



# **The Impact of Intolerance of Uncertainty on Career Decision-Making: The Mediating Effect of Career Adaptability**

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## **Abstract**

**Title:** The Impact of Intolerance of Uncertainty on Career Decision-Making: The Mediating Effect of Career Adaptability

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This study examines how intolerance of uncertainty, or the tendency to react negatively to uncertain situations, affects career decision-making difficulties. To date, only a handful of studies have examined the mechanisms or variables that mediate this relationship. Career adaptability has been recognized as an important coping resource, especially with the increased uncertainty due to unpredictable labour markets. The current thesis examines the relationships between intolerance of uncertainty with its subfactors, prospective anxiety and inhibitory anxiety, career adaptability, and career decision-making difficulty in 140 participants facing the transition from uni to work. The study conducted correlation and path analysis and assessed the mediating effect of career adaptability, to better understand the role of career adaptability in overall career decision making in the context of uncertainty.

The results showed that higher intolerance of uncertainty was positively related to career decision-making difficulty, whereas career adaptability was negatively related to decision-making difficulty. Intolerance of uncertainty and career adaptability showed no significant relationship, whereas inhibitory anxiety, showed a significant negative relationship. The mediating role of career adaptability was therefore only supported between inhibitory anxiety and career decision-making difficulties. Discussions on the role of career adaptability are introduced and practical implications for career counseling are suggested, along with the limitations of the study.

**Keywords:** Intolerance of uncertainty, Career decision-making difficulties, Career adaptability, Prospective anxiety, Inhibitory anxiety, Transition from university to work

## **Sumário**

**Título:** O impacto da intolerância à incerteza na tomada de decisões de carreira: O Efeito Mediador da Adaptabilidade de Carreira

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Este estudo examina como a intolerância à incerteza, ou a tendência para reagir negativamente a situações de incerteza, afeta as dificuldades na tomada de decisões de carreira. Apesar de poucos estudos terem investigado os mecanismos que medeiam essa relação, a adaptabilidade de carreira tem sido amplamente reconhecida como um recurso fundamental para lidar com a incerteza, especialmente face à imprevisibilidade dos mercados de trabalho. Esta pesquisa analisa as relações entre a intolerância à incerteza, incluindo seus subfatores, ansiedade prospectiva e ansiedade inibitória, a adaptabilidade de carreira e as dificuldades na tomada de decisões de carreira em 140 participantes que estão na fase de transição da universidade para o trabalho. Foram conduzidas análises de correlação e de percurso para avaliar o papel mediador da adaptabilidade de carreira.

Os resultados indicaram que uma maior intolerância à incerteza estava associada positivamente às dificuldades na tomada de decisões de carreira, enquanto a adaptabilidade de carreira estava negativamente associada a essas dificuldades. Não foi encontrada uma relação significativa entre a intolerância à incerteza e a adaptabilidade de carreira como um todo, mas a ansiedade inibitória apresentou uma relação negativa significativa com a adaptabilidade de carreira. Dessa forma, o papel mediador da adaptabilidade de carreira foi apoiado apenas na relação entre a ansiedade inibitória e as dificuldades de tomada de decisão de carreira. O estudo discute o papel da adaptabilidade de carreira, sugere implicações práticas para o aconselhamento de carreira e apresenta limitações da pesquisa.

**Palavras-chave:** Intolerância à incerteza, Dificuldades na tomada de decisões de carreira, Adaptabilidade de carreira, Ansiedade prospectiva, Ansiedade inibitória, Transição da universidade para o trabalho

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## **1. Introduction**

Recently, factors that influence career decisions have become a subject of interest among many scholars (Anghel & Gati, 2021) which is of no surprise because selecting a career is one of life's most challenging decisions. Many people experience challenges because of the vast amount of information they must process when considering various career paths (Gati et al., 2019). Moreover, technological advancements, including automation and artificial intelligence, are transforming labor markets which creates unpredictability where new opportunities arise and traditional jobs disappear (Blustein, 2019). During such fluid and unstable times, university students who are preparing to enter the workforce can no longer expect a linear career path (Pyo & Yang, 2020).

To address these challenges, Savickas (2002) developed the career construction theory in which he argues that students must actively manage and shape their career development to deal with the inherent uncertainty of their environment. At the centre of this theory is the concept of adaptation, which presents a new, postmodern approach to understanding career development. The theory brings individual traits, behaviors, and psychological states into concert with situational factors to determine career outcomes. The most critical factor of this theory is career adaptability, which is defined as a coping resources that enable individuals to solve complex unfamiliar problems of unpredictable labor markets effectively (Savickas, 2013).

The present thesis explores the relationships between intolerance of uncertainty, career adaptability, and career decision-making difficulty in university students who are in the transitioning phase from education to work. The thesis aims to offer insights into how career adaptability impacts students' career decision-making difficulties in uncertain environments. The findings of the thesis have practical implications for career counseling to prioritize and cultivate adaptability.

## **1.1 Relevance of the Topic**

Career decision-making has been an increasingly complex process for university students and graduates, as the problems of making such choices tend to persist well into their working lives (Dogan, 2010; Gati & Saka, 2001). Empirical data clearly show that career decisions have an impact on many interrelated domains and thus can have long-term implications for an individual's career satisfaction (Gati, Gadassi, & Shemesh, 2006), well-being (Creed, Prideaux, & Patton, 2005), and standard of living (Sabates, Gutman, & Schoon, 2017).

The rapid rates of technological, sociological, and economic changes add to these challenges, making the labor markets unpredictable and full of uncertainty (Bright & Pryor, 2005; Gati, 2013; Gelatt, 1989; Krumboltz, 2009). As a result, managing uncertainty has become a curial aspect of career decision-making (Xu, 2023).

In the light of labor market instabilities, the ability of flexible adapt to changing work contexts has become increasingly crucial (Le Corff & Gingras, 2011; Maggiori et al., 2017; Tladinyane & Van der Merwe, 2015). For students, fostering career adaptability can aid in promoting a more seamless transition from academic settings to professional environments, thus enhancing their likelihood of obtaining high-quality employment opportunities (Koen, Klehe & Vianen, 2012).

Pouyaud, Vignoli, Dosnon, and Lallemand (2012) considered career adaptability and work motivation as related concepts in their contribution to achieving personal goals. In their research, they have found that career adaptability fosters a strong drive for success, internal control, and future orientation, while reducing anxiety and fear of failure. Hence, career adaptability not only predicts positive outcomes regarding career decision-making, but also academic success (Rottinghaus et al., 2005), subjective career success and satisfaction (Zacher, 2014a), life satisfaction (Hirschi, 2009), a sense of empowerment (Hirschi, 2009), and comfort with one's educational and career plans (Rottinghaus et al., 2005).

In light of the important role that career decision-making has, the necessity to navigate uncertainty, and the key role that career adaptability plays in addressing these challenges, this thesis aims to explore these interrelated aspects.

## **1.2 Problem Statement and Research Question**

Past research has explored the impact of intolerance of uncertainty as a factor that may negatively affect career decisions (Arbona et al., 2021). But only a handful of studies have investigated the mechanisms or variables that mediate this relationship. In fact, no studies have examined the role of career adaptability in the relationship between intolerance of uncertainty and career decision-making difficulties.

Since career adaptability has been recognised as an important variable which is closely linked to a variety of career outcomes (De Guzman & Choi, 2013; Guan et al., 2013), this study examines whether career adaptability may explain the relationship between intolerance of uncertainty and career decision-making. Therefore, the following research question was developed.

RQ: Does career adaptability mediate the relationship between intolerance of uncertainty and career decision-making difficulties?

## **1.3 Structure of the Dissertation**

The thesis is divided into six chapters: The first chapter introduces the research topic and outlines the aims, relevance and scope of the dissertation. The second chapter reviews the existing relevant literature on career decision making, intolerance of uncertainty and the role of career adaptability. The design and procedure of the study is discussed in the methodology section, which is Chapter 3. Chapter 4 then examines the results of the study, including its main findings, and Chapter 5 interprets these findings with the existing literature and their implications from a managerial and academic perspective, while also addressing the limitations of the study and suggesting ideas for future research.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Career Decision-Making Difficulties**

Career decision-making is increasingly recognized as a significant and challenging issue in the modern workplace. These decisions rank among the most crucial in a person's life due to their deep connections to psychological, physical, economic, and social aspects (Bimrose & Mulvey, 2015; Bubić & Ivanišević, 2016; Gati & Tal, 2008; Robertson, 2014.) Career decision-making difficulties (CDMD) refer to the various challenges individuals face when deciding on a career path (Gati et al., 1996). CDMD encompass a range of challenges that individuals encounter when determining a career path (Gati et al., 1996). These difficulties often emerge when a person is uncertain about which career to pursue or faces difficulty in selecting among multiple options (Long and Peng, 2000). Importantly, these difficulties are not just obstacles to making a decision; they also represent how individuals respond to and manage the stress and complexity inherent in the career decision-making process (Liu and Zhang, 2021).

In today's diverse job market, individuals are often faced with a vast array of career options, each carrying its own set of uncertainties. As a result, the process of making career decisions is no longer viewed as a one-time event but rather as part of a lifelong journey. This ongoing process involves navigating multiple steps and transitions, where the ability to adapt becomes more crucial than the pursuit of predefined goals (Hirschi, 2018; Lent, 2018). This perspective highlights the need to navigate unpredictable changes and capitalize on emerging opportunities rather than following a predetermined career path (Blustein, 2006; Bright & Pryor, 2005; Pryor & Bright, 2011; Savickas, 2000; Van Esbroeck et al., 2005).

