



The Mediating Role of Resilience between Career Adaptability and Life Satisfaction¹

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ABSTRACT

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This study sought to investigate the mediating role of resilience between career adaptability and life satisfaction among Turkish university students, drawing on the LD approach. A total of 287 university students, 226 (78.7%) of whom were female and 61 (21.3%) were male, participated in the study. Participants' ages varied, from 19 to 37, with a mean of 21.23 (SD = 2.36). The mediating role of resilience in the relationship between career adaptability and life satisfaction was tested using structural equation modelling. In this study, it was found that resilience has a partial mediating role in the relationship between career adaptability and life satisfaction. This finding shows that career adaptability positively predicts life satisfaction both directly and indirectly via resilience in university students. The results indicated that it is easier for university students with high career adaptability to adapt to adverse conditions and recover themselves. Thus, these university students may evaluate their lives as more satisfactory. Both theoretical and practical consequences of the study's findings are given.

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INTRODUCTION

The Turkish economy is having difficulty meeting the needs of a significant number of working-age individuals because of fluid economic conditions, refugee influx, currency devaluation, political obstacles, and international terrorism (Büyükgöze-Kavas & Autin, 2019). As a matter of fact, Turkey is among the countries with the lowest employment rate (56.4%) of recent tertiary graduates (Eurostat, 2021). Turkey is among the countries with the highest the neither in employment nor in education or training rate (38.1 %) in 2020. This rate is well above the 17.6 %, European average (Eurostat, 2020). In order to be able to work in a government institution, they have to take and pass the examination (the Public Personnel Selection Examination) held once a year. Many students strive for many years to be successful in this exam. Because, as Masdonati and Fournier (2015) stated, diplomas no longer guarantee direct employment in a short time, either in Turkey. This prolongs the school-to-work transition period for Turkish university students. The prolongation of the passage from school to work may create difficulties in the identity construction of individuals who are neither full students nor full employees (Masdonati & Fournier, 2015; van Vianen et al., 2015). On the other hand, within the scope of COVID-19 precautions, university students had to continue distance education in Turkey. Many restrictions and distance education have brought along many problems such as mental health problems, and lack of motivation in Turkish university students (Taşçı, 2021). Briefly, it can be said that there are many risk factors for reducing the life satisfaction of university students under current conditions. Therefore, it can be expected that Turkish university students need more help to design their lives and careers in the face of the unpredictable and rapid changes of the 21st century.

In the 21st century, people need to develop skills different from the professional skills required for 20th-century professions and learn to cope with uncertainty, career troubles, and career transitions (Nota et al., 2014). The Life Design (LD) approach has been introduced as a lifelong self-construction process aimed at developing these skills and competencies in life projection (Savickas et al., 2009). By concentrating on the processes of adaptation, regulation, and self-identity, the LD method expands the person-environment fit and career development approaches (Nota & Rossier, 2015). People may use these procedures to organize and design their life, as well as their career development and personal paths (Savickas et al., 2009). The LD approach focuses on strengthening an individual's set of resources useful in overcoming developmental tasks, managing work and career transitions, coping with personal and career troubles, and their achieves satisfaction from their experiences (Hartung, 2015; Rossier, 2015). On the one hand, this approach highlights the importance of essential resources to help young people to be employed and design their career futures. On the other hand, it emphasizes the importance of essential resources that will help adults adapt themselves to changes in the labor market, the outcomes of economic and political transformations, and abrupt technological and scientific developments (Savickas et al., 2009). In the LD approach, career adaptability and positive psychological resources are beneficial to coping with uncertainty, adversity, and change (Santilli et al., 2020). Considering that career adaptability and resilience may important in coping with uncertainty, difficulty, and change, as well as promote life satisfaction, the present study focused on these variables as key resources. Personal resources regulate people's vocational behaviour (van Vianen et al., 2015) and help them cope with stressors (Hobfoll, 1989, 2002, 2011). Therefore, personal resources may play a central role in life satisfaction among university students.

