

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CAREER  
ADAPTABILITY AND WORK STRESS AMONG  
EMPLOYEES IN KUALA LUMPUR: JOB  
SATISFACTION AS A MEDIATOR

WONG YONG KENT

MASTER OF PSYCHOLOGY (INDUSTRIAL  
AND ORGANIZATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY)

FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES  
UNIVERSITI TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN  
SEPTEMBER 2023

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CAREER ADAPTABILITY AND  
WORK STRESS AMONG EMPLOYEES IN KUALA LUMPUR: JOB  
SATISFACTION AS A MEDIATOR**

By

**WONG YONG KENT**

A dissertation submitted to the Institute of Postgraduate Studies and Research,

Faculty of Arts and Social Science

Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman,

in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Psychology (Industrial and Organizational Psychology)

SEPTEMBER 2023

## **ABSTRACT**

### **THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CAREER ADAPTABILITY AND WORK STRESS AMONG EMPLOYEES IN KUALA LUMPUR: JOB SATISFACTION AS A MEDIATOR**

**Wong Yong Kent**

The present study examined the relationship between career adaptability, job satisfaction, and work stress among employees in the private services sector. Drawing upon the transactional model of stress, the study aimed to examine how these variables interacted and influenced each other within the organizational context. A sample of 425 participants was surveyed using validated measurement scales of Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS), Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire Short form (MSQSF), and General Work Stress Scale (GWSS) for career adaptability, job satisfaction, and work stress. The results revealed a significant negative correlation between career adaptability and work stress, suggesting that higher career adaptability was associated with lower work stress levels. Additionally, job satisfaction was found to have a significant negative correlation with work stress, indicating that greater job satisfaction was linked to reduced work stress. However, contrary to initial hypotheses, job

satisfaction did not emerge as a significant mediator in the relationship between career adaptability and work stress. The study shed light on the nuanced relationships between these variables and highlighted the importance of considering multiple factors in understanding employees' experiences within the workplace. These findings contributed to the existing literature on stress and well-being in organizational settings and had implications for HR practices and employee development programs.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my dissertation supervisors, Dr. Pung Pit Wan and Ms. Sarvarubini a/p Nainee, from the Department of Psychology and Counselling at Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman, Kampar, for their consistent guidance and support throughout my research. Their valuable advice and direction were instrumental in completing this thesis. I am also grateful to the professionals who served as the Panel of Assessors during the dissertation examinations, as their feedback and guidance were invaluable.

I would like to extend my appreciation to all the participants who generously gave their time and participated in the online questionnaire, which helped me to gather the necessary data for this research.

Finally, I would like to thank my parents and course mates for their unwavering support and encouragement throughout the preparation of this dissertation. Without their support, this accomplishment would not have been possible.

## APPROVAL SHEET

This dissertation entitled “**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CAREER ADAPTABILITY AND WORK STRESS AMONG EMPLOYEES IN KUALA LUMPUR: JOB SATISFACTION AS A MEDIATOR**” was prepared by WONG YONG KENT and submitted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Psychology (Industrial and Organisational Psychology) at Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman.

Approved by:



---

(Dr. PUNG PIT WAN)  
Date: 13 September 2023  
Supervisor  
Department of Psychology and Counselling  
Faculty of Arts and Social Science  
Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman



---

(MS. SARVARUBINI A/P NAINEE)  
Date: 14 September 2023  
Co-supervisor  
Department of Psychology and Counselling  
Faculty of Arts and Social Science  
Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman

## SUBMISSION SHEET

FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCE

UNIVERSITI TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN

Date: 13/9/2023

### SUBMISSION OF FINAL YEAR PROJECT /DISSERTATION/THESIS

It is hereby certified that WONG YONG KENT (ID No: 20AAM00200) has completed this ~~final year project/~~ **dissertation/ thesis\*** entitled “ THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CAREER ADAPTABILITY AND WORK STRESS AMONG EMPLOYEES IN KUALA LUMPUR: JOB SATISFACTION AS A MEDIATOR ” under the supervision of DR. PUNG PIT WAN (Supervisor) from the Department of Psychology and Counselling, Faculty of Arts and Social Science, and MS. SARVARUBINI A/P NAINEE (Co-Supervisor)\* from the Department of Psychology and Counselling, Faculty of Arts and Social Science.

I understand that University will upload softcopy of my ~~final year project /~~ **dissertation/ thesis\*** in pdf format into UTAR Institutional Repository, which may be made accessible to UTAR community and public.

Yours truly,

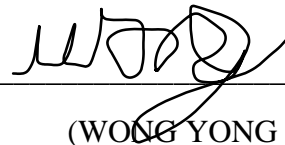


(WONG YONG KENT)

## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the dissertation is based on my original work except for quotations and citations which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted for any other degree at UTAR or other institutions.

Name \_\_\_\_\_



(WONG YONG KENT)

Date: 13 SEPTEMBER 2023



# Table of Contents

<b>ABSTRACT .....</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT .....</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>APPROVAL SHEET .....</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>SUBMISSION SHEET .....</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>DECLARATION .....</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES .....</b>	<b>xi</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES .....</b>	<b>xii</b>
<b>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS .....</b>	<b>xiii</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background of the Study .....	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem .....	9
1.3 Research Objectives .....	13
1.4 Research Question .....	14
1.5 Research Hypothesis .....	14
1.6 Significance of Study .....	15
1.7 Definition of Variables .....	17
1.7.1 Career Adaptability .....	17
1.7.1.1 Conceptual Definition.....	17
1.7.1.2 Operational Definition.....	17
1.7.2 Work stress .....	17
1.7.2.1 Conceptual Definition.....	17
1.7.2.2 Operational Definition.....	18
1.7.3 Job Satisfaction.....	18
1.7.3.1 Conceptual Definition.....	18
1.7.3.2 Operational Definition.....	18
1.7.4 Employees in Kuala Lumpur.....	18
1.7.4.1 Conceptual Definition.....	18
1.7.4.2 Operational Definition.....	19

<b>CHAPTER 2.....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>LITERATURE REVIEW .....</b>	<b>20</b>
2.1 Review of Literature.....	20
2.1.1 Career Adaptability.....	20
2.1.2 Career adaptability in the private service industry .....	21
2.1.3 Job Satisfaction.....	21
2.1.4 Job satisfaction in the private services industry .....	22
2.1.5 Work Stress.....	23
2.1.6 Work stress in the private services industry .....	24
2.1.7 Relationship between Career Adaptability, Job Satisfaction and Work stress .....	25
2.1.8 Career Adaptability Predicts Work Stress .....	30
2.1.9 Job Satisfaction Predicts Work stress .....	33
2.1.10 Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction in the Relationship between Career Adaptability and Work Stress .....	36
2.2 Theoretical Framework .....	39
2.2.1 Transactional Model of Stress .....	39
2.3 Conceptual Framework .....	44
 <b>CHAPTER 3.....</b>	 <b>46</b>
<b>RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>46</b>
3.1 Research Design .....	46
3.2 Research Location .....	47
3.3 Sampling Method .....	47
3.4 Research Sample .....	48
3.4.1 Inclusion Criterion .....	50
3.4.2 Exclusion Criterion.....	51
3.5 Procedure.....	51
3.6 Instruments .....	52
3.6.1 Career Adapt-Abilities Scale .....	52
3.6.2 Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (Short-Form Version) .....	53
3.6.3 General Work Stress Scale .....	54
3.7 Data Analysis .....	55

3.8 Pilot Study .....	56
<b>CHAPTER 4.....</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>RESEARCH FINDINGS.....</b>	<b>58</b>
4.1 Introduction .....	58
4.2 Data Cleaning .....	58
4.3 Assumption of Normality .....	59
4.3.1 Skewness and Kurtosis .....	59
4.3.2 Scatterplot of Standardized Residuals .....	60
4.4 Reliability and Validity .....	61
4.4.1 Validity of the Instruments.....	61
4.4.2 Reliability of the Instruments .....	63
4.5 Descriptive Statistic.....	65
4.5.1 Gender.....	65
4.5.2 Age.....	65
4.5.3 Ethnicity.....	66
4.5.4 Working Experience .....	66
4.5.5 Working Sector .....	66
4.6 Inferential Statistic .....	69
4.6.1 Pearson Correlation .....	69
4.6.2 Tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) .....	70
4.6.3 Multiple Regression Analysis.....	71
4.6.4 Additional Analysis .....	71
4.6.5 Mediation Analysis (Process Macro).....	74
4.7 Conclusion.....	76
<b>CHAPTER 5.....</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>77</b>
5.1 Introduction .....	77
5.2 Discussions.....	77
5.2.1 There is a Significant Relationship between Career adaptability and Work stress.....	78
5.2.2 Career adaptability is a Significant Predictor of Work Stress .....	80

5.2.3 There is a Significant Relationship between Job satisfaction and Work Stress.....	82
5.2.4 Job satisfaction is a Significant Predictor of Work Stress.....	83
5.2.5 Job satisfaction is a Significant Mediator in the Relationship between Career Adaptability and Work Stress.....	86
5.3 Implications.....	89
5.3.1 Theoretical Approach.....	89
5.3.2 Practical Approach.....	91
5.4 Limitations.....	93
5.5 Recommendations.....	94
5.6 Conclusion.....	96
<b>REFERENCES .....</b>	<b>98</b>
<b>APPENDICES.....</b>	<b>118</b>
Ethical Approval for Research Project/Protocol.....	118
Scatterplot of Standardized Residuals.....	120
Career Adapt-Abilities Scale .....	122
General Work Stress Scale.....	124
Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (Short form) .....	125

## LIST OF TABLES

<b>Table</b>	<b>Page</b>
4.1 Normality Analysis Test Result	60
4.2 Correlation Matrix of Discriminant Validity	63
4.3 Reliability Test Analysis (Pilot Study and Actual Study)	64-65
4.4 Sociodemographic Characteristic of Participants	67-68
4.5 Pearson Product Moment Correlation between CA, JS and WS	70
4.6 Tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) of the Measured Variables	71
4.7 Results for Multiple Linear Regression (CA and JS Predicting WS)	73-74
4.8 Process Macro Analysis for Mediation Model in Present Study	75-76

## LIST OF FIGURES

<b>Figures</b>		<b>Page</b>
2.1	Theoretical Framework of the Study	42
2.2	Conceptual Framework of the Study	44
4.1	Scatterplot of Standardized Residuals (Career Adaptability with Employee's Work Stress)	120
4.2	Scatterplot of Standardized Residuals (Job Satisfaction with Employee's Work Stress)	121

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

CA	Career Adaptability
JS	Job Satisfaction
WS	Work Stress
CAAS	Career Adapt-Abilities Scale
MSQSF	Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (Short Form)
GWSS	General Work Stress Scale
VIF	Variance Inflation Factor
KL	Kuala Lumpur
AIA	American International Assurance

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

Stress is a commonly experienced emotion in various individuals' daily lives, particularly in workplaces. Work stress, as a negative response to perceived demands surpassing employees' coping capacity, can be attributed to the similar stress reactions experienced by others (Saadeh & Suifan, 2020). Notably, research conducted by the AIA Vitality survey underscores the prevalence of work stress among Malaysian employees, impacting their overall well-being. The survey revealed that 51% of workers in Malaysia experience work stress, with 53% of those individuals experiencing health problems due to workplace stressors (American International Assurance Vitality [AIA Vitality], 2019). Similarly, a survey found that 53% of employed Malaysians experienced significant work-related stress, leading to symptoms of anxiety and depression in one out of five employees (Relate Malaysia, 2021). This stress has severe implications, impacting job performance and resulting in higher costs due to sickness, absenteeism, presenteeism, turnover, and mental health issues. In fact, work-related stress costs approximately RM946 per worker annually, accounting for 31% of the average monthly salary and totals of RM14.46 billion in costs for employers, which is notably higher than the RM344.82



million allocated for mental health treatment under Budget 2020 (Relate Malaysia). This highlights the high prevalence of work stress among Malaysian employees, resulting in various problems and consequences in different aspects of their lives.

Addressing the rationale for focusing on the chosen variables, the ongoing changes in industries, especially with Malaysia's involvement in the industry 4.0 revolution, require employees to adapt to evolving job features. These transformations have led to a shift in job roles, skill requirements, and organizational expectations. With these changes happening, the problem of work stress has become more noticeable as employees feel more pressure to adjust, do well, and succeed. One critical aspect that has emerged as a potential solution to alleviate work stress is the concept of career adaptability. In short, inadequate adaptability can result in adverse outcomes such as job dissatisfaction and work stress. According to Fiori et al. (2015), career adaptability can significantly impact employees' work stress because adaptability is an individual's readiness to cope and engage in work responsibilities, even in unpredictable conditions. For instance, career adaptability empowers an employee to effectively manage unforeseen actions, organizational changes, or personal vocational shifts in the future. If these unpredictable occurrences are not appropriately accommodated, they may contribute to heightened work stress among employees.

The link between career adaptability and work stress becomes even more pronounced when considering the undeniable impact of workplace demands. For instance, swift adjustments to technological advancements, target achievements, and procedural changes have become the norm, exerting significant pressure on employees (Lukic & Lazarevic, 2018). In this context, career adaptability becomes the critical buffer that enables employees to tackle these challenges with resilience and adaptability. The absence of this adaptive capability may culminate in escalated work stress, as employees grapple with the strain of unanticipated changes and uncertainties.

Not only that, but the recent disruptions also caused by the "COVID-19" pandemic further amplify the significance of career adaptability, for example, organizations are grappling with unprecedented changes, from remote work arrangements to shifts in business strategies (Al-Jubari et al., 2022). In this context, employees with higher career adaptability are better equipped to navigate the uncertainties and complexities, thereby mitigating the surge of work stress. In fact, employees with strong career adaptability are better at regulating stress responses and handling career-related situations (Coetzee & Stoltz, 2015; Hoboubi et al., 2017). In other words, employees' ability to proactively embrace change and effectively manage work-related challenges serves as a formidable shield against the encroachment of stress. As industries continue to evolve and organizations face new challenges, fostering career adaptability emerges as

a strategic imperative to safeguard employees' well-being and promote a healthier work environment.

In addition to career adaptability, another significant factor in understanding the constituents of work stress is job satisfaction. Job satisfaction entails an individual's comprehensive evaluation of their job, encompassing both affective and cognitive dimensions (Rizkina & Mohd Mahudin, 2022). Individuals who hold positive job evaluations are likely to experience higher levels of job satisfaction, which subsequently has an inverse effect on stress levels (Hoboubi et al., 2017; Tongchaiprasit & Ariyabuddhiphongs, 2016). Job satisfaction essentially equips employees with a positive outlook while fulfilling their job responsibilities, thereby helping them navigate potential negative repercussions. For instance, job satisfaction directly influences employees' mental and emotional well-being. Within the private services sector, employees often confront demanding customers, tight deadlines, and high-pressure scenarios. If they are not satisfied with their job, the stress and burnout they encounter can have adverse impacts on their mental health (Awwad et al., 2022). This can lead to absenteeism, diminished productivity, and, in certain instances, even contribute to mental health crises within society.

The intricate relationship between job satisfaction and work stress is a topic of significant importance in today's dynamic work environment. On the other hand, the relationship between job satisfaction and work stress is a complex interplay. Low job satisfaction can heighten

work stress, creating a vicious cycle where employees feel dissatisfied with their work environment and responsibilities, leading to increased stress levels (Hoboubi et al., 2017). Conversely, high levels of work stress can diminish job satisfaction as employees struggle to find fulfillment in their roles (Hoboubi et al., 2017). This relationship underscores the importance of addressing both factors together to create a work environment that nurtures employee well-being and organizational success. In fact, job satisfaction is a critical indicator of the quality of the work experience and has far-reaching implications for both employees and employers because it is associated with higher motivation, increased commitment, improved job performance, and enhanced overall well-being. However, when job satisfaction is compromised, it can exacerbate work stress and amplify its negative effects. Therefore, understanding the nuances of how job satisfaction and work stress interact is crucial for developing effective interventions.

Additionally, research has shown that job satisfaction can play a pivotal role in mediating the impact of career adaptability on work stress. As job satisfaction reflects an individual's overall emotional state and well-being concerning their job. When someone is satisfied with their job, they tend to experience positive emotions, such as happiness, contentment, and enthusiasm (Fiori et al., 2015). These positive emotions contribute to a general sense of well-being. Thus, job satisfaction is considered as one of the positive affect that employees might experience in their work. In the context of career adaptability and work stress, positive affect may play a

critical role in how individuals cope with challenges and demands in the workplace. Employees who have higher levels of positive affect may be more resilient in the face of stressors, more adaptable to changes in their work environment, and better equipped to manage work-related stress. In contrast, individuals with lower positive affect may find it more challenging to cope with stressors and may be more susceptible to experiencing work-related stress. Understanding the role of positive affect in the relationship between career adaptability and work stress can provide valuable insights into how individuals' emotional experiences may influence their ability to navigate career challenges and job demands. It may also shed light on potential interventions or strategies that organizations can implement to promote positive affect and well-being among employees, leading to improved work performance and overall job satisfaction.

As employees with higher career adaptability are better equipped to handle challenges and adapt to changes, they tend to experience lower levels of work stress. Employees with strong career adaptability who also experience higher job satisfaction are more likely to perceive work challenges as manageable tasks rather than overwhelming stressors. This positive outlook and coping mechanism influenced by job satisfaction contribute to reducing overall work stress levels. In this context, job satisfaction acts as a mediator between career adaptability and work stress. It plays a pivotal role in how employees perceive and respond to stressors, thereby influencing the overall experience of work stress. When employees are satisfied with their jobs, they are more likely to handle challenges

positively and are less prone to feeling overwhelmed by stress (Cheng & Kao, 2022). This highlights the intricate interplay between adaptability, satisfaction, and stress.

According to Perrewe and Zellars (1999), researchers suggested that the relationship between career adaptability and work stress could be mediated by job satisfaction, highlighting the interaction between environmental factors and individual characteristics. In turn, when individuals find satisfaction in their job roles, they are better equipped to handle stressors, as they have a positive outlook and higher adaptability towards the environment. Conversely, employees with lower job satisfaction might lack the positive resources needed to effectively tackle stressors, potentially leading to amplified stress levels.

