

Higher Education Students Career Concerns and the Influence of their Perception on Attitudes and Values Skills

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Working

Working: Assessing Skills, Habits, and Style (Miles & Grummon, 2006; Adapt. Oliveira & Meireles, 2007)

Taking responsibility (TR): "I keep and use a list of things I've got to do" - 6 items, $\alpha=.52$, $\rho=.56$
Working in teams (TE): "I prefer to learn with other people" - 4 items, $\alpha=.38$, $\rho=.36$
Persisting (PER): "I don't let go of something until I understand it" - 6 items, $\alpha=.71$, $\rho=.77$
Sense of Quality (SQ): "I seek out new activities and responsibilities" - 6 items, $\alpha=.56$, $\rho=.70$
Life Long Learning (LLL): "I usually don't make a special effort to learn new things" - 6 items, $\alpha=.38$, $\rho=.51$
Adapting to change (AM): "I adapt quickly to new situations" - 6 items, $\alpha=.52$, $\rho=.67$
Permanent problem solving (RPP): "I make a detailed plan before I tackle a complex problem" - 4 items, $\alpha=.46$, $\rho=.60$
Information processing (PI): "I make a mental picture of what I am trying to learn or solve" - 6 items, $\alpha=.59$, $\rho=.70$
Thinking in terms of systems (PS): "I want to see how one task is related to other tasks" - 4 items, $\alpha=.38$, $\rho=.59$

introduction

The aim of this study is to test the structural as well as the measurement invariance of the Career Concern Inventory (Savickas, 2002), and the Starfish model (Evans, 2001, 2005) items and dimensions using Miles & Grummon (2006) Working Questionnaire and Salford's Skills Development Self-Report Survey (2006). The invariance regards the comparison between two samples, namely from Portugal and Poland. Finally it was tested a model where Career Concerns Inventory predicted one of the five dimensions of the Starfish Model: Attitudes and Values.

KSSA

Key Skills Self-Assessment Survey (Salford Key Skills Project, 2006; Adapt. Oliveira & Meireles, 2007)

Personal and work organization (OPT): "I identify my priorities (what is most important to do, in what order)" - 6 items, $\alpha=.79$, $\rho=.82$
Problems resolution (RP): "I usually know when a problem exists and can explain what the problem is" - 4 items, $\alpha=.57$, $\rho=.59$
Creativity (CRJ): "I seek and welcome new information and ways of performing duties" - 4 items, $\alpha=.64$, $\rho=.69$
Integrity and ethics (IE): "I use sound ethical practices in carrying out operational duties" - 4 items, $\alpha=.55$, $\rho=.69$
Written communication (CESC): "I am confident that I can produce written material, e.g. essays, which express my ideas clearly" - 4 items, $\alpha=.57$, $\rho=.77$
Oral communication (CORA): "I am confident in discussions and make relevant points" - 7 items, $\alpha=.74$, $\rho=.81$
Team work (TEQ): "I enjoy working as a member of a team" - 13 items, $\alpha=.85$, $\rho=.86$
Interpersonal relationship (RI): "I recognize and handle difficult relationships" - 13 items, $\alpha=.80$, $\rho=.82$
Learning and continuous improvement skills (AMC): "I plan my revision and I am well prepared for exams" - 13 items, $\alpha=.68$, $\rho=.75$

