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# Living One's Calling: proprietà psicometriche della versione italiana in studenti universitari

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Annamaria Di Fabio<sup>1</sup> e Andrea Svicher<sup>2</sup>

## Sommario

La *Living Calling Scale* (LCS) è uno strumento di autovalutazione per misurare il *living a calling*. Questa ricerca indaga le proprietà psicometriche della LCS – versione italiana in studenti universitari. Il presente studio ha coinvolto 103 studenti universitari della regione Toscana, Italia centrale. La LCS — versione italiana è stata valutata utilizzando l'Analisi Fattoriale Confermativa (AFC). La coerenza interna è stata misurata utilizzando i coefficienti alfa di Cronbach. La validità concorrente della LCS è stata esplorata attraverso le correlazioni di Pearson con il *Calling and Vocation Questionnaire*, la *Satisfaction with Life Scale*, la *Meaningful Life Measure* e il *Work as Meaning Inventory* per studenti universitari. I dati hanno indicato che un modello unifattoriale forniva un buon adattamento ai dati. Lo strumento ha dimostrato un'eccellente coerenza interna e una validità concorrente soddisfacente. I risultati hanno mostrato che la LCS – versione italiana per studenti universitari ha buone proprietà psicometriche, sottolineando come sia una misura affidabile per rilevare il *living a calling* anche nel contesto italiano.

## Parole chiave

Calling; *Living out a Calling*; versione italiana; *Living Calling Scale*; studenti universitari.

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# Living One's Calling: Psychometric Properties of the Italian Version in University Students

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## Abstract

The Living Calling Scale (LCS) is a self-assessment tool for evaluating the living of a calling. This research investigates the psychometric properties of the LCS – Italian version among university students. Our study involved 103 university students from the region of Tuscany, Central Italy. The LCS — Italian version was evaluated using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Internal consistency was measured using Cronbach's alpha coefficients. LCS's concurrent validity was explored via Pearson's correlations with the Calling and Vocation Questionnaire, Satisfaction with Life Scale, Meaningful Life Measure, and Work as Meaning Inventory for University students. The data suggested that a one-factor model provided a good fit to data. The instrument demonstrated excellent internal consistency and satisfactory concurrent validity. Our findings showed that the LCS – Italian version for university students has good psychometric properties, underscoring it as a trustworthy measure of living out a calling also in the Italian context.

## Keywords

Calling, Living out a Calling, Italian Version, Living Calling Scale, University Students.

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## Introduction

The construct of calling as an orientation towards one's occupation (Wrzesniewski et al., 1997) is progressively catalysing more and more interest for psychological research. Following these authors, work can be perceived in three distinct ways: seeing it as a means of revenue, viewing it as a platform for professional advancement, or considering it a calling. Those who consider their work as a means of revenue are driven by monetary gains; those who regard it as a platform for career growth seek it as a pathway to success; those who discern it as a calling emphasize its eudaimonic qualities of meaningfulness, its positive societal contributions, and its alignment with their personal identity (Wrzesniewski et al., 1997). Subsequent research divided the calling orientation into three phases: (1) having a calling, (2) searching for a calling, and (3) living one's calling out during everyday activities (Duffy & Autin, 2013; Dik et al., 2012). The phase of searching for a calling encompasses the individual's quest for an occupation in which they have not yet identified a calling but aspire to, aiming for both personal satisfaction and societal contribution. Differently, the phase of having a calling deals with the individuals' recognition of a particular vocation they feel called to, regardless of whether or not they are actively engaged in it. The phase of living a calling encompasses people who have discerned their calling and thus consistently embody it in their occupation. Duffy et al. (2015) equated perceiving a calling to possessing a vehicle and living a calling to the act of driving the vehicle. Building on this analogy, the mechanism of searching for a calling is linked to the search for an ideal vehicle (Duffy et al., 2015). Scholars (Duffy et al., 2012; Dik et al., 2012) have advanced and pointed out specific instruments for assessing the various elements of the overarching calling construct. The first is the 24-item Calling and Vocational Questionnaire (CVQ) (Dik et al., 2012). As outlined by Dik et al. (2012), it incorporates two distinct scales. The first scale is the CVQ-search and evaluates how individuals are seeking an occupation where they discern a calling characterized by an intrinsic or extrinsic guiding force, the discovery of purpose, and the ability to benefit others. The second scale, the CVQ-presence scale, evaluates the extent to which individuals regard themselves as possessing such a calling. The two scales both encompass three underlying dimensions, namely: transcendent summons, purposeful work, and prosocial orientation (Dik et al., 2012). The second measure for assessing calling is the 4-item Brief Calling Scale (BCS) (Dik et al., 2012). Formulated alongside the CVQ, the BCS provides a comprehensive assessment of the extent to which an individual is searching for as well as perceives a calling. Differently to the CVQ, it does not break down into transcendent summons, purposeful work, and prosocial orientation. The third tool to evaluate calling is the 6-item Living Calling Scale (LCS) (Duffy et al., 2012), which assesses the extent to which respondents were living

