

Chapter 23

Assessment Methods for Self-Development Goals of Executives

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ABSTRACT

There is a complex relationship between self-development and self-awareness. The individual needs to develop an awareness of herself and her self-development goals before being able to identify circumstances consistent with these goals and to make decisions that will bring about personal development. There are different approaches and methods for assessing these goals. The types of self-development goals range from images of the self to personal projects. This article examines methods for exploring the self-development goals of executives, because this is of particular relevance today. The findings suggest an instrument for exploring self-development goals for executives.

INTRODUCTION

Self-development is of particular relevance for executives: We know from school research that there is a direct connection between the self-development of teachers and the achievements of learners (Drago-Severson, 2009). Analogous to this, this correlation transfers from the learning-achievement relationship of managers with employees. Leading employees thereby requires

personal reflection by managers on their own personality.. Self-development is relevant for managers not only from a theoretical perspective, but rather also because of a manager's typical mode of self-regulation: We can assume that this is characterized by a discrepancy between motive and goals (Kehr, 2004a, 2004b) and by extrinsic aspirations (Windolf, 1992). The compensatory model of work motivation and volition suggests that a congruence of motives and goals is associated with low intrapersonal conflict, intrinsic

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motivation, and successful performance (Kehr, 2004b). According to the self-determination theory and the Aspiration Index developed by Kasser and Ryan (1993) growth is one dimension of the intrinsic motivation: We conclude that the congruence of goals and motives indirectly correlates with growth. Extrinsic aspirations detract from self-development (Kasser, Ryan, Zax, & Sameroff, 1995).

It is becoming clear that in adult education and personal development of executives there is a need to enhance self-development. The significance of intentionality for self-development is evident in that the development of the self produces intentionality, and vice versa development in the course of life becomes increasingly the object of intentional action (Brandstädter, 2007). The individual needs to develop an awareness of the self and the self-development goals before being able to make decisions that will bring about self-development and to identify circumstances consistent with these goals. Studies show that people are typically not aware of self-development goals (McClelland, Koestner, & Weinberger, 1989).

There are different approaches and methods for exploring self-development goals depending on the operationalization of the construct: The types of self-development goals range from images of the self to personal projects. This article examines the construct of self-development goals in order to develop methods for exploring them. Starting from a theoretical foundation of self-development, I will show the current state of research on methods of operationalizing and assessing self-development goals in order to work out a system for exploring self-development goals for executives.

BACKGROUND

To operationalize the construct of self-development, we need a theory which describes the structure and attributes of the development of the self. Baltes (1997) understands development

as any change in the adaptive capacity of the organism. According to Baltes, the concept of development describes a joint product of gains and losses. Unlike Baltes (1997), here we specify development as a change in organic capacity in the sense of growth. With Daloz (1999, p. 23) development "... is more than simply change. The word implies direction". In order to classify what we should understand as growth it is necessary to take into account subjective and objective criteria. Here we focus on objective criteria which are to be identified drawing on theories of self-determination, self-development, and subjective well-being.

A theoretical foundation for self-development is provided by Kegan's theory of the ontogenesis of the self. Following Kegan the "self" refers to a system that creates meaning, a process to which subjective well-being is linked (Kegan, 1982, 2000). Fingarette (1963, p. 62) considers the creation of meaning as a process that reflects the personal existence, in which a person creates a new viewpoint that implies specific duties for that person.

Kegan relates growth to a gain in the complexity of the meaning-forming system: a specific subject-object relationship characterizes meaning formation (Kegan, 2000): The *subject* is what the person is involved in, that with which she identifies and with which she is so "fused" that she experiences it as herself. The *object*, to the contrary, represents what the person can examine, about which she reflects and that she can change. If meaning formation changes, a transformation takes place: The subject becomes the object. Such an objectivation process takes place over the entire lifetime and is a process of becoming conscious: The person creates objects. Simultaneously, a loss of the subject occurs which leads to self-determination, for at each new stage in ontogenesis the person is more able to recognize who she is, because she can observe and change more of herself. According to Kegan (2001, p. 194): "... the basic underlying principle of 'com-

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