

# **What is occupational success? A comparative content analysis of economics and psychology journals**

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**International Workshop Career Success - Approaches from Economics and Psychology.**  
**LABOR, Labor and Socio-Economic Research Center, Institute for Employment Research, Nuremberg, december, 3- 4 2009**

# **Aims of the presentation**

- **To reflect in a critical way on the construct of occupational success**
- **To understand in details the different perspectives on occupational success of psychology and economics**
- **To present the preliminary results of a comparative content analysis of economics and psychology journals**

## **Premise**

**The term ‘occupational success’ has a wide array of meanings that create difficulty in understanding what various writers, scholars, and individuals mean when they refer to it.**

**Google scholar on december, 1st: 5610 pages related to “occupational success”**

**Hierarchical sequence of occupational positions (Savickas, 2000; 2001; 2002)**

**Occupational success is understandable only in the interconnection with a more general life satisfaction (Super, 1980)**

**integrative construction of a given set of working experiences**

**... Tot capita tot sententiae**

# What is occupational success? A comparative content analysis of economics and psychology journals



**objective measures**

**(for ex., income)**

**economic perspective**

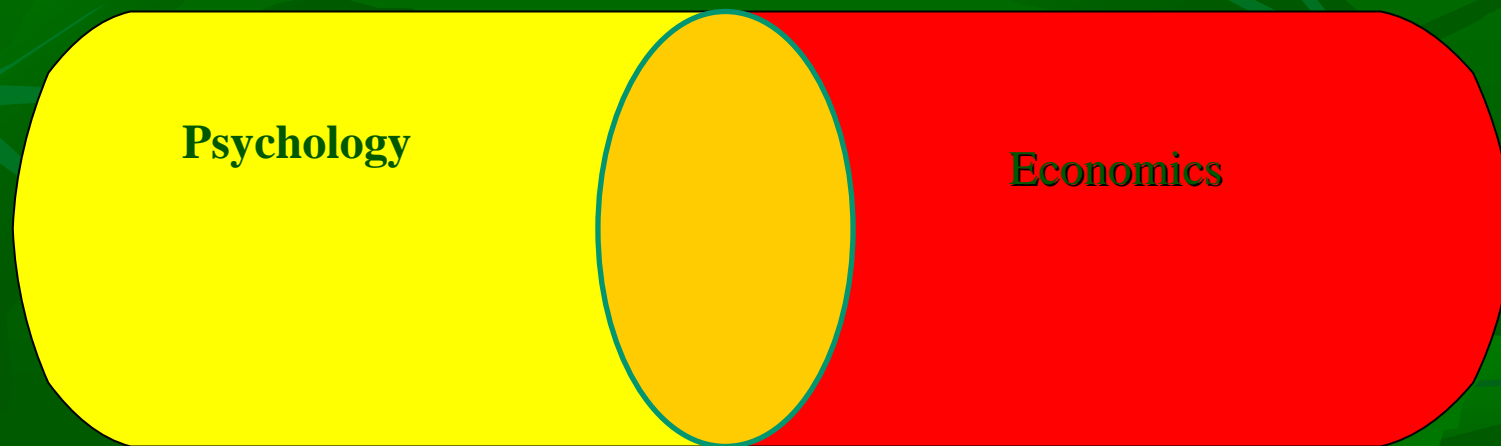
**subjective meanings**

**(for ex., career self-efficacy)**

**psychological perspective**

# Research Question: how do economics and psychology conceive occupational success?

In particular, we would like to understand what the 2 disciplines share and, on the other hand, what is the distinctive contribution of each of them in theorizing occupational success.



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**In searching for the economics and psychology view of occupational success**

**.....academic publications**

**by analyzing the publication activity of a given journal, much can be learned about a field of study (see Foley, Keener, & Branch, 1994; Nietupski, Hamre-Nietupski, Curtin, & Shrikanth, 1997; Ongel & Smith, 1994; Buboltz, Miller, & Williams, 1999).**

**Comparative content analysis of economics and psychology related academic journals.**

**What is occupational success? A comparative content analysis of economics and psychology journals**

**Data consists of the abstracts of all the articles published in economics and psychology academic journals (EconLit and Psycharticles Database) from the first available issue of 2000 to the last issue of 2009.**

**Cut-off-word: success**

**Career Success  
Occupational Success**

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**Content analysis has been run with the aid of the software T-Lab (Lancia, 2004).**