Particularly, difficulties can arise when employees, even if they are good at adapting to changes in their careers, find themselves in job positions that don't make them happy. In these situations, even those who are really good at adapting might struggle in dealing with work stress. If there's a disconnect between how well someone can adapt and how satisfied they are with their job, it can mess up the way they usually handle stress and undermining the protective factor offered by career adaptability. Of notes, Fiori et al. (2015) found that elevated career adaptability is associated with higher job satisfaction and lower job stress. This underscores career adaptability's role in influencing job satisfaction and predicting work stress (Fiori et al., 2015).

Specifically, it is important to address this interaction between career adaptability, job satisfaction, and work stress, especially in the private services sector. The private services sector encompasses industries such as finance, hospitality, retail, and more, where employees engage directly with customers and clients. Employees in this sector frequently navigate high-pressure situations, demanding customers, and rapidly changing service standards. When employees are unable to adapt towards their work and affecting their job satisfaction, the sector's inherent stressors can become more daunting, ultimately impairing employees' mental health and well-being. The private services sector, in short, became one of the sectors that should be taken into consideration because employees who worked in this sector often engage directly with customers and clients, the consequences of this relationship are amplified.

Winasis et al. (2020) discovered a significant impact of work stress on employees within the private services sector, study suggests that the impact is manifested in negative consequences, including reduced job engagement and decreased job performance. In essence, employees in the private services sector are constantly faced with the requirement to meet customer expectations, provide high-quality service, and effectively manage challenging situations and ultimately, these demands can contribute to elevated stress levels (Lukic & Lazarevic, 2018). If not adequately managed, this stress can erode job satisfaction and lead to employee turnover, lower service quality, and ultimately impact the reputation and success of the organization. To conclude, the problems

encountered in the private services sector, such as high customer expectations, rapidly changing environments, time pressure, emotional labor, job insecurity, lack of autonomy, and a competitive environment (Lukic & Lazarevic, 2018), can significantly influence the relationship between career adaptability, job satisfaction, and work stress. Employees' ability to navigate these challenges and effectively manage stress relies on their career adaptability and its interaction with job satisfaction. Acknowledging and addressing these dynamics is important for organizations operating within the private services sector to ensure employee well-being, and overall success.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Work stress is commonly encountered by employees in various organizations. AIA Vitality's Malaysia's Healthiest Workplace Survey revealed that Malaysia workers are suffering from work stress where 51% of workers acknowledged that suffered from work-related stress (AIA Vitality, 2019). Of note, work stress can significantly influence employee job performance and organizational commitment (Jamal, 2011). Due to work stress, 16% of employees reveal that having a low level of engagement at work, 32% of employees have chronic health conditions such as high cholesterol and high blood pressure, 90% of employees do not eat a balanced diet and 42% of employees involved into unhealthy eating (Ram, 2019). Similarly, Relate Malaysia (2021) conducted a nationwide survey revealed that 53% of employed Malaysians encountered significant work-related



stress, with one out of five employees exhibiting symptoms of anxiety and depression. The survey also highlighted the negative consequences of work stress, including its impact on job performance and the increased cost of sickness absenteeism, presenteeism, turnover issues, and mental health-related problems.

In fact, the estimated cost of work-related stress per worker per year is RM946, which accounts for 31% of the average monthly salary, resulting in a total cost of RM14.46 billion to employers, equivalent to 1% of the country's GDP (Relate Malaysia, 2021). Notably, this total cost is significantly higher than the RM344.82 million allocated for mental health treatment under Budget 2020 (Relate Malaysia, 2021). Additionally, with employee health issues costing Malaysia businesses around RM 1.46 million per year due to increased absenteeism and presenteeism. This, in turn, reduces job productivity and leads to additional costs for recruiting manpower to improve productivity, impacting an organization's profit, culture, and development (Johns, 2010; Ram, 2019).

Furthermore, work stress problems not only result in negative consequences for employees in their personal lives but also have repercussions on their career-related dimensions. For instance, researchers have identified that work stress can significantly impair job productivity, job engagement, and job performance (Winasis et al., 2020). Moreover, both surveys have illuminated the substantial health problems arising from work stress among employees, indicating that heightened work stress levels can

contribute to a degradation of employees' overall quality of life (AIA Vitality, 2019; Relate Malaysia, 2021). As a result, understanding the sources of work stress is crucial for addressing this issue and reducing its impact on employees and organizations. Similarly, researchers have highlighted that work stress is on the rise in Malaysia, and this trend may be attributed to job uncertainty, frequent modifications in employees' professional lives, and career development-related issues (Shaare et al., 2022). Undoubtedly, work stress can have various negative effects on individuals, especially when they struggle to handle tasks beyond their abilities or outside their job scope. This can lead to health problems and injuries, significantly impacting their overall well-being. Therefore, it is essential to understand the sources of work stress to address this issue effectively and reduce its impact on employees and organizations.

In addition, employees in the private services sector have become increasingly concerned about their levels of work stress. Working in the services sector entails consistently delivering top-quality service to customers, often requiring direct engagement with them. This dynamic necessitates a continuous fulfillment of client expectations, coping with escalating demands, navigating uncertainties, and functioning in a competitive environment (Lukic & Lazarevic, 2018). These demands can significantly affect their overall well-being and contribute to elevated work stress levels. Similarly, researchers stated that empirical studies had investigated work stress across various sectors of employees. The results consistently indicate that work stress has a detrimental impact on their

personal well-being, as well as affecting job performance and productivity (Burman & Goswami, 2018). This highlights the necessity of taking proactive measures to address work stress problems among employees in the services sector.

Notably, a comprehensive literature review conducted by Burman and Goswami (2018) encompassed 203 journal articles spanning from 1993 to 2017, revealing variations in the levels of work stress among employees across different sectors or units. Researchers have noted that the service sector remains relatively underexplored in terms of work stress. They suggest that future studies should focus on conducting research on work stress among employees from different sectors (Burman & Goswami, 2018). The study further emphasizes the importance of conducting further investigations in this area, particularly within the service sector (Burman & Goswami, 2018). To address this gap, the present study aims to examine work stress among employees in the private services sector.

Another notable gap in Malaysian research emerges from the years 2010 to 2023, where limited studies have focused on the interplay between career adaptability, job satisfaction, and work stress. Despite searching various databases, including Google Scholar, ProQuest, ScienceDirect, Sage Journal, as well as Malaysia specific databases like MyTO and MyJurnal, fewer than 10 relevant studies were found. Notably, the present study has considered job satisfaction as the mediator in

examining the relationship between career adaptability and work stress, and there has been minimal research done on this relevant topic.

Contrary to the initial perception of a lack of studies under the Malaysia context, there have been several studies conducted by the researchers in examining the relevant variables of career adaptability, job satisfaction and work stress. For instance, Amira Nur Syafiqah Bt Mohammad et al. (2018) conducted a study examined the relationship between job satisfaction, training development, work environment and career adaptability among fresh graduates in Malaysia. Additionally, study conducted by Omar and Noordin in 2016, researchers examined the influence of moderators on individualism-collectivism and career adaptability among ICT professionals in Malaysia (Omar & Noordin, 2016). Furthermore, study conducted by Ng et al. (2020) in investigating on the relationship between career adaptability and life satisfaction among working adults in Malaysia and considering the moderating role of age and mediating role of job satisfaction.

### **1.3 Research Objectives**

1. To examine the relationships between career adaptability and work stress among employees in Kuala Lumpur.
2. To examine the relationships between job satisfaction and work stress among employees in Kuala Lumpur.

3. To examine whether job satisfaction is a significant mediator in the relationship between career adaptability and work stress among employees in Kuala Lumpur.

#### **1.4 Research Question**

1. Is there any significant relationship between career adaptability and work stress among employees in Kuala Lumpur?

2. Is there any significant relationship between job satisfaction and work stress among employees in Kuala Lumpur?

3. Is job satisfaction a significant mediator in the relationship between career adaptability and work stress among employees in Kuala Lumpur?

#### **1.5 Research Hypothesis**

H1: There is a significant relationship between career adaptability and work stress among employees in Kuala Lumpur.

H2: There is a significant relationship between job satisfaction and work stress among employees in Kuala Lumpur.

H3: Career adaptability is a significant predictor of work stress among employees in Kuala Lumpur.

H4: Job satisfaction is a significant predictor of work stress among employees in Kuala Lumpur.

H5: Job satisfaction is a significant mediator in the relationship between career adaptability and work stress among employees in Kuala Lumpur.

### **1.6 Significance of Study**

This study is vital as it provides an exciting opportunity for advancing knowledge on the factors that contribute to work stress among employees in the workplace. Its significance lies in the potential it presents for human resource professionals to not only recognize but also proactively address the intricate aspects of employees' mental well-being. Particularly, an imperative context-setting note stems from the AIA Vitality's (2019) Malaysia's Healthiest Workplace Survey, revealing that a staggering 51% of workers admitted to grappling with work-related stress. This statistic underscores the pervasive nature of work stress issues in contemporary workplaces, emphasizing the urgency of such research. By squarely addressing employees' perspectives on work stress, this study contributes significantly to the existing knowledge base and provides pertinent insights into the modern employment landscape. In effect, it plays a pivotal role in addressing a salient concern affecting a substantial portion of the workforce. Work stress affects people in all kinds of jobs.

This study's utility extends to human resource professionals who seek actionable insights. By identifying particular sources of stress and

difficulties experienced by workers, experts can strategically create interventions. Practical measures such as customized training schemes focused on career adaptability and assistance networks can be implemented to alleviate work-related stress. Consequently, employees' career adaptability and job satisfaction could be enhanced, leading to a decrease in the overall impact of work stress. An essential dimension of this study pertains to its examination of the applicability of the transactional model of stress within the Malaysian context. This investigation is crucial, as the model's effectiveness has often been demonstrated in Western settings. By exploring its adaptation within the Malaysian work environment, the study contributes to bridging gaps between theories and local experiences, thus enhancing our comprehension of work stress.

In conclusion, this research doesn't merely address a singular concern; rather, it offers a vantage point from which to elevate broader aspects of mental health. By raising organizational awareness about the prevalence and ramifications of work stress, this study stimulates actions aimed at minimizing such concerns. Ultimately, its impact extends beyond the confines of its immediate research scope, contributing to a healthier, more balanced workforce, and fostering a culture that prioritizes employee well-being.

## **1.7 Definition of Variables**

### **1.7.1 Career Adaptability**

#### **1.7.1.1 Conceptual Definition**

Career adaptability defined as an individual's preparedness to cope with work-related tasks and actively engage in their work responsibilities, even when faced with unpredictable adjustments or changes in work conditions (Fiori et al., 2015).

#### **1.7.1.2 Operational Definition**

Respondents score on the Career-Adapt Abilities Scale to measure their career adaptability. Respondents rate how strongly they have developed their abilities to manage their career transitions and challenges. A higher score indicates that employee has higher career adaptability.

### **1.7.2 Work stress**

#### **1.7.2.1 Conceptual Definition**

Work stress is defined as the unpleasant psychological state that arising from the evaluation of workplace perceived demands that surpass an employee perceived resources in achieving the workplace demands (De Bruin, 2006).



### **1.7.2.2 Operational Definition**

Respondents' response to the General Work Stress Scale to measure their level of work stress. The scale scores are ranging from 9 to 45 and higher score indicate that employee has a higher level of work stress.

### **1.7.3 Job Satisfaction**

#### **1.7.3.1 Conceptual Definition**

The positive or negative experiences that formed under the circumstances of employee makes evaluative judgements on their intrinsic need, extrinsic need or general need from the job or work situation (Rizkina & Mohd Mahudin, 2022).

#### **1.7.3.2 Operational Definition**

Respondent score on the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (Short-Form Version) to measure their level of job satisfaction. Respondents rate how satisfied they feel about the aspect of their present job. A higher score indicates that employee has higher job satisfaction.

### **1.7.4 Employees in Kuala Lumpur**

#### **1.7.4.1 Conceptual Definition**

Employees in Kuala Lumpur are individuals who work for an organization or business entity, typically under a contract of employment

or service, in exchange for compensation or wages. Their working areas are particularly located in Kuala Lumpur. They contribute their skills, time, and effort to fulfil specific roles, tasks, or responsibilities within the organization's framework (Rajandran et al., 2019).

#### **1.7.4.2 Operational Definition**

Employees in Kuala Lumpur refer to individuals who are employed and work within the geographical area of Kuala Lumpur, which is the capital city of Malaysia. Employees in Kuala Lumpur can be engaged in the private services sector. They contribute to the workforce and play a significant role in the city's economic activities and overall development. Additionally, employees in Kuala Lumpur who worked in the private services sector will be involve in present study.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Review of Literature**

##### **2.1.1 Career Adaptability**

According to Johnston (2018), the term "career adaptability" refers to a psychological concept describing an individual's readiness and capability to handle vocational developmental tasks, personal crises, and occupational changes. This internal resource aids employees in managing assigned responsibilities and addressing unexpected challenges effectively (Fiori et al., 2015). Career adaptability functions as a prepared psychological asset commonly possessed by employees in the workforce. Its primary role is to assist employees in adapting to novel situations or navigating unfamiliar circumstances at the workplace. For instance, career adaptability helps employees better manage newly assigned tasks or transitions between jobs. Through effective adaptation, employees can swiftly identify solutions for specific issues and foster positive attitudes towards confronting unforeseen hurdles. Consequently, career adaptability becomes a predictive factor for an employee's ability to function efficiently within an organization.

According to Johnston (2018), a correlation exists between an employee's career adaptability and various outcomes, including satisfaction and stress. Individuals with limited career adaptability might struggle with

uncertainty or find it challenging to adjust to abrupt changes within the organization (Fiori et al., 2015). This deficiency in resources can lead to negative emotions related to job satisfaction and work stress. Hence, career adaptability emerges as a crucial determinant of an individual's psychological well-being.

### **2.1.2 Career adaptability in the private service industry**

In the fast-paced and constantly evolving market of the private service industry, employees' ability to adapt to changes and new challenges is crucial for their career growth and organizational success. Career adaptability, which refers to an individual's capacity to proactively manage their career development and navigate career transitions, plays a pivotal role in determining employee positive outcomes. However, the level of career adaptability among employees in the private service industry remains relatively unexplored. Therefore, this study aims to assess the level of career adaptability among employees in the private service industry, identify the potential outcomes and providing awareness for organization in enhancing career adaptability for individual and organizational success.

### **2.1.3 Job Satisfaction**

The concept of job satisfaction has been extensively examined in previous research. It generally refers to the emotions or responses shaped by an employee's feelings toward their job (Mateescu & Chraif, 2015). In essence, employees consider themselves satisfied when they experience

positive feelings within the organization. Khan and Ali (2013) found a significant link between job satisfaction and employee work stress. Their study revealed that job dissatisfaction can lead to increased stress levels among employees. This dissatisfaction might discourage employees from effectively performing their assigned tasks, resulting in decreased performance and adverse consequences at work. Hence, comprehending the role of job satisfaction is pivotal in determining organizational outcomes.

Mateescu and Chraif (2015) highlight that job satisfaction materializes when employees experience a sense of comfort or pleasure derived from the interplay between psychological, physiological, and environmental factors. Furthermore, researchers emphasize the role of the adaptation process in shaping job satisfaction. They suggest that this process fosters positive evaluations, thereby aiding employees in establishing satisfaction (Mateescu & Chraif, 2015). Moreover, the relationship between career adaptability and job satisfaction has been underscored, indicating that higher career adaptability is associated with increased job satisfaction (Le et al., 2019).

#### **2.1.4 Job satisfaction in the private services industry**

Job satisfaction is a critical factor in determining employee well-being and organizational outcomes in the private service industry. However, the level of job satisfaction among employees in this sector remains a matter of concern. Factors such as uncertainty, a constantly changing environment,

job security, vocational transitions, and work-life balance can significantly impact job satisfaction levels. Understanding the factors that help establish job satisfaction in the private service industry is essential for employers to create a positive and motivating work environment. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the factors influencing job satisfaction among employees in the private service industry and explore potential outcomes that may arise.

### **2.1.5 Work Stress**

Work stress is an unpleasant feeling that might occur in everyone's lives and significantly impact an employee in different aspects. It is defined as a phenomenon where the job environment or job characteristics cause poor psychological or physical health and damage an employee's health condition (Kumar, 2011).

Numerous researchers have outlined the multifaceted repercussions of work stress, spanning job engagement, satisfaction, performance, and intent to leave (Chao et al., 2015; Lambert et al., 2020). While these outcomes are well-documented, the current study aims to uncover the root causes behind work stress. Gharib et al. (2016) have indicated that factors like workload, job ambiguity, and role conflicts can significantly elevate job stress levels. Additionally, excessive workloads or organizational policies can generate a stressful atmosphere, potentially leading to elevated stress levels and compromised health (Vyas & Luk, 2010).

Internal elements, like an individual's adaptation to their work environment, also play a pivotal role in work stress. Fiori et al. (2015) establish a noteworthy link between career adaptability and work stress, indicating that higher career adaptability is associated with lower stress levels. With prior research covering the breadth of work stress and its causes, this study zooms in on the internal aspect of employees' response to stress. Specifically, it explores the potential connection between career adaptability and work stress.

### **2.1.6 Work stress in the private services industry**

Work stress has emerged as a significant concern in today's society, especially within the private services industry, impacting both employees' well-being and organizational performance. The rapid pace of changes in rules, policies, service standards, information technology, and market dynamics has placed immense pressure on employees. The increasing workload and challenges, particularly evident during events like the 'COVID-19' pandemic, have further elevated stress levels among workers. The potential repercussions of work stress on job satisfaction, productivity, and employee retention within this sector have become major concerns. Therefore, comprehending the sources and consequences of work stress in the private services industry is crucial for devising effective strategies to enhance employee well-being and organizational success.

