



Cognition of a successful professional: a study on the mental constructs of millennials

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Abstract

This article addresses the development of the first qualitative stage of a broader research project that seeks to construct and validate a semantic differential on career adapted for millennials. To this end, the aim of this work was to elucidate which mental constructs represent a successful career for millennials, also known as Generation Y. The model of career anchors by Schein (1996) was used as a theoretical basis for analysis and comparison. The study is inductive and qualitative in nature, with data collected by applying the repertory grid. This technique is based on the psychology of the Personal Constructs of Kelly (1969) and is considered suitable for eliciting cognitive content without interference from the researcher. The results showed a set of eleven more frequent constructs, with the most significant being autonomy and flexibility in execution, social relevance, participation in management, responsibility for results and errors, and training requirement, mentioned by four respondents. The study allowed a new dimension valued by millennials in their careers to emerge in the field: connectivity, represented by the constructs for communication and responsibility for knowledge transmission. The elicitation of the connectivity dimension may be considered the theoretical contribution, strengthening the field of study and organizational practices in relation to the theme. The study also makes recommendations for future research.

Keywords: Career. Millennials. Cognitive constructs.

Introduction

The entrance of millennials into the job market has led to new challenges in the design and management of managerial practices regarding the human factor in organizations. The “Millennial” label refers to individuals born between 1981 and

2000 (OLIVEIRA, 2010), who grew up with greater exposure to technology, connectivity through communication and information technologies and a less rigid family structure in terms of upbringing and behavior. According to Rocha (2008), the characteristics of this generation include impatience and insubordination, which leads them to constantly question established practices in their professional environment.

One of the management practices of the human factor that has been targeted for reflection in its adaptation for millennials is the structuring of professional careers. In this field of study, works are frequently published that seek to understand the changes caused by new organizational configurations and the adaptation of existing career models for this population segment. The ultimate goal of this type of work is to arrive at a better understanding of which career configuration might be best suited to the profile of millennials, seeking to promote satisfaction at work and improve organizational results.

One of the main conceptual models in this field of study is the career anchors of Schein (1996). This theoretical proposal led to the creation of a widely used tool to identify a respondent's profile or the differences in profile from one generation to another. However, millennials can be viewed as having different cognitive elements or priorities from previous generations, and these elements could not be identified and understood by an established and standardized tool. Therefore, it can be supposed that there is a gap when it comes to understanding what is valued by millennials in the context of professional careers.

Seeking to bridge this supposed gap, the present article addresses the following research question: which mental constructs represent a successful career to millennials? In addressing this problem, the main purpose is to clarify the mental constructs representative of a successful career for millennials. In this article, the results with regard to the development of the first qualitative stage of a broader research project are described and discussed, with a view to constructing and validating a semantic differential on careers adapted to millennials.

There are theoretical and practical justifications for this study. On the theoretical side, the construction of knowledge helps to bridge the gap when seeking to understand the relevant constructs concerning careers for millennials. Another theoretical contribution is the methodology, the repertory grid, which is innovative for studies on this theme. The empirical contribution lies in the possibility of promoting changes in how organizations manage millennials' careers, which affects their satisfaction at work. Thus, the study aids the management and retention of talent.

This article is in five distinct and complementary sections. This introduction sets out the problem, aims and justification. The second section contains the theoretical framework, seeking to clarify the principal theories on which the study and data analysis are based. In the third section, the methodological strategy is presented. In the fourth, the data are discussed and analyzed in an attempt to answer the research problem. In the fifth section, the study is brought to a conclusion and the proposed aim of the study is achieved.

Theoretical Framework: Millennials and Career

The corporate world has changed rapidly due to constant social transformations through contemporary upheavals such as new technologies, social demands, access to information, the rapid dissemination of news and knowledge and generation gaps. These changes also involve the relationships between people and organizations as seen in alterations to work contracts between these actors. In other words, how people understand the term career has undergone a transformation process involving responsibility, roles, importance, expectations and results.

Reflecting on how changes in the concept and shape of careers means understanding their history better. To Chanlat (1995), the notion of career is a historically recent idea, appearing in the nineteenth century. According to Kilimnik, Castilho and Santa'Anna (2006), it was only in the last century that the word came to define the trajectory of professional life. Therefore, although the idea of a career emerged along with the industrial society, it was only in the twentieth century that it came to be perceived as fully developed and more important to people and organizations (Kilimnik; Castilho; Santa'Anna, 2006).

