



INVESTIGATION OF CAREER ADAPTABILITY OF TEACHERS WORKING IN SPECIAL EDUCATION SCHOOLS

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate the career adaptability of Turkish teachers working in special education schools in terms of psychological well-being and job satisfaction. The study group consist of 214 Turkish teachers working in the special education training in İstanbul. Personal Information Form, Career Adaptability Scale, Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire and Psychological Well-Being Scale were collected in the study. In the analysis of the findings obtained in the study, multiple regression analysis, t-test and ANOVA techniques were used. When the research findings are examined, female Turkish teachers working in special education schools have higher career adaptability than male Turkish teachers. Besides, Turkish teachers in the age range of 36-40 have more career adaptability than other age groups. According to the results of the research, job satisfaction and psychological well-being are important variables explaining career adaptability of Turkish teachers working in special education schools.

Keywords: Career adaptability, Turkish teacher, psychological well-being, job satisfaction, career development.

INTRODUCTION

Career adaptability is defined as skills that help individuals successfully manage career-related transitions and adjustments over the course of their career development (Savickas, 2013). These abilities are discussed through an examination of four distinct dimensions. The first is career concern, which refers to an individual's planning skills regarding their career development. The second aspect is career control, which encompasses the ability of individuals to make decisions and take responsibility for their career development. The third facet is career curiosity, which relates to the ability of individuals to learn about themselves and their surroundings during career development. The final dimension is career confidence, which addresses problem-solving skills in individual's career development process (Savickas, 2005, 2012, 2013).

There are various psychological factors that affect the career adaptability of individuals. One of these psychological factors is job satisfaction. This term refers to the degree by which individuals are content with their jobs (Vieira, 2005). In the profession of teaching, job satisfaction is expressed as either a teacher's attitudes towards the students, towards the school they work for, or as the satisfaction or dissatisfaction they felt about the profession itself (Vural, 2004). There are two important theories that explain job satisfaction. The first is the scope theory, and the other is expectation theory. Scope theories explain job satisfaction based on motivation. Expectation theories deal with job satisfaction in relation to needs and values (Aşık, 2010).

Psychological well-being is another factor that affects the career adaptability of individuals. Psychological well-being corresponds to the eudemonic dimension of well-formed, whereas



subjective well-being corresponds to its hedonic dimension (Ryff, 1989). In other words, subjective well-being represents a hedonistic understanding of happiness, whereas psychological well-being refers to the understanding of positive functioning (Ryff, 1989). The concept of psychological well-being is defined as the ability of individuals to be aware of their lifelong goals and potential, while continuing with their lives, and establishing a healthy relationship with their environment (Ryff, 1989). In addition, the determinants of psychological well-being have been put forth by Ryff & Keyes (1995). These are establishing positive relationships with people, good command of the environment, autonomy, having life goals, personal development and self-acceptance.

Teaching is a profession that includes subject specific knowledge, as well as qualities such as tolerance, self-sacrifice, self-improvement, and fulfillment of professional duties. Teaching deserves to be on the basis of all professions. This is because teaching is a key profession that plays a role in teaching cognitive and kinetic subtleties of other professions (Türer, 2009). The teacher is a mediator for teaching, who designs exams, establishes discipline, and advocates a middle class morality (Çelikten, Şanal, & Yeni, 2005). The teaching profession currently requires occupational competence and expert knowledge and skills in social, cultural, economic, scientific and technological dimensions of education (Şişman & Acat, 2003). In addition to this, the teaching profession becomes more demanding when it comes to education of children with mental retardation, which also brings stress. Specifically, dependent on the type and degree of disability of children with mental retardation, it is observed that teachers working with these children are more likely to feel a psychological burden than others (Şahbaz & Dursun, 2010). The intensity of direct contact, the distinct characteristics of these children, the necessity of meeting their needs, and issues around classroom management, all have an impact on the performance of such teachers. In respect to career development, the continuing development of teachers is also beneficial for the children and institution in relation to ongoing teaching and learning outcomes. For this reason, teachers' structures of self should be in harmony with their profession. With this in mind, it is of significant value to reveal the factors that might best facilitate these teachers' adjustment to the demands of their profession.

