



University of
**Southern
Queensland**

THE RELATIONS AMONGST MALADAPTIVE COGNITIONS, DEFENSE
MECHANISMS AND CAREER SATISFACTION

A Thesis submitted by

Jennifer Bowman

BA (Psychology), DipEd, GradCertCounsSkills, GradCertEd.

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ABSTRACT

Career decisions are not necessarily rational as they depend on an individual's state of mind. Interests, work values, and career satisfaction are commonly investigated in the career development field, but emotions are ostensibly absent in career theory. The way people understand and interpret their life stories is influenced by unconscious influences such as cognitive schemas and defense mechanisms. Maladaptive schemas are usually unconscious and occur when cognitive and emotional patterns created early in life become rigid, self-defeating, and repetitive. Defense mechanisms also influence subjective reactions and can influence emotional distress, stress management, functioning and quality of life. A survey using a sample of American members of the general public ($N = 376$) was conducted and measured their maladaptive schemas, defense mechanisms, and career satisfaction. Most cognitive schemas correlated with career adaptabilities. There were many moderate correlations between defense mechanisms and career adaptabilities, especially mature defenses, such as sublimation. This research will inform the psychodynamic theory of career development and practice of career counselling.

CERTIFICATION OF THESIS

I, Jennifer Bowman declare that the Master's Thesis entitled 'The relations amongst maladaptive cognitions, defense mechanisms and career satisfaction' is not more than 100,000 words in length including quotes and exclusive of tables, figures, appendices, references, and footnotes. The thesis contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for the award of any other academic degree or diploma. Except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is my own work.

Signed:

Date:

Endorsed by:

Professor Peter McIlveen

Principal Supervisor

Professor Gavin Beccaria

Associate Supervisor

Student and supervisors' signatures of endorsement are held at the University.

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DEDICATION

This research is lovingly dedicated to my late Grandma, Elsie. We started the journey together and even though I will not be able to show you the final copy now, I know that you will be proud of this work. I will have a cup of tea and a biscuit for you!

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The present research is an investigation into the relations among maladaptive schemas, defense mechanisms, career satisfaction and adaptability. This chapter overviews theoretical and empirical literature related to the potential links among maladaptive cognitions, defences, and career satisfaction. The literature review addresses the theoretical perspectives of Life Span Life Span Theory (Super, 1953) and Career Construction Theory (Savickas, 1997). There is also a spotlight on the psychodynamic concepts (Watkins & Savickas, 1990; Watkins, 1993) that are important to consider ostensible irrationality of career decision-making (Krieshok et al., 2009). This includes maladaptive schemas and defense mechanisms, as well as trauma. The aims of the present research are discussed, followed by the research design.

The Contemporary World of Work

Careers in the Twenty First Century are unpredictable and changeable, which makes knowledge of competencies that enhance successful career development vital for employability (Aydogmus, 2019). Due to the challenging times of the contemporary world of work, there will continue to be chaos, unpredictability, and frequent transitions. This has led to a behavioural phenomenon that is vitally important in vocational psychology and that is career self-management (King, 2004). In a changing world where the normal cultural markers of adult life such as finding a job for life, buying a new home, getting married and so on, are vanishing, there is a drive for therapeutic knowledge of the self to be able to adapt to the new environments faced (Silva, 2012).

The conditions of work have changed towards unpredictability over job security, which creates a substantial impact on career counselling, therefore it is

significant to explore not just theory and practice but the career-decision making process (Gati & Kulcsár, 2021). The 2020 Global Pandemic has heightened the issue of job insecurity and volatility of the future, and stability moving forward. There were many people that were made redundant and had to move into different jobs for financial security, for example. The work contexts that individuals used to construct a meaningful life for themselves are no longer available (Marcia & Josselson, 2013).

In the job market, individuals require increased employability, which requires knowledge in their career and self-competencies, to remain competitive. To gain control over career, it is important to understand the roles of cognition as they are a determinant to behaviour (Kidd, 1998). Managing the complexities of the new career landscape requires knowledge of psychological coping resources. In an uncertain world of work, there is a need for alternative approaches to understand careers and the many areas that can affect it (Kidd, 2004). In an information-based world, individuals must remain flexible and become life-long learners to stay relevant and competitive, which requires knowledge of self (Rottinghaus & Miller, 2013).

There are numerous career theories which can inform systems of Career Development. It can be said that each theory tends to focus on addressing different problems and this can be understood by its perspectives and underpinnings (Brown, 2002). An individual's problems are multifaceted and complex, and categories intertwine depending on the individual's unique attributes, barriers, and personal history (Gysbers et al., 2014). The present research will focus on Life Span Life Space Theory (Super, 1953) and Career Construction Theory (Savickas 1997).

Researchers need to continuously examine the validity, relevance and practical use of career theories and communicate and collaborate to assist Career Development Practitioners (CDPs) in their work (Savickas, 1997). However, with a

rapidly changing world, further ideas for advancements and improvements in theory need to be considered to stay relevant to practice. Vocational psychology in practice has outpaced theory and research and there has been limited research into a narrative approach (McIlveen, 2008). In the Psychology field there has been a growing understanding of the role of non-conscious processes in decision-making, but these need to be explored in the vocational theories field to explore interventions and integrate up-to-date knowledge to assist individuals (Krieshok et al., 2009). The work of vocational psychology is often overlooked in mainstream social affairs and related fields of psychology, and links from research between the fields are not made (Savickas et al., 2002).

Increasingly individuals are not just seeking jobs for financial reasons but want to provide themselves a purpose and a sense of meaning in life, especially when work and career take up the majority of time for many (Rottinghaus & Miller, 2013). Previous research has found a link and positive relationship between career satisfaction and life satisfaction meaning a critical outcome measure for research on career services and interventions in a variety of settings (Lounsbury et al., 2004). Job stress is perceived to occur when personal capabilities are a poor fit to the work environment which can then become threatening, causing a reaction of stress affecting psychological and physical health (Sur & Ng, 2014).

Career oftentimes is seen as a form of identity, individuals in day-to-day life are asked their names and occupations as if it is an extended form of self. Previously individuals have been matched to an occupation for life, but now there needs to be a focus on adapting to change especially through the lifespan considering there is not just one match for individuals, but many options (Krieshok et al., 2009). A new era of work has begun with different structures and technologies disrupting employment

patterns and organizations. These new trends have been documented but examining the psychological experiences of workers in the new world of work and the ways individuals are coping with the complexities has only just begun (Ashford et al., 2018).

Many professions are favouring integrative approaches to share knowledge across many areas. Blending epistemologies comes with many advantages, especially integrating personality and psychodynamics with vocational psychology to observe the commonalities, unique differences and to acknowledge age related transitions (Rottinghaus & Miller, 2013). To have a postmodern view is to try and merge thinking as an alternative over keeping ideologies isolated or at odds between professions. This postmodern view will encourage new viewpoints and questioning which could lead to new insights to assist the contemporary world of work and an individual's journey through it.

Career theory and research needs to continue being merged with contemporary models in developmental and personality psychology (Savickas et al., 2002). Contemporary theories acknowledge that human development requires a diverse process of functioning and is multifaceted on many levels (Broderick & Blewitt, 2015). Career adaptability provides an insight into the coping mechanisms that are utilised in the careers field.

Parson (1909) believed that individuals needed to increase their ability to apply reason to the relationship between knowledge of self and knowledge of occupations when making career decisions (as cited in Krieshok et al., 2009). This lack of awareness or knowledge in career decisions could prove harmful to individuals in many ways. The gap between science and practice has been experienced in many industries and professions including mental health, medicine,

law, and education which have subsequently struggled with preparing individuals for the complex demands of the workplace (Broderick & Blewitt, 2015).

Dysfunctional career decision making can play a detrimental role in an individual's life and career but the mechanisms and foundations underlying the dysfunction remain unclear (Xu, 2021). Maladaptive repetition, for example, needs to be considered in career interventions to understand vocational behaviour and problems with career decision making or lack of satisfaction in career (Cardoso, 2012). There are plenty of unconscious processes in decision making and both rational thought and intuitive processes are intertwined and need to be considered, as memory is a reconstruction of accumulated knowledge and can be imperfect (Thuraisingham, 2017). In Career Interventions, the how and why of behaviours and underlying processes have been ignored and these limitations need to be built upon (Patton & McMahon, 2014). When considering occupation, interests and work values are investigated, but emotions have an absent presence in Career Theory (Kidd, 2004).

The present research will observe different frameworks and theories from careers theory and psychodynamic concepts to aid towards career success and life satisfaction. This research aims to address the research gap in psychodynamic concepts of career. This will be achieved by investigating the relations amongst maladaptive schemas, defense mechanisms and career and life satisfaction. I begin with an overview of a broad theoretical framework in which the present research is situated.

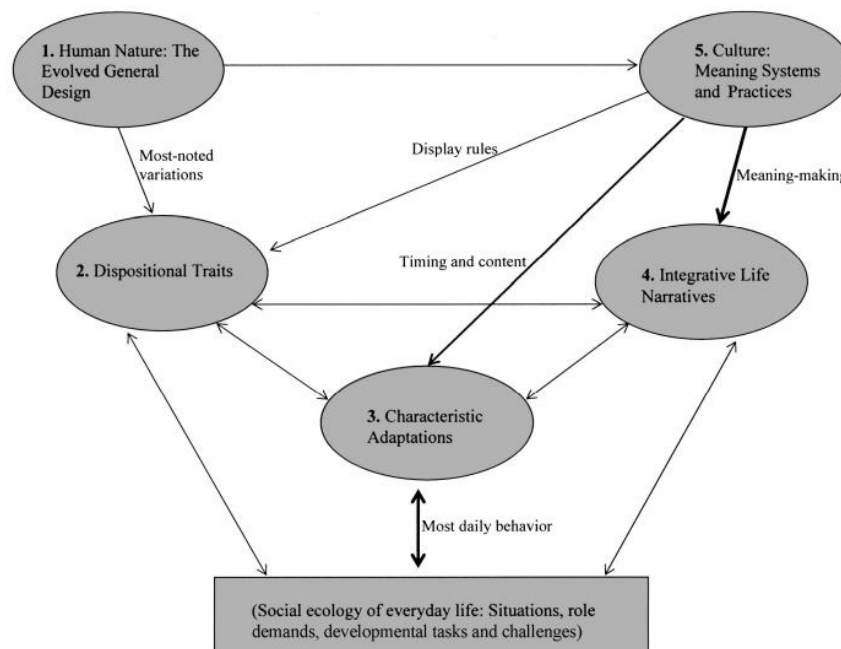
What Do We Know When We Know a Person?

McAdams (1995) posed this important question of what it is to know a person. McAdams (1995) claimed that there are three different levels to a person

including dispositional traits, characteristic adaptations, and their integrative life narratives. As seen in Figure 1, these three levels to a person are also situated within human nature, cultural context, and the social ecology of everyday life, that can affect personality. These different variables interact with each other in different ways and contexts. Importantly, McAdams (1993) pointed out that dispositional traits, characteristic adaptations, and integrative life narratives are separate structures not dependent on each other and the latter two have received less focus and research.

Figure 1

Five Principles of Personality Psychology



Note. The five main principles of personality psychology. Adapted from “A new Big Five: Fundamental principles for an integrative science of personality” (p. 213) by D. P. McAdams, and J. L. Pals, 2006, *American Psychologist*, 61(3), p.213. Copyright 2006 by the American Psychological Association.

Dispositional Traits

Dispositional traits exhibit the most fundamental differences between individuals and can be seen from the very beginning of life (McAdams & Olson,

2010). It is proposed that humans have biological factors and dispositional traits through experiences gained in childhood and genetics, which are enduring (Rottinghaus & Miller, 2013). Individuals can be seen as actors in their early years, acting socially and displaying their temperament of which personality traits then develop (McAdams & Olson, 2010). Individuals watch the people and the world around them as they learn and develop.

Dispositional traits display psychological individuality through behaviour in particular, showing similar thoughts and feelings in many different situations (McAdams & Olson, 2010). These internal characteristics are usually the cause of a person's behaviour and personality traits. An individual's perceptions of themselves and others are usually stable and vary along a continuum of personality traits such as neuroticism, extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness (Murtha et al., 1996). The most popular trait taxonomy is the Big Five model of personality traits (McCrae & Costa, 1997; McCrae & Costa, 2003).

The basic dimensions of the Big Five model include Extraversion which can demonstrate an individual's assertiveness, ambitiousness, and positive emotionality; Neuroticism can demonstrate instability and stress proneness, and personal insecurity; Conscientiousness can be characterised by achievement orientation, dependability, and orderliness; Openness to Experience can show intellectual and imaginative traits; Agreeableness can be associated with cooperative and trusting characteristics (Sur & Ng, 2014).

Whilst dispositional traits are an important aspect of career (Costa et al., 1984; Sutin et al., 2009; Sutin & Costa, 2010), a fundamental weakness of an individual trait taxonomy is that they do not give information about why people differ and how these traits can manifest in behaviour (McCabe & Fleeson, 2016). It

is useful information to have but it does not give the whole picture of human behaviour. Every part of the tripart framework is important but certain areas have been given more focus. Dispositional traits and characteristic adaptations have been treated mainly as two separate entities by divergent traditions in psychology, demonstrating another split, but they have been seen to be connected (McCabe & Fleeson, 2016).

Characteristic Adaptations

Characteristic adaptations vary between individuals as they are social-cognitive, motivational, and developmental traits shown in personal action (McAdams & Pals, 2006). Individuals are self-regulating and have a sense of personal agency during their development after watching others and then are driven by their own specific aspirations and desires for relatedness and achievement within the world (McAdams & Olson, 2010).

Individuals possess dispositional traits but then build upon their characteristic traits as they develop. Goals can provide a cognitive representation of what an individual strives to attain or avoid and can display function and process (McCabe & Fleeson, 2016). Characteristic adaptations display how individuals react to their environment, situations, and which resources they utilise. This behaviour is partly due to their own life narrative and unique biology and experiences. Personality traits demonstrate a person's individuality and can also predict work performance outcomes and career success (McAdams & Pals, 2006).

Characteristic adaptations can show what motivates an individual by understanding what they want from life, their guiding values and beliefs set, and their mechanisms for coping and adapting. Characteristic adaptations have not been integrated and mapped into a specific framework in the way that personality has.

McAdams and Olson (2010) described individuals as motivated agents at this stage as they adapt to the social world seeking out what they want but are avoidant of other aspects due to fear. The focus in this stage is on making choices and achieving goals.

Everyday personality dynamics in some ways can be demonstrated more by cognition and motivation and be socially influenced, allowing for change over time as opposed to more rigid traits (McAdams & Pals, 2006). When individuals make decisions, it is typically based on feelings of preferences and what they perceive their self-identity to be, which has been formed by inherent learning from experience (Krieshok et al., 2009). Individuals can strive for meaning in life and develop goals they would like to achieve in many domains, but this can become challenging at times.

Integrative Life Narratives

Life narratives represent a person becoming an author of their own self-narrative perspective of their life and career (McAdams & Olson, 2010). As in books or movies, there will be certain characters and themes following a plot and featuring pivotal moments. Individuals must discover the story of the self and discover the bounds of cultural, economic, family values, gender role, societal expectations, dispositional traits, and characteristic adaptations to discover how they came to be and what shaped them (McAdams & Olson, 2010). When a coherent narrative of an individual's life is created, an individual can gain perspective and insight into their inner and outer world and enliven anything that was dormant or perhaps underdeveloped (Marcia & Josselson, 2013). Individuals aim to integrate the past, present, and future into a coherent life narrative to gain insight and perspective of their life story.

Career can indicate an individual's life and showcase the dynamic forces that influence career and life decisions (Krieshok et al., 2009). Career narratives bring together broad traits of the individual, specific responses to life demands in characteristic adaptations and then challenge the individual to make sense and meaning out of life (McAdams & Pals, 2006). It has been said that psychological differences can be encoded in language and using certain words can depict which personality traits an individual falls under (Bainbridge et al., 2022). This demonstrates the power of language, especially when showcasing individual differences. Unconscious thought mechanisms of the brain are much larger than the conscious portion, however the conscious part offers the opportunity of speech and being able to explain and communicate interpretation and reasons for choices (Krieshok et al., 2009).

In the rational form of processing, abstract symbols, words, and numbers are used but the experiential system which is also at work, encodes information using images and narratives in particular, which can then affect decision making (Krieshok et al., 2009). This emphasises the need to explore the life narratives and stories individuals tell themselves and others and how they are able to explain their career choices. It also provides a landscape which can be somewhat malleable once understood. If there are destructive or maladaptive thought processes occurring, particularly unconsciously, then they can be addressed.

Toward an Integrative Theory of Career

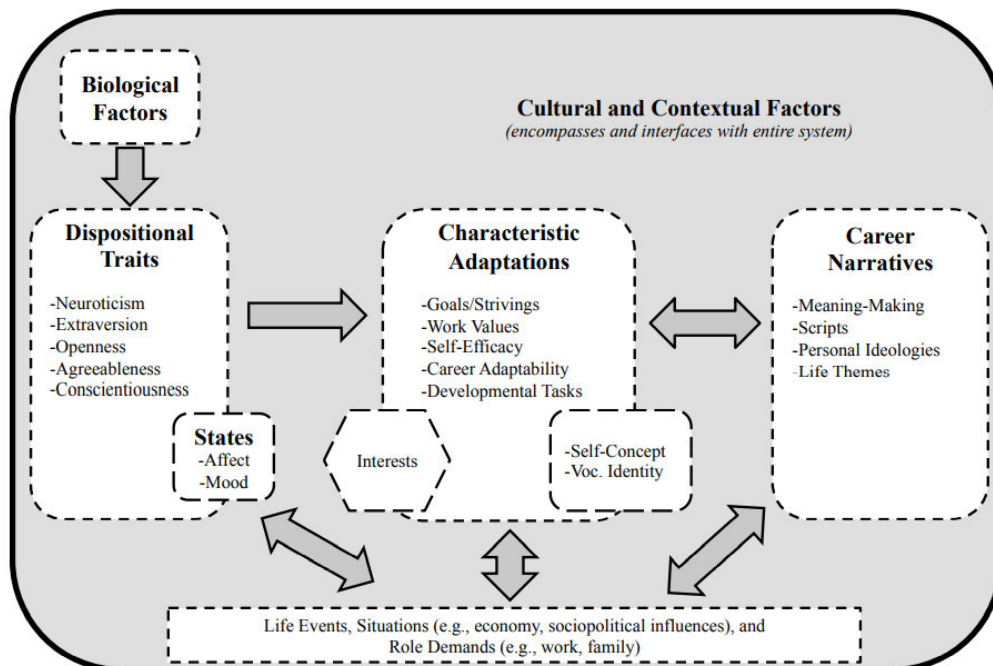
The challenge of constructing and understanding identity is important for adults in particular. Adults need to be able to integrate all roles they play socially and culturally to understand their cognitive and physiological themes and incorporate past and present, to work towards the future (McAdams, 1995). Adults usually strive

for fit and purpose in society, to give their life meaning. There have been many segmented theories that focus on different areas of personality, which have produced different frameworks to understand them. By integrating theories into a framework, including personality theories, it can help in vocational psychology to bridge the gap of the unknown or different perspectives to gain a more holistic view of the person and the world of work (Rottinghaus & Miller, 2013).

As seen in Figure 1.2, Rottinghaus and Miller (2013) were able to produce a broad integrative framework that successfully demonstrates the three different layers to identity, including cultural and contextual factors that can affect these and how they may interact. There are many different domains and layers that make up an individual and many theories have produced segmented theories. Each theory has important aspects that can contribute and support the overall picture.

Figure 1.2

An integrative framework of career



Note. An integrative framework of factors affecting career. Adapted from “Convergence of personality frameworks within vocational psychology” by P. J Rottinghaus, and A. D Miller, in *Handbook of vocational psychology* (3rd ed, p.110) by W.B. Walsh, M.L. Savickas, and P.J. Hartung, 2013, Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group. Copyright 2005 by Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

The three layers mentioned previously will not supply all the information but do provide an excellent guideline to knowing a person and how they formed their self-concept (McAdams, 1993). Keeping in mind McAdams’ (1995) important work, I will now explore other theories including Life Span Life Space Theory (Super, 1953) which lays down important groundwork for career’s theory. It is important to remember that these theories are positioned in a broader, higher level vocational psychology literature, as previously discussed.

Life Span Life Space Theory of Careers

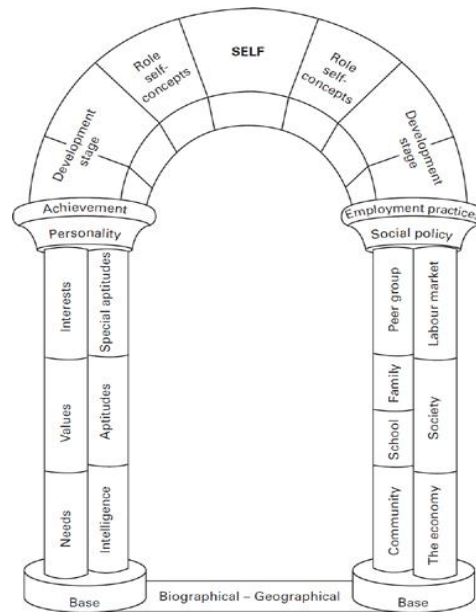
The approach of Donald Super (1953) draws on developmental, differential, social, personality, phenomenological psychology and self-concept and demonstrates that one field is not sufficient to describe the multifaceted process of career. Super’s theory developed over many years and understood the importance of seeking how individuals construct their self-concept to negotiate work lives and surrounding roles (Savickas, 1997). Super (1953) considered occupation as an expression of self and as careers unfold then individuals discover who they are and seek to express their self-concept through work to be satisfied. One of Super’s many significant contributions to the field of career development was to be aware of the rapidly changing realities of the nature of work and the need for constant expansion of current thinking regarding career exploration and maturity (Blustein, 1997).

Super (1957) examined why people work, how their work effects other areas of their lives and how the work life cycle relates to the human life cycle. Super provided a framework to view developmental stages and transitions during the life span and often revised his theories. Life span development describes people's behavioural characteristic and responses at different ages and recognizes the factors that contribute to developmental differences between humans (Broderick & Blewitt, 2015). Super (1980) highlighted in his life span life space approach that career counsellors should not only focus on the work role but attend to all demands on an individual, especially in the future. Developmental science is not a remote body of knowledge and can provide many advantages and awareness to helping professionals but there is an uneasy alliance between them (Broderick & Blewitt, 2015).

As seen in Figure 1.3, there are many career determinants that can affect an individual especially across the life span. For example, career may not be the central role in an individual's life, as at one stage the role of parent would be. Super's work has highlighted the importance of work as part of human identity and focussed on the multiple social roles, background factors and influences across the lifespan (Herr, 1997). Super (1980) explained that individuals had different self-concepts such as a vocational self and a social-self and these can change in different roles and situations.

Figure 1.3

The Archway of Career Determinants



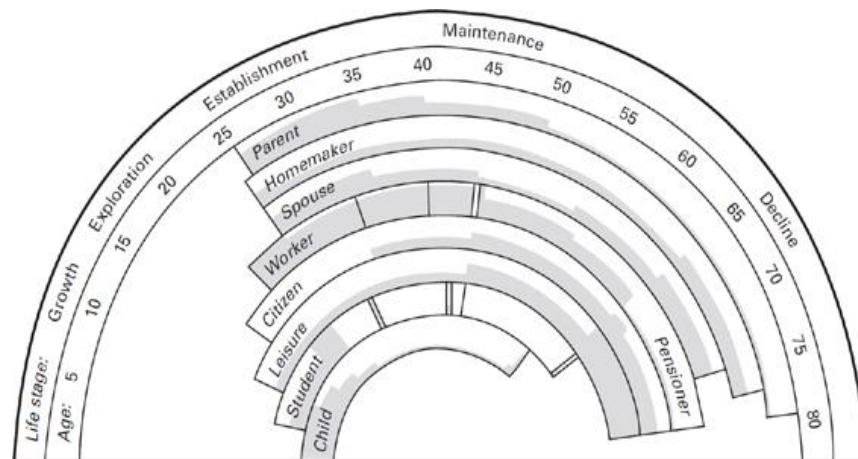
Note. An archway showcasing the many career determinants. Adapted from “A Segmental Model of Career Development: A life-span, life-space approach to career development” by D.E Super, in D. Brown (Ed.), *Career choice and development* (p.200), 2002, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. Copyright 2002 by John Wiley & Sons.