The polyphony involved in this semantic category refers to the existence of multiple concepts with regard to career. When seeking a conceptual definition, numerous proposals have emerged, leading to the conclusion that there is no single idea, but rather an ongoing and evolving concept. According to Bastos (2000), to talk of career is to face a plural concept and the multiple meanings associated with it.

According to Chanlat (1995), every independent society provides the framework in which careers begin, develop and end. However, Chanlat (1996) highlights that the changes that have taken place in the structure of employment, which is part of the nature of our society, have directly affected people and their careers. The author claims that two main factors have contributed to this: culture and social structure.

In this context, a number of researchers are accompanying the attempt to clarify a concept for career, understanding its dynamic and process without a single definition, as it reflects social issues directly. These researchers include London and Stumpf (1982), Arthur, Halle Laurence (1989), Chanlat (1995), Dutra (1998), Schein (1999) and Hall (2002).

To London and Stumpf (1982), career can be defined as a sequence of positions occupied by people during their lives. This career is made up of stages, which can be altered, reflecting the needs, motivations, aspirations, expectations and impositions of individuals, organizations and society. Hall (2002), in an attempt to define career, presents four distinct meanings related to experiences, personal learning and work performed throughout an individual's life. They are career as vertical mobility, career as a profession, career as a consequence of jobs throughout the life of an individual and career as a consequence of experiences in different functions performed by an individual.

These meanings are aligned with the perception of Bastos (2000), that career is part of a vertex that simultaneously articulates personal decisions and organizational processes of people management. According to this author, the concept of ca-

reer is important when it comes to analyzing how individuals and organizations, as social actors, are configuring the scenario of the world of work.

Irrespective of the conceptual delineation, it is important to recognize changes and how they affect the workforce. According to Sant'Anna and Kilimnik (2009), if in other eras careers were focused on occupations and positions, with organizations mainly responsible for their management, now there is greater emphasis on personal planning in a modern career. However, the authors go on to say that this transition in career models does not occur without tension, as it is necessary to consider the parties involved. These two models were described by Chanlat (1995) as traditional and modern. To this author (CHANLAT, 1995), the modern model is characterized by offering opportunities to all types of professionals belonging to different social groups, presenting a progression of a discontinuous career that is more horizontal than vertical and marked by instability.

Treading the path of change regarding the understanding and conceptualization of career, citing Mcdaniels and Gysberg (1992), Kilimnik, Castilho and Santa'Anna (2006) claim that with the passing of time the concept of change has come to incorporate other elements beyond only work and occupation that were attributed to it in the beginning. A career nowadays is understood as being linked to other dimensions. For this reason, there is an understanding that career is something determined and thus constructed.

The construction of career nowadays, according to Evans (1996), has adopted a spiral configuration or zigzag to replace the traditional format of a ladder. This spiral trajectory is perceived as more aligned and in tune with the requirements of modern times, as it enables people to develop with a wide range of skills. In terms of development and spiral, people do not follow only a single career. It is common for them to follow different careers in the course of their lives (Kilimnik; Castilho; Santa'Anna, 2006).

In addition to studies that seek to conceptualize or classify careers, those that look at individual characteristics established during the construction of a career or in individual relationships with work and organizations deserve to be highlighted. In these studies, the generation to which individuals belong is identified as an important factor.

According to Oliveira (2000), at least three generations are currently active in the job market: Baby Boomers (born between 1946 and 1960), Generation X (born between 1961 and 1980) and Generation Y or Millennials (born between 1981 and 2000). These groups are considerably different in aspects such as values, culture, needs, living with technology, world view, family and social relationships, expectations and responsibilities.

As the focus of the present study, millennials are people raised in close contact with technology, with flexible rules in their education and upbringing, based on reward systems due to the lack of attention from their parents (TAPSCOTT, 2008). This leads the individuals of this generation, raised in a time of great technological progress and economic and financial prosperity, to make intense use of technology. The representatives of this generation are constantly connected, easily navigating through virtual space, not understanding how previous generations managed to live

and work without the technological advances that are part of their routine (CLARO *et al.*, 2010).

