



# Validation of the Career Adapt-Abilities Scale and an examination of a model of career adaptation in the Philippine context<sup>☆</sup>



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## ABSTRACT

This paper presents the validation of the Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS) in the Philippine context. The CAAS consists of four subscales, with six items each, measuring self-regulative psychosocial resources (e.g., concern, curiosity, control, and confidence) for coping with occupational tasks and transitions. Filipino university students ( $N = 289$ ) and working adults ( $N = 495$ ) participated in the study. Internal consistency estimates for the full scale and subscales ranged from .87 to .97. Confirmatory factor analyses supported the multidimensional and hierarchical model of career adaptability. The factor structure was similar to that obtained from the CAAS international validation from 18 countries. Results also suggested that career adaptability was positively associated with adaptivity in the form of tenacious goal pursuit and flexible goal adjustment as well as with adaptation outcomes of career satisfaction and promotability. Overall, the findings confirm the utility of CAAS in the Philippine context and support the model that states higher levels of personal adaptivity (willingness) and career adaptability (competence) relate to better adaptation outcomes in terms of career success.

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## 1. Introduction

The Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS) is a 24-item instrument designed to measure the psychosocial construct of career adaptability in different countries. Each of the four subscales has six items which measure the adapt-ability resources of concern, control, curiosity and confidence. Existing validation work spanning across 18 countries demonstrated the scale's excellent reliability and cross-national measurement equivalence (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). However, further validation studies are necessary because "countries vary in the degree to which they prompt the formation of adaptability because they provide different opportunities and imperatives to develop and express psychosocial resources and transactional competencies" (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012, p.3). Accordingly, this paper aims to contribute to this line of work by examining the construct validity of CAAS along with the fit of its multi-dimensional and hierarchical model in a non-Western context such as the Philippines. This ongoing development in career adaptability research also provides an opportunity for elaborating its nomological network in various contexts. Thus, the current study investigates the relationship of career adaptability with other elements in the overall model of career adaptation. The model states that higher levels of adaptation (outcome) are expected for those who are willing (adaptive) and able (adaptability) to perform behaviors that address changing conditions (adapting) (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). This study examines the relationship between adaptivity (willingness) and adaptability (able), with the expectation that individuals who

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are more willing to adapt their behaviors will have developed more competencies or adapt-abilities. In this study, adaptivity is operationally defined as tenacious goal pursuit and flexible goal adjustment. Furthermore, we also examine the relationship between adaptivity and adaptability with the adaptation outcomes of career satisfaction and promotability.

As a set of transactional competencies, it is important to describe the contextual contingencies that prompt the development of adapt-ability resources. Thus, the succeeding section provides a brief description of the Philippine work context, where pertinent issues such as economic uncertainty and underemployment emphasize the relevance of career adaptability.

### 1.1. The Philippine context

The Philippines, with a burgeoning population of roughly 95 million, has a competitive and globalized workforce (United Nations Statistics Division, 2011). Unlike most developed countries confronted with an aging workforce, the country has a growing working age population of 64 million (National Statistics Office, 2013). The Philippines has shown relative resilience during the global economic crisis, compared to its neighboring countries in the ASEAN region, because of the high remittances coming from its large expatriate workforce. This steady recovery is also demonstrated by an increase in labor participation and upward employment trend in its industries (e.g., construction, manufacturing, hospitality, professional and business services; Bureau of Labor and Employment Statistics, 2013).

Despite this promising economic growth, the Philippines remains vulnerable as it confronts perennial labor issues as well as impending labor market changes and economic crisis (Son & San Andres, 2009). Specifically, the quality of within-country employment (e.g., compensation, work hours, job-skills match) remains a pressing concern as indicated by its surging underemployment rate and prevailing job-skills mismatch (Sugiyarto, 2007). Recent national surveys indicate that more employed Filipinos continue to express their desire to obtain additional working hours, job, or income while new graduates struggle in securing a job commensurate to their skills (National Statistics Office, 2013). Consequently, a large portion of the labor force seeks work opportunities outside the Philippines because of fierce competition and inadequacy of sufficient remuneration within the country's labor market. Overall, these environmental conditions influence an individual's adaptability by either promoting or constraining career-related resources or options.

The uncertainties instigated by the economic situation and competitive employment conditions in turn influence Filipinos' construal of careers. In the Philippine context, the high regard for family ties and desire for economic mobility primarily shape how individuals enact their careers (Salazar-Clemena, 2002). For instance, early career decisions are associated with active parental involvement (Garcia, Restubog, Toledano, Tolentino, & Rafferty, 2012; Restubog, Florentino, & Garcia, 2010) and occupational choices are influenced by the desire for economic improvement more than achieving fit and self-actualization (Watts & Fretwell, 2004). As in other developing countries, most workers in the Philippines cannot afford to remain unemployed hence they take on any job that could sustain a living (Sugiyarto, 2007). Career exploration hence is geared towards finding any job that satisfies basic needs rather than searching for options to find a better fitting job and establish a fulfilling career. Then again to break through the country's prevailing labor issues, the workforce needs to be equipped with resources that enables it to cope and sustain a career in face of disruptions brought about by economic stress or personal circumstances. The more the country's workforce opens up to global competition, the more it needs to ensure that it is ready to adapt to the demands of the constantly evolving work context.

### 1.2. Career adaptability

More than ever, adaptability is an essential competency as today's workers confront frequent transitions and less definable prospects throughout the span of their career (Hall & Mirvis, 1995; Savickas, Nota, Rossier, Dauwalder, Duarte, Guichard, et al., 2009). Career adaptability is a relevant construct as it facilitates the coping and proactive search for a better job which is imperative in the Philippine context. Specifically, it enables the search for job opportunities and creation of options to improve one's career (Klehe, Zikic, van Vianen, Koen, & Buyken, 2012). Anchored on career construction theory, career adaptability is conceptualized as a set of "attitudes, competencies, and behaviors that individuals use in fitting themselves to work that suits them" (Savickas, 2013, p.45). It is a multidimensional psychosocial construct comprised of four self-regulatory strengths that enables the individual to prepare for current and anticipated occupational changes. Career concern pertains to a time perspective towards preparation for the future such as developing a career vision. Career control indicates a sense of ownership and responsibility to exert influence on one's career. Career curiosity refers to interest in exploring possible selves and opportunities in one's environment. Lastly, career confidence pertains to the pursuit of aspirations and anticipation of success in face of obstacles. These adapt-ability resources, as measured in the CAAS, are necessary for negotiating career transitions and achieving person–environment integration (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012).

Career construction theory posits interplay among adaptive readiness, adapt-ability resources, and adaptation outcomes (Savickas, 2013). To examine this overall model of career adaptation, we test the relationship of career adaptability to willingness to adapt or adaptivity in terms of tenacious goal pursuit and flexible goal adjustment as well as both of their relations to the adaptation outcomes of career satisfaction and promotability.

#### 1.2.1. Career adaptivity and career adaptability

In this study, we specifically use the dual-process model of assimilative and accommodative coping to conceptualize willingness to adapt. Specifically, the assimilative style of coping is operationalized as tenacious goal pursuit (TGP) which pertains to a "tendency to tenaciously pursue goals even in the face of obstacles and under high risk of failure" (Brandstadter & Renner, 1990, p.61). Conversely, the accommodative style of coping corresponds with flexible goal adjustment which denotes a "tendency to positively reinterpret initially aversive situations and to relinquish blocked goal perspectives easily" (Brandstadter & Renner, 1990, p.61). These coping modes, notwithstanding its divergent functions, work in complementary ways in facilitating

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