The capacity to utilize adaptable strategies such as concern, control, curiosity and confidence is referred to as career adaptability (Savickas, 2002, 2005). The concern is an individual's proactive and forward-oriented evaluation of their career. Control refers to a person's faith that she or he is in charge of her or his career. Curiosity is about being open to career exploration. Confidence is an individual's perception of efficacy in successfully implementing and executing career development (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). During career transitions, career adaptability serves as a key self-regulation contraption for operating stress and boosting well-being (Ramos & Lopez, 2018). In addition, orienting on the future, coping with career transitions and changes, and adapting to changing conditions can contribute to improved life satisfaction (Wehmeyer, 2015). The results of previous studies found that career adaptability positively predicted life satisfaction and subjective well-being (Büyükgöze-Kavas et al., 2015; Kırdök & Bölükbaşı, 2018; Marcionetti & Rossier, 2019; Öztemel & Yıldız-Akyol, 2021). Based on theoretical explanations and

previous research findings, it was hypothesized that career adaptability will positively predict life satisfaction (Hypothesis 1). In addition, previous studies have found that career adaptability positively predicts resilience (Ginevra, Maggio et al, 2018; Santilli et al., 2020). Therefore, it was hypothesized that career adaptability will positively predict resilience (Hypothesis 2).

In an age of fast change and unpredictability, resilience may be an important resource that can help college students pursue their career development and achieve their career goals. Resilience is underlined as the basis of positive human development in literature (Lerner, 2006; Ungar et al., 2013). According to Masten (2014), resilience is a dynamic system's ability to adjust successfully to adversity that threatens its function, vitality, or development. Resilience supports compliance and reduces the negative effects of troubling life events (Jacelon, 1997). Besides, resilience is a phenomenon that is noticed, learned, and includes a developmental process (Masten et al., 1990). In many previous studies, resilience was found to be positively related with life satisfaction and well-being in university students (Bajaj & Pande, 2016; Cohn et al., 2009; Gündoğan, 2021; Miranda & Cruz, 2022; Wu et al., 2021). Based on theoretical explanations and previous research findings, it was hypothesized that resilience will positively predict life satisfaction (Hypothesis 3).

Subjective well-being refers to how and why people have pleasant experiences in their life, encompassing both cognitive and emotional reactions (Diener, 1984). The emotional indices of subjective well-being are positive and negative affect. The cognitive indicator of subjective well-being is life satisfaction (Diener et al., 1999). Individuals set a suitable standard for themselves and compare their conditions with that standard and make subjective evaluations of their lives (Diener et al., 1985). These evaluations may be related to specific areas such as job, academic, and marriage, or they may be a general evaluation of the individual's life. Moreover, individuals may be satisfied with most areas in their lives and still be generally dissatisfied due to the influence of one area (Pavot et al., 1991). There is empirical evidence showing the importance of career adaptability and resilience in boosting life satisfaction. Based on theoretical explanations and previous research findings, it has been hypothesized that there will be a mediator role of resilience in the relationship between career adaptability and life satisfaction (Hypothesis 4).

Based on the LD approach, the present study aims to study the relationships among career adaptability, resilience, and life satisfaction of Turkish university students. Employing LD approach, various studies has been carried out in different participant groups and countries on why relationship exists between career adaptability and life satisfaction. For example, the results of the previous studies showed that the relationship between career adaptability and life satisfaction are mediated by hope in Italian workers with mild intellectual disability (Santilli et al., 2014), resilience in the parents of children with mild intellectual disability in Northeast Italy (Ginevra, Maggio et al, 2018) and in middle school students in Italy and Belgium (Santilli et al., 2020), future orientation in university students in Italy and Spain (Cabras & Mondo, 2018) and Italian and Swiss adolescents (Santilli et al., 2017), courage in Italian high school students (Ginevra, Magnano et al., 2018) and Italian university students (Magnano et al., 2021), and self-determination in Italian adults who substance use disorder (Di Maggio et al., 2021). The empirical studies on the basis of the LD approach have primarily been performed in Western countries with individualistic cultural characteristics. In individualistic cultures, behaviours guided by personal goals, being more cooperative rather than competitive, and high personal benefits are at the forefront. The collectivist cultures, on the other hand, prioritize collective goals over individual ones, emphasizing ideas like cohesiveness, interdependence, and belonging within social groupings (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Turkish society, on the other hand, shows a tendency from collectivist culture to individualistic culture and has both cultural characteristics (İmamoğlu, 1998). Therefore, this study is important in terms of providing evidence for the intercultural applicability of the LD approach. Emphasizing the importance of resilience in the association between career adaptability and life satisfaction may help university students construct their futures and perceive their lives more satisfying via preventive intervention programs. Furthermore, the results of the present study are expected to extend previous studies on the intercultural applicability of the LD approach by emphasizing the value of career adaptability and resilience in promoting life satisfaction in a society that combines individualistic and collectivist cultural characteristics.