Tapscott (2008) describes eight characteristics in which millennials differ from previous generations. They are: prizing freedom in all things, from making their choices to expressing themselves; wanting to personalize and customize things; being the new opinion makers; observing corporate integrity when deciding where to buy products or whether to work in a certain organization; wanting to have fun and leisure at work, in school and in their social lives; being good collaborators and having good social relationships; requiring fast, real time communications; and seeking constant innovation.

Vasconcelos *et al* (2010), making a compilation of other authors on this generation, found that when describing this generation, it stands out as being more well informed and having a higher education level than its predecessors. Other characteristics also stand out, such as permanent connection with some form of media, being used to changes and valuing diversity, concern over social issues and believing in individual rights, being more creative than receptive, being curious, happy, flexible and collaborative, forming networks to achieve goals, prioritizing the personal side in relation to professional issues, being innovative and enjoying mobility, being immediatist, impatient, self-oriented and driven by results. They do not handle restriction, limitations and frustration well (LOMBARDIA *et al*, 2008; TAPSCOTT, 2008). This generation sees work as a challenge and fun, and prizes an informal environment with transparency and freedom, also seeking constant learning without fear of job turnover (LOMBARDIA *et al.*, 2008; VELOSO *et al.*, 2008; COIMBRA; SCHIKMANN, 2001).

When seeking to understand the context of millennials and their perceptions regarding career, an important study in the field is that of Schein (1996) on career anchors. This work was developed from a study by Edgar Schein in 1961 involving 44 former students on the Master's Degree program of the Sloan School of Management. From this investigation, Schein (1996) defined career anchors as a set of self-perceptions related to talents and skills, motives and needs and attitudes and values that people have with regard to the work they do or seek to do.

According to Kilimnik *et al.* (2008), a career anchor in the professional life of individuals can be used to organize experiences, identify areas of contribution throughout their trajectory, generate criteria for types of work and identify patterns of ambition and success that people can determine for themselves. In other words, it helps to guide, outline, stabilize and integrate a person's career.

Vasconcelos *et al* (2010) explain that Schein (1996) identified eight career anchors, with the predominant one being the one that professionals will not do without even in difficult decision making processes, which can be identified through real work experiences. The first five categories of anchor (autonomy/independence; security/stability; technical/functional competence; general managerial competence; entrepreneurial creativity) were identified in the study conducted by Schein (1970). Later, Schein (1996) added three new anchors: service/dedication to a cause; pure challenge; lifestyle. Figure 1 describes the eight career anchors defined by Schein (1996).

Figure 1: Career anchors

Career anchor	Characterization
Autonomy/Independence (AI)	The characteristics of this anchor are: concern over freedom and independence. The central focus of choice is the search for places that offer flexibility to decide when and how to work. Members of this group with autonomous careers can be prepared for the future. However, those who still depend on stable jobs to “plan their freedom” may be vulnerable to a changing scenario.
Security/Stability (SS)	The main characteristic of this anchor is: seeking physical and financial security. The most important thing these individuals seek is a feeling of stability and job security. It is interesting that due to the changing scenario, individuals anchored in SS need to increasingly shift their dependence on an organization to themselves.
Technical/functional competence (TF)	The characteristics of this anchor are: the development of personal expertise and specialization, building a career in a specific technical or professional field. They value formal recognition, i.e., the recognition of peers or other people.
General managerial competence (GC)	The characteristics of this anchor are: concern over integrating the efforts of others to achieve results and the articulation of the different functions of an organization. This anchor is linked to recognition/reward and highlights the importance of developing emotional skills to handle increasingly complex management.
Entrepreneurial creativity (EC)	The main characteristic of this anchor is: concern over creating business, products or services. The creative impulse is predominant. In a changing scenario, Schein highlights that these people could have more and more opportunities.
Service/dedication to a cause (SD)	The characteristics of this anchor are: seeking to help improve society, the priority being to serve a cause. To Schein, the number of people in this anchor is growing due to a more complex context.
Pure challenge (PC)	The characteristics of this anchor are: seeking opportunities to find solutions to apparently insoluble problems, overcoming adverse situations or opponents. The priority is to overcome the impossible. The author believes there is a doubt whether the growing number of people in this anchor is indeed an inclination or a need to adapt to the challenges of the business world.
Lifestyle (LS)	The characteristics of this anchor are: seeking opportunities to reconcile and integrate personal and family needs and career demands. To Schein, this anchor has changing most since the original study and has grown most, since it includes the concept of a career for life. It represents changes in work contracts, with companies less dominant over employees.

