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CREATIVITY, SHYNESS AND EMPLOYABILITY

CRIATIVIDADE, TIMIDEZ E EMPREGABILIDADE

CREATIVIDAD, TÍMIDEZ Y EMPLEABILIDAD

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ABSTRACT

Objective: To analyze the relationship between self-perception of creativity, shyness, and employability of the individual.
Methodological procedures: A quantitative research was conducted with 152 respondents through exploratory factor analysis to develop a unified scale of perceived individual creativity and regression analysis to assess the effects of perceived individual creativity and timidity on employability.
Results: Shyness is negatively related to creativity self-perceived. Although more creative individuals are less afraid of becoming unemployed and have more hope of repositioning themselves professionally, there is no evidence of the relationship between employability, creativity, and shyness regarding the previous experience of unemployment. Therefore, this article contributes to understanding how the effects of conditions intrinsic to the individual – specifically, creativity and shyness – can affect their insertion in the labor market.
Limitations: The research considered only individuals residing in some regions of Brazil with a level of education above or equal to higher education. Even though creativity may have a different relevance from one sector to the other, the profession was not controlled.
Practical implications: This study elucidates how different factors underlying perceived individual creativity have distinct effects on professional insertion. In addition, the article offers a synthetic assessment scale to measure the self-perception of creativity.
Theoretical implications: A validated scale of individual creativity was proposed. In addition, this study contributes to the interpretation of specific personality characteristics – like shyness – and individual skills – such as individual creativity as a factor to be considered in studies on human resources and employability.
Originality: The study proposes a scale for the perception of individual creativity and separately analyzes the factors that constitute the individual creativity perceived concerning shyness and employability.

Keywords: Creativity; Shyness; Employability.

RESUMO

Objetivo: analisar a relação entre a autopercepção da criatividade, a timidez e a empregabilidade do indivíduo.
Procedimentos metodológicos: foi realizada uma pesquisa quantitativa com 152 respondentes, por meio de análise fatorial exploratória, a fim de desenvolver uma escala unificada de criatividade individual percebida e uma análise de regressão para avaliar os efeitos da criatividade individual percebida e da timidez sobre a empregabilidade.
Resultados: a timidez está negativamente relacionada à criatividade individual percebida pelos indivíduos. Embora indivíduos mais criativos tenham menos medo de ficar desempregados e tenham mais esperança de se reposicionarem profissionalmente, não há evidências da relação entre empregabilidade, criatividade e timidez, no que diz respeito à experiência anterior de desemprego.
Limitações: a pesquisa considerou apenas indivíduos residentes em algumas regiões do Brasil, com grau de escolaridade acima ou igual ao ensino superior. Não foi controlada a profissão, mesmo que criatividade possa ter relevância diferente de um setor econômico para outro.
Implicações práticas: contribui para a compreensão dos efeitos de condições intrínsecas ao indivíduo – especificamente, criatividade e timidez – na inserção no mercado de trabalho.
Implicações teóricas: foi proposta uma escala validada de criatividade individual. Além disso, o estudo contribui na interpretação de características específicas de personalidade – como a timidez – e de habilidades individuais – como a criatividade individual – como fatores a serem considerados em estudos sobre recursos humanos e empregabilidade.
Originalidade: A pesquisa oferece uma escala para mensurar a autopercepção de criatividade e analisa separadamente os fatores que constituem a criatividade individual percebida em relação à timidez e a empregabilidade.

Palavras-chave: Criatividade; Timidez; Empregabilidade.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: analizar la relación entre la autopercepción de la creatividad, la timidez y la empleabilidad del individuo.
Procedimientos metodológicos: Se realizó una investigación cuantitativa con 152 encuestados, mediante análisis factorial exploratorio, con el fin de desarrollar una escala unificada de creatividad individual percibida, y un análisis de regresión para evaluar los efectos de la creatividad individual percibida y la timidez sobre la empleabilidad.
Resultados: la timidez se relaciona negativamente con la creatividad individual percibida por los individuos. Los individuos más creativos tienen menos miedo a estar desempleados y tienen más esperanzas de reposicionarse

profesionalmente, no hay evidencia de la relación entre empleabilidad, creatividad y timidez, con respecto a la experiencia previa de desempleo.
Limitaciones: La investigación consideró solo a personas que residen en algunas regiones de Brasil, con un nivel de educación superior o igual a la educación superior. No se controló la profesión, aunque la creatividad puede tener una relevancia diferente de una a otra.
Implicaciones prácticas: contribuye a la comprensión de cómo los efectos de las condiciones intrínsecas al individuo, específicamente la creatividad y la timidez, pueden afectar su inserción en el mercado laboral.
Implicaciones teóricas: Se propuso una escala validada de creatividad individual. Además, se contribuye a la interpretación de características específicas de la personalidad, como la timidez, y las habilidades individuales, como la creatividad individual, como un factor a considerar en los estudios sobre recursos humanos y empleabilidad.
Originalidad: fue propuesto una escala para la percepción de la creatividad individual y fue analizado por separado los factores que constituyen la creatividad individual percibida en relación con la timidez y la empleabilidad.

Palabras clave: Creatividad; Timidez; Empleabilidad.

1 INTRODUCTION

As a personality trait, shyness can be defined as an excessive self-focus characterized by a negative self-assessment that causes discomfort or inhibition in situations of social interaction, and has consequences when pursuing interpersonal or professional goals (Henderson et al., 2010). As a result, job selection processes are very challenging for shy people. While on the one hand, they represent exposure of their fear of social interaction, on the other, they represent the hope of finding an environment in which individual characteristics are valued.

The recent appreciation of creativity as one of the most valued emotional skills of the 21st Century (Nakano & Wechsler, 2018) creates another challenge for shy people. Despite this, studies reveal conflicting results in the relationship between creativity and shyness. While on the one hand, there is an inverse relationship between shyness and creative imagination, there is also a positive relationship between shyness and aesthetic sensitivity, essential elements for innovation (Kwiatkowska, Rogoza, & Poole, 2018).

In addition to the conceptual aspect, contextual events have also presented challenges for shyness and creativity. Several changes have taken place in the job market in recent years, especially from 2014, with the beginning of one of the longest recessions faced by Brazil (Volkmer & Oliveira, 2017). Furthermore, the unemployment rate, which was 5.4% in 2013, reached 11.9% in 2016, and 12.7% in 2019 (Lameiras, Carvalho, & Corseuil, 2019) and, in 2020, these figures were further exacerbated by the COVID-19 Pandemic, reaching 13.1% (IBGE, 2020). As a result, these economic movements have led to increased competition for jobs and a highly competitive environment (Volkmer & Oliveira, 2017).