Super (1980) defined career as a combination of common and uncommon roles including child, student, citizen, worker, spouse, lover, homemaker, parent, and pensioner. His work considered different working classes and how women and men’s career trajectories may look different due to household duties and parental responsibility. The life span approach demonstrates predictable stages in a career role and the life space approach understands all of the positions and roles held in society. Super (1990) developed a life rainbow as seen in figure 1.4, which demonstrates a trajectory of life roles across the life span explaining life and career development stages (as cited in Brown, 2002). The five life stages as seen in figure 1.4 are growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance, and decline. Super (1990) defined these as growth from birth, interacting and learning behaviours from others; exploration from

teenage years exploring and trying out activities and occupations; establishment in a permanent and appropriate field by mid 20s; maintenance by mid 40s, attempting to hold on to their job and developing new skills; decline from 60s onwards as activities change and work reduces, and people plan for retirement (as cited in Brown, 2002).

Figure 1.4

A Career Life Rainbow



Note. A diagram showing possible roles and stages of the life span. Adapted from “The Life-Career Rainbow: Six Life Roles in Schematic Life Space” by D. E. Super, in D. Brown (Ed), *A lifespan, life-space approach to career development* (p.212), 2002, San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. Copyright 2002 by John Wiley & Sons.

Super (1980) understood that career choice would be an unfolding process and therefore there would be multiple transitions and points of entry and not just the singular move from school to the workforce. These stages are still important but in a post-industrial society, we have lost stability and now need to put emphasis on mobility (Savickas, 2005). Individuals still aim to grow and explore but there is a high chance that they cannot establish and maintain themselves in one occupation now and instead complete mini cycles of the stages. Therefore, attention should fall on achieving this through self-identity and career self-management. A person cannot

rely on one job for thirty years but now may look to frequent job transitions due to an unreliable labour market or establishing growth in different occupations and roles.

Super (1955) constructed career maturity which focussed on an individual's readiness to make career and educational choices and to plan and explore knowledge to support this (as cited in Krieshok et al., 2009). Super (1980) defined career maturity as reaching a certain level of maturity when being prepared to make occupational choices including psychological, social, and biological readiness. Career maturity is a psycho-social structure that includes cognition in career development tasks. Developmental theories give an overview of human development and a shared language but can often fall short of suggesting specific interventions when development becomes maladaptive (Marcia & Josselson, 2013).

This theory highlights the different developmental stages and touches on the occurrence of trauma during these but does not go into detail. It is important to understand how trauma can inform a person's perspective and career choices. Super pointed out the importance of examining the past in careers counselling so that career themes and characteristics of a person could be found and examined in order to predict a future career plan (Jepsen, 1994).

Super (1954) devised a promising Thematic-Extrapolation method which in some ways fell short in providing tools for CDPs at the time but astonishingly there has been very little career pattern research conducted since (Jepsen, 1994). This thematic-extrapolation method allows a focus in exploring an individual's life history and depicting life patterns to explore. An individual is then able to gain a coherent view of themselves and how they can implement self-concept in work and life roles, which is exceedingly practical (McIlveen, 2011).

Super proposed that careers become an expression of self. The key notions of the Life Span Life Space theory are a focus in this present research, as are career maturity and the thematic extrapolation method, which will be continued in the next section. Super (1954) was aware not just of developmental stages and transitions but of life patterns and themes which could be discussed in detail through language in the thematic-extrapolation method. However, Super did not finish this theory and other theorists have chosen to build and expand on these ground-breaking ideas. Next, I will look in depth at Career Construction Theory (Savickas, 1997) and how it has built on and offered a bridge between segments of Life Span Life Space Theory (Super, 1953).

Career Construction Theory: The Comprehensive Segmental Theory

Mark Savickas (2001) built on Super's innovative ideas by aiming to join the segmented theories together and used McAdams (1995) tripartite framework to establish a comprehensive, segmental theory of career. Savickas (2001) believed that there should not be an isolation of different perspectives on theories but a focus on looking for commonalities to aim for a convergence of theories. Savickas (2005) understood that types focus on similarities, but life themes focus on uniqueness, which opens up more awareness and understanding of the individual. Instead of fitting a person to work, it is important to fit work to the individual so that they can gain meaning and significance in life.

Savickas (1997) expanded on Super's developmental theory adding career construction into the framework to assist in innovative practice ideas and to bridge the gap between theories. "Career is now owned by the individual; it is a process, not a structure" (Watts, 1996, p.44). Career Constructivism emphasises that meaning is created through individual cognitive processes, and these can be crystallised in the

mind and prioritized by the individual (Patton & McMahon, 2014). Brown (2003) defined values as beliefs and standards that an individual creates which guide their functioning and these can dictate cognitive, affective, and behavioural patterns (as cited in Patton & McMahon, 2014).

From a career construction viewpoint, career is subjective, and individuals make sense of the world by imposing meaning on their vocational behaviour and occupational choices (Savickas, 2005). Therefore, it is important for individuals to understand how and why they are constructing a certain reality for themselves. Savickas (1997) stated that early experiences may structure future aspirations, specifically during roles played trying to meet those needs later in life.

Savickas noted that individuals construct their reality through social processes as an actor absorbing family life, experiences, important interpersonal relationships and then as an agent transitioning out into the world, before becoming an author to make sense of their lives and construct a future (Brown & Lent, 2013). This reality movie for individuals is not necessarily reality itself but what an individual has constructed to be reality and it is important to gain knowledge of these constructs (Krieshok et al., 2009). Individuals may be managing their choices based on the fictional movie created and therefore it can be vital to understand their personal logic and drives.

Careers today do not follow a particularly normative path and work needs to be a focus over career (Savickas, 2001). Modern day work and career can defy linear progressions and can only be understood in unique ways to that individual (Krieshok et al., 2009). Savickas (2001) moved away from career maturity and penned career adaptability to demonstrate that it is not an age-related process. Savickas (1997) understood the importance of readiness to cope with unpredictable tasks and

adjustments, changes in work and conditions, and the continuous need to respond to novel situations and circumstances over a linear continuum of developmental tasks.

Adaptability will demonstrate how an individual navigates the world of work and its many transitions and if they are able to cope with and succeed in tasks and problem-solving. There are four dimensions within career adaptability which are career concern for preparing for the future, career control of the responsibility to construct career, career curiosity to explore, learn and be inquisitive about career options and career confidence to encounter and overcome obstacles (Savickas, 2005). An individual now requires competency in all of these dimensions to tackle many different work transitions over the lifespan as career is constructed.

It is vital for an individual to be aware of these cognitions and patterns to help construct their life from a point of awareness of self. There has been an emphasis on logic and reasoning in career decision making but cognitive heuristics and biases can affect judgements and decisions, and these need more focus (Krieshok et al., 2009). Career construction theory and those fluid enough to adapt to change in the labour market with variations in economics, politics and culture will provide flexible frameworks to inform practice, policy, and social advocacy (Blustein, 2011). This is an important theory as a basis for the present research, as it considers how life themes have come to be and how they may affect future career development.

In recent years, there has been a focus on adaption, maintenance and a contextualist worldview (Brown, 2002). Self-efficacy is defined by someone's beliefs about their capabilities and levels of performance which can affect their lives and career, but the problem is that maladaptive cognitions and defense mechanisms are unconscious and need to be brought to the surface (Bandura, 1994). There is

awareness of trauma, but little research has been completed focusing on how this trauma can play out during the life span, especially in the career domain.

Savickas's contribution builds on previous work but provides a broader framework for career development practitioners, focusing on the importance of human agency and individual life themes that interact with the environment as well as tools to add to vocational tests (Blustein, 2008). This perspective provides support along the whole lifespan that addresses how a person came to be and what direction is needed at different stages in their life and career. Career Construction strives to find meaning, purpose, and continuity through themes to help decrease the fear or stress of an unpredictable future (Wolf, 2018).

Career construction theory is a segmental theory with three core segments: vocational traits, career adaptability, and life themes. I will now overview each segment.

Vocational Traits

It is crucial to understand vocational and personality traits to comprehend how they can affect career choices and motivations. In psychology, personality traits are seen as the core of the individual and showcase psychological individuality (McAdams & Olson, 2010). Vocational traits are thought to be quite rigid and unadaptable, similar to cognitive schemas. McAdams (1993) emphasizes genetic predispositions being at play when it comes to personality traits compared to characteristic adaptations and life stories being shaped by environmental factors. Crucially, personality traits have been found to be one of the strongest predictors of life satisfaction (Tharp et al., 2020). Dispositional traits can be directly correlated to work-related satisfaction as they can provide a cognitive bias through which individuals view the world, including career (Chiu & Francesco, 2003).

Dispositional traits are an individual's frame of reference in situations, which then will affect their reactions, thoughts, feelings, and behaviours (Chiu & Francesco, 2003). These traits are first seen as temperament in babies and may not be a precursor to vocational traits, but individuals may seek out environments that fit with their dominant temperament or personality traits (McAdams & Olson, 2010). Measures of affective disposition can predict job satisfaction, attitudes, and values due to personality traits influence on an individual's world view and job-related choices (Furnham et al., 2005). For example, a person high in openness would seek out variety and learning opportunities compared to a person high in neuroticism who would seek out and value a stable job and environment.

The connection between personality traits and vocation is evident but coverage of the construct has been debated due to different perspectives, and received less emphasis (Rottinghaus & Miller, 2013). Vocational personality and traits tend to always focus on the functional but do not talk about dysfunctional traits. McAdams (1993) noted that personality has an unconscious and conscious terrain to discover and must be explored at three different levels of function including traits, personal concerns, and life story. There are said to be positive and negative affectivity traits thought of as personality traits which work independently of each other with different consequences and predictors of behaviour (Chiu & Francesco, 2003).

Importantly Spokane & Decker (1999) noted that personality traits, interests, abilities, self-efficacy, and other domains that make up vocational self-concept may only be one side of complex, underlying traits. Only neuroticism tends to be mentioned when viewing dispositional traits. The Big Five personality traits (McCrae & Costa, 1997; McCrae & Costa, 2003) are a broad base framework, but human

evolution has shown that there are many variations to these categories and many that are not mentioned or understood (McAdams & Pals, 2006).

Vocational psychology has typically tended to focus on personality traits alone when looking for workplace fits but need to encompass the many factors that contribute to how a person views themselves (Rottinghaus & Miller, 2013). Personality psychology is lacking a comprehensive framework to look at the whole person, which would give a better knowledge of how a person is similar to others and how they are not (McAdams & Pals, 2006). As previously discussed, practitioners are required to have knowledge of particular theories and potentially choose a favourite, when there needs to be an overarching framework collaborating different perspectives and work.

Super was predominately a trait-and-factor counsellor who wanted to consider a different perspective such as career construction (Savickas, 1997). Super used psychometric tests and appreciated their use but considered what other techniques would enhance gaining information on careers and decided that talking therapy would be an option. Super intended to have supplementary perspectives to provide practitioners and researchers a way to understand and intervene appropriately in not only occupational choice but lifelong career development (Savickas, 1997). Dispositional traits are considered enduring but now in a constantly changing environment and world of work, it is important to also consider how a person changes over time including their characteristic adaptations and life story (McAdams & Pals, 2006).

Personality is an exceptionally dynamic construct and needs to be viewed holistically incorporating different perspectives and a unified framework when being used in vocational psychology moving forward (Rottinghaus & Miller, 2013).

Individuals have vocational traits or schemas, but their behaviour is demonstrated in characteristic traits or career adaptability as this is the behaviour shown to create an outcome (McAdams & Pals, 2006). Many prominent personality theorists only make a passing mention to dispositional traits and instead focus on characteristic adaptations and the goals humans strive for and coping mechanisms they enforce (McAdams & Olson, 2010). This leads to questions of what people value and how they move towards or avoid certain situations, including how they cope with stressful life events.

RIASEC

John Holland (1997) understood that individuals seek out certain environments and sought to produce a trait-orientated framework that would be user friendly and simple for counsellors to follow and understand but robust enough to cover vocational choice. The framework described personality types and acknowledged their influences, but the goal was not to focus on how these developed but rather the outcomes they provide in vocational career. Holland (1997) understood that occupation is an expression of personality, demonstrating values, interests, and traits. However, by linking personality and vocational interests, Holland's theory demonstrates how information can be contributed between the different areas of personality psychology and vocational theory and its benefits (Watkins et al., 2013).

Holland (1997) articulated six personality types using the abbreviation RIASEC, that individuals could fall into which include realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising, and conventional. The realistic type have a preference for hands on and technical skills and are self-directed; the investigative type enjoy thinking about physical, biological or cultural phenomena, observing and working systematically; the artistic type enjoy creative unstructured pursuits; the social type

enjoy helping and caring for others and can show empathy and patience; the enterprising type enjoy entrepreneurial work and leading or persuading; the conventional type enjoy working accurately and being organised, precise and conscientious (Gurres et al., 2021).

These personality types will generally respond to problems in a similar way and their job satisfaction and achievement depends on congruence between their personality type and the job environment and tasks. These types are useful but do not provide great insight into why and how people came to be and how a counsellor could work best with the individual. As seen in Figure 1.5, each personality type has certain characteristics including values and preferences for work environments and careers.

Figure 1.5

Holland's RIASEC Types

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Realistic <i>Preference for working with:</i> things <i>Personality characteristics:</i> frank, practical, focused, mechanical, determined, rugged <i>Preferred/typical activities and skills:</i> mechanical, manual, physical, and athletic tasks <i>Sample careers:</i> Fitness trainer, firefighter, mechanic, builder, farmer, landscaper <i>Sample majors:</i> criminal justice studies, athletic training, construction management <i>Values:</i> tradition, freedom, independence</p> | <p>Investigative <i>Preference for working with:</i> things and ideas <i>Personality characteristics:</i> analytical, intellectual, reserved, independent, ambitious <i>Preferred/typical activities and skills:</i> working with abstract ideas, solving intellectual problems, collecting data <i>Sample careers:</i> biologist, researcher, physician, mathematician, computer systems analyst <i>Sample majors:</i> botany, engineering, mathematics, pre-med, food technology <i>Values:</i> independence, logic, achievement</p> |
| <p>Artistic <i>Preference for working with:</i> ideas and people <i>Personality characteristics:</i> complicated, original, impulsive, independent, expressive, creative <i>Preferred/typical activities and skills:</i> using imagination, creative expression <i>Sample careers:</i> artist, musician, actor, creative writer, photographer <i>Sample majors:</i> art, theater, graphic design, music <i>Values:</i> esthetic experience, self-expression, imagination, non-conformity</p> | <p>Social <i>Preference for working with:</i> people <i>Personality characteristics:</i> cooperative, helpful, empathic, kind, tactful, warm, sociable, generous <i>Preferred/typical activities and skills:</i> interacting with and helping people, teaching, guiding <i>Sample careers:</i> teacher, clergy, counselor, nurse, school bus monitor <i>Sample majors:</i> nursing, education, counseling, social work <i>Values:</i> altruism, ethics, equality</p> |
| <p>Enterprising <i>Preference for working with:</i> data and people <i>Personality characteristics:</i> persuasive, energetic, sociable, adventurous, ambitious, assertive <i>Preferred/typical activities and skills:</i> leading, managing, persuading, and organizing people <i>Sample careers:</i> manager, lawyer, business administrator, politician <i>Sample majors:</i> pre-law, business management, political science <i>Values:</i> tradition, achievement, ambition</p> | <p>Conventional <i>Preference for working with:</i> data and things <i>Personality characteristics:</i> careful, conforming, conservative, responsible, controlled <i>Preferred/typical activities and skills:</i> ordering, attending to details <i>Sample careers:</i> accountant, banker, actuary, editor, office manager, librarian <i>Sample majors:</i> business, accounting <i>Values:</i> tradition, ambition, obedience, economic achievement, comfort</p> |

Note. A description of all five RIASEC types. Adapted from “Holland’s theory of vocational choice and adjustment” by M.M Nauta, in S.D Brown and R.W Lent (Eds), in *Putting Theory and Research to Work* (p. 63), 2020, John Wiley & Sons. Copyright 2021 by John Wiley & Sons.

RIASEC types acknowledge dispositional traits in personality that are usually enduring but also lists characteristic adaptations of the types including values and goals. Individuals can be a mixture of these types of personality but usually have a dominant type. The highest scoring three types are used as a code for the Holland type to help individuals assimilate into the working world. People and environments could be fit into this model and the personality types would be able to predict certain outcomes. These include which careers people choose, the skills they utilise, how individuals assimilate into their environments and the resulting level of satisfaction of career decisions and work performance.

When considering vocational traits and interests, Savickas realised there was a taxonomy of traits, and that these could be utilised in language by individuals to explain their lives (Brown & Lent, 2020). The word adapt means to fit or join, adaption demonstrates attempts to implement self-concept into work roles and adapting behaviour to address changing conditions (Porfeli & Savickas, 2012). In the new world of work, individuals may not have the opportunity to seek out their best fit. The focus falls more on identity over congruence and consistency, which is where adaptability from the individual is vital. However, the link between career maturity and mainstream psychology has not received the attention it deserves and has therefore worked in isolation (Watkins et al., 2013).

Career Adaptability

“Adaptability means the quality of being able to change, without great difficulty, to fit new or changed circumstances” (Savickas, 1997, p., 254). Career adaptability refers to how individuals will cope with constant developmental work tasks, transitions, and traumas such as loss of control, issues in the workplace, stress of career management and constant job loss and cycles (Prescod & Zeligman, 2018). With constant technological, social, and economic change, being able to adapt and adjust successfully is desirable and keeps individuals active and in control of their own career (Johnston, 2016). Adaptivity is a personality trait which shows willingness or flexibility to change, and adaptability is a psychosocial construct to perform behaviours and utilise resources to adapt to a changing environment (Porfeli & Savickas, 2012).

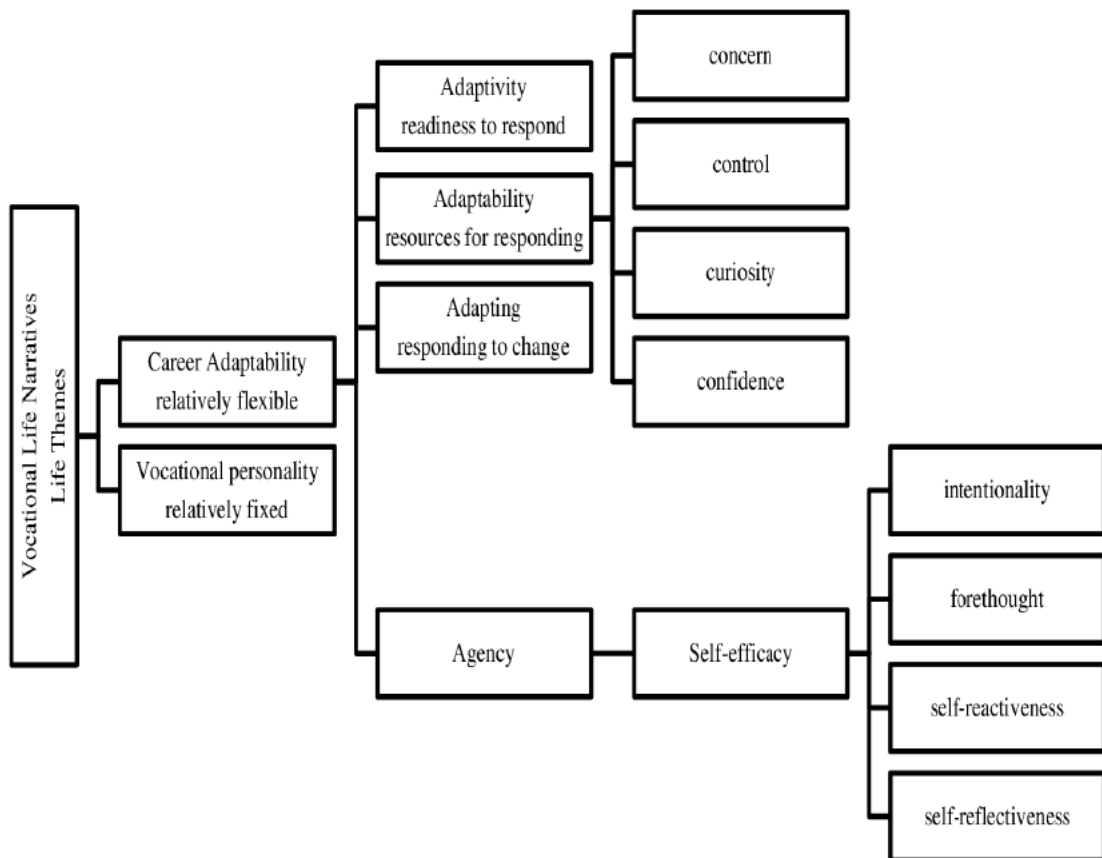
In the new world, career adaptability has been deemed necessary for a successful career and improved overall well-being (Johnston, 2016). Career adaptability was previously defined as “readiness to cope with changing work and working conditions” (Super & Knasel, 1981, p. 195). Therefore, as seen in Figure 1.6, career adaptability is an important resource to navigate and show readiness in the process of career development and career decisions, especially in uncertain career climates (Porfeli & Savickas, 2012). In line with a self-construction view, Savickas (2013) highlighted the importance of career adaptability as a resource including increasing concern and control over vocational future, being curious of future selves and possibilities and increasing confidence to pursue aspirations (as cited in Patton & McMahon, 2014, p. 82).

Understanding career narratives can give information on how people make meaning of their life themes and how these came to be. This information can then

assist with work on self-efficacy and support making successful career decisions, achieve goals and positive life outcomes. “Career adaptability deals with how an individual constructs a career whereas vocational personality deals with what career they construct” (Savickas, 2005, p., 48). Similarly, characteristic adaptations demonstrate what an individual places importance on including goals, motivations, values, strategies, developmental tasks and so on (McAdams & Pals, 2006).

Figure 1.6

A map of career adaptability



Note. An analysis and map of career adaptability. Adapted from *Exploring new horizons in career counselling* (p. 242), by P. McIlveen, and W. Midgley, 2015, by Sense Publishers. Reprinted with permission.

Career adaptability displays characteristic traits which are thought to be quite stable but can adapt over time, comparable to defense mechanisms. Similar to defense mechanisms, there can be adaptive and maladaptive characteristic traits. Career adaptability or personal concerns include defense mechanisms and are a largely unmapped landscape of personality which can assist in understanding an individual but cannot give the whole picture (McAdams, 1993). However, being able to consider and plan for the next move, will be beneficial for workers today (Krieshok et al., 2009). Therefore, it proves to be an important area of focus for this present research.

It is important to move away from career decisions and instead focus on individuals gaining control, agency, self-efficacy, and other characteristic adaptations that will assist in career satisfaction (Rottinghaus & Miller, 2013). The four dimensions of career adaptability including control and confidence, are positively related to well-being, positive affect, and life satisfaction (Johnston, 2016). Savickas (1997) provided a framework with four dimensions of career adaptability resources, which are concern and control of planning for the future and curiosity and confidence to explore an individual's career options and tackle obstacles affecting the ability to achieve desired goals, which I will now overview.

