

## "Career Adaptability Profiles and Their Relations With Emotional and Decision-Making Correlates Among Belgian Undergraduate Students"

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### ABSTRACT

This study used a person-centered approach to investigate university students' profiles of career adaptability and determine whether different combinations of concern, control, curiosity, and confidence could be identified. We also explored the relations of these profiles with emotional intelligence, anticipatory emotions, and career decision-making self-efficacy. We found six distinct profiles of career adaptability among 307 university students who differed both on their level and on shape. Emotional intelligence was associated with profiles displaying higher levels of career adaptability. Furthermore, profiles of career adaptability significantly displayed differences in terms of positive anticipatory emotions at the prospect of the school-to-work transition and career decision-making self-efficacy but not in terms of negative anticipatory emotions. These results highlight that differentiating profiles of career adaptability provide insights for the design and the implementation of career-related interventions among university students.

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# Career Adaptability Profiles and their Relations with Emotional and Decision-Making Correlates among Belgian Undergraduate Students

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**Abstract**

The present study used a person-centered approach to investigate university students' profiles of career adaptability and determine whether different combinations of concern, control, curiosity, and confidence could be identified. We also explored the relations of these profiles with emotional intelligence, anticipatory emotions, and career decision-making self-efficacy. We found 6 distinct profiles of career adaptability among 307 university students that differed both on their level and shape. Emotional intelligence was associated with profiles displaying higher levels of career adaptability. Furthermore, profiles of career adaptability significantly displayed differences in terms of positive anticipatory emotions at the prospect of the school-to-work transition and career decision-making self-efficacy, but not in terms of negative anticipatory emotions. These results highlight that differentiating profiles of career adaptability provide insights for the design and the implementation of career-related interventions among university students.

Keywords: career adaptability, emotional intelligence, anticipatory emotions, career decision-making self-efficacy, latent profile analysis

1 Emerging adulthood is a particularly crucial phase in individuals' career development  
2 (Porfeli & Lee, 2012). For undergraduate students, career development tasks include the  
3 crystallization of career goals, the commitment to a career choice, and the active preparation  
4 for a chosen career path and the job market entry. Understanding undergraduates' capabilities  
5 to prepare for and deal with these tasks and challenges is therefore crucial to sustain and help  
6 them to navigate an ever more insecure and turbulent world of work (Koen et al., 2012).  
7 Within the career construction literature, these capabilities have been referred to as career  
8 adaptability (Savickas, 2013). The construct of career adaptability has gained increasing  
9 attention in recent years. It has been defined as a "psychosocial construct that denotes an  
10 individual's resources for coping with current and anticipated tasks, transitions, and traumas  
11 in their occupational roles" (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012, p. 662). Building on the career  
12 construction model of adaptation, vocational research has sought to identify the antecedents  
13 (i.e., adaptivity), individual responses (i.e., adapting responses), and outcomes (i.e.,  
14 adaptation results) of career adaptability (Hirschi et al., 2015; Rudolph et al., 2017). Even  
15 though a vast amount of research insights has been gathered over the years, the study of  
16 career adaptability has heavily relied on variable-centered approaches and has overlooked the  
17 possibility that individuals may not only differ in their *mean* levels of career adaptability but  
18 also in the specific combinations of career adaptability dimensions (i.e., concern, control,  
19 curiosity, and confidence; Hirschi & Valero, 2015). These emerging approaches have been  
20 referred to as person-centered and provide promising avenues for a complementary and more  
21 thorough understanding of vocational processes (Hofmans et al., 2020; Spurk et al., 2020).

22 In the first study investigating the profiles of career adaptability using a person-  
23 centered approach, Hirschi and Valero (2015) found, and partially replicated, five profiles  
24 that were meaningfully related to antecedents (i.e., adaptivity) and career-related outcomes  
25 (i.e., adapting). In their first sample, they found that profiles were mostly differentiated upon

26 their level (low vs. high levels of career adaptability dimensions) rather than their shape  
27 (qualitative distinct combinations among career adaptability dimensions), except for a small  
28 *helpless-passive* profile. This latter profile was characterized by very low levels of control  
29 and curiosity dimensions, and average levels of concern and confidence. In the second  
30 sample, five profiles were differentiated upon their level (very low, low, below average,  
31 above average, and high career adaptability). In both studies, they demonstrated that  
32 personality factors influenced profile membership and that profiles displaying higher levels  
33 of career adaptability tended to report higher levels of career planning and exploration.  
34 Hirschi and Valero (2015) concluded “that levels effects dominate shape effects in latent  
35 career adaptability profiles” and, therefore, “that researchers can rightfully examine career  
36 adaptability using a variable-centered approach” (p. 227). However, the replication of profiles  
37 in different populations and (educational) contexts, as well as the investigation of additional  
38 theoretically-driven antecedents and outcomes is an important prerequisite in order to shed  
39 light on the (in-)adequacy of person-centered approaches as well as their complementariness  
40 with variable-centered methods when studying important vocational processes (Hofmans et  
41 al., 2020; Spurk et al., 2020). Given that person-centered approaches are rather exploratory in  
42 nature and highly sample-dependent, Morin et al. (2018) proposed the following steps to  
43 address the construct validity of profiles and their generalizability: (1) demonstrating their  
44 theoretical value, (2) demonstrating meaningful relations with key covariates, and (3)  
45 replicating profile solutions across samples and across time. Investigating the construct  
46 validity and their generalizability to different samples is not only important for theoretical  
47 purposes but also for practice in order to confirm their rightful use in identifying at-risk  
48 students as well as designing and implementing tailored interventions among university  
49 students (Koen et al., 2012).