The diversity of occupations allows individuals the freedom to seek alternatives that best align with their preferences, interests, skills, and competencies. However, the vast number of choices and the unpredictability of changes in the job market increase the complexity of these decisions. Savickas (2000) described the postmodern work environment as a setting for personal meaning-making and self-management. Consequently, the impact of making inappropriate career decisions can be substantial, manifesting in significant financial costs (such as investments in training) and psychological distress (including difficulties in making major life changes and frustration from unsatisfying employment).

Given these potential outcomes, it is understandable that the process of career decision-making is often fraught with stress, frequently leading to increased levels of anxiety (Gati & Levin,

2014; Lipshits-Braziler, 2018). Career indecision differs from general indecisiveness, which is characterized by a broader, more persistent difficulty in decision-making across various domains (Osipow, 1999).

Notably, around half of all college students experience some form of career indecision (Morgan & Ness, 2003). In today's job market, however, people are likely to encounter career indecision multiple times throughout their lives. Challenges such as unemployment, job searches, promotions, or relocation can all reignite feelings of uncertainty (Heisz, 1996; Osipow, 1999).

As such, career indecision is a recurring challenge that many face at different stages of their careers. Recognizing the pervasive nature of this issue, researchers have developed various tools to measure and understand career indecision. The first tools focused on evaluating career indecision as a single dimension, with examples such as the Career Decision Scale (Osipow et al., 1976) and My Vocational Situation (Holland et al., 1980). Later, second-generation tools adopted a more complex, multidimensional approach to understanding career indecision by exploring its underlying causes. Notable examples include the Career Decision Profile (Jones, 1989) and the Career Factors Inventory (Chartrand et al., 1990). Despite these advancements, both the first and second generations of these tools were primarily grounded in clinical observations by practitioners, rather than in robust theoretical frameworks (Osipow, 1999). Recognizing the need for a more systematic approach, researchers like Gati et al. (1996) introduced the first theory-based multidimensional assessment of career indecision, which is deeply rooted in decision theory. This taxonomy breaks down the causes of career indecision into three main categories: lack of readiness, lack of information, and inconsistent information. In the three following paragraphs, I describe these categories in accordance with Gati et al. (1996):

The lack of readiness cluster includes challenges that people face even before they begin making career decisions. These challenges often stem from low motivation, general indecisiveness, or harmful beliefs about career choices. Individuals might feel unmotivated or unsure about what steps to take, and their unrealistic or negative expectations can make the decision-making process even harder.

The lack of information cluster deals with not having the necessary knowledge when making career decisions. This could mean not understanding the steps needed to choose a career, not knowing enough about oneself, having limited information about different career options, or

not knowing where to find relevant information. People struggling with this issue often feel overwhelmed and find it difficult to weigh their options effectively.

The inconsistent information cluster focuses on problems that come from receiving conflicting or unreliable information. This might include internal conflicts, like having mixed feelings about one's skills, interests, or values, or external conflicts, such as getting contradictory advice from family members or mentors. These conflicts can create confusion and slow down the decision-making process.

The career decision-making difficulties questionnaire (CDMDQ) was developed using this taxonomy, featuring a structure that includes 10 first-order scales, three second-order clusters, and one third-order total score. This design provides a comprehensive assessment of the severity of career indecision. To validate this approach, the taxonomy underlying the CDMDQ has been empirically tested and supported through numerous studies. These studies have demonstrated that career decision-making difficulties, as measured by the CDMDQ, are associated with various mental health issues, including depression (Walker & Peterson, 2012) and anxiety (Jia et al., 2022; Park et al., 2017). Additionally, research has explored the links between these difficulties and personality traits, such as the Big Five dimensions (Burns et al., 2013; Di Fabio et al., 2015).

Research has also explored the roles of emotional intelligence (Di Fabio et al., 2015; Santos et al., 2018) and tolerance for uncertainty (Arbona et al., 2021; Storme et al., 2019; Xu & Tracey, 2015) in managing career decision-making difficulties. Building on these findings, other studies have identified several positive psychological aspects — such as career adaptability (Rudolph et al., 2017), resilience (Shin & Kelly, 2017), and core self-evaluation (Koumoundourou, Tsaousis, & Kounenou, 2010) as crucial influences that help individuals overcome these challenges. Understanding the career decision-making process can help individuals make better choices (Gati & Levin, 2015; Gati & Tal, 2008). While many factors influence the career decision-making process, the current study focuses on intolerance of uncertainty, which will be discussed in detail in the subsequent section.

## **2.2 Intolerance of Uncertainty**

Ladouceur, Gosselin, and Dugas (2000) describe intolerance of uncertainty as a tendency to respond negatively to uncertain situations, regardless of the likelihood or impact of the outcomes. This concept includes beliefs about the necessity for certainty, the ability to manage

unpredictable changes, and the capacity to function effectively in ambiguous situations (Obsessive Compulsive Cognitions Working Group, 1997). Carleton (2016) further defines intolerance of uncertainty as an individual's difficulty in coping with the negative emotions triggered by a perceived lack of critical or sufficient information, leading to a persistent sense of uncertainty. Moreover, intolerance of uncertainty can create dysfunctional emotions and hinder actions focused on resolving problems (Nekić & Mamić, 2019).

According to Bottesi, Marchetti, et al. (2020), it was first created in the field of generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) research. Subsequently, Freeston et al. (1994) defined it as a more comprehensive construct that encompasses emotional, cognitive, and behavioral responses to uncertainties in ordinary life scenarios, thereby expanding its scope beyond GAD alone. It has also been described by Ladouceur et al. (2000) as a dispositional trait that reveals unfavorable affective, cognitive, and behavioral perceptions and reactions when confronted with erratic and uncertain situations or events. People with high intolerance of uncertainty are more likely to see uncertainty as unsettling, threatening, and undesirable due to the likelihood that something bad will happen (Dugas et al., 1998)

The concept of intolerance for uncertainty has also been studied from an evolutionary perspective, and it is believed that the ability to perceive uncertainty as dangerous is innate. Infants eventually learn to perceive uncertainty as safe and interact with the world through learning and attachment (Brosschot et al., 2018). Developmental research has provided an explanation for the high levels of intolerance for uncertainty. According to Osmanağaoğlu et al. (2018), it has been explained that during childhood and adolescence, cognitive processes related to perception and response to uncertainty develop. From this vantage point, temperament in children has been considered a potential candidate for an early risk factor for an intolerance of uncertainty (Hawes et al., 2021).

An example of how childhood temperament influences adult intolerance of uncertainty can be found in a study by Zdebik et al. (2018), which found that behavioral inhibition seen in childhood predicted self-reported intolerance of uncertainty in adulthood. Because of their positive emotion regulation processes, people who experienced secure attachment as infants have been found to be more adept at handling uncertainty (Yuksel, 2014). Furthermore, studies on the impact of parenting styles on a child's intolerance of uncertainty level have shown that supportive parenting styles enable kids to deal with uncertainty more effectively (Shen et al., 2020).

In modern times, intolerance of uncertainty is particularly relevant for university students who encounter uncertainty when making career decisions, a challenge intensified by a volatile job market shaped by technological advancements, the information economy, and globalization (Kwok, 2018; Hirsich, 2018). Individuals with high intolerance of uncertainty often perceive ambiguous information as threatening and struggle with problem-solving, frequently resulting in passivity or avoidance of uncertain situations (Dugas et al., 2005; Hedayati et al., 2003). For example, those with high intolerance of uncertainty find uncertain situations highly stressful because they doubt their ability to manage the uncertainty effectively (Carleton, 2016; Dugas et al., 2005).

People with high intolerance of uncertainty tend to view uncertain situations negatively, which hampers their ability to predict, prepare for, and act in these circumstances (Buhr & Dugas, 2002; Huang et al., 2019; Liao Wei, 2011). This heightened intolerance often leads to increased anxiety, complicating the career decision-making process (Arbona et al., 2021). Effective career management today requires the ability to handle uncertainty (Rodrigues et al., 2015). Tolerance of ambiguity, a related concept, has also been associated with fewer difficulties in making career decisions. Among US college students, a higher tolerance of ambiguity is correlated with greater career decision-making self-efficacy and fewer career decision-making difficulties (Xu & Tracey, 2015).

Research identifies two dimensions of intolerance of uncertainty: prospective anxiety, which involves proactive efforts to reduce uncertainty, and inhibitory anxiety, which leads to immobilization in uncertain situations (Carleton et al., 2007). Recent studies, such as those involving Korean college students, have shown that higher tolerance of uncertainty (with intolerance of uncertainty items reverse-coded) positively correlates with career identity and career decision-making self-efficacy (Garrison et al., 2017; Kim et al., 2016). Moreover, studies found a significant positive correlation between intolerance of uncertainty and employment anxiety among graduates (Chen & Zeng, 2021) and career decision-making difficulties. (Arbona et al., 2021)

Hence, based on previous research, the following hypothesis is considered in the present study:

H1: Intolerance of uncertainty will be positively related to career decision-making difficulties.