CCI

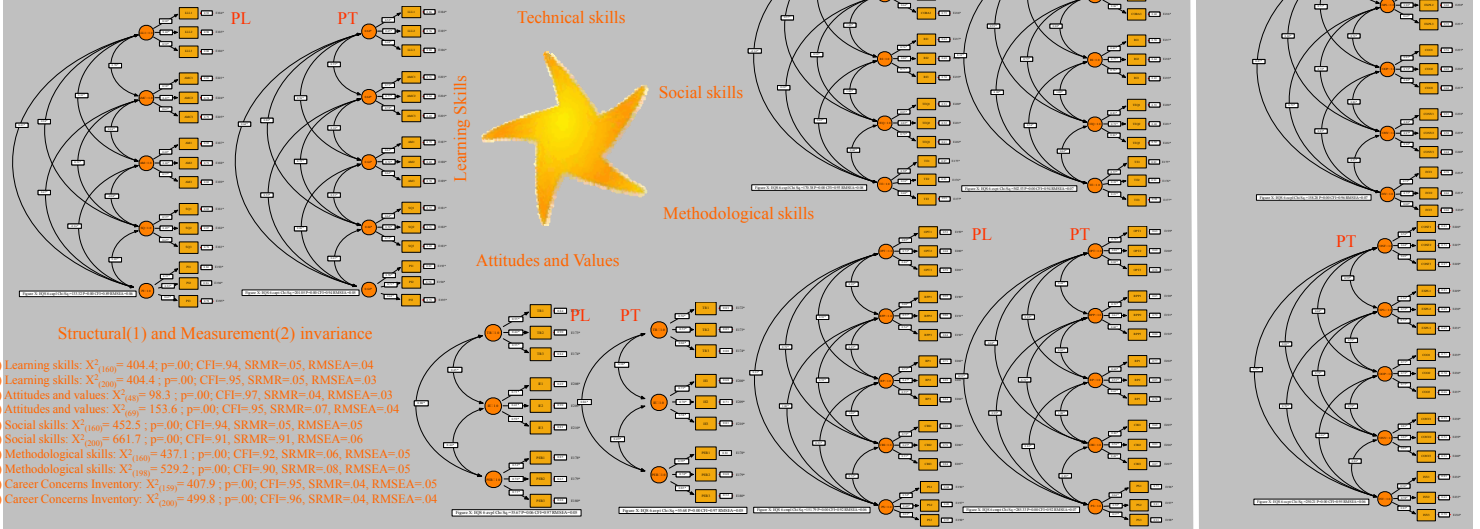
Student Career Concerns Inventory (Savickas, 2002; Adapt. Gonçalves, Coimbra, Crespo & Ramos, 2002)

Confidence (CONF): "Hoping to have a good future" - 5 items, $\alpha=.72$, $\rho=.60$
Conviction (CONV): "Assuming seriously my goals" - 15 items, $\alpha=.90$, $\rho=.87$
Cooperation (COP): "To make relationships with different kinds of people" - 10 items, $\alpha=.83$, $\rho=.79$
Exploration (EXPL): "Interviewing people with professions I like" - 6 items, $\alpha=.77$, $\rho=.71$
Investment (INV): "Decide what I want to do in my life" - 7 items, $\alpha=.80$, $\rho=.77$

Sample

The sample was built upon a total of 444 Portuguese and 181 Polish HE students. There were 276 Portuguese males and 167 females and 59 males and 122 females in Polish students sample. Age range was between 17 and 50 years for Portugal and 19 to 25 for Poland ($M=20.4$, $SD=3.6$; $M=21.5$, $SD=2$, respectively). The Portuguese sample had 118 freshmen, 293 finalists (3rd year) and 31 students of other years. For Poland there were only freshmen ($n=118$) and finalists (5th year; $n=63$). Finally, for both countries, about 80% was similarly divided into two categories for parents qualifications, i.e., (1) Both parents at almost the secondary level or (2) Both parents at almost the bachelor level.

results



discussion

A first major result respects the invariance in the instruments used for both countries, although alpha values were generally higher for Portugal. Nevertheless we found multicollinearity, therefore we recommend the use of each skills dimension separately. Starfish model can be used as theoretical framework but not for statistical purposes. The results also show measurement differences between both countries regarding the theoretical predicted model, namely the total coherence between the Savickas' model (2002) sequentially relation between dimensions (Rocha et al., 2009). Polish model behave differently because cooperation doesn't have any relation with investment. Nevertheless, both models found predictions from career concerns dimensions into attitudes and values skills. Portuguese Model: confidence, conviction and cooperation were the predictors; Polish model: confidence, convictions and investment weights into attitudes and values. The length of studies difference, 3 to 5 years for completing the degree, can have an impact in these results. Longitudinal designs can shed light into what was found in the current study.

references

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