50           The objectives of the present study were threefold. First, we sought to replicate  
51 Hirschi and Valero's (2015) findings with regards to career adaptability profiles among  
52 undergraduate students in Belgium. For this purpose, we used latent profile analysis to  
53 examine the emergence of distinct profiles with different combinations of the dimensions of  
54 concern, control, curiosity, and confidence. In order to address the emotional nature of career  
55 transitions and to respond to calls for a better inclusion of emotional processes in vocational  
56 research (Hartung, 2011; Kidd, 2004), our second objective was to investigate the relations  
57 between career adaptability profiles and two important emotional correlates: emotional  
58 intelligence and anticipatory emotions. On the one hand, emotional intelligence has been  
59 identified as a key antecedent of career adaptability (Celik & Storme, 2017; Coetzee & Harry,  
60 2014; Udayar et al., 2018). However, the number of empirical efforts regarding their relation  
61 is still limited (Parmentier et al., 2019) and it remains unclear how these relations would  
62 translate in a person-centered framework. On the other hand, as future graduates anticipate  
63 their transition into the world of work, the various events it entails (e.g., finding a job), and  
64 how they will cope with these challenges, they experience what has been called *anticipatory*  
65 emotions (Baumgartner et al., 2008), that is, emotions currently experienced at the prospect  
66 of a future event. These anticipatory emotions are close to constructs such as career hope or  
67 career anxiety – even though the latter were mainly considered as trait or dispositions – and  
68 have been identified as important correlates of career adaptability (Parmentier et al., 2021;  
69 Santilli et al., 2017; Vignoli, 2015). Third, we investigated career decision-making self-  
70 efficacy as an additional outcome of career adaptability profiles in order to strengthen the  
71 replication approach of our study. As such, both emotional intelligence and career  
72 adaptability have been identified as antecedents of career decision-making self-efficacy (Di  
73 Fabio & Saklofske, 2014; Rudolph et al., 2017).

74 In doing so, the present study offers several contributions to the field. First, it provides  
75 a direct replication in another sample of previous research on career adaptability profiles.  
76 Such replication efforts are important to assess and ascertain the utility of person-centered  
77 approaches in vocational research (Hofmans et al., 2020; Spurk et al., 2020). Second, we  
78 contribute to the existing evidence about career construction theory by testing a broad model  
79 of relations between adaptivity (i.e., emotional intelligence), adaptability, and adapting  
80 responses (i.e., anticipatory emotions and career decision-making self-efficacy). Investigating  
81 the broader career construction model of adaptation using a person-centered approach is  
82 important to provide insights into how different profiles are related to different antecedent  
83 and outcomes variables (Hofmans et al., 2020; Spurk et al., 2020). Third, we echo previous  
84 calls for more research on the role of emotional processes in career development (Hartung,  
85 2011; Kidd, 2004).

### 86 **Profiles of Career Adaptability**

87 Career adaptability has been defined as a set of psychosocial self-regulatory,  
88 transactional, and malleable resources that allow individuals to prepare for, cope with, and  
89 manage career transitions and the associated career- or work-related issues (Savickas &  
90 Porfeli, 2012). Career adaptability is a multidimensional construct composed of four  
91 dimensions: concern (i.e., being future-oriented and prepare for the future), control (i.e.,  
92 being responsible in constructing one's own career), curiosity (i.e., exploring possible selves  
93 and fit between oneself and the environment), and confidence (i.e., beliefs of own capacities  
94 to manage career goals). Meta-analytic findings have confirmed that career adaptability was  
95 related to a wide range of career-related outcomes such as job and career satisfaction, career  
96 identity, lower job stress, and employability (Rudolph et al., 2017), among other outcomes.  
97 Accordingly, career adaptability is considered as a key career meta-competency that  
98 individuals may rely upon when anticipating and preparing for major career events, deal with

99 work and career changes, proactively plan their career, develop new skills, engage in career  
100 behaviors, and ultimately build sustainable careers (Buyken et al., 2015).

101 Even though substantial empirical evidence has now demonstrated the role of career  
102 adaptability in individuals' careers (see Johnston, 2018, for a review), the existing stream of  
103 research is mainly dominated by variable-centered approaches. This focus overlooked the  
104 possibility that individuals may differ in their intraindividual *combinations* on the specific  
105 dimensions of career adaptability. In other words, while variable-centered approaches study  
106 the extent to which variables are related to each other *on average* for the entire sample, they  
107 fail to describe *how* the specific dimensions of career adaptability combine together, that is,  
108 the patterns and the relative intensity of their combinations. These arguments gave rise to  
109 calls for the use of person-centered approaches in vocational research (Hofmans et al., 2020;  
110 Spurk et al., 2020).

111 In this study, we used latent profile analysis (LPA) to investigate the combinations of  
112 the career adaptability dimensions of concern, control, curiosity, and confidence among a  
113 sample of university students. In LPA, profiles are described based on their level and shape.  
114 While level differentiates profiles on their mean level for each specific dimension (e.g., low  
115 vs. high concern), shape refers to the different forms displayed by the specific combination of  
116 the dimensions taken together (e.g., low concern with high curiosity). Contrary to classical  
117 clustering, LPA lies within the structural equation modeling framework and thus have several  
118 advantages, such as the availability of fit indices to choose the best profile solution, the  
119 consideration of measurement errors, and the inclusion of covariates (Hofmans et al., 2020;  
120 Spurk et al., 2020), among other advantages.

121 **Research question 1.** *Do distinct profiles of career adaptability emerge, and do they*  
122 *vary both quantitatively and qualitatively?*



123 Consistent with Hirschi and Valero (2015), we expected the emergence of at least five  
124 profiles differentiated mainly according to level (from low to high levels on all dimensions).  
125 However, theoretical arguments cast doubt on the ubiquity of such profiles only differentiated  
126 according to their mean levels. While the higher-order construct of career adaptability has  
127 attracted most of researchers' attention, there are several arguments in investigating the  
128 specific contributions of each dimension separately (see also Hirschi & Valero, 2015). A first  
129 argument stems from the numerous empirical efforts that showed the unique explanatory and  
130 predictive validity of career adaptability dimensions, independently of the broad construct of  
131 career adaptability, with several antecedents and outcomes (Rudolph et al., 2017 for a meta-  
132 analysis). The second line of argument stems from the theoretical conceptualization of the  
133 career adaptability dimensions that explicitly theorize the presence of different profiles  
134 (Savickas, 2013). Actually, the four dimensions of career adaptability do not necessarily  
135 develop at the same rates, and experienced career-related tasks, transitions, and traumas are  
136 likely to intervene in the development of these dimensions, sometimes leading to regressions  
137 or fixations (Savickas, 2013). Consequently, significant intraindividual differences between  
138 the four dimensions are likely to emerge depending on their development trajectories. As  
139 such, counselors are invited to assess potential career-related problems associated with each  
140 specific dimension finely: indifference (low concern) or anxiety (high concern), indecision  
141 (low control) or impulsivity (high control), unrealism (low curiosity) or overstimulation (high  
142 curiosity), and inhibition (low confidence) or overconfidence (high confidence). According to  
143 Savickas (2013), investigating these differences with regards to the four dimensions could be  
144 crucial for understanding the antecedents and consequences of individuals' career-related  
145 problems, and implementing tailor-made interventions. Consequently, while we expected the  
146 emergence of specific profiles following Hirschi and Valero's (2015) findings, we still left

