



CAREER ADAPTABILITY AND SUSTAINABLE EMPLOYMENT IN THE BANKING SECTOR: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF WISDOM MANAGEMENT

*Adaptabilidade de carreira e emprego sustentável no setor bancário:
o papel mediador da gestão da sabedoria*

Taher Javadi¹, Leon Vratar², Petra Cajnko²

¹ Islamic Azad University, Department of Management, Ard. C, Ardabil, Iran

² University of Maribor, Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, Slovenia

E-mail: taher.javadi@iau.ir, leon.vratar@um.si, petra.cajnko@um.si

ABSTRACT

In the volatile labor market and increasing environmental uncertainties, career adaptability (CA) is considered a critical skill for employees to retain employment. This study examines the role of CA in fostering sustainable employment, with a focus on the mediating effect of wisdom management (WM) among employees of public banks in Ardabil. Using a correlational research design and structural equation modeling (Hayes Model 4), data were collected via validated questionnaires from 370 participants. The results indicate that CA has a positive impact on WM, which in turn indirectly influences sustainable employment (although not directly in AMOS). Bootstrap analysis confirmed the partial mediating role of wisdom management. Ultimately, the findings suggest that combining individual adaptability skills with ethical leadership styles can foster sustainable employment (SE) in Iranian workplaces.

Keywords: Career adaptability, Sustainable employment, Wisdom management, Public banks, Mediation model, Sustainable human resources

SUBMETIDO EM: 30/08/2025

ACEITO EM: 27/09/2025

PUBLICADO EM: 30/10/2025



ADAPTABILIDADE DE CARREIRA E EMPREGO SUSTENTÁVEL NO SETOR BANCÁRIO: O PAPEL MEDIADOR DA GESTÃO DA SABEDORIA

*Career adaptability and sustainable employment in the banking sector:
the mediating role of wisdom management*

Taher Javadi¹, Leon Vratar², Petra Cajnko²

¹ Islamic Azad University, Department of Management, Ard. C, Ardabil, Iran

² University of Maribor, Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, Slovenia
E-mail: taher.javadi@iau.ir, leon.vratar@um.si, petra.cajnko@um.si

RESUMO

No mercado de trabalho volátil e nas crescentes incertezas ambientais, a adaptabilidade de carreira (AC) é considerada uma competência crítica para os colaboradores manterem os seus empregos. Este estudo examina o papel da AC na promoção do emprego sustentável, com foco no efeito mediador da gestão da sabedoria (WM) entre os funcionários dos bancos públicos em Ardabil. Utilizando um desenho de investigação correlacional e modelação de equações estruturais (Modelo Hayes 4), os dados foram recolhidos através de questionários validados de 370 participantes. Os resultados indicam que a AC tem um impacto positivo na WM, que por sua vez influencia indirectamente o emprego sustentável (embora não directamente no AMOS). A análise bootstrap confirmou o papel mediador parcial da gestão da sabedoria. Em última análise, as descobertas sugerem que a combinação de competências individuais de adaptabilidade com estilos de liderança éticos pode promover o emprego sustentável (SE) nos locais de trabalho iranianos.

Palavras-chave: Adaptabilidade de carreira, Emprego sustentável, Gestão da sabedoria, Bancos públicos, Modelo de mediação, Recursos humanos sustentáveis

INTRODUCTION

In today's constantly changing work environments, where instability, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity have become the norm (Bennett & Lemoine, 2014). Both individuals and organizations face growing challenges in maintaining meaningful employment, making ethical decisions, and building personal and institutional resilience. Navigating such conditions requires not only technical competence but also psychological flexibility and wise leadership.

In response to these challenges, three interrelated concepts have gained increasing scholarly and practical attention: career adaptability (CA), Sustainable employment (SE), and Wisdom Management (WM). CA refers to the psychological and behavioral resources individuals use to anticipate, manage, and respond to career-related changes and disruptions. It comprises four core dimensions: concern, control, curiosity, and confidence (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). Research has consistently linked higher levels of adaptability to enhanced job satisfaction, performance, self-concept, and mental well-being (Haenggli & Hirschi, 2020; Hirschi, 2009; Potomkin, 2024).

SE, on the other hand, is not merely about job retention but about the capacity to engage in meaningful, productive, and secure work throughout one's career, supported by learning-oriented and inclusive organizational contexts (van Dam et al., 2017). In countries like Iran, where geopolitical instability and structural limitations have periodically disrupted employment and economic conditions (Filin et al., 2019) this concept takes on added urgency.

Within this landscape, WM has emerged as a strategic and ethical framework for organizational leadership. It integrates experience, reflection, values, and foresight to help managers make balanced and humane decisions (Melé, 2010; Nonaka & Toyama, 2007). Studies suggest that wise leadership fosters trust, adaptability, learning, and long-term sustainability at both the individual and organizational levels (Babae Rayni et al., 2021; Baltes & Staudinger, 2000).

Despite the increasing attention to these three constructs individually, their intersection remains underexplored, particularly in non-Western public sector contexts, such as Iran. While CA supports employee resilience and SE enhances long-term engagement, the presence of wise leadership may serve as a critical enabler that connects and amplifies these outcomes. As noted by Nakra et al. (2024), adaptive capacities play a key moderating role in human resource outcomes, particularly when aligned with ethical and sustainable HRM practices.

This study aims to fill the gap by examining the combined and interactive effects of CA, WM, and SE within Iran's public banking sector. It specifically examines whether wise leadership mediates the link between employees' adaptability and their long-term employability. The research aims to contribute theoretically to vocational psychology and strategic HRM, while also offering practical recommendations for policymakers and practitioners in developing economies.

Research Questions

- ✓ Does CA significantly predict SE among employees in state-owned banks?
- ✓ To what extent does CA influence WM in organizational settings?
- ✓ Does WM have a significant impact on employees' SE?
- ✓ Does WM mediate the relationship between CA and SE?

General Objective

To examine the impact of CA on SE, with a specific focus on the mediating role of WM among employees of state-owned banks in Ardabil province, Iran.

