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Summaries

Editor

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Foreword from the President

EDAMBA, the **European Doctoral programmes Association in Management and Business Administration** has the mission to support and facilitate cooperation by providing and managing a network to exchange information, disseminate best practices and raise the quality of doctoral education among its members in Europe and beyond. For the past quarter century, **EDAMBA** has helped the participating schools to increase the quality of their Doctoral programmes, as well as to create an environment of excellence with a European perspective, all the while pursuing diversity. In many ways it has proved to be an unparalleled forum of discussion to schools that have a long-established tradition of doctoral education and also to those who have recently started this new practice. The ultimate goal is to have the **EDAMBA** network reach as far and wide as possible, while at the same time maintaining the integrity of the various programmes within the network.

Currently EDAMBA has 60 doctoral programmes as members of the Association coming from 28 countries. It is governed by the General Assembly, which elects each year an Executive Committee. The main current activities of the Association are the Annual Meetings, the Research Summer Academy, the Consortium on Doctoral Supervision, the Thesis Competition.

The Annual meetings have become during the years the main platform for discussing common problems and issues, discussing impressive changes in the doctoral landscape and promoting best practices among the Directors of Doctoral programmes in the association. The Summer Academy operating since1992 with its international dimension has been the privileged forum for dialogue on research paradigms and methodologies while building a strong scholarly network among doctoral students coming from a broad range of programmes and disciplines.

The Winter Academy launched in 2008 aims at improving the quality of doctoral supervision by fostering a dialogue among senior and junior faculty and developing competent supervisors for addressing the shortage of qualified faculty in Business and Management studies in the European Universities and Business Schools. In the steps of the Winter Academy, as a joint initiative between the EIASM and EDAMBA in shaping the new landscape of global doctoral education, EDAMBA runs a Consortium on the importance of supervision in doctoral education. A European Code of Practice for Doctoral Studies in Management and Business has just been published for consultation with our membership and wider community.

The Thesis Competition was first launched in 2003. It aims at distinguishing high-quality doctoral dissertations which have significantly contributed to new knowledge in all areas of business studies and management. The top-3 peer reviewed abstracts are given prizes and the short-list of selected abstracts is published in this EDAMBA journal. With this publication, we hope to contribute to the dissemination of distinguished doctoral dissertations from throughout our network in Europe and worldwide.

Dimitris ASSIMAKOPOULOS
EDAMBA President

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Emerging Perspectives on Behavioral Competencies: An innovative measurement model, learning antecedents, and employability outcomes

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Abstract

In recent decades, systematic comparisons between best and average performers have shown that the people who perform best in their job are those who manifest behavioral competencies, which are the ones related to emotional and social behaviors. Literature on behavioral competencies, as a stream of Emotional Intelligence, is highly fragmented and mainly focused on leaders and adult workers in organizations. This thesis shifts the focus on young individuals exploring the processes that allow them to better develop, measure, and exploit behavioral competencies. Through the integration of educational, psychological and managerial theories, this thesis contributes to the current debate on behavioral competencies by providing a better understanding of their antecedents, outcomes, and measurement.

INTRODUCTION

Behavioral competencies are defined as "related but different sets of behavior organized around an underlying construct, which we call the 'intent" (Boyatzis, 2009: 750). They comprise emotional, social and cognitive abilities that have been associated with effectiveness, particularly when manifested by people in leadership positions (Emmerling and Goleman 2005; Rosete and Ciarrochi 2005). They showed to be accurate predictors of personal and professional success (Boyatzis, Rochford, and Cavanaugh, 2017; Sigmar, Hynes, and Hill, 2012) and nowadays they are considered one of the most valuable characteristics in the workplace (Azevedo, Apfelthaler, and

Hurst, 2012; LinkedIn, 2019). However, despite the recognized relevance of behavioral competencies in the organizational context, the labor market has frequently emphasized the existence of a behavioral skills gap (Azevedo et al., 2012; Gault et al., 2010; McKinsey and Company, 2012), which reveals that individuals do not display the behavioral competencies desired by organizations and needed to be effective. The aforementioned behavioral skills gap calls for the need to focus the attention on young generations entering the labor market. This thesis aims at deconstruct the processes through which the behavioral skills gap could be reduced by providing a better understanding of behavioral competencies antecedents, outcomes, and measurement.
Through the integration of theories from different fields (experiential learning theory, emotional intelligence, career orientation), this thesis contributes to the current debate on behavioral competencies i) by considering complementary ways – specifically extracurricular activities – in which young individuals can develop behavioral competencies, so as to be equipped with the competencies they need; ii) by assessing whether behavioral competencies affect the way young individuals approach their career decisions and ultimately their employability; iii) by examining and proposing a way to effectively assess behavioral competencies.

