

ABSTRACT

A Pilot Assessment Centre for Secondary School Education Leaders – Design, Development and, Evaluation

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The purpose of this study was to develop and evaluate activities to be used in a simulated assessment and development centre setting for the selection and training of secondary school education leaders. An eight-step educational research and development design methodology was used. Sixty seven principals were engaged in a job analysis process which utilised a researcher-designed questionnaire. Document analysis and input from local subject matter experts from the field of education produced knowledge, skill, abilities other characteristics statements. The study sample (n = 12) of six male and six female secondary school middle managers participated in a simulated assessment and development centre process. Five assessment exercises were constructed using measurable dimensions. Quantitative data were generated from the administration of the exercises to the study sample. Focus group and individual interviews provided perspectives on components of the assessment centre process and fairness elements of the study.

Results revealed that no specific age grouping outperformed any of the other age groupings. Exercise performance levels of the male participants did not differ significantly from that of their female counterparts. Moreover, no particular middle management position displayed superior performance over the other positions. In the post-experience interviews, a theoretical thematic approach was utilised. Generally, participants did not believe that the assessment conditions negatively affected their performance and felt that the system was fair and friendly. However, they felt that more information about the process should have been given. Although the respondents found the assessments easy to understand, individual lack of interpretation may have contributed to the lack of variance among scores. Additionally, feedback from the assessors was considered insufficient.

The existing dual management system in Trinidad and Tobago presents a challenge to any one single selection process. Perhaps, then, a focus on the development of skills and competencies in such centres may be a useful approach in initiating these types of assessment procedures within the system.

Keywords: Sean Annisette; Assessment and development centres; Job analysis; Fairness; Measurement.