Source: Adapted from Schein (1996)

Schein's model can be viewed as a central aspect in the attempt to understand changes in career for millennials given the ubiquity of studies with this orientation on the theme. In Brazil, works by the following authors could be considered examples of this research trend: Oliveira and Ferreira (2013); Gomes *et al.* (2014) and Medeiros *et al.* (2014). However, according to Leong, Rosenberg and Chong (2014), although the model is widely used by researchers, it has limitations when it comes to identifying recent changes in the world of work and the model of more dynamic careers. To these authors, another limitation of the model is the unstable formation of factors in large samples, indicating that the limits of some anchors may not be well defined.

Therefore, it could be argued that it is necessary to study the topic with inductive approaches and qualitative methodologies capable of identifying new elements in this relationship. A methodological possibility is conducting research with a view to discovering significant cognitive elements for millennials in the context of careers. To understand better the relationship of the cognitive elements with the theme, this association is explored in the following subsection.

Cognition and Mental Constructs

Human cognition has been the object of study in several fields of knowledge, such as psychology and organization theory. In psychology, the cognitive tradition has investigated mental processes such as memory, perception, language, problem solving and reasoning (BANYARD; GRAYSON, 2000). In organizational theories, this theme has formed the basis of studies on institutions (SCOTT, 1995), the competitive environment (SMIRCICH; STUBBART, 1985; RAMOS; FERREIRA; GIMENEZ, 2011), and strategic action (GONZÁLEZ, CALDERÓN; GONZÁLEZ, 2012). The cognitive process associated with career choice and the evaluation of professional success can be viewed as a cross-cutting theme in the fields of psychology and organizations. By comprehending the cognition of individuals, organizations can restructure their work organization processes, with a view to promoting greater individual engagement and achieving better organizational results.

Cognition can be understood as the processes involved in the construction of knowledge, which involves its acquisition, organization and use (GIMENEZ, 2000). To Bastos and Borges-Andrade (2004, p. 69), "it is, therefore, essentially a social activity, either because it is based on rules, norms, roles and expectations, or because it involves thinking of any social objects that carry value, emotional and affective meaning". This dual nature of cognition (individual and social) has fueled a debate on the micro and macro approaches to studying cognitive phenomena.

The major tradition in cognition research is experimental, a predominant form of research of the micro-cognitive approach (SCHRAAGEN; KLEIN; HOFFMAN, 2008). In this case, cognition is studied as a micro level (with the subject as the analysis unit) and from micro-cognitive tasks. In other words, with the fragmentation of the cognition processes. Flach (2008) points out three limitations of this line of research: i) the division of cognitive labor in the laboratory does not help to understand cognition in real contexts because there cognitive processes occur seamlessly; ii) micro-cognition isolates the individual, while cognition actually occurs in rich social and

multiple contexts; and iii) emotion is treated as a disturbance, but in real life there is a connection between emotion and cognition.

Seeking to overcome these limitations, other forms of research have been valued. For example, macro-cognitive studies associated with decision making in naturalistic contexts (KLEIN, 2009; HENRIQSON; SAURIN; BERGSTROM, 2010) and works resulting from the Situated Cognition model proposed by Robbins and Ayede (2009). These studies share the goal of perceiving how external elements are represented and ordered in an individual's mind, seeking to clarify the active role of the subject in the construction of his social reality.

The challenge of studying cognition outside the laboratory has led researchers to seek other methodologies and procedures for capturing reality. To Hoffman and Militello (2009), the most significant elements in this task are represented by the set of methods known as Cognitive Task Analysis (CTA).

The methods described by Hoffman and Militello (2009) include the repertory grid of the personal construct theory of Kelly (1963). The theoretical framework proposed by the author led to a research procedure capable of permitting the knowledge of cognitive constructs that guide the perception and action of individuals in the face of reality. It is now possible to associate the use of the repertory grid (RG) with the set of research that seeks to understand cognition outside the experimental scope.