### **2.1.7 Relationship between Career Adaptability, Job Satisfaction and Work stress**

Career adaptability can affect employee well-being in various dimensions, such as life satisfaction, personal stress, and job satisfaction. Previous studies have demonstrated a significant association between career adaptability and work stress, suggesting that an individual's career adaptability can be linked to a reduction in their work stress levels (Fiori et al., 2015; Urbanaviciute et al., 2019; Yang et al., 2019). This aligns with the central concept of the present study, which highlights that career adaptability potentially plays a role in either maintaining or mitigating work stress. Specifically, Fiori et al. (2015) revealed in their research a noteworthy correlation between career adaptability and work stress. To add, the findings indicate that an individual's adaptability to their job can influence cognitive appraisal processes, subsequently shaping the pleasurable emotions experienced in the workplace and ultimately affecting work stress. Importantly, this concept is consistent with the fundamental premise of the applied theory in the present study, the transactional model of stress. This theory underscores the transactional process between an individual's cognitive appraisals and environmental factors in the determination of stress outcomes. In addition, the study conducted by

Rasheed et al. (2020), investigated the connection between career adaptability and turnover intentions. The study suggests that higher levels of career adaptability are associated with reduced turnover intentions among employees (Rasheed et al., 2020). This implies that individuals who possess



the ability to adapt to changes in their careers are more likely to remain committed to their current jobs rather than seeking alternatives. This helps to confirmed that career adaptability plays a crucial role in reducing turnover intentions and potentially lowering work stress levels, in fact, employees who can effectively adjust to new challenges and uncertainties in their roles might experience less stress because they feel more equipped to handle changes and reduces stress levels associated with career uncertainty. These insights underscore the importance of fostering career adaptability in employees, as it not only impacts turnover but also contributes to a more resilient and less stressed workforce.

In addition, previous studies have attempted to apply a longitudinal approach to examine the association between career adaptability and work stress. The results revealed significant correlations between these variables and contributed to the understanding that career adaptability can influence employees' work stress over various timeframes (Fiori et al., 2015; Maggiori et al., 2013). However, the present study intends to apply a cross-sectional approach to assess the relevant variables and aims to provide a distinct understanding of the relationship between career adaptability and work stress. Furthermore, previous findings have argued that career adaptability is associated with employees' perceived stress. Researchers have outlined that employees' perceptions of demands, changes, and challenges significantly impact how they perceive their stress levels. In other words, employees lacking career adaptability are more likely to view

these demands or challenges negatively, which ultimately heightens their stress levels (Johnston et al., 2013; Rudolph et al., 2017).

Similarly, this perspective aligns with the focus of the present study, suggesting that employees in the private service sector often face difficulties such as increasing demands, high expectations, and a changing work environment. Without the capability to adapt to these situations, these challenges may significantly contribute to employees experiencing work-related stress. Previous studies have also suggested that there is a likely significant relationship between career adaptability and work stress. This is because employees with higher career adaptability tend to perceive difficulties in a more positive manner, which ultimately contributes to a lower level of work stress (Gong, 2019; Yu et al., 2019). In fact, employees with higher levels of career adaptability are better equipped to handle the challenges and stressors brought about by unprecedented situations, career adaptability helps them to adjust to new circumstances, reevaluate work-family balance, and respond to organizational changes contributes positively to their overall well-being (Al-Jubari et al., 2022).

According to Hassanie et al. (2022), healthcare employees showed the significant result of employee's career adaptability has a significant relationship with work stress. In this context, the study explained that employees with strong career adaptability are better equipped to handle increased workloads and challenging situations, thus, their ability to adapt positively to these stressors may contribute to lower levels of traumatic

stress and improved mental health outcomes (Hassanie et al., 2022). Past finding revealed that individuals who possessed higher career adaptability will developing career optimism which associated with positive attitude towards challenges and changes in the work environment or tasks given and ultimately, resulted in lower work stress (Chui et al., 2020). These past findings support the central concept of the present study, suggesting that employees who have acquired higher career adaptability will master the abilities to deal with uncertainties and, potentially, experience lower work stress. It is noteworthy that past findings have revealed the significance of career adaptability in preparing employees to cope with stressors and, ultimately, contributing to their emotional well-being and the success of the organization.

Lastly, researchers have also investigated the relationship between job satisfaction and work stress among employees in the services sector (Chung et al., 2017). Previous studies have consistently suggested that job satisfaction plays a significant role in how employees in the services sector perceive and experience work stress, influencing the overall work environment positively. Furthermore, these studies indicate that employees who experience high levels of stress tend to have lower job satisfaction, illustrating that negative appraisals of the job environment can contribute to heightened work stress (Hans et al., 2014; Manzoor et al., 2011; Riaz et al., 2016). This alignment with the core principles of the transactional model of stress highlights the interaction between an individual's cognitive appraisals and the surrounding environment.

Moreover, Yahaya et al. (2010) reported a negative correlation between employees' job satisfaction and their experience of work stress. This finding is supported by other studies that emphasize the significant link between job satisfaction and work stress (Sen, 2008; Yahaya et al., 2010). Subsequently, previous studies have consistently highlighted the substantial link between job satisfaction and work stress by emphasizing that demanding situations and various career-related factors significantly influence employees' perception of job satisfaction. Consequently, these factors can impact employees' overall outcomes, including job burnout and heightened work stress (Ogbuanya & Yekinni, 2020; Vickovic & Morrow, 2020).

This aligns with the present study's assumptions, suggesting that job satisfaction is less likely to be perceived in workplaces characterized by conflicting demands. This situation is particularly pertinent to employees in demanding fields like the services sector, where the nature of the work can lead to increased stress levels. Similarly, previous research has specifically examined employees in the service sector and found that job satisfaction plays a crucial role in reducing work stress. This research revealed a negative correlation between job satisfaction and work stress, indicating that job satisfaction has a direct impact on shaping the level of work stress experienced by service sector employees (Awwad et al., 2022). In simpler terms, the satisfaction employees derive from their jobs in the services sector has a significant influence on their experience of work stress.

Lambert et al. (2021) highlighted that lower levels of job satisfaction are associated with higher levels of stress, emphasizing the concept of job satisfaction as a protective factor against the adverse effects of work stress. This finding further confirmed the notion that job satisfaction is a critical factor in affecting employees' work stress levels and enabling them to cope with negative experiences more effectively. In short, researchers indicated the significant correlation between job satisfaction and work stress (Cha & Amrein-Beardsley, 2023; Muyidi et al., 2022), of notes, the study also further indicating that receiving adequate support helps to enhance in employees job satisfaction which in turn, mitigate the negative effects of work stress (Muyidi et al., 2022). Collectively, these past findings reinforce the notion that employees' job satisfaction greatly influences their ability to cope with stressors and perceive stress levels. In other words, job satisfaction enables employees to approach workplace challenges and changes with a positive outlook, helping them develop a sense of well-being that, in turn, affects their experience of work stress.

### **2.1.8 Career Adaptability Predicts Work Stress**

Fiori et al. (2015) discovered that career adaptability significantly predicts employees' work stress using a longitudinal approach. This suggests that employees with career adaptability tend to have positive experiences when dealing with challenges, ultimately affecting their work stress levels. While previous research has shown that career adaptability predicts work stress (Maggiori et al., 2013; Yang et al., 2019), the present

study intends to use different approaches to assess whether career adaptability can indeed predict work stress. This will provide valuable insights into the relationship between career adaptability and work stress. Furthermore, existing studies have highlighted the role of career adaptability in predicting work stress. This is explained by the idea that career adaptability equips employees with the psychological resources to cope with occupational responsibilities and personal stress, directly influencing work stress (Akca et al., 2018). This suggests that career adaptability plays a crucial role in shaping employees' responses to workplace stressors. The literature also provides a deeper understanding of how career adaptability affects employees' experience of work stress, for example, failure to adapt to work demands and fit into the organization can lead to work stress (Gong, 2019; Shin & Lee, 2018). This aligns with the idea that career adaptability can serve as a protective factor against the negative impact of work stress. Scholars have emphasized that higher levels of career adaptability lead to positive responses to work-related stressors, potentially reducing counterproductive work behavior (Yu et al., 2019). On the contrary, a lack of career adaptability can result in higher work stress, leading to negative outcomes like counterproductive work behavior, lower job engagement, and issues with absenteeism and presenteeism (Winasis et al., 2020; Yu et al., 2019). These negative outcomes not only impact employees but also have financial implications for the government, as they contribute to increased costs.

Frontline employees and nurses, both being part of the service sector, are subject to the study. The findings indicate that career adaptability predicts employees' work stress, emphasizing its significance within the service sector (Gong, 2019; Sony & Mekoth, 2016). The evidence from existing literature demonstrates that individuals with strong career adaptability are better prepared to manage work-related challenges and stressors. Furthermore, Chui et al. (2020) elaborate that individuals possessing higher career adaptability may have improved skills to effectively handle stressors. Their capacity to adapt and take control of their careers could extend to managing demanding situations and work-related stress more efficiently and again, individuals with these qualities are likely to be more resilient and proactive in addressing stressors, potentially leading to reduced levels of perceived work stress (Chui et al., 2020). It is plausible that career adaptability aids employees in resolving unexpected workplace issues, meeting job expectations, and delivering quality work that ensures career success, ultimately helping to avoid the development of negative emotions. To add, existing literature suggested the career adaptability has significantly predicted employees work stress, they outlined that development of career adaptability helps predict positive job outcomes (Hirschi & Valero, 2015; Johnston et al., 2013). In previous literature, the study utilized the career construction theory to uncover the potential interplay between career adaptability and work stress (Urbanaviciute et al., 2019), however, the present study aims to concentrate on the transactional model of stress to explore the potential effects of career adaptability on work stress. This choice is due to the fact that the applied model emphasizes the

significant concept of the transactional interplay between individual factors and environmental factors. As a result, this approach may reveal distinct insights into the relationship between career adaptability and work stress, further contributing to the theory.

### **2.1.9 Job Satisfaction Predicts Work stress**

In addition, incorporated with previous literature, job satisfaction has been identified as a significant factor in predicting employees' work stress. Researchers have discovered that employees who express job satisfaction also tend to report lower levels of work stress in the workplace (Chung et al., 2017; Yahaya et al., 2010). This helps to explain the scenario where employees' job satisfaction contributes to positive feelings while performing their job and, consequently, reduces work-related stress. Similarly, the present study assumes that job satisfaction can greatly influence how employees perceive their stress levels. In alignment with past findings, the study also aims to examine the significant effect of job satisfaction on work stress. Undoubtedly, previous research has shown that job satisfaction significantly predicts employees' work stress, particularly within the services sector (Awwad et al., 2022; Chung et al., 2017).

Indeed, employees in the services sector often emphasize the significant impact of job satisfaction on their work stress. For instance, those who consistently face elevated job demands are likely to experience heightened levels of work stress (Awwad et al., 2022). Similarly,



researchers have highlighted the pivotal role of job demands in influencing employees' career development. The strain caused by these demands can adversely affect overall job satisfaction, leading to reduced job satisfaction and increased work stress in the service sector (Awwad et al., 2022). In line with this perspective, the present study aims to provide a deeper understanding of how various factors contribute to employees' positive experiences and ultimately lead to a decrease in work stress. Existing literature also helps to further confirming the ideas of job satisfaction has significantly predict employees work stress, supporting the notion of job satisfaction can greatly impact on how employees perceived in their stress level (Ardakani et al., 2013; Mazeed et al., 2019).

Moreover, the study conducted by Singh et al. (2022) likely contributes to the growing body of evidence that supports the idea that job satisfaction can act as a protective factor against work-related stress. When employees find greater job satisfaction, they tend to encounter reduced stress levels as they become more adept at addressing challenges and sustaining a positive perspective (Singh et al., 2022). According to Ogbuanya and Yekinni (2020), their study revealed that different career variables lead to varying levels of work stress. The results reported that employees experiencing job dissatisfaction tend to experience higher work stress. Career variables such as career development, career transition, or career satisfaction may determine the amount of stress an individual feels. In a previous study conducted among Saudi female journalists, it was found that job satisfaction significantly predicted work stress. The results further

indicated that the level of job satisfaction experienced by these journalists had a direct impact on their perception of work stress (Muyidi et al., 2022). This study has contributed to a unique contextual comprehension of job satisfaction and work-related stress within the sample of female journalists, as previous research in a similar context has been limited. This discovery reinforces the robust predictive influence of job satisfaction on work-related stress.

Additionally, nurse managers who reported higher levels of job satisfaction are less likely to experience work stress, while those with lower job satisfaction are more likely to predict higher work stress (Jappinen et al., 2022). Scholars have reviewed the predictive effect of job satisfaction towards work stress, finding that employees who are satisfied with their job tend to experience positive emotions and lower work stress (Manzoor et al., 2011; Siahaan, 2017). This finding supports the assumptions of the theory applied in the present study, which outlines that employees in the private services sector are less likely to develop work stress when they positively appraise their job environment. To add, Silinda (2018) revealed that the transactional model of stress explains stress through the process of employees negatively appraising particular situations, leading to a decrease in employees' satisfaction and ultimately resulting in stress.

### **2.1.10 Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction in the Relationship between Career Adaptability and Work Stress**

Again, job satisfaction plays a mediator role in the present study, indicating that career adaptability is likely to influence employees' appraisals of their work and ultimately, contribute to work-related stress. This is supported by previous research by Tladinyane and Merwe (2016), who pointed out that career adaptability promotes mastery of career transitions, leading to increased personal well-being and ultimately decreased work stress. Undoubtedly, effective adaptation to the workforce helps employees fit well within the organization and fosters positive perceptions, resulting in lower work stress. In alignment with previous studies, the results revealed a positive association between career adaptability and employees' job satisfaction, which further explains how career adaptability functions as personal resources, positively influencing employees' perceptions of their job, leading to job satisfaction, and subsequently reducing work stress (Eryilmaz & Kara, 2016; Fiori et al., 2015; Santilli et al., 2017). The evidence highlights a plausible explanation for considering job satisfaction as a mediator. Employees with higher career adaptability are often more adept at resolving unplanned scenarios within their job, potentially influencing how they perceive their work role. In other words, their effective adaptation skills enable them to develop job satisfaction, thereby decreasing the likelihood of experiencing work stress.

This is also supported by previous studies that emphasized how employees demonstrating higher career adaptability are linked to greater job

satisfaction and subsequently perceive lower stress levels (Eryilmaz & Kara, 2016; Santilli et al., 2017). In addition, researchers have utilized job satisfaction as a mediator in assessing employees' mental health outcomes. The results have provided supportive evidence for using job satisfaction as a mediator to measure job-related perceptions and work stress (Zhou et al., 2023). To elaborate, job satisfaction often mirrors employees' overall contentment and positive emotions regarding their work environment. Therefore, employees who display high adaptability are likely to be more satisfied with their job, which in turn is associated with a positive outlook on their work (Zhou et al., 2023). This positive outlook acts as a buffer against work-related stressors (Zhou et al., 2023).

Researchers proposed a mediated moderation model to understand the intricate relationship between the pandemic's impact, job stress, organizational resilience, and job satisfaction. Specifically, they hypothesize that job satisfaction plays a role in mediating the effect of work stress on the overall well-being of employees, especially during times of crisis (Cheng & Kao, 2022). Job satisfaction, in turn, potentially acts as the mediator in the relationship between career adaptability and work stress. This is supported by evidence indicating that job satisfaction can be influenced by prerequisite factors and, in turn, impact the outcomes. For example, employees' adaptability helps enhance their career experiences, contributing to positive perceptions that lead to increased job satisfaction and in turn, help to mitigate the levels of work stress. Particularly, researchers suggest that employees who experience higher levels of job

satisfaction due to effective internal factors are more likely to exhibit positive work outcomes (Sung & Hu, 2021).

Indeed, the revealed results showed that employees who are able to align with the company values, cultures, and mission will significantly increase their job satisfaction and consequently lead to improvements in work-related outcomes, such as reduced work stress (Sung & Hu, 2021). Past studies offer insights that can be applied to explain how job satisfaction acts as a mediator in affecting employees' work stress (Orgambidez & Almeida, 2020). In fact, employees with higher resilience and adaptive abilities are likely to have a positive perception of their work environment, creating a positive mechanism for viewing problems as temporary obstacles rather than unresolved burdens, thus mitigating work stress problems (Orgambidez & Almeida, 2020). Existing literature also points out that job satisfaction is established when an individual appraises their working environment in a positive or negative manner, and it leans towards predicting stress levels from jobs (O'Connell et al., 2008; Zaghini et al., 2023). In turn, career adaptability may act as a factor in determining job satisfaction in the workplace, which can possibly lead to work stress.

Particularly, the present study utilized the transactional model of stress in explaining the underlying interplay of CA, JS, and WS. This model highlights the central concept that work stress is created under the transaction process between two factors instead of being directly caused by a single dimension. For example, individuals experience stressful feelings

when their environment poses a threat to their well-being and exceeds the limit of their available resources (Silinda, 2018). This also supports the idea of assessing the interaction process between career adaptability and job satisfaction in affecting work stress, and therefore, applying job satisfaction as the mediator may further lead to an advanced understanding of work stress problems.

## **2.2 Theoretical Framework**

### **2.2.1 Transactional Model of Stress**

The transactional model of stress was introduced by Richard Lazarus and Susan Folkman in the field of psychology. Lazarus and Folkman's transactional model of stress, emphasizes the dynamic interaction between an individual and their environment when encountering stressors (Gieselmann et al., 2020). The model highlights the cognitive appraisal process as a central mechanism in determining how individuals perceive and respond to stressful situations (Gieselmann et al., 2020). This model has been influential in understanding how individuals interpret and cope with stressors, shaping the way researchers and practitioners approach stress management and psychological well-being (Gieselmann et al., 2020). The transactional model of stress highlights the subjective nature of stress and emphasizes that individuals actively engage with their environment and their own cognitive processes in response to stressors. It recognizes that stress is not solely determined by external events but is influenced by the

individual's perceptions, evaluations, and coping strategies (Gieselmann et al., 2020).