Concern

According to Savickas (2013) concern is the most important and fundamental dimension of career adaptability because it shows a willingness and concern to prepare and plan for the future (as cited in Brown & Lent, 2013). Individuals that just think of career subjectively do not make it a behaviour, as career construction fosters the need to connect the past, present, and future to gain continuity through career. Without a future orientation, many individuals can struggle with indifference or

pessimism towards career or feel very lost and aren't able to connect up all of their experiences.

Control

Savickas (2013) also believed that control was the second most important dimension in career adaptability as it strives for independence and autonomy, especially when making career decisions (as cited in Brown & Lent, 2013). When individuals can exert self-control over career it results in becoming self-disciplined, engaging in vocational development tasks and any education needed, which can then widen an individual's range of options to progress towards a meaningful career. If individuals do not exert control on their career circumstances, it can cause hesitancy and delay important decisions.

Curiosity

The career adaptability dimension of curiosity is described by Savickas (2013) as the initiative to learn about different types of work and seek out occupational opportunities and information to explore (as cited in Brown & Lent, 2013). By gaining occupational interest and a curiosity of options, individuals can better fit themselves into the world of work and be open to new avenues, taking on a form of self-control. These experiences can be an abundance of knowledge and strengthen abilities and values which in turn produce transferable skills. Individuals that do not seek out new information can form an unrealistic view of the world of work, abilities, and self-image.

Confidence

The career adaptability dimension of confidence is described by Savickas (2013) as being based on self-confidence and self-efficacy to then be able to execute action needed to solve problems encountered (as cited in Brown & Lent, 2013).

Individuals need confidence to pursue goals and interests. It is important for individuals to build self-acceptance and knowledge to increase productivity and approach tasks confidently. Otherwise, a lack of confidence can cause self-consciousness and individuals could avoid or not have the belief to achieve goals or pursue preferred work areas and opportunities in career.

Savickas (2001) noted that actual processes and mechanisms of career maturity are insufficiently described and there is a need to address gain, loss, and resilience across the lifespan. When looking at career adaptability, there is an awareness that core self-evaluations and cognitive flexibility are needed along with the adaptability resources of concern, control, curiosity, and confidence to enhance career decisions, exploration, and occupational self-efficacy (Neureiter & Traut-Mattausch, 2017). Savickas (1997) understood that adaptability resources are self-regulation capacities and building on these strengths can help individuals navigate and anticipate change. The present research utilised a measurement that included this information, which will now be discussed.

The Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS)

The Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012) was chosen for this research due to its reliability, validity, and measures of the four subscales of concern, control, curiosity, and confidence, mentioned previously. It was developed by an international research group and has been validated as a measure for career adaptability in many countries and many studies, showing it can replicate well in different contexts, demonstrating construct validity (Johnston, 2016). Career adaptability offers a resource to show how individuals manage career-related transitions and traumas and is an important construct of CCT and Vocational Psychology (Rudolph et al., 2017). Thus, supporting the main focus of this present

research and providing a gateway of knowledge alongside the other variables mentioned.

In a meta-analysis conducted by Rudolph et al (2017) it was found that career adaptability was significantly associated with cognitive ability, big five traits, career planning, exploration, career self-efficacy and vocational decision making, career and life satisfaction, amongst other variables. Many of these variables are being covered by this present research, making the CAAS a good fit. There has been a growing interest in career adaptability especially since the late 1990s due to its importance for successfully navigating career development and the decision-making process (Stead et al., 2021).

Savickas (2013) encouraged and focussed on self-efficacy and career adaptability, so that individuals are able to adapt to an unpredictable work landscape. Another meta-analysis by Stead et al (2021) supported the notions of Savickas (2013) and Lent and Brown's (2013) theoretical perspectives on the relationship between career adaptability and career decision self-efficacy.

Life Themes

Savickas (2009) aims to discover the interaction between the individual and environment to assist in life design by building on adaptability, exploration of self and lifelong learning. "Career construction theory adheres to the epistemological constructivism that says we construct representations of reality but diverges from the ontologic constructionism that says we construct reality itself" (Brown, 2002, p. 154). It is imperative that individuals comprehend their constructed reality, especially when it may impinge on their wellbeing.

The life theme component of CCT focuses on the why of vocational behaviour and seeks meaning, building from Super's view that individuals express

preferences and seek to develop a self-concept through work (Savickas, 1997). Life themes can demonstrate a process of meaning making but can additionally be displayed as a product, an individual's life story, showing a thread that connects the past to the present and then links to the future (McIlveen, 2011). Individuals unconsciously may be using past experiences and learnt points of reference to decide future decisions, which will then showcase key patterns and themes (Krieshok et al., 2009).

Individuals can have many different combinations of personality and characteristic traits, but it is their life story that makes the person completely distinctive. Dispositional traits give a human outline of the individual, the characteristic adaptations fill in some individual detail and behaviour patterns but developing a narrative identity can anchor meaning to life (McAdams & Pals, 2006). To be able to make sense of an experience, individuals must communicate and describe the story, then try to explain the behaviour, which could make sense of an internal life script (McAdams, 1993). By using the integrative framework, it shows how vocational personality can be showcased in a narrative way to demonstrate subjective meaning and well-being (Rottinghaus & Miller, 2013).

Vocational traits can show the basis for vocational behaviour, career adaptability displays the how, but life themes show the "why" of vocational behaviour. Humans can follow similar evolutionary designs and fit particular categories however, they all have their unique individual variations and stories (McAdams & Pals, 2006). Young children display dispositional traits when finding a fit as a social actor, develop characteristic adaptations by adopting goals in adolescence and later in adulthood strive to be an author gaining a narrative identity and understanding of self (McAdams & Olson, 2010). Schemas provide scripts and

autobiographical memory and therefore life narratives can contribute, especially as traits are semantic categories of self-knowledge, but life narratives are episodic forms of memory (McAdams & Pals, 2006).

Psychometric tests and career information resources (e.g., courses, jobs) are useful for providing potential information, but they neglect the subjectivity of a person's career and how they make sense of attributes and actions during their course of working to achieve needs and outcomes (Cochran, 1998). Vocational behaviour actively provides an environment for meaning making, reactions and choices. By talking about career, individuals choose highlights of experiences, exposing the narrative truth by which their life is composed (Savickas, 2005).

Career or occupation can be a manifestation of the self, which could show the type of person someone is and through career individuals hope to develop closer to their goals or a better fit for a particular environment (Savickas, 2005). For example, an artistic person would fit well with a creative job such as an art teacher to a greater extent than banking or accounting, which is highly logical. There tends to be an emphasis on using occupation as an extended form of self-identity and having to choose a job for financial reasons over fit could cause internal self-conflict.

Individuals need to gain more knowledge of past suffering and a narrative therapy option allows more control over emotions to be able to face the ambiguities and disruptions of life today (Silva, 2012). Savickas (2013) suggested organizing events and incidences into episodes to try and find a plot running throughout as this narrative gives rise to a person's self-identity. How an individual interprets trauma for example is person dependent, they can consider it an obstacle to triumph over or a reason for downfall and thus raising the importance of narrative stories in identity formation (McAdams, 1993).

In organizational studies there is the notion that identity is constructed, not given and continues to change, including parts of a person's consciousness (Hoedemaekers, 2010). Such objectified tests and information are not in a narrative form and therefore restrict meaning-making and awareness of schemas, especially when making decisions (Cochran, 1998). Constructivism and narrative counselling allow a person to make sense of the chaos and identify certain patterns and potential problems that could keep people in a cycle affecting life and career (Cardoso, 2012). An individual's dispositional traits tend to be enduring but characteristic adaptations and life narratives change over time so can provide valuable information on personality development and transitions (McAdams & Pals, 2006).

The narrative approach provides CDPs and individuals tools to form meaning making through articulating their stories, which should highlight life and career themes (Patton & McMahan, 2014). CDPs need counselling methods to develop client's stories and to assist them to break repetitive cycles that are not serving them. If an individual can make meaning from previous trauma and re-organize them into a more coherent narrative then this can increase their psychological health and well-being (McAdams & Pals, 2006). These current major theories provide a great basis for exploration into psychodynamic constructs and tools for investigating these in a career counselling space.

In careers counselling occupational choice and rational career development were the focus but there has been a demand to analyse career patterns and an individual's life stories. Being able to form a meaningful narrative helps increase psychological development, coping and increases overall well-being (McAdams & Pals, 2006). There are many determinants to behaviour and career to consider in an individual's life story, including values, interests, family self-concepts, and

developmental stages. Being able to gather this information will assist considerably in making sense of choices leading up to the present and then being able to assist individuals to attain personal goals in the future.

Narrative counselling allows an individual to organize characters and themes into a coherent plot to uncover unrealised aspirations or repeating behaviours due to past traumas that are occurring in their career (Cochran, 1998). An individual could be choosing career paths such as community services, for example, to assist others because their own needs were neglected as a child by parental figures. Not having needs met could cause individuals to act on these needs unconsciously without realising. It is therefore important to gain a deeper understanding of psychological concepts and their workings. Consequently, personal counselling should be included in careers counselling and narrative counselling used as a possible solution. In broader terms, the link between career counselling and psychotherapy should be recognised instead of working separately (Cardoso, 2016).

Integrating psychotherapy approaches and CCT with life themes, individuals can become aware of core themes underlying problems (Cardoso, 2016). The focus has been on competencies and beliefs in the career counselling industry but there needs to be a shift to understand learning, cognition and the process of decision making (Savickas, 2001). It is useful for individuals to understand their biology, drives and traits to see how they are manifested by characteristic adaptations and goals, which then interact in society so that a unique life story can be made sense of (Rottinghaus & Miller, 2013).

Historically there has been a divide between CDP's and emotion and life focused counselling, and even psychology. These differing professions have separate practices, governing bodies, associations, and professional literature which deepens

the dichotomy (Gysbers et al., 2014). There has been a considerable amount of research into the process of personal-social counselling and psychotherapy but little on vocational counselling (Watkins et al., 2013). There needs to be further cohesion and collaboration between professions and industries to gain a better understanding of careers. Career guidance needs to be viewed holistically through life and personal counselling to determine underlying causes of problems in career or indecisiveness in decision making.

Life-span life-space theory deals with the timeframe that developmental trauma can occur, and career construction theory alludes to it, but their inadequacy lies in not theorising the role of early trauma. Two clinical psychological perspectives offer a potential avenue to explore the effects of early life experiences on career adaptability: maladaptive schemas and defense mechanisms. The three psychodynamic levels that will be focussed on and described now are defense mechanisms, maladaptive schemas, and career and life satisfaction, alike to the three domains previously covered.

Psychodynamics and Career

Psychodynamic theories in psychology all follow the tenet that events in childhood and the unconscious have a great influence on personality and adulthood. This in turn has a major influence on vocational choices but career studies lack an in-depth understanding of important theories and perspectives of the unconscious. Psychoanalytic theory makes a significant contribution to theories of career development by adding the dimension of unconscious career choices (Malach-Pines & Yafe-Yanai, 2001).

Psychoanalytic theory created by Sigmund Freud (1990) proposed that there are agencies of human personality, and these are the three personalities of the Id, ego,

and superego, which are in conflict with each other (Broderick & Blewitt, 2015). Id is the part of the personality that focuses on instinct and its purpose is to blindly fulfill needs and work on the pleasure principle (Freud, 2018). Humans are born with the Id part of personality, which is a biological trait and displays inborn aggressive and destructive features (Broderick & Blewitt, 2015). The Id is a rigid structure that is not changeable and is entirely unconscious to individuals. Aiming to understand the Id is therefore difficult and complicated, but still important.

The ego is another part of the personality that focusses on maintaining an individual in their environment, as its function is to create a link between the unconscious person and the outside world (Freud, 2018). The ego develops after birth as cognitive and physical skills emerge and operates on the reality and understanding of a situation (Broderick & Blewitt, 2015). The ego interacts with the Id to fulfil bodily needs but aims to complete them in a rational way and understands the consequences of its context.

Work was deemed to be an outlet by which unacceptable impulses could be channelled into socially acceptable behaviours, allowing the pleasure and reality principles to be combined, which satisfied both id and ego demands (Watkins & Savickas, 1990). The ego is between the unconscious and conscious and therefore can be more malleable and serves as a self-protective approach. It also would explain why individuals with certain traits favour and seek out or avoid certain environments.

The superego is the part of the personality that provides moral and conscience assessment of actions or thoughts of a person to maintain the individual in society (Freud, 2018). The superego is said to be the internalized parent that provides constraint to the child in the world when behaviour is in contrast with parental restrictions (Broderick & Blewitt, 2015). The superego is the overarching construct

that must aim to fulfil the pressures and needs of the id but by completing the task in an appropriate way to fulfil the ego, or the superego will be left with anxiety and guilt. If the three areas are understood, including how they interact, then individuals can gain more control over past, present, and future.

Another important perspective to consider was Bordin (1981) who followed on from the Freudian viewpoint of early childhood experiences and the unconscious but expanded on the interpersonal and social aspects important to human development. Humans have many unconscious desires, motivations, and feelings. This viewpoint pushed the significance of psychodynamic and psychoanalytic ideas into counselling psychology. McAdams (1993) even suggested a potential fourth area of personality in the framework which would incorporate the unconscious and more indirect characteristics of an individual.

Erik Erikson (1950) focused on lifelong personality development and established different stages of normal and abnormal personality development depending on how individuals coped during psychosocial crisis stages (Crawford et al., 2004). Adler (1932) described personality as a device individuals used to fit their context and develop a lifestyle with subjective goals (Chang & Liu, 2022). This is in line with a Constructivist point of view that individuals are a product of their social surroundings.

Defense mechanisms are a fundamental construct in psychodynamic theory and have been associated to constructs such as adaption and coping (Nicolas et al., 2017). Anna Freud (1993) expanded on defense mechanisms, particularly repression and noted a lack of mastery leading to possible neurosis. In the psychosexual stages if there is an overindulgence or denial by the caretakers in any of the stages then this causes fixation (Broderick & Blewitt, 2015). Freud focussed on the id and primitive

drives and urges but Anna Freud (1993) found that the ego gives useful information as it mediates between the id and the super-ego. A trait in personality may be a determinant to certain behaviours that manifest such as a maladaptive attachment pattern due to abuse and trauma in childhood, affecting personality (McAdams, 1993).

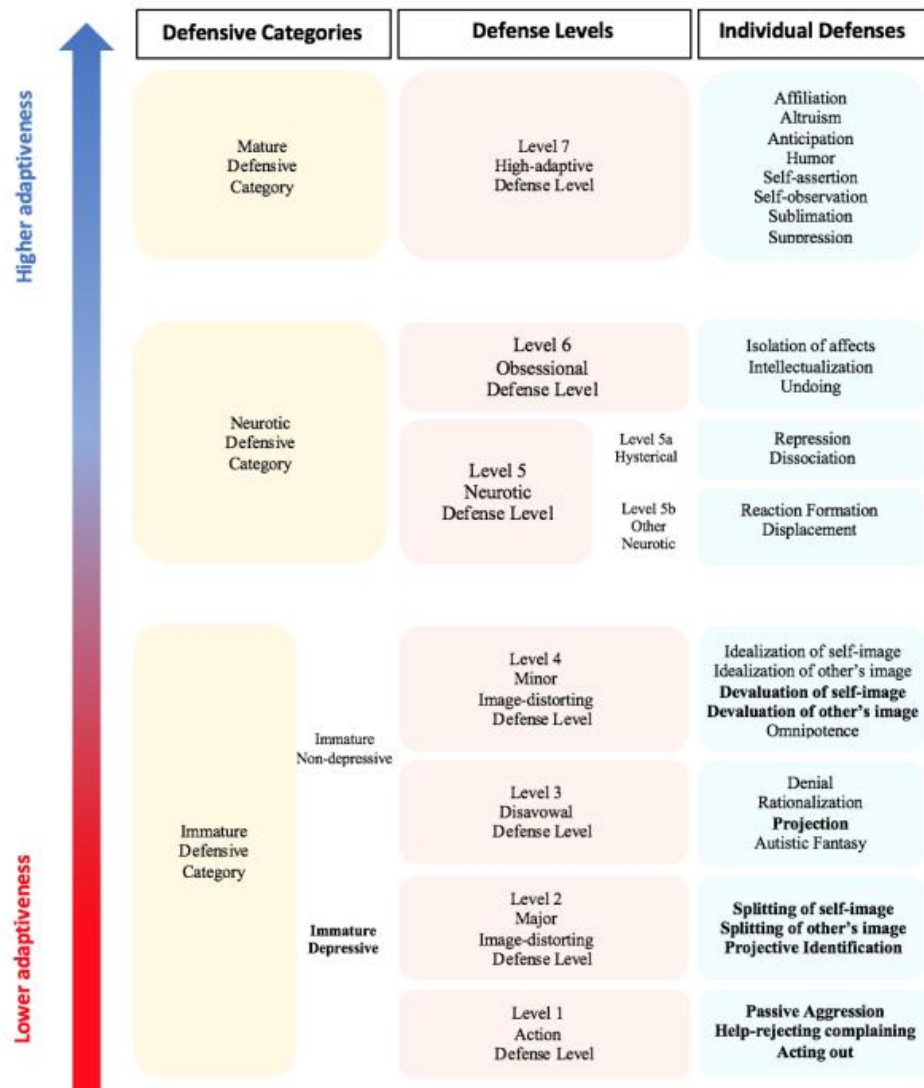
Defenses give valuable insights into behaviour and are useful in a variety of areas which could include career. Karen Horney (1950) developed an interpersonal theory explaining that children who felt isolated or helpless by parental figures would develop defenses and coping mechanisms which would push them towards, against or away from people (Coolidge et al., 2001). Internal and external conflict can be facilitated or blocked by social contexts (Broderick & Blewitt, 2015). Identity development is an important area to focus on and the many aspects that could contribute or impact it.

Defense Mechanisms

Defense mechanisms are a psychodynamic concept and are automatic psychological mechanisms that facilitate an individual's reaction and response to internal or external conflicts or stress (Di Giuseppe & Perry, 2021). Defence mechanisms were first developed by Sigmund Freud to explain psychological symptoms and Anna Freud explained that they are possible solutions to inner conflict, as subjective reactions can influence emotional distress, stress management, functioning and quality of life (Di Giuseppe et al., 2020). Again, there is little in the literature regarding the role of defence mechanisms in career, but they have been an enduring construct in psychoanalysis and psychology. The defenses can be arranged hierarchically based on their level of adaptiveness as seen in Figure 1.7 and may underlie other areas of functioning (Perry & Bond, 2012).

Figure 1.7

Hierarchical organization of defensive categories and levels



Note. A diagram showing defense levels, categories, and order of adaptiveness.

Adapted from “The Hierarchy of defense mechanisms: Assessing defensive functioning with the Defense Mechanisms Rating Scales Q-Sort” by M. Di Giuseppe, and J. C. Perry, 2021, in *Frontiers in Psychology*, p. 3. Copyright 2021 by Di Giuseppe and Perry. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.718440>

How an individual interprets work stressors, or environment can be dependent on cognitive appraisals and interpretations of reality, and it is important to

gain more understanding of this process to help individuals gain more control over situations and outcomes (Li et al., 2021). An individual's behaviour is not part of a maladaptive schema however they usually produce a behaviour response, and these can become maladaptive, affecting function (Young et al., 2007). Defence mechanisms can play a moderating role between maladaptive schemas and career and life satisfaction. Empirical studies have shown that when individuals need to adapt to stressful situations, defense mechanisms can be a better predictor for recovery than coping mechanisms, if they are adaptive (Nicolas et al., 2017). Non-adaptive defenses are a temporary strategy but harmful in the long run as they can distort schema and produce pathological responses, but adaptive schemas can reduce negative emotion (Zhang & Guo, 2017).

To ascertain how individuals cope with and manage inner demands, a psychological factor of defense mechanisms can be a gateway of knowledge (Sammallahti et al., 2003). McIlveen (2014) explains that powerful compulsions occur to defend against the emotions of an earlier event. For example, specific defense mechanisms such as reaction formation or repression can be linked back to conflicts arising at particular stages of development (Broderick & Blewitt, 2015). A way to be free from poor mental health is how free people are from the bondage of their past, as humans tend to repeat formative life experiences (Corradi, 2009). These cycles can impact career decisions and vocational performance and this link should be investigated further.

With many CDPs coming from different backgrounds including education, a focus would solely be on careers and not viewing individuals through a therapeutic lens or lacking knowledge in psychodynamic concepts. From a Psychodynamic approach, a trauma experience could include repressed feelings that would lead to

repetition compulsion but on an unconscious level. Therefore, actions that follow would be guided by unconscious defences. Unsuccessful resolution at earlier stages of development can stall progress and increase the likelihood of maladaptive behaviour occurring (Broderick & Blewitt, 2015). It is important to explore the defenses as they may directly affect career and life satisfaction.

An Example: The Repetition Compulsion

The repetition compulsion provides an example of how the unconscious can affect individual's conscious everyday lives, including career. Freud's psychoanalytic construct of the repetition compulsion is useful as the drive to repeat and re-enact influential early life experiences can showcase information about the individual and their life journey (Cramer et al., 2016). Individuals choose an occupation to replicate significant childhood experiences, with the goal of satisfying needs that were unfulfilled during childhood (Malach-Pines & Yafe-Yanai, 2001). It is a vital contribution in psychoanalysis, helping to understand human nature but the repetition compulsion's contributions to psychodynamics and career has astonishingly received very little attention (Corradi, 2009).

Lacan (1977) discussed individuals trying to make sense of personal trauma in retrospect and even the unconscious can be seen, or a gap noted in spoken language (Parker, 2005, p.170). The repetition compulsion was first mentioned by Sigmund Freud (1914) alluding to pathological repetitions in childhood, including repressed meaning in relational patterns (as cited in Sanchez-Cardenas, 2021). This early trauma could be repeated unconsciously throughout the lifespan or lay dormant until triggered. A career path may not come from a normative trajectory and could have been affected by early trauma, which has impacted developmental stages and career choices (Bryce et al., 2022).

Repetition may be observable to an extent, but its purpose and meaning may be unconscious but perhaps familiar and comforting to the individual (Sanchez-Cardenas, 2021). Individuals could strive to pick a career goal that helps prevent others from experiencing the same trauma (Berman et al., 2020). Similarly, individuals may strive for this unconsciously but feel some familiarity in certain patterns of behaviour, relieving tension. If needs are not met in childhood, there could become a central preoccupation in an individual's life, which may focus on relieving or resolving negative feelings (Cardoso, 2012).

Individuals build an identity made up of values and goals to give life purpose, but trauma can de-rail this. Dominant life themes can lead a person to choose a career to meet past and current needs which can affect future aspirations (Cardoso, 2012). A person for example, may unconsciously focus on striving for a well-paid role due to being told that they would not amount to anything in childhood. Similarly, work traumas or loss of work roles can challenge a person's beliefs about themselves and the world, causing identity distress or incorporating trauma into their identity (Berman et al., 2020). Work transitions and a fragile economy can increase these events happening now and in the future.

Psychodynamic theory views trauma as caused by a life event which is then defined by how a person is able to cope and respond adequately to minimise long term consequences (Lazaratou, 2017). In Lacan analysis in psychoanalysis, language is the provision for the unconscious (Parker, 2005). It is important for individuals to talk about personal experiences to uncover themes or experiences that had not been considered before but may still have an impact in the present.