### **2.3 The Mediating Role of Career Adaptability**

Career adaptability is essential for ongoing career development in a constantly evolving work environment (Savickas et al., 2009). It has been recognized as a vital resource for successful career growth and for effectively responding to career challenges (Chan & Mai, 2015; Johnston, Maggiori, & Rossier, 2015; Zacher, 2015). Specifically, career adaptability includes coping resources and competencies, such as planning, decision-making, exploration, and problem-solving, that enable individuals to manage complex challenges, uncertainty, and ambiguity within their job roles and the broader labor market (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012).

The development of adaptability resources begins in childhood through the identification and imitation of role models (Garcia et al., 2019; Ramos & Lopez, 2018). Throughout life, these resources are shaped by personal experiences and learning (Hirschi & Valero, 2015; Savickas, 2021). Individuals with more developed career adaptability resources find it easier to manage their careers, as they are more confident in their abilities, more likely to explore career opportunities, and better equipped to design and implement a career plan (Hirschi et al., 2015; Neureiter & Traut-Mattausch, 2017; Taber & Blankemeyer, 2015).

Career adaptability is a central concept in career construction theory (Savickas, 2021), a well-established theory that seeks to explain how individuals organize their characteristics, make career choices, and find meaning in their career paths in a multicultural and globalized society. Career construction theory posits that career success, satisfaction, and development (adaptation outcomes) are achieved through a sequence involving the willingness to change (adaptivity), the self-regulatory resources acquired through experience (adaptability), and the strategies used to address changing conditions (adapting; Savickas, 2021; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). This relationship between adaptivity, adaptability, adapting, and adaptation is widely supported in the literature (Rudolph et al., 2017).

Within this framework, career adaptability is defined as a psychosocial construct reflecting individuals' self-regulatory resources to solve unfamiliar, complex, and ill-defined problems associated with vocational tasks, occupational transitions, and work challenges (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). Self-regulation includes the attitudes, beliefs, and skills that help individuals control their impulses and make choices that move them toward their goals, particularly in response to significant life changes like transitioning from school to work or dealing with job loss (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012).

Savickas (2005) further describes career adaptability as a multi-dimensional construct comprising four key career adaptabilities that support self-regulation strategies: concern, control, curiosity, and confidence. Concern refers to an individual's awareness and preparation for their vocational future. Control reflects their beliefs about personal responsibility in career preparation and perceived control over their vocational situation and future. Curiosity is the tendency and ability to explore professional environments, learning about different types of work and career opportunities. Finally, confidence involves perceived self-efficacy in solving problems and overcoming obstacles, developed through handling challenges in both professional and personal life (Savickas, 2005; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012).

These components enable individuals to plan for an unpredictable future, overcome career setbacks, and adapt to changes (Wehmeyer et al., 2019; Xu et al., 2020). High career adaptability allows individuals to quickly adjust to new roles and tasks, navigate transitions, and effectively manage unforeseen career scenarios (Savickas et al., 2009; Xu et al., 2020). Thus, career adaptability represents the resources and capabilities that an individual can mobilize throughout their career (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). Numerous studies highlight a positive relationship between adaptability and career exploration (Li et al., 2012) and career motivation (Fang et al., 2018).

H2: Career adaptability is negatively associated with career decision-making difficulties..

Given the complex nature of decision-making amid uncertainty, both career adaptability and tolerance of uncertainty play vital roles in this process (Maggiori et al., 2013; Shin & Kelly, 2015; Vashisht et al., 2023). Indeed, studies have shown that intolerance of uncertainty is negatively associated with career adaptability (Hwang & Kim, 2016; Kim & Kwon, 2020).

H3: Intolerance of uncertainty is negatively related to career adaptability

Through the lens of the career construction model (Savickas, 2005), intolerance of uncertainty can be seen as part of a personality trait related to adaptivity, which drives the activation of adaptability resources (career adaptability) and influences adapting responses (behaviors that address changing conditions) to achieve adaptation outcomes (Rudolph et al., 2017; Savickas, 2013; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). Within this framework, career decision-making difficulties are considered a negative adapting response in the career construction process (Hirschi et al., 2015; Šverko & Babarović, 2019). Jia et al. (2020) used this theoretical model to explore the relationship between individual personality factors (adaptive ability), career adaptability

(adaptive resources), and career decision-making difficulties (adaptive response). Their findings indicate that career adaptability serves as a mediator between personality traits and career decision-making challenges.

To add evidence to the career adaptability research, the present study hypothesized that career adaptability may play a mediating role between intolerance of uncertainty and career decision-making difficulty:

H4: Career adaptability will mediate relation between intolerance of uncertainty and career decision-making difficulty.

### **3. Methodology**

This chapter outlines the research methodology employed to investigate the research question and hypotheses. It begins with a detailed explanation of the research design and approach. Following this, the chapter provides an overview of the participants involved in the study and describes the procedures undertaken during the research, including the steps taken to ensure reliability. Finally, the chapter details the instruments and measures used to assess the variables of interest and their relationships.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

The primary objective of this thesis was to analyze the influence of intolerance for uncertainty on career decision difficulty, with a particular focus on the mediating role of career adaptability. To address this objective, a correlational research design was employed.

The correlational design adopted in this study follows a quantitative approach, which is essential for generating robust and scientifically valid insights (Babbie, 2020). This method is particularly effective for examining the degree and direction of relationships between variables, which is critical for understanding how intolerance of uncertainty and career adaptability influence career decision-making difficulties.

#### **3.2 Participants**

A total of 189 questionnaires were initially distributed to explore various aspects of career decision-making among students. After checking the data completeness, 34 responses had to be excluded, furthermore, 14 were removed because respondents were non-students, and removal of 1 participant was made because he did not consent.

The final sample consisted of 140 participants, aged between 21 and 31 years of age  $M = 25.6$ ,  $SD = 2.1$ . Of these participants, 55.0% identified as male  $n = 77$ , 44.3% as female,  $n = 62$ , and 0.7% as a non-binary or third gender,  $n = 1$ . Employment status was distributed as follows: Master's student 38.6% ( $n = 54$ ), full-time worker 33.6% ( $n = 47$ ), and Bachelor's student 12.1% ( $n = 17$ ). With respect to nationality, participants reported being German 82.1% ( $n = 115$ ), Portuguese 2.1% ( $n = 3$ ), English 0.7% ( $n = 1$ ), and of other nationalities 15.0% ( $n = 21$ ). See Appendix 2 for more detailed information about participant demographics.

### **3.3 Procedure**

Data collection for the study was conducted by carrying out an online questionnaire, which was designed using Qualtrics. This questionnaire was then distributed through various channels, including social media such as WhatsApp, Instagram and LinkedIn, as well as internal communication tools such as Slack and email within Personio, a company I work for. Personio is a technology company that operates in the software as a service industry, providing HR systems for small and medium-sized businesses. Additionally, channels like SurveyCircle and SurveySwap were utilized to increase the reach for more participants.

The data collection period ran from August 16th to August 22nd, during which all the qualified respondents were invited to complete the survey. All the respondents were first informed of the purpose of the study at the beginning of the questionnaire, provided information on their rights regarding confidentiality, and asked to give their consent before proceeding. The questionnaire was divided into three sections that addressed different aspects relevant to the study.

The first section consisted of 34 items from the career decision-making questionnaire, as developed by Gati and Saka (2001). The second section focused on the intolerance of uncertainty scale-12, developed by Carleton et al. (2007), and consisted of 12 items that needed to be filled in by the respondents. The final section included 12 items from the short form of the career adapt-ability scale, developed by Maggiori et al. (2017). At the end of the questionnaire, respondents were further asked to provide personal background information, including age, gender, and employment status. The full questionnaire can be found in appendix

### **3.4 Measurement**

#### **3.4.1 Career Decision-Making Difficulty**

The career decision-making difficulties questionnaire (CDMDQ), developed by Gati et al. (2001) is a widely used instrument for measuring career decision-making difficulties. The scale

assesses three main dimensions: a) lack of readiness (lack of motivation, general indecisiveness, and dysfunctional beliefs), b) lack of information (lack of information about the career decision-making process, the self, occupations, and ways of obtaining additional information), c) inconsistent information (unreliable information, internal conflicts, and external conflicts). Gati and Saka (2001) confirmed the classification of 10 categories of CDMDQ and revised the CDMDQ to 34 items, rated on a 9-point scale ranging from 1 (*does not describe me*) to 9 (*describes me very well*). The career decision-making difficulty questionnaire has shown, in general, strong psychometric properties in numerous studies. For instance, the Cronbach's  $\alpha$  for the lack of readiness subscale runs from 0.50 to 0.74, while in lack of information and inconsistent information subscales, Cronbach's  $\alpha$  goes from 0.80 to 0.95, reflecting a high magnitude of internal consistency. (Gati & Saka, 2001; Leung et al., 2021; Levin et al., 2020; Nauta, 2012; Xu et al., 2020).

