

Sánchez-Queija*, Inmaculada; Rothwell**, Andrew; Vargas***, Reyes; Parra*, Águeda

*Universidad de Sevilla (Spain), **Loughborough University. UK, ***Escuela Universitaria de Osuna (Spain).

INTRODUCTION

Finding and keeping employment is both a definition of employability (Rothwell & Arnold, 2007) and one of the main issues/preoccupations of Emerging Adults, especially in Spain where 40% of people under 25 years old are unemployed (EUROSTAT, 2021), being the highest young unemployed rate in Europe.

Finding a job is an important marker to adulthood, that provides economic resources to become independent from parents and increases the probability to reach personal goals and aspirations (Peeters et al., 2017) that results in better wellbeing. However, nowadays Spanish emerging adults face this developmental task in a constantly changing labour market, that provides few opportunities and that has placed all responsibility to find a job in their hand (Forrier & Sels, 2003). Thus, it becomes a key issue to study emerging adults employability from the individual perspective.

From the individual perspective, two approaches emerge: individual competences and dispositions, and self-perceived employability (Vanhercke et al., 2014). The first analyses the skills and abilities which facilitate job-finding opportunities (De Vos et al., 2011). The second refers to perception of one's own capacities and skills for finding a job with the perception of the impact of the external labour market and the importance of their qualifications when trying to find a job (Rothwell et al., 2008). In this research we have examined conjointly both approaches for a person-centered perspective to try to know how employability affect emerging adults' well-being. The sample were recruited in 2015, in a context of economic crisis. Our research also includes a focus on resilience and emotional intelligence as important skills that could facilitate finding a job.

METHOD

SAMPLE

1502 undergraduates who were emerging adults (Mage= 20.32; SDage= 2.13; 60.1% women) from the Transition to Adulthood in Spain project (TAE). Participants were recruited from two universities in Spain: UPV/EHU and US and were represented proportionally in the five major knowledge areas: Arts and Humanities, Sciences, Health Sciences, Social and Legal Sciences and Engineering and Architecture

MEASURES

- *Demographic variables*: All participants indicated their age, sex and education level.
- *Self-Perceived Employability Scale* that evaluates internal ($\alpha = .72$) and external ($\alpha = .80$) self-perceived employability (Rothwell et al., 2008; Vargas et al., 2018)
- *Brief Resilience Scale* (Smith et al., 2008, $\alpha = .80$)
- *Brief Emotional Intelligence Scale* (Davies et al., 2010, $\alpha = .67$)
- *Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale* (Bados et al., 2005, $\alpha = .89$)
- *Ryff Wellbeing scale* (Díaz et al., 2006, $\alpha = .87$)

PROCEDURE

All participants were informed of the aim of the study and assurances were given that the survey was both anonymous and confidential. All students participated voluntarily. The study was approved by the Andalusian Biomedical Research Ethics Committee.

DATA ANALYSIS

A K-means cluster analysis, Chi-squared test (Cramer's V and adjusted standardized residuals were calculated) and ANOVA was conducted

TAKE AWAY

People that perceive themselves as employable perceive that they have personal skills such as resilience and emotional intelligence, that these promote well being and are a protective factor for general distress.

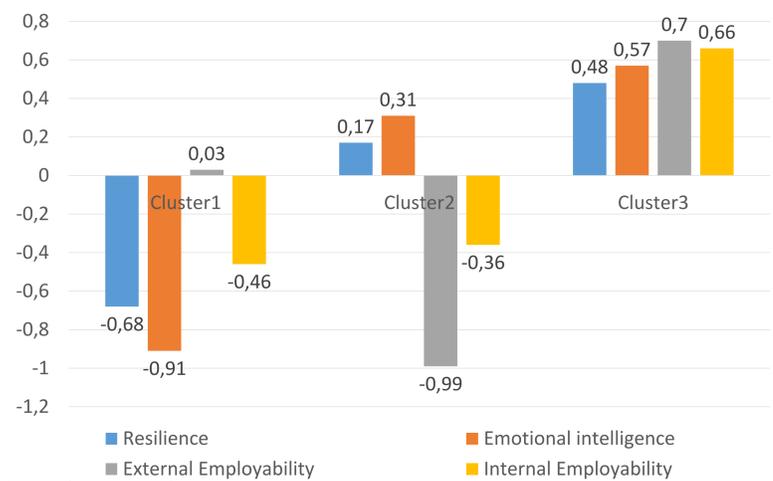


Fig 1. Cluster Analysis.

