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Abstract

A number of studies have concluded that when students have greater confidence about their math skills and are aware of its usefulness, they have a more positive perception of the subject. This article aims to examine whether this pseudo linear trend in the relationship between affective and instrumental dimensions is also true of the university context. Special attention is devoted to the articulation of these dimensions in structuring student perceptions of quantitative methods so as to identify the various forms that this interaction can assume. Our second aim is to understand how the perceptions of these subjects are constructed by students from degree courses in distinct scientific areas. Can we speak of group dynamics whereby socialization within each degree course triggers the sharing of similar perceptions? We concluded that a certain linear trend can also be identified in the university context in the relationship between the affective dimension and usefulness of quantitative methods i.e., that the highest levels in the perception of the usefulness of these subjects corresponded to the highest levels of self confidence and enjoyment of the subjects. However, in addition to this

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scenario there is another configuration in which negative feelings coexist with the recognition of the usefulness of quantitative methods subjects. Namely, lower levels of self confidence and enjoyment of these subjects can also be associated with high levels of perceived usefulness. We also concluded that there is evidence of what we designated a certain course culture in the perceptions about quantitative methods. Nevertheless, when our observation is extended to the scientific area the heterogeneity of the perceptions becomes evident. Another important finding is the rejection of the thesis, at least in the university context, that defends the lack of self-confidence in quantitative methods among females student. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) Ramos, Madalena, E-Mail: madalena.ramos@iscte.pt