THEORETICAL FRAME

Behavioral competencies

The study of behavioral competencies represents one of the streams of Emotional Intelligence (EI) research. Three main models dominate the field and are associated with different measurement strategies (for a more extensive review see Cherniss, 2010). The behavioral approach, which is based on the work of Boyatzis and Goleman (Boyatzis and Sala, 2004) and the influence of McClelland (1973), "refers to those competencies that are clearly linked to EI" (Cherniss, 2010: 115). The concept of competency encompasses both actions and the intent that moves individuals to manifest the behaviors. Differently from other approaches, the behavioral one "offers a theoretical structure for the organization of personality and linking it to a theory of

action and job performance" (Boyatzis, 2009: 757). Indeed, behavioral competencies have been shown to enable people pursue effectiveness in the organizational context (Beigi and Shirmohammadi, 2011; Brown, George-Curran, and Smith, 2003; Emmerling and Cherniss, 2003; Emmerling and Boyatzis, 2012; Williams, 2008; Zhang and Fan, 2013), as well as to contribute to higher levels of psychological and physical well-being and more satisfying interpersonal relationships (Bisquerra Alzina and Pérez Escoda, 2007; Pérez Escoda, Bisquerra, Filella, and Soldevila, 2010).

Experience as enabler of behavioral competency development

Scholars claim that behavioral skills need to be taught, adopting non-traditional methods in which the person is involved in an emotional and experiential context (Dwyer, 2001; Kremer and McGuiness, 1998). By involving participants in a process of reflection, interactive engagement, and practice, experiential learning techniques stimulate the cognitive, behavioral, and emotional dimensions of learning that are necessary to acquire emotional and social competencies (Hoover et al., 2010). Experiential learning theory's key pillars challenge the traditional idea that learning is achieved through transmission of knowledge, and claim that learning is a process of creating knowledge through the synergetic transactions between the person and the environment. In this transaction, one is called upon to think, feel, perceive and behave shifting between the four modes (Kolb and Kolb, 2005).

In contrast with traditional educational activities mainly focused on transmission and on the "thinking" mode, extracurricular experiences provide students the opportunity to be engaged in concrete experiences that allow individuals potentially adopt all four modes. Extracurricular activities expose students to different environments that challenge their perceptions and behaviors. Through active involvement in extracurricular activities, students have the opportunity to identify, model and mirror appropriate behaviors to promote higher levels of critical thinking and reflection, which are essential to the development of behavioral competencies. Compared with forced or simulated experiences, natural experiences induce more reflective and revelatory ambience (Nair, 2011).

Previous research supports a positive effect of participating in extracurricular activities on people development, especially in young age (Fredricks and Eccles, 2006). Participating in extracurricular activities should provide students the opportunity "to acquire and practice specific social, physical, and intellectual skills that may be useful in a wide variety of settings" (Eccles et al., 2003, p. 866).

Exploit behavioral competencies to deal with the current job market

The uncertainty that characterizes nowadays labor market asks individuals to be more proactive in managing their career in order to adequately prepare for the school to work transition and increase chances for employability. In this regard, studies on protean career (Hall, 2004) claim the role of self-directedness in one's career orientation and path, which means that individuals assume responsibility and personal agency for their career decisions (Briscoe et al., 2006; Hall et al., 2018).

Seminal contributions on protean career orientation have proposed that two competencies, namely self-awareness and adaptability, have a primary role in nurturing an individual's protean career orientation (Gubler et al., 2014; Hall, 2004). Nevertheless, recent studies (Gubler et al., 2014) have pointed out that this relationship has hardly been empirically tested.

Exploring the role of behavioral competencies as predictors of protean career orientation is particularly salient since, as demonstrated by prior studies, competencies can be developed by educational institutions (Boyatzis, Stubbs, & Taylor, 2002; Hoover, Giambatista, Sorenson, & Bommer, 2010), with relevant implications for preparing individuals for contemporary careers.

