Study of employability role in occupational mobility and transition with PLS structural equation model

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1   INTRODUCTION

The instability of labour market has put the central issue of employability. Frequent reorganizations and downsizing have led to a dramatic increase in employment transitions, impacting on the career models. Whereas job security is assumed to be important in predicting well-being under the traditional career model, employability is considered crucial to the welfare of workers in new conditions of labour market. In general, the concept of employability is used to indicate employee ability to acquire or to keep a job consistent with his wishes in labour market or in the company. If there are many studies about factors that may facilitate the commitment and the welfare of workers already employed during organizational changes, there is few researches about unemployed workers.

There is evidence that people losing their jobs have a significant deterioration of mental and physical health, with possible depressive effects. This deterioration has significant human and social costs and can affect success of relocation: difficulty to loss a job may influence the intention to look for a job, the amount and the type of job-searching behaviour. An important goal for job policies is to prevent health damage identifying early unemployed workers with risk of depression. To achieve this aim is useful to identify available employability resources and protective factors. However, there isn't sufficient empirical evidence on the applicability of the construct of employability for involuntary job transitions. Furthermore, an assessment system of employability profiles is not currently available and shared in the Italian system of employment agencies.

Since the psychosocial employability approach proposed by Fugate and colleagues, [1] and [2], the purpose of our contribution is to analyze the role of employability in the process of reemployment. Through structural equation models, we intend to explore the relationship between employability and mental and physical health. We also want to understand whether and how some variables identified in the literature as potential risk factors (perception of justice, perceived employability and perceived utility of services) attend in this relationship.

2   THE EVALUATION MODEL

The aim of the paper is to emphasize how Statistics is useful to determine the weights to be attributed to the different variables considered in the intervention planning. The variables involved in the analysis are dispositional employability, self-efficacy, social capital, proactivity, perceived employability, perceived utility of services, use of services, perception of justice and state of physical and mental health. To analyze relations between variables, a PLS Path Model is used [3].

First of all the hypothesis to be tested is that proposed by [2], according to which "dispositional employability is presented as a multidimensional construct reflected in (different) latent dimensions... Each of these latent factors possesses an a priori, and unique, set of items as indicators". This construct is therefore considered as a higher, second-order factor that represents, with a more parsimonious representation, the conceptual (and empirical) space common to its independent latent dimensions. The best model obtained to explain the relationship between

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dispositional employability and its factors is that considers employability as a second order construct. To estimate the model we have applied the hierarchical component model, using the repeated indicators approach ([3], [4], [5] and [6]).

In the analysis different hypothesis are tested. In the final model the relationship between dispositional employability and physical and mental health is considered with the analysis of the perception of justice and its effects. The variables involved are: dispositional employability, perceived employability, perceived utility of services, unemployment time, use of services, perception of justice and physical and mental health; the estimated model is shown in Figure 1.
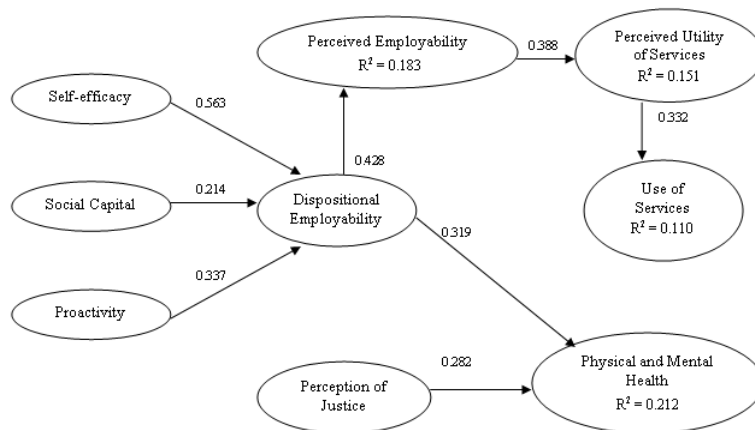

Figure 1. Estimation of the structural model.

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