

Assessing Educational Leaders: Validation and Adaptation of the Spanish Version of VAL-ED

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The educational leadership has become a key factor in the improvement of educational quality (Leithwood & Louis, 2011). In Spain school principals has had limited opportunity to leadership, to depend on your election by the School Council (Bolívar & Moreno, 2006). However, in convergence with research and educational policy (OECD, 2008), currently becomes a professional role, as school leader (Bolívar *et al.*, 2011). Tools are required to assess the exercise of pedagogical leadership. It has been used (Gago, 2006) the “Principal Instructional Leadership Rating Scale” (PIMRS), carried out three decades ago (Hallinger, 2011). A new assessment for principals developed by researchers at Vanderbilt University and the University of Pennsylvania (Porter *et al.*, 2008) has the potential to clarify what is meant by educational leadership and how it can be measured: *Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education* (VAL-ED). Our research team has made the translation, validation and adaptation to spanish version, as well as its subsequent implementation, on whose process and results shares this contribution.

VAL-ED measures principals’ performance at the intersection of *six core components* (High standards for student learning; rigorous curriculum; quality instruction; culture of learning and professional behavior; connections to external communities; and performance accountability) and *six key processes* (planning, implementing, supporting, advocating, communicating and monitoring). The assessment instrument is composed of 72 questions, in which each respondent is asked to evaluate the principal’s performance on 72 behaviors. Respondents rate performance on a scale from 1 for “ineffective” to 5 for “outstandingly effective” after considering data on which the evaluation is based, such as school documents or personal evaluation. Their applications are supported with evidence of validity and applicability satisfactory (Goldring *et al.*, 2009; Porter *et al.*, 2010). The measurement’s developers acknowledge that VAL-ED still has its *limitations*. For example, it only measures perceptions of a principal’s performance. It should correlate the principal’s performances with the learning of students and school improvement.

Method

The random sample was formed by principals and his team, teachers, and supervisors. A method based on a cross-cultural adaptation, that would allow it to maintain a validity and reliability similar to the original instrument: translate and adapt the VAL-ED from English to Spanish, using a forward translation, back-translation and assessment of back translation for conceptual equivalence (Beaton *et al.*, 2000; Vinokurov *et al.*, 2007). Item equivalence and conceptual equivalence were established by comparison of meaning between original and back-translation. In a second phase a Analysis Exploratory factor analysis was deemed the most appropriate approach for scale development, and a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) approach was used for a test of factorial validity and cross-cultural invariance. Cronbach’s alpha coefficients for

each dimension of the scale. The alpha coefficients, which are evidence of construct validity, suggest that the VAL-ED is a relatively reliable instrument. We have analyzed the homogeneity of the dimensions and the factors for calculating the internal consistency for each dimension; as well as the item-total correlation of the scale (no item can be correlated below 0.20). Show your validation to the Spanish context, as well as the first results in each of the “core components” and their corresponding “processes” (Porter, Polikoff et al., 2010).

Expected Outcomes

Results indicate that the Spanish version of the VAL-ED seems to be a valid instrument to assess learning activities in organizations with Spanish-speaking populations, especially of Spain. The instrument then reports results in two ways. First, it shows how the principal compares with a nationwide peer-group. Second, it portrays a principal’s performance as basic, proficient or distinguished, as determined by experts. The developers envision that districts using the measure will determine how much weight to give the instrument, or the scores of certain types of raters, as well as whether to emphasize performance against peers or performance against a standard. Can become an excellent instrument to describe the leadership of the directors and, in turn, put it in relation to the processes of school improvement and increase of learning.

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