

# Worries and career employment attitudes: the role of social inequalities of master's degree students.

Senad KARAVDIC & Michèle BAUMANN

University of Luxembourg, Research Unit INSIDE, Institute Health & Behaviour, Walferdange L-7201 Luxembourg

**Introduction:** A worries assessment of university students is important when monitoring over time their preparation for the beginning of a career. At the end of their master's degree they must mobilize all their capabilities to find a job, but the risk of unemployment is present.

**Aim:** To analyze the relationships between traits of worry and career attitudes, happiness and the quality of their autonomy among postgraduates.

**Method:** An online questionnaire was sent to the students who received financial aid, obtained independently of their socioeconomic status, from the Luxembourgish government. Penn-State-Worry score\*, Career dimensions (adaptability, optimism, knowledge and planning), Happiness scale and Quality of life Autonomy-domain, and socio-demographic characteristics were assessed. Bivariate-tests, correlations and multiple linear regression models were used for analysis.

	Students (N=481)
Age: mean (SD) [min; max]	26.4 (5.5) [20 ; 59]
Nationality	
Female	58.9
Luxembourger	65.7
EU	27.9
Non-EU	6.3
Parents education level (>Bachelor)	
Father	49.4
Education Filed	
Social Sciences and Humanities	30.8
Law, Economics and Finance	32.6
Life Science and Health	14.9
Technology and Communication	21.8
Employment Status (in Education field)	
Yes	27.1
Job contract Type	
Permanent	36.1
Fixed term	38.0
Internship	25.9
Working Hours	
Less and equal to 20h	44.2
Perceived financial situation [1-6]	4.3(1.1)
Worries [3-15]	8.3 (3.1)
Wellbeing	
Happiness [1-10]	7.9 (1.6)
Autonomy QoL[1 -5]	3.8 (0.6)
Positive Career attitudes [ 1- 5]	
Career Adaptability	4.0 (0.58)
Career Optimism	3.8 (0.63)
Career Knowledge	3.2 (0.92)
Career Planning	3.6 (0.85)

**Results:** Of the 481 volunteers (26.4 years; SD=5.5), a majority were women and unemployed.

Sociodemographic determinants such as European or non-EU nationality (*vs. Luxembourgish*), possession of an internship employment contract (*vs. fixed-term and permanent contract*) and studying social sciences and humanities were related with a high score of worries.

Lower adaptability and optimism career attitudes, lower happiness and quality of autonomy were associated with a higher score of worries.

		Worries [3-15]				
		B	SE <sup>1</sup>	L95 <sup>2</sup>	U95 <sup>2</sup>	P-value <sup>3</sup>
Intercept		20.40 5	3.19 8	14.032	26.779	0.000
Nationality	Luxembou rger	- 2.720	1.04 9	-4.810	-0.630	0.008*
	EU	- 1.003	1.04 0	-3.076	1.069	
	Non-EU	0				
Employment (in education field)	No	1.580	0.60 5	0.373	2.786	0.011*
	Yes	0				
Employment contract type	Permanent	- 2.543	0.77 3	-4.084	-1.003	0.006*
	Fixed term	- 1.119	0.74 7	-2.608	0.370	
	Internship	0				
Positive Career Attitudes	Adaptabilit y	- 2.271	0.65 1	-3.569	-0.972	0.001* **
	Optimism	- 2.162	0.68 8	-3.532	-0.791	0.002* *
Wellbeing	Autonomy QoL	- 1.518	0.72 1	-2.954	-0.082	0.039*
	Happiness	- 0.669	0.22 5	-1.118	-0.220	0.004*

<sup>1</sup>Std.Error; <sup>2</sup> Confidence Intervals; <sup>3</sup>Significant p-value: \*; p<.05; \*\*; p<.01; \*\*\*: p<.001; Adjusted R<sup>2</sup>=31.7%

**Conclusion:** Engaged in a problem-solving process, students' career adaptability and optimism acquisition can be hindered by worries. University career employment workshops may help to increase the individual skills to improve and/or to maintain their wellbeing.

Nationality, employment contract status and chosen academic field had generated mental health inequalities that must be considered in consultations, counseling and implementation of prevention programs.

\*Berle D; Starcevic V; Moses K; Hannan A; Milicevic D; Sammut P, (2011). 'Preliminary validation of an ultra-brief version of the Penn State Worry Questionnaire. *Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy: an international journal of theory and practice*, vol. 18, no. 4, pp. 339 – 346.