I built on motivation orientation theory (Martin, 2001, 2002), and on the latest developments of person-organization fit theory (Wille, Beyers, & De Fruyt, 2012), to identify the behavioral competencies that may influence the person's protean career orientation. I argue that competencies related to setting learning goals and maintaining optimism in pursuing those goals, and competencies related to understanding and influencing the environment are positively associated to protean career orientation.

According to motivation orientation theory, individuals who attain their self-defined learning goals view tasks in terms of effort rather than ability (Wiegand & Geller, 2005).The focus on effort reflects an orientation towards achievement. Motivation orientation theory also asserts that individuals with a learning focus are less threatened by failure in pursuing their goals. A positive outlook help individuals perceive problems as challenges to overcome rather than as obstacles. Individuals with positive expectations about future events are more likely to assume a proactive career orientation, since they perceive career changes not as threats but as opportunities for learning and professional advancement (Fugate et al., 2004).

An updated perspective on person–environment fit has proposed that the adjustment between individuals and their environment is dynamic and reciprocal (Wille, Beyers, & De Fruyt, 2012), thus implying that individuals are assumed to be able to influence their environment. Hall et al. (2018) argue that protean career oriented individuals are unlikely to be affected by external controls or influences. Rather, they may be active agents in identifying and shaping their environment so that it allows their personal needs to be met and their main values to be pursued.

Enlarge and enrich competency models to better identify drivers of effectiveness in different contexts

Based on the behavioral approach on Emotional Intelligence, several assessment instruments that measure the adoption of behavioral items have been developed (Boyatzis, 2009; Mikulic, et al., 2015; Palmer et al., 2009). Although all these instruments are useful to evaluate behavioral competencies, and showed different validity and reliability attributes (see Cherniss, 2010; Ackley, 2016, Boyatzis, 2016), they seem limited in the range of competencies that they can assess. According to Cherniss (2010:114), the "virtue of the broader models is that they bring together many of the emotional and social abilities that are important for success in school, work, and life into one framework". Indeed, in recent years, economic, social, and cultural factors have shaped organizational activities, requiring a reconsideration of the skills necessary to be effective in this new scenario. These behaviors concern for example entrepreneurial behavior, innovation abilities, engagement in the group/organization,

the ability to think outside the box or to think in a visionary fashion. I thus adopted both deductive and inductive approaches for the initial scale item generation (Hinkin, 1995). An in-depth literature review was undertaken considering existing competency dictionaries/codebooks (e.g. Boyatzis, 1982; Boyatzis, 2009; Spencer and Spencer, 1993), integrating it with the search for individual characteristics that drive effectiveness in emerging literature fields that analyze the behavioral aspects of innovation processes and entrepreneurship (e.g. Dyer, Gregersen, and Christensen, 2008; Puccio, Mance, and Murdock, 2011). As far as the inductive approach is concerned, I carried out 148 interviews of high performance entrepreneurs, new product development team members, and project managers adopting the Behavioral Events Interview technique (McClelland, 1998) and deriving inductively through coding the behavioural patterns adopted in episodes of effectiveness. Integrating existing competency models with emerging competencies from the literature and from the empirical analysis, I defined a framework of 31 behavioral competencies.

METHOD

This thesis adopts a quantitative empirical approach. Epistemologically, the investigator and investigated are considered independent entities. The three studies look for relationships between existing constructs, derive hypothesis from theory or logical arguments, and tests for confirmation or disconfirmation of those hypothesis.

Survey tools were used to collect self-report measures and peer-reviewed measures. In the first two studies data on behavioral competencies were collected through a 360-degree assessment. This evaluation system has been recognized as “one of the most remarkable innovations in leadership development over the past 20 years” (Hezlett, 2008, p.703). In order to address the issue of rater accountability and prevent biased ratings, many strategies have been adopted according to the literature that investigates 360 degree assessments (Bracken, Rose, and Church, 2016; Helzett, 2008; Hensel et al., 2010; Scullen et al., 2003).

Data were explored and analyzed to verify model assumptions. The methods used to tackle the thesis research questions included different types of analysis (Partial Least Square – Path Modeling, Structural Equation Modeling, Exploratory Factor Analysis, Confirmatory Factor Analysis, Correlations).