1 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Career adaptability

Career adaptability (CA) has garnered growing attention as a crucial psychological asset for navigating today's rapidly changing and unpredictable job landscape. As traditional career paths become more fragmented and

uncertain, individuals must respond proactively to transitions, disruptions, and opportunities. CA helps them not only to survive change but to thrive through it.

According to (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012) CA consists of four key dimensions: concern (the capacity to envision and prepare for the future), control (a sense of personal agency over career decisions), curiosity (the desire to explore potential opportunities), and confidence (the belief in one's ability to achieve career goals despite obstacles). These dimensions collectively empower individuals to manage their professional lives with greater clarity, autonomy, and resilience.

A growing body of research highlights the positive outcomes associated with higher levels of CA, including greater job satisfaction, stronger employability, and reduced stress (Fiori et al., 2015; Hirschi, 2009). Adaptable individuals are more likely to stay engaged, acquire new skills, and adapt to change, even in uncertain or highly regulated environments. Importantly, adaptability does not function uniformly across populations. Zacher & Griffin (2015) found that age moderates its effects on job satisfaction, while (Hirschi, 2009) emphasized the role of emotional disposition and social support in its development, particularly among youth and students whereas Potomkin (2024) showed that all aspects of career adaptability are related to self-concept.

The Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS), a widely validated tool, has further demonstrated that adaptability can be reliably measured and applied across cultural and occupational settings. In Iran, where economic volatility, structural rigidity, and policy fluctuations pose ongoing challenges to job stability, fostering adaptability is particularly urgent, especially for employees in public-sector institutions such as banks. McKenna and his colleagues validated the CA in Iran and analyzed it in relation to career satisfaction (McKenna et al., 2017).

Given the rapid pace of technological disruption, demographic shifts, and the decline of traditional employment models, CA is no longer optional—it is essential. Individuals with strong adaptability resources are better positioned to maintain long-term employability, identify meaningful career paths, and thrive in the face of uncertainty. These findings call for targeted interventions, such as career development programs, mentorship initiatives, and adaptability-focused training, to help individuals prepare for the demands of an evolving labor landscape.

Sustainable Employment

Sustainable employment (SE) goes beyond just having a job—it involves a person's ability to stay employed and improve their skills throughout their career. This idea is based on three key pillars: physical and mental health, motivation and engagement at work, and the capacity to continually update skills and knowledge in response to changing labor market needs.

At its core, SE involves a balance between *meaningful work*—which offers individuals a sense of purpose and personal fulfillment—and *age-sensitive support structures* that address the needs of employees across various stages of their careers. In this view, SE is not just about obtaining or retaining a job, but about thriving in it through lifelong learning, psychological safety, motivation, and a sense of value in the workplace.

According to (van Dam et al., 2017) the intrinsic value of work plays a particularly critical role in maintaining engagement, especially for older employees. Similarly, (van der Klink et al., 2016) emphasize that sustainable employability outcomes are shaped by the dynamic interaction of personal resources (such as health, skills, and motivation) and social or organizational contexts.

Despite growing recognition of this concept, interventions aimed at promoting SE have shown mixed results. (Hazelzet et al., 2019) argue that many organizational programs fail to address the full complexity of employability, often overlooking emotional, developmental, or contextual dimensions. Nonetheless, the need for sustainable work frameworks has become increasingly urgent in response to global challenges, including demographic shifts, skills mismatches, and economic volatility.

In light of these trends, forward-thinking employers are placing greater emphasis on creating work environments that prioritize employee well-being, adaptability, and long-term engagement. By fostering intrinsic motivation and providing opportunities for skill development, organizations can not only boost productivity but also reduce turnover and burnout, key components of workforce sustainability.

Wisdom Management

Wisdom management (WM) represents an emerging paradigm in leadership studies, highlighting the integration of ethical reflection, emotional intelligence, experiential knowledge, and long-term thinking in

organizational decision-making. It moves beyond the mechanistic, efficiency-driven models of traditional management, instead promoting human-centered leadership capable of navigating complexity, ambiguity, and change (Alammar & Pauleen, 2015; McKenna & Rooney, 2005).

Ardabili and McKenna (2017) suggested that practical wisdom management in Iran is rooted in the governance traditions of ancient Persia and is reflected in the ethical and deliberative decision-making principles of Zoroastrianism. Javadi and Damayanti (2025) conducted a systematic review and meta-analysis of 71 studies, proposing a conceptual model of managerial wisdom as a multidimensional capacity that enhances strategic and ethical decision-making, leadership, and sustainability. Their findings show that organizations with wise leaders—who combine knowledge with values, reflection, and adaptability—achieve greater flexibility, empathy, fairness, employee satisfaction, and long-term success.

Moreover, instruments such as the San Diego Wisdom Scale (SD-WISE) and the Self-Assessed Wisdom Scale (SAWS) have contributed to the operationalization and empirical validation of managerial wisdom across different cultural and occupational settings. These tools have revealed consistent links between wisdom and outcomes such as resilience, engagement, ethical behavior, and trust in organizational climates (Intezari & Pauleen, 2014; Kunzmann & Baltes, 2005).

Bierly et al., (2000) argue that wisdom, distinct from knowledge, involves judgment and the ability to simplify complex situations for action. They highlight experience, learning motivation, and spirituality as key drivers of organizational wisdom, supported by leadership, culture, and knowledge sharing.

Thus, in contexts such as Iranian public banks, where bureaucratic rigidity and top-down authority can often limit adaptability and innovation, WM provides a viable framework for balancing tradition with transformation. It offers both a moral compass and a practical toolkit for aligning short-term pressures with long-term human and organizational sustainability.

2 HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Hypothesis 1 (H1): CA has a significant positive impact on SE.

CA is a core psychological resource that enables individuals to cope effectively with workplace challenges, changes, and uncertainty (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). Employees with higher adaptability are more likely to proactively update their skills, align with changing job demands, and sustain meaningful employment over time. Recent research by (Zhao et al., 2022) further confirms that CA significantly contributes to SE, particularly when supported by individual characteristics such as proactive personality and career identity. Furthermore, adaptable employees are more likely to successfully transition into new roles, maintain continuous learning, and exhibit lower turnover intentions (Chan & Mai, 2015; Maggiori et al., 2013). As such, CA is expected to enhance the likelihood of SE over time.