The original theory of the RG, from the psychology of personal constructs (KELLY, 1963), states that understanding the world is associated with the categorization of elements of perception. These categories are based on the establishment of similarities and differences between perceived elements, which constitutes a stable frame of reference for individuals. This cognitive work is associated with the necessary effort for man to understand and behave in the external environment, which is based on hypotheses of the real world (KELLY, 1963).

According to the theory of Kelly (1963), the cognitive construction of reality gains importance because interpretation and cognitive experience of events tend to have a greater impact on individuals than the given objectives. In this sense, it could be said that man cognitively reconstructs the reality around him and, despite its inaccuracy, this construction strongly influences his actions.

The central cognitive element of this mental reconstruction is cognitive constructs. They can be defined as patterns of understanding associated with a theme or substantive area where the subject has experience. These constructs are organized into systems and form the lens through which individuals perceive and evaluate the world around them (KELLY, 1963).

A series of characteristics of the mental construct system forms the central corollary of the theory of Kelly (1963). To the author, the system is **constructed**, i.e., man actively articulates, through pre-verbal mental processes, patterns that he will later use to evaluate the world. This construction is **individual**, as even shared experiences are appropriated and represented differently between two people. The constructs are **organized** into systems or subsets, with the intention of minimizing possible paradoxes. A construct is necessarily **dichotomous**, as its genesis is associated with the perception of differences and similarities between events. When evaluating something, an individual makes a **choice**, represented by the allocation of that ele-

ment of the real world to one of the poles of the construct. The system of constructs has **depth**, as a construct can serve to evaluate more or fewer situations. The system of constructs is based on **experience**, as this cognitive construction is the target of a continuous mental validation process by the subject. An individual's set of constructs is unique, but may share **common elements** with the systems of other individuals. Finally, the author claims that a rich **socialization** process is only possible if an individual understands the other's system of constructs.

The RG has been used in works on a wide range of themes, such as the resocialization of terrorists (CANTER; SARANGI; YOUNGS, 2014), construction of semantic scales to evaluate management themes (DING; NG, 2008), humanist psychology (EPTING; PARIS, 2006), impact of professional identity on multidisciplinary teams (HYMANS, 2008), student counselling (KREBER *et al.*, 2003) and accountancy (HUSSEY, 2007).

Specifically with regard to a professional career, in the scope of this review three works were identified. In the article by Neimeyer (1989), the importance of the psychology of personal constructs for career choices is discussed. To the author, this theory lends theoretical and empirical support for the cognition of the subject to be elicited and discussed in works on vocational orientation, enabling an understanding of the deep reasons that lead to certain professional choices. In a later work, Neimeyer (1992) describes how the application of the RG, associated with the ordering of constructs by the individual, can clarify what is actually valued in a career choice by individuals. When reviewing the contributions of Kelly's theory to career counselling, Spokane (1992) concludes that the use of the RG helps to deepen the theme by proposing different categories from those valued in the literature and relevant to the individual.

Methodology

As the intention in this section is to clarify the methodological procedures that guide the study, the section has been constructed objectively. It begins with a presentation of the ontological and epistemological assumptions inherent to the work, followed by a description of the material practices of the researcher and how the results were obtained and analyzed.

This study reflects an anti-foundationalist ontology and constructivist epistemology (SCHWANDT, 2006), as reality is understood as a cognitive and social construction, and access to knowledge is measured by the interpretations and significations of the individual. The study involves basic qualitative research. This means that the article does not represent a specific type of qualitative research, such as data-based theory or a case study. It is a study where the choice of participants, type of collection and data, as well as the ethical and validation procedures, are qualitative. However, the design does not tie the study to any tradition of qualitative research (MERRIAM, 2009).

To delineate the participants in qualitative research, it is necessary to reflect on the purposes of the study and how the choice of individuals can lead to responses to the research question (MASON, 2002). To Merriam (2009), this process should begin with the recognition of the inclusion criteria that reveal the researcher's focus

of interest. In keeping with the objectives of the study, two inclusion criteria were defined: being a millennial and having professional experience. Delimiting the study to individuals with professional experience seemed adequate because, according to the theory of the Psychology of Personal Constructs (KELLY, 1963), contact with an area of experience is required to refine the system of constructs on the theme. With these criteria in mind, seven millennials with at least two years of professional experience were invited to participate in the study. The number seemed adequate given the inductive nature of the study and the perception that, even with small samples, studies of this nature fulfil their role of generating new theoretical elements (PAPADAKIS; IOANNIS; BARWISE, 2010).