METHOD

Research Design

The relational survey model was used in this study because the relationships among career adaptability, resilience, and life satisfaction were examined using structural equal modeling. The relational survey model is a survey model that examines the mutual change between two or more variables (Karasar, 2011).

Participants

The convenience sample method was used to recruit 287 Turkish university students for this study. There were 226 females (78.7%) and 61 males (21.3%). The participants' ages ranged from 19 to 37, with a mean of 21.23 (SD = 2.36). 130 of the participants are first-year students, 67 are second-year students, 63 are third-year students, and 27 are fourth-year students. Most of the participants (91.6%) perceive their socio-economic status as middle level.

Measures

Career Adapt-Abilities Scale – Short Form (CAAS-SF)

CAAS-SF is the short form of the 24-item CAAS-International Form 2.0 (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012) created by Maggiori et al. (2017). CAAS-SF consists of 12 items and four sub-dimensions with three items in each sub-dimension. Answers to CAAS-SF are given on a 5-point Likert scale. Participants answered the items in degrees between not strong (1) and strongest (5). Sub-dimensions are concern (e. g. “Becoming aware of the educational and vocational choices that I must make”), control (e. g. “Counting on myself”), curiosity (e. g. “Observing different ways of doing things”), and confidence (e. g. “Working up to my ability”). The validity and reliability studies of the Turkish CAAS-SF were investigated by Işık et al. (2018). Confirmatory factor analysis fit indices for the sample of university students $\chi^2/df = 2.13$; GFI = .95; CFI = .96; RMSEA = .059 was found in the scale adaptation study. A positive correlation was found between the Turkish CAAS-SF and career decision self-efficacy ($r = .66$). Cronbach Alpha reliability of Turkish CAAS-SF was found as .76 to .90 for the university students' sample. The test-retest reliability of the Turkish CAAS-SF was found as .62 to .82 (Işık et al., 2018). The Cronbach Alpha reliability was found .87 in the current data.

The Brief Resilience Scale (BRS)

Smith et al. (2008) developed the BRS, 6-items (e. g. “I usually come through difficult times with little trouble”), 5-point Likert-type scale. Participants answered the items in degrees between strongly disagree (1) and strongly agree (5). The psychometric properties of the Turkish BRS were investigated by Doğan (2015). Confirmatory factor analysis fit indices for the sample of university students $\chi^2/df = 1.83$; GFI = .99; CFI = .99; RMSEA = .05 was found and support single factor structure in the scale adaptation study. A positive correlation was found between the Turkish BRS and happiness and ego resilience ($r = .40$ and $r = .61$, respectively). The Cronbach Alpha reliability of Turkish BRS was found .83 (Doğan, 2015). The Cronbach Alpha reliability was found .85 in the current data.

The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)

Diener et al. (1985) developed the SWLS, 5-items (e. g. “So far I have gotten the important things I want in life”), 7-point Likert-type scale. Participants answered the items in degrees between strongly disagree (1) and strongly agree (7). The validity and reliability studies of the Turkish SWLS were examined by Durak et al. (2010). Confirmatory factor analysis fit indices for the sample of university students $\chi^2/df = 2.02$; CFI = .99; TLI = .98; RMSEA = .043 was found and support single factor structure in the scale adaptation study. A positive correlation was found between the Turkish SWLS and positive affect and monthly income ($r = .31$ and $r = .13$, respectively). The Cronbach Alpha reliability of Turkish SWLS was found .81 (Durak et al., 2010). The Cronbach Alpha reliability was found .87 in the current data.

Procedure

This study was confirmed by the university ethics commission. The data were collected online with Google Forms. In order to prevent lost data, participants were compulsory to mark all items in Google Forms. Before completing the items, the participants came across a text describing the purpose of the study and became participants voluntarily.

