



Career Adapt-Abilities Scale: Convergent validity of subscale scores



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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 25 February 2014

Available online 28 March 2014

Keywords:

Career development

Career adaptability

Career Adapt-Abilities Scale

ABSTRACT

This study examined the convergent validity of scores from the four subscales in the Career Adapt-Abilities Scale. The differential relation of each subscale to theoretically-related constructs was examined in a sample of 332 graduating university students. The results were as predicted. Career concern related highest to future time perspective; career control related highest to both locus of control and core self-evaluations as well as inversely to neuroticism; career curiosity related highest to proactive personality; and career confidence related highest to generalized self-efficacy. The only relation that was not as predicted involved self-esteem, which was predicted to relate highest to confidence. It related higher to career control ($r = .42$) and career concern ($r = .41$).

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1. Introduction

In today's global economy and information societies individuals must construct their own careers. To do so, they are encouraged to be flexible and proactive as well as develop employability skills and adaptability resources. Career trajectories are now less clearly defined, causing employees to face greater challenges in coping with work transitions (Savickas et al., 2009). Career construction theory (Savickas, 2005, 2013) presents a framework to comprehend vocational behavior across the life-cycle. The theory conceptualizes human development as driven by adaptation to a social environment with the goal of person–environment integration. Career adaptability requires a set of psychosocial competencies that provide an individual with resources for coping with developmental tasks, occupational transitions, and work traumas (Savickas, 1997). Career adaptability resources are the self-regulation strengths that a person may draw upon to solve the unfamiliar and complex problems presented by developmental tasks, occupational transitions, and work traumas. Because they are psychosocial attitudes and competencies, they are more changeable than personality traits. Therefore, career counselors and coaches concentrate a great deal of attention on career adapt-abilities (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012; Van Vianen, De Pater, & Preenen, 2009). In particular, they focus on self-regulatory resources denoted as concern, control, curiosity and confidence.

Some studies indicated that these career adaptability resources play an important role in adolescence and characterize youth's professional development (Hartung, Porfeli, & Vondracek, 2008). Adolescents higher in career adaptability are more successful in mastering vocational transitions (Creed, Muller, & Patton, 2003; Germeijs & Verschueren, 2007) and levels of career adaptability can predict levels of perceived well-being and of control over one's own life (Hirschi, 2009).

Coetzee and Harry (2014) indicated the positive role of emotional intelligence in career adaptability. Youth with higher levels of time perspective were more involved in the decisional process and more committed in school (Ferrari, Nota, & Soresi, 2010). Career adaptability would be helpful to provide individuals with the necessary psychosocial resources to cope with the transition

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from school to work (Koen, Klehe, & Van Vianen, 2012). Improving the career adaptability of individuals can raise their chances of finding a good job. Career adaptability showed a negative relationship to work stress and positive relationship with orientation to happiness and also mediates the relationship between orientations to happiness and work stress (Johnston, Luciano, Maggiori, Ruch, & Rossier, 2013). One recent study (Guan et al., 2013) examined the role of career adaptability in university graduates' job search self-efficacy and their employment status. The researchers reported that the four dimension of career adaptability predicted job search self-efficacy, employment status, and person–environment fit perceptions.

Because it has become a central construct in vocational psychology, an international and collaborative team constructed a measure that researchers may use to study career adaptability. The Career Adaptability Research Team, an international team of vocational psychologists from 18 countries (Australia, Belgium, Brazil, China, England, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Netherlands, Portugal, South Africa, Switzerland, Taiwan and USA) met several times over four years to jointly construct a measure of career adaptability. Together they used the English language to construct and develop the Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012), then translated it into their local languages, and finally completed cross-cultural validity studies.

Subsequent research on the psychometric characteristics, construct validity, and convergent validity of the CAAS have been strongly supportive. However, none of these studies have examined the convergent validity of the CAAS four subscales. Convergent validity indicates the degree to which two measures of constructs that theoretically should relate, do in fact relate. Thus, the purpose of the present study was to examine the convergent validity of the CAAS subscales.

