

Factor Structure and Construct Validity of the Chinese Version of Career Adapt-Abilities Scale Short form (CAAS-SF) for Career Adaptability among University Students in China

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Abstract

Career adaptability is linked to effective career development and adjustment, which improves subjective career success. This study aims to evaluate the reliability and validity of the Chinese version of the Career Adapt-Abilities Scale Short Form (CAAS-SF) among undergraduate students in China using exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses. The study included 349 public-funded undergraduates in teacher-training programs. The English CAAS-SF was translated into Chinese, and the results revealed an overall Cronbach's alpha of .91 (concern = .942, control = .943, curiosity = .939, confidence = .934). The 12-item, four-factor CAAS-SF model was found to be appropriate for Chinese culture based on the sample data. Cross-cultural validation supports that the CAAS-SF reliably predicts career adaptability and is effective for assessing it among Chinese undergraduates, though further research with larger samples is needed to fully confirm these findings.

Keywords: Factor-Structure, CAAS-SF, Career Adaptability

Career Adapt-Abilities Scale Short form (CAAS-SF)

The Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS) is a well-established tool for evaluating career adaptability, encompassing four key dimensions: concern, control, curiosity, and confidence (Maggiori et al., 2015). Initially developed as a comprehensive questionnaire to assess career adaptability, the CAAS has evolved to include a shorter version known as the Career Adapt-Abilities Scale-Short Form (CAAS-SF), which comprises 12 items measuring adaptability across the same four dimensions (Taveira et al., 2022). The CAAS has demonstrated its cross-cultural applicability and relevance through utilization in various cultural contexts such as Iran, India, Malaysia, Portugal, China, the United Kingdom, and Greece (McKenna et al., 2016; Pal & Jena, 2021; Hamzah et al., 2022; Sou et al., 2020; Wang, 2023; Sidiropoulou-Dimakakou et al., 2018), showcasing its cross-cultural applicability. Furthermore, the scale has been successfully adapted and validated in different languages, including Malay, German, and Brazilian Portuguese, showcasing its versatility and utility (Hamzah et al., 2022; Johnston et al., 2013; Ambiel et al., 2022).

Moreover, the CAAS-SF has been particularly useful in large-scale studies, such as those involving elite athletes (Hu, 2023), early career stage university graduates (Song et al., 2023), and students with special educational needs (Yang et al., 2023). Its utility extends to diverse fields, including vocational education (Taveira et al., 2022), psychology (Levin & Lipshits-Brazil, 2021), and sports science (Nikander et al., 2021). Moreover, the CAAS-SF has been instrumental in exploring the relationship between career adaptability and various factors like social capital (Sou et al., 2022), self-efficacy (Amalia & Kurniawati, 2019), and vocational personality types (Hasret & Baltaci, 2015).

Research studies have consistently supported the reliability and validity of the CAAS as an instrument for measuring career adaptability, with evidence confirming its psychometric properties and construct validity (McKenna et al., 2016; , McIlveen et al., 2016; , Dries et al., 2012). Additionally, the CAAS has been associated with various outcomes such as career satisfaction, entrepreneurial intentions, career engagement, and vocational identity, emphasizing its importance in comprehending individuals' career development and decision-making processes (McKenna et al., 2016; Sou et al., 2022; Dries et al., 2012).

Furthermore, the CAAS-SF has been validated in different samples, demonstrating its psychometric properties and confirming its factor structure through confirmatory factor analysis (Maggiori et al., 2015; Yu et al., 2019). Its adaptability across different populations, such as university students, workers, and athletes, underscores its versatility and relevance in assessing career adaptability (Nikander et al., 2021). The CAAS-SF's ability to measure individuals' readiness and resources for current and future career tasks highlights its practical value in guiding career development efforts (Yang et al., 2023).

Research on Career Adaptability

Career adaptability is a crucial aspect in today's dynamic work environment, and the Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS) has emerged as a prominent tool for assessing this construct. Career adaptability among Chinese college students has been a subject of significant research interest. Studies have explored various factors influencing career adaptability, for example, Pang et al. (2021) found a relationship between resilience, career adaptability, and career decision-making difficulties among Chinese college students. This highlights the importance of resilience and adaptability in reducing challenges in career decision-making (Pang et al., 2021).

Additionally, Wang & Fu (2015), and Liu et al (2023), emphasized the significance of social support, social comparison, and professional identity in enhancing career adaptability among Chinese college students, particularly in fields like engineering (Wang & Fu, 2015; Liu et al., 2023). Moreover, personal traits such as core self-evaluations, grit, and proactive personality have been identified as predictors of career adaptability among Chinese college students (Du et al., 2022; Li et al., 2021; Hou et al., 2014). These studies suggest that individual characteristics play a crucial role in shaping students' ability to navigate career challenges and adapt effectively.