Maladaptive Schemas

Cognitive schemas are a way for humans to categorise and organize information of the world and to process it but failing to challenge these representations formed can lead to rigid patterns of behaviour developing (Cardoso, 2012). “Early Maladaptive Schemas are self-defeating emotional and cognitive patterns that begin early in our development and repeat throughout life” (Young et al., 2007, p. 7). Early maladaptive cognitions and schemas occur when needs are not met during development as children or adolescents and these can be met with avoidance, overcompensation or surrendering to these feelings (Young et al., 2007).

The concept of needs, especially needs that have not been met is central to understanding humans, how they construct purpose and career plans and why they behave the way that they do (Sampaio et al., 2021). Individuals with early maladaptive schemas tend to gravitate towards certain environments or occupations which have similar dynamics, aiming to master these feelings or heal, however if they develop maladaptive coping styles then this can lead to occupational stress (Bamber & McMahon, 2008). For example, an individual who felt abandoned in childhood could then avoid intimate relationships as an adult, choose partners with similar avoidant qualities or cling to a partner, which could push them away. These structures developed early in life are usually resistant to change making them vital to be understood to make sense of a person, but less theoretical emphasis has been given to this developmental area and the consequences (Dozois et al., 2008).

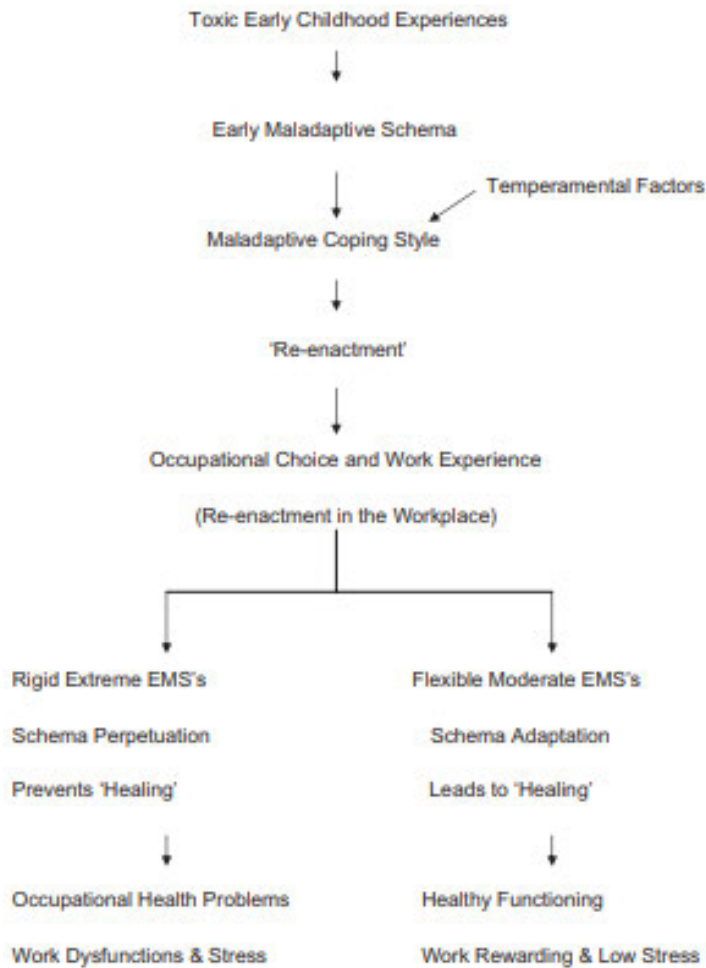
The four most powerful and damaging Early Maladaptive Schemas (EMAs) are abandonment/instability, mistrust/abuse, emotional deprivation, and defectiveness/shame and the other fourteen are dependence/incompetence, vulnerability to harm or illness, enmeshment/undeveloped self, failure,

entitlement/grandiosity, insufficient self-control/self-discipline, subjugation, self-sacrifice, approval-seeking/recognition-seeking, negativity/pessimism, emotional inhibition, unrelenting standards/hypercriticalness and punitiveness (Young et al., 2007).

EMAs usually operate on a deep level of cognition and therefore out of consciousness and recognition of the individual, making the individual psychologically susceptible (Young et al., 2007). Maladaptive schemas do not have to be irrational but simply display early learnings and constructed reality by individuals to make sense of their world, creating their own version of reality (Welburn et al., 2002). As shown in Figure 1.8, individuals may have difficulties or find barriers to career and life satisfaction due to lack of awareness of these life themes and potential cycles of repetition. Thus, demonstrating the importance of addressing these holistically in career counselling. These re-enactments in the workplace can be aided by high adaptive defense mechanisms, which can assist in the healing process and potentially provide healthy behaviour.

Figure 1.8

A Schema-focused model of occupational stress



Note. A model of occupational stress. Adapted from “Danger-early maladaptive schemas at work!: The role of early maladaptive schemas in career choice and the development of occupational stress in health workers” by M. Bamber and R. McMahon, 2008, in *Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy*, 15, p.98. Copyright 2008 by John Wiley & Sons, Ltd. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cpp.564>

Dysfunctional beliefs are an important cognitive element in career development, but they have not been explored as much as other cognitive processes, such as self-efficacy (Xu, 2021). Vocational Psychology and developmental theory

address ordinary areas in counselling but remain silent when dysfunction or pathological issues occur, and this needs to be addressed in careers counselling. A limitation of the field is the lack of literature surrounding maladaptive cognitions in vocational psychology. Maladaptive schemas are said to be predictors of defense mechanisms and it is important to focus on defense mechanisms as they are potentially less stable and more adaptive (Walburg & Chiaramello, 2015). It is important to consider how maladaptive schemas and defense mechanisms can affect how the individual considers career success and life satisfaction overall.

Career and Life Satisfaction

Career decisions are one of the most important decisions individuals can make as they affect an individual's relationships, social, economic, and emotional well-being (Gati & Kulcsár, 2021). Career and life satisfaction are therefore intrinsically linked to each other. While this study aims to measure career satisfaction, it is still a good indicator of overall life satisfaction. Career decisions can be irrational involving an individual's perceptions, bias, preferences, beliefs, and constructed reality that they have made and can get in the way of skilful decisions (Thuraisingham, 2017).

Career success can be measured extrinsically through salary, status, promotions, and accolades or intrinsically through job satisfaction and positive psychological well-being and is subjective due to the individual's wants and needs in life and work (Onyishi et al., 2019). There is a correlation between personality and life satisfaction but the link between dispositional traits and financial satisfaction needs more attention (Tharp et al., 2020). An individual's dispositional traits can affect life satisfaction and have an effect on if financial satisfaction is held in high regard when judging work fulfillment. Thus, demonstrating that career and life

satisfaction can have varied meaning to individuals. Life satisfaction is affected by the experiences in a career journey, transitions, achievements, and changes showing a relation to career satisfaction and ultimately, human experience. (Lounsbury et al., 2004).

Success is related to subjective feelings of accomplishment in many aspects of work behaviour and well-being (Spurk et al., 2011). Career Satisfaction can be seen as psychodynamic motivation and success will occur if the work role is a good fit and an adequate outlet for vocational characteristics (Savickas, 2005). Career guidance counselling can tend to focus on matching individuals to an occupation but has now moved to a more holistic view of counsellors and clients equally discussing the self and career and life choices (Patton, 2001). It is important to understand how people are similar to others, but it is vitally important to understand how and why people differ, which is how life themes can be of assistance (McAdams & Pals, 2006).

Needs relate to vocational performance and career development and individuals consequently must comprehend the psychological underpinnings of a career problem (Sampaio et al., 2021). However, the underlying cognitions and coping strategies lack focus in research (Li et al., 2021). Little is known about how people interpret careers and the many emotions that can arise from work experiences, which indicates that the connection between careers and psychological well-being requires more emphasis (Kidd, 2008). Narrative identity is a psychosocial construct which considers broad trends of enduring traits, and adaptations show how individuals deal with daily life demands, and life themes can assist meaning making in a complex world (McAdams & Pals, 2006).

It is valuable for individuals and counsellors including CDPs to be able to identify maladaptive schemas and defense mechanisms to provide intervention strategies to improve career and life satisfaction. As Watkins (1985) explains, there are many different types of countertransference including manifestations by clients that can be constructive or destructive, but it is critical to explore, recognise and manage these appropriately. Vocational Psychology has focussed on the content of 'me' rather than on the process of 'I' (Savickas, 2011). Attention has been on the attitude towards work or perhaps perceived success and not the experiences and emotions faced during a career (Kidd, 1998). Dysfunctional beliefs can affect the process and outcome of career decision-making, commitment to career and satisfaction in work (Xu, 2021).

Freud's work suggested that defence mechanisms were an ego defence to suppress unwanted thoughts, but social and personality psychology adopt the emphasis of individuals protecting their perceived self-esteem (Baumeister et al., 1998). The uncertainty of work or job loss, can present a threat to an individual's self-esteem and occupational identity, highlighting the need for exploring self-identity (Hoyer & Steyaert, 2015). This highlights the need for narrative counselling within career's counselling to fully explore the self and all life roles.

Research Problem

The present research aim is to explore and answer, 'what are the relations amongst maladaptive schemas, defense mechanisms and career satisfaction?'. 'Are there differences between men and women in career adaptability?'. The main ideas from the literature review are that understanding an individual can be deconstructed on three levels. These levels include enduring dispositional traits or schema, potentially malleable characteristic adaptations or career adaptability, and life themes

and narratives that showcase individual meaning-making. Career counsellors should use these levels to understand client's vocational behaviours and vocational psychologists should work to link these variables (Savickas, 2001).

Unconscious cognitions, schemas, and defense mechanisms have not been granted as much focus and research as conscious and healthy schemas and adaptations. Therefore, this present research aims to contribute to the research gap. This present research aims to take these theories and put them into a clinical setting for theoretical innovation. Psychodynamic concepts can aid the career counselling field exponentially and this link needs to be explored. The present research is exploratory and does not have a particular hypothesis, and instead aims to explore associations between psychodynamic concepts and career. As exploratory research, this will be achieved by investigating the correlations among maladaptive schemas, defense mechanisms, career adaptability, and career satisfaction.

CHAPTER 2: METHOD

The previous chapter outlined important literature and discussed the research aims. This section outlines participants that were recruited, including demographics. This research was approached from a post positivist approach. The procedure to gather data, the measures employed, and data analysis are stated. Results will then be discussed in depth in the following chapter.

Participants

A culturally specific sample of only American adults were chosen for this study. This was due to Prolific being used as a recruitment tool. Very few people in Australia are registered to prolific, compared to a wide range of Americans. Therefore, there was an insufficient population of an Australian sample available. American adults were chosen to provide a discreet and well-defined national sample. There was also an aim to submit the results of this study into an American journal article.

The survey composed of 376 participants. Participants comprised female ($n = 184$; 48.9%), male ($n = 188$; 50%), non-binary ($n = 1$; 0.5%), and unidentified ($n = 3$; 0.8%). Participant ages ranged from 20-75 years old. Race consisted of American Indian or Alaska Native ($n = 3$; 0.8%), Asian ($n = 23$; 6.1%), African American ($n = 29$; 7.7%), Caucasian ($n = 296$; 78.7%), Hispanic or Latino ($n = 16$; 4.3%), Indian ($n = 1$; 0.3%), Pacific Islander ($n = 1$; 0.3%) and prefer not to say ($n = 7$; 1.9%). Relationship status included those who were never married ($n = 152$; 40.4%), married or in a de facto relationship ($n = 191$; 50.8%) and those separated or divorced ($n = 33$; 8.8%). Participants comprised of parents ($n = 167$; 44.4%) and those who did not have children ($n = 209$; 55.6%). Participants education levels included high school certificate, diploma or equivalent ($n = 78$; 20.7%), trade,

apprenticeship, vocational qualification or equivalent ($n = 44$; 11.7%), bachelor degree or equivalent ($n = 172$; 45.7%), graduate diploma or graduate certificate degree ($n = 7$; 1.9%), master degree ($n = 62$; 16.5%) and doctorate degree ($n = 13$; 3.5%).

Participants encompassed many industries including professional, scientific, and technical services ($n = 52$; 13.8%), healthcare and social assistance ($n = 50$; 13.3%), education and training ($n = 37$; 9.8%) and others. Type of work comprised permanent, salaried, tenured, ongoing employment ($n = 306$; 81.4%), contract for a fixed period of time, temporary ($n = 28$; 7.4%), casual, on-call, gig, and seasonal ($n = 36$; 9.6%). Participants worked between 3 hours up to 90 hours per week with an average of 38 hours ($SD = 11.48$). Time in current job for participants included less than six months ($n = 25$; 6.6%), six months to one year ($n = 31$; 8.2%), one year to two years ($n = 36$; 9.6%), two years to five years ($n = 98$; 26.1%) and more than five years ($n = 186$; 49.5%).

Procedure

Data was gathered by means of an online survey during February 2022. Participants were recruited through Prolific (<https://www.prolific.co>) which is an online platform that connects researchers with participants. Participants voluntarily register to prolific to make extra income. Participants are paid a small monetary amount per survey completed. They were paid \$11.90 per hour to complete the survey. There are different subject matters and areas of surveys and participants choose which ones they would like to participate in and then follow the instructions provided. Prolific distributed the invitation to the survey to registered users.

A sampling methodology was used to target specifically American adults in work with an equal divide of male and female. It was estimated that the survey

would take approximately fourteen minutes to complete. An information sheet was provided on the first page before the commencement of the survey. Participants were asked to reflect accurately on their recent experiences and emotions during day-to-day tasks, including career. Participants were then provided an ethics form and asked to tick a checkbox to provide their understanding and consent to take part in the survey.

Ethics approval was gained from the University Human Research Ethics Committee (approval number: H21REA291) before data was collected. The research was deemed to be low risk. Participation was voluntary and no personal identifiers were collected. Participants were known by their prolific account numbers and no personally identifiable information was collected for use in this research.

Measures

The survey consisted of four measures designed to gather information relating to career adaptability, defense mechanisms and cognitive schemas.

The Career Adapt-Abilities Scale

The Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012) consists of a 24-item measure, and recent research has produced a 12-item short-form measure (Maggiori et al. 2015), of the four subscales of career adaptability: concern, control, curiosity, and confidence in relation to work tasks. The scale measures confidence in relation to occupational transitions, developmental tasks, and work traumas (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). Participants were asked to rate from 1 (not strong) to 5 (strongest) how strongly they had developed the abilities listed. For example, “planning important things before I start” and “learning how to make better decisions”. Theoretically, high levels of career adaptability will most likely produce high levels of career satisfaction. In addition, the original publication of the CAAS

in the USA (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012) reported on validation studies in other nations and languages (e.g., Belgium, China, France, Iceland, Italy, Korea, The Netherlands, South Africa, Switzerland, Taiwan). This international study reported internal consistency Cronbach α : Concern $\alpha = .83$; Control $\alpha = .74$; Curiosity $\alpha = .79$; Confidence $\alpha = .85$; Total Career Adaptability $\alpha = .92$. The present research used the short form (Maggiori et al. 2015).

The Defense Mechanisms Rating Scale

The Defence Mechanisms Rating Scale-Self Report-30 is a shortened version of the Defense Mechanisms Rating Scales (DMRS) and is the first self-report measure of the twenty-eight defense mechanisms (Di Giuseppe et al., 2020). Participants indicated on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (not at all) to 5 (very often/much) how often in the past week that they dealt with difficult emotions or situations listed. For example, “did you complain about how others don’t understand you or don’t really care?” and “Did you take an active role in solving problems that arose?”

The DMRS-SR-30 measures twenty-eight defense mechanisms clustered in three areas of denial, projection, and identification. In addition, the original publication of the DMRS-30 (Di Giuseppe et al., 2020) reported on the defense categories and levels. Categories include (with internal consistency Cronbach α in parentheses): mature ($\alpha = .70$), neurotic ($\alpha = .69$), immature ($\alpha = .82$), depressive ($\alpha = .76$), and other immature ($\alpha = .58$). Defense levels include (with internal consistency Cronbach α in parentheses): high adaptive ($\alpha = .70$), obsessional ($\alpha = .36$), neurotic ($\alpha = .63$), minor image distorting ($\alpha = .52$), disavowal ($\alpha = .58$), major image distorting ($\alpha = .49$), action ($\alpha = .46$).

The defense mechanisms include: affiliation, altruism, anticipation, humour, self-assertion, self-observation, self-sublimation, suppression, intellectualization, isolation of affect, undoing, displacement, dissociation, reaction formation, repression, devaluation, idealisation, omnipotence, denial, projection, rationalization, autistic fantasy, projective identification, splitting of self-image, splitting of other's image, acting out, help-rejecting complaining and passive aggression (Di Giuseppe et al., 2020).

Young's Schema Questionnaire-3

Young's Schema Questionnaire-3 (YSQ-3; Young, 2006) is a self-report measure consisting of five domains assessing the eighteen early maladaptive schemas measured by a Likert scale (Calvete et al., 2013). Participants indicated on a 6-point Likert scale from 1 (completely untrue of me) to 6 (describes me perfectly) their level of agreement with the item statements. For example, "I feel that I'm not loveable" and "I'm not as talented as most people are at their work".

The eighteen schemas measured by the YSQ-3 and reported (Calvete et al., 2013) are (with internal consistency Cronbach α in parentheses): abandonment ($\alpha = .80$), mistrust ($\alpha = .74$), emotional deprivation ($\alpha = .83$), defectiveness ($\alpha = .73$), social isolation ($\alpha = .74$), dependence ($\alpha = .54$), vulnerability ($\alpha = .67$), enmeshment ($\alpha = .62$), failure ($\alpha = .83$), entitlement ($\alpha = .64$), insufficient self-control ($\alpha = .74$), subjugation ($\alpha = .67$), self-sacrifice ($\alpha = .76$), approval-seeking ($\alpha = .76$), negativity ($\alpha = .80$), emotional inhibition ($\alpha = .83$), unrelenting standards ($\alpha = .61$), and punitiveness ($\alpha = .72$).

The Career Satisfaction Scale

The Career Satisfaction Scale (CSS; Greenhaus, Parasuraman, & Wormley, 1990) was applied to measure subjective career success (Hofmans et al., 2008). This

is a five-item self-report where participants indicate on a 5-point Likert scale their level of agreement, from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The items listed are generic, utilised to assess any occupational group (Onyishi et al., 2019). For example, “I am satisfied with the success I have achieved in my career” and “I am satisfied with the progress I have made toward meeting my overall career goals”. Greenhaus et al. reported the CSS as having internal consistency of Cronbach $\alpha = .88$.

Plan for Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using SPSS 25 statistical software. Data was screened for outliers and missing items. Correlational analysis was conducted and will determine relations among the variables (Curtis et al., 2016). Particular hypotheses were not proposed but data will address the research question to demonstrate whether there is a correlation between cognitive schemas, defense mechanisms, and career satisfaction. The definition for the strength of the correlations is .10 is a small effect, .30 is a medium effect, and .50 is a large effect size (Cohen, 1992).

CHAPTER 3: RESULTS

This chapter presents the results that were found in the present data. Results are displayed in table form to help with thorough analysis and described hereafter with respect to associations among the measured variables. The reporting is arranged under the subheadings career satisfaction, career adaptability, and its subscales, concern, control, curiosity, and confidence, and the relations with maladaptive schema and defense mechanisms.

Data Screening

All data were within the correct range. All survey responses were completed in a reasonable time frame. Nine participants did not complete all questions and were deleted from the data. There was no missing data due to all questions being compulsory for participants to answer. An item response from the YSQ-SF in the subscale of unrelenting standards/hyper criticalness was missing due to being combined within another question. Table 5 presents the descriptive statistics including correlations, and coefficients of skewness and kurtosis which were within acceptable ranges with none greater than $|1|$ (Field, 2014).

Summary of Results Tables

Table 1 presents the means, standard deviations, skewness, kurtosis, correlations, and internal consistency Cronbach alpha coefficients for the Career Variables (i.e., Career Satisfaction, Career Adaptability, and its subscales). Table 2 presents the mean differences between males and females mean scores for the Career Variables and T-test statistics. Table 3 presents the means, standard deviations, skewness, kurtosis, correlations, and internal consistency Cronbach alpha coefficients for the Schemas. Table 4 presents the means, standard deviations, skewness, kurtosis, and correlations for Defense Mechanisms. Internal consistency

Cronbach alpha coefficients for the defense mechanisms were not calculated due to an anomaly in the published equation. Table 5 presents the differences between females' and males' mean scores for Defense Mechanisms and T-test statistics. Table 6 presents the correlations among Defense Mechanisms, Career Adaptability and Career Satisfaction. Table 7 presents the correlations among Maladaptive Schema, Career Adaptability and Career Satisfaction. Table 8 presents the correlations among Maladaptive Schema and Defense Mechanism Levels.

Career Satisfaction

Table 2 shows the t-test completed for the independent groups of females and males. The effect size was small for career satisfaction, career, adaptability, concern ($d = -.32$), control but was not significant for confidence and curiosity ($d = -.16$). As shown in Table 2, the mean scores for all the career variables including career satisfaction, career adaptability and subscales were all slightly higher in the male population. Table 5 demonstrates the t-tests of mean differences between females, males, and defense mechanisms. There was a strong effect size for the difference between male and females on self-assertion ($d = -.51$). There were also strong effect size differences for dissociation ($d = .55$) and undoing ($d = .58$). In the strongest effects, females were higher in undoing and dissociation, but males were higher in self-assertion. This information is demonstrated in Table 5 and also shows some medium effect sizes between defense mechanisms and humor, self-assertion, self-observation, and suppression. It shows some small effect sizes between defense mechanisms and displacement, anticipation, altruism, sublimation, dissociation, and undoing.

Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics and correlations among maladaptive schemas, showing many medium and high correlations. As shown in Table 7, all

maladaptive schemas except self-sacrifice, correlated negatively with career satisfaction. There were no high correlations between maladaptive schemas and career satisfaction. With a negative medium correlation were mistrust/abuse, defectiveness/shame ($r = -.45$), emotional deprivation ($r = -.44$), social isolation ($r = -.53$), emotional inhibition, failure ($r = -.50$), vulnerability ($r = -.51$), dependence/incompetence ($r = -.48$), abandonment/instability ($r = -.44$), subjugation, negativity/pessimism ($r = -.56$), and insufficient self-control ($r = -.44$). Displaying a small negative correlation were enmeshment/undeveloped self, approval seeking and punitiveness. Entitlement/grandiosity ($r = -.10$), unrelenting standards ($r = -.07$), and self-sacrifice ($r = -.01$), displayed a very small correlation with career satisfaction.

Table 4 shows the correlations between defense mechanisms and demonstrates many small correlations. As shown in Table 6, there were no high correlations between defense mechanisms and career satisfaction. However, there was a medium negative correlation between career satisfaction and splitting-self ($r = -.38$), and a medium positive correlation with omnipotence ($r = .32$), and self-assertion ($r = .32$). The defense mechanisms that had a positive small correlation were acting out, projective identification, omnipotence, affiliation, altruism, self-assertion, and suppression. The defense mechanisms that had a negative mild correlation with career satisfaction were help/rejecting/complain, splitting-self, autistic fantasy, projection, denial, devaluation, repression, dissociation, displacement, undoing and isolation. Defense Mechanisms that did not show a significant correlation were passive aggression, splitting object, rationalization, idealization, reaction formation, intellectualization, anticipation, humour, self-observation, and sublimation.

Career Adaptability

The correlations between career adaptabilities can be seen in Table 1. As shown in Table 7, there were no high correlations between maladaptive schemas and career adaptability. All correlations were negative besides the correlations between unrelenting standards and self-sacrifice. Medium correlations were found between career adaptability and defectiveness/shame ($r = -.45$), emotional deprivation, social isolation, failure ($r = -.46$), vulnerability, dependence/incompetence ($r = -.47$), abandonment/instability ($r = -.41$), subjugation ($r = -.41$), negativity/pessimism, and insufficient self-control ($r = -.43$). Small correlations were found between career adaptability and mistrust/abuse, emotional inhibition, enmeshment/undeveloped-self, approval seeking, unrelenting standards and self-sacrifice. There were very small correlations between career adaptability and entitlement/grandiosity ($r = -.05$) and punitiveness ($r = -.09$).

