
Perceived Discrimination at Workplace Scale: Proprietà psicometriche nei dipendenti migranti

Tariku Ayana Abdi¹ e Alessandro Lo Presti²

Sommario

Mentre le carriere dei migranti in generale e degli africani in particolare sono sottorappresentate nella letteratura, la maggior parte degli studi disponibili si concentrano in modo sproporzionato sugli aspetti legati alla loro discriminazione sul posto di lavoro. Tuttavia, a nostra conoscenza, nessuna ricerca ha adattato o convalidato la scala della *Perceived Discrimination at Workplace* di Sanchez e Brock (1996) sui lavoratori migranti africani in Italia. Questo studio si propone di adattare e valutare le proprietà psicometriche della scala della *Perceived Discrimination at Workplace* di Sanchez & Brock (1996) sui lavoratori migranti africani che lavorano in Italia. Abbiamo somministrato la *Perceived Discrimination at Workplace Scale* con le scale *Career Satisfaction* e *Job Satisfaction* a 209 lavoratori dipendenti migranti africani che lavorano in Italia e abbiamo esaminato le proprietà psicometriche della scala. Abbiamo analizzato l'affidabilità della scala utilizzando l'alfa di Cronbach, eseguito l'analisi fattoriale confermativa e la correlazione di Pearson per indagare la sua relazione con le scale di soddisfazione carriera e soddisfazione lavorativa. I risultati hanno mostrato che la *Perceived Discrimination at Workplace Scale* è affidabile e mostra una buona validità discriminante con la scala della Soddisfazione di Carriera e della Soddisfazione lavorativa. La scala ha inoltre dimostrato buone proprietà psicometriche ed è appropriata per programmi di intervento sulla carriera e per essere utilizzata a scopi di ricerca su campioni di lavoratori migranti africani.

Parole chiave

Perceived Discrimination at Workplace Scale, Soddisfazione lavorativa, Successo di carriera, Questionario, Soddisfazione di carriera, Lavoratori migranti africani.

¹ Alma Mater Studiorum, Università di Bologna, Dipartimento del Management, Bologna, Italia.

² Università della Campania «Luigi Vanvitelli», Dipartimento di Psicologia, Caserta, Italia.

Perceived Discrimination at Workplace Scale: Psychometric Properties in Migrant Employees

Tariku Ayana Abdi¹ and Alessandro Lo Presti²

Abstract

While the careers of migrants in general and Africans specifically are underrepresented in the literature, most studies available are disproportionately focused on migrant workplace discrimination aspects. However, to our knowledge, no research has adapted or validated the *Perceived Discrimination at Workplace Scale* of Sanchez and Brock (1996) to African migrant employees in Italy. This research aims to adapt and evaluate the psychometric properties of the *Perceived Discrimination at Workplace Scale* of Sanchez & Brock (1996) to African migrant employees working in Italy. We administered the *Perceived Discrimination at Workplace Scale* with the *Career Satisfaction* and the *Job Satisfaction Scales* to 209 African migrant employees working in Italy and investigated the scale's psychometric properties. We analysed the reliability of the scale using Cronbach's alpha, performed confirmatory factor analysis, and Pearson's correlation to investigate its relationship with the *Career Satisfaction* and *Job Satisfaction Scales*. The results showed that the *Perceived Discrimination at Workplace Scale* is reliable and has discriminant validity with the *Career Satisfaction* and *Job Satisfaction Scale*. The scale has also demonstrated good psychometric properties and is appropriate for career intervention programmes, policy implications, and future research purposes among African migrant employees.

Keywords

Perceived Discrimination at Workplace Scale, Job satisfaction, Career success, Questionnaire, Career satisfaction, African migrant employees.

¹ Alma Mater Studiorum, University of Bologna, Department of Management, Bologna, Italy.

² University of Campania «Luigi Vanvitelli», Department of Psychology, Caserta, Italy.