Table 1: Methodological choices

	Study 1	**Study 2**	**Study 3**
Type of study	Empirical	Empirical	Scale development
Empirical approach	Quantitative	Quantitative	Quantitative
Sample size	n = 324	n = 120	n=1346 (six studies)
Analysis/ technique	Partial Least Square – Path Modeling	Structural Equation Modeling	Exploratory Factor Analysis, Confirmatory Factor Analysis, Correlation
Measures	Self-report Peer-reviewed	Self-report Peer-reviewed	Self-report

EMPIRICAL CASES

A 360 degree perspective on behavioral competencies: three studies

The persistent demand in the job market for professionals with higher behavioral competencies underlines the need for further research to understand, besides formal training, what else may enhance behavioral competencies. The first article looks at the determinants of behavioral competencies. The literature has highlighted that the development of behavioral competencies is a complex phenomenon and requires a change in people's habitual behavior (Boyatzis, 2008; Cherniss and Goleman, 2001).

Researchers started to develop, implement and test the effectiveness of formal training activities based on Experiential Learning Theory in higher and executive education settings (Boyatzis et al., 2002; Hoover et al., 2010). However, the number of people that can access this type of training is still limited. This entails that in order to develop behavioral competencies most people still rely on their personal experiences. Previous studies suggested that a way in which young individuals can practice and develop behavioral competencies is by actively participating in extracurricular activities (Rubin, Bommer, and Baldwin, 2002). Intuitively, this notion has been widely used in HR hiring practices assuming higher behavioral competencies for those individuals that participated in extracurricular activities. However, no study has comprehensively and empirically investigated the effect of extracurricular activities on different types of behavioral competencies. Hence, this study asks whether the participation to different types of extracurricular activities influences young individuals' behavioral competency portfolios. Findings reveal that participating in extracurricular activities is associated with higher levels of behavioral competencies; however, not all extracurricular experiences affect all types of competencies. This study helps disentangle this relationship showing that cultural activities influence interpersonal and cognitive skills, sport activities help enhance self-management competencies, while experiences abroad relate to higher social awareness, social management skills and cognitive competencies. In so doing, this thesis advances the understanding of which activities that are not part of academic curricula influence students' behavioral competencies, and which kinds of activity are associated with specific clusters of competencies.

As one of the biggest challenges in developing behavioral competencies is the involvement in contexts in which the person can practice new behavioral repertoires (Boyatzis, 2009; Hoover et al., 2010), I argue that extracurricular activities may represent a relevant setting in which individuals can apply experiential learning for behavioral competency development. However, each type of activity is characterized by specificities that allow the individual to experiment and prove some behaviors more than others. Thus, I challenge the accepted wisdom that infer the possession of behavioral competencies from the presence of any type of extracurricular activities in a student's curriculum vitae, proposing that specific types of extracurricular activities may enhance different types of competencies and that the behaviors that were actually experimented should be scrutinized.