147 the research question relatively open. This is consistent with the inductive and exploratory  
148 nature of person-centered approaches (Hofmans et al., 2020).

### 149 **Correlates of Career Adaptability Profiles**

150 The second and third goals of this study were to explore the relationships of distinct  
151 career adaptability profiles with antecedents and outcomes. Building on the career  
152 construction model of adaptation, we considered emotional intelligence as a facet of  
153 adaptivity (Hirschi et al., 2015; Rudolph et al., 2017) and hypothesized that emotional  
154 intelligence would predict profile membership. This is consistent with previous variable-  
155 centered research evidence considering emotional intelligence as an important factor of  
156 adaptive functioning in individuals' careers. Previous research has already shown that  
157 emotional intelligence was an antecedent of career adaptability (Coetzee & Harry, 2014;  
158 Parmentier et al., 2019) and that career adaptability mediated the impact of emotional  
159 intelligence on several outcomes such as academic satisfaction, academic engagement,  
160 employability, and career decision-making (Celik & Storme, 2017; Udayar et al., 2018). We  
161 expected that emotionally intelligence individuals would be more aware of their career  
162 aspirations and more future-oriented (i.e., concerned), perceive better control over career-  
163 related tasks (i.e., control), evaluate career-related tasks positively and more able to anticipate  
164 the emotional consequences of their choices and behaviors (i.e., curiosity), and build  
165 confidence in overcoming emotional situations (i.e., confidence). We therefore hypothesized  
166 that individuals with a high level of emotional intelligence would be more likely to belong in  
167 profiles with high levels of the four career adaptability dimensions.

168 **Hypothesis 1.** *High levels of emotional intelligence will be related to higher*  
169 *likelihood of membership into profiles characterized by high levels of concern,*  
170 *control, curiosity, and confidence.*

171           Furthermore, we explored the relations between career adaptability profiles and  
172 anticipatory emotions at the prospect of the school-to-work transition and career decision-  
173 making self-efficacy. Building upon the career construction model, these two variables are  
174 both considered as adapting responses. Adapting, or adapting responses, refers to the display  
175 of adaptive behaviors or reactions and the development of adaptive attitudes that help when  
176 addressing changing career conditions and dealing with career development tasks (Savickas,  
177 2013). Within the career construction model of adaptation (Hirschi et al., 2015), adapting or  
178 adapting responses are considered as outcomes of career adaptability: individuals are more  
179 likely to display adapting responses in response to career-related tasks when they feel that  
180 they have career adaptability resources in terms of concern, control, curiosity, and confidence  
181 to prepare for and face these tasks.

182           On the one hand, previous research has highlighted the impact of career adaptability  
183 on positive and negative future-oriented affect and emotions (Buyukgoze-Kavas, 2014;  
184 Parmentier et al., 2021; Santilli et al., 2017; Vignoli, 2015). Related research also showed  
185 that career adaptability was a key predictor of positive and negative affect, and well-being  
186 (Celen-Demirtas et al., 2015; Fiori et al., 2015; Konstam et al., 2015; Maggiori et al., 2013;  
187 Urbanaviciute et al., 2018). On the other hand, self-beliefs in making career-related decisions  
188 are a core ingredient of the career decision-making process (Di Fabio & Saklofske, 2014).  
189 Building upon social cognitive theory, career decision-making self-efficacy beliefs have been  
190 developed to account for individuals' confidence in their ability to successfully complete the  
191 tasks required to make a career decision (Betz et al., 1996). Previous research has  
192 consistently shown that higher levels of career adaptability were associated with higher levels  
193 of career decision-making self-efficacy (Rudolph et al., 2017). According to Savickas  
194 (2013), concerned individuals develop plans to achieve their career goals and are more future  
195 oriented. Individuals with a high level of control are more able to shape their environment

196 and to develop adaptive behaviors towards their future career goals. Curious individuals  
197 explore their environment as well as their future self. Finally, confident individuals in regard  
198 to their career develop a form of confidence in their abilities to overcome career difficulties.  
199 We therefore predicted that individuals with high levels of the four career adaptability  
200 dimensions would display higher levels of positive anticipatory emotions and career decision-  
201 making self-efficacy levels and lower level of negative anticipatory emotions.

202 **Hypothesis 2.** *Career adaptability profiles will display significant differences in*  
203 *terms of positive and negative anticipatory emotions such as profiles characterized by*  
204 *higher levels of concern, control, curiosity, and confidence will display more positive*  
205 *and less negative anticipatory emotions.*

206 **Hypothesis 3.** *Career adaptability profiles will display significant differences in*  
207 *terms of career decision-making self-efficacy such as profiles characterized by higher*  
208 *levels of concern, control, curiosity, and confidence will display more career*  
209 *decision-making self-efficacy.*

## 210 **Method**

### 211 *Participants and procedure*

212 Data were collected among 307 university students from various programs in Belgium.  
213 Students were contacted and invited to participate to an online survey which was approved by  
214 the Institutional Review Board of the university. Students were assured of both the anonymity  
215 and the confidentiality of the study and gave their informed consent. Of the participants,  
216 78.8% were girls and mean age was 22.33 years ( $SD = 4.19$ ). With regard to year of study,  
217 140 participants were bachelor students (47.3%), while 156 participants were master students  
218 (52.7%). Proportions of study programs were as follows: Social Sciences (69.2%), Health  
219 Sciences (25.7%), and Science and Technology (5.1%).

