Strategy (SLS) is a multi-phase systematic program, based on an understanding of schools functioning as learning communities with leadership distributed widely within each school. It is underpinned by the NSW DET School Leadership Capability Framework and the NSW Institute of Teachers' Professional Teaching Standards. The programs address the needs of future school leaders and the broader leadership group within each school. The School Executive Induction Program and the Principal Induction Program are designed to induct new appointees into these leadership functions. The Principal Development Program and the School Executive Development Program provide continuing professional development for established school leaders and for faculty with other leadership roles.

## *Organization of the Selection Procedure*

Regarding the filling of vacant school leadership positions, different situations have to be described. In case a member of the school leadership team has to be appointed for an interim period, the selection is made by a committee within the school. When school leadership personnel have to be appointed for a longer period, until recently, a distinction was made whether the appointment was for lifetime or "merit based" for a specific time period. In the meantime, however, only merit-based selections for limited periods are made. In charge of the organization of this selection procedure is a panel usually comprised of different members according to the respective federal state. In NSW, the panel consists of one representative of the NSW Teachers Federation; one representative of the Director-General, and one administrative/clerical representative of the Education Department.

## *Advertising and Marketing*

Vacant positions are advertised on the online platform jobs@DET as well as in the Commonwealth Government Gazette and additionally in the ACT Schools Bulletin (in most cases in March). The advertising period is about 6–12 months, which is quite long, due to the effort to advertise and fill all vacant positions for the coming term at the same time.

Linked to the various training and development programs, there are extensive marketing activities: Since the entire qualification program is mainly organized and implemented by the ISLGs, these groups are of major importance. There are 20 of these groups altogether. They have been formed out of two to three individual school districts respectively. The main task of each ISLG is to disseminate information about the programs, to coordinate the implementation at the local level and to facilitate mentoring opportunities and the development of local collegial networks. It may be assumed that networks can also be used for recruiting applicants for vacant positions.

## Prerequisites and Pre-selection

Applicants for a school leadership position are expected to have taken part in one of the development programs and to hold the "Certificate of School Leadership". That, however, is not a mandatory requirement for appointment to school leadership positions. All teaching staff is free to apply.

## Job Profiles

The NSW Department of Education and Training through the Training and Development Directorate formulated a conceptual basis for a notion of leadership that is expected to cope with the enlarged demands on school leaders. Hence, this may be called a comprehensive job profile. There is, however, no information about the extent of this job profile being taken into account in the selection procedure itself or whether it is supplemented by any further locally decided demands.

## Selection Methods

Within the frame of the merit-based selection, the classic methods are applied. First, the online applications are gone through. The references are checked and partly the support by external consultants is used. On the basis of this pre-screening, a more restricted selection is made (short-listing). Applicants on the short-list are invited to an interview by the panel. While Chapman (1984b) still reported that the "most senior eligible applicant must be offered the position" (p. 45), today a merit-based selection is made.

## Evaluation of the Selection Procedure

Some basic evaluation was undertaken in the 1980s (Chapman, 1984a,b). A team of the Commonwealth Schools Commission was founded with the primary objective to identify ways of supporting and improving the professional development

of principals. For this purpose, four studies were conducted, one of which aims at developing a descriptive profile of principals and another at summarizing the procedures which are currently followed in selecting and appointing principals and to identify the assumptions underlying these processes. Due to the changes in the 1990s, it must be assumed that the modes of selection and the criteria for the decision were modified. There is no information about evaluation studies on school leader selection and appointment after those changes in the 1990s.

However, there are some hints at general problems in the Policy Statements of the Australian Secondary Principal Association (ASPA). The Policy Paper "School Leaders: Shortage and Suitability in Australian Public Schools" from November 1999, for example, indicates some improvements of the selection procedure.

More importantly, ASPA notes that some jurisdictions are questioning the ability of the merit-based selection processes to ensure that the best person is actually offered the job. ASPA strongly endorses the principle of selection by merit but notes there are some strongly held views that current processes by which merit is determined are not always working well. Issues surrounding existing selection processes are

– self-promotion is rarely a reliable predictor of future performance.
– information about past performance is a more reliable indicator but is hard to obtain.