**Analysis of word occurrence and co-word mapping  
(based on the association index of Cosine)**

**Linguistic specificity analysis.**



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**Economics: 24 articles**

*Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science x 2*

*International Journal of Manpower x 2*

*Journal of Population Economics x 2*

*Journal of International Business Studies x 2*

*Economics Working Papers*

*Environment and Planning A*

*Journal of income distribution*

*Labour*

*Hacienda Publica Espanola/Revista de Economia Publica*

*Applied Economics*

*Scottish Journal of Political Economy*

*Journal of Cultural Economics*

*Human Resource Development Quarterly*

*Journal of Applied Finance*

*Journal of African Business*

*Tijdschrift voor Economie en Management*

*American Journal of Agricultural Economics*

*Spoudai*

*Journal of World Business*

*Australian Bulletin of Labour*

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**Psychology: 38 articles**

*Journal of Applied Psychology x 12*

*American Psychologist x 6*

*Journal of Counseling Psychology x 5*

*Journal of Personality and Social Psychology x 4*

*Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research x 3*

*Developmental Psychology x 2*

*Journal of Educational Psychology x 2*

*History of Psychology*

*Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*

*Canadian Psychology/Psychologie canadienne*

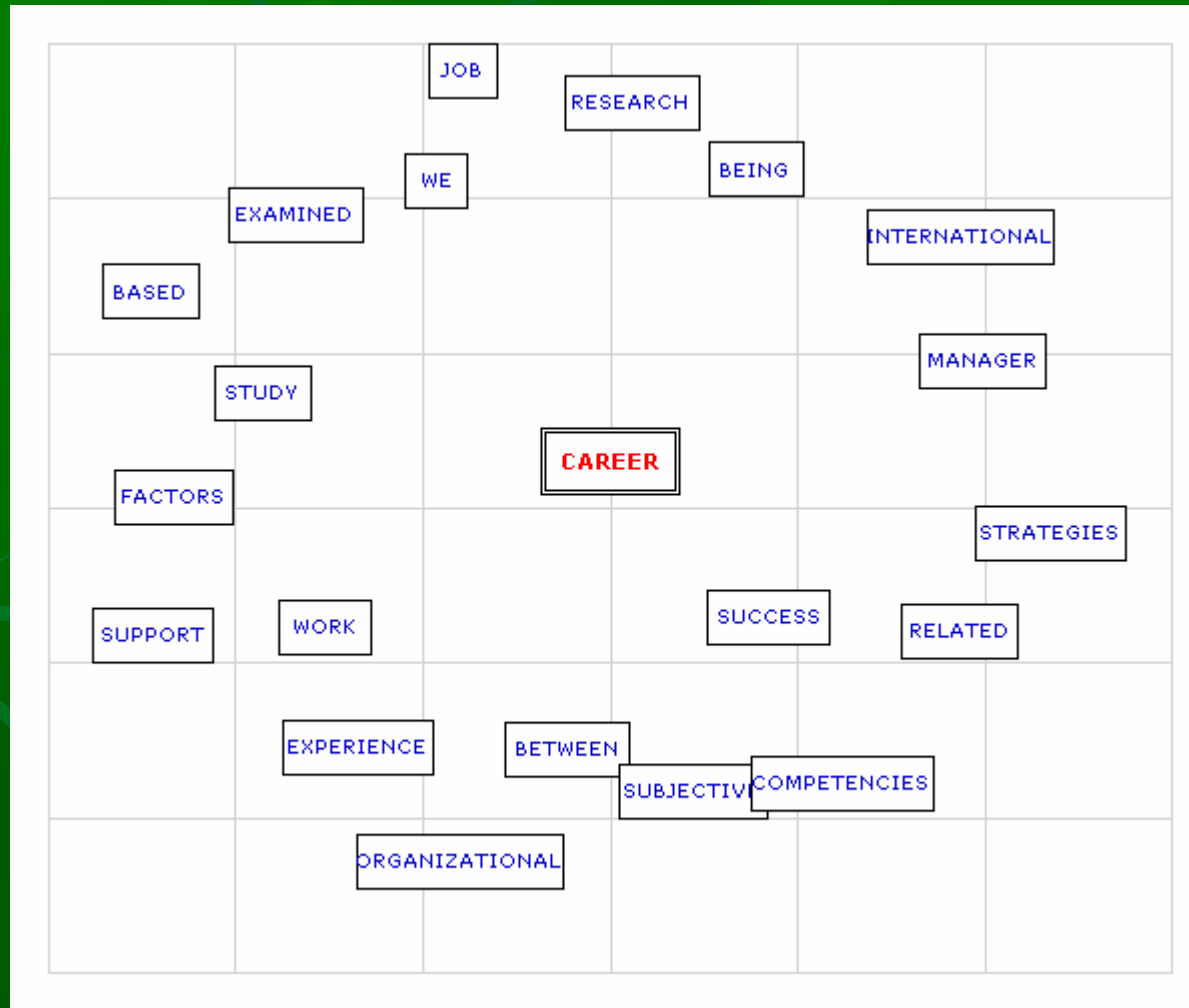
*European Psychologist*

*Journal of Educational Psychology*

*Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*

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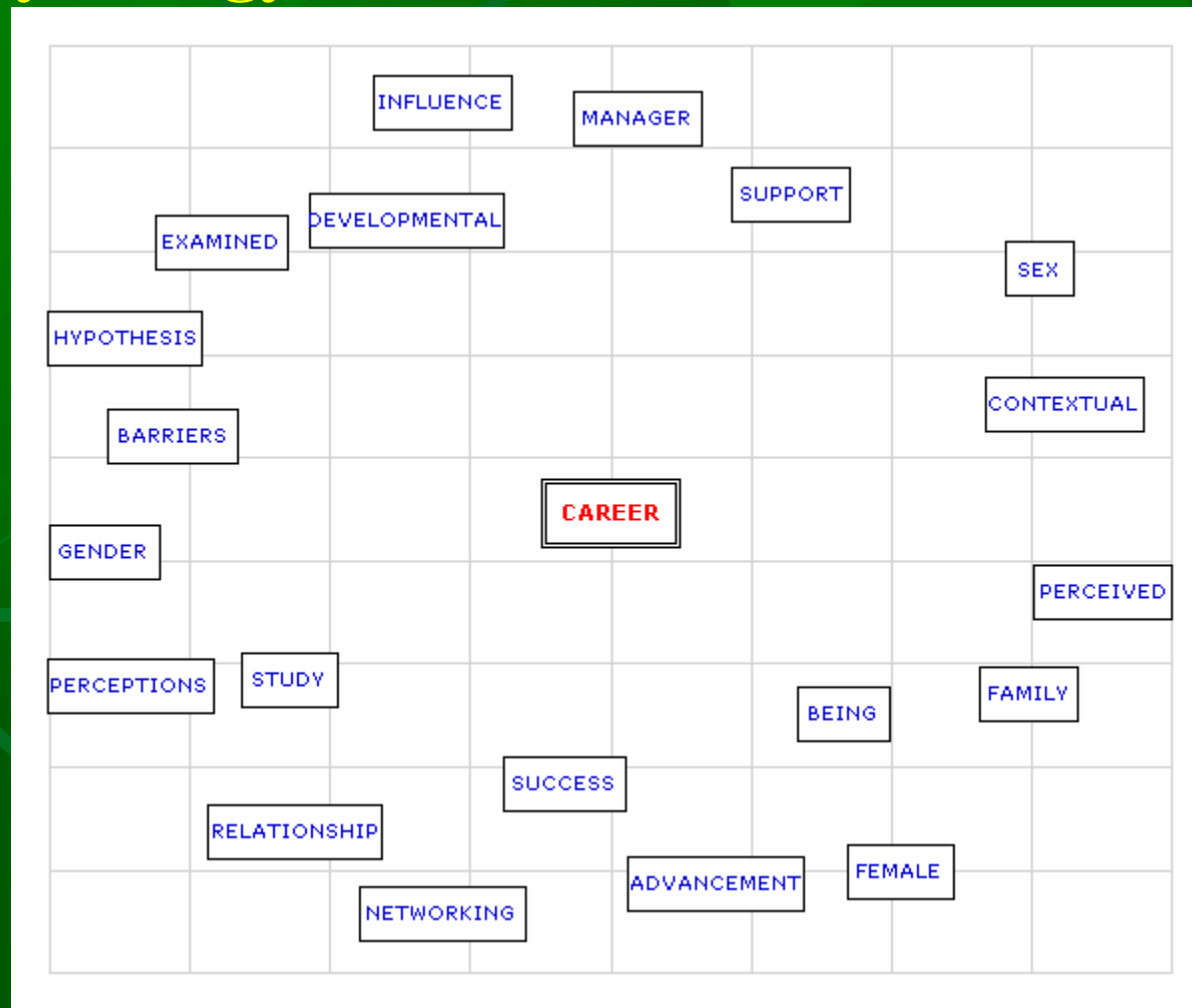
## Results. Economics Journals. Career – 34 occurrences