### 220 *Measures*

221 *Career adaptability*

222 Career adaptability was investigated with the short version of the Career Adapt-  
223 Abilities Scale (Maggiore et al., 2017). This instrument consists of 12 items ranging from 1  
224 (“*Not one of my strengths*”) to 5 (“*My greatest strength*”) and is composed of 4 separate  
225 dimensions: concern ( $\alpha = .73$ ; e.g., “*Preparing for the future*”), control ( $\alpha = .74$ ; e.g.,  
226 “*Making decisions by myself*”), curiosity ( $\alpha = .63$ ; e.g., “*Observing different ways of doing*  
227 *things*”), and confidence ( $\alpha = .70$ ; e.g., “*Taking care to do things well*”).

228 *Emotional Intelligence*

229 We measured emotional intelligence using the intrapersonal dimension of the Profile  
230 of Emotional Competence ( $\alpha = .89$ ; Brasseur et al., 2013). The measure includes 25 items  
231 rated from 1 (“*Strongly disagree*”) to 7 (“*Strongly agree*”) and provides separate sub-scores  
232 for 5 dimensions (i.e., identification, comprehension, expression, regulation and utilization).  
233 Examples of items are “*When I am touched by something, I immediately know what I feel*”  
234 (identification dimension) or “*I find it difficult to handle my emotions*” (reverse scoring,  
235 regulation dimension).

236 *Anticipatory Emotions*

237 We assessed positive anticipatory emotions with the 5 following items: excited,  
238 strong, enthusiastic, proud, determined ( $\alpha = .85$ ). Negative anticipatory emotions were  
239 assessed with the 5 following ones: jittery, upset, scared, nervous, and afraid ( $\alpha = .87$ ). For  
240 both subscales, response scales ranged from 1 (“*Not at all*”) to 5 (“*A great deal*”). The  
241 instructions for the emotional induction were as follows: “*Stop for a moment and think about*  
242 *your situation at the end of your studies and the entry on the labor market. Please indicate*  
243 *how do you feel right now at the prospect of your transition from university to the job market*  
244 *using the following statements.*”

245 *Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy*

246 Career decision-making self-efficacy was assessed with a validated French version of  
247 the Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale–Short Form ( $\alpha = .84$ ; Betz et al., 1996; Gaudron,  
248 2013). Previous research has demonstrated the good psychometric properties of the French  
249 version (Storme, Celik &, Myszkowski, 2019). This scale consists of 18 items ranging from 0  
250 (“No confidence at all”) to 5 (“Complete confidence”). Sample items are “Determine what  
251 your ideal job would be” and “Identify employers, firms, institutions relevant to your career  
252 possibilities.”

253 [INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE]

## 254 Results

### 255 Preliminary analyses

256 All statistical analyses were conducted using *Mplus* 8 with the robust maximum  
257 likelihood estimator. The means, standard deviations, and bivariate correlations are displayed  
258 in Table 1. Second, we performed confirmatory factor analyses to assess the measurement  
259 reliability and discriminant validity of our constructs. All construct-specific measurement  
260 models for career adaptability, emotional intelligence, anticipatory emotions, and career  
261 decision-making self-efficacy, respectively, demonstrated satisfactory to excellent fit to the  
262 data ( $RMSEAs \leq .09$ ;  $CFIs \geq .95$ ;  $TLIs \geq .92$ ;  $SRMR \leq .07$ ). Our theoretical model in which  
263 all constructs and their respective items were modeled altogether fitted the data satisfactorily  
264 ( $\chi^2(406) = 685.57$ ;  $RMSEA = .05$ ;  $CFI = .91$ ;  $TLI = .89$ ;  $SRMR = .07$ ) and was superior to  
265 all more constrained models. Factor scores were saved from this theoretical measurement  
266 model to be used as profile indicators in the subsequent analyses (Morin et al., 2016).

### 267 Latent profile analyses

268 We performed several LPA in a stepwise procedure from 1 up to 8 profiles. Besides  
269 the availability of fit statistics, issues of parsimony, theoretical adequacy, substantive  
270 meaning, profile redundancy, and profile size also drive the profile enumeration process

271 (Nylund et al., 2007). LPA were performed using 5,000 random sets of starting values and  
272 1,000 iterations, while retaining the 100 best solutions for optimization. Several fit statistics  
273 were used to evaluate each profile solution: Akaike Information Criterion (AIC), Consistent  
274 AIC (CAIC), Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC), sample-size adjusted BIC (SABIC),  
275 adjusted Lo-Mendell-Rubin likelihood ratio test (aLMR), Bootstrap Likelihood Ratio test  
276 (BLRT), and entropy. The best profile solution should display smaller AIC, CAIC, BIC, and  
277 SABIC values, an entropy greater than .70, and significant aLMR and BLRT statistics.  
278 Recommendations from simulation studies encourage researchers to favor the CAIC, BIC,  
279 SABIC, and BLRT (Nylund et al., 2007). Means and variances of each indicator were  
280 allowed to vary during the enumeration process, providing a more realistic parameterization  
281 and less biased parameter estimates (Morin et al., 2011).

282 [INSERT TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE]

283 The fit indices associated with the profile enumerations are displayed in Table 2. The  
284 AIC and SABIC kept on decreasing and suggested the continuing addition of profiles.  
285 However, they tended to reach a plateau after the 6-profile solution. Values for the BIC and  
286 CAIC are more informative as they reached a plateau after 4 profiles and both reached their  
287 lowest point at 6 profiles and increased afterwards. The values associated with aLMR and  
288 BLRT supported a 3- and a 7-profile solution, respectively. However, aLMR is known to  
289 underestimate the number of profiles (Nylund et al., 2007) and the results of the BLRT were  
290 inconsistent and regularly failed to converge for the 7- and the 8-profile solution. These  
291 results thus supported the 6-profile solution as the best description of our data. In order to  
292 check the theoretical adequacy and meaning carried out by the different profile solutions, we  
293 carefully examined the solutions from 4 up to 6 profiles. These qualitative investigations  
294 brought further support for the 6-profile solution as additional profiles were systematically  
295 qualitatively distinct and meaningful. The 6-profile model was thus retained as the best





320 profiles. Finally, the smallest and last profile (5.9% of the sample) was composed of students  
321 displaying high levels of career adaptability dimensions.