In organizational studies, employability has been studied in under different lines of study, all of which share the perception that it is a topic related to both the external and internal environment of organizations. For example, Cunningham (2008) understands that gender issues still present barriers to achieving a balance in employability. Pianta (2006) finds a positive correlation between the implementation of innovation and improved employability conditions. Kalleberg (2009) evaluates the constant increase in precariousness and insecurity in work relationships. One thing these studies all have in common is that they view employability as something that affects organizations. Despite the increasing number of studies that focus on individual's employability, there is still space to investigate how the individual's intrinsic conditions – such as creativity and shyness – can affect their ability to find employment.

The skills needed to deal with the new demands in the work environment are still neglected in job recruitment processes, which were designed for the individual competences of the previous Century (Hamilton & Davison, 2018). Studies indicating ways of reconciling specific characteristics of individuals that distort the perception of individual skills, such as shyness, in interviews or in the routine of organizations, have been kept out of the discussion – with a few rare exceptions that focus on the link between shyness and the ability to concentrate on technology-related activities (Scholz, 2017), or that discuss shyness as a problem for organizations when it comes to excessive sentimentality in labor relations (McDonnell, 1984). In general, shyness is seen as a trait that needs to be hidden by the candidate and discovered by the employer (Donida, Visentini, & Ferreira, 2018; Van Zalk, Lamb, & Rentfrow, 2017), failing to consider characteristics that may correlate with shyness and that may be attractive to the organization, at a time when creativity is considered one of the individual skills that will make a difference in the careers of 21st-century workers (Nakano & Wechsler, 2018). In organizations, although the talent selection process is an ongoing challenge, bias variants (Knight, 2017) generally

transform this process into a muddle between what the organization wants, what it sees in the individual, and what talents the individual really has to offer. It is in this gap in the literature that this article positions itself, seeking to answer the following research question: how does the self-perception of creativity and shyness affect the individual's employability?

This study analyzes the relationship between the individual's self-perception of creativity, shyness, and employability. It brings together studies on personality, from psychology, organizational studies, and creative characteristics, relating these themes to the average time taken to find a job and the perception of the risk that the individual has about the possibility of being unemployed. We evaluated employability in relation to two subjective aspects, seeking to understand the relationship between these factors – the fear of being unemployed and the hope of finding a job – and an objective aspect, for how long the individual was unemployed. Quantitative research was conducted to achieve this objective, via a survey with 152 individuals. The results of the survey were interpreted by exploratory factor analysis and regression analysis.

The results demonstrate that shyness is negatively correlated with creativity. Although more creative individuals are less afraid of being unemployed and have greater expectations of managing to find a job, this feeling is not corroborated in tests related to the time individuals spent unemployed. In terms of contribution to human resource management practices, this study offers some reflections on how hiring processes are applied. As for the theoretical contribution, it proposes a scale of perceived individual creativity and offers new avenues of research to understand the relationship between shyness and creativity, at a time when individual creativity is understood by organizations as a vital skill for dealing with the socioeconomic transformations of the 21st Century.

This article is structured in sections. Following the introduction, it presents the literature review. After that, it outlines the methodological procedures used to gather the data and analyze the results described in the next section. Next, a discussion of the results is given, and finally, the conclusions are presented.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to be able to relate the individual's creativity, shyness and employability, we divided the literature review into three sections. The first section presents the evolution of creativity as a concept, how it develops in the organizational context, and creative people's characteristics. In the second section, we explored the concept of personality and the differences on a continuum between introversion and extroversion and the connection to shyness. Finally, we present the concept of employability.

2.1 CREATIVITY

Although creativity can be defined as the production of ideas, insights, or products that are new and useful (Amabile, 1988), this concept developed over the years, until it became validated as a human ability that can be stimulated and converted into organizational creativity (Woodman, 2008). For a long time, creativity was seen as a magical feat (Pinheiro, 2009), a phenomenon of an intrapsychic nature, basically centered on the individual and dependent on their personality characteristics (de Alencar, 2012). In ancient times, it was believed that creativity was a gift from the gods and that human creations were limited to ideas cultivated by these gods in their brains (Gomes, Rodrigues, & Veloso, 2016).

The process by which creativity is conceived has received particular attention in the literature. The first model of creative thinking followed the anthropocentric line of the early 20th Century. The creation of a new idea followed four steps, as shown in Figure 1 (de Alencar, 1995, citing Wallas, 1926).

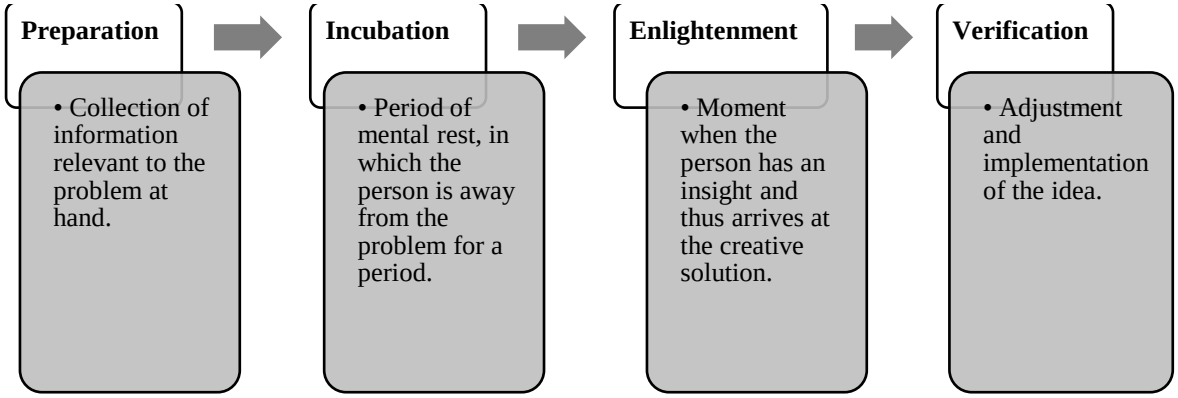


Figure 1. The creative thinking model, according to Wallas (adapted from de Alencar, 1995)