their callings through their present occupation. By summing the results from its six items, a comprehensive living calling score was obtained. This instrument's initial formulation and validation involved working adults (Duffy et al., 2012). Numerous investigations have evidenced the LCS's positive associations with presence of a calling, life meaning, job satisfaction and academic satisfaction (Duffy et al., 2013, 2014a, 2014b, 2015). In this framework, the Work as Calling Theory (WCT) was advanced by Duffy et al. (2018) to provide an empirically driven theory of calling. A key feature of the WCT is the distinction of perceiving a calling and living a calling into two separate constructs. Differently from previous research, which presented perceiving a calling as a direct antecedent to work and career outcomes, Duffy et al.'s WCT (2018) suggests that in order to fully achieve the positive benefit of calling, those who perceive a calling should subsequently live it out. Empirical evidence supported this notion, indicating that the positive effects of perceiving a calling are particularly evident among individuals who believe they are living their calling (e.g., Duffy & Dik, 2013; Hirschi et al., 2018). In line with this, those genuinely embodying their calling are discerned as the most fulfilled, dedicated, and engaged individuals (Duffy et al., 2018, 2019). Therefore, living a calling emerged as the centrepiece of the WCT model (Duffy et al., 2018), which is focused on studying both the predictors and outcomes of living out a calling. With regards to the Italian framework, previous studies explored the psychometric properties of both CVQ (Di Fabio & Svicher, 2022) and BCS (Di Fabio & Svicher, 2023), confirming their good psychometric properties also in the Italian context. However, the psychometric properties of the LCS, which stands as the preferred measure for assessing living a calling according to the WCT model (Duffy et al., 2018, 2019), have not been explored yet. To this end, the current study aims to examine the psychometric properties of the LCS in university students.

## Methods

### *Participants and Procedures*

The LCS-Italian version was translated from its English counterpart using the back-translation method. Our research encompassed 103 university students (Mage = 21.16 DS = 3.98; males n = 32, 31.1%; females n = 71, 69.9%) from Tuscany, Central Italy. Enrolment was solely based on voluntary participation. Every individual provided written consent, adhering to both Italian privacy regulations (Law Decree DL196/2003) and the EU General Data Protection Regulation (EU 2016/679). The administration sequence was balanced to prevent any bias from the presentation order.

### Instruments

The *Living Calling Scale* (LCS) (Duffy et al., 2012) – Italian version by Di Fabio & Svicher consists of six questions that assess individuals' perception of how they are actively living their callings. The participants' responses are measured using a seven-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). These responses are then used to calculate a total score that reflects the extent to which an individual lives in alignment with their calling.

The *Calling and Vocation Questionnaire* (CVQ) (Dik et al., 2012) – Italian version (Di Fabio & Svicher, 2022), is a self-report measure featuring 24 items, evaluating calling in terms of «presence of» and «search for». Answers are recorded on a four-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Not at all true for me) to 4 (Absolutely true for me). The Italian version revealed a two-bifactor model: six specific factors and two overarching factors. The CVQ-presence aggregates scores from three factors (Transcendent Summons, Purposeful Work, and Prosocial Orientation). The CVQ-search aggregates scores from three search factors (Transcendent Summons, Purposeful Work, and Prosocial Orientation). Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients ranged between 0.53-0.84 for the six factors and between 0.78-0.90 for the main factors. In the present research, the CVQ-presence score was used.

The *Satisfaction with Life Scale* (SWLS; Diener et al., 1985) – Italian version (Di Fabio & Gori, 2016), is a unidimensional five-item questionnaire aimed at assessing cognitive aspects linked to a broader sense of well-being, with an emphasis on autonomous individuals' capabilities to make independent judgments (Diener et al., 1985). Answers are captured using a seven-point Likert scale («Strongly Agree» = 7 and «Strongly Disagree» = 1) (Diener et al., 1985; Di Fabio & Gori, 2016). Cronbach's alpha was found to be 0.85 (Di Fabio & Gori, 2016).

The *Meaningful Life Measure* (MLM; Morgan & Farsides, 2009) – Italian version (Di Fabio, 2014) is a 23-item self-report tool. It employs a 7-point Likert scale (1 = «Strongly Disagree»; 7 = «Strongly Agree») to measure five dimensions plus an overall score related to life meaning. The five dimensions encompass Accomplished Life (pertaining to the attainment of individual aims), Exciting Life (denoting a life perceived as stimulating), Principled Life (reflecting a personal philosophical approach to life), Purposeful Life (indicating distinct aspirations and objectives), and Valued Life (capturing an intrinsic recognition of life significance). A Cronbach's coefficient of 0.85 was determined for the overall score, with the subscales ranging from 0.84 to 0.87 (Di Fabio, 2014). In this investigation, the overall score was utilized.