### **3.4.2 Intolerance of Uncertainty**

The intolerance of uncertainty scale, developed by Carleton and later examined by Zhang et al. (2017), is a measure for assessing the negative cognitive, emotional, and behavioral responses to anticipated unpredictability and avoidance behaviors when confronted with uncertainty. This scale has been shown to demonstrate a two-factor structure in a reliable manner, which captures the anxiety and avoidance aspects of intolerance of uncertainty (Chen & Zeng, 2021). The first factor, anticipatory anxiety, consist of seven items indicating apprehension and concern about possible future events; for example, “Unexpected things get on my nerves”. The second, inhibitory anxiety, reflects five items characterizing behavior and experiences related to being hindered by uncertainty; for example, “When it comes time to take action, uncertainty holds me back”. The instrument consists of a total of 12 items; each item is rated by participants using a 5-point Likert scale. This Likert scale ranges from 1 for “strongly disagree” to 5 for “strongly agree”. Higher scores indicate a lower tolerance for uncertainty. The total score is obtained by summing the ratings on all items; scores range from 12 to 60, with higher scores indicating higher intolerance of uncertainty. The intolerance of uncertainty scale also showed strong internal consistency, with Cronbach's  $\alpha$  ranging from 0.83 to 0.91 in college student samples in previous studies (Carleton et al., 2007; Helsen et al., 2013).

### **3.4.3 Career Adaptability**

The Career Adapt-Ability Scale-short form is an adaptation of the original by Maggiori et al. (2017) and is a 12-item measure across four subscales: concern, control, curiosity, and

confidence. Items within each of the three-item subscales are scored on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 for = “strongly disagree” to 5 for = “strongly agree.” Scores are summed to yield an overall score, in which higher scores represent greater career adaptability. The scale has exhibited very strong internal reliabilities ranging from 0.76 to 0.90, according to Maggiori et al. (2017).

### **3.5 Data Analysis**

After completing the data collection with a sample size of 140 participants, the data was extracted, downloaded, and prepared for IBM SPSS analysis. First and foremost, the cleaning of data ensured its usability and proper coding. Initial analyses started with reliability tests on the assessment of scales and further included descriptive statistics, which summarized the main characteristics of the data. This was followed by a bivariate correlation analysis to look at the significant associations between the variables in focus. Then, Hypotheses 1 to 4 were tested using the PROCESS macro (model 4).

## **4. Results**

### **4.1.1 Scale Reliability**

To test internal coherence of the scales, Cronbach's  $\alpha$  test was run, based on Vale et al.'s (1997) guideline, whereby a Cronbach's  $\alpha$  between 0.7 and 0.8 represents a satisfactory result, while above 0.9 it represents an excellent one. According to Greithuijsen et al. (2014), in some instances, coefficients below even 0.7 can be acceptable as well. The intolerance of uncertainty subscale consisted of 12 items. It had a Cronbach's  $\alpha$  of 0.83, demonstrating good internal consistency and meaning that the items are well correlated and reliable within the construct. For prospective anxiety and inhibitory anxiety Cronbach's  $\alpha$  was 0.73 and 0.83, respectively, confirming very similar results from other studies (Carleton et al., 2017). The career adaptability subscale had 12 items, its Cronbach's  $\alpha$  being 0.88, reflecting good internal consistency. Finally, the Cronbach's  $\alpha$  for the 34-item career decision making difficulty scale was 0.93, which is considered excellent internal consistency. The high value of this coefficient means that the items are highly interrelated. In sum, all scales had at least satisfactory reliability, thus, the final score for the career adaptability and career decision-making difficulty scale was calculated by averaging the items whereas intolerance of uncertainty scale score was summed up. See Appendix 3 for more detailed information about scale reliability.

## 4.2 Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 below shows the descriptive statistics for the primary variables analysed in this study. Uncertainty intolerance had a mean score of 33.96 and a standard deviation of 7.32. Prospective anxiety, which reflects anxiety about possible future events, had a mean score of 21.76 with a standard deviation of 4.40, while inhibitory anxiety, which captures anxiety that interferes with decision making or action due to uncertainty, had a mean score of 12.25 with a standard deviation of 4.10. Career adaptability reported a mean of 4.08 with a standard deviation of 0.50. The career decision difficulty scale gave a mean score of 4.02 with a standard deviation of 1.25.

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistic**

| Scale | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | Min   | Max   |
|-------|----------|-----------|-------|-------|
| IU    | 33.96    | 7.32      | 13.00 | 58.00 |
| PA    | 21.76    | 4.40      | 8.00  | 35.00 |
| IA    | 12.25    | 4.10      | 5.00  | 23.00 |
| CA    | 4.08     | 0.50      | 2.17  | 5.00  |
| CDMD  | 4.02     | 1.25      | 1.44  | 7.56  |

*Note.* IU = Intolerance of Uncertainty; PA = Prospective Anxiety; IA = Inhibitory Anxiety; CA = Career Adaptability. CDMD = Career Decision-Making Difficulty.

## 4.3 Hypothesis Testing

### 4.3.1 Bivariate Correlation Analysis

To determine the right method for bivariate analysis, normality test was conducted for the key variables, namely career decision-making difficulty, intolerance of uncertainty with its subscales prospective and inhibitory anxiety and career adaptability. The results, which are shown in Appendix 4, show that all variables are normally distributed except for career adaptability. Since the results from Pearson and Spearman correlations did not differ meaningfully, Pearson correlation was used in this study for ease of interpretation.

**Table 2: Bivariate Correlations**

| Variables        | 1    | 2    | 3     | 4     | 5     | 6     | 7     | 8 |
|------------------|------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|---|
| 1. Dummy_Germany | 1    |      |       |       |       |       |       |   |
| 2. Dummy_Female  | -.07 | 1    |       |       |       |       |       |   |
| 3. Dummy_Master  | -.05 | .124 | 1     |       |       |       |       |   |
| 4 UI             | -.00 | .09  | -.042 | 1     |       |       |       |   |
| 5. IA            | -.01 | -.07 | -.045 | .85** | 1     |       |       |   |
| 6. PA            | .09  | -.07 | -.04  | .87** | .48** | 1     |       |   |
| 7. CA            | -.14 | .11  | -.089 | -.06  | -.22* | .11   | 1     |   |
| 8 CDMD           | .07  | .01  | .11   | .46** | .52** | .29** | .33** | 1 |

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed)

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (two-tailed)

Table 2 shows the results of the bivariate correlation analysis. A positive correlation was found between uncertainty intolerance and career difficulties ( $r = .46$ ). Individuals with higher levels of uncertainty intolerance tend to experience more difficulty in making career decisions. Prospective anxiety was also positively correlated with ( $r = .29$ ), meaning that those with higher prospective anxiety also face greater difficulties in career decision-making. Inhibitory anxiety showed a strong positive correlation with career difficulties ( $r = .52$ ), which suggests that individuals with higher levels of inhibitory anxiety experience even more pronounced difficulties in making career decisions. Interestingly, while the overall results did not show a significant relationship between uncertainty intolerance and career adaptability ( $r = -.06$ ), one of the uncertainty intolerance subscales, inhibitory anxiety, did show a significant relationship with intolerance of uncertainty.

The correlation between prospective anxiety and career adaptability was non-significant ( $r = .12$ ), meaning no substantial relationship between prospective anxiety and career adaptability was found. However, a small but significant negative correlation was found between inhibitory anxiety and career adaptability ( $r = -.22$ ). Individuals with higher inhibitory anxiety tend to have lower levels of career adaptability. Lastly, a negative correlation was observed between career adaptability and career decision-making difficulty ( $r = -.33$ ), suggesting that individuals with higher career adaptability experience fewer difficulties in career decision-making.

Finally, the bivariate correlation matrix shows dummy variables for nationality, gender, and current employment status. The dummy variable for nationality was coded as 1 for Germany, as most participants were from Germany. For all other nationalities, it was coded as 0. Females were coded as 1, while males and non-binary were coded as 0. As for current employment status, this was also coded as 1 and others, as most participants were currently Master's students. Interestingly, no significant relationships were found between nationality, gender, and employment status with the other main variables.

#### **4.4.1 Mediation Analysis**

The mediation analysis used the Hayes PROCESS macro (model 4) to test whether career adaptability mediates the relationship between intolerance of uncertainty and career decision-making difficulty. Specifically, this model tested for the presence of an indirect pathway in which the independent variable influences the dependent variable through the mediating variable.

In PROCESS' first model, the relationship between independent (uncertainty intolerance) and mediator (career adaptability) was tested. ( $b = 0.00$ ,  $SE = 0.01$ ,  $p = .504$ ), meaning that the variation in the intolerance of uncertainty variable did not lead to any statistically significant variations in career adaptability. Therefore, an individual's adaptability was largely unaffected by their level of intolerance to uncertainty.

In PROCESS' second model, the simultaneous relationship between independent and mediator on the dependent variable (career decision-making difficulties) was tested. Regarding the effect of career adaptability on career decision-making difficulty, the results show a significant negative effect ( $b = -0.73$ ,  $SE = 0.18$ ,  $p < .001$ ). This suggests that individuals with strong career adaptability skills may have reduced or no career decision-making challenges. These findings support the view that adaptability acts as a protective factor in dealing with challenges inherent in career decision-making and thereby mitigates these potential difficulties.

The analysis also indicates that the intolerance of uncertainty significantly and directly influences career decision-making difficulties ( $b = 0.07$ ,  $SE = 0.01$ ,  $p < .001$ ), meaning that individuals who struggle with uncertainty tend to find it difficult to make decisions, particularly in complete or ambiguous situations are prone to experience career decision making challenges. Finally, as already expected from the correlation analysis conducted earlier which revealed a non-significant relationship between uncertainty intolerance and career adaptability, the

mediation analysis did not find any indirect effect of intolerance of uncertainty on career decision-making difficulty through career adaptability,  $b = 0.00$ ,  $SE = 0.01$ , 95% CI = [-0.06, -0.02].

