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Final dissertation

**Life Satisfaction, Work Engagement, Turnover Intention, Career
Adaptability and Digital Career Adaptability in Turkey and Italy: a cross-
national study.**

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Life Satisfaction, Work Engagement, Turnover Intention, Career Adaptability and Digital Career Adaptability in Turkey and Italy: a cross-national study

Abstract

This study examines the impact of life satisfaction, work engagement, turnover intention, and career adaptability on digital career adaptability in a cross-national sample of Turkish and Italian professionals. The Digital Career Adaptability Scale (CAAS-D) is still under development, and this study aims to explore its relationships with key variables. Using a quantitative design, data were collected via an online survey from 338 participants with varying work experience (0–3 years, 3–6 years, and 6+ years). Pearson's correlation analysis found no significant relationship between digital career adaptability and either life satisfaction or work engagement. However, career adaptability positively predicted digital career adaptability in both groups. Although mixed findings, turnover intention was also positively associated with digital career adaptability, with stronger effects in the Turkish sample. Finally, hierarchical regression analysis showed that job tenure, but not nationality, moderated the effect of life satisfaction on digital career adaptability positively, with this effect being more pronounced in the 0–3 years' experience group.

Keywords: Career Adaptability, Digital Career Adaptability, Life Satisfaction, Work Engagement, Turnover Intention, Cross-National Study

Chapter 1

Career Adaptability, Life Satisfaction, Work Engagement, and Turnover Intention

In today's rapidly evolving work environment, the concepts of career adaptability, life satisfaction, work engagement, and turnover intention have become critical areas of study. As globalization and digital transformation reshape professional landscapes, individuals are required to develop new strategies to navigate career challenges successfully. Career adaptability, defined as an individual's ability to manage and adjust to career-related changes and transitions, plays a pivotal role in ensuring professional success and personal well-being (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012).

In the digital era, career adaptability has become even more essential, as individuals must navigate an evolving labor market shaped by automation, remote work, and rapid technological advancements (Potgieter & Ferreira, 2022; Coetzee et al., 2020). However, digital career adaptability is a relatively new concept, and there is no direct empirical research on digital career adaptability. Understanding how digital career adaptability contributes to employees' overall satisfaction and engagement while mitigating turnover intentions is essential for both individuals and organizations striving for sustainable professional development (Rossier et al., 2012; Rudolph et al., 2017). Therefore, this thesis explores the interplay between career adaptability, life satisfaction, work engagement, and turnover intention, particularly in the context of digital career adaptability.

A cross-national approach is adopted in this study, comparing these factors among professionals in Turkey and Italy. The reason why cross-cultural comparison was adopted is that despite previous research on general career adaptability, to our knowledge, there is no

research comparing the differences between different countries in digital career adaptability. By addressing this gap, this study seeks to provide evidence for the relationship between various variables and differences between nations.

Additionally, this study investigates the role of work experience in digital career adaptability. Previous research has examined career adaptability broadly (Fiori et al., 2015; Santilli et al., 2017) but has not sufficiently considered how different levels of work experience (0-3 years, 3-6 years, and 6+ years) impact individuals' ability to adapt to digital transformations in their careers. This research also explores how turnover intention interacts with digital career adaptability, an area that remains largely unexamined in the literature. Turnover intention, which has been linked to traditional career adaptability in prior research (Ito & Brotheridge, 2007; Stroh et al., 1996), has yet to be clearly defined in relation to digital career adaptability.

To address these gaps, this study aims to answer the following research questions:

- How do life satisfaction, work engagement, turnover intention, and career adaptability influence digital career adaptability?
- How do these relationships differ between Turkey and Italy?
- Does work experience and nationality moderate the relationship between career adaptability and digital career adaptability?

The following chapters will provide a comprehensive review of relevant literature, present the research methodology, discuss empirical findings, and analyze their implications for career planning and workforce development.

1.1 Career Adaptability

Career adaptability, referring to an individual's ability to adjust, has emerged as a key concept in vocational psychology, representing the capacity to actively shape one's career within an increasingly unpredictable job market (Öncel, 2014; Savickas, 2013).

Interest in career adaptability has grown significantly since the influential studies of Savickas (1997; 2005; 2013) and Savickas and Porfeli (2012), driven by the evolving nature of careers in increasingly unstable work environments, where career paths have become less structured and more uncertain. Super (1994), introduced the term "career adaptability," which he suggested could also be applied to describe the later stages of human development. According to Super and scholars who have commented on his work (e.g., Goodman, 1994), this concept refers to an individual's ability to maintain a balance between their professional and personal life. The components of career adaptability include values related to work, such as autonomy, the ability to make decisions, long-term planning, seeking and accepting new roles, making decisions, and the willingness to reflect on one's experiences. The concept of career adaptability introduces a new perspective on the job market. Unlike the traditional approach, which focuses on finding a permanent and suitable position for the individual, the modern view emphasizes creating and preparing a job that aligns with one's needs, preferences, and abilities. A key feature of this new career model is the focus on emotions, passion, and what truly brings life satisfaction. In this context, a career becomes a form of life creation (Paszowska-Rogacz, 2020). Career adaptability, therefore, is considered a psycho-social meta-competence that enables individuals to respond effectively to changes and meet the expectations of the evolving economic landscape. It reflects the readiness, willingness, and resources required to address both current and future professional challenges, including making choices, accepting challenges, fulfilling professional roles, or responding to new demands in the professional environment (Rossier, 2015; Savickas, 2005, 2011, 2012). It is also closely linked to curiosity about the world and oneself, as well as flexibility, openness to change, and resilience (Maree, 2017).

Savickas (2005), a disciple and collaborator of Super, further developed the concept of career adaptability, which today appears to be more relevant than Super's (1984) notion of career maturity, originally proposed during the relatively stable social and economic conditions of the 20th century. Savickas (1997) described career adaptability as an individual's preparedness to handle both the anticipated tasks of entering and engaging in a work role, as well as the unforeseen adjustments required due to changes in work environments and conditions (p. 254). Career adaptability includes an awareness of future career prospects, a sense of personal control over one's life, curiosity about career decision-making, and the confidence to make and execute those decisions (Savickas, 2013).

Career adaptability is conceptualized as a multidimensional and hierarchical framework consisting of four essential resources, also known as adapt-abilities: career concern, career control, career curiosity, and career confidence (Maggiore et al., 2013; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). These dimensions represent distinct aspects of career adaptability: the ability to anticipate and prepare for future career opportunities (concern), the capacity to make informed career choices and take deliberate actions (control), the willingness to explore different options and potential roles (curiosity), and the self-efficacy to engage in activities necessary for achieving career goals (confidence) (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). In this context, career concern is considered the core dimension of career adaptability, as it encompasses elements such as a future-oriented perspective, active engagement, planning, awareness, and optimism regarding the attainability of future goals (Perera & McIlveen, 2014). Career control represents the perception of personal authority over one's vocational future and the belief in personal responsibility for shaping one's career. Curiosity about potential selves and social opportunities enhances individuals' engagement in active exploration. Career confidence involves the ability to maintain commitment to one's aspirations and goals, despite encountering challenges and obstacles (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012; Stoltz, 2014).

Unlike individual adaptability, which refers to a person's general ability, skills, dispositions, willingness, and/or motivation to adjust to various tasks, social settings, and environmental conditions, career adaptability seems to focus on situation-specific evaluation goals (Hamtaux et al., 2013). Career adaptability skills serve as a source of resilience for individuals in shaping their careers (Guan et al., 2014; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012) and may have an impact on their attraction to, retention within, and intention to leave a job (Ferreira, 2012). Research on employee retention has gained increasing importance due to several global factors, including concerns about a shortage of skills, an aging workforce, greater career mobility opportunities for knowledge workers, the rapid pace of technological advancements, and the need for organizations to remain competitive in a challenging business environment (Dietrich, 2000; João & Coetzee, 2012; Mohlala et al., 2012; Samuel & Chipunza, 2009; Van Dyk & Coetzee, 2012).

Adaptation outcomes are supported by the person-environment fit, along with results such as commitment, development, satisfaction, and work success (Savickas, 2013; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). Adaptive responses are positively correlated with promotion-focused self-regulation strategies, which involve being goal-oriented, actively seeking and finding alternative solutions, being proactive, as well as engaging in task-oriented coping and cognitive reappraisal (van Vianen et al., 2012). According to Savickas (2005, 2013) and related research, emerging adults with higher career adaptability are more capable of effectively planning their vocational future, exploring and evaluating various career alternatives, making informed and confident career decisions, solving problems, and overcoming obstacles to achieve their career aspirations. Additionally, they can successfully adapt to changing career circumstances and work conditions.

More specifically, it is positively associated with promotion-focused self-regulation strategies, which include being goal-oriented, seeking and identifying alternative solutions, and

taking proactive actions (van Vianen et al., 2012), as well as with task-oriented coping and cognitive reappraisal (Zecca & Rossier, 2011).

Additionally, possessing greater career adaptability resources can enhance perceived career opportunities, improve the ability to manage obstacles and challenges, and increase the likelihood of successfully achieving career goals. These factors collectively contribute to higher levels of life satisfaction (Kvasková et al., 2023). Regarding adaptation outcomes, career adaptability is linked to employees' life satisfaction. It was found that career adaptability partially mediates the relationship between life satisfaction and, on the one hand, job insecurity and job strain, in a group of Swiss adults, both employed and unemployed (Maggiori et al., 2013). Hirschi (2009) explored how career adaptability can influence the development of a sense of dominance and well-being, which are important factors for promoting life satisfaction, particularly in the positive development of young people.

Career adaptability plays a crucial role in helping individuals shape both their career and personal lives. By enhancing flexibility and autonomy, it strengthens their ability to cope with uncertainty, ambiguity, and challenges in both their careers and personal spheres (Nota & Rossier, 2015; Savickas, 2011; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). This multidimensional construct is associated with individuals' ability to adjust to varying life circumstances, alter environmental conditions based on personal needs and constraints, navigate transitions effectively, and manage uncertainty by enhancing flexibility and autonomy (Rossier, 2015). In adult workers, high levels of career adaptability can aid in achieving, sustaining, and realigning career goals. These levels are also linked to subjective career success and job satisfaction (Zacher, 2014; Zacher & Griffin, 2015).

1.2 Life Satisfaction

Life satisfaction, which refers to an individual's overall perception and assessment of their quality of life, serves as a fundamental indicator of subjective well-being (Gilman & Huebner, 2003). Life satisfaction plays a vital role in an individual's overall well-being (Pavot & Diener, 1993) and is regarded as a key outcome in career development within the Life Design paradigm (Rossier, 2015). It is also recognized as the subjective dimension of quality of life (Schalock & Felce, 2004).

Diener (2000) suggests that life satisfaction is a cognitive process where individuals assess the quality of their lives using a set of predefined criteria. It is viewed as the cognitive aspect of subjective well-being, with individuals consciously evaluating their lives based on a series of personal criteria to describe the quality of their own existence (Pavot & Diener, 1993).

Diener (2000) defines it as a cognitive process in which individuals assess the quality of their lives based on a set of predefined criteria. It is seen as the cognitive aspect of subjective well-being, involving a conscious evaluation of one's life, where individuals describe the quality of their own life according to a set of personally defined criteria (Pavot & Diener, 1993).

The concept of life satisfaction has been extensively studied in recent decades, with researchers concentrating on identifying the factors that contribute to it. Given the significance of life satisfaction in human development (Satici et al., 2016), it is essential to examine the factors that enhance life satisfaction, particularly for youth who are in a transitional phase (Hampel & Petermann, 2006). An increasing number of studies have highlighted the important role of life satisfaction in mental health and positive outcomes (Satici et al., 2016; Suldo et al., 2015).

Empirical research has shown that life satisfaction is positively associated with mental health and career success (Diener & Chan, 2011; Luhmann et al., 2013). Several studies have

found positive correlations between hope, optimism, future orientation, resilience, and factors related to both job and life satisfaction (Patton et al., 2004; Santilli et al., 2016; Schmid & Lopez, 2011; Youssef & Luthans, 2007). Additionally, the link between job strain and life satisfaction is partly mediated by career adaptability (Maggiori et al., 2013).

Wehmeyer et al. (2011) defined quality of life as a multidimensional concept that includes both objective and subjective components (such as life satisfaction). It encompasses the ability to meet one's needs and the opportunity to enhance one's life. Quality of life is shaped by personal values and criteria, including factors such as material living conditions, living environment, and employment.

Schalock et al. (2002) argue that life encompasses key aspects of human existence, such as family and work, while quality pertains to human values, including health, satisfaction, and happiness. Furthermore, Brown, Hatton, and Emerson (2013) describe quality of life as a social construct, determined by various indices across different domains, both subjective and objective, such as physical and material well-being, emotional well-being, social connectedness, and community life.

Life satisfaction, an essential component of overall well-being, is significantly influenced by various factors, including career adaptability and resilience. In the context of workers, studies suggest that life satisfaction among workers can be defined as the overall sense of fulfillment and contentment employees experience regarding their work, career, and personal life (Santilli et al., 2024). Research indicates that interventions aimed at fostering courage and improving career adaptability can have a positive effect on individuals' life satisfaction (Magnano et al., 2021). Additionally, life satisfaction is not only related to career adaptability but can also be predicted by positive factors such as resilience (Hirschi, 2009; Masten & Tellegen, 2012; McIlveen et al., 2013; Santilli et al., 2016).

Similarly, life satisfaction in workers is often linked to various factors, including their work, career, and personal life, which contribute to their overall sense of fulfillment and contentment. The connection between job satisfaction and life satisfaction has been consistently confirmed by previous studies. Poyrazli et al. (2012) compared life satisfaction among guidance counselors and administrators working for the Ministry of Education in Turkey. The study identified gender, marital status, and extrinsic job satisfaction as key predictors of life satisfaction. Similarly, research conducted on correctional staff in the United States found a significant relationship between job satisfaction and life satisfaction (Lambert et al., 2009). In the Southeast Asian context, Burke (1999) conducted a study among professional and managerial women in Manila, revealing a strong and consistent link between work experiences, work outcomes, and life satisfaction.

Given that career decisions are essential to overall life satisfaction, especially during emerging adulthood, it is important to recognize how life satisfaction is influenced by various factors such as personality traits and individual characteristics. Career transition is a key developmental task during emerging adulthood, with career decisions being one of the most significant factors influencing the lives of emerging adults. These decisions play a crucial role in shaping future well-being, especially in relation to life satisfaction (Kvitkovičová et al., 2016; Macek et al., 2016).