The *Work as Meaning Inventory for University students* (WAMI-U) (Di Fabio & Kenny, 2020) consists of 10 items adapted from the Work as Meaning Inventory (WAMI) (Steger et al., 2012). WAMI-U is composed of three factors, namely Positive meaning (example of item «I view my study as contributing to my personal

growth»), Meaning-making through study («I view my study as contributing to my personal growth») and Greater good motivation («I know my study makes a positive difference in the world») (Di Fabio & Kenny, 2020). Cronbach's coefficient was found between 0.80-0.82 for subscales and 0.81 for total score (Di Fabio & Kenny, 2020). The total score was considered for the current analyses.

### Data analysis

The factor structure of the LCS-Italian version was assessed using confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) via the RStudio software, version 2022.12.0 (Macintosh). The unidimensional model of the LCS, which consists of six items that were regressed on a single factor representing living out a calling, was examined. Evaluation of the model was conducted using the comparative fit index (CFI) and the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), where scores above 0.90 indicate a satisfactory fit. Further, the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) was observed, with values less than 0.08 deemed appropriate (Browne & Cudeck, 1993). Cronbach's alpha was also computed. Values > 0.70 were considered acceptable (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). The concurrent validity of the LCS with other tools, namely CVQ, SWLS, MLM, and WAMI-U, was calculated via Pearson's r coefficients. Correlations were judged as follows: < 0.30 weak; between 0.30 and 0.50 moderate: > 0.50 strong (Cohen, 1992). We employed the Lavaan 0.6-9 and Psych 2.2.5 R packages for analyses.

## Results

Table 1 presents the results obtained through the application of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The Italian version of the CVQ model demonstrated a satisfactory fit to the data (table 1). The Cronbach's alpha value for the entire scale was found to be excellent, with a value of .91. The correlations among the LCS and CVQ Presence, SWLS, MLM, and WAMI-U are shown in Table 2. All the correlations among LCS, CVQ-presence, SWLS, MLM, and WAMI-U were positive and statistically significant (Table 2).

**Table 1**

Living Calling Scale — Italian Version. Confirmatory Factor Analysis — Goodness of Fit indices (*n* = 103)

LCS model	$\chi^2(df)$	CFI	TLI	RMSEA [95%CI]
One-factor	57.4(9)	.961	.935	.055 [.021-.077]

CVQ = Calling and Vocation Questionnaire; CFI = Comparative Fit Index; TLI = Tucker-Lewis Index; RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation.

**Table 2**Correlations of the CVQ with SWLS, MLM, WAMI-U ( $n = 103$ )

	CVQ-Presence	SWLS	MLM	WAMI-U
LCS	.66**	.34**	.48**	.53**

LCS = Living Calling Scale; CVQ = Calling and Vocation Questionnaire; SWLS = Satisfaction with Life Scale; MLM = Meaningful Life Measure; WAMI-U = Work as Meaning Inventory for University students.

## Discussion

This study examines the psychometric properties of the Living Calling Scale (LCS) in university students. The LCS is based on Dik and Duffy's (2009) theory of calling and on the WCT model (Duffy et al., 2018). The data presented in our study support the findings reported in the original English-language study by Duffy et al. (2012), which identified a one-factor instrument. The analysis conducted in our study has confirmed a one-factor structure for the LCS, which allows for the calculation of an overall factor score of living out a calling, which was found to have excellent reliability. The concurrent validity of the LCS has been investigated based on previous research conducted by Duffy et al. (2013, 2014a, 2014b, 2015). In line with results in the literature, it was found that the LCS exhibited significant positive associations with CVQ Presence of Calling, Satisfaction with Life, Meaning in Life, and Meaning at Work. The research possesses limitations. One primary limitation is related to its participants, university students from the region of Tuscany, which consequently restricts the generalizability of the findings. However, to our knowledge, this study represents the first investigation regarding the psychometric properties of the LCS-Italian version. Future investigations could expand the present findings to include university students from different regions of Italy, as well as encompassing various educational levels and addressing different targets of workers. In brief, the psychometric properties of the Italian version of the LCS were found to be satisfactory in university students. The study confirmed the presence of a reliable one-factor structure for the LCS, underling its suitability as an assessment tool for measuring research and interventions for living out a calling in university students, in line with the WCT approach proposed by Duffy et al. (2018).

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