As shown in Table 6, there were no high correlations between career adaptability and the defense mechanisms. There was a medium negative correlation between career adaptability and splitting self ($r = -.34$) and a medium positive correlation with self-assertion ($r = .38$). There was a small negative correlation between career adaptability and passive aggression, projection, denial, devaluation, repression, dissociation, undoing and isolation. There was also a small positive correlation between career adaptability and projective identification, altruism, anticipation, suppression, self-observation, and sublimation. The smallest correlations were between career adaptability and acting out ($r = .05$), help/rejecting/complain ($r = -.09$), splitting-object ($r = .08$), autistic fantasy ($r = -.06$), rationalization ($r = -.10$), idealization ($r = .06$), reaction formation ($r = .00$), intellectualization ($r = -.06$), affiliation ($r = .09$), and humor ($r = .02$).

Concern

Looking at the subscale of concern in particular and maladaptive schemas in Table 1, there were no highly significant correlations. There were medium negative correlations between concern and defectiveness/shame ($r = -.38$), failure ($r = -.35$), dependence/incompetence ($r = -.35$), and insufficient self-control ($r = -.38$). However, there were two small positive correlations between concern and unrelenting standards, and self-sacrifice. There were small negative correlations between control and emotional deprivation, vulnerability, enmeshment/undeveloped-self, abandonment/instability, subjugation, negativity/pessimism, and punitiveness. There were very small correlations between concern and mistrust/abuse ($r = -.10$), entitlement/grandiosity ($r = .02$), and approval seeking ($r = -.10$).

There were no high or medium correlations between concern and the defense mechanisms, as shown in Table 6. There were small positive correlations between concern and splitting-object, projective identification, omnipotence, affiliation, altruism, anticipation, self-assertion, sublimation, and suppression. There were small negative correlations between concern and splitting-self ($r = -.25$), denial, devaluation, repression, dissociation, displacement, and undoing. There were very small correlations between concern and acting out, help/rejecting/complain, passive aggression, autistic fantasy, projection, rationalization, idealization, reaction formation, intellectualization, isolation, humor ($r = -.01$), and self-observation.

Control

Looking at the subscale of control in particular and maladaptive schemas in Table 7, there were no significantly high correlations. However, there were some medium negative correlations between control and defectiveness/shame ($r = -.47$), social isolation ($r = -.31$), failure ($r = -.46$), vulnerability ($r = -.33$),

dependence/incompetence ($r = -.52$), enmeshment/undeveloped self ($r = -.32$), abandonment/instability ($r = -.48$), subjugation ($r = -.47$), negativity/pessimism ($r = -.35$), and insufficient self-control ($r = -.41$). There were also some small correlations including two positive correlations between concern and unrelenting-standards and self-sacrifice. There were some small negative correlations between control and mistrust/abuse, emotional deprivation, emotional inhibition, approval seeking, and punitiveness. There were very small correlations between control and entitlement/grandiosity ($r = -.07$).

There were no high correlations between defense mechanisms and control, however, there was a medium positive correlation with self-assertion ($r = .43$) as shown in Table 8. There were also two medium negative correlations with splitting self ($r = -.36$) and undoing ($r = -.30$). There were small positive correlations between control and omnipotence, altruism, anticipation, self-observation, sublimation, and suppression. There were also small negative correlations between control and help/rejecting/complain, passive aggression, splitting-self, rationalization, denial, devaluation, repression, dissociation, displacement, and undoing. There were very small correlations between control and acting out, splitting-object, projective identification, autistic fantasy, projection, idealization ($r = -.01$), reaction formation, intellectualization, isolation, affiliation, and humor.

Curiosity

Looking at the subscale of curiosity in particular and maladaptive schemas in Table 1, there were no high correlations. There were medium negative correlations between curiosity and defectiveness/shame ($r = -.31$), failure ($r = -.32$), dependence/incompetence ($r = -.34$), and subjugation ($r = -.32$). There were however, two small positive correlations between curiosity and unrelenting standards

and self-sacrifice. There were small negative correlations between curiosity and mistrust/abuse, emotional deprivation, social isolation, emotional inhibition, vulnerability, enmeshment/undeveloped self, abandonment/instability, negativity/pessimism, insufficient self-control, and approval seeking. There were very small negative correlations between curiosity and entitlement/grandiosity ($r = -.07$), and punitiveness ($r = -.02$).

There were no medium or high correlations between defense mechanisms and curiosity, as shown in Table 6. There were positive small correlations between curiosity and altruism, anticipation, self-assertion ($r = .30$), self-observation, sublimation, and suppression. There were negative small correlations between curiosity and passive aggression, splitting-self, projection, denial, devaluation, repression, dissociation, undoing, and isolation. There were very small correlations between curiosity and acting out, help/rejecting/complain, splitting object, projective identification, autistic fantasy, rationalization, omnipotence, idealization, reaction formation ($r = .01$), displacement, intellectualization, affiliation, and humor.

Confidence

Looking at the subscale of confidence in particular and maladaptive schemas in Table 1, there were no significantly high correlations. However, there were negative medium correlations between confidence and defectiveness/shame ($r = -.35$), social isolation ($r = -.33$), failure ($r = -.42$) vulnerability ($r = -.32$), dependence/incompetence ($r = -.39$), abandonment/instability ($r = -.37$), subjugation ($r = -.35$), negativity/pessimism ($r = -.31$), and insufficient self-control ($r = -.39$). There were positive small correlations between confidence and unrelenting-standards and self-sacrifice. There were negative small correlations between confidence and mistrust/abuse, emotional deprivation, emotional inhibition,

enmeshment/undeveloped self, and approval seeking. There were very small correlations between confidence and entitlement/grandiosity ($r = -.085$), and punitiveness ($r = .06$).

There were no high correlations between confidence and defense mechanisms, as shown in Table 6. There was a medium negative correlation between confidence and splitting self ($r = -.31$) and a medium positive correlation with self-assertion ($r = .36$). There were positive small correlations between confidence and omnipotence, altruism, anticipation, self-assertion, self-observation, sublimation, and suppression. There were negative small correlations between passive aggression, splitting-self, projection, rationalization, denial, devaluation, repression, dissociation, displacement, undoing, and isolation. There were very small correlations between confidence and acting out, help/rejecting/complain, splitting-object, projective identification, autistic fantasy, idealization, reaction formation, intellectualization, affiliation, and humor ($r = .02$).

Defense Mechanisms and Maladaptive Schema

The correlations between defense mechanisms and maladaptive schema are evident and positive, as shown in Table 8. There were some small correlations between the level of high adaptive defense mechanisms and maladaptive schemas including emotional deprivation, failure, enmeshment/undeveloped-self, unrelenting standards, punitiveness, and self-sacrifice. There were many medium correlations between high adaptive defenses and mistrust/abuse ($r = .44$), defectiveness/shame, social isolation, emotional inhibition ($r = .43$), vulnerability ($r = .48$), dependence/incompetence, abandonment/instability ($r = .45$), subjugation, negativity/pessimism ($r = .46$), entitlement/grandiosity, insufficient self-control ($r = .45$), and approval seeking. There were no high correlations recorded.

There were many small correlations between the level of obsessional defense mechanisms and maladaptive schemas including mistrust/abuse, defectiveness/shame, emotional deprivation, social isolation, emotional inhibition, failure, dependence/incompetence, enmeshment/undeveloped-self, entitlement/grandiosity, unrelenting standards, and punitiveness. There were some medium correlations between obsessional defense mechanisms and schema including vulnerability ($r = .42$), abandonment/instability, subjugation, negativity/pessimism, insufficient self-control, approval seeking, and self-sacrifice. There were no high correlations recorded.

There were a majority of small correlations between the level of neurotic defense mechanisms and maladaptive schemas including mistrust/abuse, defectiveness/shame, emotional deprivation ($r = .06$), social isolation, emotional inhibition, failure, vulnerability, dependence/incompetence, enmeshment/undeveloped-self, abandonment/instability, subjugation, negativity/pessimism, insufficient self-control, punitiveness, and self-sacrifice. There were some medium correlations with entitlement/grandiosity, approval seeking, and unrelenting standards. There were only three medium correlations which included entitlement/grandiosity ($r = .34$), approval seeking ($r = .37$), and unrelenting standards ($r = .31$). There were no high correlations recorded.

There were some small correlations between the level of minor image distortion defense mechanisms and maladaptive schemas including defectiveness/shame, emotional deprivation, emotional inhibition, failure, dependence/incompetence, enmeshment/undeveloped self, entitlement/grandiosity, approval seeking, unrelenting standards, punitiveness ($r = .17$), and self-sacrifice. There were some medium correlations between minor image distortion defenses and

mistrust/abuse, social isolation, vulnerability ($r = .39$), abandonment/instability, subjugation, negativity/pessimism, and insufficient self-control. There were no high correlations recorded.

There were some small correlations between the level of disavowal defense mechanisms and maladaptive schemas including mistrust/abuse, emotional deprivation, social isolation, emotional inhibition ($r = .15$), enmeshment/undeveloped self, entitlement/grandiosity, insufficient self-control, approval seeking, unrelenting standards, and punitiveness. There were some medium correlations between disavowal defense mechanisms and defectiveness/shame, failure, vulnerability ($r = .43$), dependence/incompetence, abandonment/instability ($r = .44$), subjugation, negativity/pessimism, and self-sacrifice. There were no high correlations recorded.

There were some small correlations between the level of major image distortion defense mechanisms and maladaptive schemas including mistrust/abuse, defectiveness/shame, emotional deprivation, social isolation, emotional inhibition, failure, dependence/incompetence, enmeshment/undeveloped self, abandonment/instability, subjugation, entitlement/grandiosity, insufficient self-control, approval seeking, unrelenting standards, and punitiveness ($r = .12$). There were only three medium correlations between major image distortion defense mechanisms and vulnerability ($r = .40$), negativity/pessimism ($r = .34$), and self-sacrifice ($r = .32$). There were no high correlations recorded.

There were only a few small correlations between the level of action defense mechanisms and maladaptive schemas including entitlement/grandiosity, approval seeking, unrelenting standards, punitiveness ($r = .24$), and self-sacrifice. There were medium correlations between action defense mechanisms and mistrust/abuse ($r =$

.49), defectiveness/shame, emotional deprivation, social isolation ($r = .44$), emotional inhibition ($r = .42$), failure ($r = .45$), dependence/incompetence ($r = .46$), abandonment/instability ($r = .41$), subjugation ($r = .47$), and insufficient self-control ($r = .41$). There were two high correlations between the level of action defense mechanisms and vulnerability ($r = .55$), and negativity/pessimism ($r = .52$).

Table 1*Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Among Career Adaptabilities Subscales and Career Satisfaction*

| Variable | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|
| 1. Career Satisfaction | .96 | | | | | |
| 2. Career Adaptability | .48** | .91 | | | | |
| 3. Concern | .50** | .81** | .80 | | | |
| 4. Control | .42** | .82** | .57** | .80 | | |
| 5. Curiosity | .28** | .85** | .54** | .61** | .72 | |
| 6. Confidence | .38** | .87** | .53** | .65** | .73** | .83 |
| <i>M</i> | 3.12 | 3.07 | 2.91 | 3.60 | 3.54 | 3.46 |
| <i>SD</i> | 1.17 | .70 | .96 | .95 | .83 | .89 |
| <i>Kurtosis</i> | -.93 | -.22 | -.59 | -.45 | -.29 | -.36 |
| <i>Skewness</i> | -.51 | -.22 | .03 | -.41 | -.26 | -.31 |

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$ Internal consistency Cronbach alpha coefficients are shown on the diagonal.

Table 2*Differences between Females and Males Mean Scores for Career Variables*

| | | | | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances | | t-test for Equality of Means | | | | | Effect Size | |
|-----------------------------|---|----------|-----------|---|----------|------------------------------|-----------|----------|-------------------------|--------|------------------|------|
| | | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>p</i> | <i>t</i> | <i>df</i> | <i>p</i> | <i>M_{diff}</i> | 95% CI | Cohen's <i>d</i> | |
| Career Satisfaction | F | 2.95 | 1.17 | 0.36 | 0.55 | -2.85 | 370 | 0.00 | -0.34 | -0.58 | -0.11 | -.30 |
| | M | 3.30 | 1.15 | | | -2.85 | | | | | | |
| Career Adaptability Concern | F | 2.96 | 0.72 | 3.05 | 0.08 | -3.01 | 370 | 0.00 | -0.22 | -0.36 | -0.08 | -.31 |
| | M | 3.18 | 0.66 | | | -3.01 | | | | | | |
| Control | F | 2.76 | 0.99 | 2.32 | 0.13 | -3.10 | 370 | 0.00 | -0.30 | -0.50 | -0.11 | -.32 |
| | M | 3.06 | 0.91 | | | -3.10 | | | | | | |
| Curiosity | F | 3.45 | 0.99 | 3.61 | 0.06 | -3.00 | 370 | 0.00 | -0.29 | -0.48 | -0.10 | -.31 |
| | M | 3.74 | 0.88 | | | -2.99 | | | | | | |
| Confidence | F | 3.47 | 0.88 | 4.04 | 0.05 | -1.53 | 370 | 0.13 | -0.13 | -0.30 | 0.04 | -.16 |
| | M | 3.60 | 0.78 | | | -1.53 | | | | | | |
| | F | 3.36 | 0.92 | 0.40 | 0.53 | -2.31 | 370 | 0.02 | -0.21 | -0.39 | -0.03 | -.24 |
| | M | 3.57 | 0.86 | | | -2.31 | | | | | | |

Note. Two-tailed t-test.

Table 3*Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Among Cognitive Schemas*

| Variable | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
|-------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|------|
| 1.Mistrust/Abuse | .93 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2.Defectiveness/Shame | .42** | .95 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3.Emotional Deprivation | .43** | .64** | .94 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4.Social Isolation | .57** | .63** | .62** | .96 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5.Emotional Inhibition | .48** | .50** | .48** | .64** | .91 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6.Failure | .40** | .64** | .44** | .56** | .44** | .95 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 7.Vulnerability | .59** | .54** | .45** | .65** | .50** | .61** | .90 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 8.Dependence/Incompetence | .39** | .65** | .44** | .55** | .44** | .71** | .59** | .84 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 9.Enmeshment/Undeveloped-Self | .33** | .38** | .26** | .34** | .29** | .41** | .37** | .54** | .88 | | | | | | | | | |
| 10.Abandonment/Instability | .46** | .57** | .39** | .49** | .39** | .61** | .58** | .66** | .50** | .95 | | | | | | | | |
| 11.Subjugation | .44** | .60** | .47** | .48** | .50** | .60** | .59** | .64** | .52** | .70** | .90 | | | | | | | |
| 12.Negativity/Pessimism | .60** | .57** | .47** | .59** | .50** | .60** | .83** | .59** | .39** | .62** | .62** | .95 | | | | | | |
| 13.Entitlement/Grandiosity | .30** | .06 | .12* | .22** | .27** | .06 | .22** | .17** | .20** | .19** | .20** | .19** | .75 | | | | | |
| 14.Insufficient Self-Control | .30** | .44** | .38** | .45** | .35** | .52** | .53** | .56** | .32** | .56** | .53** | .51** | .22** | .92 | | | | |
| 15.Approval Seeking | .24** | .22** | .18** | .16** | .25** | .29** | .32** | .37** | .31** | .43** | .44** | .34** | .41** | .32** | .88 | | | |
| 16.Unrelenting Standards | .26** | .09 | .10* | .14** | .20** | .04 | .17** | .07 | .20** | .18** | .17** | .24** | .28** | .07 | .36** | .85 | | |
| 17.Punitiveness | .22** | .31** | .11* | .19** | .24** | .28** | .21** | .23** | .19** | .24** | .28** | .31** | .09 | .10* | .21** | .43** | .87 | |
| 18.Self-Sacrifice | .15** | -.05 | -.03 | -.02** | -.06 | -.02 | .15** | -.00 | .07 | .13* | .08 | .18** | -.01 | .04 | .16** | .31* | .13* | .86 |
| <i>M</i> | 2.82 | 1.88 | 2.01 | 2.65 | 2.34 | 1.90 | 2.39 | 1.71 | 1.60 | 2.17 | 2.03 | 2.79 | 2.06 | 2.29 | 2.35 | 3.04 | 2.61 | 3.39 |
| <i>SD</i> | 1.20 | 1.17 | 1.28 | 1.46 | 1.20 | 1.12 | 1.26 | .87 | .92 | 1.36 | 1.07 | 1.52 | .85 | 1.21 | 1.10 | 1.28 | 1.09 | 1.18 |
| Kurtosis | -.28 | 2.40 | 1.10 | -.24 | .03 | 2.37 | -.35 | 2.56 | 3.74 | .27 | 1.35 | -.79 | 1.26 | .64 | .09 | -.55 | .09 | -.61 |
| Skewness | .61 | 1.69 | 1.40 | .84 | .90 | 1.62 | .76 | 1.54 | 1.93 | 1.12 | 1.31 | .61 | 1.03 | 1.14 | .74 | .35 | .59 | .35 |

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$ Internal consistency Cronbach alpha coefficients are shown on the diagonal.

Table 4*Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Among Defense Mechanisms*

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | |
|-----|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|--|
| D1 | -- | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| D2 | .11* | -- | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| D3 | .21* | .09 | -- | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| D4 | .06 | .12* | .09 | -- | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| D5 | -.06 | .04 | .13* | .01 | -- | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| D6 | .19* | .29* | .12* | .02 | -.19* | -- | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| D7 | -.03 | .01 | .07 | .02 | .12* | -.05 | -- | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| D8 | .07 | .13* | .07 | .10* | .22* | -.02 | .01 | -- | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| D9 | .11* | .13* | .29* | -.14* | .02 | .13* | -.04 | -.03 | -- | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| D10 | -.07 | -.05 | -.08 | -.12* | .12* | -.13* | .04 | -.01 | .04 | -- | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| D11 | .11* | -.08 | .02 | .11* | -.22* | .09 | -.08 | -.03 | -.11* | -.05 | -- | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| D12 | .05 | -.08 | .13* | .01 | -.07 | .07 | .00 | -.09 | .05 | -.19* | .10* | -- | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| D13 | .03 | .07 | .10* | -.04 | .36* | -.04 | -.02 | .02 | .06 | .11* | -.12* | .09 | -- | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| D14 | .02 | -.06 | .00 | .02 | .18* | -.16* | .11* | .08 | -.04 | .31* | -.17* | -.11* | .08 | -- | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| D15 | -.09 | .19* | .09 | -.01 | .11* | .14* | .17* | .12* | .02 | .18* | -.20* | -.12* | .16* | .19* | -- | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| D16 | -.15* | -.12* | -.11* | -.08 | .02 | -.07 | -.05 | -.04 | -.16* | -.04 | -.12* | -.02 | -.01 | -.05 | .00 | -- | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| D17 | -.12* | .01 | -.04 | -.18* | .08 | .06 | .02 | -.03 | .17* | .18* | -.19* | -.04 | .09 | .06 | .10 | -.13* | -- | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| D18 | -.01 | .08 | .00 | -.15* | .11* | .00 | .00 | .04 | .16* | .17* | -.04 | -.06 | .23* | .09 | .19* | -.14* | .11* | -- | | | | | | | | | | | |
| D19 | -.09 | .03 | .07 | -.07 | -.07 | .05 | -.04 | -.14* | .07 | .05 | -.02 | -.03 | .03 | -.02 | .11* | -.04 | .13* | .06 | -- | | | | | | | | | | |
| D20 | .01 | .04 | .05 | .17* | .08 | .04 | .11* | .02 | .05 | .15* | -.04 | -.06 | .05 | .18* | .33* | -.05 | .05 | .11* | .02 | -- | | | | | | | | | |
| D21 | -.04 | -.02 | .03 | -.09 | -.18* | -.06 | -.21* | -.11* | .00 | -.19* | .01 | -.02 | -.17* | -.20* | -.15* | -.04 | -.17* | -.09 | -.06 | -.18* | -- | | | | | | | | |
| D22 | -.08 | -.17* | -.19* | -.18* | -.26* | -.11* | -.16* | -.25* | -.21* | -.23* | .02 | -.04 | -.20* | -.20* | -.20* | .12* | -.18* | -.16* | -.14* | -.25* | .20* | -- | | | | | | | |
| D23 | -.17* | -.16* | -.21* | -.07 | -.10* | -.21* | .04 | -.03 | -.22* | .03 | -.09 | -.11* | -.13* | -.06 | -.12* | .08 | -.10 | -.11* | -.16* | -.08 | .03 | .11* | -- | | | | | | |
| D24 | -.12* | -.11* | -.13* | -.19* | -.16* | -.12* | -.16* | -.16* | -.02 | -.06 | -.03 | -.09 | -.08 | -.08 | -.18* | -.01 | -.02 | -.16* | .05 | -.24* | .00 | .08 | -.02 | -- | | | | | |
| D25 | -.03 | -.36* | -.21* | -.03 | -.26* | -.15* | -.20* | -.19* | -.23* | -.22* | .15* | .00 | -.30* | -.20* | -.43* | .02 | -.27* | -.31* | -.17* | -.28* | .03 | .25* | .12* | .11* | -- | | | | |
| D26 | -.18* | -.13* | -.23* | -.12* | -.17* | -.13* | -.10* | -.12* | -.09 | -.25* | -.14* | -.04 | -.21* | -.24* | -.25* | -.02 | -.07 | -.19* | -.10 | -.23* | .07 | .14* | .13* | .19* | .32* | -- | | | |
| D27 | -.09 | -.08 | -.14* | -.11* | -.20* | -.11* | -.15* | -.15* | -.09 | -.21* | .02 | -.03 | -.20* | -.27* | -.21* | -.07 | -.02 | -.13* | -.11* | -.21* | .32* | .19* | -.01 | .14* | .11* | .14* | -- | | |
| D28 | -.02 | -.24* | -.29* | -.04 | -.20* | -.11* | -.17* | -.10 | -.27* | -.16* | .01 | -.12* | -.27* | -.13* | -.30* | .01 | -.15* | -.20* | -.09 | -.21* | .02 | .23* | .05 | -.01 | .55* | .19* | .11* | -- | |
| M | 2.26 | 2.83 | 2.43 | 3.17 | 2.85 | 3.01 | 2.93 | 3.34 | 3.08 | 3.65 | 2.89 | 3.22 | 2.87 | 3.16 | 3.16 | 3.55 | 3.95 | 3.25 | 3.18 | 3.08 | 3.51 | 4.83 | 4.86 | 4.80 | 5.76 | 5.17 | 4.02 | 5.22 | |
| SD | .94 | 1.24 | .87 | 1.58 | 1.52 | 1.31 | 1.48 | 1.40 | 1.29 | 1.46 | 1.50 | 1.40 | 1.19 | 1.51 | 1.10 | 1.54 | 1.41 | 1.28 | 1.33 | 1.29 | 1.56 | 1.90 | 1.66 | 1.80 | 2.12 | 1.74 | 1.64 | 1.72 | |
| KS | 1.50 | 1.16 | .96 | 2.37 | 2.63 | .39 | .95 | .70 | 1.03 | .52 | .84 | .17 | .52 | 2.15 | .35 | .86 | .53 | -.56 | 1.09 | .97 | .86 | -.45 | -.15 | -.41 | -.01 | .39 | -.59 | .86 | |
| SK | 1.23 | 1.14 | .97 | 1.24 | 1.49 | .82 | 1.12 | .84 | .87 | .65 | 1.12 | .75 | .93 | 1.25 | .67 | .79 | .50 | .43 | .90 | .86 | .80 | .17 | .19 | .19 | .34 | .36 | .33 | .56 | |