Furthermore, research on emerging adults has established a link between life satisfaction and personality traits and individual characteristics such as emotional stability, extraversion, conscientiousness, openness, autonomous motivation, proactive coping, hope, and a sense of purpose in life (Bronk et al., 2009; Dwivedi & Rastogi, 2016, 2017; Ozer & Schwartz, 2020). Individuals who demonstrate bravery in pursuing their goals work purposefully to achieve them (Santilli et al., 2024).

1.3 Work Engagement

Work engagement refers to a positive, rewarding, and work-related psychological state marked by vigor, commitment, and absorption (Van Wingerden et al., 2017; Blanch & Aluja, 2009). It embodies an enthusiastic and motivated state, characterized by high energy levels, a deep sense of commitment, and concentrated attention on work (Schaufeli et al., 2006). According to Kahn (1990), work engagement is characterized by the expression and application of an individual's preferred self, integrating cognitive, emotional, and behavioral aspects with active and fulfilling performance. Employees exhibiting high levels of work engagement channel their physical, cognitive, and emotional resources into their work (Kahn, 1990). Building on this framework, Schaufeli et al. (2002) further developed the concept, defining work engagement as a positive, work-related psychological state composed of three core dimensions: vigor, dedication, and absorption.

Vigor is defined by elevated energy levels, a strong willingness to invest effort in tasks, and the persistence to overcome obstacles (Tims et al., 2012). From an organizational standpoint, employees displaying vigor maintain their efforts despite challenges and perceive their work as energizing (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008; Timms et al., 2015). The second component, dedication, is characterized by a deep psychological commitment to work, accompanied by enthusiasm and a sense of being challenged (Schaufeli, Salanova, et al., 2002). Finally, absorption is described as complete focus and immersion in one's work, often resulting in the rapid passage of time or difficulty in disengaging from work (Mauno et al., 2007; Schaufeli, Martinez, et al., 2002). Some scholars have drawn parallels between absorption and the concept of flow, a state in which individuals are so deeply engaged in an activity that they lose track of everything else, and the activity becomes inherently rewarding (González-Roma et al., 2006; Mauno et al., 2007).

Work engagement is regarded as a positive predictor of career adaptability (Petrou et al., 2012) and has been shown to have a positive relationship with job performance, organizational citizenship behaviors (Buil et al., 2019), and organizational commitment (Uddin et al., 2019). In contrast, it is negatively correlated with turnover intention (Jones & Harter, 2005). Engaged employees align their identities with their work and exhibit high levels of vigor, dedication, and deep absorption (Gignac et al., 1996; Klitzman et al., 1990; Timms et al., 2015). Individuals with strong work engagement demonstrate greater enthusiasm for their roles, which, in turn, energizes the entire organization (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Furthermore, empirical studies validate the positive impact of work engagement on overall well-being (Rossier et al., 2012; Salanova et al., 2014; Shimazu et al., 2015).

In addition to its conceptualization, extensive research has examined the outcomes of work engagement, especially its contribution to career adaptation. As a form of proactive response to adaptation (Merino-Tejedor et al., 2016), work engagement represents proactive motivation (Hirschi et al., 2013) and is regarded as a key mechanism for achieving self-actualization through sustained effort, positive emotions, and motivated cognition in the workplace (Matz-Costa et al., 2012; Robertson et al., 2012). Career adaptability, as a social-psychological resource, can promote adaptive responses, which in turn contribute to positive adaptation outcomes (Nilforooshan & Salimi, 2016).

Research on work engagement has largely concentrated on its outcomes (Kim et al., 2009), yet it is equally important to explore the intrapersonal processes that contribute to work engagement (Inceoglu & Warr, 2011). Kahn (1990) argues that an individual's perception of their work environment, along with their personality traits, influences their readiness to engage in work roles. An individual's inclination toward self or organizational practices plays a crucial role in shaping how employees adjust to their work and work environments (Salanova & Schaufeli, 2008).

Most researchers concur that work engagement encompasses both an energy dimension and an identification dimension. It is defined by high energy levels and a strong sense of identification with one's work. The perspective presented in this special issue advocates for a unified construct of work engagement, emphasizing employees' experience of work activities. However, despite extensive exploration of related constructs over the past decade, there has yet to be consensus regarding its precise definition. In contrast, a recent review by Macey and Schneider (2008) highlighted the proliferation of diverse definitions of engagement, many of which merely represent re-packaged versions of older concepts. To address this conceptual ambiguity, the authors propose employee engagement as an overarching umbrella term encompassing different types of engagement—such as trait engagement, state engagement, and behavioral engagement—each linked to various conceptualizations, including proactive personality (trait engagement), involvement (state engagement), and organizational citizenship behavior (behavioral engagement).

Bakker (in press) outlines four key reasons why engaged employees outperform their disengaged counterparts. Engaged employees: (1) frequently experience positive emotions such as happiness, joy, and enthusiasm; (2) enjoy better psychological and physical health; (3) generate their own job and personal resources (e.g., support from others); and (4) inspire engagement in others. While positive emotions expand individuals' thought-action repertoire (Fredrickson, 2003), good health enhances performance by enabling individuals to fully utilize their mental and physical resources, including skills, abilities, and knowledge. Additionally, employees who actively generate their own resources are more capable of managing job demands and achieving their work objectives (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Lastly, in most organizations, performance results from the collective efforts of individual employees. Therefore, it is plausible that the transfer of engagement within work teams contributes to enhanced overall performance.

Research on work engagement is still in its early stages, which is surprising given that contemporary organizations expect their employees to be proactive, take initiative, assume responsibility for their own professional development, and commit to high performance standards. Consequently, organizations require employees who are energetic, dedicated, and fully immersed in their work—that is, engaged with their work (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008).

However, it is crucial to understand the mechanisms through which traits influence work engagement. Since interventions targeting traits are challenging to design, it is essential to explore the mediating effects of other potential factors to enhance intervention possibilities. Shrout and Bolger (2002) suggest that empirically examining mediation effects can improve the understanding of possible intervention points in counseling. Research on the relationships between work engagement and its antecedents has revealed that both job and personal resources are positively associated with work engagement.

Considering that both work and family life demand significant time, energy, and emotional investment, several studies on work engagement have supported the idea that an individual's personal life (e.g., non-work satisfaction and work–nonwork conflict) has a substantial impact on their work engagement, and vice versa (Halbesleben, 2010; Timms et al., 2015). For instance, several empirical studies (e.g., Parkes & Langford, 2008; Shankar & Bhatnagar, 2010) have identified a connection between work engagement and work–life/family-related constructs. Conversely, when employees experience a shortage of resources (i.e., depletion of role resources; Rothbard, 2001), they are less likely to meet their family responsibilities, thereby resulting in work–life conflict (Chernyak-Hai & Tziner, 2016; Mache et al., 2016).

Another study indicates that marital status positively influences work engagement. Engaged employees exhibit high energy levels, are enthusiastic about their work, and are often

completely absorbed in their tasks, causing time to pass quickly (Macey & Schneider, 2008; May, Gilson, & Harter, 2004; Schaufeli & Bakker, in press).

Over the past decade, there has been growing interest in research on employee work engagement and psychological well-being within the fields of human resource development (HRD) and organizational behavior (Shuck & Wollard, 2010). Studies have demonstrated that work engagement, defined as "a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind" (Schaufeli et al., 2006, p. 702), positively impacts a range of outcomes, not only for employees but also for organizations. These outcomes include job satisfaction, organizational commitment, work performance, financial returns, and customer loyalty (Albdour & Altarawneh, 2014; Bakker et al., 2012; Salanova et al., 2005; Yan et al., 2017). Through a meta-analytic approach, Halbesleben (2010) found that work engagement is positively associated with employees' organizational commitment, performance, and health/well-being, while it is negatively related to turnover intention.

Previous research has consistently demonstrated that job resources, such as social support from colleagues and supervisors, performance feedback, skill variety, autonomy, and learning opportunities, are positively related to work engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Halbesleben, in press; Schaufeli & Salanova, 2007). In line with these ideas about the motivational role of job resources, multiple studies have found a positive relationship between job resources and work engagement (for a meta-analysis, see Halbesleben, in press). For instance, Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) provided evidence of a positive relationship between three job resources—performance feedback, social support, and supervisory coaching—and work engagement (vigour, dedication, and absorption) across four samples of Dutch employees.

In summary, the existing literature consistently underscores the importance of work engagement as a key factor in enhancing both individual and organizational outcomes, with various job resources playing a crucial role in fostering this engagement.

1.4 Turnover Intention

For over six decades, researchers have shown a sustained interest in understanding employees' turnover intention, considered a precursor to actual turnover behavior. Foundational studies, such as that of March and Simon (1958), suggested that employees initiate the termination process only when they perceive both a desirability and an ease of movement. This perceived desirability is now referred to as turnover intention, defined as an individual's intention to voluntarily leave an organization or profession. Intentions are crucial because they reflect personal judgments and perceptions (Mobley et al., 1979) and are the most immediate predictors of behavior (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980). According to Mobley (1982) and Mobley et al. (1978), the process leading to turnover includes thoughts of quitting, intentions to search, and finally, the intention to quit. Organizations that become aware of these intentions can implement proactive strategies to manage actual turnover.

Numerous studies have explored employee turnover, proposing various models that incorporate different contributing factors. Yet, these models consistently highlight turnover intention as the key antecedent to actual turnover. Therefore, identifying what triggers such intentions is vital for organizations. Employees may wish to leave immediately, soon, or exit the organization, role, or profession altogether. Regardless of the form, understanding these underlying reasons is essential for reducing voluntary turnover. Mobley et al. (1979) emphasized that quitting intentions are influenced by organizational factors, employee characteristics, job expectations, labor market conditions, and individual values, all of which ultimately affect actual turnover behavior.

When it comes to personality, Stagner (1948) defined it as an internal organization of perceptual, emotional, cognitive, and motivational systems that guide responses to the environment. While Friedman and Rosenman's (1959) theory of Type A and B personalities initially motivated research into the personality-turnover link, findings did not support a significant relationship (Dole et al., 2001). Later studies, however, found that dispositional traits—consistent ways of thinking, feeling, and behaving—do influence turnover intentions (Chiu et al., 2003). Judge et al. (1977) identified positive and negative affectivity as such traits, with positive affectivity being negatively related to turnover intention, while negative affectivity showed no clear relationship.

Researchers also explored the impact of employees' perceptions on their intent to leave. Perceived organizational support (POS), for instance, has been shown to reduce turnover tendencies (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Individuals high in POS are less likely to seek or accept other job offers (Eisenberger et al., 1990). However, the strength of this relationship remains minimal, suggesting a need for further research (Allen et al., 2003; Griffeth et al., 2000; Rhoades et al., 2001; Wayne et al., 1997).

Another factor, organizational justice, also influences turnover intentions. When employees perceive low distributive justice or inequity, they are more likely to consider quitting (Hendrix et al., 1998; Hom et al., 1984). Studies confirm the significance of both distributive (Fields et al., 2000) and procedural justice (Cohen et al., 2001; Dailey et al., 1992) in affecting turnover behavior. However, some researchers found a negative association between turnover intention and both types of justice (Loi et al., 2006), underlining the complexity of this relationship.

Jackofsky and Peters (1983) proposed that ability indirectly affects the desirability of movement. Highly skilled individuals often dislike routine tasks and therefore have a stronger

desire to seek new roles. Nonetheless, Rosse (1987) found that ability had only a marginal influence on this perceived desirability to change jobs.

Several studies have also investigated the influence of demographic and positional variables like ethnicity, gender, and hierarchical status, but the findings did not support any significant link to turnover intention (Dole et al., 2001; Mynaatt et al., 1997).

Organizational factors have evolved to meet more than just financial needs. As Herzberg (1966) outlined in his two-factor theory, elements such as achievement, recognition, the nature of the work, and growth opportunities significantly impact job satisfaction, which, in turn, affects the intention to stay or quit. In line with this, Life Design theory emphasizes that the courage to embrace uncertainty allows individuals to approach career transitions with curiosity and openness, improving their perceived quality of life (Santilli et al., 2021; Santilli et al., 2024).

Job stress is another crucial organizational factor influencing quitting intentions. Stressors like role ambiguity, conflict, overload, and work-family imbalance negatively impact job satisfaction and organizational commitment. These, in turn, fuel the desire to leave indirectly, rather than directly, affect turnover intentions—via job dissatisfaction and lack of support—this view is supported by multiple studies (Armstrong-Stasen et al., 1994; Koeske & Koeske, 1993; Tinker & Moore, 2001).

Social support, particularly from supervisors, can alleviate burnout and reduce intentions to quit. For instance, Moore (2002) found that supervisory support lowers burnout, and thus turnover intention. Similar effects were reported among nurses and retail workers (Kalliath & Beck, 2001; Hatton et al., 1998; Munn et al., 1996; Firth et al., 2004). However,

some studies reported that social support does not moderate the relationship between stressors and quitting intention (Rahim et al., 1996).

Interestingly, the gender of supervisors also influences turnover intention. In a study involving 12,000 young American workers, employees with female managers reported lower perceptions of responsibility and greater intent to seek other jobs compared to those with male managers (Valentine et al., 2001).

Intrinsic job factors are also powerful motivators. McGee (1971) noted that job-changing decisions are largely driven by factors such as the nature of the work, opportunities for growth, and compatibility with colleagues. A study of Norwegian university staff reinforced this, identifying collegial relations as the most influential factor in decisions to leave. Staff who found their work less intrinsically satisfying showed a higher intention to quit.

Finally, self-esteem acts as a mediating factor between stressors and turnover intentions. Low self-esteem is linked to various psychological issues and maladaptive behaviors (Kaplan, 1975, 1980; Silverstone, 1991; Waters and Moore, 2002). It also correlates with job satisfaction (Greenhaus and Badin, 1974; Inkson, 1978; Kohli, 1985; Teas, 1981, 1982), which indirectly shapes employees' intent to stay or leave.

Chapter 2

The Associations between the Variables of Interest and Socioeconomic Comparison between Italy and Turkey

2.1 The Association between Career Adaptability and Life Satisfaction

Career adaptability refers to an individual's ability to take proactive steps in managing their career progression by maintaining a sense of concern, control, curiosity, and confidence (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). Research indicates that individuals with high career adaptability tend to experience various positive outcomes, including enhanced employability, greater career satisfaction and success, and improved life satisfaction (Blokker et al., 2019; Hartung & Cadaret, 2017; Savickas, 2013; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). In Malaysia, life satisfaction is often linked to job stability and a good income (Al-Naggar et al., 2013; Duffy et al., 2012).