Overall the model with intolerance of uncertainty and career adaptability significantly predicts career decision-making difficulties ( $F(2, 130) = 27.54$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and explains almost 30% ( $R^2 = 0.30$ ) of the variance.

A second mediation analysis was carried out to explore whether the sub-scales of intolerance of uncertainty could reveal a significant mediation effect. As the correlation between prospective anxiety and career adaptability was not found to be significant, this mediation analysis mainly looked at the inhibitory anxiety sub-scale. Therefore, this analysis used inhibitory anxiety as an independent variable, to look for a mediation effect of career adaptability. In line with the correlational analysis, PROCESS' first model showed that inhibitory anxiety significantly predicted career adaptability ( $b = -0.03$ ,  $SE = 0.01$ ,  $p = .011$ ), meaning that individuals who experience higher levels of inhibitory anxiety tend to feel less able to adapt to career-related challenges.

Like in the first mediation analysis, the PROCESS' second model shows a significant and negative association between career adaptability and career decision-making difficulty ( $b = -0.54$ ,  $p = 0.0038$ .) In addition, a significant and positive effect of inhibitory anxiety on career decision-making difficulty was also found ( $b = 0.15$ ,  $SE = 0.02$ ,  $p < .001$ ). In other words, individuals with a higher tendency to inhibitory anxiety are more likely to experience career decision-making difficulties. Lastly, the mediation analysis showed that career adaptability significantly mediates the relationship between inhibitory anxiety and career decision-making difficulties with  $b=0.01$ ,  $SE = 0.01$ , 95% CI [0.00, 0.04]. The mediation effect is significant since the confidence interval does not include zero.

Overall, the analysis shows that his model is significant ( $F(2, 131) = 31.87$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), which means that both inhibition anxiety and career adaptability predict career decision-making difficulties and that approximately 33% ( $R^2 = 0.33$ ) of the variance in decision-making difficulties is explained by these two variables.

## **5. Discussion**

This chapter presents the main findings of the analysis carried out and relates them to the academic literature reviewed previously. The research question is answered by discussing the related findings. It also highlights the implications for academics and managers. Finally, the chapter will outline the limitations of the study and suggest avenues for future research.

### **5.1 Main Findings**

This research investigated the potential mediating role of career adaptability in the relationship between intolerance of uncertainty and career decision-making difficulty. Based on previous research, a positive relationship between intolerance of uncertainty and career decision-making difficulty was expected. According to the results of the study, career decision-making difficulty was positively and directly correlated with intolerance of uncertainty, which is consistent with the research of Xu and Tracey (2014, 2015) and Arbona et al. (2021). The strong correlation between intolerance of uncertainty and career decision difficulty suggests that high anxiety and worry about the future can reduce motivation for career development activities. Thus, this anxiety appears to create dysfunctional beliefs about the decision-making process (Arbona et al., 2021). Moreover, these findings align with studies suggesting that cognitive distortions and behavioral paralysis associated with higher levels of intolerance of uncertainty are likely to directly affect an individual's engagement in gathering and integrating information about themselves and the labor market (Arbona et al., 2021). Previous research has suggested that when an individual's expectations for the future are not positive, additional information is more likely to be overwhelming than helpful in the career decision-making process (Kelly & Shin, 2009). Therefore, the present research underscores the important role of uncertainty intolerance in the framework of career decision-making difficulty by showing that individuals with low uncertainty tolerance are more likely to experience increased career indecision along multiple dimensions of the decision-making process. Overall, the study provided support for H1.

According to prior research (Chen et al., 2022), this thesis expected a negative relationship between career adaptability and career decision-making difficulty. The results confirmed that expectation, since these variables showed direct and negative relationship, similar to the findings from a study conducted in Turkey that found students with low career adaptability reported high career decision-making difficulties (Karacan-Ozdemir, 2019). This suggests that individuals who are skilled in career adaptability may be able to reduce or even eliminate the challenges of making career decisions. Students may feel confused by the new, inconsistent,

and unpredictable information in today's complex career landscape (Xu et al., 2020). This uncertainty may lead to poor career decisions, stemming from a lack of preparation or reliance on external influences (Kashdan & Rottenberg, 2010). On the other hand, career adaptability refers to a person's ability to prepare for and participate in future occupational roles while adjusting to unpredictable factors related to employment, especially those caused by changes in the economy (Salovey & Sluyter, 1997; Glavin, 2013). Highly adaptable students set informed goals, plan more, and actively seek growth opportunities to enhance the skills needed for successful career management (Savickas et al., 2009). Therefore, the results of this study confirmed H2.

Finally, this study hypothesised that there would be a negative relationship between intolerance of uncertainty and career adaptability, and that career adaptability would play a mediating role. While previous research indicated that intolerance of uncertainty has a negative relationship with career adaptability (Hawng & Kim, 2016), the results of this study did not support a direct effect of intolerance of uncertainty on career adaptability. Therefore, these results led to the rejection of H3 and also H4.

Previous research has primarily used the combined score of the two factors to measure intolerance of uncertainty; however, prospective anxiety and inhibitory anxiety showed slightly different results in a study that examined intolerance of uncertainty decision-making in an uncertain situation (Carleton, 2016). For instance, the degree of the relationship between performance on risk-gaining and executive functioning tasks and inhibitory and prospective anxiety was higher for prospective anxiety than for inhibitory anxiety (Carleton, 2016). Another study examining whether intolerance of uncertainty predicts startled responses to an uncertain aversive shock found that, although both subscales had similar relationships, inhibitory anxiety had a stronger link to anticipatory startle responses than prospective anxiety (Nelson & Shankman, 2011).

As career adaptability and inhibitory anxiety were found to have a positive and significant relationship in the first correlational analysis, a second mediation analysis was conducted to examine the mediating effect of one of the subfactors of uncertainty intolerance, namely inhibitory anxiety. First, the direct effect of inhibitory anxiety on career decision-making was both statistically significant and positive, meaning that individuals who experience more inhibitory anxiety, characterized by hesitation and indecision due to anxiety, tend to have more difficulty making career decisions. Second, and more interestingly, the study found that

career adaptability was significantly negatively predicted by inhibitory anxiety. Individuals with higher inhibitory anxiety may have reduced career adaptability due to withdrawal and paralysis in uncertain situations. This research supports the findings of another study in which researchers found a negative association between inhibitory anxiety and career adaptability (Lee & Jung, 2021). In the same study, they also reported that prospective anxiety was positively related to career adaptability. Individuals with high levels of prospective anxiety are more likely to prefer predictability about the future and are more likely to seek information to reduce uncertainty (Bennet et. El., 2016), which in turn may lead to greater engagement in career planning (Lee & Jung, 2021).

The mediation analysis also revealed that career adaptability mediates the relationship between inhibitory anxiety and career decision-making. Overall, the results indicate a significant influence of inhibitory anxiety on career decision-making difficulty, both directly and indirectly through career adaptability. The results also suggest that individuals with lower levels of inhibitory anxiety tend to have higher levels of career adaptability and, consequently, fewer career decision-making difficulties. Chen et. al. (2014) proposed that career adaptability is an important mediator in explaining the career decision-making process, and the close relationship between career adaptability and career decision-making difficulty has been confirmed (Hou et al., 2020).

The current study found that intolerance of uncertainty was not significantly related to career adaptability, but by examining the sub-factors separately, this thesis has found a significant negative relationship between inhibitory anxiety and career adaptability. The mediation analysis further confirmed a mediation role between inhibitory anxiety and career decision-making difficulty.

## **5.2 Academic and Managerial Implications**

From an academic perspective, this study contributed to the literature on career decision-making. This study explored how intolerance of uncertainty, specifically its sub-factors (inhibitory anxiety and prospective anxiety), impacted career decision-making. While the study did not find a mediating role between overall intolerance of uncertainty and career decision-making difficulty, it did show that career adaptability served as a mediator when focusing on inhibitory anxiety alone. The result provides clearer insight into how anxiety influences decision-making, especially within the career context. It also increases our understanding of intolerance of uncertainty by emphasizing the distinct roles of its sub-factors. By examining

how intolerance of uncertainty and career adaptability influence career decision-making, as well as how anxiety impacts the decision-making process, the study deepens our understanding of career decision-making theory. Moreover, It adds to the understanding of emotional and cognitive aspects of career decisions, therefore offering a more solid theoretical framework to assist individuals in making better career choices.

This study has also some important practical implications. The uncertainties within the current labour market may further affect the level of intolerance of uncertainty experienced by many students and recent graduates. Past research have placed more emphasis on cognitive-behavioral approaches to address intolerance of uncertainty (Barlow, 2011). While these methods are effective, these interventions have mainly been used to treat other emotional disorders. There needs to be different strategies are necessary to help to cope with uncertainty and adapt more effectively to a changing environment for individuals outside of clinical setting. (Lee and Jung, 2021). This study suggest that career adaptability could be a useful tool to help individuals increase their tolerance for uncertainty and to adjust to the unpredictable nature of their careers. Therefore, a career development program that emphasizes cultivating career adaptability could be an effective cognitive tool to help students to develop tolerance for uncertainty and improve their career decision-making abilities (Koen, Klehe, and Van Vianen, 2012).