The most considerable criticism of Wallas' proposition concerns the exaggerated focus on the individual and the association of the creative process with an almost magical moment when the person has a catharsis about a solution (Pearson, 2011). After this initial conception, in 1961, psychologist Mel Rhodes realized that although creativity is a mental process, it potentially generates an artifact, when it occurs in an environment where the creative process is stimulated. Along the same lines, considering the creative process an interrelated universe, Csikszentmihalyi (1996) identified three main elements in creativity: (1) individual talent; (2) the domain or discipline in which the individual is working; and (3) the field in which the person is inserted and their judgments about the quality of new ideas or products. From this conception, experience and the generation of ideas are linked. It is understood that individuals generate diverse ideas within their area of experience, which are submitted to the judgment of the field in which they are inserted (people, organizations, and society) and that only a small number of these ideas are accepted as creative (Baer, 2012). One of the premises that link these creative works is promoting a re-elaboration of the domain, providing opportunities for future experiences to be built based on new knowledge, increasing the complexity of the theme (Gardner, 1993). In contrast, Kuhn (2006) opposes the idea that creativity emerges only in people with great experience, and suggests that innovations also occur among younger researchers.

Thus, it is highlighted that creativity is an interactive process, which involves reflection and action and needs to seek validation from its surroundings (Mumford, 2012). This debate gains relevance when the concepts of creativity and innovation are associated (Pinheiro, 2009) and when the importance of these initiatives is analyzed in light of the impacts of globalization and the rise of the creative economy in the business scenario (de Vasconcellos, Garrido & Parente, 2019).

2.1.1 Creativity in the organizational context

The advancement of technology and the spread of social networks have set the stage for one of the most profound human transformations (Goldstein, 2014). Creativity plays a pivotal role in leading organizations on this path (Rocha & Wechsler, 2016), given its influence on innovative capability (Gomes et al., 2016). In this scenario, the role of the individual in organizations gains prominence, as the need to create products, services and processes is entrusted to him or her, combining creativity, innovation, and change, in order to raise the quality of the organization and ensure its survival (de Alencar, 1995).

In this discussion, care must be taken to distinguish between creativity and innovation. While creativity is associated with the generation of new and useful ideas (Amabile, 1988; Marchiano & Banzato, 2017), innovation is defined as the implementation of creative ideas (Rocha & Wechsler, 2016) relevant to long-term success (Alberton & Carvalho, 2017). Furthermore, it should be noted that creativity can be associated with an individual, while innovation implies the collaboration of more people (Pinheiro, 2009).

Thus, it can be seen that creativity has gained relevance in organizations as an essential skill of the 21st Century (Nakano & Wechsler, 2018). However, although we understand the importance of creativity for business competitiveness globally (Alberton & Carvalho, 2017), few studies have attempted to elucidate how organizational creativity can sustain the skills needed for it to emerge (de Vasconcellos et al., 2019). This gap in organizational studies could be explained by the fact that organizational creativity has its roots in research conducted within psychology (Dougherty & Rutgers, 2008; Hargadon, 2008; Zhou & Shalley, 2008).

In general, organizations consider that most creativity comes from their employees, being seen as the result of human or intellectual capital (Alberton & Carvalho, 2017). Therefore, creative individuals are seen as valuable in

organizations, as they are more willing, daring, and take more risks, promoting original ideas that contribute to innovation. Due to these factors, there have been many studies seeking to understand the characteristics of creative people and how creativity can be inserted into the corporate environment (Alberton & Carvalho, 2017; Marion, 2012).

2.1.2 Characteristics of creative people

The creative process is complex, involving several aspects and proving challenging to investigate empirically (de Alencar, 1995). Perhaps for this reason, there are still disagreements as to what aspects constitute personality traits of creative people (Pinheiro, 2009). Creativity itself is a characteristic of the human species, although this potential is not easily achieved, due to the hurdles and challenges that everyone must face at some point in their lives. (Kazanjian & Drazin, 2012). In view of this, and speculating that there are still people who reach higher creative potential, the literature has attempted to elucidate the kind of behavior that can overcome these challenges and bring forth this individual ability (Predebon, 2013).

Several studies have already been carried out in this context to extract common personality traits that could explain moments of creative inspiration (de Alencar, 1995). In these studies, what can be observed is that the characteristics vary depending on the area in which the creative individual is inserted. To illustrate these divergences in characteristics, Figure 2 lists the sets of personality traits attributed to creative people, according to Wechsler (1998), Eysenk (1999), and Byrd and Brown (2007) and cited by Monteiro Jr (2011). Among these, only three traits are common to all the authors, independence, self-acceptance, and flexibility.

Wechsler (1998)	Eysenck (1999)	Byrd & Brown (2007)
• Self-confidence or positive self-concept	• Independence	• Ambiguity
• Original and innovative thinking	• Domination	• Independence
• High external and internal sensitivity	• Introversion	• Internal targeting
• Fantasy and imagination	• Openness to stimuli	• Singularity
• Non-conformity	• Wide range of interests	• Authenticity
• Independence of judgments	• Self-acceptance	• Flexibility
• Openness to new experiences	• Intuition	• Self-acceptance
• Sense of creative destiny	• Flexibility	
• Elaborate and enriching ideas	• Presence and social attitudes	
• Preference for risky situations	• Antisocial attitude	
• High motivation and curiosity	• Concern with social norms	
• Good sense of humor	• Radicalism	
• Impulsivity and spontaneity	• Rejection of external restrictions	
• Fluency and flexibility of ideas		
• High use of analogies and unusual combinations		

Figure 2. Personality Traits of Creative People (Eysenk, 1999; Monteiro Jr, 2011; Wechsler, 1998)

It should be considered that besides the distinction in the analysis, these features are complementary. According to Pinheiro (2009), these factors can generate a positive tension that results in creative behavior. From this perspective, the possibility arises of evaluating whether the friction generated by contradictory personality traits, such as shyness, can nurture creative success in different individuals' personalities.

2.2 SHYNESS

Historically, relevant studies in the field of psychology have focused not only on behavior but also on thoughts. Based on research presented in 1920 by Swiss psychologist and psychiatrist Carl Gustav Jung (1976), personality is called the psyche. It fluctuates between two primary senses – extroversion and introversion – in differing proportions, depending on where the person focuses their attention.