322 [INSERT TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE]

### 323 *Antecedents of career adaptability profiles*

324 First, when comparing a model in which the control variables were allowed to predict  
325 profile membership to a model which constrained their effects, our results showed that the  
326 impact of control variables was negligible. Second, using the R3STEP function in *Mplus*, we  
327 conducted the multinomial logistic regression analyses. Overall, higher levels of emotional  
328 intelligence were consistently associated with profiles characterized by higher levels of the  
329 career adaptability dimensions. High levels of emotional intelligence were associated with a  
330 higher probability to belong to the *high* compared to the other profiles ( $B = -2.96, p < .001, B$   
331  $= -2.08, p < .001, B = -1.82, p < .001, B = -1.77, p < .001$ , and  $B = -0.96, p < .05$ , for the  
332 *low, low confidence, below average, above average, and concern dominant* profiles,  
333 respectively). Similar results were found for the *concern dominant* profiles compared to the  
334 other profiles ( $B = -2.00, p < .001, B = -1.12, p < .01, B = -0.86, p < .01, B = -0.81, p < .01$ ,  
335 for the *low, low confidence, below average, and above average* profiles, respectively). High  
336 levels of emotional intelligence were associated with a higher probability to belong to the  
337 *below average* and *above average* profile compared to the *low* profile ( $B = -1.15, p < .01$  and  
338  $B = -1.19, p < .01$ , respectively). However, no significant effects were found between the  
339 *above average* profile and the *low confidence*. In addition, no significant effects were neither  
340 found between the *low confidence* and the *below average* profiles, nor between the *low* and  
341 the *low confidence* profiles. Emotional intelligence also discriminated profiles with rather  
342 high levels of career adaptability but with varying patterns (i.e., the *above average* and  
343 *concern dominant* profiles). However, emotional intelligence did not differentiate profiles

344 with low levels of career adaptability but with different patterns (e.g., *below average*, *low*,  
345 and *low confidence* profiles). Overall, these results brought support for Hypothesis 1.

346 [INSERT TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE]

#### 347 *Outcomes of career adaptability profiles*

348 Differences between profiles in terms of anticipatory emotions and career decision-  
349 making self-efficacy were performed using the BCH function in *Mplus*. Results are displayed  
350 in Table 4 and graphically represented in Figure 2. Significant differences between career  
351 adaptability profiles could be found for positive anticipatory emotions and career decision-  
352 making self-efficacy. However, no significant differences were found between profiles with  
353 regards to negative anticipatory emotions. Overall, profiles with higher levels of career  
354 adaptability dimensions displayed higher levels of positive anticipatory emotions and career  
355 decision-making self-efficacy. However, profiles displaying similar levels of career-  
356 adaptabilities but with different shape hardly displayed significant differences. For example,  
357 while the *low* profile displayed much lower levels of career adaptability and career decision-  
358 making self-efficacy compared to the *low confidence* and the *below average* profiles, these  
359 two last profiles did not statistically differ. A similar pattern was found for the profiles  
360 displaying higher mean levels of career adaptability but with varying shapes (i.e., the *below*  
361 *average*, *concern dominant*, and *high* profiles). These results supported our third hypothesis  
362 and partially our second hypothesis.

#### 363 **Discussion**

364 The objectives of the present study were to investigate career adaptability profiles  
365 using a person-centered approach and examine their relations with emotional intelligence,  
366 anticipatory emotions at the prospect of the school-to-work transition, and career decision-  
367 making self-efficacy in a sample of university students in Belgium. In doing so, we sought to  
368 replicate Hirschi and Valero's (2015) findings and extend the investigation of antecedents

369 and outcomes to emotional processes in a different national and educational context. The  
370 present paper therefore aimed to expand existing knowledge pertaining to the profiles of  
371 career adaptability within the career construction model of adaptation. Due to the rather  
372 exploratory and inductive nature of person-centered approaches, such endeavors are  
373 important in order to ascertain that profiles are useful for practice and interventions (Hofmans  
374 et al., 2020; Spurk et al., 2020). The present study also aimed to address previous calls for the  
375 inclusion of emotional processes in career development whose importance is stressed out in  
376 stressful and emotional career events such as the school-to-work transition.

377 First, our results yielded six distinct and meaningful career adaptability profiles. Three  
378 profiles encompassed rather low levels of career adaptability, and, together, were composed  
379 of the half of the sample. The *low* profile described students that displayed low levels on all  
380 dimensions. The *low confidence* profile displayed low levels on all dimensions but  
381 specifically on the confidence dimension. The *below average* profile was composed of almost  
382 a quarter of the total sample with levels on all dimensions somewhat below average. The  
383 other three profiles exhibited students with rather high levels of career adaptability. Two  
384 profiles displayed moderately high levels of career adaptability but were qualitatively  
385 differentiated especially with regards to the concern dimension. The last profile was the  
386 smallest and encompassed students that had higher levels on all dimensions. Finally, these  
387 profiles were found to be similar in number, in shape, within-person variance, and size  
388 among bachelor and master students. These results are partially consistent with Hirschi and  
389 Valero's (2015) findings as our results yielded a 6-profile solution, instead of a 5-profile  
390 solution. However, most profiles were differentiated upon their level (the *low*, *above average*,  
391 and *high* profiles), which is consistent with Hirschi and Valero (2015). Having said that,  
392 several differences between Hirschi and Valero's study and ours are noteworthy with regards  
393 to the sample (e.g., different country, different educational context, sample size) and