## **5.2 Limitations & Future Research**

The present study has several limitations. To examine the relationship between intolerance of uncertainty, career adaptability, and career decision difficulty the study used correlational cross-sectional data. Cross-sectional data only provide a snapshot of the relationship between variables at a single point in time and therefore do not capture how these relationships evolve. The results of the study provide (partial) support for the proposed model, however, it cannot be ruled out that other models may also provide a good fit for the data. For example, a plausible model would include other variables as mediators of the relationship between intolerance of uncertainty and difficulty in making career decisions. Longitudinal and experimental research is needed to further explore the causal relationships between the variables.

A second limitation has to do with the small sample size in this study, which restricts conclusions to a broader population. In addition, it is important to note that the majority of participants were German, which also limits the applicability of the findings to individuals from other national or cultural backgrounds. Moreover, the study focused on students who had made

the transition from university to work which also limits the relevance of the findings to those outside of this transition period. Consequently, future research should include larger and more diverse samples from various cultural and national backgrounds which can enhance the generalizability of the findings.

Thirdly, the relationship between career adaptability and career decision-making difficulty subfactors was not examined in this study. More research needs to be done to gain a deeper understanding of the relationships between the subfactors of the variables.

Despite the limitations, the current study is important this research is meaningful because it uncovered the relationship between intolerance of uncertainty and career decision-making difficulties, which expanded the scope of influence that intolerance of uncertainty has on career decision-making difficulties. Furthermore, although it did not support the mediating effect of career adaptability in the relationship between intolerance of uncertainty and career decision-making difficulty, it provided evidence of the mediating role of career adaptability between one of the sub-factors of intolerance of uncertainty, inhibitory anxiety, and career decision-making difficulty.

## **6. Conclusion**

The goal of the thesis was to examine the relationship between intolerance of uncertainty and career decision-making difficulties among current and recent university students by focusing on the mediating role of career adaptability. The findings reveal that intolerance of uncertainty significantly affects the ability to make career decisions. Although the study did not identify a clear mechanism through which overall intolerance of uncertainty influences career decision-making, it did show that career adaptability plays a mediating specifically concerning inhibitory anxiety. To further explain the current study's findings about the relationship between inhibitory anxiety and career adaptability, and career decision making difficulty, more research is required.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Research Survey

#### Q1 Informed consent

Dear Participant,

This research study is part of a master's thesis at Católica Lisbon School of Business and Economics. The purpose of the study is to examine the factors influencing career decision-making.

This survey is expected to take seven minutes to complete. Your participation is voluntary. The data will be used in an anonymous and confidential way, and your responses are only used for research purposes.

Please answer the questions honestly to help us collect the most accurate data possible. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at s-bbcanli@ucp.pt.

Thank you for your participation!

Best regards,  
Berkan Canli

#### Q2 Do you consent to participate in this study?

- I consent
- I do not consent

#### Q3 Are you currently a student or a recent graduate (graduated within the last 12 months)?

- Yes
- No

#### Q14 This section of the survey seeks to identify potential challenges and issues associated with making career decisions.

Have you thought about which field you would like to major in or the occupation you would like to pursue?

- Yes
- No

**Q20 If so, to what extent are you confident of your choice?**

|                      | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     | 7                     | 8                     | 9                     |                       |                |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
|                      | 1 (1)                 | 2 (2)                 | 3 (3)                 | 4 (4)                 | 5 (5)                 | 6 (6)                 | 7 (7)                 | 8 (8)                 | 9 (9)                 |                |
| Not confident at all | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Very confident |

**Q56 Next, you will be presented with a list of 34 statements concerning the career decision-making process. Please rate the degree to which each statement applies to you.**

Circle 1 if the statement does not describe you and 9 if it describes you well. Of course, you may also circle any of the intermediate levels.

**Q20 I know that I have to choose a career, but I don't have the motivation to make the decision now.**

|                      | 1 (1)                 | 2 (2)                 | 3 (3)                 | 4 (4)                 | 5 (5)                 | 6 (6)                 | 7 (7)                 | 8 (8)                 | 9 (9)                 |                   |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Does not describe me | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Describes me well |

**Q21 Work is not the most important thing in one's life and therefore the issue of choosing a career doesn't worry me much.**

|                      | 1 (1)                 | 2 (2)                 | 3 (3)                 | 4 (4)                 | 5 (5)                 | 6 (6)                 | 7 (7)                 | 8 (8)                 | 9 (9)                 |                   |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Does not describe me | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Describes me well |

**Q22 I believe that I do not have to choose a career now because time will lead me to the "right" career choice.**

|                      | 1 (1)                 | 2 (2)                 | 3 (3)                 | 4 (4)                 | 5 (5)                 | 6 (6)                 | 7 (7)                 | 8 (8)                 | 9 (9)                 |                   |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Does not describe me | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Describes me well |

**Q23 It is usually difficult for me to make decisions.**

|                      | 1 (1)                 | 2 (2)                 | 3 (3)                 | 4 (4)                 | 5 (5)                 | 6 (6)                 | 7 (7)                 | 8 (8)                 | 9 (9)                 |                   |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Does not describe me | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Describes me well |

**Q24 I usually feel that I need confirmation and support for my decisions from a professional person or somebody else I trust.**

|                      | 1 (1)                 | 2 (2)                 | 3 (3)                 | 4 (4)                 | 5 (5)                 | 6 (6)                 | 7 (7)                 | 8 (8)                 | 9 (9)                 |                   |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Does not describe me | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Describes me well |

**Q25 I am usually afraid of failure.**

|                      | 1 (1)                 | 2 (2)                 | 3 (3)                 | 4 (4)                 | 5 (5)                 | 6 (6)                 | 7 (7)                 | 8 (8)                 | 9 (9)                 |                   |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Does not describe me | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Describes me well |

**Q26 I like to do things my own way.**

|                      | 1 (1)                 | 2 (2)                 | 3 (3)                 | 4 (4)                 | 5 (5)                 | 6 (6)                 | 7 (7)                 | 8 (8)                 | 9 (9)                 |                   |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Does not describe me | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Describes me well |

**Q27 I expect that entering the career I choose will also solve my personal problems.**

|                      | 1 (1)                 | 2 (2)                 | 3 (3)                 | 4 (4)                 | 5 (5)                 | 6 (6)                 | 7 (7)                 | 8 (8)                 | 9 (9)                 |                   |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Does not describe me | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Describes me well |

**Q28 I believe there is only one career that suits me.**

|                      | 1 (1)                 | 2 (2)                 | 3 (3)                 | 4 (4)                 | 5 (5)                 | 6 (6)                 | 7 (7)                 | 8 (8)                 | 9 (9)                 |                   |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Does not describe me | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Describes me well |

**Q29 I expect that through the career I choose I will fulfill all my aspirations.**

|                      | 1 (1)                 | 2 (2)                 | 3 (3)                 | 4 (4)                 | 5 (5)                 | 6 (6)                 | 7 (7)                 | 8 (8)                 | 9 (9)                 |                   |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Does not describe me | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Describes me well |

**Q31 11. I believe that a career choice is a one-time choice and a life-long commitment.**

|                      | 1 (1)                 | 2 (2)                 | 3 (3)                 | 4 (4)                 | 5 (5)                 | 6 (6)                 | 7 (7)                 | 8 (8)                 | 9 (9)                 |                   |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Does not describe me | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Describes me well |

**Q32 I always do what I am told to do, even if it goes against my own will.**

|                      | 1 (1)                 | 2 (2)                 | 3 (3)                 | 4 (4)                 | 5 (5)                 | 6 (6)                 | 7 (7)                 | 8 (8)                 | 9 (9)                 |                   |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Does not describe me | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Describes me well |

**Q33 I find it difficult to make a career decision because I do not know what steps I have to take.**

|                      | 1 (1)                 | 2 (2)                 | 3 (3)                 | 4 (4)                 | 5 (5)                 | 6 (6)                 | 7 (7)                 | 8 (8)                 | 9 (9)                 |                   |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Does not describe me | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Describes me well |

**Q34 I find it difficult to make a career decision because I do not know what factors to take into consideration.**

|                      | 1 (1)                 | 2 (2)                 | 3 (3)                 | 4 (4)                 | 5 (5)                 | 6 (6)                 | 7 (7)                 | 8 (8)                 | 9 (9)                 |                   |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Does not describe me | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Describes me well |

**Q35 I find it difficult to make a career decision because I don't know how to combine the information I have about myself with the information I have about the different careers.**

|                      | 1 (1)                 | 2 (2)                 | 3 (3)                 | 4 (4)                 | 5 (5)                 | 6 (6)                 | 7 (7)                 | 8 (8)                 | 9 (9)                 |                   |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Does not describe me | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Describes me well |

**Q36 I find it difficult to make a career decision because I still do not know which occupations interest me.**

|                      | 1 (1)                 | 2 (2)                 | 3 (3)                 | 4 (4)                 | 5 (5)                 | 6 (6)                 | 7 (7)                 | 8 (8)                 | 9 (9)                 |                   |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Does not describe me | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Describes me well |

**Q37 I find it difficult to make a career decision because I am not sure about my career preferences yet.**

|                      | 1 (1)                 | 2 (2)                 | 3 (3)                 | 4 (4)                 | 5 (5)                 | 6 (6)                 | 7 (7)                 | 8 (8)                 | 9 (9)                 |                   |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Does not describe me | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Describes me well |