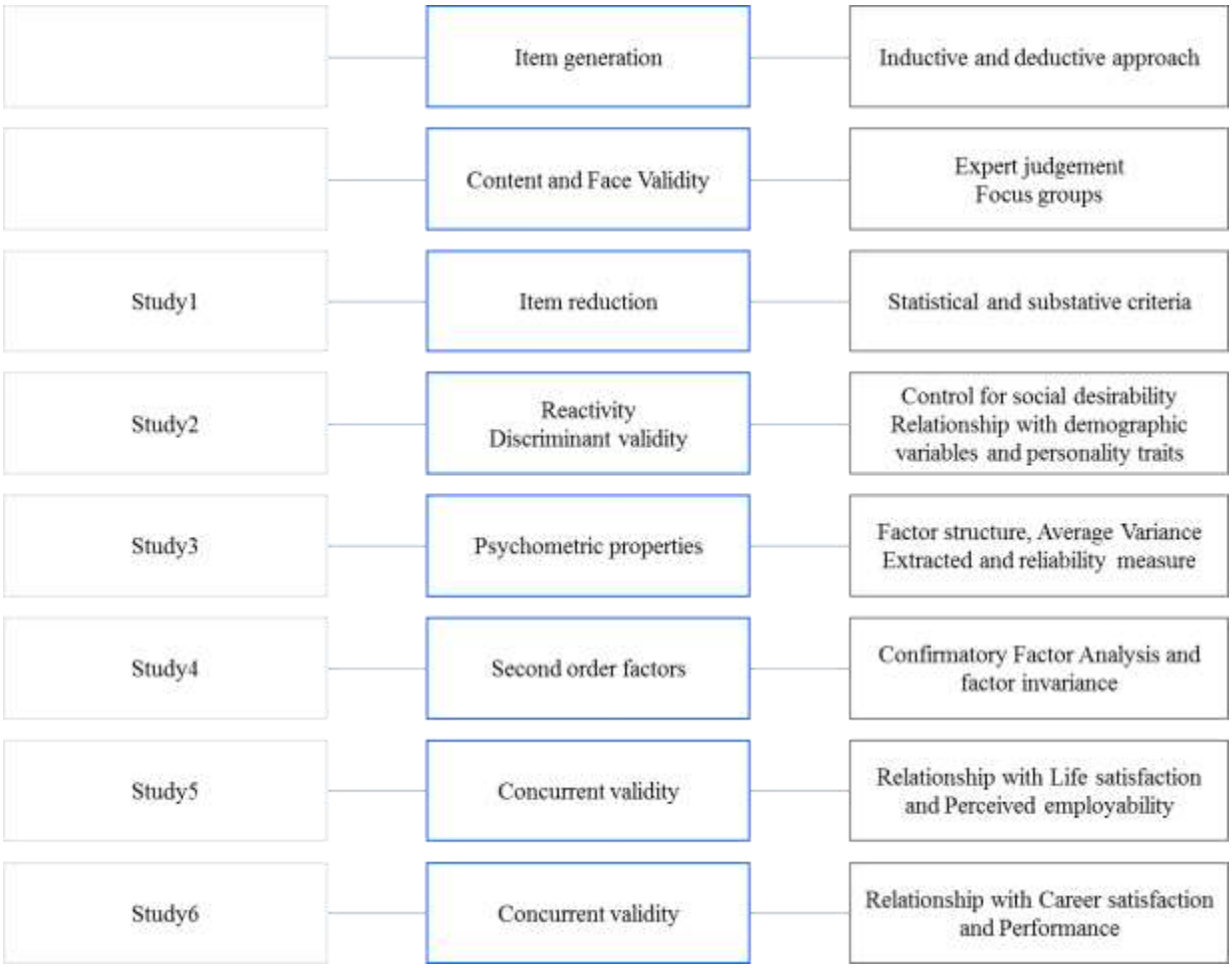
The second study concerns the outcomes of behavioral competencies. It assesses the impact of behavioral competencies on the way graduates approach their career and the effect that this approach has on employability. I focused on the emerging body of research on protean career orientation that defines a non-traditional way of approaching one's career path, which is consistent with the current turbulent job market context (Briscoe and Hall, 2006). Indeed the current employment conditions for young individuals are characterized by a high level of ambiguity regarding one's career path and expectations. In order to deal with this ambiguity, careers have become increasingly directed by the individual rather than by the organization and affected by the person's intrinsic values. Scholars defined this approach as "protean" (Hall, 1976). Literature on protean career orientation relates the construct to two behavioral competencies (self-awareness and adaptability) (Hall, 2004). However, the role of these competencies is still under debate, very few empirical studies have been undertaken to test their impact (Gubler et al., 2014), and no studies have questioned if other behavioral competencies contribute to the adoption of a protean career orientation. Moreover, I investigated if having a protean career orientation supports young individuals on entering the labor market, considering its effect on employability according to both its subjective and objective domain.

Based on data on newly graduated students, findings not only provided support for the positive effect of adaptability and self-awareness, but also introduced that a broader set of behavioral competencies enables young individuals to approach their career in a self-managed and value-driven way. Specifically, the results suggest that being able to manage oneself to pursue learning goals, and to understand and influence the environment, leads individuals to be more inclined to adopt a protean career orientation. Moreover, results showed that people who conceive career in a protean way feel they are more employable and receive a higher number of job offers. Thus, I claim that for young individuals behavioral competencies represent an asset to enter the job market, as they enhance graduates' subjective and objective employability, and this relationship is mediated by a protean approach to their career path individuals develop.