394 analytical procedure (e.g., operationalization of the indicators, underlying assumptions, fit  
395 statistics) that could potentially account for the differences between the two studies. Still, we  
396 did observe the emergence of two qualitatively differentiated profiles: the *low confidence* and  
397 the *concern dominant* profiles. The emergence of profiles that display qualitative different  
398 patterns in terms of shape is critical and suggest that level does not always dominate the  
399 investigation of career adaptability profiles. In addition, while profile sizes were relatively  
400 similar for the *low* and *below average*, the proportion of students in the *high* profile was  
401 smaller in our study (5%) compared to Hirschi and Valero's (2015) study (15%). While we  
402 agree with Hirschi and Valero's (2015) conclusions that level effects are generally  
403 predominant, our results bring more nuance with regards to this important issue and provide  
404 evidence that, in specific contexts, shape differences may occur. Especially, these two  
405 qualitatively distinct profiles accounted for approximately a third of our sample and emerged  
406 early in the enumeration process, precluding the emergence of spurious profiles due to  
407 violations of the model's distributional assumptions (Bauer & Curran, 2003). Actually, the  
408 present study sheds light on the complementariness of both approaches in that they provide  
409 distinct but equally useful information to the study of career adaptability (Collins & Lanza,  
410 2010). As such, the reliance on either a variable- or a person-centered approach is directly  
411 dependent upon the research question or the practical issue at hand (Hofmans et al., 2020).  
412 When adopting a variable-centered approach, one is able to study the relations, on average,  
413 between career adaptability and key covariates, establishing these relations for the entire  
414 sample. The person-centered approach is well suited to bring nuance in these relationships  
415 and investigate whether subpopulations with distinct patterns of these relations exist.

416 Emotional intelligence was found to be a strong and consistent predictor of profile  
417 membership. As hypothesized, individuals with higher levels of emotional intelligence had a  
418 higher probability to belong to profiles with higher levels of career adaptability. Interestingly,

419 not only emotional intelligence differentiated profile membership between profiles with  
420 varying *levels* of career adaptability but emotional intelligence also differentiated profiles  
421 with varying *shapes* of career adaptability dimensions. Actually, this was only true for  
422 profiles with high levels of career adaptability as high levels of emotional intelligence was  
423 associated with a higher probability to belong to the *concern dominant* compared to the *above*  
424 *average* profile. However, emotional intelligence did not predict differences in profile  
425 membership between the *low confidence* and the *above average* or the *low* profile.  
426 Importantly, the examination of predictors of profile membership is of great importance in  
427 order to address the construct validity of the profiles and show that they reflect substantial  
428 and valid different populations (Hofmans et al., 2020). Nonetheless, these results are largely  
429 in line with previous research highlighting the predictive effect of emotional intelligence on  
430 career adaptability in cross-sectional and longitudinal studies (Celik & Storme, 2017; Coetzee  
431 & Harry, 2014; Parmentier et al., 2019; Udayar et al., 2018). This suggests that disposing of a  
432 high level of general adaptive functioning, particularly in emotional situations, stimulates the  
433 use and the development of career adapt-abilities.

434 The examination of differences between profiles with regards to anticipatory emotions at  
435 the prospect of the school-to-work transition and career decision-making self-efficacy also  
436 brought critical insights. Consistent with our hypotheses, we found significant differences  
437 with regard to positive anticipatory emotions and career decision-making self-efficacy.  
438 Profiles with higher levels of career adaptability displayed consistently higher levels on these  
439 two variables. Contrary to the effects found for emotional intelligence, the impact on  
440 outcomes was mainly an effect of the *levels* as results failed to distinguish profiles with  
441 similar levels of career adaptability but varying shapes (i.e., the *above average* and *concern*  
442 *dominant* profiles or the *low confidence* and *below average* profiles). This is nonetheless  
443 consistent with previous research highlighting the positive impact of career adaptability on

444 positive future-oriented affect and career decision-making self-efficacy (Rudolph et al.,  
445 2017). Surprisingly, no significant differences were found for negative anticipatory emotions.  
446 This is rather inconsistent with existing evidence showing the important protective role that  
447 career adaptability plays with regards to career anxiety or negative affect. Additional research  
448 efforts are certainly needed to disentangle this pattern of results as these previous studies  
449 offer only limited value as they mainly relied on trait and dispositional approaches to  
450 affective processes in career development.

#### 451 *Limitations and future directions*

452         The present study is not without limitations. First, we relied on a cross-sectional  
453 design, limiting our ability to make any inferences about the causal relations between the  
454 antecedents and outcomes of career adaptability profiles. Future research could focus on  
455 longitudinal studies in order to better investigate the temporal precedence between the  
456 variables of interest and further address the construct validity and replicability of career  
457 adaptability profiles (Morin et al., 2018). Second, our sample was mainly composed of  
458 women, limiting our ability to generalize our findings to other samples or populations. This  
459 issue should especially be addressed as the samples used in Hirschi and Valero's (2015)  
460 studies shared similar sample characteristics. Replication efforts could bring additional  
461 support for the profiles found in these studies. Third, our sample size may be considered as  
462 small with regards to latent profile analyses standards (Tein et al., 2013). This issue would be  
463 important to address in subsequent replication efforts.

#### 464 *Practical implications*

465         Besides the theoretical contributions brought about by the present study, several  
466 implications for practice could be raised. Differentiating profiles of career adaptability  
467 provides a more realistic representation that goes beyond the impact of a single construct and  
468 is useful for the development of typologies which can be used for counseling and

469 interventions. Actually, the classification into career adaptability typologies is appealing for  
470 counselors and naturally aligned to their efforts to tailor their interventions based on the type  
471 of client they are trying to help (Hofmans et al., 2020). Our study highlights, for example,  
472 that counselors should pay attention to students showing profiles with low levels on the four  
473 career adaptability dimensions and profiles with low level on one specific dimension (e.g.,  
474 *low confidence*), as they represented a quarter of the entire sample. Following Savickas  
475 (2013), a lack of career confidence, for example, can lead to career inhibition and threaten the  
476 ability for students to achieve career goals. With students in the *low confidence* profile,  
477 counselors are invited to primarily focus on improving clients' confidence and self-esteem  
478 through emotional support, but also the engagement in activities whose successful attainment  
479 will strengthen their sources of self-efficacy and confidence. Finally, emotional intelligence  
480 and career adaptability have been demonstrated as reflecting malleable self-regulatory  
481 processes that can be taught and improved (Hodzic et al., 2018; Koen et al., 2012). Our  
482 findings thus offer important avenues in the development and the use of tailor-made  
483 interventions specifically designed to increase both global levels of career adaptability  
484 alongside with its specific dimensions.