While careers of migrants in general (Al Ariss et al., 2012) and of Africans specifically (Abdi et al., 2021; Attias-Donfut & Dimova, 2011) are underrepresented in the literature, most studies are disproportionately focused on migrant workplace discrimination aspects (Crowley-Henry & Ariss, 2018). Workplace discrimination refers to a differential treatment of individuals during employment opportunities and other career-related decisions (e.g., during selection, promotion, and compensation) based on their ethnic, racial, religious, cultural, or other background, where such differential treatment is objectively unjustified by the demands of the work that these individuals perform (e.g., Araújo & Borrell, 2006; Sanchez & Brock, 1996). Despite research interest in perceived discrimination due to its association with different career outcomes such as job satisfaction, career satisfaction, and well-being (e.g., Elçi et al., 2021; Ensher et al., 2001; Sanchez & Brock, 1996), and the fact that migrants are more likely to be the targets of discrimination at workplace compared to their counterpart natives, there have been few studies focusing on the migrant population (e.g., Avery et al., 2008; Krings et al., 2014).

Among the few available studies considering the migrant population, Krings et al. (2014) and Avery et al. (2008) used a single item to assess perceived discrimination among migrant employees in Switzerland and the US, respectively; the former authors used the items used by the latter. Moreover, Capasso et al. (2016) also implemented a single item to assess self-reported discrimination at work among ethnically and racially diverse migrant workers in Southern Italy.

On the other hand, Sanchez and Brock (1996) implemented a unidimensional 10-item scale selected from a 24-item scale measuring acculturative and perceived discrimination by Mena et al. (1987) to assess perceived discrimination in work settings among Hispanic immigrants in the United States. Sanchez and Brock (1996) provided evidence for the psychometric properties of the scale while documenting the negative association between perceived discrimination and job satisfaction among Hispanic employees in the US. Moreover, other authors also provided evidence of the negative effect of perceived discrimination on job satisfaction among the general population (Ensher et al., 2001). Similarly, Elçi et al. (2021) have reported that (gender-based) discrimination at the workplace has a negative effect on the career satisfaction of Turkish female employees.

Despite the relevance of the perceived discrimination variable as a vital predictor of labour market and career outcomes, particularly among migrants (e.g., Chihaya et al., 2022; Sanchez & Brock, 1996), studies investigating the psychometric properties of instruments of perceived discrimination among migrant employees are lacking, and, if existing, are at their infancy stages. Specifically, given the significant prevalence of African migrant workers in Italy (e.g., Achilli et al., 2016; D'Angelo, 2019), robust, valid, and psychometrically solid measurement scales are necessary in the context of African migrant employees, where to

the best of our knowledge, no empirical research has been conducted to assess this construct among this migrant group.

Therefore, the present study aims to adapt and validate the *Perceived Discrimination at Workplace Scale* of Sanchez and Brock (1996) to African migrant employees in Italy. To this end, we performed confirmatory factor analysis (hereafter CFA), an analysis of reliability using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, and an investigation of discriminant validity.

Methods

Participants and Procedures

Migrant sampling and recruitment into surveys is a complex and challenging task (Pötzschke & Braun, 2016). Moreover, the timing for the data collection was also hindered by COVID-19, which did not allow us to collect data face-to-face. Therefore, we sent out questionnaires to African migrant workers on Facebook and WhatsApp groups. In the end, we received responses from 209 participants, comprising 122 males (58.37%) and 85 women (40.67%), while two were missing values. The participants have been in Italy on average for the last 17.44 years ($SD = 10.00$). Concerning their legal status, 47.85% were documented migrants (with legal work and residence permits), 40.19% have Italian citizenship status, and 11.48% were unwilling to disclose their legal status. Regarding their employment types, 78.47% had indefinite or renewable employment contracts, and 20.10% reported having temporary employment work contracts, while three were missing values. We also asked about their educational levels. The responses showed that 28.71% had a vocational education diploma, 26.32% had a master's degree, 21.53% had a bachelor's degree, 20.10% attended secondary/high school, 1.91% had a doctorate, and 1.44% attended primary school.

Measure

The *Perceived Discrimination at Workplace Scale* (Sanchez & Brock, 1996). The Scale, which is in English, has 10-items assessing perceived discrimination on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5), and is reported to have been selected from a 24-item scale measuring acculturative and perceived discrimination by Mena et al. (1987). The Scale had a Cronbach's $\alpha = .87$ and demonstrated a unidimensional factor structure (Sanchez & Brock, 1996). To make the items specific to the current sample, we replaced *ethnicity* or *ethnic origin* with *migration background* and *English* with *Italian*. Examples of such

items are: «At work, I sometimes feel that people actively try to stop me from advancing because of my *ethnic origin*» replaced by «At work, I sometimes feel that people actively try to stop me from advancing because of my *migration background*», and «At work, people think I am unsociable when in fact I have trouble communicating in *English*» replaced by «At work, people think I am unsociable when in fact I have trouble communicating in *Italian*». Finally, the items were translated into Italian and then translated back into English by bilingual professionals to keep the equivalence of the construct in both languages (Brislin, 1980).

