

Editorial

Jérôme Rossier

Published online: 6 June 2014
© Springer Science+Business Media Dordrecht 2014

After the first issue of volume 14, entitled *Social justice, prosperity, and sustainable employment as a challenge for career guidance*, which was a very interesting special issue edited by Andreas Frey, Karen Schober, as well as Claudia Hollinger, and including among others, the key *IAEVG communiqué on social justice in educational and career guidance and counseling* (pp. 154–155), our *Journal's* second issue includes four different research contributions, from three different continents, inclusive of three quantitative studies and one qualitative. The first contribution, rooted in the social cognitive career theory (SCCT; Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994) describes the impact of self-efficacy, outcome expectations, parental career expectations, career aspiration, as well as career planning and exploration in a relatively large sample of Indonesian high school students. The second contribution analyses the structural invariance across gender of a standard RIASEC interest inventory and of a short form where items showing gender-specific item functioning were removed. The third contribution explores discrepancies between educational training and the labor market requirements using a qualitative approach among minority, low socioeconomic status young adults in Canada. Finally, the last contribution studies the impact of an internship's quality on students' vocational development, in terms of career exploration in a sample of Portuguese students.

In the first contribution, “Parental influences and adolescent career behaviours in a collectivist cultural setting,” Dian Sawitri, Peter A. Creed, and Melanie J. Zimmer-Gembeck have studied the influence of parental expectations on the career development of their adolescent children in an Indonesian collectivistic cultural context. Using the SCCT framework, this research has also investigated if this parental influence might have a direct impact on students career planning and

J. Rossier (✉)
Institute of Psychology, University of Lausanne, Géopolis-4207, 1015 Lausanne, Switzerland
e-mail: Jerome.Rossier@unil.ch

exploration along with a potential indirect impact (mediation) through self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and career aspirations. This study supports the idea that family environment has an important influence on adolescents career development (Nota, Ferrari, Solberg, & Soresi, 2007) and that this influence can be observed in a large variety of cultures, especially in collectivist cultures where the power distance is somewhat large. This study emphasizes, once again but in a cultural environment that has been rarely investigated, the importance of process variables such as self-efficacy in the relationship between environmental factors and career outcomes variables. The authors of this contribution suggest that “influence of significant others on individual career choices and behavior in a collectivist context might be stronger and more direct.” However, in order to bring a definitive answer to this claim, a cross-cultural quasi-experimental approach comparing different cultures in a single study should be adopted.

The second contribution “Does gender-specific differential item functioning affect the structure in vocational interest inventories?” by Andrea Beinicke, Katja Pässler, and Benedikt Hell has investigated if removing items showing gender-specific differential item functioning affected the structural equivalence across gender of a standard RIASEC interest inventories. This research is original for several reasons. First, the item response theory has only been used very rarely for assessing psychometric properties of interest inventories. Moreover, studying the structural invariance across gender of this type of inventories is relevant since these expressed interests usually differ greatly between women and men and that this fact may induce social inequalities. In addition, several studies have shown that the RIASEC structure is not very stable across gender or cultural groups. For this reason, putting forward a procedure using differential item functioning for selecting potentially cross sub-samples stable items seems an important and very relevant topic.

In the third article, “Misalignment between post-secondary education demand and the labor market supply: Preliminary insight from young adults on the evolving school to work transition,” John R. Graham, Michael L. Shier, and Marilyn Eisenstat presented the results of this qualitative analysis of the misalignment between higher education pedagogic objectives and labor market requirements among low socioeconomic status young adults from a racial-minority sub-population, most of them being unemployed. The study of the relationship between higher education and labor market requirements seems especially important when considering the increasing number of young adults who encounter difficulties to have access to this market. For instance, we can think about the important and increasing number of NEETs (not in education, employment, or training) illustrating that the school to work transition becomes increasingly more difficult. Moreover low SES status might also imply less socio-cultural resources and thus more difficulties to face that type of transitions. This study seems to indicate that when a misalignment between post-secondary education objectives and the labor market demand exists, low SES students are especially disadvantaged. In addition, these young adults felt that the skills they acquired were not always matching the labor market requirements. In this context it might be relevant to study the usefulness and impact of internships (refer to the related last contribution of this issue). The topic of

this article is certainly an important one, and further research combining a variety of methods and focusing on variety of sub-populations is definitely needed.

In the last contribution, “Vocational profiles and internship quality among Portuguese VET students,” Victor Gamboa, Maria Paula Paixão, and Saúl Neves Jesus have studied the impact of an internship’s quality during a VET program and students’ vocational development. This study emphasizes the importance of workplace learning and suggests that it may contribute to help students acquiring skills required by the labor market. As stated by the authors of this contribution “workplace learning experiences constitute the primary strategy for linking school with occupational reality”. Thus, internships certainly promote the professionalization of VET programs. However, this study shows that the quality of the internship is also an important aspect to consider. Internships of higher subjective quality (as perceived by the students) will induce a more positive career development. Moreover, the impact of an internship also depends on students’ profiles, for example more anxious students benefited less from internships. At this point, and as suggested by the authors, long-term impacts of internships should be more precisely explored, and more importantly, knowing better how students benefitting less from an internship should be prepared and coached in order to help them learning as much as possible in such a workplace learning should be further studied.

All the studies of this issue have interesting practical implications and help us understanding our clients’ career development, which depends on their social and proximal family environment, as well as their work experiences. Besides, new suggestions were presented to develop structurally more robust career measurements. We hope that this issue will bring you a number of new and interesting insights, which will contribute to your own professional development. We wish you a pleasant reading hoping that that this issue will stimulate your own thoughts and lead to other contributions to our *Journal*.

References

- Lent, R. W., Brown, S. D., & Hackett, G. (1994). Toward a unifying social cognitive theory of career and academic interest, choice, and performance. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *45*, 79–122. doi:[10.1006/jvbe.1994.1027](https://doi.org/10.1006/jvbe.1994.1027).
- Nota, L., Ferrari, L., Solberg, V. S. H., & Soresi, S. (2007). Career search self-efficacy, family support, and career indecision with Italian youth. *Journal of Career Assessment*, *15*, 181–193. doi:[10.1177/1069072706298019](https://doi.org/10.1177/1069072706298019).