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612

**Tables**

613 Table 1

614 *Correlation Matrix*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Gender	–											
2. Age	–.04	–										
3. Study year	–.06	.43**	–									
4. Study program	.03	–.03	.04	–								
5. Emotional intelligence	–.17**	.15*	.12	.10	–							
6. Concern	.06	.10	–.02	–.09	.31***	–						
7. Control	–.05	.17**	.11	–.02	.35***	.42***	–					
8. Curiosity	.03	.16**	.18**	–.16*	.19**	.33***	.27***	–				
9. Confidence	.01	.15*	.17**	–.06	.15*	.31***	.36***	.44***	–			
10. Positive anticipatory emotions	.00	–.02	–.11	–.09	.16*	.54***	.40***	.19**	.26***	–		
11. Negative anticipatory emotions	.09	–.01	.14*	.05	–.19**	–.05	–.15*	–.01	.01	.09	–	
12. Career decision-making self-efficacy	–.05	.07	.04	–.02	.36***	.58***	.38***	.28***	.30***	.45***	–.15*	–
<i>M</i>	–	22.33	–	–	4.50	3.54	3.84	3.69	3.89	3.33	2.69	3.37
<i>SD</i>	–	4.19	–	–	0.85	0.78	0.79	0.68	0.64	0.83	0.94	0.55

*Note.* Gender was coded 1 = male and 2 =female; study program was coded 1 = medicine and health sciences, 2 = life and technology sciences and 3 = human and social sciences. EI = emotional intelligence. PAE = positive anticipatory emotions. NAE = negative anticipatory emotions. CDSE = career decision-making self-efficacy. \* Significant at the .05 level. \*\* Significant at the .01 level. \*\*\* Significant at the .001 level.

615

616 Table 2

617 *Latent Profile Enumeration Fit Statistics*

# of profiles	LL	fp	SCF	AIC	BIC	SABIC	CAIC	aLMR ( <i>p</i> )	BLRT ( <i>p</i> )	Entropy
1	-1546.38	8	1.11	3108.77	3138.58	3113.21	3146.58	–	–	1
2	-1365.04	17	1.15	2764.09	2827.44	2773.53	2844.44	.000	.000	.77
3	-1265.45	26	1.07	2582.89	2679.79	2597.33	2705.79	.000	.000	.87
4	-1214.53	35	1.10	2499.07	2629.51	2518.50	2664.51	.080	.000	.81
5	-1173.57	44	1.08	2435.14	2599.13	2459.58	2643.13	.052	.000	.88
6	-1141.33	53	1.10	2388.66	2586.19	2418.09	2639.19	.151	.000	.82
7	-1118.35	62	1.15	2360.70	2591.77	2395.13	2653.77	.415	.014	.87
8	-1095.81	71	1.01	2333.62	2598.23	2373.05	2669.23	.194	.483	.89

*Note.* LL = log likelihood ; fp = free parameters ; SCF = scaling correction factor; AIC = Akaike information criteria; BIC = Bayesian information criteria; SABIC = sample-size adjusted BIC; CAIC = consistent AIC; aLMR = adjusted Lo-Mendell-Rubin likelihood ratio test; BLRT = Bootstrap Likelihood Ratio test.

618

619 Table 3

620 *Means of Indicators of Career Adaptability Profiles*

	<i>Low</i>	<i>Low confidence</i>	<i>Below average</i>	<i>Above average</i>	<i>Concern Dominant</i>	<i>High</i>
Concern	-1.20 (.19)	-0.24 (.11)	-0.31 (.12)	0.39 (.13)	0.64 (.07)	1.22 (.14)
Control	-1.05 (.16)	-0.41 (.14)	-0.28 (.12)	0.40 (.10)	0.49 (.11)	1.41 (.05)
Curiosity	-0.90 (.19)	-0.62 (.11)	-0.19 (.08)	0.35 (.12)	0.39 (.10)	1.38 (.08)
Confidence	-0.86 (.19)	-1.11 (.03)	-0.12 (.06)	0.54 (.11)	0.25 (.03)	1.59 (.02)

*Note.* Reported indices refer to the means and standard errors of profile indicators.

621

622 Table 4

623 *Differences of Outcomes between Career Adaptability Profiles*

	Low	Low confidence	Below average	Above average	Concern dominant	High	Overall $\chi^2$
Positive anticipatory emotions	-1.09 <sub>a,b,c,d,e</sub>	-0.19 <sub>a,b,c,e</sub>	-0.35 <sub>a,b,c,d</sub>	0.50 <sub>c</sub>	0.55 <sub>b</sub>	0.83 <sub>a</sub>	167.51***
Negative anticipatory emotions	0.16	0.02	-0.08	0.21 <sub>b</sub>	-0.23 <sub>b</sub>	-0.29	7.76
Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy	-1.17 <sub>a,b,c,d,e</sub>	-0.23 <sub>a,b,c,e</sub>	-0.30 <sub>a,b,c,d</sub>	0.31 <sub>a,b,c</sub>	0.74 <sub>b</sub>	1.11 <sub>a</sub>	267.52***

*Note.* PAE = positive anticipatory emotions. NAE = negative anticipatory emotions. CDSE = career decision-making self-efficacy. Overall chi-square tests were performed with 5 degrees of freedom. Subscripts indicate significant differences between profiles at the .05 level. Subscripts from *a* to *e* refer to significant pairwise comparisons with the High, Concern Dominant, Above average, Below average, and Low confidence, respectively.