Several studies have demonstrated the impact of career adaptability on life satisfaction. Soresi et al. (2012) examined 1,202 high school students in Italy and found a significant positive correlation between career adaptability and life satisfaction (Ng et al., 2020). Similarly, Ramos and Lopez (2018) identified a significant positive relationship between specific dimensions of career adaptability, such as curiosity and confidence, and subjective well-being, an indicator of life satisfaction. Career adaptability enables individuals to navigate workplace challenges, enhance employability, increase self-awareness, and achieve higher career satisfaction and success (Hartung & Cadaret, 2017). Individuals with high career adaptability are more likely to meet their career objectives, which is positively associated with life satisfaction (Soresi et al., 2012).

Career construction theory (Savickas, 2013) suggests that individuals who effectively align their personal needs with external career opportunities tend to experience higher life satisfaction. This concept aligns with the Lifespan, Life-Space theory (Super, 1980), which proposes that successful adaptation in one's career positively influences other life roles, such as being a parent, community member, or student, ultimately leading to greater life satisfaction. The expanded roles and interactions within work and academic environments provide individuals with additional resources for career adaptability, enhancing their effectiveness across multiple roles (Ng et al., 2020).

A study conducted in Southeast Asia among professional and managerial women in Manila found a strong link between work experiences, work outcomes, and life satisfaction (Burke, 1993). Additionally, empirical evidence supports the mediating role of job satisfaction in the relationship between career adaptability and life satisfaction. In Australia, Iverson and Maguire (2000) examined remote mining workers and found that job satisfaction mediated the impact of various job characteristics, such as routinization, industrial relations climate, promotional opportunities, work overload, and work participation, on life satisfaction.

Building on this empirical evidence, career adaptability has been shown to influence life satisfaction through job satisfaction (Ng et al., 2020). Work plays a dominant role in one's life, occupying nearly two-thirds of an individual's lifetime (Super, 1980), and serves as a primary domain from which people derive their self-concept and identity (Savickas, 2013). Therefore, investing in career adaptability skills becomes a rational effort for career improvement. In line with Career Construction Theory, individuals with adaptive readiness actively acquire career adaptability resources, allowing them to respond effectively to job challenges. This adaptability leads to outcomes such as job satisfaction, which ultimately influences life satisfaction (Ng et al., 2020).

Ng et al. (2020) examined the predictive validity of the Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS) and found that career adaptability indirectly influenced life satisfaction through job satisfaction. Job satisfaction acted as a mediator in this relationship, while connectedness functioned as a boundary condition, further enhancing job satisfaction. Even after controlling for demographic factors such as age, gender, race, and marital status, career adaptability maintained a significant positive effect on both job satisfaction and life satisfaction. These findings align with Fiori et al. (2015), reinforcing the direct link between career adaptability and job satisfaction. In other words, connectedness serves as a facilitating condition that strengthens the impact of career adaptability on both job satisfaction and life satisfaction (Ng et al., 2020).

Life satisfaction reflects an individual's overall happiness across various life domains and is linked to mental well-being, including positivity and contentment with current life dimensions compared to one's ideal or desired quality of life (Diener et al., 1985; Diener & Suh, 1997). For adults balancing work, study, family, and social life, career adaptability yields two types of outcomes: immediate and delayed. The immediate outcome is job satisfaction, achieved through the effective use of internal resources (e.g., career adaptability skills) and external resources (e.g., connectedness with family, friends, university, and communities). This finding aligns with Career Construction Theory, which asserts that adaptability is crucial for career success (Savickas, 2013). The delayed outcome is life satisfaction; despite the challenges of managing work and studies, individuals feel prepared for future career uncertainties. This result supports the Lifespan, Life-Space theory, which suggests that engaging in various roles provides additional resources and confidence to navigate challenges in other life domains (Super, 1980).

Studies also highlight the role of career-related parental support in life satisfaction. Expanding on previous research on career social support (Jiang et al., 2017), recent findings suggest that career-specific parental support significantly impacts life satisfaction. Support from parents in the form of instrumental guidance, career role modeling, verbal encouragement, and emotional backing helps adolescents contemplate their future careers and take action on their career plans (Turner et al., 2003; He et al., 2023). According to the social cognitive career theory of well-being (Lent & Brown, 2006), parental support plays a crucial role in shaping overall life satisfaction. For adolescents facing career planning challenges, parental guidance serves as a valuable resource for reducing stress and enhancing life satisfaction (Byrne et al., 2007).

Ghosh et al. (2019) found that both career transition readiness and career adaptability were positively correlated with life satisfaction, with career adaptability being a particularly strong predictor. However, neither variable significantly predicted academic satisfaction. Other studies show a strong relationship between career adaptability and life satisfaction among middle school students, with resilience mediating this relationship (Santilli et al., 2020; Grossen et al., 2020). This suggests that students who effectively cope with challenges experience greater life satisfaction when they possess strong career adaptability.

Marcionetti and Rossier (2021) suggest that improvements in career adaptability enhance adolescents' perceptions of coping with life events (general self-efficacy), which in turn strengthens their career adaptability. Additionally, for Swiss adolescents, the relationship between career adaptability and life satisfaction is entirely mediated by an optimistic outlook on the future (Santilli et al., 2017). In contrast, for Italian adolescents, career adaptability directly influences life satisfaction, with an optimistic future outlook acting as a secondary factor (Santilli et al., 2017).

2.2 The Association between Career Adaptability and Turnover Intention

Career adaptability is often linked to positive outcomes, such as increased job satisfaction (Chan et al., 2015; Guan et al., 2014), which, in turn, can reduce turnover intentions (Rasheed et al., 2020). However, career adaptability can also act as a double-edged sword, potentially increasing voluntary turnover intentions (Ito & Brotheridge, 2007; Karatepe & Olugbade, 2017). The precise impact of career adaptability on employee turnover intentions remains uncertain, with conflicting findings across studies (Lee et al., 2021).

One positive view is that career adaptability can enhance career satisfaction, thereby reducing turnover intentions. Chan and Mai (2015) identified career satisfaction as a mediator in the relationship between career adaptability and turnover intentions, concluding that individuals with higher career adaptability are more likely to experience greater career satisfaction, which, in turn, decreases their likelihood of leaving their jobs. In other words, adaptable individuals may feel more secure in their roles and less dependent on their current employers, reducing their turnover intentions. Similarly, other studies have shown that adaptable employees tend to develop stronger relationships with colleagues and supervisors, fostering greater organizational commitment (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). This positive career attitude within the organization makes them less likely to leave (Chan & Mai, 2015).

Conversely, research also suggests that high career adaptability may lead to higher turnover intentions. Employees with high adaptability may be more likely to seek external career opportunities due to their increased mobility and qualifications for roles outside their current organizations (Ito & Brotheridge, 2007; Yu & Zheng, 2013). Roehling et al. (2000) argued that the security derived from career adaptability is not tied to a specific employer but rather to the employee's ability to manage career transitions and seize new opportunities. This

sense of security could encourage employees to leave their current organizations in pursuit of better prospects elsewhere (Stroh et al., 1996).

Further, research suggests that employees with high career adaptability are more receptive to career changes. Guan et al. (2013) found that employees with elevated career adaptability are more open to exploring alternative career paths, which increases their career mobility (Savickas, 2013; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). Zacher et al. (2015) support this notion, arguing that adaptable employees feel more confident in exploring new opportunities. As career adaptability enhances employability both within and outside an organization (Waterman et al., 1994), it may inadvertently increase turnover intentions, particularly when employees feel qualified for better opportunities elsewhere (Ito & Brotheridge, 2007).

To better understand the impact of career adaptability on turnover intentions, the role of work social support must be considered. Studies have shown that employees who perceive strong social support from supervisors and colleagues are more likely to stay with their organizations (Lee et al., 2021). Social support can help employees feel more committed to their current roles and less inclined to leave. On the other hand, employees who feel isolated or unsupported in the workplace may be more likely to explore external job opportunities, regardless of their career adaptability (Dawley et al., 2010). Social exchange theory suggests that employees' decisions to remain in or leave an organization are influenced by relational factors, such as perceived workplace support (Maertz et al., 2007). Even though career adaptability can foster a sense of psychological security and career growth within an organization (Rasheed et al., 2020), its positive effects may be undermined if employees perceive insufficient workplace support. Therefore, organizations must ensure that career development and social support are aligned to retain adaptable employees.

The relationship between career adaptability and turnover intentions may also vary significantly across different national contexts. For instance, in countries like Turkey, where economic fluctuations and job instability are more pronounced, employees with high career adaptability might view their adaptability as a tool for job security, which could reduce their turnover intentions (OECD, 2022). In such contexts, career adaptability might be perceived more as a safeguard against unemployment rather than a means for career advancement, leading to lower turnover intentions. In contrast, in countries with more stable employment systems, such as Italy, career adaptability may encourage employees to seek new career opportunities for personal and professional growth. With stronger labor protections and career development support, Italian employees might view career adaptability as a catalyst for mobility rather than a necessity for job security (Eurostat, 2023). This suggests that the effect of career adaptability on turnover intentions is heavily influenced by national labor market conditions and cultural attitudes toward job mobility.

In conclusion, the relationship between career adaptability and turnover intentions is complex and context dependent. While career adaptability can enhance job satisfaction and organizational commitment, it may also increase turnover intentions when employees feel empowered to explore external career opportunities. Moreover, work social support plays a crucial moderating role in determining whether highly adaptable employees remain in their organizations or leave. Additionally, cross-national differences highlight the importance of economic conditions and cultural factors in shaping this dynamic. Future research should further explore how labor market conditions, national policies, and organizational structures affect the relationship between career adaptability and turnover intentions in various cultural contexts.

2.3 The Association between Career Adaptability and Work Engagement

The contemporary career landscape is characterized by ongoing uncertainty, increasing job market flexibility, and rising workplace demands (Rudisill et al., 2009). As employees face heightened work-related pressures, their well-being and engagement become crucial factors in career sustainability (Guest, 2017). In highly competitive job markets, such as in China, growing workplace demands contribute to heightened negative emotions among employees (Zheng et al., 2015). Despite the relatively limited practical focus on employee well-being (EWB), research has consistently highlighted its significance for enhancing performance and reducing turnover (Daniel & Harris, 2000; Lyubomirsky et al., 2005; Proudfoot et al., 2009).

Career Construction Theory (Savickas, 2005) posits that individuals with high career adaptability possess strong self-regulatory skills—such as career concern, control, curiosity, and confidence—that enable them to maintain a positive outlook in the face of challenges (van Vianen et al., 2012). Several studies suggest that career adaptability may be positively associated with work engagement, as individuals who are better equipped to manage career challenges tend to demonstrate higher levels of vigor and dedication (Petrou et al., 2012; Rudolph et al., 2017).

Furthermore, career adaptability enhances employees' vocational skills, including forward-thinking concern and exploratory curiosity, which help them develop a clear sense of direction in their careers (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). Even when confronted with organizational challenges, these individuals are more likely to maintain their sense of purpose and motivation due to their ability to navigate uncertainty effectively. In contrast, employees with lower career adaptability lack these self-regulatory resources, making them more susceptible to disengagement when facing job-related stressors. The cognitive demands associated with workplace obstacles tend to impede their work engagement, resulting in diminished energy and motivation (Jiang et al., 2022).

Adaptation in a professional setting result from engaging in behaviors aimed at managing changing circumstances (Ployhart & Bliese, 2006). Career adaptation, therefore, involves mastering vocational tasks, handling job transitions, and adjusting to work-related challenges and uncertainties (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012; Hirschi et al., 2014). Within the framework of Career Construction Theory (CCT), adaptability resources promote adaptive responses that contribute to psychological adjustment through coping strategies based on engagement (Yang et al., 2019). This highlights the interconnectedness between career adaptability and work engagement, as employees who actively cultivate adaptability are better positioned to sustain high levels of workplace motivation.

With increasing globalization and diversification of the workforce, organizations can no longer assume sole responsibility for employees' career development (Biemann et al., 2012). Individuals must take an active role in managing their own careers (Kim & Jyung, 2011). In this context, employees encounter mounting challenges in adapting to shifting work environments (Savickas et al., 2009; Yang et al., 2019). Career adaptability is an essential resource that equips individuals with the skills necessary to navigate these changes effectively, ultimately fostering higher levels of work engagement.

Research has consistently demonstrated that individuals with high career adaptability experience positive outcomes, including enhanced job search behaviors, improved career decision-making (van Vianen et al., 2012), greater career exploration (Li et al., 2015), and stronger employability (McArdle et al., 2007). Additionally, career adaptability has been shown to negatively correlate with turnover intentions (Chan & Mai, 2015), further underscoring its role in sustaining work engagement.

To clarify the distinction between career adaptability and work engagement, it is important to note that work engagement refers to the extent to which employees invest their

physical, cognitive, and emotional energy into their work tasks (Kahn, 1990). Expanding on this concept, Schaufeli et al. (2002) describe work engagement as a positive state of mind marked by vigor, dedication, and absorption. While career adaptability equips employees with the psychological resources needed to navigate career challenges, work engagement reflects the degree to which employees actively immerse themselves in their tasks. This psychological state has been found to predict career adaptability (Petrou et al., 2012) and is linked to higher job performance, increased organizational commitment, and lower turnover intentions (Jones & Harter, 2005; Buil et al., 2019; Uddin et al., 2019).

One factor that may weaken the relationship between career adaptability and work engagement is job insecurity. Extremely high levels of job insecurity have been shown to reduce the positive effects of adaptability by increasing stress levels and undermining employees' motivation to engage with their work (Yoo & Lee, 2019). Additionally, core self-evaluation (CSE)—an individual's subconscious assessment of their own capabilities and worth—moderates this relationship, with those possessing higher CSE levels demonstrating stronger engagement despite job insecurity (Yoo & Lee, 2019).

Career adaptability and work engagement are particularly important for individuals experiencing intimate partner aggression (IPA). Research by Deen et al. (2021) found that IPA victims often rely on employment as a source of financial stability, personal safety, and emotional support. Employment allows them to maintain autonomy and regain self-esteem through professional achievements, making career adaptability an essential resource in sustaining work engagement despite personal adversity (Hang et al., 2006)).

Deen et al. (2021) defines career adaptability as a psychosocial strength that enables individuals to handle vocational transitions and challenges (Savickas, 2005). By fostering personal agency and self-regulation, career adaptability helps individuals maintain their work

engagement, ultimately enhancing job performance, retention, and career success. Meta-analytic findings further confirm that confidence—one of the core dimensions of career adaptability—is strongly linked to work engagement, as it reinforces employees' perseverance and self-efficacy in navigating workplace challenges (Rudolph et al., 2017).