To sum up, Table 16.5 provides an overview:

**Table 16.5**  Recruitment and selection in New South Wales, Australia

| ASPECT | DESCRIPTION |
| --- | --- |
| OVERALL APPROACH | 1. Interim positions: fully decentralized (appointment by schools)<br>2. Long-term positions: relatively decentralized (selection panel) |
| SELECTION BODY | 3. Mixed selection panels |
| ADVERTISING & MARKETING | 4. In the Commonwealth Government Gazette and the ACT Schools Bulletin<br>5. Long advertising period of 6 to 12 months<br>6. Extensive marketing activities linked to the development programs |
| JOB PROFILE | 7. No information about profiles; but conceptual basis for a new leadership in schools is formulated by NSW Department of Education and Training |
| PREREQUISITES | 8. All teaching staff are free to apply<br>9. "Certificate of School Leadership" (expected) |
| SELECTION METHODS | 10. Screening of written applications, references checks, interviews by the panel<br>11. Partly supported by external consultants |
| SELECTION CRITERIA | 12. Principle of a merit-based selection process highly emphasized |
| EVALUATION | 13. No information about evaluation studies on school leader selection and appointment after the changes in the 90s<br>14. Some critique is formulated by the ASPA |

## The United States

It is the distinctive decentralization of decision making processes in the education sector – besides open enrolment and the accountability of schools to the public – that has had serious effects on the principals' functions and range of tasks. For that the federal states have set up standards, and the universities of various states have founded bodies for collaboration in order to be able to create consensus across the states and to assure a level of quality as high as possible. Thus, when issues of personnel marketing and the selection of principals in the Unites States are discussed, this should be closely linked to the characteristic features of the US education system and the present "market" for educational leadership qualification programs as of a master degree. Generally speaking, the responsibility for the training and development of teachers aspiring a leadership position lies with the universities.

### *Organization of the Selection Procedure*

Due to the special role of the university-based training and development programs, the selection procedure basically is two-phased: In the first phase, the teachers have to get an adequate university degree as a prerequisite. This is closely linked to getting a license, which is a precondition for consideration as a potential candidate for a vacant position at all. It is only on that basis that the actual selection procedure takes place. As mentioned above, the tradition of university-based training and development programs is highly relevant. Of similar importance are the federal states' responsibility for the education policy, which already leads to an enormous differentiation, and the development of school site management (including the individual school's autonomy in matters of personnel), which increases individualization and differentiation. Hence, the responsibility for the design of the selection procedure eventually lies with the schools. In most cases, the selection committees, established by the school, are in charge of it. Quite often, the committees delegate the (pre-)selection procedures to other agents or carry it out with the support of personnel consultants or personnel recruitment agencies. Services of that kind exist (according to a survey of the School Boards Associations (of 2001, quoted after Riede, 2003a)) in more than 34 states. Among them are private companies as well as services of the School Board Associations (see Riede, 2003a,b).

### *Advertising and Marketing*

Advertisements for vacancies can be found on the career boards of the various professional associations or on the board of the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP, 1998, 2002, 2004), which can be accessed by members

only. Some companies and districts also set up their own candidate pool, circulate emails and lots of leaflets around schools, or publish advertisements in newspapers. Assumedly, the Unites States is the country in which most marketing is practiced (in terms of leaflets for programs, etc.), as these programs are integrated in the university culture of the American higher education system with its typical marketing culture and are advertised accordingly.

## Prerequisites and Pre-selection

In general, the prerequisite for the application of teachers for a leadership position as a "principal" is a master degree in "Education", "Educational Leadership", "Educational Administration" or similar. Additionally, applicants for principalship have to own a certificate (valid in the respective state or district). To get that, they must have taken the respective courses, have professional experience, and often have passed a special test or an assessment centre interview. For a detailed survey of the conditions for licensing in the different federal states see the information offered by the National Center for Education Information in Washington (2003). Besides, Korostoff and Orozco (2002) provide detailed information about all state agencies and universities and various ways to get a licence.

## Job Profiles

Evidence for fulfilling the demands from this implicit profile can be provided by candidates through their licence. However, in the actual selection procedure, there are additional demands specific to the individual school, which are individually formulated by the private personnel agencies and the school itself.