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## Results. Psychology Journals. Career – 40 occurrences

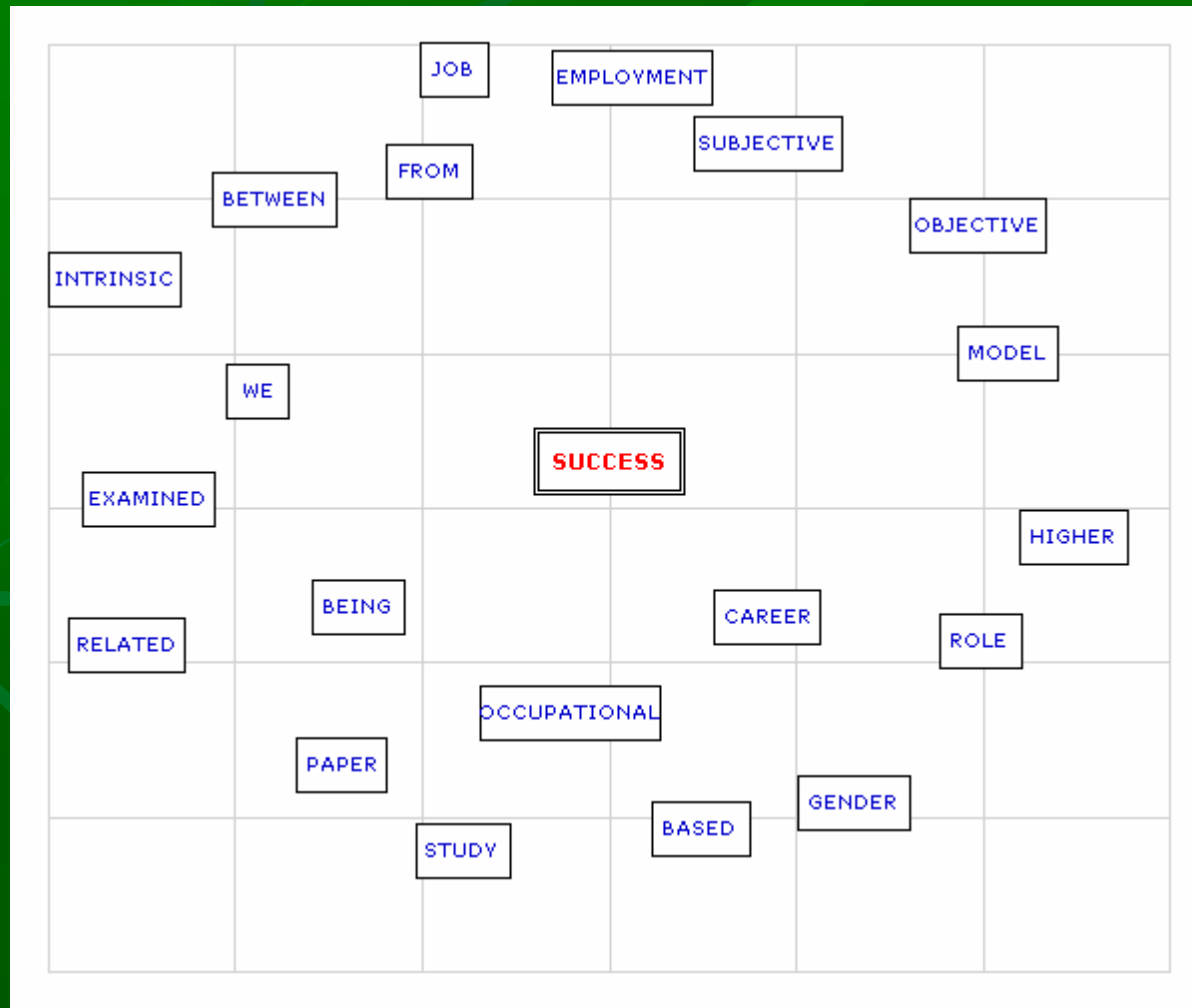


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Results. Economics Journals. Success 58 occurrences