Note. * $p < .05$. D1 = Acting Out, D2 = Help Rejecting Complain, D3 = Passive Aggression, D4 = Splitting Object, D5 = Splitting Self, D6 = Projective Identification, D7 = Autistic Fantasy, D8 = Projection, D9 = Rationalization, D10 = Denial, D11 = Omnipotence, D12 = Idealization, D13 = Devaluation, D14 = Repression, D15 = Dissociation, D16 = Reaction Formation, D17 = Displacement, D18 = Undoing, D19 = Intellectualization, D20 = Isolation, D21 = Affiliation, D22 = Altruism, D23 = Anticipation, D24 = Humor, D25 = Self-Assertion, D26 = Self Observation, D27 = Sublimation, D28 = Suppression, KS = Kurtosis, SK = Skewness. Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Table 5*Differences between Females and Males Mean Scores for Defense Mechanisms*

| | | Levene's Test | | | | t-test for Equality of Means | | | | | | Effect Size |
|-----|---|---------------|-----------|----------|----------|------------------------------|-----------|----------|-------------------------|--------|-------|------------------|
| | | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>p</i> | <i>t</i> | <i>df</i> | <i>p</i> | <i>M_{diff}</i> | 95% CI | | Cohen's <i>d</i> |
| D1 | F | 2.14 | 0.91 | 0.00 | 0.95 | -2.28 | 370 | 0.02 | -0.22 | -0.41 | -0.03 | -0.24 |
| | M | 2.36 | 0.94 | | | -2.28 | 369.97 | 0.02 | -0.22 | -0.41 | -0.03 | |
| D2 | F | 2.92 | 1.30 | 2.64 | 0.10 | 1.35 | 370 | 0.18 | 0.17 | -0.08 | 0.43 | 0.14 |
| | M | 2.75 | 1.17 | | | 1.35 | 364.52 | 0.18 | 0.17 | -0.08 | 0.43 | |
| D3 | F | 2.37 | 0.84 | 0.37 | 0.54 | -1.43 | 370 | 0.15 | -0.13 | -0.31 | 0.05 | -0.15 |
| | M | 2.49 | 0.89 | | | -1.43 | 369.56 | 0.15 | -0.13 | -0.31 | 0.05 | |
| D4 | F | 3.00 | 1.45 | 3.60 | 0.06 | -2.11 | 370 | 0.04 | -0.34 | -0.66 | -0.02 | -0.22 |
| | M | 3.35 | 1.67 | | | -2.11 | 364.86 | 0.04 | -0.34 | -0.66 | -0.02 | |
| D5 | F | 3.07 | 1.61 | 7.28 | 0.01 | 2.58 | 370 | 0.01 | 0.41 | 0.10 | 0.71 | 0.27 |
| | M | 2.66 | 1.42 | | | 2.58 | 362.06 | 0.01 | 0.41 | 0.10 | 0.71 | |
| D6 | F | 3.10 | 1.32 | 1.48 | 0.22 | 1.41 | 370 | 0.16 | 0.19 | -0.08 | 0.45 | 0.15 |
| | M | 2.91 | 1.27 | | | 1.41 | 368.66 | 0.16 | 0.19 | -0.08 | 0.45 | |
| D7 | F | 3.00 | 1.54 | 1.50 | 0.22 | 0.89 | 370 | 0.38 | 0.14 | -0.17 | 0.44 | 0.09 |
| | M | 2.86 | 1.44 | | | 0.89 | 367.00 | 0.38 | 0.14 | -0.17 | 0.44 | |
| D8 | F | 3.48 | 1.34 | 0.27 | 0.60 | 1.83 | 370 | 0.07 | 0.27 | -0.02 | 0.55 | 0.19 |
| | M | 3.22 | 1.45 | | | 1.84 | 368.69 | 0.07 | 0.27 | -0.02 | 0.55 | |
| D9 | F | 3.09 | 1.34 | 0.16 | 0.69 | 0.14 | 370 | 0.89 | 0.02 | -0.24 | 0.28 | 0.01 |
| | M | 3.07 | 1.25 | | | 0.14 | 366.91 | 0.89 | 0.02 | -0.24 | 0.28 | |
| D10 | F | 3.86 | 1.43 | 0.15 | 0.69 | 2.92 | 370 | 0.00 | 0.44 | 0.14 | 0.73 | 0.30 |
| | M | 3.42 | 1.45 | | | 2.92 | 369.94 | 0.00 | 0.44 | 0.14 | 0.73 | |
| D11 | F | 2.73 | 1.46 | 0.02 | 0.89 | -1.94 | 370 | 0.05 | -0.30 | -0.60 | 0.00 | -0.20 |
| | M | 3.03 | 1.51 | | | -1.94 | 369.96 | 0.05 | -0.30 | -0.60 | 0.00 | |
| D12 | F | 2.97 | 1.26 | 4.22 | 0.04 | -3.54 | 370 | 0.00 | -0.51 | -0.79 | -0.22 | -0.37 |
| | M | 3.48 | 1.49 | | | -3.54 | 362.42 | 0.00 | -0.51 | -0.79 | -0.23 | |
| D13 | F | 3.05 | 1.24 | 6.14 | 0.01 | 3.09 | 370 | 0.00 | 0.37 | 0.14 | 0.61 | 0.32 |
| | M | 2.67 | 1.09 | | | 3.08 | 361.74 | 0.00 | 0.37 | 0.14 | 0.61 | |
| D14 | F | 3.31 | 1.63 | 3.77 | 0.05 | 2.10 | 370 | 0.04 | 0.32 | 0.02 | 0.63 | 0.22 |
| | M | 2.98 | 1.34 | | | 2.09 | 353.44 | 0.04 | 0.32 | 0.02 | 0.63 | |
| D15 | F | 3.43 | 1.09 | 2.52 | 0.11 | 5.32 | 370 | 0.00 | 0.58 | 0.36 | 0.79 | 0.55 |
| | M | 2.86 | 1.00 | | | 5.31 | 366.04 | 0.00 | 0.58 | 0.36 | 0.79 | |

| | | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>p</i> | <i>t</i> | <i>df</i> | <i>p</i> | <i>M_{diff}</i> | 95% CI | Cohen's <i>d</i> |
|--------|---|----------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|-------------------------|-------------|------------------|
| D16 | F | 3.56 | 1.47 | 0.99 | 0.32 | 0.08 | 370 | 0.93 | 0.01 | -0.30 0.33 | 0.01 |
| | M | 3.55 | 1.61 | | | 0.08 | 368.32 | 0.93 | 0.01 | -0.30 0.33 | |
| D17 | F | 4.18 | 1.39 | 0.06 | 0.81 | 3.32 | 370 | 0.00 | 0.48 | 0.19 0.76 | 0.34 |
| | M | 3.71 | 1.37 | | | 3.32 | 369.50 | 0.00 | 0.48 | 0.19 0.76 | |
| D18 | F | 3.60 | 1.31 | 2.13 | 0.15 | 5.59 | 370 | 0.00 | 0.72 | 0.46 0.97 | 0.58 |
| | M | 2.89 | 1.16 | | | 5.58 | 362.04 | 0.00 | 0.72 | 0.46 0.97 | |
| D19 | F | 3.21 | 1.31 | 0.09 | 0.77 | 0.68 | 370 | 0.49 | 0.09 | -0.18 0.36 | 0.07 |
| | M | 3.12 | 1.34 | | | 0.68 | 370.00 | 0.49 | 0.09 | -0.18 0.36 | |
| D20 | F | 3.11 | 1.28 | 0.23 | 0.63 | 0.57 | 370 | 0.57 | 0.08 | -0.19 0.34 | 0.06 |
| | M | 3.03 | 1.29 | | | 0.57 | 369.95 | 0.57 | 0.08 | -0.19 0.34 | |
| D21 | F | 3.57 | 1.55 | 0.22 | 0.64 | 0.65 | 370 | 0.51 | 0.11 | -0.21 0.42 | 0.07 |
| | M | 3.47 | 1.57 | | | 0.65 | 369.98 | 0.51 | 0.11 | -0.21 0.42 | |
| D22 | F | 4.68 | 1.81 | 2.51 | 0.11 | -1.28 | 370 | 0.20 | -0.25 | -0.64 0.14 | -0.13 |
| | M | 4.93 | 1.96 | | | -1.28 | 368.80 | 0.20 | -0.25 | -0.64 0.14 | |
| D23 | F | 4.88 | 1.50 | 6.46 | 0.01 | -0.07 | 370 | 0.95 | -0.01 | -0.35 0.33 | -0.01 |
| | M | 4.89 | 1.79 | | | -0.07 | 361.56 | 0.95 | -0.01 | -0.35 0.32 | |
| D24 | F | 4.47 | 1.65 | 5.49 | 0.02 | -3.67 | 370 | 0.00 | -0.68 | -1.04 -0.31 | -0.38 |
| | M | 5.15 | 1.89 | | | -3.68 | 365.13 | 0.00 | -0.68 | -1.04 -0.31 | |
| D25 | F | 5.24 | 2.02 | 0.30 | 0.58 | -4.87 | 370 | 0.00 | -1.03 | -1.45 -0.62 | -0.51 |
| | M | 6.28 | 2.07 | | | -4.87 | 370.00 | 0.00 | -1.03 | -1.45 -0.62 | |
| D26 | F | 5.10 | 1.65 | 0.94 | 0.33 | -0.80 | 370 | 0.42 | -0.14 | -0.50 0.21 | -0.08 |
| | M | 5.25 | 1.80 | | | -0.81 | 368.61 | 0.42 | -0.14 | -0.50 0.21 | |
| D27 | F | 3.78 | 1.59 | 0.83 | 0.36 | -2.88 | 370 | 0.00 | -0.49 | -0.82 -0.15 | -0.30 |
| | M | 4.27 | 1.66 | | | -2.88 | 369.77 | 0.00 | -0.49 | -0.82 -0.15 | |
| D28 | F | 5.06 | 1.59 | 3.19 | 0.07 | -1.63 | 370 | 0.10 | -0.29 | -0.64 0.06 | -0.17 |
| | M | 5.35 | 1.80 | | | -1.63 | 366.20 | 0.10 | -0.29 | -0.64 0.06 | |
| DCatND | F | 3.13 | 0.61 | 0.27 | 0.61 | -0.67 | 370 | 0.50 | -0.04 | -0.17 0.08 | -0.07 |
| | M | 3.17 | 0.61 | | | -0.67 | 369.63 | 0.50 | -0.04 | -0.17 0.08 | |
| DCatD | F | 2.89 | 0.55 | 0.25 | 0.61 | 1.58 | 370 | 0.12 | 0.09 | -0.02 0.20 | 0.16 |
| | M | 2.80 | 0.55 | | | 1.58 | 369.75 | 0.12 | 0.09 | -0.02 0.20 | |

Note. D1 = Acting Out, D2 = Help Rejecting Complain, D3 = Passive Aggression, D4 = Splitting Object, D5 = Splitting Self, D6 = Projective Identification, D7 = Autistic Fantasy, D8 = Projection, D9 = Rationalization, D10 = Denial, D11 = Omnipotence, D12 = Idealization, D13 = Devaluation, D14 = Repression, D15 = Dissociation, D16 = Reaction Formation, D17 = Displacement, D18 = Undoing, D19 = Intellectualization, D20 = Isolation, D21 = Affiliation, D22 = Altruism, D23 = Anticipation, D24 = Humor, D25 = Self-Assertion, D26 = Self Observation, D27 = Sublimation, D28 = Suppression, DCat ND= DCat Non Depressive, DcatD = DCat Depressive.

Table 6
Correlations Among Defense Mechanisms, Career Adaptability and Career Satisfaction

| Variable | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 32 | 33 | 34 | | | | |
|----------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|----|--|--|--|--|
| 1. CS | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2. CA | .47** | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3. CC | .50** | .81** | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4. CN | .42** | .82** | .57** | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5. CY | .28** | .85** | .54** | .62** | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6. CF | .38** | .87** | .53** | .65** | .73** | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 7. AO | .15** | 0.05 | 0.06 | 0.04 | -0.02 | 0.07 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 8. HR | -.16** | -0.09 | 0.02 | -.19** | -0.09 | -0.08 | .11* | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 9. PA | 0.04 | -.12* | 0.02 | -.18** | -.16** | -.14** | .21** | 0.09 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 10. SO | 0.06 | 0.08 | .13* | 0.07 | -0.03 | 0.07 | 0.06 | .12* | 0.09 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 11. SS | -.38** | -.34** | -.25** | -.36** | -.26** | -.31** | -0.06 | 0.04 | .13* | 0.01 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 12. PI | .13* | .11* | .13* | 0.03 | 0.06 | 0.10 | .19** | .29** | .12* | 0.02 | -.19** | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 13. AF | -.13* | -0.06 | -0.03 | -0.07 | -0.02 | -0.08 | -0.03 | 0.01 | 0.07 | 0.02 | .12* | -0.05 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 14. PJ | -.15** | -.11* | -0.08 | -0.05 | -.12* | -.11* | 0.07 | .13* | 0.07 | .10* | .22** | -0.02 | 0.01 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 15. RN | -0.07 | -0.10 | -0.04 | -.13** | -0.04 | -.10* | .11* | .13* | .29** | -.14** | 0.02 | .13** | -0.04 | -0.03 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 16. DL | -.16** | -.28** | -.23** | -.15** | -.28** | -.26** | -0.07 | -0.05 | -0.08 | -.12* | .12* | -.13* | 0.04 | -0.01 | 0.04 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 17. OM | .32** | .20** | .18** | .22** | 0.09 | .19** | .11* | -0.08 | 0.02 | .11* | -.22** | 0.09 | -0.08 | -0.03 | -.11* | -0.05 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 18. ID | 0.09 | 0.06 | 0.07 | -0.01 | 0.03 | 0.07 | 0.05 | -0.08 | .13* | 0.01 | -0.07 | 0.07 | 0.00 | -0.09 | 0.05 | -.19** | .10* | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 19. DV | -.27** | -.26** | -.21** | -.28** | -.20** | -.19** | 0.03 | 0.07 | .10* | -0.04 | .36** | -0.04 | -0.02 | 0.02 | 0.06 | .11* | -.12* | 0.09 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 20. RP | -.28** | -.23** | -.24** | -.17** | -.19** | -.18** | 0.02 | -0.06 | 0.00 | 0.02 | .18** | -.16** | .11* | 0.08 | -0.04 | .31** | -.17** | -.11* | 0.08 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 21. DS | -.28** | -.18** | -.14** | -.20** | -.14** | -.17** | -0.09 | .19** | -0.01 | .11* | .14** | .17** | .12* | 0.02 | .18** | -.20** | -.12* | -.16** | .19** | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 22. RF | 0.05 | 0.00 | -0.03 | -0.02 | 0.00 | 0.05 | -.15** | -.12* | -.11* | -0.08 | 0.02 | -0.07 | -0.05 | -0.04 | -.16** | -0.04 | -.12* | -0.02 | -0.01 | -0.05 | 0.00 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 23. DM | -.15** | -.19** | -.19** | -.13** | -0.08 | -.21** | -.12* | 0.01 | -0.04 | -.18** | 0.08 | 0.06 | 0.02 | -0.03 | .17** | .18** | -.19** | -0.04 | 0.09 | 0.06 | 0.10 | -.13* | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 24. UN | -.18** | -.27** | -.21** | -.30** | -.15** | -.24** | -0.01 | 0.08 | 0.00 | -.15** | .11* | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.04 | .16** | .17** | -0.04 | -0.06 | .23** | 0.09 | .19** | -.14** | .11* | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 25. IN | 0.03 | -0.06 | -0.05 | -0.05 | -0.07 | -0.03 | -0.09 | 0.03 | 0.07 | -0.07 | -0.07 | 0.05 | -0.04 | -.14** | 0.07 | 0.05 | -0.02 | -0.03 | 0.03 | -0.02 | .11* | -0.04 | .13* | 0.06 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 26. IS | -.12* | -.11* | -0.06 | -0.07 | -.13* | -.14** | 0.01 | 0.04 | 0.05 | .17** | 0.08 | 0.04 | .11* | 0.02 | 0.05 | .15** | -0.04 | -0.06 | 0.05 | .18** | .33** | -0.05 | 0.05 | .11* | 0.02 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 27. AF | .19** | 0.09 | .11* | 0.04 | 0.07 | 0.10 | -0.04 | -0.02 | 0.03 | -0.09 | -.18** | -0.06 | -.21** | -.11* | 0.00 | -.19** | 0.01 | -0.02 | -.17** | -.20** | -.15** | -0.04 | -.17** | -0.09 | -0.06 | -.18** | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 28. AL | .14** | .18** | .11* | .19** | .21** | .14** | -0.08 | -.17** | -.19** | -.18** | -.26** | -.11* | -.16** | -.25** | -.21** | -.23** | 0.02 | -0.04 | -.20** | -.20** | -.20** | .12* | -.18** | -.16** | -.14** | -.25** | .20** | 1 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 29. AN | 0.10 | .16** | .14** | .13* | .15** | .11* | -.17** | -.16** | -.21** | -0.07 | -.10* | -.21** | 0.04 | -0.03 | -.22** | 0.03 | -0.09 | -.11* | -.13* | -0.06 | -.12* | 0.08 | -0.10 | -.11* | -.16** | -0.08 | 0.03 | .11* | 1 | | | | | | | | | |
| 30. HM | 0.06 | 0.02 | -0.01 | 0.05 | 0.03 | 0.02 | -.12* | -.11* | -.13** | -.19** | -.16** | -.12* | -.16** | -.16** | -0.02 | -0.06 | -0.03 | -0.09 | -0.08 | -0.08 | -.18** | -0.01 | -0.02 | -.16** | 0.05 | -.24** | 0.00 | 0.08 | -0.02 | 1 | | | | | | | | |
| 31. SA | .32** | .38** | .23** | .43** | .29** | .36** | -0.03 | -.36** | -.21** | -0.03 | -.26** | -.15** | -.20** | -.19** | -.23** | -.22** | .15** | 0.00 | -.30** | -.20** | -.43** | 0.02 | -.27** | -.31** | -.17** | -.28** | 0.03 | .25** | .12* | .11* | 1 | | | | | | | |
| 32. SO | 0.03 | .13* | 0.06 | .13** | .17** | .10* | -.18** | -.13* | -.23** | -.12* | -.17** | -.13* | -.10* | -.12* | -0.09 | -.25** | -.14** | -0.04 | -.21** | -.24** | -.25** | -0.02 | -0.07 | -.19** | -0.10 | -.23** | 0.07 | .14** | .13* | .19** | .32** | 1 | | | | | | |
| 33. SL | 0.09 | .17** | .11* | .14** | .17** | .15** | -0.09 | -0.08 | -.14** | -.11* | -.20** | -.11* | -.15** | -.15** | -0.09 | -.21** | 0.02 | -0.03 | -.20** | -.27** | -.21** | -0.07 | -0.02 | -.13* | -.11* | -.21** | .32** | .19** | -0.01 | .14** | .11* | .14** | 1 | | | | | |
| 34. SP | .16** | .24** | .13** | .28** | .20** | .24** | -0.02 | -.24** | -.29** | -0.04 | -.20** | -.11* | -.17** | -0.10 | -.27** | -.16** | 0.01 | -.12* | -.27** | -.13** | -.30** | 0.01 | -.15** | -.20** | -0.09 | -.21** | 0.02 | .23** | 0.05 | -0.01 | .55** | .19** | .11* | 1 | | | | |

Note. CS = Career Satisfaction, CA = Career Adaptability, CC = Concern, CN = Control, CY = Curiosity, CF = Confidence, AO = Acting Out, HR = Help Rejecting Complain, PA = Passive Aggression, SO = Splitting Object, SS = Splitting Self, PI = Projective Identification, AF = Autistic Fantasy, PJ = Projection, RN = Rationalization, DL = Denial, OM = Omnipotence, ID = Idealization, DV = Devaluation, RP = Repression, DS = Dissociation, RF = Reaction Formation, DM = Displacement, UN = Undoing, IN = Intellectualization, IS = Isolation, AF = Affiliation, AL = Altruism, AN = Anticipation, HM = Humor, SA = Self-Assertion, SO = Self Observation, SL = Sublimation, SP = Suppression. *Note.* * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Table 7*Correlations Among Maladaptive Schema, Career Adaptability, and Career Satisfaction*

| Variable | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | |
|--------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|----|--|
| 1 Career Satisfaction | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 Career Adaptability | .48** | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 Concern | .50** | .81** | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4 Control | .42** | .82** | .57** | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5 Curiosity | .28** | .85** | .54** | .62** | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6 Confidence | .38** | .87** | .53** | .65** | .73** | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 7 Mistrust/Abuse | -.39** | -.20** | -.10 | -.20** | -.16** | -.23** | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 8 Defectiveness/Shame | -.45** | -.45** | -.38** | -.47** | -.31** | -.35** | .42** | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 9 Emotional Deprivation | -.44** | -.33** | -.28** | -.29** | -.25** | -.29** | .43** | .64** | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 10 Social Isolation | -.53** | -.34** | -.29** | -.31** | -.24** | -.33** | .57** | .63** | .62** | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 11 Emotional Inhibition | -.31** | -.27** | -.15** | -.25** | -.25** | -.28** | .48** | .30** | .48** | .64** | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 12 Failure | -.50** | -.46** | -.35** | -.46** | -.32** | -.42** | .40** | .64** | .44** | .56** | .44** | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 13 Vulnerability | -.51** | -.31** | -.23** | -.33** | -.18** | -.32** | .59** | .54** | .45** | .65** | .50** | .61** | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 14 Dependence Incompetence | -.48** | -.47** | -.35** | -.52** | -.34** | -.39** | .39** | .65** | .44** | .55** | .44** | .71** | .59** | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 15 Enmeshment Undeveloped Self | -.30** | -.26** | -.16** | -.32** | -.20** | -.20** | .33** | .38** | .26** | .34** | .29** | .41** | .37** | .54** | 1 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 16 Abandonment/Instability | -.44** | -.41** | -.28** | -.48** | -.29** | -.37** | .46** | .57** | .39** | .49** | .39** | .61** | .58** | .66** | .50** | 1 | | | | | | | | | |
| 17 Subjugation | -.36** | -.41** | -.28** | -.47** | -.32** | -.35** | .44** | .60** | .47** | .48** | .50** | .60** | .59** | .64** | .52** | .70** | 1 | | | | | | | | |
| 18 Negativity/Pessimism | -.56** | -.33** | -.27** | -.35** | -.19** | -.31** | .60** | .57** | .47** | .59** | .50** | .60** | .83** | .59** | .39** | .62** | .62** | 1 | | | | | | | |
| 19 Entitlement/Grandiosity | -.10 | -.05 | .02 | -.07 | -.07 | -.09 | .30** | .06 | .12* | .22** | .27** | .06 | .22** | .17** | .20** | .19** | .20** | .19** | 1 | | | | | | |
| 20 Insufficient Self Control | -.44** | -.43** | -.38** | -.41** | -.26** | -.39** | .30** | .44** | .38** | .45** | .35** | .52** | .53** | .56** | .32** | .56** | .53** | .51** | .22** | 1 | | | | | |
| 21 Approval Seeking | -.16** | -.19** | -.10 | -.25** | -.15** | -.16** | .24** | .22** | .18** | .16** | .25** | .29** | .32** | .37** | .31** | .43** | .44** | .34** | .41** | .32** | 1 | | | | |
| 22 Unrelenting Standard | -.07 | .14** | .11* | .12* | .12* | .13* | .26** | .09 | .10* | .14** | .20** | .04 | .17** | .07 | .20** | .18** | .17** | .24** | .28** | .07 | .36** | 1 | | | |
| 23 Punitiveness | -.16** | -.09 | -.10* | -.10* | -.02 | -.06 | .22** | .31** | .11* | .19** | .24** | .28** | .21** | .23** | .19** | .24** | .28** | .31** | .09 | .10* | .21** | .43** | 1 | | |
| 24 Self-Sacrifice | .01 | .24** | .18** | .19** | .24** | .21** | .15** | -.05 | -.03 | -.02 | -.06 | -.02 | .15** | -.00 | .07 | .13* | .08 | .18** | -.01 | .04 | .16** | .31** | .13* | 1 | |