The *Career Satisfaction Scale* (Greenhaus et al., 1990; Italian version: Abdi & Lo Presti, 2024a) is a five-item scale that assesses one's satisfaction with one's attainment of career goals for income, advancement, new skills, and overall career progress (e.g., Greenhaus et al., 1990). Participants responded to the items on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5). A sample item is: «I am satisfied with the progress I have made toward meeting my goals for advancement». The original scale had adequate Cronbach's alpha (α) reliability of .88 while for the Italian version it was .91.

The *Job Satisfaction Scale* (Pejtersen et al., 2010; Italian version: Abdi & Lo Presti, 2024b). The scale measures job satisfaction using four items on a five-point Likert scale ranging from *not relevant* (1) to *very satisfied* (5). A sample item is «How pleased are you with your job as a whole, with everything taken into consideration?». The original scale had Cronbach's alpha values of .82 while for the Italian version it was .89.

Data analysis

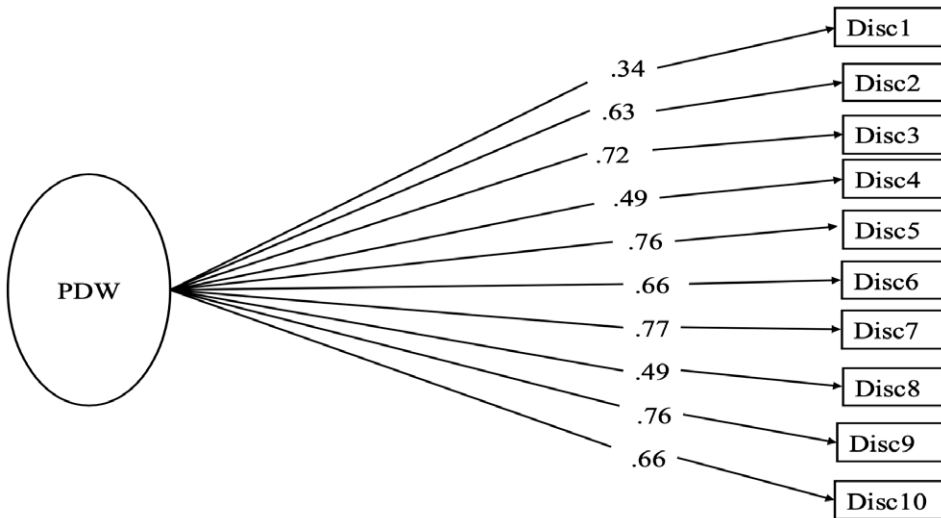
CFA was carried out using Mplus 8 software. Model fit was evaluated with comparative fit index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), and standardized mean square residual (SRMR). Generally, values ³ .90 of CFI and TLI indices are considered indicators of a good fit model (Vandenberg & Lance, 2000). For the RMSEA index, values $\leq .08$ are considered acceptable fit model, values between .08 and .10 are mediocre, and values $> .10$ are not acceptable, while for SRMR, the cutoff value close to .08 indicates a better model fit (Gunzler & Morris, 2015; Hu & Bentler, 1999; Vandenberg & Lance, 2000).

Results

The CFA results showed that CFI = .93, TLI = .90, RMSEA = .10, and SMR = .06, indicating an acceptable fit model for data except for the RMSEA value, which is close (.098) to .10. However, several scholars showed that for simpler models,

RMSEA is sensitive to sample size and may be inflated (e.g., Kenny et al., 2014). The Cronbach’s alpha of the scale was also found to be adequate with the value of $\alpha = .87$. The path diagram of the CFA results of the *Perceived Discrimination at Workplace Scale* is depicted in Figure 1. Moreover, we performed Pearson’s correlations between the *Perceived Discrimination at Workplace Scale* and the *Career Satisfaction Scale* and between the *Perceived Discrimination at Workplace Scale* and the *Job Satisfaction Scale*, presented in Table 1. Consistent with our expectation, the *Perceived Discrimination at Workplace Scale* showed negative and statistically significant correlations with both the *Career Satisfaction Scale* and the *Job Satisfaction Scale*.