The third study aims at effectively measure behavioral competencies for both developmental and evaluation purposes. A number of survey-based assessment tools

are already present in the literature. However, the current instruments present some limitations: a) they assess one specific competency or a relatively restricted set of competencies, which limits the possibility to assess a wide variety of behaviors that can influence effectiveness in different settings, and may lead to the assessment of competencies with not-compatible instruments; b) some models were developed in the 80s and 90s, which calls for a reconsideration of the skills needed to be effective in the current organizational environment; c) some scales refer exclusively to working/company settings, which make them not applicable to different target people; d) most scales privilege internal consistency rather than complexity of the constructs, underestimating their possible sub-dimensions. In order to overcome these limitations, this paper develops and validates a new competency framework and scale to assess a comprehensive set of thirty-one behavioral competencies. This was achieved by performing six studies (summarized in Figure 1) assessing content and face validity, reactivity, discriminant validity, concurrent validity, psychometric properties, and by grouping the thirty-one categories into six second-order factors.

Figure 1: six stages of competency framework development and scale validation



Results provide an updated, validated, comprehensive instrument to assess behavioral competencies.

Differently from existing scales, which privileged internal consistency rather than variety of dimensions, the item generation phase and subsequent stages of the validity assessment embraced the complexity of each included construct. As behavioral competencies may be defined by not only one but a set of behaviors which, although following the same intent, may differ, methodologically the study shows the need to differentiate between formative and reflective constructs (Bisbe et al., 2007). Scales that privilege internal consistency demonstrate a limited and biased ability to measure a complex multifaceted construct. In the item generation phase I decided to include a comprehensive set of items per each competency able to depict the variety of behaviors with which the competency is demonstrated. In the subsequent stages of the validity and reliability assessment, in order to assess the underlying factor structure of each

scale, I first studied the nature of the items, whether they are formative or reflective (Bisbe, et al., 2007; Jarvis, Mackenzie, and Podsakoff, 2003; Law, Wong, and Mobley, 1998). This allows creating an assessment tool that is not biased towards one specific facet of the construct, but rather includes all the major facets that constitute the construct.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Educational implications

There is a general agreement on the fact that higher educational institutions should better prepare students for their future and this includes improving their behavioral competencies (Andrews and Higson 2008). Both the introduction of *ad hoc* development programs (e.g. Chen et al., 2004; Waddock and Lozano, 2013) and the exploitation of out of the class experiences can help students foster their behavioral abilities. The findings of this thesis show that extracurricular activities are significantly associated with higher levels of specific clusters of emotional, social, and cognitive competencies. As these experiences are extracurricular by definition, one could think they pertain exclusively to the individual remit. However, we assert that educational institutions can benefit from these findings and act consistently in order to help students acquire the competencies they need in three ways: i) by promoting awareness of the role of extracurricular activities in enhancing behavioral competencies; ii) by promoting participation inside and outside the university campus, and training instructors accordingly; iii) by adopting extracurricular activities as real life learning laboratories in competency development programs.

This thesis also suggests that behavioral competencies can enhance graduates' protean career orientation, highlighting the fact that developing behavioral competencies in students helps them to assume control over their career and orient their career decisions according to their needs and values. Educational institutions should create dedicated programs to improving students' behavioral abilities and assist them in reflecting on how to approach their future career, how to take charge of their career in a flexible and value-driven way that will have a positive effect on employability.

Behavioral competencies become crucial elements that need to be developed across the education path of the individual. This can be achieved first by raising awareness on the

importance of these competencies, second by creating motivation to the development of these competencies. Third, there is need to develop awareness on one's current behaviors, adopting behavioral competency assessment models, like the one proposed in this thesis. This helps students reflect on their habitual behavior, on the effects it could have in the organizational environment, and evaluate what are their strengths and what are the competencies they need to develop in order pursue their professional desires.

Managerial implications

This thesis also highlights also some managerial contributions. First, it scientifically supports the relationship between behavioral competencies and extracurricular activities that has been frequently taken for granted in recruitment and selection processes. Moreover, it helps to better understand this relationship by disentangling the effect of different extracurricular activities on different clusters of behavioral competencies. This draws attention to how research can offer a clearer and scientific-based base to build processes previously driven by intuition. Second, it advises employers to take into account the career orientation of candidates, which may be driven by certain behavioral competencies and tend to affect the individual's employability perception. Third, it provides a measurement model that can be used in various human resource management practices to evaluate people's behavioral competency in great detail and with great flexibility thanks to the large repertoire of competencies included.

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