The first one cluster is composed by young that who score poorly on personal skills (resilience, emotional intelligence, internal employability) and were in the mean of external employability. The second one emphasizes a weak understanding of the labour market and poor confidence in the opportunities related to their studies. The third one cluster is composed by people with good personal skills and with high external and internal self-perceived employability. Women are overrepresented at cluster 1 and 2, and men in cluster 3 ($\chi^2 = 53.36$, $p < .001$, Cramer's V = .19). Students from engineering, architecture and health sciences are overrepresented in cluster 3, meanwhile students for arts and humanities, social and legal sciences and pure sciences are overrepresented at cluster 2 ($\chi^2 = 147.21$, $p < .001$, Cramer's V = .22). Finally, people with higher perceived economic status are overrepresented in cluster 3 ($\chi^2 = 17.90$, $p < .001$, Cramer's V = .08)

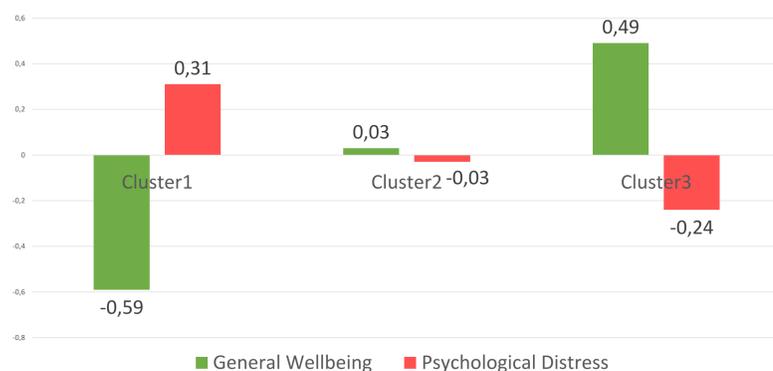


Fig 2. Relationships between Clusters and Wellbeing/Distress.

Participants in cluster1 rated themselves as lower in wellbeing (M= 4.22, SD= .63) and higher psychological distress (M=38.12, SD= 23.33). In addition, in ascending order appear in cluster 2 (M= 4.6, SD= .56; M=30.75, SD= 19.16) and cluster 3 (M= 4.89, SD= .48; M= 26.2, SD= 19.35 for wellbeing and distress respectively)

REFERENCES

- Bados, A., Solanas, A., & Andrés, R. (2005). Psychometric properties of the Spanish version of depression, anxiety and stress scales (DASS). *Psicothema*, 17(4), 679–683.
- De Vos, A., De Hauw, S., & Van der Heijden, B. I. J. M. (2011). Competency development and career success: The mediating role of employability. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 79(2), 438-447.
- Davies, K. A., Lane, A. M., Devonport, T. J., & Scott, J. A. (2010). Validity and reliability of a Brief Emotional Intelligence Scale (BEIS-10). *Journal of Individual Differences*, 31(4), 198.
- Díaz, D., Rodríguez-Carvajal, R., Blanco, A., Moreno-Jiménez, B., Gallardo, I., Valle, C. & Dierendonck, D. V. (2006). Adaptación española de las escalas de bienestar psicológico de Ryff. *Psicothema*, 18(3), 572-577
- Peeters, E., Nelissen, J., De Cuyper, N., Forrier, A., Verbruggen, M., & De Witte, H. (2019). Employability capital: A conceptual framework tested through expert analysis. *Journal of Career Development*, 46(2), 79-93.
- Rothwell, A., & Arnold, J. (2007). Self-perceived employability: development and validation of a scale. *Personnel review*, 36(1), 26-41.
- Forrier, A., & Sels, L. (2003). The concept employability: A complex mosaic. *International journal of human resources development and management*, 3(2), 102-124.
- Rothwell, A., Herbert, I. and Rothwell, F. (2008), "Self perceived employability: construction and initial validation of a scale for university students", *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 73, 1-12.
- Smith, B. W., Dalen, J., Wiggins, K., Tooley, E., Christopher, P., & Bernard, J. (2008). The brief resilience scale: assessing the ability to bounce back. *International journal of behavioral medicine*, 15(3), 194-200.
- Vanhercke, D., Cuyper, N. De, Peeters, E., & Witte, H. De. (2014). Defining perceived employability: a psychological approach. *Personnel Review*, 43(4), 592–605.
- Vargas, R., Sánchez-Queija, I., Rothwell, A., Parra, A. (2018). Self-perceived employability in Spain. *Education & Training*, 60(3), 226 - 237.