Figure 1



Perceived Discrimination at Workplace Scale: CFA — Path diagram (N = 209)

Note: PDW = *Perceived Discrimination at Workplace Scale*; Disc1 = *Item 1*, Disc2 = *Item 2*, Disc3 = *Item 3*, Disc4 = *Item 4*, Disc5 = *Item 5*, Disc6 = *Item 6*, Disc7 = *Item 7*, Disc8 = *Item 8*, Disc9 = *Item 9*, Disc10 = *Item 10*.

Table 1

Correlations Between the *Perceived Discrimination at Workplace Scale* and the *Job Satisfaction Scale* and Between the *Perceived Discrimination at Workplace Scale* and the *Career Satisfaction Scale* (N = 209).

Variables	Career Satisfaction Scale	Job Satisfaction Scale
Perceived Discrimination at the Workplace	-.32**	-.33**

Note: ** $p \leq .01$.

Discussion

To the best of our knowledge, no research has adapted the *Perceived Discrimination at Workplace Scale* of Sanchez and Brock (1996) to the context of African migrant employees in Italy. Therefore, this study aimed to adapt the *Perceived Discrimination at Workplace Scale* of Sanchez and Brock (1996) and examine its validity and psychometric properties among African migrant employees in Italy. The results illuminated that the *Perceived Discrimination at Workplace Scale* can validly and reliably assess perceived discrimination against migrant employees. Statistically significant negative correlations with the *Career Satisfaction Scale* and *Job Satisfaction Scale*, which are consistent with previous study findings (Elçi et al., 2021; Ensher et al., 2001; Sanchez & Brock, 1996), provide evidence for discriminant validity for the *Perceived Discrimination at Workplace Scale*. Thus, the good psychometric properties of the scale suggest its suitability for career intervention, policy implications, and future research on migrant employees.

References

- Abdi, T. A., & Lo Presti, A. (2024a). Career Satisfaction Scale: Psychometric properties in migrant workers. *Counseling, 17*(3), 59-66. <https://doi.org/10.14605/CS1732405>
- Abdi, T. A., & Lo Presti, A. (2024b). Job Satisfaction Scale: Psychometric properties in migrant workers. *Counseling, 17*(3), 15-21. <https://doi.org/10.14605/CS1732402>
- Abdi, T. A., Peiró, J. M., & Lo Presti, A. (2021). Antecedents of career success of African migrant workers in Europe: A 2011-2019 systematic literature review and future research agenda. *Australian Journal of Career Development, 30*(3), 211-225. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10384162211066380>
- Achilli, L., Fargues, P., Salamonska, J. J., & Talo, T. (2016). *Study on migrants' profiles, drivers of migration, and migratory trends*. International Organization for Migration (IOM) Study, Migration Policy Centre. Cadmus, EU Research Repository. <https://hdl.handle.net/1814/43964>
- Al Ariss, A., Koall, I., Özbilgin, M., & Suutari, V. (2012). Careers of skilled migrants: towards a theoretical and methodological expansion. *Journal of Management Development, 31*(2), 92-101. <https://doi.org/10.1108/02621711211199511>
- Araújo, B. Y., & Borrell, L. N. (2006). Understanding the link between discrimination, mental health outcomes, and life chances among Latinos. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences, 28*(2), 245-266. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0739986305285825>
- Attias-Donfut, C., & Dimova, R. (2011). Social mobility SANS Frontières? Results from a survey on immigrants in France. *European Societies, 13*(1), 51-68. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616696.2010.483000>
- Avery, D. R., McKay, P. F., & Wilson, D. C. (2008). What are the odds? How demographic similarity affects the prevalence of perceived employment discrimination. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 93*(2), 235. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.93.2.235>
- Brislin, R. W. (1980). Translation and content analysis of oral and written materials. In H. C. Triandis, & J. W. Berry (Eds.), *Handbook of cross-cultural psychology: Methodology* (Vol. 2) (pp. 389-444). Allyn & Bacon.