The present study utilized the transactional model of stress to explain the relationship between variables. This model suggests that an individual's stress arises from cognitive appraisals of their environment. Stress results from an individual's interaction with an environment they perceive as important to their well-being, where their resources are strained or exceeded (Perrewe & Zellars, 1999). Work stress is defined as the response that arises from the transactional process between workers and their complex work environment (De Bruin, 2006). In other words, an individual's resources and appraisals towards a particular environment determine the stressors they encounter. The present model explained that work stress develops from the interactions of an individual's psychological resources with the environment (Gieselmann et al., 2020). Employees may encounter work stress because they lack the available resources to deal with certain challenges or situations, leading to uncomfortable feelings such as work stress (Fiori et al., 2015).

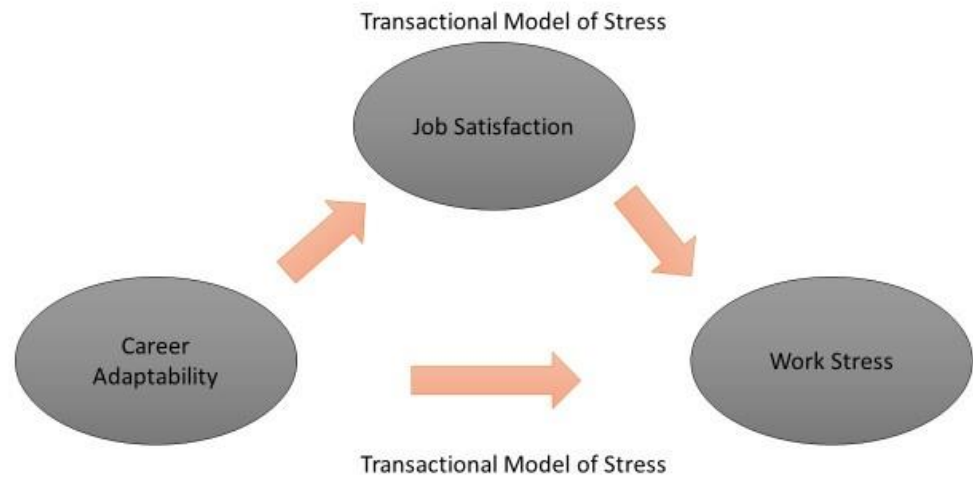
Career adaptability is defined as the psychological resources that help an individual acquire readiness in coping with tasks and actively participate in the work role, even under unpredictable adjustments and changes in work and working conditions (Fiori et al., 2015). Work stress results from the interaction between an individual and their environment, where the individual's personal resources are taxed or exceeded in dealing

with particular situations, which may lead to discomfort or negative interpretation and, in turn, cause work stress (Perrewe & Zellars, 1999). Therefore, the role of career adaptability becomes clear in helping an employee acquire sufficient capability to resolve difficult situations or adapt to a particular environment, which may eventually decrease work stress. Conversely, employees who lack career adaptability may develop stress because their available resources are taxed when encountering unpredictable adjustments within their working environment.

The mediating role of job satisfaction is further supported by the transactional model of stress. Specifically, the model explains that stress results from an individual's psychological resources interacting with their personal interpretation within their job environment. Job satisfaction is defined as the individual's job appraisal that includes affective and cognitive evaluations within their job environment (Rizkina & Mohd Mahudin, 2022). Job satisfaction or dissatisfaction is formed when individuals appraise the work environment, as the appraisal process is often linked to their emotional response towards the environment (Rizkina & Mohd Mahudin, 2022). Consequently, if employees can effectively adapt to the work environment, they are likely to form a positive appraisal of the environment, resulting in job satisfaction and reduced work stress. The interpretation of a stressful situation can be viewed as a loss, challenge, or threat, and the significance attached to the situation is essential in how individuals regulate and adapt their responses (Fiori et al., 2015). To conclude, career adaptability helps an employee increase their inner



resources in adapting to and resolving challenging situations in the workplace, affecting work interpretation in establishing job satisfaction, and resulting in positive or negative outcomes, such as higher or lower work stress.



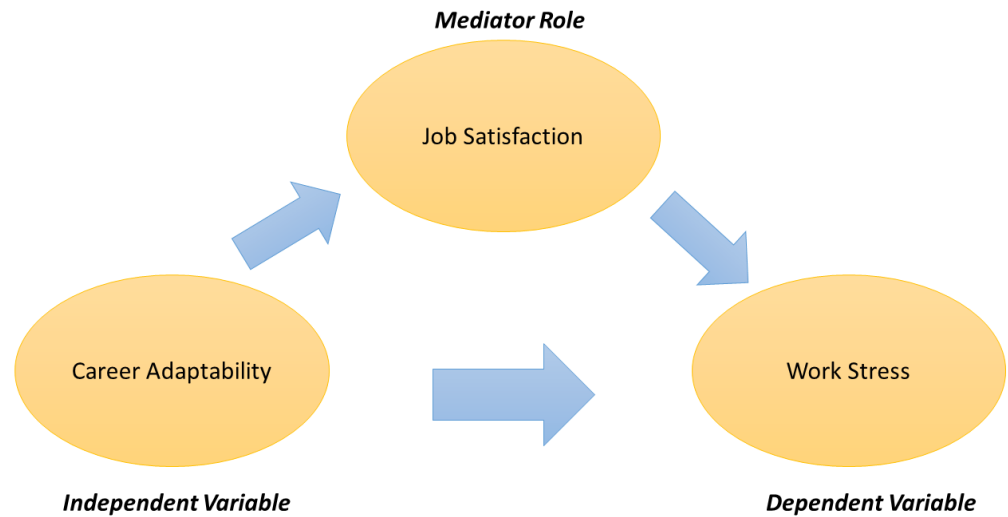
**Figure 2.1: Theoretical Framework of the Study**

The figure 2.1 provides a visual representation of the theoretical framework, illustrating the influence of career adaptability on work stress and emphasizing the mediating role of job satisfaction. In short, this model suggests that an individual's ability to navigate uncertain or changing work situations (career adaptability) can influence their cognitive appraisals of these situations. When an employee possesses high career adaptability, they are more likely to appraise challenges as manageable and opportunities for growth. This positive appraisal can lead to enhanced job satisfaction, as the

individual perceives their ability to effectively handle various work demands.

In other words, the positive impact of job satisfaction on work stress becomes evident through this transactional lens. An employee who is satisfied with their job is more likely to perceive their work environment as positive, leading to a lower perception of stressors. Their cognitive appraisals shift towards viewing challenges as manageable hurdles rather than overwhelming burdens, resulting in reduced work stress. However, it's important to acknowledge that while career adaptability may positively influence job satisfaction, other factors can also come into play. For instance, an employee's work role, responsibilities, and experience level can shape how career adaptability translates into job satisfaction and subsequently affects work stress. In conclusion, the transactional model of stress provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how career adaptability can impact job satisfaction and, consequently, work stress.

### 2.3 Conceptual Framework



**Figure 2.2: Conceptual Framework of the Study**

The conceptual framework of this study serves as a visual representation of the relationships among the variables under investigation. The framework illustrates the relationship between career adaptability, job satisfaction, and work stress. Career adaptability is positioned as the independent variable, reflecting its potential influence on the other variables. Job satisfaction is depicted as the mediating variable, which is expected to play a role in how career adaptability affects work stress. Existing studies have indicated that individuals with higher levels of career adaptability are more likely to experience job satisfaction and reduced work stress (Fiori et al., 2015; Maggiori et al., 2013; Urbanaviciute et al., 2019; Yang et al., 2019). These findings contribute to the theoretical basis for

examining the mediating role of job satisfaction. The conceptual framework also aligns with the transactional model of stress, which emphasizes the dynamic interaction between an individual and their environment. In this context, career adaptability can be seen as a personal resource that influences an individual's appraisal of their work environment, subsequently affecting their job satisfaction and, consequently, their experience of work stress. By adopting this framework, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the complex relationships between career adaptability, job satisfaction, and work stress within the context of the private service sector.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Research Design

The current study used a quantitative research method to study the proposed variables. Additionally, quantitative research emphasized numerical analysis, dealing with quantifying, and analysing variables to achieve results. Consequently, the quantitative study aimed to explain an issue or phenomenon by gathering numerical data from a sample population and analysing it with statistical techniques to obtain results (Apuke, 2017). The study employed a cross-sectional design to collect data at a specific point in time.

The research utilized a cross-sectional design, which involved collecting data at a single point in time. Participants were surveyed once, and their responses were used to understand the relationships between career adaptability, job satisfaction, and work stress, with job satisfaction in a mediator role. The cross-sectional design allowed for the examination of these relationships at a specific moment, providing insights into potential associations among the variables and revealing the mediator role of job satisfaction.

### **3.2 Research Location**

The location of the research mainly focused on Kuala Lumpur (KL), the federal capital city of Malaysia. KL is a metropolitan city in Malaysia with a total population of 1.79 million people (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2020) and was considered the alpha city in the financial, cultural, and economic sectors in the Malaysia Federal Territories. Additionally, Bloom (2020) found that KL, Malaysia, ranked 13th among other cities as a stressful workplace. The survey showed that KL was the only state that was revealed as one of the stressful workplaces among other states in Malaysia, and other global cities such as Tokyo, Mumbai, and Seoul were ranked 1st, 2nd, and 3rd as the most stressful workplaces (Bloom, 2020). However, due to limited studies in Malaysia, the present study examined the sample population from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

### **3.3 Sampling Method**

For the present study, a purposive sampling method was employed to select participants aged between 18 and 60. According to employment laws in Malaysia, it was explicitly stated that no child under the age of 15, and those between 15 to under 18 years of age, were permitted to be engaged in any form of the labour force or employment. Additionally, Malaysian laws specified the official retirement age as 60 (Jabatan Tenaga Kerja Semenanjung Malaysia, 2022). Therefore, the present study aimed to investigate employees in Kuala Lumpur who fell within the age range of 18 to 60 years. The purposive sampling method is a non-probability sampling

technique that targets specific individuals or events intentionally to obtain crucial information that might not be accessible through other options (Taherdoost, 2016).

The chosen method involved selecting participants from the private services sector in Malaysia. This approach, known as purposive sampling, focused on deliberately selecting individuals based on predetermined criteria that aligned with the research objectives. In this context, participants were chosen based on their employment in the private services sector, which represented the study's target population. This selection strategy ensured that the sample accurately pertained to the study's central focus, which was exploring the connections between career adaptability, job satisfaction, and work stress within this particular sector.

### **3.4 Research Sample**

The sample population was selected based on the requirements set in the present study. Specifically, white-collar workers who were currently employed in the private services sector located in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, were qualified to participate in the study. White-collar workers were defined as salaried office workers (Hopp et al., 2009), who were claimed by researchers to engage more in a sedentary lifestyle and less physical activity in the workplace, which might have resulted in higher opportunities for developing obesity, lower quality of life, and work stress.

Moreover, the sample included male and female employees who had a minimum of six months of working experience in the organization. This requirement was set because the time it took for an employee to adapt to their job varied from one individual to another, according to researchers (Johnston, 2018). Thus, to accurately determine employees' adapting responses within their job environment, the present study set the parameters to select employees with a minimum of six months of working experience.

There were a total of 1.256 million people working in the private services sector in Kuala Lumpur (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2020). Consequently, the sample size of the current study was determined using the statistical formula of Krejcie and Morgan in 1970. One of the widely used formulas in determining the sample size was the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) formula, which was used to estimate population percentages from sample percentages (Johnson & Shoulders, 2019).

The present study followed the formula table created by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) to determine the sample size. The table formula further suggested that a representative sample size of people more than 1,000,000 should consider taking a representative sample size of 384 people, and all the given numbers from the table were calculated using the formula mentioned above. Therefore, the present study considered taking a representative sample size of 384 people, and assuming a 15% non-response rate, the final sample size was a total of 442 employees from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.



### **3.4.1 Inclusion Criterion**

The sample population for this study consisted of male and female white-collar employees who had worked in the private services sector in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, for a minimum of six months. This criterion was set based on previous research indicating that employees' adaptation periods varied, with some adapting within a month and others taking up to six months (Gajda, 2019; Johnston, 2018). By selecting employees who had worked for at least six months, the study aimed to accurately capture their adaptation responses within their job environment and increase the credibility of the results.

White-collar workers were chosen for this study because they were more likely to engage in sedentary lifestyles and less physical activity in the workplace, which could lead to negative consequences such as obesity, reduced quality of life, and work stress (Dedele et al., 2019). Moreover, these workers typically spent long hours in the office and performed fewer physical activities, which might have resulted in various outcomes such as stress, poor physical health, and decreased psychological well-being (Dedele et al., 2019). Therefore, including white-collar workers in the sample population helped to explore these issues further.

### **3.4.2 Exclusion Criterion**

Employees who had worked in the private services sector for less than six months were not eligible to participate in the current study. This criterion was necessary as it ensured that the participants had had sufficient time to adapt to their job environment and any changes that may have occurred during their tenure.

### **3.5 Procedure**

Preliminarily, the researcher obtained ethical approval from the ethics committee at the Universiti of Tunku Abdul Rahman. Subsequently, the researcher sought approval from relevant authorities, such as the human resource department or managerial approval, before sending the questionnaires to the concerned employees. The researcher was required to write all the guidelines in the email, along with the study's objectives, and attach the informed consent form to be sent to the participants before emailing them the questionnaires. The researcher obtained all the informed consent from participants and informed them about the confidentiality of data collection, assuring that all information would be kept confidential and used solely for research purposes.

The questionnaires were distributed online for both the pilot and actual studies. The pilot study was conducted on a smaller sample than the intended sample size in the current study, and the result of the pilot study was collected to improve the questionnaire. Lastly, the actual data collection was

conducted online, where the researcher sent the questionnaires to participants via email.

### **3.6 Instruments**

#### **3.6.1 Career Adapt-Abilities Scale**

Employee career adaptability was assessed using the Career Adapt-Abilities Scale developed by Savickas and Porfeli (2012). This scale comprises 24 items distributed across 4 subscales, namely concern, control, curiosity, and confidence. The general scale was utilized to gauge an employee's career adaptability in the current study. Participants were required to rate their responses on a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (indicating low ability) to 5 (indicating very strong ability). The reliability of the subscales was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, yielding values of .88 for concern, .87 for control, .86 for curiosity, .87 for confidence, and an overall reliability of .94 for the entire scale. These reliability coefficients were reported in a study conducted by Johnston and colleagues (2013). This instrument was employed to assess participants' career adaptability. The CAAS consists of a series of questions designed to measure an individual's capacity to adapt to changes and challenges in their career. Participants rated their agreement with various statements related to their career adaptability. A higher score on this scale suggests a greater ability to navigate career-related changes effectively. The example question of four subscales includes concern, control, curiosity, and confidence.

The example question of four subscales includes:

1. Concern (Thinking about what my future will be like) (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012).
2. Control (Taking responsibility for my actions) (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012).
3. Curiosity (Looking for opportunities to grow as a person) (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012).
4. Confidence (Overcoming obstacles) (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012).

### **3.6.2 Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (Short-Form Version)**

Employee job satisfaction was evaluated using the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (Short-Form), which was developed by Weiss and his colleagues in 1967. This questionnaire comprises 20 items, categorized into three subscales: intrinsic satisfaction, extrinsic satisfaction, and general satisfaction. A general scale was employed to gauge overall job satisfaction among employees. Participants were asked to rate their responses on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (indicating low satisfaction) to 5 (indicating high satisfaction). The reliability of the subscales was measured using Cronbach's alpha coefficients, yielding values ranging from .84 to .91 for intrinsic satisfaction, .77 to .82 for extrinsic satisfaction, and .87 to .92 for the general scale. These high reliability coefficients demonstrate the trustworthiness of using this scale to

assess employee job satisfaction. For instance, a question regarding intrinsic job factors was "being able to keep busy all the time," while a question related to extrinsic job factors was "the competence of my supervisor in making decisions.". This questionnaire includes statements that inquire about various aspects of job satisfaction, such as relationships with colleagues, the work environment, and personal growth opportunities. Respondents indicated their level of agreement with these statements. Higher scores on this scale indicate a higher level of overall job satisfaction.

The example of intrinsic and extrinsic job factors question included:

1. Intrinsic job factors "being able to keep busy all the time".
2. Extrinsic job factors "the competence of my supervisor in making decisions".

### **3.6.3 General Work Stress Scale**

Employee work stress was assessed using the General Work Stress Scale, which consists of 9 items and was developed by De Bruin and Taylor in 2005. The general scale was utilized in the present study to evaluate the level of work stress experienced by employees. Participants were asked to rate their responses on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (indicating "never") to 5 (indicating "always"). The reliability of the scale was measured using Cronbach's alpha coefficients, which yielded values of .88 and .89 for the general reliability of the total scale. These reliability coefficients were reported in a study conducted by Fiori and his colleagues

in 2015. Example questions from the scale include "Do you get so stressed at work that you want to quit?" and "Do you feel like you cannot cope with your work anymore?". This scale comprises items that assess the extent to which individuals perceive stressors in their work environment. Participants indicated how often they experience specific stress-related situations. A higher score on this scale reflects a higher perceived level of work-related stress.

The example questions are included:

1. "Do you get so stressed at work that you want to quit".
2. "Do you feel like you cannot cope with your work anymore".

### **3.7 Data Analysis**

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize and describe the characteristics of the participants and the variables of interest. Measures such as mean, standard deviation, and frequency distributions were used to provide an overview of the data. While correlation analysis, such as Pearson's correlation coefficient, was utilized to assess the strength and direction of relationships between pairs of continuous variables, such as career adaptability, job satisfaction, and work stress. This analysis helped identify any significant associations between these variables. Multiple regression analysis is also utilized to ascertain the predictive effects of career adaptability and job satisfaction on work stress, in short, present

study consists of two predictor variables: career adaptability and job satisfaction. Multiple regression analysis comes into play when we're dealing with more than one predictor variable, therefore, utilizing multiple regression to examine how these two factors, together or separately, can predict work stress levels.