At one end of the spectrum, extroversion encompasses people who generally focus their attention on the external world of facts, things, and people. They generally have an impulsive attitude and prefer talking to writing. Although they make friends quickly, their relationships tend to be more superficial. They also have difficulty deepening their knowledge, and therefore become more generalists (Silva & Ribeiro, 2010). They are characterized by their sociability, impulsiveness, vivacity, insight and optimism, always focused on associating with others (Feist, Feist, & Roberts, 2015).

At the opposite end of the spectrum, the introversion characteristic of people is usually a focus on their inner world of impressions, emotions, and thoughts. These people often have difficulty deciding and speaking, although they are able to write very efficiently. They also tend to be specialists rather than generalists, as they have a high level of concentration, and they generally like to find out more about a particular subject (Silva & Ribeiro, 2010). As a rule, they are silent, passive, unsociable, careful, reserved, and thoughtful (Feist et al., 2015), resisting social interaction environments (Zack, 2019).

In the view of Jung (1921, cited by Fadiman & Frager, 1986), the differences between people who were more prone to introversion or extraversion came solely from their behavior. However, Eysenck (1997, cited by Feist et al., 2015) argues that the level of brain stimulation is what determines this dimension of personality. Eysenck (1997, cited by Feist et al., 2015) suggests that more introverted individuals have a higher level of brain stimulation than more extroverted people. This neurophysiological characteristic prompts the most introverted to shape their behavior to compensate for this excess of stimulation, avoiding the extra excitement provided by the outside world. In contrast, extroverts compensate for their low stimulation by looking for diverse experiences in everyday socialization (Feist et al., 2015).

According to Jung (1976), introversion is the personality trait of people who prefer to focus their energies on the inner world. Their focus is not on the object but on the impression it makes (Ramos, 2005). Interaction with people creates anxiety in the most introverted, and a fear that others are demanding, imposing, and threatening (Zack, 2019).

Recent studies indicate that introversion can represent an ability to concentrate in the work environment (Balsari-Palsule & Little, 2020). However, it is common for more introverted individuals to harbor negative thoughts for fear that they will appear ridiculous in the eyes of others. As a rule, they are distrustful, sometimes stubborn. Yet they can feed low self-esteem, culminating in possible manifestations of envy and insecurity (Kuri & Truzzi, 2004).

One of the main difficulties resulting from shyness is the fear of the social interaction it triggers (Zack, 2019). This fear, although it can be considered adaptive because it helps the person to defend against dangerous occurrences, may not be favorable when it is too extreme. If this fear takes hold of a person, it can develop from mere shyness as a personal trait, making the person more prone to introversion, to a pathological disorder of social phobia (Gouveia, 2000).

Studies indicate that shyness is negatively associated with creativity (Kwiatkowska et al., 2018), especially when analyzing the degree of openness usually associated with a creative personality. However, despite being related, creativity is not determined, nor does it end in social interaction. One could assume, following this reasoning, that shy people can express their creative side passively or, at least, not so actively. This perception echoes the research carried out by Cheek and Stahl (1986), who concluded that shy individuals who had no prior knowledge of how others would judge their work had more significant creative performance.

Although there are several different propositions to measure social anxiety, no way to assess shyness was explicitly identified for a long time. To fill this gap, Cheek and Buss (1981) built a scale using three criteria: (1) affection criterion (tension, concern); (2) instrumental components (clumsy behavior, aversion to looks); (3) exclusion of any reference to the preference of being with other people, to avoid research bias, as described in Figure 3.

Items on the Shyness Scale
• I feel awkward in environments where social interaction is required
• I have difficulty talking to strangers
• I feel tense when I am with people I do not know well
• When talking, I worry about what others will think of me
• I feel nervous when talking to someone who represents greater authority
• I feel uncomfortable at parties and other social gatherings
• I feel inhibited in social situations
• I have difficulty looking someone directly in the eye
• I am shyer when I meet someone of the opposite sex

Figure 3. Shyness Scale (Cheek & Buss, 1981)

We have explored the themes identified with personality aspects. The next section now looks at employability as a construct representing the individual's interaction with the financial results arising from their abilities.

2.3 EMPLOYABILITY

Since the beginnings of economic studies, there has been keen interested in the dynamics between means of production and the recurrent interaction between them (Milios & Dimoulis, 2018). Production and work serve as a transition between the resources generated in the economy by the needs of individuals and the reward for their work (Herrmann, 2008). Just like the market economy, represented by the offer of goods targeted at the consumer, individuals offer their work in exchange for the benefits of the productive environment, such that that contracts are established in which entrepreneurs and workers find the best possible results (Williamson, 1985).

However, the dominant production system, established at the beginning of the 20th Century, divides work into small tasks, diluting the bargaining power among workers and transferring the labor pricing power to corporations (Lobato et al., 2016). Thus, skills related to creativity lost its importance, as mass production entailed fewer ideas and more sweat, and the constant sharing of ideas represented a barrier to production supported by bureaucratic organizations (Cummings, 1965).

Nevertheless, the transformations that the economy experienced at the end of the 20th Century brought a new challenge to a society in which professional training favored mass and serial production: the capacity to absorb knowledge (Cohen & Levinthal, 1990). Once recognized as a determinant of organizational performance, it began to seek to understand how knowledge is generated, beginning to place more value on intangible resources, such as organizational creativity (de Vasconcellos et al., 2021).

The mismatch between professional training and the demand for intangible attributes is reflected in the individual's employability. While Pianta (2006) finds a positive correlation between the implementation of innovation and improved employability conditions, Kalleberg (2009) argues that the constant increase in precariousness and insecurity in labor relations still persists. Consequently, the misalignment between professional training and the needs of organizations leads to afflictions and fear among workers (Den Haan et al., 2018).

Although the demand for more creative individuals is already perceived in various large corporations (e.g., Apple, 2019 e Samsung, 2019), those with large-scale production still have difficulty recognizing the creative potential of future employees, and often, this creativity is abandoned during the individual's educational years (Cropley & Cropley, 2008). Consequently, employability, or its absence, goes beyond the measurement published by research institutes. Employability has implications for how much people look for a job, and involves the individual's ability to offer their attributes to the hiring organizations (Kalleberg, 2009). In addition, high unemployment rates among newly-qualified professionals can lead to prolonged anguish throughout their professional careers, with disastrous effects on their quality of life (Schmillen & Umkehrer, 2017).

Figure 4 summarizes the research objective. This study aims to test if individuals' perceptions about their creativity and shyness are related to their employability. To assess employability, we used an objective variable – length of time unemployed – and two subjective variables, fear of being unemployment and hope of finding employment.