The data collection technique employed was the Repertory Grid. This technique enables the elicitation of the cognitive constructs of individuals for the specific scenario designed by the researcher. An advantage of using the RG is the elicitation of elements of cognition of the respondents with minimum interference from the researcher. This allows the result to be associated with the characteristics of the individual rather than those of the researcher. Another advantage is the structuring of the technique, which allows the replication of studies that have been conducted.

For the purposes of this study, the application of the RG was structured into four stages. First, the participant was asked to list twelve jobs or positions that, to him, meant a successful career in any field of activity. Later, the jobs were presented in triads and the participant was asked to form groups using some criteria that enabled him to explain how two of those occupations were similar and one differed. Kelly (1963) called this procedure the minimum context form of elicitation. This stage ended with theoretical saturation, when the constructs began to be repeated with new groups or when the participant claimed at least three times that he could see no more similarities or differences. As rating the poles of the construct is an individual process, in the third phase, the respondent was asked to indicate which pole was desirable to him in his career. Finally, the respondent was asked to order the constructs, from the most relevant to the individual to the least relevant to enable an understanding of what is more highly valued by the subject. To illustrate the characteristics described above, the stages for the application of the technique are shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Application Stages of the Repertory Grid

Stage	Description
Identification of jobs/occupation	The participant is asked to list 12 jobs or occupations in any field of activity that to him represent a successful career.
Elicitation of constructs	The interviewee is shown triads and is asked to indicate how two of them are similar and differ from the third.
Organization of positive and negative poles of the construct	The researcher reds out the poles that appeared in each construct and the participant indicates what, to him, is positive or desired.
Ordering by relevance	The elicited constructs are presented to the respondent in small notes and the respondent puts them in order of importance.

Source: Research data.

The application of the repertory grid lasted on average one hour and fifteen minutes, with the time varying between 42 and 98 minutes. To facilitate the data collection, if a fault occurred in the notetaking during the procedure, the interviews were recorded. As the analysis was based on the repertory grids obtained, it was not necessary to transcribe the interviews, as in case of doubt, the audio file could be directly consulted.

The collection procedure resulted in seven repertory grids, with the listing of the constructs, their ordering by relevance to the respondent and the discerning of positive and negative poles of each construct. These elements were treated by descriptive statistics for the purposes of the study.

Description and discussion of the results

The seven participants were aged between 20 and 26 years, the average age being 23 years. They had between two and six years of professional experience, resulting in an average of four years of experience. They entered the work market between the ages of 15 and 22 years. The most common form of access to the market was as an intern.

The first result obtained was that each individual has a unique set of constructs. Although there were common constructs between systems, there was no relationship of identity between the set of constructs generated. This first result is in keeping with the corollaries of the Psychology of Personal Constructs (KELLY, 1963) and reinforces the idea that understanding the career options of each individual assumes an understanding of their unique system of constructs.

A list of 25 constructs was generated, with an average number of seven construct per respondent. This average is coherent with previous studies using the repertory grade (RAMOS; FERREIRA; GIMENEZ, 2011). There was considerable variation in the number of constructs, with numbers between two and twelve elements obtained. To Kelly (1963), the use of a lower number of elements indicates more generic evaluations on a theme and may be linked to difficulties on the part of the individual to take a stance on an area of activities. Systems with higher numbers of construct allow more accurate evaluations and support the choices of the individual in the field that generated the system of constructs.

With regard to the importance attributed to the respondents to the elicited constructs, there was great diversity. This data set shows that the attributes associated with career and professional success are measured by the values of the individuals. Bearing in mind that they are millennials, this shows that the formation of their careers is dynamic, with a spiral logic. In other words, it is influenced by the environment where they are developed (EVANS, 1996, *apud* KILIMNIK; CASTILHO & SANTA'ANNA, 2006) and may be affected by the characteristics of this generation (TAPSCOTT, 2008).

The two constructs classified as most important to each of the respondents are shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Most important constructs by respondent

Respondent	Most important construct	Second most important construct
01	Contact with people	Time Autonomy
02	Flexibility in execution	Training Requirement
03	Personal Achievement	Innovation
04	Personal Achievement	Training Requirement
05	Participation in Management	Social Relevance
06	Need for Empathy	Knowledge Transmission
07	Innovation	Task Complexity

Source: Research data.