624

625

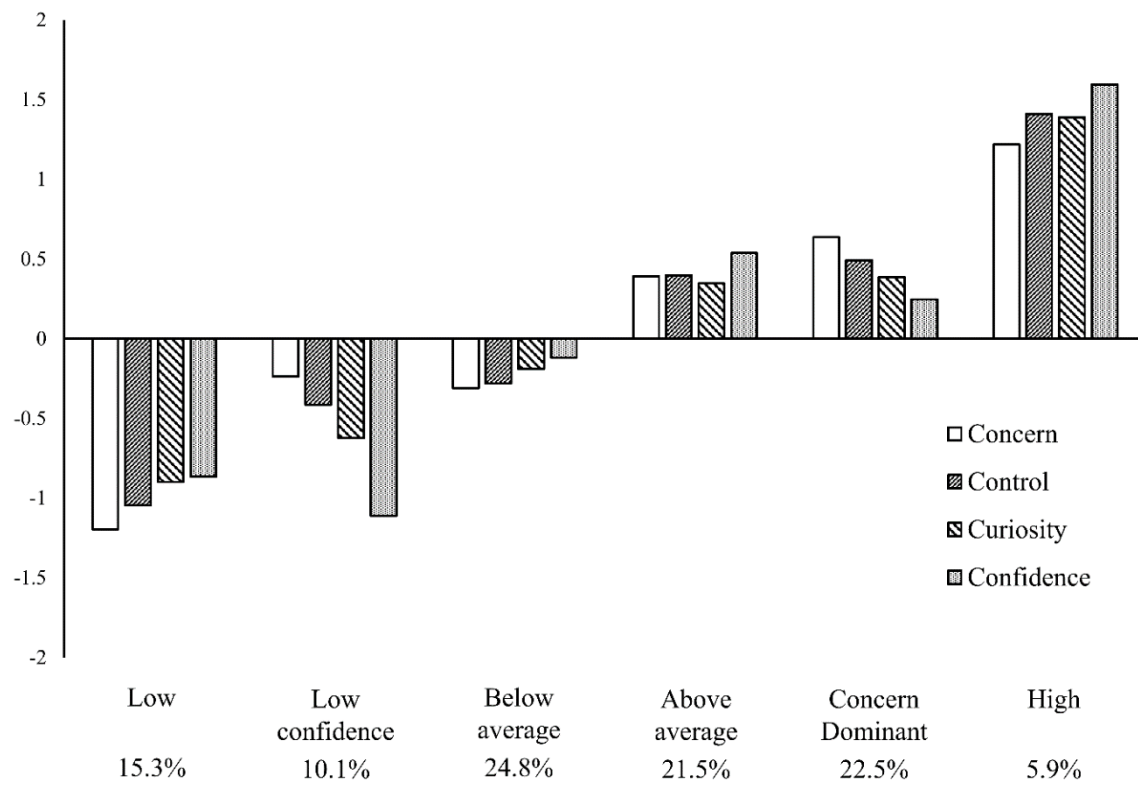
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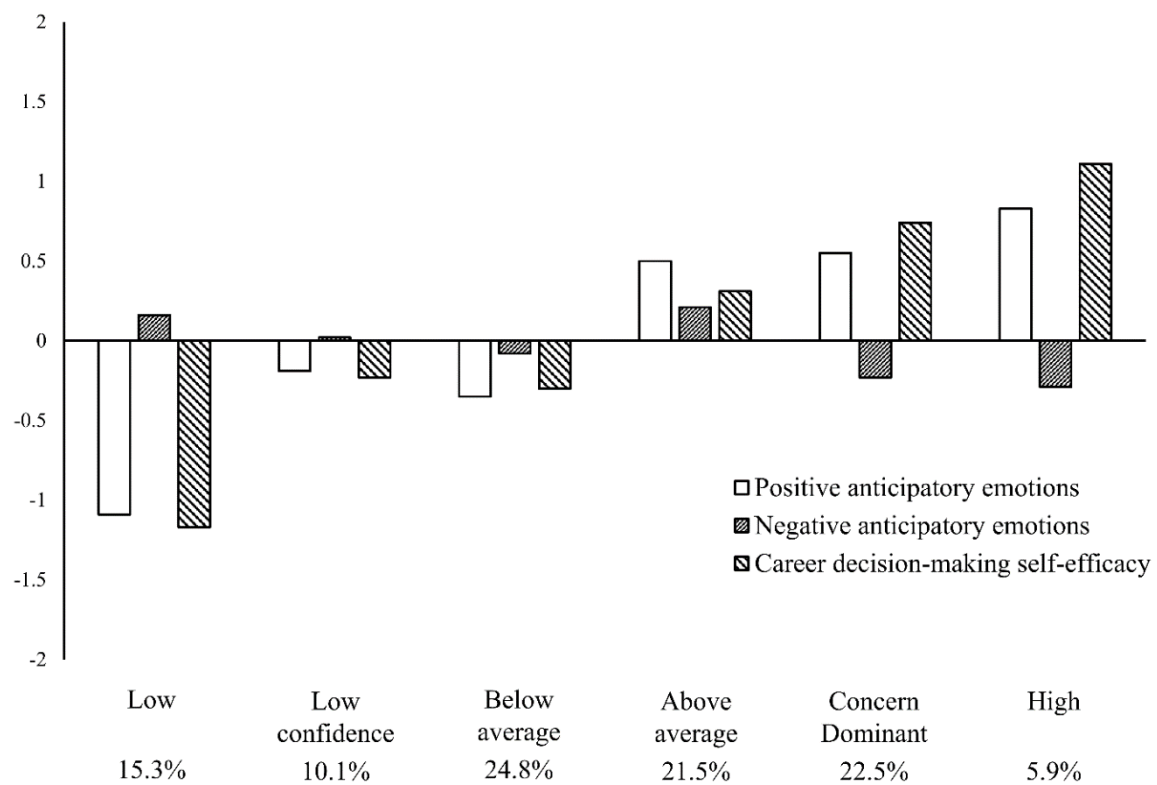
**Figures**

629 Figure 1. *Final 6-profile Solution of Career Adaptability*



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631 Figure 2. *Outcomes for the Final 6-profile Solution of Career Adaptability*



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