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Table 8*Correlations Among Maladaptive Schema and Defense Mechanism Levels*

| Variable | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 |
|---------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|----|
| 1. High Adaptive | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2. Obsessional | .64** | -- | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3. Neurotic | .54** | .60** | -- | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4. Minor Image Distortion | .52** | .56** | .54** | -- | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5. Disavowal | .45** | .51** | .49** | .55** | -- | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6. Major Image Distortion | .46** | .48** | .44** | .52** | .50** | -- | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 7. Action | .64** | .47** | .44** | .42** | .47** | .40** | -- | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 8. Mistrust/Abuse | .44** | .28** | .20** | .35** | .27** | .22** | .49** | -- | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 9. Defectiveness/Shame | .31** | .22** | .19** | .27** | .31** | .12* | .38** | .42** | -- | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 10. Emotional Deprivation | .25** | .11* | .06 | .27** | .21** | .16** | .34** | .43** | .64** | -- | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 11. Social Isolation | .35** | .24** | .15** | .34** | .26** | .22** | .44** | .57** | .63** | .62** | -- | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 12. Emotional Inhibition | .43** | .24** | .20** | .23** | .15** | .18** | .42** | .48** | .50** | .48** | .64** | -- | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 13. Failure | .29** | .22** | .15** | .22** | .34** | .21** | .45** | .40** | .64** | .44** | .56** | .44** | -- | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 14. Vulnerability | .48** | .42** | .25** | .39** | .43** | .40** | .55** | .59** | .54** | .45** | .65** | .50** | .61** | -- | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 15. Dependence/Incompetence | .38** | .25** | .19** | .30** | .39** | .20** | .46** | .39** | .65** | .44** | .55** | .44** | .71** | .59** | -- | | | | | | | | | | |
| 16. Enmeshment/Undeveloped-Self | .29** | .26** | .17** | .22** | .30** | .12* | .32** | .33** | .38** | .26** | .34** | .29** | .41** | .37** | .54** | -- | | | | | | | | | |
| 17. Abandonment/Instability | .45** | .38** | .29** | .36** | .44** | .25** | .41** | .46** | .57** | .39** | .49** | .39** | .61** | .58** | .66** | .50** | -- | | | | | | | | |
| 18. Subjugation | .40** | .33** | .29** | .32** | .39** | .22** | .47** | .44** | .60** | .47** | .48** | .50** | .60** | .59** | .64** | .52** | .70** | -- | | | | | | | |
| 19. Negativity/Pessimism | .46** | .38** | .30** | .38** | .44** | .34** | .52** | .60** | .57** | .47** | .59** | .50** | .60** | .83** | .59** | .39** | .62** | .62** | -- | | | | | | |
| 20. Entitlement/Grandiosity | .38** | .28** | .34** | .22** | .16** | .20** | .28** | .30** | .06 | .12* | .22** | .27** | .06 | .22** | .17** | .20** | .19** | .20** | .19** | -- | | | | | |
| 21. Insufficient S-Control | .45** | .38** | .27** | .31** | .28** | .24** | .41** | .30** | .44** | .38** | .45** | .35** | .52** | .53** | .56** | .32** | .56** | .53** | .51** | .22** | -- | | | | |
| 22. Approval Seeking | .36** | .34** | .37** | .22** | .29** | .20** | .27** | .24** | .22** | .18** | .16** | .25** | .29** | .32** | .37** | .31** | .43** | .44** | .34** | .41** | .32** | -- | | | |
| 23. Unrelenting Standards | .29** | .25** | .31** | .24** | .25** | .26** | .28** | .26** | .09 | .10* | .14** | .20** | .035 | .17** | .07 | .20** | .18** | .17** | .24** | .28** | .07 | .36** | -- | | |
| 24. Punitiveness | .14** | .14** | .21** | .17** | .20** | .11* | .24** | .22** | .31** | .11* | .19** | .24** | .28** | .21** | .23** | .19** | .24** | .28** | .31** | .09 | .10* | .21** | .43** | -- | |
| 25. Self-Sacrifice | .24** | .30** | .23** | .20** | .33** | .32** | .26** | .15** | -.05 | -.03 | -.02 | -.06 | -.02 | .15** | -.00 | .07 | .13* | .08 | .18** | -.01 | .04 | .16** | .31** | .13* | -- |

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

CHAPTER 4: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This research aimed to explore the relations between psychodynamic concepts, and it is interesting to see that they are at work in individual's lives, including in their work domain. The main findings included correlations between maladaptive schemas, defense mechanisms, career adaptability, career satisfaction, and life satisfaction. This final chapter includes a summary and theorisation of the results found. Results will be discussed in connection to the literature and the aims of the present research. High adaptive defense mechanisms will be focussed on and those with mild to moderate correlations. Theoretical and practical implications including limitations, will be considered with suggestions for future research. The significance of the present research will be reviewed with some concluding statements on the research undertaken.

Main Findings and Theoretical Implications

Constructivism has provided some informative areas of enquiry for research and literature and continues to discuss the process of how internal cognitions and social processes can impact an individual's career development (Gysbers et al., 2014). Career Construction Theory takes the perspective of focusing on nonlinear progressions, contextual possibilities, and personal themes of an individual over personality traits and a logical approach (Savickas, 2012). Career Construction Theory has provided a useful framework for this present research. The present data has shown correlations between maladaptive cognitions, defense mechanisms and career including the career adaptability subscales of control, confidence, curiosity, and concern across the board.

Gender Differences and Career

In the present data, the differences between males and females in career variables and defense mechanisms was explored. It was important to include this data as very little is known about the relations amongst career adaptability and vocational identity. Prior research has identified differences in gender in perceived social support and career outcomes, but it has not been explored in-depth (Zhang et al., 2021). Previous studies have shown that men and women differ in their choice, use and style of defense mechanisms but the reason behind these differences is still largely unknown and debated (Petraglia et al., 2009). Self-efficacy was not a significant predictor on career adaptability for males so it has been suggested that career counsellors may want to adapt different approaches depending on the gender of their clients (Dostanić et al., 2021).

Prior research has found that women tend to be more adaptable and purposeful with their career choices, but research has been limited and inconclusive regarding gender differences (Coetzee & Harry, 2014). When exploring career adaptability differences, unconscious bias may be at work but also gender bias, differing work and life issues, gendered environments, and different opportunities of advancement between males and females (Ritter et al., 2021). Previous research has found that women tend to favour internalizing defences such as denial compared to men who favour externalizing defenses such as projection (Petraglia et al., 2009). Previous research has also found gender differences in early maladaptive schemas due to differences in perception, cognition, and behaviour (El-Gilany et al., 2013). Previous research has also shown a higher vulnerability for females to develop early maladaptive schemas than males (Brenning et al., 2012).

Maladaptive Schemas

In the present data, the correlation between numerous cognitive schemas and career adaptabilities was evident. These results are interesting because they demonstrate that maladaptive cognitions are enduring in an adult population. The schemas with high correlations with career adaptabilities included defectiveness/shame, failure, dependence/incompetence, subjugation, insufficient self-control, and abandonment/instability. This present data is consistent with Bordin (1990) that states individuals try to create childhood states as adults through career (as cited in Phillips et al., 2022). These states are based on negative thoughts such as incompetence, failure, subjugation, insufficiency, instability, and shame as noted. To counteract these, individuals would have to increase career adaptability. The present data demonstrates that as career satisfaction and adaptability increase then it lowers maladaptive schemas, which would be expected.

This present research was interested with maladaptive schemas being at work but found that results could be affected if defense mechanisms were also at work for them, therefore changing results gained. The present research revealed many moderate to high correlations between maladaptive schemas and defense mechanisms. Maladaptive schemas can show an individual's relating and reacting styles when processing information and the need for compensatory coping or shortfalls in adaptive coping (Dozois et al., 2008). The present data supports previous literature that has found substantial evidence of defense mechanisms in research that were not predominately looking for these (Baumeister et al., 1998). The present data displays mild correlations between many defense mechanisms and career satisfaction and adaptability. It is important to have knowledge of what could impact these dimensions of career adaptability.

Defense Mechanisms

Career adaptability is a psychosocial construct that determines a person's resources for coping with occupational traumas and transitions and resources denote self-regulation capacities (Porfeli & Savickas, 2012). Maladaptive resources and functioning therefore can affect these processes, which make it vital to understand these concepts to assist in career satisfaction. The present data showing correlations between defense mechanisms, maladaptive schemas, and career adaptabilities is consistent with the literature regarding evidence showing defense mechanisms at work, when there is a threat to self-esteem (Baumeister et al., 1998). Savickas (2005) explained that career adaptability focusses on how an individual constructs a career and the coping processes used over the career itself. Defense mechanisms mobilize when there is a threat or a stressor as a form of self-protection and are developed at different life stages due to individual environments and experiences (Khaleelee, 2009).

Defense mechanisms lie on a continuum scale depicting the level of maturity and functioning (Cramer, 2000). The present data shows a positive correlation between the high mature defense mechanisms, which include affiliation, altruism, anticipation, humor, self-assertion, self-observation, sublimation, and suppression. This was expected due to the normative population sample who would most likely demonstrate adaptive defense mechanisms. Defense mechanisms can display symptoms of mental distress, but they are not limited to this and have also been found to be part of normal everyday functioning (Nicolas et al., 2017). High-adaptive defense mechanisms promote greater adaption and resilience, whereas immature defense mechanisms are usually out of lack of awareness and protect against painful

feelings, but both can be found in clinical and healthy populations (Di Giuseppe, Miniati, et al., 2020).

Defense mechanisms either way, are working to protect undesirable thoughts or external threats that are not aligned with schemas established early on. These high functioning defenses can therefore manifest healthy behaviours when it comes to career adaptability. There can be many factors involved when choosing a career. It is important to note that less apparent reasons for career choice can include underlying psychological thoughts, processes, and motives (Hudson & Cohen, 2016). As Savickas (1997) pointed out, individuals are actively and perhaps unconsciously trying to master what they have previously suffered, meaning that one's preoccupations can become their occupation.

Self-Assertion

Of the high adaptive defenses which correlated with control, confidence, curiosity, and concern, were self-assertion, and suppression. Previous literature has noted that even people with high self-esteem should not be taken at face value as they could be denying or suppressing feelings of imperfection (Cramer, 2000). Similarly, individuals in the workplace could be using self-assertion as a way to achieve goals so that they are able to suppress feelings of inferiority. Therefore, this can then be seen as a positive correlation.

In the present data there was a moderate correlation between self-assertion and career satisfaction, adaptability, and confidence, which would be expected. This is in line with the literature noting that self-assertion allows an individual to express and release their thoughts and feelings to alleviate conflicts or internal or external stressors (Di Giuseppe & Perry, 2021). Being an adaptive defense, a positive correlation with career satisfaction and adaptability would be expected. Suppression

similarly demonstrates that individuals deal with internal or external conflicts or stressors by avoidance and can suppress and hide vexing feelings and problems (Di Giuseppe & Perry, 2021).

Sublimation

Sublimation in particular provides a transformation or transference from the original drive to a different one (Siljak, 2017). The present data shows a mild correlation between career satisfaction and adaptability with sublimation but not reaction formation. This is consistent with psychoanalytic theory that better functioning is not necessarily the absence of negative thoughts or desires but instead, being able to manage and transform them effectively and efficiently into an adaptive way (Metzger, 2014). The present data similarly showed mild negative correlations between career satisfaction and adaptability and denial and repression. However, there was a mild positive relation between career satisfaction and career adaptability and suppression. This is in line with the current literature as immature defenses would require more effort or perhaps anxiety as they are opposing instead of transferring the energy and aren't as functional.

The present data indicated no significant correlation between sublimation and career satisfaction but a moderate correlation between sublimation and career adaptability. Many psychodynamic theories in career are based on Freud's concept of work as a result of sublimation due to unacceptable wishes being channelled into socially acceptable behaviour (Caputo et al., 2020). Sublimation is usually highly correlated with creative pursuits or even aggressive impulses being channelled into sport (Metzger, 2014). These feelings can be very deep in the subconscious and even with repression, it is not enough to keep the feelings hidden, therefore sublimation as a defense provides a way to transform and release them into something positive, such

as career (Siljak, 2017). This demonstrates a maladaptive schema being transformed into a positive work success by defense mechanisms at work but may not result in career satisfaction.

Sublimation has been hard to prove in the literature due to its unconscious nature. Freud alluded to sublimation as unwelcome sexual or aggressive impulses that were directed into other acceptable pursuits, particularly artistic endeavours (Baumeister et al., 1998). When examining sexual repression, Hudson and Cohen (2016) found that protestants are more likely to pursue artistic and creative careers due to their forbidden desires and religious beliefs. High adaptive functioning shows that wounds potentially have been healed or individuals can use sublimation to discharge their distress or rage into something of value (Metzger, 2014). The present data displayed a positive mild correlation between sublimation and concern, control, curiosity, and confidence. This demonstrates a link between sublimation and career endeavours.

Undoing

Undoing, which is another high adaptive defense mechanism, had a moderate positive effect with control in the present data. This would be expected in line with the literature as according to Di Giuseppe and Perry (2021) undoing is when an individual removes a destructive or threatening thought and usually accomplishes something by actions that has the opposite effect, such as career. In the current literature, Butler and Astbury (2008) conducted a study on homosexual participants that were not accepted in society and found defense mechanisms of undoing, sublimation, suppression, compensation, displacement, and denial at work in these individuals.

The present data indicated the highest correlation between undoing and confidence, which supports the current literature. Individuals that use undoing have to deliberately express thoughts or behaviours that are overly acceptable and confidently seek approval (Butler & Astbury, 2008). The more effective an individual becomes at undoing the past, the more confident they would become as a person. There was a negative mild correlation between undoing and career adaptability demonstrating that as career adaptability increases, undoing comes down as it is trying to get rid of negative or threatening thoughts.

Suppression

Suppression is a defense mechanism that involves having a vague awareness of unacceptable thoughts and feelings, but individuals are able to attempt to hide or block them out (Butler & Astbury, 2008). The present research found a small positive correlation between suppression and career adaptability. This would be expected if an individual was able to suppress negative or inappropriate thoughts to adapt to a situation. This is in line with the current literature suggesting that individuals would be able to regulate emotions in a socially acceptable way and could adapt to stressful situations by stifling emotions, which is necessary for functioning in society (Gross & Cassidy, 2019).

Altruism

Altruism had a positive mild correlation with career satisfaction and all of the subscales of career adaptability, concern, control, curiosity, and confidence. This is in line with the current literature which shows that individuals deal with emotional conflicts or external stressors by dedicating themselves to helping and fulfilling other's needs (Di Giuseppe & Perry, 2021). An individual that felt that someone was not there for them in stressful situations in earlier life would not want another person

to suffer the same, so may become a social worker or teacher for example, to fulfill their own needs.

Altruism demonstrates an individual's willingness to help others and is not lead by extrinsic rewards or praise. This is not surprising as life and career satisfaction is subjective, and research has found that there are many elements that can affect it. These include personality and cognitive judgements, especially those of affective experiences whether thought of positively or negatively, which links to an individuals' sense of altruism (Song et al., 2020). This sense of altruism, therefore, demonstrates the importance of the stages of development across the life span and how it can affect career adaptability.

It has been argued that individuals with early maladaptive schemas gravitate towards workplaces with similar structures and dynamics which can provide healing, or if toxic, can lead to occupational stress (Bamber & McMahon, 2008). The research argues that psychological flourishing could be a further component to overall wellbeing and demonstrates the importance of achieving potential through being able to exercise capacities and capabilities (Song et al., 2020). Therefore, if high functioning defense mechanisms are at work which permit individuals to achieve their capabilities and potential in the workplace, then individuals would deem their career and life successful.

Splitting-Self

From a Lacanian (1953) perspective, individuals feel as if something is missing and they have to strive to reach totality which he labelled as the split-self (Phillips et al., 2022). Although not a high adaptive defense expected, it is interesting to note in the present data a mild negative correlation between splitting self and career adaptability and career satisfaction. This could demonstrate a link between

individuals using career to fill the missing piece and feel whole as a person. This correlated with McAdams (1993) that noted the importance of understanding the self as the subject, explaining one's ego and the self as an object, explaining self-concept.

Splitting self is when an individual views themselves or others as either all good or all bad, usually from a learned response of unpredictability from caregivers in early life (Di Giuseppe & Perry, 2021). Although a major image-distorting defense level and a maladaptive defense, the present data showed moderate negative correlations between splitting-self and career satisfaction and career adaptability, including control and confidence. This is in line with the current literature that states utilising the defense of splitting is associated with unstable self-esteem as the individual chaotically goes between favourable self-esteem and being dissatisfied with self (Myers & Zeigler-Hill, 2008).

Due to day-to-day stress, individuals reduce demands on their cognitive capacity by representing themselves as all good or bad (Watson et al., 2001). As Myers and Seigler-Hill (2008) note, the splitting defense is a normal psychological function, but it is expected to dissipate in childhood as learning and development occurs. It is therefore interesting to note this defense in an adult population. It would be expected to have a negative correlation with career satisfaction and career adaptabilities due to the pressure and instability of self-esteem, due to splitting. However, career aspects would have negative and positive qualities for those experiencing splitting so it could potentially depend on situations as to which side the individual reports on the day.

Defense Styles

The present data displayed moderate to high correlations between the defense mechanism levels and all maladaptive schemas. In psychoanalytic theory, little

attention has been given to defense styles in schema theory (Karaarslan et al., 2021). Maladaptive schemas were demonstrated to be at work, showing that emotional needs were not met in younger years, as previously discussed. It is important to understand the functioning of defense mechanisms, otherwise the efficacy of an individual's coping strategies could be overlooked or misunderstood (Cramer, 2000). Savickas (1997) noted that individuals have to adapt to new work environments and wish to fit in, giving meaning and connectedness to their lives and fulfilment.

There are certain stages in development that were not completed or fully crystalized due to an event and these will be seen in life and the workplace unless adaptive defense mechanisms are at work. It is important that an individual has mature high functioning defense mechanisms and not maladaptive coping techniques, as these will continue to affect functioning. The present research supports the theory that there are relations amongst maladaptive cognitions, defense mechanisms and career and life satisfaction and these can be explored further in future research.

Practical Implications

This current data can be further analysed in the field to encourage further research and discussion. This present research may help towards development of career interventions and professional development. By crossing boundaries this present data may be useful in supporting an integrative approach between different professions including psychology and career development (Blustein, 1997). Strategies to increase knowledge of psychodynamics in career and considerations toward CCT or integrative frameworks can be considered.

This present research supports Savickas (2012) in promoting vocational guidance, career education and life design for those preparing and already in the

workforce. This present research highlights again the need for more education and training to increase career adaptability skills to assist individuals to prepare for the unknowns of the 21st century (Blustein, 1997).

Studies have found that narrative counselling can contribute to enhancing career adaptability resources (Johnston, 2016). This present research has provided information to support the need for individuals to develop a capacity to explore their internal psychological experiences to aid in career competencies, adaptability, and satisfaction (Blustein, 1997). This present research provides counsellors with some evidence that mature defenses and maladaptive schemas are at work. These psychodynamic concepts need to be understood and listened out for in counselling sessions. This further demonstrates the importance of personal counselling and psychodynamics within careers counselling and its benefits. For example, a client may come in that has made repeated mistakes in their career and if the counsellor has knowledge of the repetition compulsion, then underlying psychodynamics can be explored in the session.

Methodological Implications

The measures used displayed good internal consistency and suggested strong reliability in this present research. Standard and reliable measures were used in the survey however, the defense mechanism scale had not been used in the career development field of research previously. This data can be used in future research in the field and contributes to the gap between psychodynamics and career development in research. This present research used a quantitative approach due to time constraints and funding. The funding provided for this present research was used on Prolific as there is a cost to use the platform, but the benefit is being able to collect data rapidly. Prolific also provided access to an international sample.

Utilising prolific was a new and interesting feature to this present research to collect data. The advantages of prolific are that it provides data quickly due to participants being offered a monetary incentive and are already signed up to the data base, so can be used anonymously. Participant's demographics are shared but personal identifying information is not as participants are identified by their prolific ID of a unique code. Filters can be utilized to set the sample as needed so that pre-screening surveys were not required. The filters were used to provide an equal number of men and women in the sample and also to use cultural specificity for a United States sample. Participants who utilise prolific are usually enthusiastic towards surveys and well versed in completing them.

Limitations

The limitations of this present research include the sample of a mainstream demographic segment, rather than a clinical population. However, the sample was a good size but could be limited by cultural specificity. The sample size was taken from participants residing in America only and was a convenience sample contributing to less generalisability across the population. Caucasian participants consisted of 78.7% of the sample, potentially creating a sample bias. A recommendation for future research would be to repeat the same study but in other countries, and perhaps on mentally ill participants or employing other personality measures. Higher adaptive defenses were focused on as the sample size did not focus on mentally ill participants. Mild to moderate correlations between variables were seen but the causation of relationships cannot be determined.

The survey had a monetary incentive which may mean that participants completed the survey for this reason and did not participate fully. However prolific was a useful tool for collecting data quickly and sufficiently. Defense mechanisms

could have been at work while the participants were filling out the survey, challenging data reliability. However, it is said that although schemas are largely unconscious, individuals usually have some conscious awareness of them, especially due to negative consequences of belief patterns (Welburn et al., 2002). Therefore, self-report measures were useful for the context of this present research, but other assessments could be considered and utilized for further research.

Future Research

This present research will provide additional data for research and counselling practices. Data from this present study can be utilized in future analyses and will contribute to the literature, especially the gap between psychodynamics and career. This provides material for future investigation into maladaptive schemas, defense mechanisms and career adaptability. From a psychotherapy perspective it is important to identify the reasons behind defenses and then assist individuals to work towards using more mature adaptive defenses, including sublimation (Metzger, 2014). Future research could utilise additional variables including personality and other areas of life satisfaction.

Future research could similarly utilise a qualitative approach to explore the answers and explanations of participants to discover further links between data. A similar approach to Marcia and Josselson, (2013) could be taken, which utilises semi-structured interview techniques to record participant's own descriptions of their experiences and how they deal with issues. A longitudinal approach could be taken so that the affect over time of maladaptive schemas and defense mechanisms can be seen. A longitudinal study could record defense mechanisms first and then years later, collect career data.

Future research may want to focus on different populations to provide a wider scope for data. Research could be conducted in a clinical setting and perhaps with a normative population and those with mental impairments. Other measures could be added such as personality tests. Qualitative research could be of value to focus on case studies enabling examination of exact links between maladaptive cognitions and defense mechanisms, especially life themes.