Although the system of constructs is unique for each participant, constructs repeated in more than one system demonstrate their importance to the careers of the group. This duality unique systems composed of constructs shared with other respondents is the duality of human cognition, at the same time composed of social elements and reassigned by the cognizant individual (RAMOS, 2005). The frequency associated with the constructs found in more than one cognitive system are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Most frequent constructs

Constructs	Number of occurrences
Autonomy and flexibility in execution	4
Social relevance	4
Participation in management	4
Responsibility for results and errors	4
Training requirement	4
Innovation	3
Time autonomy	2
Personal achievement	2
Contact with people	2
Personal recognition	2
Knowledge transmission	2
Others	15

Source: Research data.

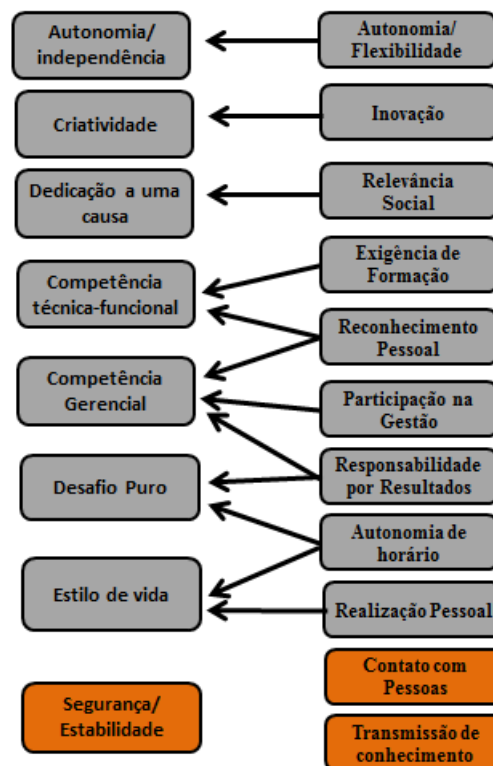
Of the 25 constructs generated, 14 were mentioned once and are diverse, including type of organization (large company, public company), hierarchical position (having a boss, not having subordinates, no hierarchy), type of work environment (dynamic, complex, with defined processes, controllable) or personal characteristics required for the job (empathy, communication, technical skills, leadership, precise execution).

A set of eleven constructs were elicited from more than one respondent. In this group, the most frequent were autonomy and flexibility in execution, social relevance, participation in management, responsibility for results and errors and training

requirement, mentioned by four respondents. Autonomy and flexibility in execution was described by the respondents as the possibility of executing their activities autonomy in the planning and execution of tasks without following a pattern established by third parties. Social relevance refers to the scope and importance of the results of work to society. Responsibility was valued for its connection to the generation of expected results and the extent of the impact of errors. Training requirement was in opposition to the respondents' activities based on innate characteristics or ones that do not depend on training and experience to be executed properly.

The innovation construct was mentioned by three respondents and has to do with the possibility of the job or occupation promoting this characteristic in activities and the organization. Personal satisfaction elements such as time flexibility, personal achievement and recognition were cited by two respondents. The connectivity associated with tasks was highlighted by two respondents through personal contact constructs and responsibility in knowledge transition. The relationships between the chosen constructs in this study and the career anchors described by Schein (1996) are shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Relationship between constructs and career anchors



Source: Research data.

An analysis of the most elicited constructs from the respondents shows that nine are aligned with seven career anchors described by Schein (1996). Autonomy/flexibility, innovation and social relevance were perceived as being aligned with the anchors of autonomy/independence, creativity and dedication to a cause, respectively. The constructs of training requirement and personal recognition were in keeping with the technical/functional competence anchor. Personal recognition, partici-

pation in management and responsibility of results and errors are parallel to the managerial competence anchor. The responsibility for results and errors construct was also analyzed as being aligned with another anchor: pure challenge. The constructs of autonomy/flexibility and personal achievement were identified as being in line with the life style anchor.