To investigate whether job satisfaction mediated the relationship between career adaptability and work stress, a mediation analysis was conducted. This analysis examined the indirect effect of career adaptability on work stress through job satisfaction. Statistical techniques like Process Macro analysis were applied to determine the significance and strength of this indirect effect. In addition, reliability analysis, using measures like Cronbach's alpha, was employed to assess the internal consistency and reliability of the measurement scales used for career adaptability, job satisfaction, and work stress. High reliability indicates that the items within each scale consistently measure the intended constructs.

### **3.8 Pilot Study**

A pilot study was conducted to identify any potential shortcomings, errors, or areas for improvement in the research design and measurement instruments prior to commencing the main study. A total of 30 responses were collected from private services employees for the pilot study. Based on the feedback obtained from the pilot study participants, it was determined that the questions were clearly understood, participants were

able to respond effectively to the instruments, and all questions were deemed relevant to the context of the study. As a result, no modifications were made to the clarity and relevance of the instrument questions, indicating that the instruments effectively captured participants' responses. The pilot study also aimed to establish the reliability of the instruments in order to ensure their appropriateness for use. The results of the reliability analysis showed that the Career Adapt-Abilities Scale demonstrated a high reliability with a reported score of  $\alpha = .96$ . Similarly, the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire short form exhibited a high reliability score of  $\alpha = .93$ , while the General Work Stress Scale reported a satisfactory reliability score of  $\alpha = .86$ . These findings indicated that all of the instruments yielded satisfactory reliability values in assessing the specific variables among the employees. Consequently, no modifications were deemed necessary as the study proceeded to the actual research phase.

In designing the questionnaire for this study, the present study opted not to include negative items. The decision was made considering the nature of the constructs under investigation and the potential impact on respondent comprehension and data quality. By using only positively phrased items, the current study aimed to streamline the response process and minimize any confusion that participants might encounter when interpreting negatively worded statements. This approach also aligns with the simplicity of our research objectives, where higher scores indicate a stronger agreement or positive perception of the constructs measured.



## **CHAPTER 4**

### **RESEARCH FINDINGS**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

The present chapter primarily discusses the impact of employees' career adaptability and job satisfaction on their work stress and investigates the mediating role of job satisfaction in the relationship between career adaptability and work stress. This section includes a discussion of demographic information, hypothesis testing, descriptive statistics, and inferential statistics.

#### **4.2 Data Cleaning**

A total of 17 responses were discarded from the collected data due to factors such as incomplete survey questions or not meeting the research requirements. As a result, a total of 425 completed sets of responses were retained for further analysis in the present study.

### **4.3 Assumption of Normality**

Assuming that the variables were normally distributed was important because it affected the validity of the analysis results. If the data were not normally distributed, the results of the analysis could have been biased or misleading. Additionally, the normality assumption was crucial for calculating accurate p-values, confidence intervals, and making valid conclusions about the relationships between variables. When data was normally distributed, it allowed for more accurate and reliable statistical inferences to be made. Particularly, violations of the normality distribution could have led to incorrect interpretations; therefore, it was important to assess the normality of the data in the present study.

#### **4.3.1 Skewness and Kurtosis**

The skewness of the Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS) was reported as .286, while the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire Short Form (MSQSF) revealed a score of .771, and the General Work Stress Scale (GWSS) reported a score of .001.

Additionally, the kurtosis of the Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS) was reported as -.125, the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire Short Form (MSQSF) was reported as .841, and the General Work Stress Scale was reported as -.335.

According to Ghasemi and Zahediasl (2012), skewness values falling between -2 and +2 are considered normally distributed. Similarly, kurtosis values falling within -2 and +2 are also considered normally distributed. Therefore, all the questionnaires reported a normally distributed result, as their skewness and kurtosis values fell within the expected range of -2 and +2.

**Table 4.1**

*Normality Analysis Test Result*

<b>Measured Variable</b>	<b>Skewness</b>	<b>Kurtosis</b>
<b>CAAS</b>	.286	-.125
<b>MSQSF</b>	.771	.841
<b>GWSS</b>	.001	-.335

**4.3.2 Scatterplot of Standardized Residuals**

Scatterplots of standardized residuals were used to assess the assumptions of normality, outliers, and independent residuals, as recommended by Pallant (2007). According to Pallant (2007), outliers can be ignored when the standardized residual is within the range of -3 to +3.

Based on the results, the standardized residual values for the instruments were considered normal, as the standardized residual fell within the range of -3 to +3. Therefore, the results suggested no violations of assumptions in the present study.

#### **4.4 Reliability and Validity**

##### **4.4.1 Validity of the Instruments**

The discriminant validity of the instruments Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS), Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire Short-form (MSQSF), and General Work Stress Scale (GWSS) was assessed by analysing the Pearson correlation coefficients between these scales. The result indicated that all of these correlation coefficients were statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ). Importantly, each of the scales exhibited varying magnitudes and directions. Furthermore, a significant correlation was revealed between the construct of CAAS and MSQSF ( $r = .662, p < .05, n = 425$ ). It suggested a meaningful but distinct relationship between career adaptability and job satisfaction, aligning with expectations, as these constructs might have overlapped to some extent while remaining conceptually separate. A significant correlation coefficient was also found between CAAS and GWSS ( $r = -.449, p < .05, n = 425$ ). This further revealed that CAAS and GWSS were negatively correlated, supporting the idea of separate constructs.

Additionally, a significant correlation coefficient was found between the construct of MSQSF and GWSS ( $r = -.244, p < .05, n = 425$ ). This further indicated that MSQSF and GWSS were negatively related but still separate constructs. In other words, the Pearson correlation coefficients supported the discriminant validity of these measurement instruments, indicating that these instruments effectively captured distinct aspects of career adaptability, job satisfaction, and work stress, while acknowledging the nuanced relationships between these constructs. In addition, congruence with prior research, researchers found that the Career Adapt-Abilities Scale was validated through the applied use of factor analysis (Johnston et al., 2013). Substantiating this, existing literature underscored the well-constructed validation of the MSQSF instrument in their findings (Weiss et al., 1967). Additionally, researchers reported a satisfactory outcome from the factor analysis of the GWSS, suggesting the scale's efficacy in assessing the general stress factor (Fiori et al., 2015).

**Table 4.2**

*Correlation Matrix of Discriminant Validity*

Scale	1	2	3
1. CAAS	-		
2. MSQSF	.662**	-	
3. GWSS	-.449**	-.224**	-

*Note.* N = 425; CAAS = Career Adapt Abilities Scale; MSQSF = Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire Short Form; GWSS = General Work Stress Scale.

**4.4.2 Reliability of the Instruments**

The total of 30 responses were collected from private services employees for the pilot study. Based on the reliability analysis result, the Career Adapt-Abilities Scale was reported with high reliability, which showed a score of  $\alpha = .96$ . The Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire Short form revealed a high reliability score, which showed  $\alpha = .93$ . The General Work Stress Scale reported a high reliability score, which showed  $\alpha = .86$ .

In the actual study, a total of 425 responses were collected among employees from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia who worked in the private services sector. The reliability test showed Career Adapt-Abilities scale obtained the Cronbach's value of  $\alpha = .96$ , Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire Short Form obtained the Cronbach's value of  $\alpha = .93$ , and General Work Stress Scale obtained the Cronbach's value of  $\alpha = .86$ . This

reported result of reliability revealed the standard and acceptable range of reliability values. According to Taber (2018), the study mentioned that reliability values were determined by the indicator of Cronbach Alpha value. The Cronbach alpha values provided a threshold or cutoff considered acceptable, sufficient, or satisfactory. The researchers specifically indicated that a satisfactory Cronbach alpha value is typically considered to be above .70 (Taber, 2018).

**Table 4.3**

*Reliability test analysis (Pilot Study and Actual Study)*

<b>Measures</b>	<b>Number of items</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>
Pilot Study				
<b>CAAS</b>	24	76.97	17.19	.97
<b>MSQSF</b>	20	61.47	11.88	.94
<b>GWSS</b>	9	23.20	7.32	.94
Actual Study				

<b>CAAS</b>	24	74.97	15.28	.96
<b>MSQSF</b>	20	57.62	9.97	.93
<b>GWSS</b>	9	24.86	5.01	.86

---

## **4.5 Descriptive Statistic**

### **4.5.1 Gender**

A total of 425 employees working in the private service sector at KL participated in this research. There were 208 males (48.9%) and 217 females (51.1%).

### **4.5.2 Age**

Total of 425 respondents participated in this research, there are the minimum age of 18 and maximum age of 52. All the participants age ranged from 18 to 52 (0.2% - 20.7%), the majority participants who were came from the age group ranging from 18 to 30 and it consisted of 97. 2% from the overall participants. There were total of 10 participants who were aged between 31 to 40 (2.3%), total of 2 participants who were aged 41 and above.



### **4.5.3 Ethnicity**

Among the 425 respondents in this research, there were 64 Malay respondents (15.1%), 285 Chinese respondents (67.1%), 60 Indian respondents (14.1%) and 15 respondents had selected others (3.5%).

### **4.5.4 Working Experience**

There are 425 respondents in present study and the respondents were response with the minimum working experience of 6 months and maximum working experiences of 25 years. Of note, there are 347 of respondents were reported with minimum 6 months of experiences to 2 years which claimed the majority of 81.6% from the overall participants. In other word, total of 57 respondents (13.3%) who had working experiences between 2 years above to 4 years, total of 17 respondents (4.0%) who had working experiences between 4 years above to 6 years, total of 2 respondents (0.5%) who had working experiences between 6 years above to 8 years and total of 2 respondents (0.4%) who had working experiences 10 years and above.

### **4.5.5 Working Sector**

Among the 425 respondents in the present study, 425 (100%) were comprised with working in the service sector.

**Table 4.4***Sociodemographic Characteristics of Participants*

---

Sample Characteristic	<i>n</i>	%
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	208	48.9
Female	217	51.1
<b>Age</b>		
18 to 30	413	97.2
31 to 40	10	2.4
40 and above	2	0.4
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
Malay	64	15.2
Chinese	285	67.1

---

Indian	60	14.2
Others	15	3.5
Working Experiences (years)		
0.6 to 2 years	347	81.6
2 to 4 years	57	13.3
4 to 6 years	17	4.1
6 to 8 years	2	0.5
10 years and above	2	0.5
Working Sector		
Services	425	100

---

## **4.6 Inferential Statistic**

### **4.6.1 Pearson Correlation**

The initial analysis examined the relationship between career adaptability and work stress, revealing a statistically significant negative correlation. The results indicated a medium negative relationship between career adaptability and work stress, with  $r = -.449$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $n = 425$ . Additionally, a significant negative correlation was found between job satisfaction and work stress. The results indicated a medium negative relationship between job satisfaction and work stress, with  $r = -.244$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $n = 425$ .

In conclusion, the study found that employees with higher levels of career adaptability reported lower levels of work stress, while employees with higher levels of job satisfaction reported lower levels of work stress.

**Table 4.5**

*Pearson Product Moment Correlations between CA, JS and WS*

Scale	1	2	3
1. Work Stress	-		
2. Career Adaptability	-.449**	-	
3. Job Satisfaction	-.224**	.662**	-

*Note.* N = 425, \*p < .05. \*\*p < .01

#### **4.6.2 Tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)**

The Variation Inflation Factor (VIF) was used to test for the assumption of multiple regression and to identify the presence of multicollinearity. The results showed a tolerance value of 1.0 and VIF value of 1.0 for career adaptability, as well as a tolerance value of 1.0 and VIF value of 1.0 for job satisfaction. According to Pallant (2020), multicollinearity could be ignored if the tolerance level was above .10 and the VIF level was below 10, as it did not affect the multicollinearity assumption. Therefore, multicollinearity was not a problem in the present analysis, and the multiple regression analysis was conducted without further adjustments.

**Table 4.6**

*Tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) of the measured variables*

<b>Measured Variable</b>	<b>Tolerance</b>	<b>VIF</b>
<b>CAAS</b>	1.000	1.000
<b>MSQSF</b>	1.000	1.000

#### **4.6.3 Multiple Regression Analysis**

A multiple linear regression was conducted to predict work stress based on career adaptability and job satisfaction. Notably, a significant regression equation was found  $F(2, 422) = 56.61, p < .000$ , with an  $R^2$  of .212. Furthermore, the multiple linear regression analysis indicated a statistically significant relationship between the predictors (CA and JS) and work stress. The results showed that CA ( $\beta = -.177, p = .000$ ) and JS ( $\beta = -.066, p = .023$ ) significantly predicted work stress. In total, the variation in work stress was explained by 21.2% through the combined influence of career adaptability and job satisfaction.

#### **4.6.4 Additional Analysis**

Each of the subscales was also analysed through multiple regression to ascertain their predictive effects on various dimensions of career adaptability towards work stress. A noteworthy finding emerged as the

concern subscale of career adaptability exhibited a significant predictive effect on work stress  $F(1, 423) = 81.81, p < .05$ , accounting for an  $R^2$  of .16. In essence, this implies that 16% of the variance in work stress can be attributed to the influence of the concern subscale. Furthermore, the control subscale demonstrated a significant predictive effect on work stress  $F(1, 423) = 94.02, p < .05$ , explaining an  $R^2$  of .18. This highlights that the variation in work stress can be elucidated by 18% through the impact of the control subscale. Similarly, the curiosity subscale yielded a significant predictive effect on work stress  $F(1, 423) = 78.96, p < .05$ , contributing to an  $R^2$  of .155. In this instance, 15.5% of the variance in work stress can be ascribed to the influence of the curiosity subscale. Moreover, the confidence subscale also emerged as a significant predictor of work stress  $F(1, 423) = 86.97, p < .05$ , accounting for an  $R^2$  of .169. Hence, it can be deduced that 16.9% of the variation in work stress is explicable through the influence of the confidence subscale. Consequently, among the measured subscales, the results suggest that the control subscale holds a stronger potential in predicting variations in employees' work stress.

Similarly, the subscales of the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire Short Form were utilized to measure the predictive effect of job satisfaction on work stress. Notably, the findings unveiled that the intrinsic subscale exhibited a significant predictive effect on work stress  $F(1, 423) = 20.83, p < .05, R^2 = .045$ . In brief, this suggests that 4.5% of the variance in work stress can be elucidated by the influence of the intrinsic subscale. Furthermore, the extrinsic subscale also emerged as a significant

predictor of work stress  $F(1, 423) = 19.07, p < .05, R^2 = .041$ . This highlights that 4.1% of the variance in work stress can be attributed to the influence of the extrinsic subscale. As a result, both subscales demonstrated predictive effects on work stress. However, it's noteworthy that the intrinsic factor appeared to wield a stronger influence in predicting variations in employees' work stress.

**Table 4.7**

*Results for Multiple Linear Regression (CA and JS Predicting WS)*

Effect	$\beta$	SE	95% CI		p
			LL	UL	
Constant					
CAAS	-.177	.019	-.214	-.139	.000
Concern	-3.04	.336	-3.70	-2.38	.000
Control	-3.01	.310	-3.62	-2.40	.000
Curiosity	-2.84	.320	-3.47	-2.21	.000



Confidence	-2.93	.314	-3.54	-2.31	.000
MSQSF	-.066	.131	.009	.123	.023
Intrinsic Factor	-2.10	.46	-3.0	-1.19	.000
Extrinsic Factor	-1.913	.438	-2.77	-1.05	.000

*Note.*  $p < .001$ ,  $R^2 = .212$

#### 4.6.5 Mediation Analysis (Process Macro)

Based on the mediation analysis, career adaptability was found to be a significant predictor of job satisfaction,  $B = .43$ ,  $SE = .24$ , 95%CI (.39, .48),  $p = .00$ , indicating a statistically significant relationship between career adaptability and job satisfaction. In addition, job satisfaction was found to be a significant predictor of work stress,  $B = .07$ ,  $SE = .03$ , 95%CI (.01, .12),  $p = .02$ , indicating a statistically significant relationship between job satisfaction and work stress. After controlling for job satisfaction, career adaptability was still found to be a significant predictor of work stress,  $B = -.18$ ,  $SE = .02$ , 95%CI (-.21, -.14),  $p < .001$ , suggesting a significant relationship between career adaptability and work stress. The results showed that 21.2% of the variance in employees' work stress can be explained by career adaptability ( $R^2 = .212$ ).

The study employed the concept of indirect effect to elucidate the mediating association between career adaptability and work stress, wherein job satisfaction played the role of the mediator. The percentile bootstrap estimation approach with 5000 samples was used in the Process Macro. However, the result indicated that the indirect coefficient was not significant,  $B = .29$ ,  $SE = .02$ ,  $95\%CI (-.00, .06)$ . According to the researcher, the lower and higher confidence interval levels not including zero or going on the zero will help to explain the significance relationship, otherwise, it will indicate insignificant findings. Therefore, the present study did not support the mediated model, as the mediating effect was found to be insignificant, indicating that job satisfaction did not serve as a mediator in the relationship between career adaptability and work stress.

**Table 4.8**

*Process Macro Analysis for Mediation Model in Present Study*

Variable	B	95% CI		SE	$\beta$	p	R <sup>2</sup>
		LL	UL				
Step 1							.44
Constant	25.14	21.55	28.72	1.83		.00	

---

Career	.43	.39	.48	.02	.66	.00
Adaptability						
Step 2						.21
Constant	34.30	31.72	36.87	1.31		.00
Career	-.18	-.21	-.14	.02	-.54	.00
Adaptability						
Job	.07	.01	.12	.03	.13	.00
Satisfaction						

---

*Note.* CI = Confidence Interval

#### **4.7 Conclusion**

In this study, the researchers investigated several hypotheses using statistical analyses such as Pearson Correlation, Multiple Regression, and Process Macro. The findings showed that the research hypotheses (H1, H2, H3, and H4) were supported, indicating a significant correlation and prediction between employees' career adaptability and work stress, as well as between job satisfaction and work stress.

However, the fifth hypothesis (H5) was not supported, suggesting that job satisfaction did not play a mediating role in the relationship between career adaptability and work stress.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

In the present chapter, topics covered include a discussion of the study, implications of the study, and recommendations for future research. Specifically, the objective of this study was to investigate the connections among career adaptability, job satisfaction, and work stress, predict the associations among these variables, and analyse the potential mediating role of job satisfaction in the relationship between career adaptability and work stress. The findings indicated that there was a significant negative relationship among career adaptability, job satisfaction, and work stress, and that both career adaptability and job satisfaction could effectively predict employee work stress. However, the mediating effect of job satisfaction did not mediate the relationship between career adaptability and work stress.