**Q38 I find it difficult to make a career decision because I do not have enough information about my competencies and/or about my personality traits**

|                      | 1 (1)                 | 2 (2)                 | 3 (3)                 | 4 (4)                 | 5 (5)                 | 6 (6)                 | 7 (7)                 | 8 (8)                 | 9 (9)                 |                   |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Does not describe me | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Describes me well |

**Q39 I find it difficult to make a career decision because I do not know what my abilities and/or personality traits will be like in the future.**

|                      | 1 (1)                 | 2 (2)                 | 3 (3)                 | 4 (4)                 | 5 (5)                 | 6 (6)                 | 7 (7)                 | 8 (8)                 | 9 (9)                 |                   |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Does not describe me | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Describes me well |

**Q40 I find it difficult to make a career decision because I do not have enough information about the variety of occupations or training programs that exist.**

|                      | 1 (1)                 | 2 (2)                 | 3 (3)                 | 4 (4)                 | 5 (5)                 | 6 (6)                 | 7 (7)                 | 8 (8)                 | 9 (9)                 |                   |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Does not describe me | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Describes me well |

**Q41 I find it difficult to make a career decision because I do not have enough information about the characteristics of the occupations and/or training programs that interest me.**

|                      | 1 (1)                 | 2 (2)                 | 3 (3)                 | 4 (4)                 | 5 (5)                 | 6 (6)                 | 7 (7)                 | 8 (8)                 | 9 (9)                 |                   |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Does not describe me | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Describes me well |

**Q42 I find it difficult to make a career decision because I don't know what careers will look like in the future.**

|                      | 1 (1)                 | 2 (2)                 | 3 (3)                 | 4 (4)                 | 5 (5)                 | 6 (6)                 | 7 (7)                 | 8 (8)                 | 9 (9)                 |                   |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Does not describe me | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Describes me well |

**Q43 I find it difficult to make a career decision because I do not know how to obtain additional information about myself.**

|                      | 1 (1)                 | 2 (2)                 | 3 (3)                 | 4 (4)                 | 5 (5)                 | 6 (6)                 | 7 (7)                 | 8 (8)                 | 9 (9)                 |                   |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Does not describe me | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Describes me well |

**Q44 I find it difficult to make a career decision because I do not know how to obtain accurate and updated information about the existing occupations and training programs, or about their characteristics.**

|                      | 1 (1)                 | 2 (2)                 | 3 (3)                 | 4 (4)                 | 5 (5)                 | 6 (6)                 | 7 (7)                 | 8 (8)                 | 9 (9)                 |                   |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Does not describe me | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Describes me well |

**Q45 I find it difficult to make a career decision because I constantly change my career preferences.**

|                      | 1 (1)                 | 2 (2)                 | 3 (3)                 | 4 (4)                 | 5 (5)                 | 6 (6)                 | 7 (7)                 | 8 (8)                 | 9 (9)                 |                   |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Does not describe me | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Describes me well |

**Q46 I find it difficult to make a career decision because I have contradictory data about my abilities and/or personality traits.**

|                      | 1 (1)                 | 2 (2)                 | 3 (3)                 | 4 (4)                 | 5 (5)                 | 6 (6)                 | 7 (7)                 | 8 (8)                 | 9 (9)                 |                   |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Does not describe me | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Describes me well |

**Q47 I find it difficult to make a career decision because I have contradictory data about the existence or the characteristics of a particular occupation or training program.**

|                      | 1 (1)                 | 2 (2)                 | 3 (3)                 | 4 (4)                 | 5 (5)                 | 6 (6)                 | 7 (7)                 | 8 (8)                 | 9 (9)                 |                   |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Does not describe me | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Describes me well |

**Q48 I find it difficult to make a career decision because I'm equally attracted by a number of careers and it is difficult for me to choose among them.**

|                      | 1 (1)                 | 2 (2)                 | 3 (3)                 | 4 (4)                 | 5 (5)                 | 6 (6)                 | 7 (7)                 | 8 (8)                 | 9 (9)                 |                   |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Does not describe me | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Describes me well |

**Q49 I find it difficult to make a career decision because I do not like any of the occupation or training programs to which I can be admitted.**

|                      | 1 (1)                 | 2 (2)                 | 3 (3)                 | 4 (4)                 | 5 (5)                 | 6 (6)                 | 7 (7)                 | 8 (8)                 | 9 (9)                 |                   |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Does not describe me | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Describes me well |

**Q50 I find it difficult to make a career decision because the occupation I am interested in involves a certain characteristic that bothers me.**

|                      | 1 (1)                 | 2 (2)                 | 3 (3)                 | 4 (4)                 | 5 (5)                 | 6 (6)                 | 7 (7)                 | 8 (8)                 | 9 (9)                 |                   |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Does not describe me | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Describes me well |

**Q51 I find it difficult to make a career decision because my preferences cannot be combined in one career, and I do not want to give any of them up (e.g., I'd like to work as a free-lancer, but I**

**also wish to have a steady income).**

|                      | 1 (1)                 | 2 (2)                 | 3 (3)                 | 4 (4)                 | 5 (5)                 | 6 (6)                 | 7 (7)                 | 8 (8)                 | 9 (9)                 |                   |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Does not describe me | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Describes me well |

**Q52 I find it difficult to make a career decision because my skills and abilities do not match those required by the occupation I am interested in.**

|                      | 1 (1)                 | 2 (2)                 | 3 (3)                 | 4 (4)                 | 5 (5)                 | 6 (6)                 | 7 (7)                 | 8 (8)                 | 9 (9)                 |                   |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Does not describe me | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Describes me well |

**Q53 I find it difficult to make a career decision because people who are important to me (such as parents or friends) do not agree with the career options I am considering and/or the career characteristics I desire.**

|                      | 1 (1)                 | 2 (2)                 | 3 (3)                 | 4 (4)                 | 5 (5)                 | 6 (6)                 | 7 (7)                 | 8 (8)                 | 9 (9)                 |                   |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Does not describe me | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Describes me well |

**Q54 I find it difficult to make a career decision because there are contradictions between the recommendations made by different people who are important to me about the career that suits me or about what career characteristics should guide my decisions.**

|                      | 1 (1)                 | 2 (2)                 | 3 (3)                 | 4 (4)                 | 5 (5)                 | 6 (6)                 | 7 (7)                 | 8 (8)                 | 9 (9)                 |                   |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Does not describe me | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Describes me well |

**Q57 Finally, how would you rate the degree of your difficulty in making a career decision?**

|     | 1 (1)                 | 2 (2)                 | 3 (3)                 | 4 (4)                 | 5 (5)                 | 6 (6)                 | 7 (7)                 | 8 (8)                 | 9 (9)                 |      |
|-----|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------|
| Low | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | High |

**Q58 Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements.**

|  | Strongly disagree<br>(1) | Disagree (2)          | Neutral (3)           | Agree (4)             | Strongly agree (5)    |
|--|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Unforeseen events upset me greatly. (1)   | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 2. It frustrates me not having all the information I need. (2)                         | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3. One should always look ahead so as to avoid surprises. (3)                          | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 4. A small, unforeseen event can spoil everything, even with the best of planning. (4) | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 5. I always want to know what the future has in store for me. (5)                      | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 6. I can't stand being taken by surprise. (6)  | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 7. I should be able to organize everything in advance. (7)                             | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 8. Uncertainty keeps me from living a full life. (8)                                   | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 9. When it's time to act, uncertainty paralyzes me. (9)                                | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 10. When I am uncertain, I can't function very well. (10)                              | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 11. The smallest doubt can stop me from acting. (11)                                   | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 12. I must get away from all uncertain situations. (12)                                | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

**Q59 Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements.**

|   | Strongly disagree<br>(1) | Disagree (2)          | Neutral (3)           | Agree (4)             | Strongly agree (5)    |
|---|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. I think about what my future will be like. (1)                             | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 2. I prepare for the future. (2)  | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3. I am aware of the educational and vocational choices that I must make. (3) | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 4. I make decisions by myself. (4)  | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 5. I take responsibility for my actions. (5)                                  | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 6. I count on myself. (6)   | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 7. I look for opportunities to grow as a person. (7)                          | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 8. I investigate options before making a choice. (8)                          | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 9. I observe different ways of doing things. (9)                              | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 10. I take care to do things well. (10)                                       | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 11. I learn new skills. (11)  | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 12. I work up to my ability. (12)   | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

**Q60 How old are you?**

---

**Q61 What is your gender?**

- Male (1)
- Female (2)
- Non-binary / third gender (3)
- Prefer not to say (4)

**Q62 What is your nationality?**

- German (1)
- Portuguese (2)
- English (3)
- Other (4) \_\_\_\_\_

**Q63 What best describes your employment status?**

- Bachelor student (1)
- Master student (2)
- Working full-time (3)
- Working part-time (4)
- Unemployed (5)
- Other (6) \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 2: Demographics

### Frequency Table for Employment Status

|       |                   | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Bachelor student  | 17        | 12.1    | 12.1          | 12.1               |
|       | Master student    | 54        | 38.6    | 38.6          | 50.7               |
|       | Working full-time | 47        | 33.6    | 33.6          | 84.3               |
|       | Working part-time | 7         | 5.0     | 5.0           | 89.3               |
|       | Unemployed        | 5         | 3.6     | 3.6           | 92.9               |
|       | Other             | 10        | 7.1     | 7.1           | 100.0              |
|       | Total             | 140       | 100.0   | 100.0         |                    |