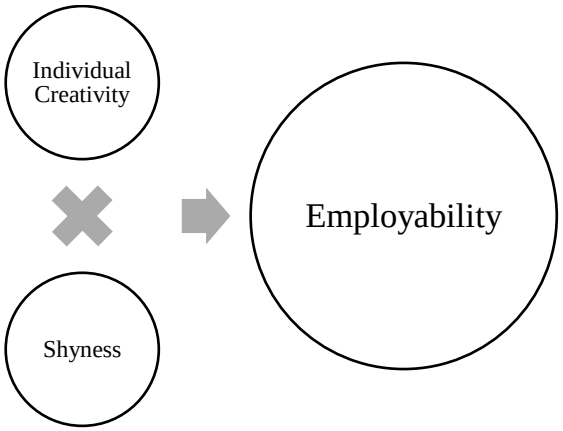


Figure 4. Research scheme
Source: The author

3 METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

Given the scarcity of studies that focus on individual creativity and employability within the organizational context, the first stage of the study conducts a bibliographic survey, as recommended by Gil (2008), to explore concepts related to creativity. In this stage, we analyzed the concept of creativity and the characteristics of creative people. We saw that it would be necessary to develop a scale to measure perceived individual creativity that differed from the existing scales related to organizational creativity.

Based on these data, we developed a quantitative and explanatory survey to understand whether there is a relationship between creativity, shyness, and employability and whether the themes are correlated. We carried out the data collection between 20th March, 2019 and 5th April, 2019, through an online questionnaire, via Google Forms, disseminated using the snowball technique, inviting respondents to share the research (Etikan, 2016).

After the data collection, we built a database using Excel software, later exported to the IBM SPSS Amos Software v.21 and IBM SPSS Statistics Software v.25 for exploratory factor analysis and correlation. We modulated the responses on a Likert scale, ranging from 1 (totally disagree) to 5 (totally agree). The application of exploratory factor analysis aims to concatenate the information collected through multiple variables into a smaller set relevant to the research topic, aiming at minimal loss of information (Hair, 2009). On the other hand, regression analysis aims to discover relationships or associations between the research variables (Dancey & Reidy, 2006). This is cross-sectional research that is limited to determining causal relationships between variables and their correlations. Thus, the cause-effect relationship results from the theoretical appropriation of the relationships. (Bono & McNamara, 2011).

3.1 PRE-TEST

Because this research required the construction of a scale of perceived individual creativity to be validated, we developed a pre-test collection stage with 31 respondents. After applying the normality and reliability tests, the questionnaire was considered viable, without requiring any changes to the questions, which determined the immediate collection sequence so as to generate bias in the collection period between the pre-test collection and the rest of the sample.

3.2 SAMPLE PROFILE

Regarding the sample profile, of the 152 respondents, 3% were under 20 years old; 35% were between 20 and 30 years old; 40%, between 31 and 40 years old; 13%, between 41 and 50 years old; and 9%, over 50 years old. Regarding sex, 63% identified as female and 37% as male.

Among the respondents, 86% were working, demonstrating that most of participants were professionally active, similar to the percentage of the active population that declared themselves employed in the first quarter of 2019 (IBGE, 2019). In addition, 61% of respondents had been unemployed in the past, with 45% finding another job in less than six months, 40% in six to twelve months, and 15% in more than twelve months.

Respondents with a level of education below incomplete higher education were discarded to ensure that the homogeneity criterion did not produce a reliability bias (Hair, 2009). Regarding the respondents' level of education, 32% of the sample had incomplete higher education, 28% had complete higher education. 40% had postgraduate education. The three main income groups earned up to two minimum wages 15%), between two and five minimum wages (44%), and between five and ten minimum wages (21%). At the time the survey was conducted, the minimum wage in Brazil was US$ 254.00 (R$ 998.00).

3.3 DATA TREATMENT

First, we evaluated whether missing values could compromise the research result, and none were not detected. Then, to validate the instrument and apply factor analysis, we ran two tests, KMO and Bartlett. KMO test results closer to one indicate validation. The result was 0.879. The Bartlett test recommends that the significance of the variables under evaluation be up to $p < 0.05$. The result was $p < 0.001$. Therefore, the sample was considered as having normality and was suitable for exploratory factor analysis testing. We then tested the correlations between the variables to assess whether there was a correlation between them in each construct, confirming the feasibility of the regression analysis.

3.4 VARIABLES

Next, we described the sets of latent and descriptive variables.

3.4.1 Shyness variable

For the formation of the shyness variable, we used the instrument already validated by Cheek and Buss (1981). All variables showed a correlation of $p < 0.01$, proving to be significant and correlated. We tested composite reliability, extracted variance, and Cronbach's alpha to assess the construct validity. According to Dancey and Reidy (2006), the composite reliability must be greater than 0.7, the extracted variance more significant than 0.5, and Cronbach's alpha between 0.7 and 1. The results for the shyness variable were adequate, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1
Shyness construct validity test

Applied tests	Factorial loads
Composite reliability	0.934
Extracted Variance	0.615
Cronbach's Alpha	0.907

Source: Survey data

We found that the construct is significant at $p < 0.01$, ensuring the general reliability of the latent variable SHYNESS, defined by the mean of the observable variables.

3.4.2 Perceived individual creativity variable

For the construct of perceived individual creativity, we created between two and three questions that represent the characteristics of creative individuals, according to Wechsler (1998), Eysenk (1999), and Byrd and Brown (2007, cited by Monteiro Jr, 2011), as presented in Table 2. After applying the questionnaire, we performed a factor analysis of questions Q16 to Q83, looking for correlations and factor loadings.

Considering the observable variables ($p < 0.01$), we identified six factors that were correlated with each other, corresponding to 60% of the perceived individual creativity construct. We named the factors according to the interpretation of the set of questions, grouped by factor.

Table 2
Factor analysis of perceived individual creativity.

Factor	Questions analyzed	Name
F1	Q64, Q65, Q66, Q67 e Q78	SELF-ACCEPTANCE
F2	Q46, Q49, Q50 e Q71	OPENING TO NEW EXPERIENCES
F3	Q55, Q56 e Q57	SOCIAL ATTITUDES
F4	Q30, Q31 e Q47	RISK-TAKING
F5	Q21, Q22 e Q26	NONCONFORMISM
F6	Q16, Q76 e Q77	AUTHENTICITY

Source: Research data.