#### **5.2 Discussions**

The present study investigated the mechanism that elucidated the relationship between the variables. The evidence showed that individual differences in career adaptability had a negative relationship with work stress in work settings. Employee's career adaptability served as a psychological preparation for employees to face change-related events

within the company, ultimately helping individuals to better cope with unexpected situations and resulting in lower work stress.

### **5.2.1 There is a Significant Relationship between Career adaptability and Work stress**

Consistent with the initial hypotheses, the results of this study revealed a significant negative correlation between career adaptability and work stress. This finding aligned with previous research that had highlighted the importance of career adaptability in mitigating adverse outcomes such as work-related stress (Fiori et al., 2015; Yang et al., 2019). Results indicated that employees who demonstrated higher levels of career adaptability were more likely to experience lower levels of work stress. Other than that, theoretical implications of these findings were noteworthy. The transactional model of stress, which emphasized the interplay between individual cognitive appraisals and environmental factors, appeared to be supported by our results. Employees with greater career adaptability may have engaged in more positive cognitive appraisals of their work environment, viewing challenges as opportunities for growth rather than stressors. This interpretation was consistent with the model's proposition that adaptive responses could buffer against the impact of stressors (Silinda, 2018).

Aligned with prior research, the study's findings aimed to establish that an increase in career adaptability among employees led to improved emotional well-being, manifested as reduced work stress. In essence, career

adaptability functioned as a mechanism to alleviate work stress by aiding individuals in effectively navigating uncertainties and unexpected situations, particularly in the context of the private services sector (Gong, 2019; Sony & Mekoth, 2016). Furthermore, career adaptability played a pivotal role in enabling individuals to seamlessly integrate into their work roles within the organizational framework. More specifically, individuals possessing higher levels of career adaptability tended to respond positively to organizational changes and confront challenges inherent to their job. This positive response equipped them with the capacity to manage stress-inducing perceptions stemming from changes or uncertainties, thereby contributing to diminished work stress (Cullen et al., 2014). This further contributed to the understanding of private service employees who revealed higher career adaptability were associating with reporting lower work stress, and additionally, this also underscored the significant role of career adaptability in assisting employees to effectively mitigate work-related stressors.

The results further supported the idea that organizations should prioritize the development of career adaptability among their employees, especially within the private services sector. Providing resources and interventions that enhanced employees' abilities to navigate challenges and uncertainties within their careers may lead to decreased work stress and improved overall well-being, thus contributing to the practical implications for the organization. In alignment with prior research, scholars had indicated a significant correlation between employees' career adaptability

and work stress, wherein individuals with higher career adaptability tended to experience lower levels of work stress (Hassanie et al., 2022; Maggiori et al., 2013; Rasheed et al., 2020). In essence, the present study's findings supported the notion that there was a significant negative relationship between career adaptability and work stress, indicating that higher levels of career adaptability were associated with reduced work stress. Thus, H1 was accepted in the present study.

### **5.2.2 Career adaptability is a Significant Predictor of Work Stress**

In accordance with the formulated hypothesis and consistent with the findings of previous research, the results of this study provided strong evidence supporting the significant predictive relationship between career adaptability and work stress (Fiori et al., 2015; Hassani et al., 2022; Maggiori et al., 2013). The study's analysis revealed that employees possessing greater career adaptability exhibited increased flexibility in addressing uncertainties and challenges in their work environment. Consequently, this capacity endowed them with essential skills and resilience, enabling them to proficiently handle and reduce stressors, resulting in reduced perceived work-related stress. As mentioned in previous findings, career adaptability had been identified as equipping employees with the abilities to navigate unpredictable situations within their work roles, leading to a reduction in work stress (Chui et al., 2020).

In other words, the current results aligned with the idea that career adaptability played a congruent role in predicting employees' work stress levels within the organization. Existing findings, in turn, reported that employees' work stress could emerge from various workplace experiences, including a lack of adaptability due to negative appraisals or job dissatisfaction. These findings aligned with previous studies that had indicated career adaptability could significantly predict work stress (Yang et al., 2019; Yu et al., 2019). Additionally, the outcome of the study revealed a significant predictive relationship between career adaptability and work stress, which aligned with the principles of the transactional model of stress. This finding suggested that employees' ability to adapt to various career-related challenges and uncertainties had a notable impact on their experience of work stress. In the context of the transactional model of stress, this relationship underscored the importance of the interaction between an individual's cognitive appraisals of their work environment and their ability to adapt to these stressors.

Essentially, employees with higher career adaptability were better equipped to appraise stressful situations in a manner that allowed them to navigate challenges effectively, leading to lower perceptions of work stress. This corresponded to the core idea of the transactional model, where the interplay between an individual's cognitive appraisals and the environment played a pivotal role in determining their stress levels (Giesemann et al., 2022). Thus, present findings contributed to the understanding of how career adaptability operated within the framework of the transactional



model of stress, shedding light on its influence in shaping employees' responses to work-related stressors. Notably, previous literature had employed various theoretical approaches to explain the potential impact of career adaptability on work stress (Fiori et al., 2015; Yang et al., 2019). Adding a novel perspective, the present study revealed that the predictive effect of career adaptability on work stress could be interpreted within the framework of the transactional model of stress.

### **5.2.3 There is a Significant Relationship between Job satisfaction and Work Stress**

Congruent with previous findings, the present results revealed a significant relationship between job satisfaction and work stress. Indicating that when individuals were satisfied with their jobs, they were more likely to view their work positively and feel a sense of accomplishment and fulfillment (Chung et al., 2017; Yahaya et al., 2010). Conversely, job dissatisfaction could lead to negative perceptions and emotions about one's work, which may contribute to higher levels of stress. This was because job satisfaction was often seen as a reflection of employees' contentment and positive emotions related to their work environment; in turn, when employees developed positive emotions with the job, he or she was less likely to engage in work stress. Importantly, this discovery underscored the notion that an increase in job satisfaction corresponded to a decrease in work stress, particularly within the context of the private service sector. This aligned with prior research that underscored the correlation between higher levels of job satisfaction among employees in the services sector and

their reduced experience of work stress (Awwad et al., 2022; Jappinen et al., 2022).

Undeniably, previous research had consistently reported a connection between job satisfaction and work stress. Scholars had theorized that job satisfaction acted as a protective factor against work stress, buffering individuals from the negative effects of stressors in the work environment (Ardakani et al., 2013; Mazeed et al., 2019). Employees who derived satisfaction from their work were better equipped to cope with challenges and uncertainties, as they possessed a positive outlook and greater resilience. In short, the present results confirmed that job satisfaction served as one of the notable factors in helping employees mitigate work stress. Therefore, H2 was accepted in the present study; the evidence suggested a correlation between higher levels of reported job satisfaction and lower levels of reported work stress among the respondents.

#### **5.2.4 Job satisfaction is a Significant Predictor of Work Stress**

Similarly, the causal direction of job satisfaction influencing work stress aligned with the idea that employees who derived contentment and fulfillment from their work environment tended to possess the psychological resources necessary to effectively cope with challenges and demands. These employees were more likely to view their work positively, interpret stressors as manageable hurdles, and exhibit adaptive responses. Consistent with earlier research, scholars had underscored the significant

predictive role of job satisfaction in relation to employees' work stress (Manzoor et al., 2011; Siahaan, 2017). This reaffirmed the idea of job satisfaction as a central factor in mitigating employees' work stress, ultimately contributing to overall organizational success. Particularly within the private service sector, job satisfaction held the potential to shape how employees perceived potential stressors. For example, individuals experiencing lower job satisfaction might interpret challenges or the work environment more negatively, thereby giving rise to stressors that subsequently amplified their work stress levels. In fact, job satisfaction was commonly regarded as an indicator of an employee's overall contentment with their work environment and conditions (Chung et al., 2017). When individuals found themselves content and fulfilled within their job roles, they tended to experience positive emotions and reduced levels of stress (Singh et al., 2022).

Additionally, the findings of this study held valuable implications for understanding the transactional model of stress within the context of job satisfaction and work stress. The transactional model of stress posited that stress emerged from the transactional process between an individual's cognitive appraisals and environmental factors (Gieselmann et al., 2022). This study's results contributed to a deeper understanding of this model by revealing how job satisfaction operated as a significant factor within this transactional process. In the context of the transactional model, job satisfaction could be seen as a cognitive appraisal that individuals made about their work environment. When employees experienced higher job

satisfaction, they were likely to engage in positive cognitive appraisals of their job situations. These positive appraisals, in turn, influenced how they perceived and responded to work-related stressors. The study's causal relationship between job satisfaction and reduced work stress aligned with this theoretical concept (Silinda, 2018). Subsequently, the study contributed to the understanding of the transactional model of stress by proving the pivotal role of job satisfaction as a cognitive appraisal in shaping employees' responses to work stressors. This insight underscored the importance of fostering a positive work environment that promoted job satisfaction, potentially leading to more effective stress management. However, a comprehensive understanding of stress within organizations required acknowledging the interconnectedness of various factors and their dynamic influence on stress experiences. In conclusion, the study's identification of job satisfaction as a causal factor influencing work stress emphasized the significance of cultivating a positive work environment that nurtured employee satisfaction. This causal link implied that efforts to enhance job satisfaction could potentially yield a reduction in work stress, thereby contributing to improved overall employee well-being and organizational outcomes, especially within the private services sector. Therefore, hypothesis 4 was accepted in the present study.

### **5.2.5 Job satisfaction is a Significant Mediator in the Relationship between Career Adaptability and Work Stress**

Although previous studies had suggested a significant relationship between job satisfaction and work stress (Awwad et al., 2022; Chung et al., 2017). Surprisingly, the present result did not find job satisfaction to mediate the relationship between career adaptability and work stress. This unexpected finding presented an incongruence with previous literature, as it challenged the notion that job satisfaction mediated the relationship between career adaptability and work stress. Prior studies had generally implied that employees displaying positive job behaviors were more likely to develop job satisfaction, which in turn contributed to a reduction in work stress (Fiori et al., 2015; Sung & Hu, 2021; Zaghini et al., 2023). In contrast, the current study suggested that higher career adaptability among employees may not necessarily lead to job satisfaction as a factor affecting their work stress.

One possible explanation could be the complexity of the relationship between these variables. While job satisfaction may contribute to a reduction in work stress, it might not fully capture the interplay between career adaptability and work stress. Career adaptability involves an individual's ability to navigate various challenges and uncertainties in their career, which may not be entirely addressed by job satisfaction alone. This explanation shed light on the additional factors that needed to be considered when assessing the relationship between these variables. Specifically, a potential discrepancy could arise due to the fact that the present study did

not specify the work roles or positions of the employees. It was important to acknowledge that employees holding different job positions might have distinct tasks, responsibilities, and levels of decision-making authority. These variations could significantly impact their perceptions of adaptability, job satisfaction, and work stress. Likewise, senior-level workers may possess a wealth of experience and adaptability, enabling them to handle changes or new tasks more effectively and, subsequently, reducing their work stress. However, their extensive adaptability experiences might not necessarily translate into the development of positive experiences that lead to heightened job satisfaction and decreased work stress. In fact, their repetitive exposure to similar tasks or familiar challenges might result in feelings of boredom, a lack of challenge, or even work fatigue, which could potentially undermine their overall job satisfaction. This was further claimed by previous literature in suggesting that experiencing task boredom can significantly impact the perception towards the job and further lead to diminishing job satisfaction (Seckin, 2018; Van Wyk et al., 2018).

To add, other contextual factors such as job demands, and external stressors could also play a role in influencing the relationship between these variables. For instance, individuals in managerial positions might experience higher levels of stress due to increased responsibilities and decision-making demands, regardless of their career adaptability or job satisfaction. On the other hand, employees in more specialized roles might have lower stress levels if they find their tasks aligned with their skills and interests, even if their career adaptability is moderate. Indeed, previous

findings suggested that job demands, and job resources can act as significant factors in affecting employees from different perspectives (Bakker & Vries, 2021). In short, this aligns with the idea that employees' work roles or job positions could play a significant role.

Contrary to the theoretical concept, the theoretical framework had suggested that job satisfaction would act as a mediator between career adaptability and work stress. However, the empirical results revealed a different picture, indicating a lack of mediation by job satisfaction in this relationship. This discrepancy could be attributed to several factors. In fact, individual differences and unique circumstances of participants could also contribute to this discrepancy (Zacher & Rudolph, 2021). People's perceptions of job satisfaction and work stress are influenced by a wide range of personal and situational factors, and these variations might have impacted the mediating role of job satisfaction. Again, the complexity of the work environment, including factors such as organizational culture, job demands, and external stressors, could contribute to the discrepancy (Bakker & Vreis, 2021).

The theoretical model might not have accounted for all the contextual factors that influenced the relationship between CA, JS, and WS. As a result, the anticipated mediation effect may not have materialized as expected, it's possible that there are underlying mechanisms or variables that were not considered in the initial theoretical model. Therefore, this discrepancy may highlight the dynamic and complex nature of the

interactions between career-related variables and work stress. It suggests that the relationship between career adaptability, job satisfaction, and work stress is more nuanced than initially hypothesized. To conclude, while job satisfaction has been established as a significant factor in work stress reduction, it may not fully explain the mediation effect between career adaptability and work stress in the current study, therefore, this finding may become the reference of future research to delve deeper into the underlying mechanisms that explain the relationship between CA, JS, and WS as exploring other potential mediators or moderators could provide a more comprehensive understanding of how these factors interact and contribute to employees' overall well-being and work-related outcomes. Thus, hypothesis 5 was failed to accept in the present study.

### **5.3 Implications**

#### **5.3.1 Theoretical Approach**

In terms of the theoretical implications, the current study significantly advanced the transactional model of stress by shedding light on the intricate interplay between career adaptability and work stress. This model posits that stress arises due to the interaction between individuals and their environment, where stressors emerge when perceived demands exceed available resources (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). The current study's results aligned well with this model by highlighting the interplay between career adaptability and work stress.



This study introduced a different perspective to the transactional model of stress by suggesting that individual stress experiences could indeed emerge from an individual's own adaptability within their environment. This conceptual proposition extended the model's applicability beyond external stressors to include an internal dimension driven by an individual's ability to adapt effectively. The transactional model, which emphasizes the dynamic interaction between individuals and their environment, found resonance in the notion that individuals with differing levels of career adaptability may experience distinct stress outcomes. The novelty of this study's findings emerged from the limited exploration of the transactional model of stress in the context of career adaptability and work stress. While past research had predominantly focused on external stressors, the present study bridged the gap by highlighting the significance of internal adaptability as a stress determinant. This filled a crucial void in the existing literature and offered a deeper understanding of the mechanisms through which stress unfolded.

Furthermore, the finding that job satisfaction did not mediate the relationship between career adaptability and work stress introduced a deeper layer to the theoretical landscape. This observation underlined the complexity of stress dynamics, suggesting that the relationship between these variables might be more intricate than initially assumed. This outcome challenged conventional assumptions about the mediating role of job satisfaction. In conclusion, this study's theoretical implications demonstrated its profound impact on the transactional model of stress. By

highlighting the relationship between career adaptability and work stress, the study broadened the model's scope and applicability. Simultaneously, the mediating role of job satisfaction raised intriguing questions about the mediating processes within this context. Collectively, these implications invited future research to delve deeper into the mechanisms underlying stress development and adaptation within the workplace, fostering a richer and more comprehensive understanding of employee well-being.

### **5.3.2 Practical Approach**

From a practical standpoint, the implications of this study held substantial value for the realm of organizational management and human resources. The findings offered actionable insights that could aid in the mitigation of employee stress, thereby fostering a healthier and more productive work environment. By focusing on strategies to enhance career adaptability and bolster job satisfaction, organizations could directly address the root causes of work-related stress among their workforces.

The implication lay in the potential for organizations to strategically elevate career adaptability as a key competency. This could be achieved through targeted interventions such as training programs, skill development initiatives, and mentorship opportunities. Strengthening career adaptability equipped employees with the tools to navigate uncertainties and challenges with greater ease, ultimately leading to reduced stress levels. Moreover, fostering a work environment that prioritized job satisfaction through

supportive leadership, employee recognition, and work-life balance measures could further contribute to minimizing stress. Another practical application of the study's findings involved illuminating the specific stressors within the organizational context. Armed with an understanding of the factors that significantly contributed to work stress, management departments could design tailored interventions to alleviate these stressors. Proactive measures could include workload optimization, role clarification, and fostering open communication channels to address concerns promptly. By mitigating these stress-inducing factors, organizations could foster employee well-being and retention while curbing potential burnout and turnover.

Furthermore, the study's outcomes held the potential to inspire a broader shift in organizational culture, one that champions employee mental health. This cultural transformation could be reinforced by transparent communication, policies that support work-life balance, and wellness programs that address both physical and mental well-being. By promoting a holistic approach to employee welfare, organizations could create an atmosphere where stress was managed effectively, ultimately contributing to improved mental health outcomes. In summary, the practical implications of this study provided a roadmap for organizations to navigate the complex landscape of employee stress. By empowering employees with enhanced career adaptability and cultivating job satisfaction, organizations could pave the way for a more resilient, satisfied, and productive workforce. Additionally, a proactive stance towards

addressing stressors within the workplace could yield tangible benefits for both employees and the organization as a whole, fostering a culture that prioritized mental well-being and ultimately contributing to the broader perspective on effective stress management strategies.