Hypothesis 2 (H2): WM has a significant positive impact on SE.

WM is a strategic leadership approach grounded in ethical decision-making, human-centered values, and the balance between short-term goals and long-term organizational vision (McKenna & Rooney, 2005). Organizations that adopt wisdom-oriented leadership tend to foster supportive work environments that promote professional growth and well-being, ultimately enhancing job satisfaction and employment sustainability (Alammar & Pauleen, 2015). Moreover, such leadership fosters learning cultures, creativity, and flexibility—key elements for helping employees navigate changes in the technological and economic landscape (Nonaka et al., 2008). Especially during periods of disruption, wisdom-driven management may help prevent burnout and ensure job continuity (Jeste et al., 2019). Therefore, it is hypothesized that WM plays a direct and positive role in sustaining employment.

Hypothesis 3 (H3): WM mediates the relationship between CA and SE.

While CA is considered a crucial factor in maintaining SE, its effectiveness may be influenced by managerial and organizational conditions. WM can amplify this relationship by creating environments that support personal and professional development (Bratianu & Bejinaru, 2023). Through learning opportunities, innovation-friendly policies, and a culture of psychological safety, wise leaders enable employees to fully leverage their

adaptability capacities (Glück, 2018). Furthermore, by promoting conscious and ethical decision-making, wisdom leadership can align individual needs with organizational objectives. Supporting this view, (Neves & van Dam, 2024) found that adaptability leads to positive employee outcomes only when supported by high-quality leadership, reinforcing the mediating role of wisdom-based management. Thus, it is posited that WM functions as a mediating mechanism between CA and SE.

3 METHODS

Samples and Procedures

The participants in this study were employees working at state-owned banks in Ardabil, Iran. A total of 370 bank staff voluntarily completed the survey questionnaires. Among the respondents, 288 were male (77.8%) and 82 were female (22.2%). Most held a bachelor's degree ($n = 152$, 41.1%). The most common age group was 36–40 years old ($n = 102$, 27.6%), and the largest proportion of participants had over 26 years of work experience ($n = 154$, 41.6%). Regarding marital status, 83.2% were married, and 16.8% were single.

A stratified random sampling method was used to ensure a balanced representation across different branches and job levels. All participants were informed of the study's purpose, assured of confidentiality and anonymity, and participation was entirely voluntary.

Measures

Career adaptability

Career adaptability was assessed using the 24-item Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS) originally developed by (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). The CAAS consists of 24 items measuring four adaptive resources: **concern** (e.g., “Thinking about what my future will be like”), **control** (e.g., “Making decisions by myself”), **curiosity** (e.g., “Looking for opportunities to grow as a person”), and **confidence** (e.g., “Overcoming obstacles”). Responses were recorded on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*not strong*) to 5 (*strongest*). The present study employed the Persian version of the CAAS validated by McKenna, Zacher, Ardabili, and Mohebbi (2017), which demonstrated acceptable psychometric properties in Iranian samples. In the current study, Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the CAAS achieved 0.89.

Wisdom Management

The mediating variable was measured with the 40-item scale created by (Webster, 2003), which evaluates five key dimensions of wisdom in organizational settings: experience, emotional regulation, reflection, openness, and humor, each consisting of eight items. Items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Sample items include: “I am very aware of my emotions” (emotional regulation) and “I can laugh at my own mistakes and awkwardness” (humor). The Cronbach's alpha for the emotional regulation subscale was 0.90.

Sustainable Employment

Sustainable Employment (SE) was measured using a 20-item scale adapted from (van Dam et al., 2017). This tool includes three subscales: work engagement (8 items), job commitment (7 items), and emotional commitment (5 items). All items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). An example item from the job commitment subscale is: “I could easily find another job like mine.” The Cronbach's alpha for the work engagement subscale was 0.91.

4 RESULTS

To start the analysis, potential concerns related to common method variance (CMV) were addressed. Both exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses were conducted to determine whether a single dominant factor influenced the data. Although the results of Harman's single-factor test were not separately reported, the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) showed strong evidence that the measurement model fit well and that the constructs were conceptually and statistically distinct. This suggests that CMV was not a major threat in the current study.

The CFA results showed a strong fit between the proposed model and the observed data. While the chi-square statistic was significant ($\chi^2 = 3873.87$, $df = 3388$, $p < 0.001$)—as expected due to the large sample size—the chi-square to degrees of freedom ratio ($\chi^2/df = 1.143$) was well within the acceptable range of 2 to 3, indicating an excellent model fit. Additional fit indices supported this conclusion: the RMSEA was 0.007, with a 90% confidence interval from 0.006 to 0.008, and a PCLOSE value of 1.000. Incremental fit indices, including CFI (0.974), TLI (0.972), and IFI (0.974), all exceeded the standard threshold of 0.90. Parsimonious fit indices such as PNFI (0.782) and PCFI (0.924) also demonstrated a good balance between model simplicity and explanatory power. Finally, the Akaike Information Criterion (AIC) for the proposed model (4,405.87) was significantly lower than that of the independence model (22,115.05), supporting the overall model adequacy. Hoelter's index confirmed an adequate sample size, with values of 2836 ($p = 0.05$) and 2882 ($p = 0.01$), both well above the recommended cutoffs.

Descriptive statistics and correlation analyses further clarified the relationships between variables. All measured variables showed positive and significant Pearson correlations at the $p < 0.01$ level. Correlation coefficients ranged from 0.58 to 0.90, indicating generally strong and consistent associations. Specifically, CA (CA) showed a high correlation with both WM (WM) ($r = 0.90$) and SE ($r = 0.88$), indicating that individuals who perceive themselves as more adaptable are also more likely to experience supportive leadership and long-term employability.

Additionally, WM was strongly linked to SE ($r = 0.89$), supporting its potential role as a mediator between CA and SE. Subdimensions of WM—including openness, reflection, emotional regulation, and humor—also showed significant correlations with CA and SE. For example, openness was positively related to humor ($r = 0.70$), reflection ($r = 0.70$), and CA ($r = 0.80$), suggesting that employees who are open to new experiences tend to be more reflective, self-aware, and adaptable in the workplace.

