

THE IMPACT OF A RENEWED VALIDATION AND GUIDANCE PROCESS ON PRACTITIONERS AND THEIR CANDIDATES

Results of the Portuguese field trial of the European project
TRANSVAL-EU

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Introduction

TRANSVAL-EU is a cross-country policy experimentation with a focus on training of validation and guidance practitioners for identifying, documenting, assessing, and certifying transversal skills. During six pilots, practitioners have been trained in order to optimise the validation process of non-formal and informal learning among several validation candidates. An extra pilot in Portugal has been realised. This specific field trial has only been evaluated among the involved candidates. This report describes the results of the scientific evaluation focussing on the impact on the Portuguese validation candidates.

More specific background information concerning the research methodology has been provided in the European research report (for more information see: www.transvalproject.eu).

Research questions from the perspective of the validation and guidance candidate (= focus on impact innovative and inclusive validation & guidance) which will be answered are:

- Have transversal skills systematically been embedded into validation and guidance processes and procedures?
- Do adult learners perceive an increase concerning chances on education, training, leisure, work, voluntary work, etc. due to improved access, support and guidance to validate their transversal skills gained?
- Have innovative tools for adults (referring to their current practice) to validate transversal skills for upskilling, reskilling, job seeking or self-empowerment and development been offered?

Sample: Candidates from Portugal

Among 34 candidates a pre- and the post-test has been realised, before and after the validation process. According to table 1, more men than women were included (circa 83% versus 33%). Besides, most of them (91%) were born in the country they live in. Also, all of the involved candidates were 26 years or older. Furthermore, in terms of education, the study covered both high-skilled as low-skilled adults (see table 1). Finally, most of the involved candidates have paid work (77%).

Table 1: Sociodemographic characteristics of Portuguese candidates (N = 34)

Sociodemographic characteristic	Category	Nr. of candidates (%)
<i>Gender</i>	Male	17.6
	Female	82.4
<i>Nationality</i>	Autochthone	90.9
	Foreign	9.1
<i>Age</i>	0 – 25 years	0.0
	26 – 45 years	51.5
	46 – 65 years	48.5
<i>Highest form of education</i>	Primary school	8.8
	Secondary school	23.5
	Vocational school	50.0
	High school	0.0
	University	17.6
	Other	0.0
<i>Years in education</i>	5 years or less	8.8
	Between 6 and 10 years	23.5
	Between 11 and 15 years	58.8
	Between 16 and 20 years	8.8
	Over 21 years	0.0
<i>Job status</i>	Paid work	76.5
	Self-employed	20.6
	Voluntary work (unpaid)	0.0
	Paid work and voluntary work	0.0
	Unemployed	2.9
	Looking for a job	0.0

Missing values are excluded in percentage calculations

Impact of field trial on experienced increase of competences of Portuguese candidates

By conducting a pre-and post-test among the 34 candidates involved the experienced increase in several competences of the TRANSVERSAL Competence Framework (TCF) in addition to the rate of social inclusion and labour market position has been analysed.

First, according to table 2, most of the used scales seems to be highly reliable according to the high scores for the Cronbach's Alpha (based on the total European sample). Besides, it becomes that based on the Paired Samples T-test that the experienced increase is significant for almost all variables (based on the total European sample).

Second, according to the experienced increase, it became clear that a significant share of the candidates involved experienced an increase in competences. This varies between circa 30% until 55%. For example, the candidates experienced to be more able to solve problems or foster cooperation or using oral or written communication. Besides, 18% to 24% experienced an increase in social inclusion (see table 2). To be more specific, these candidates meet more people and join new activities like nature or sports activities.

Third, it becomes clear that all of the candidates experienced to be better involved in a validation process concerning validation of transversal skills. According to table 2, 100% of the candidates experienced after joining the validation process that they know what transversal skills are, and they are aware of their transversal skills. Besides, they seemed to complete an assessment to test their skills and received a certification. Finally, they experienced that they could discuss which skills they have learned with their teacher and experienced that their learning experiences have been written down.

Table 2: Experienced increase of competences among Portuguese candidates (N = 34)

Competences	Used or newly constructed variable	Experienced increase among candidates (in %)	Cronbach's Alpha of Scale
Using oral communication	National language skills (SIT)	41.2	0.95
Using written communication	National language skills (SIT)	41.2	0.95
Communicating using digital technologies	Digital language skills (SIT)	47.1	0.96
Solving problems and reacting to unforeseen	Assertiveness (SIT)	55.9	0.87
Cooperating and fostering cooperation	Assertiveness (SIT)	55.9	0.87
Managing and organising activities	Newly constructed	29.4	0.87
Building one's career path	Newly constructed	55.9	0.56
Developing one's competences and profile	Newly constructed	55.9	0.56
Social inclusion	Meeting and attempting & Being active in nature and sports (SIT)	17.6 – 23.5	0.82 – 0.70
Transversal skills (incl. guidance & validation)	Newly constructed	100	0.81

Interpretation of impact

The TRANSVAL-EU project aims to contribute to a more constructive and reliable validation and guidance process. In order to do so, in six European countries (Austria, Belgium, Italy, Lithuania, Poland and Portugal) eight field trials have been organised in order to optimize the validation process concerning transversal skills.

According to the results among the Portuguese candidates, 30% to 55% of them experienced that some of their transversal competences increased. This study showed that learning interventions referring to formal, non-formal and informal learning for adults have impact on a significant share of these learners. The results of the field trials of TRANSVAL-EU are comparable and seem to be promising especially in comparison with the earlier published results of the study of Taris (2007) showing the impact of training of 10% to 20%.

Furthermore all of the involved Portuguese candidates (100%) experienced that they were involved in a constructive process of validation and guidance of transversal skills and perceived to be among others more aware of their transversal competences.

References

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