- Capasso, R., Zurlo, M. C., & Smith, A. P. (2016). Ethnicity, work-related stress and subjective reports of health by migrant workers: a multi-dimensional model. *Ethnicity & Health, 23*(2), 174-193. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13557858.2016.1258041>
- Chihaya, G. K., Marcińczak, S., Strömgen, M., Lindgren, U., & Tammaru, T. (2022). Trajectories of spatial assimilation or place stratification? A typology of residence and workplace histories of newly arrived migrants in Sweden. *International Migration Review, 56*(2), 433-462. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01979183211037314>
- Crowley-Henry, M., & Ariss, A. A. (2018). Portrayal of skilled migrants' careers in business and management studies: A review of the literature and future research agenda. *European Management Review, 15*(3), 375-394. <https://doi.org/10.1111/emre.12072>
- D'Angelo, A. (2019). Italy: the 'illegality factory'? Theory and practice of refugees' reception in Sicily. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 45*(12), 2213-2226. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2018.1468361>
- Elçi, M., Sert-Özen, A., & Murat-Eminoğlu, G. (2021). Perceived gender discrimination and turnover intention: The mediating role of career satisfaction. In M. Ozsahin (Ed.), *New Strategic, Social and Economic Challenges in the Age of Society 5.0 Implications for Sustainability* (vol 121). *European Proceedings of Social and Behavioural Sciences* (pp. 64-76). European Publisher. <https://doi.org/10.15405/epsbs.2021.12.04.8>
- Ensher, E. A., Grant-Vallone, E. J., & Donaldson, S. I. (2001). Effects of perceived discrimination on job satisfaction, organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behavior, and grievances. *Human Resource Development Quarterly, 12*(1), 53-72. <https://doi.org/10.1002/1532-1096>
- Greenhaus, J. H., Parasuraman, S., & Wormley, W. M. (1990). Effects of race on organizational experiences, job performance evaluations, and career outcomes. *Academy of Management Journal, 33*(1), 64-86. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/256352>
- Gunzler, D. D., & Morris, N. (2015). A tutorial on structural equation modeling for analysis of overlapping symptoms in co-occurring conditions using MPlus. *Statistics in Medicine, 34*(24), 3246-3280. <https://doi.org/10.1002/sim.6541>
- Hu, L. T., & Bentler, P. M. (1999). Cutoff criteria for fit indexes in covariance structure analysis: Conventional criteria versus new alternatives. *Structural Equation Modeling: A Multidisciplinary Journal, 6*(1), 1-55. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10705519909540118>
- Kenny, D. A., Kaniskan, B., & McCoach, D. B. (2014). The performance of RMSEA in models with small degrees of freedom. *Sociological Methods & Research, 44*(3), 486-507.
- Krings, F., Johnston, C., Binggeli, S., & Maggiori, C. (2014). Selective incivility: Immigrant groups experience subtle workplace discrimination at different rates. *Cultural Diversity & Ethnic Minority Psychology, 20*(4), 491-498. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0035436>
- Mena, F. J., Padilla, A. M., & Maldonado, M. (1987). Acculturative stress and specific coping strategies among immigrant and later generation college students. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences, 9*(2), 207-225. <https://doi.org/10.1177/07399863870092006>
- Pejtersen, J. H., Kristensen, T. S., Borg, V., & Bjorner, J. B. (2010). The second version of the Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire. *Scandinavian journal of public health, 38*(3_suppl), 8-24. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1403494809349858>
- Pöttschke, S., & Braun, M. (2016). Migrant sampling using facebook advertisements: A case study of Polish migrants in four european countries. *Social Science Computer Review, 35*(5), 633-653. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0894439316666262>
- Sanchez, J. I., & Brock, P. (1996). Outcomes of perceived discrimination among Hispanic employees: Is diversity management a luxury or a necessity?. *Academy of Management Journal, 39*(3), 704-719. <https://doi.org/10.5465/256660>

Vandenberg, R. J., & Lance, C. E. (2000). A review and synthesis of the measurement invariance literature: Suggestions, practices, and recommendations for organizational research. *Organizational research methods*, 3(1), 4-70. <https://doi.org/10.1177/109442810031002>