Conversely, employees with low career concern tend to experience lower energy and resilience, resulting in dissatisfaction with their career progression and reduced work engagement (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012; Rudolph et al., 2017). Those who lack career adaptability are also less inclined to take proactive steps in shaping their professional development, making them more susceptible to disengagement and turnover (Rudolph et al., 2017).

2.4 The Association between Work Engagement and Turnover Intention

Work engagement, which refers to an employee's emotional commitment and enthusiasm for their work, has been found to have a significant inverse relationship with turnover intention, the desire of employees to leave their organization (Bakker & Demerouti, 2018; Schaufeli et al., 2019). The more engaged an employee is in their job, the less likely they are to consider quitting (Kim & Park, 2019; Lee et al., 2021). This dynamic has been a key focus of organizational behavior research, as companies aim to retain talent in an increasingly competitive job market (Albrecht et al., 2020).

Bakker and Demerouti (2018) emphasize that work engagement is fueled by the job resources available to employees, such as autonomy, social support, and opportunities for development. These resources foster engagement by enhancing the employee's ability to perform well and contribute meaningfully to their organization. In turn, high engagement leads to lower turnover intention, as employees feel valued and supported in their roles (Breevaart et al., 2014). In their study, it was observed that when employees have access to adequate job

resources, they are not only more engaged but also report lower intention to leave their jobs (Albrecht et al., 2020).

Studies also suggest that the relationship between work engagement and turnover intention is mediated by factors such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment. In a study conducted by Kim and Park (2019), work engagement was shown to positively influence job satisfaction, which in turn reduced turnover intention. Employees who are both engaged and satisfied with their work environment are less likely to consider leaving, as they experience a sense of fulfillment and alignment with the organization's goals (Kim & Park, 2019).

Furthermore, job demands, such as workload and role ambiguity, can weaken the positive effects of work engagement on turnover intention. According to Huang et al. (2020), when job demands become overwhelming, they can lead to burnout, even in engaged employees, thus increasing turnover intention. However, they also found that organizations that manage job demands effectively by providing support and balancing workloads tend to retain their engaged employees longer (Huang et al., 2020).

Additionally, personal resources like resilience and optimism play a role in moderating the relationship between work engagement and turnover intention. Employees who possess higher levels of resilience are more likely to stay engaged even in challenging work environments, thereby reducing their turnover intention (Knight et al., 2021). This was supported by the findings of Knight et al. (2021), who demonstrated that resilient employees, due to their ability to adapt to stressors, are less likely to want to leave their jobs even under demanding conditions.

The role of leadership in this dynamic has also been explored. A study by Breevaart et al. (2014) showed that transformational leadership—where leaders inspire, motivate, and support employees—has a strong positive influence on work engagement, and consequently reduces turnover intention. Engaged employees who are led by transformational leaders are

more likely to stay with the organization due to the meaningful and supportive relationship they share with their leaders (Breevaart et al., 2014).

In South Korea, newly hired employees face significant issues with high turnover and low retention rates. The Korea Employers Federation (KEF, 2016) reports that the turnover rate for new employees rose by 5% over the past five years, reaching 27.7%. This means that almost one-third of new recruits leave their jobs within a year. Such turnover represents a substantial loss for both individuals, who invest time and effort in their job search, and organizations, which allocate resources for recruitment and training, only to lose employees who have already integrated the company's values and norms (Lee, 2010). A major factor contributing to this early turnover is the employees' struggle to adjust to their roles and the organization, which accounts for 49% of the cases (KEF, 2016).

2.5 The Association between Work Engagement and Life Satisfaction

Work engagement, often defined as a positive, fulfilling state of mind characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption, has been shown to positively impact employees' overall life satisfaction (Schaufeli et al., 2019). Life satisfaction, in this context, refers to the cognitive assessment of one's quality of life based on personal criteria (Diener et al., 2018). The more engaged employees are in their work, the more likely they are to experience satisfaction in other areas of life, suggesting a strong positive association between work engagement and life satisfaction (Bakker & Oerlemans, 2019).

Multiple studies indicate that engaged employees tend to experience higher levels of life satisfaction, largely because work engagement enhances their sense of purpose and fulfillment (Bakker & Oerlemans, 2019). Engaged employees often perceive a sense of alignment between their personal values and the goals of their organization, which contributes to their sense of belonging and satisfaction (Kahn, 1990). The underlying mechanism here is that work

engagement fulfills psychological needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness, which are strongly linked to overall well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2020).

Empirical evidence suggests that work engagement acts as a buffer against stress and emotional exhaustion, contributing to life satisfaction (Shimazu et al., 2008). Engaged employees are better equipped to cope with workplace challenges and maintain a positive emotional state, improving their performance and enhancing their satisfaction with life outside of work (Rich et al., 2010). In a study by Knight et al. (2021), work engagement was found to significantly reduce negative spillover effects from work to personal life, thereby promoting greater life satisfaction.

Additionally, personal resources such as optimism, resilience, and self-efficacy further strengthen the link between work engagement and life satisfaction. According to studies by Hakanen and Schaufeli (2018), employees who are both optimistic and resilient not only engage more effectively in their work but also report higher life satisfaction. Optimism serves as a psychological buffer, enabling employees to maintain their engagement even when faced with job demands, which enhances their overall quality of life (Luthans et al., 2007).

Besides that, workplace support plays a crucial role in defining the relationship between work engagement and life satisfaction. Research by Zito et al. (2019) shows that employees who experience a high degree of support from their supervisors and colleagues tend to have higher levels of work engagement and, consequently, higher life satisfaction. The presence of a positive organizational culture that values employee well-being encourages individuals to invest more emotionally in their work, which enhances life satisfaction (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

The importance of work-life balance in this relationship cannot be overlooked. Studies by Haar et al. (2019) indicate that employees who are engaged at work but can also maintain a healthy work-life balance report significantly higher life satisfaction. When employees can

engage fully in both their professional and personal lives, they experience a more harmonious and satisfying life overall (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006).

Furthermore, work engagement has been linked to the development of meaningful relationships both inside and outside the workplace. Engaged employees are more likely to participate in social activities and build supportive networks, which contribute to their overall life satisfaction (Hakanen et al., 2019). The social connections formed through work engagement can provide emotional support and resources that further enhance personal well-being (Hakanen & Schaufeli, 2018).

Lastly, the role of leadership in fostering work engagement and enhancing life satisfaction is vital. Transformational leadership fosters an environment of trust and inspiration, which enhances employees' sense of purpose and motivation. This, in turn, strengthens their work engagement and ultimately improves their overall life satisfaction (Breevaart et al., 2014). Leaders who demonstrate empathy, provide feedback, and encourage professional development create an environment that supports engagement and, consequently, contributes to greater life satisfaction among employees (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1996).

2.6 Socioeconomic Comparison between Italy and Turkey

The socioeconomic conditions of Italy and Turkey differ significantly, particularly in terms of well-being. Well-being refers to individuals' overall sense of health, happiness, and life satisfaction, encompassing physical, financial, emotional, and work-related aspects (Joshi, Kumari, & Jain, 2008). It is often measured through frameworks like Gross National Well-being (GNW), which considers economic, environmental, physical, mental, and social dimensions (Correa, 2017; Kaka, Miller, & Rizk, 2022). These factors are crucial in understanding the socioeconomic disparities between the two countries.

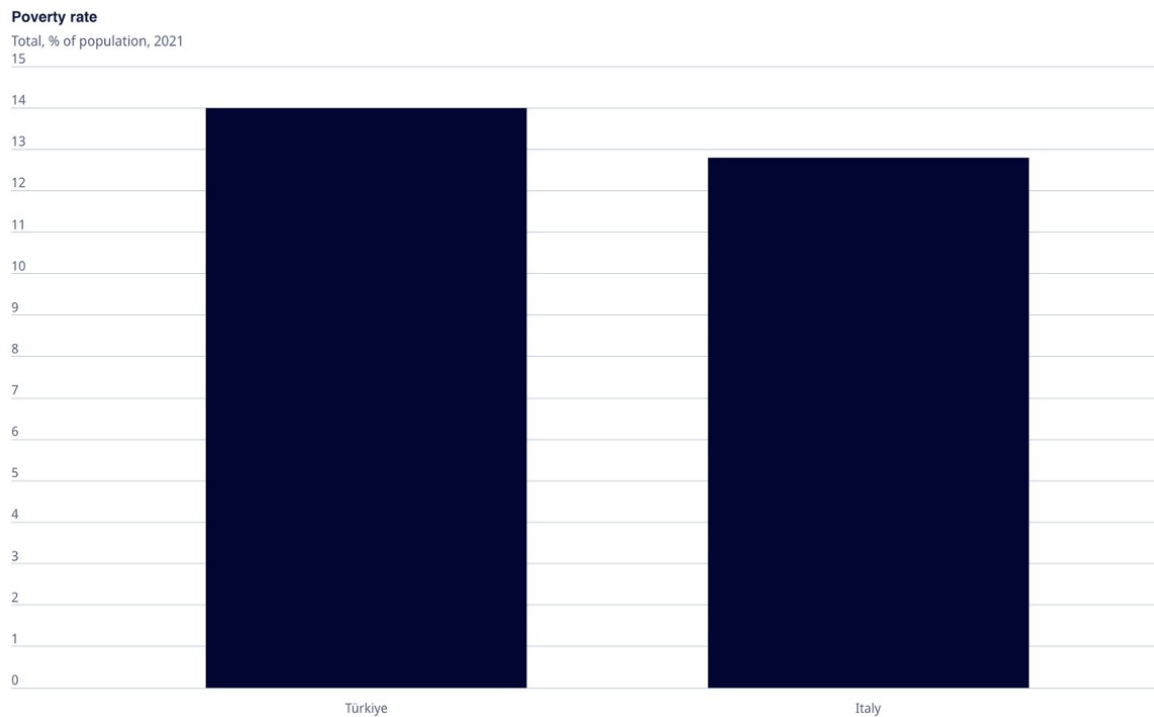
According to Ince (2024), unemployment rates in Turkey and Italy show a notable difference. The latest data indicates that Turkey's unemployment rate stands at 37.9%, while Italy's is 29.8%. However, Turkey falls below the EU average in most well-being indicators, particularly in financial and work-related well-being. In contrast, Italy benefits from a more stable economy, leading to higher life satisfaction (Ince, 2024).

Italy's economy is projected to recover in 2024-25, but high public debt limits fiscal flexibility. Delays in implementing the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP) may slow economic growth. Structural issues such as high labor taxes, weak tax collection, and low productivity—particularly in the service sector—continue to hinder progress. Limited access to higher education and persistent poverty contribute to low labor force participation, especially among women, whose employment rates remain among the lowest in the OECD. Corruption perceptions have improved but remain a concern. Additionally, Italy faces environmental challenges, including high carbon emissions, slow renewable energy expansion, and outdated vehicles that hinder decarbonization efforts (OECD, 2024).

Turkey struggles with high inflation, regulatory inefficiencies, and low labor force participation. Inflation remains a significant issue due to supply constraints, currency depreciation, and low interest rates. While public debt is relatively low, rising fiscal risks, such as foreign exchange-protected deposits, pose economic challenges. Strict regulations and declining transparency in governance create additional barriers for businesses. Labor participation, particularly among women and youth, is among the lowest in the OECD. Furthermore, low education spending exacerbates inequality and skill shortages. Environmentally, Turkey relies heavily on coal, and weak emissions policies contribute to sustainability concerns (OECD, 2024).

Poverty and Youth Employment

Figure 1: Poverty Rate in Italy and Turkey



(OECD, 2021)

Note: Poverty rate is the ratio of the population whose income falls below the poverty line.

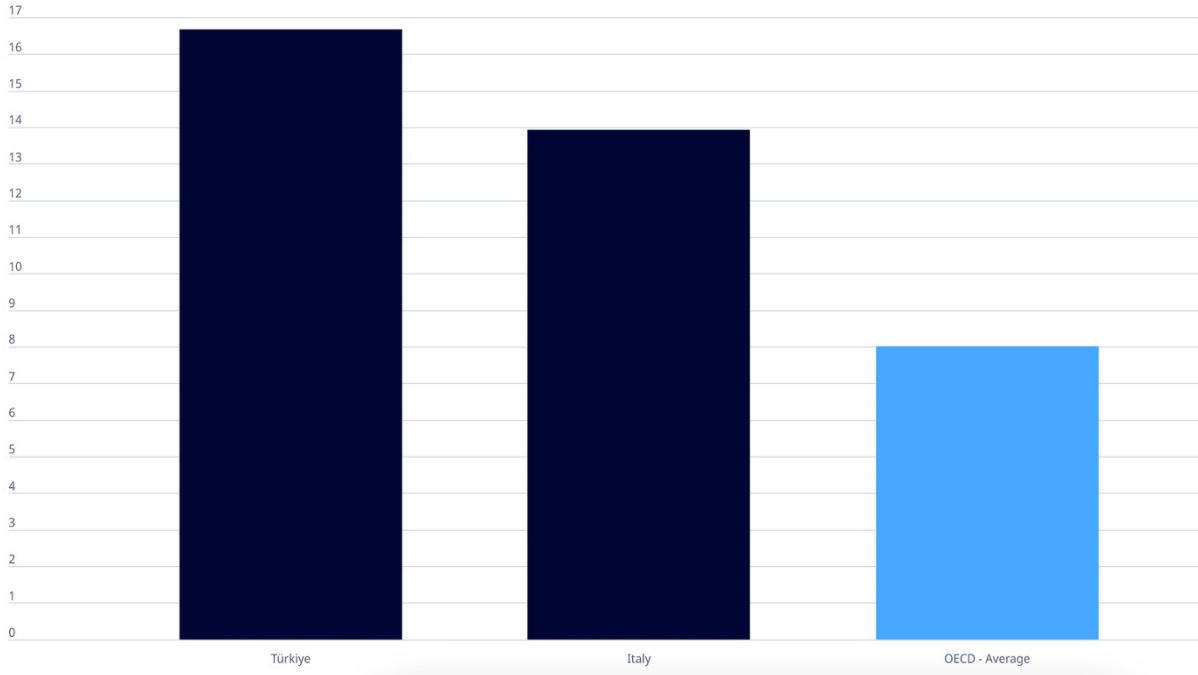
As of 2021, poverty levels in both Italy and Turkey remain high, with Turkey's poverty rate at approximately 14% and Italy's slightly lower but still exceeding 12%. Economic inequality and low labor force participation are key contributing factors. In Turkey, inadequate education spending and limited job opportunities drive poverty, while in Italy, low productivity and rising public debt exacerbate economic vulnerabilities (OECD, 2021).