Taken together, these results establish a solid empirical basis for testing the study's structural model and hypotheses. The statistical strength of the CFA and the correlations among key constructs indicate that CA, WM, and SE are closely connected aspects of professional well-being in organizational settings.

Table 1 - Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Matrix of Study Variables

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. Concern	3.15	1.34	1													
2. Control	3.13	1.29	.66**	1												
3. Curiosity	3.20	1.31	.60**	.61**	1											
4. Confidence	3.19	1.25	.58**	.59**	.65**	1										
5. Experience	3.21	1.29	.61**	.63**	.65**	.61**	1									
6. Emotional regulation	3.16	1.29	.60**	.61**	.65**	.62**	.61**	1								
7. Reflection	3.26	1.32	.65**	.69**	.66**	.59**	.67**	.62**	1							
8. Openness	3.26	1.30	.66**	.68**	.66**	.70**	.71**	.60**	.70**	1						
9. Humor	3.22	1.26	.70**	.62**	.65**	.68**	.70**	.60**	.69**	.70**	1					
10. Work Engagement	3.19	1.32	.62**	.67**	.65**	.63**	.70**	.69**	.67**	.63**	.66**	1				
11. Job Commitment	3.24	1.31	.63**	.60**	.69**	.63**	.66**	.65**	.64**	.66**	.68**	.63**	1			
12. Emotional Commitment	3.23	1.33	.64**	.67**	.66**	.64**	.63**	.66**	.70**	.68**	.66**	.63**	.63**	1		
13. CA	3.17	1.10	.84**	.84**	.85**	.83**	.74**	.73**	.77**	.80**	.78**	.76**	.76**	.78**	1	
14. WM	3.22	1.11	.75**	.76**	.76**	.75**	.86**	.80**	.86**	.87**	.86**	.78**	.77**	.78**	.90**	1
15. SE	3.22	1.15	.73**	.75**	.77**	.73**	.76**	.77**	.77**	.76**	.76**	.87**	.87**	.87**	.88**	.89**

4.1 Hypothesis Testing

To test the proposed hypotheses, Hayes' PROCESS Macro (Model 4) was used to analyze both direct and indirect effects, with CA as the independent variable, WM as the mediating variable, and SE as the dependent variable. The analysis showed statistically significant results across all tested relationships, supporting the proposed model structure.

For Hypothesis 1, which proposed that CA positively predicts WM, the regression results yielded a coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.8099, indicating that approximately 81% of the variance in WM can be explained by CA. The model was statistically significant ($F = 1567.79$, $p < .001$), confirming that CA has a strong and meaningful effect on the development of WM skills among employees.

For Hypothesis 2, which assessed the direct effect of WM on SE (controlling for CA), the results showed an $R^2 = 0.8369$, indicating that nearly 84% of the variance in SE is accounted for by the combined influence of CA and WM. Once again, the model demonstrated strong statistical significance ($F = 941.66$, $p < .001$), highlighting the crucial role of WM in fostering SE outcomes.

Hypothesis 3 examined whether WM mediates the relationship between CA and SE. The bootstrapped indirect effect was significant, with a 95% confidence interval that did not include zero (BootLLCI = 0.3968, BootULCI = 0.6302), indicating partial mediation. This suggests that while CA has a direct impact on SE, a substantial portion of this effect is transmitted through wise, human-centered management practices.

Overall, the findings indicate that CA plays a significant role in achieving SE, both directly and indirectly through its mediating role in WM. The consistently high R^2 values in both models (each over 80%) emphasize the explanatory strength of the proposed model. Additionally, the high adjusted R^2 values across models confirm that the model retains its predictive power even after considering the complexity of the variables.

These results provide empirical support for the idea that adaptability and wise leadership together contribute to fostering long-term employee engagement and retention. They also highlight the practical importance of investing in both individual career resources and organizational leadership development.

Table 2 -Results of Hypothesis Testing Using Hayes' PROCESS Model 4

hypothesis Number	Coefficient (B)	P Value	Confidence Interval (LLCI, ULCI)	ΔR^2	Adjusted R^2	R^2	F
hypothesis 1	0.9081	0	(0.8630, 0.9531)	0.81	0.8094	0.81	1567.8
hypothesis 2	0.5624	0	(0.4635, 0.6612)	0.837	0.8364	0.837	941.66
hypothesis 3	0.5107	(Bootstrapped)	(0.3968, 0.6302)	-	-	-	-

Table 2 presents the regression coefficients (B), significance levels (P), confidence intervals (LLCI and ULCI), and model fit statistics (ΔR^2 , Adjusted R^2 , R^2 , F) for each of the three hypotheses. Hypothesis 3 was tested using bootstrap confidence intervals to assess the indirect (mediated) effect.

Table 3 shows the results of hypothesis testing using Process Macro (Model 4 and Bootstrap method) and AMOS. These analyses examined the direct effects of job compatibility on micro-management and SE, as well as the mediating role of micro-management in the relationship between job compatibility and SE. The findings reveal different levels of hypothesis confirmation depending on the analytical method used.