#### **5.4 Limitations**

The present study employed a cross-sectional approach to evaluate employees' psychological factors, a methodology that came with inherent limitations. While this approach was valuable for capturing a snapshot of the relationships at a specific point in time, it fell short in addressing potential changes in employees' career adaptability over time. As career adaptability was a dynamic construct, the inability to account for changes over time could have restricted the accuracy of assessing its influence on work stress. To enhance the depth of understanding, future investigations should consider adopting longitudinal approaches. By tracking changes in career adaptability and work stress over an extended period, researchers can provide a more comprehensive and accurate depiction of the relationship's dynamics. A further limitation arose from the specific focus of the present study on employees within the private services sector. While this targeted approach offered benefits in terms of homogeneity and focused insights, it might have also limited the generalizability of the findings to broader industry contexts. This reduction in generalizability could have diminished the study's credibility and potentially influenced the external validity of the results. To alleviate this limitation, future research could undertake a more

diverse sampling strategy by including employees from a wider array of industries. This broader sample composition would enhance the study's external validity, facilitating the application of the findings across various workplace settings and contexts.

In summary, while the present study made significant contributions, it also had limitations. The cross-sectional design's inability to account for changes over time in career adaptability raised questions about the true nature of its influence on work stress. Moreover, the focus on the private services sector, while providing focused insights, might have limited the findings' applicability to other industries. Addressing these limitations through longitudinal research designs and more diverse industry samples would enhance the study's robustness and broaden its implications for employee well-being and organizational practices.

## **5.5 Recommendations**

Future research endeavours could take steps to enhance the diversity of sectors represented in the study's sample. By incorporating employees from different industries, the study's scope would expand to encompass a broader range of work environments, potentially revealing varied insights into the relationship between CA, JS, and WS. While the current study unveils a significant relationship among these variables within the private services sector, it's imperative to acknowledge that this relationship might manifest differently across other industries. In this regard, cultural

dimensions could play a crucial role in shaping the interplay between career adaptability, job satisfaction, and work stress. Cultural factors have the potential to influence individuals' perceptions, values, and responses to work-related stressors. Incorporating a cross-cultural perspective in future research would enrich our understanding by investigating whether the observed relationships hold true across different cultural contexts. For instance, cultural norms and societal expectations could moderate how career adaptability influences job satisfaction and subsequently impacts work stress. Furthermore, considering various sectors and cultural backgrounds could provide insights into any potential sector-specific or culture-specific nuances in these relationships. It might unveil whether the associations established in the present study hold consistent across diverse workplace settings and cultural landscapes. Such an approach would bolster the reliability and generalizability of the research outcomes, thereby yielding more comprehensive insights applicable to a broader range of work contexts and cultural environments.

## **5.6 Conclusion**

In summary, this study has shed light on the predictive value of career adaptability and job satisfaction for work stress among employees in the private service sector in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The findings suggest that employees with higher levels of career adaptability and job satisfaction tend to experience lower work stress. Human resource profession can focus on enhancing employees' adaptability and satisfaction to reduce the work stress levels, which can lead to a healthier and more productive workforce.

## REFERENCES

- Al-Jubari, I., Mosbah, A., & Salem, S. F. (2022). Employee well-being during Covid-19 pandemic: the role of adaptability, work-family conflict, and organizational response. *Sage Open*, 1-13.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440221096142>
- American International Assurance Vitality. (2019, November 15). Malaysian workforce: Sleepless and overworked.  
<https://www.aia.com.my/en/about-aia/media-centre/press-releases/2019/malaysian-workforce-sleepless-and-overworked.html>
- Amira Nursyafiah Bt Mohammad., Abu Samah, I. H., Naiemah, U. S., Abd Rashid, I. M., Nurshahrizleen, S., Basri, H. H., & Mansor, M. F. (2018). Job satisfaction, training & development and work environment on career adaptability among fresh graduates in Malaysia. *International Journal of Engineering and Technology*, 7(2.29), 417-420.
- Akca, Y., Ozer, G., & Kalaycioglu, E. (2018). Impact of career adaptability on employee performance. *International Journal of Business and Management Invention*, 7(11), 24-28.
- An, J. Y., Cha, S., Moon, H., Ruggiero, J. S., & Jang, H. (2016). Factors affecting job satisfaction of immigrant Korean nurses. *Journal of*



*Transcultural Nursing*, 27(2), 126-135.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1043659614539175>

Apuke, O. D. (2017). Quantitative research methods a synopsis approach.

*Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review (Kuwait Chapter)*, 6(10), 40-47. <https://doi.org/10.12816/0040336>

Ardakani, M. B., Zare, M., Mahdavi, S., Ghezavati, M., Fallah, H., Halvani, G., Ghanizadeh, S., & Bagheraat, A. (2013). Relation between job stress dimensions and job satisfaction in workers of a refinery control room. *Journal of Community Health Research*, 1(3), 198-208.

Attorney General's Chambers of Malaysia. (2020). Laws of Malaysia. From, <http://www.agc.gov.my/agcportal/index.php?r=portal2>

Awwad, R. I., Aljuhmani, H. Y., & Hamdan, S. (2022). Examining the relationships between frontline bank employees' job demands and job satisfaction: A mediated moderation model. *Sage Open*, 12, 1-19.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244022107988>

Bakker, A. B., & Vries, J. D. (2021). Job demand-resources theory and self-regulation: a new explanations and remedies for job burnout. *Anxiety, stress and coping*, 34(1), 1-21.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/10615806.2020.1797695>

- Burman, R., & Goswami, T. (2018). A systematic literature review of work stress. *International Journal of Management Studies*, 3(9), 112-132.  
[https://doi.org/10.18843/ijms/v5i3\(9\)/15](https://doi.org/10.18843/ijms/v5i3(9)/15)
- Cha, D. J., & Amrein-Beardsley, A. (2023). A survey research study of music education faculty: demographics as related to indicators of job satisfaction and stress. *International Journal of Music Education*, 0(0), 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02557614231164652>
- Chao, M. C., Jou, R. C., Liao, C. C., & Kuo, C. W. (2015). Workplace stress, job satisfaction, job performance and turnover intention of health care workers in rural Taiwan. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Public Health*, 27(2), 1827-1836. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1010539513506604>
- Chew, R. (2017, July 13). Stress and the city. *The Edge Market*.  
<https://www.theedgemarkets.com/article/stress-and-city>
- Cheng, S. C., & Kao, Y. H. (2022). The impact of Covid-19 pandemic on job satisfaction: a mediated moderation model using job stress and organizational resilience in the hotel industry of Taiwan. *Heliyon*, 8(3), 1-8. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2022.e09134>
- Chung, E. K., Jung, Y., & Sohn, Y. W. (2017). A moderated mediation model of job stress, job satisfaction, and turnover intention for airport security

screeners. *Safety Science*, 98, 89-97.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssci.2017.06.005>

Chui, H., Li, H., & Ngo, H. (2022). Linking protean career orientation with career optimism: career adaptability and career decision self-efficacy as mediators. *Journal of Career Development*, 49(1), 161-173. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0894845320912526>

Coetzee, M., & Stoltz, E. (2015). Employees' satisfaction with retention factors: Exploring the role of career adaptability. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 89, 83-91. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2015.04.012>

Cullen, K. L., Edwards, B. D., Casper, W. C., & Gue, K. R. (2014). Employees adaptability and perceptions of change-related uncertainty: Implications for perceived organizational support, job satisfaction and performance. *Journal of Business Psychology*, 29(2), 269-280. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10869-013-9312-y>

De Bruin, G. P. (2006). The dimensionality of the general work stress scale: A hierarchical exploratory factor analysis. *Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 32(4), 68-75.

De Bruin, G. P., & Taylor, N. (2005). Development of the sources of work stress inventory. *South African Journal of Psychology*, 35(4), 748-765.

Dedele, A., Miskinyte, A., Andrusaityte, S., & Bartkute, Z. (2019). Perceived stress among different occupational group and the interaction with sedentary behaviour. *International Journal of Environment Research and Public Health*, *16*(23), 46-95.  
<https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph16234595>

Department of Statistic Malaysia. (2020, December 30). Employment and salaries & wages statistic 2018.  
[https://www.dosm.gov.my/v1/index.php?r=column/cthemByCat&cat=437&bul\\_id=UklnZ2hNOUNIZHc3NmVrRWxRV2k1QT09&menu\\_id=Tm8zcnRjdVRNWWlpWjRlbmtlaDk1UT09](https://www.dosm.gov.my/v1/index.php?r=column/cthemByCat&cat=437&bul_id=UklnZ2hNOUNIZHc3NmVrRWxRV2k1QT09&menu_id=Tm8zcnRjdVRNWWlpWjRlbmtlaDk1UT09)

Dursun, M. T., & Argan, M. T. (2017). Does personality affect career adaptability. *International Journal of Humanities Social Sciences and Education*, *4*(10), 107-115. <http://dx.doi.org/10.20431/2349-0381.0410014>

Eryilmaz, A., & Kara, A. (2016). Comparison of teachers and pre-service teachers with respect to personality traits and career adaptability. *International Journal of Instruction*, *10*(1), 85-100.

Fiori, M., Bollmann, G., & Rossier, J. (2015). Exploring the path through which career adaptability increases job satisfaction and lower job stress: The role of affect. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *91*, 113-121.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2015.08.010>

- Gajda, J. (2019). Professional adaptation of new employees to the organization. *Sciendo, 1*(1), 929-938.
- Ghasemi, A., & Zahediasl, S. (2012). Normality test for statistical analysis: A guide for non-statisticians. *International Journal of Endocrinology and Metabolism, 10*(2), 486-489. <https://doi.org/10.5812/ijem.3505>
- Gharib, M. N., Jamil, S. A., Ahmad, M., & Ghouse, S. (2016). The impact of job stress on job performance: A case study on academic staff at Dhofar University. *International Journal of Economic Research, 13*(1), 21-33.
- Girolamo, D. N., & Mans, C. (2019). Research study design. *Fowler's Zoo and Wild Animal Medicine Current Therapy, 9*, 59-62. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-323-55228-8.00011-4>
- Gieselmann, A., Elberich, N., Mathes, J., & Pietrowsky, R. (2020). Nightmare distress revisited: cognitive appraisal of nightmares according to Lazarus' transactional model of stress. *Journal of Behavior Therapy and Experimental Psychiatry, 68*, 101-117. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbtep.2019.101517>
- Gong, Z. X. (2019). Relationship between feedback environment established by mentor and nurses' career adaptability: a cross-sectional study. *Journal of Nurse Management, 27*, 1568-1575.

- Hans, A., Mubeen, S. A., Khan, S., & Al-Saadi, A. S. M. (2014). A study on work stress and job satisfaction among headmasters: A case study of bilingual schools in Sultanate of Oman- Muscat. *Journal of Sociological Research*, 5(1), 40-46.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.5296/jsr.v5i1.5426>
- Hassanie, S., Olugbade, O. A., Karadas, G., & Altun, O. (2022). The impact of workload on workers' traumatic stress and mental health mediated by career adaptability during Covid-19. *Sustainability*, 14, 1-18.  
<https://doi.org/10.3390/su141912010>
- Hoboubi, N., Choobineh, A., Ghanavati, F. K., Keshavarzi, S., & Hosseini, A. A. (2017). The impact of job stress and job satisfaction on workforce productivity in an Iranian petrochemical industry. *Safety and Health at Work*, 8(1), 67-71. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.shaw.2016.07.002>
- Hopp, W. J., Iravani, S. M. R., & Liu, F. (2009). Managing white collar work: an operations-oriented survey. *Production and Operations Management*, 18(1), 1-32.
- Hirschi, A., & Valero, D. (2015). Career adaptability profiles and their relationship to adaptivity and adapting. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 88, 220-229. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2015.03.010> 0001-8791

Ismail, R., Yussof, I., & Uddin, N. (2012). Analysis of labour requirements in the Malaysian services sector. *International Journal of Business and Management Science*, 5(1), 19-37.

Jabatan Tenaga Kerja Semenanjung Malaysia. (2022, September 11). Laws of Malaysia; Minimum retirement age act 2012.  
<https://jtksm.mohr.gov.my/ms/laman-utama>

Jamal, M. (2011). Work stress, job performance and organizational commitment in a multinational company: An empirical study in two countries. *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 2(20), 20-29.

Jappinen, K., Roos, M., Slater, P., & Suominen, T. (2022). Connection between nurse managers' stress from workload and overall job stress, job satisfaction and practice environment in central hospitals: a cross-sectional study. *Journal of Nursing Research*, 42(2), 109-116.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/20571585211018607>

Jiang, Z. (2016). The relationship between career adaptability and job content plateau: The mediating roles of fit perceptions. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 95-96, 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2016.06.001>

- Johns, G. (2010). Presenteeism in the workplace: A review and research agenda. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 31*, 519-542.  
<https://doi.org/10.1002/job.630>
- Johnston, C. S., Luciano, E. C., Maggiori, C., Ruch, M., & Rossier, J. (2013). Validation of the German version of the Career Adapt-Abilities Scale and its relation to orientations to happiness and work stress. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 83*, 295-304.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2013.06.002>
- Kumar, C. S. (2011). Job stress and job satisfaction of IT companies' employees. *Management and Labour Studies, 36*(1), 61-7
- Lal, A., Tharyan, A., & Tharyan, P. (2020). The prevalence, determinants and the role of empathy and religious or spiritual beliefs on work stress, job satisfaction, coping, burnout, and mental health in medical and surgical faculty of a teaching hospital: A cross-sectional survey. *Journal of La Revue de Medecine Interne, 41*(4), 232-240.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.revmed.2019.12.005>
- Lambert, E. G., Keena, L. D., Haynes, S. H., May, D., & Leone, M. C. (2020). Predictors of job stress among southern correctional staff. *Criminal Justice Policy Review, 31*(2), 309-331.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0887403419829211>



Lambert, E. G., Qureshi, H., & Frank, J. (2021). The good life: exploring the effects job stress, job involvement, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment on the life satisfaction of police officers. *International Journal of Police Science Management*, 23(3), 279-292.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/14613557211016494>

Levin, K. (2006). Study Design III: Cross-sectional studies. *Evidence-based dentistry*, 7, 24-25.

Le, K. K., Hamzah, S. R., & Omar, Z. (2019). Conceptualising personal resource on career adaptability. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Science*, 9(9), 875-886.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v9-i9/6378>

Loke, Y. J. (2014). Debt servicing burden among working adults in Malaysia. *The Asian Conference on the Social Sciences 2014* (pp. 02-52). Official Conference Proceedings.

Lukic, J. M., & Lazarevic, S. L. (2018). Sources of workplace stress in service sector organizations. *Economics and Organization*, 15(3), 217-229.  
<https://doi.org/10.22190/FUEO1803217L>

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>

Manzoor, M. U., Usman, M., Naseem, M. A., & Shafiq, M. M. (2011). A study on job stress and job satisfaction among universities Faculty in Lahore, Pakistan. *Global Journal of Management and Business Research*, 11(9), 1-5.

Mazeed, S. A., Saritha, P., Begum, N., Illangi, C. B., & Manjula, G. (2019). Job satisfaction and employee engagement contemporary tools to eliminate stress among work force in an organization. *International Journal of Innovative Technology and Exploring Engineering*, 8(11), 1744-1746. <https://doi.org/10.35940/ijiteeK1531.0981119>

Muyidi, A., Zhang, Y. B., & Gist-Mackey, A. (2023). The influence of gender discrimination, supervisor support, and government support on Saudi female journalists' job stress and satisfaction. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 37(2), 207-224. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08933189221103623>

Ng, S. I., Lim, Q. H., Cheah, J. H., Ho, J. A., & Tee, K. K. (2022). A moderated-mediation model of career adaptability and life satisfaction among working adults in Malaysia. *Current Psychology*, 41, 3078-3092. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-020-00837-7>

- O'Connell, D. J., McNeely, E., & Hall, D. T. (2008). Unpacking personal adaptability at work. *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies*, 14(3), 248-259.
- Ogbuanya, C. T., & Yekinni, S. A. (2020). Analytical investigation of career variables as correlate work stress o electrical/electronic trade teachers in technical colleges. *International Journal of Electrical Engineering*, 58(4), 793-827. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020720920907880>
- Omar, S., & Noordin, F. (2016). Moderator influences on individualism-collectivism and career adaptability among ICT professionals in Malaysia. *Procedia Economics and Finance*, 37, 529-537.
- Orgambidez, A., & Almeida, H. (2020). Exploring the link between structural empowerment and job satisfaction through the mediating effect of role stress: a cross-sectional questionnaire study. *International Journal of Nursing Studies*, 109, 103-672. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijnurstu.2020.103672>
- Pallant, J. (2007). *SPSS survival manual* (3rd ed.). McGraw-Hill.
- Perrewe, P. L., & Zellars, K. L. (1999). An examination of attributions and emotions in the transactional approach to the organizational stress process. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 20, 739-752.

Ram, B. S. (2019, November 15). Survey: Malaysian employees are overworked, sleep deprived, unhealthy. *New Straits Times*.  
<https://www.nst.com.my/news/nation/2019/11/539026/survey-malaysian-employees-are-overworked-sleep-deprived-unhealthy#:~:text=KUALA%20LUMPUR%3A%20A%20survey%20has,in%20a%2024%2Dhour%20period>.

Rajandran, C. N., Subramaniam, A., & Maideen, M. H. (2019). Impact of job burnout, job security and organizational commitment on turnover intention among credit counselling and debt management agency employees in Kuala Lumpur. *International Journal of Recent Technology and Engineering*, 7(5), 2277-3878.

