The use of Similarity Structure Analysis in the identification of students' functional profiles of competence – A study with Portuguese elementary school students

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Abstract: This study aims to identify students' functional profiles - describing the representational functions available to consolidate certain school competences, in a sample of 670 students of Portuguese Basic Schools, in which 58,3% were girls and 41,7% were boys (33,6% from 1st level, 36,0% from 2nd level and 30,4% from 3rd level). Four instruments were used: Questionnaire of the Attitudes Towards School, Questionnaire of the Attitudes Towards Portuguese Language, Questionnaire of the Attitudes Towards Mathematics and EQi-yv. Based on the SSA the polar structure observed, combined with the relative position of the external variable, it is possible to suggest the existence of differentiated profiles considering personal and scholarly features that become more efficient with school progress, pointing out the necessity to consider these variables independently when school policy decisions are taken. The advantages of these techniques to improve the characterization and interpretation of the complexity and multidimensionality of students´ profiles and their consequences for educational and psychological assessment and intervention are discussed.