Career adaptability is a very important psycho-social variable (Savickas, 2005), because career adaptability is related to individuals' transition from school to work life (Koen Klehe & Van Vianen, 2012); goal orientation and career optimism (Tolentino, Garcia, Lu, Restubog, Bordia, & Plewa, 2014); job participation (Rossier, Hansenne, Baudin, & Morizot 2012); job loyalty (Rossier, Zecca, Stauffer, Maggiori, & Dauwalder 2012); job satisfaction (Fiori, Bollmann, & Rossier, 2015); career achievements (Zikic & Klehe, 2006); academic satisfaction (Duffy, Douglass, & Autin, 2015); career hopes; career satisfaction and career management skills of individuals (Hirschi, Niles & Akos, 2011); their likelihood of finding appropriate employment (Hirsch, 2010); and to know themselves and their profession (Zikic & Klehe, 2006). Moreover, when the literature on career development is surveyed, it is observed that studies about career adaptability of Turkish teachers are limited. For example, Eryılmaz and Kara (2017) have investigated the relationship between career adaptability and personality traits of prospective Turkish teachers. On the other hand, it can be noted that no studies in the literature currently exist, which investigate career adaptability, job satisfaction and psychological well-being of special education teachers. Accordingly, the aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between career adaptability, psychological well-being and job satisfaction of Turkish teachers working in special education schools.

The study aims to investigate the relationship between psychological well-being, job satisfaction and career adaptability of Turkish teachers working in special education schools. Five sub-goals were identified in accordance with the overall aim of the study. These include:

1. Does the psychological well-being of Turkish teachers working in special education schools significantly predict their career adaptability?
2. Does the job satisfaction of Turkish teachers working in special education schools significantly predict their career adaptability?



3. Does the career adaptability of Turkish teachers working in special education schools differentiate depending on the gender variable?
4. Does the career adaptability of Turkish teachers working in special education schools differentiate depending on the seniority variable?
5. Does the career adaptability of Turkish teachers working in special education schools differentiate depending on the age variable?

METHOD

Research Design

This relational study was implemented to reveal the relationship between career adaptability, psychological well-being and job satisfaction of Turkish teachers working in special education schools. Psychological well-being and job satisfaction are the independent variables of the study, and career adaptability is the dependent variable.

Study Group

The group of the study consists of 214 Turkish teachers, working in the field of special education in public schools in the European side of Istanbul, selected by the maximum diversity sampling method (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006).

Data Collection Instruments

Personal information form: This form, which is deemed to be relevant for the purpose of the research, was prepared by the researcher to obtain information on the demographic characteristics and work life of teachers working with children with special needs. The Personal Information Form consisted of close-ended items to collect information about the teachers working with individuals with special needs, such as gender, marital status, age group, seniority, education level (associate degree, bachelor's degree, graduate degree), field of graduation (special education form teacher, children development, guidance and counseling, branch teacher), the children group worked with (mild mental retardation, moderate-severe mental retardation, autism).

Minnesota satisfaction questionnaire: The first scale used in the study, the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire was developed by Weiss, Dawis, England, and Lofquist (1967), measuring job satisfaction and consisting of 20 items. Baycan (1985) translated the scale into Turkish and conducted validity and reliability studies (Cronbach's alpha=.77). The Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire is a five-point Likert-type scale scored between 1 and 5. The scale is scored by marking one of these options: "Very dissatisfied", 1 point; "Dissatisfied", 2 points; "Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied", 3 points; "Satisfied", 4 points; "Very satisfied", 5 points. There are no reverse-coded items in the scale (Çam, Akgün, Babacan, Bilge, & Keskin, 2005). Twelve items of the scale measure job satisfaction based on intrinsic factors, whereas the remaining 8 items measure job satisfaction based on external factors. The intrinsic and extrinsic factors of the scale were addressed together, contributing to overall job satisfaction. The Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) and two sub-scales of job satisfaction, the intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction, can be measured together. Intrinsic satisfaction (Items 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 15, 16, and 20) indicates how employees feel about the job itself, and extrinsic satisfaction (Items 5, 6, 12, 13, 14, and 19) reflects what employees feel about the institution they work for. When calculating the scores of the questionnaire, the general job satisfaction scores vary between 20 and 100, intrinsic job satisfaction scores vary between 12 and 60, and extrinsic job satisfaction scores vary between 6 and 30. The reliability coefficient of the scale used in most studies was found to be .85 in this study.