Analysis Plan

The data were analyzed by structural equation modeling using AMOS and SPSS package programs. The BRS items were parceled out to represent latent variables to decrease the number of parameters to be estimated, enhance reliability, and lessen the danger of violating the normality assumptions (Landis et al., 2000; Little et al., 2013). The factor analysis was performed for BRS to create the parcels; the items were ranked according to the factor load and were distributed to each parcel in a balanced and orderly manner. This process resulted in three parcels representing the three parcels representing the latent variable of resilience. Five statistical indices and cut-off scores in line with the recommendations of Browne and Cudeck (1993), and Hu and Bentler (1999) were used for satisfactory goodness of fit values: The χ^2/df ratio (≤ 3), CFI $\geq .90$, GFI $\geq .90$, and RMSEA $\leq .08$. Recommended of Preacher et al. (2007), the significance of the mediation of resilience between career adaptability and life satisfaction was tested using the bootstrapping technique.

Ethic

Ethical approval was obtained for this study from the Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee of the Nevşehir Hacı Bektaş Veli University (2021.09.297).

RESULTS

Preliminary Analysis

Before performing the mediation analysis with the structural equation model, the data were prepared for analysis, and the assumptions were tested. Since the data was collected online with Google Forms, the participants were provided to answer all the items. Therefore, there was no missing data in the data set. One outlier found using the Mahalanobis distance test was removed from the dataset. Analyzes were performed with data collected from 287 participants. Since the skewness and kurtosis estimates of the variables varied within the range of ± 1.5 , the assumption of normal distribution was met (Table 1). The correlation coefficients between the variables were less than .90. In addition, variance inflation factor values were less than 10 (range 1.54 to 3.04). Therefore, there was no multicollinearity problem (Tabachnick & Fidel, 2013). The correlation estimates between the study variables and descriptive statistics results are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1. Correlation estimates and descriptive statistics

Variables	1	2	3	α	M	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
1. Career adaptability		.36	.35	.87	49.49	6.73	-.350	-.350
2. Resilience	.32		.31	.85	18.64	4.91	-.047	-.255
3. Life satisfaction	.32	.29		.87	19.87	6.44	.096	-.378

Note. All correlations are significant $p < .01$. Bold values are latent variable correlations.

Mediation analysis

Before the mediation analysis, the goodness of fit of the measurement model was evaluated. Goodness-of-fit values for the measurement model were satisfactory ($\chi^2 = 128.916$; $df = 51$; $\chi^2/df = 2.52$; GFI = .93; CFI = .95; TLI = .94; RMSEA = .073). The factor loads of the observed variables ranged from .65 to .91, all of which were statistically significant ($p < .001$). Afterward, the structural model presented in Figure 1 was tested and the same goodness-of-fit values were found as an indication that the structural model was saturated. Career adaptability significantly predicted life satisfaction before being included in the resilience the structural model ($\beta = .36$, $p < .001$). When resilience was included in the model as a mediating

variable, career adaptability significantly predicted life satisfaction, but its predictive power was reduced ($\beta = .28, p < .05$). The reason for this is that career adaptability predicts resilience ($\beta = .37, p < .001$) and resilience predicts life satisfaction ($\beta = .22, p < .001$), respectively. The standardized total effect of career adaptability on life satisfaction was .36, the standardized direct effect was .28, and the standardized indirect effect was .08.

Adhering to the views of Preacher et al. (2007), the bootstrap technique (10000) was used to test the significance of the mediation of resilience between career adaptability and life satisfaction. The 95% confidence interval for the indirect effect ranged from .032 to .146 and did not include zero. Thus, the mediating role of resilience was significant. The path coefficients of the structural model, direct and indirect effects are displayed Table 2.

