



Name: Tomás da Silva, José
Designation: Associate Professor of Psychology
Organization: University of Coimbra
Contact Information: Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, Rua Colégio Novo, Apartado 6153 – 3001-802 Coimbra, Portugal.
email: jtsilva@fpce.uc.pt
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About the Presenter:

José M. Tomás da Silva is associate professor of psychology at the University of Coimbra (Portugal). He received his PhD from the same University in 1997. He was for ten years (1999-2009) the Dean of the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, of the University of Coimbra. He is the coordinator of a research group of the Institute of Cognitive Psychology, Vocational and Social Development. His research interests are in the areas of vocational psychology, motivation and academic achievement. In the career domain he is particularly interested in applying the major constructs of Socio-Cognitive Career Theory to explain the development of career interests and in studying the links among personal agency expectancies and several career outcomes. He is also interested in researching the role of motivation constructs (psychological needs, achievement goals, instrumentality) on vocational development and school performance.

Title of Paper: **Incremental Validity of Self-Efficacy over Vocational Interests in Predicting Academic Choices:
A Study with 10th and 11th Portuguese Students**

Abstract:

At least from the 20's of the past century vocational psychologists have shown that vocational interests are a major factor in the determination of academic and occupational choices. More recently a growing body of literature supports the incremental utility of self-efficacy beliefs for the choice of academic tasks/subjects and for the selection of occupations. The present study aims to examine the incremental predictive power of personal efficacy over that offered by an assessment of likes and dislikes (vocational interests) in relation to occupational titles, in discriminating the choices of academic areas made by high school Portuguese students. In this study a sample of 300 10th and 11th grade students studying in different educational courses answered a questionnaire about their self-efficacy and interests in occupational titles developed in accordance with J. Holland's RIASEC model. A discriminant function analysis (DA) of the data revealed, in line with the previous research, that self-efficacy beliefs have incremental validity over vocational interests, but most importantly, that the combined use of both as predictors allows explaining a greater amount of variation in the criterion (academic course choice). Finally, the implications of the results for the development of career interventions with high school students are discussed and further research on this topic is encouraged.