## Selection Methods

Little is known about the selection methods applied in the actual procedure of filling the position. Essentially, there is supposed to be an analysis of the curriculum vitae and a sequence of interviews with the personnel agency and members of the hiring committee. According to various advertisements, the following documents are usually required: current resume, current transcripts, cover letter outlining your qualifications for this position, professional letters of reference, copy of principal certification, and quite often, additionally the response to some questions regarding the school or the vision of the future development of the school.

   On the other hand, in an effort to find out more about what factors are really important in predicting performance for future principals, the assessment centre method came into play.

The 12 leadership indicators identified by the NASSP (1998, 2002, 2004) are supposed to constitute a good predictor for future levels of performance for newly hired administrators in education. The assessment centre, a growing trend currently used in various areas of the United States, has several characteristics: (1) The use of multiple contrived situations (e.g. business simulations) to observe behaviour, (2) the presence of several trained assessors who pool their evaluations along a variety of specified dimensions (e.g. the assessee's leadership, risk-taking, and administrative abilities), (3) the evaluation of several candidates at one time, and (4) extensive feedback, written or verbal, to either the candidate or management, or both.

## Selection Criteria

The decision very often lies directly with the school, i.e. with the hiring or selection committee of the particular school. The heterogeneous composition of those bodies on the one hand has the advantage that various perspectives can be taken into account. On the other hand, the members of those committees usually have not been trained in the selection of personnel at all, or give access to criteria different from the search for the "best suited individual". Riede (2003a), for example, reports on issues of very able candidates having not been accepted out of "political reasons" and less able ones having been favoured. Roza et al. (2003) state that human resource directors and superintendents draw on different criteria for selection, the former preferring professional experience – typically defined as years of teaching experiences – and the latter focusing on for leadership competences and often being dissatisfied with the individuals put in the position.

## Evaluation of the Selection Procedure

The NASSP has had their assessment centre procedures (already in place since the early 1980s) evaluated continuously (see Schmitt, 1980, 1994; Schmitt et al., 1982; Schmitt & Cohen, 1990a,b; Williams & Pantili, 1992; Pashiardis, 1993). The research findings confirmed sufficient prognostic validity of the assessment centre for the future achievement of principals. Research in further selection methods applied in concrete processes of filling positions (e.g. interviews, potential analyses, self-assessment through psychological tests) still is a desiderate. In comparison, the effectiveness and the quality of preparatory training and development programs, of some specific methods such as principal internships and the effectiveness of the standards are regularly evaluated and broadly discussed.

To sum up, Table 16.6 provides an overview:

**Table 16.6**  Recruitment and selection in the United States of America

| ASPECT | DESCRIPTION |
| --- | --- |
| OVERALL APPROACH | 1. Distinctive decentralization (responsibility lies with the schools) |
| SELECTION BODY | 2. Hiring or selection committees, established by the school |
|  | 3. Sometimes supported by personnel consultants or personnel recruitment agencies or services of the School Board Associations |
| ADVERTISING & MARKETING | 4. In career boards, newspapers, etc. |
|  | 5. Recruiting companies also send emails and leaflets around |
| JOB PROFILE | 6. National standards serve as a general job profile, complemented by specific requirements of the respective school |
| PREREQUISITES | 7. Teaching licenses, adequate university master degree, principal license |
| SELECTION METHODS | 8. Great variation among tests (for licensing); analysis of the curriculum vitae, answers to written questions, reference checks, interviews and assessment centres |
| SELECTION CRITERIA | 9. No data (probably a result of the very decentralized process) |
| EVALUATION | 10. Studies on the validity of the NASSP assessment centre |
|  | 11. No research findings in further selection methods |
|  | 12. Heterogeneous composition of the selection committee is not always an advantage |

## Conclusion

This chapter has drawn heavily on a recently started international comparative study (Huber, 2005, 2006, 2007; Huber et al., 2007), which describes current practice from around the world and identifies commonalities and differences. As this project has only started in an exploratory first phase, we are still restricted in the way we can draw our conclusions. Interestingly, there seems to be little international work available on how school leaders are selected and recruited.