Table 2. Path coefficients of the structural model, direct and indirect effects

Paths	β	SE	95% CI	
			Lower	Upper
Direct Path				
Career adaptability → Life satisfaction	.28	.05	.125	.487
Career adaptability → Resilience	.37	.07	.237	.438
Resilience → Life satisfaction	.22	.04	.077	.355
Indirect Path				
Career adaptability → Resilience → Life satisfaction	.08	.02	.032	.146

Note. β = Standardized estimate; SE: Standard error; CI: Confidence intervals

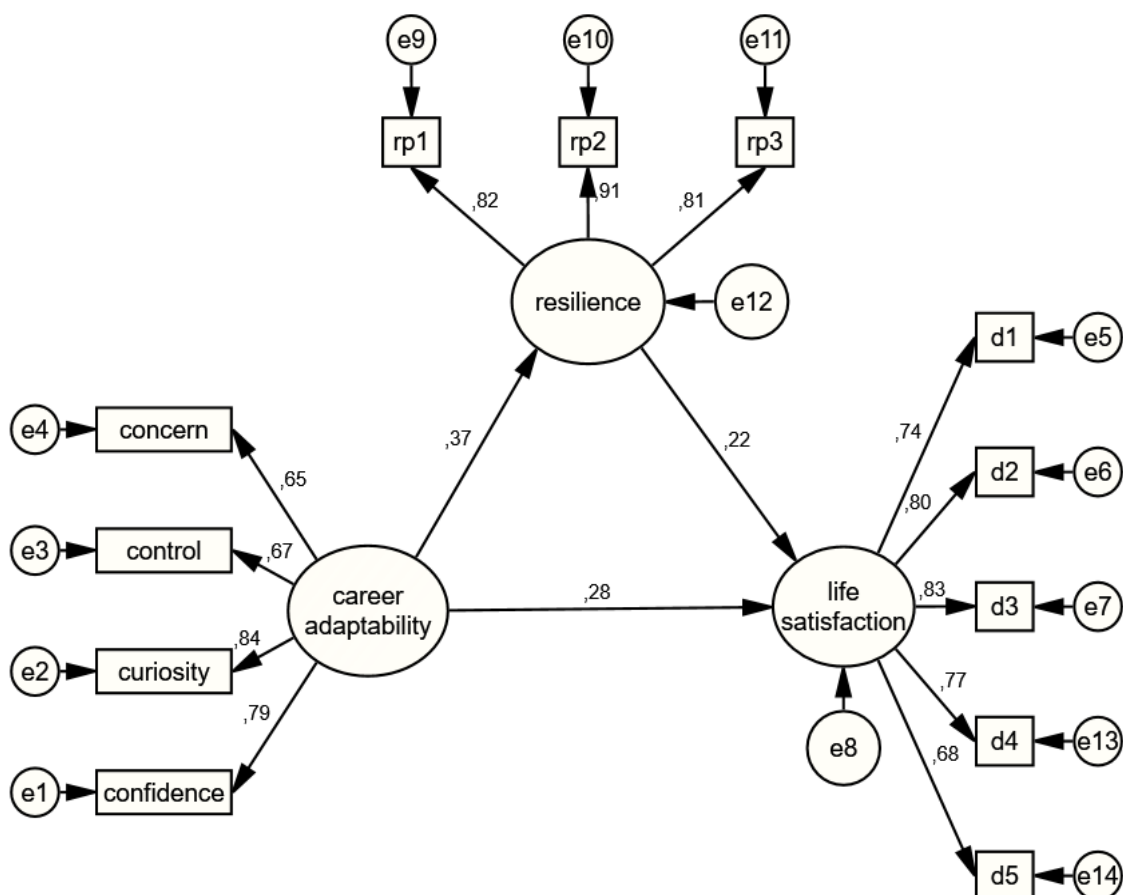


Figure 1. Standardized coefficients of the model (all coefficients are significant); rp: resilience parcel

DISCUSSION

This study sought to investigate the mediating role of resilience between career adaptability and life satisfaction among Turkish university students, drawing on the LD approach. The results show that life happiness is predicted by career adaptability both directly and indirectly through resilience.