As they were not significant, we excluded the other questions from the analysis. We considered the results for the variable individual creativity to be adequate in terms of composite reliability and Cronbach's Alpha. Meanwhile, although the extracted variance is below the recommended value of 0.50, the reliability criterion was considered

satisfactory because it is a subjective construct, whose limit, according to the literature, is adequate if greater than 0.32 (Tabachnick et al., 2001), as shown in Table 3.

Table 3
Validity of the perceived individual creativity construct

Applied tests	Factorial loads
Composite reliability	0.763
Extracted Variance	0.353
Cronbach's Alpha	0.839

Source: Research data

3.4.3 Subjective employability variables

To determine the perception of employability of the sample, we presented two variables, on a scale of agreement from 1 to 5: The fear of being unemployed (FEARUNEM) and the hope of getting a new job (HOPEEMPL).

3.4.4 Objective employability variable

To constitute an objective employability variable, we asked each respondent what was the longest period of time, in months, that they had been unemployed. Based on the sample responses, we created an objective variable called unemployment experience (UNEMEXPE).

3.4.5 Control variables

We controlled the variables sex, age, income, and educational background to prevent data outside the variables from influencing the results.

4 PRESENTATION OF DATA AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

Initially, we compared the control variables with the variables of interest, perceived individual creativity, shyness, and employability. Then, for employability, we analyzed the control variables with two subjective variables: fear of unemployment and hope of re-employment, and the objective variable, unemployment experience. Afterward, we performed an analysis of the variables of interest.

4.1 SHYNESS AND CONTROL VARIABLES

Regarding the control variables, compared to the variable shyness, it can be observed that the variable age was negatively correlated with shyness ($\beta = -0.261$; $p < 0.001$). Regarding the sample, the older the respondent, the less shy they were. As for income, individuals in the sample with higher income had a lower degree of shyness ($\beta = -0.234$; $p < 0.004$). In the sample, the higher the level of education, the less shy the respondents were ($\beta = -0.163$; $p < 0.045$). The variable sex was not significant in the context of shyness.

4.2 PERCEIVED INDIVIDUAL CREATIVITY AND CONTROL VARIABLES

Having defined the factors that form the perceived individual creativity, we began to analyze their correlations. Thus, it became possible to understand the effects between the factors that form the perceived individual creativity and the control variables. Regarding the sample, it was observed that the variable income has a low correlation with perceived individual creativity ($\beta = 0.151$; $p < 0.063$), demonstrating that creative individuals have higher income in the sample. The variables sex, age, and educational background were not significant in regard to perceived individual creativity.

4.3 EMPLOYABILITY AND CONTROL VARIABLES

Regarding the control variables, compared to the subjective variable of fear of being unemployed (FEARUNEM), it was observed that the variable income had a low correlation (β = 0.137; *p* < 0.093). Likewise, older individuals are also more afraid of being unemployed (β = 0.150; *p* < 0.065). The variables sex and educational background were not significant in relation to the fear of unemployment. We also analyzed the relationship between the control variables and the hope of finding another job (HOPEEMPL). We found that individuals with higher incomes are more hopeful of regaining employment (β = 0.192; *p* < 0.018) and that the other control variables: age, sex, and professional training, were not significant.

When we compared the control variables with the objective variable of employability, experience of unemployment (UNEMEXPE), we found that they were not correlated. However, this demonstrates homogeneity in the sample regarding the experience of unemployment.

4.4 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE EMPLOYABILITY VARIABLES

In order to capture the perception between the previous evaluation of experience of unemployment and the subjective variables related to the fear of being unemployed and the hope of getting another job, we intrinsically analyzed the relationship between these variables. The results showed that individuals do not significantly associate the experience of unemployment with the fear of becoming unemployed again. On the other hand, the experience of unemployment was negatively associated association with the hope of finding a new job (β = -0.214; p < 0.008). Finally, the two subjective variables of employability, the hope of finding a new job and the fear of being unemployed, showed a positive and significant correlation (β = 0.323; p < 0.000), indicating that even if the individual fears unemployment, he/she is confident that he/she will find another job in the future.

4.5 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SHYNESS AND PERCEIVED INDIVIDUAL CREATIVITY

As shown in Table 4, the variable shyness was negatively correlated (β = -0.476; p < 0.01) with the variable perceived individual creativity. These results indicate that the individuals in the sample that were more shy tend to perceive themselves as less creative, which corroborates the findings of other studies (e.g., Kwiatkowska et al., 2018) and lends credibility to the sample. However, in a more accurate assessment, nuances can be seen. Considering the factors that form the perceived individual creativity, the correlations varied. For example, SELF-ACCEPTANCE (β = -0.581; p < 0.000), RISK-TAKING (β = -0.402; p < 0.000) and NON-CONFORMISM (β = -0.318; p < 0.000) are more intense characteristics that distinguish creative and shy individuals. According to the sample data, shy individuals are more likely to develop difficulties in self-acceptance, take fewer risks, and settle for situations more often than individuals who see themselves as more creative.

Table 4
Relationship between Shyness and Perceived Individual Creativity

		INDIVCR	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6
	Correlation	-0.476	-0.581	-0.296	-0.149	-0.402	-0.318	-0.176
SHYNESS	**Sig.**	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.066	0.000	0.000	0.030
	N	152	152	152	152	152	152	152

Source: Research data

With lower intensity, considering the other determinants of perceived individual creativity, shy individuals tend to have less OPENNESS TO NEW EXPERIENCES (β = -0.296; *p* < 0.000), have SOCIAL ATTITUDES (β = -0.149; *p* < 0.066) less intense and not showing more AUTHENTICITY (β = -0.176; *p* < 0.030), all with low and negative correlations. This result allows us to infer that all factors related to the variable perceived individual creativity were negatively associated with shyness, but in different aspects and to differing degrees.

4.6 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SHYNESS AND EMPLOYABILITY

In the sample, shyness was not related to the individual's experience of unemployment nor to the hope of finding another job. However, it has some interaction with the fear of being unemployed, as shown in Table 5, in an inverse relationship. Therefore, there is evidence in the sample that those who are more shy are less afraid of an unemployment situation (β = -0.127; p < 0.105).