Regarding the analysis of perceived parallelism between the career anchors of the model by Schein (1996) and the constructs that emerged in this study, it should be highlighted that some anchors were identified by more than one construct. Furthermore, some constructs were perceived as aligned with more than one anchor. This could mean that the career anchors that constitute a consolidated model among researchers in this field, having been used in numerous studies, has points that need to be discussed and may not be generally applicable in the same form in a context or population with multiple characteristics, as is the case with millennials. This evidence is coherent with the analysis of Leong, Rosenberg e Chong (2014), who claim that some career anchors are not stable in large samples, implying that it may be necessary to improve the validity of the construct.

An innovator generated by the methodology is the absence of references to construct that could be associated with the security/stability anchor. Analyzing this omission in light of the characteristics of the target public of the study, it can be said that the relationship between millennials and their careers reveals a significant difference over that of past generations. Having grown up in a technologically and economically favorable environment (CLARO et al., 2010), these professionals prize freedom over feelings of stability and security. This result is also in keeping with the modern idea of a career in a spiral, constructed by the individual in multiple movements within and between organizations, as described by Evans (1996).

Another inductive discovery is the presence of constructs that cannot be classified in the traditional model of career anchors. 'Contact with people' and 'knowledge transmission' are innovative in relation to the topic and are a cause for reflection. First, the two construct could be classified in the same dimension, which the authors of this article have called connectivity. The respondents that showed aspects of these constructs (four out of seven) felt that contact with other people, including in a structured communication process to transmit knowledge is an important indicator and desirable in their careers. This reflects some of the characteristics attributed to the generation in question, frequently described as having good social relationships requiring speed and real time in communications (TAPSCOTT, 2008) and capable of forming networks to achieve their goals (VASCONCELOS et al., 2010). This result confirms that connectivity as an element of the organization of work and careers could be aligned with the demands of millennials and be associated with satisfaction at work and retaining talents. Specifically, attempting to comprehend millennials' perceptions of careers considering connectivity could result in a better understanding of the changes that have occurred in contemporary organizations.

Final Considerations

Changes in the organization of work and the mentality of millennial workers emphasizes the need to understand the elements currently valued by these individu-

als in their careers. For this purpose, the present study sought to elucidate the mental constructs that represent a successful career for millennials. To achieve this goal, an inductive study of a qualitative nature was conducted, using the repertory grid as a technique, an instrument from the Psychology of Personal Constructs of Kelly (1969).

The results associated with the elicited constructs for this generation indicated that significant constructs, associated with connectivity in working relationships are not included in traditional conceptual models on this theme, such as the career anchor model of Schein (1996). Given the characteristics of this generation such as a need for connection, formation of networks and real time communication, new challenges now face talent management in organizations. Managerial practices such as banning the use of instant communication applications and work divided according to a bureaucratic logic of fragmentation and isolation can result in dissatisfaction and prevent individuals from remaining in an organization or work environment. The idea of careers that include intense communication, the formation of networks and shared results could help to meet expectations and adapt to the profile of this generation.

Another significant result is the absence of any mention of constructs regarding the security/stability anchor, demonstrating that this generation is better represented by career models that value movement and learning over stability or continuity. As a brain drain is a current concern of organizations, it could be said that more dynamic careers might serve to strengthen the connection between individuals and organizations.

Knowledge of the constructs most valued by millennials, such as flexibility in task execution, social relevance of activities, participation in management and responsibility for results and errors and training requirement makes it possible to understand that the career pathways designed for this generation need to include a strong appeal for professional development. Valuing these constructs shows that this generation is willing to commit and take responsibilities, albeit without limitations on their autonomy to choose the best way to achieve results.

This work makes theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, the inductive nature of the study, based on a complex methodology for eliciting the mental constructs of participants without interference from the researcher's cognition led to the emergence of a dimension not included in previous theoretical models: connectivity. Another theoretical contribution is further empirical evidence for valuing more dynamic career models, given that security does not seem to be a dimension valued by millennials. The empirical contribution is the possibility of using this knowledge to improve the management of talent in organizations, valuing connectivity in the design of activities and careers and considering other important constructs that emerge.

The complexity and importance of the theme mean that it requires further study. A proposal would be to use the repertory grid to construct a semantic differential to evaluate careers and professional success with its content generated by millennials. The development of this tool could serve as a basis to further understanding of the changes that affect the organization of work and career management, constituting a better basis for organizational decision making on this subject.

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