The first step was to identify one or two target constructs for each of the four dimensions of career adaptability. A careful reading of the descriptions of the four dimensions led me to choose as target constructs core self-evaluations, self-esteem, generalized self-efficacy, internal locus of control, proactive personality and future time perspective and negatively associated with neuroticism. I hypothesized that these constructs should show differential relationships to the four CAAS subscales. In particular, I made the following predictions.

Concern is the first and most important dimension of career adaptability. Career concern means essentially a future orientation, a sense that it is important to prepare for tomorrow. Career concern is used in career construction theory (Savickas, 2005) to encompass a variety of highly-related constructs in the vocational psychology literature, namely time perspective, planfulness, anticipation, orientation, involvement, and optimism about the achievability of future goals. Career concern supports attitudes of planfulness and optimism. Its opposite, career indifference, reflects planlessness and pessimism about the future. Thus, career concerns should correlate highest with a measure of future time perspective.

The second most important dimension in career adaptability is control over an individual's own vocational future in that individuals believe that they are responsible for constructing their careers. Career control means intrapersonal self-discipline and the processes of being conscientious, deliberate, organized, and decisive in performing vocational development tasks and making occupational transitions. In career construction theory, control is meant to encompass variables such as decision making, assertiveness, locus of control, autonomy, self-determination, effort attributions, and agency. Career indecision, the inability to choose, is seen as lack of career control (Savickas, 2005). Thus, career control should correlate highest with core self-evaluations and with internal locus of control and lowest with inversely, neuroticism. Neuroticism (Costa & McCrae, 1992) is the tendency to see life as problematic and difficult. Locus of control (Rotter, 1966) means beliefs about the causes of events in one's life. And, core self-evaluation is a basic, fundamental appraisal of one's worthiness, effectiveness, and capability as a person (Judge, Locke, & Durham, 1997). Furthermore, I predicted that control will relate much stronger to core self-evaluation than to internal locus of control because career construction theory does not prioritize independence from interpersonal influences, rather it includes a value on interdependence. Thus career control should relate to modestly to internal locus of control but much more strongly to positive core self-evaluations. It should also have the highest negative correlation to neuroticism, which is a tendency to see life as problematic and difficult.

The third dimension of career adaptability is curiosity. Career curiosity means the initiative to learn about the types of work that one might want to do and the occupational opportunities to do it. It also refers to inquisitiveness about and exploration of the fit between self and the work world. Exploration and information-seeking behavior are seen as a function of career curiosity by vocational development theories. And lack of career curiosity can lead to "naiveté" about the world and false knowledge of the self (Savickas, 2005). Thus, it should relate highest to proactive personality. Proactivity can be conceptualized as a goal-driven process involving both goal generation and goal striving of proactive actions. Proactivity refers to anticipatory change-oriented and self-initiated behavior in situations. To be a proactive person means performing tasks effectively, foreseeing and overcoming the problems and capturing the opportunities (Parker, Bindl, & Strauss, 2010).

In career construction theory, the fourth and final dimension is confidence. Career confidence denotes feelings of self-efficacy concerning one's ability to successfully execute a course of action needed to make and implement suitable educational and vocational plans. Self-confidence denotes the anticipation of success in encountering challenges and dealing with the problems. Individuals need to solve complex problems to make career-related decisions. Self-esteem, generalized self-efficacy and encouragement are fundamental constructs encompassed by career confidence. A lack of career confidence can result in career inhibition that prevents actualizing roles and achieving goals (Savickas, 2005). Thus, career confidence will correlate highest with measures of generalized self-efficacy and with self-esteem. Self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1965) means the overall value that one places on oneself as a person. And generalized self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997) means the evaluation of how well one can perform across a variety of situations.

Another variable included in this study is GPA. I predicted that GPA would relate highest to concern about the future, because achievement motivation is future oriented.

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