Research has indicated that higher scores on the CAAS-SF reflect greater career adaptability (Çarkıt, 2022). Studies have also explored the relationship between career

adaptability and various factors such as work engagement, social capital, career engagement, life satisfaction, and well-being (Sou et al., 2022; Jiang et al., 2022; Çarkit, 2022). Additionally, the CAAS-SF has been used in studies focusing on different populations, including undergraduates in Korea (Kim, 2021), adult workers with Chiari malformation (Tokar et al., 2019), and higher learning institution students in Malaysia (Hamzah et al., 2022).

Furthermore, research by Chen et al (2022), Feng et al (2021), and Xia et al (2020), has explored the mediating role of career adaptability in relationships between variables like perfectionism, role accumulation, and social support. These studies provide insights into how different factors interact with career adaptability to influence college students' career decision-making processes and overall employability. Based on the importance of career adaptability, it is essential to analyze the characteristics of career adaptability, Career Adapt-Abilities Scale short form(CAAS-SF) provided a framework for predicting, explaining, and influencing behavioral intentions.

Overall, this is the hypothesis based on the literature review:

H1. The Chinese version of the CAAS-SF for career adaptability would have good reliability and validity.

Methods

Participants and Procedure: The study involved 349 undergraduate students from teacher-training universities in Shanxi Province, China. The sample comprised 67 males and 282 females, all of whom were full-time, on-campus students. Before data collection began, participants provided written consent and were given a formal notice outlining the study's objectives and ensuring confidentiality and anonymity. The data was collected via paper questionnaires, with all participants remaining anonymous.

Model

The Career Adapt-Abilities Scale-Short Form (CAAS-SF) was used in this study. This scale has demonstrated incremental predictive power over general ambiguity tolerance regarding career decision self-efficacy and adaptability (Storme et al., 2017). The aim was to assess the reliability and validity of the Chinese version of the CAAS-SF in evaluating career adaptability among university students, focusing on concern, curiosity, control, and confidence.

Measures

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

The Career Adapt-Abilities Scale-Short Form (CAAS-SF) has 12 items consisting of four dimensions, respectively are concern (e.g., "I think about what my future will be like"), control (e.g., "I make decisions by myself"), curious (e.g., "I look for opportunities to grow"), confidence(e.g., "I take care to do things well")

The Chinese version was adapted using a translation/back-translation procedure following Brislin's model (Brislin, 1970) and further refined by psychological experts. The final version was reviewed by the research team and translator to ensure it met all procedural requirements.

Data Analysis

The study used IBM SPSS Statistics and Amos for statistical analysis, focusing on examining the relationships and significance of each item. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) were conducted using maximum likelihood estimation. The data showed a normal distribution, and Cronbach's alpha was used to assess internal consistency (Johnson et al., 2019). Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was employed to verify the fit of the model, with RMSEA and SRMR values below .08 indicating a good model fit (Browne & Cudeck, 1992). Parametric correlation coefficients were also used to evaluate associations between variables.

Results

Analysis of item-total correlations showed all 12 items were significantly associated. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of .947 and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (Chi-Square = 2353.419, $p = .000$) indicated an acceptable sample for Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), with a high KMO value suggesting very good validity. Table 1 displays the factor loadings of all items.

Table 1

Result of the validity of concern, control, curious, and confidence

	Eigenvalues (Initial)	% of Variance (Initial)	% of Cum. Variance (Initial)	Eigenvalues (Rotated)	% of Variance (Rotated)	% of Cum. Variance (Rotated)
1	6.77	56.418	56.418	3.109	25.912	25.912
2	0.728	6.067	62.485	2.194	18.281	44.192
3	0.711	5.923	68.407	2.137	17.811	62.003
4	0.591	4.927	73.335	1.36	11.332	73.335
5	0.574	4.78	78.115			
6	0.486	4.05	82.165			
7	0.46	3.832	85.997			
8	0.436	3.636	89.633			
9	0.362	3.019	92.651			
10	0.329	2.739	95.391			
11	0.294	2.447	97.837			
12	0.26	2.163	100			

items	Factor loadings			
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
CA1	0.198	0.835	0.243	0.12
CA2	0.527	0.504	0.43	0.052
CA3	0.352	0.557	0.341	0.145
CA4	0.316	0.112	0.821	0.169
CA5	0.203	0.374	0.719	0.209
CA6	0.519	0.255	0.486	0.172
CA7	0.765	0.292	0.224	0.148
CA8	0.599	0.2	0.306	0.439
CA9	0.251	0.198	0.23	0.883

CA10	0.45	0.636	0.043	0.33
CA11	0.657	0.259	0.295	0.302
CA12	0.786	0.28	0.254	0.16

Reliability Analysis

Reliability analysis, summarized in Table 2, showed a Cronbach's alpha of .928 for all items, indicating strong internal consistency. Individual factors (concern, control, curiosity, and confidence) had Cronbach's alpha values of .942, .943, .939, and .934, respectively.