## What is occupational success? A comparative content analysis of economics and psychology journals

### Results. Economics Journals.

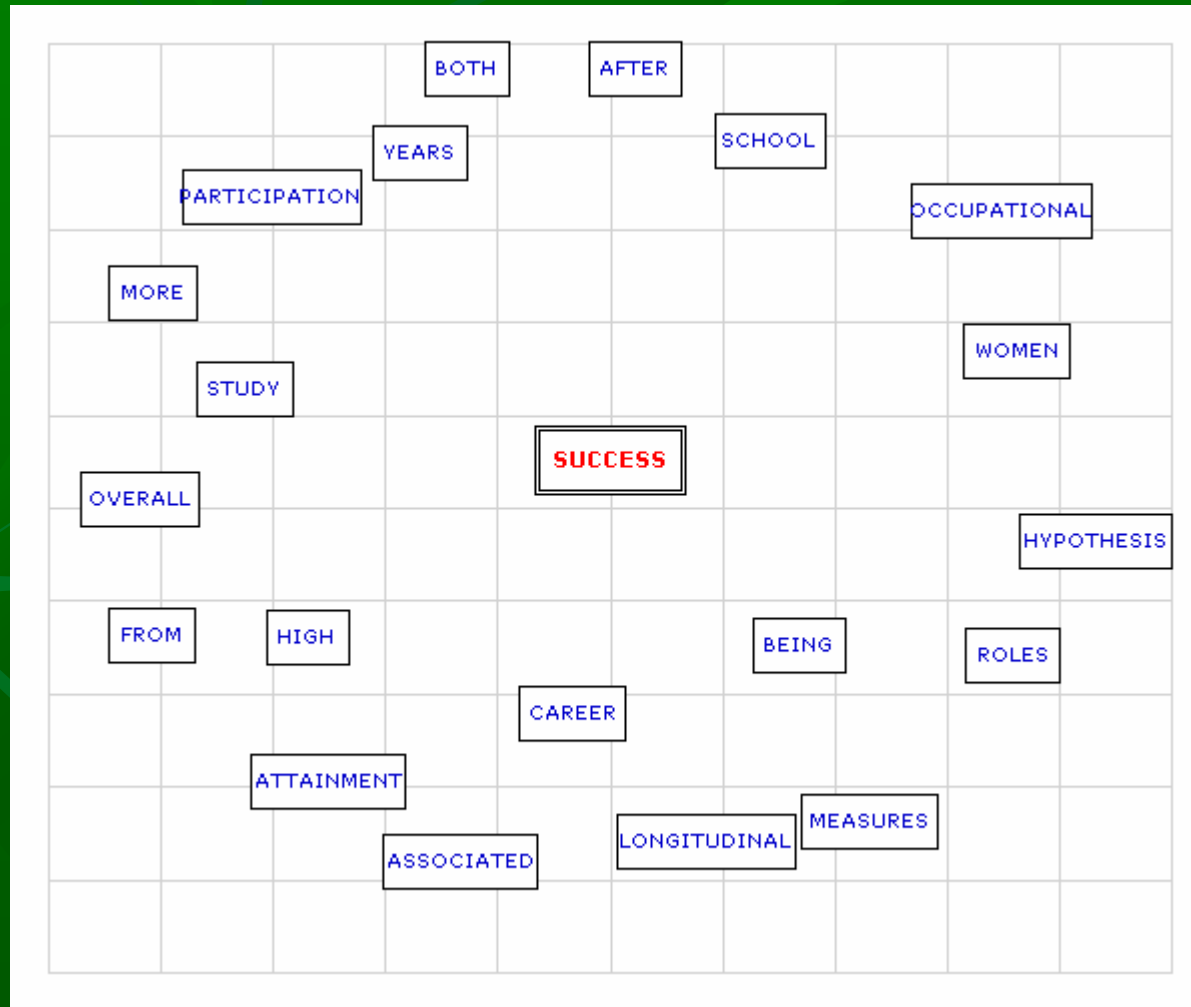
LEMMA	COEFF	OCC	CO-OCC	CHI <sup>2</sup>
career	0,64	34	23	8,154
occupatio	0,511	17	13	6,42
being	0,507	37	19	0,114
we	0,421	12	9	3,742
from	0,382	18	10	0,362
subjective	0,363	5	5	5,488
model	0,363	5	5	5,488
role	0,359	10	7	1,961
based	0,344	8	6	2,35
paper	0,342	11	7	1,048
examined	0,331	6	5	3,006
between	0,328	12	7	0,459
gender	0,324	4	4	4,33
higher	0,324	4	4	4,33
employme	0,324	4	4	4,33
objective	0,324	4	4	4,33
study	0,315	13	7	0,127
related	0,29	5	4	2,01
use	0,281	3	3	3,204
intrinsic	0,281	3	3	3,204
job	0,281	3	3	3,204
specific	0,281	3	3	3,204
ethnic	0,281	3	3	3,204
CEs	0,281	3	3	3,204