Conclusion

Whilst this research did not have a particular hypothesis, it has shown that maladaptive schemas and defense mechanisms are variously correlated with career adaptability and career satisfaction. Whilst it is difficult to investigate subconscious thoughts and feelings, it is important to note their statistical relations, especially for future research. This present research has bridged the gap between psychodynamics and career and life satisfaction. Understanding the link between these concepts is significant and will aid in careers counselling and support for those in the workforce moving forward. This present research makes a significant contribution to the research gap in vocational and psychodynamic research. Understanding the potential underlying predictors in career and life satisfaction is vital in today's unpredictable future. A focus on maladaptive schemas, cognitions and defense mechanisms provides great insight for future directions in research and practice.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM



University of Southern Queensland

Consent form

Questionnaire

USQ HREC Approval number: [H21REA291](#)

Project Title

The relations amongst maladaptive cognitions, defence mechanisms and career and life satisfaction

Research team contact details

Principal Investigator Details

Miss Jennifer Bowman

Email: [REDACTED]

Supervisor Details

Prof Peter McIlveen

Email: Peter.McIlveen@usq.edu.au

Telephone: +66 (07) 4631 2375

Statement of consent

By signing below, you are indicating that you:

- Have read and understood the information document regarding this project. Yes / No
- Have had any questions answered to your satisfaction. Yes / No
- Understand that if you have any additional questions, you can contact the research team. Yes / No
- Are over 18 years of age. Yes / No
- Understand that any data collected may be used in future research activities Yes / No
- Agree to participate in the project. Yes / No

Name (first & last)

| | | | |
|------------------|--|-------------|--|
| Signature | | Date | |
|------------------|--|-------------|--|

Please return this document to a research team member before undertaking the questionnaire.

APPENDIX B: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET



University of Southern Queensland

Participant Information Sheet

USQ HREC Approval number: [H21REA291](#)

Project Title

The relations amongst maladaptive cognitions, defence mechanisms and career and life satisfaction

Research team contact details

Principal Investigator Details

Miss Jennifer Bowman

Email: [REDACTED]

Supervisor Details

Prof Peter McIlveen

Email: Peter.McIlveen@usq.edu.au

Telephone: +66 (07) 4631 2375

Description

This project aims to look at how maladaptive schemas may influence career and life satisfaction through the mediating variable of defense mechanisms. Schemas are patterns imposed on reality during cognitive development in our early years to help explain and mediate perception of the world. These schemas can become rigid and as adults we aim for cognitive consistency, therefore schemas can become positive, negative, adaptive or maladaptive. Maladaptive repetition needs to be considered in career interventions to understand vocational behaviour and problems with career decision making or lack of satisfaction in career. Dysfunctional career decision making can play a detrimental role in an individual's life and career but the mechanisms and foundations underlying the dysfunction remain unclear

This project is being undertaken as part of a Master of Science project (applied) through the University of Southern Queensland.

The purpose of this project is to investigate the relations between career and life satisfaction and maladaptive cognitions and defence mechanisms. The focus is on everyday behaviour and emotional life, and behaviours learnt early in life which are expressed as "maladaptive cognitions" in the present. This will be achieved by measuring the key variables in a survey which will be completed by those in the workforce. The results will contribute to knowledge in the field, especially the research gap in vocational psychology and careers counselling when addressing

maladaptive schemas. The findings from this study will have theoretical and practical implications for counselling practice.

Participation

Your participation will involve completion of an online questionnaire that will take approximately 10 minutes of your time.

Questions and statements to rate will include: “I feel that people will take advantage of me” “I can’t seem to discipline myself to complete routine or boring tasks” “Did you make humorous comments about challenging personal issues or stressful situations?” “I am satisfied with the progress I have made toward meeting my overall career goals” “I’ve always let others make choices for me, so I really don’t know what I want for myself” “Becoming aware of the educational and vocational choices that I must make”.

Your participation in this project is entirely voluntary. If you do not wish to take part, you are not obliged to. If you do not wish to take part, you are not obliged to. If you decide to take part and later change your mind, you are free to withdraw from the project at any stage. You will be unable to withdraw data collected about yourself after you have participated in the questionnaire.

If you do wish to withdraw from this project, please contact the Research Team (contact details at the top of this form).

Your decision whether you take part, do not take part, or take part and then withdraw, will in no way impact your current or future relationship with the University of Southern Queensland.

Expected benefits

It is expected that this project will not directly benefit you apart from a monetary payment once the survey is completed. However; it may benefit counsellors and neighbouring industries, providing implications to counselling practice in the future.

Your small monetary incentive will be paid through Prolific on completion of the questionnaire via your private account created on the site.

Risks

In participating in the questionnaire, there are no anticipated risks beyond normal day-to-day living.

Sometimes thinking about the sorts of issues raised in the questionnaire can create some uncomfortable or distressing feelings. If you need to talk to someone about this immediately, please contact an appropriate support or help line in your country of

residence. You may also wish to consider consulting your General Practitioner (GP) for additional support.

Privacy and confidentiality

All comments and responses are confidential unless required by law.

The names of individual persons are not required in any of the responses.

The dataset will be made available after the research project is complete and after all relevant publications are released. You will not be able to access your data because it will be non-identifiable. A plain language summary of the research outcomes will become available after the thesis and journal article have been released. This plain language statement may appear in a public domain site such as LinkedIn.

Any data collected as a part of this project will be stored securely, as per University of Southern Queensland's [Research Data and Primary Materials Management Procedure](#).

Consent to participate

Clicking on the 'Submit' button at the conclusion of the questionnaire is accepted as an indication of your consent to participate in this project.

Questions

Please refer to the Research team contact details at the top of the form to have any questions answered or to request further information about this project.

Concerns or complaints

If you have any concerns or complaints about the ethical conduct of the project, you may contact the University of Southern Queensland, Manager of Research Integrity and Ethics on +61 7 4631 1839 or email researchintegrity@usq.edu.au. The Manager of Research Integrity and Ethics is not connected with the research project and can address your concern in an unbiased manner.

Thank you for taking the time to help with this research project. Please keep this document for your information.

APPENDIX C: SURVEY FOR PARTICIPANT SAMPLE

Section A: Beliefs

A1. Listed below are statement that a person might use to describe him or herself. Please read each statement and decide how well it describes you. When you are not sure, base your answer on what you emotionally feel, not on what you think to be true. Choose the highest rating from 1 to 6 that describes you and write the number in the space before the statement.

RATING SCALE:

1 = Completely untrue of me

2 = Mostly untrue of me

3 = Slightly more true than untrue

4 = Moderately true of me

5 = Mostly true of me

6 = Describes me perfectly

Completely untrue of me

Mostly untrue of me

Slightly more true than untrue

Moderately true of me

Mostly true of me

Describes me perfectly

I feel that people will take advantage of me.

I feel that I cannot let my guard down in the presence of other people, or else they will intentionally hurt me.

It is only a matter of time before someone betrays me.

I am quite suspicious of other people's motives.

I'm usually on the lookout for people's ulterior motives.

A2. Listed below are statement that a person might use to describe him or herself. Please read each statement and decide how well it describes you. When you are not sure, base your answer on what you emotionally feel, not on what you think to be true. Choose the highest

rating from 1 to 6 that describes you and write the number in the space before the statement.

RATING SCALE:

1 = Completely untrue of me

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4 = Moderately true of me

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6 = Describes me perfectly

Completely untrue of me

Mostly untrue of me

Slightly more true than untrue

Moderately true of me

Mostly true of me

Describes me perfectly

No man/woman I desire could love me once he/she saw my defects or flaws.

No one I desire would want to stay close to me if he/she knew the real me.

I'm unworthy of the love, attention, and respect of others.

I feel that I'm not lovable.

I am too unacceptable in very basic ways to reveal myself to other people.

A3. Listed below are statement that a person might use to describe him or

herself. Please read each statement and decide how well it describes

you. When you are not sure, base your answer on what you

emotionally feel, not on what you think to be true. Choose the highest

rating from 1 to 6 that describes you and write the number in the

space before the statement.

RATING SCALE:

1 = Completely untrue of me

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Completely untrue of me

Mostly untrue of me

Slightly more true than untrue

Moderately true of me

Mostly true of me

Describes me perfectly

I haven't had someone to nurture me, share him/herself with me, or care deeply about everything that happens to me.

I don't have people to give me warmth, holding, and affection.

I haven't felt that I am special to someone.

I have not had someone who really listens to me, understands me, or is tuned into my true needs and feelings.

I haven't had a strong or wise person to give me sound advice or direction when I'm not sure what to do.

A4. Listed below are statements that a person might use to describe him or herself. Please read each statement and decide how well it describes you. When you are not sure, base your answer on what you emotionally feel, not on what you think to be true. Choose the highest rating from 1 to 6 that describes you and write the number in the space before the statement.

RATING SCALE:

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6 = Describes me perfectly

Completely untrue of me

Mostly untrue of me

Slightly more true than untrue

Moderately true of me

Mostly true of me

Describes me perfectly

I don't fit in.

I'm fundamentally different from other people.

I don't belong; I'm a loner.

I feel alienated from other people.

I always feel on the outside of groups.

A5. Listed below are statements that a person might use to describe him or herself. Please read each statement and decide how well it describes you. When you are not sure, base your answer on what you emotionally feel, not on what you think to be true. Choose the highest rating from 1 to 6 that describes you and write the number in the space before the statement.

RATING SCALE:

1 = Completely untrue of me

2 = Mostly untrue of me

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6 = Describes me perfectly

Completely untrue of me

Mostly untrue of me

Slightly more true than untrue

Moderately true of me

Mostly true of me

Describes me perfectly

I am too self-conscious to show positive feelings to others (e.g., affection, showing I care).

I find it embarrassing to express my feelings to others.

I find it hard to be free-spirited and spontaneous around other people.

I control myself so much that people think I am unemotional.

People see me as uptight emotionally.

A6. Listed below are statement that a person might use to describe him or herself. Please read each statement and decide how well it describes you. When you are not sure, base your answer on what you emotionally feel, not on what you think to be true. Choose the highest rating from 1 to 6 that describes you and write the number in the space before the statement.

RATING SCALE:

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4 = Moderately true of me

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6 = Describes me perfectly

Completely untrue of me

Mostly untrue of me

Slightly more true than untrue

Moderately true of me

Mostly true of me

Describes me perfectly

Almost nothing I do at work (or school) is as good as other people can do.

I'm incompetent when it comes to achievement.

Most other people are more capable than I am in areas of work and achievement.

I'm not as talented as most people are at their work.

I'm not as intelligent as most people when it comes to work (or school).

A7. Listed below are statement that a person might use to describe him or herself. Please read each statement and decide how well it describes you. When you are not sure, base your answer on what you

emotionally feel, not on what you think to be true. Choose the highest rating from 1 to 6 that describes you and write the number in the space before the statement.

RATING SCALE:

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- 5 = Mostly true of me
- 6 = Describes me perfectly

Completely untrue of me

Mostly untrue of me

Slightly more true than untrue

Moderately true of me

Mostly true of me

Describes me perfectly

I can't seem to escape the feeling that something bad is about to happen.

I feel that a disaster (natural, criminal, financial, or medical) could strike at any moment.

I worry about being physically attacked by people.

I worry that I'll lose all my money and become destitute or very poor.

I worry that I'm developing a serious illness, even though nothing serious has been diagnosed by a doctor.

A8. Listed below are statement that a person might use to describe him or herself. Please read each statement and decide how well it describes you. When you are not sure, base your answer on what you emotionally feel, not on what you think to be true. Choose the highest rating from 1 to 6 that describes you and write the number in the space before the statement.

RATING SCALE:

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- 3 = Slightly more true than untrue
- 4 = Moderately true of me
- 5 = Mostly true of me
- 6 = Describes me perfectly

Completely untrue of me

Mostly untrue of me

Slightly more true than untrue

Moderately true of me

Mostly true of me

Describes me perfectly

I do not feel capable of getting by on my own in everyday life.

I think of myself as a dependent person, when it comes to everyday functioning.

I lack common sense.

My judgement cannot be relied upon in everyday situations.

I don't feel confident about my ability to solve everyday problems that come up.

A9. Listed below are statements that a person might use to describe him or herself. Please read each statement and decide how well it describes you. When you are not sure, base your answer on what you emotionally feel, not on what you think to be true. Choose the highest rating from 1 to 6 that describes you and write the number in the space before the statement.

RATING SCALE:

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 - 5 = Mostly true of me
 - 6 = Describes me perfectly
- Completely untrue of me

Mostly untrue of me

Slightly more true than untrue

Moderately true of me

Mostly true of me

Describes me perfectly

I have not been able to separate myself from my parent(s), the way other people my age seem to.

My parent(s) and I tend to be over-involved in each other's lives and problems.

It is very difficult for my parent(s) and me to keep intimate details from each other, without feeling betrayed or guilty.

I often feel as if my parent(s) are living through me – that I don't have a life of my own.

I often feel that I do not have a separate identity from my parent(s) or partner.

A10. Listed below are statement that a person might use to describe him or herself. Please read each statement and decide how well it describes you. When you are not sure, base your answer on what you emotionally feel, not on what you think to be true. Choose the highest rating from 1 to 6 that describes you and write the number in the space before the statement.

RATING SCALE:

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6 = Describes me perfectly

Completely untrue of me

Mostly untrue of me

Slightly more true than untrue

Moderately true of me

Mostly true of me

Describes me perfectly

I find myself clinging to people I'm close to, because I'm afraid they'll leave me.

I need other people so much that I worry about losing them.

I worry that people I feel close to will leave me or abandon me.

When someone I care for seems to be pulling away or withdrawing from me, I feel desperate.

Sometimes I am so worried about people leaving me that I drive them away.

A11. Listed below are statements that a person might use to describe him or herself. Please read each statement and decide how well it describes you. When you are not sure, base your answer on what you emotionally feel, not on what you think to be true. Choose the highest rating from 1 to 6 that describes you and write the number in the space before the statement.

RATING SCALE:

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6 = Describes me perfectly

Completely untrue of me

Mostly untrue of me

Slightly more true than untrue

Moderately true of me

Mostly true of me

Describes me perfectly

I think that if I do what I want, I'm only asking for trouble

I feel that I have no choice but to give in to other people's wishes. Or else they will retaliate or reject me in some way.

In relationships, I let the other person have the upper hand.

I've always let others make choices for me, so I really don't know what I want for myself.

I have a lot of trouble demanding that my rights be respected and that my feelings be taken into account.

A12. Listed below are statement that a person might use to describe him or herself. Please read each statement and decide how well it describes you. When you are not sure, base your answer on what you emotionally feel, not on what you think to be true. Choose the highest rating from 1 to 6 that describes you and write the number in the space before the statement.

RATING SCALE:

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6 = Describes me perfectly

Completely untrue of me

Mostly untrue of me

Slightly more true than untrue

Moderately true of me

Mostly true of me

Describes me perfectly

Even when things seem to be going well, I feel that it is only temporary.

If something good happens, I worry that something bad is likely to follow.

You can't be too careful; something will almost always go wrong.

No matter how hard I work, I worry that I could be wiped out financially and lose almost everything.

I worry that a wrong decision could lead to disaster.

A13. Listed below are statement that a person might use to describe him or herself. Please read each statement and decide how well it describes you. When you are not sure, base your answer on what you emotionally feel, not on what you think to be true. Choose the highest

rating from 1 to 6 that describes you and write the number in the space before the statement.

RATING SCALE:

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 - 5 = Mostly true of me
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- Completely untrue of me
- Mostly untrue of me
- Slightly more true than untrue
- Moderately true of me
- Mostly true of me
- Describes me perfectly

I have a lot of trouble accepting “no” for an answer when I want something from other people.

I’m special and shouldn’t have to accept many of the restrictions placed on other people.

I hate to be constrained or kept from doing what I want.

I feel that I shouldn’t have to follow the normal rules and conventions other people do.

I feel that what I have to offer is of greater value than the contributions of others.

A14. Listed below are statement that a person might use to describe him or herself. Please read each statement and decide how well it describes you. When you are not sure, base your answer on what you emotionally feel, not on what you think to be true. Choose the highest rating from 1 to 6 that describes you and write the number in the space before the statement.

RATING SCALE:

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Completely untrue of me

Mostly untrue of me

Slightly more true than untrue

Moderately true of me

Mostly true of me

Describes me perfectly

I can't seem to discipline myself to complete routine or boring tasks.

If I can't reach a goal, I become easily frustrated and give up.

I have a very difficult time sacrificing immediate gratification to achieve a long-range goal.

I can't force myself to do things I don't enjoy, even when I know it's for my own good.

I have rarely been able to stick to my resolutions.

A15. Listed below are statements that a person might use to describe him or herself. Please read each statement and decide how well it describes you. When you are not sure, base your answer on what you emotionally feel, not on what you think to be true. Choose the highest rating from 1 to 6 that describes you and write the number in the space before the statement.

RATING SCALE:

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6 = Describes me perfectly

Completely untrue of me

Mostly untrue of me

Slightly more true than untrue

Moderately true of me

Mostly true of me

Describes me perfectly

Unless I get a lot of attention from others, I feel less important.

If I make remarks at a meeting or am introduced at a gathering, I look forward to recognition and admiration.

Lots of praise and compliments make me feel like a worthwhile person.

Accomplishments are most valuable to me if other people notice them.

Having money and knowing important people make me feel worthwhile.

A16. Listed below are statements that a person might use to describe him or herself. Please read each statement and decide how well it describes you. When you are not sure, base your answer on what you emotionally feel, not on what you think to be true. Choose the highest rating from 1 to 6 that describes you and write the number in the space before the statement.

RATING SCALE:

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Completely untrue of me

Mostly untrue of me

Slightly more true than untrue

Moderately true of me

Mostly true of me

Describes me perfectly

I must be the best at most of what I do. I can't accept second best.

I try to do my best. I can't settle for "good enough". I must meet all my responsibilities.

I feel there is constant pressure for me to achieve and get things done.

I can't let myself off the hook easily or make excuses for my mistakes.

A17. Listed below are statement that a person might use to describe him or herself. Please read each statement and decide how well it describes you. When you are not sure, base your answer on what you emotionally feel, not on what you think to be true. Choose the highest rating from 1 to 6 that describes you and write the number in the space before the statement.

RATING SCALE:

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Completely untrue of me

Mostly untrue of me

Slightly more true than untrue

Moderately true of me

Mostly true of me

Describes me perfectly

If I make a mistake, I deserve to be punished.

If I don't try my hardest, I should expect to lose out.

If I don't do the job, I should suffer the consequences.

It doesn't matter why I make a mistake; when I do something wrong, I should pay the price.

I'm a bad person who deserves to be punished.

A18. Listed below are statement that a person might use to describe him or herself. Please read each statement and decide how well it describes

you. When you are not sure, base your answer on what you emotionally feel, not on what you think to be true. Choose the highest rating from 1 to 6 that describes you and write the number in the space before the statement.

RATING SCALE:

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Completely untrue of me

Mostly untrue of me

Slightly more true than untrue

Moderately true of me

Mostly true of me

Describes me perfectly

I'm the one who usually ends up taking care of the people I'm close to.

I am a good person because I think of others more than of myself.

I'm so busy doing for the people that I care about that I have little time for myself.

I've always been the one who listens to everyone else's problems.

Other people see me as doing too much for others and not enough for myself.

Section B: Defence

B1. In the past week, how much did you deal with difficult emotions or situations in the following ways?

Not at all = 1

Rarely/slightly = 2

Sometimes/somewhat = 3

Often/a lot = 4

Very often/much = 5

Not at all

Rarely/slightly

Sometimes/somewhat

Often/a lot

Very often/much

Did you perceive others as “all good” or “all bad”?

Did you react as if you were detached from personally relevant issues?

Did you develop somatic symptoms, such as headache, stomach pain, or the loss of ability to do something, in response to emotional situations?

Did you offer physical or psychological help to others in need?

Did you have repetitive or serial daydreams to which you retreated in lieu of real life?

Did you think about how you would handle difficulties that you might expect in the future?

Did you feel as if there was nothing positive or redeeming about yourself?

Did you have an attitude of giving much more than you received without perceiving the imbalance?

Did you ask for physical or emotional support while doing your best to handle the problem?

Did you try to diffuse the tension by engaging in creative activities?

Did you have an attitude of suspiciousness or perceive others as untrustworthy, unfaithful, or manipulative?

Did you make humorous comments about challenging personal issues or stressful situations?

Did you reflect upon your emotional experiences and personal thoughts?

Did you try to take your anger out on yourself or express it with self-harming behaviors?

Did you justify or give plausible explanations to cover up the real reasons for personal problems or stressful situations?

Did you take an active role in solving problems that arose?

Did you idealize yourself or others for your/their personal characteristics?

Did you consciously or unconsciously try to irritate someone in indirect or annoying ways?

Did you temporarily put aside your personal needs to deal with other things that needed to be done?

Did you focus on minor or unrelated matters that distracted you away from a problem that makes you anxious?

Did you discuss an emotional topic in general or impersonal way, without considering or experiencing your feelings?

Did you complain about how others don't understand you or don't really care?

Did you experience strong feelings toward someone, thinking that the other person intended to make you feel that way?

Did you feel confused, "spaced out," or unable to talk about a distressing topic?

Did you engage in verbal or physical fights?

Did you have trouble remembering simple things?

Did you avoid thinking about personal problems or feelings?

Did you perceive yourself as very strong, powerful, untouchable?

Did you have contradictory or conflictual ideas about a topic that makes you anxious?

Did you devalue yourself or others for your/their personal characteristics?

Section C: Satisfaction

C1. Read following statements about your satisfaction with your career.

Rate your level of agreement using a range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

1 = Strongly disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Neutral

4 = Agree

5 = Strongly agree

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

I am satisfied with the success I have achieved in my career.

I am satisfied with the progress I have made toward meeting my overall career goals.

I am satisfied with the progress I have made toward meeting my goals for income.

I am satisfied with the progress I have made toward meeting my goals for advancement.

I am satisfied with the progress I have made toward meeting my goals for the development of new skills.

Section D: Adaptability

D1. Different people use different strength to build their careers. No one is good at everything, each of us emphasizes some strengths more than others. Please rate how strongly you have developed each of the following abilities using the scale below.

1 = Not strong

2 = Somewhat strong

3 = Strong

4 = Very strong

5 = Strongest

Not strong

Somewhat strong

Strong

Very strong

Strongest

Thinking about what my future will be like.

Preparing for the future.

Becoming aware of the educational and vocational choices that I must make.

Making decisions by myself.

Taking responsibility for my actions.

Counting on myself.

Looking for opportunities to grow as a person.

Investigating options before making a choice.

Observing different ways of doing things.

Taking care to do things well.

Learning new skills.

Working up to my ability.

Section E: About Me

E1. What is your gender?

Female

Male

Non-binary

Prefer not to say

E2. What is the last industry you were working within before retiring (or currently working within)?

Agriculture, forestry, and fishing

Mining

Manufacturing

Electricity, gas, water, and waste services

Construction

Wholesale trade

Retail trade

Accommodation and food services
Transport, postal and warehousing
Information Media and telecommunications
Financial and insurance services
Rental, hiring and real estate services
Professional, scientific, and technical services
Administrative and support services
Public administration and safety
Education and Training
Health care and social assistance
Arts and recreation services
Other services

E3. In what country were you born?

E4. What is your current nationality? If you have dual citizenship, please indicate which is the most relevant for you now.

E5. What is the race with which you mostly identify?

American Indian or Alaska Native

Asian

Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

Black or African American

White (European, Middle East, North Africa)

Hispanic or Latino

Indian/Subcontinent

Native Hawaiian

Pacific Islander

Prefer not to say

E6. What is your current age in years (rounded to whole years)?

E7. What is your highest level of educational qualification?

Bachelor

Bachelor (Honours)

Graduate Diploma or Graduate Certificate

Master

Doctorate

E8. How do you describe your current relationship status?

Never Married

Married or in a Defacto Relationship

Separated or Divorced

E9. Are you a parent? Parenthood in this sense includes children or adults you claim as offspring by birth, adoption, family arrangements, or legal guardianship.

Yes

No