Figure 2: Youth Not in Employment, Education, or Training (NEET) in Italy and Turkey

Youth not in employment, education or training (NEET)

15-19 year-olds, % in same age group, 2022

18



(OECD, 2022)

Note: This indicator presents the share of young people who are not in employment, education, or training (NEET), as a percentage of the total number of young people in the corresponding age group, by gender.

This chart illustrates the percentage of young people (aged 15-29) who are neither in employment nor in education or training (NEET) in Italy and Turkey as of 2022. In Turkey, approximately 27% of young people fall into the NEET category, while in Italy, this rate is around 23%. Both countries significantly exceed the OECD average. In Turkey, low female labor force participation and insufficient education spending contribute to the high NEET rate, whereas in Italy, labor market rigidity and economic uncertainty make it more difficult for young people to transition into employment (OECD, 2022).

When it comes to social support system and healthcare, in Turkey, social support is primarily family-based due to traditional values, whereas Italy employs a more institutionalized eldercare system. Healthcare access is a significant issue in both countries, with Turkey's rural

areas facing severe challenges due to inadequate infrastructure and a shortage of specialists (Arun & Cakiroğlu Çevik, 2011). Although people have personal preferences, they also engage in collective and public decision-making aimed at promoting the common good (Carr & Hartnett, 1996). It is important to promote the concept of responsible careers, where individuals consciously address social issues—like environmental sustainability and social justice—by making intentional choices about their jobs, desired roles, work strategies, and related actions (Sullivan & Arthur, 2006).

In the past twenty years, Italy's labor market has been shaped by globalization and rapid technological advancements, demanding that workers demonstrate increased flexibility, proactive attitudes, continuous learning, and enhanced levels of employability and career adaptability (Frese, 2001; Savickas et al., 2009).

Among European Union countries, Italy has experienced the highest rise in temporary employment, growing from 8% in the 1990s to 12.5% by 2009. Additionally, it has witnessed a surge in the number of 'reluctant' temporary workers—individuals employed on short-term contracts despite preferring otherwise (CNEL, 2010). Moreover, the lack of effective governmental policies addressing youth employment has led to young people in Italy becoming the most disadvantaged social group, facing a 17.4% unemployment rate and experiencing marginalization in the labor market (Oecd, 2011).

Ongoing transformations may affect our self-perception and worldview, as they promote intense individualism and extreme flexibility, encourage "the inculcation of calculating mentalities," and contribute to the reduction of social concerns to purely economic terms (Rose, 1999, p. 214).

Chapter 3

The Present Study

The foundation of this study is based on extensive literature exploring the impacts of life satisfaction, work engagement, turnover intention, and career adaptability on digital career adaptability. Life satisfaction and work engagement are commonly associated with greater job satisfaction and career adaptability, as highlighted in prior research (Diener et al., 1985; Schaufeli et al., 2002). Additionally, negative tendencies such as turnover intention are believed to negatively influence digital career adaptability, as individuals considering leaving their jobs may struggle adapting to the evolving demands of digital transformation (Tett & Meyer, 1993). Career adaptability, characterized as an individual's proactive and flexible response to career changes, has become increasingly relevant in the digitalized work environment (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012).

In this study, a sample group consisting of Italian and Turkish individuals was examined to assess the impact and associations of life satisfaction, work engagement, turnover intention, and career adaptability with digital career adaptability. Given the ongoing digital transformation in the workplace, understanding these relationships can aid in developing strategies to support individuals in achieving greater career satisfaction and success.

3.1 Aims and Hypotheses

This study represents a novel exploration into the concept of digital career adaptability, a field that, to my knowledge, has not yet been investigated in existing literature. Given the accelerating pace of digital transformation in the workplace, there is a pressing need to understand how factors like life satisfaction, work engagement, turnover intention, and career adaptability influence individuals' capacity to adapt to digitalized career demands.

The primary aim of this study is to examine how life satisfaction, work engagement, turnover intention, and career adaptability contribute to digital career adaptability among

Italian and Turkish individuals with various levels of job tenure. Given the importance of professional experience in shaping adaptability, participants are categorized into three groups based on their years of work experience: 0-3 years, 3-6 years, and 6+ years.

Based on theoretical foundations and prior studies of general career adaptability, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Life satisfaction will positively influence digital career adaptability in both nationalities (Bi & Wang, 2020; Santilli et al., 2017).

H2: Work engagement will have a positive association with digital career adaptability in both nationalities (Rossier et al., 2017; Rudolph et al., 2017; Savickas and Porfeli, 2012).

H3: Turnover intention will be negatively associated with digital career adaptability in both nationalities (Rasheed et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2021).

H4: Career adaptability will have a positive effect on digital career adaptability in both nationalities.

H5: The effect of life satisfaction, work engagement, turnover intention, and career adaptability on digital career adaptability will vary based on nationality and job tenure in both nationalities.

These hypotheses form the foundational framework for this study, which aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of digital career adaptability and its predictors, offering new insights into adapting to digital career demands in an evolving workplace.

3.2 Methods

3.2.1 Participants

The 338 participants consisted of individuals from Turkey and Italy. Inclusion criteria required participants to have work experience and to be either from Turkey or Italy. Participants were categorized based on their job tenure: 0-3 years, 3-6 years, and more than 6 years. Each

participant voluntarily agreed to participate in the study, confirming their understanding of the research objectives, the confidentiality of their data, its use solely for educational and research purposes, and their right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

3.2.2 Research Design

The current study aims to examine the interaction of variables such as life satisfaction, job engagement, turnover intention, career adaptability, and digital career adaptability among Turkish and Italian individuals with work experience.

Ethical approval for the current research project has been gathered from the relevant institutional review board at the University of Padua. All procedures and data collection methods adhere to the ethical guidelines outlined in the Italian legislation, including the D. Lgs.196/2003 on privacy and the EU GDPR 679/2016 on personal data protection, as well as the ethical standards stated in the Code of Conduct for Italian Psychologists. Participant confidentiality and privacy are strictly protected throughout the study, and data are assured to be handled anonymously and confidentially. I was committed to transparency and accountability in all aspects of the research process.

The current study adopted a correlational and non-experimental research design. Data for this study were collected using social media platforms, primarily Facebook and Instagram, within communities targeting individuals with work experience in various cities or regions across Italy and Turkey. A flier containing information about the university, researcher, participation requirements, survey content, and duration, along with an informed consent form, was created and used. The survey and flier were regularly shared in a wide range of groups on Facebook and Instagram for a month. 376 participants filled the survey. From these, 360 participants fully completed the survey. Out of 360, 22 influential plots were detected using Cook's distance and excluded from the analyses. Therefore, the final sample comprised 338 participants (see more details in results section).

3.2.3 Materials

Participants completed the survey of 73 items through the Google Docs platform. The survey included Likert scales, meaning that respondents rated their level of agreement with various statements on a scale, typically ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" or "never" to "always and everyday".

a. Demographic measures

The demographic section of the survey (7 items) collects information on participants' gender, country of birth, educational level, last or current occupation, countries in which they have worked, last or current job status, and duration of employment.

b. Life Satisfaction

The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) is designed to measure an individual's overall assessment of life satisfaction (Diener et al. 1985). The development of the SWLS began with the generation of 48 potential items that reflected aspects of life satisfaction and well-being. Through factor analysis, 10 items were identified that had high loadings (0.60 or above) on a common factor related to global evaluations of life. This list was then refined to five items, ensuring that the scale maintained high reliability. Participants respond to the SWLS using a 7-point Likert scale, where 1 indicates "strongly disagree" and 7 indicates "strongly agree." All five items are positively keyed, allowing the responses to be summed for a total score. The possible scores range from 5 to 35, with a neutral score of 20. Scores between 5 and 9 indicate extreme dissatisfaction with life, while scores from 31 to 35 suggest extreme satisfaction. Intermediate scores (21-25) indicate slight satisfaction, and scores between 15 and 19 reflect slight dissatisfaction. The SWLS is versatile and can be effectively used across various age groups and populations (Diener et al. 1985).

In this study, both Turkish and Italian versions of SWSL were administered. The Turkish version used a 5-point Likert scale. A high positive and statistically significant

correlation was found between the English and Turkish version ($r = 0,92$; $p = 0,000$). Validity and reliability studies conducted in Turkey have confirmed that the Turkish form is culturally appropriate and serves as a reliable tool for assessing life satisfaction, particularly among teachers working in schools affiliated with the Ministry of National Education (Dağlı, A., & Baysal, N., 2016). However, in this study, the Turkish version of the SWLS, which is based on a 5-point Likert scale, was statistically adjusted to match the original 7-point scale used in the Italian version. This transformation was applied during the analysis to ensure consistency between both versions and to allow for valid cross-cultural comparison. The Italian version of SWSL, developed by Di Fabio and Gori (2016), is a five-item, unidimensional questionnaire designed to measure cognitive components related to overall well-being, emphasizing individuals' ability to make independent evaluations. Responses are recorded on a seven-point Likert scale (Diener et al., 1985; Di Fabio & Gori, 2016). Cronbach's alpha for the Italian scale is reported as 0.85 (Di Fabio & Gori, 2016). Some examples from the SWSL are as follows: "In most ways my life is close to my ideal", "The conditions of my life are excellent".

c. Work Engagement

The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) was developed by Schaufeli et al. (2002) to measure employee work engagement. In this study, both Turkish and Italian versions of the UWES were administered. The Utrecht work engagement scale (UWES-17) was used to measure work engagement in this study. The 17-item version consists of three dimensions, namely vigor (six items) with Cronbach alpha coefficients ranging from 0.75 to 0.82, dedication (five items) with Cronbach alpha coefficients ranging from 0.88 to 0.90 and absorption (six items) with Cronbach alpha coefficients ranging from 0.70 to 0.77 (Schaufeli, Salanova, Conzalez-Romá & Bakker, 2002). A seven-point Likert-type frequency rating scale ranging between extreme values of 0 (never) and 6 (always) was used to rate work engagement

items (Schaufeli et al., 2003). Examples of scale items are: “At my work, I feel bursting with energy”, “Time flies when I’m working.”

In the Turkish version, UWES-17 is rated on a 5-point Likert scale. There are no reverse-coded items in the scale, meaning that higher scores on the scale indicate a higher level of work engagement. The reliability of UWES-TR was assessed using internal consistency and test-retest methods. The overall Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient for the scale was found to be .94. For the sub-dimensions, the reliability coefficients were .87 for "vigor," .87 for "dedication," and .84 for "absorption." To determine test-retest reliability, the scale was administered to 31 employees twice with a one-month interval. The test-retest reliability coefficient for the entire scale was .85, with .89 for "vigor," .80 for "dedication," and .69 for "absorption." (Eryilmaz, A., & Doğan, T., 2012). Work engagement was measured using the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES; Schaufeli et al., 2002), which in its original form consists of a 7-point scale ranging from 0 (never) to 6 (always). However, the Turkish adaptation of the UWES utilizes a 5-point Likert scale. For consistency across both language versions, responses obtained from Turkish participants were adjusted and interpreted in line with the original 7-point scale format, enabling more accurate cross-cultural comparison. Moreover, the Italian version of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) also exhibits strong psychometric properties, confirming its reliability and validity for measuring work engagement in healthcare workers. Factor analyses revealed a consistent three-factor structure (vigor, dedication, absorption), and internal consistency was satisfactory, with Cronbach's alpha values above .70. Construct validity was supported by significant correlations with the Maslach Burnout Inventory, aligning with expected relationships between engagement and burnout dimensions (Pisanti et al., 2008). Some examples from the survey are as follows: “At my work, I feel bursting with energy”, “I am proud of the work that I do”, “I am enthusiastic about my job”.

d. Turnover Intention

Turnover intention refers to an individual's intention to leave or stay in their current job and was measured using a 15-item scale developed by Roodt (2004). The scale's reliability is supported by a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.91 reported by Jacobs (2005). In this study, neither Turkish nor Italian versions of the Turnover Intention Scale (TIS) were available. Therefore, both scales were translated into related languages and were double-checked by the native speakers of the corresponding language. Some examples to the items of the survey can be given as follows: "I do not think about leaving my current job", "I plan to leave this job within the next year".

e. Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS)

The Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS), by Savickas & Porfeli (2012), developed through international collaboration across 13 countries, as one of which is Italy, includes 24 items across four subscales: concern, control, curiosity, and confidence, designed to assess psychosocial resources essential for career adaptability. Field testing indicated metric invariance across countries, with reliability estimates for the CAAS and its subscales ranging from acceptable to excellent. Participants responded to each item on a scale from 1 = "not strong" to 5 = "strongest".

Both the Italian and Turkish adaptations of CAAS have high Cronbach's α value, indicating that the adaptations are valid and reliable. The Cronbach's α of the CAAS was found to be 0.89 in the Italian measurement model (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012) while 0.90 in the Turkish measurement model (Kanten, 2012). Some examples from the CAAS are as follows: "Planning important things before I start", "Preparing for the future".

f. Digital career adaptability

To date, no research using digital career adaptability scale has been conducted since the tool is currently under development by the supervisor of the current thesis, the Professor Lea

Ferrari. The survey is originally under development in Italian and English. Turkish translation of the survey was done and double-checked by the researcher of the current study, whose native language is Turkish.

3.3.3 Procedure

Participants accessed the survey through the Google Forms (Google, n.d.), where they were presented with a series of questions covering demographic information and various questionnaires. The survey link and QR code, along with an introductory paragraph and a specially designed flier, were shared across social media platforms, particularly on Facebook, within communities targeting individuals with work experience in various cities or regions across Turkey and Italy. Before starting the survey, participants were presented with an informed consent form summarizing the purpose of the study, confidentiality measures, and voluntary participation. It was emphasized that participation was voluntary, and participants were not paid for their involvement in the study. Upon completion of the survey, the collected data were exported from Google Forms to an excel file and analyzed using R Studio (Posit team, 2023). Statistical analyses, including descriptive, correlation and regression analyses, were conducted to examine the relationships between variables of interest.

Chapter 4

Results

Once data collection was completed, all data from Google form was exported to a Microsoft Excel (Microsoft Corporation, 2018) spreadsheet and uploaded to R Studio programming language (Posit Team, 2023), where all the analyses were performed. Initially, subjects who did not meet the predefined exclusion criteria were excluded from the dataset. Before correlation matrices and regression models, factors such as linearity, normality, and multicollinearity were checked, and results are reported as proper for analyses. Additionally, 22 influential points were detected using Cook's distance. Two analyses were conducted with and without the influential plots. After comparing the results, it was shown that removal of influential plots strengthened the already established associations. Thus, they were excluded from the analysis. After removing these, the final sample comprised 338 participants.