Psychological well-being scale (PWBS): The psychological well-being scale, developed by Diener, Wirtz, Tov, Kim-Prieto, Choi, Oishi, and Biswas-Diener (2010), and adapted to Turkish language by



Telef (2013), aims to measure the psychological well-being of individuals. The 7-point Likert type scale consists of 8 items and is scored between "Completely disagree" to "Completely disagree". The scale has a single dimension, and the lowest and highest scores to be taken on the scale are between 8 and 56. A high score indicates that the individual is successful in using many resources and that has a high-level of psychological well-being in general. According to the exploratory factor analysis, the total variance explained was found to be 42%. According to the confirmatory factor analysis results, the goodness of fit indices obtained were RMSEA=.08, SRMR=.04, GFI=.96, NFI=.94, RFI=.92, CFI=.95 and IFI=.9. According to the test-retest reliability, there was a positive and significant relationship between the two application ($r=.86$, $p<.001$). When the reliability of the scale was examined, the Cronbach's alpha value was found to be .80. Within the scope of this study, the reliability of the scale was calculated as .80.

Career adaptabilities scale

Initially developed by Savickas & Porfeli (2012) the scale was adapted to Turkish by Kanten (2012), who assessed its validity and reliability. The construct validity was performed by the confirmatory factor analysis. Based on the confirmatory factor analysis, some of the items (1, 2, 4, 7, and 18) were removed from the scale, which originally consisted of 24 items. As a result, a scale incorporating 19 items in four sub-scales was obtained. The sub-constituents of this scale are concern, control, curiosity and confidence.

Further, according to confirmatory factor analysis results, the 4-sub-scale and 19-item scale was found to have a RMSEA value of .074, 144 degrees of freedom and Chi-square value of 514.62. The degree of freedom of the Chi-square value was calculated as 3.50 ($517.62/144=3.50$). The aptness of fit values of the scale, according to the confirmatory factor analysis: NFI, .90, NNFI, .92, IFI, .93, CFI, .93, GFI, .90. In the reliability study conducted by Kanten (2012), the internal consistency coefficients of sub-scales ranged from .61 to .81.

Data Analysis

Multiple regression analysis was used to determine the predictive power of psychological well-being and job satisfaction in predicting career adaptability. In addition, the independent samples t-test was used to determine whether career adaptability differ significantly by gender. In addition, the ANOVA technique was used to determine whether career adaptability differ significantly in terms of seniority and age. Finally, some descriptive statistics (e.g. mean, standard deviation, etc.) were presented.

FINDINGS

The research findings are discussed under five main headings. First, the descriptive statistics for the variables in the study, next the findings related to the extent to which job satisfaction and psychological well-being significantly predict career adaptability, and finally the results of the one-way analysis of variance are introduced as a means of determining whether career adaptability differ according to seniority and age group.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics based on personal information form

Variables		n	%
Gender	Male	48	22.4
	Female	166	77.6
Age	25 years and under	47	21.9
	26-30 years	64	29.9
	31-35 years	36	16.8
	36-40 years	20	9.3
	41-45 years	23	10.7
Marital Status	45 years and above	24	11.2
	Married	108	50.5
	Single	106	40.5



Education Status	Degree	55	25.7
	Bachelor's Degree	146	68.2
	Graduate Degree	13	6.1
Seniority	5 years or less	119	55.6
	6-10 years	61	28.5
	11-15 years	10	4.7
	16-20 years	17	7.9
	21 years and above	7	3.3
Working Student Group	Mild Mental Retardation	48	22.4
	Moderate-Severe Mental Retardation	117	54.7
	The Autism Group	49	22.9
	Total	214	100