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Results. Psychology Journals. Success 53 occurrences



## What is occupational success? A comparative content analysis of economics and psychology journals

### Results. Psychology Journals. Success occurrences

LEMMA	COEFF	OCC	CO-OCC	CHI <sup>2</sup>
being	0,509	67	27	0,988
career	0,488	40	20	4,806
high	0,398	15	10	6,762
study	0,386	27	13	2,057
years	0,342	10	7	5,295
School	0,342	10	7	5,295
women	0,338	30	12	0,212
roles	0,315	6	5	5,984
longitudin	0,315	6	5	5,984
participati	0,309	4	4	7,203
attainmer	0,309	4	4	7,203
overall	0,309	4	4	7,203
associated	0,292	7	5	3,918
measures	0,292	7	5	3,918
hypothesi	0,292	7	5	3,918
After	0,292	7	5	3,918
occupatio	0,292	7	5	3,918
from	0,291	18	5	0,578
more	0,289	14	5	1,249
both	0,289	14	5	1,249
factors	0,276	5	5	4,262
agency	0,276	5	5	4,262
reciprocal	0,276	5	5	4,262
self-evalu	0,276	5	5	4,262

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**What is occupational success? A comparative content analysis of economics and psychology journals**

**Linguistic Specificity Analysis . Over-used words Economics**

WORD	CHI <sup>2</sup>	SUB	TOT
we	19,98	17	19
market	18,29	14	15
occupatio	15,77	23	31
how	12,58	12	14
two	10,72	9	10
success	7,8	58	111
new	6,9	8	10
subjective	6,9	8	10
on	6,54	38	70
countries	6,28	6	7
career	5,83	61	122
This	5,63	34	63
based	5,11	8	11
assumptio	4,84	5	6
conflict	4,84	5	6
employme	4,84	5	6
can	4,66	10	15
language	4,24	6	8
Survey	4,24	6	8

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**What is occupational success? A comparative content analysis of economics and psychology journals**

**Linguistic Specificity Analysis . Over –used words Psychology**

WORD	CHI <sup>2</sup>	SUB	TOT
performan	12,58	23	24
women	10,27	42	51
high	9,99	19	20
outcomes	6,08	16	18
authors	5,6	18	21
successful	4,26	10	11
being	4,06	120	177

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## Linguistic Specificity Analysis . Exclusive Specificity Economics

WORD	OCC
labor	11
paper	11
immigrant	10
mobility	10
United	9
earnings	8
Germany	7
teaching	7
migration	6
global	5
intrinsic	5
States	5
fluency	5
immigrant	5
terms	5
SCS	5
examines	4
find	4
European	4
entrepreneur	4
East	4
competence	4

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## Linguistic Specificity Analysis . Exclusive Specificity Psychology

WORD	OCC
coaching	11
ratings	11
harassment	10
core	10
contextual	10
years	10
reciprocal	10
recommend	10
relationships	10
barriers	9
self-evaluation	9
present	8
psychology	8
supported	8
agency	8
sexual	8
Kite	7
predict	7
test	7
racial	7
attitudes	7
variance	7

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## **Contents-lacking analysis**

**Analysis question: Do Economics and Psychology journals refer to each other in talking about occupational success?**

**The occupational success construct is approached in an interdisciplinary way? Or not?**

**Psychology related journals make no reference at all to economics**

**Economics-related journal make just one reference to psychology theories**

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## **Results Discussion**

### **Economics**

**Focus on Labor Market**

**Earnings**

**Mobility - Special attention to immigrants**

**Work – family conflict**

**Survey**

### **Psychology**

**Focus on individual paths which lead to occupational success,  
from education and school - longitudinal designs  
and on individual resources, like agency**

**Focus on barriers and supports to career success (i.e. Coaching)**

**Special attention to gender and family issues**

**Work – Life Balance**

### **Lack of interdisciplinarity**

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## **Study's Limits .... and Future Research Agenda**

**The analysis have been run only on the abstracts.**

**It is mandatory to enrich the analysis by providing a mix-method approach, thanks, for ex., to a discursive analysis of the full articles under investigation.**

**An interesting integration could be the analysis of the methodology used to do the research**

**Besides the journal articles analysis, it would be interesting to interview psychologists and economists, for example using a Delphi Method design on the stimulus “What is occupational success?”.... And, in more general terms, **to develop interdisciplinary researches****

**Thank You for Your attention!**

**For further info  
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