The results demonstrated that career adaptability bolsters university students' life satisfaction. This result supports Hypothesis 1. Namely, the result of this current study indicates that having psychosocial resources to deal with career development duties, career transitions and traumas may contribute to increased life satisfaction. The results of this study support the results of many preceding studies that found that career adaptability positively predicted life satisfaction and subjective well-being (Hirschi, 2009; Parola & Marcionetti, 2021; Ramos & Lopez, 2018; Wilkins et al., 2014). The individuals, who have a positive attitude to prepare for their future roles, perceive their life and career under their own control are constantly curious to explore the self and the outside world, and believe that they can cope with obstacles and transitions may feel more life satisfaction. The results of this study are coherent with the LD approach that career adaptability helps people plan their uncertain futures, dealing adverse working conditions, adapt to changes in the labor market conditions, and thus increases their well-being (Savickas, 2012, 2015; Savickas et al., 2009). Moreover, the results of this study, coherent with the career construction model of adaptation that adaptability resources (career adaptability) are important for adaptation outcomes (life satisfaction; Savickas, 2005, 2013; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012) as well as with the results of the meta-analysis studies on the career construction model of adaptation (Rudolph et al., 2017). Besides, this result is compatible with the theoretical views of Hartung and Teber (2008), who stated that career construction increases meaning and satisfaction in life.

In this study, it was found that career adaptability predicted resilience positively. This result supports Hypothesis 2. The result of this study is coherent with the results of the previous studies that found that career adaptability positively predicted resilience (Ginevra, Maggio et al, 2018; Xu et al., 2020). This result complies with the LD approach that career adaptability may include, promote, or be associated with other personal resources that facilitate career transitions and career adjustment (Rossier, 2015). This result also complies with the LD approach that contextual and personal resources help individuals access other valuable resources (van Vianen et al., 2015). This result of the present study indicates that the capacity to use self-regulation strategies and psychosocial resources boosts the successful adaptation of the individual to the difficulties that threaten her/his functionality and development.

In this study, it was found that resilience predicted life satisfaction positively. This result supports Hypothesis 3. The result of this study is coherent with the results of the previous studies that found that resilience positively predicted life satisfaction (Hu et al., 2015; Kalaitzaki et al., 2021; Karaman et al., 2020; Mak et al., 2011). This result also complies with the LD approach that key resources will facilitate people's well-being (van Vianen et al., 2015). This result of the present study indicates that the successful adaptation of the individual to the difficulties that threaten her/his functionality and development boosts life satisfaction.

The results of the current study show that career adaptability indirectly predicted life satisfaction through resilience. This result partially supports Hypothesis 4. This result gives considerable clues as to how the relationship between career adaptability and life satisfaction occurs and the mechanism underlying this relationship. While this result provides cross-cultural evidence for the LD approach, it highlights that resilience is a malleable personal resource for coping with the uncertainty, insecurity, and instability of the 21st century, providing supporting evidence for the LD approach. Moreover, these results are in line with the views of the LD approach that career adaptability can strengthen personal resources and contribute to well-being (Rossier, 2015). Resilience partially carries the effect of career adaptability on life satisfaction. These results support the results of past studies that found that resilience has a mediating role in the relationship between career adaptability and life satisfaction of parents with mildly mentally retarded children (Ginevra et al., 2018) and, middle school students (Santilli et al., 2020). Given that career adaptability is a self-regulation mechanism and a psychosocial resource for facing difficulties, managing career transitions, and coping with traumas (Savickas, 1997, 2002), it may be easier for university students with high career adaptability to reach positive adaptation in the face of challenging conditions and bounce quickly after sinking. That is career adaptability may boost personal resources such as resilience among university students. Thus, they may get greater satisfaction from life. There

is because career adaptability has the power to increase personal resources (Nota & Rossier, 2015) such as resilience, and resilience protects the individual against negativities by enabling the individual to swiftly recover the energy needed to respond when faced with adversity (Masten, 1989; Masten et al., 2006).

The results of this study stressed the significance of increasing career adaptability and resilience in fostering university students' life satisfaction. Practitioners may develop and implement intervention or training programs to improve the career adaptability of university students. Practitioners may improve the resilience of university students through activities that improve their career adaptability. Thus, their life satisfaction may increase. Similarly, intervention or training programs that strengthen resilience may be developed and implemented. Counsellors may help clients' careers construct and boost their resilience. Thus, it may be ensured that university students are stronger in the face of 21st-century uncertainty, insecurity, and rapid changes.

Although the results of the current study provide a deeper understanding of how career adaptability and life satisfaction are related, serial mediation may be tested by adding more variables in future studies. Future studies may have an experimental or longitudinal design. Thus, it may be possible to draw causal inferences. For the generalizability of the study results, this study may be replicated in secondary school, high school students, and working adult samples.

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