Rasheed, M. I., Okumus, F., Weng, Q. X., Hameed, Z., & Nawaz, M. S. (2020). Career adaptability and employee turnover intentions: The role of perceived career opportunities and orientation to happiness in the hospitality industry. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 44, 98-107. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2020.05.006>

Relate Malaysia. (2021, September 13). Workplace mental health: the business costs. [https://relate.com.my/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/WorkplaceMentalHealth\\_FA\\_Edited\\_2021.pdf](https://relate.com.my/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/WorkplaceMentalHealth_FA_Edited_2021.pdf)

- Rizkina, N.S., & Mohd Mahudin, N. D. (2022). I've got enough on my plate!  
The mediating role of job demands in the relationship between  
psychosocial safety climate and job satisfaction. *Human Factors and  
Ergonomics Journal*, 7(1), 19-37.
- Riaz, M., Ahmad, N., Riaz, M., Murtaza, G., Khan, T., & Firdous, H. (2016).  
Impact of job stress on employee job satisfaction. *International Review  
of Management and Business Research*, 5(4), 1370-1381
- Rudolph, C. W., Lavigne, K. N., & Zacher, H. (2017). Career adaptability: A  
meta-analysis of relationships with measure of adaptivity, adapting  
responses, and adaptation results. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 98,  
17-34. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2016.09.002>
- Rudolph, C. W., Lavigne, K. N., Katz, I. M., & Zacher, H. (2017). Linking  
dimensions of career adaptability to adaptation results: A meta-analysis.  
*Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 102, 151-173.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2017.06.003>
- Saadeh, I. M., & Suifan, T. S. (2020). Job stress and organizational  
commitment in hospitals; The mediating role of perceived  
organizational support. *International Journal of Organizational  
Analysis*, 28(1), 226-242. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJOA-11-2018-1597>

- 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>
- Santilli, S., Marcionetti, J., Rochat, S., Rossier, J., & Nota, L. (2017). Career adaptability, hope, optimism, and life satisfaction in Italian and Swiss adolescents. *Journal of Career Development*, 44(1), 62-76.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0894845316633793>
- Sen, K. (2008). Relationship between job satisfaction & job stress amongst teachers & managers. *Indian Journal of Industrial Relations*, 44(1), 14-23.
- Seckin, S.N. (2018). Boredom at work: a research on public employees. *Journal of Business Research Turk*, 10(1), 639-651.  
<https://doi.org/10.20491/isarder.2018.411>
- Shaare, N. N., Hussien, M. A., Mohd Hasnurizal, W. K., Aziz, N. I., Osman, N. S., & Mohd Idris, S. M. (2022). A review of job stress and its influence on health-related risk. *International Journal of Accounting, Finance and Business*, 7(42), 58-70. <https://doi.org/10.55573/IJAFB.074208>

- Shin, Y. J., & Lee, J. Y. (2018). Self-focused attention and career anxiety: the mediating role of career adaptability. *The Career Development Quarterly*, 67, 110-125. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cdq.12175>
- Siahaan, E. (2017). Can we rely on job satisfaction to reduce job stress. *International Journal of Management Science*, 3(3), 17-26. <https://doi.org/10.18775/ijmsba.1849-5664-5419.2014.33.1002>
- Singh, P., Bhardwaj, P., Sharma, S. K., & Mishra, V. (2022). Effect of organizational factors on psychological stress and job satisfaction. *The Journal of Business Perspective*, 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09722629221106265>
- Silinda, F. T. (2018). A transactional approach to predicting stress experienced when writing dissertations. *Journal of Psychology*, 49(3), 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0081246318801733>
- Sony, M., & Mekoth, N. (2016). The relationship between emotional intelligence, frontline employee adaptability, job satisfaction and job performance. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 30, 20-32. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2015.12.003>
- Sung, Y. K., & Hu, H. H. (2021). The impact of airline internal branding on work outcomes using job satisfaction as a mediator. *Journal of Air*

Transport Management, 94, 1-10.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jairtraman.2021.102063>

Taber, K. S. (2018). The use of Cronbach's Alpha when developing and reporting research instruments in science education. *Research of Science Education*, 48, 1273-1296. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11165-016-9602-2>

Taherdoost, H. (2016). Sampling method in research methodology; How to choose a sampling technique for research. *International Journal of Academic Research in Management*, 5(2), 18-27.

Tariq, M. R., Sohail, M., & Muhammad, A. (2011). Impact of employee adaptability to change towards organizational competitive advantage. *Global Journal of Management and Business Research*, 11(7), 1-11.

Tladinyane, R., & Merwe, M. VD. (2016). Career adaptability and employee engagement of adults employed in an insurance company: An exploratory study. *Journal of Human Resource Management*, 14(1), 1-9. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/sajhrm.v14i1.752>

Tongchaiprasit, P., & Ariyabuddhiphongs, V. (2016). Creativity and turnover intention among hotel chefs: The mediating effects of job satisfaction and work stress. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 55, 33-40. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2016.02.009>



- Urbanaviciute, L., Udayar, S., & Rossier, J. (2019). Career adaptability and employee well-being over a two-year period: Investigating cross-lagged effects and their boundary conditions. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *111*, 74-90. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2018.10.013>
- Van Wyk, A. E., Swarts, I., & Mukonza, C. (2018). The influence of the implementation of job rotation on employees' perceived job satisfaction. *International Journal of Business and Management*, *13*(11), 89-101. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ijbm.v13n11p89>
- Vickovic, S. G., & Morrow, W. J. (2020). Examining the influence of work-family conflict on job stress, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment among correctional officers. *Criminal Justice Review*, *45*(1), 5-25. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0734016819863099>
- Vyas, L., & Luk, S. (2010). Frazzled care for social workers in Hong Kong: Work stress circumstances and consequences. *International Social Work*, *54*(6), 832-851. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020872810382684>
- Walinga, J. (2014). *Introduction to psychology-1<sup>st</sup> Canadian edition*. University of Saskatchewan. <https://openpress.usask.ca/introductiontopsychology/chapter/stress-and-coping/>

Weiss, D. J., Dawis, R. V., England, G. W., & Lofquist, L. H. (1967). Manual for the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire.

[http://vpr.psych.umn.edu/sites/vpr.dl.umn.edu/files/monograph\\_xxii\\_-\\_manual\\_for\\_the\\_mn\\_satisfaction\\_questionnaire.pdf](http://vpr.psych.umn.edu/sites/vpr.dl.umn.edu/files/monograph_xxii_-_manual_for_the_mn_satisfaction_questionnaire.pdf)

Winasis, S., Wildan, U., & Sutawidjaya, A. H. (2020). Impact of digital transformation on employee engagement influenced by work stress on Indonesian private banking sector. *Proceedings of the 5<sup>th</sup> NA International Conference on Industrial Engineering and Operations Management Detroit*, 1238-1250.

Yang, X., Feng, Y., Meng, Y., & Qiu, Y. (2019). Career adaptability, work engagement, and employee well-being among Chinese employees: The role of guanxi. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *10*, 1029.

<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.01029>

Yahaya, A., Yahaya, N., Amat, F., Bon, A. T., & Zakariya, Z. (2010). The effect of various modes of occupational stress, job satisfaction, intention to leave and absentism companies commission of Malaysia. *Australian Journal of Basic and Applied Sciences*, *4*(7), 1676-1684.

Yu, K., Liu, C., & Li, Y. (2019). Beyond social exchange: Career adaptability linking work stressors and counterproductive work behavior. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *10*, 1079. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.01079>

- Yu, H., Guan, X. Y., Zheng, X. M., & Hou, Z. J. (2017). Career adaptability with or without career identity: How career adaptability leads to organizational success and individual career success. *Journal of Career Assessment, 26*(4), 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1069072717727454>
- Zacher, H. (2015). Daily manifestations of career adaptability: Relationships with job and career outcomes. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 91*(1), 76-86. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2015.09.003>
- Zacher, H., & Rudolph, C. W. (2021). Individual differences and changes in subjective wellbeing during the early stages of the Covid-19 pandemic. *American Psychologist Association, 76*(1), 50-62. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/amp0000702>
- Zaghini, F., Biagiolo, V., Fiorini, J., Piredda, M., Moons, P., & Sili, A. (2023). Work-related stress, job satisfaction, and quality of work life among cardiovascular nurses in Italy: Structural equation modelling. *Applied Nursing Research, 72*, 151-703. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.apnr.2023.151703>
- Zhou, J. J., Zhang, J., Chi, M., & Guo, W. (2023). Does migrant workers' subjective social status affect their mental health? Job satisfaction as a longitudinal mediator. *International Journal of Social Psychiatry, 0*(0), 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00207640231164014>

## APPENDICES

### Appendix A

#### Ethical Approval for Research Project/Protocol



**UNIVERSITI TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN**  
Wholly Owned by UTAR Education Foundation (Company No. 578227-M)

Re: U/SERC/56/2021

15 March 2021

Dr Pung Pit Wan  
Department of Psychology & Counselling  
Faculty of Arts and Social Science  
Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman  
Jalan Universiti, Bandar Baru Barat  
31900 Kampar, Perak

Dear Dr Pung,

#### Ethical Approval For Research Project/Protocol

We refer to your application for ethical approval for your research project (Master student's project) and are pleased to inform you that your application has been approved under Expedited Review.

The details of your research project are as follows:

<b>Research Title</b>	The Relationship between Career Adaptability and Work Stress Among Employees in Kuala Lumpur: Job Satisfaction as a Mediator
<b>Investigator(s)</b>	Dr Pung Pit Wan Ms Sarvarubini Nainee Wong Yong Kent (UTAR Postgraduate Student)
<b>Research Area</b>	Social Sciences
<b>Research Location</b>	Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur
<b>No of Participants</b>	442 participants (Age: 18 - 60)
<b>Research Costs</b>	Self-funded
<b>Approval Validity</b>	15 March 2021 - 14 March 2022

The conduct of this research is subject to the following:

- (1) The participants' informed consent be obtained prior to the commencement of the research,
- (2) Confidentiality of participants' personal data must be maintained; and
- (3) Compliance with procedures set out in related policies of UTAR such as the UTAR Research Ethics and Code of Conduct, Code of Practice for Research Involving Humans and other related policies/guidelines.

Kampar Campus : Jalan Universiti, Bandar Barat, 31900 Kampar, Perak Darul Ridzuan, Malaysia  
Tel: (605) 468 8888 Fax: (605) 466 1313  
Sungai Long Campus : Jalan Sungai Long, Bandar Sungai Long, Cheras, 43000 Kajang, Selangor Darul Ehsan, Malaysia  
Tel: (603) 9086 0288 Fax: (603) 9019 8868  
Website: www.utar.edu.my



Should you collect personal data of participants in your study, please have the participants sign the attached Personal Data Protection Statement for your records.

The University wishes you all the best in your research.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

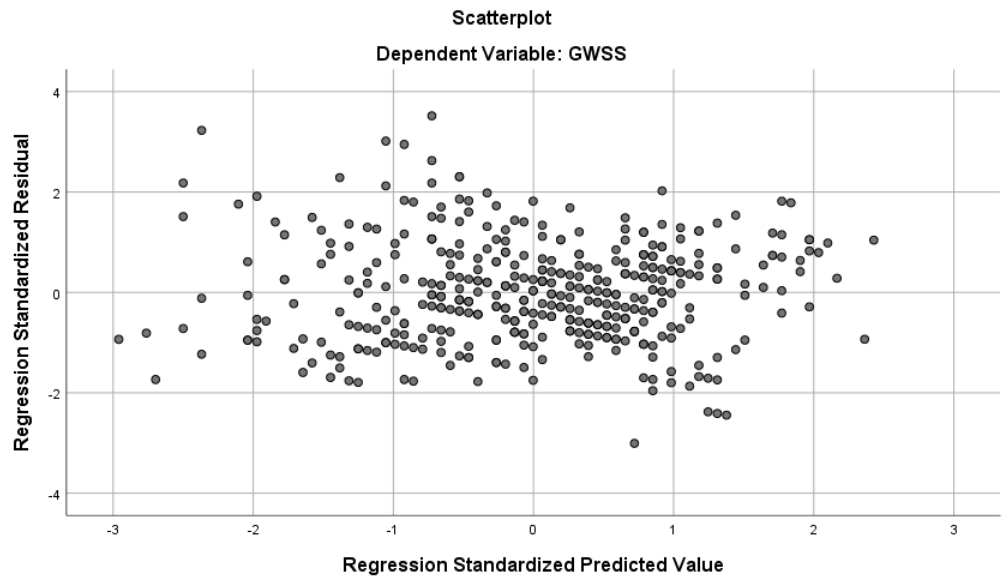


**Professor Ts Dr Faiz bin Abd Rahman**  
Chairman  
UTAR Scientific and Ethical Review Committee

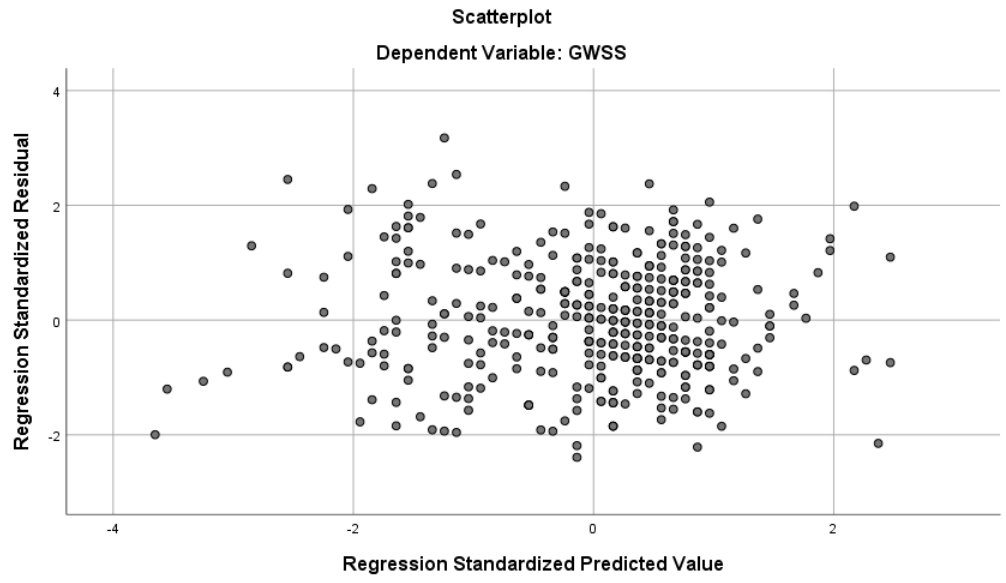
c.c    Dean, Faculty of Arts and Social Science  
         Director, Institute of Postgraduate Studies and Research

## Appendix B

### Scatterplot of Standardized Residuals



**Figure 4.1: Career Adaptability with Employee's Work Stress**



**Figure 4.2: Job Satisfaction with Employee's Work Stress**

## Appendix C

### Career Adapt-Abilities Scale

#### Career Adapt-Abilities Scale

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_    Circle one: Male or Female

**DIRECTIONS**

Different people use different strengths to build their careers. No one is good at everything, each of us emphasizes some strengths more than others. Please rate how strongly you have developed each of the following abilities using the scale below.

<u>STRENGTHS</u>	Strongest	Very Strong	Strong	Somewhat Strong	Not Strong
1. Thinking about what my future will be like					
2. Realizing that today's choices shape my future					
3. Preparing for the future					
4. Becoming aware of the educational and vocational choices that I must make					
5. Planning how to achieve my goals					
6. Concerned about my career					
7. Keeping upbeat					
8. Making decisions by myself					
9. Taking responsibility for my actions					
10. Sticking up for my beliefs					
11. Counting on myself					
12. Doing what's right for me					



Please rate how strongly you have developed each of the following abilities using the scale below.

<b><u>STRENGTHS</u></b>	<b>Strongest</b>	<b>Very Strong</b>	<b>Strong</b>	<b>Somewhat Strong</b>	<b>Not Strong</b>
13. Exploring my surroundings					
14. Looking for opportunities to grow					
15. Investigating options before making a choice					
16. Observing different ways of doing things					
17. Probing deeply into questions that I have					
18. Becoming curious about new opportunities					
19. Performing tasks efficiently					
20. Taking care to do things well					
21. Learning new skills					
22. Working up to my ability					
23. Overcoming obstacles					
24. Solving problems					

## Appendix D

### General Work Stress Scale

General Work Stress Scale  
Gideon P. de Bruin & Nicola Taylor  
University of Johannesburg  
2005

#### INSTRUCTIONS

The purpose of the following questions is to examine how stressed you are at work. Please respond to the following questions by making a cross [x] over the number that best indicates your answer.

	Ne ve r	Ra rel y	So me ti me s	Of ten	Al wa ys
1. Does work make you so stressed that you wish you had a different job?	1	2	3	4	5
2. Do you get so stressed at work that you want to quit?	1	2	3	4	5
3. Do you worry about having to wake up and go to work in the morning?	1	2	3	4	5
4. Do you find it difficult to sleep at night because you worry about your work?	1	2	3	4	5
5. Do you get so stressed at work that you forget to do important tasks?	1	2	3	4	5
6. Does work make you so stressed that you find it hard to concentrate on your tasks?	1	2	3	4	5
7. Do you spend a lot of time worrying about your work?	1	2	3	4	5
8. Do you feel like you cannot cope with your work anymore?	1	2	3	4	5
9. Does work make you so stressed that you lose your temper?	1	2	3	4	5

## Appendix E

### Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (Short form)

**Ask yourself: How satisfied am I with this aspect of my job?**

**Very Sat.** means I am very satisfied with this aspect of my job.

**Sat.** means I am satisfied with this aspect of my job.

**N** means I can't decide whether I am satisfied or not with this aspect of my job.

**Dissat.** means I am dissatisfied with this aspect of my job.

**Very Dissat.** means I am very dissatisfied with this aspect of my job.

---

<b>On my present job, this is how I feel about . . .</b>	<b>Very Dissat.</b>	<b>Dissat.</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Sat.</b>	<b>Very Sat.</b>
1. Being able to keep busy all the time . . . . .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The chance to work alone on the job . . . . .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. The chance to do different things from time to time . . . . .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. The chance to be "somebody" in the community . . . . .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. The way my boss handles his/her workers . . . . .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. The competence of my supervisor in making decisions . . . . .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Being able to do things that don't go against my conscience . . . . .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. The way my job provides for steady employment . . . . .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. The chance to do things for other people . . . . .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. The chance to tell people what to do . . . . .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. The chance to do something that makes use of my abilities . . . . .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. The way company policies are put into practice . . . . .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. My pay and the amount of work I do . . . . .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. The chances for advancement on this job . . . . .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. The freedom to use my own judgment . . . . .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. The chance to try my own methods of doing the job . . . . .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. The working conditions . . . . .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. The way my co-workers get along with each other . . . . .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. The praise I get for doing a good job . . . . .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. The feeling of accomplishment I get from the job . . . . .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>Very Dissat.</b>	<b>Dissat.</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Sat.</b>	<b>Very Sat.</b>