Table 5
Relationship between Shyness and Employability

		FEARUNEM	HOPEEMPL	UNEMEXPE
SHYNESS	**Correlation**	-0.132	-0.054	-0.032
	Sig.	0.105	0.505	0.699
	N	152	152	152

Source: Research data

4.7 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERCEIVED INDIVIDUAL CREATIVITY AND EMPLOYABILITY

As shown in Table 6, the variable perceived individual creativity presents nuances concerning employability as a whole construct and when its formative factors are related to these variables.

Table 6
Relationship between Creativity and Employability

		INDIVCR	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6
FEARUNEM	Correlation	0.082	-0.228	0.016	-0.093	0.112	0.009	0.016
	Sig.	0.317	0.005	0.841	0.253	0.170	0.917	0.846
	N	152	152	152	152	152	152	152
HOPEEMPL	Correlation	0.209	0.249	0.086	0.160	0.201	0.021	0.192
	Sig.	0.010	0.002	0.294	0.049	0.013	0.798	0.018
	N	152	152	152	152	152	152	152
UNEMEXPE	Correlation	-0.036	-0.071	0.016	0.026	-0.044	-0.016	-0.008
	Sig.	0.662	0.384	0.849	0.751	0.592	0.842	0.920
	N	152	152	152	152	152	152	152

Source: Research data

4.7.1 Relationship between perceived individual creativity and fear of unemployment.

A priori, the variables perceived individual creativity and fear of unemployment are not correlated. However, some intrinsic aspects to individual creativity gain evidence. For example, we notice that while those individuals who present greater self-acceptance fear unemployment less (β = -0.228; p < 0.005), the other variables associated with factors that form the perception of individual creativity are not significant.

4.7.2 Relationship between perceived individual creativity and hope of finding a job.

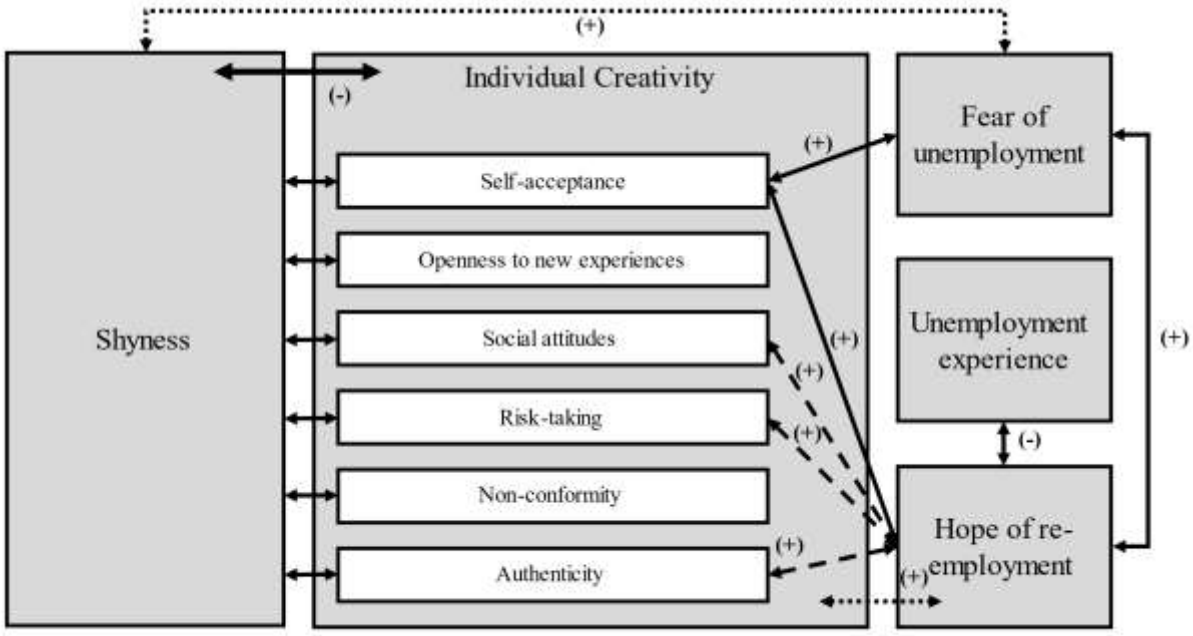
This comparison highlights an important subjective role of perceived individual creativity concerning employability. There is a significant and positive correlation between the variables (β = 0.209; p < 0.010), contributing to the understanding that those individuals who perceive themselves as creative tend to face the possibility of finding a new job in the future with positive expectations. Looking specifically at the factors that shape the perception of individual creativity, it is possible to understand how this happens. The most relevant factor in this process is self-acceptance (β = 0.249; p < 0.002), as it represents a factor loading and a more intense significance than the entire construct. However, other factors contribute to this perception, such as the propensity to take risks (β = 0.201; p < 0.013), authenticity (β = 0.192; p < 0.018), and social attitudes (β = 0.160; p < 0.049).

4.7.3 Relationship between perceived individual creativity and time spent unemployed.

In the analysis between perceived individual creativity and time spent unemployed, we found no correlation between the variables forming the perception of individual creativity.

5 DISCUSSION

Exploratory factor analysis enabled us to confirm that the main characteristics of creative personality listed in the literature: self-acceptance, openness to new experiences, social attitudes, risk-taking, non-conformity, and authenticity (Eysenk, 1999; Pearson, 2011; Wechsler, 1998) are related and sustain perceived individual creativity scale. Figure 5 summarizes the results.



Linear arrow: relations with the significance of *p*-value ≤ 0.000
Segmented arrow: relationships with the significance of *p*-value ≤ 0.05
Dotted arrow: relations with the significance of *p*-value ≤ 0.10

Figure 5. Correlations between shyness, perception of individual creativity, and employability variables.
Source: The authors.

The creative personality traits, assumed by the perceived individual creativity factors, were negatively associated with shyness and reveals nuances. For example, self-acceptance, risk-taking, and non-conformity are the factors that most distance creative and shy people. This data corroborates previous research, in which there was a negative relationship between the degree of openness and shyness (Kwiatkowska et al., 2018). Furthermore, this result reinforces the view that the more introverted tend to be more specialist, passive, thoughtful, and less sociable (Feist et al., 2015; Silva & Ribeiro, 2010). The negative correlation between self-acceptance and shyness shows the tendency of the most introverted to foster low self-esteem through negative and self-deprecating thoughts arising from the fear of others' judgment, already observed in the literature (Kuri & Truzzi, 2004). These characteristics, present in shyness, hinder the development of the creative personality, the focal points of which are openness to new experiences and self-acceptance (Kwiatkowska et al., 2018).