A total of 214 people participated in the study. Turkish teachers working in special education schools participating in the research, 48 were male and 166 were female. When the age distribution was examined, it was observed that there were 47 individuals under the age of 25; 64 between the ages of 26-30; 20 between the ages of 36-40; 23 between the ages of 41-45; 24 individuals above the age of 45. Of the participants, 108 were married, and 106 were single. Of them, 55 had associate degree, 146 had bachelor's degree, and 13 had graduate degree. The number of people working for 5 years or less in the profession was 119; 61 for 6-10 years; 10 for 11-15 years; 17 for 16-20 years; and 7 for working for 21 years and above. Of the Turkish teachers participating in the study, 48 were working with students with mild mental retardation, 117 were working with moderate-severe mental retardation, and 49 were working with the autism group.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics based on scales

Variables	Mean	Std.Dev.
Intrinsic Satisfaction	47.97	5.91
Extrinsic Satisfaction	27.54	5.75
Total of Job Satisfaction	75.51	10.49
Total of Psychological Well-Being	48.05	3.93
Total of Career Adaptability.	82.78	6.31

According to the three sub-scales of job satisfaction of 214 individuals participating in the research, the averages were calculated as $\bar{X}=47.97$ for intrinsic satisfaction, $\bar{X}=27.54$ for extrinsic satisfaction, and $\bar{X}=75.51$ for total job satisfaction. Psychological well-being and career adaptability were assessed in relation to one parameter, and average scores were found to be $\bar{X}=48.05$ for psychological well-being, and $\bar{X}=82.78$ for career adaptability.

Gender variable findings predicting career adaptability

This section of the study incorporates t-test results from independent samples to analyze career adaptability in terms of gender variable.

Table 3. T-Test Results of Independent Samples to ascertain Career Adaptability according to Gender Variable

Gender	n	Mean	Std.Dev.	df	t	p
Male	48	4.27	.314	212	1.985	.048*
Female	166	4.38	.334			

**p<.01; *p<.05

The above results of the analysis illustrate the difference between career adaptability of Turkish teachers who work in special education schools according to the gender variable. On examination of Table 3, it was concluded that career adaptability differ significantly depending on gender [$t=1.985$, $p<.05$]. According to these results, it can be said that male Turkish teachers working in special education schools have lower career adaptability than female Turkish teachers.



Findings in relation to seniority variable as a determinant of career adaptability

This component of the study implements one-way analysis of variance results, to investigate the career adaptability in terms of seniority variable.

Table 4. Results of one-way ANOVA for career adaptability of Turkish teachers working in special education schools according to seniority variable

Variable	Seniority Year	n	Mean	Std.Dev.	F	p
Career adaptability	5 years or less	119	4.37	.276	4.523	.02*
	6-10 years	61	4.24	.311		
	11-15 years	10	4.57	.000		
	16-20 years	17	4.52	.232		
	21 years and above	7	4.29	.995		

**p<.01; *p<.05

The results displayed above illustrate the difference between career adaptability of Turkish teachers who work in special education schools according to seniority variable. It may be observed from Table 4 that the career adaptability of Turkish teachers who work in special education schools differ significantly according to their seniority [F=4.523 p<.005]. Here, it is seen that the highest average belongs to the teachers with 11-15 years of seniority [\bar{X} =4.57]. This is followed by the teachers with 16-20 years of seniority [\bar{X} =4.52], 5 or fewer senior years [\bar{X} =4.37], 21 or more senior years [\bar{X} =4.29], and finally 6-10 senior years [\bar{X} =4.24].

One-way analysis of variance, a parametric statistical test format, was used to test whether the participants' career adaptability varied according to their seniority. On analysis of variance, a statistically significant difference was found (p=.02), [p<.05]. Among the Post Hoc tests, the Tukey test was used to test the source of the difference. The direction of the difference was found as (6-10 years of seniority) - (11-15 years of seniority). In other words, there was a difference between the career adaptability of teachers working in special education schools in terms of their seniority.

Findings about age variable as an indicator of career adaptability

This section of the study includes the one-way analysis of variance results for investigating the career adaptability in terms of age variable.