Table 3 - Results of Hypotheses Testing Using Process Macro and AMOS

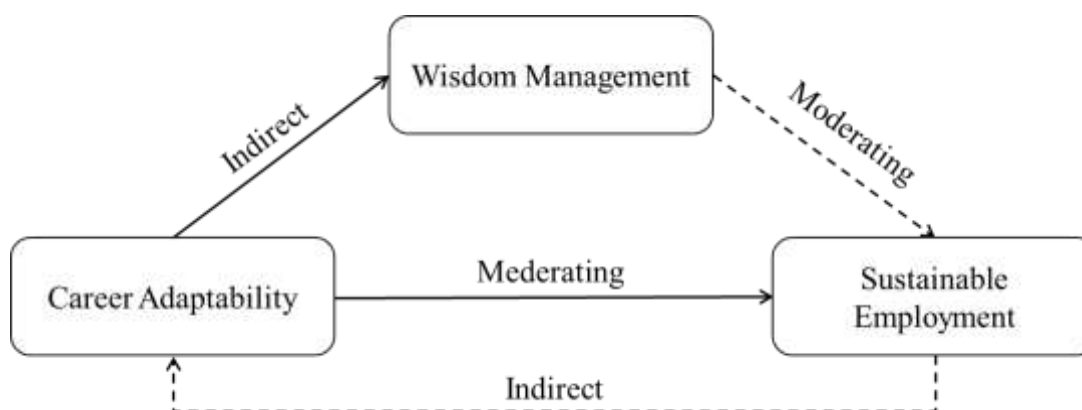
Hypothesis No.	Hypothesis Statement	Analytical Tool	Result	Explanation
H1	CA has a positive and significant effect on WM.	Process Macro (Model 4)	☑ Supported	The analysis revealed a positive and significant path coefficient ($B = 0.9081$, $p < 0.001$), indicating high predictive power ($R^2 = 0.8099$). Thus, employees with higher levels of CA contribute to the development of WM.
H2	WM has a positive and significant effect on SE.	AMOS and Process Macro	☑ Supported in Process Macro ✗ Rejected in AMOS	In Process Macro, the path coefficient was positive and significant ($B = 0.5624$, $p < 0.001$, $R^2 = 0.8369$). However, the direct path was not significant in AMOS. Due to the higher sensitivity of the Bootstrap method, the Process Macro result is considered more reliable, and the hypothesis is accepted based on that.
H3	WM mediates the relationship between career adaptability and SE.	Process Macro (Bootstrap)	☑ Supported	The confidence interval for the indirect effect (Boot LLCI = 0.3968, Boot ULCI = 0.6302) did not include zero, indicating partial mediation. This suggests that wise management partially transmits the effect of career adaptability on SE.

Table 3 summarizes the results of hypothesis testing using both AMOS and Process Macro. In the AMOS analysis, the direct path from wise management to SE was not significant, leading to the rejection of hypotheses H2 and H3. However, the Process Macro Analysis—which is more accurate because of its use of bootstrapping—showed both significant direct and indirect effects, confirming all three hypotheses (H1, H2, and H3). Furthermore, the R^2 values exceeding 80% in both models indicate a strong explanatory power. Therefore, in the final interpretation, based on the more comprehensive and statistically robust Process Macro results, all proposed hypotheses are supported.

5 DISCUSSION

This section examines the interactive relationships among the three primary constructs of the study. The conceptual model that underpins the research framework is illustrated in the figure below.

Figure 1 - Conceptual Framework of the Study



The proposed relationships among CA, WM, and SE are visually depicted in Figure 1, which illustrates the conceptual framework of this study. As shown in the model, CA is expected to positively influence SE both directly and indirectly through WM, which acts as a mediator. Additionally, WM is also predicted to moderate the relationship between CA and SE, highlighting the interaction between individual adaptability and wise leadership in fostering long-term employment sustainability.

Interaction Between CA and WM in Predicting SE

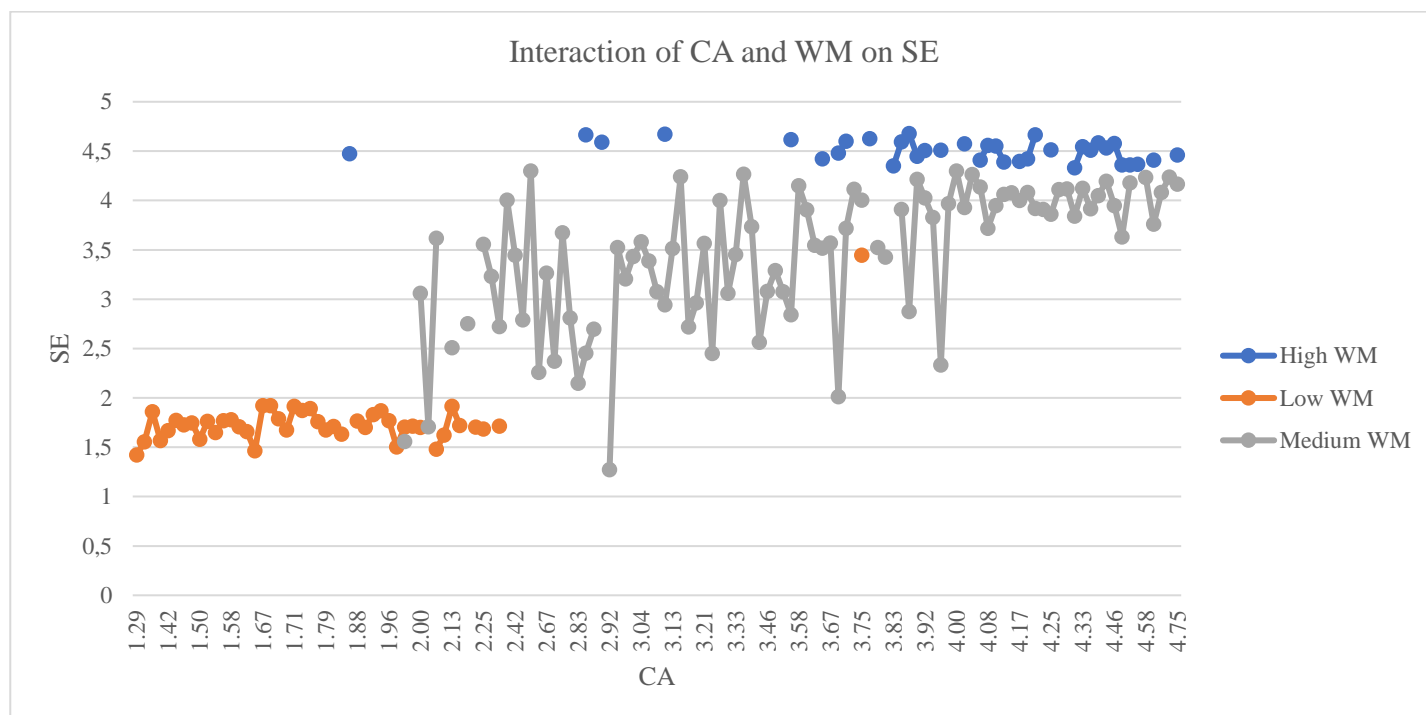
A key focus of this study is the interactive role of WM in the relationship between Career Adaptability and SE. Hypothesis 3 (H3) suggests that WM acts as a mediating or moderating variable that may influence how strongly and in which direction CA affects SE. This suggests that the positive relationship between CA and SE may depend on the level of effective management within the organizational environment.