Given our first five case study countries, some central similarities and differences can be highlighted.

First, the overall approach of school leader selection ranges (as could be expected) from a distinctive decentralized one (with responsibility lying with the schools as in England and the Unites States) to a centralized one (as in many German states and above all in Singapore, where the ministry is in charge). Accordingly, the selecting body is either a committee established by the school, the community (or district) or the department of the ministry itself. These decentralized versus centralized approaches seem to affect the advertising and marketing activities undertaken to fill vacant school leader positions. They are either quite intense and widespread (in the countries with the decentralized approach) or restricted to official information publications.

Second, many countries use job profiles or framework conceptualizations of different kinds. Some are based on standards, some are solely driven by school law

and school regulations in which the role of school leaders is described. In countries where the selecting body is school or district based, there is a whole variety of different kinds of profiles, often taking the local situation into account.

Third, a *conditio sine qua non* as a prerequisite for applying for a school leadership position in most countries is having a teaching licence and some experience in teaching in the respective type of school. In the countries described here teaching experience is required but its duration is not stipulated in official documents unlike in many other European countries (e.g. Cyprus, France, Italy, Norway, Spain and others, see Eurybase Fig. 49: Minimum number of years of professional teaching experience required to become a school head in primary, general lower and upper secondary education, 2002/03). With regard to further formal prerequisites, two approaches seem to exist. Many countries require participation in a preparatory training course or an extensive development program usually concluding with a certificate or a license, as it is the case in Australia, England, Singapore and the USA. On the other hand Germany is relying mostly on the previous performance of the candidates as teachers.

Fourth, the selection methods applied differ widely. While in most of the German Länder the emphasis is put on formal criteria indicating abilities (albeit adding further selection methods if considered desirable) and in Singapore they solely rely on interviews. Although a great variety of methods are used in England and the United States, interviews, however, seem to be indispensable.

Fifth, as to the evaluation of the selection procedures, there is a striking research desiderate: Mostly, no information about the reliability and validity is available. In England and the USA, however, some studies on selection methods are being undertaken.

It can rightly be assumed, however, that increasing efforts concerning the selection of school leaders will be made at the moment and in the near future. This is due to the rising awareness of the central role of school leaders, corroborated by international research findings, as well as to the increasing importance of school leadership in the change process of many school systems from a centralized one towards a more decentralized system of self-managing schools.

What has to be taken into account in respect to diagnostic measures used for selection should be based on a few considerations. In general, it seems as if a more rigorous and systematic approach is needed.

First, the approach should be based on what we know from research about good or competent school leadership with regard to school quality and school improvement. Findings from research help to identify what is expected from school leaders in general.

Second, the approach should also be based on the specific organizational context. What expectations by regulations, professional standards, or voices of different stakeholders exist and have to be taken into account? What is needed is not only to take a general perspective into account but also the specific organizational context. Given the desired fit of a person's competences to the requirements of a specific organization, more is required than just backmapping individuals against a general compilation of generic competences: a contextual fit is required.

Third, the selection processes should use a wide range of diagnostic means in a kind of mixed method approach combining biographic-oriented, behavioural-oriented, and the trait-oriented instruments. The biographical assessment approach follows the idea of predicting the candidate's future performance on the basis of his or her past achievements and experiences. Methods following this approach are, e.g. screening of biodata, reference checks, or interviews. The behavioural-oriented approach focuses on one's actual behaviour usually observed in tasks where future job situations are simulated and in which the applicant is required to take action (e.g. work sample, assessment centre, classroom teaching). The trait focuses on assessing personality characteristics. This approach follows the idea that there are basic personality traits (e.g. intelligence or achievement motivation) which have a demonstrable causal link with professional success. Psychometric intelligence and personality tests are an example of a selection process designed according to this approach. From several decades of research in the field of aptitude assessment it can be concluded that combining all three assessment approaches by integrating different diagnostic measurements will lead to better person-job-fit decisions. Currently most countries focus on biographical information for selecting school principals. Methods representing a behavioural or trait-oriented approach are far less used.