Table 5. Results of one-way ANOVA for the career adaptability of Turkish teachers working in special education schools according to age variable

Variable	Age	n	Mean	Std.Dev.	F	p
Career adaptability	25 years or less	47	4.33	.32	4,579	.00**
	26-30 years	64	4.26	.27		
	31-35 years	36	4.30	.27		
	36-40 years	20	4.56	.26		
	41-45 years	23	4.53	.23		
	45 years and above	24	4.39	.51		

**p<.01; *p<.05

The above results illustrate the difference between career adaptability of Turkish teachers who work in special education schools according to age variable. Analysis of Table 5 reveals that adapt-abilities of teachers who work in special education schools differ significantly according to their age groups [F=4.579 p<.005]. Here it is observed that the highest average belongs to the teachers in the 36-40 age group [\bar{X} =4.57]. This is followed by teachers who are between the ages of 41-45 [\bar{X} =4.53]; aged 45 and over [\bar{X} =4.39]; aged 25 and under [\bar{X} =4.33]; and aged 31-35 [\bar{X} =4.30]. The 26-30 age group has the lowest scores [\bar{X} =4.26].

Among the parametric statistical tests, one-way analysis of variance was used to test whether career adaptability of participants varied according to age variable. Based on the analysis of variance, a statistically significant difference was found (p=.01), [p<.05]. Among the Post Hoc tests, the Tukey



test was used to test the source of the difference. The direction of the difference was found as (26-30 age group) - (36-40 age group). In other words, there was a difference between the career adaptability of Turkish teachers working in special education schools in terms of their age.

Job satisfaction and psychological well-being findings predictive of career adaptability

This section of the study includes the multiple regression analysis results for investigating the explanatory power of job satisfaction and psychological well-being on career adaptability. Table 6 shows the extent to which job satisfaction and psychological well-being can be indicative of career adaptability. The results are shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Results of multiple regression analysis of relevant between variables in study

Career adaptability	B	SE	β	t	p
Constant	48.22	4.88		9.87	.00
Intrinsic Satisfaction	.22	.08	.21*	2.55	.01
Extrinsic Satisfaction	.14	.08	.13	1.69	.09
Psychological Well-Being	.41	.1	.25**	3.84	.00

n=214, R= .47, R²= .22, F=19.92, p<.01**, p<.05*

According to Table 6, there are significant correlations between job satisfaction, psychological well-being and career adaptability [R=.47, R²=.22, F=19.92, p<.01]. When the results of the t-test on the significance of the regression coefficient are examined, it is noted that intrinsic satisfaction (β =.21), and psychological well-being (β =.25), are significant predictors of career adaptability (p<.01, p<.05). Intrinsic satisfaction and psychological well-being explain about 22% of the total variance of career adaptability. According to Table 6, there is a significant and positive relationship between intrinsic satisfaction and career adaptability. Namely, as the intrinsic satisfaction increases, the career adaptability also increase. In addition, there is a significant and positive relationship between psychological well-being and career adaptability. That is, as psychological well-being increases, the career adaptability also increase.

DISCUSSION and CONCLUSION

This study was conducted to investigate the relationship between career adaptability and psychological well-being and job satisfaction of Turkish teachers working in special education schools. Based on the results, there is a significant and positive relationship between intrinsic satisfaction and career adaptability. That is, as the intrinsic satisfaction increases, the career adaptability also increase. In addition, there is a significant and positive relationship between psychological well-being and career adaptability. That is, as the psychological well-being increases, the career adaptability also increase. Finally, female Turkish teachers working in special education schools use their career adaptability more than male Turkish teachers. In addition, teachers in the 36-40 age group use their career adapt-abilities more than other age groups.

Psychological well-being of Turkish teachers working in special education schools included in the study significantly predicts their career adaptability. In the literature review, studies on career adaptability and subjective well-being (Hartung & Taber, 2008; Konstam, Tomek, Celen-Demirtas, & Sweeney, 2015), and well-being conditions (Maggori, Johnston, Krings, Massoudi, & Rossier 2013; Kavas, Duffy, & Douglass, 2015) were found. For example, Kavas, Duffy, and Douglass (2015) have investigated the relationship between Turkish university students' career adaptability and well-being. In their research results, a significant and positive relationship between career adapt-abilities and life satisfaction was observed. Similarly, Konstam et al. (2015) have investigated the correlation between career adaptability and subjective well-being in relation to unemployed adults. According to the results of this research, there has been a significant and positive relationship between trust and control dimensions of the career adaptability and life satisfaction. In addition, the control dimension of career adaptability shares a significant and positive relationship with positive emotions, a significant and negative relationship with negative emotions, and a significant and positive relationship with life



