

In memoriam Hartmann H. Scheiblechner



Already on 24th of December 2010 the Austrian – though he was employed for more than 30 years in Germany – psychometrician, Professor Hartmann Scheiblechner, PhD, has died after suffering for a long time from a serious illness. Born on 16th of August 1939, he barely reached an age over 70 years old. Though he was not as present in scientific community in number of congress presentations and publications in top journals as others, he definitely was a distinguished scientist in psychometrics (Item-Response-Theory, IRT) and in measurement theory. Bear in mind, that he most notably published five(!) papers in the world-wide most famous journal of psychometrics, *Psychometrika*.

Starting his study of Psychology in Vienna in 1959, he gained his PhD. in 1968. In the years from 1964 to 1968 he held a scholarship and was employed as a research assistant, respectively, at the well-known Institute of Advanced Studies (founded by Paul F. Lazarsfeld and Oskar Morgenstern) in Vienna, and from 1968 to 1972 assistant professor at the Department of Psychology, University of Vienna (head: Gerhard. H. Fischer). There he was a member of the first generation acquainted with the Rasch model. Georg Rasch's concept of specific objective comparisons was the basis of all of Hartmann H. Scheiblechner's research activities. Still in Vienna, he developed social interaction models for the measurement of personnel preferences (cf., in particular, Scheiblechner, 1971), which actually offers a) specific objective comparisons of subjects' criterion-specific attractiveness, b) of subjects' criterion-specific activity/passivity of applying preferences, and c) of their interactions-specific but criterion-unspecific sympathy. It is too bad, that these models are rather forgotten and hardly applied during the last decades (but see Kubinger, 2012).

From 1972 until the time he retired in 2004, Hartmann H. Scheiblechner was a full professor of psychology (methods in psychology) at the Philipps-University of Marburg/Lahn (Germany). Again, a very important contribution to IRT, his latency model for measuring response times – developed at the beginning of Scheiblechner's time in Marburg (Scheiblechner, 1979) –, was hardly noticed though it offers specific objective comparisons as well. His main interest then focussed on a non-parametric Item-Response-Theory, which led to several models and the already mentioned *Psychometrika* papers, respectively. The matter is to suppose just an ordered metric of testees on one side and items on the other side, but not any interval-scaled one. An impressive practical

application of some multi-dimensional generalization of that approach is published just in this journal, that is in this issue (Scheiblechner, 2013). And he published another paper in this journal (Scheiblechner, 2009): There he emphasized why specific objective comparisons are so important from a scientific point of view.

His death is a big loss for his family; it also means a big loss for the scientific community (of IRT). I myself was an early student of Hartmann H. Scheiblechner, in the late 1968 in Vienna. I very much appreciated his eagerness for teaching everybody in fields he deliberately had analysed and reflected, or even developed further by himself. And it was Scheiblechner himself, who emphatically recommended me to become his successor in Vienna. I will always have fond memories of him. Maybe this “in memoriam” helps to raise awareness of Hartmann H. Scheiblechner’s work in IRT scientific community.

Finally: for more details see <http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scheiblechner>; and if the reader likes to watch Hartmann H. Scheiblechner on a DVD recording see “Internationale Fachtagung: Die Messtheorie von Rasch in Psychologie und Pädagogik” (ed. Rost, J., 2005: DVD © Pabst Science Publishers, ISBN 3-89967-201-1).

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