

Immigrant Groups and Cognitive Tests

Validity Issues in Relation to Vocational Training

Immigrant groups form an increasing share of the Swedish population. Public policy emphasizes the importance of entering working life, but knowledge and skills from the country of origin may not be immediately applicable. In assessing suitability for different lines of work, and in vocational guidance, cognitive tests are important tools for psychologists at the Public Employment Service. However, these tools are poorly validated for the immigrant groups, which may cause unwanted complications.

In this thesis aspects of cognitive test use with immigrant groups are investigated. Psychologists at the Employment Service assessed suitability of applicants for different areas of vocational training with a structured procedure that included cognitive testing. Test results and psychologists' evaluation of suitability were investigated with Structural Equation Models in relation to granted training and employment. Although psychologists' evaluations of cognitive skills varied somewhat with the cultural background of the tested individual, tests seem to measure basically the same latent variables in native and immigrant groups. Prognostic properties of test results and outcomes of training in relation to work were also similar for immigrant and native groups. The findings thus suggest that the use of cognitive tests is supported for immigrant and native groups.



Ann Valentin Kvist has worked as a psychologist and project leader at the Employment Service. Her research interests concern psychological methods that support vocational guidance and vocational learning, with special focus on valid methods when assessing competences in individuals with different cultural backgrounds.

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