The study also demonstrated a positive correlation between income and individual creativity, revealing that the trend towards valuing creativity as a valued skill in the 21st Century already finds evidence (Nakano & Wechsler, 2018). On the other hand, the understanding that shyness is a personality characteristic must take into consideration that it changes throughout life, as it is negatively associated with age. The data indicate becoming less shy is part of the maturation process. Therefore, it can be worked on so that the individual can overcome its adverse effects, such as the resistance to work in environments with more significant social interaction (Zack, 2019).

The results also indicate a negative relationship between the individual's level of education and shyness, with continued education mitigating the harmful effects of shyness in relation to fear of unemployment and the hope of finding a new job. Furthermore, it warns that shyness is harmful to the individual in terms of income, as shyer individuals report having lower incomes, which confirms previous studies (Henderson et al., 2010). Therefore, disregarding the characteristics of the crisis in which the research took place, seeking the development of creativity is related to the need to develop disinhibition. This information is relevant, considering that creativity is one of the most requested skills for the period of digital transformation that is developing globally (Manyika et al., 2016; Nakano & Wechsler, 2018).

The sample points out a negative relationship between income and shyness and, in parallel, a positive relationship between income and perceived individual creativity. These data reinforce the expectation that social interaction, which is essential for the emergence of creativity, is valued in organizations and is reflected in employee's remuneration. This finding contributes to the perception of creativity as a skill that is increasingly valued in organizations (de Alencar, 2012; Nakano & Wechsler, 2018; Oldham & Baer, 2012) and suggests that shyer people realize that the risk of becoming unemployed is a reality that is inherent to the job market.

The finding, of this research, of a negative correlation between creativity and shyness contributes to previous research (Kwiatkowska et al., 2018). However, it must be understood that not all activities within the organization demand creativity; concentration and focus are also skills required in organizations (Poole & Schmidt, 2020; Silva & Ribeiro, 2010).

Nonetheless, it is notable that shyness, although a consolidated construct in personality studies, has different implications in its relationship with creativity. For example, the survey data showed a moderate correlation between perceived individual creativity, self-acceptance, social attitudes, and shyness. In contrast, the factors open to new experiences, risk-taking, non-conformity, and authenticity had a low correlation, opening alternatives for these individuals to work through their shyness in a multifaceted way and become more creative. It is in line with argued by Csikszentmihalyi (1996), who identified individual talent, discipline, and the social environment as formative elements of creativity by favoring judgments about the quality of new ideas.

Finally, the fear of being unemployed is triggered by situations of increased unemployment pointed out in the literature (Den Haan et al., 2018). It is especially common among younger people (Schmillen & Umkehrer, 2017), representing a reason for more significant anxiety among the shyest, while the hope of finding another job is a comfort to those who see themselves as more creative. However, according to the survey, the length of time unemployed, the objective variable of employability, can affect everyone in a way, without a positive correlation with shyness or perceived individual creativity.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to analyze the relationship between the individual's self-perception of creativity, shyness, and employability. Theoretical perspectives on personality and creative characteristics were considered, relating them to the average time spent unemployed, the perception of the risk of becoming unemployed, and the hope of professional outplacement. It is considered that the objective was achieved and that the study brought essential contributions regarding the main personality traits of creative individuals and the fragility of those who consider themselves shy, in relation to their employability.

Although the objective was achieved, the study has some limitations. For example, the research only considered individuals living in certain regions of Brazil, with a level of education above or equal to higher education, without considering the environment in which they are inserted. Also, in the sample, the profession respondents' was not controlled, and this may be an area for further research. Creativity can be a crucial element in some professions, but less relevant for performing more routine tasks. In contrast, shyness can be a determining factor in some jobs requiring high levels of concentration. Thus, new studies that contemplate other groups of people with less education, different professions, and in other countries, may contribute significantly to the theme. Studies are also suggested covering other points of the creative process, or at the level of analysis of organizational creativity, expanding the discussion of the importance of the environment in developing creativity. It is also recommended that the research be repeated in other economic periods, to see whether contextual issues would have any implications for the results. Finally, the employability measurement adopted in the study is limited, as it does not take into account that factors other than fear, hope, and experience may also be defining factors in this measurement.

Regarding employability, the research found no correlation between the experience of unemployment and the level of self-perception of creativity or shyness. However, the survey data reveal that even if there is no evidence of objective effects, some subjective aspects can cause fear over the possibility of unemployment and the hope of finding

another job. The hope of finding another job is boosted by the self-perception of creativity, as it is associated with several factors, such as self-acceptance, and a greater willingness among those who perceive themselves as creative to have positive social attitudes, be more willing to take risks and be more authentic. This result allows us to infer that employability, concerning both the fear of unemployment and the hope of finding another job, is a complex phenomenon and possibly interfaces with the economic context. However, it allows us to infer that the growing unemployment rate causes less concern to individuals who show greater self-acceptance.

Nevertheless, when analyzing the formative factors of perceived individual creativity, some information requires further research. For example, the greater the individuals' self-acceptance, sociability, and authenticity, the less fear of being unemployed. Furthermore, it leads to the belief that people with higher self-esteem, social interaction, and authenticity perceive themselves as being able to find a new job more quickly than other people. These people consider alternatives in relation to shyness, both in professional training and in the feelings derived from it.

Finally, this study also presents organizational contributions. It allows reflections on how selective processes are developed, which characteristics need to be highlighted, and which requirements are valued in the organization. For example, shy individuals have a higher power of concentration, which is suitable for activities other than those where creativity is required. On the other hand, individual creativity has nuances that can be better employed when suited to the role.

This study makes contributions at the individual level. Individuals who perceive shyness as an obstacle to their employability may reflect on the survey data. No correlation was identified between the longest period of unemployment and level of shyness. The results show that the employability conditions of shy individuals and those who perceive themselves as creative are similar. On the other hand, the perception of the risk of becoming unemployed is more intense among the shy, possibly because it indicates that they would have to go through selection processes again, which, as demonstrated by the literature review, positions shyness as a barrier to be overcome.

As a theoretical contribution, this study allowed for elaborating a valid scale of perceived individual creativity, which proved viable both by exploratory factor analysis and by confirming a negative relationship with shyness. It also contributes to the interpretation of specific personality characteristics, such as shyness, and individual skills, such as creativity, as a factor to be considered in studies on human resources and employability.

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