

33. Assessing vocational identity status and its relationship with psychological well-being among tertiary students in Hong Kong

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Abstract

Vocational identity is the conscious awareness of one's worker role. Its development represents a primary developmental task of young people. From a psychosocial perspective, establishing a vocational identity concerns clarifying one's role as a worker in the specific historical, social and cultural niche the person resides. Taking a process approach, Porfeli et al. (2011) developed the "Vocational Identity Status Assessment" (VISA) to classify young people into different vocational identity statuses with reference to how they explore and make commitment about their careers. Typical identity statuses such as achievement, moratorium, foreclosure, diffusion and others were identified by studies in the West, implying that career guidance can be tailored to specific identity status groups in a specific cultural context. This line of research is informing practice in countries like United States, Italy and France. In this study, we take the initiative to validate and apply the Vocational Identity Status Assessment (VISA) among tertiary students in Hong Kong. From a sample of about 500 sub-degree students across several tertiary institutions, we propose to test the psychometric properties of the assessment scales and classify respondents into different vocational identity groups through the cluster analysis method. The levels of self-esteem, life satisfaction and career self-efficacy as indicators of psychological well-being will be analyzed and compared among different groups. The results will highlight the value of this process approach of vocational identity and the relationship between career development and psychological well-being. We shall discuss how different student services can be tailored to different vocation identity groups to enhance life-career development of students in the Hong Kong context, also addressing some policy issues regarding the implementation sub-degree educational programs in Hong Kong.