Table 2

Reliability Assessment for All Items and Dimensions

Items	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach Alpha if Item Deleted	Cronbach' α^2
CA1	.639	.925	0.928
CA2	.763	.919	
CA3	.657	.924	
CA4	.653	.924	
CA5	.677	.923	
CA6	.693	.922	
CA7	.735	.921	
CA8	.725	.921	
CA9	.609	.926	
CA10	.677	.923	
CA11	.739	.920	
CA12	.765	.920	

Table 3

Correlation Between Factors

factors	concern	control	curiosity	confidence
concern	1			
control	.700**	1		
curiosity	.688**	.708**	1	
confidence	.747**	.701**	.775**	1

* Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

As indicated in Table 3, a Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between concern, control, curious, and confidence scores. Table 4 showed that $\chi^2(54) = 158.46$, $p = .000$, GFI = .931, RMSEA = .075, CFI = .955, suggesting that the career adaptability scale possesses strong construct validity, supporting hypothesis 1.

Table 4

Measurement Model Evaluation

Chi-Square	df	p-value	GFI	CFI	TLI	RMSEA
158.46	54	0	0.931	0.955	0.945	0.075

Discussion and Conclusion

This study evaluates the psychometric properties of the Chinese version of the CAAS-SF, focusing on the career adaptability of undergraduate students. The results support the hypotheses, with the structure comprising 12 items across four components, consistent with both the Chinese and original versions of the questionnaire. The analyses confirmed that the CAAS-SF is both reliable and valid for assessing career adaptability within Chinese culture, this study represents its first validation in that environment.

Furthermore, the CAAS-SF has been validated in different languages, such as Malay (Hamzah et al., 2022), German (Johnston et al., 2013), French (Stauffer et al., 2018; Storme et al., 2017), and Turkish (Öztemel & Akyol, 2020). Its validity has been assessed in relation to proactive personality, career satisfaction, and career decision-making difficulties (Johnston et al., 2013; Storme et al., 2017). The reliability analysis revealed that Cronbach's alpha exceeded .6 for each dimension of the scale. In this study, the overall Cronbach's alpha for all items was .928, indicating that the questionnaire demonstrated excellent internal consistency, there are 349 undergraduate students who have a high career adaptability.

The study confirms that the CAAS-SF is a reliable and valid tool for assessing career adaptability within Chinese culture. Despite limitations, such as the small and imbalanced sample size, the Chinese version of the CAAS-SF proves to be a valuable tool for evaluating career adaptability among Chinese students. Future research should include a more diverse and larger sample to enhance the generalizability of the findings

In conclusion, the CAAS-SF is a valuable tool for assessing career adaptability due to its brevity, reliability, and validity across diverse populations and cultural contexts. Researchers have utilized this scale to explore the intricate relationships between career adaptability and various psychological constructs, highlighting its significance in understanding individuals' abilities to navigate their careers effectively. It is crucial to study career adaptability in order to enhancing career adaptability among Chinese college students, so that their successful transition into the workforce. By considering the various personal, social, and psychological factors that influence career adaptability, educators, policymakers, and career counselors can better support students in developing the necessary skills to excel in their future careers. Future research on the CAAS-SF could focus on exploring its predictive validity in different career background, investigating its cross-cultural applicability in more countries.

Meanwhile, the Chinese version of the CAAS-SF enhances existing knowledge by validating and expanding career adaptability theory within the Chinese context. It provides a tool for assessing career adaptability among university students in China. The Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS) is grounded in the theoretical framework of career adaptability, which posits that career adaptability is a crucial resource for managing career transitions and uncertainties. By developing and validating a Chinese version of the CAAS-SF, the study expand the applicability of career adaptability theory across different cultural contexts. This adaptation allows for a more comprehensive understanding of how career adaptability functions within the specific socio-cultural and economic environment of China, thereby contributing to the theoretical refinement of the construct. In addition, university students in China face distinct career-related challenges, including intense academic pressures, a competitive job market, and evolving economic conditions. The CAAS-SF provides a practical tool for assessing career adaptability in this context, offering insights into how students

perceive and manage their career development. The study is crucial for developing effective career counseling services and interventions tailored to the needs of Chinese students.

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Appendix 1 English and Chinese Version of the Questionnaire

Variable	Potential variable	Items
Career adaptability	concern	"I think about what my future will be like"
		"I prepare for the future"
		"I am aware of the educational and vocational choices that i must make".
	control	"I make decisions by myself"
		"I take responsibility for my actions".
		"I count on myself"
	curiosity	"I look for opportunities to grow"
		"I investigate options before making a choice"
		"I observe different ways of doing things from people around"
	confidence	"I take care to do things well"
		"I learn new skills"
		"I develop my ability step by step"

No	问题
1	我在想我的未来会是什么样子
2	我为未来做准备
3	我很清楚我必须做出教育和职业选择
4	我自己做决定
5	我对自己的行为负责
6	我靠自己
7	我寻找成长的机会
8	在做出选择之前，我会调查各种选择
9	我观察周围人不同的做事方式
10	我在意把事情做好
11	我学习新技能
12	我一步一步发展自己的能力