The Moderating Influence of WM

When effective management is exercised at a high level, it is expected to strengthen the positive connection between CA and SE. Employees with strong adaptive skills working in environments led by thoughtful, ethical, and reflective leadership are more likely to achieve long-term job stability and satisfaction. On the other hand, in settings marked by low levels of effective management, the positive effects of adaptability may be weakened. In such environments, the lack of prudent decision-making and strategic foresight can lead to organizational challenges that even highly adaptable individuals find hard to overcome.

Moderation Analysis: The Role of WM in the CA–SE Relationship

Figure 2 - Interaction Effect of CA and Wise Management on SE



As shown in Figure 2, SE rises with higher levels of career adaptability across all levels of wise management (WM). However, the strength and consistency of this connection vary greatly depending on the level of WM.

At high levels of WM, the positive relationship between CA and SE is both strong and stable. Notably, SE reaches its peak as CA increases, indicating that in environments with effective wise leadership, employees are better able to turn their adaptability into long-term, stable employment outcomes.

At the medium level of WM, although the relationship remains generally positive, it shows significant fluctuations. This suggests that moderate management can support SE, but its effects are less consistent and may be influenced by other organizational factors.

In contrast, at low levels of WM, SE remains relatively low even as CA increases. This suggests that when effective management is absent, employees' individual adaptability is insufficient to secure SE, likely due to inadequate organizational support or poor leadership practices.

These findings support the hypothesis that wise management moderates the relationship between CA and SE. Essentially, WM boosts the functional activation of employees' adaptive capacities, increasing their potential to secure and maintain stable employment. Therefore, wise management functions not only as a cognitive and behavioral resource but also as a vital organizational mechanism that allows individual competencies to contribute meaningfully to long-term human capital retention and organizational sustainability.

5.1 Theoretical Implications

This study presents a new framework for understanding SE by exploring the interactive effects among WM, career adaptability, and SE. The findings enhance theoretical progress in several key areas.

- Advancing the Theory of WM and Its Impact on SE

WM is a growing concept in management literature, emphasizing ethical, informed, and future-focused decision-making. Based on the framework proposed by (Nonaka et al., 2008) Organizations that adopt WM create environments that foster learning, innovation, and richer social interactions. Through participatory decision-making and knowledge-sharing practices, wise leadership enhances employee well-being and long-term employability.

Previous research (e.g., (McKenna & Rooney, 2005)) has shown that wise managers can reduce workplace stress and enhance job satisfaction, which in turn lowers turnover rates and increases employee commitment. The current study confirms that WM positively impacts SE by fostering supportive and stable work environments where employees feel secure and motivated to stay. This finding broadens existing theoretical models by highlighting the organizational-level influence of wise leadership on employment continuity, moving beyond traditional, individual-focused approaches.

- Empirical Support and Expansion of CA Theory

Based on the theory of CA by (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012) This study confirms that individuals with higher CA are better at managing workplace changes and challenges. As previous research (Chan & Mai, 2015; Fiori et al., 2015) shows that employees with greater adaptability tend to have lower turnover intentions and higher job satisfaction.

Importantly, the study identifies a strong direct relationship between CA and SE, suggesting that Adaptive individuals not only manage change more effectively but also excel in terms of long-term employability. This aligns with recent work by (Zhao et al., 2022), which links CA to improved performance and reduced occupational stress. Theoretically, this expands the role of CA from a personal coping mechanism to a central determinant of employment sustainability, highlighting its relevance for strategic human resource development.

- Unveiling the Interactive Effects Between WM and CA

A key contribution of this research is identifying the interactive effects between WM and CA in predicting SE. Earlier studies (e.g., (Maggiori et al., 2013; Rudolph et al., 2017)) suggested that the influence of CA might be moderated by managerial factors. This study confirms that employees with high CA working under effective leadership are significantly more likely to experience SE.

The findings mirror those of (Zacher & Griffin, 2015), highlighting that supportive, wisdom-driven workplaces enhance the benefits of employee adaptability. Additionally, the study emphasizes the mediating role of WM, showing that wise management enhances the translation of adaptability into SE outcomes. This underscores the importance of aligning managerial styles with employee capabilities to maximize long-term workforce stability.

- Expanding the Conceptual Understanding of SE

SE refers to an individual's ability to maintain meaningful, long-term work while adapting to environmental changes. Building on the perspectives of (van Dam et al., 2017), who emphasized both individual and organizational factors of SE, this study highlights that managerial style—particularly wise management—plays a vital role alongside personal adaptability.

Sustainable employability is increasingly viewed as a multidimensional and evolving outcome, rooted in the dynamic interaction between personal resources, job demands, and environmental conditions. As (Fleuren et al., 2020) suggest that long-term employability depends not only on individual competencies but also on how well the work context supports continuous alignment between individuals and their roles. This study supports such integration, showing that WM and CA together promote SE. Theoretically, these findings suggest a need to refine SE models to include leadership as a key organizational factor. Future research could examine additional elements, such as organizational culture and social support, to deepen our understanding of employment sustainability.

5.2 Practical Implications

The current study offers several practical implications for organizational leaders, human resource professionals, and policymakers seeking to promote SE and enhance workforce resilience. By examining the roles of CA, WM, and SE, the findings provide evidence-based strategies to improve employee engagement, retention, and long-term organizational sustainability.

- Formulating Organizational Policies to Foster CA

The demonstrated positive link between CA and SE emphasizes the importance of providing employees with adaptive skills. Organizations should adopt structured interventions such as career counseling, resilience training, upskilling workshops, and personalized professional development programs. These initiatives can enhance employees' ability to manage career changes, respond effectively to workplace challenges, and maintain long-term occupational engagement.