satisfaction. As a result, the findings of the aforementioned studies overlap with the findings of the current study. This can be explained by factors determining psychological well-being. The factors that determine psychological well-being are establishing positive relationships with people, good command of the environment, autonomy, having life goals, personal development, and self-acceptance (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). Individuals with self-acceptance and life goals have a positive sense of self, demonstrate awareness of their limitations, and develop positive feelings about the future (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). They may have adopted these structures of self in their career. In other words, psychologically mature individuals can make fresh discoveries about themselves and their professions, and they can make plans for their careers as well. Similarly, they may also be aware of their responsibilities in career development. In addition, they can also gain faith in overcoming obstacles or difficulties that may arise during career changes. As a result, it can be said that psychological well-being contributes positively to career adaptability.

In relation to job satisfaction, the intrinsic satisfaction of Turkish teachers working in special education schools included in the study significantly predicts their career adaptability. In the literature, there are studies investigating the relations between job satisfaction and career adaptability (Han & Rojewski, 2015; Zacher & Grifffin, 2015). Findings of the current study indicate that there is a significant and positive relationship between job satisfaction and career adaptability. These findings are consistent with the results of the studies mentioned above. Deci and Ryan's motivation theory could provide perspective into this result. There numerous theories employed to investigate job satisfaction. One of them is scope theory. Scope theory explains job satisfaction in terms of motivation (Köroğlu, 2012). Aside from this, Deci and Ryan have explained motivation with a theory encompassing three systems. The first of these refers to a system of motivation determined by biological instincts; the second pertains to a motivation system refined by punishment and awards; and the third is the system of motivation derived from within (Pink, 2009). Individuals influenced by the third system exhibit life goals such as planning goals, acquiring skills, and meeting them for autonomy. In addition, these individuals are inclined to attach a meaning and value to life (Pink, 2009). It can be concluded that these tendencies have been transferred to their career development and by extension to career adaptability.

There was a statistically significant difference in the career adaptability of Turkish teachers working in special education schools included in the study in terms of gender variable. Male Turkish teachers working in special education schools have lower career adaptability than female Turkish teachers. According to Karakuş (2016), male teachers' career planning levels are lower than female teachers. This finding corroborates the findings of this study. This can be explained by the developmental characteristics of women. When it comes to the education of children with special needs, teachers working in special education schools require as much patience and self-sacrifice as the families of disabled people do. On the other hand, it is a fact that children with disabilities who need special education require increased levels of sacrifice and patience than their normal peers in their education and care, which has also been shown to be emotionally challenging for teachers (Çokluk, 1999). According to Barkow, Cosmides, and Tooby (1995), women have proved more successful in developing caregiving characteristics than men due to intrinsic qualities. As a result, it can be said that they transferred these developmental characteristics to their career development processes.

A difference was observed in the career adaptability of Turkish teachers working in special education schools included in the study in terms of the age variable. The career adaptability of Turkish teachers in the 26-30 age group working in special education were found to be lowest, as compared with other age groups. The career adaptability of the Turkish teachers in the 36-40 age group were found to be higher than other age groups. This result can be explained by Super's life-span and life-space theory (Super, 1980). Super's life-span and life-space theory has five major professional development periods. These developmental periods are growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance, and decline. The 36-40 age group corresponds to the professional development period in the Super's theory. During this developmental period, individuals have three developmental responsibilities,



namely, decision making at work, and establishment and progress in their jobs (Super, 1980). In other respects, it can be said that the high-level of career adaptability of the 36-40-years old Turkish teachers who work in special education schools may indicate that they had successfully completed the developmental tasks as stipulated by their establishment period.

Limitations of the Study

This research has some limitations. The first of these is the data collection method is a survey application that provides cross-sectional data. Second, the sample size is limited to 214 Turkish teachers working in the field of special education in public schools on the European side of Istanbul. Another limitation is that 166 of the 214 Turkish teachers are female teachers.

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