This is interesting because a professional selection approach should focus on a prognostic perspective. It is about assuming the future performance of a candidate in a certain position. It is not about "rewarding" experienced individuals as teachers for their merits. We do not have empirical evidence for the existing practice in some countries, which is based on the assumption that a good teacher automatically becomes a good school leader. There is the risk of losing a competent teacher while not necessarily gaining a competent school leader. Professional diagnostics aim at prediction on a prognostic base, not solely on a retrospective base. In this respect, an even less valuable criterion would be the mere age of the candidate in terms of the years of experience in the profession.

Huber et al. (2007) developed an online inventory for self-assessment (the Competency Profile School Management – CPSM) comprising around 30 test scales related to the competence profile to undertake school development and school management (with around 400 items) and a complex problem analysis tool (in the form of an in tray exercise), which have been standardized with around 300, 2009 with 1000 teachers.

As to what is missing but needed, we see several emerging issues.

First, there is still some need for a clearer conception of competencies required for school leadership. It is clear from the brief country reviews that there is a further demand to compare both the common and the distinct elements that we find in different countries, and to recognize that – although a competency-based approach may have some advantages – there is still little consensus about what the key competencies are than there might be. However, school leadership has to deal with a great amount of complexity and uncertainty but also with dilemmas and contradictions and with different expectations, given all the different stakeholders from the system context as well as the local context.

Second, in this regard, there appears to be a strong case for looking in more detail at the impact school leaders have on the school's quality and improvement process. We need research on the effectiveness of school leadership considering the complexity of an organization and all its possible impact. We now have the necessary statistical and analytical tools to investigate this impact through multi-level and multivariate techniques.

Third, we have become increasingly conscious during our own work in this field that the conception of school leadership, even taken internationally, is a rather narrow one. Perhaps there does not need to be "one supreme head" in each school. Maybe school leadership needs other conceptualizations like collective leadership and the re-conceptualization of the school leader's role as simply one part in a team. This would allow to move away from the school leadership concept as a position for one person, the "multifunctional miracle being" (Huber, 2004), the one-man/one-woman at the top, but to conceptualize school leadership as a function that a team serves to fulfil. It is this last issue which seems to us to challenge most forcibly the orthodoxy underpinning current approaches to recruitment and selection and which offers the most interesting avenue of exploration for the future.

Fourth, we need research on the instruments' reliability and validity in particular, and on the effectiveness of selection procedures in general. We need to know how accurate the method applied can measure the intended criterion (a question of reliability). We also need to know if it really measures what it intends to (a question of construct validity) and whether it allows us to draw trustworthy conclusions on future job performance (a question of criterion validity). Especially little is known about the quality of interviews in the context of selecting school principals, even though they are the most applied and probably the most influential tool in hiring decisions. As has been known from studies in the economic sector, interviews differ widely in their reliability and validity.

Fifth, in this context, there are further considerations of efficiency that have to be determined in terms of a cost–benefit analysis. It can be assumed that there is a higher efficiency and effectiveness when individuals take over leadership who have been carefully selected and are suitable for the demands. Undeniably, however, there are the costs associated with the various selection methods. As stated above, the more different sources of information or the more different perspectives one includes in the selection procedure, the more objective and reliable, but also the more expensive the process gets. Consequently, the dilemma is higher expense versus more reliability and validity of the selection process. Yet, it is also important to ask how much has to be spent if the wrong individuals are selected, let alone the educational damage that an incompetent principal can inflict. In essence, a cost–benefit analysis of the type described above would probably prove that it is far more beneficial to spend more resources initially during the selection process as opposed to having the wrong person on the job for a number of years, particularly in the countries where school leaders get appointed as civil servants and keep the position and the salary level for many years.

Finally, it is very interesting to look at potential links of diagnostic procedures, leadership experiences and training and development opportunities. Among the

diagnostic procedures are self or needs assessment and assessment in terms of selection or external evaluation. Leadership experiences may comprise a position in the middle management or the senior management team or elsewhere in the school, or as a previously established school leader. Training and development opportunities may have different phases: orientation, preparation, induction and continuous professional development. The kind of triad of diagnostic procedures, leadership experiences, and training and development opportunities might serve to illuminate and to enhance practice in terms of quality assurance and quality development in leadership.

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