### Descriptive Statistics for Age

|                    | N   | Minimum | Maximum | Mean  | Std. Deviation |
|--------------------|-----|---------|---------|-------|----------------|
| How old are you?   | 135 | 21      | 31      | 25.61 | 2.102          |
| Valid N (listwise) | 135 |         |         |       |                |

### Frequency Table for Age

|       | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | 5         | 3.6     | 3.6           | 3.6                |
| 21    | 5         | 3.6     | 3.6           | 7.1                |
| 22    | 5         | 3.6     | 3.6           | 10.7               |
| 23    | 7         | 5.0     | 5.0           | 15.7               |
| 24    | 21        | 15.0    | 15.0          | 30.7               |
| 25    | 30        | 21.4    | 21.4          | 52.1               |
| 26    | 27        | 19.3    | 19.3          | 71.4               |
| 27    | 14        | 10.0    | 10.0          | 81.4               |
| 28    | 14        | 10.0    | 10.0          | 91.4               |
| 29    | 7         | 5.0     | 5.0           | 96.4               |
| 30    | 3         | 2.1     | 2.1           | 98.6               |
| 31    | 2         | 1.4     | 1.4           | 100.0              |
| Total | 140       | 100.0   | 100.0         |                    |

### Frequency Table for Gender

|       |                           | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|---------------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Male                      | 77        | 55.0    | 55.0          | 55.0               |
|       | Female                    | 62        | 44.3    | 44.3          | 99.3               |
|       | Non-binary / third gender | 1         | .7      | .7            | 100.0              |
|       | Total                     | 140       | 100.0   | 100.0         |                    |

### Frequency Table of Nationality

|            | N   | %     |
|------------|-----|-------|
| German     | 115 | 82.1% |
| Portuguese | 3   | 2.1%  |
| English    | 1   | 0.7%  |
| Other      | 21  | 15.0% |

### Appendix 3: Scale Reliability

#### Cronbach's Alpha: Intolerance of Uncertainty

| Cronbach's Alpha | Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items | N of Items |
|------------------|--|------------|
| .936             | .936   | 12         |

#### Cronbach's Alpha: Prospective Anxiety

| Cronbach's Alpha | N of Items |
|------------------|------------|
| .731             | 7          |

### **Cronbach's Alpha: Inhibitory Anxiety**

| Cronbach's Alpha | N of Items |
|------------------|------------|
| .826             | 5          |

### **Cronbach's Alpha: Career Adaptability**

| Cronbach's Alpha | N of Items |
|------------------|------------|
| .877             | 12         |

### **Cronbach's Alpha: Career Decision-Making Difficulty**

| Cronbach's Alpha | Cronbach's Alpha<br>Based on<br>Standardized<br>Items | N of Items |
|------------------|---|------------|
| .933             | .933  | 32         |

## **Appendix 4: Check for Normal Distribution**

### **Skewness and Kurtosis**

|          |            | UI   | PA    | IA    | CA    | CDMD_2 |
|----------|------------|------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| N        | Statistic  | 137  | 138   | 138   | 137   | 139    |
| Skewness | Statistic  | .025 | -.202 | .360  | -.659 | .173   |
|          | Std. Error | .207 | .206  | .206  | .207  | .206   |
| Kurtosis | Statistic  | .533 | .910  | -.303 | 1.508 | -.466  |
|          | Std. Error | .411 | .410  | .410  | .411  | .408   |

## Appendix 5: Mediation Analysis with Hayes PROCESS macro (Model 4)

Run MATRIX procedure:

\*\*\*\*\* PROCESS Procedure for SPSS Version 4.2 \*\*\*\*\*

Written by Andrew F. Hayes, Ph.D. [www.afhayes.com](http://www.afhayes.com)  
 Documentation available in Hayes (2022). [www.guilford.com/p/hayes3](http://www.guilford.com/p/hayes3)

\*\*\*\*\*

Model : 4  
 Y : CDMD\_2  
 X : UI  
 M : CA

Sample  
 Size: 133

\*\*\*\*\*

OUTCOME VARIABLE:  
 CA

Model Summary

|   | R     | R-sq  | MSE   | F     | df1    | df2      |
|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|----------|
| p | .0585 | .0034 | .2536 | .4494 | 1.0000 | 131.0000 |
|   | .5038 |       |       |       |        |          |

Model

|          | coeff  | se    | t       | p     | LLCI   | ULCI   |
|----------|--------|-------|---------|-------|--------|--------|
| constant | 4.2245 | .2068 | 20.4251 | .0000 | 3.8153 | 4.6337 |
| UI       | -.0040 | .0060 | -.6704  | .5038 | -.0158 | .0078  |

\*\*\*\*\*

OUTCOME VARIABLE:  
 CDMD\_2

Model Summary

|   | R     | R-sq  | MSE    | F       | df1    | df2      |
|---|-------|-------|--------|---------|--------|----------|
| p | .5455 | .2976 | 1.0816 | 27.5358 | 2.0000 | 130.0000 |
|   | .0000 |       |        |         |        |          |

Model

|          | coeff  | se    | t       | p     | LLCI    | ULCI   |
|----------|--------|-------|---------|-------|---------|--------|
| constant | 4.4258 | .8738 | 5.0650  | .0000 | 2.6971  | 6.1544 |
| UI       | .0739  | .0123 | 5.9853  | .0000 | .0494   | .0983  |
| CA       | -.7271 | .1804 | -4.0297 | .0001 | -1.0841 | -.3701 |

\*\*\*\*\* DIRECT AND INDIRECT EFFECTS OF X ON Y \*\*\*\*\*

Direct effect of X on Y

| Effect | se    | t      | p     | LLCI  | ULCI  |
|--------|-------|--------|-------|-------|-------|
| .0739  | .0123 | 5.9853 | .0000 | .0494 | .0983 |

Indirect effect(s) of X on Y:

|    | Effect | BootSE | BootLLCI | BootULCI |
|----|--------|--------|----------|----------|
| CA | .0029  | .0056  | -.0061   | .0163    |

\*\*\*\*\* ANALYSIS NOTES AND ERRORS \*\*\*\*\*

Level of confidence for all confidence intervals in output:

95.0000

Number of bootstrap samples for percentile bootstrap confidence intervals:

5000

----- END MATRIX -----

Run MATRIX procedure:

\*\*\*\*\* PROCESS Procedure for SPSS Version 4.2 \*\*\*\*\*

Written by Andrew F. Hayes, Ph.D. [www.afhayes.com](http://www.afhayes.com)

Documentation available in Hayes (2022). [www.guilford.com/p/hayes3](http://www.guilford.com/p/hayes3)

\*\*\*\*\*

Model : 4  
Y : CDMD\_2  
X : IA  
M : CA

Sample

Size: 134

\*\*\*\*\*

OUTCOME VARIABLE:

CA

Model Summary

|   | R     | R-sq  | MSE   | F      | df1    | df2      |
|---|-------|-------|-------|--------|--------|----------|
| p |       |       |       |        |        |          |
|   | .2193 | .0481 | .2406 | 6.6671 | 1.0000 | 132.0000 |
|   | .0109 |       |       |        |        |          |

Model

|          | coeff  | se    | t       | p     | LLCI   | ULCI   |
|----------|--------|-------|---------|-------|--------|--------|
| constant | 4.4113 | .1323 | 33.3438 | .0000 | 4.1496 | 4.6730 |
| IA       | -.0265 | .0102 | -2.5821 | .0109 | -.0467 | -.0062 |

\*\*\*\*\*

OUTCOME VARIABLE:

CDMD\_2

Model Summary

|   | R     | R-sq  | MSE    | F       | df1    | df2      |
|---|-------|-------|--------|---------|--------|----------|
| p |       |       |        |         |        |          |
|   | .5721 | .3273 | 1.0578 | 31.8678 | 2.0000 | 131.0000 |
|   | .0000 |       |        |         |        |          |

Model

|          | coeff  | se    | t       | p     | LLCI   | ULCI   |
|----------|--------|-------|---------|-------|--------|--------|
| constant | 4.3986 | .8515 | 5.1657  | .0000 | 2.7141 | 6.0830 |
| IA       | .1451  | .0220 | 6.5916  | .0000 | .1016  | .1887  |
| CA       | -.5382 | .1825 | -2.9491 | .0038 | -.8992 | -.1772 |

\*\*\*\*\* DIRECT AND INDIRECT EFFECTS OF X ON Y \*\*\*\*\*

Direct effect of X on Y

| Effect | se    | t      | p     | LLCI  | ULCI  |
|--------|-------|--------|-------|-------|-------|
| .1451  | .0220 | 6.5916 | .0000 | .1016 | .1887 |

Indirect effect(s) of X on Y:

|    | Effect | BootSE | BootLLCI | BootULCI |
|----|--------|--------|----------|----------|
| CA | .0142  | .0091  | .0009    | .0362    |

\*\*\*\*\* ANALYSIS NOTES AND ERRORS \*\*\*\*\*

Level of confidence for all confidence intervals in output:

95.0000

Number of bootstrap samples for percentile bootstrap confidence intervals:

5000

----- END MATRIX -----