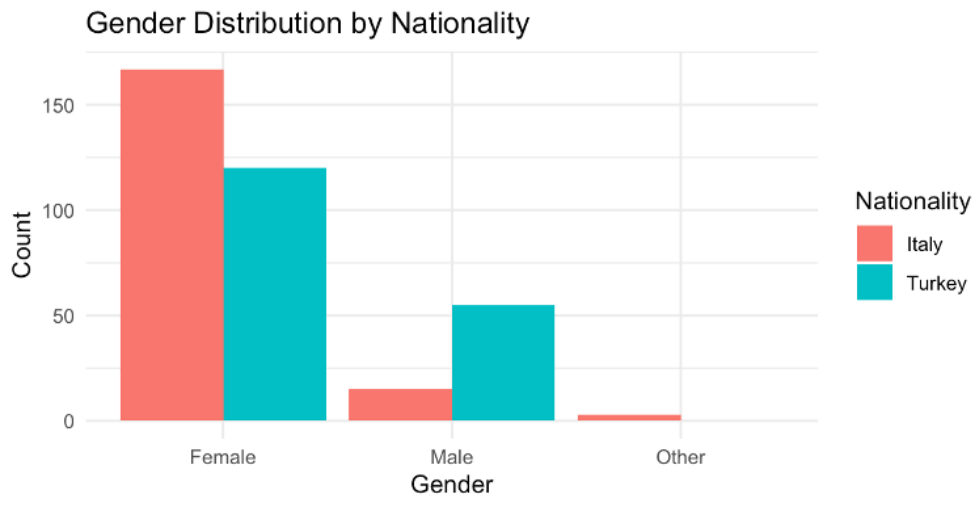
4.1 Descriptive Statistics of the Sample

Descriptive statistics were used to provide a comprehensive overview of the sample's characteristics. Various statistical measures such as mean and standard deviation were calculated to summarize the data. This preliminary analysis was essential to understand the demographic background and key variables of the participants.

4.1.1 Descriptives of Demographic Data

Figure 1

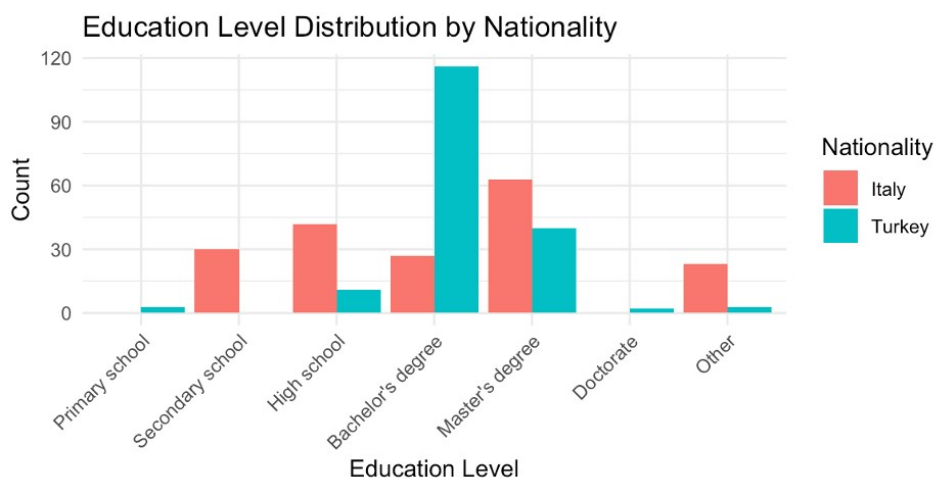
Gender distribution by nationality



Note: The bar chart provides a visual representation of distribution of gender by nationality. The count in the y-axis states the actual number of the gender of participants from both countries. For instance, from left bar to the right bar; 167,120, 15, 55, 3, 0.

Figure 2

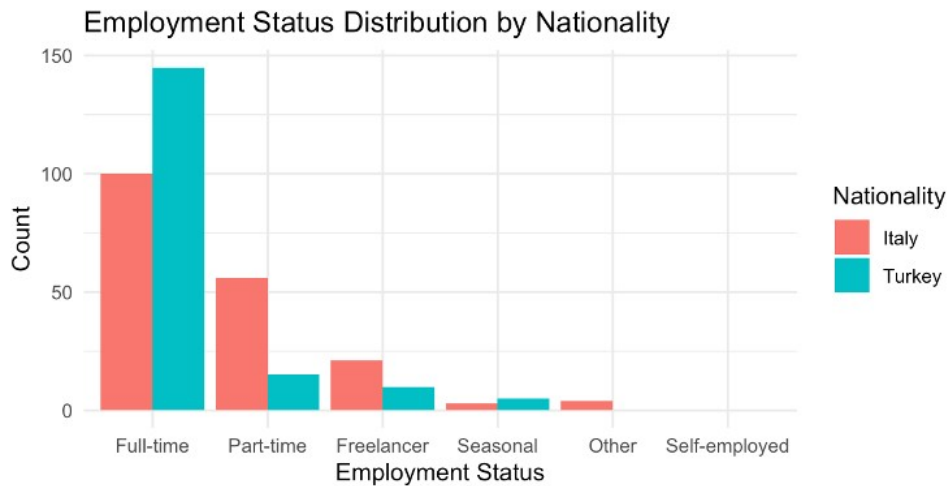
Education level distribution by nationality



Note: The bar chart provides a visual representation of the education level distribution by nationality. The count in the y-axis states the actual numbers of participants.

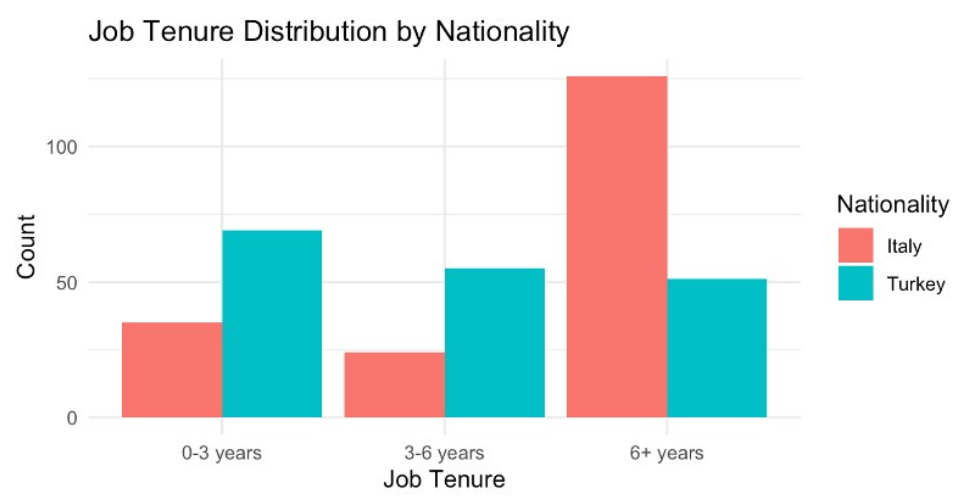
Figure 3

Employment status distribution by nationality



Note: The bar chart provides a visual representation of the employment status distribution by nationality. The count in the y-axis states the actual numbers of participants.

Figure 4



Note: The bar chart provides a visual representation of job tenure distribution by nationality. The count in the y-axis states the actual numbers of participants.

4.1.2 Descriptive of Variables: Differences between the two nationalities

Analysis of variance shows significant differences between Turkish and Italian participants on the career adaptability $F(1,374)=4.381$, $p=.037$, life satisfaction $F(1,374)=61.948$, $p=.001$, and work engagement $F(1,374)=13.327$, $p=.001$. As reported in the table, Italian participants tend to show higher scores than Turkish participants overall.

Table 1**Descriptive of variables**

Variables	Italy (M)	Italy (SD)	Turkey (M)	Turkey (SD)
SWSL	18.26	5.06	14.40	4.35
UWES	62.73	17.54	56.65	14.19
TIS	18.75	5.34	18.01	4.16
CAAS	97.80	12.53	95.14	11.95
CAAS-D	38.64	12.37	37.43	12.48

Note: The table presents the means (M) and standard deviations (SD) for the Italian and Turkish samples across different variables.

4.2 Testing the Hypotheses from 1st to 4th.

It was hypothesized that Life Satisfaction, Career Adaptability, Work Engagement, Turnover Intention would exhibit significant relationships with Digital Career Adaptability. Specifically, higher levels of Life Satisfaction, Career Adaptability, Work Engagement would be associated with higher levels of Digital Career Adaptability, while higher Turnover Intention levels would be negatively associated with Digital Career Adaptability. Pearson correlation analyses were conducted for the whole sample and for the Turkish and Italian samples separately to test these hypotheses, and the findings are summarized in the correlation matrix.

Table 2**Pearson's correlation**

Variable	SWLS	CAAS	UWES	TIS	CAAS-D
SWLS	—				
CAAS	0.31 (0.000)	—			
UWES	0.42 (0.000)	0.51 (0.000)	—		
TIS	-0.39 (0.000)	-0.11 (0.159)	-0.50 (0.000)	—	
CAAS-D	0.10 (0.194)	0.43 (0.000)	0.13 (0.092)	0.20 (0.012)	—

Note: The table shows Pearson's r and p-value of the variables of interest in the study.

The analyses revealed several significant relationships. Life Satisfaction (SWLS) was positively correlated with Career Adaptability (CAAS) ($r = 0.31$, $p < 0.001$) and Work Engagement (UWES) ($r = 0.42$, $p < 0.001$), while it was negatively correlated with Turnover Intention (TIS) ($r = -0.39$, $p < 0.001$). Career Adaptability (CAAS) was positively associated with both Work Engagement (UWES) ($r = 0.51$, $p < 0.001$) and Digital Career Adaptability ($r = 0.43$, $p < 0.001$). Additionally, Work Engagement (UWES) showed a significant negative relationship with Turnover Intention (TIS) ($r = -0.50$, $p < 0.001$). Lastly, Turnover Intention (TIS) was positively correlated with Digital Career Adaptability ($r = 0.20$, $p = 0.012$).

Below are reported the correlations for the Italian (above the diagonal) and Turkish (below the diagonal) samples.

Table 3

Pearson's correlation for the Italian and Turkish samples

Variables	SWSL	CAAS	UWES	TIS	CAAS-D
SWSL	—	0.223 (0.002)	0.445 (0.001)	-0.482 (0.001)	0.063 (0.377)
CAAS	0.291 (0.001)	—	0.195 (0.006)	-0.071 (0.316)	0.290 (0.001)
UWES	0.376 (0.001)	0.486 (0.001)	—	-0.660 (0.001)	0.033 (0.641)
TIS	-0.312 (0.001)	-0.170 (0.024)	-0.405 (0.001)	—	0.138 (0.051)
CAAS-D	-0.031 (0.686)	0.295 (0.001)	0.083 (0.274)	0.107 (0.161)	—

Note: The table shows Pearson's r (correlation coefficient) and p-values (in parentheses) for the Italian (above the diagonal) and Turkish (below the diagonal) samples.

The correlation analysis for the Italian sample revealed several significant relationships. Life satisfaction (SWLS) demonstrated a small but significant positive correlation with career adaptability (CAAS) ($r = .223, p = .002$), indicating that individuals with higher life satisfaction tend to exhibit greater career adaptability. Additionally, a moderate positive correlation was observed between life satisfaction and work engagement (UWES) ($r = .445, p = .001$), suggesting that individuals who are more satisfied with their lives are also more engaged in their work. Moreover, a strong negative correlation was found between life satisfaction and turnover intention (TIS) ($r = -.482, p = .001$), implying that individuals with higher life satisfaction are less likely to consider leaving their jobs. Career adaptability (CAAS) also showed a weak but significant positive correlation with work engagement ($r = .195, p = .006$), while digital career adaptability (CAAS-D) was moderately correlated with traditional career adaptability ($r = .290, p = .001$). Lastly, a strong negative correlation was found between work engagement and turnover intention ($r = -.660, p = .001$), indicating that employees with higher engagement levels are significantly less likely to have intentions of leaving their jobs.

For the Turkish sample, similar patterns of significant correlations were observed. Life satisfaction (SWLS) was moderately and positively correlated with career adaptability (CAAS) ($r = .291, p = .001$), indicating that individuals with higher life satisfaction tend to

exhibit better career adaptability. Similarly, a moderate positive correlation was found between life satisfaction and work engagement (UWES) ($r = .376, p = .001$), suggesting that individuals who are more satisfied with their lives are also more engaged in their work. Additionally, a moderate negative correlation was found between life satisfaction and turnover intention (TIS) ($r = -.312, p = .001$), indicating that individuals with higher life satisfaction are less likely to consider leaving their jobs. In line with the Italian sample, a moderate positive correlation was observed between career adaptability and digital career adaptability (CAAS-D) ($r = .295, p = .001$). Furthermore, work engagement showed a moderate negative correlation with turnover intention ($r = -.405, p = .001$), suggesting that individuals with higher engagement levels are less likely to have turnover intentions. Lastly, the correlation between turnover intention and digital career adaptability ($r = .138, p = .051$) approached significance but did not reach the conventional threshold for statistical significance, indicating that no strong conclusion can be drawn about this relationship.

4.3 Main Regression

To examine the differences in relationships between Turkish and Italian participants, multiple linear regression analyses were conducted separately for each sample. In the Turkish sample, Life Satisfaction, Work Engagement, Turnover Intention, and Career Adaptability were entered as independent variables, with Digital Career Adaptability as the dependent variable. The same regression model was then applied to the Italian sample.

Table 4

Main regression, Turkish Sample

Main Regression	Estimate (β)	Standard Error	t-value	p-value
Intercept	-1.50617	0.65965	-2.283	0.023772*
SWSL	0.03596	0.03969	0.906	0.366376
UWES	0.01424	0.04987	0.286	0.775635
TIS	0.40080	0.11734	3.416	0.000812***
CAAS	0.81368	0.15852	5.133	8.43e-07***

*Note: The table shows the estimate, standard error (Sd error), t-value, p-value of main regression analysis results in the Turkish sample. Asterisks symbol is used to indicate statistically significant results: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$*

The model was significant, with an F-statistic of 13.2 ($p < 0.001$), explaining approximately 25.4% of the variance in Digital Career Adaptability ($R^2 = 0.2541$). Among the predictors, Turnover Intention (TIS) ($\beta = 0.4008$, $t(155) = 3.416$, $p < 0.001$) and Career Adaptability (CAAS) ($\beta = 0.8137$, $t(155) = 5.133$, $p < 0.001$) were significant positive predictors. Higher turnover intention and career adaptability were associated with higher digital career adaptability. However, Life Satisfaction (SWSL) ($\beta = 0.03596$, $t(155) = 0.906$, $p = 0.3664$) and Work Engagement (UWES) ($\beta = 0.01424$, $t(155) = 0.286$, $p = 0.7756$) were not significant predictors. These findings suggest that turnover intention and career adaptability are important factors influencing digital career adaptability among Turkish participants, while life satisfaction and work engagement do not appear to play a significant role in this context.

