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Reflective Thinking in Business Courses: Validation of an Instrument to Evaluate Reflection

Rodrigo Libanez Melan, Thais Accioly Baccaro, Saulo Fabiano Amâncio-Vieira

OBJECTIVES OF THE PAPER

The paper aimed at the validation of an instrument for reflective thinking evaluation in Business and Administration course, which can encourage that kind of thinking by allowing the efforts in its promotion to be assessed and, consequently, the importance of modifying these efforts.

The Business & Administration course in the traditional way in which it has been offered is incompatible with the demands for a more sustainable existence, which is achieved by the usual conceptions and practices of this field of knowledge. Thus, reflective thinking can become a suitable way to oppose such incompatibility.

APPROACH USED

- The Reflective Thinking Measurement Questionnaire (RTMQ), developed by Kember et al. (2000), was employed in validation procedures (it has been translated and adaped).

- The participants were undergraduate students in the Administration course at the State University of Londrina (UEL).

- We have developed a quantitative, formal, exploratory and descriptive survey, carried out with primary data and using statistical techniques: calculation and evaluation of the Kappa coefficient (analysis of the level of agreement between the judges regarding the translated RTMQ) and Cronbach's Alpha and Omega coefficient (RTMQ reliability check), structural analysis (RTMQ adequacy regarding the composition of their constructs and variables that measure them).

KEY RESULTS

- It was observed that among the dimensions of the RTMQ evaluated (habitual action - HA, understanding - U, reflection - R and critical reflection - CR), the habitual action presented unsatisfactory Cronbach's Alphas.

- The lower reliability of the habitual action in relation to the other dimensions is also generally observed in the studies that dealt with the RTMQ.

- From the covariance established between the constructs, only the one between HA and CR was not significant, thus opposing to the result obtained by Kember et al. (2000). Other study indicates the possibility of HA to be reduced while the occurrence of U, R and CR increases.

- After modifying the model and using the 251 data collected in this new structure, the loads and indicators were adequate.

MAIN CONCLUSIONS

- After its translation, adaptation and use, the collected data confirmed the validity of the instrument. Regarding the HA dimension, it showed Cronbach's alpha to be unsatisfactory, indicating the possibility of being improved on the statements that represent it, a result that agreed with those of other studies about the RTMQ (Buzdar & Ali, 2013; Fridge & Bagui, 2016; Kember et al., 2000; Lethbridge et al., 2013; Phan, 2008).

- It was observed that the best model was the one in which covariance was predicted between HA and U (instead of between HA and CR) and statement 16 was excluded (differences from the original).

- The analysis of the RTMQ validity and the favourable results to its use for measuring reflective thinking can be an important ally in reflection promotion in Business and Administration courses. However, due to the unsatisfactory reliability of the HA dimension, the computation and analysis of Cronbach's Alpha is recommended.

CONTACT DETAILS OF THE AUTHORS

Rodrigo Libanez Melan

State University of Londrina

E-mail:
rodrigo.libanezm@gmail.com

Thais Accioly Baccaro

State University of Londrina

E-mail:
thaisbaccaro@uel.br

Saulo Fabiano Amâncio-Vieira

State University of Londrina

E-mail:
saulofav@gmail.com