- Institutionalizing WM Practices

Considering WM's significant influence in CA and SE, organizations should prioritize integrating wisdom-based decision-making at all managerial levels. Promoting ethical leadership, reflective judgment, and participative governance can enhance the organizational environment, resulting in greater job satisfaction and reduced turnover intentions. Building a culture of continuous learning, knowledge sharing, and interpersonal trust is essential for establishing WM as a central leadership approach.

- Designing Evidence-Informed Strategies for Talent Retention

In a rapidly changing and unpredictable labor market, SE depends on both individual adaptability and supportive organizational structures. According to the study's findings, organizations should develop retention strategies that include clear career advancement paths, flexible work options, and comprehensive well-being initiatives. Programs such as hybrid work arrangements, mental health services, and work-life balance policies can significantly enhance employee engagement and organizational stability.

- Enhancing Performance Appraisal and Employee Development Systems

To align human resource practices with the changing needs of the workforce, organizations should update their performance evaluation frameworks to measure skills related to adaptability and wisdom-focused behavior. Using psychometrically validated tools and data-driven feedback systems can help identify high-potential employees and support the creation of personalized development plans that match long-term strategic objectives.

- Policy Recommendations for Promoting SE at the National Level

On a broad level, the results indicate that public policymakers should consider implementing supportive legislation and funding strategies that encourage SE practices. This could include subsidies for employer-led training programs, the promotion of lifelong learning initiatives, and targeted employment support services for vulnerable populations. Policy efforts should aim to create a labor environment that consistently promotes both organizational innovation and individual flexibility.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

This study makes significant contributions to understanding the dynamic relationships between career adaptability, wisdom management, and sustainable employment. However, several limitations should be acknowledged. The use of a cross-sectional design limits the ability to draw definitive causal conclusions. Although

the hypothesized pathways were supported by the data, longitudinal or experimental studies are necessary to confirm the temporal order and the evolving nature of these relationships.

Another limitation relates to the context-specific scope of the research. The data were collected from employees in state-owned banks in Ardabil province, Iran, which may restrict the external validity of the findings. Future research should investigate whether the proposed framework applies across different sectors, organizational cultures, and geographic regions to improve generalizability.

Furthermore, the reliance solely on self-reported measures introduces the risk of response biases, including common method variance. Although statistical controls were used, future studies would benefit from incorporating data from multiple sources and methods to strengthen the robustness of the results.

Additionally, while this study emphasizes wisdom management as a mediating and moderating factor, other contextual variables—such as transformational leadership, psychological safety, or organizational justice—might also play important roles in shaping the link between adaptability and employment sustainability. Exploring these factors could yield deeper insights into organizational conditions that promote long-term employability.

Finally, as workplaces continue to evolve through technological disruptions, remote work models, and AI-driven transformations, future research should explore how these trends interact with individual adaptability and leadership wisdom to influence sustainable career paths. Addressing these emerging dynamics will be crucial for developing HR strategies that support resilient and future-ready workforces.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the interconnected roles of CA, SE, and WM as essential factors in promoting long-term workforce stability and organizational effectiveness. CA enables employees to effectively handle workplace changes and challenges, laying the foundation for SE. In turn, SE provides a supportive environment—characterized by job security, opportunities for ongoing learning, and organizational support—where individuals can develop and perform more effectively. WM introduces a strategic and ethical perspective, ensuring that reflective and human-centered principles guide organizational practices.

In today's rapidly changing work environment, driven by technological disruption, economic uncertainty, and shifting labor market demands, the connection among these three factors becomes increasingly important. CA boosts employee resilience, while SE enhances motivation, well-being, and productivity. WM serves as a guiding force that aligns these efforts with broader organizational values and long-term objectives.

Based on this research, organizations are advised to adopt an integrated approach that enhances adaptability, fosters SE conditions, and institutionalizes wisdom-focused management practices. For instance, organizations offering skill development opportunities, flexible career options, and supportive leadership are more likely to cultivate a motivated, innovative, and dedicated workforce. Ultimately, the study indicates that such a comprehensive strategy not only boosts individual and organizational performance but also advances broader social and economic sustainability goals.

REFERENCES

- Alammar, F., & Pauleen, D. (2015). Exploring managers' conceptions of wisdom as management practice. In *Journal of Management and Organization* (Vol. 22, pp. 550–565). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/jmo.2015.53>
- Ardabili, F. S., & McKenna, B. (2020). Practical Wisdom in Ancient Iran, In Intezari, A., Spiller, Ch., & Yang, Sh-Y (1st Ed). *Practical Wisdom and Leadership in a Poly-cultural World: Asian, Indigenous and Middle-Eastern Perspectives*, Routledge Publishing, London. (Book chapter)
- Babaei Rayni, A., Daneshfard, K., & Mirsepassi, N. (2021). Designing a Human Resource Development Model to Enhance the Effectiveness of Government Agencies (Case Study: Kerman Governorate). *Public Organizations Management*, 9(3), 45–60. <https://doi.org/10.30473/ipom.2021.51553.4025>
- Baltes, P. B., & Staudinger, U. M. (2000). Wisdom: A metaheuristic (pragmatic) to orchestrate mind and virtue toward excellence. *American Psychologist*, 55(1), 122–136. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.55.1.122>
- Bennett, N., & Lemoine, G. J. (2014). What a difference a word makes: Understanding threats to performance in a VUCA world. *Business Horizons*, 57(3), 311–317. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2014.01.001>