Table 5

Main regression, Italian Sample

Main Regression	Estimate (β)	Standard Error	t-value	p-value
Intercept	-0.27478	0.80332	-0.342	0.7327
SWSL	0.03651	0.07291	0.501	0.6172
UWES	-0.04147	0.07429	-0.558	0.5774
TIS	0.25499	0.12847	1.985	0.0487*
CAAS	0.67473	0.14048	4.803	3.37e-06***

*Note: The table shows the estimate, standard error (Sd error), t-value, p-value of main regression analysis results in the Italian sample. Asterisks symbol is used to indicate statistically significant results: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$*

The model was significant, with an F-statistic of 7.66 ($p < 0.001$), explaining approximately 15.1% of the variance in Digital Career Adaptability ($R^2 = 0.1506$). Among the predictors, Turnover Intention (TIS) ($\beta = 0.25499$, $t(173) = 1.985$, $p = 0.0487$) and Career Adaptability (CAAS) ($\beta = 0.6747$, $t(173) = 4.803$, $p < 0.001$) were significant positive predictors. Higher turnover intention and career adaptability were associated with higher digital career adaptability. However, Life Satisfaction (SWSL) ($\beta = 0.0365$, $t(173) = 0.501$, $p = 0.6172$) and Work Engagement (UWES) ($\beta = -0.0415$, $t(173) = -0.558$, $p = 0.5774$) were not significant predictors.

Both models showed that Career Adaptability (CAAS) was a significant positive predictor of Digital Career Adaptability in both Turkish ($\beta = 0.8137$, $t(155) = 5.134$, $p < 0.001$) and Italian ($\beta = 0.6747$, $t(173) = 4.803$, $p < 0.001$) participants. Turnover Intention (TIS) was a significant predictor for Turkish participants ($\beta = 0.4008$, $t(155) = 3.416$, $p < 0.001$) but only for Italian participants at a marginal level ($\beta = 0.25499$, $t(173) = 1.985$, $p = 0.0487$). Life Satisfaction (SWSL) and Work Engagement (UWES) were not significant predictors in either group. The explanatory power of the models differed, with the Turkish model explaining 25.4% of the variance, compared to 15.1% in the Italian model.

4.4 Hierarchical regression, Testing the 5th Hypothesis

To examine whether the effects of life satisfaction, work engagement, turnover intention, and career adaptability on digital career adaptability vary based on nationality and job tenure, a hierarchical regression analysis was conducted. This method allowed for an in-depth exploration of how these relationships are influenced by the proposed moderators.

The analysis began with a base model, where digital career adaptability was the dependent variable. The independent variables—life satisfaction, work engagement, turnover intention, and career adaptability—were included in the model alongside nationality and job tenure. This provided a baseline understanding of how these predictors influence digital career adaptability without accounting for interaction effects.

Following the base model, eight additional models were constructed to systematically examine moderation effects. In each model, an interaction term was added to test the moderating role of job tenure and nationality (country of birth) for each independent variable. Specifically, the models were structured as follows:

- Baseline model: Includes the main effects of all predictors (life satisfaction, work engagement, turnover intention, and career adaptability), along with nationality and job tenure.
- 1st model: Adds the interaction term *Job Tenure:Life Satisfaction*.
- 2nd model: Adds the interaction term *Job Tenure:Work Engagement*.
- 3rd model: Adds the interaction term *Job Tenure:Turnover Intention*.
- 4th model: Adds the interaction term *Job Tenure:Career Adaptability*.
- 5th model: Adds the interaction term *Country of Birth:Life Satisfaction*.
- 6th model: Adds the interaction term *Country of Birth:Work Engagement*.
- 7th model: Adds the interaction term *Country of Birth:Turnover Intention*.

- 8th model: Adds the interaction term *Country of Birth:Career Adaptability*.

This approach allowed for a detailed evaluation of whether and how job tenure and nationality moderated the relationships between each predictor and digital career adaptability.

The results of the hierarchical regression analysis are presented in the following table (See Table 4).

Table 6

Hierarchical regression model

Model	R-squared	Adjusted R-squared	F-statistics (df)	P-value
Baseline	0.2082	0.1914	12.04 (7, 330)	4.205e-14
Model 1	0.2155	0.1939	10.01 (9, 328)	1.33e-13
Model 2	0.2147	0.1932	9.967 (9, 328)	1.53e-13
Model 3	0.209	0.1873	9.629 (9, 328)	4.62e-13
Model 4	0.2103	0.1887	9.708 (9, 328)	3.566e-13
Model 5	0.2083	0.189	10.82 (8, 329)	1.547e-13
Model 6	0.2087	0.1895	10.85 (8, 329)	1.42e-13
Model 7	0.209	0.1898	10.87 (8, 329)	1.341e-13
Model 8	0.2101	0.1909	10.94 (8, 329)	1.072e-13

Note: The table presents R-squared, adjusted R-squared, F-statistics (degrees of freedom), and p-values for the hierarchical regression model. Higher R-squared values indicate better model fit, and lower p-values suggest statistical significance.

The baseline model provides the foundation for understanding how the independent variables such as life satisfaction, work engagement, turnover intention, career adaptability, nationality, and job tenure predict digital career adaptability. The R-squared value of 0.2082 indicates that approximately 20.82% of the variance in digital career adaptability is explained by the predictors in this model. Additionally, the model is statistically significant ($p < .0001$),

suggesting that the predictors collectively have a meaningful relationship with the dependent variable.

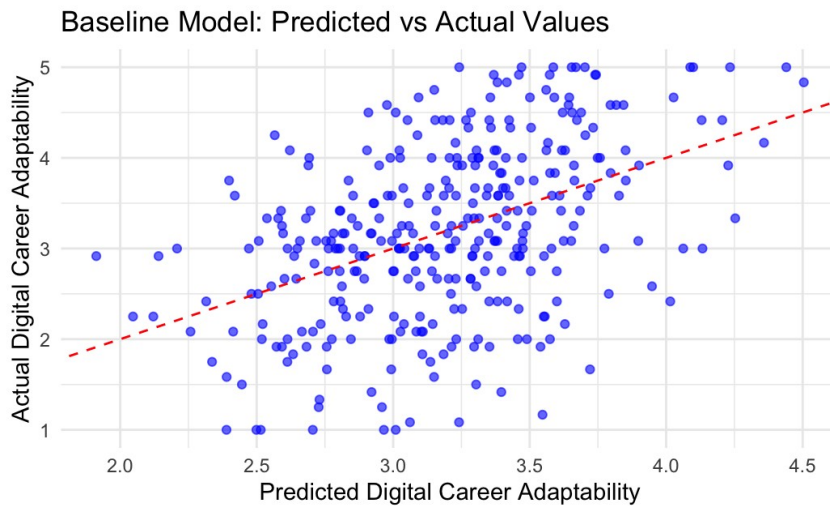
Subsequent models 1 to 4 incorporate interaction terms between job tenure and each predictor. Model 1, which includes the interaction between job tenure and life satisfaction, shows a slight improvement in R-squared (0.2155), indicating a marginal increase in explanatory power compared to the baseline model (See figure 12). This model exhibits the largest improvement in R-squared among the models that test job tenure as a moderator. In contrast, models 2 to 4, which examine interactions with work engagement, turnover intention, and career adaptability, demonstrate minimal or negligible changes in R-squared, with values similar to the baseline model.

Models 5 to 8 include interaction terms between nationality and each predictor. The R-squared values for these models range from 0.2083 to 0.2101, showing minimal improvement over the baseline model. The effects of the interaction terms appear limited, suggesting that nationality has a less significant moderating role compared to job tenure.

The adjusted R-squared values follow similar trends as the R-squared values, indicating that the inclusion of the interaction terms does not lead to a substantial improvement in model fit. F-statistics remain significant across all models, suggesting that the predictors, including the interaction terms, collectively explain variance in digital career adaptability.

Figure 5

Baseline model: Predicted vs. Actual Values

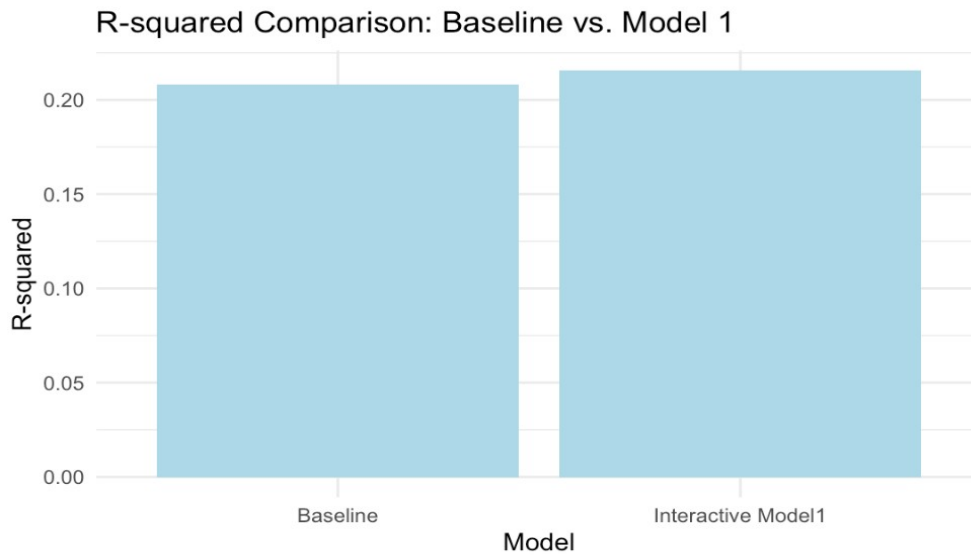


Note: This scatterplot shows the relationship between the predicted values of Digital Career Adaptability (generated by the baseline model) and the actual observed values. The red dashed line represents the ideal scenario where predictions perfectly align with actual values (a 1:1 relationship).

Although there is a positive trend, as shown by the general alignment of points along the diagonal, the dispersion suggests that the model does not fully explain the variability in the outcome (%20.82).

Figure 6

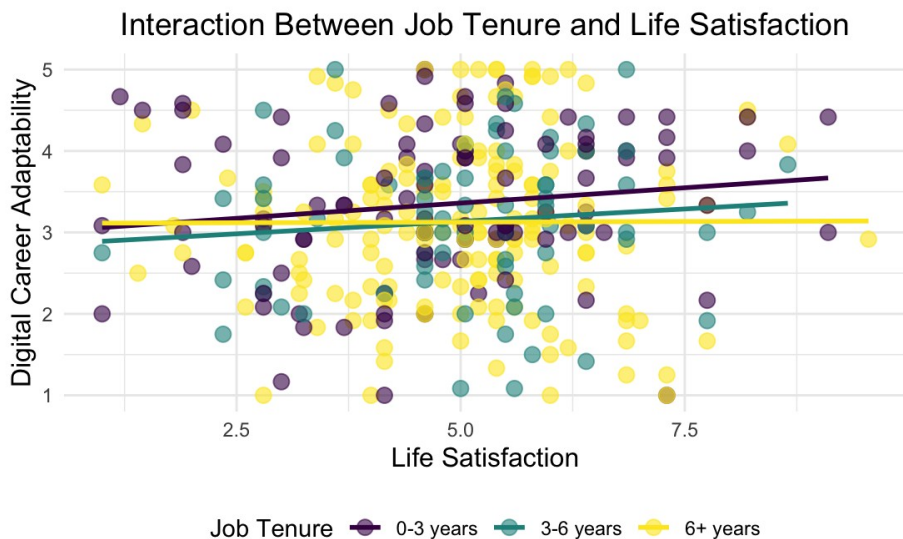
R-squared values for baseline and first interactive model



Note: The bar plot graph shows the statistically significant r-squared value differences between the base model and 1st interactive model that includes the interaction between job tenure and life satisfaction.

Figure 7

Interaction between Job Tenure and Life Satisfaction



Note: Scatter plot with regression lines show the relationship between life satisfaction and digital career adaptability over the different levels of job tenure (0-3, 3-6, 6+).

The interaction plot demonstrates how the relationship between Life Satisfaction and Digital Career Adaptability varies across different levels of Job Tenure. Overall, higher Life Satisfaction is associated with greater Digital Career Adaptability, but the strength of this relationship differs by tenure group. For individuals with 0–3 years of tenure, the relationship is the strongest, as indicated by the steepest purple slope. This suggests that early in their careers, individuals may rely more on their subjective well-being, such as life satisfaction, to adapt to digital career challenges. In contrast, for those with 3–6 years of tenure, the relationship is positive but weaker. For individuals with more than 6 years of tenure, the slope is almost flat, suggesting that life satisfaction has little influence on digital career adaptability in this group.

Chapter 5

Discussion

Digital career adaptability, a novel construct, has become increasingly relevant in today's dynamic and technology-driven workplace. Previous research has highlighted the benefits of career adaptability, including enhanced career satisfaction, employability, and life satisfaction (Blokker et al., 2019; Hartung & Cadaret, 2017; Savickas, 2013; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). However, its questionnaire is under development and limited attention has been given to how digital career adaptability interacts with other well-established psychological constructs, such as life satisfaction, work engagement, turnover intention, and career adaptability.

Given the increasing importance of digital career adaptability, this study examined its associations with life satisfaction, work engagement, turnover intention, and career adaptability. Additionally, the study explored whether these relationships varied across different cultural and professional backgrounds, including nationality and job tenure. By addressing these gaps, this research provides a deeper understanding of digital career adaptability and its relationship with other related variables. Furthermore, the study not only examined digital career adaptability as an outcome variable but also investigated the relationships among the predictor variables to offer a more comprehensive perspective on their interconnections within the career adaptability framework.

