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## The Effectiveness of Educational Intervention Based on Career Adaptability on Career Decision Self-Efficacy of University Students

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### Extended Abstract

#### Aim

One of the most important tasks for university students during their academic life is choosing a career (Kwon, 2019). Therefore, it is crucial to focus on the capabilities that enable individuals to make informed decisions. Career decision self-efficacy (CDSE) is one of these abilities, referring to a self-confidence in making career-related choices. CDSE assists people in five key areas: self-evaluation, gathering occupational information, goal selection, planning, and problem-solving. According to Savickas's career construction model of adaptation (Savickas, 2013), CDSE is an adapting response that occurs following career adaptability. In fact, career adaptability serves as a self-regulation resource that promotes adaptive behaviors such as CDSE (Rudolph, Lavigne, & Zacher, 2017) and helps individuals cope with occupational tasks, vocational transitions, and work-related challenges (Savickas, 2013). Career adaptability is a meta-competency that can be taught; it enhances the decision-making process by fostering concern, increasing control over career paths, boosting confidence, and stimulating curiosity. Consequently, this study aims to investigate the effect of an educational intervention based on career adaptability on the CDSE of final-semester university students.

#### Methodology

This study utilized a quasi-experimental design with a pretest-posttest structure, a control group, and a two-month follow-up, making it a quantitative study. The statistical population comprised all final-semester students at the University of Isfahan during the 2022-2023 academic year. Thirty students, whose CDSE scores were one standard deviation below the mean score of the population, were selected. They were randomly assigned to two groups of 15 individuals: the experimental group (seven girls and eight boys) and the control group (nine girls and six boys). The developed training package included four reflective questions from the Life Adaptability Qualitative Assessment (LAQuA) (DiFabio, 2015) and a set of career adaptability training techniques identified by Hartung & Cadaret (2018). The Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale — Short Form (CDSE-SF), consisting of 25 items, was used to measure CDSE (Betz, Klein, & Taylor, 1996). Participants in the experimental group received a career adaptability intervention over nine sessions, each lasting 90 minutes, while the control group received no intervention. After the study concluded, the intervention was also provided to the control group. The CDSE-SF was administered in three stages: pre-test, post-test, and follow-up. Finally, data were analyzed using SPSS-25 software and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) with repeated measures.

#### Findings

The results of the ANOVA with repeated measures indicate significant intra-group and inter-group effects on Career Decision Self-Efficacy (CDSE) and its dimensions, including self-evaluation, occupational information, goal selection, planning, and problem-solving, due to the effect of time ( $P < 0.001$ ). Thus, there are significant differences among the three stages: pre-test, post-test, and follow-up for these variables. According to Bonferroni's post hoc test results, there is an interaction between group and time in CDSE and its dimensions ( $P < 0.01$ ), demonstrating significant differences between

the pre-test, post-test, and follow-up stages, as well as between the experimental and control groups. Additionally, the F values and significance levels for the group effect indicate a significant difference between the experimental and control groups regarding CDSE and its dimensions ( $P < 0.05$ ). The calculated effect sizes reveal that the effect of career adaptability training on CDSE due to time was 74%, with 47% attributed to interaction and 35% to group effects.

### **Conclusion**

The future time perspective is enhanced by creating concern, one of the career adaptability competencies, which ultimately aids individuals in setting goals and planning. Moreover, taking control of career and vocational tasks by increasing boldness empowers individuals to make decisions and enhances their sense of responsibility (Savickas, 2013). Curiosity allows individuals to explore the work environment through an in-depth analysis of potential talents and opportunities (Mcilveen & Midgley, 2015). It is clear that when individuals feel confident in examining various aspects, they are more assured in their decision-making abilities. Curiosity not only enhances problem-solving and self-evaluation but also strengthens confidence, enabling individuals to believe in their decision-making capabilities by fostering a sense of agency. In summary, as noted by Nilforooshan (2020), career adaptability can promote adaptive behaviors such as CDSE. One of the primary concerns of guidance counselors is decision-making and its associated challenges; therefore, this intervention can be beneficial for students facing decision-making difficulties, especially those on the verge of significant life choices, such as ninth-grade students.

**Keywords:** Adaptability, Career, Decision-Making Self-Efficacy, Students.

### **Ethical Considerations**

To adhere to ethical standards, informed consent was obtained from all students participating in the intervention program, and they were informed about all stages of the intervention. The control group was assured they would receive the interventions after completing the study if they desired. Both groups were guaranteed that their information would remain confidential, and no names were collected. To motivate participants, the educational aspects of the interventions were explained prior to the start, and the entire intervention process was provided at no cost.

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### **Conflict of Interest**

The authors declare that they have no competing interests relevant to the content of this article.

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