- Bierly, P. E., Kessler, E. H., & Christensen, E. W. (2000). Organizational learning, knowledge and wisdom. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 13(6), 595–618. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09534810010378605>
- Bratianu, C., & Bejinaru, R. (2023). Wisdom Management: A Semantic Analysis. *Proceedings of the International Conference on Business Excellence*, 17(1), 1167–1178. <https://doi.org/10.2478/picbe-2023-0105>
- Chan, S. H. J., & Mai, X. (2015). The relation of career adaptability to satisfaction and turnover intentions. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 89, 130–139. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2015.05.005>
- Filin*, N. A., Medushevsky, N. A., Gordeeva, M. A., Koklikov, V. O., & Khodunov, A. S. (2019). *Socio-Economic Development of Iran Within The Transformation Of Sanctions Policy In 2012-2018*. 1952–1960. <https://doi.org/10.15405/epsbs.2019.03.02.227>
- Fiori, M., Bollmann, G., & Rossier, J. (2015). Exploring the path through which career adaptability increases job satisfaction and lowers job stress: The role of affect. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 91, 113–121. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2015.08.010>
- Fleuren, B. P. I., de Grip, A., Jansen, N. W. H., Kant, Ij., & Zijlstra, F. R. H. (2020). Unshrouding the sphere from the clouds: Towards a comprehensive conceptual framework for sustainable employability. *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, 12. <https://doi.org/10.3390/SU12166366>
- Glück, J. (2018). Measuring Wisdom: Existing Approaches, Continuing Challenges, and New Developments. *Journals of Gerontology - Series B Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences*, 73, 1393–1403. <https://doi.org/10.1093/geronb/gbx140>
- Haenggli, M., & Hirschi, A. (2020). Career adaptability and career success in the context of a broader career resources framework. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 119. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2020.103414>
- Hazelzet, E., Picco, E., Houkes, I., Bosma, H., & de Rijk, A. (2019). Effectiveness of Interventions to Promote Sustainable Employability: A Systematic Review. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 16(11), 1985. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph16111985>
- Hirschi, A. (2009). Career adaptability development in adolescence: Multiple predictors and effect on sense of power and life satisfaction. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 74(2), 145–155. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2009.01.002>
- Intezari, A., & Pauleen, D. J. (2014). Management Wisdom in Perspective: Are You Virtuous Enough to Succeed in Volatile Times? *Journal of Business Ethics*, 120, 393–404. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-013-1666-6>
- Javadi, T., & Damayanti, R. (2025). The Role of Wisdom in Managerial Decision-Making: A Systematic Review with a Meta-Analytic Approach. *European Journal of Studies in Management and Business*, 34, 1–28. <https://doi.org/10.32038/mbrq.2025.34.01>
- Jeste, D. V., Lee, E. E., Cassidy, C., Caspari, R., Gagneux, P., Glorioso, D., Miller, B. L., Semendeferi, K., Vogler, C., Nusbaum, H., & Blazer, D. (2019). The new science of practical wisdom. *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine*, 62, 216–236. <https://doi.org/10.1353/pbm.2019.0011>
- Kunzmann, U., & Baltes, P. B. (2005). The Psychology of Wisdom. In *A Handbook of Wisdom* (pp. 110–136). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511610486.006>
- Maggiori, C., Johnston, C. S., Krings, F., Massoudi, K., & Rossier, J. (2013). The role of career adaptability and work conditions on general and professional well-being. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 83(3), 437–449. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2013.07.001>
- McKenna, B., & Rooney, D. (2005, January). (PDF) *Wisdom Management: Tensions Between Theory and Practice in Practice*. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/37618441_Wisdom_Management_Tensions_Between_Theory_And_Practice_In_Practice
- McKenna, B., Zacher, H., Ardabili, F. S., & Mohebbi, H. (2017). Career adapt-abilities scale—Persian form: Psychometric properties and relationships with career satisfaction and entrepreneurial intentions. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 98, 81–96. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2016.01.004>
- Melé, D. (2010). Practical wisdom in managerial decision making. *Journal of Management Development*, 29(7/8), 637–645. <https://doi.org/10.1108/02621711011059068>
- Nakra, N., Kashyap, V., & Arora, R. (2024). Interactive effects of sustainable HRM, career adaptability and career sustainability on employee well-being. *Employee Relations*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ER-01-2024-0021>
- Neves, P., & van Dam, K. (2024). Facilitating Change: The Role of Adaptability and LMX for Change Support. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00218863241257959>
- Nonaka, I., & Toyama, R. (2007). Strategic management as distributed practical wisdom (phronesis). *Industrial and Corporate Change*, 16, 371–394. <https://doi.org/10.1093/icc/dtm014>
- Nonaka, I., Toyama, R., Hirata, T., Bigelow, S. J., Hirose, A., & Kohlbacher, F. (2008). *Managing Flow*. Palgrave Macmillan UK. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230583702>
- Potomkin, V. (2024). Self-concept and educational success on career adaptability among nurses. *Management Issues in Healthcare System*, 10, 25–36. <https://doi.org/10.32038/mihs.2024.10.03>

- Rudolph, C. W., Lavigne, K. N., & Zacher, H. (2017). Career adaptability: A meta-analysis of relationships with measures of adaptivity, adapting responses, and adaptation results. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 98, 17–34. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2016.09.002>
- Savickas, M. L., & Porfeli, E. J. (2012). Career Adapt-Abilities Scale: Construction, reliability, and measurement equivalence across 13 countries. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 80(3), 661–673. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2012.01.011>
- van Dam, K., van Vuuren, T., & Kemps, S. (2017). Sustainable employment: the importance of intrinsically valuable work and an age-supportive climate. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 28(17), 2449–2472. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2015.1137607>
- van der Klink, J. J., Bültmann, U., Burdorf, A., Schaufeli, W. B., Zijlstra, F. R., Abma, F. I., Brouwer, S., & van der Wilt, G. J. (2016). Sustainable employability – definition, conceptualization, and implications: A perspective based on the capability approach. *Scandinavian Journal of Work, Environment & Health*, 42(1), 71–79. <https://doi.org/10.5271/sjweh.3531>
- Webster, J. D. (2003). An Exploratory Analysis of a Self-Assessed Wisdom Scale. *Journal of Adult Development*, 10, 13–22. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1020782619051>
- Zacher, H., & Griffin, B. (2015). Older Workers' Age as a Moderator of the Relationship Between Career Adaptability and Job Satisfaction. *Work, Aging and Retirement*, 1(2), 227–236. <https://doi.org/10.1093/workar/wau009>
- Zhao, L., Li, W., & Zhang, H. (2022). Career Adaptability as a Strategy to Improve Sustainable Employment: A Proactive Personality Perspective. *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, 14. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su141912889>



Esta licença permite que os usuários distribuam, remixem, adaptem e desenvolvam o material em qualquer meio ou formato apenas para fins não comerciais, e somente desde que a atribuição seja dada ao criador.