5.1 First Hypothesis

The study hypothesized that life satisfaction would positively influence digital career adaptability. The correlation analysis conducted separately for Turkish and Italian participants revealed differing results. In the Italian sample, there was a small but significant positive correlation between life satisfaction (SWLS) and career adaptability (CAAS) ($r = .223$, $p = .002$), while its correlation with digital career adaptability (CAAS-D) was not statistically significant ($r = .063$, $p = .377$). However, in the Turkish sample, there is a significant correlation

between SWSL and CAAS, again, between SWSL and CAAS-D, no correlation has been found ($r = -0.031$, $p = .686$). These findings suggest that life satisfaction does not have a direct and consistent impact on digital career adaptability across both cultural contexts. While prior research has linked life satisfaction with career adaptability in general (Blokker et al., 2019; Savickas, 2013), its role in digital career adaptability remains unclear and may be influenced by other mediating variables. This pattern is consistent with previous research showing a robust positive relationship between career adaptability and life satisfaction, primarily mediated by job satisfaction and moderated by contextual resources such as connectedness and optimism (Ng et al., 2020; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). While life satisfaction has been shown to enhance psychological readiness for career transitions (Ramos & Lopez, 2018; Hartung & Cadaret, 2017), its effect on digital career adaptability may be limited due to the complex interplay of digital competencies, technological access, and systemic support. The lack of a significant predictive role of life satisfaction in digital career adaptability in this study could be attributed to the specific cognitive, technical, and contextual demands required for navigating digital career environments. Therefore, while general life satisfaction supports career adaptability through psychosocial well-being, its contribution to digital career adaptability may require the presence of additional factors such as digital self-efficacy, infrastructure, and domain-specific training.

The main regression model for the Turkish dataset also revealed that life satisfaction (SWSL) was not a significant predictor of digital career adaptability ($\beta = 0.03596$, $p = 0.3664$). For the Italian dataset, life satisfaction (SWSL) was also not a significant predictor of digital career adaptability ($\beta = 0.0365$, $p = 0.6172$). Moreover, in the hierarchical regression models, the results followed the same trend, resulting that life satisfaction remained insignificant in its relationship with digital career adaptability.

5.2 Second Hypothesis

It was hypothesized that work engagement would have a positive association with digital career adaptability. The analysis revealed that in the Italian sample, work engagement (UWES) had a weak but significant positive correlation with career adaptability (CAAS) ($r = .195, p = .006$), while its correlation with digital career adaptability (CAAS-D) was not statistically significant ($r = .033, p = .641$). In contrast, in the Turkish sample, work engagement showed a stronger and significant correlation with career adaptability ($r = .486, p = .001$), but again, its correlation with digital career adaptability was not significant ($r = .083, p = .274$). These findings suggest that while work engagement is positively related to career adaptability in both cultural contexts, its direct link to digital career adaptability is weak. These results align with existing literature highlighting a positive association between career adaptability and work engagement (Petrou et al., 2012; Rudolph et al., 2017). Individuals with high adaptability are more likely to remain engaged, particularly when faced with professional uncertainty (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012; Yang et al., 2019). However, the reverse direction—whether work engagement leads to higher adaptability has received less attention. While some studies suggest that engaged employees may develop greater adaptability through sustained motivation and commitment (Jiang et al., 2022), others point out that external factors, such as job insecurity, may weaken this effect (Yoo & Lee, 2019). The present study's findings suggest that although work engagement is associated with general career adaptability, it does not significantly predict digital career adaptability. This distinction may be due to the unique cognitive and technological demands embedded in digital adaptability, which require not only motivation but also domain-specific resources, digital literacy, and structural support. Thus, work engagement alone may be insufficient for fostering digital career adaptability, especially in rapidly evolving digital environments. This implies that work engagement alone may not be a strong predictor of digital career adaptability, and other influencing factors should be considered.

The main regression analysis for the Turkish dataset indicated that Work Engagement (UWES) was not a significant predictor of Digital Career Adaptability ($\beta = 0.01424$, $p = 0.7756$). Similarly, the Italian dataset also showed that Work Engagement (UWES) was not a significant predictor of Digital Career Adaptability ($\beta = -0.04147$, $p = 0.5774$). Moreover, in the hierarchical regression models, the results followed the same trend, resulting that work engagement.

5.3 Third Hypothesis

It was hypothesized that turnover intention would be negatively associated with digital career adaptability. The correlation analysis showed that in the Italian sample, turnover intention (TIS) had a small and non-significant negative relationship with career adaptability (CAAS) ($r = -.071$, $p = .316$) and a weak, marginally significant positive correlation with digital career adaptability (CAAS-D) ($r = 0.138$, $p = 0.051$). In the Turkish sample, turnover intention also had a significant negative correlation with career adaptability ($r = -.170$, $p = .024$) and a non-significant positive correlation with digital career adaptability ($r = .107$, $p = .161$).

These results suggest that turnover intention may have a small negative effect on career adaptability across both cultural contexts. However, its potential influence on digital career adaptability remains inconclusive, as the results were weak and only marginally significant in the Italian sample. This could indicate that individuals considering job transitions may be exploring digital career skills, but further research is needed to clarify this relationship.

The main regression analysis for the Turkish dataset revealed that Turnover Intention (TIS) was a significant positive predictor of Digital Career Adaptability ($\beta = 0.4008$, $p = 0.0008$). Similarly, the analysis for the Italian dataset indicated that Turnover Intention (TIS) was a significant positive predictor ($\beta = 0.2550$, $p = 0.0487$). Moreover, in the hierarchical regression models, turnover intention consistently emerged as a significant predictor of digital

career adaptability. For the baseline model, the estimate was $\beta = 0.3339$ ($p < 0.001$), and for the strongest interactive model, the estimate remained largely unchanged ($\beta = 0.3335$, $p < 0.001$).

In summary, correlation analyses and regression analyses stated different results for the relationship between turnover intention and digital career adaptability. This discrepancy suggests the presence of suppression or confounding effects, where other variables in the regression model (e.g., CAAS, job tenure) may control for shared variance and reveal the unique contribution of turnover intention. Such a finding highlights the added value of multivariate models in uncovering underlying relationships that are not evident at the bivariate level. Future studies should further explore this relationship by testing potential mediators (e.g., digital self-efficacy, perceived opportunity structures) or moderators (e.g., organizational support) that might clarify how individuals with higher turnover intention engage with digital adaptability resources potentially as a proactive coping strategy when contemplating career change.

5.4 Fourth Hypothesis

It was hypothesized that career adaptability would have a positive effect on digital career adaptability. The analysis revealed a moderate and significant positive correlation between career adaptability (CAAS) and digital career adaptability (CAAS-D) in both samples. Specifically, in the Italian sample, career adaptability was significantly correlated with digital career adaptability ($r = .290$, $p = .001$), while in the Turkish sample, the correlation was slightly stronger ($r = 0.295$, $p = 0.001$).

The main regression analysis for the Turkish dataset showed that Career Adaptability (CAAS) was a significant positive predictor of Digital Career Adaptability ($\beta = 0.81368$, $p < 0.001$). Similarly, for the Italian dataset, Career Adaptability (CAAS) also significantly predicted Digital Career Adaptability ($\beta = 0.67473$, $p < 0.001$).

In the hierarchical regression models, the baseline model showed that Career Adaptability (CAAS) remained a strong and significant predictor ($\beta = 0.73908$, $p < 0.001$). The best performing interactive model, which is the first interactive model, produced similar results, with Career Adaptability (CAAS) continuing to have a significant positive effect ($\beta = 0.75662$, $p < 0.001$).

The results are consistent with each other and with the hypothesis. The Career Adaptability Scale (CAAS) served as the basis for developing Digital Career Adaptability (CAAS-D). Thus, it is reasonable to conclude that they are strongly associated. However, it is important to investigate why certain variables of interest were associated with career adaptability but not with digital career adaptability, or vice versa.

5.5 Fifth Hypothesis

It was hypothesized that the effect of life satisfaction, work engagement, turnover intention, and career adaptability on digital career adaptability would vary based on nationality and job tenure. The baseline hierarchical regression model revealed significant predictors of digital career adaptability. Specifically, turnover intention ($\beta = 0.3339$, $p < 0.001$) and career adaptability ($\beta = 0.7391$, $p < 0.001$) were positively associated with digital career adaptability. Job tenure showed a negative association ($\beta = -0.1910$, $p = 0.025$), while life satisfaction, work engagement, and nationality did not emerge as significant predictors. The overall model explained 20.8% of the variance in digital career adaptability ($R^2 = 0.2082$, $p < 0.001$).

In the interactive model, the inclusion of interactions between life satisfaction and job tenure revealed nuanced effects. The interaction term for life satisfaction and the linear job tenure component approached significance ($\beta = -0.0844$, $p = 0.084$), suggesting a potential moderating role of job tenure in the relationship between life satisfaction and digital career

adaptability. However, other interaction terms were not significant. The model explained slightly more variance than the baseline model ($R^2 = 0.2155$, $p < 0.001$).

These findings highlight that while turnover intention and career adaptability consistently influence digital career adaptability, the moderating effects of job tenure and nationality are less clear and warrant further investigation. The relationship between turnover intention and career adaptability has been a subject of debate in existing literature, with studies offering both negative and positive associations. Some research suggests that career adaptability can foster job and career satisfaction, thereby reducing turnover intention (Chan & Mai, 2015; Rasheed et al., 2020). Adaptable individuals may feel more secure in their roles and develop stronger organizational commitment, making them less likely to leave (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012; Lee et al., 2021). This tendency may be especially evident in unstable labor markets, such as Turkey, where adaptability is perceived as a strategy for maintaining job security (OECD, 2022).

However, other studies have pointed out that higher career adaptability can also be associated with increased turnover intention. Adaptable employees may feel more confident in their employability and become more open to external opportunities that align better with their goals (Ito & Brotheridge, 2007; Yu & Zheng, 2013; Zacher et al., 2015). In this view, adaptability enables individuals to pursue career advancement beyond their current roles, particularly when they perceive better prospects elsewhere (Stroh et al., 1996; Waterman et al., 1994). These divergent findings underscore the context-dependent nature of the relationship between career adaptability and turnover intention and point to the influence of labor market conditions, social support, and individual agency.

It is important to discuss the possible underlying reasons behind the moderating effect of job tenure although it is not strong. The strongest association is seen in individuals with 0–3 years of tenure, indicating that early-career professionals rely more on their well-being to

navigate digital career challenges. For those with 3–6 years of tenure, the relationship remains positive but weaker. In contrast, for individuals with more than 6 years of tenure, life satisfaction has little influence on digital career adaptability, as reflected in the nearly flat slope. This pattern suggests that early-career professionals (0–3 years) might depend more on personal well-being (e.g., life satisfaction) to handle career changes, possibly because they are still developing professional skills and networks. As tenure increases, individuals may gain more experience, confidence, and industry-specific skills, reducing their reliance on life satisfaction to adapt digitally. For those with 6+ years of tenure, adaptability may be shaped more by accumulated expertise, professional stability, and external career factors rather than subjective well-being.

In conclusion, this study offers an exploratory contribution to the emerging field of digital career adaptability by examining its distinct associations with key psychological and career-related variables. The findings highlight that while digital career adaptability is conceptually related to general career adaptability, it also demonstrates unique patterns of association, suggesting it captures additional, context-specific dimensions. These results underscore the need for further validation and refinement of the CAAS-D tool and point to the importance of investigating digital adaptability as a separate construct in future research.

5.6 Limitations

While this study provides valuable insights into the relationships between life satisfaction, work engagement, turnover intention, career adaptability, and digital career adaptability across Turkish and Italian samples, several limitations must be acknowledged. The study utilized convenience sampling, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. The demographic differences between nationalities such as gender, educational level, and job tenure can be given as an example to this. Furthermore, the study did not rely on age, but experience, which could have been an important factor influencing digital career adaptability and other

variables. Additionally, the cross-sectional design of this study limits the ability to infer causal relationships between variables. Since data were collected at a single point in time, it remains unclear whether life satisfaction directly influences career adaptability and work engagement over time, or whether these relationships are reciprocal. Future research might prefer employing longitudinal designs to better capture these dynamic relationships. Moreover, although well-established scales were used potential measurement bias cannot be ruled out. Cultural and linguistic nuances in the translation and adaptation of these scales may have influenced participants' responses. In some scales, surveys had to be translated to be used in the research. Additionally, the Digital Career Adaptability is a relatively new construct, and its scale might require further validation across diverse populations. Given that digital transformation progresses at different rates across countries and industries, the interpretation of digital career adaptability might vary. Future studies could test the scale's validity across different cultural and occupational groups to ensure its applicability. Additionally, the hierarchical regression analyses revealed subtle effects, particularly with respect to interactions between life satisfaction and job tenure. However, these interactions were not consistently significant, possibly reflecting insufficient statistical power or complexity in the underlying relationships. Furthermore, all measures relied on self-reported data, which can be subject to social desirability bias and common method variance. Although steps were taken to ensure anonymity and minimize bias, the potential for inaccuracies in self-reported responses remains. Moreover, this study did not account for additional potential confounding factors such as organizational support, digital literacy, or access to technological resources, which might influence digital career adaptability. Furthermore, notable socioeconomic disparities between Italy and Turkey may also have influenced the study's outcomes. Differences in economic stability, access to resources, and employment conditions could shape individuals' experiences of life satisfaction, work engagement, and adaptability. Particularly in the current Turkish

context, the erosion of the middle class and increasing financial precarity may significantly impact participants' perceptions of career development and digital adaptability. These structural inequalities were not directly measured in the current study, yet they may act as underlying variables influencing the results. Additionally, variations in educational attainment between the two national samples might have played a substantial role in shaping career adaptability and digital career adaptability. Higher levels of education generally provide individuals with broader access to information, digital tools, and career development opportunities. Notably, discrepancies between the survey responses and publicly available OECD socioeconomic data suggest that participants may come from highly polarized income groups, with a concentration in either low-income or high-income segments of society. This could indicate an emerging socio-economic divide that may have influenced how individuals perceive and report their career-related experiences. Moreover, some inconsistencies observed in participants' responses might reflect individual-level ambiguity or defensiveness in self-reporting sensitive socioeconomic realities. Future studies could incorporate these variables to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the topic.

5.7 Future Research

Building on the limitations of this study, future research should aim to address several areas. Firstly, future studies should strive for more diverse and representative samples. The demographic differences observed in this study, such as variations in gender distribution, educational level, and job tenure between Turkish and Italian participants, highlight the importance of considering broader, more balanced populations. Employing random sampling methods and larger sample sizes could enhance the generalizability of the findings. Secondly, further validation of the Digital Career Adaptability construct is recommended, particularly in cross-cultural contexts. Researchers could refine the scale by testing it in diverse settings to ensure its reliability and applicability across varying cultural and occupational groups. Thirdly,

longitudinal studies would be beneficial to examine the dynamic nature of these relationships over time. Moreover, integrating additional variables, such as organizational support, digital literacy, or access to technological resources, could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors shaping digital career adaptability. These variables might explain the subtle and complex interactions observed in the hierarchical regression analyses. Finally, employing mixed methods approaches, including qualitative interviews or focus groups, could complement quantitative findings by uncovering deeper insights into participants' experiences and perceptions, particularly regarding cultural and contextual influences.

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