

Improving Scale Properties With a Bifactor Structure: Measuring Work as a Calling

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Abstract

Calling has been central to psychological research in understanding what drives individuals to feel drawn to their profession. Experiencing a sense of calling has been associated with increased motivation, a stronger sense of purpose, and the perception of work as a means of contributing to others. Moreover, identifying a calling during professional training can facilitate specialization and enhance adaptability to workplace challenges. Research on calling has grown exponentially in both quantity and quality over the past decade. However, a major limitation in calling research is the lack of consensus regarding its definition and measurement. Divergent empirical approaches have hindered the development of a unified framework, limiting the construct's applicability. Reliable and valid instruments are crucial to advancing research, allowing for a deeper understanding of how calling evolves over time and its impact on career and well-being. One of the most widely used instruments in this field is the Calling and Vocation Questionnaire (CVQ), developed by Dik et al. (2012). The CVQ distinguishes three content-related factors—Transcendent Summons, Purposeful Work, and Prosocial Orientation—that define the essence of calling. Additionally, it includes two temporal dimensions—Presence and Search—that describe the stage of the process in which an individual is situated. The original structure of the CVQ proposes six first-order factors derived from combining the three content dimensions with the two temporal dimensions. However, this factorial structure has not been consistently replicated in subsequent studies, including with participants from non-Western countries, such as India, or in adapting the scale to other languages, such as Korean or Spanish—where low fit indices and lack of factor consistency have been reported. As an alternative, we propose a bifactor model in which each item is explained by combining a content factor and a temporal factor instead of being categorized into one of the six possible types. Therefore, the three content-related factors define the construct, while the two temporal dimensions represent different ways of experiencing calling.

This bifactor structure was tested through a confirmatory factor analysis in a sample of art majors ($N = 427$), yielding a good fit ($CFI = .90$, $RMSEA = .059$, $\chi^2/df = 2.302$) and outperforming the original model.

Although the bifactor solution proposed in this study modifies the relation between the factors from the original model, it remains consistent with the theoretical framework of the construct. Moreover, it captures the interdependence of calling dimensions, facilitating construct interpretation and practical application. This structure allows for the independent analysis of subscales, providing greater flexibility depending on research needs.

Keywords

bifactor, psychometrics, calling, scale

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